



# Guittard

## AMERICA'S FIRST FAMILY OF CHOCOLATE

THIS FAMILY-OWNED CHOCOLATE COMPANY IN CALIFORNIA HAS BEEN QUIETLY MAKING SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE CHOCOLATE—FROM BEAN TO BAR—FOR 150 YEARS. THEIR OBSESSION WITH FLAVOR HAS MADE THEM LEADERS IN A GLOBAL EFFORT TO ELEVATE CHOCOLATE—AND THE LIVES OF COCOA FARMERS.

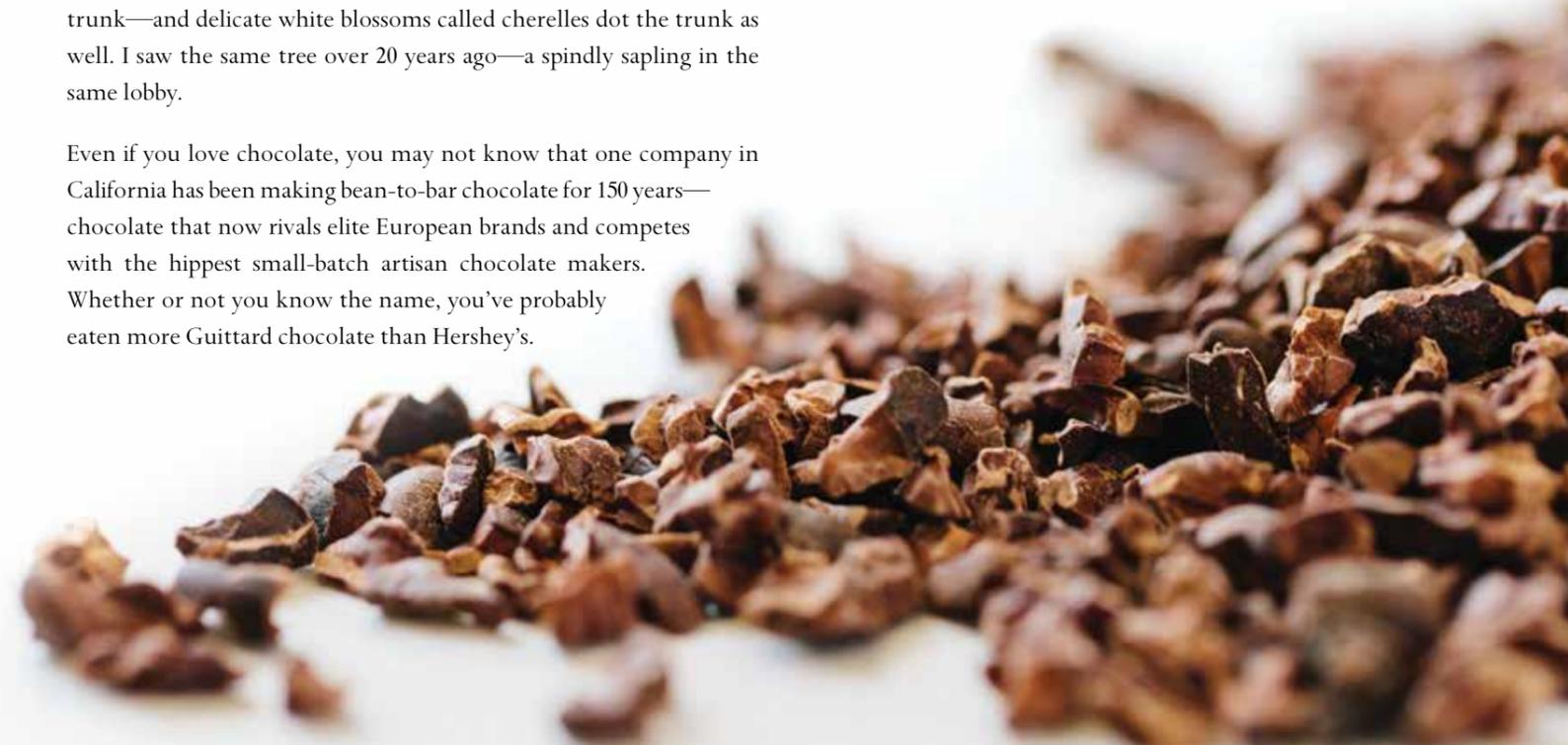
BY ALICE MEDRICH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT ARMENDARIZ AND COURTESY OF GUITTARD CHOCOLATE COMPANY

