

Frigoulette chocolate from São Tomé

It is said that chocolate came to Europe around 1550. The Spaniards brought the first cacao beans to our continent, while the Aztecs have been drinking cacaoatl, cacao water, for more than a thousand years, and flawless cacao beans of the best quality served as currency there.

Chocolate, first as a hot drink, later also in solid form with new processing methods, inspired all of mankind in the following centuries without exaggeration. On the occasion of International Chocolate Day, which falls on July 7th for an unknown reason, we tell the story of *Bernard Xueref*. At an age when others are retiring, the Frenchman starts a career as a chocolatier. The trigger for his passion is a cocoa bean from São Tomé & Príncipe.



All *Chocolaterie Frigoulette* products are made from São Tomé cocoa beans. For company founder Bernard Xueref, these are the best cocoa beans in the world. They come from a *Première Grand Cru* plantation and are certified organic. Transparency, respect for nature and a close and personal collaboration with his partner Kafka are important to Bernard Xueref / © Photo: Georg Berg

On the route du chocolate

The Frigoulette chocolate factory is located in the village of Beaufort-sur-Gervanne, in the heart of the Vercors Nature Park. A winding road leads out of the village towards Frigoulette. The manufacture is named after the land on which Bernard Xueref's family has farmed for generations. The flags of France and São Tomé & Príncipe hang above the entrance to the wooden building. The island state in the Gulf of Guinea is also known as the Chocolate Island. In 1822 Portuguese settlers from Brazil settled on São Tomé & Príncipe. They brought cocoa plants with them, which thrived on the volcanic soil. Soil conditions and the favorable climatic conditions near the equator led to a cocoa boom. In 1913, cocoa cultivation on São Tomé reached its peak with 36,000 tons. Today, the island state only produces around 3,000 tons. An environmentally friendly and sustainable increase in productivity is an important concern for company founder Bernard Xueref.



Bernard Xueref, founder of Frigoulette Chocolaterie in his factory. He discovered his passion for cocoa beans from São Tomé in 2010. He describes the aromas of the grand cru cocoa bean with notes of cinnamon, caramel and tobacco, slightly floral and slightly acidic / © Photo: Georg Berg

Best beans - Organic Grand Cru from Sao Tomé

Bernhard Xueref discovered his passion for the cocoa beans from Sao Tomé in 2010. It was the special aromas and the extraordinarily high quality of processing and fermentation that excited him, who had been dealing with agricultural topics all his life. It describes the aroma profile of the fine flavor cocoa from São Tomé with notes of cinnamon, caramel and tobacco, slightly floral, slightly earthy and with little acidity. Bernard Xueref travels to São Tomé twice a year. He keeps close contact with many protagonists on the island. Also based in São Tomé, Kaoka is the exclusive supplier of organic grand cru beans to Frigoulette.



Cutting the nougat pralines in the Chocolaterie Frigoulette. The cut praline does not require an additional chocolate shell. The manufacturer from Beaufort-sur-Gervanne only uses organically certified and fair trade cocoa beans from Sao Tomé. / © Photo: Georg Berg

Pure and without milk

Frigoulette only uses cocoa beans from São Tomé. No animal fats such as milk, cream or butter are processed in Frigoulette. Palm oil is also not used. Instead, pralines and chocolates have a cocoa content of 68 percent and only cocoa butter is processed. Many products can be tasted at the counter with a view of the manufactory. Frigoulette cooking chocolates with the aroma of lavender, thyme or mint are used in

French recipes.

Commitment and intercultural exchange

In 2013, Bernard Xueref bought two hectares of land on São Tomé. On the pilot plots, as he calls them, improved cultivation methods should increase the yields and thus the income of the local farmers. School projects are supported and over the years an intercultural exchange develops between schools on São Tomé and places in the Val de Drôme such as Beaufort, Suze-sur-Crest, Plan-de-Baix and Gigers. There is a lecture room in the factory in Beaufort. Groups of visitors, from tourists to school classes, learn here what makes good chocolate and that, in addition to excellent product quality, the protection of nature and fair payment for the producers are also important. In just twelve years, Bernard Xueref has become an influential ambassador for grand cru chocolate that is about much more,



Chocolaterie Frigoulette's Malakoff nougat praline is available throughout France and is particularly popular at Christmas. It stands out from the typical chocolates on the outside. Malakoff is one of the cut pralines that do not require an additional shell around the center / © Photo: Georg Berg

Malakoff Chocolates or the Food of the Gods

Theobroma is the Latin name of the cacao fruit and means nothing less than food of the gods. If, as with Frigoulette, all products are made with the best fine chocolate, this old Latin translation comes pretty close in culinary terms. Chocolate, pralines, cooking pallets made from flavored cocoa have nothing in common with the candies made from bulk cocoa that are on the supermarket shelves. An example of this is the Malakoff nougat praline from Chokolaterie Frigoulette. It is available throughout France and is particularly popular at Christmas. The Malakoff praline stands out from the typical pralines on the outside. It is one of the cut pralines that do without an additional shell around the core. The Frigoulette bestseller is wrapped in golden paper by hand. Production for Christmas is already underway in the summer.



