

Who's Who in the Upper Keys

**David Rodriguez** Chocolate Artist and International Pastry Chef Extraordinaire at Key Largo Chocolates & Ice Cream

There are some fantastic surprises in store at the Key Largo Chocolates factory. Kristie and Bob Thomas, owners of Key Largo Chocolates and Ice Cream, have hired the crème de la crème of pastry chefs and chocolatiers, David Rodriguez.

Rodriguez has a pedigree a mile long, beginning as a child in Puerto Rico where he was inspired by his grandmother who was a chef. He graduated from the New England Culinary Institute and moved to Spain, where he worked as a pastry chef for Ritz-Carlton for several years.

From Spain he traveled to Washington, DC, with Ritz-Carlton, and also worked for the U.S. government as well as several foreign embassies. While there he was the pastry chef for the opening of the National Air & Space Museum, hired to create the space shuttle and an astronaut completely out of sugar. (I'll bet it was out of this world!)

Rodriguez then moved to Chicago to open the Peninsula Hotel. It was in the windy city that he began a wholesale

baked goods company servicing major chains such as Walmart. From there he relocated again to Miami, which was home base while he worked for a Belgium chocolate company throughout South America and the Caribbean. It was there that he met and became friends with the Bob and Kristie Thomas, and that is where the fun begins.

Chef David was the pastry chef for the 2010 Emmys and Grammys. He speaks four languages!

Chef David has created some amazing sculptures completely out of chocolate. On display in the Key Largo store there is a spectacular chocolate floral centerpiece on the front counter, and around the corner - just past the delicious ice cream room - you can view the exquisite coral reef chocolate sculpture complete with fish!

What big surprises are in store for Key Largo Chocolates? With the expertise and help of Chef David they are expanding to the next level. Soon they will be producing wedding cakes and baked goods which they will wholesale




David with Kristie and his incredible, edible reef sculpture.

around the country. Who knows, maybe they will make Key Largo the Chocolate Capital of the World?

Stop in and meet Chef David, check out the sculptures and try a free sample of my favorite, the key lime dark chocolate. Tell them the Coconut Telegraph sent you!



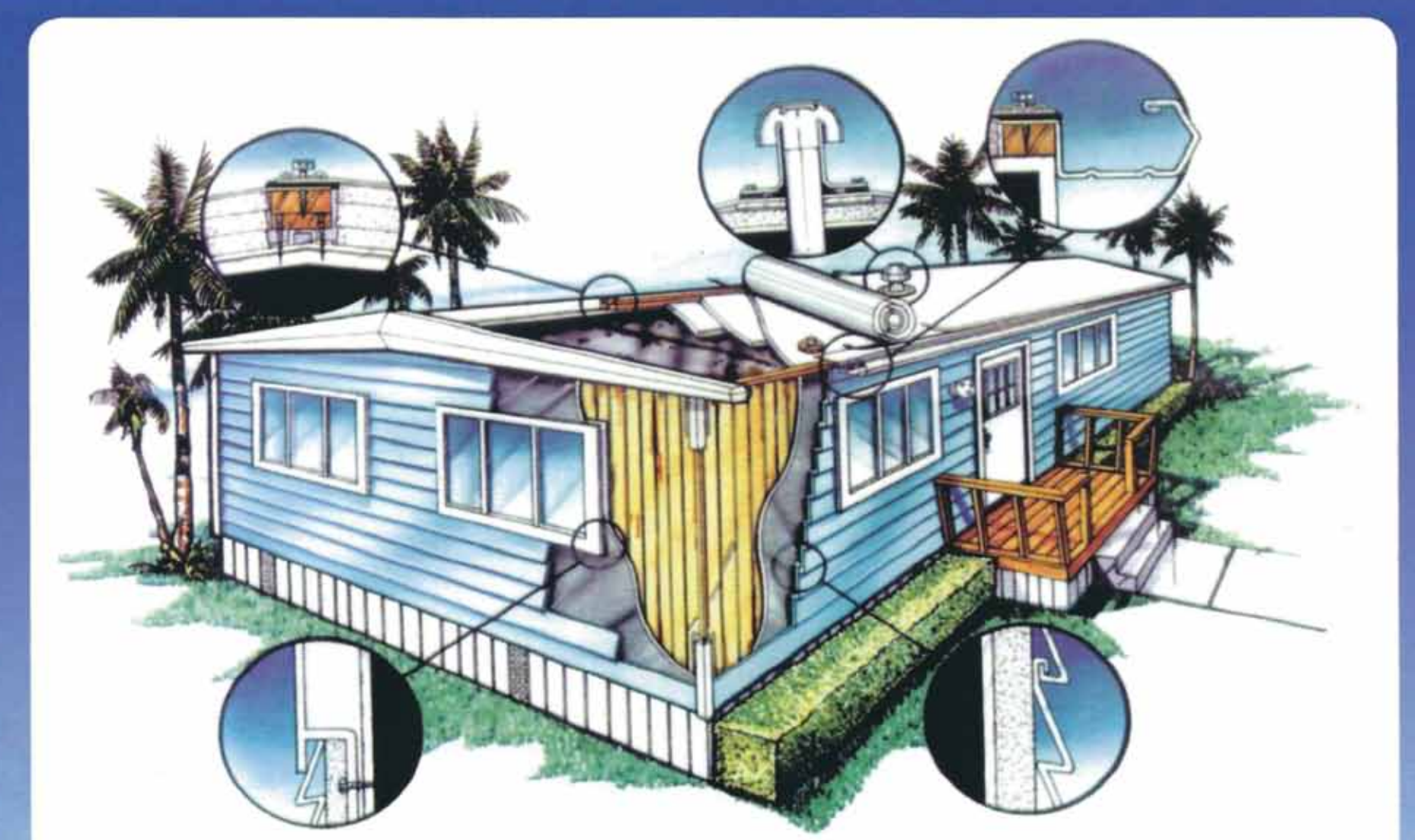
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