

# Where to get your Valentine's Day chocolates in L.A.



Boxes of truffles being wrapped at Valerie Confections. (Cheryl A. Guerrero / Los Angeles Times)



By **Amy Scattergood**

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**I**t's that time of year again: time to find some roses, make a dinner reservation (your temple of haute cuisine, my taco truck) or engineer your own meal for your beloved, and locate some very good chocolate, assuming you do this sort of thing. If not, it's an excellent excuse to get yourself some terrific chocolate. Because comfort food is a very relative term.

**ChocoVivo** — At her Culver City bean-to-bar chocolate shop, Patricia Tsai makes chocolate bars, either

plain, for baking or in various flavors. There's a tasting menu for eating on-site, using stone-ground chocolate that comes from a farm in Tabasco, Mexico. The chocolate also goes into mugs of hot chocolate or sipping chocolate. Although you can add dairy to the mugs, the bars themselves have no dairy or soy and are thus great for vegans desperate for good chocolate. The shop feels like Groundwork Coffee Co., with beans and a counter to sit at and drink and sample from that tasting menu — and a huge sheet of copper on which they plan to show chocolate-themed films. Also potentially good for this holiday is Tsai's apothecary, which includes rose-cacao body oil. *12467 Washington Blvd., Culver City, (310) 845-6259, [chocovivo.com](http://chocovivo.com).*

**Compartes** — Compartes owner Jonathan Gramh operates a glorious chocolate business out of his original Brentwood location — he closed his Melrose Avenue shop, and is opening a new location in Century City in April. Compartes does it up for Valentine's Day, making gorgeous geometric heart-shaped boxes filled with pink rosé chocolate truffles, infused with rosé wine; 24-karat-dusted dark chocolate and strawberry Champagne truffles, infused with Moët; a box of heart-topped, chocolate-dipped Oreos; and dipped-to-order fresh strawberries. *912 S. Barrington Ave., Brentwood, (310) 826-3380, [compartes.com](http://compartes.com).*

**Dylan's Candy Bar** — If you have a preteen or teenage daughter, you've probably spent a lot of time in this upscale sweets shop at the Original Farmers Market. The shop, owned by Dylan Lauren, daughter of Ralph, opened in 2012 as the L.A. outpost of her New York candy boutique. It's a brightly colored fun-house place, loaded with novelty candy, chocolate, help-yourself bins and tables filled with seasonal sweets, including quite a selection for Valentine's Day. They have an ice cream window, if you want a cone while you shop at the nearby Grove. *6333 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles, (323) 930-1600, [dylanscandybar.com](http://dylanscandybar.com).*

**Edelweiss Chocolates** — This old-school Beverly Hills chocolate shop began life in 1942 as Candy Roundup, and if you walk through the shop from the back, as do the regulars, you can see the original machines, which are all still in use. Lucille Ball did this one day when the 1940s-era chocolate enrober was malfunctioning and got the idea for her famous 1952 "I Love Lucy" episode, "Job Switching," which is why there's a picture of Ball above the machine now. The shop's second owner was Swiss, and he's the one who renamed the place and added European-style chocolate to the repertoire. Now owned by the Zahir family, Edelweiss continues to make classic chocolates using the original equipment and offers about 85 types of chocolate candies, including their popular chocolate-covered pretzels and chocolate-covered marshmallows. A second shop opened in the Brentwood Country Mart in 2005. *444 N. Cañon Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 275-6003, [edelweisschocolates.com](http://edelweisschocolates.com).*

**Jin Patisserie** — Since Jin Patisserie closed shop in 2013 on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, it's been a bit harder to find Kristy Choo's glorious French macarons and chocolates. But they've hardly disappeared,

just relocated. Now in an industrial complex in Culver City, Jin Patisserie operates a tiny retail shop at its production facility, where it does mostly wholesale business and is open six days a week to the public. There you can pick up Choo's macarons, cookies and cakes, and selections of her chocolates, all made with Swiss Felchlin chocolate and in a variety of flavors and patterns. New this year: edible chocolate trees. 5741 Buckingham Parkway, Suite D, Culver City, (310) 399-8801, [jinpatisserie.com](http://jinpatisserie.com).

**Joan's on Third** — Joan McNamara has been operating Los Angeles' version of Dean & DeLuca since 1998, providing us all with great food, catering and exquisite gifts both from her original shop on 3rd Street and her second shop in Studio City. You can find chocolate in the form of brownies, cookies, cupcakes, roulade and cake slices. And on the counters and racks and shelves, which McNamara fills with gift items, there are Valentine's candies and cupcakes, bonbons, heart-shaped cookies and those old-fashioned little conversation hearts we all used to get as kids. 8350 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles, (323) 655-2285; 12059 Ventura Place, Studio City, (818) 201-3900, [joansonthird.com](http://joansonthird.com).

