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Kitchen + Dining 2025

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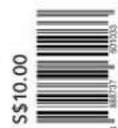
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STYLE ARTISAN

MODESI CHOCOLATES

Using 3D printing technology, Abhimanyu Goel and Aakanksha Jain produce chocolates shaped like local buildings and patterned tiles.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY VERONICA TAY

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Some couples took advantage of the pandemic lockdowns to Netflix and chill, in the literal sense. Others, like Abhimanyu Goel and Aakanksha Jain – Abhi and Aashi for short – were more restless, and decided to focus their energies on making chocolate. Not just any chocolate, mind you, but ones that are 3D-printed in the shape of iconic Singapore buildings.

You could call it their natural instinct: Abhi, 33 and Aashi, 32 are NUS Architecture alumni. Abhi is a Senior Research Associate at NUS and Aashi is an urban planner. They met in India in 2008 – Abhi hails from New Delhi while Aashi is from a town within the National Capital Region – before relocating to Singapore.

In Singapore, the pair enjoy discovering the country's multicultural heritage, especially when that heritage is writ large

on a building façade, such as a shophouse. Their chocolate project, which has since blossomed into a small, home-based business – Modesi Chocolates – combines their twin loves of architecture and chocolates (Aashi used to make chocolates in India).

"It came about in late 2022," explains Abhi. "I talked to some people and they suggested we start this as a serious business. We could reach out to more people since our friends and family members are all in the architecture and design community." However, the pair are quick to point out that theirs isn't a chocolate company, but a design company. Chocolate just happens to be the happy medium.

As design-conscious individuals, they see Singapore through an architectural lens, and translate their inspirations into bite-sized pieces of chocolate. Some are shaped like

buildings, while others resemble patterned tiles found on building façades. Compared to traditional methods of moulding chocolate, 3D printing allows very intricate, detailed designs to be realised.

At the moment, Modesi Chocolates is made from premium Belgian chocolate and natural ingredients, with no artificial colouring added. There are six flavours – strawberry and pistachio, as well as two types of dark chocolate; milk chocolate; and white chocolate.

Ultimately, Abhi and Aashi want their chocolates to bring people together.

"We want to tell stories. We're figuring out a way to do it through our patterns and chocolates. We want to spark conversations between people of different cultures," says Aashi. "It's a story of love," Abhi adds.



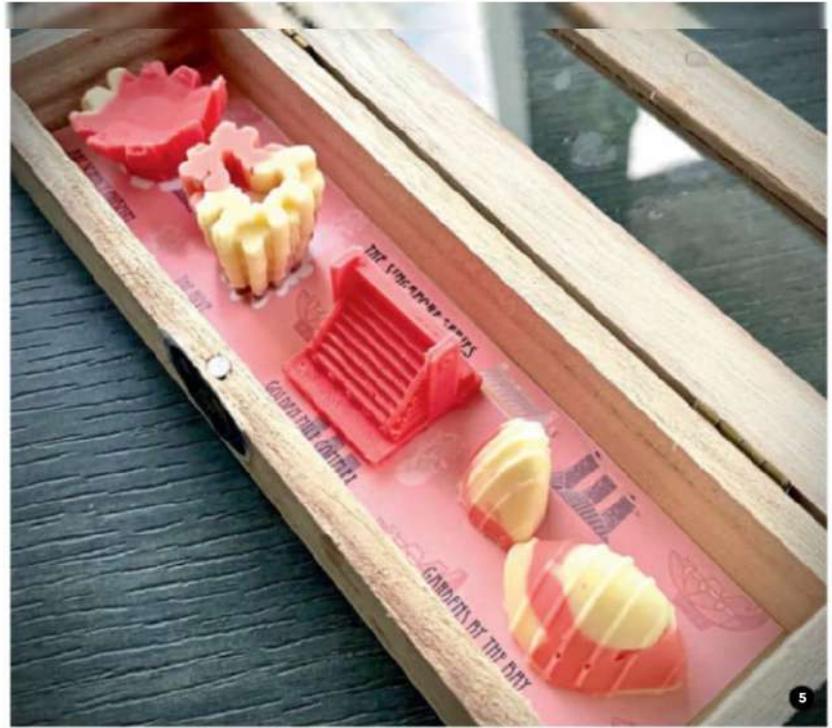
1. Abhimanyu Goel (left) & Aakanksha Jain (right).

