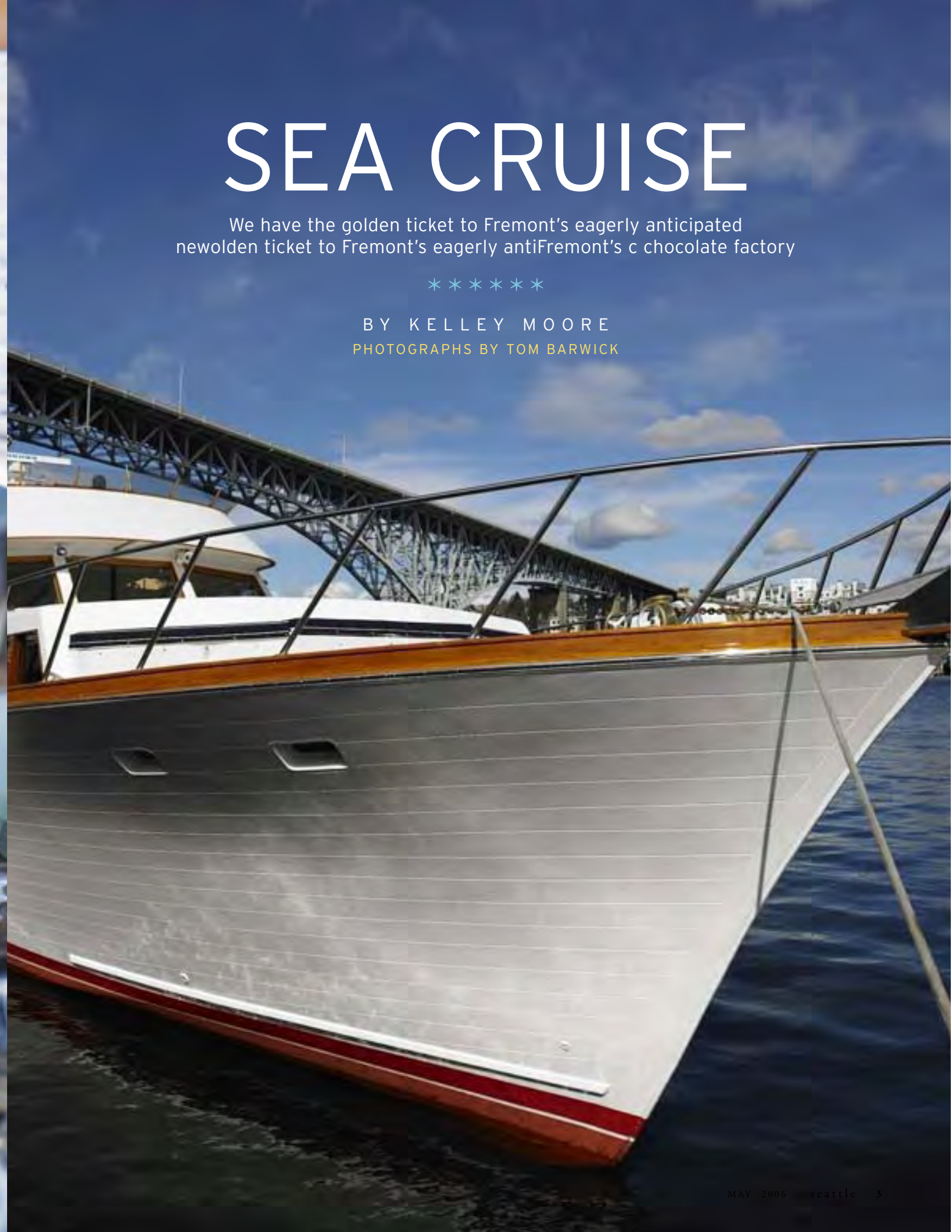




SEA CRUISE

We have the golden ticket to Fremont's eagerly anticipated newolden ticket to Fremont's eagerly antiFremont's c chocolate factory

BY KELLEY MOORE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM BARWICK



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THE TABLE Dan Donohue, a former Caffè Vita roaster—has been buying chocolate-making equipment, importing organic cocoa beans and assembling the first factory in the country devoted to producing 100 percent Fair Trade chocolate. There are less than two dozen bean-to-bar chocolate factories in the United States and Theo is the only one in the Northwest. Whinney, 39 (known as Whinney Wonka around the factory), traces his interest in the chocolate business back 20 years (“30 pounds ago,” he jokes), when he was working as a conservation volunteer in Belize. “There were

FOR THE PAST ONE and a hyears, Theo Chocate founder Joe Whinney—along with Music (his ex-wife), chocolatier Autumn Martin and production manager Dan Donohue, a former Caffè Vita roaster—has been buying chocolate-making equipment, importing organic cocoa beans and assembling the first factory in the country devoted to producing 100 percent Fair Trade chocolate. There are less than two dozen bean-to-bar chocolate factories in the United States and Theo is the only one

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Whinney unsheathes a pryer, a dangerous-looking tool used for pulling beans out of a burlap sack without making a permanent hole in the sack (If you had a pryer, you would never lose at Operation.). He extracts some Ghanaian beans, which are waiting their turn in Theo’s vintage 1930s roaster, a heavy black sphere that looks like a diving bell. The beans areheathes a pryer, a dangerous-looking tool used for pulling beans out of a burlap sack without making a permanent hole in the sack (If you had a pryer, you would never lose at Operation.).

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ing by looking at the middle of the production chain, where the chocolate moves from machine to machine looking sometimes like sludge, sometimes like covered that when they sent [the tanks] out to have them insulated, they had “We’ve had some hilarious episodes,” says Music, standing next to a chocolate holding tank. “The first time they poured chocolate into this one, they discovered that when they sent [the tanks] out to have them insulated, they had covered over a hole. And so 600 pounds of liquid chocolate went in and then proceeded to come out all over the floor. It was a comedy.”

Nearly all of the machines at Theo are painted a cheerful lime-green, though nothing could make the refiner (which combines chocolate with sugar, cocoa butter and/or milk powder) look friendly: It has five metal rolls that spin alarmingly fast. The refiner could flatten you faster than a steamroller.



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