



NEUHAUS

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THE INVENTION OF THE BALLOTIN:
THE ART OF
PACKAGING



ART NOUVEAU

Neuhaus regards the rich heritage of Belgian art and ornamentation as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Its Art Nouveau praline pays tribute to Belgium's golden age of design. Within its diamond-shaped shell, inspired by the jewellery industry, lies a delectable surprise that matches its aestheticism: a Peruvian chocolate ganache with roasted hazelnuts.

A similar tribute is paid to Art Deco (see box), which the Maître Chocolatier honours with an architectural design for its dark chocolate casing filled with Californian almond praliné and nougat slivers.



CAPRICE AND TENTATION

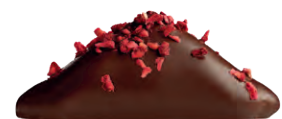
With Tentation, Caprice forms a duo of Irrésistibles - a title coined in 2010 to designate an evolving family of creations consisting of ten delightful pralines, developed from these two. How do you tell them apart at a glance? Caprice has a dark chocolate coating; Tentation has a milk chocolate coating. All the chocolates in this range are marked by a distinctive triangular shape that has established them in the national imagination and earned them various nicknames: 'Napoleon's hats', 'bicornes' or simply 'triangles'.

This duo of pralines was crafted with remarkable precision in 1958 to coincide with the Brussels Universal Exhibition. Caprice is a thin nougatine filled with smooth Madagascar vanilla fresh cream and coated in intense Belgian dark chocolate. Tentation features nougatine filled with Arabica coffee ganache and coated in fine Belgian milk chocolate. Together, they offer a contrasting experience, as the intensity of Caprice's dark chocolate meets the sweetness of Tentation's milk chocolate. Their respective ganaches, meanwhile, provide complementary flavours.

These emblematic chocolates derive their name from the cinephilia of Adelson de Gavre, son-in-law of Jean Neuhaus Jr. Deeply influenced by Brigitte Bardot's charisma - the French actress often portrayed characters that were as liberated as they were provocative - he chose the names Caprice and Tentation for two of his creations. These names reflect the sensuality

and audacity permeating this cinematic reference, consecrated by posterity. This duo, deeply rooted in the elegance and spirit of that era, remains a powerful symbol of the creativity and daring that have shaped Neuhaus's reputation. It also reflects the company's connection to its history.

In the wake of this fantastic twosome, the Maître Chocolatier created new versions inspired by today's tastes, named in the same semantic vein: Désir 64% Cocoa (nougatine topped with a dark Peruvian chocolate ganache); Plaisir (nougatine, hand-filled with a Piedmont hazelnut ganache and coated in fine Belgian milk chocolate); Séduction (nougatine topped with a raspberry cream); Délice (nougatine topped with salted butter caramel); Emotion (nougatine, hand-filled with fresh cream made of 100% Arabica coffee beans and coated in creamy white chocolate); Folie (nougatine hand-filled with a hazelnut ganache, coated in intense Belgian dark chocolate, and sprinkled with crispy hazelnut pieces); Frisson (a yuzu, sweet mango, and lemony coriander blend in a creamy white chocolate ganache, enrobed with dark chocolate, and sprinkled with orange biscuit crumble).



From top to bottom: Désir, Séduction, Délice, Plaisir, Emotion, Folie and Frisson



JEAN 72 %

In 1912, Jean Neuhaus Jr. revolutionised the confectionery world by creating one of Belgium's finest specialities. The 'praline', as Neuhaus named it, enjoyed immediate success. His invention was more than just a simple chocolate-coated bite-sized treat; it made culinary history by providing a radically new taste experience, delivering surprising contrasts and sweet harmonies.

Among the contemporary creations of a Master Chocolatier who enjoys revisiting his history (Pierre, Louise, Suzanne...), the Jean 72% praline stands out. It is a tribute to Jean Neuhaus' vi-

Jean et

sionary spirit and heritage. An intense 72% dark chocolate layer with subtle bitterness envelops its core, a smooth ganache made from exceptional Madagascar cocoa. This cocoa, renowned for its rich, complex flavours, adds fruity, slightly acidic notes that fully reveal the finesse of this creation.

