

# Spotlight on a Cake Decorator - Mary Anne Loveridge



## How long have you been decorating cakes?

15 years .. I started when my oldest boy turned 1. He's now 16 and has his learner's (very scary)!

## What inspired you to get started?

Mum's magical birthday cakes are one of my fondest childhood memories. There were 8 of us and lots to do, but Mum would toil until the wee hours of the morning

on her secret projects. There were always clues to give her away (teacup of piping tips soaking on the kitchen window sill, ramekins of royal icing), but the wonderful creations were always a surprise. I wanted to do the same for my children so William got a Humpty Dumpty cake and I was hooked!

## How long have you been a member of the Guild?

My good friend, Sandra Page, talked me into joining. Our first meeting was Sydney Branch's 25th Birthday in August 2004. At the time, Juniors was run by Dorothy King with her band of helpers (Lily Ma, Iris Boxsell and others). I offered to demonstrate from time to time and eventually Dorothy passed the baton to me and I've been organising Juniors since.



## What do you enjoy about the meetings?

Catching up with a wonderful group of people, many of whom I now count as friends. It's a day out just for 'me' which, as a busy working mum, I really treasure. And I always learn something new.

## Has cake decorating changed much in the time you've been doing it?



When I started, the 'modern wedding cake' with sugar figurines was taking over from flowers. Mad-hatter cakes came into vogue a few years after I'd been decorating. Frosting sheets and air-brushing

were new and out of reach for most decorators. Lace is back, but no longer created the way Mum did for her wedding cake. And the naked cake .. not sure I'd call that decorating, but if the client wants it, why not?

## Most memorable cake/decorated piece?

My first ever blue ribbon at the Easter Show, a 3D Yoda, got a mention in the SMH and the Channel 10 news. Also, a 50th wedding anniversary cake for my parents. I piped roses the 'old-fashioned' way just as Mum'd taught me. It was difficult making the lace fit the cake perfectly and hard to find a plastic retro bride and groom. Mum and Dad loved it!



## Most rewarding part of cake decorating?

Making someone's special occasion just perfect. I was an electrical engineer before taking a career break and love the challenge of working out how to get a large piece of sugar work to come together, and then titivating it using a quilting pattern or jewellery making techniques. It's a great feeling when a client tells you there'd been an argument at the QVB tearooms over the cake - were the orchids *real* or made of sugar?



## Your biggest challenge as a cake decorator?

Apart from time, the greatest challenge is transporting the cakes. Hubby still hasn't forgiven me for the jewellery box wedding cake! The lid weighed about 5kg. I told him he couldn't touch the edges, it had to be handled on the underside only. Reception was on a boat and Peter carried the lid up and down gangplanks, as instructed, not touching the edges! The main part of the cake weighed about 15kg and was on a heavy base board. It took two apprentices from the kitchen to carry it .. and they both complained!



## If you had one piece of advice for a new decorator, what would it be?

Get yourself a buddy - to attend meetings with, to run away from hubby and kids to go to the Cake Bake and Sweets Show with, to ring when you need help with a disaster and most importantly, to enjoy the journey with. Sandra has saved me so many times and I can't thank her enough, nor my army of Junior buddies who help me out at every meeting.