

Truth Coffee's David Donde is taking on the world of chocolate

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

24 Mar 2021

David Donde, the visionary behind Truth Coffee, has broadened his horizons and launched a chocolate company with long-standing Truth COO Ken Walton. Not to be mistaken for a side hustle, the co-founders are already eyeing expansion abroad in the US and UK.



David Donde. Credit: Crave Concepts

The new brand, Minimalist Chocolate, aptly describes what the pair set out to achieve when diving into the new endeavour. Minimalist Chocolate is made using just two ingredients, cocoa and milk, and despite having no added sugar, the product lacks the unpleasant bitterness one often associates with sugar-free chocolate.

“Chocolate without crap in it. That tastes good? That has a long lingering and pleasant aftertaste? Buy some, you decide,” Donde says confidently.

The coffee guru has transferred some of his knowledge from the coffee business to chocolate-making. Yet again, the secret lies in a unique roasting process, which allows Minimalist Chocolate to reach maximum flavour without sugar, soy lecithin, fructose and other additives.



Credit: Crave Concepts

“No-one is brave enough to say ‘no sugar required’. We did it with coffee in 2005 with the launch of Origin Coffee Roasting, and now we’re doing it with chocolate. The approach is simple: no bitterness in the chocolate to begin with, so no sugar needed to overcome it,” Donde says.

“We’re at a point now where you need to explicitly ask for sugar with your coffee if you want it, because good coffee doesn’t need it. Chocolate can be the same.”



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While parallels can be drawn between chocolate and coffee, a wave of specialty coffee roasteries drove the sophistication and growth of coffee over the years, but chocolate has stagnated somewhat, explains Donde.

The idea for Minimalist was thus sparked with the realisation that the world of chocolate looks like coffee did before the rise of specialty roasteries.



Credit: Crave Concepts

A necessary pivot

Market potential aside, the Covid-19 pandemic played a monumental role in Donde's decision to pivot.

Talking to Bizcommunity about what drove the move into a new product category, Donde said, "It's simple, Covid. I need to take care of my staff."

For this reason, many Truth employees have been involved in the development and daily operations of Minimalist Chocolate. For example, the roasting is headed up by Truth coffee roaster Oliver Rollinson, and Truth's baker and pastry chef Bobby Kumar is now also the Minimalist chocolatier.



Credit: Crave Concepts

Daily operations, including production, are done from the Truth Coffee headquarters in Buitenkant Street, Cape Town.

Bean to bar

When developing the product, the Minimalist team sampled beans from 15 different countries, before settling on ethically-sourced cocoa from a small-scale, free trade plantation on the island of São Tomé.

After one year in development, Minimalist Chocolate launched to market in February with a small but considered range comprising sugar-free classic chocolate bars and a selection of bon bons for the sweeter toothed. A dairy-free oat milk bar is also on the way.



Credit: Crave Concepts

Minimalist Chocolate is available from Truth Coffee and online at www.minimalistchocolate.com, as well as selected specialty retailers nationwide.

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