

# Women in chocolate



Kirsten Tibbitts  
CALLEBAUT  
AMBASSADOR

CALLEBAUT  
Ronald Stastka

CALLEBAUT  
Sandy Shelly

Cosmo  
Natascha Scherer

CHOCOLATE  
ACADEMY

CALLEBAUT  
Estella M. Belfor

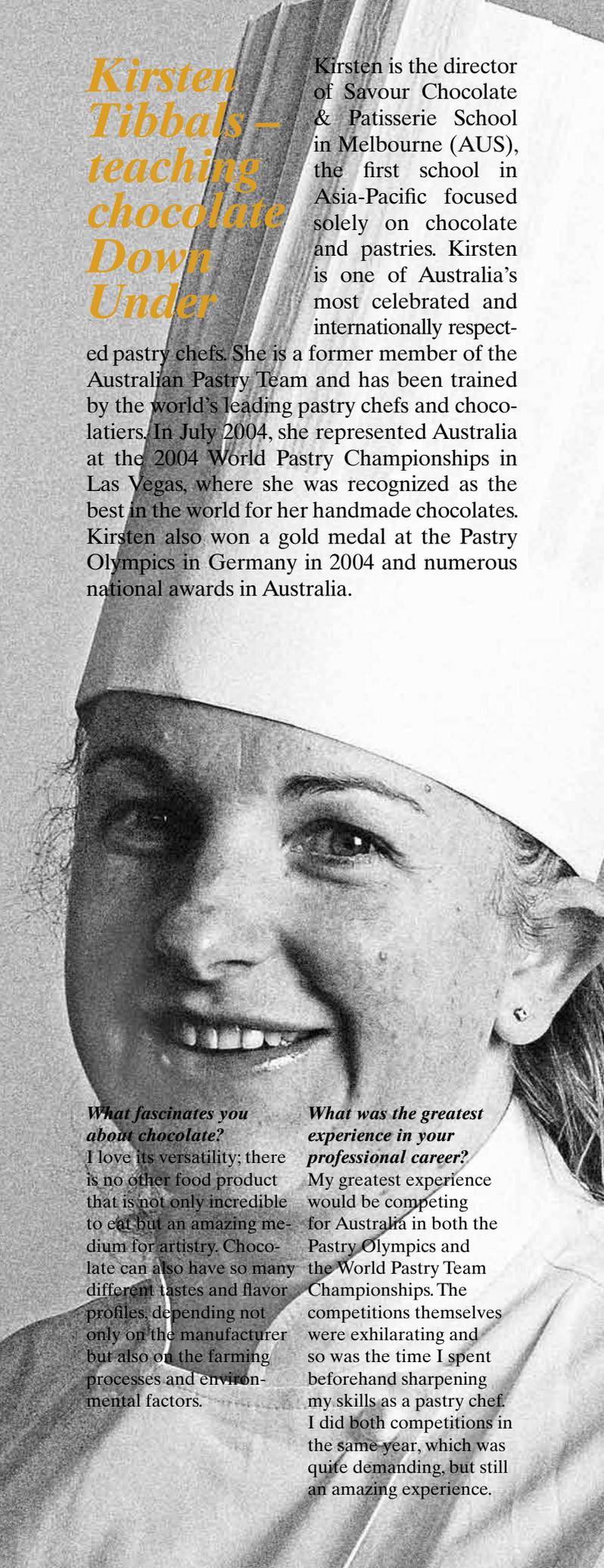
*A closer look at...*

# ... the female side of chocolate art

by Raphael Wermuth

*Looking at the sheer numbers, one could easily get the impression that the world of chocolate artisans is a purely man's world. Far from it! We would like to introduce you to four passionate women who easily rival their male professional colleagues. They are all masters of their craft with impressive artisanal skills and a long list of achievements, not to mention a deep passion for chocolate.*

The four female chocolate artisans are all members of the Barry Callebaut Ambassadors Club. At the end of May 2011, they had an opportunity to take part in a visit to a cocoa origin country – for the first time for some of them. Together with more than 100 colleagues, they became acquainted with the Brazilian cocoa production and the local processing of Barry Callebaut at its cocoa factory in Ilhéus. An exclusive gourmet chocolate demonstration at the Caesar São Paulo International Airport Hotel marked the crowning climax for the Barry Callebaut Ambassador chefs from Europe, the U.S., Canada, Asia and Oceania.