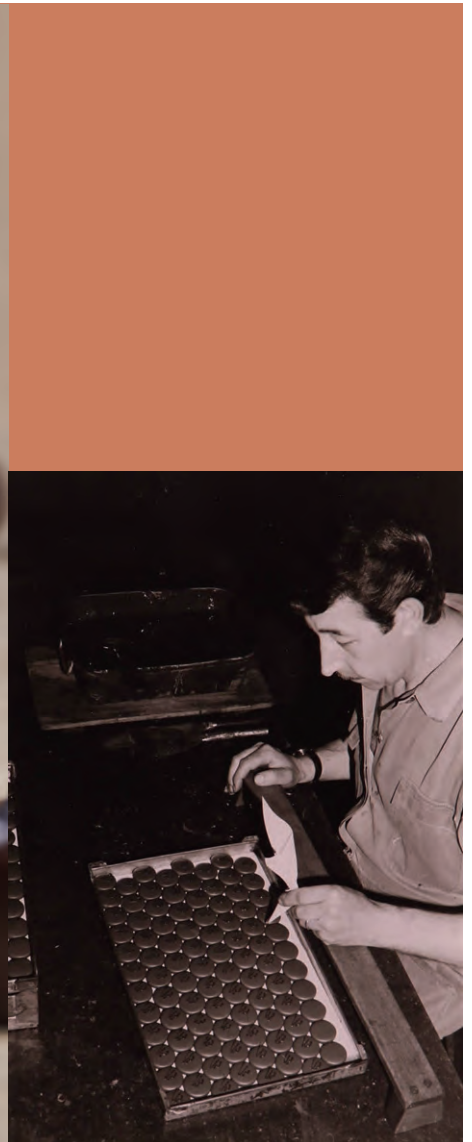
Jean 72% entices and delights dark chocolate aficionados while narrating a tale of passion for authentic taste and a pursuit of perfection. Savouring this praline is akin to diving into the unique realm of Neuhaus, where tradition and modernity converge to create an extraordinary sensory experience. It pays homage to a Belgian invention that, more than a century later, continues to delight palates across the globe.



The Neuhaus family as pralines! At the top, Jean and Louise, the heart in the middle is Suzanne, Frédéric is at the bottom left, and finally Pierre, the last generation, on the right



neuhaus



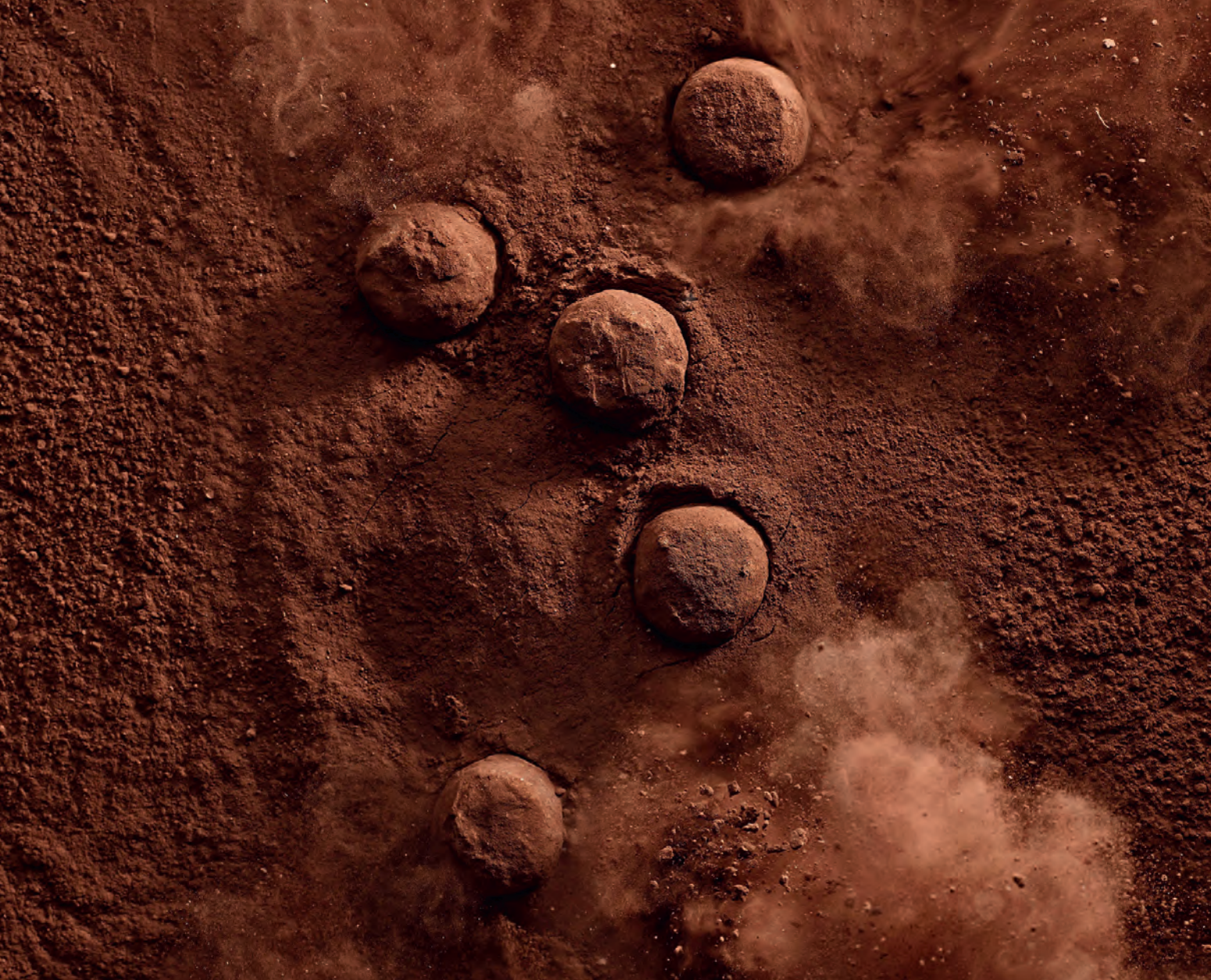
Nature abhors a vacuum but is not above working miracles. Two emblematic chocolates that had once been retired, Violetta and Bonbon 13, inspired such a wave of nostalgia among their loyal fans, quick to express their attachment, that they were allowed a triumphant return to the range. Violetta, characterised by its milk chocolate ganache, subtly scented with violet and coated in a thin layer of dark chocolate, captivates with its refined floral balance.

