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Angus Thirlwell, CEO & Co Founder of Hotel Chocolat

"I must be one of the luckiest people around – to work in a business which lives by my obsessions for true creativity, honest ingredients and has a link back to my childhood in the West Indies through our cocoa estate in St Lucia".

Luxury chocolatier and cocoa grower, Hotel Chocolat was co-founded by Angus Thirlwell back in 1993 with business partner Peter Harris with the vision to make a better type of chocolate readily available to UK consumers. However, the foodie entrepreneurial spirit has always run in his family as Angus' grandmother owned a patisserie chain and his father founded the British iconic ice cream brand Mr. Whippy.

Charisma and passion have played a huge part in Angus' success story. Today with over 30 stores nationwide and a successful US internet operation based in Boston, soon to grow to the launch of stores Stateside this Autumn, Hotel Chocolat continues to go from strength with Angus at the helm. In 2008, the company was awarded the coveted number one spot in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 and has also been awarded official 'Cool Brand' status for the third year running.

To ensure that authentic, wholesome ingredients remain the foundations of the company's success, Angus religiously eats chocolate every day, tastes and approves every single recipe, and is as much at home in his chef whites in the new product development kitchen as he is in the boardroom. 2010 will see the opening of the next stage in Angus' vision; the luxurious 5* *real* Hotel Chocolat on the company's cocoa plantation in St Lucia.

Angus' inspirational leadership has resulted in a number of schemes which makes Hotel Chocolat's Cambridgeshire HQ one of the most coveted places to work, including a chocolate diploma and the opportunity for employees to visit the St Lucia plantation. It has also seen the brand blossom into what it is today, staying ahead of the pack and resulting in the strong brand reputation that is Hotel Chocolat.

Starting with the humble cocoa bean on the St Lucia plantation to the luxurious chocolate seen in stores, it is evident that Angus is on a mission to let the world know that British chocolate is once again a force to be reckoned with.