

# The Boston Globe

## A very sweet creation

Chocolate dress looks good enough to eat

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**D**espite limited experience in the realm of fashion design, local chocolatier Jörg Amsler could sense there was going to be a problem when he saw the initial sketches from Heatherette designers Richie Rich and Traver Rains.

Rich and Rains, who regularly design for Paris Hilton, and count Pink, Justin Timberlake, David Beckham, and Britney Spears among their clients, collaborated with Amsler to create a chocolate dress for last week's Chocolate Fashion Show in New York. Their first attempt at a chocolate dress for the show was a full-length gown they called "Chocolate Holiday." The sketch depicted a form-fitting, floor-length frock that was completely adorned with chocolate Christmas trees, Easter eggs, gingerbread men, stars, hearts, snowmen, turkeys, shamrocks, and pretty much anything else evocative of a holiday that could be depicted in chocolate.

"When we think about chocolate, we always think about holidays," says Rains. "So we just went crazy with it. We knew there were going to be a lot of brown dresses on the runway, and we wanted ours to be one big, colorful confection." But a full-length dress covered in dangling chocolate ornaments would have weighed nearly as much as the model wearing it. Amsler, who loved the concept of holidays run amok in chocolate, had visions of a svelte model buckling under the weight of all that chocolate. Or worse, a model loosing her skirt on the runway.

"There would have been so much weight toward the bottom, that the dress would have slipped right off of her," says Amsler,



At left is the original sketch for the dress.

who owns Truly Jörg's Pâtisseries in Boston and Saugus. "I'm sure everyone would have loved that. But that's not a goal." Instead, Amsler suggested a mini version of the holiday dream dress, one that would not harm or cause embarrassment to the model. Rich and Rains designed a shortened version ("We're always happy to show a little skin," says Rains), and Amsler began creating the 300 pieces of chocolate to decorate the dress. The ornaments were created in white chocolate and then airbrushed in neon shades of food coloring.

"It was genius the way that he did it," says Rains. "I think he really understood what we were trying to convey." It took Amsler about 30 hours to create and color the 300 chocolate pieces. The day before last Thursday's show, he brought the chocolate to Heatherette's Empire State Building studio, and Rains and Rich began sewing and gluing about 200 of the chocolate ornaments to the dress. They created

a basic dress form for the model to wear, and added tulle to give volume underneath all that chocolate. The final product weighed about 23 pounds and was worn by Nena, a former contestant on TV's "America's Next Top Model." She also sported a pink flamingo purse (made of chocolate) and a chocolate cellphone.

"They give the models a lot of crazy challenges on that show," says Rains. "So Nena had no problems in the dress. And only two pieces of chocolate fell off." The dress is on display in the lobby of the Hotel Commonwealth.

Although the chocolate is edible, Amsler would prefer that you stop into his store if you get a sudden craving.



Nena models the chocolate dress by designers Richie Rich and Traver Rains at last week's Chocolate Fashion Show in New York.



Pastry Chef Jörg Amsler with his chocolate dress at the New York Chocolate Show.