

Award Winning Cupcakes That Make You Smile; Oh, How Sweet Arleen's is!

By Anthony McBride

Arleen Scavone's Sweet Arleen's Cupcakes have won the highly coveted Food Network's 'Cupcake Wars' in 2010 and 2011 (she has only been opened since 2009!), making Scavone and her bakers the undefeated champions of the tastiest cupcakes in the nation, if you are beginning to salivate don't fret because Sweet Arleen's has a mobile truck that can bring her sweets right to your next social or business event. I chose to visit Sweet Arleen's cupcake boutique in Westlake to interview the now famous banker turned baker, and my first observation was the staff behind the counter- they were as excited as the customers- but there was no real division, it was like being in someone's home, all friends and neighbors. I didn't notice money changing hands... I didn't notice credit cards being swiped; it was like I had stumbled upon a secret

cupcake society! Of course the customers paid for their food, but money was incidental, it was a mere bargaining chip for the price of joy, for the thrill of the bread pudding chase and the ultimate sacrifice for cupcake satisfaction! Luckily, Arleen confided in me and I just might have the secret to her success below;

Anthony McBride: Why are your cupcakes so genuinely delicious?

Arleen Scavone: Each recipe was created using only the finest ingredients. Each dessert has been tested many times and we choose only the best of the best to bring to Sweet Arleen's. We have never sacrificed quality for quantity.

AM: Why cupcakes?

AS: Cupcakes are something that everyone loves and craves - they're fun! Having grown up baking with my family, I knew I had to share my



great recipes with the world! We incorporate seasonal fruits, Belgian chocolates and harvest seasoning so that we can elevate your cupcake experience to be something truly delicious.

AM: What feedback do you get from customers the most?

AS: On our cupcakes, "Wow, these are soooo good, and the icing isn't too

sweet - I love them!", we get this feedback because we uniquely ice our cupcakes with Italian and French Buttercreams and a not-too-sweet Cream Cheese icing. It's what keeps

people coming back again and again. On our bread puddings; "I didn't think I liked bread pudding until I tasted yours, but these are unbelievable - and I love the sauces you've paired with them" and "I'm so glad you introduced savory bread pudding, my favorite is the Mac n Cheese!"

AM: You are inspiring others to follow their dreams; did you expect this to happen?

AS: I've always been a natural leader and have often been asked to speak to groups of employees in various industries. I'm a real person - People love my story because I decided to follow my dream. I hope I inspire others to do the same if they can.

AM: Tell me about community outreach; it seems to be something you're very passionate about, besides food!

AS: Wow, my "new year" has been filled with so many community com-

mitments. Even though I'm busy juggling two simultaneous careers, I feel fortunate to be in a position to help others and can be an established role model for other small businesses. Community support doesn't always require cash - many of them just want some advice and of course a cupcake or two! We are very active with all of our schools with fundraisers, internships, and speaking engagements.

AM: Why are specialty cupcakes still trending so highly in today's economy?

AS: Everyone needs to feel special - especially when you feel like you've cut back on many of those extras. For less than \$4, the smiles our cupcakes bring to faces of all ages is the biggest treat ever!!

AM: Which is your biggest selling product and what's your personal favorite?

AS: Our Red Velvet cupcake with Cream Cheese Icing and our French Toast Bread Pudding with Praline Sauce are our customers' favorites, and I must say - they are in MY favorites list as well!

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