



Michel Cluizel Brings the World of Chocolate to Canada

Chocolate lovers can take pleasure in the finest quality premium chocolate with the recent introduction of Michel Cluizel Chocolate from France. As the exclusive distributor in Canada, The Qualifirst Group offers a wide range of Michel Cluizel products including bars, single squares and boxed gift sets of blended and single estate plantation milk and dark chocolates, with up to 99 percent cocoa, available in fine food shops across Canada or on-line at www.epicureal.com and www.qualifirst.com

Internationally recognized for its commitment to quality, Michel Cluizel is one of the last independent boutique chocolate companies in France that still controls the entire chocolate making process. Cocoa beans are sourced from plantations around the world where they are fermented and air-dried then shipped to its state-of-the-art "Chocolaterie" located in the south of Normandy. There, the beans are roasted and crushed to an unsweetened paste used in the making of its luxurious chocolates.

Michel Cluizel pioneered the creation of estate chocolates with its 1er Cru ("first growth") Plantation Chocolate that indicate the specific plantation and country of origin. Each plantation chocolate is full-bodied and offers distinct flavour notes similar to the unique taste of single plantation coffee beans. Michel Cluizel's single estate chocolates originate from the following plantations around the world: Mangaro Noir (Madagascar); Maralumi, (Papua-New Guinea); Concepcion (Venezuela); Los Anconès (Santo Domingo); and Vila Gracinda (São Tomé).

In addition to dark chocolate, the Cluizel single estate plantation series also includes two milk chocolates: Maralumi Plantation (Papua New Guinea; 47% cocoa), and Mangaro Plantation (Madagascar; 50% cocoa); both are available in 100 g bars.

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Michel Cluizel offers a wide assortment of dark chocolate that are characteristically low in acidity making them the perfect chocolate to enjoy as is and to use in baking and dessert making. The 100 g bars contain 60, 72, 85 or 99 percent cocoa. The higher the cocoa content, the less sweet

the chocolate. Michel Cluizel 'Noir Infini' chocolate with 99 percent cocoa is one of the very few unsweetened chocolates available on the market.

There have been many studies linking dark chocolate with health benefits. (The darker the chocolate the more concentrated the cocoa). Rich in antioxidants, studies indicate that dark chocolate is beneficial in preventing heart disease, diabetes, and reducing the risk of stroke and dementia.

The designation of “noble ingredients” on each bar and box of Michel Cluizel Chocolate ensures that only pure cocoa, cocoa butter, whole Bourbon vanilla bean and cane sugar go into the making of the superior chocolate. Following the origin of traditional chocolate making in Europe, no additives are allowed including soy lecithin (often sourced from genetically modified soybeans), commonly used as an emulsifier in the manufacture of chocolate. Michel Cluizel products have a superior taste without the addition of soy lecithin that can affect a chocolate’s flavour.

Michel Cluizel Chocolates are distributed in Canada by the Qualifirst Group, a leading importer and distributor of exotic, gourmet food products used and/or carried by more than 1,500 restaurants, 1,000 retailers and hundreds of specialty shops across Canada. Michel Cluizel chocolates can also be purchased online at www.epicureal.com.

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Hi and low-res j-peg images are available.

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