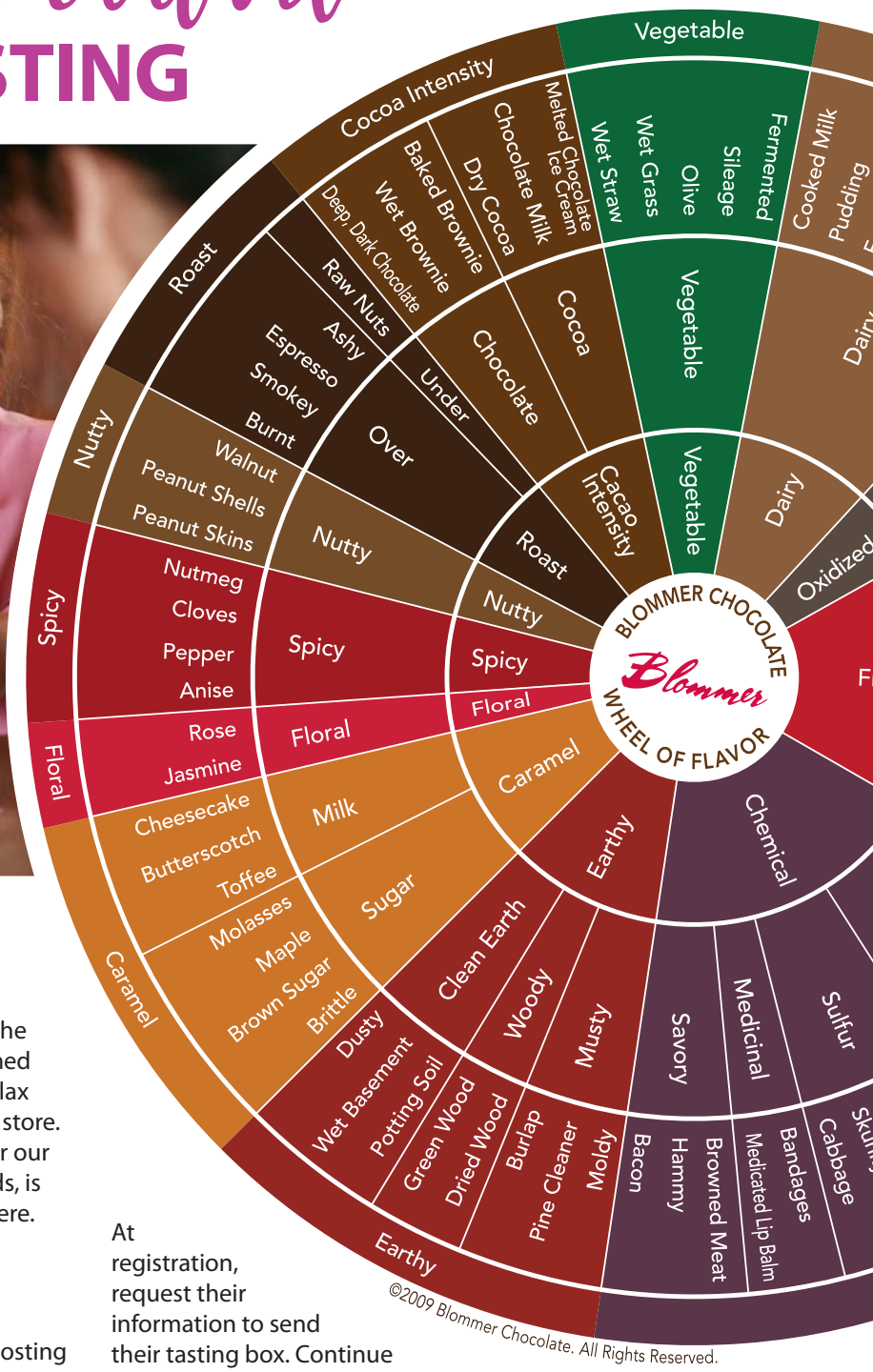
HOW TO HOST A *Virtual* CHOCOLATE TASTING





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WHY might we be interested in hosting a virtual chocolate tasting?

Even if your retail space is open for business, you might not be able to do your usual in-store sampling to share the experience that is chocolate. We have become accustomed to nesting in our homes, as a safe place where we can relax without all the extra precautions required to go out to a store. Home is our domain and entertaining at home, either for our regular household "unit" or bringing in a few close friends, is going to stay strong even when permitted to go elsewhere.

HOW can we go about hosting a virtual chocolate tasting?

Use all your resources to get the word out that you are hosting a virtual tasting. Share how your customers can participate and how to receive their tasting kit. Social media, such as your Facebook page, is a great way to spark interest in addition to advertising in your store or in the windows. Partner with a local organization like a nearby high school music booster or a local charity and let them advertise within their network for a percentage of the proceeds.

Advertise your virtual tasting party on your website with a place for those interested to register and order their tasting kits. You may host one event, with a scheduled date and time, or host a series of events with options for different products or even themed boxes.