I can smell chocolate long before I pull into the little visitors' lot in front of the factory at 10 Guittard Road. Built in 1955 and painted two colors—vaguely chocolate and caramel—it resembles a California elementary school of the same era. The redwood-paneled lobby was last remodeled in 1983. But who needs new or fancy when you've got a living cacao tree in the room? The Guittard specimen even has fruit—eight colorful cacao pods hanging from its lower limbs and trunk—and delicate white blossoms called cherelles dot the trunk as well. I saw the same tree over 20 years ago—a spindly sapling in the same lobby.

Even if you love chocolate, you may not know that one company in California has been making bean-to-bar chocolate for 150 years—chocolate that now rivals elite European brands and competes with the hippest small-batch artisan chocolate makers. Whether or not you know the name, you've probably eaten more Guittard chocolate than Hershey's.

Guittard is the oldest continuously family-owned chocolate producer in the United States. You could call it a big boutique chocolate maker—the largest of the small chocolate makers, but 40 times smaller than the big guys. Gary Guittard is the fourth generation of Guittards to head this company, and one of three Guittards leading it today. His nephew Clark is head of international sales and his daughter, Amy, is the director of marketing.





Guittard makes chocolate—not candies. Don't expect truffles or bonbons or chocolate bars with nuts, sea salt, or spices. There are no nougats or novelties. Do expect a curated selection of fine chocolate for home bakers—chocolate baking chips, cocoa powder, baking bars, and organic baking wafers plus special blends for nibbling, and all Fair Trade Certified and non-GMO. Guittard makes over 300 different chocolate formulations—"the widest variety of flavors and styles in the industry"—for pastry chefs, bakers, and chocolatiers as well as candy, ice cream, and novelty makers.

The story begins when Etienne Guittard, scion of French stone masons, who failed to strike gold in California. Etienne landed in San Francisco in the mid-19th century, carrying chocolate from his uncle's factory in Paris—chocolate that he planned to trade for mining supplies. Mining never panned out—but Etienne recognized a market for chocolate among wealthy San Franciscans. This would not be the first time a Guittard turned setback into opportunity.

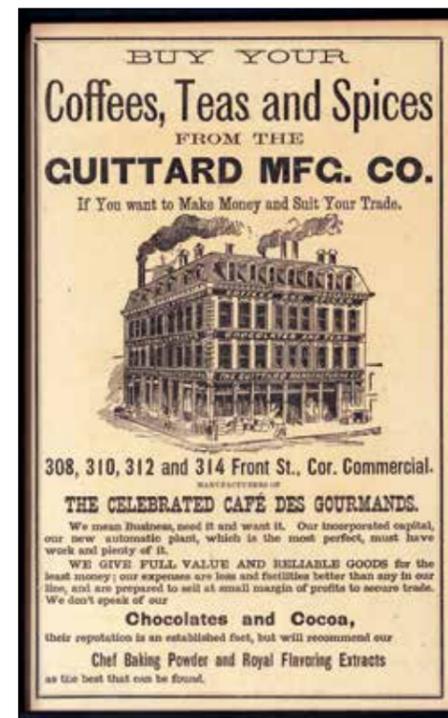
Etienne sailed home to perfect his skills and acquire equipment and returned to San Francisco to open the first Guittard Factory in 1868.

Horace C. Guittard, Etienne's son, rebuilt the factory when it was destroyed by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. His son Horace A. Guittard steered the company through World War II, staying Stateside to supply chocolate and cocoa to the military. Facing displacement by

a new freeway, Horace A. took the opportunity to build a new factory 15 miles south of the city in Burlingame, California. That Burlingame factory remains company headquarters today and produces Guittard's Collection Etienne: single-origin and special blend chocolates. (This year, much of the remaining production was relocated to a new, cutting-edge factory in Fairfield, California, with the capacity to double current production.)

