



From the keyboard of

CLAY GORDON

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Bio & Curriculum Vitae

Bio

Clay Gordon earned a BFA in Photography from the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design in 1983.

Shortly after graduation he pivoted to the world of high technology, and over the course of nearly 20 years he worked on pioneering projects in computer graphics, interactive multimedia, electronic prepress, visual databases and full-text information management and retrieval, high definition television production, and Internet development projects. His client list included IBM Applications Systems Division, DuPont Design Technologies, Silicon Graphics Inc, Time Warner Full Service Network, MIDEM (now REED-MIDEM), and Agence France Presse, among others.

Much of Clay's work during this period involved roles in new product development, researching market trends and technologies for clients, and writing about trends and technologies for those clients as well as for technical and general audiences.

Recognizing an opportunity in the expansion of interest in gourmet foods in 1994 – *there were professional critics for just about everything but none for chocolate* – Clay set out to become the world's first *professional* chocolate critic, a milestone he achieved in Spring 2001. Since then he has been actively promoting an awareness and understanding of the entire cocoa to chocolate supply web as an independent journalist, critic, and consultant – supported by extensive personal experience gained through visits to cacao farms in the Americas, Caribbean, and Africa; visits to specialty/craft and commodity chocolate factories on four continents; and observing hundreds of world-class chefs, chocolatiers, and chocolate makers in professional kitchens, competitions, and teaching situations.

Since 2001, Clay has been a highly visible and influential advocate of teaching chocolate appreciation through his work at his pioneering rating/review website chocophile.com; his 2007 book *Discover Chocolate*; via the seminal online community TheChocolatLife.com; and through hundreds of tasting classes and lectures both in-person and online including nearly 400 podcast episodes since mid-2021. Through his work on TheChocolatLife.com and related online activities since 2008, his presence at conferences around the world, and his network of professional colleagues, Clay maintains an up-to-date understanding of cocoa and chocolate market segmentation and market requirements – all the while tasting a lot of chocolate.

By fostering community in all his efforts, Clay has built a global following for his work and ideas. He has been a featured speaker at dozens of industry conferences, from Amsterdam and London to La Paz, Lima, and São Paulo. He has been a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and his opinions have been seen in the pages of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and dozens of other print, radio, television, and online media outlets.

In 2019, the Fine Chocolate Industry Association (FCIA) awarded him their first Recognition of Excellence Award for Contributions to Communications.



CV ~ Cocoa and Chocolate Consulting

Since 1998, Clay has worked in the fields of cocoa and chocolate as an independent author, consultant, and sales professional. While he has specialized in craft and specialty chocolate and cocoa – focusing on sourcing, quality, new product development, manufacturing, marketing, and consumer education from the farm to the factory to the table – his experience includes work with some of the largest chocolate makers and equipment manufacturers in the world as well as state and federal government agencies in cocoa-producing countries.

He has made his knowledge, experience, and network available to a number of influential cocoa suppliers, chocolatiers, and chocolate makers, including dozens of startups – in addition to some of the world's largest chocolate companies.

Since 2008 he has been the publisher and moderator of *TheChocolateLife.com*, a global online community serving over 12,000 registered members and uncounted visitors in more than 160 countries. While in lockdown during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, Clay launched *TheChocolateWire*, a specialized Press/PR service, joined *International Confectionery Magazine* as their Technical Editor, and hosted 149 episodes of *TheChocolateLife on Clubhouse*.

He has also hosted 145 episodes of *TheChocolateLifeLIVE*, and more than 120 episodes of *PodSaveChocolate*, both twice-weekly podcasts streamed to YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Select Consulting Clients

June 2021 — December 2024

International Confectionery Magazine Technical Editor, Hand Media
Responsible for researching and writing 2000-word feature articles covering topics in cocoa, chocolate, and confectionery sourcing, manufacturing, and innovation. Act as a technical resource to the publisher, managing editor, and other members of the Hand Media staff. Organize, moderate, and participate in twice-annual editions of *ConfectioneryLIVE*, a series of global virtual symposia.

2023 — 2024

International Cocoa Diplomacy (London; Lagos, Nigeria)

Assist the founder (a Nigerian tribal King, the Oloni of Eti-Oni) of this global non-profit in the moderation of two conference programs, one in London (October 2023) and one in Nigeria (Abuja and Lagos, January 2024). Assist in the development of marketing language and supporting materials.



