



PIONEER PRESS online

Chocolate rules on Valentine's Day

By **Stephanie Fosnight**
Staff Writer
Pioneer Press

Drew Shotts creates in one medium these days, but he doesn't find it boring.

"You can make so many different things with chocolate," said Shotts, whose days of making chocolate pie with his mother inspired his training first as a chef, then a pastry chef and finally an acclaimed chocolatier.

Shotts, who lives in Rhode Island, supplies premiere chocolates and sweets like chocolate-covered candied ginger to The Chocolate Box, a new Winnetka store owned by Evanston residents Jim and Rachel Prendergast.



This Valentine's Day, make it a chocolate menu with Drew Shotts' chocolate martini, chocolate mudslide cookies and Fudgy Chocolate Layer Cake (not pictured). (Jason Han/Staff Photographer)

The store, which just opened in December, has already become popular with the after-school crowd for its hot chocolate. Besides selling Shotts' seasonal collections of truffles (including the limited edition "Legendary Lovers" Valentine's Day collection) and some of his baked goods, the Prendergasts offer bricks of baking chocolate and treats like chocolate-zucchini bread.

To avoid overdosing, the trick is to pair chocolate with other foods, Rachel Prendergast says.

"Drew is a master at balance," she said. "The truffles are the perfect balance of flavor, the way they linger in your mouth. They're not too sweet."