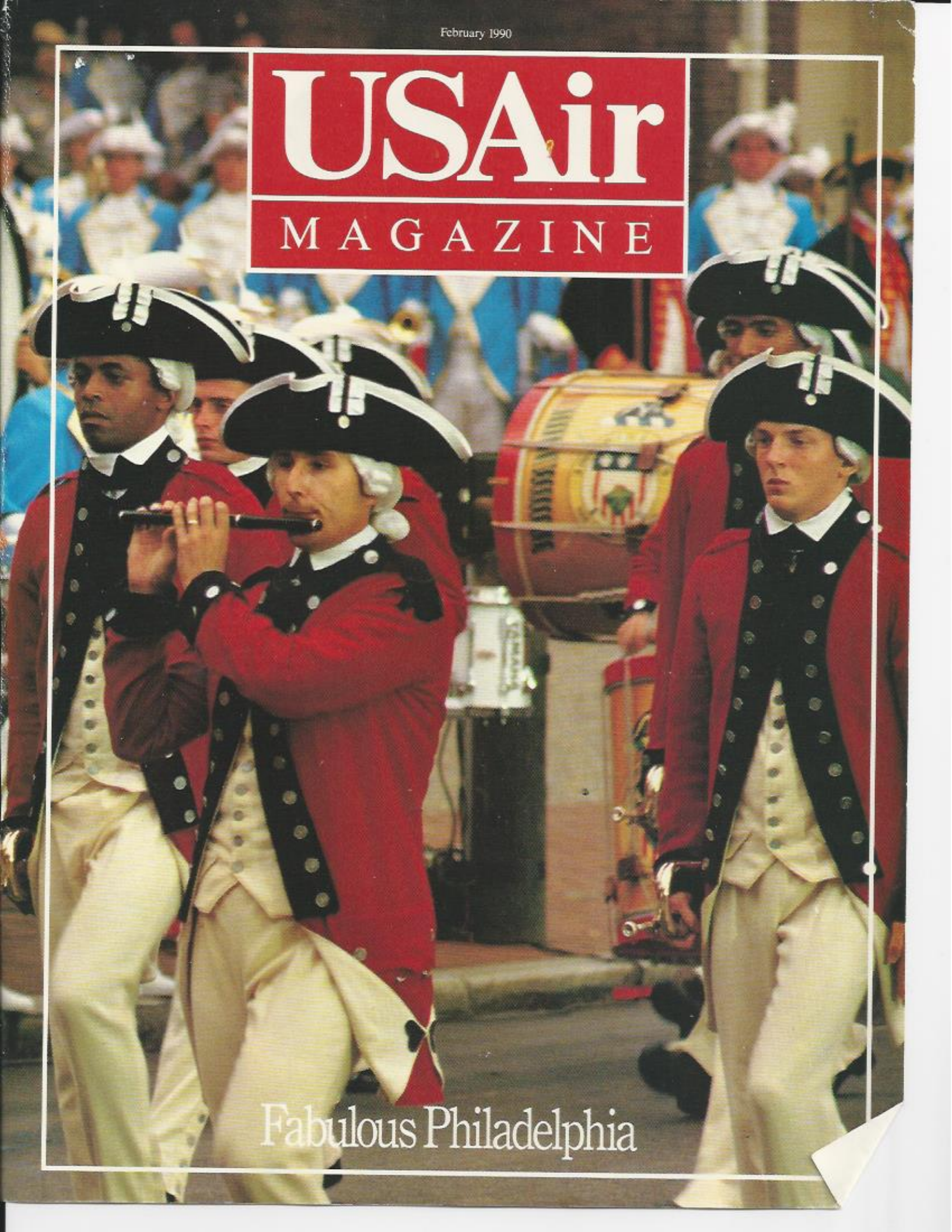


February 1990

USAir

MAGAZINE

Fabulous Philadelphia



How Sweet It Is

By Henry M. Holden



How did the love affair with chocolate begin? Back in the 16th century—gold, silver, and precious stones were not the only loot that traveled back across the Atlantic as the Americas opened to European exploitation. One unforgettable treasure was a little brown bean that some natives of the warmer regions of the New World swore by: From the bean they made a bitter but flavorful drink known in the Nahuatl tongue of the Aztecs of Mexico as *cacahuatl*.

Things started boiling on Good Friday in 1528, when a fleet of Spanish ships appeared off the coast of Mexico. Hernando Cortés off-loaded his entire army of 500 helmeted, mail-clad men, with weapons that belched fire and thunder and hurled invisible and deadly missiles.

The news traveled to Emperor Montezuma II, who was both amazed and almost hypnotized with fear. He believed the Aztec legend that the white conquistador had embodied the God of Air, Quetzalcoatl, and was returning to earth to claim his throne. Montezuma's hesitation to neutralize this handful of Spanish adventurers

was to lead to his downfall and the incredible conquest of his powerful empire. As Montezuma dawdled indecisively, Cortés began his march toward the capital—today's Mexico City. Instead of leading his vast army into a precise campaign to overwhelm the few hundred invaders, Montezuma dispatched messengers to Cortés with gold, silver, and other treasures.

Dark, rich, creamy, sweet: Even the adjectives used to describe the substance are enough to make the strong-willed salivate. It, of course, is chocolate, and this month its lovers are bonbon-barded by the objects of their desire. A box of chocolates is a traditional gift on Valentine's Day, and only the most puritanical among us could spurn this devilish offering, diet or no. According to the Confectionery Association, almost \$600 million in sales—mostly of chocolate kisses and hearts—are made each February 14; if you were to merge all the candy companies into one devoted to the sale of Valentine's Day candy alone, it would carry a *Fortune* 500 ranking.

