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Love shines at local confectionery

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If you've seen the film, "Willie Wonka And The Chocolate Factory," then you clearly understand a child's barely containable excitement at the prospect of touring a candy factory. Adults may feel the need to be—a bit—more restrained. The excitement generated by the small gathering of adults as they awaited a tour of Norman Love's Fort Myers "Chocolate

Regional Manufacturers Association (SRMA), a few weeks ago, however, was clearly palpable.

World-renowned local pastry chef and confectioner Norman Love never intended to be in the chocolate business. To hear and truly understand that statement, one must hear it from his lips, told in his quietly intense manner. As Love shares his story, the passion and intensity increases, but his voice remains low, completely captivating his audience.

At age 15, his first job was at an ice cream shop in Florida: it was then he decided to pursue the confectionery arts. This was at a time when very few professional training programs were offered in this field, so it was very difficult to secure a place at such learning institutions. So it was then he began his journey in "the school of hard knocks," as he puts it, learning and perfecting his trade as he continued along his career path.

After learning the craft of pastry-



PHOTO BY MIKE SHAPIRO

making in France, Norman served as executive pastry chefs for many luxury resorts including the Ritz-Carlton.

International acclaim also followed Love. *Chocolatier and Pastry Art and Design* magazine named him one of the country's top 10 pastry chefs in 1996 and 1997. In 1999, he led the U.S. team to a bronze medal in the biennial *Coup du Monde de la Patisserie* (World Cup of Pastry) competition in Lyons, France, which featured the top pastry chefs from 18 nations.

In 2001, the culinary virtuoso left

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PHOTO BY MIKE SHAPIRO

Norman Love: his business is his passion

LOVE, from page 1



PHOTO BY MIKE SHAPIRO

During the holidays, customers will stand in line outside to place their orders

the corporate world and entered into private enterprise, founding Norman Love Confections. His adventurous flair, love of the avant-garde and pen-

chant for perfection are basic ingredients in the ultra-premium chocolates that are revered as representatives of the industry's finest gourmet sweets.

Since founding Norman Love Confections, Love and his chocolates have been featured by USA Today, the TODAY Show, Martha Stewart Living and O, the Oprah magazine, well as many other media.

Among the many accolades he has received over the years, in 2012 Love was named one of the "10 Best Chocolatiers In The World" on www.NationalGeographic.com and the

Florida Retailer of the Year for Leadership by the Florida Retail Federation in 2011. He is also co-founder of the National Pastry Team Championship and is a regular guest judge on the Food Network Challenge series.

Love has inspired a corporate culture of relentless pursuit of innovation, excellence and quality. Known for creating chocolate flavors recognizable with American consumers, Norman Love Confections is also recognized for its artistic and aesthetic presentation of the chocolates. Many innovative projects are underway for his company and he looks forward to

implementing them, keeping his roots firmly planted here in Southwest Florida.

It was truly fascinating to hear him talk about his business, his passion: "It is truly our goal here to come in each day to do a better job than we did yesterday—because that's how we define success." Instilled with a dedication to hard work, total customer focus and a high ethics standard during his years working for The Ritz-Carlton organization, one can see the results of this approach every day, in every confectionery creation his shop LOVE-ingly produces.



PHOTO BY MIKE SHAPIRO

The tour group listens as Love explains his confectionery manufacturing process



PHOTO BY MIKE SHAPIRO

Love answers questions from the tour group in the retail shop