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### **Re-Inventing chocolate in an ethical way.**

The artisan chocolate maker Josef Zotter has set himself the task of re-inventing chocolate. For him the chocolate produced by the industrial processes of the large multi-nationals is simply dull. The cocoa bean is a complex and rich source of flavours; to lose this in a sea of sugar and artificial additives is absurd. So, armed with some inspiration and a lot of experience he set about turning the established chocolate world on its head. Artificial flavourings, preservatives and similar products from the chemical industry would have no place in Zotter Chocolate.,

Josef started creating his chocolate masterpieces in his café in Graz but soon the demand proved too much, so he moved back to his parents' farm and converted some outbuildings into a chocolate workshop. These humble outbuildings have now developed into the Zotter Chocolate Factory where Josef and his wife Ulrike welcome many thousands of chocolate pilgrims to watch their chocolate being made and, of course, to taste it for themselves.

Josef used his long experience as a chef and confectioner to match and combine flavours that you wouldn't normally expect to find in a chocolate bar. Blood Orange; Cashew Nut & Pineapple and Cinnamon, Apple & Honey were amongst his early triumphs, soon to be followed by BaconBits and Celeriac, Truffle & Port Wine. Josef invented the term 'Hand-scooped' to describe his handmade bars, each bar being built up in layers; every layer containing its own distinctive taste.

In 2007 Josef made the leap to become a chocolate maker. This means that every step from the roasting of the cocoa beans via the roller mills, up to the finishing touches in the conche is now located under one roof. Most companies prefer to buy their chocolate ready-made, allowing them to concentrate on the marketing & packaging. Zotter is not only one of the few European companies which processes its own cocoa, but also the only one which produces exclusively organic and fairtrade chocolate from bean to bar. In this way Josef Zotter clearly positions himself against standardised mass production and the concentration of the chocolate market.

The Zotter range is wide and varied, from Hand-scooped, to single origin chocolate bars via drinking chocolate, each one carefully combining the finest of ingredients. Josef likes to challenge peoples' preconceptions but is definitely not a novelty chocolate maker. He allows himself the luxury of placing an emphasis on the subtleties and extravagances of the ingredients and to constantly explore the aromatic origins of chocolate. The packaging of these wonderful chocolates is also distinctive. Each variety is wrapped in its own individual work of art, the unconventional outer matching the exotic inner.

Josef's innovation is not limited to his chocolate. He very conscious of the impact that manufacturing can have on the environment, so even the heat used in the process is homemade. Cocoa shells and wood chips are burnt in a small steam plant, located behind the Chocolate Factory. In this way no waste arises from the production and the steam plant ensures an ecologically justifiable heat generation. The making of chocolate requires a lot of energy, so the additional power is obtained from green energy sources, because renewable energy will keep the motor of creativity running for the future.

Zotter chocolate is available from good delicatessens, speciality chocolate shops, John Lewis Foodhalls and online.

For further information on this release, an electronic copy or hi-res pictures please contact:

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