

A chocolatier's sweet mix

Cocoa, cloves, tea and ... absinthe?

BY KRIS CORONADO

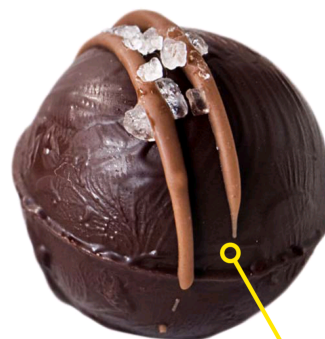
Jane Morris was working at an online discount brokerage firm in 2005 when she got strange news: Her body was intolerant to chocolate. Rather than be spooked by the diagnosis, she and her allergist came up with a solution. "I was like, 'Well, I'm just going to have a little bit every day,'" recalls the 34-year-old. "He said, 'Well, if you do, you should eat really, really nice chocolate, because you won't want as much, and it'll be more satisfying for you.'"



So Morris did just that. It wasn't long before the avid baker began making her own chocolates for co-workers and friends. By 2007, she was no longer intolerant and was selling confections

wholesale under the name J. Chocolatier. In 2008, she made chocolate a full-time gig and opened her Georgetown shop (1039 33rd St. NW, 202-333-4111, jchocolatier.com) the next year. Today, she offers a rotating mix of six to nine types of sweets (a single bonbon costs about \$2.25).

Here, Morris gives us a glimpse inside her labor of love.



Morris debuted 2-to-3-ounce **lavender bars** (\$8.50) in October. Morris says she tried dried lavender from various vendors before settling on Dean & DeLuca's. "It has to be just right, because if it tastes grassy, it tastes like soap," she says.



Most of Morris's chocolates are made in batches of 240; that number is doubled for her popular **Fleur de Sel Caramels**. "We average about 2,000 pieces per week," she says. "During the holidays, we may have to make six or seven thousand pieces."

Morris uses multiple types of couverture (high-quality chocolate), such as these dark chocolate **chips from Ghana**, which are used to coat truffles. "We order them in chips instead of blocks because it melts evenly," she says.

Morris uses **Caramelia** by Valrhona to make pink salt chocolate bars. The brand's main ingredient is dairy-based caramel made from skim milk and butter. Other caramel-flavored chocolates are made with caramelized sugar.

Crushed **cocoa nibs** top Morris's warm clove-flavored truffles. Morris says she re-created an old Spanish drink recipe in solid form with ingredients such as cloves, cinnamon, ancho chile and vanilla.

A little absinthe goes a long way: For a batch of 240 **absinthe verte truffles**, Morris uses just three ounces of Leopold Brothers Absinthe Verte. "That is plenty," she says; otherwise, the flavor would be overpowering.



For **Earl Grey truffles**, she uses Great Falls Grey, blended by Great Falls Tea Garden with ingredients such as blue cornflower, blueberry and vanilla. Each truffle is lightly dusted with 24-karat pulverized gold; "a little vial will last me two years," Morris says.

