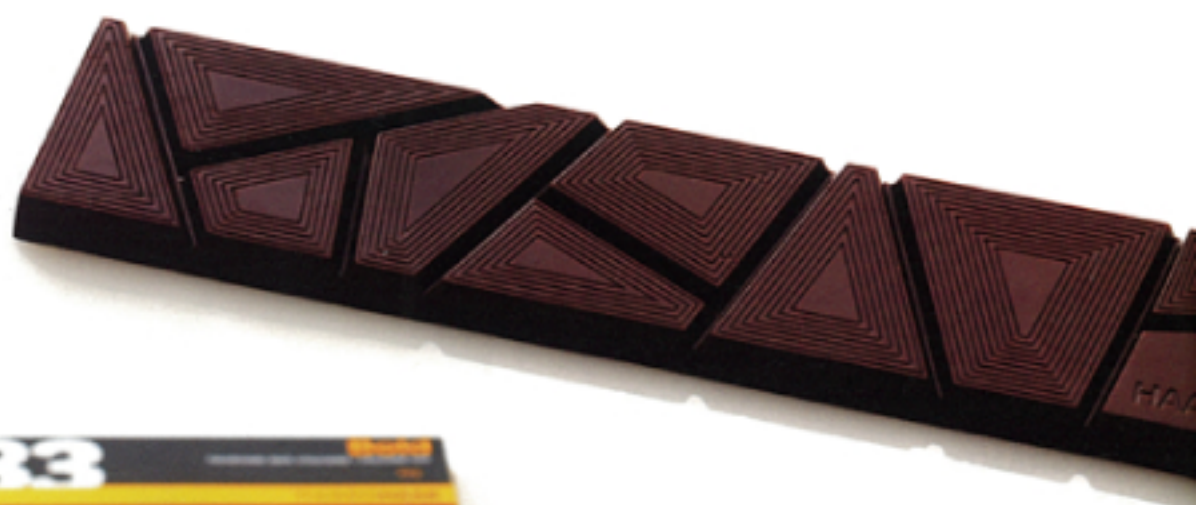


SWEETEST MAKEOVER

The North American consumer finally appreciates that the ritual of chocolate consumption is more important than the quantity consumed. Designer Marc Bricault takes this premise forward and, for famed Vancouver chocolatier Thomas Haas, has transformed chocolate design into something of a new genre.

Bricault started out by designing the architectural environment of Haas's pastry shop/café/chocolate factory in North Vancouver. At Haas's request, Bricault then reformatted the packaging for a brand new line of chocolate bars to be made on site. He crafted its elegantly embossed box, with large silver leaf numbers boasting each bar's cocoa percentage. He also reconfigured the stuff inside, by forgoing the standard chocolate bar mould for something far more audacious. Instead of the workaday grid of break lines, the purchaser of a \$4.50 Thomas Haas bar gets an artful frieze of asymmetric trapezoidal pieces. It's partly logistics, says Bricault: when you're dividing up a chocolate bar among friends of various appetites, it's useful to have the option of offering a larger or smaller piece. As for the next step, Bricault is currently designing a cylindrical container for a disc-shaped patty of nut-filled chocolate. "We just want to be more playful," he explains. "The standard chocolate bar is kind of boring, don't you think?" www.thomashaas.com

ADELE WEDER



Vancouver's Marc Bricault jazzes up Thomas Haas's chocolates with a redesign that envelops everything from the chocolate factory and the packaging to the bar itself.



Héctor Esrawe conjured the ribbed Oruga, one in a series of exuberant glasses commissioned by Nouvel Studio, a Mexico City workshop. Thirteen of the country's emerging and established architects designed the cocktail vessels.

ART OF GLASS

Mexico City's Nouvel Studio, the top artisanal glass workshop in Latin America, boasts healthy international sales: its products sell at Moss and Barney's, and it has conceptualized custom vessels for the MoMA Design Store and Ralph Lauren. The company's Mexican face, however, is defined by its top-shelf tequila and perfume bottles. To build on that, Nouvel channelled the creativity and name recognition of the local architecture and design elite into a bold new line of drinking glasses that debuted in North America last January.

It enlisted 13 architects and designers, some from Mexico's old guard, like Ricardo Legorreta, as well as such younger talents as Héctor Esrawe and Emiliano Godoy, best known for the socially conscious furnishings of their NEL collective. Breaking the barriers of generation and school, the project unites professionals more accustomed to competition than collaboration. And yet each participant stood out by designing a strikingly different glass – from Teodoro González de León's no-nonsense Untitled, to Michel Rojkind's Hansop, a holster-shaped tequila shot glass. www.nouvelstudio.com

JULIA COOKE