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CINDY CRAWFORD

BEACH PATROL

The people who make Miami

SUSY BORJA

More Than Happy to Let Them Eat Cake

By all accounts, Susy Borja has a very sweet situation. As vice president of Edda's Cake Designs, she is in charge of designing and decorating the company's moist and luscious vanilla-rum pound cakes, training staff and overseeing production at locations in Coral Gables, Doral, South Miami and Pembroke Pines.

Born into a family of Cuban-born artists—Borja's grandmother was a painter, and her mother, Edda Martinez, began designing her first creative cakes in the mid '70s—the 30-year-old mother of two joined the cake business after a lifetime of incidental exposure to the process. Thirty years ago, Martinez—who took and later taught classes at Wilton School of Cake Decorating & Confectionary Art in Darien, Illinois—earned a reputation as a phenomenal cake baker. "She'd make cakes for her children's birthday parties, and orders started pouring in from our friends' mothers," Borja says of her mother. "Through word of mouth, the business grew and grew. Soon we had cakes all over our living room." Besides the company's vanilla-rum flavor, which has a near cultish following, Edda's Cake Designs offers flavors such as chocolate, orange, amaretto and piña colada, as well as an assortment of sumptuous pastries.

"You don't have a birthday without cake. You don't have a wedding without cake. In fact, half the time, cake adds the wow factor to the celebration itself," says Borja, who tops her creations with buttercream and/or fondant icing in designs that range from flowers and lace to jewelry and two-dimensional human portraits. "When I'm shopping with friends, trying on dresses, I'll see a fabric that might make an incredible wedding-cake design and want to take a picture of it. They think I'm crazy. But cakes have evolved so much, and we stay on top of the trends. It's why people are always waiting to see what we come up with next."

—Suzy Buckley



JUST THE FACTS

Favorite savory cuisine: "Sushi."

Now playing on your iPod: "Jack Johnson, Dave Matthews, Kanye West."

Pet peeves: "Bad manners and slow drivers."

Greatest assets: "My son, Max, four, and daughter, Andrea, two."

Secret to staying in shape: "Pilates."

Where you will vacation this summer: "Casa de Campo and the Bahamas."

Best film you have seen lately: "Borat."

Television shows you stay home to watch: "24 and Entourage."

Most embarrassing moment: "Pick any home video from my early teenage years."

Motto: "Life is about balance. All extremes are bad."