



The Fournil d'Armorique

Rob As you can hear, I'm in a workplace. I'm in the centre of Rostrenen, at the "Fournil d'Armorique", it's the bakery at the centre of town. I'm speaking to the Master Chef, the Master Pâtissier, Boulanger, Laurent Maesele. What are the cakes and pastries that are typical of Brittany?

Laurent The typical cakes of Brittany are the "Kouign Amann", *the* Breton cake, and the "Palet Breton", all of which we make here, in the traditional way.

Rob What is the Kouign Amann?

Laurent It's bread dough, which is covered with butter and sugar. There's lots of butter, and lots of sugar, and it's very, very good. It's sweet, but cooked in such a way as to give an unforgettable taste.

Rob And the Palet?

Laurent The Palet Breton is again butter and sugar. It's Brittany! We use strong flour, to give a longer shelf life, and there's always an aftertaste of butter. We use farmhouse butter from the Mestric farm in Trégornan en Glomel nearby, as a base for the palets. It's a Breton biscuit made with Breton butter!

Rob You have invented some Breton pâtisserie of your own; you're not from Brittany, but you have been inspired by Brittany to create some new pâtisserie.

Laurent We do indeed make the "Bonnet Rouge". This cake comes out of the local demonstrations that we've all heard about. We were on the coast, my wife and I, and we came across a cake, not red but in the form of a bonnet. We had a kind of flash, and when we got home, our neighbour, he's a campaigner, a Bonnet Rouge and it all came together, the cake, my neighbour, and "bingo", we created our cake. It's a red dome, filled with marshmallow, very soft, a Breton biscuit at the bottom, some custard, and strawberry sauce in the centre. All covered with a shell of white chocolate, dyed red.

Rob Where do you get your ingredients from?

Laurent Most of the ingredients come from nearby; we try to use local products. Our strawberries come from Mellionec during the season,

the honey comes from Glomel. We have a small local producer who is an auto-entrepreneur, making his own honey. It's a real honey taste; you can't get any better. It's honey, not sugar beet, which is what is added to industrial honey. We only take the top quality. When it comes to the flour, almost all comes from Mur-de-Bretagne, where our miller is found, producing 70% of his flour on site. The wheat doesn't all come from Brittany, but a large majority does, notably the "Ginizdu", a mixture of buckwheat and wheat flour, produced at Châteaulin, near Brest. This mix gives a stronger flour, ideal for a typical Breton baguette.

Rob Because you don't only make pâtisserie; you make bread also.

Laurent Indeed, we make our own bread, fifteen different varieties, from the traditional baguette, through wholegrain, bread with cereals, and so on. We try to bring new items to our clients, who, we can see from their eyes, enjoy picking and choosing. They say "I'll take that, and that, ooh and that!" It's important to offer new things regularly, to keep swapping things around, in order to amaze the customers; that's really important.

Rob And your chocolate: where does your chocolate come from?

Laurent We don't make our chocolate; cake makers don't make their own chocolate. We transform the chocolate which we get in the form of lozenges, which come from France, from a company called Valrhona. I make a point of that because it's a question of quality for us; it's a traditional, almost hand-crafted chocolate. It's delivered in these lozenges, a few centimeters in size, and we melt them down to make bars, sweets and our moulds. On our Facebook page, Le Fournil d'Armorique, we can offer people the chance to see our products for Easter, and order what they like.

Rob This time of year, what are you preparing, in terms of chocolate?

Laurent At the moment, we are preparing our chocolates for Easter, eggs of course, but also what we call assemblies, or arrangements. We try to avoid doing too much moulding, but we do make small eggs, which we fill with little objects, each one different. We make some "Hello Kitty", we make some "Ninja Turtles", to try to be a bit different, a bit original. To offer things that you can't find elsewhere. Your "Hello Kitty" won't be the same as anyone else's!

Rob What's good about chocolate, for well-being, for *bien-être*?

Laurent Why do we like chocolate? That's a big question! There are even people who don't like chocolate, it's incredible! But, it does happen; I know someone who only likes white chocolate, not the dark. The difference between them is that in the white chocolate there's a lot more milk. There's milk powder in it, so it's sugar, milk powder and cocoa butter. It's a milk chocolate with more milk. That's the simple difference.

Rob But there's still chocolate in white chocolate? You're very inspired, you're very inspired about chocolate; where does that come from?

Laurent From way back. I fell into it, as I often say; I can't really explain it, I was born that way. I've always wanted to be a baker, a pâtissier, a chocolatier. I studied in Belgium, in Brussels, where there's a chocolate producer, "Côte d'Or", very well-known in Belgium, and I had the chance to visit. Since then, it's been a passion, to create ... You can do anything you like in chocolate, sculpture, modeling, anything. And it's so good! As for percentages, any dark chocolate above 45-50% cocoa solids is better for you than milk chocolate, because milk chocolate and white chocolate have a much higher quantity of sugar than the dark. So, dark chocolate is better for your health, which is good to start with. But the higher the percentage of cocoa, the lower the amount of sugar. On the other hand, above 70%, and you have to have the taste for it, as it's very bitter. It depends on one's preference. I've tasted chocolate without sugar, it's "unusual"; I've tasted 99% cocoa, and it's very, very bitter.

Rob Thank you very much Laurent, *merci Laurent*, for this inspiration; and I'm very tempted to go to the shop and buy some chocolate!

