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LIVE YOUR

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Life Is Sweet

Why settle for one absolutely exquisite, utterly delightful, dense, gooey, luscious, lovely, satiny, nutty, fruity, chocolaty, layered, fresh-from-the-oven, gorgeously frosted cake when you can have ten? We asked some of America's most brilliant bakers to dream big and come up with a delectable dessert for our tenth birthday.

The result is a little slice of heaven.

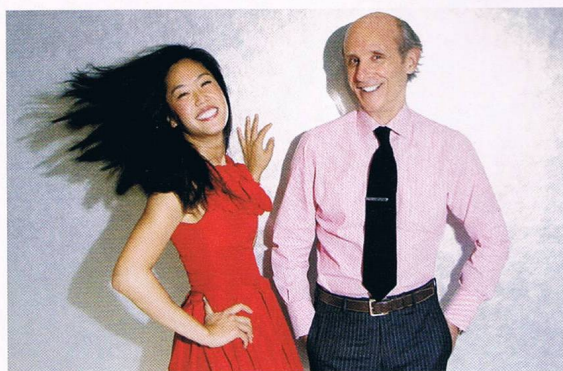
BY CELIA BARBOUR PHOTOGRAPHS BY SANG AN



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PEAKS OF GLORY

“This cake is like the best gingerbread you’ve ever had,” says David Guas of his **gâteau de bayou**, his version of a traditional spice cake from the Acadian region of his native Louisiana. Guas’s recipe includes nontraditional ingredients like black pepper, fresh ginger root steeped in boiling water, and hot sauce, which “adds a little acidity as well as heat.” After it is baked, the cake is soaked in Steens pure cane syrup—which tastes like a mild, smooth cousin to molasses—and then topped with a burnt-sugar meringue, browned with a blow-torch for a toasted-marshmallow effect.



Robert Priest and Grace Lee

Guest designers of the anniversary issue

The creative team, who have garnered dozens of design awards between them, began working together at *O at Home* in 2004 and started their firm, Priest + Grace, last May. "This is the first time *O* has stepped away from its traditional look. We kept the character and spirit of the magazine but presented it in a different way entirely, adding a lot of color and embellishment," says Priest of the tenth anniversary design. "This milestone has a sense of richness that we tried to celebrate."

PLAYING FAVORITES

The ten chefs who made extravagant creations for "Life Is Sweet" (page 234) share their favorite confections, ingredients, kitchen tricks, and more.



RON BEN-ISRAEL'S FAVORITE...

Mistake: "While decorating one of my first cakes, my hands started shaking and I covered the cake with squiggles. It became a trend."



MATT LEWIS'S FAVORITE...

Birthday cake flavor: "Growing up, it was chocolate and peanut butter. And today? Well...chocolate and peanut butter."



CHRISTINA TOSI'S FAVORITE...

Birthday cake mix: "Pillsbury Funfetti. I love it, now and forever!"



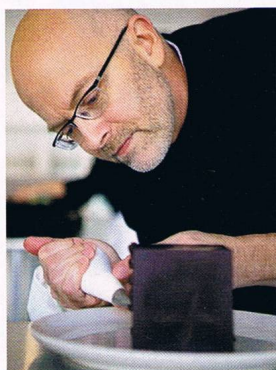
DAVID GUAS'S FAVORITE...

Baking secret: "Add salt! It's the secret to a delish cake. I also used hot sauce and sugarcane syrup in the cake I made for *O*."



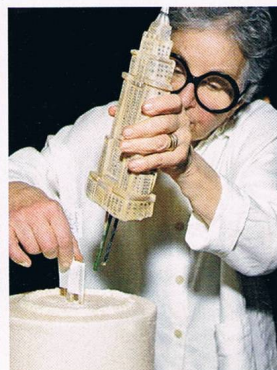
MINDY SEGAL'S FAVORITE...

Pastime: "If I could do nothing but create ice cream flavors all day long, I'd be happy."



BILL YOSSES'S FAVORITE...

Trick: "I melt chocolate in the microwave, not on the stovetop—but I watch it closely so it doesn't burn."



SYLVIA WEINSTOCK'S FAVORITE...

Cake memory: "When I sold my very first cake—it was little, with tiny sugar flowers. That one meant the most."



LIZ PRUEITT'S FAVORITE...

Secret ingredient: "Grapefruit essence. It's not tart, but it adds a nice, full, round grapefruit flavor that can be very subtle or strong."



BUDDY VALASTRO'S FAVORITE...

Cake design: "I created an ocean-themed cake for Adventure Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey. We went snorkeling to get inspired."



GINA DEPALMA'S FAVORITE...

Kitchen advice: "Drink bourbon and listen to some good music while you're cooking! The best way to approach the kitchen is to be relaxed." **O**