

# Sweet Beginnings



It's decades of deliciousness at **Coblentz Chocolate Co.**

By **Kyle Valentini**

It's hard to believe it's been three decades since Jason and Mary Coblentz started Coblentz Chocolates out of their own kitchen in spring 1987. A lot has changed in that time, but their dedication to satisfying customers who crave premium chocolates, caramels and other confections has only grown.

"We started with a dream and decided that quality was important from the very beginning," Jason Coblentz said. "That, along with great employees, is what has brought us to great success. We hoped that the business would become this successful."

The Walnut Creek business housed in a charming Victorian home takes visitors back to a nostalgic time when a trip to the candy store was a big deal. It still is at Coblentz, where premium candy remains an affordable luxury.

"Quality does not go out of style. That is why our chocolate caramels have been a top seller since we opened in 1987," Coblentz said. "But occasionally a new trend pops up that gravitates towards becoming a classic. For instance, when sea salt became a popular trend, we began making a sea salt caramel. This item has become one of our best sellers, right up there with our traditional chocolate caramel."

Seasonal items also are popular at Coblentz Chocolates, and they are the locals' go-to place for holiday confections or the

perfect gift for special occasions.

Some of Coblentz signature items include caramels, clusters, Buckeyes, cordials and meltaways along with Swiss-style truffles. The Jason & Mary's Pieces collection includes oversized Pecan or Cashew Snappers, Almond Butter Crunch, Dutch Pretzel and several other tempting varieties.

Coblentz Chocolates offers a variety of other candies including brittles and barks, the



**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S BEEN THREE DECADES SINCE JASON AND MARY COBLENTZ STARTED COBLENTZ CHOCOLATES OUT OF THEIR OWN KITCHEN IN 1987.**

Wunderbar Schokolade, a 3-ounce chocolate bar in a variety of flavors as well as caramel corn, flavorful roasted nuts and delicious, creamy fudge.

New varieties are added, and everyone in the company is encouraged to contribute ideas.

"A concept is shared among us. Then we ask how we can make it unique to

Coblentz Chocolates and if it is possible to make it in the large quantities that we need to in order to sell it," Coblentz said. "Samples are made. We all enjoy this part. Packaging ideas are explored. Then costs are calculated, and at that point we can move the piece into production and then into the store."

Because Coblentz Chocolates uses fresh, local cream and butter and a higher percentage of cocoa butter in their recipe, their chocolates simply taste better.

Coblentz believes in fair trade, and more and more customers demand it.

"While the desire for quality products has remained, consumers have become more aware of sources related to the products they love," Coblentz said. "Consumers want products from sources that are treating employees and farmers fairly."

A special observation area allows visitors to watch as candy is made.

When a trip to the shop is not possible, Coblentz offers all their products online at their website.

"Marketing the business has changed dramatically as well with the web," Coblentz said. "The ability to sell our products online and reach our customers through social media has increased our brand visibility."

Coblentz Chocolates ships anywhere in the U.S. ♦

*Coblentz Chocolate Co. is located at 4917 State Route 515 just off of State Route 39 in Walnut Creek. The phone number is 330-893-2995. They are open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit them online at [www.CoblentzChocolates.com](http://www.CoblentzChocolates.com).*