Bonbon 13 is a tribute to tradition: a crunchy hazelnut praline coated in intense dark chocolate that showcases seductive contrasting textures and timeless indulgence.

Fun fact: the number '13' on the praline was most likely initially a capital 'B', the graphic evidence of which has been lost over time. In light of the public's enthusiasm, the Maître Chocolatier had to reinstate these two must-haves. This proves that certain flavours transcend all trends and capture chocolate lovers' hearts.



Violetta at the top and Bonbon 13 at the bottom



THE BEST TRUFFLE IN THE WORLD

ACCORDING TO BLOOMBERG

In 2017, Bloomberg declared Neuhaus truffles the best in the world and ranked the 16-piece Prestige ballotin first in its category. Journalist and culinary critic Kristen Krader described these creations as a one-of-a-kind experience, a mix of refinement and mastery of chocolate techniques. 'Oh, my God, I feel like I just fell into a chocolate-filled swimming pool', she wrote, impressed with the charm of these generous yet delicate creations.

Their soft coating reveals an exquisitely unctuous and frothy core from which flavours unfold in successive waves. 'It makes you realise how many old or mediocre chocolates you may have eaten in your life', she added, emphasising the exceptional freshness of the Neuhaus products, which seem 'to have been manufactured right at that moment'.

The journalist was also very taken with the case containing these chocolate treasures. The bright red box,

adorned with elegant gold-embossed trim, promises quality in its own right. 'Just looking at it, you know what you are holding is special', she specified. This acknowledgement, among many others, speaks to Neuhaus's savoir-faire and its ability to elevate Belgian chocolate to a world-class level of excellence, confirming its place among the undisputed references in chocolate.

NEUHAUS A PIONEER IN ONLINE CHOCOLATE EXPERIENCES

Since 2025, Neuhaus has taken innovation a step further by launching a new service: customers can now assemble a custom gift box online. Wherever they are in Europe, they can choose from 38 varieties of emblematic pralines and have their selection delivered to their home or sent to a loved one.

This innovation continues a transformation that began five years earlier during the 2020 pandemic. This pivotal period accelerated Neuhaus' online sales, which increased sixfold in just a few months, revealing a real craze for remotely ordered chocolate. 'Since then, our online sales have continued to grow, becoming a perfect complement to our worldwide network of 750 stores', says Isabel Baert, CEO of the brand.

