

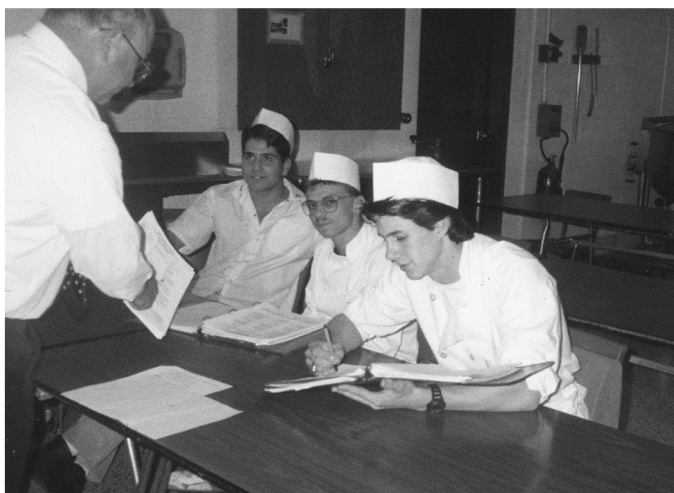


JOHNNY IUZZINI

My Journey into the Wonderful World of Chocolate



As you can see from the time I could hold a utensil of any sort, I was stuffing (and covering) my face with chocolate goodness. Whether it was Mom's pudding or some chocolate cake mixture, my brother and I really didn't care; we fought for those dirty beaters. I have always had a sweet tooth but supposedly I was diagnosed as being hyper-kinetic as a child and therefore my mother limited our intake of sweets and store bought candy. She was the dehydrator queen, long before it was cool. She made all sorts of fruit chips, fruit leathers, beef jerky, etc. Tasty, but not the easiest things to trade with other kids at lunch for a devil dog. Honestly, other than my father's once a year gift of Godiva to my mother, I had no clue what fine chocolates were. I only knew popular candy bars like Kit Kats (still one of my guilty pleasures btw).



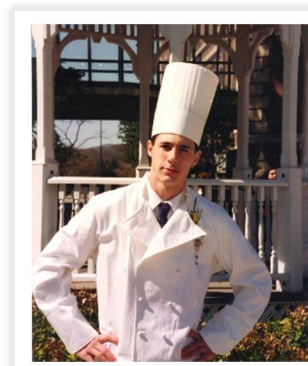
I started young in the kitchen, 15 to be exact. It was good for me, kept me out of trouble, gave me something to focus on and I could only look to myself to improve daily. I finished high school and was accepted at The Culinary Institute of America but I had some time to kill. Luckily, I landed a job at the famed River Café working garde manger. This is where my life changed directions. I would work everyday on the savory side but then out back, in the barn as we called it, a French Pastry Chef named Eric Gouteryron would be making chocolate bridges, butterflies and all these fantastical creations. Every day when I finished my shift I would head out back and I would ask him if I could stay and work with him to learn. At first he would say, "Why bother? You are just a cook" and then he got in the habit of testing me on information he had taught me from the previous day.

If I got it right, I got to work for a few more hours. Technically, I was working for free, but really I was working for



something more valuable - the knowledge. One lesson that I will never forget was crystallization temperature points for dark chocolate. I got it wrong the first day and he wouldn't let me stay. I never got it wrong again. This is really where my love affair with chocolate began.

From this point I attended the Culinary Institute of America where we received crash courses in a lot of material that spanned the world. Again, being exposed to and more importantly learning how to make delicate little chocolate bon bons, petit fours, and mignardises. Now I had the basics and it was time to build upon that.



I had worked for a young talented Pastry Chef during my internship named Lincoln Carson. He taught me a lot, especially speed during service. (He also took me to buy my first street motorcycle too). He had worked for Francois Payard and told me that was whom I needed to work for next. So the day after graduation (and numerous trails and tests), I started at Restaurant Daniel as a pastry cook under the famed and feared Francois Payard. We did a lot of chocolate, not only for garnishes and decors for desserts and cakes but also small show pieces and bon bons. I was one of only two Americans on the team and I got my butt kicked daily, most of the time I didn't even understand them to know why.