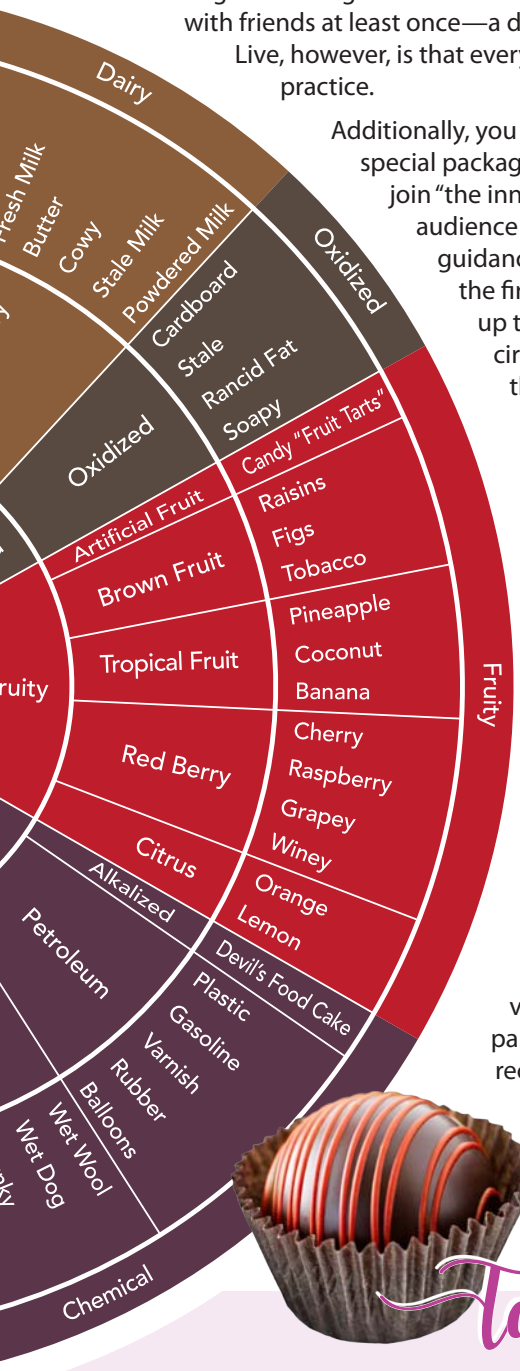
At registration, request their information to send their tasting box. Continue to build anticipation with a short message on Facebook or other social media everyday leading up to the deadline to register for the event and even after the event to show them what they missed in anticipation for your next event.

Decide which platform will best help you achieve your goals and vision for your virtual chocolate tasting. Facebook Live allows you to engage with your audience as they type questions in real time. Following the live event, the recording will be available on your Facebook page in case they missed the timeslot. It is best to have at least to two people to manage a Facebook Live event—one to present and one to manage the social media logistics. Another popular platform for virtual

presentations is Zoom Video Conferencing. Zoom has on-demand capabilities to allow for reoccurring webinars with recording and auto-generated transcripts. Do a practice run with friends at least once—a disadvantage of Facebook Live, however, is that everyone will see your practice.

Additionally, you may want to offer special packages for loyal customers to join "the inner circle" as part of a live audience as your space and local guidance may allow. It may be the first 10 people who sign up to be part of the "inner circle" and they receive their special tasting kit as they arrive.

If you are going to have people participate live in your retail space and you anticipate most of the virtual tastings might be done at the customer's leisure and not live, earlier in the day may be best. On the other hand, it seems most tastings are being held in the evening—as a relaxing after-dinner treat. A benefit of offering a virtual tasting, is that participants can view the recording whenever it fits their schedule.



WHAT should you INCLUDE in the virtual tasting kit?

CHOCOLATE PRODUCT

You could include all finished pieces, such as truffles or meltaways, or a combination of solid chocolates and some of the inclusions you might normally use—walking participants through how you selected those particular flavor combinations. Try tasting milk, dark and white chocolate alone, then taste a caramel, followed by a combination to see the different effect.

TASTING BALLOT OR MAT

This serves as a way to easily identify the product they are tasting and the order in which it will be tasted. ***Click here to download a sample tasting ballot.***

FLAVORWHEEL

A useful guide through the sensory process. ***Click here to download the Blommer Chocolate Wheel of Flavor.***

TASTING WARE OR UTENSILS

For those all about the details, include special tasting ware and utensils. Try sustainable palm leaf plates and mini bamboo tongs.



Eco-Gecko Palm Leaf Plate, $1.25 ea

SWAG WITH YOUR LOGO

Branded napkins, insulated tote bags, pens or local flair to keep and remind participants of their experience with you.

Rose Potts
Blommer Chocolate Company
East Greenville, Pennsylvania



» CLICK HERE to view Blommer Chocolate's Taste Talk as Rose dives into how to host a virtual chocolate tasting.

Tasting Theme Ideas

Although you don't have to have a theme, it will make the experience more memorable and may lead to multiple tastings.

WINE AND CHOCOLATE—*always a winner!*

Depending on your state, you could include wine in the tasting box, offer recommendations for participants to purchase wine in advance, or you could partner with a local winery and cross-promote your virtual event including a small tasting glass as winery swag. **Here's some general pairings guidelines:**

White Chocolate ..... **Pinot Grigio**
Milk Chocolate ..... **Merlot**
Dark Chocolate ..... **Cabernet**

VACATION DESTINATION

Even though we may not be able to travel, you now have the opportunity to take your customers away to an exotic location or highlight your home base.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

Set the tone with California wines, Beach Boys music and surfer vibes as you walk through your chocolate and wine pairings.

MAINE HARVEST

Celebrate regional treasures such as Maine blueberries in different confections and do a tasting near the ocean.