

Vote For Your Favorite Gingerbread Piece

Contributed by James Hutson

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Vote for your favorite piece in Stamford Museum & Nature Center's first annual Visions of Gingerbread: The Sweetest Architects holiday exhibition. Visitors will be able to place a bid on each of the unique creations - inspired by some of the most well known architecture of our time - starting November 7 through December 20. Click through this article to see details on each design

[Click Here to View the Results of the Voting](#) Black Forest Pastry Shop Herb Mueller, Head Pastry Chef "Wildcat Rollercoaster"

"The inspiration behind this entry was a family vacation to Hershey Park in Hershey, Pennsylvania," said Herb Mueller, owner and Head Pastry Chef at Black Forest Pastry Shop. During the sweltering 95 degree heat and the ensuing 45-minute wait to board the thrill ride, Herb was mesmerized, thinking what would be involved in creating a gingerbread replica of the Wildcat Rollercoaster at Hershey Park. Some of the ingredients used in production of the Wildcat are: honey, rye flour, sugar, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, chocolate, Royal icing, and candies.

About the chef

Herb Mueller is the owner and second generation Head Pastry Chef at the Black Forest Pastry Shop. Herb crafted his skills during a 2 year apprenticeship under the world renowned Pastry Chef, Oliver Bittlingmaier at the Café Röder in Bad Durrheim, Germany. He continued his pastry/baking education graduating from the Culinary Institute of America's Baking & Pastry Arts program in 1993. Since 1995, Herb has run Black Forest Pastry Shop, a business started by his parents, with business partner Dan Puffer. Black Forest Pastry Shop has been creating thousands of gingerbread houses for over 20 years.

[DiMare Pastry Shop](#) Tim McGrath Roman Coliseum Tim was inspired to recreate Rome's Coliseum after a recent trip to Italy for his honeymoon. "It is a really cool structure, and probably one of the most famous in Italy." The coliseum is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

About the chef

DiMare Pastry Shop is a family-owned bakery that produces quality specialty cakes and baked goods with a traditional Italian flair. Originally opened in Riverside by Ugo DiMare in 1976. Matriarch Bice DiMare, along with her daughters Maria and Sabrina, and grandchildren Timothy and Brittany, have maintained the business. The DiMare family has seen the business flourish with the opening of their second location in Stamford in 1997. DiMare's has been involved with numerous local fundraisers. We service many area hotels and country clubs. DiMare Pastry has won Best of the Gold Coast four times, and has won "Best of The Knot" wedding cake three years consecutively. [Michael Joseph's Fine Foods](#) Mary Colacurcio, Executive Pastry Chef Whimsical Castle

This Whimsical castle scene was designed and created by Mary Colacurcio, Executive Pastry Chef of Michael Joseph's Catering. The scene depicts a castle in a rural winter setting. Intricately designed towers, topped with spires overlooking a bridge crossing a bucolic millpond surrounded by rustic countryside. Each component is made from handcrafted ingredients; gingerbread, pastillage, rolled fondant, edible silver leaf and chocolate.

About the chef

Award-winning pastry chef, Mary Colacurcio is the Executive Pastry Chef for Michael Joseph's. Prior to moving to the East Coast she was the executive pastry chef at The Four Seasons Hotel in Carlsbad, Ca. She has been working the pastry field for the past 20 years. [Sweet Lisa's Exquisite Cakes](#) Lisa and Stephen Maronian, Owners/Chefs and Rene Mendez

Bendel's Department Store

Lisa and Stephen chose to create Bendel's Department Store in New York City because Stamford Museum & Nature Center's exhibition galleries are located in the former summer home of department store owner and namesake, Henri Bendel.

A variety of materials will be used to construct Bendel's including poured sugar, Royal icing, sugar paste, marzipan and pastillage.

About the chefs

Lisa Maronian, a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America and The International Pastry Arts Center, together with husband Stephen Maronian, a fellow graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, work closely with clients from the initial design consultation through final presentation of the finished product. They have been featured many magazines including Connecticut Magazine, Bon Appetit, Food and Wine, Brides, Town and Country, and The New York Times among others. They have also appeared on the Food Network and ABC News, among others. [Sweet On You Bakery & Cafe](#) Rebecca Martin, Owner and Ruben Palma, Executive Pastry Chef

Casa Batlló

"As cake artists, Casa Batlló is both inspiring and very challenging," said Rebecca Martin, owner of Sweet On You. "We will be using gingerbread, pastillage, fondant, gum paste, poured sugar, airbrushing and hand painting with gel colors

and luster dusts to create our edible Casa Batlló. This project will require us to use all of our sugar art techniques and professional skills to render. To us, Casa Batlló is Gaudi's most fantastical completed architectural work. The façade of the building is covered in multicolored tiles created from ceramic discs and fragments of colored glass, the windows are organic, undulating shapes that remind us of a wide open lion's jaw, and the roof top looks like a multicolored serpent's back."

Casa Batlló was created by renowned Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi. Gaudi's unorthodox body of architectural works are often described as a Catalan version of Art Nouveau. His works are instantly recognizable for their fantastical designs, organic, plant-like towers, undulating tiled roofs and use of mosaic and color, all of which result in buildings that appear like fantastical creatures looming over Barcelona.

About the chefs

Rebecca Martin transformed a life long love for good food and baking into a reality when she opened Sweet on You inside the Stamford JCC in July 2006. Hidden away in the JCC without a street sign, Sweet On You has gone from being Stamford's best kept secret to a hit throughout Connecticut and Westchester. Rebecca has appeared on the Martha Stewart Show, on ABC News for the tri-state area and in multiple newspapers and blogs.

Ruben Palma, Executive Pastry Chef, is no stranger to pastry art competitions having competed in international chocolate and sugar art competitions. He comes from a family of pastry chefs, studying the fine art of baking at his father's side as a young boy, and later at Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School. He has held positions in some of the finest pastry kitchens including the Ritz Carlton. Cheshire Barn SM&NC staff volunteers: Beth Strauss, Lauren Satterfield, Penny Tuminski, Erica DeLucia, Maria Errico, Angela Errico, Angelina Errico, Cathryn Oulighan & Kathy Ritch. Cheshire Barn is located at Heckscher Farm at Stamford Museum & Nature Center. The barn was moved from Cheshire, Connecticut in 1977 and reconstructed on the farm. It is a working barn, which houses some of our animals and is also used for feed storage. Mélange of gingerbread, an assortment of candies, cookies, royal icing, and pretzels were some of the items used to recreate the Cheshire Barn. About the chefs: The staff volunteers were inspired by the rustic beauty and simplicity of the Stamford Museum & Nature Center's Cheshire Barn, especially when it is dressed up for the annual Holidays on Heckscher event. "The different textures of wood and stone against the backdrop of glistening snow presented a delightful challenge for us novice bakers," said Kathy Ritch. "And the beloved inhabitants of the farm add a touch of whimsy to our creation."