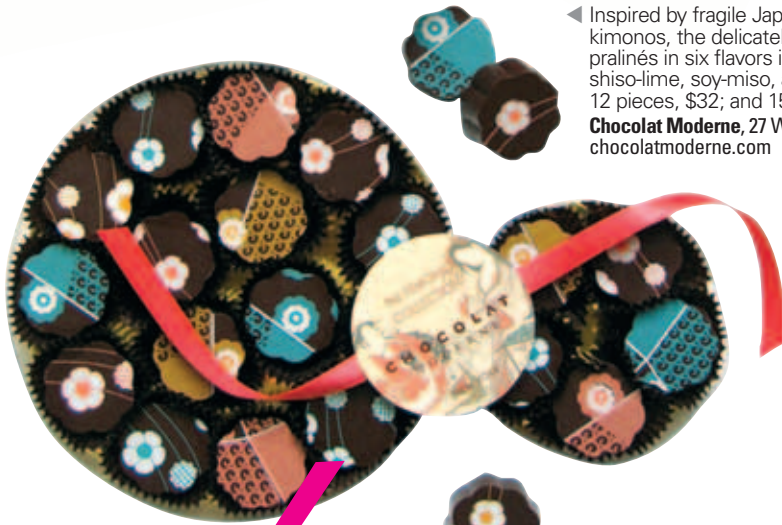


We just missed London's Chocolate Week, and New York's seductive Chocolate Show was last month, so we're indulging now. Chocolates for the holiday season, then after that, for the winter chill in January, and after that for Valentine's Day, neatly tucked into February. Frankly, any excuse will do. From among Gotham's many boutiques, we've selected a few mouth-watering goodies. And just because we're showing traditional bonbons here, don't think that you can't score thick, gooey brownies, all manner of interesting chocolate ice creams, and tasty, gourmet cocoas to brew at home. Mmmm, good! **By Ruth J. Katz**



◀ Inspired by fragile Japanese cherry blossoms and the opulent designs found on vintage kimonos, the delicately decorated "Kimono Collection" comprises ganaches, caramels, and pralinés in six flavors infused with both savory and sweet Japanese ingredients, including shiso-lime, soy-miso, and organic persimmon-white peach, among the mix. 5 pieces, \$14; 12 pieces, \$32; and 15 pieces, \$35

Chocolat Moderne, 27 West 20th Street (Fifth/Sixth Avenues), Suite 904; 212-229-4797; chocolatmoderne.com



▲ Only 18 "Starry Night" ornaments (each weighs over six pounds!) are handcrafted worldwide. Made with the finest chocolate and filled with a nougatine and caramelized almonds mixture, the ornaments are coated with nuts, violet petals, and crystallized roses, then dusted with gold. \$585; individual "Shooting Star" ornaments (left) \$28 each

La Maison du Chocolat, 1018 Madison Avenue (78th/79th Streets); 212-744-7117, 800-988-5632; laimaionduchocolat.com

hot chocolates!



▶ Decadent Bacon Caramel Toffee—a sweet butter toffee, blended with cherry-wood-smoked bacon and coated in milk chocolate. \$12

Vosges Haut Chocolat, 132 Spring Street (Greene/Wooster Streets); 212-625-2929; 1100 Madison Avenue (82nd/83rd Streets); 212-717-2929, 888-301-9866; vosgeschocolate.com

▲ Although Bond Street has been doing a thriving wholesale business (think Dean & DeLuca) for several years, happily, the shop has opened for retail sales. The flavorful chocolates (mostly dark) sport different infusions, but they usually include flavors out of the ordinary—like absinthe, elder flowers, lavender, passion fruit, and flavorsome teas. 6 pieces, \$15; 9 pieces, \$22; and 16 pieces, \$36

Bond Street Chocolates, 63 East Fourth Street (Bowery/Second Avenue); 212-677-5103; bondstchocolate.com

