A taste-driven chocolate market

craft producers, direct sourcing &
the economics of flavour

© Martin Christy 2015
What is fine cacao for?

Fine cacao is used:

- For commercial recipes, eg in blends for enrobing
- Large scale origin and blended chocolate production
- Small factory produced origin chocolate
- NEW: Micro-batch chocolate
A taste-driven chocolate market

What is fine cacao for?

To make good tasting chocolate!
How do we know what fine cacao is?

- Technical definitions
- Research
- The market
- ICCO Panel
A taste-driven chocolate market

How do we know what fine cacao is?

Can it make good tasting chocolate?
How do we know what fine cacao is?

• Fine cacao is capable of being transformed into fine chocolate that:
  – Has complexity and richness
  – Has varied or distinctive flavour notes that are in harmony and balance
  – Has a lingering and clean aftertaste
  – Is free of defects that hijack the sensory experience
    • (mould, bad fermentation/contamination/undesirable notes)
• Fine chocolate can only be made from fine cacao!
How do we know what fine cacao is?

By tasting!
A taste-driven chocolate market

... but taste is subjective!

Yes & No
Tasting protocols

- Fundamental to sensory analysis
- Human taste (not yet) replaceable
- No evaluation and flavour assessment without taste
- Managed subjectivity
- Competitions, prizes, designations, agreements
A taste-driven chocolate market

Mapping flavour

© Alex Rast, Martin Christy 2015
Creating value with flavour

- VALUE comes from appreciation of nuanced flavour
- Fine chocolate must be taken seriously
  - Not eaten like candy (MELT don’t MUNCH!)
- Sommeliers/experts/geeks/authors/bloggers
- Sophisticated language/tools/understanding
- Tastings/events/courses
- Change mental price points
- Flavour key in ALL parts of supply chain
A taste-driven chocolate market

Flavour-driven price model

- The only possible model for high end cacao
- ‘Charity’ not an option
- Ethical/sustainable labels don’t work for fine cacao & add limited value
- Direct sourcing/contact – a shorter supply chain
Challenges

• Developing the market
  – cacao producers need to reach small = tiny customers
  – cacao producers need to reach consumers
  – cacao producers need empowering to “market flavour”

• New trade and logistical models
  – Make small quantity trading viable
Challenges - Price

• Price of ‘fine cacao’ too low
• Low differentials bulk to fine
• Oversupply of high quality fine cacao
• Developing realistic-minded consumer market
• Teaching (some) consumers to understand flavour
  – Fine will never be the whole market
  – Idealistic but not unrealistic
    • has worked for coffee, traditional in wine

© Martin Christy 2015
The fine/craft chocolate market

- Proportion of market – 100s not 1,000,000s of tonnes
- Is craft chocolate relevant?
  - Consumer awareness and communication
  - Punches above its weight
  - Market leading
- Fine cacao not viable without fine & craft chocolate
Direct Cacao

- Trade Association
  - small, fine cacao and chocolate producers
- Common message to consumers
  - from chocolate AND cacao producers
- Labelling NOT certification
- Trade network and models
- One piece of the puzzle
A taste-driven chocolate market

Direct Cacao

• Strength: is from within fine/craft industry
• Challenge: is from within fine/craft industry
  – needs resourcing while staying independent
• Create real outcomes for small producers on both end of the chain
  – chocolate bars in consumers’ hands

© Martin Christy 2015
Direct Cacao – needs help!

• Resourcing
• Support
• Collaboration
Conclusion

Fine cacao – use it or lose it!
Conclusion

FLAVOUR > VALUE
A taste-driven chocolate market

craft producers, direct sourcing &
the economics of flavour