

Backgrounder

Guittard Chocolate Company is a San Francisco Bay Area based chocolate maker celebrated for crafting world-class couverture chocolate based on traditional French methods. Founded in San Francisco in 1868, Guittard Chocolate Company is the oldest continuously family-owned and operated chocolate-making business in the United States.

Today, Guittard Chocolate Company continues to raise the bar with its passion for crafting the highest quality chocolate, providing the best service and setting new standards for the industry. Its expanded line of retail products makes the “chocolate for experts” available to home bakers and chocolate lovers.

The Growth of a Family Business

In the 1850s, Etienne Guittard embarked on the arduous journey from Tournus, France, to San Francisco in search of gold. An experienced chocolate maker, Etienne had brought French chocolate to trade for mining supplies, but soon discovered that newly rich miners were willing to pay top dollar for fine chocolate. With a new plan, Etienne sailed back to Tournus where he worked in his uncle’s chocolate factory until he could afford to buy his own chocolate making equipment. In 1868, he returned to San Francisco and opened Guittard Chocolate on Sansome Street, selling chocolate as well as coffee, tea and spices.

San Francisco, with its vibrant commercial hub and temperate climate, became one of the great chocolate manufacturing centers in America, where ships from exotic regions of the world brought their cacao beans to market. Of the original family-owned commodity companies that brought commerce and culture to the dusty and often lawless streets of early San Francisco, Guittard Chocolate Company is the only one that remains family-owned.

Horace C. Guittard succeeded his father Etienne in 1899 in running the thriving company. In 1906, the great earthquake destroyed the family business along with most of San Francisco. Undaunted, Horace moved the company to a temporary location on Commercial Street while rebuilding the factory on Main Street near the Embarcadero.

Horace’s son Horace A. became president of the company in 1950 and relocated the factory to Burlingame in 1955 where it became and continues to be one of the leading suppliers of fine chocolate to professionals in the pastry, confectionary and ice cream trades. While Horace A. was instrumental in bringing the company into the era of automation, he continued to operate in the Old World tradition, producing small, carefully tended batches of chocolate and working closely with customers, tailoring products according to their needs. This

visionary approach placed the Guittard Chocolate Company at the forefront of innovation of several American food trends.

Horace A.'s son Gary joined the family business in 1975 after stints as a grocery broker and then in the bakery supply business. Put in charge of developing specialty chocolates, he traveled abroad extensively, soaking up every nuance of the chocolate making business. By 1989, when he became President and CEO of the Guittard Chocolate Company, he fully understood that chocolate making is an art as well as a science—complex and demanding, requiring tireless effort throughout the process, from the farmer through to the factory.

An advocate for preserving and elevating the quality of chocolate, Gary sounded the alarm in 2007 with a grass roots group and petition called, “Don’t Mess with Our Chocolate,” when it became apparent that industrial confectioners were petitioning the F.D.A. to replace cocoa butter with cheaper fats and still call the resulting product “chocolate.” His petition made international news, rallied opposing forces and succeeded in its mission. The F.D.A. now states that only chocolates made with cocoa butter and no other fats may be labeled “chocolate.”

Gary currently serves on the executive committee of the Heirloom Cacao Preservation Initiative, a partnership between the Fine Chocolate Industry Association (FCIA) and the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) to create the first genotype map with a focus on flavor cacao trees. Through the HCP, he hopes to shine a light on the threat to heirloom and native trees that produce fine-flavor beans and reverse the trend of growers and producers replacing their heirloom and native trees with low-flavor, high-yield and disease resistant varieties like CCN-51.

Today, Gary is joined by the fifth generation of the family including his daughter Amy who is responsible for marketing and becoming increasingly involved in sourcing and sustainability and his nephew Clark who oversees international sales.

Beans

Guittard Chocolate Company is the oldest continuously family-owned and operated chocolate maker in the US and one of the few that works directly with growers, long before harvest. In addition to paying a premium for its cacao, an expert team at Guittard travels the world, working closely with growers, many of whom they’ve known and worked with for years, to assess the development of individual crops and to oversee the fermentation and drying process of the cacao beans. Whether working with the bold and traditional or the unique flavors and characteristics of rare heirloom cacao varieties, Gary and his sourcing team are constantly in search of that elusive blend or single origin bean that will create new and exciting chocolate experiences. It is this uncompromising attitude towards sourcing and dedication to building and nurturing relationships with their growers that is a hallmark of Guittard’s “quality from the ground up” approach.

