

Calendar of Events

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April 3, 2025

Webinar: Tips for Starting or Growing a Bean-to-Bar Chocolate Company

01:00 PM - 02:00 PM EST

Description:

There is a misconception that the Bean-to-Bar process is complicated and tedious. It is actually more of a meditative process, if you focus and enjoy making chocolate. You are also helping the cocoa farmers to earn more income and helping your customers eat healthier chocolate - they can eat chocolate without the guilt.

In this webinar, Andal Balu, President & Cofounder of CocoaTown will share practical tips to start and grow your craft chocolate business. You will learn how to start the business on a shoe-string budget. Whether starting or growing the business, know the things to consider in buying the equipment, packaging, marketing and creating a win-win relationship between you and farmers and customers. You will also learn how to minimize your investment but maximize your impact on cocoa farmers, your customers and your bottomline.

For example buying 100% couverture from the farmers instead of buying beans has the following benefits:

Less initial investment & operating expenses for the start-up – need fewer machines, less real estate, labor & utility costs. Less S&H costs- beans takes more volume. Also beans have around 6% moisture content, 20% of husk – which means at least 25% of what we pay is not usable. Couverture is dense and compact. Cost of labor is less in origin countries. In addition, it does not need refrigerated transportation. Importing as couverture is still considered as ingredient – less import fees. You can still innovate and add whatever ingredients you want and all you need are the melangers/grinders and tempering machines. More benefit for the farmers – the more the commodity is processed, better the value for the farmer – they do not have to go to bed hungry

Presenter Bio:

Andal Balu is the President and Co-Founder of CocoaTown, a pioneering company that has empowered chocopreneurs in over 100 countries by providing essential equipment, education, and exposure.

With a Masters degree in Botany and experience as an Agricultural Research Scientist, Andal embarked on her entrepreneurial journey by co-founding Inno Concepts Inc. in 1992, specializing in trading specialty kitchen equipment for Indian cooking. In 2008, Andal co-founded CocoaTown, aiming to navigate through the challenging economic landscape at the time.

At CocoaTown, Andal assumes multiple crucial roles, overseeing accounting, marketing, sales, and customer service. Her dedication and expertise have led to remarkable achievements and recognition. She has received esteemed awards, including the Innovation in Chocolate Industry award from the Fine Chocolate Industry Association and the Exporter of the Year award from the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Andal's influence extends beyond her company, as she serves on the board for the Fine Chocolate Industry Association, actively contributing to the advancement and growth of the industry & FCIA.

Apart from her professional endeavors, Andal's love for travel and cultural exploration is evident. Proficient in multiple Indian languages and English, she cherishes the opportunity to connect with people from different backgrounds. With an optimistic outlook, Andal aspires to visit 100 countries before 2030, immersing herself in diverse cultures and broadening her understanding of the world. Her passion, entrepreneurial

spirit, and commitment to empowering others have cemented her position as a trailblazer in the chocolate industry and beyond.

June 29, 2025
- July 1, 2025

Reserve Your FCIA Pavilion Booth at the 2025 Summer Fancy Food Show in NYC!

10:00 AM - 05:00 PM EST

The Fine Chocolate Industry Association (FCIA) is excited to invite you to be part of the FCIA Partner Pavilion at the 2025 Summer Fancy Food Show, taking place June 29 – July 1, 2025, at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City. This is the largest specialty food industry event in North America, bringing together thousands of buyers, distributors, and industry professionals.

For fine chocolate companies looking to expand their reach, the FCIA Pavilion offers a prime opportunity to showcase your brand alongside other premium chocolate makers in a high-visibility section of the show floor.