2023

Consultant, Cacao Consulting (Prescott, AZ). New business development, sales, and consulting support for a company that specializes in new product development (NPD) and startup co-manufacturing services, helping companies formulate products and bring them to market. Cacao Consulting also offers services in sourcing custom-built chocolate manufacturing, tempering, enrobing, and depositing equipment.

2022

GoodSAM Foods PBC/Luker Chocolates (USA/Colombia) / **Hacienda Victoria SA** (Ecuador) / **Cocoa Supply, SA** (Ecuador). For these clients I traveled to Colombia and Ecuador (respectively) to observe their operations in person with the intent to write about their operations for trade publications, online publications, and in social media. These articles included photographs I took documenting those travels. The purpose of these efforts was to improve industry and general awareness of the work these companies are doing in sustainable and traceable supply chains.

2020 — 2022

Grupo M2I (Brazil / Portugal). Assist in the development and delivery of international speaker programs for the largest producer of chocolate festivals in Brazil. Participate in the company's first international festival at the World of Wine in Porto, Portugal.

2017 — 2022

Barry Callebaut Group (Switzerland). Participate, as an independent analyst, in the global launch events for Ruby chocolate (Shanghai, China, 2017); Hidden Persuaders in Cocoa and Chocolate (Köln, Germany, 2018); Whole Fruit (San Francisco, CA, 2019); and 2nd Generation Chocolate (Venice, Italy, 2022).

2021

IKOM Chocolate Consult on the development and installation of a pilot-scale chocolate manufacturing facility in Cross River State, Nigeria.

2020

Cargill Foods (Belgium). Participate, as a part of an external sensory analysis panel, in the final selection for a new line of single-origin couverture chocolates for professionals being introduced by a Cargill-owned brand.

2015 — 2020

State government agencies (Agriculture, Economics/Tourism) of Tabasco (MX), the Consejo Regulador de Cacao, and related Mexican federal government agencies. Consult on: a) the technification of post-harvest capabilities for the state of Tabasco in the context of creating a formal *Denominacion de Origen* for the Grijalva region of Tabasco and Chiapas; b) developing an understanding of international market demand for cocoa to guide the development of governmental support priorities to grow the cocoa industry in Tabasco, c) researching and writing best practices manuals.

2015 — 2019

Develop and produce flavor visualization graphics used by the Cacao of



Excellence, MOCCA's Central American Flavor Map project, and cocoa producers and chocolate makers globally.

2014 — 2018

Ingemann Cacao Fino, Nicaragua. Researched and wrote print and online materials changing the way the company presented itself, its farmers, and its work to markets and buyers outside of Nicaragua. Created, organized, promoted, and co-led sessions of the week-long *Academia del Cacao*, held in Nicaragua, that introduced potential buyers to Ingemann's approach to technified post-harvest processing.

Consulted on the design, layout, and equipment selection for a 1000m² cocoa processing and chocolate manufacturing facility capable of processing a minimum of 1,000MT cocoa annually.

2017

Association of Producers and Exporters of Nicaragua (APEN), Nicaragua. Lead consultant on the development of a national branding campaign for Nicaraguan cocoa that included liaison with Nicaraguan federal government ministries, cocoa growers, cocoa processors, chocolate makers, and other stakeholders in Nicaragua as well as interviewing international buyers. The "Cacaos de Nicaragua" branding is now used globally by Nicaraguan cocoa producers.

2011 — 2017

New World Spirits, NYC, USA. Consulted on supply chain development including identifying and selecting cacao sourcing and production partners in South America and the Caribbean for *Solbeso*, an 80 proof distilled spirit made from fresh cacao juice. Also served as *Solbeso's* Brand Ambassador to culinary markets.

2002 — 2011

Carymax Productions, NYC, USA. Helped create and deliver special educational and support programs for The World Pastry Forum, The World Pastry Team Championships, and The National Pastry Team Championships.

2010

Cacao Prieto / Widow Jane Distillery, NYC, USA. Marketing communications for this startup chocolate and confectionery company. Helped build out the factory space and work on patent applications for pharmaceutical use of cacao extracts. Oversaw federal TTB and NY State liquor license filings.

