



DAR

TAVERNIER-SINGER

Curated by Michele Muska
Photography by Clare Barboza



DAR TAVERNIER-SINGER lives and works in a small town on the banks of the Connecticut River in Southern Vermont. She draws upon Vermont's landscapes, her travels and the farm-to-table movement as well as her background in the arts, sciences, and restaurants for inspiration for her beautiful chocolate creations. When she's not in the kitchen you can find her hiking, gardening, drawing, traveling to cities near and far to see live music and visit restaurants, museums and galleries, and renovating her 1930s bungalow with her partner in business and life, her husband John.



in the kitchen first began, where I would let my imagination go wild and tweak recipes and experiment with ingredients. The family table often included milk and cream from local dairy farmers, fruits and vegetables from area farms, orchards and our own garden. We loved wild berries picked trailside in the nearby Adirondacks, fresh-caught trout from local lakes and streams, and venison, rabbit and pheasant that my father hunted and prepared (verily leading me to become a vegetarian for many years, but that's another story).

My parents supported my creativity, and drawing, painting, cooking, reading and writing were things I've always done ever since I can remember. I took art, dance, music, embroidery, sewing and cookery lessons growing up, and a favorite after school activity was baking and preparing meals.

My love of the outdoors and for creating led me to study biology and art as an undergraduate. I did fieldwork with a botany professor and drew scale illustrations of the plant systems we studied and their cross sections through a microscope. Today I make drawings and small watercolor illustrations of the often beautiful ingredients we source locally to make our confections. Through college and years following I worked front and back of house in restaurants and cafés in New York State, San Francisco, the Czech Republic and Vermont. I enjoyed spending a summer camping in Northern Sweden, foraging wild blueberries and cloudberries to make preserves to eat with the crusty Polish bread I'd brought along.

My experimentation with chocolate started in earnest in the late 90s in Vermont, where I began honing my truffle-making skills by tempering chocolate at home on a marble slab, and refining my ganache recipes using ingredients from local farm stands and farmers markets.

I am self-taught as a confectioner, drawing on my years of working in restaurants and researching techniques in books and online and visiting other chocolatiers. I learned hands-on through trial and error and lots of practice.

Cooking, like art, is a form of expression in which the creation is made to be shared, and to impart a certain feeling or emotion, to talk about history in a cultural or personal context, and to describe or explain something in a way other than verbal. Cooking brings people together. I began creating our Chocolate Charcuterie so people could use them on a cheese board or hors d'oeuvre tray, and explore new pairings of flavors which I hope inspire conversations, ideas and connections.

Stepping out of the often frenetic energy of production kitchens and into the quiet of our home is helpful for introspection and reflection. I begin playing around with ingredients there, researching techniques and trying out new ideas.

Next comes scaling the recipe up in our commercial kitchen, which I think of as my laboratory. After I make a batch and we test it among ourselves, the farmers market and our factory shop are great places to test new ideas with customers.

A pastry chef friend described my approach as earthy and elegant, which I found to be a great compliment. I find inspiration in classic techniques and old world cuisines, as well as new, adventurous explorations in cooking, and the natural world.

I get a lot of inspiration from travel, hiking, our kitchen garden, farmers and fellow foragers, friends who are fantastic home cooks, and creative professional chefs. Our weekly farmers market is a concentration of some of the area's finest growers and makers in one place and I am there every week. I can check in regularly on what's ripe and in season, what's new and exciting, and what is growing particularly well that year. I am honored to have relationships with local farmers and foragers as a business owner, and some grow or forage ingredients specifically for our recipes. Foraging and gardening makes people more connected to their food, where it comes from, what it looks like and how it grows. Appreciative people have to work for it, take care of it, and know it.

Creating new confections often starts at home, when I've brought new ingredients back from a farm stand or a shop, a jaunt in the woods, or have discovered a dish at a restaurant or in a cookbook that sparks something.





MUSHROOM TRUFFLES FROM OUR FORAGE COLLECTION

Getting people to try unusual recipes with ingredients they don't usually associate with chocolate is often a challenge. I am most excited when I come up with recipes that evoke the flavors, sights and textures of walking along a forest trail, into a field or through an orchard.

