

MIZZOU

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Alumni Profile

A passion for pastry

Plenty of people crave pastry, whether Danish, strudel or chocolate eclair. But chances are their desire is more for consuming the confections than for making them.

That's where Nathaniel Reid comes in.

Reid, BS '03, an award-winning pastry chef at Norman Love Confections in Fort Myers, Fla., directs the creation of everything from cakes to croissants. He is the 2012 recipient of *Dessert Professional Magazine's* Top 10 Pastry Chefs award. But Reid's career in culinary arts came only after his mom suggested he swap his biology major for one in hotel and restaurant management.

During his studies at Mizzou, he got his first taste of a working kitchen by creating desserts professionally as the pastry chef at Columbia restaurant Chris McD's.

"I didn't have any formal training in pastry making," Reid says. "But I was adamant I could do it, and they gave me a shot."

Customers raved about his contemporary takes on traditional pastries.

After graduation, he moved on to Le Cordon Bleu Academy in Paris to hone his craft. It was an expensive endeavor, and money was tight. "Random scholarships seemed to come through



Nathaniel Reid, BS '03, is a celebrated pastry chef and a 2012 recipient of *Dessert Professional Magazine's* Top 10 Pastry Chefs award. Photo by Christine Chang

every time just before I totally ran out of money,” he says.

Reid, a native of Farmington, Mo., put his knowledge to work back in the U.S. as a chef in Las Vegas, working in casino restaurants. It was a fast-paced life, and after three years in the desert oasis, and a stint at the five-star St. Regis Resort at Monarch Beach, Calif., he left for Norman Love Confections on the western Florida coast.

Despite the economic downturn, Norman Love opened a gelato shop in January 2012.

“At a small store like this, you get to know your customers well,” Reid says. “They’re loyal, and we love them for that.”

But if you ask Reid what his favorite dessert is, you’ll find it isn’t one of the fancy creations he spends all day making. It’s a simple homemade treat.

“My wife’s chocolate chip cookies, definitely,” he says. Reid’s wife, Lee Lee, shares the kitchen at home. She is also a pastry chef. — *David Earl*

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