

Life style



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Traditional recipe: Chocolate Monggo uses images of traditional cultural icons on its packaging, making it an attractive souvenir.

Chocoholic finds sweet niche

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THE JAKARTA POST/YOGYAKARTA

With Valentines Day upon us again, lovers are in their element – chocolate lovers, that is.

Yet no chocolate connoisseurs can claim to have enjoyed the complete chocolate experience until they've tasted Chocolate Monggo – a sophisticated chocolate that combines European and Javanese recipes.

The packaging of Chocolate Monggo (which means "please") products will delight traditionalists. While many chocolate factories choose to package their products in modern designs with bright colors and photos of models, the packaging for Chocolate Monggo retains the feel of yesteryear.

Designs used on Chocolate Monggo packaging include traditional pictures or symbols of Javanese culture: Borobudur Temple, pedicabs, *dokar* (traditional Yogyakarta horse-drawn carts), and *Semar* (a character in shadow puppet shows).

The manager of Chocolate Monggo, Thierry Detournay, said his chocolate was made from a recipe combined from European and Javanese formulas. It was by chance that the Belgian, whose wife is from Surakarta in Central Java, once undertook a chocolate cooking course with a famous chef in his home country, giving him the taste and skills to know what can work.

The company's specialty is dark chocolate, specifically Chocolate Monggo, with its strong chocolaty taste. On top of that, every month the company manufactures a variety of chocolates for a variety of tastes: Let your tongue savor ginger- or orange-flavored chocolate, or a combination of cashews and ginger.

Consider the ginger chocolate. At first it has that bittersweet of regular dark chocolate. Then comes the surprise: The taste melts into a mix of sweetness and warmth, fired by the

slice of ginger in the middle. To ensure the ginger is delicious and not too hot, it is first candied – sliced and boiled with sugar and water until it is cooked.

"It is best to eat this chocolate when the stomach is full of gas," said Edward Riando P, Thierry's partner. "But don't worry because we process the ginger first to make candy, with the result a delicious taste."

To produce quality chocolate, the raw materials are brought in from Jakarta. The raw materials are bought half-cooked because there is no cacao-processing factory in Yogyakarta.

Chocolate Monggo sweets are produced without using preservatives. Even the packaging uses recycled paper. The idea is to deliver a message about the importance of caring for the environment.

"Unless we are forced to do so, we will not use plastic," Thierry said.

After the ingredients are processed, Thierry taste-tests them all to ensure they measure up to his standards of sophistication and flavor.

"I check everything myself – no exceptions. Bad ingredients, or those that don't have the right taste for our style and quality, are thrown away," Thierry said.

To keep customers interested, Chocolate Monggo employs its own team of special product designers. This team is responsible for developing new types of chocolate while always retaining the Javanese style. With its 25 employees, Chocolate Monggo is able to produce 1,000 packs of different varieties and sizes a month; they work their way through an average two tons of half-cooked cacao in the process.

According to Edward, tourists tend to make up Chocolate Monggo's main customer base, thanks to a mixture of the chocolate's exotic appeal and the traditional designs that make the chocolates ideal souvenirs to visitors to Yogyakarta.

As such, the Chocolate Monggo range can be easily found in souvenir shops or food malls in Yogyakarta.

Alternatively, buyers can go directly to the Chocolate Monggo production house in Jl Dalem KG III/978, Purbayan subdistrict, Kotagede, Yogyakarta. As well as being



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Chocolate please: Employees of Chocolate Monggo make the chocolate based on a special recipe that combines European and Javanese traditions.

able to view the production process, the production house offers, of course, a ready stock of chocolate.

Now the Chocolate Monggo brand is spreading to Bali, Semarang and Surakarta. Since the beginning of 2008, Chocolate Monggo has been available in all the Carrefour chain stores across Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi (Jabotabek).

The company also often receives export orders from Singapore, Alaska, Australia and some European countries – a demand the company isn't able to meet on a large scale because the processes are carried out in the traditional way.

So how much does it cost to enjoy Chocolate Monggo? It is, typically, more expensive than regular supermarket brands: About Rp 20,000 (US\$1.50) per 100-gram pack in Yogyakarta and Rp 28,000 (US\$2.50) for the same size in Bali or Jakarta.

But a 40 percent rise in the price of cacao is giving the company some headaches.

"If the price goes up 10 percent we can still cope. Now it has gone up 40 percent. If it continues to rise we will collapse because it's impossible to sell if the price has to go up," Thierry said.

"Why not make a chocolate with the number one quality, using number one materials and which combines the recipes of Europe and Java?"

FINE TRADITIONAL CHOCOLATE ... PLEASE!

The story of Chocolate Monggo begins with Thierry Detournay's disappointment when he was in Yogyakarta in 2001 as a lecturer in French literature at Gadjah Mada University (UGM).

As a chocolate connoisseur, it was difficult to find quality chocolate," he said.

Thierry, who has the skills of a chocolate chef, then thought, "Why not make a chocolate with the number one quality, using number one materials and which combines the recipes of Europe and Java?" He was in the right place, he realized, as Indonesia is the third largest producer of cacao in the world.

When Thierry met Edward Riando P., who is also a chocolate connoisseur, together they pioneered the manufacture of chocolate under the brand name Cacao Mania. The production was seasonal, with items coming out for Christmas, Easter and Valentine's Day.

Using a Vespa, I used to sell chocolates outside a church when

there was an event," Thierry said.

"In Yogyakarta I also met my future wife and in 2004 we got married."

Edward took a similar marketing approach. He tried to sell chocolates in various shops and supermarkets in Yogyakarta.

Their chocolates, especially truffles and small chocolates, soon found an eager market, especially among tourists. In 2005, they no longer had to depend on seasonal sales but were able to produce chocolates year-round under the flag of the Antugerah Mulia Company.

The name Chocolate Monggo itself arose from a deadlocked discussion between Thierry, Edo and another friend when they were looking for a name that had a special relevance to Yogyakarta. In the middle of the discussion, one of them gave in saying "Monggo [please], what is the name?"

Well, from the result of that deadlock was born the name Chocolate Monggo, Thierry said.



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