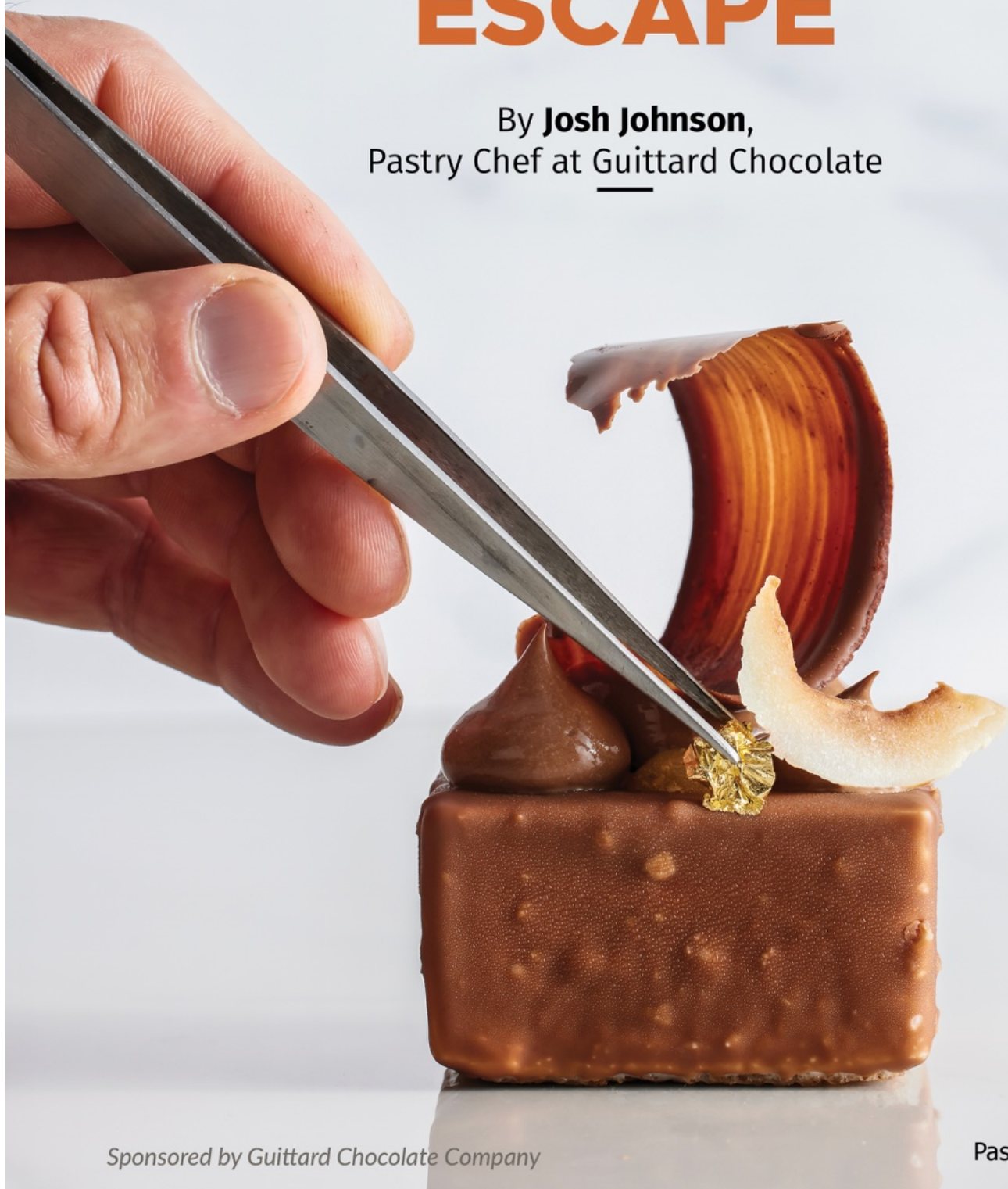


# CHOCOLATE PECAN TROPICAL ESCAPE

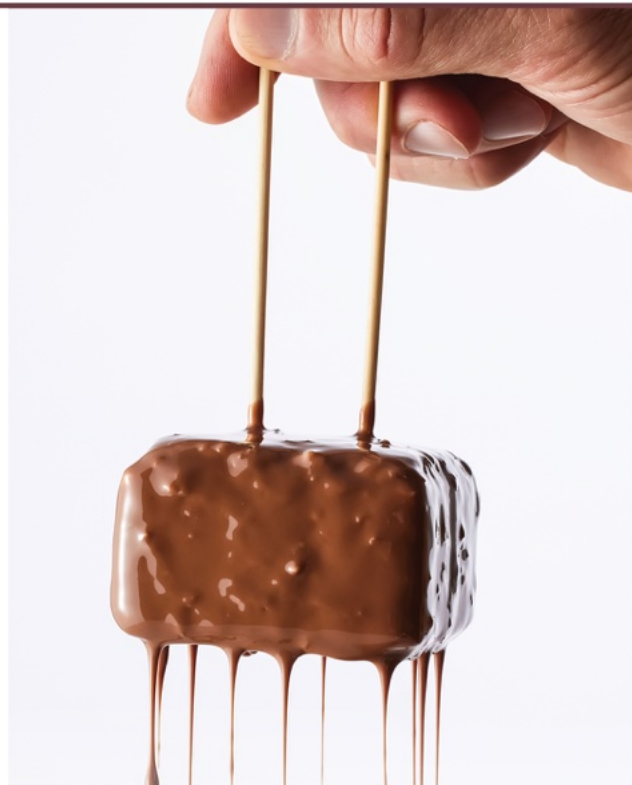
By **Josh Johnson**,  
Pastry Chef at Guittard Chocolate



**W**hen winter starts to settle in in the Midwest, I start thinking about the flavors that transport me to a different time or place for inspiration. I also consider what is fresh and seasonally relevant in the middle of winter. So, in this dessert I have combined two different Guittard Chocolate couvertures with pecans, coconut and passion fruit to create a dessert that can deliver tart, savory and sweet all in one bite. This offers the perfect balance of comfort and freshness – and can transport your palate to your favorite winter escape location.

My path to becoming a pastry chef was a bit untraditional. I trained in several different places – from my uncle's bakery in the Midwest, to The Ritz-Carlton, to the French Pastry School – and as a result, my style is a mashup of a variety of influences, all coming together in an approachable way. I like blending interesting flavors together with more common and comfortable ones when preparing dessert for a menu or a diverse clientele. It invites the less adventurous to try something new and eliminates the risk that you have a dessert on the menu that no one is willing to try. If the combination is just right, your guest is always pleasantly surprised with the combination, and you have created a memorable moment for a guest who may have tried something such as passion fruit and chocolate together for the first time.

This Chocolate Pecan Tropical Escape dessert taps into all the senses. The pecan sponge is a buttery, comforting and nutty complement to the mildly



tropical coconut mousse. To bring in an acidic tart contrast and something unexpected, I add a passion fruit center. Richness and indulgence come from the Guittard 64% L'Etoile du Nord cremeux. The caramel notes in the Guittard 38% Soleil D'Or milk chocolate coating, combined with the finely chopped coconut flakes, give the dessert a texture that really makes the dessert stand out when it shatters into your mouth like a magic shell.

This is a versatile style dessert, because you can easily substitute different flavors in the center layer and deliver something completely new, or you can experiment with multiple elements to bring different flavors forward. It is also perfect for this time of year, because it presents well as an upscale dessert for two – a perfect choice for a winter staycation, a getaway resort menu or a Valentine's Day date night out.





