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Amazing dessert: the ice cream sandwich at Ginger Elizabeth



Ginger Elizabeth Chocolates has earned a national reputation for its handcrafted, luxurious chocolates and small desserts such as the gianduja cake and the café cremeaux.

Once you visit the small shop on L Street, it's easy to understand why. Quality. Consistency. Premium ingredients. Time-tested technique.

So, when I finally got around to trying the ice cream sandwiches, available seasonally from May through October, I had great expectations. I bought all three flavors (\$5.50 each), took them home and planned how I would taste them - one per day, each neatly sliced in half, and then savored as slowly as possible. The lemon, then the pistachio and, finally, the salted caramel.

Despite my expectations, these three treats blew me away. They're revolutionary, so much better than any ice cream sandwich I've ever had, from those mass-produced ones at the convenience store to so-called "artisan housemade" desserts at fine restaurants that often required a chisel and dental insurance. My girlfriend described them as one of the finest desserts she's ever had. They could easily be showcased at any restaurant in town.

There are several reasons why these are so good, so different. The blond cookies that make the sandwich are about four inches round, and they are actually made from the shop's macarons recipe, only they're much larger.

Though the ice cream is superb and the flavors nuanced and understated, it is this cookie that changes everything. Because it is so airy and light, it doesn't get rock-hard when it freezes. It is easy to bite into, and once you settle in and start tasting, you confront multiple textures and, seemingly, different temperatures, in your mouth. It is a wonderful experience, this process of slowly nibbling and tasting these treats.

I was so impressed with this dessert that I called Ginger Elizabeth Hahn to find out more. She confirmed my thinking about what made them work.

"Using the macaron as the vessel for the ice cream is great because when the macaron is frozen, it is still really soft," Hahn said.

Macarons are a time-consuming and relatively pricy treat, coveted by those who appreciate the airy texture and variety of natural flavors. They are made, Hahn informed me, with almond flour, powdered sugar, granulated sugar and egg whites. Because there is no butter, they don't freeze to the consistency of a steel beam - like the disastrous ice cream sandwiches I recently had at two restaurants I won't name here.

We're already planning our Friday night around getting more. Anyone hosting a dinner party, book club or backyard barbecue would score major points with guests by serving these for dessert. Or better yet, just go to the shop, get one (or more) and sit at a table outside to enjoy every last bite.

Categories: Blair Anthony Robertson, Fine dining, Food

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kerriprice

The Salted Caramel Macaron ice cream sandwich is absolute heaven. The macaron cookie is soft but chewy, and the caramel just oozes out of the center of the ice cream when you bite into it. As usual, another delicious treat from Ginger Elizabeth!

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