



The sweet taste of innovation



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Chocolate is currently enjoying a revival. In Switzerland as in other countries, there are artisans working by hand to turn cocoa beans into superb chocolate.

Terroir, variety, origin ... these are terms we tend to associate with wine, but now they are being applied to chocolate too. This is because chocolate tastes completely different depending on where it comes from and how it is made. Sometimes it has a spicier flavour; sometimes the cocoa is dominated by fruity tones.

New artisans are seeking to introduce customers to the diversity of chocolate. In most cases, they source their cocoa directly from the growers, or at least know which producers the chocolate comes from. They process the cocoa beans in small factories to create the finished chocolate in a process known as 'bean to bar'. It's a global trend which is also gaining in popularity in the country most associated with chocolate. Most artisan chocolatiers avoid the additives typically used in the industry, such as soya lecithin, choosing instead to work only with cocoa beans, sugar, and possibly a little cocoa butter.



One new name in this area is La Flor (www.laflor.ch) in Zurich. This small company in the Binz quarter of the city produced its first batches of chocolate in November. There are also longer-established names in Switzerland, such as Garçoa (www.garcoa.ch), Naturkostbar (www.naturkostbar.ch), Fabian Rehmann (www.fabianrehmann.ch) and Fabian Rimann (www.fabianrimann.com), who carry out every stage of the process from bean to bar under one roof.

When it comes to chocolate, it's always well worth trying out new varieties – and of course ensuring that producers in the countries of origin are paid fair prices.