



Double dipping at Bernard C.

Chocolates bring smiles

This Valentine's Day, if you'd like to give your sweetheart a bit of paradise, then a gift from Bernard C. Chocolates might do the trick.

"We love giving people a new chocolate to try, because of the way they react," said Cathy Kapatos, owner of Bernard C. Chocolates in Troy and Southfield. "You wouldn't believe all of the moans (of delight) we get and the things people say. Some people say it's better than their spouse or better than sex. We were thinking about doing a radio commercial, just featuring all of the different moans and sounds people make when they taste our chocolate for the first time."

Want sets Bernard C. apart from other fine chocolates?

For starters, the company uses only the freshest ingredients and no artificial additives in its products, in order to extend their shelf life and for the taste, Kapatos said. The cream centers are made with whipping cream, not butter cream, which makes them lighter and silkier than most, and the caramel and toffee centers aren't hard or chewy. They're more on the liquid side.

Another Bernard C. Chocolates feature is its wide selection. Forty-seven different center fillings are available, and an additional 20 fillings are seasonal.

For Valentine's Day, there are three special fillings: Marion berry, which is kind of like a blackberry; creme praline; and mocha raspberry.

In the tradition of fine European confectioners, a lot of attention is given to how the chocolates are presented. Gift wrapping is available upon request, and the wrapping changes every two weeks to reflect the changing seasons and holidays.

Some prices include: \$1.10 for a Valentine's Day chocolate, heart-shaped sucker; \$7.50 for a small bag filled with truffles or heart-shaped chocolates; \$12 to \$14 for a small to medium box of chocolate; \$40 for a 10-ounce box of assorted chocolates (Henry said that was the most popular size for Christmas and that it contains about 54 pieces); and \$75 for a box of 100 chocolates.

Bernard C. Chocolates are the creation of award-winning confectioner Bernard Callebaut, whose family has been in the chocolate business for four generations. His family owned the Callebaut Chocolate Factory in Wize, Belgium, from 1911 until 1980, when it was sold to another company.

In 1992, he moved to Canada and opened a chocolate factory in Calgary. Several years ago, he expanded the factory and its production capacity, which enabled him to begin shipping products to the United States.

Kapatos said she got involved with the company through friends. Lamont Tolley and his wife, Judy Strite, who live in Calgary. They fell in love with the chocolate years ago, and whenever they'd visit Kapatos and her husband, they'd bring along a gift box of it.

When Tolley found out about the factory's expansion, he urged Kapatos to open a Bernard C. store with him in Michigan. For two years, she put him off. But, in August 1996, on a visit to Calgary, she decided to call the company and inquire about store opportunities, just to get her friends off her back.

Kapatos and Tolley now own two Bernard C. stores: Somerset Collection North in Troy, (248) 643-8808, and Applegate Square, 29081 Northwest in Southfield, (248) 356-2100.

When asked who her major competitors were, she mentioned Godiva and Sydney Bagg, but she had nothing bad to say about them.

"We're 'choco-holics.' We like everyone's chocolate," she said. "But ours is special and we think it's the best and our customers seem to agree."

Other great chocolate finds include confections at Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory; Nordstrom's Habits truffles; Jacobson's Joseph Schmidt chocolates; and Hudson's Prunco chocolates.

Shoppers bid sad farewell to Winkelman's



These are the final days for Detroit retailing legend, Winkelman's, though many of the stores are already closed. Longtime customers have shopped their favorite hunting ground recently, to say goodbye, and pick up a final bargain... or two.

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
Editor

Sharon Simo of West Bloomfield browsed through the clothing racks at Winkelman's Oakland Mall store Wednesday afternoon, but the pickings were slim.

In the midst of a two-week-old liquidation sale, the prices were right (60 percent off) but the choices were few. "I feel so bad that Winkelman's won't be around anymore," she said. "I have such strong ties to the company. Winkelman's has been a tradition in my life since I was a kid. My mom took me shopping here, my husband's

company did the building engineering for Winkelman's stores, and when I had a community TV show, Winkelman's lent me the clothes I wore on the air."

