



Sweet success

## And all because the lady loves...

...divinely decadent chocolate. Life is sweet for four successful women who have turned their passion into their business

Photographs John Reardon Words Lesley Dohson

### 'I eat it when I wake in the morning'

Olivia Poole-Rossini is the chocolate. Hope for Fortnum & Mason, author of *The Chocolate Connoisseur's Pocket*, 2010, and a former member of the Academy of Chocolate.

Child can't remember her first taste of chocolate. "I can't even remember when I was 10," she says. "My mother melted some and put it on my tongue — she tells me I looked like an angel." Chocolate has captured her ever since. "I grew up in South America, and there was very little chocolate. When I returned to France at the age of 14, I used my pocket money to buy different types and compared them."

"When she was old enough to have her own flat in Paris, she had chocolate evenings and would ask guests to bring along particular bars or make cakes, each using exactly the same recipe for different chocolates, which they'd then compare."

She worked in the chocolate department of L'Oréal, a renowned Parisian cosmetics, where she rose to become chocolate strategist.

"When Fortnum & Mason advertised for a chocolate lover, 20 friends emailed, saying, 'You have to try for this job.'" Now she is surrounded by chocolate of the very finest quality, and she has a mission to educate us on how to get the very best from it.

By chocolate she means bars that contain 80% cocoa solids at least, and made from the finest cocoa beans from the top suppliers. "The best way to eat chocolate is with water and a bit of orange. When you wake in the morning, have two different pieces of chocolate, which you compare with fresh taste buds. This way you can truly grasp the difference."

And her favourite? "My friends are sceptical from a special place, or experimental chocolate, or pieces that people have sent to me. I keep them in my little treasure box for special occasions."

Fortnum & Mason, 020 7734 8040, [www.fortnumandmason.com](http://www.fortnumandmason.com)

Illustration: www.iam.iam.iam.iam