

Dive into Chocolate

Tips on creating quick chocolate displays.

Professional chefs are always on the lookout for helpful tips and tools to bring more ingenuity and efficiency into their daily tasks. Today, the combination of silicone, chocolate and colored cocoa butter can provide a fresh recipe for artistic success. When blended with a splash of creativity, these materials can help navigate your imagination to new depths.

As Pastry Chef Stéphane Tréand MOF was completing twenty new nautical theme Showpeels™, he realized they had great potential to help other chefs save time in the kitchen. The thin patterned silicone sheets are easy to work with and provide consistent detailed shapes time and time again.

If you have seen Chef Stéphane's work before, you already know of his unique ability to bring creativity and play together. His skill in uniting shape, color and texture into enticing compositions is the result of a lifetime interest in art and nature.

Have a look at how Chef Stéphane utilizes silicone, chocolate, and color to demonstrate fast ways to create 'underwater' displays filled with unexpected lightness and luminosity.

His methods are quick, effective techniques that are readily adaptable to suit your individual needs whether you are working with chocolate, sugar or pastillage.

Dive in, we can't wait to see what you make!



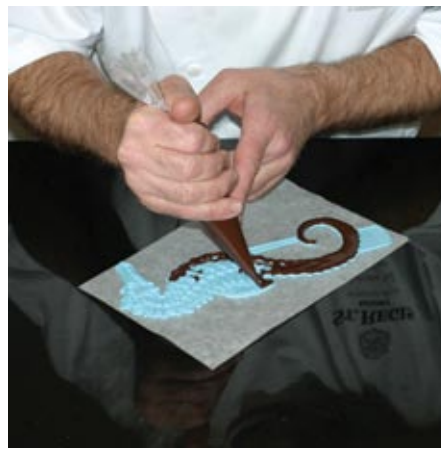
By Michael Joy Chicago School of Mold Making and Stéphane Tréand MOF, Executive Pastry Chef at the St. Regis Resort Monarch Beach. Produced by Beatrice Schneider.





1. Getting started.

Begin by cutting the patterns out of the 8" x 10½" silicone Showpeel sheet. If it's your first time cutting silicone, make a few test cuts in non-detail areas until you are comfortable how the X-acto blade cuts through the silicone.



2. Pipe the chocolate.

Next, cut fitted pieces of parchment for each pattern you will be casting. Fill a small piping cone with tempered chocolate and pipe chocolate along the outside perimeter before filling the interior area.



3. Level the chocolate.

Shimmy the parchment paper back and forth quickly to level out the chocolate. This must be done quickly, before the chocolate starts to set. *Note:* The 'dipping tabs' on the tail have not been covered with chocolate.



4. Peel & reveal.

Once the chocolate has set (5-10 minutes in a refrigerator), it is ready to unmold. Gently peel the silicone away from the casting. *Not Shown:* To contour a casting, allow the chocolate coated Showpeel to "set up" inside the contour of a large bowl.



5. Create the coral structure.

First, place a thin sheet of acetate onto a ¼" thick sheet of Plexiglas. Next, several ladles of tempered chocolate are pooled onto the surface. The chocolate must be at least 3/8" thick to have enough strength to stand vertically. (See photo 9)



6. Cut out the coral shape.

Once the chocolate has achieved the initial set (about 10 minutes in a cool room), Chef Stéphane freehand cuts a coral pattern. The inside cuts will create open 'windows' as seen in photo 19.



7. Flip the chocolate slab.

After the chocolate has completely set (5-10 minutes in a refrigerator), a second sheet of Plexiglas is set on top of the chocolate slab enabling Chef Stéphane to easily flip over the slab.



8. Remove the coral pattern.

Once the Plexiglas and acetate sheet have been removed, the chocolate remnants can be carefully removed from the coral cut-out. Make sure to save a few large pieces to use as support braces (next photo).



9. Stabilize the coral structure.

Chef Stéphane attaches the coral onto a base that is heavy enough to anchor the entire sculpture. For additional support, Stéphane adheres a chocolate remnant onto the back of the coral for vertical stability.



10. Airbrush the castings white.

Conserve time and materials by airbrushing groups of chocolate castings at the same time. To achieve bright colors on dark chocolate, it must first be primed with white colored cocoa butter.



11. Apply second color (yellow).

Good airbrush results are made by following a plan. Chef Stéphane knows what colors he will use before he starts painting. If your plan is not clear, find relevant photographs to use as reference material.



12. Apply the third color (orange).

To create deep colors, Chef Stéphane layers darker colors over lighter colors. Color intensity can also be controlled by airbrush placement. Close airbrush placement will result in darker shades.



13. Apply the fourth color (green).

Notice Stéphane does not use green on all of the patterns. To blend small amounts of complimentary colors, simply add new color to the airbrush cup. *Note:* First test the color by spraying on a paper towel.



14. Apply the fifth color (brown).

Mixing colors in the airbrush can be tricky. By using light colors first, darker shades can easily be made by adding a deeper hue to the airbrush cup. It is easier to go from light to dark then from dark to light.



15. Apply the sixth color (blue).

The trick for making a flat shape look 3-D is to paint a dark color around the perimeter and leave the interior a light color. The light color will appear to be pushing forward and will create a contoured effect.



16. Apply the last color (dark brown).

As a final touch, Chef Stéphane paints the eyes and fin tips dark brown. *Note:* Not shown, he also uses a razor knife to scratch off over-spray, to make sharp streaks and fine lines.



17. Preparing for luster dust.

This is a great master-chef trick. To bond luster dust onto the airbrushed surface, Chef Stéphane lightly melts the surface with a heat gun until the chocolate has a slight shine.



18. Apply metallic powder.

Working quickly, he blows mixed luster dust off the brush onto the glossy surface. Chef Stéphane mixes pearl luster with gold to give a 'warm' effect and pearl with silver to give a 'cool' tone.



19. Composition

With so many shapes and sizes to choose from, it is important to select good placement before attaching anything to the coral. *Helpful Hint:* Keep large shapes low or in middle and small shapes higher.



20. Finish construction

A shot of cold spray is used to strengthen the attachment points. Notice how Chef Tréand has kept much of the coral pattern visible. It makes the centerpiece colorful and interesting, but not overcrowded.



21. Fast & fun.

With these methods, it won't take long to create a chocolate sculpture that will captivate and delight your guests with the ocean's beauty.

To learn more about casting, visit **Tips & Tools** at www.ChicagoMoldSchool.com.