

OVERALL SUMMARY

The range of products is so large by now that it is almost impossible to maintain an overview. The quality level has increased and the many new Bean-to-Bar manufacturers enormously stimulate the chocolate industry. It is particularly pleasing that this trend, resp. this revolution is a world-wide phenomenon and not just regional or one limited to a few countries. Even if there are a few new Bean-to-Bar manufacturers which the market doesn't need, in the end, the market will weed out the superfluous companies and copycats by itself.

For eight months, cocoa and chocolate constituted the center of my life even beyond the usual measure. During this time I had chocolate products permanently at home and almost daily – often several times a day – our postman or one the many parcel services delivered new products. During this time I practically travelled once around the world to do research and procure products.

Many people supported me with my project. I would like to highlight Mark Christian from C-Spot© (www.c-spot.com). He accepted dozens of consignments for me in New York, which I picked up mid-November in exchange for 40 kg chocolate products which I had collected for him in Europe. In addition, I spent many hours discussing all sorts of subjects around cocoa and chocolate with him. This fruited in many ideas and also information which I had not been aware of at that stage.

Of course, the book would have justified many other trips but writing a book consists primarily of the writing itself and in my case also of tastings. Research is necessary, should however, be concluded by and large when writing. Nonetheless, hundreds of e-mails and innumerable telephone calls were necessary for the research work – and without the Internet this book would have been close to impossible. Unfortunately, I have to mention here that many companies have a miserable communication. Even today I am still waiting for answers from dozens of companies.

All told, I bought far more than 200 kilograms of chocolate products, or received it as samples, in

the period between August 2014 and March 2015. Together with the products I had tasted for my first book, I tried 6,000 products from 550 manufacturers in 70 countries. Of these 4,000 products have been considered in the book. I have not tasted all of the products presented in the book again. Many ratings date from my tastings for the first book but also from tastings which I conducted after publishing of the first book and before starting to write this book. On average, I tasted 10 products per day. The tastings were split into two or three per day: one each in the morning, afternoon and occasionally in the evenings. This means that I ate about 150 grams of chocolate per day, a feat which would hardly be possible for anyone under normal circumstances. By virtue of my more than twenty years' experience, this was a continuation of my daily work for me, as I had conducted it before as co-owner of the Confiserie Coppeneur. At that time this had been more the rule to taste so many chocolate products in a single day. During this period of about seven months, I added about 1,000 kilocalories daily to my normal nutrition. My scales reacted correspondingly, as I had also almost stopped my sporting activities during this time. I promptly paid the penalty for this in the form of four kilograms extra hip, leg and facial fat...

My personal summary...

In the following I would like to address the different keywords and subjects in a casual order.

Industrially manufactured mass products from major branded companies

Due to the enormous demand, I have decided to test not only brands suitable for the specialized trade in the new issue but also many supermarket and discount brands. Looked at it in retrospect, this makes sense because one can represent the differences much better.

In the rarest of cases could a product awaken my interest. The greater majority of these products is simply inedible and I consider the "consumption" of these products as bodily

injury. Nearly all of them process far too much sugar, fat and additives, including very often artificial flavorings.

Chocolates and Nougat:

Among chocolates and nougat one will also always find products which are edible. These are, however, rare in the retail food and discount trade.

Surprisingly, the discounters, at least when it comes to the ingredients list, offer "clean" products which are also partially edible. However, what the brand manufacturers such as "Alpia", "Milka", "Cadbury", "Hershey's" or "Sarotti" think when selling such abysmal products, is incomprehensible for me. Yet, the behavior of the consumers is also frightening. That the consumer buys this type of product by the millions is not only surprising but it also frightens me. That many people then also say that they like it leaves me with a feeling of incredulousness and helplessness.

Confectionery and filled Bars:

Actually each written word about confectionery from industrial manufacturers is superfluous. Basically, all confectionery boxes offered in the retail food trade and discount shops, especially those which contain butter or cream ganache and marzipan as filling, are inedible. As soon as a confectionery box exceeds a shelf life of six months, it may be thrown in the rubbish bin straight away instead of subjecting one's body to this refuse. There may always be exceptions but generally speaking, I would not touch such products.

