

Campus confectioners: Family duo teaches chocolate making

Chloe Huang and Zachary Crystal • February 26, 2024



Kensie Pao

SAY CHOCOLATE!— Reine and Carine proudly display their freshly made chocolate-dipped fruit and ganache-filled chocolates. The mother-daughter duo collaborates to prepare for lessons. “If I’m planning a class, I’ll always ask for her [Reine’s] input,” Carine said.

As a velvety aroma of chocolate wafts around the culinary classroom, students grow tense with anticipation. Student’s eyes are glued on chocolatier Carine Schultz’s every move as she gently taps the plastic mold against the counter. She then precisely lifts the top of the mold to reveal a beautiful array of shiny Belgian chocolate filled with raspberry ganache. Students’ eyes widen and the room fills with applause and bubbling conversation, exclaiming Schultz’s expertise.

As instructors of one of the five culinary classes at Palo Alto's Adult School, Carine Schultz and her daughter, Palo Alto High School senior Reine Schultz, have provided the community with an immersive chocolate-making experience since 2021.

Each class is \$60 per person and is hosted monthly from August to March in Room 103 at Paly. Walking into the classroom, students first see a stand in the middle of the room for Reine and Carine to perform their chocolate-making magic. Surrounding stations are meticulously prepared with ingredients for students to create their own ganache-filled Belgian chocolates.

"It [chocolate making] was a thing my mom and I would always do together. Especially [while] moving around, it was always a thing the two of us had in common."

— *Reine Schultz, senior*

The class, "Belgian Chocolates Galore," begins with a step-by-step demonstration of the chocolate-making method the mother-daughter duo has mastered. Carine explains the scientific reasoning behind each step.

"You start with chocolate at room temperature, then you melt it down to 45 degrees Celsius," Carine said.

"Reine has always been my little helper. Every country we have been in, she has always been interested, always been on the side, always willing to help get full of chocolate."

— *Carine Schultz, instructor*

As students receive a ladle full of luscious melted chocolate, they begin the meticulous process of molding and filling, allowing little room for error. Shannon Varty, an Adult School student, quickly discovered that she had begun a complex process.

"I don't think anybody could just do that [chocolate making] on their own without instruction," Varty said.

The class is the latest step in Carine's 30-year-long global culinary journey, which was initially inspired by her family's chocolate business in South Africa. Her passion became her profession as she pursued chocolate-making in European countries such as Belgium, Germany and England. She took Reine along for the journey from Australia to Hong Kong to the United States.

"It [chocolate making] was a thing my mom and I would always do together," Reine said. "Especially [while] moving around, it was always a thing the two of us had in common."

Reine said she started baking at a young age and began chocolate-making around 12 years ago. Now, Reine manages marketing and the Instagram account for the class. During class time, Reine constantly circles around the classroom, assisting students and working behind the scenes to set up for her mom to demonstrate each step, allowing the class to run smoothly.

“Reine has always been my little helper,” Carine said. “Every country we have been in, she has always been interested, always been on the side, always willing to help get full of chocolate.”

Carine and Reine both spend hours collaborating to prepare recipes, ingredients and lesson plans. Carine said she thinks it’s rewarding to see people succeed at chocolate-making, especially since chocolate is difficult to work with.

“When you de-mold their product and it comes out all shiny and it tastes so good, there’s nothing better than fresh chocolate,” Carine said. “It’s the reward of seeing people’s faces like, ‘Wow, I made that.’”



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INSIDE OUT — The mold is flipped to get rid of excess chocolate. “The chocolate is viscous,” Carine said. “It will stick to the shell of the mold creating the shape that you want to put your filling in.”