**A loving look
at everyone's
favorite
Valentine's
Day gift—
chocolate.**

Appeasement of the gods with such gifts and sometimes even human sacrifices was common in the Aztec culture. Montezuma hoped that the celestial invaders could be bought off and would go away. Cortés, however, fooled the Aztecs and simply accepted the emperor's bribes, demanded more, and then continued his march.

The emperor's ransom also included cacao beans. Montezuma considered cacahuatl an ambrosia from the gods; it was a drink too good for the common people. Indeed, the Aztecs, Mayans, and Toltecs before him valued chocolate so highly that they used the cacao beans as currency; caches of the beans were among the artifacts recovered from the grave sites of these civilizations.

Serving cacahuatl to the Spanish conquerors in great golden goblets, Montezuma also revealed to Cortés that it had a secret ingredient; he confided that he drank chocolate by the potful because it enhanced his sexual powers. For all its regal importance, however, Montezuma's cacahuatl was very bitter, and the Spaniards did not find it to their taste. To make the concoction more agreeable, Cortés and his countrymen later sweetened it with cane sugar—a delicious discovery.

Cortés sent his newfound treasure back to King Carlos V of Spain, explaining its benefits more delicately than Montezuma had: "It is the divine drink that builds up resistance and fights fatigue." This delightful plunder entranced the nobility: They became so possessive of it that they kept its existence a secret from outsiders for nearly 100 years. Spanish monks eventually spilled the beans—so to speak—and let the secret out. It was not long before chocolate gained acclaim throughout Europe as a delicious, health-giving food. Even when the rest of Europe discovered chocolate, it remained for many years the prerogative of the wealthy and influential.

Around 1657, chocolate spread across the English Channel to Britain. By 1765, chocolate completed the circle from New World to Old and back again; that year, Thomas Jefferson opened the first chocolate factory in Massachusetts Bay. In 1828, a Dutchman named Van Houton discovered how to press the fat—cocoa

butter—out of chocolate. This was a major breakthrough in the substance's development, and it yielded some important byproducts as well: Cocoa butter is now used in soaps, cosmetics, and suntan oils. He also discovered hot cocoa when he mixed the powder that remained after he had pressed out the fat with water, and in 1850, he added sugar and cocoa-butter paste to ground beans, creating a sweet form of the substance. Twenty-five years later, the Swiss developed the first version of milk chocolate, and Henry Nestle improved on it by using condensed milk.

But the man who really made America fall in love with chocolate was Milton Hershey, who developed the old Valentine standby, Hershey's Kisses. Today, an entire city is built on chocolate—well, almost. Hershey, Pennsylvania, home of the world's largest chocolate factory, covers more than 18 acres. Hershey started out in 1900 with a caramel factory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He sold it in 1903 for \$1 million and built a chocolate factory in the middle of a cornfield. In his laboratory Hershey developed his own process for making chocolate using fresh whole milk. As his product caught on, he proceeded to build an entire city of houses, schools, and stores around his factory. Today, hundreds of thousands of pounds of chocolate are shipped from that location every week. Milton Hershey did for chocolate what Henry Ford did for the automobile: Hershey developed the machinery that made mass-produced chocolate, and suddenly the confection was affordable to everyone.

While the taste alone is reason enough to give chocolate on Valentine's Day, there is another attribute you might want to consider: The candy may make the recipient more romantic. Old Montezuma wasn't too far off the mark—an analysis of chocolate shows it contains small amounts of phenylethylamine, a chemical produced naturally in the brain, that some scientists believe increases when people fall in love. Chocolate as an aphrodisiac? Enjoy a piece or two, and you be the judge. □

Henry Holden is a free-lance writer and photographer based in Randolph, New Jersey.

CONFIGURATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

for Products, Processes and Facilities

The Foundation for Continuous Improvement and Total Quality Management

Series 8 and 9

COURSE SCHEDULES

West Coast San Diego (Series 8)		East Coast Washington DC (Series 9)	
Course I	Mar 19-21	Course I	Jun 18-20
Course II	Mar 21-23	Course II	Jun 20-22
Course III	May 21-23	Course III	Aug 20-22
Course IV	May 23-25	Course IV	Aug 22-24
Course V	Jul 16-18	Course V	Oct 8-10
Course VI	Jul 18-20	Course VI	Oct 10-12
Executive Course X	Feb 22-23	Executive Course X	Aug 16-17

Certification is awarded to those satisfactorily completing Courses I through VI

(619) 546-8118

CMII INSTITUTE OF CONFIGURATION MANAGEMENT

Arizona State University
College of Engineering and Applied Sciences

CONTACTS



BAUSCH & LOMB

BARNES+HIND

CooperVision

CIBA
VISION®

Johnson & Johnson

Fast, Convenient, Direct-to-You savings of up to 70%. All Brands and Prescriptions in stock, including Tints & Disposables. Overnight shipments available. Lenses 100% Guaranteed in factory-sealed vials.

Call for information and
FREE CATALOG.

Call Toll Free: 1-800-666-LENS
International: 1-305-968-4555

LENS EXPRESS

America's #1
Shop-at-Home
Contact Lens
Service™

2780 Gateway Dr., Pompano Bch., FL 33069