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## Hands-on class for chocoholics

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Cloaked in fall's darkness, they may arrive alone, paired off or in small clusters. They give the front door a quick rap, their minds filling with thoughts of the delectable goodies they'll soon receive.

Are these night travelers trick-or-treaters? Nope. They're locals ready for a chocolate-making class at Arlington's Artisan Confections, a place where adults go to indulge. (Whoever said candy is just for kids?)

The students receive a warm welcome from shop owner Jason Andelman, a former pastry chef at the District's TenPenh. He has been "doing chocolate" for seven years and peddling rich, artfully designed treats out of his Lee Highway storefront since 2006.

Samples of Mr. Andelman's work - including his signature silk-screened bonbons and some formidable chocolate-chunk brownies - are spread across the retail counter, forming a buffet that promises to give participants a chocolate buzz and make them hungry to learn more.

One woman says her knees buckle as a salted butter caramel bonbon hits her taste buds.

Once folks have taken the bait, Mr. Andelman, 37, introduces himself and the cacao plant, from which chocolate is made. He hands around plastic dishes containing cocoa



beans and various types of chocolate and encourages students to touch, taste and smell.

Sensory experiences continue throughout the two-hour session. Visitors inhale the scent of warm ganache used for bonbon centers. They hand-paint transfer sheets that lend their hues to the flattened tops of these delicacies. They cluster-bomb sheets of melted chocolate with various toppings to make chocolate bark. They snitch bites of chocolate-coated crunchy goodies before the mixture hardens into little haystacks called rocher.

The activities come in rapid succession. Chocolate-making is something Mr. Andelman calls "exacting" and "technical," but nothing ever seems all that stressful. (Sinful, maybe.)

By the end of the class, students have produced enough chocolate to each claim three gift bags full of rocher and bark and a 24-piece box of bonbons, plus they have several pages of recipes and instructions to take home.

Mr. Andelman admits that making these treats in one's own kitchen may be harder. "A lot of this equipment you probably don't have in your home," he says, pointing to what he calls an "'I Love Lucy' machine" that enrobes candies in chocolate as they coast down a small conveyor belt.

The chocolatier says the discrepancies don't stop people from trying, however.