

# THE CHOCOLATIER

Master chocolate maker and lifelong truffle lover Amelia Rope founded Amelia Rope Chocolate Ltd six years ago

## When did your love of chocolate first manifest itself?

I loved chocolate as a child. The first grown-up truffle I tasted was in the late Seventies (I was about seven or eight) when I was given an old-fashioned unflavoured Prestat chocolate truffle. It was a chocolate pudding feast I remember to this day. My grandmother guarded them closely so there was no pinching one without her noticing!

## How did you manage to find yourself in the position you are in now with virtually no training?

I have no idea. I guess just a combination of hard work, not listening to anyone saying "no", staying focused and true to myself, and seeing where it leads to.

## When did you decide to take the plunge and set up your business?

In 2006 I wrote to a food editor asking to meet up to hear about how to become a food journalist. I took along chocolate truffles as a thank you. The editor took one taste and said "wow". Then I found myself on *Market Kitchen* coating and dipping truffles with Tana Ramsay. The turning point was having a vision of a rose petal with its lip covered in chocolate and a piece of gold leaf on it. I spent three months working out how to make it. A friend suggested I drop them in to food editors so I took the day off work and to my amazement, they proved a press hit. That was when Amelia Rope Chocolate was formed.

## How tough a journey has it been?

Tough, tough, tough. I sold my flat several years before I set up my business and used the small amount I made on it to pay for courses to prepare for going on *MasterChef*. At one time I moved 15 times in 15 months, house-sitting for friends or getting cheap rent. I was trying to grow a business with zero working capital, which is a test for juggling cash flow. Now, I look back and wonder how I did it. That said, I would tell anyone to go for it.

## How big an influence was your *MasterChef* experience?

I was amazed I was selected for the show and also asked to return the following year. As both Greg (Wallace) and John (Torode) said, I had no confidence with what I was doing and



## "I'VE JUST FINISHED WORKING ON AN EDIBLE ART INSTALLATION FOR IMMERSIVE POP-UP BAR CHOCOLAT FOR BAILEYS CHOCOLAT LUXE"

needed to go out and get trained up and build my confidence. In the end, I did that with my chocolate business.

## Is your business where you expected it to be in 2013?

I'd like it to be larger as I'm a tough task master, but when I take time to breathe and look at it, I do feel I have achieved a lot in the past year. I've just finished working on an edible art installation for immersive pop-up Bar Chocolat, which was a collaboration with Baileys for the launch of Baileys Chocolat Luxe. To have the opportunity to work with other chocolate lovers and a brand like this has been exciting – especially getting my product into the

hands of new and different people.

## What ambitions do you have for the business?

I would like it to reach the potential I've always believed it has. It is not about material success for me (although I would love a chunky salary to have some fun with), it's more about the product and where I want to end up.

## What does chocolate mean to you?

Heaven, hell, a honeymoon, a divorce, luxury, a treat, my life, creativity, challenges. It has taken me on one journey I never anticipated. It helped me become me.

[ameliarope.com](http://ameliarope.com); also stocked at Liberty

## IN MINT CONDITION

Try Amelia Rope's exquisite cocoa and mint truffles



## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 8)

### GANACHE (TRUFFLE CENTRE):

- ◆ 400g dark chocolate (75% or more such as Amelia Dark Edition 03 Tanzania)
- ◆ 25g unsalted farmhouse butter, diced
- ◆ 20g clear acacia or a blossom honey
- ◆ 200ml double cream
- ◆ A big bunch of fresh mint (washed and dried)

### COATING:

- ◆ Cocoa powder/chopped nuts/coconut/cocoa nibs

## METHOD

**STEP 1:** Chop up the chocolate and place 250g into a mixing bowl. Add butter and honey.

**STEP 2:** Place the cream and mint into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Bash the mint to make sure all the aromatic oil seeps into the cream. Once the cream is flavoured to the desired strength sieve the cream and immediately pour it over the chocolate.

**STEP 3:** Whisk the chocolate until it has completely melted and the mixture is smooth. Leave the mixture to cool.

**STEP 4:** Either pipe the truffles (using a piping bag and 2cm nozzle) or use a melon scooper to scoop out the truffles and place them on a greaseproof lined baking sheet.

**STEP 5:** Place the remaining chocolate into a bowl and gently melt over a saucepan of hot water. Remove the pan from the heat. Place each truffle on a fork and dip in the chocolate then refrigerate. Once they have set, coat them a second time, roll them in your chosen coating, then keep them in the fridge until they are ready to be eaten.