

COCOA BISTRO

ALCHEMY IN CHOCOLATE

fresh



*"WHEN YOU LOOK AT CHOCOLATE,
YOU ALWAYS THINK SWEET," SAYS
AUDREY. "THERE'S REALLY A
COMPLEXITY INVOLVED WHEN YOU
ADD IN SAVOURY THINGS, LIKE
HERBS OR NUTS OR ALCOHOL."
HER INNOVATIVE RECIPES CAN
TRANSPORT YOU, IN ONE BITE,
TO ANOTHER TIME OR PLACE.*

Kingston chocolatier Audrey Brown is an alchemist of chocolate, constantly exploring and experimenting with new, unique flavours for her handmade chocolate creations. One of her first recipes, for Limoncello Basil truffles, has become – ten years later – one of the most popular for her business, Cocoa Bistro.



1

With simple ingredients, Cocoa Bistro staff coax out flavours that evoke memories. And then with painstaking care, they create each tiny masterpiece, hand-painting tinted cocoa butter into each chocolate mold before pouring in a thin layer of dark chocolate.



2

The chocolate is then poured out again, leaving a thin shell. "It's very important that the shell is thin," says Audrey, "so that you don't meet any resistance when you bite down into the truffle."



3

Audrey assists Melanie Helsby with the completed truffles.

After the shell is set, the ganache is made. For the Limoncello Basil truffles, basil leaves are muddled into fresh cream, which is then heated to release the herb's oils. The infused cream is mixed with a white chocolate ganache, and then Limoncello liqueur and fresh lemon juice are added. This is piped into the chocolate shells. A second thin layer of chocolate seals up the truffle. The entire process for one batch – about 200 truffles – takes two days.



4

Then there's the Canadian Campfire truffle. They use Lapsang Souchong tea for its smoky flavour (sourced from Cha Cha Tea in Kingston) as well as maple pecan whisky (from King's Lock Craft Distillery in nearby Johnstown). Each truffle is topped with hand-painted white and red swirls of cocoa butter, an indication of the fiery, smoky flavours inside. The sweet and spicy Ryan Reynolds truffle features chipotle-infused caramel enrobed in dark chocolate.





Ryan Reynolds, Limoncello Basil, and Canadian Campfire truffles.

Cocoa Bistro changes up their chocolate offerings seasonally. The spring–summer collection has 12 different flavours and the fall–winter collection has 15. You can get truffles in boxes of four, 12, 15, or 24, and choose your favourite combinations. If you love traditional chocolate flavours, you can get a vanilla bean truffle, made with Madagascar vanilla bean and a milk chocolate ganache. Or you can go for something a little more unusual, like the Guavalicious, featuring guava and white chocolate ganache in a dark chocolate anatomical heart mold.

Cocoa Bistro truffles are made with a mix of international (high-quality Belgian chocolate) and local ingredients (including cream, honey, and fruit purée). Sourcing local ingredients is easy for Audrey. Every Sunday, she can be found at the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market. There, she sells her truffles as well as a selection of chocolate bars and barks. "It's an amazing place to be to connect to local food," she says. While she has a storefront in Kingston's west end, she also

loves being part of the market every Sunday, where she gets to meet visitors to Kingston as well as see her regulars. While Cocoa Bistro's creations are in great demand leading up to those holidays associated with chocolate – Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Easter – Audrey also has a growing fan base of those who know that any day is a good day for a handmade chocolate treat.

→ **COCOA BISTRO**
840 Development Dr.
Open Tuesday – Saturday

→ **AT THE MEMORIAL CENTRE FARMERS' MARKET**
303 York St.
Sundays