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Raising The Bar: The Future Of Fine Chocolate



Synopsis

"Just give me all your chocolate and no one gets hurt!" Billions of us worldwide understand what it means to scream those words. We feel lost-even unhinged-without chocolate's pleasures. And if chocolate is the music that makes our days brighter, fine chocolate is the symphony-the richest, most complex form in the chocolate universe. The most important movement in that symphony's centuries-old existence is now beginning. And that future is... what? A world of gray monochromatic flavor, or one rich with a rainbow of flavors that capture the myriad pleasures and diversity of the cocoa bean? In the spirit of Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *Raising the Bar: The Future of Fine Chocolate* tells the story of what that next movement in the fine flavor chocolate symphony might hold. Told in four lively parts covering everything from before the bean to after the bar-genetics, farming, manufacturing, and bonbons-the book features interviews with dozens of international stakeholders across the fine flavor industry to consider the promises and pitfalls ahead. It looks through what is happening today to understand where things are going, while unwrapping the possibilities for the millions and millions of us who believe that life without the very best chocolate is no life at all.

Part One: Seeds of Change: Genetics and Flavor The genetic story of the future of flavor cacao told through discussions with researchers, scientists, and experts around the world who are involved at the genetic level: from the mapping of the cacao genome to the Heirloom Cacao Preservation Initiative (HCP). The HCP seeks to connect flavor to genetics to the work being done on the ground in order to confront the spread of low-flavor beans and ensure cacao quality and diversity for future generations.

Part Two: From the Ground Up: Farmers, Farming, and Flavor Discussion of the issues of growing cacao from an ecological and sustainable perspective given the reality of where it is grown. Interviews and stories cover the majority of fine flavor growing regions and myriad efforts to add value and values to fine flavor chocolate; preserve, protect, and propagate flavor cacao for the future; and ensure that the beans are as good as they can possibly be. The realities and possibilities of fair trade chocolate and the work being done on fermentation are also covered.

Part Three: To Market, To Market: Craftsmanship, Customer Education and Flavor Can consumers learn to slow down, taste, explore, and value the costly complexity of fine chocolate? Though the future looks bright by some measurements, sometimes the numbers aren't what they seem... Discussions with both artisan and traditional chocolate manufacturers around the world on how they see the market and sources for fine flavor beans and what they are doing to educate their customers about their craft, including a survey of the nature of raw, organic, and functional chocolate.

Part Four: Performing Flavor: The Art of the Chocolatier Whether watching over those creations, traveling the world to discover new pairings, or simply taking their love of Junior

Mints to the highest level, the world's fine flavor chocolatiers are all deeply aware of the "stage" they work on and the importance of taste in every performance. The future of their creations-the most flavorful and beautiful bonbons and confections in the world-are discussed as these chocolatiers confront the issues surrounding the preservation of their craft and how they see their flavors and recipe development changing (or not) in the future.

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Customer Reviews

Funny and witty, *Raising the Bar: The future of Fine Chocolate* delivers what it promises: an in-depth analysis of the current fine chocolate situation, both in the bean to bar spectrum as well as in the chocolatier end. The book devotes a large portion of its writing explaining what is happening to cocoa beans today, expanding on the issues faced by farmers, brokers, and buyers alike and finally exploring what the impacts are to the final end consumer. If you do not know much about the backstage of chocolate manufacturing, this is the perfect place to start. It explains in a friendly manner all the aspects involved in creating our favorite treat and how many of these steps on the ground (the cocoa farms) are in danger of extinction. It does so through the eyes of those who are

involved in the field - manufacturers and chocolatiers alike. Various snippets from interviews with some of the world's most prominent chocolatiers give great insights into this current chocolate situation. I am impressed with this book and with all the knowledge I have gained from it. Quick and easy to read, the book sheds light into a story that is highly important not only to the future of fine chocolate lovers, but to the impacts on nature, genetics, politics, social responsibility and the people who have made chocolate a significant part of their lives. I suggest this book to anyone and everyone. Just as we are growingly fascinated with our organic chicken and whether they have been pasture-raised or not, we should as well be obsessed with a treat that most of us have a daily interaction with. Right now, too few people are interested in understanding chocolate and saving the future of fine chocolate. If you are a chocolate lover, this book is a must read. If you are not as much a chocolate lover, this book will give you a new appreciation and respect to the brave souls working in the industry.

Worst book ever! First of all, it should be titled: "Random Gossips of the Cacao Industry to Impress People Outside the Industry". Second, the authors should have taken a writing course to organize their ideas. To anyone with a professional level of education this is an extremely mediocre and unprofessional book, much less amusing nor interesting. Third, what is the professional background and/or education of the authors? They cite the organizations and uncredited online school created by themselves, but...where they trained to become chocolatiers or chocolate makers? Waste of money or time unless this is the required text for their online courses.

I really enjoyed this book. My expectations were not only met but completely exceeded. Something that positively surprised me was that each issue is discussed from different points of view, so the reader gets a whole picture of the situation. After reading you can come to your own conclusions. I highly recommend this book for anybody who has an interest in fine chocolate as a consumer or producer. An added value that it has to me is that it can be used as a tool to educate the naive consumer who will believe whatever he sees on labels; this book will open his mind to question and go beyond the label to get more info about any fine chocolate he will meet in the market.

Whether you are baker, pastry chef, chocolatier, or just a chocolaholic, you will want to be in on the latest and greatest regarding the future of this product. From bean to bar and beyond, authors Pam Williams and Jim Eber take us on a journey through the jungles of the Ivory Coast, New Guinea, Venezuela, and other areas where cacao is grown to understand what is going on in those areas

that have and will continue to affect the cacao production on this planet-the good, the bad, and the ugly. From there, we migrate to the complexities of understanding just what chocolate is all about and how the industry is taking chocolate to a whole new level. And in the end, we learn just how chocolatiers around the globe are creating the products that consumers appear to be not only buying but craving. Upon completion of this book, you will never look at a bar of chocolate in the same way again, I can assure you. Not only did I enjoy learning the information that was so eloquently expressed, but I also was introduced to the players both big and not-so-big in this chocolate story through the authors' references. From growers to manufacturers to artisan chocolate retailers, I now have a whole new set of individuals whose work and product I will be following with interest.

For a true chocolate lover, this is delectable! *Raising the Bar: The Future of Fine Chocolate* lets you understand what's behind the chocolate you love. An affordable luxury and healthy pleasure, good chocolate is heading in the direction of fine wine & gourmet food. This book gives details about how chocolate is made and produced, so you can choose chocolate manufacturers and chocolatiers who support what you believe in. Examples are discussions about fair trade practices and treating farmers well to ensure the chocolate industry's preservation (there's a great story about a chocolate manufacturer bringing the final manufactured chocolate bars back to the cacao farmers in a small village in Venezuela). There is also info about GMOs and the concerns of chocolate manufacturers, as well as the sheer joy of exploring all the flavor possibilities of chocolate!

Lots of good content and quotations but could have been half the length. Reads more like a first draft more than a polished book. But even by skimming you can pick up the general trends and who's who in the industry.

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