

Food

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Raising the chocolate bar

Give your valentine goodies that look as great as they taste

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When it comes to chocolates, the bar has risen considerably: artisanal, high-cocoa-count, single-estate chocolates. Confections infused with pink peppercorns, rosemary, lavender, chipotles; filled with passion fruit mousse or mojito ganache. Gold-leafed, printed with polka-dots and paisleys. Bonbons so delicately wrought that Faberge himself might have had a hand in making them. If you're seeking to sweep your squeeze off his or her feet with sweets on V-day, here are some of the luxe chocolates that struck our fancy this year.

Chocolate sculpture

Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates' sleek Kansas City boutique turns out some of the most elegant chocolates we've seen. Crafted in sculptural shapes, Christopher Elbow chocolates come in flavors such as single-malt scotch and orange-blossom honey [caramel](#). Collections can be had for \$8 for four pieces, up to \$70 for 42. Window-shop on the Web,

www.elbowchocolates.com, then call



Star-Telegram Photos/Ross Hailey

Charged for Charles

Charles Chocolates, based near San Francisco, makes swoon-worthy sweets. There are edible valentine boxes with bittersweet base and white-chocolate lid (\$45 and \$60) and boxed assortments in chocolate-brown and Tiffany blue that Holly Golightly would have approved of (\$30-\$90). The truffles, in vivid flavors such as mint and ginger, just knocked us off our feet. For ground shipping, order by Friday at www.charleschocolates.com or 888-652-4412.