

Setting a fancy table with decorations that double as dessert

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Using confections to brighten up a party table is the forte of Mary Ann Hollen and her daughter, Diane Fowler.

Mrs. Hollen holds sway over the cake decorating and marzipan sessions that take place in all metropolitan Detroit Kitchen Glamour stores. Mrs. Fowler is known for her ways with a piece of chocolate in Greenfield Village.

They often assist one another for a demonstration or a workshop.

"All of my daughters were coloring cocoanut instead of coloring books as youngsters," Mrs. Hollen said. "And they can all set a pretty fancy table."

Setting a fancy table for family, guests, a special holiday and particularly Easter, is what four workshops in Farmington Community Center is all about when the connoisseurs of confection come to visit this spring.

MRS. HOLLEN held up a miniature squirrel modeled of marzipan and pointed to delicate icing resembling lattice work and chocolate bunnies dressed in pink jackets. "This is a craft, a technique that any one can learn, any one can do," she said.

"I've been teaching this for 25 years, and I'm still telling people that you need not be an artist to do some very lovely things."

"I made all of the mistakes myself while I was learning. What we do is pass on the proper ingredients to use and the techniques that are needed to produce what you want."

Marzipan, when the proper recipe is used, will work as easily as clay. The recipe for frosting will be different for a flower or a petal, and so will the amount of pressure exerted on the tube, and so will be the way the tube is held in one's hand.

Melting chocolate, tinting the white chocolate to any color, even flavoring it, pouring it into a mold, then decorating the figure with one's imagination, are also but techniques to be learned.

In all instances, the two women say, the cost is considerably lower than if one were to buy the confections as party decorations.

"THE CHOCOLATE that's bought in blocks for molding contains none of the paraffin that's necessary for preserving it when it's sold retail, so it has a lot more flavor. This flavor is even retained when you give it another flavor," Mrs. Fowler said.

"I tinted some white chocolate lavender and flavored it with grape for table favors at a wedding shower. I put some blueberry flavoring into blue-tinted baby booties for another party."

"Both were great, so I added that little trick to give to the people who come to my lecture-demonstrations."

Participants in her workshops also learn how to paint with chocolate. This is done with a paint brush, taking a brown-chocolate molded piece, then using white chocolate that's been tinted to paint on clothes or accessories.

"I got into the chocolate business when I fell in love with a white snow man lollypop who had charcoal eyes and red mittens."

Her latest innovation is the chocolate version of the gingerbread house.

In addition to classes in Greenfield Village, Mrs. Fowler creates chocolate party decorations for weddings, showers, holidays and special occasions.

"BUT THE March workshop in Farmington Community Center will be strictly for Easter," Mrs. Fowler said, "full of baskets and bunnies and painted eggs and little chickens."

"In May, we'll be working on party favors and centerpieces. I have a new (chocolate) umbrella to show for bridal showers. It can be saved or eaten for dessert!"

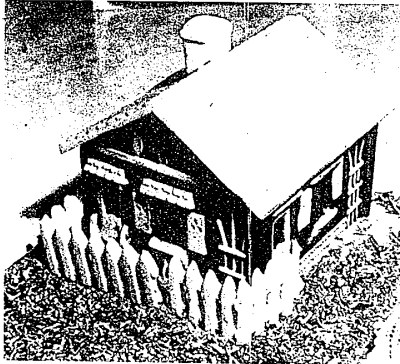
Mrs. Fowler's workshop in chocolate molding for Easter runs from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, March 17. The fee is \$7, and her talk will include ideas on how to box and package the candies for gift giving.

"There is no need for a follow-up class. You can learn all the techniques you need, then go home and use your imagination."

Mrs. Hollen heads up the session called "Modeling With Marzipan" that runs from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, March 31. Participants will buy candy batter to use in the workshop to mold fruits and vegetables.

"This is a beginner's class. Fruits and vegetables are the easiest of the shapes."

"In one session, you can get the feel of it so you can go on to make more



Diana Fowler's newest innovation is the chocolate version of the gingerbread house. White chocolate tinted pink is used for accessories. Colored coconut is used for landscaping.

complicated animals or figures.

"But everyone will get a recipe. It's not much more than almond paste and powdered sugar and how much is that? A lot less than you'd pay for purchased marzipan."

Fee is \$7 plus materials. Mrs. Hollen's session on preparing and decorating a wedding cake for one-third the cost of a catered variety runs

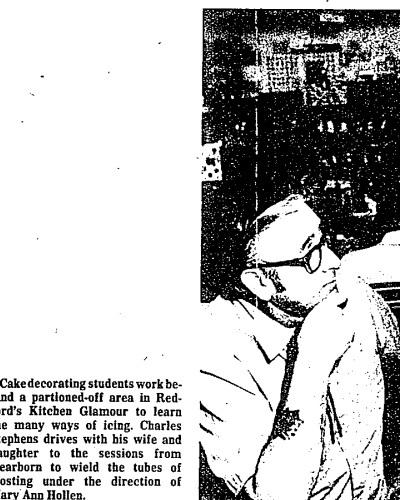
from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, March 24. Fee is \$7.

The principles used can be transferred for use on a cake to be served for any special occasion.

All workshop sessions require in-person registration five days prior to the event.

The center is on Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile.

Staff photos by Art Emanuele



Cake decorating students work behind a partitioned-off area in Redford's Kitchen Glamour to learn the many ways of icing. Charles Stephens drives with his wife and daughter to the sessions from Dearborn to wield the tubes of frosting under the direction of Mary Ann Hollen.



The proud instructor is Mary Ann Hollen, who shows the work of her students who work with batches of marzipan to turn out fruits, vegetables, animals and sometimes fantasy figures. Mrs. Hollen heads up all of the cake decorating classes given in Kitchen Glamour's four stores in metropolitan Detroit as well as teaching the techniques of modeling with the almond paste candy.



Chocolate Easter figures, dyed, flavored, decorated or put on lollypop sticks fill the basket in readiness for the holiday. The creations are those of Diana Fowler, who says one workshop is all that's needed to learn the tricks of chocolate molding.

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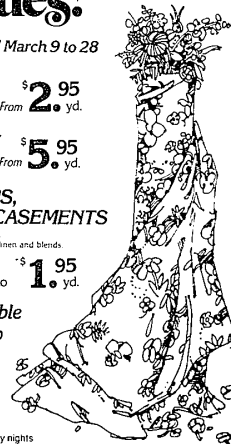
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