

Floral Elegance Madame Peony

Osires Barbosa, Columbia

This cake was inspired by the classic designs of the European courts, mainly the combinations and elegance of the court of Marie Antoinette. We will focus on the elaborated draperies, valances, flights, and the typical use of exaggeration of Versailles. Decorating with sugar beads will provide the cake an even more luxurious effect. While the cake seems elaborately decorated with many details, including many mini-bows, they will all come together and give the cake a very feminine touch.

In addition, we will use very elegant and exaggerated floral bouquets. The primary flower is one inspired by the peony, with pinks and light blues, and combined with blue foliage. Then we will use touches of gold to convert our cake in a cake worthy of royalty!

It all starts with 4 tiers of cake smoothly covered with the intense, light blue fondant. The blue tone can vary slightly on each of the tiers but try to keep the same color hue so it will match perfectly with the other details.

Once the cakes are covered and stacked (don't forget to use supports) it's time to start making all the detailed decorations for each of the tiers. Most of these decorative pieces should be attached to the cake with edible glue made with hot water and CMC or Tylose, which must be applied to the piece, then allowed to dry a little bit before applying the piece to the cake.

Begin making the drapes for the bottom tier by mixing some gumpaste in pink and putting it through the "pasta machine" on #1, #2 and then #3. Then with a round cutter (a cookie cutter works, too), cut circles which will be used for the draping on the top edge of the cake. It takes 4 circles to make one single draping. Photo #1 shows the four stages of the drape. It is a simple technique, but the effect is very elegant. Photo #2 shows how the drapes are placed.

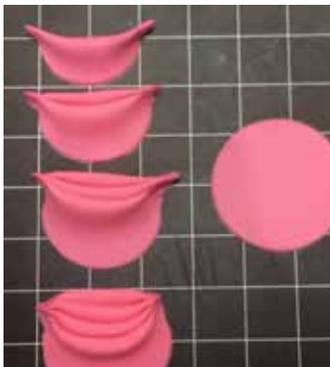


Photo #1



Photo #2

Now run the pink gumpaste through the "pasta machine" again on #1, #2 and #3. Cut out 6 cm by 3.5 cm (1½ x 2½ inches) rectangular pieces. Gather and pinch together the narrow ends, exactly as shown in Photo #3. These pieces are used to decorate the bottom edge of the bottom cake by placing them end on end around the cake. More of these same type pieces are used at the upper edge of the second cake by placing them adjacent to each other as shown in Photo #4.



Photo #3



Photo #4

These pieces are a quilting technique of draping, also known as "French couture". They need to look like they have good padding. You may find it easier to make the pieces and let them dry a couple of minutes so they hold their shape a little better before applying the edible glue and then attaching them.

Next with the pink gumpaste roll into balls that when gently flattened, with a roller, will be about 1" in diameter. Now use a ball tool to make a dent in the center of each one and then mark 8 "folds" with a sharp modeling tool as in Photo #5.



Photo #5

These are now decorative "buttons". In the center cavity of each button place a large sugar pearl. You can also use chocolates or other sweets, anything to make it look elegant. These decorative buttons will be placed at the joins of the puffs at the lower edge of the first cake as shown in Photo #6.



Photo #6

Then with pink royal icing, pipe a pearl border using tip #3 or #4, at the lower edge of the first drape. Then with a tip #3 or #2 drop 2 strings just above the piped border, also shown in Photo #6. In this way we are making a more luxurious, elegant and giving valances to finish the drapes. The decorative buttons are also placed at the joins of the draping that makes up the upper edge of the second cake as shown in Photo #7. This is called French couture.

To finish the drapes on the bottom tier you will need to make bow loops. Make pink gumpaste rectangles cut like we did for the draping. Gather and pinch the edges and place the pinched edges together to make the bow loop. It takes 2 loops to make a bow. Place the pinched ends of 2 loops over each other and attach them between the drapes. Then with the pastry bag, pink royal icing and the tip #4 or #5, place a dot of royal icing in the center of each bow and put a blue sugar pearl. With the same tip and pink royal icing, pipe pink dots points below the bows, to make a decorative effect. Place a pink sugar pearl on the bottom dot as shown in Photo #8.



Photo 7



Photo #8

To make the cake bottom borders for the upper 3 tiers we will use pink royal icing, and a PME® tip #42. Do a small, slightly elongated shell border. This will leave enough room between each shell to apply a tiny of sugar pearl. This will give us a delicate and chic result.

For the third tier stretch one good sized amount of pink gumpaste and pass it through the "pasta machine" on #1, #2 and #3. Then with the aid of sticks or plastic straws make 3 folds lengthwise with the gumpaste making sure to turn the outside edges under as in Photo #9. You want the folds to be smooth and even, now let the piece to dry a couple of minutes before attaching with edible glue around the cake.

