

Cheesecakes have captured their fancy

By Lisa Simon
staff writer

SAY IT with cheesecake. That's the motto and marketing tool of two sisters, Marion Sheridan and Linda Ozog, who created a gourmet cheesecake of the month club based in Sheridan's Farm-

ington Hills home.

A different cheesecake flavor for each month of the year — including winners like Raspberry, Grand Mariner, Raspberry Ribbon, Pumpkin Spice. Each cake is custom-wrapped, garnished and packaged.

Single orders, a bimonthly option, or three-, five-, eight-, or 12-month

memberships are available. Included in the price is United Parcel Service (UPS) delivery to any of the mainland states.

Both Sheridan and Ozog felt that untapped passions for professionally made, home-delivered cheesecakes were reason enough to start a business. For a customer's enjoyment or as an anniversary, a birthday gift to family members or a holiday gift to business associates, cheesecake is a tasteful, delectable gift, Sheridan said. "Who doesn't love cheesecake?"

THE DIFFERENT flavors for each month often coincide with the seasons. November's Pumpkin Spice might be a nice alternative Thanksgiving dessert, and December's rum mocha could easily be a Christmas favorite, Sheridan said.

Sponsoring one flavor per month was a way of keeping costs down as well as allowing for mass production, the women explained.

The idea for a cheesecake club was born when Sheridan knew a program about women who had started aCookie of

were boring compared to cheesecake, she said. Because both Sheridan and Ozog have several young children, the women wanted a business that could easily function out of their homes.

A special cheesecake telephone line was installed, and when Sheridan isn't home the call is transferred directly to Ozog's home in Novi. If neither partner is home, an answering machine takes the call.

Months of research followed the initial discussions. Finding the proper aesthetic and functional packaging was only part of the process. Coordinating the right look and size of the cakes was pursued as well as lining up bakers, Virginia Matthews of Dearborn.

BOTH SHERIDAN and Ozog supplied Matthews with their favorite cheesecake recipes, and others were born out of testing and sampling with Matthews' help.

Last year's February cheesecake contest at the Farmington Community Center was an opportune time to mingle with a cheesecake-loving crowd. One of 25 contestants, the sisters' chocolate cheesecake took second place.

Besides having a great time, "it (the contest) gave us different ideas about sizes and flavors," Sheridan said. Because chocolate is an all-time favorite — five cheesecakes of the month are fancy chocolate flavors, she said. "The cakes have a remarkable shelf life."

For best taste results, each cake must sit at a full 24 hours before delivery and care instructions are included with each cake. Refrigeration for up to two

weeks and freezing for up to six months are recommended.

The three-pound cakes, each with a gourmet walnut crust taste better after they have sat in a refrigerator for a few days, especially the ones with liquor. If the flavor of the month includes a liquor, it's always real, Sheridan said. All cake ingredients are natural.

"IT (THE business) works best with sisters," Sheridan said. Although neither woman has pursued business previously, they got excited whenever the phone rings, Ozog said.

Ozog, a free-lance artist, brings a special talent to the business. She designed the club's gold and black brochure and designs and draws all the business advertising. "It's terrific having an artist as a partner," Sheridan said.

"Call it quality calories," Sheridan

said of the cakes, which each contain 1½ pounds of cream cheese. Neither woman dared to place a calorie count on the cakes.

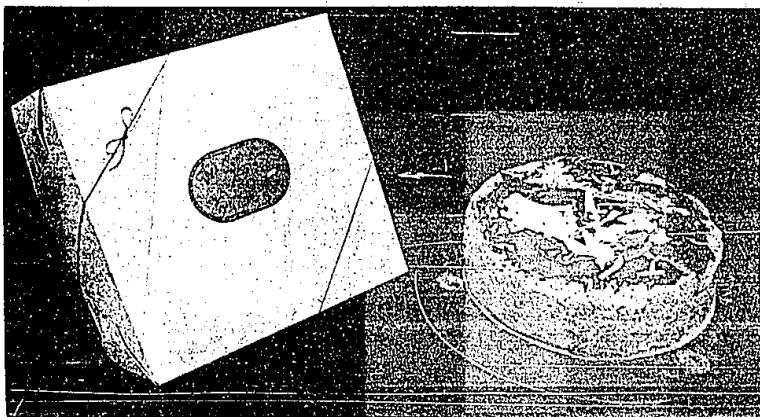
Easing into the business slowly was the sisters' marketing plan. Growing slowly is their intent. The business' debut was Mother's Day with May's cheesecake flavor — almost-chocolate. They sold 13 cakes the first week.

