

# ARTICLES

## IMAGES / The Passion of the Chef



by Daisy Goldstein / photos John Londono

**] Looking at Gabriel Serero's food is almost as good as eating it. Not only do his dishes have a delicate balance of aromas, textures and melt-in-your-mouth tastes – they also look like little pieces of art. Serero skillfully paints sumptuous and decadent dishes that are a feast for the eyes. The Swiss chef and maître chocolatier first came to Montreal to work at "Toqué" and learn from chef Normand Laprise. He now pairs up with local choreographer/entrepreneur Yves Delima in their newly opened Café De Lima Lounge. There, Serero gives a new definition to the term "eye candy."**

**Your pairing of ingredients has been described as "mischievous" – what does it feel like to be able to play with food all day?** That's the fun part. When you can be creative, it's the most interesting part. You have to be open-minded in order to let the tastes evolve.

**What kind of games do you play?** For instance, my "Conte-Goûts" truffles, for which you have to guess the flavour. It's funny: when you know what taste to expect, you don't react the same way. There's also "mousse fighting," a tube filled with asparagus mousse. Two people suck from either side and whoever sucks the hardest gets the mousse.

**What's your favourite color? What's your favourite dish in that color?** I do bread in different colors: yellow bread made with tumeric, black bread made with squid ink. We are raised to believe that black isn't a food color so we don't see a lot of it. But I want to provoke change – there are many colors at our disposal and we should use them all.

**Did you ever try a combination that you didn't like?** Yes, I have. Everything is a question of balance. Why not mix garlic and chocolate, for instance? You have to go through trial and error in order to find the right balance. There is no limit to creativity, only the one you make yourself. I just assume that everything can be mixed together.

**Some people have their best ideas in the shower, some in the middle of the night. When do you have your best ideas?** It's a question of luck. Recently, I made garlic confit. I had some left over and I thought: "What can I do with this?" So I made sweet garlic ice cream. Sometimes I go to a market and suddenly I see ingredients and I start thinking: "How can I mix these together?"

**You're working with chocolate all day – any fear of eating your way through it?** Not at all. "Les cordonniers sont les plus mal chaussés," as they say.

**What would your advice be to budding chefs/chocolatiers?** When I decided that I wanted to be a chef, I went out and found the best chef to learn from... If someone wants advice, they should seek an expert. But the most important thing is to love what you do. When you wake up, you have to be happy to go to work. [

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