



ROGER VON ROTZ

The village of Cham in Canton Zug is a typical small Swiss town. About an hour south of Zurich, Cham exhibits a healthy mix of traditional and ultra-contemporary architectural styles. The town center juxtaposes discount stores, clothing boutiques, banks, and a totally atypical world-class pastry and chocolate shop, Von Rotz. Cham is the site of Von Rotz's original shop, but there are now four other branches in neighboring villages, each offering a full line of pastry and chocolate items, breads, and a café that also serves light meals.

Roger Von Rotz and his wife Andrea took over the Cham village bakery in 1997. Aline and Arnold Von Rotz, his parents, had in turn bought the bakery, in existence since 1890, in 1978. With only seven employees to start with, the younger Von Rotz set out to transform the small-town shop into a high quality establishment by utilizing only the finest ingredients as well as an innovative approach to flavoring, production, and presentation.

Today Von Rotz is the premier reception caterer, chocolatier, pastry, and bread supplier of the region, and plans are underway to expand to a glassed-in production facility where customers can see every aspect of his specialties being prepared. Not one of those celebrity chefs who never sets foot in his shops, Roger Von Rotz is a hands-on owner, and he and his wife Andrea, who

serves as director of sales, oversee every aspect of the business. During the past year I made two visits to Von Rotz, the first to his shop at Baar last spring, and the second this past September to his shop and production facility in Steinhausen.

Last March Swiss master pastry chef Franz Ziegler, a mutual friend of Von Rotz and mine, joined us and we set to a tasting of chocolates, most notably some truffles made from the newly rediscovered Fortunato No. 4 chocolate (see below), which is made from rare Peruvian cocoa beans. The square truffles clearly stated Von Rotz's motto "Echt und Gut" (real and good). Unadulterated with liqueur or any other flavoring (even the chocolate itself is vanilla-free), the truffles had a deep, rich chocolate flavor that lacked both intense bitterness and acidic bite. Onward to a host



of other chocolates with ganache centers, these in a narrow rectangular shape and flavored variously with kalamansi, passion fruit, litchi, or rose among other flavors, all of which echoed the motto again. Flavors were perfectly balanced and in harmony with the range of chocolate chosen for the centers. After a quick tour of the salesroom, it was time to leave with a promise to return to see the Fortunato No. 4 truffles being made.

Early in September 2011 I again headed to see Von Rotz, this time at his production facility. He and Peter Dahinden, his production manager for chocolates and confections, went through the process of Fortunato No. 4 truffles, from preparing the ganache to enrobing and finishing the centers. We were also able to taste his latest innovation called Noe, another Fortunato No. 4 truffle scented with coffee that grows in the same valley as the cocoa beans. With typical generosity he also provided the formula that's reproduced here. For more information on Roger Von Rotz and his work see www.echt-vonrotz.ch/en/.

Photos by Echt Von Rotz





ABOUT FORTUNATO NO. 4

A chance discovery of Dan Pearson, who was in the valley of the Río Marañón (mar-aah-NYON) in Peru for other work, Fortunato No. 4 is made by a Swiss chocolate company (that wishes to remain anonymous) from a variety of cacao called Nacional, a sub-variety of Forastero. Once widely used in the preparation of couverture grade chocolate for the European market, Nacional was grown on a large scale in Ecuador until blight all but wiped out the plantations there early in the twentieth century. The unique quality of the rediscovered Nacional from Peru lies in the fact that the trees grow in natural conditions and have done so undisturbed for centuries, allowing them to yield a percentage of rare white cocoa beans along with standard purple ones in each pod. Once the white beans are fermented and roasted, they significantly reduce the bitter and acrid elements in the chocolate resulting in a clear and aromatic flavor. During the manufacturing process a nineteenth-century roller conch, which heats the chocolate mixture only by friction, is used exclusively to preserve the aromatic elements in the chocolate. In the United States Fortunato No. 4 is available from Paul Edward of Chef Rubber at www.maranonchocolate.com.

Photos by Kerrin Rousset

Fortunato No. 4 Truffles

Yield: about 225 pieces

23 oz/650 g heavy cream (35% butterfat)

5.3 oz/150 g Trimoline

3.5 oz/100 g glucose

32.45 oz/920 g Fortunato No. 4 couverture (68% cocoa solids), melted

9.8 oz/280 g unsalted butter

26.45 oz/750 g Fortunato No. 4 couverture, tempered, for enrobing and finishing

1. Combine all ingredients in a vacuum mixer (Stephane). Expel air and heat to 43°C (109.4°F).
2. Mix on highest speed and begin cooling process. Cool ganache to 30°C (86°F).
3. Spread ganache in a 38 x 38 x 1.2-centimeter (approximately 15 x 15 x ½-inch) frame and allow to set for 12 hours.
4. Spread undersides with a thin layer of tempered couverture and cut each slab of ganache into 2.5-centimeter (1-inch) squares.
5. Enrobe in tempered chocolate and allow to set for 12 hours.
6. Finish with a drop of tempered chocolate and mark with the "No.4" stamp.

