

Neuchatel Swiss Chocolates

Mountainous Switzerland is 3,000 miles away from rural southern Chester county, but candy-maker Albert Lauber has shortened the distance by building a bridge of chocolate between the Alps of Europe and the appetites of America.

For more than a quarter century, Lauber's handmade Neuchatel Chocolates have been crafted at his factory in Oxford, Pennsylvania, and have wound up in "chocolatier" outlets of New York City locations on Wall Street, Park Avenue and at the Plaza Hotel.

"Hardly anyone visits Switzerland and leaves without a box of Swiss chocolates," says Lauber, a fifth-generation creator of confections. "What we've done is bring a part of Switzerland to the United States, and we have never compromised on taste."

He likens Swiss chocolate to champagne—you can get too much, but you can never get enough.

"What we make makes people happy. We don't have grumpy customers."

In fact, champagne truffles are on the long list of chocolate choices, an inventory that includes gourmet chocolate snacks, chocolate-covered pretzels, animal crackers and the popular Swiss Chips. The latter is a chocolate-covered potato chip, a creation that had spur-of-the-moment origins when an employee put a chip on the chocolate conveyor belt. Instantly popular, Swiss Chips confirmed the Lauber philosophy that anything that tastes good will taste even better with chocolate on it.

The combination of quality and craftsmanship is a generation-to-generation relay in the Lauber family. The "Swiss Chocolatier," as he is known around Oxford, studied the art of fine chocolates

in his father's shop and bakery on the side of a mountain in Achseten, Switzerland, near the capital city of Berne.

In the Lauber family, making chocolates was not just Saturday night activity. It was serious business (his training started at 16). The training was not a casual venture (he apprenticed in Berne and Geneva).

When he came to the United States, in 1980, he brought with him a legacy of producing chocolates that were thoroughly Swiss, consistently delicious and completely innovative.

Since everything is handcrafted, the "chocolatier" has no difficulty creating individualized specialties for holidays, special occasions and corporate clients. Past corporate clients include Dansko, Longwood Gardens and Cantor Fitzgerald.

From the crafting of the chocolates to the packaging of the end product, Albert Lauber is committed to custom-care of each individual hunger for chocolate as only the Swiss can make it.

Chef Lauber is proud of his work and has received numerous accolades for his chocolate. But the biggest—and in his view the best—review comes from his customers. "What we make makes people happy. We don't have grumpy customers."

Neuchatel Swiss Chocolates
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*Pictured:
Photography by: Scott Rowan*

