

The Chocolate Connoisseur:

for everyone with a passion for chocolate

by Chloé Doutre-Russell
Piatkus Books Ltd., London, UK, 2005, 216pp, £9.99,
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I am pleased to recommend this very special book written by the biggest imaginable chocolate enthusiast. Aged 29, Chloé Doutre-Russell is already very experienced, with deep knowledge about chocolate, cocoa and the world's chocolate market. It was the right decision for Fortnum and Mason to choose her as its chocolate buyer several years ago from around 2000

contenders. They can be now proud of her. She is a total chocolate fanatic in the right manner and, in fact, she lives with chocolate.

As the title indicates, her book is designated for chocolate connoisseurs. It shows how to become a good chocolate connoisseur and how to taste and distinguish good and bad chocolate. Furthermore, it is a source of basic information and very special techniques derived from Chloé's own experience. After reading all 216pp., you will also become a chocolate lover and it is a real passion to read the whole book for those who are already involved in chocolate. The reader must also taste chocolate whilst reading the book.

Chloé aims to apply her own ideas to all topics within the book and she describes her own feelings. I have read many books about chocolate and cocoa, but this one is exceptional as the author is trying not to copy and repeat common information found in every similar book.

Some parts of the book describing methods of distinguishing bad and good chocolate seem too precise and time-demanding, but remain, in general, the right approaches. Chloé generally concentrates on bars, which was a pleasant surprise for me as they are my favourite products. In recent years I have tasted all the top bars from many producers

around the world and I fully agree with the author's opinion about the quality. I like to taste them and compare the quality, the only difference being that I buy them because of the wrappers, which then become a part of my packaging collection.

Within the ten chapters you will find very good advice on how to become a good chocolate connoisseur. Many methods for choosing good chocolate bars and some

small chocolates are described in great deal. There is no doubt that chocolate is a pleasure and also a passion, but it is a noble passion and recent research indicates that some forms of chocolate are also healthy.

This book should be read by all owners and employees of specialist chocolate shops, in addition to small manufacturers. During the last few years, the number of specialist shops has rapidly increased, as has the number of e-shops offering the best kinds of chocolate bar. The author and I agree that the quality of chocolate will play a much bigger role in the future, with the help of single-origin cocoa plantations controlled by the producers. However, I hope that the estimated price of a 100g bar will not be £50-100, as predicted by the author. In the name of all chocolate lovers, I must congratulate the author for this excellent book and wish her further success in her 'chocolate' career.

Ing. Stanislav Krámský,
Prague, Czech Republic



Chloé Doutre-Russell, the ultimate chocolate connoisseur

Stanislav Krámský, Chocolate and Confectionery Consultant, has more than 110,000 chocolate wrappers in his collection, some which can be seen on his website at www.kramsky-cokoobaly.cz.