



Mimi Queen is the owner of Sweet Mimi's Chocolates on Main Street in Andover.

The Queen of candy

A downtown staple, Sweet Mimi's brims with treats for every occasion

Mimi Queen's sweet story begins in a chocolate shop in Andover more than three decades ago. She began working at the shop two days a week, and within a week, she was promoted to manager.

That store abruptly closed overnight, but that did not dampen Queen's connection to confections.

"Everyone thought I owned it," Queen recalls.

BEST OF THE ANDOVERS Spotlight

Her first thought was, "I am going to open my own store."

As luck would have it, there was a spot available to rent on Post Office Avenue. She was up and running in five weeks.

It helped that she already knew how to run a business inside and out as she was paying the bills and ordering stock. She remembers the bank instantly writing her a check to pay the first and last month's rent and reimagine the space.

That was 26 years ago and the beginning of her reign as Andover's candy queen.

"I always had a sweet tooth," she says with a smile.

She moved to Main Street in 2005, and today, Sweet Mimi's Chocolates is a 700-square-foot shop is brimming with candy and creativity.

Along with hosting birthday parties, Queen fulfills corporate orders and sells lots of gifts.

"I like being creative," she says.

Along with meeting the nicest people and never having to do returns, Queen loves that everyone she encounters at Sweet Mimi's is in a good mood.

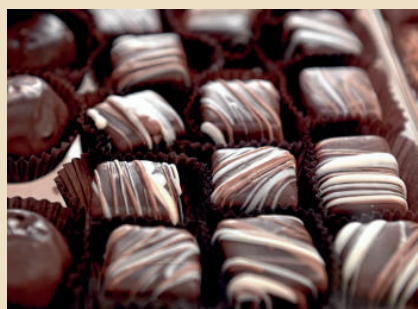
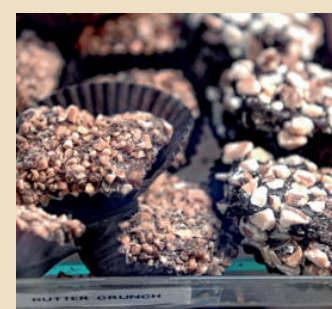


There is something to satisfy every sweet tooth at the well-stocked Sweet Mimi's.



Mimi Queen loves making up custom and seasonal plates and baskets for customers.

By STACEY MARCUS • *Photos by* TIM JEAN



Store favorites include classics like candy buttons and creamy and crunchy chocolates in flavors ranging from traditional to trendy.

"If you are going to work, you may as well be happy," she says. "I have been here forever and never met a grumpy person."

You will find a bounty of penny candy at Sweet Mimi's, along with mouthwatering chocolate turtles and truffles. In the summer, Queen also serves up Richie's slush.

Walking into Sweet Mimi's is the epitome of being a kid in a candy store. Children love to scoop penny candy and attend birthday parties where they can partake in activities like painting lollipops, designing chocolate pizzas or creating s'mores.

Queen says that she is now having second-generation birthday parties with the children and grandchildren of her original customers.

"I was in the right place at the right time," says a grateful Queen, who loves her spot in Andover's downtown and in the hearts of her sweet customers.

Three weeks before Christmas is the busiest time at Sweet Mimi's, with the days leading up to Valentine's Day and Easter tying for second place.

Along with containers of candy, you

will find a bevy of gift ideas at Sweet Mimi's. Queen brings in a variety of seasonal sweets and makes up lots of fun plates and baskets that can be themed for special occasions. She even has watering cans that can be filled with treats and adorned with colorful ribbons.

Queen has many treasured memories from over the years. Her son, Daniel, was in high school when she experienced her first Valentine's Day at the store.

"I had no idea it would be that swamped," she says. "I called the high school and asked them to please dismiss him because I needed him at the candy shop."

Queen says that the school dismissed a delighted Daniel, who labeled himself "Employee of the Month."

Queen adores Andover, where she and her husband, Jeffrey, raised Daniel and his sister, Karen.

"I know everyone," she says. "My kids grew up here."

When her grandchildren, Oliver, Mason, Sophie, Reid and Ruby, sleep over her house, they love to come to the shop to work the register and wait on customers.

One given of owning a candy store is that it can prove too irresistible to some youngsters.

Queen recalls one incident years ago, when she noticed that a little boy's pocket was bulging. She asked him if he paid for the candy, and the child told her, "I bought it last week." Queen told him that she could call the police or he could leave and never come back.

Two days later, he returned and said, "My mother wants me to pay for this." Queen took the payment and told the boy he could come back whenever he wanted.

"I was very impressed," she says. "It says a lot about the kid."

Queen stays on top of current trends and fills her store with the latest crazes, like Dubai chocolate bars filled with pistachio cream. She also offers vegan and gluten-free chocolates. In the fall, she will be creating chocolate teeth for a dentist.

After more than a quarter-century surrounded by sweetness, one thing hasn't changed: Queen remains deeply appreciative of the community that has supported her every step of the way.

"It's been a good run," she says. "I feel very fortunate."