

In remembrance of Denise and Rakoushe

Per Aspera Ad Astra !



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FOREWORD

Imagine the unimaginable. In Kuwait City, where the temperature hovers between 42 and 50 ° C , conjugates the best ingredients to produce entremets as sparkling as jewels and wedding cakes higher and each more sumptuous than the other.

Welcome to the savored world of flavours and delicacies from the most Oriental of French pastry chefs.

This great admirer of the famous Pierre Herme and Christophe Michalak multiplies his creations in search of the right balance between both the Oriental and French taste. With raspberries and passion fruit often too acidic, he yet again manages to subtly combine mousses based on dates, vanilla and cardamom but also cinnamon with Bavarois mint, all with great imagination and success. Better still, the architect of flavours makes himself an architect of monumental sculptures in sugar, which are as many as waking dreams.

Both classic and romantic, the royal architecture of his vision shines brightly.

His masterpieces of the ephemeral have since become the happiness of royal weddings from 150 to 3500 guests, from Qatar, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi. His Parisian lowers and bas-reliefs, his draperies, columns and pedestals never cease to seduce the amateur with the considerable purchasing power of Kuwait and all for his greater happiness and passion as a Pastry Chef.

Congratulations and thank you very dear Omar for sharing our passion for beautiful French pastry through this beautiful book.

Franck LACROIX

Editor-in-chief of 'Le Journal Du Pâtissier'



Omar Addihaoui : an atypical chef

Rich with an address book full of worldwide personalities, Omar, by his love of work well done as well as his rigor, has become the world specialist in wedding cakes, destined for Crowned Heads and fantastic events.

This talented chef is as much a virtuoso as his cakes are grandiose. And yet, he well knows how to stay humble next to the people who are acquainted to him.

Each of his cakes is an exception, a new adventure, a new creation and always more spectacular than the previous one.

I personally had the occasion to meet Chef Omar on several occasions and I, for one, am totally in admiration with his personality which truly reveals a talented personage of an exceptional artistic sense; but who is also able to bring out a lot of emotional designs.

As such, I feel very small next to this entrepreneur of ephemeral cakes and often ask myself how on earth does he manage to achieve all that he does?

Hence, I do pay tribute to this artisan of gastronomic pleasure.

Stay as you are Omar, for people truly admire your personality but do continue to make us dream by the splendour of your masterpieces of monumental work.

Thanks to you true Artist.

Bruno Pastorelli

Meilleur ouvrier de France (MOF)

Pastry confectionery

PREFACE

The maestros and wizards of our eras are rather fewer than many and yet, each one bears his own distinguished trait within the brilliant discipline he commands. When most have had the merit to be worldly praised and recognized, the destiny of the ‘covert ones’ still lies in the shadow of their astuteness and intellect. However great they may or might have become, none will ever be exposed until the wheel of fate works its magic and finally, gives the righteous prominence to their life’s achievements and authentic uniqueness.

Talents are meant to be shared, so dormant adepts of all ages can both be influenced or inspired and in turn, soon be part of the elite where belongs those who dare pursue, ergo propel their power, to the ceiling of the gods.

In the year 2004 and in an unusual country far away from my own, where perhaps that where the unfamiliar is sought is precisely met with, I, for one, had the chance to encounter one of these rare, undisclosed human species. An exceptionally gifted being who dared pursue the unconventional against all set standards within the field of majestic cakes. A valiant artist who knew of no half measures when it came to the heights of what his own hands were to create and the bigger the folly, the merrier. A driven spirit, yearning for a reason to exist and equally determined to leave a mark behind him when the time comes to depart from it. But foremost, a man who somehow seemed to have crossed the barrier of time and space and who, without a doubt, transcended the implausible reincarnation of the famous eighteenth-century Marie Antoine Careme, best known as the “The King of Chefs, and the Chef of Kings”.

And thus, begins the short introduction of a personage most uncommon in our cosmic universe as we know it, though more commonly known in our timeline as Omar Addihaoui.



On a Saturday 18th September of the year 1965 and in a typical Moroccan village that went by the name of Amizmiz, lodged at the very foot of the Atlas Mountains, Omar was born. There, growing by the side of both his sisters Naima and Afida was all he would ever know until the age of five, when on a starlight night, his father tragically took him away from his mother and for reasons he would comprehend at a much later stage.

Further into the vast Atlas, in the quiet hamlet of Ait Abdul Salam, he was to be entrusted to the care of his uncle. Now, amongst the multitude of summits and endless juvenile days spent staring at the wide horizon, the young master would forcefully learn the ways of both the high peaks and that of the elders who were naturally planning for his becoming a shepherd and the youngest of them all, as they proudly recall.

But at the end of his first life cycle, aged seven, a new loop occurred, when his father took him away a second time. Though, on this particular juncture, fate had equally decided that the life he was now to embrace would be in a much farther and different world than all that he had ever known and equally seen, despite his young age.

