

Fault Line Cake

The monthly birthday cake for our Church should be simple – because I don't have time to do complicated – but I never allow it to be so. DH knows me so much better than I know myself. He told me I need to be challenged and that is why every time I do a cake I have to try a new technique. Otherwise, why bother? He's right, of course. So, instead of doing a simple cake with some fondant balloons on it I had to try this fault line cake trend. I fell in love with one on Instagram by #macaronsbymo that featured macarons in the "crack." But instead of using buttercream I thought I would go with modeling chocolate to cover the cake and give me more control over the fault line. Overall, I was happy with my decision. As always, there are some cake decorating notes:

Notes on modeling chocolate:

Modeling chocolate is perfect for this project as it can be positioned upright immediately and it won't sag like fondant. I try to use Merckens melting wafers because I think they perform and taste better.

I used a 4:1 ratio of chocolate to corn syrup but a firmer modeling chocolate would have been easier to use for paneling the cake so I'll probably go with a 5:1 ratio next time. Also, I used the pasta attachment on the Kitchenaid mixer on setting "2" to get about 1/16" thickness. I felt this was too thin and showed too many many "bumps" on the cake so next time I'll

stick to 1/8" thickness which corresponds to setting "1." I tried Chocolate Chameleon candy color by Artisan Accents this time which worked really well – as you can see the chocolate turned out a really bright pink and I only added about 0.1 oz in with the corn syrup.

Notes on ganache:

I had white chocolate ganache left over from my last project a few weeks ago which I had frozen. Interestingly, with the few extra degrees of heat (okay, maybe 10) since the beginning of May the ganache was almost too soft to work with. Good to know for next time – use a 3.5:1 ratio of white chocolate to cream for hotter temperatures. Although it firmed up on the cake overnight it was still easily depressed when covering with the modeling chocolate.

Notes on Macarons:

I have been happily using the Italian method for making macarons for a few years now and will not go back to the French method ever. My current favorite recipe is that from the Bouchon Bakery cookbook with the only two modifications being 1) I do not use vanilla in the shells and 2) my oven temp at convection 315F.

Here is a relatively short video showing how I put the cake together.

How to Get Gray Modeling Chocolate (or Fondant)

I am making a zombie cake for my nephew (stay tuned) and pondering the right shade of gray for a zombie. I know, weird. I decided to experiment with some different hues. Since this is definitely some information I would refer to in the future I thought it would also make a great short blog post.



For the modeling chocolate on the left I started with a light blue MC and added 2 drops of Americolor black. I got a bluish gray obviously. This is a gray I would use for a realistic elephant color if you will.

For the one in the middle I started with white MC (made with super white CK melts) and added a marble sized amount of black MC. This was a really appealing gray to me – more like an elephant for a baby shower which would be more of cartoon color rather than a true-to-life color.

The one on the right was made with white MC and a smear of Americolor black plus a smaller smear of Americolor lemon yellow to offset the purple hues of the black. I think this is what I would call a slate gray and is what I ultimately

used for my zombies because it seemed more dead or devoid of color to me. Yikes! Not what I want to be thinking of on Valentine's day!