

**MAROU**

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This brand's coming of age story reads like an adventure book involving jungle camping and treks deep into the Vietnamese countryside, where the French expat founders built strong relationships with local farmers. Today, beans are sourced from five provinces in the Mekong Delta—each offering a unique complexity—and processed into chocolate on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City. The beautifully wrapped bars are sold around the globe, but the chic Maison Marou boutiques in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are also worth seeking out for their pastries and confections ([marouchocolate.com](http://marouchocolate.com)).

**FU WAN CHOCOLATE**

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As founder and executive chef of a small, family-run resort in tropical Pingtung, Taiwan's southernmost county, Warren Hsu's explorations of the local bounty have blossomed into a standalone chocolate factory that mainly processes Taiwan-grown beans. While the island's cacao industry is relatively small, it is flourishing—and Fu Wan is leading the pack with bold, innovative flavors like sakura shrimp, Thai curry, Tie Guan Yin tea, and unique double fermentation techniques that have garnered numerous accolades in chocolate competitions around the globe ([fuwanshop.com](http://fuwanshop.com)).

# SWEET SURRENDER

Chocolatiers around Asia are turning to local cacao farmers to create single-origin treats that capture the flavors of the region. BY CHRIS SCHALKX

**KAD KOKOA**

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Established by a Thai husband-and-wife duo after discovering a small cacao farm for sale in northern Thailand, Kad Kokoa is probably the first bean-to-bar chocolate maker in the country. Working with a handful of farmers, the founders are closely involved in the whole production process. The result? High-quality chocolate yielding the unique taste of the Thai terroir. Aside from pop-up collaborations with some of Bangkok's leading chefs, the brand also operates the city's first bean-to-bar café, where staff whip up indulgent concoctions and intricate desserts ([kadjokoa.co](http://kadjokoa.co)).

**KRAKAKOA**

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Despite being one of the world's biggest cacao-producing nations, most of Indonesia's cacao ends up in low-grade products processed elsewhere. Krakakoa aims to change this with its farmer-to-bar approach, which includes training smallholders (who account for 90 percent of local production) and financial support for organic cacao farms around the archipelago. The resulting beans are purchased above market value and end up in award-winning chocolate bars that highlight flavors from Sumatra to Sulawesi ([krakakoa.com](http://krakakoa.com)).



Inside the Ho Chi Minh City branch of Maison Marou.

**THEO AND PHILO**

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The fertile soil and milder climate of Davao in the southern Philippines has proven to be a perfect environment for cacao trees, something that the team behind the country's first artisanal chocolate brand, Theo and Philo, is taking full advantage of. Beans harvested in Davao are combined with sugar from plantations in Bacolod to create bars that are fully local and fair-trade. Try the signature "fearless flavors" that include distinctively Filipino combinations like 65 percent dark chocolate with tangy calamansi or green mango and salt, and adobo milk chocolate spiked with soy sauce and black pepper ([theoandphilo.com](http://theoandphilo.com)).