

2017 ICA CATIE AWARDS
Best Celebration Cake
40th Birthday August, 2016

Concept and How the Cake Related to the Event

The Chanel Cake was developed by our pastry chef in collaboration with our company owner. The design really was inspired by the woman it was created for, a woman who is elegant, stylish, and classic. This fashionable creation was the perfect theme for this occasion as Chanel represents all those qualities. The brand is the epitome of timeless elegance.

The overall colours of the cake needed to make a statement. Our pastry chef chose the colour palette of classic black and white, with a bit of pink based on Sarah's favourite fashion combinations.

Sarah has been an event planner with our company for 15 years, and her sophisticated flair is infused into the planning of every event. Her trademark aesthetic at her events, is monochromatic colour schemes, black and white with a pop of bold colour. She often handles the company's prestigious events for luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, David Yurman, Coach and Tiffany.

When it came time to plan her own 40th birthday, she of course planned every last detail of her own fabulous party with the help of our culinary and service teams. Sarah had planned a menu of passed hors d'oeuvres and stations, finished with butler served bite-sized desserts, including miniature donuts and house made ice cream sandwiches. Our team decided they wanted to include a dramatic element of surprise which had to be fabulous to suit the occasion. The cake was presented at midnight, as a touching gift of appreciation from her co-workers and company owners.

Originality of Presentation

The top tier of the cake is wrapped in the Chanel signature, the quilted diamond or herringbone pattern found on the brand's luxury leather handbags. Legend is that the pattern was originally inspired by the stained glass windows of the Aubazine Abbey, as well as by the cushions in Coco Chanel's Paris apartment.

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A bottle of Chanel No. 5, the world's best-selling fragrance, is perched on top of the cake. Open lipstick with the lid emblazoned with the Chanel logo, and a quilted purse and adorn the second tier. Cascading down the side of the cake is a luminous pearl necklace. A gift bag and signature black bow on the third tier complete the integrated design elements.

Cake features were crafted with edible gum paste. Edible icing prints were used for the Chanel labels and black satin ribbon tied all the elements together completing the theme.

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Assembly Mechanics

The Chanel cake was as rich and sumptuous inside as it appeared on the outside. A moist, airy, rich chocolate Devil's food cake was layered with Madagascar bourbon vanilla bean buttercream and fresh local BC raspberries.

Tiering the cake added a wow factor with its heightened presence, but the multiple layers and added detail made the cake quite heavy. Adequate support in the form of a sturdy base and the addition of wooden dowels stabilized the structure.