During this time Francois had a relationship with a company called DGF and was able to send someone to France to the International Culinary School in Chanteloup Les Vignes. It was here, taking classes with M.O.F. Bruno Pastorelli, that I really saw the potential of chocolate. The way he worked so easily with chocolate and transformed it into whatever he desired was such an eye opening experience.



Four years later at Restaurant Daniel, Chef Payard decided to leave to open his own Pastry Shop, Payard Patisserie, and I went with him as his Sous Chef. This was something I had never experienced before. Until now, my experience was all restaurants, but here I did everything from bread to viennoiserie to cakes, tarts and obviously chocolates. These years were invaluable to me and I absorbed techniques and skills I didn't know existed.



I decided I wanted to travel and wanted to take a break, now 22 years old and going non-stop since 15. I decided to backpack around the world. I spent 9 months going from NY to Hong Kong to Australia to Thailand to Russia, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, England and finally back to NYC. All the while doing "stages" or unpaid internships wherever they would let me in the door, including the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo and Ladurée in Paris under Pastry Chef icon Pierre Hermé.

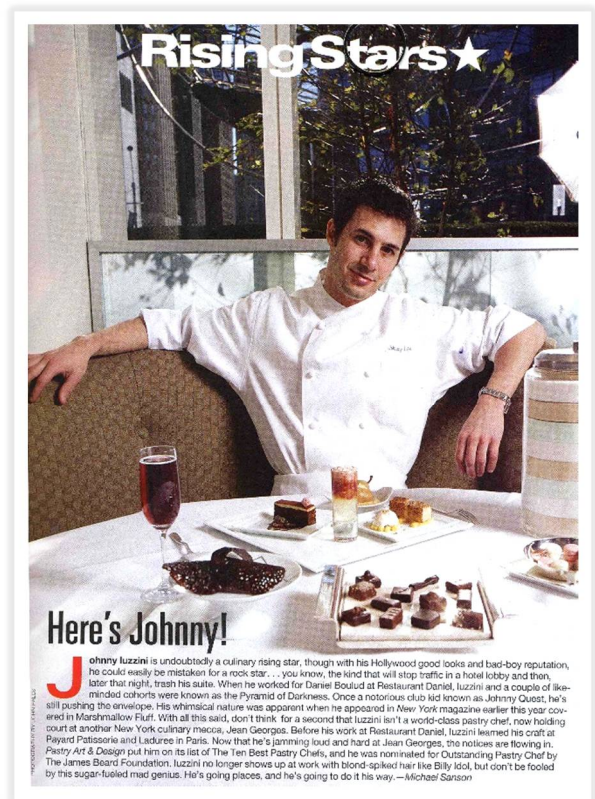
Once back in the US, I rejoined Daniel to reopen the new Restaurant Daniel under German born Pastry Chef Thomas Haas. Thomas taught me so much about refinement of chocolate, how to not only balance and layer delicate flavors but also the importance of textures. We built a small chocolate room from a former storage closet in the basement level of the restaurant and pumped out thousands of enrobed chocolates, caramels and nougats weekly that we added to our already plentiful petit four program. We had at least 12 varieties on hand so there was always something for everyone.

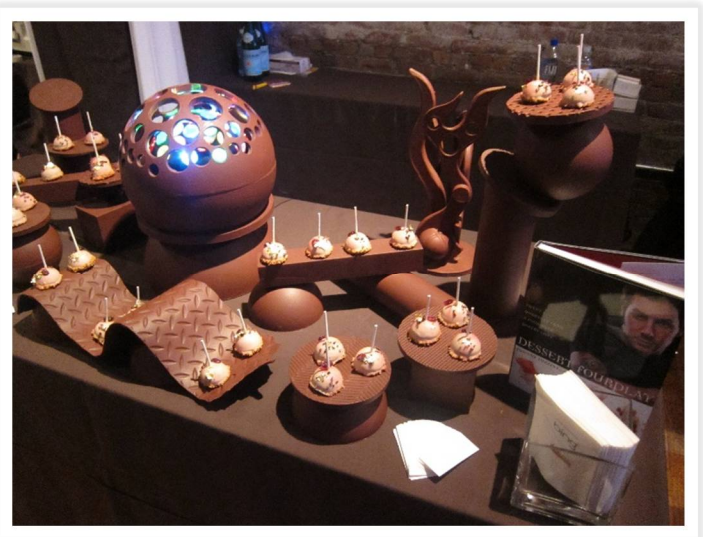




I also got a chance during this time to take a class with two more chocolate Masters, Chef Norman Love and M.O.F. Chef Olivier Bajard. We focused on new chocolate techniques, the science of confections and the art of presentation.