2006 — 2007, 2018

Askinosie Chocolate, MO, USA. Accompanied founder on first bean buying trips; assisted in pre-launch new product development and wrote promotions/marketing literature for initial packaging. Transparency report analysis for the founder's book *Meaningful Work*.

1999 — 2005

Vintage Chocolates, NJ, USA. Sell gourmet chocolates (including Michel Cluizel and Domori) including couverture, bars, and bonbons into top restaurant and hotel kitchens, chocolatiers, and gourmet retail locations in the NY Metro area.



Other Clients and Activities 2001 — present

- **Chocolates Wolter**; consulted on the facilities design and equipment sourcing for a 1000m2 chocolate factory (Tabasco, Mexico)
- **Ciao Imports**; consult on chocolate importing and distribution (USA)
- **Equipoise** Conference; presenter, moderator, program organizer, advisory board member, outreach Ambassador; CHOCOA (Netherlands) 2013–25
- **Origin Chocolate Event**; Co-developer and present of unique tasting experiences (Netherlands)
- **Delani Trading Company**; equipment sales (Peru)
- **FBM S.r.l.**; equipment sales, new product development, create and deliver educational programming in chocolate manufacturing and confectionery production (Italy and worldwide) 2012–19
- **Tachibana**; educational programming for this cacao importer and pastry ingredients distributor (Japan) 2017
- **Mahogany Chocolate**; facilities design, equipment sourcing, new product (recipe) development (Belize)
- **Wild Mountain Chocolate**; kitchen design, equipment installation and training in cocoa roasting and chocolate manufacturing (Canada)
- **REACH Grenada**; market research and social enterprise development (USA/Grenada) 2009-10
- **The Big Events Group** / The Big Chocolate Show; consumer festival operations, marketing, exhibitor outreach, event app deployment (USA) 2016–18



CV ~ Employment History

TheChocolateLife.com / TheChocolateWire

Founder, Publisher, Moderator, Chief Chocolate Correspondent, Consultant;
(January 2008 — Present)

Founded in January 2008, TheChocolateLife is the one of the largest on-line communities not on Facebook for chocolate in the world with members in over 160 countries. Founded during COVID lockdowns, TheChocolateWire provides media and PR services to small companies.

WebWideGuides, Inc.

Founder, Chief Everything Officer (May 1998 — December 2011)

WebWideGuides provided a range of strategic and tactical planning and development services to its clients (including startups and Fortune 500 companies) based on over 20 years experience cocoa and chocolate and in small and startup companies in the fields of computer graphics, interactive multimedia, high definition television, and the Internet.

WWGI's primary focus was helping companies understand technology choices and the impact that existing and new technologies would have on product development plans. Much of the work was done with small groups of developers and designers new to their respective industries, bringing experience to bear on development projects to help management maximize their R&D investments.

NOLOH LLC

2005 — 2010

NOLOH (Not One Line of HTML) was a lightweight, on-demand, object oriented Web application development platform. It was created for developing feature-rich web sites and web applications faster and with fewer resources. NOLOH extended PHP 5.1+, eliminating the need for HTML and JavaScript, and built on many advanced features such as codeless AJAX, automatic SEO, and a full suite of UI controls. Consulted on the features and functional specification and UI/UX development of an FDA 10K Type-2 medical device compliance system.

WhereTheHeckIsIt.com

CTO / CIO (September 2001 — July 2002)

Oversaw the development of the technological infrastructure and content development systems for an Internet-based curated directory startup.



Winstar Interactive Media Sales

Co-Founder, Technical / Creative Director (March 1996 — April 1998)

Provided technical and creative support to sales staff and clients of a pioneering interactive advertising representation company.

Independent technology consultant

February 1988 — February 1996

Consulting clients included Genigraphics Corporation, InterConsult Inc., IBM Application Systems Division, AGFA Matrix, Belser Knowledge Industries, Edwin Schlossberg Inc., Agence France Presse, and Silicon Graphics/Time Warner Full Service Network, among others.

Project work included formal market research studies, white paper research and writing, writing handbooks, software design and development, project management, interactive videodisc development, educational software development, and interactive place-based media development, among others.

