

## The Cordon Bleu of candy: It's just a Third Thursday at Molly Bea's

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It's not every day that a pastry chef, trained in Paris, gives a free demonstration on the art of making chocolate truffles. So when one does, people brave extremely cold weather to attend.

That was true recently when Nadia Clisby-Wendt of Beverly Shores, the owner of nadiachocolat.com, revealed a few of her professional techniques during a Third Thursday presentation at Molly Bea's Ingredients in Chesterton.

"I fell in love with dark chocolate when I lived and worked in Paris for three years," said Clisby-Wendt, who studied cooking, pastries and chocolate-making at the internationally known Le Cordon Bleu cooking school.

After graduation, she made desserts at two Paris hotels, then transferred to Chicago's Four Seasons Hotel. It was three years ago, however, that her career took on a new and unexpected direction.

"(My company) started out as Christmas presents for friends who wanted to buy more after that," she said. She now works full time making her own truffles and hand-dipped chocolates.

Nadiachocolat.com sells around 18 different flavors of chocolates for the "discriminating chocolate lover." All are crafted by hand.

Seasonal specials include white lavender truffles for Mother's Day, praline s'mores made with homemade marshmallows in the summer, and cinnamon-Sichuan pepper chocolates at Christmas.

Clisby-Wendt is a third-generation candy-maker, following in the footsteps of her maternal grandmother and great-grandmother. "I still have my great-grandmother's candy pot," she said.

"Chocolate is a really interesting ingredient," Clisby-Wendt said. "There are so many things you can do with it. It's incredibly flexible and most people love it. I can't imagine life without it!"

A love for chocolate wasn't the only thing she discovered in France. It was also where she met her husband, Geoff Wendt, who is originally from Michigan City. He also was a student at Le Cordon Bleu.

Clisby-Wendt said she was a customer first, before being asked to present the truffle-making demonstration.

Eileen Heisler, Molly Bea's owner, said the store caters to just three groups of people -- "anyone who likes to bake, cook or eat!"

She said she chose everything to be highly utilitarian. "I have very little patience with fru-fru stuff."

The store's motto, "everything for the home economist," is appropriate. Heisler is proud of her store's offerings, which include a hundred spices, items that are organic or certified chemical-free, whole-wheat pastry flour, dry-roasted peanuts that can be instantly ground into fresh peanut butter, real licorice from around the world, and many other items, including loose teas, which are her pride and joy. "We sell tons of it," she said.

"We knock ourselves out to have stuff our customers are looking for," Heisler said. An example is the six months it took to locate a supplier who carried the vegetable chips that longtime customer Cheryl Keller of Chesterton wanted. "We have brought in about four dozen items that our customers asked for," said Heisler.

She has stocked tea infusers, nutmeg grinders, smoked paprika, and spice containers with attached lids, all on the advice of one customer or another.

Heisler has offered the Third Thursday demonstrations for more than two years, and doesn't charge for them. "It's just for fun," she said, "a profit motive can't be everything."

Next month's demonstration will cater to young people ages 10 to 14 who are accompanied by an adult. Purdue North Central nutritionist Mimi Wilson will discuss teen nutrition and good eating choices.

Visit [www.mollybeas.com](http://www.mollybeas.com) to register for the Feb. 19 event. Molly Bea's is located at 761 Indian Boundary Road, Chesterton.

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