The Burlingame factory is like a hot chocolate sauna. It feels delicious and smells better. The clinking, shaking, and vibrating hum of antique machinery and the incessant clatter of baking chips tumbling off a conveyer belt is just part of the experience. Vintage machines cozy up to a few state-of-the-art pieces. Gary Guittard (Etienne's great-grandson) likes the way the older equipment makes chocolate, gently, and the production staff has decades of experience working with it.

The chocolate making process at Guittard is mechanized—but far from automatic. There is no main control panel to set and then walk away from. Throughout, and for each product, the process is varied, myriad decisions are made, tests taken, and equipment adjusted. Every batch of chocolate is tested 72 times for pathogens before it's finished. This intricate dance of art and science is designed to develop the full potential of each bean variety or blend while maintaining the consistent quality, viscosity, color, and food safety that Guittard demands and customers expect.



This vintage advertisement features an illustration of the company's first Guittard Factory in San Francisco.



A company that thrives over five generations does not do so by resting on its achievements. Each generation has met the challenges and realities of their time by continuing to evolve and reinvent—balancing cautious decision-making with the innovation required to survive. Meanwhile, the company's values—humility, kindness, and a dedication to mentoring new employees—have ensured long-term employees, sometimes two generations of the same family.

Gary hadn't planned to work in the family business, much less become president or the industry leader he is today. Gary came of age in the '60s in San Francisco. In college, he studied psychology and Eastern religions and minored in film studies. After working for a boutique ad agency for several years, Gary finally approached his dad. Horace A. sent him to work for a food brokerage company for experience before welcoming him into the family business as head of retail products.

Looking back now, 72-year-old Gary muses, "I didn't realize at the time that there would be just as much creativity with chocolate as there would be in filmmaking."

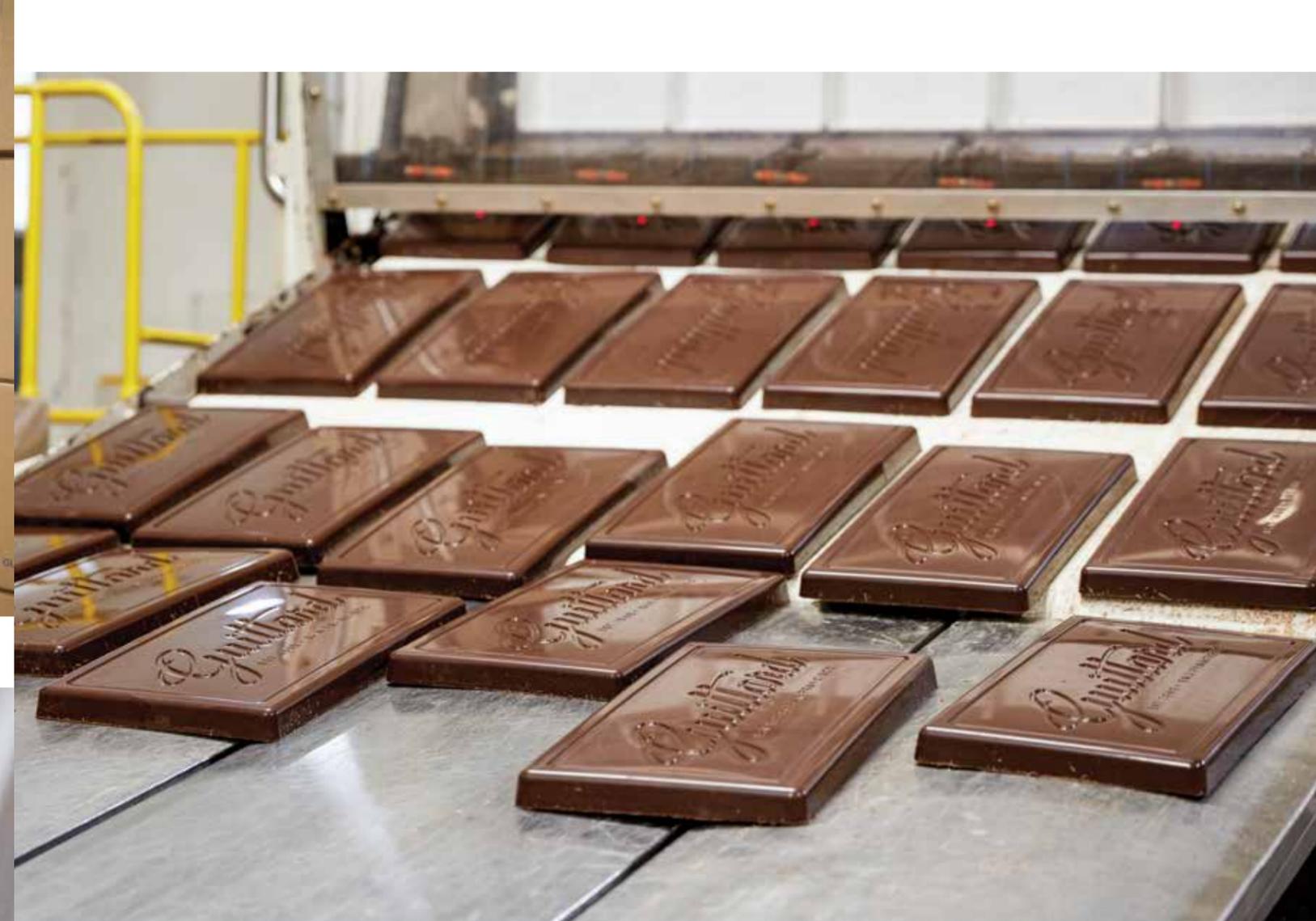
Gary's brother, Jay, was president of the company when their dad died of ALS; Jay's death within six months was the bigger shock. In 1989, Gary stepped into a role he never imagined having. Everyone at Guittard helped him. "I decided to make chocolate better," Gary says. "I felt that we needed to do that to survive and be competitive in the arena we needed to be in."