2. These geometric Southeast Asian motifs were some of the first designs the duo experimented with.

3. The founders are secretive about the exact process of creating their chocolates with a 3D printer.

4. While their products are edible, the couple insist that Modesi Chocolates is more design studio than a confectionery shop.





How did Modesi Chocolates come about?

Aashi: Modesi is a covid baby. Both of us were spending a lot of time together at home. Abhi bought a 3D printer to use at home as he couldn't go into the office. I started making chocolates because I used to do that in India. Then we thought, why not combine the two? So we experimented by making building models, like the Sydney Opera House, out of chocolate.

Abhi: In 2021, we got shortlisted as one of 12 additive manufacturing startups at the Startup Innovation Forum in MBS. And then in late 2022, I talked to some people and they suggested we start this as a serious business. We could reach out to more people since our friends and family members are

all in the architecture and design community.

Aashi: The idea is that we want this to be a local product that celebrates Singapore in a way that has never been done before. We want to tell stories through our chocolates, and we want to start conversations between people from different cultures.

Abhi: It's a story of love – bringing people together in a unified humanity. And chocolates help us to do that.

Singapore has a rich cultural heritage and stunning architecture. Are there any architectural or cultural inspirations that have influenced your chocolate creations?

Aashi: Singapore is very uniquely positioned, in the sense that design is a very important part of

how you think of Singapore. The first thing that comes to a lot of peoples' minds is Marina Bay Sands (MBS).

Abhi: One of our first chocolate designs that we launched for National Day 2021 were models of MBS, the Art Science Museum, and Golden Mile Complex.

Tell us more about the stories behind some of your chocolate creations. How do you weave narratives into your designs to engage your customers on a deeper level?

Abhi: We are always coming up with new designs. All the patterns have meanings, whether it's a flower or a Buddha hand.

Aashi: In December 2022, we had a chocolate-making workshop with a group of cancer survivors at SGH. We were just there as service providers, but the chocolates

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5. This festive bundle features chocolates in the form of several iconic architecture in Singapore.
6. Aerial view of The Hive at NTU.
7. The brand's chocolates are available in various flavours as well.
8. The two had to develop an alternative way to package their products as well.
9. Orders can be made through the brand's instagram account @modesi_chocolates
10. The founders want to use chocolate as a way to spark conversation.

sparked conversations. One of the aunties said, 'Oh, this is a very familiar pattern. I have a similar window in my house'.

I also think that chocolate as a medium is transgenerational and transcultural. You wouldn't think twice about giving chocolates to a 12-year-old or a 50-year-old. And with Singapore's mix of communities, you can give chocolate during any festive occasion. So it's a nice medium to start conversations about culture or heritage.

Sustainability is a significant focus for Modesi Chocolates. How does 3D printing contribute to minimising waste?

Abhi: We have different pillars that define Modesi Chocolates. Sustainability is one of them. In fact, we did a Masters in Sustainable Design eight years ago.

Aashi: So we understand what being sustainable is. It was important to us that we didn't adopt single-use plastic packaging, so we 3D-printed our own boxes. Ideally, once we have a proper chain set up, we would like to take the boxes back, recycle them, and give people credits or discounts based on that.

How do you see the future of Modesi Chocolates?

Aashi: The business is ready to go to the next level. We're figuring out how we can scale. We recently collaborated with a Singaporean jewellery designer, Marilyn Tan, who does bespoke designs. She has an appointment-only store in Tiong Bahru, and we did a pop-up there for two months (November 2023 to January 2024). And we are in talks with a few hotels for B2B orders. We're open to collaborations!



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