



Chocolate classes at Artisan Confections in Arlington

By Julia Beizer
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Setting the table: Chocolatier Jason Andelman doesn't expect all students in his popular classes to begin making truffles the second they get home. It takes time, patience and a Willy Wonka-like piece of equipment to create the pieces he sells at Artisan Confections. But his twice-monthly classes allow 12 adults to frolic in the back of his white-tiled Clarendon chocolate factory for two hours and take home a bagful of treats. "It's a behind-the-scenes look at what we do here," he said. Not to mention a lot of fun.

What you learn: Andelman kicked off class with a tutorial on how the cocoa bean becomes the bonbon, a taste-and-smell test of chocolate pieces during different stages of production and a look at how the shop makes ganache by mixing chocolate and cream.

And then the arts-and-crafts began. Andelman tops the chocolates he sells with graphic patterns by pressing a special plastic sheet printed with colorful cocoa butter designs onto the chocolate. Class participants decorate their own sheets. While the sheets dried, Andelman showed us the enrober, an aquarium-size machine that rains a waterfall of tempered chocolate onto ganache squares. Each participant took a turn at the ma-

chine: We lined up our 24 chocolates on the conveyor belt. They emerged just moments later, glistening and ready to be decorated.

Meanwhile, the rest of the class learned how to make chocolate bark and crunchy rocher (balls of tempered chocolate and crispy caramelized rice cereal).

Perks: You come home with a haul of your decorated bonbons, eight to 10 pieces of rocher and a small bag of bark. Not that you'll need it. "I've already had so much chocolate," said Nicole Lefton, 32, as class ended. Wine is also provided.

Nice to know: Andelman provides a chocolate ganache recipe and a cheat sheet for tempering chocolate for those who want to try this at home.

What's up next? The next classes are June 24, July 8 and July 22. Check the Web site for additional dates or call to be placed on the waiting list. There's a \$30 tasting class (no making, just eating) on Wednesday.

Price: \$65 for a two-hour class.

1025 N. Fillmore St., Arlington. 703-524-0007. <http://artisanconfections.com>.