



Critics' pick

Luxury sweet While balsamic vinegar and basil make us think of summer salads, for pastry chef Ellen Mirsky, the flavors make sense in a truffle. Mirsky, best known as the sugary mastermind at Public, launched **em chocolatier**, her line of inventive premium chocolates, a month ago. Mirsky's candies combine visual appeal (she has a background in fashion) with carefully calibrated flavors and textures that mingle salty and sweet, creamy and crunchy. Pistachios, sea salt and wafer shards, for instance, give chocolate bark (\$24/lb) a savory edge and satisfying crackle. We unexpectedly fell for the white chocolate variety, too, a slender slab studded with dried figs and perfumed with fennel seeds. The truffles (\$27 for a 12-piece box), though, are the real showstoppers: In the balsamic-and-basil sweet, the subtly acidic vinegar is the base note that carries a hint of fresh herbs—the kind of unifying ingredient that's only noticeable when absent. Mirsky finishes the bonbons with edible gold, silver or copper, making them as compelling to admire as they are to nibble. Now if only we could eat these in place of our veggies... Available online at emchocolatier.com and at Batch, 150B W 10th St between Greenwich Ave and Waverly Pl (212-929-0250)
—Stacey Harwood



PHOTOGRAPHS (TOP LEFT) BETT GUTMAN; MIDDLE RIGHT & BOTTOM) VA MIT COHEN