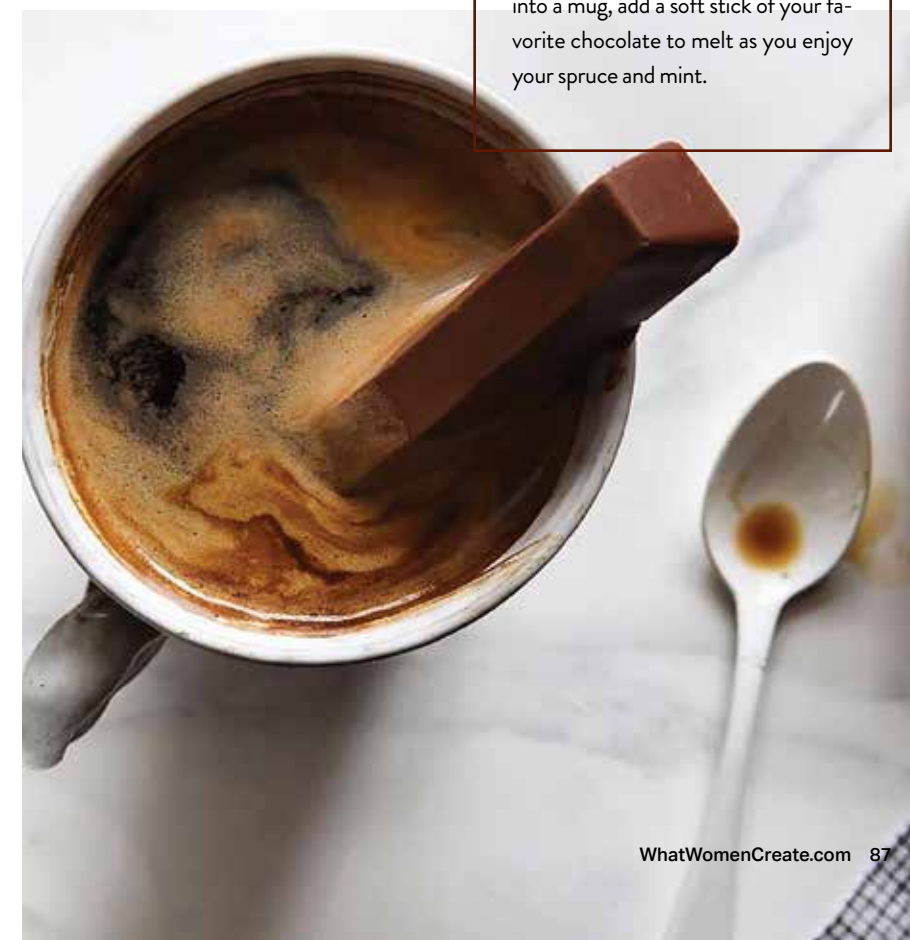
Our bonbons made with locally grown organic fermented garlic and our collection of mushroom truffles have become best-sellers. Our Forest Path Mini Tiles were inspired by a hike in the springtime, when I looked down at the litter of pine needles and cones on a gravelly path and thought "I'd like to recreate that in chocolate."

Pine needles can be added to melted chocolate but also may only be sprinkled on top of the finished candy. Pine has a beautiful, resinous flavor: herbal, sweet, a little perfumed—like rosemary all dressed up. It's a flavor that is mainly associated with colder weather, but actually, the buds in spring and early summer offer the most gentle flavor. In spring you may want to substitute pine anywhere savory-sweet herbs like rosemary, thyme, and lavender are called for. You will need to experiment to see which chocolates taste best to you with which pine needles.

PLEASE NOTE: Not all pines, spruces and firs have edible needles, so make certain if foraging your own needles that you familiarize yourself with which are edible and which are poisonous. And they all have different flavors...some you may like more than others. Pine/spruce needles should be thoroughly sorted, rinsed/cleaned and dried off before using in recipes.



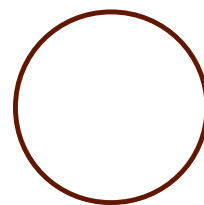
FOREST PATH MINI TILES



If you prefer not to eat pine needles you can also get pine flavor in your desserts by steeping it: put pine clippings into a bowl, add hot milk or cream, and let it all sit for a while. Strain the milk and, like that, your milk will have a delicious forest taste.

HOT CHOCOLATE WITH SPRUCE AND MINT

Chop 3 oz. semisweet 65% dark chocolate. Heat 8 oz. milk or vegan plant-based milk on low heat until scalding/steaming. Remove from heat. Add 1 Tbsp dried or fresh mint leaves and 1 tsp dried or fresh spruce needles and stir, then cover and let steep for 10 minutes. Strain the heated and infused milk with a fine mesh strainer into another pan. Gently heat to scalding again, then remove from heat and add the chocolate, stirring until it's fully melted. Pour into a mug, add a soft stick of your favorite chocolate to melt as you enjoy your spruce and mint.



ur saucisson-style and pâté-style chocolates look like and act like charcuterie and are made with Vermont cheeses or toasted nuts and savory herbs.

They were designed to be used on a cheese board and paired with fruit, bread, wine, cheese and cured meats, so people use them as a creative addition to their entertaining.

Coffee, wine, cheese, beer and chocolate pairings can heighten your flavor experience! We've created an easy chocolate food pairing and beverage pairing for you to explore. From like-goes-with-like to contrasting flavors combinations, here are some pairing and serving suggestions I especially enjoy:

SLICEABLE CHOCOLATE SAUCISSON-STYLE CHARCUTERIE

We suggest serving our rich, textured sliceable chocolate charcuterie with french bread or toasts, pizzelles, fresh and dried fruits, shortbread cookies, salty crackers, sweet & crisp olive oil tortas, fresh unsweetened whipped cream, artisan cheeses & sliced cured meats, or whatever your heart desires.

