

Artistry in wedding cakes

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to eat those better, and artistically, it's more creative, because you have more control."

He also spent three months in Chicago studying with Amy Rohr, one of the few Americans skilled in the art of constructing elaborate tiered cakes.

"WEDDING CAKE is very architectural," Paulina said.

All three of the major styles of cake design are antique English from the 1800s, according to Paulina. The Lambeth, or English, method is known for fine strings of frosting layered into scrolls and other designs.

The Australian method has a layer of rolled frosting over the cake, garnished with flowers and strings of frosting embossed leaves and flowers. A third style is the South African, or Nirvana, which features an interior cake enclosed in a box of rigid frosting with cutout, window-like arches. The shell, or box and decorations, can be removed and discarded, or saved.

Paulina will create any one of several flavors. He especially favors an English pound cake, which is light in texture with a rich, buttery taste.

The cake is enhanced with fresh fruit, dried fruit, or nuts.

While the decorations should be lovely, "The inside should be the most important," Paulina said.

"It should taste good. The possibilities are endless."

Sometimes Paulina will serve a compatible sauce with a floral design, or a monogram of the bride and groom.

"AGAIN, IT'S detail that people notice," he added. "It's amazing how many people appreciate that."

Recently Paulina made four fancy cakes for the 100th birthday party of Arthur Franklin, a retired police officer.

The most elaborate cake featured a panel containing a live dove which flew out when a ribbon was pulled. Special mirrors and a dazzling array of candles added to the excitement.

"That was so much fun," Paulina said of the assignment.

Paulina does no advertising. He gains clients through word-of-mouth, party planners and bridal shows.

Marilyn Schakne became intrigued when she heard of Paulina's display at Tiffany's.

"Everybody would like to have a little different flair," she said.

Schakne and her husband, Norman, a psychiatrist, were thrilled with their guests' reactions to their

daughters' wedding cakes. Two hundred people attended each wedding, when Kevin Paulina's cake held a place of honor.

THE FIRST wedding took place last May, when the Schakne's daughter, Susan, married Alan Marion on the Somerset Inn in Troy. The white cake, with raspberry filling, was frosted with delicate leaves, strings of frosting and delicate flowers. Some people mistook for porcelain.

"We tried to make the cake a focal point," Schakne said. "People were in awe. And it was delicious."

Six months later, in November, Susan's sister Robin married Dr. Lawrence Lash in a ceremony at Congregation Shaarei Zedek in Southfield. This time, Paulina prepared the cake according to kosher dietary requirements in the kitchen at the synagogue.

The second cake was similar to the first, although the decorations reflected each bride's personal preferences. While Susan had a round cake, Robin chose oval shape.

"The cake was outstanding," Schakne said. "The inside was equally exquisite."

VISITORS to a recent display of Paulina's at the Jacobson's store in Livonia saw a cake decorated with a lacy festoon of sugar, lattices and winged cupids' heads. Paulina was especially proud of his icing flowers, an ivory rose tinged lightly with peach tones, and tiny, colored buds.

"It's too pretty to cut," several people said, as they admired the cake.

"When I do a flower I haven't done before, I go to a florist and buy the

flowers and tear it apart," Paulina said. "There are times that I wonder if it's realistic. But when they pick up the (icing) flower and smell it, it smells like a flower."

The Jacobson cake took from 80-100 hours to complete "because of the flowers," Paulina said.

He estimates a work period of one-half hour per guest. That time includes sketching the design, deciding the appropriate style and ingredients to be used and the laborious molding and fining of flowers.

To ensure freshness, the cake is baked two days in advance. Then Paulina decorates the cake in "however many hours it takes me."

Paulina will appear with three other specialty bakers in a color spread to appear in the August-September issue of Bride's.

His varied assignments, which entail travel, bring some interesting anecdotes. Once, while delivering a cake to Florida, he was required to buy a seat on the airplane for the cake.

Another time, while carrying a plastic bag filled with his cream frosting, he was detained by an security guard. Apparently, the frosting appeared as a large white spot on the X-ray screen, and the guard thought it might be drugs hidden in the case.

Paulina believes his frosty confections satisfy his creativity.

"It's very art-oriented," he said. "You're producing a centerpiece which is visual. And that enhances the taste."

For more information, phone Paulina at 348-3536.

Specialty is torte cakes

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different ingredients and change the taste."

At the Paris Bakery, Miller learned about high production and time management. At Schoolcraft, he learned business techniques.

"And I learned never to say can't," added Miller, who from the beginning was determined to start his own bakery.

Helping to promote sales is Miller's wife, Robi Cortis of Farmington Hills, who owns a catering business and operates the New Grande Ballroom in Westland.

Elite Sweets is sparkling-clean and fragrant, with the aroma of pure vanilla, rich chocolate flavors and butter cream frosting wafting from the baking area. The shop employs seven people. Miller decorates the cakes.

THE LIGHT CHIFFON cakes are complemented with rich, thick mousse fillings, such as the subtle, featherly white chocolate or the intense, deep dark chocolate.

Miller is very particular about his ingredients. He imports large blocks of chocolate from Belgium to make his creamy chocolate mousse fillings. He purchases pure orange and ground lemon flavoring from France, and his strawberry and raspberry fillings are made from fresh fruit.

"It's not expensive, but it's worth it," Miller said. "You pay the price and get a superior product."

The various choices carry tantalizing names such as Baileys Irish Cream Torte, a chocolate chiffon cake split and layered with chocolate mousse infused with the popular Irish liqueur. A fresh strawberry neapolitan torte combines yellow and chocolate chiffon cake split and

layered with strawberry Bavarian cream and fresh strawberries, topped with strawberry buttercream.

Is your mouth watering yet? The white alpine torte is a chocolate chiffon cake split, filled and frosted with white chocolate mousse and topped with white chocolate shavings. It looks like a majestic, snow-covered mountain.

"THIS IS NICE for a second wedding," Miller said. "It's elegant, yet different from the traditional wedding cake."

One bride recently ordered a yellow chiffon cake with multiple fillings. The bottom, 12-inch layer was filled with fresh strawberries. The middle, nine-inch tier was filled with white raspberry mousse, and the top, six-inch tier contained white chocolate mousse.

The cake was covered with ivory-colored cream frosting and embel-

lished with decorations simulating black lace.

Miller's cakes cost approximately \$1.50 per guest, and delivery and set-up are free. Included in the package is a free, six-inch "anniversary cake." The customer can pick up the fresh, complimentary cake at the bakery.

MILLER BELIEVES the secret to growth is meeting the customer's needs. He generally has a nine-inch version of each flavor cake on hand. He was able to satisfy a recent customer who called on his car phone and placed an order for six cakes, to be picked up immediately.

Wedding cakes and special orders require advance notice. Ice cream cakes will be available with the advent of warm weather.

The suburban construction boom has been a real plus for Miller, who has prepared sweets trays for several company openings. He eventually wants to set up a franchise operation for Elite Sweets.

"I have always wanted to have my own business, and I have worked toward that," he said.

Elite Sweets is at 33471 W. Eight Mile Road, west of Farmington Road, Livonia. Phone 463-3600. Open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays-Fridays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

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