The Process | Making Great Chocolate

The painstaking process of transforming dried cacao beans into fine chocolate is done in Guittard Chocolate Company's Burlingame facility where cherished recipes are used and new recipes are developed; where generations-old techniques are still in use alongside the scientific rigor of the company's R&D department that precisely determines the ideal roast, conch and temper to bring out the full potential of each variety or blend of cacao.

Gary Guittard and his team are there every step of the way. Guittard's spirit of innovation shines through in the day-to-day operations—crafting new blends while also using heritage manufacturing techniques and original recipes—all with the goal of highlighting the full flavors of the cacao. Says Gary Guittard, “We let the cocoa beans tell us how they want to be processed.”

Guittard Chocolate Company is licensed by Fair Trade USA for greater profit for the farmer, sources cocoa beans that are Rainforest Alliance Certified for greater sustainability, and has a Safe Quality Food (SQF) Level 2 Certification. Guittard's factory is a peanut-free and gluten-free facility. Select products are certified Kosher.

Chocolate for Industry, Fine Dining, Home Use and Connoisseur

Industry

For generations, Guittard has made the chocolate used by some of the major manufacturers of confections, baked goods and frozen treats. Guittard's dedicated production facility and R&D and sales teams work closely with their industrial customers to develop chocolate products that are high in flavor, formulated to their specifications, consistent, and easy to work with.

Professionals

The Collection Etienne line of chocolate was introduced in 2000 and was developed for the professional pastry chef and chocolatier. Made from the world's most select cacao beans, using time-honored vintage methods and small-batch manufacturing processes that result in the world's finest chocolate, Guittard also works closely with pastry chefs and chocolatiers to come up with a chocolate that accomplishes a specific flavor in their final confectionary or pastry product. This expertise and ability to customize a product for customers of all sizes sets Guittard apart.

Collection Etienne is used by many notable chefs in the industry and culinary schools such as Johnson & Wales and the Institute of Culinary Education use Collection Etienne chocolate in the classroom.

In April 2007, Guittard Chocolate Company's Pastry Chef Donald Wressell established the Guittard Chocolate Studio in Los Angeles. A fully equipped commercial kitchen, it is where Chef Wressell works on product and recipe

development whether it's testing a new chocolate blend, creating recipes or consulting with chefs and chocolatiers who use Guittard chocolate. In 2009, Chef Wressell introduced the Guittard Chocolate Studio Guest Chef Series, three-day hands on courses taught by prominent industry professionals like Jin Caldwell and Ciril Hitz in a variety of chocolate and chocolate-related disciplines.

For the Home Baker and Chocolate Lover

Noting that home cooks were becoming increasingly sophisticated in their demands for quality baking chocolate, Guittard created the company's first line of chocolate chips for the home baker. The *Collection Etienne* line of baking and eating chocolate, introduced in 2000 and made from the world's most select cacao beans, uses the vintage methods that were employed by founder Etienne. Home bakers reap the benefits of Guittard's 147 years of expertise with making chocolate of unparalleled flavor and ease of use that elevate even the simplest of desserts and baked goods.

In 2013, Guittard introduced a new item to the Collection Etienne line—Baking Bars in three varieties, 64%, 70% and 100% cacao—newly created blends from carefully sourced and fermented fine-flavor beans that are processed in Guittard's chocolate factory in Burlingame. In 2015, Guittard introduced Collection Etienne organic and Fair Trade Certified baking wafers and Fair Trade Certified chocolate bars.

Guittard's Commitment to Sustainability

Guittard strives to create the best chocolate on earth by blending tradition and adventurous innovation in a way that nurtures the environment and cultivates constructive relationships with their extended family of customers, co-workers, farmers and suppliers.

Guittard is an industry leader in its global efforts to promote sustainability of the environment of the cocoa growing regions and the well being of cocoa workers. Guittard Chocolate Company is a founding member of the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), a public-private member group of stakeholders in cocoa. The members represent many world governments, world banks, private foundations, researchers, producers and farmers. Through WCF, Guittard is a funding partner with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and others of the Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP) in West Africa that delivers essential support to insure quality of life for farmers through sustainable cocoa growing. Guittard is a funding partner with USAID and others in Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Education Solutions, the ECHOES program, also in West Africa.

Guittard sources cacao beans that are Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance Certified.

Today

As the oldest continuously family-owned and operated chocolate company in the US, the fifth generation continues to grow the company with the same innovative spirit and commitment to sustainability that has made Guittard one of the world's most respected makers of premium chocolate.

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