

Spotlight on a Cake Decorator - Melissa Ross



How long have you been decorating cakes?

I tried my hand at my first cake for my daughter's first birthday/christening 6 years ago. Mum and I decorated a large number one cake. We had no professional skills but it was so much fun creating something memorable together!

What inspired you to get started?

I was pleased with my daughter's cake but so disappointed she couldn't eat it because of her multiple food allergies. After that I decided to try my hand at allergy-friendly decorated cakes.



How long have you been a member of the Guild?

I heard about the Guild from Lyne Fuller after attending cake decorating classes at Macquarie Community College. The first year I only attended a couple of meetings as my youngest was still a baby. I joined a year later in 2012 and made a pact with myself to attend regularly and take time out for my own hobby!



I first joined the committee as a helping hand. Then temporarily filled in as Treasurer and took on the librarian role when a more suitable member put her hand up as Treasurer .. I'm no accountant!

What do you enjoy about the Guild meetings?

I love learning new things and always take away something useful from every meeting. I also love sharing my ideas with people who are passionate about the same craft.

Most memorable creation?

One of my most memorable pieces was a cake I made for a 1st birthday party that ended up in Hooray magazine! I was so excited that images of my Little Nut Brown Hare cake and cupcake creations were pictured Australia-wide! Hand modelling the rabbits and doing free hand painting on the cake was so much fun!



One cake decorating tool you could not live without?

'The Mat', without a doubt! It's a 2-piece mat between which I roll my icing. It makes the largest cakes super easy to cover and my bench and floor is no longer covered in icing sugar! Over the years, I've tweaked the way I use it and it's the best cake tool investment I've ever made.

The most rewarding part of cake decorating is ...

... helping people with allergies celebrate. I'm always delighted to hear that someone has had their very first taste of cake. I've catered for a 12-year old who'd never eaten cake! I also love that guests without allergies are blown away to find allergy-friendly cakes can be so beautiful and also totally delicious!



Your biggest challenge as a cake decorator?

This would have to be the challenge of creating something my two children could eat safely. I still struggle with time management though!

How did you get started with your allergy-friendly cake business?

I started in 2011 after commencing classes with Lyne and word started to spread about my creations.

What type of cakes do you offer?

I specialise in cakes that are free from the top 8 Australian allergens - dairy, egg, tree nut, peanut, soy, sesame and fish. There's also a gluten free range.



What made you target this market?

Both my children have serious food allergies so I wanted to create cakes that they could eat safely.

What has the response been like?

It's been overwhelming! My husband and I initially launched a website. A few years later we set up a Facebook page. Word of mouth continues to grow my hobby and I struggle to keep up with the demand!

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

Be willing to share what you learn and knowledge will keep finding you. Get involved and participate in the Guild. You'd be surprised at how many skills you have and don't be afraid to showcase them as you're better than you think!