From the 16th district of the French capital, where he was now living with his siblings, en route for daily adventures and the discovery of what the city is beholding, the streets of Trocadero, Le Chatelet and Champs Elysees were to become his favourite evasions. Very often and for no

particular reasons, he would be drawn to the church of Sacre Coeur where he would sit outside for hours watching people pass by, whilst trying to overcome and forget the weaknesses that were very much a reality in his fitting of this new big city.

‘Till one day, at the age of fourteen, one of his most important chance meetings occurred, when on a sunny afternoon, in the Parisian street of President Wilson, he met Suzy.

An impressive haute couture 20th century fairy like lady who was to be the first one to ever see his forthcoming potential from afar. The Nostradamus dame who fatefully became the quintessence of his entire life. From this time forth and for a wisdom that shall belong to Suzy alone, she used that of her combined fortune, inner passion and knowledge of the unseen to bring him out into the light and teach him the bona fide ways of life. She furthermore wielded of her influence when she enabled him to enter into one of the best Parisian hotelier schools where he seemed to be already showing an ability within the mastering of the world of pastry.

By the entrance of the Millennium, having coupled a rather extensive skill as a pastry chef in France, the maestro now aged thirty, made his entrance into the arena of Arabia. The land where originally emerged Suzy and perhaps the precise nation where everything that he was meant to become was to be set into a ‘maktoob’* type of motion.

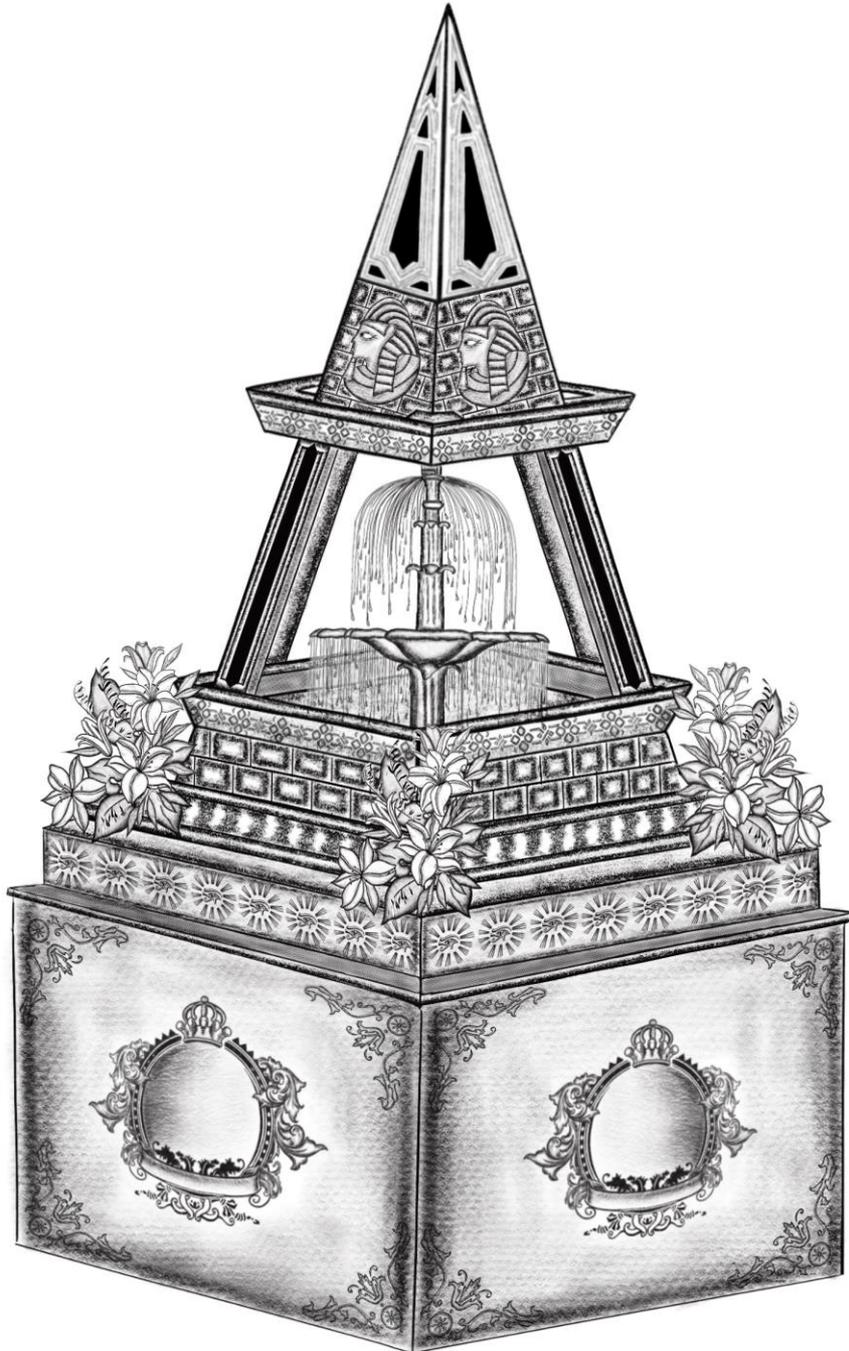
For indeed, thereupon, not only was he presently an accredited chef from the famous French metropolis but strangely enough, he also carried with him an acute sense of architecture fed from all the Parisian streets he encountered on his previous journey. Combine the latter to an Arabian world that thirsted for heights and tales of the fantastic, he remarkably reached out to the abyss of a latent creativity and embarked onto a voyage of amalgamating architectural structures with pastries. A momentous escapade where the once learnt French protocols of vertical measurements and classical décor for cakes were now being replaced by what deems a princess’ lavishness for her forthcoming haunting day, regardless of its ensuing mayhem or its toll.

