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## Now Sipping | **Stumptown Mocha**

By *CHRISTINE MUHLKE*

Luise Stauss The most carefully (and locally) sourced, intricately made drink you can have outside a cocktail bar. City Bakery's 18th annual **Hot Chocolate Month** is around the corner, but don't postpone crazy joy. Have a mocha at **Stumptown** and proceed directly to the next level.

Made with Stumptown's Hair Bender espresso blend that's roasted in Red Hook, **Mast Brothers chocolate** made in Williamsburg and whole milk from **Hudson Valley Fresh**, it's the most carefully (and locally) sourced, intricately made drink you can have outside a cocktail bar. I ordered a large, thinking that it would be served in one of the brown cups on top of the espresso machine. Instead the barista grabbed a pint glass while he warmed in a pan of hot water a bottle of Mast Brothers chocolate syrup — a custom blend of fruity Madagascar chocolate and sugar, which the Brooklyn-based brothers are constantly calibrating for the espresso bar based on staff feedback. A healthy dose of the chocolate was added to the glass, followed by a ristretto of espresso (more intense than a double). A bit of cocoa powder capped the liquid, onto which frothy milk was free-poured into a **heart shape**. He sneaked in a squirt of homemade whipped cream while I was looking at the Mast Brothers/Stumptown coffee-chocolate bars on the counter. The result: 16 ounces of winter cheer for \$4.50.

If there's anything nicer than sinking into one of the couches in the adjoining **Ace Hotel** lobby with a giant, speedy hot chocolate and a slice of caramelized French toast (made at **Café Pedlar** in Brooklyn) on a snowy morning, please let us know in the comments section.

*Stumptown Coffee Roasters at the Ace Hotel, 18 West 29th Street; (212) 679-2222.*