

That Takes the Cake!

Mary Jo Dowling, CMSA, Westford, MA

The weekend of February 23-24, 2013 I was proud to serve as a judge and instructor for the Capital Confectioners Cake Club's 9th Annual That Takes the Cake! Show in Austin, Texas. This year's theme was "Cake to the Air".

During the weekend, over 3,000 people attended this two day event with over 42 vendors, 22 instructors and demonstrators, and 22 mini classes. They also offered seven (7) extended classes, which took place either before or after the Show on more in-depth subjects.

With 339 entries the judges were certainly kept busy, and this year's newly added category for "Most Innovative New Technique" was definitely a new twist. The show theme offered up cakes featuring everything from birds of prey to Harry Potter and had to be created to serve over 100. (Of course no one actually cut into these fantastic masterpieces.) The winning show cake was created by Kim Simons of Fort Lee, NJ who drove her nesting osprey entry all the way to the show from her hometown. I believe that right there should have earned her a medal for her over 3,500 mile trip!

The divisional award went to Natalie Elliot Sideserf from Austin, TX. Her sculpted bust of Willie Nelson was so realistic that many viewers were wondering if the rest of him was hiding under the table. It was quite remarkable, and made from real cake and chocolate clays.

The most interesting award was for the "Most Innovative New Technique" which showcased several entries. The judges were able to interview each of the competitors,

who signed up for this category, one on one, to hear them describe their process and why they approached it that way. The winner of this year's award was Kimberly Chapman of Austin, TX for her technique featuring the "gummy process" to confectionary embellishment. Kimberly has been working on her process for a few years now and has raised the level she can push this medium to new heights.

The show also featured a very impressive selection of raffle prizes and I thank all of the vendors who contributed to this endeavor. I was tickled pink to be holding one of the winning tickets. The prizes featured everything from classes for a year to 40 pounds of confectioners' sugar and everything fun for a sugar artist in between.

Along with Craftsy™, the Show sponsored mini hands-on classes throughout the day for the general public. These were a great draw and most were filled within minutes of them opening. It was a great way for everyone to get their hands into sugar and go home with a little knowledge and a little treat too.

Of course my favorite part of any show is meeting people. This was my first visit to the Austin area and I had a wonderful time meeting everyone, especially my class students.

I want to give special thanks to the great organizers and the many, many volunteers that put on a show like this. They really know how to put together a show and make everyone feel welcome.

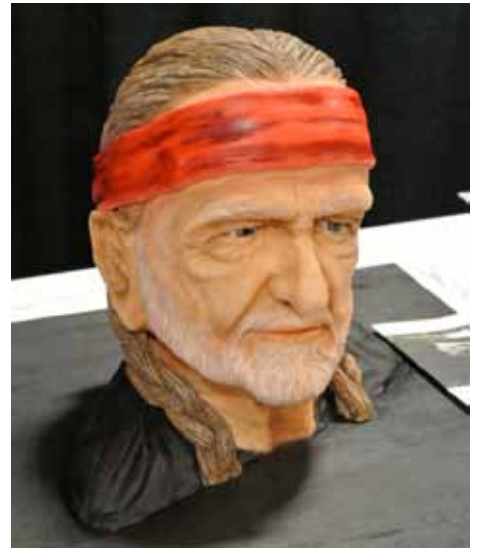
So if you are in the area next year, why not drop in, or better yet enter a cake. The 10th Anniversary theme is "Cake of Ages" which will celebrate periods in history — decades, days, and eras, all in a grand cake style.



First place showcake



Hot air balloon cake



Willie Nelson cake



Gummy cake



Magnet



Class

