



Chocolate Unwrapped

TASTE & ENJOY THE WORLD'S
FINEST CHOCOLATE

Sarah Jane Evans



Antica Dolceria Bonajuto

Some people visit Sicily for Mount Etna, others for its beaches or its ruins, and still others for its wines. However, chocolate lovers make a pilgrimage to the town of Modica in the south-eastern corner of the island for its connections with the early history of chocolate. Sicily has been overrun for centuries by different nations, each leaving behind their cultural influences. The occupying Spaniards long ago brought their chocolate and the method they had learned from the Aztecs of grinding the cacao on a *metate*, a kind of mortar and pestle, and adding spices to it.

Despite the inventions of conching and tempering, the people of Modica remained loyal to the old ways. Northern and central Italy has producers of some of the most refined chocolate in the world (for example, Amedei, see page 70), but Sicily's Antica Dolceria Bonajuto, a business opened in 1880, relishes tradition. Unlike most producers today, they work with pounded cacao that still retains its cocoa butter. It is heated just enough to liquefy the cacao, and caster sugar and flavourings such as vanilla or cinnamon are added. The essence of the technique is that the sugar crystals are not allowed to get warm enough to melt – hence the grainy appearance of sugar and chocolate in the photograph on the facing page. The cooled mixture is then shaped.

Working with cold chocolate creates a very granular chocolate, so it is served in paper cups, as it disintegrates easily, or in bars. It lacks the convenience of a





NAME OF THE BAR *Antica Dolceria Bonajuto Cioccolato di Modica*

COCOA SOLIDS, BLEND OR ORIGIN *None shown*

INGREDIENTS *Sugar, cocoa mass, cinnamon*

WEIGHT OF BAR *100g*

BAR MADE *Modica, Sicily, Italy*

WEBSITE *www.bonajuto.it*

AROMA *Earthy and herbal with notes of tobacco*

TASTE *The texture dominates: the grainy chocolate crumbles in the mouth. A dark chocolate sensation comes through next. The melt is surprisingly light and smooth. The overriding sensation is of sweetness with a spicy finish.*

PROFILE

Floral	Nutty	☿
Fruity	Spicy	☿☿☿
Winey	Toasty	☿
Honey	Smoky	
Creamy	Earthy	☿☿☿



finely tempered bar, and it certainly lacks the sheen and gloss, but it makes up for all this in sheer personality.

Modica and its chocolate languished in a culinary backwater for decades. However, with the current interest in fine chocolate and the rise of the Slow Food movement and its celebration of local food customs, it is now being rediscovered. It also proves to fans of less processed and 'raw chocolate' such as Pacari (see page 178) that raw chocolate is nothing new. The bars from Claudio Corallo (see page 102) also have that same sense of history.