

Heading back to Grenada



PHOTO BY JAN HEIN

dark, organic chocolate. Grocery owner Beverly Alexis appears, smiling, to claim the product her customers know and love.

The bars, beautifully stamped and wrapped were made at the Grenada Chocolate Company, a growing enterprise Green has had his hands on since its inception in the 1990s.

"Back then," he explained, "I was in Grenada, living like Henry David Thoreau. I built a shelter, grew food. People thought I was crazy." Living in the forested area of Hermitage, he formed an attachment with the cocoa tree. "I got to know cocoa, made cocoa balls, carried beans with me. I became a cocoa hobbyist."


The pastime spawned a dream of starting a chocolate factory, so he found two partners and began researching old time methods of making small scale chocolate. Knowledge gleaned was coupled with Green's passion for environmentally friendly technology. "We set out to make all our own equipment," he said. "We built some solar, low energy machines that we still use today."

In 2001 the first specialty chocolate rolled out into stores and restaurants. "The first six years all the cocoa came from the Belmont Estate. By partnering with them, we were able to help them certify organically." Three years ago the company had grown, creating a need for more cocoa so Green started the Grenada Organic Chocolate Farmers Cooperative, helping to certify more farms.

Green's plate held plenty but there was another dream, of having a boat that could sail the chocolate to new markets. He found an old, worn woodie and used every spare moment and dollar to bring her back

rainbow jack, 10 pounds. That's the latest thrill."

If Kyrion isn't along, his brother Marlon is. Green, their mentor, explained, "Neither of them has a sailing background but they both have wise knowledge."

The boat, aptly named *Theo Bromo*, food of the Gods, is fast. "We made it here in two hours, 16 minutes, averaging 7 1/2 knots." But the record return trip of two hours, four minutes saw plenty of 12-knot wave jumping. Each trip is a lesson. Enthusiastically, Green announced, "Next, we're getting ski goggles!" 

Jan Hein and her husband, artist Bruce Smith, divide their time between the Caribbean the Pacific Northwest with a boat and a life at each end.

to life until a hurricane hit. "When Ivan came, I had to focus on the chocolate factory and the damage we had there. I lost interest in the boat. Finally it was too much so I sold it."

The desire to sail resurfaced years later when he met the folks at Petite Anse Hotel on the north tip of Grenada. "I realized I could get a little boat, like a Hobie, and keep it on the beach." So he did, sailing it around Sauteurs, then further to Ile De Ronde. "I figured out it doesn't matter how much I get hit by wind. This boat just pops back up."

"As a stunt, I decided to go to Carriacou." Smartly, he took crew and safety gear. "After two trips there I realized I could do a delivery."

Over the years, shipping chocolate to the US and UK had become relatively effortless for the folks at the Grenada Chocolate Company but getting the bars next door, inter-island, was difficult due to cost and the melting factor.

Green only sails chocolate to Carriacou in the right conditions. "I don't even think about coming here unless the wind is a bit south." Each of several stores needs a chocolate fix every two weeks. "Now," he added, "I'm getting ready for a big stunt, to take chocolate to PSV."

A full case holds about 75 bars, a bit of weight on such a small boat. To balance things on the way home, they drag a line and usually haul in dinner. "Last time we caught a