One of the biggest challenges came almost 10 years later with the new "bean to bar" movement, launched by the upstart Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker. The food revolution that had elevated coffee, cheese, wine, and beer had finally caught up to chocolate; consumers were ready to appreciate more-diverse and complex chocolate, with fruity, nutty, or floral notes and balanced by acidity. When Gary saw the customers that Scharffen Berger was attracting—including pastry chefs and chocolatiers who might otherwise choose imported chocolate—he saw danger for Guittard but also great opportunity. He spent a few years learning to make the new style of chocolate *his* way. This meant sourcing and using more fine-flavor cocoa—cocoa beans traditionally used in small quantities to enhance lesser beans—and processing them without destroying their delicate flavors. Gary's odyssey resulted in the Collection Etienne. San Francisco chocolatier Michael Recchiuti remembers the day Gary dropped by with a foil-wrapped sample of the new chocolate. Michael told Gary that the chocolate rivaled Europe's best. Today, Michael uses tons of it in his exquisite Recchiuti confections, as does London's cutting-edge chocolatier Paul A. Young—and hundreds more.

Guittard strives to make the best chocolate on earth—Gary's giant stature in the industry comes equally from his dedication to "elevating chocolate." This means protecting industry standards and preserving heirloom varieties. In 2007, Gary started a grassroots campaign called "Don't Mess with Our Chocolate" that successfully opposed



The 2018 Limited Edition Eureka Works bar was created in celebration of Guittard's 150th anniversary this year. For every bar sold, a portion of proceeds will go to the Heirloom Cacao Preservation Fund.



a petition—by industrial chocolate companies to the FDA—that would have allowed chocolate makers to replace some cocoa butter in chocolate with cheaper fats and still label it as chocolate.

Guittard takes a leading role in global efforts to ensure sustainable sources of fine cocoa through the well-being of cocoa farmers and their communities, efforts that include literacy and child welfare programs. As a company ambassador, Amy wants to be sure that these programs really help rather than pay lip service to the idea of helping. “We do things because we care about them, not because they are a selling point.” At 36, she is the youngest and only female family member and the most recent to join what she calls “our 150-year-old start-up.” Amy travels to farm communities in Africa and Latin America and connects at the community level, especially with women on farms in co-ops when she tells them she is the first woman in her family’s company.

