



Press Kit Domori



DOMORI: SUPREME CHOCOLATE

Since its founding in 1997, Domori has represented a **revolution** in the world of **cacao**. We were the first chocolate company to focus on high quality by selecting **only the finest cacao**; and the first to make chocolate using **Criollo**, the rarest and most prized cacao. We were the first to oversee the **entire supply chain**, beginning in South and Central America, and even to plant our **own plantation** with the scope of renewing biodiversity in Criollo cultivation. We were the first to rediscover an ancient yet simple recipe to produce chocolate from just cacao and sugar; and the first to create a **100% Criollo** chocolate bar. And finally, Domori was the very first chocolate maker to create a **Chocolate Tasting Code**, allowing tasters to explore the infinite nuances of cacao.

I am just a humble servant
of cacao, and this is my
mission: to help make
cacao change history.

*Gianluca Franzoni,
Honorary President and Founder of Domori*



Domori was founded from the creative mind of **Gianluca Franzoni** and his passion for nature, gastronomy, and cacao. In 1993, after he finished his studies in economics, Franzoni landed in Venezuela. There, fascinated by the magic of cacao, he decided to create a production and business model for repositioning high quality cacao on the market.

Franzoni lived in the field for three years. He experimented with different cacao varieties and post-harvest beans with the scope of preserving Venezuela's biodiversity and halting the extinction of a particularly fine quality cacao: Criollo. Ever since, Gianluca Franzoni personally selects the raw materials for his products, and is constantly innovating in his business and production facilities.

The company

Today, **Domori** produces and sells a wide array of gourmet chocolate destined for both pastry in haute cuisine and retail in specialized, select stores. Domori means "**Due Mori**" in Venetian, or "Two Mori," where "mori" refers to objects of dark color. The name was born after founder Gianluca Franzoni's extended stay in Venezuela. He lived on cacao and coffee plantations and wanted to choose an evocative name for his project: he perceived Venice as a land of exchange, of spices and ideas, and of its Due Mori – the two bronze statues on the Clock Tower in Piazza San Marco. To Gianluca, they also represent two dark, toasted beans from Venezuela: coffee and cacao.

The company is based in **None** near Turin in Piedmont. The President is Gianluca Franzoni, and the CEO is Jean-Pierre Willemsen.

Since 2006, Domori has been part of the Gruppo illy SpA, whose president is Riccardo Illy.

A journey into botany and one among people



In the early 1990s when the company was still forming, Domori began to study cacao **cultivation** and its process of **fermentation**. It became clear that cacao beans had to be processed immediately after harvest. Thus began travels throughout South America, one following another: from Venezuela, Honduras, and Nicaragua to Peru, Mexico, and Ecuador ... to **places where chocolate was the future** – proclaimed,

prepared, and tasted; and to places **where cacao is the present**, refined down to the last detail. Understanding the botany of cacao is a fundamental part of Domori's work.

The **world of cacao** is complex: though over **15,000 varieties of cacao** have been classified, only **10%** of cacao produced in the world is of **high quality**. Only a couple of steps need to be taken to ensure that one plantation of just five hectares (12 acres) can produce five tons of cacao a year, earning the family an annual 12,000 dollars and thereby ensuring they live dignified, plentiful lives in their countries.

Domori has conserved the **biodiversity of cacao** from its beginning by recuperating heritage varieties to halt their extinction. In addition, the company has created a **sustainable production development**, working side by side with farmers in such a way that allows them to actively contribute to post-harvest selection phases. This way, the farmers know what the quality of the finished chocolate product is, and can benefit from a substantial premium if they meet Domori quality standards.



In 2002, Domori invested in Hacienda San José, introducing chocolate lovers' taste buds to six varieties of Criollo cacao and creating a unique, universal heritage for the biodiversity these varieties represent.



The next step after harvest

is **fermentation**. This determines the final quality of the product. The entire procedure lasts from 4 to 7-8 days, during which the cacao aromas develop and its bitterness and acidity diminish. This is when the roundness of flavor that distinguishes Domori chocolate develops.

