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LEADING ITALIAN CHOCOLATIER AMEDEI AGAIN DOMINATES THE ANNUAL WORLD CHOCOLATE AWARDS

PONTEDERA, ITALY (February 24, 2009) — For the fourth year in a row, Italian chocolatier **Amedei** dominated the gold medals awarded at the 2009 world chocolate awards conducted by the London-based Academy of Chocolate, including winning again the very highest award, the Golden Bean, for the best bean-to-bar chocolate, **Amedei '9'**. Amedei took 8 medals overall.

Each year the Academy of Chocolate assembles a judging panel of 25 of the world's leading chocolate experts to evaluate and rank the best chocolates in the world. Over a four day competition held earlier this month, the panel evaluated entries from over 400 premium and ultrapremium chocolate companies from around the globe.

"This success, confirmed every year, is a satisfaction that cannot diminish," said Amedei co-founder Alessio Tessieri. "Even though we have received the Academy's top honors in prior years, it is still very exciting for us. The high quality of our competitors makes us even prouder of our work, which is the result of the efforts of the entire Amedei team in Italy and internationally. It is their extraordinary work that earns Amedei the continuing renown as the 'world's best' chocolate."

Amedei won additional gold medals for its Porcelana and Toscano Black 70% dark chocolates and, in the flavored bar category, for its Milk Chocolate with Hazelnuts. The rare, limited edition Amedei Porcelana was featured on a recent episode of '30 Rock' on NBC. Amedei also won silver medals for its Toscano Black 63% and its Amedei for You™ Milk Chocolate Drops, and bronze medals for its Toscano Black 66%, its Dark Chocolate with Almonds and its Amedei for You™ Hot Chocolate.

About Amedei '9'

The Amedei '9' chocolate is a proprietary blend of cacao beans from 9 distinct plantations. The unique '9' blend involved years of research and of discovering and restoring nine key cacao plantations whose beans, blended and refined according to Amedei's exacting formula, become a strong and balanced dark chocolate whose taste expresses the distinctive and nuanced qualities of each plantation. Just as a fine scotch whiskey benefits from the best balance of key ingredients, so does the '9'. '9's' flavor notes include cherry and molasses, clove, blueberry, coffee and earthy/grassy tones.

About Amedei

Amedei, an artisanal manufacturer of gourmet chocolates, was founded in 1989 and is owned and operated by the brother-sister team of Alessio and Cecilia Tessieri of Tuscany. Amedei has also been recognized as the maker of the world's best chocolate by numerous gourmet publications including *Food & Wine*. Additional information may be found at www.Amedei.it.

In the US, Amedei products may be purchased at selected luxury retailers including selected Neiman Marcus stores, numerous fine chocolate and gourmet food stores, and on line at www.Amedei-US.com.

For more information: media-relations@amedei-us.com