Sustainability is an integral part of Gary’s obsession with flavor, and the potential is far-reaching. In Gary’s view, ensuring a supply of the best cocoa to make the best chocolate means helping farmers earn more from cultivating better cocoa. Gary started breeding programs in Costa Rica in the 1990s—part of his mission to make Guittard chocolate better. He now works with an alphabet soup of organizations and the governments of Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Indonesia to preserve and promote the cultivation of fine-flavor cocoa instead of high-yield, disease-resistant clones that produce mediocre chocolate.

Labs set up in cocoa-growing regions help breeding programs and also produce chocolate samples to allow thousands of farmers to taste the difference between chocolate made from poorly cultivated cocoa and cocoa that is cultivated properly. “We’ve gotten the big guys like Mars, Nestlé, and Mondelez to agree that we all have a responsibility not to end up with a tasteless cocoa bean,” says John Kehoe, Guittard’s director of sustainability. “If you don’t breed for flavor, you will breed it out.”

Even the best chocolate factory can't make good chocolate from flavorless cocoa beans. The beans—actually kidney bean-size seeds from the podlike fruit—from countries such as Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela—have already met Guittard's high standards for quality by the time they arrive at the factory dock, but they will be evaluated again before they go into production.

Guittard customer service breaks the mold. "We grow through our customer's success" is the Guittard mantra. Chuck Siegel, founder of Charles Chocolates, has been a Guittard customer since his company was a start-up in 2004. Recently, Guittard's director of microbiology, Ken Givich, spent what Chuck calls "a ridiculous amount of time" helping Chuck design a new lab for Charles Chocolates' new factory. Innovative new companies always have new kinds of problems. That's when senior scientist Thalia Hohenthal steps in. Thalia's been with Guittard for 33 years. She'll go into the kitchen and make the product with the customer—whatever it takes to solve a problem or tweak a process. Meanwhile, pastry chef Donald Wressell heads the Guittard Chocolate Studio in Los Angeles, California, hosting classes for and by the industry's elite pastry chefs, bakers, and chocolatiers. The services, research and development talent, and "technical muscle" in a company of Guittard's size set it apart and create enormous customer loyalty.

Guittard's company culture is equally impressive. "It's a family business, and the Guittard family takes care of their employees as family members," says Mark Spini, Guittard's vice president of sales. "They look at you as a contributor—a part of the company because people make the company." Mark's father logged 53 years with Guittard; he mentored Thalia and she went on to mentor Mark when he joined the company three decades ago.

Humility is also part of the ethos at Guittard. Everyone is enormously proud of the chocolate, but the company avoids the limelight. For them, Guittard chocolate is the exquisitely crafted ingredient—always improving—that allows the chefs and confectioners (and home bakers) to be the stars. When the pastry chef at an iconic San Francisco restaurant set a signature dessert in front of Amy, saying, "This is you," Amy replied, "No! It's you!"

The fifth generation of Guittards as well as the extended family of long-term employees all feel responsible for sustaining the company legacy. Clark Guittard, 46, oversees international sales and multiple special projects. He envisions Guittard chocolate of the future with more health benefits, chocolate for a warmer planet, biodegradable packaging, and taking a leadership role in making socially responsible decisions.

"We are stewards of a 150-year-old business," says Clark. "Our job is to keep it going. The company and the cause are bigger than us." Like everyone at Guittard, he wants to make better chocolate—and a better world.



For an exclusive, in-depth look at Guittard's chocolate-making process, visit [bakefromscratch.com/making-chocolate-at-guittard](https://bakefromscratch.com/making-chocolate-at-guittard).



## ALL ABOUT CACAO

### THE LOWDOWN ON CACAO PERCENTAGE AND HOW IT APPLIES TO BAKING

**Cacao percentage** tells you how much of your chocolate bar is cocoa beans (inclusive of any added cocoa butter). Percentage does not indicate quality or flavor—those depend on the beans and the chocolate-making—but it does give you a clue about the balance of chocolate flavor relative to sweetness. Generally, the higher the percentage, the less sweet the chocolate. Fine dark chocolates contain little more than cocoa beans and sugar. So, a 70% chocolate is about 30% sugar, a 60% chocolate is 40% sugar, and a 100% chocolate is pure unsweetened chocolate.

**Shop by taste** when you are buying chocolate to use as mix-ins for cookies or cake. Cacao percentage is not critical in any application where the chocolate will not be melted and mixed into other ingredients. Choose any chocolate that you think will taste good in your creation.