With business steadily increasing and with plans to approach businesses with this new holiday gift idea, the women have already begun searching for an alternative to the standard brandy/habit ham or bottle of liquor, Sheridan explained.

Both Sheridan and Ozog are confident of their product — and hope to break even in the coming months. Their capability is 20 to 30 orders a week. Said Sheridan: "we're ready to take on Christmas."



Linda Ozog (left) and Marion Sheridan, co-proprietors of the Gourmet Cheesecake Club.



At left: Cheesecakes come in a dozen flavors customers can choose from — from apricot brandy to Grand Mariner.

Staff photos
by
Randy Boud

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. This column appears twice monthly. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

● SPOTLIGHT SHINES

Four entrepreneurs were honored at the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce luncheon Sept. 18.

Emmett Moten, director of Detroit's Economic Development Department, talked about "Small Business Opportunities and the Redevelopment of Southeast Michigan."

Among those recognized was Lee Barthel, president of Barthel Contracting Co.

The Farmington Hills resident was chosen for his performance as a minority entrepreneur and for his firm's contracting work at Detroit's Capital Park.

He was also selected because of company growth in employees and sales and because of a record of community involvement.

● HE'S NAMED

Weston Diggs was named supervisor of new accounts at Group Health Plan, a 40,000-member health maintenance organization (HMO).

The Farmington Hills resident supervises four marketing staff members, whose primary duties are attracting and servicing new groups.

Diggs was a law student at Howard University in Washington, D.C., before returning to his hometown of Detroit, where he graduated from Wayne State University's School of Mortuary Science.

In 1965, he became managing director of a family funeral chapel in southwest Detroit. He joined Group Health Plan in 1977.

● SMASHING SUCCESS

Thompson Advertising Productions' third-annual "Tap Day at the Races" Aug. 25 at Waterford Hills Raceway proved a smashing success.

That's because the agency car, a Kelley-Hayes Co.-sponsored Dodge Shelby Charger driven by account executive Charlie Henry of Farmington Hills, was involved in a crash, which totalled the car, only two laps into the feature race.

Henry, minor injured in the accident, was holding his daughter, Shelby.

The Farmington Hills-based advertising firm also had a minor car show, which featured the agency's bobby cars.

● MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dr. Eugene Sands was named medical director of Brighton Hospital, a nationally recognized facility specializing in the treatment of alcoholism and related chemical dependency.

Before joining the hospital's staff, the West Bloomfield Township resident was in private practice and a member of the Department of Internal

Medicine at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills. The City College of New York graduate completed his medical training at the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Sands is a member of the Wayne County Osteopathic Association, the Michigan Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, the American Osteopathic Association and the American Medical Society on Alcoholism.

He also serves on the corporate board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Detroit.

Brighton Hospital is completing a \$5.4-million construction and renovation program that began in 1983. In June, it created Brighton Health Services Corp. to provide administrative, fiscal and other support services.

● ORDER RECEIVED

Percepton, a Farmington Hills-based machine vision firm, has received an order for an MV-300 machine vision system, valued at \$1 million, from A.O. Smith Automotive Products Co. in Milwaukee.

A.O. Smith manufactures frames and structural components for cars and trucks.

The machine vision system will consist of 125 sensors. The proprietary multiframe video interface developed by Percepton makes it possible to use so many sensors.

The MV-300 blends state-of-the-art electro-optics and sensors, powerful microcomputers and image processing hardware and software into a complete production system.

It will be used to provide 100 percent, on-line measurement and statistical process control capabilities to manage the truck frame assembly process for full-sized Chevrolet and GMC trucks.

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Using the benefits of the MV-300's configurability, the systems will enable A.O. Smith to measure three different truck frames on the same assembly line. Up to 70 sensors may operate on any single frame and obtain 70-150 measurements per frame. The system's advanced parallel processing allows multiple, simultaneous measurements.

Founded in 1981, Percepton specializes in the design, integration and marketing of machine vision systems, which provide solutions for manufacturing process management in the durable goods industry.

Percepton is a major supplier of machine vision systems in the sheet-metal processing market, with 50 MV-300 and MV-600 systems operating in North America.

● MOVING UP

Kurt Kertu was promoted to production manager at Thompson Advertising Productions, Farmington Hills.

The Bloomfield Hills resident will be responsible for all agency print and collateral materials production as well as supplier relations.

P.M. pattern play



MAIDENFORM'S

SKINNY PANT PJ

WITH A

PAISLEY TOP

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