

## Manitou Chocolate Shop gets new owner, new location

- Guy Priel

Radiantly Raw, which opened in 2015 at 116 Canon Ave. in Manitou Springs, has recently changed not only its owner, but its address as well. It is now located in a building twice the size of the original location, which shared space with Anna's Apothecary. The new address at 935 Manitou Ave. was once a sandwich shop.

Radiantly Raw is chocolate with a mission. Its products are raw, organic, fair trade and non GMO. All the products are dairy free, sugar free, soy free and hand crafted at the kitchen located inside the Cupcake Doctor on Austin Bluffs Parkway off Academy in Colorado Springs. Its products consist solely of three ingredients: cacao, coconut oil and honey, all containing a multitude of health benefits, including lowering cholesterol, boosting the immune system and reduces inflammation.

The Manitou location serves as the company's retail space and all products can be shipped anywhere and will also deliver locally. All products are shipped in cold pack on Monday so they don't sit on a tarmac somewhere in a warehouse over the weekend. And, since they are dairy free, they don't melt and won't spoil.

The original owner, who suffered from various health issues prior to opening the business, had decided to move on to other ventures. And, as Anna's Apothecary was looking to expand as well, she looked for a location in Old Colorado City next to the Wobbly Olive on Colorado Avenue, thus leaving Manitou.

That all changed recently.

The new owners, Scott and Katherine Smith, have lived in southwest Colorado Springs for the past five years, having arrived in 2014 from Oklahoma. Scott has expertise in finance and small business and Katherine has experience in buying and retail, so the company was a natural fit, plus their love of chocolate didn't hurt at all.

"We had been looking for something different to do and a product we liked," Scott Smith said during a recent phone interview. "We both like chocolate and jumped at the chance to do this. We took it over knowing we had a very short time frame."

They immediately looked for a location and started remodeling work in early October, with the goal of having it completed and opened in time for the Emma Crawford Coffin Races, which the Smiths succeeded in meeting, as their grand opening was the same weekend as the Emma Crawford race.

"The business wanted to expand and Anna's wanted to expand into the space, so the timing worked well for us," Scott said. "The idea of staying in Manitou was good as well. We are really excited to be able to get into this new space and stay in Manitou as well."

The company sells truffles with fillings like raspberry, orange, strawberry, pumpkin spice and cranberry. There are also various seasonal flavors available at the store. Free samples are provided for those on the fence about the product or the particular taste.

One recent addition was hot and cold chocolate drinks which can be featured more prominently in the larger space, Scott said.

“We have good employees who stayed with us after the transition,” Scott said. “That has really helped a lot and creates the perfect situation for us. We have had a really good reception from local residents and members of the business community. We are happy to be able to stay in Manitou.”

To date, the company’s best selling product is the Rawlo truffle, which is filled with maple and caramel. It contains Himalayan sea salt, dates and almond butter. The raw cacao used in their products come from Peru, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador.

Seasonal flavored products are Cookies and Cream, Cherry Hazelnut, Orange Cranberry, White Pumpkin Pecan, Maple Pecan, Salted Caramel Walnut Bark and Holiday Peppermint Bark.