



Making decorative flowers to adorn a cake (above and below) requires a delicate touch and plenty of patience as Debra D’Cunha demonstrates

Cake expectations

Award-winning cake decorator has always been a ‘designing woman’

Story by Patti Post
Photos by Ted Brown

At 4 a.m., on the day of Canada’s Baking and Sweet Show competition at the International Centre in Mississauga, Georgetown’s Debra D’Cunha quietly slipped out of bed so as not to disturb her husband, tiptoed past the bedrooms of her two young boys, and headed downstairs with excited anticipation, ready to pack up her exquisite French macarons (not to be confused with coconut macaroons,) only to find that her delicate cookies, which were perfect when she went to bed a short three hours earlier, were ruined.

Stuck to the cookie mat. Another baker might have given up, but D’Cunha’s heart was set on entering the elite pastry into competition, and a little setback like this wasn’t about to change that.

Her face lights up as she says, “I didn’t miss a beat, I just made them all over again.”

No easy task, but as she also says, “You have to have a passion for it.”

D’Cunha made it down to the event right on time, with her pink and perfect macarons. After a quick



sampling of her competitors’ submissions, she knew her chances were good. But she had to find a place at the back of a large, crowded room to await the results from the stage.

She laughs as she remembers being so confi-

dent about winning that she started gathering her purse and jacket even before they made the announcement.

D’Cunha’s company, Sweet Confectionery, was indeed declared the winner for Best French Macarons in a contest judged by industry celebrities Buddy Valastro (*Cake Boss*, TLC network,) Erin Bolger (*The Happy Baker*, Food Network,) and cookbook author Geraldine Randlesome, (whose claim to fame is being part creator of Prince Charles and Lady Diana’s wedding cake.)

D’Cunha excused her way through the packed assembly and, just as the judges were about to give up on a personal presentation, they caught sight of their winner, waving as she made her way to the stage. “There she is!” she heard someone say.

“Buddy gave me a hug and said the judges were unanimous in their decision,” says D’Cunha, smiling proudly. The TV star baker, Valastro, pronounced her French macarons “moist and delicious.” High praise for a couture cookie that requires a delicate balance of exact science and an artistic hand.

The macaron is a meringue-based cookie made





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