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SusieCakes V. Scoops

THE L.A. DESSERT WARS



By Linlee Allen
Photograph by Piper Ferguson

It's an all-out battle for the best dessert in Los Angeles. Which do you choose? The old-school frosting-filled cupcake like your mama used to make? Or the best-ever ice cream—created by a culinary wizard—that you'll taste this side of the Atlantic?

"Straight up, it's all about baking," says SusieCakes founder Susan Sarich, whose one-stop bakery, situated on San Vicente Boulevard in Brentwood, claims credit for feeding everyone from Candy Spelling to Bob Dylan. Why, she recently even baked a birthday cake for five-year-old Romeo Beckham! Sarich, who originally hails from Chicago, formerly worked in hospitality for Ian Schrager before breaking loose in August 2006 and opening the doors to her pastel-colored neighborhood bakeshop. In addition to producing countless cupcakes daily, SusieCakes also specializes in other sentimental favorites, including cakes, puddings, cheesecakes, pies and cookies, and Sarich's eager-beaver, '50s-inspired, headband-bedecked team of employees greets each and every customer who enters the store with "Welcome to SusieCakes."

Meanwhile, across town, there's a queue for a different kind of dessert. And if it's flavor you're looking for, then it doesn't get better than Scoops, an ice cream parlor in Silver Lake plunked on a street filled with bike stores and suburban homes. Gelato, vegan ice cream and sorbet are created under the masterful guidance of Tai, a risk-taking connoisseur of taste and acclaimed modern-day marvel whose past includes a teaching stint at the Portland Culinary Institute. The flavors speak for themselves: Mint Nicotine, Foie Gras with French Onion, Pear and Ginger sorbet, and Scoops' mainstay, Brown Bread. Every option tastes better than it sounds. Failing that, Tai welcomes the flavor challenge, and to prove it, he's even erected a whitewashed suggestion board beside the door of the two-and-a-half-year-old parlor where you can offer up your ideas. Providing you can resist the temptation for yet another taste-test on your way out, that is.

Styling by Ashley Nelson * Assistant to photographer: Apollo Star * Shot at Ultra Star Studios * Pictured: BipJeffington (l) and And! Marvin

This story was published on Jan. 24, 2008

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