

POP-ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN

The Sweet Aspirations Of Rachel Thebault

By poprockcandy • April 16, 2008



With over 20,000 listed restaurants in its neighborhoods, New York City may be the food capital of the world, making it an extremely difficult market in which to open a new eatery. Washington DC native Rachel Thebault, a self-noted fan of poker, placed the bet of a lifetime when she started her own confectionery shop, Tribeca Treats. The bet paid-off for the Colgate graduate and former investment banker as the specialty bakery recently celebrated its first anniversary in its present location at 94 Reade Street, between Church St. and West Broadway.

Thebault developed an appreciation for food at an early age. She was inspired by her watching and helping her mother cook and by traveling around the world with her family, sampling the cuisines of different Colgate, she spent several years in the financial industry. Her passion for food. She entered the Institute Of Business Management programs in 2004 and graduated. As the catering business continued to grow, Thebault Tribeca Treats opened its doors in January 2007.

While Tribeca Treats became a huge success, landing Thebault on the covers of numerous publications, the mother of one also chose the bakery's success an opportunity to give back to her neighborhood. She is currently on the Tribeca Partnership Board of Advisors. The board is part of A.C.E. Programs For Homeless, an organization that employs homeless people and ex-cons in a effort to make a positive influence on their lives.

Pop-Rock Candy Mountain recently spoke with Thebault about finding the perfect recipe for success, both financially and personally.



Pop-Rock Candy Mountain (PRCM): How big of a role did food play in your life as a child?

Rachel Thebault (RT): It played a very important role, both with the amount of time I spent with my parents in the kitchen — we were always cooking for the family or entertaining our friends. I would also describe myself as a “foodie.” I always traveled a lot with my family growing up and we dined in a lot of authentic atmospheres.

PRCM: Were the travels important in developing you pallet?

RT: It was important because I was able to try a lot of regional food, such as chocolate croissants in France, and more exotic fare. I was very willing to try new things such as the exotic, authentic Chinese food in China or Tibetan food in Tibet. It was a combination of both the exposure of those situations and the willingness to try new things — trying things that were out of my comfort zone. We also traveled extensively around the U.S. and I picked up an affection for a lot of American favorites as well, and that is reflective at Tribeca Treats. We call ourselves “upscale comfort food.” We do things like a s’mores cupcake, peanut butter and jelly cupcake, Fluffer Nutter cupcake —traditional American flavors. On the chocolates, we do more of an international twist.

PRCM: You mentioned cooking with your mother and its influence on you. Are you looking forward to sharing the cooking experience with your daughter?

RT: She already has started cooking with me, actually, and she’s not even three years old. I’ve had her in the kitchen with me since she could sit up in her high chair. She’s really interested in cooking and baking and she has a lot of fun. Right now, she can help make scrambled eggs for herself and she can help make pasta, obviously with my help at the oven. She’s definitely interested in cooking and baking. She knows a lot about food for a three year old

PRCM: What inspires you when you are creating new menu items?

RT: We're inspired a lot by the seasons and seasonal flavors — fresh fruits and things that are available. In the fall, we made apple cupcakes and we had one called the Sassy Pumpkin, which was a pumpkin cupcake with a cinnamon icing. In the summer, we do a lot of things with fresh berries. I would say that seasonal and holiday flavors are some things that inspire us. Really, the inspiration can come from anywhere. I'm constantly looking for things on TV and in magazines — it could be a color that inspires me or a pattern, anything.

PRCM: Do you still find cooking relaxing?

RT: Now that it's a job, it's a little more stressful, but I still enjoy to cook for myself at home. I find that very relaxing. There are definitely some aspects to the baking we do that are tension relievers such as rolling out the dough or pounding something out.



PRCM: What is an average day like for you as a working mom with successful business?

RT: Basically, I wake up around 7:30 or so and I have a little bit of time to shower before my daughter gets up. I will spend about an hour with her in the morning until the sitter comes around nine and I leave for work. Then, I work between nine and four and that can be anything from paying bills on Monday to planning for expansion, interviews, making decorations for a cake — my staff does about 90 percent of my baking, so I don't do a lot of the actual baking myself.

Then, around four, I go and pick up my daughter and bring her to the store and she watches me make the cake decorations. She loves watching me do that.

PRCM: You mentioned expansion. Are you looking to make Tribeca Treats a brand name?

RT: Yeah, it's definitely something that's on the horizon. We have a lot of nationwide customers already — people that order through the website. So I think there are definitely some opportunities for us in other cities throughout the U.S.

PRCM: How do you feel that your neighborhood has changed since 9-11? Is it a completely different place?

RT: I moved down here about five years ago; I've lived here since 2003. What I know of the neighborhood before 9-11 is more anecdotal and I worked close to here in the late 1990s. I've heard that there wasn't as much retail going on and that there were much more artists

lofts and that it was a much quieter neighborhood. I know that a lot a families moved down here around 2002-2003 and it's a huge family area now. People even refer to it as

“Triburbia.” I wouldn’t say that it’s better or worse since before 9-11, but it is definitely a different type of neighborhood.



PRCM: How did you get involved with the Tribeca Partnership Board Of Advisors?

RT: That is something that my husband and I heard about when we moved into the neighborhood and it seemed like a a very reasonable organization to support. The organization is a division of A.C.E., which takes a collection of the homeless in New York and puts

them in classes, both educational as well as training them for reentering the workforce. While they are in these classes, they are also employed cleaning the streets in Tribeca and Soho, which also has a partnership. So, it’s something that is good for helping the homeless and helping the neighborhoods. It just seemed like a no-brainer to get involved when I moved to Tribeca. When I first opened the shop, I decided to get involved on the professional side. I’ve been actively involved for a couple of years now.

Tribeca Treats

94 Reade Street, New York, NY 10013

Tel: 212-571-0500

Fax: 212-571-1220

Official Site

Donate To A.C.E. Programs For The Homeless

How To Frost A Cake With Rachel Thebault

Courtesy Photos: Sarah Hall Productions, Inc.