## ***Kirsten Tibbals – teaching chocolate Down Under***

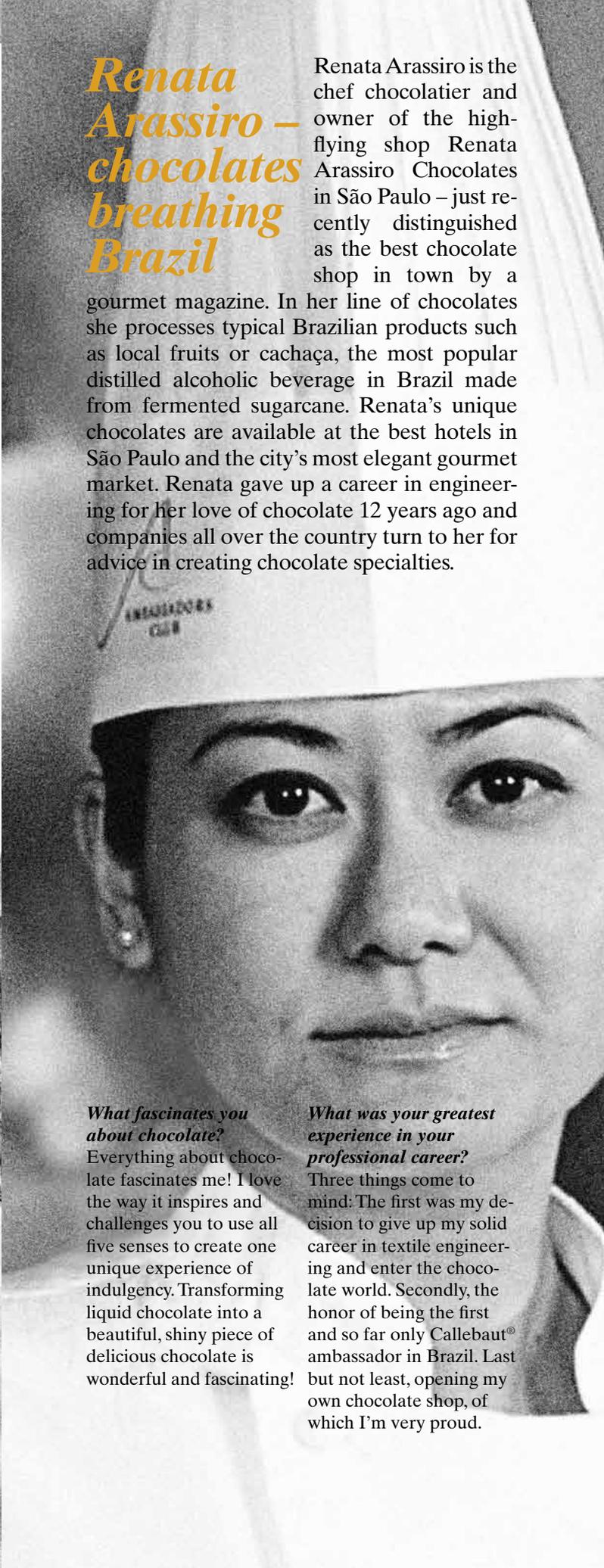
Kirsten is the director of Savour Chocolate & Patisserie School in Melbourne (AUS), the first school in Asia-Pacific focused solely on chocolate and pastries. Kirsten is one of Australia's most celebrated and internationally respected pastry chefs. She is a former member of the Australian Pastry Team and has been trained by the world's leading pastry chefs and chocolatiers. In July 2004, she represented Australia at the 2004 World Pastry Championships in Las Vegas, where she was recognized as the best in the world for her handmade chocolates. Kirsten also won a gold medal at the Pastry Olympics in Germany in 2004 and numerous national awards in Australia.

