

## Chocolate creations

Chefs demonstrate the versatility of one of the world's most popular ingredients. *Mischa Moselle* indulges for Asian Hotel & Catering Times.

Versatile only begins to describe the many uses of the ingredient that lights up faces as soon as it is mentioned. Chocolate ...

Braised oxtail may not excite many but this pasta dish as served at new Italian restaurant Bistecca is finished with 50 grams of bitter chocolate to make a classic – and richer – Roman dish.

### Limitless possibilities?



Ryan Zimmer, Pastry Chef at the Marco Polo Hongkong Hotel has let his imagination go wild in creating the cutting edge honey truffle cigar. Chef Ryan likes the Italian brand Amadei for this novel petit four, an item not on the regular menu at Cucina restaurant but available for banqueting and VIP requests.

Chef Ryan originally infused the chocolate with tobacco but found the flavour overwhelming. The honey truffle gave the earthy flavour he was looking for without spoiling the chocolate.

Chef Ryan believes that a chocolate cigar, a real cigar and a glass of cognac are, "the real way to a gentleman's heart."

Over at Spoon by Alain Ducasse at the InterContinental Hong Kong it's all about chocolate and all about Valrhona, the famed French brand that introduced the concept of *terroir*, in particular.

Also on the menu is the Raspberry Chocolate for contrasts lovers, made with 70 percent Valrhona. This has a base of chocolate sable – cocoa and almond mixed with butter – and a second layer of sache biscuit. These are topped by a layer of raspberry confit - raspberries cooked down to marmalade-like consistency. The top layer is a ganache made from 70 percent chocolate and with the unexpected addition of a little chilli. There is not enough chilli to add heat, just a fruity note. Garnish is raspberries filled with a raspberry coulis.



### Chocolate retail therapy



It's in the hotel's Island Gourmet deli shop that Chef Alain comes into his own as a chocolatier, providing customer with 12 types of pralines and a selection of chocolate filled macarons. All are hand made in-house. Chef Alain's best selling product is a cake called the Frou-Frou. It may be simple – an almond daquoise, crispy praline and chocolate mousse made with 53 percent chocolate – but 10 orders a day make it a winner.

*A longer version of this article will be appearing in the December 2009 issue of Asian Hotel & Catering Times*

---

Contact: Sharon Knowler  
[sharon@thomsonpress.com.hk](mailto:sharon@thomsonpress.com.hk)  
<http://www.thomsonpress.com.hk>