



Gold Award is Icing on the Cake



Julie Miller of Barton Seagrave won the prestigious gold award at the international cake competition, part of the International Craft & Hobby Fair in Birmingham in November.

In itself a remarkable achievement this is even more impressive when you consider that Julie only embarked on the art of sugar craft less than a year ago. Following an operation which left her housebound, Julie asked her sister-in-law to show her the basic principles of sugar craft: creating realistic flowers from sugar paste. This was something she could do sitting at her dining room table. Her first attempt was a

floral corsage that she attached to a cake and presented to her surgeon as a thank you. By then it was evident that Julie had a natural talent as well as the time and patience for the detail required. Her friends began to realise that if she was going to do this professionally she would need a name and some business cards. Together, they scoured endless websites for inspiration until finally the name emerged: Julie Couture Cakes, reflecting that her cakes were going to be works of art created specifically for an occasion.

As there was no budget for promotion, a series of begging for favours and bartering began. A copywriter fortuitously needed a cake for his Goddaughter's 21st, so Julie got copy for her promotional postcards, and a friend's brother designed stationery so that Julie could get on with making samples.

Last Christmas, friends and family who have helped out had the most magnificent cakes



ever, so beautifully decorated that they could barely bring themselves to cut into to them. As more people saw Julie's cakes, the commissions began to trickle in. Then in January, a friend lost her husband to cancer. His passion was sailing and Julie decided to recreate his boat in sugar paste and cake as her tribute to his life. It was a frantic job as there were only a few weeks to the funeral, but she did it.

Throughout this time, Julie's husband was in Maui on a building project with their son. It would be their 35th Wedding Anniversary when he returned. This time it was birds of paradise, templates for the flowers were designed and another couture cake was created - which was later unveiled as a surprise at a Valentine Ball at The Courtyard in Stanwick - courtesy of some more friends.

No family or friend event has been missed by Julie in 2010; special cakes to commemorate these events include a surfing cake for her son's 30th, hand delivered to Maui, and a "called to the bar as a barrister" cake for her daughter. The accolade of winning the gold award at the International Sugar Craft show in Birmingham is the 'icing on the cake' for Julie's sweet first year in sugar craft.

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