Use a little yellow gumpaste to make a frame to place in this draped strip,



Photo #9



Photo #10

making a buckle effect as it is seen in Photo #10. Allow everything to dry then paint with gold mixed with a little vodka or lemon extract as shown in Photo #11.

On the top tier make a pink pearl necklace with large balls of pink gumpaste and then make a pink pearl necklace with smaller pearls. Attach the pearls to the cake to give a sense that they are draped on the cake. These necklaces can also be made using a silicone mold for pearl necklaces. Try to do them in different sizes to make it look even better. When they are ready, you can use some gold dust on the pearls as in Photo #11.



Photo #11

Creating the gumpaste peonies:

Start by stretching out some pink gumpaste and passing it through the "pasta machine" on #1 and #2, and then cut the pieces for the petals using the included large and small patterns. It takes 5 small petals and 6 large petals per flower. This cake uses 3 flowers, one for each tier. Insert white floral wire into each petal. Vein the petals and curl the edges with a round ball tool, curl and finally edge the petals with a Dresden tool. They should be allowed to dry thoroughly (at least 2 or 3 days) on a foam pad or cupped surface that gives them a good shape and movement.

Next, using the loose petal pattern to cut out the loose petals, these will be used to add a feather effect in the floral spray. Each piece must be properly wired, then texturized and finally should have the edges curled with a ball tool. See Photo 12.

Preparing the peony buds is very simple, start by making a small ball of pink gumpaste. Insert a wire and then shape the gumpaste into a teardrop. Using a sharp modeling tool mark lines from the base to the point to provide the lovely shape. The peony centers are just as easy as the buds. Start by making a small ball (smaller than the buds) of pink gumpaste, insert a wire and with a sharp modeling tool mark 4 lines on the top of the ball. Both of these are shown in Photo #13.



Photo #12



Photo #13

Article continues on the next page.

All of the flower parts previously made must be dried well, the ideal is 3 days, and then they can be shaded and wired in to the bouquets.



Photo 14

With blue gumpaste, cut the leaves using the round leaf and large leaf patterns, wire them and press them into the veiner. You can texture them with a special texturing pad or by using real leaves. If using real leaves, apply some white vegetable shortening on the leaf to prevent the gumpaste leaf from sticking and to make it easier to remove. Curl the edges with a ball tool and let dry for at least 2 or 3 days. After they have dried, dust with a powder blue petal dust and then use gold dust and vodka on the edges as in Photo #14.

To shade the petals use fuchsia petal dust on the top edges of the petals and then using a deep blue petal dust at the base. This is shown in Photo #15.

On the small loose petals apply only a little powder in fuchsia petal dust from the base up and very lightly at the top edge. Follow this by using a small bit of gold dust on the upper edge of each petal. To color the flower centers use blue petal dust to dust the centers where the cuts are and then using gold dust and vodka lightly dust the tops of the centers. See Photo #16.



Photo 15



Photo #16

All wired parts, leaves, flower petals, loose petals, buds, etc., should be covered with brown floral tape as shown in Photo #17. We use 5 round buds, 5 small petals and 6 large petals to make a flower. We need 3 flowers, as will three branches. See Photo #18.



Photo 17



Photo #18



Photo #19

On the cake, you must make 2 holes, and into each insert a small plastic tube, which will serve as an insulator to prevent the floral tape or wire into contact with the inside of the cake shown Photo #19.

Now to assemble the 3 bouquets, each one will use one peony flower added to bouquets made with loose petals, buds and blue leaves. The first branch should be made with a voluptuous looking flower, but you should not add as many loose petals, teardrop and round buds and leaves as it will be at the



Photo #20

lower edge of the first cake shown in Photo #20.

Then for the second branch, which should have more loose leaves, teardrop and round buds and leaves. This bouquet will be placed in the tube on the top edge of the second tier shown in Photo #21.



Photo #21



Photo 22

About the artist: *Osiris Barbosa (Oss) was born in Brazil and currently lives in Bogota, Colombia, where he is both a chef and cake decorator. He has earned two diplomas in gastronomy, and various studies in International Cuisine. He also has earned his Wilton Master Certificate and Master Certificate of PME. He is the director of the Institute Cake's by Oss, and is an ICES Approved Teacher. Currently he is ICES Ambassador to Colombia. He, in 2015, was inducted into the International Sugarcraft Hall of Fame in Fairfax, Virginia.*

The third branch must be equally large, but combined in a way so that they look more "vertical". This bouquet will go on the top tier of the cake. This bouquet should be fuller with additional bud and leaves so that it is not flat looking in the back as the "top" of the cake should look grand!

Now take time to contemplate your creation, remember to make bouquets very delicate but with much inspiration so that it is elegant, tasteful, luxurious, well ...worthy of royalty! Congratulations on your creation! Sweet hugs!

