

CREATING SOMETHING Sweet

Holly Garner whips up both classic and creative treats at Sugar Cakery.

Story and photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY

Baking is all about trial and error. Testing recipes, making tweaks and trying to find the right combination of ingredients to make the fluffiest cupcake or smoothest buttercream is all part of the job. Holly Garner, the owner of Sugar Cakery in Lake City, spends countless hours researching and experimenting to get her recipes just right.

"It's a lot of work," Garner said. "In theory, it's great. I sit around and make cupcakes all day. But it's a lot more than that."

She is constantly trying to come up with new creations in the kitchen. Her desire to create deli-

cious and one-of-a-kind treats has led to her business becoming a local favorite and a destination for all things sweet.

Self-Taught Talent

Garner has been baking for the past 15 years, but started out only baking for her friends and family while spending her days working as the office manager at a doctor's office. On the weekends and after work she would spend her time creating cupcakes and other treats.

"It was my way of relaxing," Garner said.

She eventually heard that the previous owner of



Cupcakes, cake pops and cookie dough on display at Sugar Bakery.

Sugar Cakery, Amy Strickland, was selling the business, and Garner and her husband, Chip, spent several months trying to decide whether or not to take it over.

"We came to the conclusion that if it makes me happy I should do it," Garner said.

Garner took over Sugar Cakery in June 2016. When Strickland sold the store, she also sold her cupcake recipes with it, many of which Garner still uses. However, she has since added her own creations to the mix, combining the classic cupcakes that regular customers loved with new, exciting flavors and different desserts.

"I'm always trying to come up with new stuff," Garner said. "I've always loved doing different things, and I love now having the chance to try new things."

While coming up with new items for the store is fun, it's also very challenging. Getting a new recipe just right requires time, patience and a lot of

taste testing.

"I've spent lots of hours watching YouTube, failing and trying again," Garner said.

Sweet Creations

From the moment Garner opens the store to about an hour before it closes, she's baking, frosting, sprinkling and creating sweet works of art. The display case is always full of everything from classic cupcakes to unique treats.

"I bake all day long," Garner said. "I like to keep everything as fresh as possible and keep the display stocked."

While she tries to change out her cupcake flavors each week, the most popular flavors, including Birthday Cake, Triple Chocolate and Inside-

Out Peanut Butter Cup, stay on the menu all year long. Inside Out Peanut Butter Cup, a peanut butter cupcake filled with chocolate ganache and topped with peanut butter frosting, is just one of several unique cupcake creations that Garner has added to the menu. Others including her Banana Pudding cupcake, which is filled with good old fashioned Southern banana pudding, and her Maple Bacon cupcake.

"It's tastes just like a pancake," Garner said while describing her Maple Bacon cupcake. "How can you go wrong with a pancake?"

If you want a specific cupcake flavor but aren't sure if it's on the menu, don't worry. Garner is always happy to make any cupcake the customer requests as long as she has the ingredients.

"People can call up and tell me what they want and I'll make it for them if I have the stuff," Garner said.

Recently Garner has added a new



Sugar Bakery owner Holly Garner holds sprinkled cupcakes at her Lake City store.



Garner frosts chocolate cupcakes at Sugar Cakery.

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delicious.

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item to her menu: edible cookie dough. This edible cookie dough has no eggs and the flour is heat treated, making it perfectly safe to eat raw. So far she has introduced several cookie dough flavors to her customers, including chocolate chip, brownie batter and sugar.

“I researched a lot of recipes and tried them, then made modifications based on what I thought tasted good,” Garner said.

Although she gets to taste test many of her own creations, she also tries out recipes the people close to her, including Chip and her children.

“My friends and family are absolutely my taste testers. It's a hard job I think,” Garner said with a laugh.

Whether she's baking a batch of chocolate cupcakes or experimenting with a new flavor of cookie dough, she only has one requirement for her recipes: that they taste incredible.

“I absolutely want everything to taste delicious,” Garner said. “Of course it has to be pretty but if it's not delicious I'm not going to serve it.”



Lake City



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