



HOME & AWAY

A Sweet Trip Back in Time

Philadelphia's Shane Confectionery offers hand-crafted candies and chocolates sure to satisfy anyone's sweet tooth.

By Sean Conneely

Stepping through the front door of Shane Confectionery is like being transported back in history. The store has been meticulously restored to its appearance of a century ago, when a trip to the candy store was a real treat in more ways than one. With employees attired in period clothing—long-dresses with high-collars for women, bow ties and snappy suspenders for men—the confectionery makes today's visitors feel like they've walked into a Norman Rockwell painting.

Returning the confectionery, which is billed as the oldest continuously operating candy store in the nation, to its former glory was the work of its owners, Ryan and Eric Berley. The brothers share a love of history and an entrepreneurial spirit. In 2004, they opened the Franklin Fountain, a vintage ice cream and soda fountain a few doors from the confectionery. When the candy shop, which had been run for 100 years by three generations of the Shane family, came up for sale 2010, it seemed like a natural complement to the soda fountain.



Ryan and Eric Berley stand in front of their store with a variety of colorful treats.

G. Widman/Visit Philadelphia

After 18 months of toil, the Berleys reopened the store in 2011, keeping the name as a tribute to the Shane family.

Old-fashioned Candy Crafting

Confectioners have occupied 110 Market Street in downtown Philadelphia since 1863. In fact, the City of Brotherly Love served as a candy-making capital in the late 1800s in large part due to the high concentration of sugar cane refineries in the city dating to Colonial times. For 50 years, the business functioned primarily as a confectionery wholesaler, but in 1910, Edward Shane purchased the building and transformed it into a retail

establishment.

In the early years, he benefited from the shop's proximity to a ferry, with commuters walking right past his front door. After the construction of a bridge, business waned. Yet, the loyal clientele, drawn by the Shane family's quality sweets, helped the little shop survive for a century.

After buying the historical candy business, the Berleys were committed to carrying on the Shane legacy and to providing their guests with a memorable and authentic experience. They restored the shop's elaborate Chippendale-style cabinetry; pulled up linoleum, revealing a well-preserved pine floor; cleaned marble countertops and painstakingly refurbished the tin ceiling. They even revived a vintage cash register and brought in an old-fashioned scale to complete the scene.

The brothers are also passionate about keeping the tradition of candy makers and confectioners alive. They make much of the candy and chocolate by hand and on site, following traditional methods. And, they use locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. The Berleys remain faithful to original recipes when they can and continue to make many of the same sweets Shane had become known for, such as its mouth-watering buttercreams.

To help make their tasty assortment of treats, the brothers brought much of the store's vintage equipment back to life (they do use modern machinery as well). For their popular buttercreams, for instance, they employ a noisy 90-year-old cast-iron buttercream churner, the same one used by Edward Shane. And, just as he did, the brothers hand dip each chocolate.

Reviving Something Sweet

The Berleys have started a sweet tradition of their own with clear toy candy. These eye-catching treats resembling miniature glass statues, often in hues of blue and pink, date to the 18th century. They are made by pouring molten sugar into antique molds in the shape of an animal or toy. The final product, which is translucent, has an extraordinary level of detail. The brothers have more than 1,200 molds, half which are one-of-a-kind shapes. The store has quickly gained notoriety for this unusual candy.

For chocolate fanatics, the Berley brothers have concocted an entirely new confection known as the Whirley Berley Bar. The award-winning bar blends soft chocolate torrone (nougat), dark chocolate and caramel in a succulent celebration of chocolate. Not surprisingly, it, too, has become a customer favorite.

Truffles are also new to the confectionery and are not to be missed. The Berleys roll their truffles in the French-style and use fresh ingredients. They have experimented with a number of flavors, but a must-try is their bubbly Champagne Fizz Truffle. And, for those guests who want to linger, the shop now boasts a Chocolate Cafe.



Ryan Berley points to the many vintage molds used by Shane Confectionery candy makers.

Sean Conneely

Planning Your Trip

For more information on Shane Confectionery, visit <http://shanecandies.com>. Contact your AAA Travel agent or go to AAA.com/travel for help planning a trip to Philadelphia.

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