The flag of São Tomé & Príncipe hangs on the building of the Frigoulette chocolate factory. The island state in the Gulf of Guinea is also known as the Chocolate Island. In 1822 Portuguese settlers from Brazil settled on São Tomé & Príncipe. They also brought cocoa plants with



The bestseller from the Frigoulette chocolate factory is wrapped in golden paper by hand. The Malakoff praline from Chocolaterie Frigoulette is available throughout France and is particularly popular at Christmas. Malakoff is one of the cut pralines that do without an



Automatic packaging of nut nougat pralines in gold and red striped papillotes in the Chocolaterie Frigoulette in Beaufort-sur-Gervanne in the Val de Drôme / © Photo: Georg Berg



On a cool morning, the bestseller from the Frigoulette chocolate factory is wrapped in golden paper by hand. Malakoff pralines, nut nougat pralines with 68% cocoa and roasted hazelnuts. Production for Christmas runs in the summer. Frigoulette supplies shops throughout



Bernard Xueref dedicated himself to making the best chocolate at an age when other people are retiring. In 2013 he bought two hectares of pilot plots on São Tomé. The goal on the test field is to improve the cultivation methods in order to increase the yields and thus the income



Chocolaterie Frigoulette's Malakoff nougat praline is available throughout France and is particularly popular at Christmas. It stands out from the typical chocolates on the outside. Malakoff is one of the cut pralines that do not require an additional shell around the center / © Photo: Georg



Employees at Chocolaterie Frigoulette in Beaufort-sur-Gervanne cutting nougat pralines. The cut praline does not require an additional chocolate shell. The manufactory only uses organically certified and fair trade cocoa beans from São Tomé / © Photo: Georg Berg



Bernard Xueref, founder of Chocolaterie Frigoulette, discovered his passion for the São Tomé cocoa bean in 2010. At an age when others are considering retirement, he built a company based on quality, organic production, fair trade, social commitment and intercultural exchange / © Photo: Georg Berg



An employee at Chocolaterie Frigoulette weighs ingredients for the famous Malakoff praline. No animal fats such as milk, cream or butter are processed in Frigoulette. Palm oil is also not used. Instead, 68 percent cocoa and real cocoa butter from São Tomé / © Photo: Georg Berg



An employee at Chocolaterie Frigoulette closes the mélangeur in which the weighed ingredients are mixed and heated. No animal fats such as milk, cream or butter are processed in Frigoulette. Palm oil is also not used. Instead, 68 percent cocoa and real cocoa



Bernard Xueref, founder of Frigoulette Chocolaterie in his factory. He discovered his passion for cocoa beans from São Tomé in 2010. He describes the aromas of the grand cru cocoa bean with notes of cinnamon, caramel and tobacco, slightly floral and slightly acidic / © Photo: Georg Berg



Shopping at the Chocolaterie Frigoulette in Beaufort-sur-Gervanne. In the open kitchen in the background, nougat pralines are already being made for Christmas in the summer / © Photo: Georg Berg



Tasting trays of São Tomé cocoa beans at Chocolaterie Frigoulette in Beaufort-sur-Gervanne. Visitors can taste the cocoa beans roasted, coated in sugar and coated in chocolate. Frigoulette only uses cocoa beans from São Tomé / © Photo: Georg Berg



In the Chocolaterie Frigoulette, the focus is on the origin of the starting product for all chocolate creations, the cocoa beans from São Tomé. São Tomé and Príncipe is the second smallest country in Africa after the Seychelles. The island state in the



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Sack of cocoa beans from São Tomé & Príncipe. The island state in the Gulf of Guinea is also known as the Chocolate Island. In 1822 Portuguese settlers from Brazil settled on São Tomé & Príncipe. They also brought cocoa plants with them. Company founder Bernard Xueref describes the aromas of the grand cru cocoa beans from São Tomé with notes of cinnamon, caramel and tobacco, slightly floral and not very acidic / © Photo: Georg Berg

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