

**Bringing dark chocolate taste complexity to milk chocolate.**  
**Firetree Chocolate launches NEW milk chocolate range to bridge the growing trend for more complex flavours.**

**March 2024** – it’s fair to say that milk chocolate remains a UK favourite. Whilst YouGov haven’t repeated their 2011 survey<sup>1</sup> that showed 52% of Brits preferred milk chocolate and 31% preferred dark, all indicators suggest that milk chocolate is still a top seller.



And yet, the Bean-to-bar chocolate market is projected to register a CAGR of 7.8% during the period 2022-2027<sup>2</sup>, a market typically dominated by dark chocolate makers. The growth of dark chocolate is boosted by a variety of trends:

- An increased demand for chocolate with perceived health benefits<sup>2</sup> – especially lower sugar; dark chocolate is typically much lower in sugar than its milk chocolate counterparts
- And, according to a recent report, 7 in 10 people prefer chocolate brands that help them to do good for people and the planet<sup>3</sup> which many craft chocolate makers including Firetree aim to achieve

What’s harder to measure and yet obvious to see in so many food and drink categories from wine to whisky and olive oil to coffee is that Brits are increasingly developing a more sophisticated palate and with that comes a demand for products that challenge all the senses.

Firetree Chocolate was launched at a moment when these trends were changing the chocolate landscape. As a craft manufacturer able to scale, they are on a mission to fill an important gap in the market – bringing bean-to-

bar connoisseurship to a wider audience. Firetree sources its cocoa beans from islands across the South Pacific and Indian Ocean; islands rich in volcanic soil that gives Firetree Chocolate its unique and complex taste notes. Each terroir or cocoa origin derives a different taste experience, similar to wine or whisky making.

Firetree's earliest customers were drawn to its range of single-estate, directly-traded cocoa chocolate bars and in particular to its 100% cocoa range. Having focused entirely on dark chocolate, the business was increasingly asked by its customers to bring its rich complex flavours to milk chocolate.

The result is two new chocolate bars: 40% Milk Chocolate Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal and 50% Dark Milk Chocolate Philippines, Mindanao Island. The 50% dark milk chocolate, in particular, is a real hit with experts: Annalisa Barbieri of The Guardian said, "The depth of joy is hard to translate into words"; Alistair Birt, Senior Head Chef at Harrods said, "WOW WOW WOW! Incredible, such a unique product. Complex and delicious, you guys are rock stars."

Whilst the 40% Milk Chocolate was a must to appeal to a wider audience and elevates everyday milk chocolate to new levels, Firetree sees the 50% dark milk as bridging the trend from milk to dark chocolate. Firetree's Chocolate Maker, Martyn O'Dare explains, "The 50% dark milk needs a 'cocoa complex' bean. The Philippines cocoa beans work well as a 73% cocoa bar, but when made into this 50% cocoa dark milk chocolate, they add a sublime top level of cocoa notes without drowning the creamy milk flavour from the whole milk powder. I think this is the perfect balance of a real dark and milk chocolate."

Launched initially as 70g chocolate bars with an MRSP of £3.50, Firetree will also be adding a milk chocolate option to its popular Hot Chocolate range (MRSP £12.00 for 245g) and its exquisite Chocolate Thins (MRSP £17.00 for 25 thins/150g). Later in the year, both the milk and dark milk chocolate will be added to Firetree's on-to-go 25g bar range.

Data sources:

1 YouGov 2011

2 Mordor Intelligence: Bean-to-bar Chocolate Trends & Forecasts to 2029

3 Barry Callebaut: Trends for 2024 Report

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## Notes to Editor:

### About

Firetree Chocolate's craft chocolate-making site is in Peterborough. Firetree sources its cocoa beans directly from single-estate farmers in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Madagascar and Hispaniola. Firetree has proven product excellence having recently received nine Academy of Chocolate Awards, and over nineteen Great Taste Awards (a total of 25 'stars') earning them Great Taste Producer status.

Firetree products do not contain additives or flavourings. Many products in the range are naturally dairy-free, suitable for vegans and are Kosher and Halal certified.

### Availability

Distributor: House of Sarunds [www.sarunds.co.uk](http://www.sarunds.co.uk)

Direct: contact [info@firetreechocolate.com](mailto:info@firetreechocolate.com)

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