**Shop by percentage** when making a recipe that requires blending melted chocolate with other ingredients. Cacao percentage can affect the chemistry of the recipe and can make the difference between success and disappointment. A torte or mousse that was developed for a 60% chocolate but made with a 70% chocolate may turn out bitter, dry, or grainy. A ganache or sauce may break. If recipes call for chocolate both by name (like bittersweet or semisweet) and by percentage, shop by percentage instead of name. This is because semisweet and bittersweet chocolates are the same type of chocolate—one brand's semisweet might even be a higher percentage than another brand's bittersweet. If you can't find the exact percentage that a recipe calls for, get as close as you can—a couple percentage points won't hurt most recipes.

# CHOCOLATE FORMS AND FUNCTIONS

GUITTARD LABELS INCLUDE CACAO PERCENTAGE, BEAN ORIGINS, AND TASTING NOTES TO FIRE YOUR IMAGINATION, WHET YOUR APPETITE, AND SPARK YOUR CREATIVITY.

**Baking chips** are made with less cocoa butter than regular baking chocolate so that they hold their shape in cookies—they are not ideal for melting and blending into batters and shouldn't be used in recipes unless specifically called for.



**Wafers** are a convenient “professional” form of chocolate, because there’s no need to chop them before melting. Unlike baking chips, wafers melt and blend beautifully into batters—and they’re superb for eating. Use wafers instead of baking chips in chocolate chip cookies for extra decadent cookies.

**Bars** are versatile because they can be chopped into smaller pieces to melt or added into batter or dough. Each 6-ounce package of Guittard chocolate has three individually wrapped bars that are easy to break or cut into squares. Bake with them, or tuck a box into your desk or travel bag.

**Unsweetened cocoa powder** is a versatile baking ingredient—a super concentrated form of chocolate with very little fat and zero sugar. Guittard Cocoa Rouge imparts full fudgy chocolate flavor in cakes and cookies without making them heavy or dense. Use it in any recipe that calls for Dutch process cocoa powder. Grand Cacao Drinking Chocolate is a combination of ground chocolate and Dutch process cocoa powder—it makes an extra rich (think pudding!), creamy cup of hot cocoa and can be used for baking, too.

For further information on Guittard’s products, visit [guittard.com](http://guittard.com).

## EVERYTHING CHOCOLATE THUMBPRINT COOKIES

Makes 56

*Dear chocolate lovers, you're welcome. To celebrate Guittard (and their 150th anniversary!), we used a few of our favorite products to create a sophisticated thumbprint cookie. With cocoa powder in the dough, a pool of melty ganache in the center, and chocolate shavings and a light chocolate drizzle on top, this will be the most indulgent cookie you bake this season.*

- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup (165 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 large egg yolks (37 grams)
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup (40 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder\*
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon (1.25 gram) baking powder

Ganache (recipe follows)

Garnish: melted bittersweet chocolate, flaked sea salt, bittersweet chocolate shavings (see Note)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line several baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and brown sugar at medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in egg yolks and vanilla.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, salt, and baking powder. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Shape dough into 1-inch (13-gram) balls, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Using a ¼ teaspoon, gently make an indentation in center of each ball.

4. Bake about 9 to 11 minutes. Remove from oven, and press down centers again. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Spoon 1 teaspoon Ganache into center of each cookie. Drizzle with melted chocolate, and top with sea salt and chocolate shavings, if desired.

\*We used Guittard Cocoa Rouge Unsweetened Cocoa Powder.

**Note:** Using a vegetable peeler, scrape blade lengthwise across room temperature chocolate to create shavings.

### GANACHE

Makes ¾ cup

- ⅓ cup (113 grams) chopped bittersweet chocolate\*
- ½ cup (120 grams) heavy whipping cream

1. Place chopped chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Set aside.

2. In a small saucepan, bring cream just to a boil over medium heat. Pour hot cream over chocolate. Let stand for 1 minute; whisk until smooth. Refrigerate, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes.

\*We used Guittard Eureka Works 150th Anniversary Limited Edition 62% Cacao Bar, but Guittard Semisweet Chocolate Baking Bar 64% Cacao will work, too. ☐

