

A scandal is erupting in the world of hipster chocolate

The Mast brothers know how to spin a well-packaged tale, both in marketing themselves as a pair of bearded Brooklyn hipsters and in the beautiful wrapping that has become their chocolate brand's calling card.

Now, a blogger's exposé about the brothers' stylish company, Mast Brothers, is raising questions about what is underneath all that packaging.

A long-time chocolate blogger at DallasFood.org published a [four-part series](#) on the company's credentials, calling founders Rick and Michael Mast the “Milli Vanilli of chocolate.”

The major allegation: while the Masts say they sell bean-to-bar chocolate, the company may have remelted commercial chocolate to create bars instead of making their own, at least part of the time.

The blogger, known only to readers as Scott, cites craft chocolate makers who say that the Masts previously privately admitted to using remelted Valrhona chocolate in certain bars. He also noted changes in the qualities of the chocolate over time and confusing aspects of the company's origin story, such as how the company could have managed to make the amount of chocolate they did using their reported original,

simplistic bean to bar methods.

Remelting chocolate is a major sin in the craft-chocolate community, with most bean-to-bar makers carefully noting where the beans are from and detailing other ingredients used to avoid accusations. The Mast brothers only began listing ingredients on packages a year after the company's founding but have since stopped doing so.

The company has been tremendously successful. Originally founded out of the brothers' Brooklyn apartment, the company today has grown to include a Brooklyn factory, and stores in London and Los Angeles.

“Any insinuation that Mast Brothers was not, is not or will not be a bean to bar chocolate maker is incorrect and misinformed,” the brothers wrote in a statement on the company's website. “We have been making chocolate from bean to bar since the beginning and will continue to do so.”

The company told Business Insider that the brothers are planning a more detailed, point-by-point rebuttal.

Scott and [Quartz](#) — which independently verified many of the blog's claims — say that the company refused to answer specific questions related to the company's production and sourcing process.

Neither Scott nor Quartz claim that the Mast Brothers have *never* made bean to bar chocolate. In fact, the blog chalks up a major decline in the taste of Mast

Brothers offerings, from smooth and “blandly competent” to “coarse” and “muddy”, to the switch from remelting to the more difficult process of handcrafting their own chocolate.

“Had *any* of their output been remelted chocolate—whether ten percent, fifty percent, or one hundred percent—it would justify the belief that the Mast Brothers had defrauded the press and public,” writes Scott.

Quartz further argues that the company’s lack of transparency highlights larger issues in the craft chocolate community, noting that most of the world’s chocolate comes from West Africa, where practices such as child labor and rain forest clearing are common.

Condemnation of the company has been swift on social media, as the company’s Twitter and Facebook pages were bombarded with calls for transparency. However, the company found an ally in actor Jared Leto, who has shouted out the product many times on [various social media platforms](#) in the past, as well as on [The Tonight Show](#).