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Valentine's Sugar Cookies

145th Salon
of Culinary Art

ICES Rising Star



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145th Salon of Culinary Art

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The inspiration for this cake was cherubs and the French Baroque style. I made this for the 2013 145th Salon of Culinary Art. It won first place in the wedding cake competition and the Gold Medal of Honor of the Société Culinare Philanthropique.

To get started on this cake, I covered all of my dummies with fondant, marking them as needed while the fondant was still pliable enough to accept the marks. There are many ways to mark your cakes, use the one that works best for you. If you are good at piping "by eye" you may not need to do more than pin pokes at the top of each scallop. If you need additional guidance, then it may be best to trace the entire line you intend to pipe. I covered my board with fondant and set it aside to dry.

Once my pieces had dried sufficiently (so that I could handle them without leaving marks), I attached the bottom tier to the board and applied a pearl border.

On the bottom tier, following my marks, I piped the lattice work with a PME tip # 1.5. The scalloped edge was piped first with a tip #3, then overpiped with a tip #2 and overpiped again with a tip #1. For the overpiping you need a steady hand because you are piping each layer exactly on top of the previous one; be sure to set up your work space so that you have plenty of elbow room. It helps to pipe a



bit of each design on a practice surface until you get it right, then work on what will be your finished dummy. It may also help if you have a tilting turntable which will allow you some additional "finger room" because the cake can be tilted away from you. (Note: The royal icing that I used for stringwork was made with fresh egg whites, lemon juice, confectioner's sugar [sifted twice]). Avoid working with royal icing in humid weather.



The scallop pattern was enhanced with gumpaste pieces made using a filigree mold from CelCakes. Each piece was molded and then dried over a curved support. Once dry, these were glued in place using royal icing. I attached the next tier to the bottom tier and added the pearl border.

The next tier uses molded pieces. I made some medallions - enough to go all the way around the cake. I measured my medallion piece, and wrote down that number. I then multiplied the diameter of my cake times 3.14 (if your dummy is a 10", the equation is $10" \times 3.14 = 31.4"$). Then, I divided the result by the length of the medallion. Since my medallion was 3 inches long, using the result for a 10" cake of 31.4", I needed 10 medallions with a little allowance for space between the medallions. Since I knew I needed 10 medallions, I knew that I would need 10 flowers with 5 petals each, or 50 individual filigree pieces. I also needed 10 cherub broach pieces to use as the centers of the flowers. I painted the cherub broach pieces with some gold dust mixed with vodka and allowed them to dry. When my filigree petals were dry, I made and glued the

medallions to the side of the cake. I glued the petals to the medallions with royal icing and let it set up; then glued the cherubs in the centers of the flowers.

The next tier is 8" high and has scalloped drop strings, molded pieces, pearls and Australian extension work around the entire cake. On this tier I started with the decoration at the top of the cake and worked my way down. This way, if I dropped any of the pieces that I was applying or a drop string snapped, it would fall harmlessly down the side of the cake. If I already have all that extension work on there, it would take out a whole section. I started by making the drop strings following my marked points or lines.

I then made the molded pieces that would stand out from the side of the cake and let them dry over curved supports. When they were dry I made the filligree petals to go behind the shaped mold. I glued them in place on the side of the cake with royal icing and then attached the curved molds over the top of them. I made my scrolls using a mold from *Decorate the Cake*. (You can make your scrolls using the mold of your choice. I then applied them to the cake. I painted the scrolls with gold dust mixed with vodka, being careful not to get any gold on the surface of the cake. The four frames on the scrolls were also made from a mold from *Decorate the Cake*. I glued them in place with royal icing. I attached this tier to the bottom two that were already on the board and added the pearl border.

The bridges were piped with a PME tip # 1.5. To make the bridges, I piped the first line following my marks. I piped the next line directly on top of that first line so it began to stand out from the side of the cake. I allowed those two lines to dry. I then came back and piped another two lines and let them dry. I piped two or three additional lines so that it formed a shelf at a right angle to the cake. When all this had dried, I thinned some of the royal icing and flooded the top of the bridges so that the surface appeared smooth and even and none of the individual piping lines showed through. I let this dry. I then piped the string work with a PME tip # 00. Yes, it is tiny, yes the strings are very fragile, but it looked so good when I finally finished, I was glad I used the small tip. To pipe my strings, I began piping, attaching the string to the cake, while squeezing the piping bag, I pulled the string straight out from the cake. When the string was long enough, I brought the tip down and attached the string to the bridge. Strings should be piped close enough together that there is not room to pipe another string in between.



When I finished with the strings and they were dried, I piped a small decorative border over the top where they attach to the cake.

The next tier used scroll pieces from various molds. I made them and attached them to the cake to form a pleasing pattern. I painted these with gold dust mixed with vodka. When they were dry, I placed the tier on top of the stack, glued it in place with royal icing and attached the pearl border.

The next tier used techniques that had already been done in other places on the cake, but also added a new technique – Oriental stringwork. The stringwork at the top of the tier looks like an inverted scallop, and it is. Instead of drawing an arc upwards with my tip and piping bag, I inverted the whole tier and piped drop strings. When I turned it right side up again it created that lovely arc effect. I made my fleur de lis from a mold, applied it to the cake and painted it gold. I then let this dry.

The next step was to pipe the Oriental stringwork. This was piped using a tip #0. It started out with a small pearl being attached to the cake with royal icing at each scallop point. Drop strings were then piped from that pearl downwards and allowed to dry. I inverted the tier again and piped some additional drop strings. I let that dry and turned the cake right-side up again. I repeated this for several layers, attaching a new pearl between each layer. As you can see, the effect is lacy, delicate and ethereal. Once

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all of the work on this tier had dried, I attached it to the other cakes and added the pearl border.

For the top tier, I used scrolls made from various molds, glued them to the cake with royal icing and painted them with gold dust and vodka. I used the filigree mold to make enough petals to go around the circumference of the cake and dried them over a curved surface. I then attached them to the top edge of the cake with royal icing. I placed that tier on top of the cake, glued it in place with royal icing and added the pearl border.



I made the topper from gumpaste which was dried in bowls or half-round molds. I covered it with molded scrolls and filigree pieces, glued it together with royal icing and painted it all with gold dust mixed with vodka. Finally, I made the cherub (you can either make it by hand or use a mold). I added it to my topper, glued it in place and painted it. When it was dry, I glued the topper in place on the top of the cake.



Finally, I added the over piping to the board and finished with some more molded scroll work painted gold. 🍰