

ICES

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Chocolate Vision *L* and *Lace*



The Dragons Horde

Shirley Jackson,
ICES Hall of Fame,
Remembered

Butterflies

Light and Airy Options

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The Dragons Horde

By Ceri DD Griffiths, South Wales, UK

W*henever people talk about royal icing, or royal as it is sometimes called, unfortunately nowadays they talk about it in the past tense. 'Oh I remember royal icing, isn't that the stuff you use at Christmas', 'My grandmothers wedding cake was royal icing', 'People don't use that anymore do they, it'll break your teeth?', etc. These are not the kindest of comments about a very versatile medium which I believe has a home in the contemporary world of cake artistry today. Those of us who use it regularly know that it doesn't have to set like cement. If you know what you're doing it can be a delicious alternative to a mouth full of paste.*

I have been accused, over the years, of being a little obsessed with telling people that royal icing is coming back. Firstly, I believe it never went away, but just as with trends in fashion it took the back seat for a while. A couple of years ago the British royal wedding brought it back with a bang. All of a sudden the brides were requesting piping on their cakes, and so the scramble began in the cake decorating community to re-learn skills almost forgotten by many.

Those amongst us who are familiar with cake artistry in its many guises know that royal icing has always been there. Let's take my cake 'The Dragons Horde' shown here, it is not as obvious as you think looking for the royal icing on it. Yes, there are piped borders, but the pearls on the topper are attached with royal icing, the gold moulded pieces were made from pastillage that started life as a bowl of royal icing, all of the jewels and cameos are held in place with royal icing, the pearls around the cameos and even my friendly little dragon at the top of it all are held in place with royal icing.

Granted, royal icing is an excellent adhesive, which is what most people use it for, but how many of you make figurines and pipe the hair using royal? How many gingerbread makers out there back their gingerbread house panels with royal icing because of its strength? And decorated cookies would be lost without it. Let's forget that just because the British used to make fruit cakes and covered them in marzipan and a coating of royal icing that that is the only use for this versatile medium. Even in Britain nowadays it is pretty rare for a bride to request a full royal iced fruit cake. Instead, they want the added texture and taste that royal icing can add to a sugarpaste or fondant cake. The population is once again falling in love with sweeping scrolls, delicately piped off pieces and breathtaking suspended linework.

Royal icing is the best thing for architectural structures, perfect for supporting other mediums and you would be amazed at what you can do with it. The next time you look at an old cake decorating book or a historical volume full of cakes by Borella, Gomez, Burge, Schur or Lambeth, don't be put off. Be inspired. Don't take the view that I can't do it, look at the designs and see what of it you can do and then take that inspiration and make it your own in your next fantastic creation.

I was right, by the way, royal icing is coming back and it's here to stay. 🍰

