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Donini

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What would Christmas be without mouth-wateringly, delicious chocolate?

Your Christmas shopping isn't complete without a visit to Donini's Chocolate,

335 Bell Blvd. Step out of the cold into the shop, stop, take a deep breath, and smile. Happiness is...

At Donini's you'll find the best chocolate in town — and possibly the friendliest, most upbeat service of the season.

Chocolate is a family tradition for the Donini's. For 40 years before coming to Canada, the Donini family ran a chocolate factory in Italy. Now, we're the lucky recipients of their expertise.

To this day, Donini's is a family business. Owners Santina and Franco Donini employ family members, like Santini's brother, chocolatier Vigilio Salvoni and his wife, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth explained to us that the secrets of making chocolate are twofold: it's a family business with family pride, and it's a scientific endeavour with processes that must be strictly adhered to. For example, she notes you can't coat almonds with chocolate on a rainy day — too much moisture in the air.

The day we visited, the women at the counter were preparing to display a new truffle, the Zabaglione (pronounced zaballionae, I think, or zabbie for short). This truffle is filled with a traditional Italian Christmas cream that is similar to egg nog, but richer and thicker, and made with Marsala. It is divine.

"We're a quality-oriented small factory. That's

By SARAH MACWHIRTER THE INTELLIGENCER

our edge. We're not so much about quantity, as quality. We're very fussy. We do everything by hand. We use real liqueurs, real fruit, real cream," Elizabeth says.

The attention to quality is evident in every bite. Not only is the presentation alluring, the chocolate taste is pure and intense. And the truffles are decadent. Italian specialty truffles are popular, and the use of hazelnut and marzipan keeps Dutch and European customers coming back.

This Christmas, Donini's is offering a wide variety of white, milk and dark chocolate Santas (in a variety of sizes and prices), Frosty the Snowman, Rice Crispy Santa faces, gift packages in Christmas cellophane wrapping, as well as chocolate dinosaurs, letters, phones and squirrels.

Of course, a Christmas open house or party is that much sweeter with mugs full of Donini's chocolate sticks, peppermint chocolate sticks, and orange chocolate sticks, and bowls of bars, buttons and bits.

Along with straight chocolate, Donini's drenches their chocolate over a variety of tasty nibbles, including pretzels, toffee, almonds, raisins, macademia nuts, ginger, coffee beans and ju jubes.

Lactose intolerant? Try any of the dark chocolates, or the line of Lactitol chocolate products. But, if you have a severe milk allergy, stay

for the Christmas season. For a more formal dessert, Donini's is always ready to take special orders of the delicious and beautiful diabetic cakes (also available for non-diabetics). These cakes are light and sweet, delicately flavoured — a real treat for the deprived diabetic palate. They freeze well, too, if you want to send the leftovers home with your diabetic guest.

Above all, Christmas is a time for truffles. The most popular truffles among women customers are the white and chocolate raspberry truffles, and the men are routinely pleased with Baileys, rum, and mocha truffles. The Tiffany is a perennial best-seller, complete with hazelnut, almond and toffee.

Nut clusters and candied orange peel look appealing as well.

All of the chocolate available at Donini's is made on the premises. When you're scratching your head, wondering what to buy for the teachers, mailman, your neighbours, your in-laws, hostesses, and your own family — keep it in mind that Donini's chocolate would be welcomed by all. And, a visit there doesn't feel rushed — it feels friendly, smells fabulous, tastes great (enjoy the samples) and you can rest assured your gift will be savoured and devoured.

For more information about Donini's, call 967-2378.

away. The risk of cross contamination is present.

What about diabetics? Donini's has chocolate bars and chocolate covered almonds for diabetics, and is offering special truffles for diabetics