### ***What fascinates you about chocolate?***

I love its versatility; there is no other food product that is not only incredible to eat but an amazing medium for artistry. Chocolate can also have so many different tastes and flavor profiles, depending not only on the manufacturer but also on the farming processes and environmental factors.

### ***What was the greatest experience in your professional career?***

My greatest experience would be competing for Australia in both the Pastry Olympics and the World Pastry Team Championships. The competitions themselves were exhilarating and so was the time I spent beforehand sharpening my skills as a pastry chef. I did both competitions in the same year, which was quite demanding, but still an amazing experience.



## ***Renata Arassiro – chocolates breathing Brazil***

Renata Arassiro is the chef chocolatier and owner of the high-flying shop Renata Arassiro Chocolates in São Paulo – just recently distinguished as the best chocolate shop in town by a gourmet magazine. In her line of chocolates she processes typical Brazilian products such as local fruits or cachaça, the most popular distilled alcoholic beverage in Brazil made from fermented sugarcane. Renata's unique chocolates are available at the best hotels in São Paulo and the city's most elegant gourmet market. Renata gave up a career in engineering for her love of chocolate 12 years ago and companies all over the country turn to her for advice in creating chocolate specialties.

### ***What fascinates you about chocolate?***

Everything about chocolate fascinates me! I love the way it inspires and challenges you to use all five senses to create one unique experience of indulgency. Transforming liquid chocolate into a beautiful, shiny piece of delicious chocolate is wonderful and fascinating!

### ***What was your greatest experience in your professional career?***

Three things come to mind: The first was my decision to give up my solid career in textile engineering and enter the chocolate world. Secondly, the honor of being the first and so far only Callebaut® ambassador in Brazil. Last but not least, opening my own chocolate shop, of which I'm very proud.

## **Marianne Valentine Nysted – indulging nordic chocolate lovers**

Marianne is a pastry chef who won her first award by completing her apprenticeship with the highest score ever achieved by a pastry apprentice in Denmark. Marianne is the owner of Sweet Valentine in Copenhagen, a boutique chocolate shop in the heart of the capital of Denmark. In 1992 and 1996, she was the winner of the Danish national chocolate competition. But she has also shone on the international stage: Marianne was the first place winner of an international chocolate competition in Frankfurt in 1995 and won the bronze medal at The Nordic Championship in Oslo in 1994.

### **What fascinates you about chocolate?**

Working with a material that is so alive, varied in taste and that opens up so many possibilities. It's just so much fun playing with all these possibilities.

### **What was your greatest experience in your professional career?**

Oh, there are so many. One of the greatest experiences was getting the highest score on the apprenticeship test and winning a scholarship, which gave me the great opportunity to travel

around Europe for a year. During that time I interned at various private schools and for various pastry chefs in Switzerland, Belgium, France and Austria. Another huge step was opening my first chocolate shop in 2000 and the second one in 2011. Last but not least, I very much enjoyed travelling to Brazil with the Barry Callebaut Ambassadors Club in 2011 to experience the origin of the cocoa and seeing a different side of what I work with every day.

## **Estella M. Belfer – chocolate goes TV**

Estella is the founder and manager of Estella Master Class in Pastry & Chocolate, the leading culinary school in Israel. Estella is a graduate (cum laude) of the pastry making track at the Cordon Bleu School in Paris. She deepened her studies at various schools and companies in France, Germany and England. Estella's rich professional experience includes pastry making at the prestigious Dan Hotels. She was the first to teach advanced chocolate techniques to professionals in Israel. Estella recently launched her own TV show on the Israeli Culinary Channel. She gives lectures nationwide and in the U.S. and develops chocolate and pastry products for leading chocolate and pastry manufacturers in her home country.

### **What fascinates you about chocolate?**

Chocolate is a very unique material that engages all your senses. One cannot be indifferent to chocolate. Everywhere you go you'll find people who love chocolate.

### **What was your greatest experience in your professional career?**

My greatest experience was discovering and understanding the amazing process of how this wonderful raw material is made, mostly by hand, by skillful farmers, coping with the vagaries of the weather and various pests and diseases. Seeing how old and new technologies are used to turn cocoa into chocolate inspired me to explore the many wonders of chocolate and experiment with new creations.