**John Kelly Chocolates** — John Kelly Chocolates began life over a decade ago as a wholesale chocolate factory in a small location in Hollywood. Now owners John Kelson and Kelly Green (the company name is a combination of their first names) have a retail shop next to that factory as well as another location in Santa Monica. Their signature Belgian chocolate is something called truffle fudge, and the pair fashion it into various exquisite iterations. They also make walnut caramel clusters, chocolate and peanut butter bars, tiny chocolate frogs and butterflies, chocolate-dipped dried apricots and figs and shortbread. You can also get gift towers, which look like the Platonic ideal of those [Harry & David](#) stacked boxes your relatives send you for Christmas. 1508 N. Sierra Bonita Ave., Los Angeles, (323) 851-3269; 1111 1/2 Montana Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 899-0900, [johnkellychocolates.com](http://johnkellychocolates.com).

**Little Flower Candy Co.** — Christine Moore's Pasadena shop is a neighborhood cafe with great sandwiches, salads and baked goods. But it's also a fantastic gift shop, stocked with seasonal candies, chocolates and frilly things — and Moore's sea salt caramels and marshmallows, which engendered her shop in the first place. For Valentine's Day, the place gets reconfigured with hearts and lots of pink, including pink marshmallows, bags of pink and red candies, heart-shaped cookies, old-fashioned Sweethearts candies and lots of chocolates. 1424 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, (626) 304-4800, [littleflowercandyco.com](http://littleflowercandyco.com).

**Lolli and Pops** — This shop is a hybrid of two worlds: the contemporary universe of indoor shopping that is the Glendale Galleria and the Old World charm of a shop that's decorated in wood and hand-lettered chalk signs, where the person bagging your chocolates is dressed like an early 20th century soda jerk. Lolli and Pops has chocolates and candies sourced from around the world, and tables and shelves filled with very cute things, such as teddy bears and giant lollipops and candy cases filled with marzipan, Valentine's petits fours,

liquor-infused truffles and more. *1128 Glendale Galleria, Glendale, (818) 546-1813 and other locations in Topanga, Thousand Oaks and Sherman Oaks, [loliandpops.com](http://loliandpops.com).*

**Mignon** — Mignon is a lovely old-fashioned shop, or rather two of them: the original in Glendale, which has been open for a dozen years, and an 8-year-old outpost in Pasadena. Both shops carry a large selection of chocolates, filled and flavored (ginger sea salt, green tea, Cuban mojito, etc.) and often stenciled with pretty patterns. There are Valentine's Day boxes, including one filled with red Champagne-ganache-filled chocolate lips, and strawberry-filled chocolates in heart shapes. Or, if you're having a really big party for your loved one, you can rent a chocolate fountain, which includes not only the fountain and the chocolate but also a "professional chocolate host." *315 N. Verdugo Road, Glendale, (818) 549-9600; 6 E. Holly St., Pasadena, (626) 796-7100, [mignonchocolate.com](http://mignonchocolate.com).*

**Sweet** — It helps to have a kid with you when you navigate this huge candy shop in the Hollywood & Highland complex on Hollywood Boulevard, for morale, for inspiration and because it can be overwhelming if you're not 13. There's a lot here: RuPaul's pop-up shop; a Chocolate Lab (yes, there are pictures of Labradors) where you can build your own chocolate bars and watch them being made; a TV that loops that "I Love Lucy" candy episode; and all the displays of hard candies, chocolates and lots and lots of merchandise. *6801 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 201, Los Angeles, (323) 462-3111, [sweetlosangeles.com](http://sweetlosangeles.com).*

**Valerie Confections** — Valerie Gordon and her partner, Stan Weightman Jr., started their business with toffee, and they now have three shops selling chocolates, pastries, confections and, at two shops, lunch. The epicenter of the business is in Westlake on 1st Street, in a cute 4,000-square-foot production facility, shop, chocolate factory and bakery. There, Gordon and her staff have, among other things, five chocolate-dipping stations, where they make their chocolate candies, all blended from their unique mixture of Valrhona and Guittard chocolates. For the holiday, they make special boxes filled with chocolates, including truffles and caramels — as well as chocolates shaped like hearts and golden roses. New this year, a 61% bittersweet chocolate bar, sprinkled with crushed rose petals and dehydrated raspberries. And do not forget their rose petal petits fours. *3360 and 3364 W. 1st St., Los Angeles, (213) 739-8149, and two other locations, [valerieconfections.com](http://valerieconfections.com).*

[amy.scattergood@latimes.com](mailto:amy.scattergood@latimes.com)

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