Booth Options & Costs

FCIA's pavilion will feature two booth size options:

5' x 10' Booth: \$2,350 Includes:

*One 4' draped table (24" W x 42" H)
Two stools
One wastebasket
Booth carpet
Three complimentary exhibitor badges
50 lbs of complimentary drayage (material handling)*

10' x 10' Booth: \$4,700 (\$650 additional for corner booths) Includes:

*Two 6' draped tables (24" W x 30" H)
Two folding chairs
One wastebasket
Booth carpet
Five complimentary exhibitor badges
100 lbs of complimentary drayage (material handling)*

Exclusive Benefits for FCIA Pavilion Exhibitors

*One year of complimentary Tier 1 SFA membership (\$400 value) for participating companies who are not already Specialty Food Association (SFA) members.
Opportunity to participate in a 30-45 minute education session at the show.
Inclusion in a pre-show SFA Promoted Product email reaching over 30,000 industry buyers, retailers, and distributors.
High-visibility FCIA-branded pavilion area on the show floor, drawing attention to your fine chocolate brand.
Exclusive networking opportunities with specialty food buyers, retailers, and industry professionals.*

Why Exhibit in the FCIA Pavilion?

Being part of the FCIA Pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show means positioning your brand at the heart of the specialty food industry's premier event. With direct access to buyers, distributors, and retailers, you'll have the opportunity to showcase your chocolate to decision-makers actively seeking premium products. The pavilion offers unparalleled visibility within the show, allowing exhibitors to stand out in a dedicated fine chocolate section. This is more than just an exhibit space—it's an opportunity to leverage FCIA's strong industry connections, gain media exposure, and build relationships that can take your business to the next level. If you are looking to grow your presence in the fine chocolate market, this is the place to be.

Don't Miss Out! Secure Your Booth Today! The Deadline is March 8th, 2025!

Reserve Your Spot in the FCIA Pavilion!

*Join us in New York City and take your chocolate business to the next level!
For questions, contact Cathy Ford at C.Ford@FineChocolateIndustry.org.*

April 5, 2025
- April 6, 2025

15th Annual Southwest Chocolate & Coffee Festival

Times are available on the website.

With over 200 vendors, 6 stages, 250,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor facilities, and attracting over 22,000 attendees, this is the world's largest festival dedicated to chocolate, coffee, and gourmet foods.

Come discover exquisite chocolates, coffees, teas, candies, baked goods and delectable surprises from small craft businesses from around the world.

Take a deep dive into culinary arts with hands-on classes, tastings, and demonstrations conducted by award winning chefs, chocolatiers, coffee roasters, & baristas.

Enjoy non-stop music from the region's best bands.

Buy Tickets or Sign Up to be a Vendor!

April 6, 2025

The 17th San Francisco International Chocolate Salon

Times, Dates, & Location are on the website.

Chocolate aficionados, fanatics, lovers and addicts can taste & experience the finest in artisan, gourmet & premium chocolate in one of the world's great culinary metropolitan areas. The Original and Premier Artisan Chocolate Festival on the West Coast takes place at the San Francisco International Chocolate Salon.

[Click Here For More Information, to Exhibit, or to Buy Tickets](#)

April 24, 2025

Webinar: Is your channel strategy supporting your business growth, or secretly draining your

01:30 PM - 02:30 PM EST

Join food industry financial expert Sarah Delevan for an eye-opening deep dive into evaluating margins across sales channels. Profit Margins can vary dramatically between direct-to-consumer, retail, and distribution channels – Sarah will show you how to strategically assess profitability across your entire business.

Through real-world examples and practical formulas, you'll learn how to calculate your true channel margins, understand their impact on cash flow, and make data-driven decisions about which sales channels will best support your business goals. Stop wondering if your expansion plans will require another loan – this presentation will give you the tools to evaluate opportunities and chart a path to profitable and sustainable growth across multiple channels.

About Sarah Delevan:

Sarah Delevan is a Financial Consultant, podcast host, and “good food” advocate with over 15 years experience building and supporting regional and sustainable food systems.

As the Founder and CEO of Sarah Delevan Consulting, and The Good Food CFO, Sarah's work over the last 10 years has focused on supporting mission-driven food businesses, farmers, ranchers and fishers in achieving profitability and financial sustainability to secure their much needed place within our food system.

At the heart of all of her work is a belief that access to real food is a right, not a privilege. She is also committed to educating consumers and lawmakers about the way that food business is done within the industry at large, and fighting for meaningful change.

April 25, 2025
- April 27, 2025

Bean to Bar Immersion Workshop - Damian Allsop

Times are available on the website.

