
RETAIL CONFECTIONERS INTERNATIONAL

Fall Regional Institute

Chocolate, sugar confections and wine featured during Napa Valley visit.

by Gail D. Schippman

Another informative gathering of retail confectioners this autumn included tours, educational sessions, supplier displays, informal networking and receptions during which longtime members could meet new members and suppliers could mingle with candymakers. Napa, California, was the host site, but the Fall Regional for Retail Confectioners International included trips to Fairfield, St. Helena, Union City and Yountville, California.

WOODHOUSE CHOCOLATES

On the main street of St. Helena there is a new artisan confectionery shop named Woodhouse Chocolates. The 19th-century building's interior and exterior resembles *chocolateries* found in Paris and Brussels, with tapestries, a crystal chandelier and rich wood paneling. Hosts and owners Tracy Wood Anderson, the main chocolatier, and John Anderson, considered "the glue that holds it all together and keeps the doors open," were joined by Tracy's mother, Chris Wood (who is accomplished in both the fine arts and the culinary arts), and a few other kitchen and retail staff during the RCI visit.



The ambiance within Woodhouse was inspired by Parisian boutiques, with fine art, a chandelier and soft colors. Here Kathy LaFave of Virgin River Chocolates makes a purchase after the kitchen tour.

John and Tracy's path to making fine chocolates began when, as teenagers, they had the opportunity to travel throughout Europe where they tasted their first fine chocolates. Tracy earned a culinary degree, the couple had two daughters and helped John's parents create a winery and vineyard. When the Andersons retired from winemaking, they decided to focus on chocolates. With Tracy's palate for flavors and her culinary background and John's business background and willingness to renovate an old building, they opened Woodhouse Chocolates.



Sandy Brielmaier (Esther Price Candies), Jim Day (Esther Price Candies), Mona Keady (Raffine), Elaine Day (Esther Price Candies), Barb and Doug Dressman (Esther Price Candies) all watch as Tracy Anderson of Woodhouse works magic with chocolate Halloween moulds.

Woodhouse's chocolates include enrobed chocolates in the French style and moulded chocolates in the Belgian style — with American innovation.

The Andersons desired a vocation that they cared about deeply, that was close to home and that included their family. Woodhouse Chocolate is the realization of that dream. The family is committed to maintaining a small operation to guarantee the freshness and quality of every piece of chocolate.

JELLY BELLY

The Jelly Belly Candy Co. has major manufacturing facilities in both North Chicago, Illinois, and Fairfield, California. The California site (the company's headquarters)