



HOW SWEET IT IS

By Laura Kiniry

Dark chocolate with sliced almonds, sour cherries and crystallized violet petals from Chocomize.com

Bitter about the country's ongoing economic woes? Some news to sweeten your mood: According to recent studies, candy and chocolate have both proved to be recession-resistant, and sales of each are even expected to rise in 2010. With America's insatiable appetite for gourmet goods, it's no wonder that small-scale specialty confectioners are also thriving. To indulge, try the following:

Sucré

New Orleans

Specialties like candied Southern pecans and dark-chocolate-dipped macaroons filled with milk chocolate caramel ganache make this Big Easy boutique a must-try. www.shopsucré.com

The Chocolate Room

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Pair handmade confections like the Keiko, a peppercorn-topped raspberry ganache truffle, with a French apéritif in-house, and then take a box of peanut butter truffles to go. www.thechocolateroombrooklyn.com

Hooker's Sweet Treats

San Francisco

Though a retail shop is in the works, for now you'll have to hunt out these divine sea-salted, chocolate-dipped caramels at shops around San Fran. www.hookersweettreats.com

Chocomize.com

This online-only customizer lets you select white, milk or dark Belgian chocolate and a handful of more than 90 ingredients — everything from sour cherries to Skittles to candied rose petals — to create a signature bar that will be delivered to your door. www.chocomize.com



A FEW MORE

Curio Confections

Seattle www.curioconfections.com

Eclipse Chocolat

San Diego www.eclipsechocolat.com

Lola's Sugar Rush

Littleton, Colo. www.sugarrushonmain.com



AW Exclusive! To get a 10% discount on your Chocomize.com purchase, just enter "American Airlines" into the coupon section at checkout. Offer ends June 15, 2010.

BRIGHTEN UP

By Anna Fialho

In case you haven't noticed, there's a new trend in the realm of skin-care products. Granted, their ultimate goal is still to give you eternally wrinkle-free, youthful skin. But now these products also promote radiant, glowing, spotless, incandescent skin. (Because that, of course, will make all the difference in the fight against nature and aging in general.) Snarky comment aside, we actually like this new trend because it's legit. Or at least the products we're recommending are. These serums and creams really will make your skin all glowy and soft. That in and of itself is one step closer to shaving at least a few years off your age. So brighten up and start seeing yourself in a new light.



SERUMS

1/ SK-II Cellumination Essence

FROM \$150

Special ingredient: SK-II Pitera, a natural blend of vitamins, amino acids and minerals

Benefits: lightens age spots, evens out skin tone, illuminates the skin from within and smooths fine lines

Cate Blanchett swears by SK-II. (Enough said.)

2/ Sunday Riley Modern Skincare Juno Transformative Lipid Serum

\$125

Special ingredients: NV-5 Ageless Complex, which includes natural retinol, vitamin C, amino acids and omegas 3, 6 and 9

Benefits: evens skin tone, tightens skin, improves elasticity, super-hydrating, fights wrinkles and leaves skin ultraluminous
Celebrity fans? Blake Lively and Leighton Meester

CREAMS

3/ Lancôme Absolue Precious Cells

\$145

Special ingredients:

Reconstruction Complex, which is extracted from the fruit of Malus domestica (apple trees) and contains peptides, lipids and sugars; Pro-Xylane

Benefits: stimulates the regeneration of the skin's stem cells, which restores radiance, density and smoothness to the skin; antiwrinkle

4/ L'Occitane Immortelle Brightening Moisture Creme

\$58

Special ingredient: Essential oil from the wild Immortelle flower

Benefits: brightens and firms skin, enhances cell renewal, provides deep hydration; antiwrinkle