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ADVENTURE

JOURNAL Bringing It Home

Only Here

NUNATAK GEAR DUAL ALPINISTS BAG

Tom Halpin is the Cupid of the sleeping-bag business. The owner of Nunatak Gear (866-686-2825; www.nunatakusa.com), based in Washington's North Cascades, tailors the Dual Alpinists Bag (\$499) to couples who might otherwise flail around trying to jury-rig a trail nest. At

Zzzzzzz
Zzzzzzz



50 ounces, the custom-fit, 800-fill down bag is lighter than two separate sacks. —C.D.B.

CD Roams

MANU CHAO, RADIO BEMBA SOUND SYSTEM (EMI Latin, \$16)

French vagabond Chao builds the sounds of far-flung lands into a multi-lingual whirl that's the next best thing to being somewhere else. This live set plays in a world where Kingston, Tijuana, and Sevilla pogo side by side in a hyper-reggae party.



PAPA NOEL & PAPI OVIEDO, BANA CONGO (Tumi, \$17)

Sixty-plus Congolese guitar hero Papa Noel came to the attention of Western ears only in 2000 through his stunning CD *Bel Ami*. Here, Noel teams seamlessly with Papi Oviedo, Cuba's king of the *trés* (or mini guitar), in a magical acoustic romp.



ORCHESTRA BAOBAB, SPECIALIST IN ALL STYLES (World Circuit/Nonesuch, \$19)

Senegal's legendary Orchestra Baobab broke up in the eighties, before the world music scene emerged, but still won a global following via old bootleg recordings. This reunion is a swinging session of skit-



DUTY FREE: DARK SECRETS

THE EXPLORER'S GUIDE TO CHOCOLATE BY CHRISTIAN DeBENEDETTI

IT'S A CHOCOLATE WORLD. Cacao plantations are found throughout the tropics, but it's mainly in Latin America that travelers can sample roasted beans and such homegrown products as Mexico's piquant cocoa and the specialty chocolate prized in Caracas. In Sicily one can still experience the taste that first sold Euros on the beans. Chocolate has spread to every other continent, too: The Hershey's bar pictured below was recently found in Antarctica, where it was left behind by Admiral Byrd in 1941.

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO

IBARRA

Mexico's Ibarra, a hot cocoa made with milk and occasionally with vanilla beans, is sold throughout Latin America. **Culture hook:** The rich drink resembles *xocoatl*, which was consumed by ancient Mayas and Aztecs. (\$4 for 24 servings; www.gourmetsleuth.com)

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

EL REY RIO CARIBE

Venezuela's empty islands and 5,000-meter peaks make it an adventure destination, but it's also a center of single-plantation chocolates—

such as El Rey's fruity Rio Caribe—which hold the same snob appeal as single-malt scotch. **Culture hook:** El Rey's chocolates are sold in Caracas boutiques such as La Praline. (\$8 per pound; www.elreycocolate.com)

SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN CACAO NIBS

Cacao nibs, the cores of fermented cacao beans, are widely used in cooking. They're also delicious when ground into coffee or sprinkled on ice cream. **Culture hook:** The nibs, considered an aphrodisiac, are mixed with cane liquor for weddings in Panama. (\$28 per pound at Seattle's World Merchants; www.worldspice.com)

MODICA, SICILY

ANTICA DOLCERIA BONAJUTO

Hikers come to Modica to explore the eight-mile-long canyons of the Iblei mountains. The town's secondary appeal is its dark, richly textured chocolate—unchanged since 1875, when milk chocolate was introduced. **Culture hook:** This is how pre-Columbian Indians and four centuries of Europeans enjoyed the stuff. (\$8 per 3.2-ounce bar; www.bonajuto.it) ▲

