



Search

- By Keyword (past 14 days)
- By Date (past 90 days)
- Archives (\$)

14-day Search

For the love of chocolate

By Lise Diebel
Special to The Hamilton Spectator
 (Sep 13, 2006)

Are you suffering from an insatiable sweet tooth? Dr. Kerry Beal has just the cure in her extensive collection of confectionary recipes.

Beal is a family doctor from Burlington who also happens to be a chocolatier extraordinaire.

She rarely sells her high-end chocolates. Instead, she gives them away as gifts or shares them with friends and co-workers who are grateful to sink their teeth into adorable white chocolate mice with delectable mango cream centres or snobinettes of port-soaked figs suspended in a glorious ganache.

Beal's favourites include candied ginger dipped in dark chocolate. For added zing, she'll roll ginger in ground coriander or even ground curry before dipping.

"It gives a very interesting, different flavour," says Beal, 49, who works full-time hours at doctors' offices and also puts in a regular shift at a STD clinic.

In her spare time she teaches confectionary classes and sells chocolate-making supplies under her business name, The Chocolate Doctor.

Classes include truffle-making, chocolate-moulding and caramel techniques. Her students include everyone from brides creating handmade chocolates as wedding favours to professional candy-makers interested in honing their techniques.

Students don't always know the Chocolate Doctor is a medical doctor, too.

"A lot of people think it's just a catchy name I came up with for the business," she says.

When they find out, a few have been known to seek medical advice during truffle-making sessions. "I don't mind answering questions," says Beal. "If people have a concern, they have a concern."

Beal's interest in teaching confectionary inspired her to create three instructional DVDs with



Photos by John Rennison, the Hamilton Spectator

Superior chocolate candy begins with high-quality chocolate, says The Chocolate Doctor, Kerry Beal. Shown are her finished chocolates atop a large block of chocolate she uses to make them.



Chocolatier Kerry Beal prepares high-end chocolate treats.

directions on making everything from three-dimensional chocolate figures to chocolate curls, ruffles, ribbons and snobinettes -- chocolate containers used to hold a chocolate centre, or if made larger, to hold mousse or fresh fruit, for a very special presentation.

Her DVD series also teaches tempering -- the process by which chocolate is taken from its molten state into the form required to mould, coat and decorate.

Tempering is necessary to ensure the shiny surface and snap when chocolate is broken as well as the proper feel when bitten into.

"What you're actually doing is aligning the cocoa butter crystals into a stable form," says Beal. "If you just melt chocolate and dip things in it, it will go cloudy. It won't harden up properly. It won't have that normal snap and shine that you're accustomed to with chocolate."

Not surprisingly, the science of candy-making appeals to her medical mind.

"I do approach cooking from a somewhat scientific bent."

With the medical community warning of an obesity epidemic, Beal reconciles her profession in the health field and passion for confectionary by preaching moderation.

"I would never tell people not to allow themselves certain foods," says Beal, who enjoys her creations on occasion but isn't a chocoholic.

"If you like something, eat it, but don't make your diet consist entirely of it."

She recommends choosing quality over quantity.

"With good quality chocolate, you only need a little bit."

As for all the hype over dark chocolate --practically considered a health food these days because it's high in antioxidants -- Beal uses more milk chocolate: "It's creamy, caramelly and just plain good."

When deciding which kind of chocolate to use, Beal considers what's being used in the centres. For example, fruit centres pair beautifully with white chocolate because the chocolate's flavour doesn't overpower the filling.

Beal's love of candy-making dates back to childhood when she spent Friday nights making fudge and pull taffy in her mother's kitchen.

Fifteen years ago she got seriously into handmade chocolates after buying a small electronic tempering machine for \$650. "It did a lovely, lovely job of tempering chocolate."

But the machine was noisy.

"It sounded like a hair dryer," Beal says.

And it tempered only small quantities of chocolate at a time. Beal eventually gave it away to a friend and sought out instruction on tempering by hand from Joe Calabro, an award-winning pastry and chocolate chef in Ottawa.

* The Chocolate Doctor DVDs cost \$29.95 each (there are three in the set) and are available on Beal's website, thechocolatedoctor.ca.

The Chocolate Doctor is in

Dr. Kerry Beal teaches confectionary classes at Le Chef Complet, 447 Brant St., Burlington:

* Glorious Ganache, Oct. 15, 12 to 3 p.m. Cost: \$60. Features the preparation of multiple uses of truffle and chocolate centres.

* Christmas Moulds, Nov. 12, 12 to 3 p.m. Cost: \$60. Learn to prepare interesting chocolate for the holiday season.

To register, call 905-333-0522 or visit lechefcomplet.ca.

* Just in time for making homemade Christmas gifts, the Chocolate Doctor will be in the GoCooking kitchen at The Spectator, 44 Frid St., Sat., Oct. 28, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. She will be making bark and chocolates and truffles filled with ganache, as well as teaching tempering. Cost yet to be determined.

 [Printer friendly page](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Go](#) | [Sports](#) | [Classified](#) | [Contact us](#) | [My Subscription](#) | [Search](#)



Legal Notice: Contents copyright 1991-2006, The Hamilton Spectator. All rights reserved. Distribution, transmission or republication of any material from www.thespec.com is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of **The Hamilton Spectator**. For directions on material reuse, website comments, questions or information send email to helliott@thespec.com.

