

KRISTAN NEWMAN

Creative Genius . . .
On Her Terms!



Photos Courtesy of Kristan Newman

By Fred DiMenna

Van Gogh took brush to canvas, Beethoven arranged musical notes and Shakespeare manipulated words. Nevertheless, a common thread unifies the work of these masters. Indeed, creative genius can manifest in countless mediums of expression.

Kristan Newman was blessed with "the creative gene" at a young age when drawing, painting and playing music came naturally. However, her artistic evolution took a different path. "Decorating cakes was a natural for me," she explains. She attended Johnson & Wales University to acquire the baking skills necessary to create the medium upon which she could display her artistry.

After graduating, Kristan worked as an assistant pastry chef at a gourmet cake shop and within one year was promoted to executive pastry chef. When the business closed, she began working out of The Metropolitan in Glen Cove and Wonderful Wedding Cakes was born.



"It's very creative," she explains. "My client presents an idea and my goal is to produce an edible masterpiece that moves you. I'm not just making a food product."

Her most challenging assignment was creating a replica of the Guggenheim Museum. The melding of triangles, ovals, arcs, circles and squares that is the Guggenheim was Kristan's first experience making a three-dimensional cake. To the uninformed, using "3-D" to describe a cake seems redundant given that all known matter occupies three dimensions. However, in cake-decorating lingo, the term means that the cake is an actual replica of the subject. Unlike many 3D cakes that comprise PVC piping and wood, Kristan's

are 100% edible and she strives to make her creations as pleasing to the palate as they are to the eye.

Kristan's most time-consuming project was a 3-D cake to celebrate a client's 98th birthday. It consisted of 16 stacked presents with the man sitting on top. "It was the first time I had to make a cake that actually looked like a specific person," she explains. "I used fondant for his skin, which was tricky because you have to work fast before it dries. I actually failed, but his age worked in my favor because his skin wound up wrinkled!"



Decorating cakes at an established catering hall provided exposure that brought Kristan's talents to light. However, recognizing the need to grow, she recently moved Wonderful Wedding Cakes to a 900-square-foot storefront on Forest Avenue in Locust Valley. "It's a custom cake shop," she explains. "Everything is tweaked to intimately satisfy what you want from the cake."

Settled in her new studio, Kristan's creative genius is likely to soar. However, in addition to creativity, mindset is an important part of her artistry. "You must be able to adapt because things don't always go as planned," she says. Another atypical challenge is that in this medium of expression, the artist is typically not present when the audience enjoys the creation. "I get phone calls expressing thanks, but it can be difficult," she reveals. "However, I'm satisfied if my vision is fulfilled and the rest is icing on the cake!"

For information regarding Kristan Newman and Wonderful Wedding Cakes, visit her at wonderfulweddingcakes.com or contact her via Facebook at Wonderful Wedding Cakes.