True to its 160-year history and visionary spirit, Neuhaus has always sought to combine tradition and innovation. With this service, the company meets the expectations of today's consumers by recreating online the unique experience of in-store choice. 'Nothing will replace the pleasure of in-shop browsing and tasting, but we can now offer an elegant, practical alternative to those who choose to order from the comfort of their homes', adds Isabel Baert.

This project marks a new stage in the evolution of the Maître Chocolatier in 2025, affirming its position as a pioneer in the world of exceptional chocolate and demonstrating its commitment to enhancing the customer experience.





TRANSMISSION, THE LINKS IN A CHAIN

Olivier Demol is convinced of this, but he's not the only one in the workshop: the belief that expertise is valuable only when passed on is ingrained in Neuhaus's DNA. The Maîtres Chocolatiers share their knowledge through words, hands, dedication and passion. 'Passing on' does not imply duplication; it entails translating knowledge into another hand, another sensibility. What matters is not mere repetition but the ability to make what has been learnt resonate, bringing it to life in another body, another story.

This vision achieves its full significance through the career of Éric Lauwers, the brand's ambassador since 2018. Although his entrance into the world of chocolate was not obvious, it quickly transformed into a vocation. 'Working with cocoa presents so many fascinating challenges that I chose to make it my profession', he says. His first enduring memory? A chocolate figurine he received at seven has remained etched forever in his gustatory memory.

After completing his education at the PIVA catering school in Antwerp, he and his wife opened a shop before he decided to join Neuhaus. In the workshop of The Loft, located in the Brussels Airlines Business Lounge at Zaventem Airport, truly a window on the world, he shares his expertise with travellers from around the globe. His teaching style is impressive: 'Chocolate is alive; it demands total dedication'. During his international demonstrations, the talented teacher evokes the precision required to temper chocolate to 31.5°C, the patience necessary at each stage, and the constraints such as humidity or temperature fluctuations.

He never ceases to demonstrate his commitment to transmitting knowledge and has trained several recruits poised to emerge as the next generation. 'Some of them continue to call me 'master'', he says with a smile. In Vlezenbeek, he has introduced young

souls to all the nuances of the trade, as he is convinced that training should be based on example and passion. Paraphrasing the commonly used description of Hendrik Conscience, the writer credited with 'teaching the Dutch-speaking Belgians to read', he adds: 'I teach them to taste chocolate!'

His career has been marked by many memorable moments. He particularly remembers the day when he was giving a presentation in a shop and suddenly noticed that a Cuban guitarist on the street had stopped in front of the shop window to scrutinise a music score that had been carefully en-

graved on a chocolate bar. Intrigued, the guitarist took out his guitar, tuned it by ear, and played 'Douce Nuit' from the score in front of the astonished onlookers. Eric recounts this memory with undiminished emotion. It is a perfect illustration of the breadth of his profession.



Éric Lauwers, Maître Chocolatier and brand ambassador

PERSONAL EXPRESSION

While some artisans cherish passing on their craft, others enjoy expressing a more intimate note, a singular sensitivity. This holds true for Alim Jetha, a talented artist who has transformed chocolate sculpture into a medium for personal expression, and of Koen Rombauts, who works alongside him.

Born in 1990 in the Democratic Republic of Congo and of Indian descent, Alim grew up at the intersection of spices and cultures. He moved to Belgium at 17, initially pursuing accountancy before, against the odds, shifting to chocolate making. His first epiphany came from Frédéric Blondeel in

Brussels, where he uncovered the expressive potential of the bean and the importance of gesture.

At Neuhaus, where he joined in 2016, this passionate creator cultivates a distinctly sculptural approach to chocolate. The material vibrates under his nimble fingers. He designs monumental pieces - for instance, a 40-kilo boar made for the Durbuy boutique - and masters every stage, from moulding to packaging and transport. 'Sometimes I feel more like an engineer than a chocolatier,' he smiles.



Koen Rombauts, Maître Chocolatier

The creations of Alim and Koen, completely edible, demonstrate a profound respect for the product. Alim emphasises the absence of artifice and the importance of preserving the purity of taste. His approach is almost architectural: patience, anticipation, and attentive listening.

However, emotion is the primary factor that guides his work. He recalls seeing a child captivated by a chocolate Saint-Nicolas in a shop window when he was tired after a lengthy workday and how this reignited his passion for the profession. 'That boy's smile made my day. Never mind how tired I was: in an instant, I was reconnected with the magic of creation'.