After 8 years and earning the title of Executive Pastry Chef at the then 4-star NY Times and 3-star Michelin Daniel, it was time for me to go and spread my wings. I had been a fan of Jean George Vongerichten for some time and when word got out that I was leaving Daniel I was happy to hear from his team. We met and spoke for a couple hours and at the end of the meeting, shook hands and I was his new Pastry Chef. Following suit at what we had just accomplished at Daniel I was eager to build a massive chocolate program at Jean Georges. At first he was reluctant and I had to prove my abilities and myself. After winning a bunch of awards for our dessert program and bringing a spotlight to an already top restaurant I got him to agree to allow me to elaborate on our petit fours. I made him a deal- if he bought me the tempering/enrobing machine I would build the room and take care of the rest. That's exactly what happened. I would finish service at night and then put on my work clothes and attach yet another storage room to be repurposed into my new chocolate lab. I tiled and laid the plastic sheeting on the walls, insulated the ceiling, and helped install the new HVAC and off we went. We pumped out an average of 14,000 individual chocolates monthly that were given to our guests, as well as a 2 piece chocolate box given to guests as they left the restaurant. We definitely raised the bar and no one was doing this in NYC at the time. It was freaking awesome.





We also did lots of events and charities where we could have some fun and build crazy chocolate showpieces, sometimes even adding strobes and lava lamps. Another fun annual project was building unique New Year's Eve showpieces for every single table to display all our sweet selections and give the guests something truly special they couldn't find elsewhere.

After a decade as Jean Georges' Executive Pastry Chef it again was time for me to go and re-challenge myself. I put out my second book, Sugar Rush, did consulting, events, lots of TV but primarily was focused on learning more and more about chocolate. I built a small chocolate factory in my home loft/laboratory in Brooklyn and started experimenting making small batches of bean to bar chocolate. To be honest, I didn't make good chocolate for a while; most of it got used for baking other things. I invested in all this small equipment, some even DIY- repurposing hair dryers, vacuum cleaners, kitchen aid mixers and champion juicers to mimic grinders, ball mills, winnowers, etc. It was wild and I was getting exactly what I wanted. I realized real fast that I was back on the bottom of the ladder looking up and had so very much to learn about this magical ingredient cacao. I started researching deeper and making trips to equipment manufacturers in Europe. This is when I first spent some time with Packint Chocolate Equipment and the Datei Family.

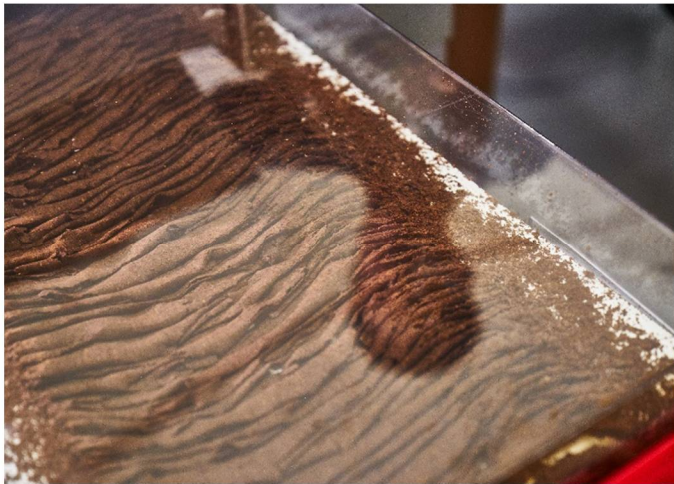


As a Chef who has always had a lot of equipment at my disposal and relied heavily on it to create the desserts and chocolates over the years you learn that not only do you have to have great equipment but the service of those machines are just as vital. Machines break- It's just their nature. Packint/PKT America gave me an opportunity to work with their equipment in Italy and also now in Long Island, New York where I currently make my chocolate from the raw fermented dry bean all the way through to the bars you see in the store today. My goal still and always has been to build my own factory in The Catskill Mountains/ Hudson Valley where I come from. It is important for me to go back to where I came from and help create jobs, opportunity, generate buzz and contribute to help an area that has been plagued with unemployment and poverty for decades since all