Jayne DiPonio of Troy shared her thoughts about the 70-year-old Detroit-retailer closing its remaining 49 stores in Michigan and Ohio.

"Through the years, Winkelman's was my number one choice for coats, party dresses and shoes," she sighed. "I spent some of the most joyful moments of my life in the bargain I bought at Winkelman's! Now what am I going to do? I'll probably take my business to Hudson's."

Sherry Triest of Livonia bemoaned the closing of the store Laurel Park Place, while other shoppers in the check-out line nodded their heads in agreement.

"It's so sad! Winkelman's was always full of wonderful merchandise. Nearly, every Saturday afternoon, I spent a little of my paycheck here. Winkelman's always had clothing in a rainbow of colors and lots of sizes, priced so a working woman could afford them. They will be missed!"

An employee who declined to have her name in print, said she and her co-workers were scrambling to put resumes in the hands of surrounding mall stores.

They (Petrie retail officials, current owners of the Winkelman's stores) say we'll have our jobs until the end of March, but many of the stores have already liquidated and are closed, like the one at Farmington and Seven Mile.

Cindy Ciura, corporate marketing director for Schostak & Co., (with three Winkelman stores leaving Schostak centers at Laurel Park Place, Wonderland Mall and Macomb Mall) said the empty store space is already under discussion.

"We've been pro-active on finding a replacement tenant for Winkelman's," she said. "It's no secret that they've been having difficulties for the past few years. Those stores won't remain dark for long."

The customer service line for the Petrie Co. is (888) 701-8182.

In related news: The Limited Inc. of Columbus, Ohio announced it would close all its Cacique lingerie stores this year, but would add 265 stores to the more profitable Victoria's Secret and Bath & Body Works divisions.

JC Penney announced last week that it will close 75 non-performing stores across the country. None are in Michigan.

Winkelman recalls his stores in their heyday

The closing of the women's fashion stores founded by his father and uncle back in February 1928, at Port and Junction in Detroit, is a "sad" time for Stanley Winkelman, 75, of Bloomfield Hills.

In a phone interview from Arizona where he is vacationing, he said mismanagement and the drive for high profits contributed to the failure of Winkelman's after it was acquired by the Petrie Co. of Secaucus, N.J., in 1984.

"It's his heyday (the early '80s) Winkelman's did \$100 million in sales from 100 stores," he said. "Since we went public in 1959, we never lost money. We never missed paying a dividend. But we weren't greedy. We invested in people and in our stores."

"I don't think the new management was in tune with what was going on. They couldn't manage it."

Winkelman recalled with fondness, the annual spring coat event where hundreds of styles at special prices were brought in to the delight of customers and store managers who enjoyed brisk, swift sales.

Of late, the merchandise quality had been downgraded and a sameness crept into the inventory mix.

A glimmer of hope for the chain, in bankruptcy protection since 1995, came on Dec. 24 when Crowley's announced plans to buy Winkelman's. However, by January, Crowley's board of directors called off the deal, "probably thought it was too much of a risk," said Winkelman.

He said the decision to close the chain was a business trade off by shareholders in search of a tax-free transaction.

After the closing announcement, Winkelman's customers rushed to the stores for bargains, refunds, and the last chance to redeem gift certificates. Slated to remain open through March, most locations had liquidated their inventory by the first week in February. Many are already gone.

"Winkelman's was a family legacy, but it was also a Detroit tradition," Winkelman stated. "It was viable to the end. It had longevity. But, now it's a memory like other fine retailers, B. Siegel's, Himmelfarb's and Alberts."

Winkelman said merchants moving into the 21st century will retail through high technology, and the ways of the past will simply disappear.

— Susan DeMaggio



Stanley Winkelman

Valentine Contest has a winner!