Hacienda San José

The Domori production chain has its native heart in **Paria in eastern Venezuela**, where the Hacienda San José is located. Among the trees of mango, papaya, mahogany, frangipani, banana, palms, and legumes, the estate extends for a total of **320 hectares (790 acres)**. 185 hectares (457 acres) are planted with grafted cacao trees, with a density of 1000 plants per hectare. The **Criollo variety is a world heritage** for its flavor and its recovery of over 10 cultivars that have become the world's finest. The annual quantity of **Criollo** with a purity of 90% represents less than **0.001% of world production**. Domori's goal is to increase from 30 tons of Criollo cacao produced annually to 120 tons by 2020.

CHOCOLATE ACCORDING TO DOMORI

Overriding even chocolate, the **Domori culture is dedicated to cacao and to the pleasure of returning to the origins of things.**

1997 signifies year zero for Domori chocolate.

Before this date, the general dichotomy of chocolate was **milk versus dark** – but “dark” became an adjective so rapidly outmoded that today, it hardly makes sense. The dichotomy dissolved into a theory between **percentages**: milk chocolate contains 30-36% cocoa mass, while bitter chocolate has a much more ample range, from 45% to 70%, 80%, 90%, and even 100% cocoa mass. **100%** chocolate, better to say 100% cacao, was proposed for the very first time on the market by Domori. **Only an aromatic, high quality cacao** can pass the taste test without any added lecithins, aromas, or sugar – just pure cocoa mass.

Working with cacao at a low environmental impact

Raw material, even of the highest quality, is not enough. Domori is present at every stage of production in order to conserve the aromatic notes that are naturally present in cacao beans of the best, select varieties. Storing, cleaning, toasting, grinding. Every day at the production center of Domori in Nona, the beans are processed with machines, using environmentally sustainable technology and innovative production methods.

There are three fundamental processing phases in the making of Domori chocolate bars:

- **Toasting at a low temperature** (about 120°C (248°F), 30° lower than the 150°C temperature that is historically used) to exalt the beans’ extraordinary aromatic notes without losing any sensory properties.
- **Partial conching**: done at a low temperature of 50°C (122°F) and lasting just 8 hours from cocoa mass to chocolate – a very brief amount of time.
- **A two-ingredient recipe**: cocoa mass and cane sugar.

A revolution: chocolate tasting

Domori has contributed to changing the world of chocolate, because our method of cultivating, fermenting, and processing cacao is so unique. We were among the first producers to intuit the importance of **single origin** chocolate. Today, words like **Trinitario** or **Criollo** – both highly prized varieties of cacao – have become words on the street, spoken together with the vortex of volatile elements that make chocolate a gourmet food. Its aromatic richness is comparable to a fine wine or quality coffee.

The Domori tasting code

Taste and memory can be trained, educated, and refined. Taste, in particular, should not monopolize the experience of a formal tasting, because you should also rely on sight, smell, touch, and sound for a full appreciation of the qualities of aromatic cacao. Domori was the first company in the world to create a **tasting code for chocolate** that involves all **five senses**, creating a complete **sensory experience**.

Evaluating chocolate

On the palate, the Domori tasting code evaluates three perceptions: scent, taste, and touch.

Scent perceptions:

Intensity. The assessment of the fullness of a single aroma.

Complexity. The evaluation of the number of different aromas.

Finesse. The overall quality of aromas.

Persistence. How long the aromas last on the palate.

Taste perceptions:

Sweetness. This is a natural characteristic of high quality cacao.

Bitterness. This must be perceived to the right degree of pleasantness. When excessive, the fault is attributed to insufficient fermentation or poor cacao quality.

Acidity. Acidity is necessary for precursory aromatic development. Again, when excessive, the fault is due to errors of fermentation or processing.

Tactile perceptions:

Tactile finesse. Judged based on the micronization of solids emulsified in cacao butter.

Astringency. This must be imperceptible, almost absent. This sensation comes from diminished lubrication of saliva.

Roundness. This sensation is one of creaminess and body, sensed when the chocolate is melting in your mouth. It is directly correlated with the quality of fermentation and the natural quality of the cacao.