



FOOD

In the hands and copper kettles of Californian **Rachel Saunders**, fruit turns into delectables like black plum jam with candied citrus and bay leaf, or blood-orange-quince preserves with brandy. You can also try her recipes at home, using her new *Blue Chair Jam Cookbook*. (jams, \$12-\$13, bluechairfruit.com; cookbook, \$23.10, amazon.com)

ARCHIVE

HOT COCOA

What tastes better with chocolate? According to these confectioners, just about everything.

“I always thought chocolate came from Europe,” says Maribel Lieberman, owner of New York’s MarieBelle and a native of Honduras. “When I learned that the Mayans and the Aztecs were the first to create chocolate, it connected me to my roots. I had found my destiny.” Chocolatey destiny might sound extreme (and lucky), but such passion is common among artisan chocolatiers, who can spend days crafting a single truffle.

These aren’t just candy—they’re mini works of art. Lieberman’s sweets boast hand-drawn scenes of New York women. Lillie Belle Farms uses local ingredients to create novel pieces like a smoky blue-cheese truffle. Spanish confectioner Oriol Balaguer’s mascleta truffle explodes with flavor: Inside the chocolate are carbonated candies like Pop Rocks. “What’s happening in chocolate goes hand in hand with the chef movement—better, more, trendier,” says Julian Rose of Moonstruck Chocolate, which is known for its animal-shaped truffles. (For fall, owls.) “As much as we hate the Food Network for some of the crazy stuff it does, it’s helping the industry, raising awareness about flavors and quality.”

A commitment to small-batch production helps maintain quality. Christopher Elbow, whose elaborate designs are now sold nationwide, says, “Growth is great, but we’ll stop producing before we mechanize or compromise quality.”

—STEPHANIE SCHOMER



L.A. BURDICK
Walpole, New Hampshire
White-chocolate mouse with cinnamon center, \$2.50



BESPOKE CHOCOLATES
New York
Pretzel-covered sea-salted caramel, \$2.25



KNIPSCHILDT CHOCOLATIER
Norwalk, Connecticut
Strawberry-lemon-thyme ganache, \$1.60



ORIO BALAGUER
Barcelona
Black truffles and dark-honey chocolate ganache, \$2.75



HEDONIST CHOCOLATES
Rochester, New York
Bittersweet chocolate truffle, \$2



CHRISTOPHER ELBOW
Kansas City, Missouri
Lemon marmalade with white chocolate ganache, \$1.75



LILLIE BELLE FARMS
Central Point, Oregon
Madagascar vanilla bean and white chocolate, \$2



MARIEBELLE
New York
Dark chocolate with peanut butter, \$2.50



BOND STREET
New York
Chocolate Buddha dusted with 24k gold, \$10



MOONSTRUCK CHOCOLATE
Portland, Oregon
Coconut ganache in ivory chocolate, \$2

UPGRADE

LEAD-HEAD

David Rees may well be the world’s first and only artisanal pencil sharpener

“Yes, it’s real,” says David Rees of his budding pencil-sharpening business. “It’s as real as artisanal cheese-making or artisanal honey production or artisanal anything else that’s part of this movement.” Unlike his electric counterparts, Rees, best known for his comic series *Get Your War On*, promises the “care and attention” your No. 2s deserve. For \$15, he’ll whittle one to a fine point, and mail it back with a baggie of shavings and a certificate of authenticity. To date, roughly 80 lead-heads with a well-honed sense of irony have used the service. “I’m hoping I get some repeat customers—people who need touch-ups or resharpening,” he adds, noting that, over time, one No. 2 could yield revenue north of \$100. “So far, that hasn’t happened.” *artisanalpen cilsharpening.com* —DAN MACSAI

