

## Tips for Airbrushing Chocolate

It seems like everywhere you look today you see or read about people utilizing the airbrush in the culinary arts—on cakes or sugar or chocolate. And, like in all the arts, artists sometimes tend to keep those “secret tips” to themselves. However, the more information that is available, the better it is for everyone involved. So following are a few recommendations for airbrushing chocolate:

- Chocolate melts at normal body temperature, so when airbrushing color onto chocolate the color cannot be too warm or it will melt the chocolate.
- The ideal room temperature in which to work is between 65-70 degrees F. with humidity that does not exceed 50%. (Chocolate and water don't “mix.”)
- A moisture trap on your air source (compressor) is necessary to prevent droplets of condensation from mixing with the air that's propelling the colorant.
- Cocoa butter is one of the most utilized colorants for airbrushing on chocolate. It should be kept at approximately 90 degrees F. for proper spraying. This is achieved by using a heat gun to warm the metal tip of the airbrush as well as the paint reservoir (bottle, side-feed funnel or the top attached color cup on a gravity feed airbrush). It will likely take a lot of practice and patience to master this!
- When airbrushing into a candy mold for the top decoration of a confection such as a bonbon, you must think in terms of reverse painting (such as that done on glass). The design to appear on top of the confection is sprayed into the mold first. Depending on the colors used, this design is backed by several sprayed coats of white to provide contrast for the design. The candy shell is then made with chocolate, the filling is inserted (tap the mold to eliminate air bubbles), and the candy is then backed with chocolate.
- When spraying colorant for candy or cakes, the same technique is used as with other airbrush applications. Use on/off triggering as you make a pass with the airbrush. Be wary of “barbells” at the beginning and end of spraying; keep your hand moving and avoid hesitation.

Some of the most popular airbrushes for spraying chocolate are constructed of metal and are dual-action triggered. A side-feed airbrush that contains a color cup provides for quick color changes and is available for both right- and left-handed persons. However, if you are spraying broad areas, a pistol-triggered style airbrush such as the Iwata Revolution HP TR1 is recommended for ease of operation. See your retailer and visit [www.iwata-medea.com](http://www.iwata-medea.com).