

CASE STUDY

Carpigiani brings Hotel Chocolat's 'Ice Cream of the Gods' to life

A visit to Hotel Chocolat's Milton Keynes retail store and café makes it clear why the cocoa-growing chocolatiers is at the forefront of product innovation. Based in the award-winning Centre:MK retail complex, the Hotel Chocolat boutique is one of the company's 30 'Cocoa Cafés' and 60+ ice cream locations, and is a great example of the original retail offering developed by the brand over the past 14 years. The strong design ethos successfully marries the dual personalities of Hotel Chocolat – namely the sophisticated, fashion-led side of its stylish products and the earthy, authentic aspects of a hands-on cocoa grower.

The café menu reflects Hotel Chocolat's passion for authenticity, originality and ethics. One of their latest café innovations is 'Ice Cream of the Gods' - a smooth, silky, cocoa-nib ice-cream, freshly made to order using a state-of-the-art Carpigiani machine.

James Drake, Hotel Chocolat's Operations and Category Manager for Food & Beverage, explains:

"Opening cafés within our stores was a natural development for Hotel Chocolat, our café offering began with a simple menu of luxurious drinking chocolate, and was an instant hit with customers. Our café menu now includes a 'Cocoa Versus Coffee Bar', an eye-catching brownie gallery, and our new 'Ice Cream of the Gods', made from thick, rich, Jersey milk ice cream infused with cocoa nibs."

"Our mantra is 'more cocoa, less sugar'. As such, our ice cream only contains 12% sugar - with such well-chosen ingredients, there was no reason to mask the divine taste."

"We decided to call this recipe 'Ice Cream of the Gods', not just because of its heavenly flavour, but after the name of the cocoa plant itself, Theobroma Cacao, which translates literally as 'cocoa, food of the gods'."





Having created a world-class recipe, Hotel Chocolat then turned their attention to sourcing the equipment they needed to produce the ice cream, James continues:

“We recognised we needed a reliable partner to provide the very best ice cream equipment and ongoing support, and as we already used Carpigiani equipment in our London

restaurant, Rabot 1745, we knew they could offer the product range and national support network we needed. We worked with Carpigiani from the beginning and refined our unique recipe at their Park Royal development kitchen, gaining invaluable support and advice from the company.”

James goes on to explain how they worked with Carpigiani to choose the right soft serve models to suit their needs:

“We chose the Carpigiani 191 machines due to their simple and easy to use design which can more than cope with the volume we require, whilst maintaining perfect product consistency every time. After initially trialling our ‘Ice Cream of the Gods’ concept using the 191 soft serve machines in eight of our cafés, the great sales combined with positive customer feedback meant we quickly increased this number to over 60 locations.”



As Hotel Chocolat began to roll out their ice cream offering, Carpigiani launched the brand new 161 machine, a compact model that can produce up to 15kg of soft serve per hour but has a footprint of just 300x630mm (w/d):

“As the team at Carpigiani understood that some of our sites have very limited space, they introduced us to their new, smaller soft serve machine. The 161 machine offers simple plug-and-play and is incredibly compact, making it ideal for our smaller sites.

Thanks to the 161, we are now able serve our ice cream across the majority of our retail estate."



"The ice cream has proved an instant hit with our customers, served in both cones and tubs. We top each portion with an elegant shard of chocolate in 65% Supermilk, and a choice of innovative sauces. Salted Caramel and Hazelnut are always on the menu, but we also offer seasonal flavours – so far, this has included Mince Pie in the winter, and Sherbert Lemon in the summer.

The versatile Carpigiani equipment also enables us to offer 'Chilled Chocolat' with a shake texture, adding an additional dimension to our offer which particularly appeals to our younger customers."

In conclusion, James enthuses:

"Working with Carpigiani has been a pleasure from day one and I would undoubtedly recommend them. We have received exceptional support from the very beginning. To date we haven't had any equipment issues, however, thanks to Carpigiani's end to end service I am confident we are in good hands should we need assistance."



For more information on Hotel Chocolat, please see www.hotelchocolat.com.

To find out more about the Carpigiani 161/191 soft serve machines, or any of the other appliances in the company's extensive portfolio, please call 01432 346018 or visit www.carpigiani.co.uk.

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Issued on behalf of Carpigiani UK by:

Andy Taylor C.F.S.P.
Account Director
Rawlingson Lane
Fordbrook Business Centre,
Marlborough Road,
Pewsey,
Wiltshire, SN9 5NU

Tel: 01672 564099 / Email: andy.taylor@rlpltd.co.uk / Twitter: @RawlingsonLane