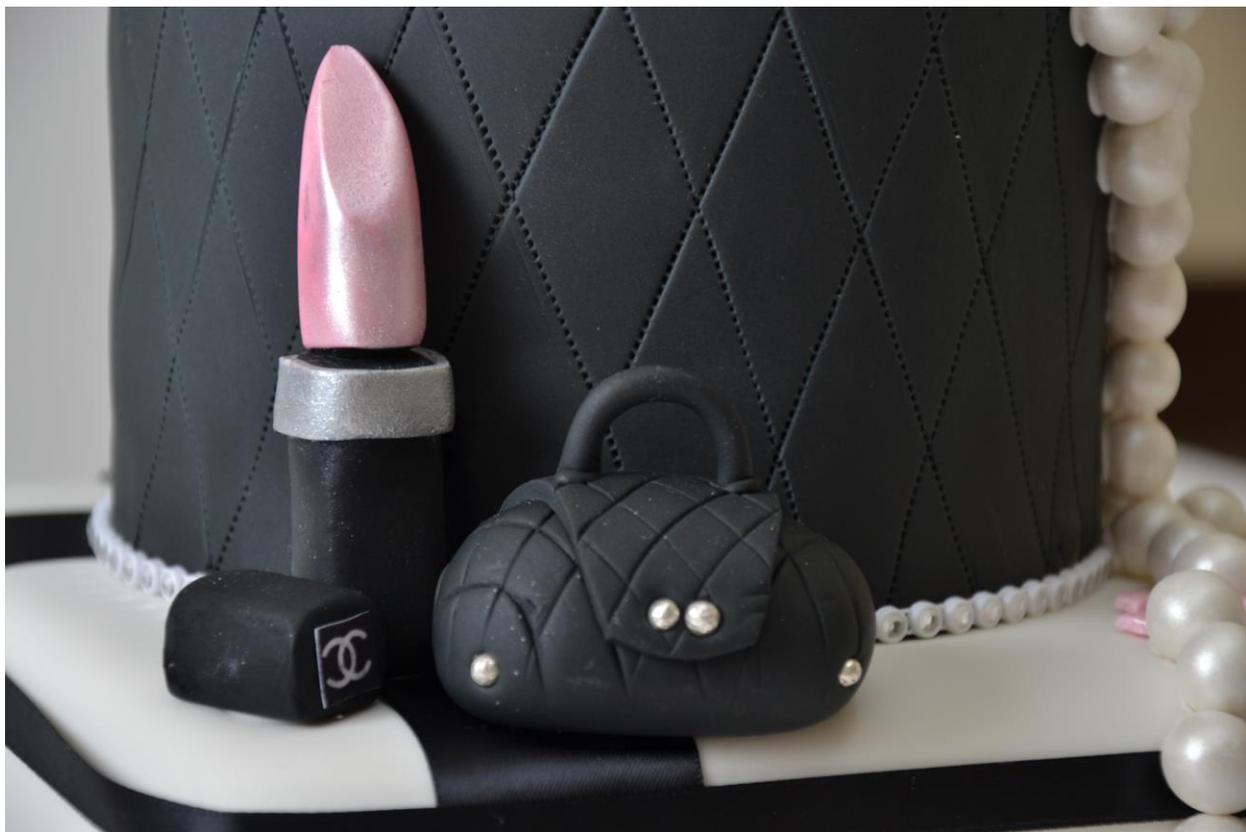
Royal icing was utilized to attach all the Chanel adornments to the cake. The white "tissue paper" surrounding the Chanel bottle was created with gum paste, using a flutter technique to create the ruffle effect.

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Challenges

Originally, a stiletto shoe was to accompany the perfume bottle as a cake topper. The birthday party fell on a very humid weekend in August, and the shoe collapsed on the day of the party. Our pastry chef tried to remake it, as the shoe was a big part of her vision for this cake, but it just wasn't possible in the compressed time frame. Abandoning the shoe actually worked out better than the original plan, as in hindsight the shoe would have made the cake too busy.

Another challenge was the delivery of the cake on a hot day, and finding a cool place onsite at the event to hide the cake from the birthday girl.



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Conclusion

Overall, our cake designer was extremely proud of the cake as was the rest of our team. Intricate design elements on the cake all came together beautifully in a striking and one of a kind celebration cake. Sarah was deeply touched by the surprise cake that perfectly captured the essence of her taste and style, and the many guests were delighted with the design and thrilled to enjoy it with their celebrating friend on a very special day.

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Recipe

Devil's food cake

850 gm all-purpose flour

315 gm cocoa powder

18 gm baking soda

11 gm baking powder

3.5 gm salt

485 gm unsalted butter

450 gm brown sugar

560 gm white granulated sugar

13 eggs

20 ml vanilla bean paste

255 gm semisweet chocolate

500 ml buttermilk

500 ml hot water

Melt chocolate and set aside. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Prepare sheet pan with parchment paper. Sift together flour, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder and salt.

Cream butter and sugars together until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs a few at a time, letting them incorporate before adding more, then add vanilla and melted chocolate.

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Combine water and buttermilk. Working in two or three additions, alternate adding buttermilk mixture and flour mixture to the butter/sugar mix. Scrape down sides of the bowl.

Bake for approx. 25-30 minutes, or until skewer comes out clean.