Two weeks ago, we asked readers to come up with an ending for the opening lines from the traditional love poem, *Roses are red...*

The winner was Diane Hackman of Garden City. She wins a makeover for two at the trendy Bellissima Salon in West Bloomfield, followed by a candlelight dinner for two at the upscale Ruth's Chris Steak House in Troy. Here's her winning poem:

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
When you kiss me,
My brain goes wahoo!

The following poems deserve an honorable mention:

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
In a world full of peanuts,
You're a cashew!
— Donna Spellman, Redford

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
Together 32 years,
and it still feels brand new!
— Wilma Rush, Farmington

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
If we get take-out,
there's no dishes to do!
— Brenda Moharek, Walled Lake

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
I think that your earring,
just fell in my shoe!
— The Rhineharts, Plymouth
Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
Your such a romantic
Don Juan took lessons from you!
— Sue Baker, Westland

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
I'll be your wallpaper,
if you be my glue!
— Tina Rothwell, Rochester Hills

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
I treasure the thought
of forever with you!
— Arnold Jahne, West Bloomfield

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
Your name is my mantra,
I'm a true guru.
— Chris Miller, Livonia

Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
I love you more than
McDonald's drive-thru!
— Julie Montgomery, Camden

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

(248) 855-8877.

FRIDAY, FEB 13

Fall fashion show

See the David Brooks collection for fall at Kathryn Scott, with a trunk show from noon to 4 p.m. Brooks manufactures classic, updated sportswear in sizes 4-16, and petites sizes 2-14.

148 Pierce, Birmingham.

(248) 442-3064.

Bridal fashion show

Preview trends in gown styles for all members of the bridal party, plus check out the new lace, trims, fabrics and headpieces, 7 p.m. at Haberman's Fabrics. Dressmaker/designer referrals. The event is free, but reservations are required.

117 West Fourth, Royal Oak.

(248) 541-0010.

Concert/Slideshow

Hear the Larados perform at 6 and 8 p.m. on stage near Crowley's. They'll provide a high-powered rendition of '50s-'60s sound and lots of rock 'n' roll Doo Wop. Shoppers can register to win a basket of 10 Beanie Babies and an Annabelle plush toy.

Livonia Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt.

(248) 476-1160.

Home show

Marketers present a showcase of exhibits to improve your home, garden and quality of life through Feb. 15, during regular mall hours.

Tel-Twelve Mall, 12 Mile/Southfield.

(248) 353-4111.

VALENTINE'S DAY/SATURDAY, FEB. 14

Madeline kids event

Hudson's welcomes Parisian story heroine Madeline for Valentine activities that are free, noon to 3 p.m. in the children's department.

Somerset Collection North.

Big Beaver/Coolidge, Troy.

(248) 816-4999.

Family Fun central

The Big Comfy Couch characters, Molly and Lunette from the PBS series, perform at 4 and 6 p.m. in the Fountain Court. Free. Photo op follows.

Fairlane Town Center.

Michigan/Southfield Fwy. Dearborn.

(313) 593-1370.

Adopt a kitten

The Backdoor Friends cat shop has adoptable cats and kittens available 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. They sell cat-themed gifts and jewelry, clothing and cat toys. Cat beanie babies, too.

Muirwood Square Grand River/Drake.

Farmington Hills.

(248) 442-0840.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 405 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48409; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

SUNDAY, FEB. 8

Puppet show

Performed daily at 7 p.m. Saturdays 11, 1 and 3 p.m. Sunday at 1 and 3 p.m.

Meadow Brook Village Mall.

Adams/Walton, Rochester Hills.

(248) 376-9451.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11

Art of massage workshop

Learn what you can do to alleviate tension and headaches at the Naturally shop from 6:45 to 9 p.m. Presented by Robyn Veros, CMT, of Just Relax. Complimentary.

650 Forest Ave. Downtown Plymouth

(734) 463-9491.

THURSDAY, FEB. 12

Trunk show set

View the entire Hino & Malee spring collection through Feb. 14 at Rox & Sherm. Representative Elaine Louie will assist shoppers with selections of jackets, pants, vests, skirts and accessories from 10 a.m. until closing.

Bloomfield Plaza, Maple/Telegraph.