



**Michael Szyliowicz
Chocolatier and Co-Founder
Mont Blanc Gourmet**

Michael Szyliowicz, chocolatier and co-founder of Mont Blanc Gourmet, studied history and political science at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, but a semester abroad in France changed his career path. Szyliowicz developed a newfound interest in gourmet chocolate during his time overseas.

Following college graduation, he and his mother, Irene, enrolled at Ecole de Paris des Métiers de la Table, “Paris School of Culinary Arts” and trained as chocolatiers. It was through their passion for fine chocolate and the belief that no one was making good, high quality chocolate in the United States that Mont Blanc Gourmet was born.

The mother and son team started their specialty chocolate making business out of their home in 1985. They installed a professional grade kitchen in the basement and created gourmet chocolates for premium hotels, restaurants, and high-end department stores. Their clients included The Plaza Hotel, Ritz Carlton hotels, Bloomingdale’s, Marshall Field’s and their chocolates were even served on Pope John Paul II’s airplane.

In 1989, the company created the first all-natural, instant, gourmet cocoa mix, and in 1991 began supplying it to new coffee shops and cafés. In 2000, they launched a line of premium syrups and drink mixes that continue to capitalize on the specialty coffee revolution. This forward-thinking philosophy has helped position Mont Blanc as a leader in creating quality, innovative products that appeal to the sophisticated food and beverage palate of today’s consumers.

Under Szyliowicz’s direction, Mont Blanc Gourmet has grown from the mother-son duo to a team of more than 12 people with sales in excess of \$13M. In the past three years, the company ranked number 52 in *Inc.* magazine’s 2005 listings of “America’s Fastest Growing Private Companies” and second in the *Denver Business Journal’s* “Fastest Growing Companies in Colorado”.

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True to his craft, unchecked growth is not at the forefront of his mind. Instead, he prefers to work with people who possess a similar passion for the coffee, tea and chocolate businesses and to develop new products of the finest quality for their worldwide customer base.

Szyliowicz believes in supporting new business potential. He sits on the board of the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee and is an active member of Entrepreneurs' Organization. Last year, he was one of the creators of "Raising The Roof", a fundraiser for Hurricane Katrina victims that raised over \$20,000 for Habitat for Humanity.

He spent most of his childhood in Denver, but his father's professorship often took the family to other countries including Turkey, Israel, England and France, perhaps piquing his culinary curiosity at a young age.

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