



“We make everything here by hand.

We typically start gelato production on Mondays by making the bases we will need to stock the case. That involves blending the sugars, flavorings, and milk and allowing them to mature under refrigeration before running each base through our batch freezer.

The batch freezer does a lot of the hard work, but we have to be sure our recipes are balanced which involves a little calculating. Everything is weighed before it goes in and if it's off, it can affect the consistency of the gelato.

As the gelato extracts from the batch freezer, it is the most dense and creamy that the gelato will ever be, so we have to work very quickly to get it

layered, decorated, and into our blast freezer to stop the melting process.

The chocolates are more difficult and depending on how many we make it could take 4 to 5 days or even 7 to 8 days to complete a production run.

And that's because the painting process can take so long. We use colored cocoa butters that are solid at room temperature. You have to heat them in 30 second intervals, squeeze them, shake them, heat them again, and so on until you reach the ideal temperature. They can be just as finicky as chocolate.

After that we start with the designs, and that's also done by hand. If the design calls for splatters, we will dip a paint brush in cocoa butter and splatter the molds. Designs like swipes or marbling are made with paint brushes, our fingers, or saran wrap and then the background cocoa butter colors are airbrushed.

Once the cocoa butters are set and dried, we can then make the bonbon shells. While our white chocolates are tempered by hand, we use our chocolate wheel tempering machine for the dark chocolates because it makes it a lot easier to temper large amounts of chocolate at one time.

We raise the temperature of the machine to melt the chocolate and then drop the temperature down and add our seeding chocolate. As we do this the wheel constantly turns encouraging the development of stage five or 'V' crystals. This creates beautifully tempered chocolate that will be shiny and have really thin shells that you can easily bite through.

The next day is ganache and ganache day is the messy day. Ganache is basically different variations of chocolate, butter, cream, and flavor and it is what we use for our fillings. Some will be made with dark chocolate, white chocolate, caramel, fruits, or nuts. When we fill the shells up with the ganache, we will leave a little bit of space to put a cap of chocolate on the bottom or 'the foot' of the chocolate.

Then they are left to set overnight and if all is lucky, they will slide right out of the mold the next day.

It's a lot of work, but the hard work pays off. We want everything to look beautiful and taste delicious, and there are still endless possibilities of designs and flavor combinations and holidays to create for.

We haven't even scratched the surface yet.”

- Ranny Starnes, co-owner of [Chocobella](#)