Due to overwhelming demand, DCM is pleased to announce two additional 3-day, hands-on chocolate making workshops led by world-renowned pastry chef and master chocolate artisan Damian Allsop. Participants will immerse themselves in the art of chocolate making, from bean to bar, and discover the secrets behind crafting exquisite chocolate creations.

[Click Here to Learn More and to Register](#)

May 2, 2025
- May 4, 2025

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May 10, 2025
- May 11, 2025

Le Marché du Chocolat

Times are available on the website.

Indulge in the world of chocolate at Le Marché du Chocolat, a refined celebration of craftsmanship and passion. Join an international gathering of master chocolatiers, artisanal chocolate makers, and industry connoisseurs as they share their exquisite creations, expertise, and devotion to the art of chocolate. Savor and shop in our elegant marketplace, delight in gourmet pairings, witness captivating demonstrations, and immerse yourself in vibrant on-stage discussions.

*May 10-11, 2025
Hilton Union Square, Grand Ballroom
San Francisco, CA
[Click Here for More Information](#)*

June 16, 2025
- June 20, 2025

Penn State Chocolate Short Course

Start and End times are available on the website

You're invited to join us for the Penn State Chocolate Short Course 2025 .

WHEN: June 16 - 20, 2025

WHERE: 252 Rodney A. Erickson Food Science Building

Penn State Department of Food Science is proud to offer a Bean-to-Bar course for both craft and industrial chocolate manufacturers.

During this 5-day course, successful craft chocolate entrepreneurs, equipment manufacturers, and Penn State faculty will instruct you in the theory and practice of chocolate production from the selection of raw materials through the marketing of finished product. Of value to those with both technical and non-technical duties, attendees will engage minds and hands to gain detailed knowledge of chocolate processing.

For more information and to register: [Click here for the event summary](#) or call 877-778-2937.

We look forward to seeing you there!

[Click Here to Register](#)

June 25, 2025

Chocolate in the Americas

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM PST

Date: Wednesday, June 25

Time: 10am-12pm,

Location: Gayley Center, 1145 Gayley Ave, Room 119B, Los Angeles, CA 90024

Fee: \$15 for non-members (public).

Course description:

Chocolate consumption began over 5000 years ago in South America as a fermented beverage made from the pulp surrounding the cacao beans. By 1757, it was being manufactured in New York, and as its popularity grew, craft chocolate developed in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In this course, we explore the history, culture, and economics of cacao and chocolate in the Americas. Tastings include chocolate made in the Americas from cacao beans of the Americas; chocolate makers include Pacari (Peru), Cacao Hunters (Ecuador), Soma (Canada), and other companies around the world that use beans from the Americas such as Friis-Holm (Denmark).

To Register: Please call 310 825-9971 and press 2.

July 1, 2025
- July 3, 2025

Food & Drinks Malaysia 2025 by SIAL

Times are on the website.

July 1-3, 2025

Malaysia International Trade & Exhibition Center (MITEC)

Kuala Lumpur

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

October 4, 2025
- October 5, 2025

Northwest Chocolate Festival

Times & Dates are on the website

We are excited to present the world's top education workshops, the best chocolate exhibitors, and indulgent chocolate tastes!

Acclaimed as the TOP SHOW for CHOCOLATE in North America and one of the best shows for Chocolate in the world for the past 15-years running – we are proud to “Celebrate and Educate the Chocolate Lover in All” for Two Full Days in October with you.

Location: Meydenbauer Center

11100 NE 6th ST, Bellevue WA 98004

[Click here for more information, to exhibit, or to buy tickets](#)

November 15, 2025
- November 16, 2025

Secaucus Coffee and Chocolate Festival

Times for each day are on the website.

The Secaucus Coffee & Chocolate Festival is a celebration of all things coffee and chocolate related... and then some! Attendees will sample a variety of coffee roasts and styles, along with a multitude of decadent chocolate-themed sweets from local and surrounding area businesses. Join local coffee shops, gourmet roasters, artisan chocolatiers, wineries, bakeries, and so much more. Explore additional exhibitors and their products and purchase items to take home. What better way to kick off the holiday season?

Where: Meadowlands Exposition Center - 355 Plaza Drive Secaucus, NJ 07094

When: November 15-16, 2025

[Learn More & Buy Tickets](#)