Ethics, Fair Trade and Sustainability

Conspicuous with the many new Bean-to-Bar manufacturers are the repeatedly emphasized (advertising) statements that one acts ethically correct, fair and sustainably. What is surprising about this is that almost none of them are certified and often, apart from empty phrases, there is no proof or evidence that it is correct what they say and write. I am not a fan of certifications but with some companies I miss the credibility. Trust needs to be earned and when a company doesn't even provide a correct



Legal Notice on its Internet site and the founders and owners are anonymous, that is everything but confidence inspiring.

Another phenomenon is that time and again, the industry is pilloried with regard to child labor and slavery. Far be it from me to come to the defense of the industry or any particular company. I also do not wish to enter into this subject further at this point, except that I clearly distance myself from tolerating, let alone promoting child or slave labor.

What makes me thoughtful, however, is that the always pilloried suppliers such as Cargill or Barry Callebaut are in the focus but never their customers. Innumerable hotels, restaurants, caterers, confectioners and bakers buy couverture and chocolate from suppliers, knowing full well the accusations with which the industry is confronted on a daily basis. All these customers have many alternatives and the option of buying somewhere else but don't do this for economic reasons. Why are these processors never mentioned or, like the industry, pilloried?

Raw Chocolate and Superfood

Often sensationalism and not always understandable or controllable statements. This ranks first for me for these two new product categories. Only few products really appealed to me. If I wish to live a healthy life, I will not eat unhealthy food such as fast food, will not smoke, won't buy meat from factory farming and will buy selected products, such as eggs, in organic

quality. Chocolate is supposed to be and also stay a luxury food for me. Fundamentally, I can take pleasure in experimenting with low-processed cocoa beans. But please spare us the statements, which have not really been proven scientifically, that such products are supposedly so much healthier than "normal" chocolate products.

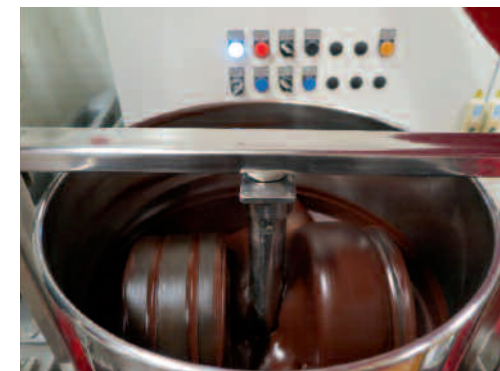
What is being offered in the meantime is partially hair-raising. The traceability of the origin of the raw materials is often scanty. Many producers are too close-lipped and raise skepticism.

Heathy and nutritious raw materials in superfood products could be a sensible supplement, but basically, they also need to taste good. But please, spare us the act of trying to sell these products as health products.

The eternal question:

Bean-to-Bar manufacturer or not...

My empathy for the suggestion of being a Bean-to-Bar manufacture is exhausted. Today, I consider this as consumer deception and distortion of competition. Why doesn't a company stand behind what it is? I do not believe that it would sell one product less if it would change its marketing strategy and represent itself as professional company which either



cooperates closely with a Bean-to-Bar manufacturer, has its own chocolate produced according to a desired recipe or purchases standard chocolate and flavors this superbly. Conspicuously many manufacturers refuse a look behind the scenes. For certain also because one wouldn't have seen any machines for manufacturing chocolate there. To be sure, there is also the one or other who does not wish to show the type and manner of his production. I find that sad and incomprehensible, because all of us are only human after all and I do not believe that a single one of them employs a technique unknown in the industry. It certainly doesn't contribute to inspiring confidence.

The secret about the purchase of the raw materials

Many manufacturers make a secret of where they purchase their raw materials. With some raw materials I can understand this, after all, one doesn't wish to disclose one's good sources. For me, however, it is totally incomprehensible why still so many confectioners (these are the colleagues who do not produce their chocolate themselves) do not disclose where they purchase their chocolate or couverture. That is so ridiculous that I have lost all interest in the company by that stage. There can't be a secret tip here as each competitor knows the possible source of supply for chocolate and couverture for processing. And when it is a first-class chocolate, there is a huge potential for marketing.

