



## Leading Hotels Introduces Chocolate Offers for Your Valentine

*Luxury Leader Gives Cupid a Hand with Tempting Confections*

New York, NY (January 24, 2013) -- While it is traditional to offer a gift of chocolate for Valentine's Day, Leading Hotels around the world offer guests sweet excuses to enjoy this delightful treat in a number of ways, any day of the year.



Proving there is more than one way to surround its guests with chocolate experiences, [Hotel Sacher Wien](#) takes the cake – literally. The recipe for the Original Sacher Torte – created by the hotel in 1832 - is a well-kept secret. More than 360,000 of these treats are produced every year, and can be purchased in one of the four Sacher shops or at the Confiserie in Vienna, Salzburg, Graz or Innsbruck. They can also be ordered online for delivery via courier almost anywhere in the world. The hotel also produces a wide variety of other sweets, specifically a mini Sacher Torte (Sacher Würfel) which is presented as a gift at turndown. For guests who are watching their weight, the Sacher Spa offers *Time to Chocolate*, a full range of sumptuous treatments and wraps, as well as a line of spa products. The creamy chocolate care – especially the cacao butter - provides

immediate results, firmer skin and a radiant look with a long-lasting effect. The best part – all are totally calorie-free!

The Swiss take chocolate very seriously indeed. And [Baur au Lac](#) in Zurich proves the point brilliantly with its own signature brand, “Chocolat 1844” – honoring the year the hotel was built – and personally created by hotel owner and managing director Andrea Kracht. Mr. Kracht, with the help of Barry-Callebaut in Paris, selected numerous varieties of cacao from various origins that have been blended to create “Carré noir 70%,” the first product under the brand. Produced in Switzerland and consisting of 70% cacao, “Carré noir 70%” is distinguished primarily by its strong cacao flavor, light fruity accents and a subtle roasted aftertaste. The first in a series of products that will soon be launched under the brand “Chocolate 1844,” this unique confection is available for sale in the hotel's gift shop, as well as the hotel's three wine shops, Baur au Lac Vins (all located in Zurich), and pairs delightfully with Baur au Lac Vin's collection of port wines.



Say the word “Belgian” and one automatically adds “chocolate”. Some might even say that you haven't truly lived until you had your first bite of Belgian chocolate. [Rocco Forte Hotel Amigo](#) in Brussels makes sure that guests can enjoy this local specialty to the full – working with local chocolatiers, such as Laurent Gerbaud, who is known for the exceptional way he combines chocolate, fruit and spices. The hotel has also created a package to introduce visitors to the Art of Chocolate Making. With rates starting from EUR 259 per night, it includes overnight accommodations, buffet breakfast, entrance to the charming nearby Museum of Cacao and Chocolate where guests can take part in a Make Your Own Chocolates workshop, and a box of sweets to take home.

Germany is also known for its chocolates and at [Excelsior Hotel Ernst](#) in Cologne, Germany, Chef Pâtissier Lea Holzapfel has individually conceptualized chocolates to suit the different style of cuisines of the hotel's restaurants – creating pralines infused with lemon grass and ginger for the East Asian restaurant taku, and more traditional flavors for Hanse Stube. The hotel also offers exclusive workshops where participants will see how Chef Holzapfel treats her work as a piece of art, working with chocolate molds and fillings, and introducing unique decoration techniques for pralines. She will also show them how to prepare their own sweets, with ingredients such as almonds, chili or orange, which they can then take home, if they can resist the temptation to eat them all on the spot!



Guests at [The Windsor Hotel TOYA Resort & Spa](#) in Hokkaido, Japan, have the opportunity to participate in a private or semi-private cooking class – the *Sweets Factory* – in which items such as gateau chocolat can be made under the tutelage of the hotel's chef patissier. For those who prefer not to indulge their sweet tooth, the Bloom SPA Toya offers special chocolate-themed treatments during Valentine's Day, including chocolate scrubs and a chocolate facial, or a facial of apples and blackberries, body scrub, and body treatment using chocolate. Spa-goers can indulge in the healing effects of chocolate, without fear of expanding their waistlines.

At California's [Bernardus Lodge](#), Pastry Chef Ben Spungin is a chocolate enthusiast, using the flavors of the surrounding coastline to add local essence. His handcrafted chocolates come in unique flavors such as Big Sur Sea Salt, Lemon Verbena, Cinnamon Stick and Garden Mint. In the Marinus Restaurant, in addition to several plated chocolate desserts, there is a three-course cacao tasting, which changes nightly, and can feature anything from crisp chocolate sorbet with puffed rice to thick spiced hot chocolate with homemade marshmallows. Guests can also enhance their confectionary skills with a three-hour hands-on class. One, on March 9 is priced at USD 125, and includes a brown bag lunch, gourmet recipes and departure gifts. The other, a two-hour experience on December 7, is priced at USD 95, and will enable guests to enjoy cocktails, Bernardus wines and a chocolate buffet, as well as to create their own chocolate delights to take home.



**For reservations, visit [www.LHW.com](http://www.LHW.com).**

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### **About The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. (LHW)**

When extraordinary and one-of-a-kind intersect, you have likely found a Leading Hotel. As the largest luxury hotel collection, with more than 430 of the world's greatest properties in over 80 countries, we seek out the exceptional. From grand palaces to intimate city hideaways, from ancient castles to sumptuous safari tent villages, from tropical aeries to mystical paradises, all are utterly unique and boldly independent. Each celebrates the culture of its destination, rather than trying to mask it with corporate-mandated sameness. Established in 1928 by several influential and forward-thinking European hoteliers, it started with 38 initial members. With our eight-decade-long commitment to providing unforgettable, authentic travel experiences, LHW selects only hotels that meet our high standards for quality and distinctiveness. To us, hospitality is not an industry; it's an art...and our passion.

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