



CUSTOM COUTURE

*Using SugarVeil, a versatile new icing,
pastry chefs can expand their repertoires
far beyond the wedding cake.*

Good Enough to Eat BY NEAL S. YONOVER

You're looking at icing. Except for the bride and the tulle netting on her head, everything else is icing. SugarVeil® icing to be precise. And it looks even more like elegant fabric up close.

To dramatize the versatility of her new state-of-the-art icing, creator Michele Hester constructed a showstopper bridal gown out of SugarVeil — smooth satin fabric, dimensional brocade, fine veiling, Venetian point lace motifs and gold filigree, pearls and even jewelry — which she debuted last November at a gallery show in her Kansas City (MO) hometown.

Using a bride is fitting because Hester considers SugarVeil to be the perfect marriage of art and sugarcraft: "It gives pastry professionals what they are looking for in royal icing, except it tastes good and it conforms to irregular shapes, among many other things."

She cites other attributes by pointing out that the model wore the dress without any problems for eight hours each night of the gallery show. "When was the last time a cake held delicate 3-dimensional shapes — with constant movement — in a warm environment," Hester wonders.

Frustrated by the flavor, brittleness and other limitations of royal icing and fondant, Hester created a patented product that can easily be shaped, combed, piped and manipulated in myriad ways, colored and can even hold real gold leaf (not the powder). What's more, because SugarVeil stays flexible and holds its shape for substantial amounts of time, it can be piped onto parchment over stencils and patterns and then applied to anything, including frosting, fondant, chocolate, gum paste and, in this case, the bare skin of a live model.

"You can create ribbon and actually tie decorative knots instead of piping facsimiles, which is much faster," she says. "All you have to do is create lines of varying thicknesses with the SugarVeil Confectionery Comb and the sky's the limit."

A textile artist whose work is on display in Germany's Stadtmuseum, Hester spent over a year researching the technology and developing an icing she could gather up like fabric. The process included hundreds of hours poring over textbooks on the hygroscopy of sugar, among other things, at the nearby American Institute of Baking, creating and testing over 400 prototypes and sharing her bedroom with a 50-pound sack of sugar. She also developed an icing dispenser that gives the chef even finer control of the flow.

Without naming names, Hester reports that dessert historians are surprised that no one has come up with anything as versatile as SugarVeil. She reports that pastry chefs who've tried the product are thrilled to be able to realize their artistic vision more completely and easily than ever before.

SugarVeil icing is cost-efficient. One 16-ounce package costs \$12 (plus shipping) and makes approximately 160 6-inch dollops. 15 pounds of SugarVeil covers one six-foot tall supermodel bride. (Bride sold separately.)

The delicate but durable dress currently resides on a mannequin in a local gallery. Hester reports that it's intact, but it now has a few lick prints, which she refuses to speculate about.

SugarVeil is OU Kosher approved. For more information, contact Michele Hester at 800.563.0074 or www.sugarveil.com. 18220 Waldron Drive, PO Box 18, Waldron, MO 64092.



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