

Alvin's job really takes the cake

By Winnifred Jardine

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Alvin R. Walkenhorst, co-owner of Carol's Pastries, is perfectly happy when he is decorating cakes — which he does every day, six days a week.

His enjoyment and skill will be shared at a cake decorating demonstration at the Deseret News Food and Hobby Show, to be held at the Salt Palace Oct. 26-29. (His demonstration will be Thursday, Oct. 27, 3:30 p.m.)

Participating with him will be Paxton Baker, owner of Baker's Cash and Carry.

Al and Paxton make a good pair. For Al Walkenhorst knows all there is to know about cake decorating. And Paxton Baker has all the supplies necessary, from any size decorating tip to every size baking pan — round, square, hexagonal, heart-shaped, scalloped, as well as pans for novelty cakes for children.

While still in high school, Al began learning the baker's trade from his father, Robert G. Walkenhorst, manager of a Salt Lake bakery, who had in turn learned his trade in Germany. Al also took a baking class at Granite High School from Lucian H. "Luke" Bates, where he got his first taste of cake decorating.

After high school graduation, Al opened a little pie shop for Russell M. Habbeshaw (well-known restaurateur in Salt Lake), called Carol's Pastries, after Russ' wife. A year later he bought the shop.

Al began by baking pies for the old Walgreen Drug Store on Second South and Main. Later his business expanded to include a number of snack bars, until he was baking from 80 to 125 pies per day.

His brother Bob, who learned the baker's trade from his father, too, joined him in the business, as did their father, who is now 79 and still working. Recently, Al's 23-year-old son, George, joined the business.

At one time Al had several bakery outlets and employed 23 people, but he has closed his retail outlets and operates solely as a wholesale bakery.

Although he makes all the cakes and French pastries at the bakery, Al prefers, above all else, decorating the cakes. He spends every afternoon at it, decorating cakes of all kinds.

"Cake decorating is easy once you get the squeeze and how to control it," Al said, as he effortlessly pressed a richly-puffed shell garland around the edge of a white wedding cake.

He told how, while working as a young man making doughnuts, he would fill his decorator bag with shortening and practice pressing the shortening through his decorator tube to make flowers and borders and other decorative forms. Then he would scrape up the shortening and practice again.

"Practice is what it takes," he reiterated, "just lots of practice."

Other than practice, there are two key factors in successful and beautiful



Pastry chef Alvin R. Walkenhorst puts finishing touches on a wedding cake. He'll give a decorating demonstration at the Deseret News Food and Hobby Show on Oct. 27 at Salt Palace.

cake decorating, according to Al.

First, is learning to hold the decorating tube cone correctly. Place the cone in your right (or dominant) hand with thumb at top, fingers at top side. (See photograph.)

Use that hand only to press out icing, and use the first two fingers of the other hand to guide or steady the cone. Then press the cone gently until the icing flows out at a speed that you can control.

The idea is to maintain a steady, even flow of icing while moving the cone in a free-and-easy gliding motion across the surface. Practice will soon give you the correct feel of it, he explained.

The second factor is to have the icing of proper consistency — not so stiff that it is difficult to squeeze through the cone, not so soft that the design will turn to blobs.

For those who would like to learn cake decorating (a marvelous old art that was first used in Italy and France), Paxton Baker explained that there are well over a hundred different tips to be used.

Tips generally are divided into six major groups, according to Paxton, and he recommended the following size tips from each group as a starter set:

No. 3 tip — a tube with a plain round hole for writing. Numbers 1 through 9 are writing tips and as numbers go higher, the openings become just a little larger.

No. 16 tip — open star tube for making stars, shells, rosettes, puffs, garlands and ropes.

No. 27 tip — closed star tip that gives a more lavish look than the open star; also used for making fleur de lis.

No. 67 tip — a leaf tube.

No. 104 tip — a petal tube used for piping roses and other flowers, also for making scalloped borders, draped ribbons and icing bows and streamers.

No. 190 tip — for making drop flowers that seem to almost "drop" out of the tube with just a squeeze and a release. Even beginners get good results with this tip.

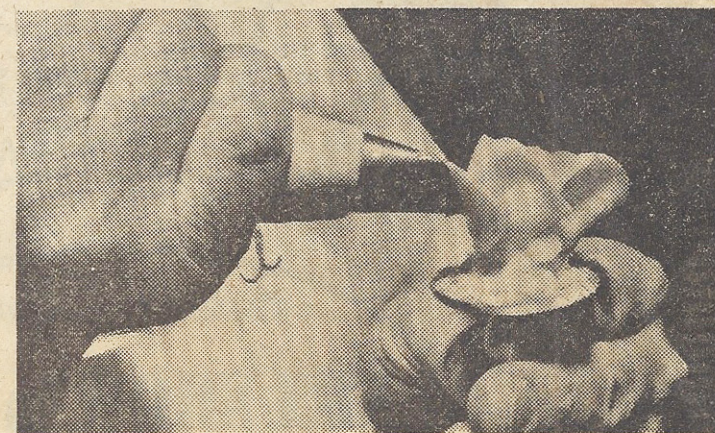
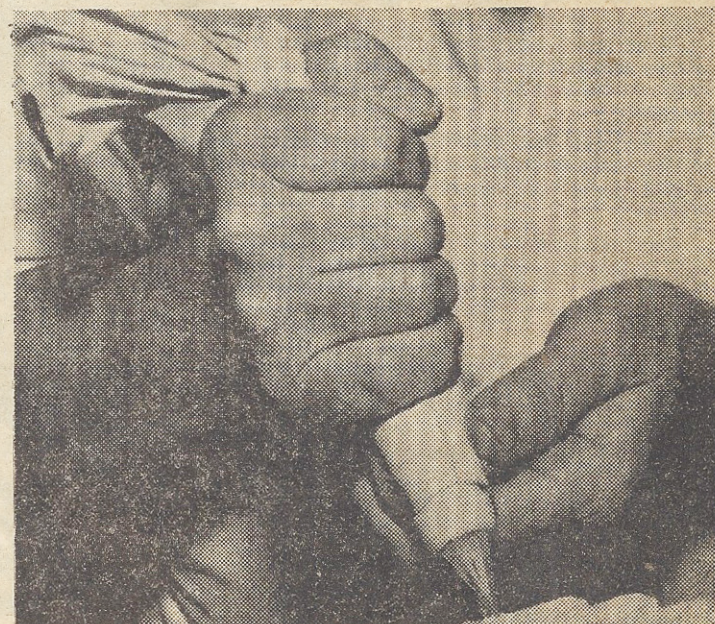
These, along with a plastic coupler (necessary to use with pastry bags for ease in changing tubes), and a 10 or 12-inch linen-coated bag (which come in sizes from 8 to 24 inches) involve an outlay of only about \$3.

Other tips may be procured as skills increase.

Following is Al Walkenhorst's recipe for icing to frost and decorate cakes.

AL'S SNOW-WHITE BUTTER-CREAM

1 1/3 cups firm all-vegetable shortening



8 cups sifted powdered sugar
2 teaspoons white vanilla
4 to 6 tablespoons cool milk or cream

Place shortening in medium bowl, and, using an electric mixer, beat several minutes until creamy. Add sugar, 1/2 cup at a time, and beat well after each addition.

Add vanilla, then milk or cream, a little at a time, and beat well.

Store in air-tight container in refrigerator; whip before using again. Makes plenty of icing to frost and decorate a two-layer, 9-inch cake.

Before decorating a cake, you've got to hold the tube just right — in your dominant hand (top photo). For creating the flowers, there are specialized tips.