Enfish Inc

Co-Founder (September 1993 — June 1994)

Enfish developed a desktop information management app for Windows called Enfish, (an acronym for Enter, Find, and Share). As one of the co-founders, many of the ideas expressed in early versions of the software were co-developed by me based on ideas I helped develop with one of the other co-founders over the course of more than fifteen years. I left the company in 1995 although the company continued to exist until 2004 when its assets were sold. I am a named inventor on four patents for my work at Enfish and one of those patents was litigated successfully against Microsoft: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enfish,_LLC_v._Microsoft_Corp.

REBO Studio

Director, Advanced Development (January 1991 — December 1992)

REBO Studio was the first HDTV production company in North America. As Director for Advanced Development I was involved in the development and marketing of video production technology REBO developed, for markets other than video production. The company's flagship product was the ReStore, a Macintosh-compatible 32-bit (RGBA) dual-buffer frame store. Just after leaving REBO I was hired to produce a training curriculum for video professionals from Taiwan that led to the publishing in 1995 of the book (written and produced by me) *The Guide to High Definition Video Production - Preparing for a Widescreen World*.



Artronics, Inc

Various positions (October 1983 — February 1988)

Participated in the development, marketing, and sales of PC-based systems for business graphics, video production, and 3D modeling and animation. Member of the team that introduced the first 24-bit paint system on an MS-DOS PC-clone to the market during SIGGRAPH 1984. Member of the team that developed software that seamlessly merged vector and raster imagery on the Matrix QCR 4D digital film recorder, an industry first, in 1985. Member of the team that developed the first business graphics system that used scalable outline fonts and user-editable kerning tables (from URW, the original font data supplier to Adobe Systems) in 1986.

EDUCATION

Rhode Island School of Design — BFA, Photography, 1980 – 1983

The Evergreen State College — Photography, September 1976 – June 1977

CV ~ Honors/Awards, Patents

Fine Chocolate Industry Association Recognition of Excellence award for “Contributions to Communications.” (2019)

Finalist, Food Reference and Technical category of 2008 *International Association of Culinary Professionals* (IACP) Book Awards.

Named inventor on four patents with Enfish, Inc in the field of information management and retrieval.

Named inventor on one pending patent with NOLOH LLC for a novel method of developing and deploying Rich Internet Applications.

Media CV — Select

Broadcast National Network Television

- The Oprah Winfrey Show (Oct 2003 - World Record holders; World's Most Expensive Chocolate)

Cable Television

- History Channel (2021)
- Discovery Channel *Secrets of Chocolate* (2010)
- Treasure HD (Satellite, first aired Sep 2007)
- History Channel, *American Eats: Chocolate* (first aired Aug 2006)
- ESPN2 *Cold Pizza* (Feb 2005)
- Fine Living (Personal Journal, Jan 2005)
- ESPN2 *Cold Pizza* (Nov 2004)
- Metro New York / "Naked NY" (2004)
- Food Network (Top 5 Foods, Sep 2003)



Radio

- Straight From the Source (Heritage Radio Network, www.heritageradionetwork.org; 2013-2014)
- The Diane Rehm Show (WAMU-FM, Washington, DC. Broadcast live and carried nationally.
- Gary Doyle Show (570 News Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, Nov 2007)
- Barbra Alexander (Health Radio Network, Nov, 2007)
- Pierre Wolfe (Business Talk Radio Network, Oct, 2007)
- Martha Stewart Living (Sirius Satellite Radio, Oct 2007)
- Martha Stewart Living (Sirius Satellite Radio, Jul 2007)
- Martha Stewart Living (Sirius Satellite Radio, Feb 2007)
- Leonard Lopate Show (WNYC/PBS, Feb 2007)
- Martha Stewart Living (Sirius Satellite Radio, Feb 2006)
- Good Morning America (XM Satellite Radio, Feb 2006)
- The Dolans (WOR, 2004)

Books (as Author)

- *The World Guide to Chocolate*, in development
- *The Pyramid Tasting Handbook* (12/2024, self-published)
- *Discover Chocolate* (10/2007, Gotham Books/Penguin USA)
- *The Guide to High Definition Video Production: Preparing for a Widescreen World* (1995, Focal Press/Butterworth Heinemann)

Books (Mentions)

- *Wild Chocolate* (auth. Rowan Jacobsen)
- *Making Chocolate* (Dandelion/Clarkson-Potter)
- *Chocolate French* (2nd Edition, Summer 2006)
- *The Great Book Of Chocolate* (auth. David Lebovitz)
- *Candy Freak* (auth. Steve Almond)
- *Chocolate Connoisseur* (auth. Chloe Doutre-Roussel)

