

Rosie's Creative Cakes Frosted With Flair

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MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) —
What does cake decorating have to do with farming?

A lot, if it's Rosie Rohrer talking.

"It's a lot like farm life. You don't plan, you just roll with the punches," says this peppy, petite farmwife and mother of two.

Rosie got her start in cake decorating at 4-H. By the time she was 11 or 12 years old, she was selling cakes to friends, and by the time she was 13, Rosie made her first wedding cake.

"Then I was too naive to be nervous about decorating a wedding cake, but I look back now and I'm embarrassed," Rosie said.

There is no need for Rosie to be embarrassed about the cakes she decorates today. Her intricate designed cakes have won top prizes in professional competition and have built a reputable name for her business called Rosie's Creative Cakes.

It was continual experimentation that honed Rosie's artistic flair on the cakes. She said, "If you master the basics, you can do a lot."

Several years after Rosie was decorating cakes, she signed up for cake decorating classes to see if she was doing things right and found out that her self-taught techniques were correct.

Hundreds of photographs of her cakes attest to the endless ideas to decorate the perfect cake for a child, hunter, farmer, seamstress, and teen-ager. Included is a basket weave design woven with frosting on the cake and decorated with fresh flowers, candles, and greens.

Rosie averages about seven to 10 small orders and one wedding cake each week. It's wedding cakes where Rosie shines. And, what she prefers to do. Sometimes she does three wedding cakes a week.

Rosie holds consultations with potential customers. She gives them a sample of a cake, and the client pages through hundreds of photos of cakes to choose the right one.

"What they want is not always what they can afford," Rosie said. "But we can often tailor a cake to the bride's expectations and price allowance."

Since Rosie established her own business, she likes the personal contact with customers.

"Brides have little impact on package deals offered through restaurants. Here, customers know what they are getting and the decorating is better quality," said Rosie, who had worked for several years for a restaurant bakeshop.

The disadvantage in working for a bakery is that the cake decorator does not talk with the customer. If the person who takes the order does not convey the exact desires of the customer, it may result in an unhappy customer.

"I like to see people's faces when they pick up a cake. To know they are pleased, and I've done what they wanted, and met their expectations means a lot. You miss this gratitude when you work for a shop," she said.

"Interaction with customers is very important. Some people don't know the options. I can do more for a bride," she said.

Rolled fondant, a European type of frosting that is rolled with a rolling pin and molded onto the cake, is a popular trend but it is much more expensive than the ordinary royal icing cake.

There are ways of attaining a similar effect at a more economical price.

"Price should not be the only concern when choosing a cake. But often by the time the bride comes to choose her cake, it is the last thing on her list and she has already used her allotment money," said Rosie, who needs to find innovative ways to meet the bride's expectations.

Sometimes she is skeptical of some of the colors or designs that the bride wants to incorporate into the cake. But, often, she is pleasantly surprised how nice a cake turns out.

In addition to baking the wedding cake, she delivers and sets it up at the reception. This has caused some heart-stoppers for Rosie, but she has so far been able to remedy the many unforeseen problems associated with wedding cakes. Transportation and hot weather are not compatible with decorated cakes. One time, it was a hot summer day, and the reception was held outside. Rosie kept the cake in air conditioning until the guests were ready to be served. Another time, a glass cake plate cracked during transportation. Fortunately Rosie always keeps a cardboard plate underneath the cake, which in this case prevented a catastrophe.

Rosie uses her own recipes for the cakes. She has a separate specially-built kitchen with three ovens for her cake decorating business in the family's Manheim farmhouse at 2385 Junction Road, Manheim.

To hold the frosting, she uses parchment triangles, which she folds and inserts decorating tips into it. She prefers to use metal seamless tips instead of plastic ones.

It required a lot of practice for



The Rohrer family includes Dwight, Rosie, Ryan, 3½, and Tyler, 3 months.

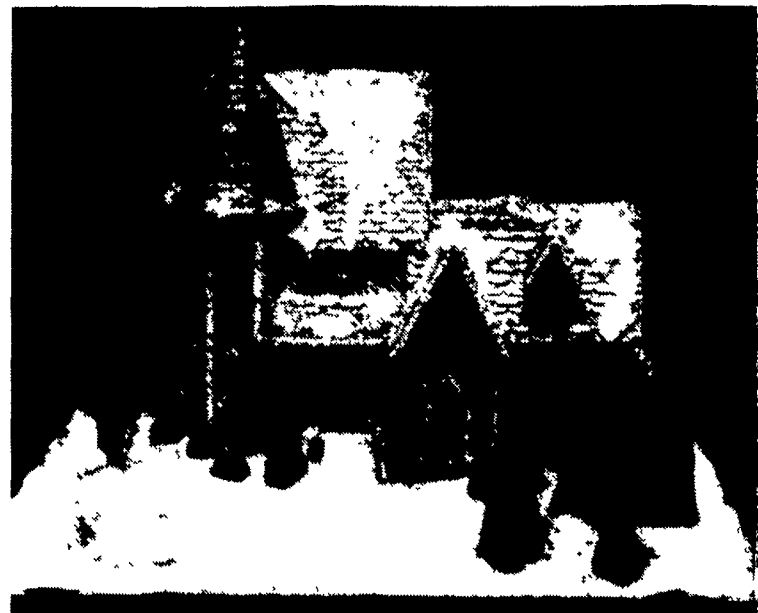
Rosie to learn to write in perfect script. She uses a swivel platform or a straw when making flowers because it adds more height and dimension, she said. To color the frosting, she uses gum paste or powder for glistening and luster as opposed to liquid coloring that thins frosting and does not produce as vibrant colors. Liquid is used for airbrush designs.

Rosie has found word-of-mouth the best form of advertising for her business.

"I'm as busy as I want to be and sometimes busier than I want to be," said Rosie who also helps her husband with farm work.

Rosie's husband, Dwight, farms 60 acres of tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, corn, and soybeans. He finishes about 100-head of steers yearly. He also is a milk tester substitute, which takes him all over the county three to four days a week.

The couple's sons, Ryan, 3½,
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This Victorian Gingerbread House is another favorite of Rosie's.



This tiered wedding cake is a spectacular display made by Rosie who always transports and sets up the wedding cakes.



Rolled fondant is rolled with a rolling pin and molded onto the cake. The lacy edging, pearls, satin ribbon, and flowers give it a romantic touch, perfect for a wedding.

**Homestead
Notes**