A confectioner who confesses to using a chocolate from a very good manufacturer principally enjoys much greater confidence with



me. In reverse, with a manufacturer who will absolutely not disclose his source of purchase, one must imply that he does not wish to confess to the quality he uses. Perhaps it's also embarrassing for him

There are, however, also companies that process different qualities. The alarm bells start ringing in my head and caution is due because this practice may indicate that the company wants to distinguish itself with the purchase of small quantities of good raw materials and uses the kudos for its other products as well.

Natural and artificial ingredients

One of my researches for the first issue led me to a specialty chocolate shop in Bonn, accompanied by an acquaintance. There was no other customer in the shop, so that the assistant working there all by herself had a detailed conversation with us. That her favorite chocolate was a Milka, did surprise us somewhat – not to say shocked us. After all, she stood in the midst of such fine chocolates as Domori, Zotter and Michel Cluizel. After I had pointed out to her that some of the offered products contained vanillin, which isn't natural, she promptly answered with: "So what?"



It really does frustrate somewhat that consumers don't care when apparently high-quality products contain artificial ingredients. So many manufacturers make a big effort to manufacture products on a natural basis. The one or other will probably give some thought to this if he gets such feedback for his work and toil....

Of course there are also consumers who pay attention to natural raw materials, but they are obviously in the minority.

Flavorings

It is not reprehensible on principle, when manufacturers use natural flavorings. Here, however, I do differentiate between a natural flavoring which comes from the eponymous fruit and a flavoring which comes from other (natural) sources. Nevertheless, I personally reject flavorings. For me, it is not a pleasure to eat a product which tastes of a fruit but doesn't have any fruit character. If a product contains fruits (pulp, concentrate, freeze-dried, dried, etc.) and flavorings to support the actual flavor, such a product cannot rouse my attention. Because the use of flavor-flat raw materials actually shows me the restricted skills of the manufacturer and his willingness to compromise during production of the article. There may be cases where a product, even with the very best, fresh raw materials, simply doesn't work in and with chocolate. Then the manufacturer must own up to this and steer clear of it. I am aware that my attitude is quite extreme but I have made a clear decision for myself on this point.

Organic quality and sustainability

I am not a strict organic fanatic, especially not with cocoa. There is just too much good cocoa available which happens to be "clean" but isn't certified. Principally I would prefer a certified one if I had the choice. What bothers me is that some manufacturers, especially the major global players, use organic products to polish up their image or also to get a slice of the cake of the organic market. The small, lone fighters were allowed to make organic products socially acceptable for decades, were visionary, yes in part even fanatic and have achieved acceptance of organic products among the population with their commitment and often years of personal dedication. Hardly a major player contributed to this performance. With their omnipresent market power they now harvest the fruits of labor by jumping on the band-wagon and offering organic products, in part even at a discount price.

Specialist retailers and other sources of supply

Specialist chocolate retailers don't live an easy life. It is incredibly difficult to manage such a shop, as there is the infamous summer slump from about May to the end of September. Unfortunately, I have also experienced time and again incompetent personnel, bad warehousing and a questionable range in the specialist trade. From a specialist dealer I expect not only that he offers better qualities than the supermarket, but also that he pays attention to the ingredients of his products. For example, a product with artificial flavorings should not be found in the specialist trade. Confectionery should definitely be bought fresh in a specialist shop. Not once could a confectionery sales package from the supermarket or department store convince. Indeed, many department stores claim the status of a specialist retailer for themselves, but I do not happen to share this opinion at all. Not one confectionery department in any of the



department stores that I visited, had the correct temperature, competent personnel was not to be found. A single praiseworthy exception is the KaDeWe in Berlin, yet even there, the range caused yawning boredom in me.

Only separate sales islands with fresh food counters and service personnel in selected department store branches can do justice to the level of a specialty shop. But these are often also managed by the manufacturers themselves. Yet even in the specialist trade, one occasionally meets untrained temps.

Therefore my recommendation: Go to the expert retailers which can also give you advice. I have

had only positive experiences with orders via the Internet. This proves that ordering from expert retailers with own shops works really well.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all readers for their interest in my book and my opinions. I hope I was able to convey a lot of information, provide ideas for the next purchase and made reading it a pleasure. I would be happy to receive your suggestions, questions, criticisms or also praise. You can contact me at the following e-mail address:

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Your Chocolate Tester
Georg Bernardini