

Spotlight on a Cake Decorator - Lyne Fuller



How long have you been decorating cakes?

I was 15 when I made my first cake with Mum's help. I then made lots of family cakes until getting my first order at 26. So .. just a few years!

What inspired you to get started?

Mum's been decorating cakes since I was 4 so I've been immersed in sugar

work all my life. I loved her cakes and she'd let me make the fun bits .. flowers, novelties and the like. With my family's encouragement, I put an entry in the Royal Easter Show in 1980. The following year, the Guild invited entrants to join a discussion group which was followed by a short demonstration. And I was hooked!

How long have you been a member of the Guild?

Since 1981. Back then, meetings were held at various TAFEs around Sydney. I helped at meetings and the President, Fay Gardner, asked me to join the committee. Since then, I've been on the branch committee with a stint on the state committee for 4 years. I've been secretary, vice-president and on the general committee and President, these last 6 years.



What do you enjoy most about the Guild meetings?

The free sharing of ideas and camaraderie of our branch. Catching up with cake decorating friends, meeting new people and welcoming them to our group.

How has cake decorating changed in the time you've been doing it?

When I started, cutters were frowned upon and there were only 3 or 4 places in Sydney for supplies. We had 3 main books - Bernice Vercoe and Dorothy Evan's *Cake Decorating*, The AWW *Complete Book of Cake Decorating* and later, Norma Dunn's *Floral Cake Decorating*. These days, my bookshelves are just groaning with books! Moulds, veinners and cutters are widely used and give a much more life-like rendition to our flowers. Sugar veil and intricate stencils give the delicacy of brush embroidery, lacework and extension work without the backache, stiff necks and sore fingers!

Has the availability of new moulds, cutters and other tools compromised the more traditional skills of piping and fine handwork?

It's certainly given rise to different styles but I think the biggest impact is how it helps those of us who are time poor. Given a choice of stencilling and flooding, I know which I'd pick! That said, mastering the skills enables you to be more versatile with your work.

Most memorable cake/decorated piece?

One I did with Denice Fuhrmann and Mum. KFC wanted a "cake" 2m long and 30cm wide for the release of their 'hot and spicy' chicken. The old man sat at the head of the table,



ate the chicken and blew on the 100 candles on the cake and set them alight! It wasn't difficult but it was fun! Also, the teddy bear I made for my son's first birthday which was included in Marie Sykes and Pat Simmons third cake decorating book. I was so chuffed to see my work in print!



One cake decorating tool you could not live without?

Two actually .. the humble toothpick and small pair of scissors!

The most rewarding part of cake decorating is ...?

... ALWAYS, the delight on people's faces when they see their cake.

What is your biggest challenge as a cake decorator?

Charging enough for my work. I'm good at encouraging others to do this but putting it into practice is difficult!

What is your one piece of advice for a new decorator?

Find a buddy and practice, practice, practice. Make cakes for family so you have a

deadline to work to and make sure they understand the value of their gift.

How can the Guild continue to be relevant to new, younger decorators who have access to an abundance of information and instructional videos online?

When asked why she'd pay for lessons when there's so much free information out there, one of my students said 'I can ask you where I'm going wrong and if you don't know the answer, you'll find out for me!'. You can't beat personal tuition or 'live' dems. Being able to ask someone what's happening with your paste or what's wrong with your flower can make the difference between roses and cabbages!