**Yield:** 24 servings  
(using a 4- or 5-oz mold)

## PECAN SPONGE CAKE

- 102 g confectioners' sugar
- 217 g roasted pecans
- 58 g pastry flour
- 125 g unsalted butter
- 33 g honey
- 3 g sea salt, divided
- 125 g egg yolks
- 14 g vegetable oil
- 198 g aged egg whites
- 1.5 g cream of tartar
- 86 g granulated sugar

**Note:** Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature.

1. Process the confectioners' sugar, pecans and pastry flour in a food processor to a fine flour consistency. Set aside.
2. Cream the butter, honey, and 1.5 g of the salt. Gradually add the yolks and oil and mix until light and airy.
3. Add the pecan flour mixture and mix thoroughly. Set this mixture aside.
4. Whip the egg whites, cream of tartar, remaining 1.5 g salt and the granulated sugar to a stiff meringue. Fold meringue into the butter mixture in 3 parts.
5. Spread onto a parchment-lined half sheet pan and bake at 325°F (162°C) until golden brown.

## GUITTARD L'ETOILE DU NORD 64% CHOCOLATE CREMEUX

- 300 g heavy cream
  - 300 g milk
  - 40 g granulated sugar
  - 120 g egg yolks
  - 260 g Guittard L'Etoile du Nord 64%
1. Combine the cream, milk, sugar, and yolks in a saucepan. On medium heat, cook to 180°F (82°C), while continuously stirring.
  2. Pour the hot mixture over the Guittard L'Etoile du Nord 64% wafers and allow to sit for 1 minute. Emulsify with a rubber spatula. Finish with a hand blender until smooth.
  3. Cast into a container and refrigerate until set.

## PASSION FRUIT GELÉE

- 8 g gelatin sheets (140-bloom)
- 40 g water
- 50 g granulated sugar
- 4 g NH pectin
- 500 g Boiron Passion Fruit purée

1. Bloom the gelatin in the water; set aside.
2. Combine the sugar and NH pectin.
3. Combine the sugar mixture with the purée, then bring to a full boil.
4. Remove from heat, add the bloomed gelatin and stir until fully melted.
5. Cast into desired molds and freeze.

## ITALIAN MERINGUE

- 40 g water
  - 25 g glucose
  - 150 g granulated sugar
  - 92 g egg whites
1. Cook the water, glucose, and sugar to 244°F (118°C).
  2. Pour over the whipping egg whites on high speed.
  3. Once cooled, remove 180 g for the mousse recipe.

## COCONUT MOUSSE

- 14 g gelatin (140-bloom)
  - 70 g water
  - 500 g Boiron Coconut purée, divided
  - 180 g Italian Meringue
  - 350 g heavy cream, whipped to soft peaks
1. Bloom the gelatin in the water; set aside.
  2. Melt the gelatin with 100 g of purée, then combine with remaining purée.
  3. Blend the purée into the Italian meringue, scraping the sides of the bowl.
  4. Fold the whipped cream into the meringue mixture in 3 parts.







## GUITTARD SOLEIL D' OR 38% MILK CHOCOLATE COATING

- 75 g unsweetened flake coconut
- 250 g Guittard Cocoa Butter
- 400 g Guittard 38% Soleil D'Or milk chocolate, melted

1. Chop the flake coconut very fine; set aside.
2. Melt the cocoa butter and combine it with the melted milk chocolate.
3. Add the chopped coconut flakes, mix well.
4. Dip frozen mousse into the coating at 110°F (43°C).

## ASSEMBLY

1. Assemble upside-down by casting Coconut Mousse into desired mold; press frozen Passion Fruit Gelée insert into the mousse. Cap off with a disc of Pecan Sponge that is cut slightly smaller than the mold in order to press out the excess mousse. Freeze completely solid, preferably overnight.
2. Remove from mold and, using a skewer, dip the frozen form into the 110°F (43°C) coating and allow the excess to drip off. Dip all the way up to the edge, leaving the pecan sponge exposed as the top of the dessert.
3. With a piping bag and pastry tip of choice, pipe various sizes of the cremeux and garnish with left over gelee and toasted coconut shards.