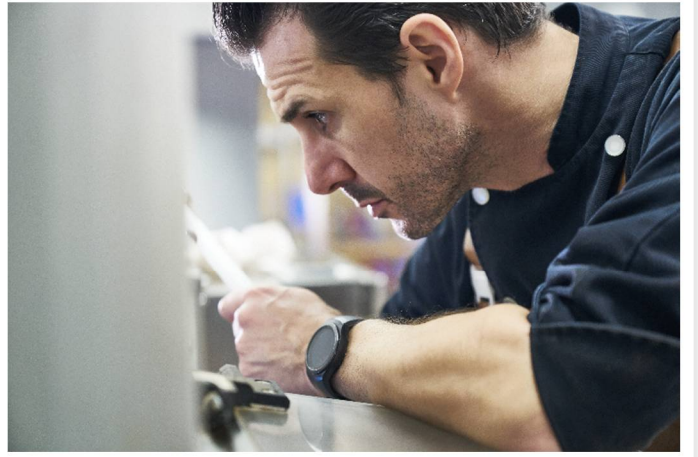
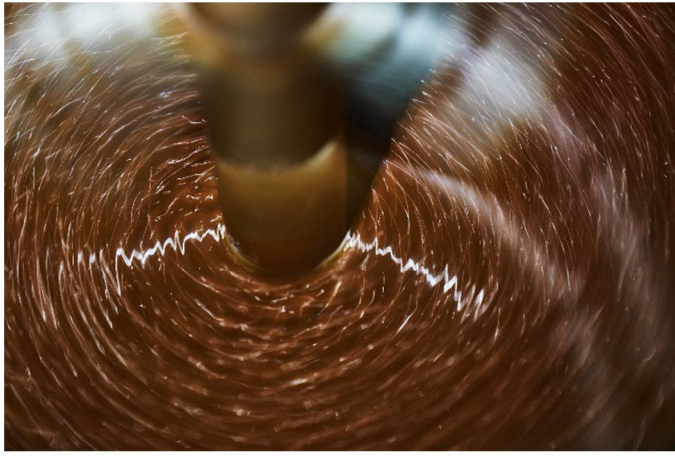
the grand hotels of yester year and many industries have packed it up and/or moved away. Once I find the right investors/partners that truly share that same vision as well as similar goals with as much passion and dedication as I have then hopefully one day it will happen. Until then I will strive for greatness where I am.





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I pretty much work alone at this point from sorting the beans to roasting, winnowing, pre-refining, refining, conching, molding and then packaging and shipping. It was extremely important to me to truly do it alone and understand how each and every step is crucial to developing the final product and to understand what is required of each and every position as I start to look to add individuals to my team. This is a temporary situation and I am extremely grateful to Lorenzo and the Datei/Packint Family for this opportunity to chase and launch my dream. I am honored to be an ambassador of their amazing equipment.

Moving forward, please keep in mind I will be constantly striving and looking to make my products better and better with every batch as well as increase my sweet offerings. I will be releasing in small quantities as I figure out logistics and best practices for packaging and shipping to get you the chocolate in the best possible condition during these upcoming warmer months. The best way to stay up to date is to join the e-mail list on the site, [here](#). This will be where I will always make my first announcements and offer limited edition products. You can always follow me on social media @Johnnyluzzini across all platforms for news and events.

I thank you all in advance for your ongoing patience and most of all, your support. I am excited to share my chocolate with you.

The store is now OPEN!!!!

Sincerely, Your Chocolate Covered Pal,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Luzzini". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a cursive font.

Johnny luzzini