Soppressata Di Cioccolato Dark Chocolate Ganache Log with Fermented Black Garlic, Chili & Black Pepper Flakes & Sliced Almonds

- **CHEESES:** chèvre, pecorino, piccante provolone, sharp cheddars
- **FRUITS & NUTS:** ripe nectarines, peaches, raspberry preserves, marcona almonds
- **CURED MEATS:** salami/salumi, soppressata
- **SPIRITS:** zinfandel, syrah, creamy porter or stout, amber, vienna style lager, fruity hard ciders, ice cider, chai, fruity sour ales



Chocolate saucisson is chocolate that is rolled (sometimes in icing sugar) to look like a French or Italian meat salami (saucisson).



Chocolate Salami Dark Chocolate Ganache Log with Marsala-Marinated Fig, Rosemary Shortbread & Toasted Hazelnut

- **CHEESES:** blue cheeses, washed rind cheeses, aged and smoked cheddars
- **FRUITS & NUTS:** dried and fresh figs, fresh and dried apples & pears, roasted almonds and hazelnuts
- **CURED MEATS:** salami/salumi, prosciutto
- **SPIRITS:** madeira, marsala wine, sherry, port, porter, crabapple ciders, hard apple ciders, sour Belgian ales

Chocolate Mortadella Dark Chocolate Ganache Log with Pistachios, Cardamom Shortbread & Medjool Dates

- **CHEESES:** soft goat cheeses, young soft cheese like a fromage blanc, greek style yogurt spiced with honey and orange water, or with cinnamon and black pepper, camembert
- **FRUITS & NUTS:** citrus or apricot preserves, spiced stone fruit jams, dates, pistachios and almonds
- **CURED MEATS:** salami/salumi
- **SPIRITS:** African chenin blancs, red zinfandel or syrah, crisp mineral white wines, Vermont meads, rich pear ciders, saisons, herby gins

**Spreadable, Smooth Chocolate
Pâté-Style Charcuterie**

Our pâté chocolats are blended with savory Vermont cheeses and are sliceable when they reach room temperature. Spread on toasts, thinly sliced baguette, water crackers, cookies, or other biscuits. Place a thick slice on warm toasted bread, pancakes, french toast and waffles for a divine, melty treat!

To serve as individual desserts, float a couple of thick slices on a pool of berry coulis, a sweetened red wine reduction or crème anglaise, and serve with fresh fruits and unsweetened freshly whipped cream.

- **CHEESES:** soft goat cheeses, fresh whipped cream, heavy cream whipped with honey, taleggio, brie, tomme, tomme de chèvre
- **FRUITS & NUTS:** summer berries like strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries and red cherries, cranberry preserves, hazelnuts, almonds
- **SPIRITS:** port, sherry, sparkling wines like champagne, cava, prosecco, fruit wines, fruity rosés, lambrusco, off-dry rieslings, blanc de blancs, lambics, sour belgian beers, scotch, hoppy fruity IPAs

I love being a part of a gathering incorporating my chocolate, where people are discovering new flavors and possibilities. Through my chocolates I want to inspire a sense of experimentation, adventure and sharing through creating.

PRO TIP: Make a delicious Kir Royale with champagne and a splash of cassis, or a Chocolate Kir with sparkling wine, a splash of crème de cacao and a strawberry or cherry garnish, or a sprig of fresh mint.



PHOTO BY DAR TAVERNIER-SINGER

Who doesn't love grilled cheese? Well then, how about grilled chocolate and cheese? Our pâté-style chocolate charcuterie lends itself to a scandalously delicious toasted sandwich. Blended with Vermont made cheeses and butter, it's a simple solution to an extravagant bite. Assembled ahead of time and grilled just before serving, cut into quarters and serve at your next gathering. I guarantee guests won't let them stay on the platter long! They make delicious breakfast sides, like a warm and melty pastry.

Grilled Chocolate & Cheese Pâté

INGREDIENTS

- Thinly sliced hearty bread
- Tavernier Chocolates pâté chocolat chilled & sliced to about 1/4" thickness
- 1-2 Tbsp olive oil
- Flake sea salt
- Fresh fruit thinly sliced (optional)

1. Heat 1-2 Tbsp oil on a well-seasoned frying pan on medium-high heat.
2. When pan is hot, place 2 slices of bread on pan and press frequently with a spatula to

3. brown, approximately 2-4 minutes, checking its progress after 1-2 minutes so it doesn't burn.
3. When bread is toasted and a golden brown, flip and brown opposite side for another 2 minutes, pressing down on bread with spatula.
4. Place slices of chocolate pâté on one slice, making sure that the pâté that is on top of the bread does not hang over the sides (it will melt quickly onto the pan & burn!). If you wish to add sliced fresh fruit (we love apples, pears, peaches or fresh strawberries), now is the time to do it! Cover and brown for another 1-2 minutes until pâté is melted.
5. Remove from heat, place both slices separately on cutting board with your spatula. Drizzle a tiny bit of fruity, cold pressed olive oil over the top of the melted pâté, sprinkle with flake sea salt. Press plain toasted bread slice on top of the melted & toasted pâté slice, cut into halves or quarters, & serve while warm.

Voilà! Enjoy!

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