

Spotlight on a Cake Decorator - Dianne Cassim



How long have you been a member of the Guild?

I joined in 2001 and remember attending the Mysteries in Springtime weekend seminar held by our branch shortly after. I believe it was at the following AGM that I became a general committee member and took over the Library. I've been on the committee since and have served as general committee member, vice-president and currently, as Treasurer.

What do you enjoy most about the Guild meetings?

I enjoy spending time with other decorators, learning from them, exchanging tips and sharing experiences.

How long have you been decorating cakes and what inspired you to get started?

I have been making cakes for about 38 years now. My first experience was back in 1979 when a neighbour helped me make my engagement cake. We made fondant from scratch (no choice back then) and cut out flower petals using cardboard templates. I enjoyed the experience so much that I enrolled in an evening college course to learn the basics, and have been learning and decorating ever since.



What was your most memorable cake/decorated piece?

I made an 8 tier wedding cake which had different shaped cakes and many different decoration types such as hand moulded roses, quilting, stripes, figurines and lots of bling. I did it a few years ago now but it's still one of my favourites. I also enjoy making novelty cakes.

One cake decorating tool you could not live without?

My old knitting needle which I use for a variety of tasks such as frilling, marking, veining. It's very versatile.

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

Totally! When I first started there was no ready-made

fondant or gumpaste, no cutters, no veiners, very few tools – you really had to learn how to do things from scratch. Unlike today where you can buy almost anything so you don't really have to know a lot, the tools do the work for you!



What is the most rewarding part of cake decorating?

Two things – the satisfaction you feel when something just works the way you want it to and the look on the client's face when they see the finished product and are happy with it!

Are there any challenges you face as a cake decorator?

There are lots of challenges so it's hard to pick just one or two. One of the biggest challenges as you get older is your health. Cakes seem to get heavier and harder to lift and carry!

The weather in summer can also be a big challenge here in Sydney, especially the hot and humid weather such as we've had lately. It makes icing a cake very difficult!



Do you have any other interests apart from cake decorating?

I enjoy gardening but seem to be doing less and less of it as time goes on. My cake business keeps me busy. Sometimes I work 7 days a week just trying to keep up!

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

Just buy the basics, don't waste a lot of money on fancy tools. There are many items you probably already have at home that can be very useful. Be creative and improvise.