Bylined Articles in Specialty/Special Interest Publications

- Technical Editor, International Confectionery (Jun 21– Dec 24; 35 articles)
- International Confectionery (A Generational Approach to Chocolate, Jan 21)
- SeriousEats.com / Serious Chocolate (8 columns, May-October, 2008)
- Dessert Professional Magazine (VI, Nos 1-2)
- Chocolatier Magazine (1 article plus 9 issues of *The New World Chocolate Society Newsletter* 2004-2007)
- Yahoo! Personals (2005)
- The Independent Film and Video Monthly (1992)
- Millimeter magazine (>15 articles, 1989-1991)
- AVVideo magazine (>30 articles, 1986-1990)

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Mentions in Newspapers

- USA Today
- The Journal News (Hudson Valley/Gannett Suburban)
- The New York Times (Dining In/Out section)
- The Wall Street Journal (Personal Journal)
- Dallas Morning News
- San Francisco Chronicle
- East Bay Express (Oakland, CA)
- Sacramento Bee
- Knight-Ridder Syndicate (worldwide syndication)

Mentions in General Interest Magazines

- Business Week (multiple issues)
- People
- Newsweek
- Shape
- Woman's World

Mentions/Interviews in Specialty/Special Interest Publications

- Kiplinger's Personal Finance
- Business Week On-line
- The Robb Report (Christmas Buying Guide issue)
- Chow Magazine (Inaugural Issue)
- MSNBC.com
- The Street.com
- Yahoo! Pick
- money.cnn.com
- Time Out (NY)
- Culinary Trends Magazine
- Gourmet News Magazine



Select Lectures, Presentations, Tastings, Events

- **British Society of Flavourists Annual Symposium** – “Quantifying the Flavours of Cocoa and Chocolate” w/ Zoi Papalexandratou (Brussels; 2024)
- **MidWest Craft Chocolate Festival** – Featured presenter, official festival “Concierge” (Rushville, IN; 2024)
- **Southwest Chocolate and Coffee Festival** – Featured presenter (Albuquerque, NM; 2024)
- **British Society of Flavourists Annual Symposium** – “Communicating the Flavours of Chocolate and Coffee (Remote; 2023)
- **Chocolat Xingu, Chocolat Bahia, Chocolat Porto** – Invited international guest, presenter, panel moderator (2022)
- **CHOCOA** – Moderator, co-moderator, advisory board member, presenter *The Chocolate Maker's Forum*, tastings and pairings (Amsterdam; 2014–19, 2022)
- **Chocolat São Paulo** Invited international guest, presenter (2020)
- **Festival del Chocolate** – Co-creator/organizer Mini-Foro (Villahermosa, Tabasco, MX; 2016, 2019)
- **Origin Chocolate** – Invited international guest, presenter (Amsterdam; 2012–16)
- **Roots of Cacao** – Presenter (New York, Institute of Culinary Education, 2018)
- **Chocolat Bahia** Invited international guest, presenter (2017)
- **Salon del Cacao y Chocolate** – Invited international guest, presenter (Lima, PE; 2013–2015, 2017)
- **Academia de Cacao** – Co-creator, co-host (Nicaragua; 2015–16)
- **NYU Experimental Cuisine Collective** – Invited speaker *How Chocolate Gets Its Taste* (NYC; 2013)
- **Chocolate Unwrapped / The Chocolate Show** (London; 2009, 2012–18)
- **Academy of Chocolate** (The \$100 Bar of Chocolate; London, 2012)
- **2nd International Conference on Fine Flavor Cocoa in the Andean Region** / *Segundo Congreso Internacional de Cacaos Finos y de Aroma en la Region Andina* – Invited international guest, presenter (La Paz, Bolivia; Nov 2010)
- **Google** – *Author Talk* in support of the release of *Discover Chocolate* (2008).
- **Discover Chocolate in Belize** – Eco-tours (2007–08, 2010)
- **NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies / James Beard Foundation** – Advanced Wine and Chocolate Pairings (NYC; Mar 2006, Nov 2006, Mar 2007, Oct 2007)
- **The Chocolate Show** (Salon du Chocolat NY)
Main Stage Presenter (2004–07)
- **University of Chocolate** (Ecuador, 2003, 2005)