= Chocolatier (video game) =

Chocolatier is a casual strategy video game with action game elements , developed by Big Splash Games and published by PlayFirst . The game was released as a download on May 1 , 2007 and was followed by CD @-@ ROM release on September 27 , 2007 . Players assume the role of a young Chocolatier , who must navigate 14 cities around the globe while buying ingredients , manufacturing chocolates , and selling them to chocolate shops . Two modes of play are available : in story mode the player must rebuild an almost bankrupt chocolate empire and acquire 64 chocolate recipes from around the world ; in free mode players start out with scant resources and must become successful chocolatiers .

Chocolatier was the first game developed by Big Splash Games , a trio of experienced video game designers , who remained employees whilst developing a prototype game in their spare time . This prototype was rejected by publishers , but after coming up with the premise of Chocolatier the team was signed @-@ up by PlayFirst and completed the title . The game received a mostly positive reception : reviewers enjoyed the action mini @-@ game which is played when chocolates are manufactured , and the game 's graphics , sound , and Victorian @-@ era presentation .

= = Gameplay = =

The player assumes the role of a young chocolatier in 1880 , during the Victorian era . The game has two modes of play : story and free play . Story mode involves a number of quests , including delivering specific chocolates and restoring the fictional Baumeister chocolate empire to its former glory . The player is enlisted by Evangeline Baumeister to rebuild the Baumeister chocolate empire which has been ruined by Evangeline 's younger sister who scattered chocolate recipes around the world . The player must locate the 64 lost recipes , visit 14 different cities around the globe , purchase 6 closed Baumeister factories , establish business relationships with outlets and suppliers , and manufacture chocolates to keep in business . Free play mode allows the player to travel , manufacture , and trade without undertaking quests . This mode starts the player with a small amount of cash and all chocolate recipes unlocked for use . In story mode , players begin with a single factory and a recipe for simple chocolate bars , the player must visit the market to purchase ingredients and begin the manufacturing process .

The game is turn @-@ based . Each turn represents one week , and travelling between cities takes a number of turns depending on the proximity of the destination city . Many cities have a chocolate shop , where the player can sell his or her stock , and a market where ingredients can be purchased . Some specialty cacao beans can only be purchased from plantations in certain cities . Factories manufacturing chocolates produce a set amount of product every turn , as long as the required ingredients are in stock . During story mode , quests are given by non @-@ player characters ; these typically involve producing a particular volume and type of chocolate and delivering it to another non @-@ player character , who is either traveling or can be found at a set location . Quest rewards take the form of a high price for the chocolates or a new recipe . Some encounters with characters give the player an opportunity to gamble a large amount of money on a dice roll . Market owners can be bartered with , though this carries the risk of them becoming irritated and raising prices rather than lowering them .

When producing a particular chocolate for the first time , a mini @-@ game is played where ingredients are fired from a cannon to fill circular trays which revolve around the cannon . The ingredients and quantities needed vary , depending on the recipe . Each time a circle is filled with the correct ingredients , it is removed and an empty circle put in its place . The trays spin faster as more circles are filled . If too many ingredients are wasted by misfiring the cannon , production is brought to a halt and the mini @-@ game must be attempted again . The mini @-@ game ends when the timer runs out ; the number of completed circles is equal to the number of chocolates produced by that factory every week . The mini @-@ game cannot be played unless the player owns the correct ingredients , and it can be replayed if the player wishes to try to improve the efficiency of the factory . Playing the mini @-@ game advances in @-@ game time by one week .

Different chocolate types , such as truffles and squares , require the factory to be upgraded first , costing money .

= = Development = =

 Tucson , Arizona based Big Splash Games was formed in late 2005 by three veterans of the videogame industry : Jon Blossom , Stephen Lewis and Michael Wyman . They came together to produce a prototype video game for the casual market . They worked on this for a few months when they were not working (they still held jobs within the industry to support themselves) . This prototype was pitched to a few publishers in order to gain feedback . PlayFirst , though not interested in the prototype , issued the team a request for proposal for an economic simulation game , hoping that Big Splash could produce another proposal . The next morning , Big Splash co @-@ founder Stephen Lewis remembered that he had been told that some people , in particular women , " have an almost religious connection with chocolate " . Taking this idea he quickly wrote a proposal and forwarded it to his two partners . After brainstorming the idea the team decided that it satisfied PlayFirst 's request for proposal , forwarded a copy of the idea and received word from the publisher that they " had hit the nail on the head " .
 Chocolatier was designed to appeal to women aged between 35 and 55 , a different market compared to the games previously developed by the trio . In order to immerse themselves in the subject matter during development , Big Splash 's staff tasted as many variety of chocolates as they could find and took the Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker factory tour , where they witnessed the full " bean to bar " process . The factory mini @-@ game was developed in order to give players a break from the economic side of the game , which involves buying low and selling high . It took approximately the same time to produce the mini @-@ game as it did to create the rest of the game , which drained the developer 's resources , though Stephen Lewis believed this was " the right decision " . Journalists were sent Chocolatier @-@ branded chocolate bars and " golden tickets " which allowed them to download the game for free , in order to promote the game 's release . The game 's sequel , Chocolatier 2 : Secret Ingredients was first released on November 27 , 2007 . Chocolatier : Decadence by Design is the third installment , released in 2009 . The Great Chocolate Chase : A Chocolatier Twist was later released by PlayFirst .

= = Reception = =

 Chocolatier was awarded Gamezebo 's Zeeby award for best strategy game of 2007 . The game received a positive response from critics , though GameZone 's Anise Hollingshead found the game too easy , noting " there really isn ? t a whole lot of thinking involved . " other reviewers called it " a delightfully challenging business tycoon game " , " challenging but not frustratingly so " , and said that the game " turned out as beautifully as the chocolates . " The game 's graphics and sound received praise : Marc Saltzman noted " the game 's wonderful art style and delightful music " , but website Killer Betties ' Jason Van Horn found the graphics " alright , simply doing what it needs to do to get its gameplay across . "
 Reviewers praised the amount of freedom given to players , Meryl Evans of Blogcritics stated " There was no right or wrong , or a set path you must take " , but added that the game lost pace when she had gathered a large amount of money and had to find a specific character to speak with before completing her current quest . After finding the non @-@ player character , the game " picked up again and kept me hopping for the rest of it . " Didi Cardoso of website Grrl Gamer also enjoyed the freedom , but noted that sometimes she felt lost and was unsure of how to find the location of the next recipe . The chocolate manufacturing mini @-@ game was also praised as " fun " . Peter Cohen of Macworld noted that some fans of business simulators might find the mini @-@ game " off @-@ putting " , but also suggested that it helped break up gameplay . Marc Saltzman expressed the same opinion , while Anise Hollingshead found the mini @-@ game to be too easy to play .