And as the client shall always be king as taught in his early days, the composer of heights and of sugar symphonies was not only happily rendering that promise but in doing so, he cleverly formulated some of the foremost chef d’oeuvre our heavenly body and all its finest master chefs therein have ever witnessed to this day.

This distinctive book **King of Chefs and 21st Century Chef to Kings** shall now invite you to get into the world of such an adept where wedding cakes are no longer considered a mere mass of sweet symmetrical food but have somewhat been turned into extraordinary **Royal Magnus Opus** that follow the remarkable genesis of a man who conceived them in mind, adorned them in the real world and then transposed them into being for all of those who required it.

CHAPTER I

The Crowning of the First Height



Everything began at the start of the Millennium and in a small monarchy lodged between desert and sea and regionally known for its finest sea pearl fishermen. Though broadly unknown globally, it went by the name of 'Kuwait'.

By now, Omar had signed up with the finest pastry establishment that existed in the capital at the time and was fervently getting accustomed to local tastes and new protocols of etiquette all defined by the traditions that sprang from the kingdom.

Then came a rather common Thursday afternoon, when a tall and gracefully black mulberry silk veiled woman, more commonly known and revered to as a 'Sheikha'* in this part of the world, made her entrance into the newly appointed chef's workplace with the purpose of laying down the specifics for her forthcoming wedding cake. Though, unlike any of the fine clientele before, the princess was most determined to behold the biggest cake the firm was able to make in its entire history. This she insisted upon and undoubtedly, she could afford to. Daunted by her many voyages in the land of pharaohs, her royal highness had envisioned a bridal cake in the image of a golden pyramid and empowered with as much tallness and elegance one hand could create.

This was to be the first challenge out of many more to come, the chef recalled facing in his early career in Arabia. A seemingly insuperable monolith that was standing high and daring, both the abilities of the young wizard and the company who had just appointed him were now being summoned.

Whilst the sheikhdom of Kuwait was and to date, still leads the field of creative cakes in the entire region of the Arabian Peninsula, at this period though, no sound minded institution had ever elevated and equally beautified a cake beyond 60 centimeters of height.

A broken arm resulting from a petty and most unwelcomed accident at that precise point in time, combined in equal measure with the eagerness of a young phoenix determined not to be defeated by the current event but instead, turn it into the first stepping stone of an acclaimed existence. This is what it took for Omar to embrace his prime test and thrust himself into the climbing of a ladder that begged for his paramount move to be taken.

Aided by ten members of his current kitchen staff, he first drew what he had envisioned of the cake: a tall 1.4 meter pyramid structure, composed of three distinctive layers. Each level would naturally follow the mathematical formula he had learnt in France and which dictated that the bottom serves as a base and that the above layers could only ascend at a space of 10cm diameter each and for the overall best visual effect. And while the two foot levels of the cake (each measuring 80 cm and 70cm diameter respectively) were to be kept edible with a mixture of Tahitian vanilla sponge infused in Iranian saffron and the finest Turkish pistachio, the top level made of Styrofoam would only stand as a hollow structure. For remarkably, such open décor would then allow the guests to surprisingly discover and admire a cunning tool lodged within the heart of the pyramid itself: that of an electric water fountain. The entire piece of art subtly covered in rolling sugar would at last be mounted on an 88cm x 90cm x 90cm golden-wood table carved with the emblem of the princess's family as demanded by the local custom.

These early days were notably the chef's debut in the making and experimenting with silicone molds. The fabrication of gum paste sugar flowers, bows and arabesque designs of all sorts that suited the local theatre had indeed become something of a hobby that would occupy his days and sometimes much of his nights too. This new skill he had now discovered and which he would soon master the virtuosity of. But this hour was more importantly the precise moment when he realized that the convergence of his fondness for the Parisian architecture could not only be combined with the indulgence drawn from local wedding cakes but would likely appeal to the local consumers. Were we not, after all, in the land of the stories of a thousand and one Arabian nights?