

# Holiday dishes a recipe for success

Ever have a craving for a scrumptious dessert, but think you have to drive downtown to satisfy your sweet tooth?

Look no further. Markham's Main St. features its very own dessert restaurant in Dessertations.

Having opened in March, the shelves at Dessertations are stocked with more than 35 different sweets, from cookies and tarts to cakes, pies and cheesecakes, delivered daily from four bakeries downtown.

Prices on average range from \$3.50 per slice to \$25 for an entire dessert.

While Dessertations seems tiny from the outside, it is tastefully decorated in an up-beat contemporary decor and seats 30 people comfortably.

Owned by Ron and Jane Maheu of Markham, Dessertations is managed by Ron's brother, Marc, who lives above the shop.

"Ron has dreamed about opening his own dessert restaurant for several years, after having discovered several downtown," Maheu said. "Markham needed a restaurant like this and so far the response has been positive."

While the choices at Dessertations are too numerous to mention, here are several of their most popular sellers: White Chocolate Mousse Cake, Chocolate Mousse Meringue Pie, Lemon Chiffon Pie, Strawberry Panache, Rocky Road Cheesecake and Carrot Cake.

Early in the New Year, Dessertations plans to sponsor a bake-off, and will send the winner to the Bahamas next spring.

Dessertations has just begun offering a catering service for anniversaries, birthdays and dinner parties. A waitress is sent to the home with a selection of sweets, previously chosen by the host or hostess, and serves them in style.

With a keen sweet tooth, here is Ron Maheu's favorite Christmas recipe for holiday entertaining:

## Christmas Chocolate Mousse Loaf (Serves 8)

- 1 cup of finely chopped pecans
- 12 ounces of semi-sweet chocolate
- 3/4 cup of unsalted butter
- 3 Tbsp. of unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 5 egg whites
- Pinch of salt

Generously butter bottom and sides of one-quart glass loaf pan. Line bottom with waxed paper. Sprinkle chopped pecans over bottom and sides of loaf pan and press into place, set pan aside.

In a heavy pot, place chocolate, butter and cocoa and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until chocolate and butter are melted. Remove from heat. Place pot in sink full of cold water and stir to cool. Do not let harden.

Transfer mixture to large bowl. Add sugar and beat with electric mixer at medium speed until well mixed (several minutes will be required to avoid sugar crystals in the final products.) Beat in egg yolks one at a time. Set aside.

Beat egg whites and salt in another large bowl until whites are stiff and glossy. Stir 1/4 of egg whites into chocolate mixture until well-blended, then gently fold in remaining whites.

Turn into prepared loaf pan. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled (Several hours).

Carefully separate mousse from pan with sharp knife or spatula and invert onto a breadboard.

## Christmas Sauces

### Vanilla Cream Sauce

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1/4 cup sifted powdered sugar

1 cup custard sauce (see below)

### Custard Sauce

- 1 cup milk
- 1 2-inch piece of vanilla bean, split
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- Scald milk with vanilla bean

in small saucepan (not aluminum) over high heat and set aside.

Combine egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl and whisk until mixture is thick and lemon coloured.

Gradually whisk milk into egg mixture. Return to saucepan. Place over low heat and cool, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and coats spoon.

Set pan in sink full of cold water to cool. Strain custard into a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled (Several hours).

### Raspberry Sauce

Four 10-ounce packages of frozen unsweetened raspberries. Powdered sugar to taste (approximately 4 - 6 ounces)

Kirsh to taste (approximately 4 tablespoons)

### Serving

- 8 whole pecans
- 8 whole raspberries
- 16 mint leaves

Sauce a large dinner plate, half with Vanilla Cream Sauce and half with Raspberry Sauce, being sure to keep a clear line of demarcation between the two sauces down the centre of the plate.

Place a slice of Chocolate Mousse Loaf in the centre of the plate and decorate each piece with 1 whole pecan, 1 whole raspberry and two mint leaves.

The recipe is quite involved and takes a few hours preparation time. Most of the component items, however, can be prepared in advance and refrigerated.



Marc Maheu, manager of Markham Main St. shop Dessertations, shows one of the many sweet samples sold there that tickle the palate — if you don't mind the Christmas calories. — Bill Lanning

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