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She's the queen of the ball with winning cake design

Lebanon's Sadie Eisenhour went 'outside the box' to win decorating contest

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Sadie Eisenhour of Lebanon poses with her masterpiece, which captured top prize for most creative cake in the professional category at Chocolatefest, and second place for the prettiest. (SUBMITTED)

HERSHEY >> Sadie Eisenhour took the competitive streak she once fed through school sports and the skills she learned at the hands of well-known chefs to win first place recently in the cake-decorating competition at Chocolatefest in Hershey.

Eisenhour, a Lebanon resident, is finishing her final term at YTI's Lancaster campus in the pastry

arts program. She entered Chocolatefest in February at the suggestion of her boss, Chef Mario Stanzione of the Hollywood Casino, where she is doing an externship.

This year's theme for the Chocolatefest competition was "Royal Ball." Eisenhour said when she heard it, "I knew I had to think outside the box. I always try to think of ideas that nobody else will have. I want my cake to stand out in every way possible."

She believes that to give herself that competitive edge in a contest like this, she not only has to produce something strikingly different, she has to do it using her best skills.

"I always try to do what I'm good at while also trying to challenge myself and try something new and harder that will showcase as much skills and techniques as possible," Eisenhour said. "I enjoy doing elegant designs and classical piping on cakes, which is a technique that I was introduced to by a chef at YTI who also competes in cake competitions."

The winning cake featured multiple layers in a masquerade-ball theme "because I really admired the different types of masquerade masks and their designs."

The intricate piping and string work on the cakes represented the designs on the masks and dresses you would see at an old-fashioned masquerade ball, she said. The final layer was topped with a mask.

Because her job encouraged her participation, and she was representing her employer, she was allowed time and materials at work to prepare.

"The weekend of the competition I would work my regular shift at work and then stay a few hours to work on my cake," Eisenhour said.

She divided the work into three days and had to ensure the cake and all components were fresh for the competition, because the cake had to be edible and was going to be auctioned off.

When she's not executing a contest-winning cake design, Eisenhour is preparing for her professional life. She hopes to one day open a family bakery, but before that she plans to run a small business selling cakes and cookies on the side while she hopes to "travel and work for talented pastry chefs at different types of businesses" to get a wide range of experience, she said.

Eisenhour grew up in a baking family, where both her great-grandmother and grandmother were bakers.

"I always knew I had a strong interest in pastry arts," she said.

During her senior year in high school, she attended Lebanon County Career and Technology Center for the pastry arts program, and then chose YTI to continue her schooling.

Is there a particular pastry she holds above others?

"I can't say I have a favorite thing to make," she said. "I really enjoy doing so many different things. I can admit I get bored easily, so I love that in my career I am able to work with all the different aspects of the pastry field."



Eisenhour's winning cake was designed around the theme 'Royal Ball.' (SUBMITTED)

