

Making chocolate *the Soma* *way*

with David Castellan
and Cynthia Leung



1

Beans

Soma works with top-grade “flavour beans,” which arrive at the factory plucked from their thick pods, fermented and dried in the sun.





2

Quality control

Castellan often uses a guillotine to inspect cocoa samples for proper fermentation, and for insect damage.



3

Sorting & cleaning

A vibrating table is used to carefully inspect for flotsam, which can include things like cigarette butts and intact lizard skulls.



4

Roasting

Soma's German-built roaster was designed in the 1890s, but thanks to a series of sensors, Castellan tracks each batch's time and temperature data.



5

Winnowing

Soma's winnower, salvaged from a Lindt factory in Italy, cracks and de-shells the beans, and sorts them by size.



6

Grinding

Freshly ground cocoa beans, called cocoa liquor, taste sludgy, bitter and acidic, with an often puckery, astringent texture.



7

Cocoa liquor

The fats in cocoa are remarkably shelf-stable; if need be, the liquor can sit here for more than a year.



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8

Milling

The ball mill turns coarse cocoa liquor, cane sugar and cocoa butter silky smooth by churning them through hundreds of steel ball bearings.



9

Conching

By heating and aerating freshly-made chocolate, the conche allows acids and off-flavours to dissipate.



10

Aging

Castellan and Leung age their chocolate for anywhere from a few weeks to a few years. Most in the industry agree it improves dark chocolate's flavour.



11

Tempering

Careful tempering aligns the fats in chocolate, giving bars a glossy, unblemished surface and noticeable snap when you bite in.



12

Barring

Perfectly tempered chocolate is squirted into custom bar moulds that Leung designs, then vibrated to remove air bubbles and quickly cooled.



