

Company enjoys sweet Christmas

By CHRIS MALETTE
Staff Reporter

Donini Chocolate Ltd. is enjoying one of its best Christmas sales seasons ever and the sweet Christmas yearning for candy has almost cleaned out the Bell Boulevard factory store.

The chocolate boom started midway through December, says factory store manager Antoinetta Ossanna, and "has been going strong ever since.

"We have sold right out of some kinds of chocolate and candy and that doesn't happen very often," she said.

In fact, last week Donini's candy-makers made 140 kg of chocolate-covered almonds. By this week they had sold out of the crunchy delicacies.

The factory, opened by the Donini family in 1980, has been achieving ever-increasing successful sales and

production levels since it opened, said Ossanna.

"Easter is traditionally our busiest time of the year," she said, "but this Christmas seems to be better than most."

It seems the traditional Christmas crock, as a gift, is falling from favor and being overtaken by sweeter, more sober signs of Christmas wishes.

"Instead of giving someone a bottle at Christmas, we seem to be getting people saying they want to give chocolate baskets for a change. They try it and keep up the tradition, forgetting about giving out booze."

Party packs, or an assortment of dark and milk chocolates are becoming popular office and company fare and Ossanna said many executives stock up early for Donini treats for their employees and customers.

"Dark chocolate is becoming very popular and is probably our best

seller," said the manager.

"Many people think it's bitter, but it's sweet. Ours is a semi-sweet dark chocolate and people allergic to dairy products like it, especially, because it contains no milk."

But the prime reason, she believes, for this season's chocolate success is the popularity of gift baskets.

"People will be putting together gift baskets full of all kinds of good foods from the area and, of course, they include our chocolates.

"Baskets, baskets, baskets! It seems that's all we've been hearing."

Customers for Donini products are not only from the Quinte area, says Ossanna. The reputation of the Italian chocolate-making family's sweet success has been spreading and she said customers regularly travel from London, Windsor, Ottawa "and we even have one man who comes to us from Thunder Bay each year."

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