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In good taste: choosing a wedding cake

Years from now, when you think back on your wedding and the festivities that surrounded it, there's one thing you'll almost certainly remember: the wedding cake.

Your wedding cake will no doubt be prominently displayed at your reception and be a focal point of both family photographs and toasts to the union of the bride and groom. What- ever the size of the reception or the location, having exactly what you want for your wedding cake is most important.

Paula Christ at the Baker's Loaf in Southfield finds that many brides-to-be are choosing more interesting flavors for their cakes these days. She notes that carrot cake with a cream cheese frosting is growing in popularity.

"I also note that there's a demand for more realistic cake toppers in porcelain that make nice keepsakes," she added. When the bride chooses her cake she is also likely to select items for her dessert table and Christ notes that the fresh fruit flans are a featured selection.

"One of the best things we have to offer at Baker's Loaf is the talent of Mary Denning, our cake decorator," she commented. "It takes real talent to make the beautiful spring flower decorations and string work that gives the wedding cake real elegance."

At Mrs. Maddox Cakes in Farmington Hills, boiled icing is a feature for wedding cakes.

"People come to us for the special look of the icing," notes Marian O'Neil at the Farmington Hills store.

"We also work in tountains and special decorative effects with the cake. We've made eight-tier cakes to serve 700 guests."

The bakery has also added several new wedding services this year: hot hors d'oeuvres complete with servers and set-up and complete sweet tables with all serving-pieces provided.

The Machus Pastry Shop in Bloomfield works closely with the bride to get the cake she wants, which might even include adapting a special recipe.

"Just recently we did an anniversary cake for the 150th celebration of the Boistford Inn," noted Pearl Thoun, pastry manager for the Machus shops. "We were given a century-old recipe to adapt. It had raisins, currants, citron, spices, yeast leavening and wine and brandy instead of milk or water."

Thoun, who oversees an average of six to eight wedding cakes each week, also sees a growing trend to tortes as the wedding cake. Machus uses the richest whipped cream possible in recipes for tortes.

"Some of the requests we get from brides include pastel trim colors to match the bridesmaid dresses, heart-shaped tiers and fresh flowers on their cakes," she commented.

"We never use preservatives in the cakes and they are always made fresh for the day of the wedding," she added.

Stu Koster at the Bavarian Bakery in Troy is often requested to use several different kinds of batter in his tiered wedding cakes.

"The butter creme frostings are being requested in mauve and pink, but the bride likes a choice for her guests with the different cake flavors," he said.

For the bride who wants the wedding cake to serve as the dessert as well, Bob Brinacombe of the Cheesecake Cafe in Farmington Hills suggests a New York style cheesecake in any one of 30 flavors.

"For 300 people we'd make a five-tier cake weighing 80 pounds," he said. "The icing and flowers are done in whipped creme and all the flowers are done by hand."

Brides-to-be would do well to visit area pastry shops and sample the cakes to find the taste she likes. Most often, there's also a sample cake she can view.

Pastry shops are finding a growing interest in cake flavors and note requests for chocolate, cherry nut, banana nut and marble compete equally with the traditional white cake batter.



Wedding dress spills

Every bride has a nightmare in which she dreams that someone accidentally spills wine, salad dressing or other food on her beautiful wedding gown.

Here's some advice to make sure a wedding-day spill doesn't ruin the bride's big moment.

Learn about the dress material and how to clean it in advance.

To keep a stain from setting, act fast. Don't rub the spot; give it a few quick blots instead.

Fight water-soluble stains with water. These include champagne and wines, perspiration and most beverages. Put a towel under the fabric and blot the top with a damp cloth, preferably wrung out in a light solution of white vinegar or detergent and water. When the stain is gone, blot dry.

Use cleaning solvent on greasy stains such as lipstick and other cosmetics, perfumes, salad dressing and chocolate.