Alim dreams of opening his own chocolate factory, possibly in Africa. Meanwhile, he continues to learn, experiment, and share his knowledge in his unique way. His chocolate reflects him: humble, generous, and full of life.





FUNDAMENTAL VOCABULARY

Here is a glossary of the technical terms most commonly used at Neuhaus to enhance understanding of the know-how and language of chocolate makers. From bleaching to vanilla, these words reveal the precision of the actions and the richness of the textures that make up the house's daily life.

Fatbloom

Occurs when chocolate is not stored at the correct temperature (between 15°C and 18°C). The vegetable fat in the cocoa then migrates to the surface, forming a white veil that alters the product's aesthetics without changing its taste.

Caramé

Caramel is a sweet topping made by heating sugar until it melts and develops a distinctive flavour and a golden hue. It is often used in Neuhaus pralines for its intense yet comforting taste.

Coating

Coating covers a filling with a thin layer of tempered chocolate. This stage is crucial for giving the pralines a shiny, elegant finish.

Cocoa butter

Cocoa butter is a key ingredient in the production of chocolate. It is a vegetable fat derived from cocoa beans that imparts smoothness and texture. At Neuhaus, this ingredient is carefully selected to ensure exceptional quality.

Couverture

Couverture chocolate is a high-quality type of chocolate used by chocolate makers to coat their products. It has a higher cocoa butter content than conventional chocolate, which results in a smoother texture and a glossy finish after tempering.

Crystallisation

Crystallisation refers to the process by which cocoa butter molecules are organised stably and regularly as they cool. This precise structure, known as the 'V-shape', gives tempered chocolate its shine, crunchiness, and long shelf life. Well-controlled crystallisation prevents visual defects (whitening, stains) and ensures a perfect texture.

Feuillantine

This is a pastry preparation made from finely crushed crêpe dentelle flakes, used to add crunch to various sweet creations. Originally from Brittany, it is made by crumbling gavottes, ultra-thin crêpes rolled and baked until they become delightfully crumbly. Thanks to its delicate texture and slightly buttery flavour, feuillantine is often used in preparations that contrast melting and crunchiness.

Ganache

Ganache is a smooth mixture created by blending melted chocolate with cream (whipping cream, milk, or sour cream) or another liquid, such as tea, coffee, or alcohol. It is commonly used as a filling in various pralines and enhances the flavour of the chocolate.

Where does ganache come from? The story goes that an absent-minded apprentice pastry chef inadvertently spilt hot cream onto a chocolate preparation one day. His boss was furious; he first chastised him and called him a 'ganache' ('fool' in old French) before changing his mind after tasting the impromptu mixture.

Garnishing

Garnishing involves filling a chocolate shell with a filling, frequently utilising a piping bag to ensure even distribution.



DARK CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

A FONDANT DELIGHT

Chocolate truffles epitomise refinement and simplicity: a silky ganache, a crunchy coating, and a delicate layer of cocoa that enhances every bite. Their origins date back to the end of the 19th century, when a chocolatier is said to have mistakenly poured hot cream over melted chocolate, resulting in an incredibly melting texture.

In this recipe, we elevate the intensity of the chocolate fondant with a pinch of Guérande fleur de sel, which adds a subtle hint of iodine and enhances the flavours.

Preparation

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler and mix it with the cream and the pinch of salt.

Let the mixture cool in the fridge for 2 hours.

Shape small balls, either in the palm of your hand or using a piping bag. Place them back in the fridge for a few minutes.

Place each truffle on a fork, dip the fork into the melted chocolate, and then roll the truffle in cocoa powder.

ADVICE FROM THE MAÎTRE CHOCOLATIER

Tempering the coating chocolate stops the truffles from becoming sticky and provides them with a thin, crunchy coating.

Intense cocoa: unsweetened cocoa powder provides an elegant, powerful finish on the palate.

For something different, incorporate a dash of Espelette pepper, orange zest, or a hint of coffee into the ganache.

Enjoy!

Ingredients

(for about 70 truffles)

Fondant truffle

- 480 g dark chocolate
- 320 ml heavy whipping cream (minimum 35% fat content)
- 1 pinch of fleur de sel de Guérande

Coating

- 250 g tempered dark chocolate
- 200 g cocoa powder (unsweetened)

Utensils

- Bain-marie
- Saucepan
- Dipping fork
- Blender
- Piping bag (optional)
- Spatula or scraper



