

Fall benefit's a slice of heaven for lovers of sweets

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I don't care how wonderful the dinner. When the dessert cart rolls by, you can't help but turn and gawk at the dazzling offerings. So going to the 15th Annual Creative Confections: Northeast Ohio's Premier Dessert Competition was a real head turner.

The theme of Saturday's night of luscious, mouth-watering concoctions at the Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum was "Halloween Harvest." With 20 of the Cleveland area's finest pastry chefs whipping up spooktacular delights in honor of this theme, it was a real showcase of heavenly rich creams and icings.

Desserts were judged on artistic presentation and taste. The two scores were weighed equally to determine Best in Show. Categories included cakes and tortes and individually plated desserts. First-, second- and third-place awards were given for artistic presentation. The same awards were given for taste.

More than 300 people attended this decadently delicious affair on the stormy night. Taste of Excellence of Cleveland catered the affair.

"Even with the bad weather, we knew that people would come to this affair," said Karen Peterson, executive director of the Center for Therapy Through the Arts, The Art Studio. "You just can't resist the desserts."

All the proceeds from this tantalizing event benefited the Center for Therapy, a collection of programs providing art therapy to people with special needs and those seeking general wellness.

Here's how it measured up.

Most Artistic Dessert Cakes and Tortes

First place: Canterbury Golf Club, Beachwood, "Pushing Up Daisies," Barry Karrh, pastry chef.

Second place: Cakes Plus, Rocky River, "Hay! Sweet Potato Caramel Cake," Diana Dumitru, pastry chef.

Third place: The Grand Finale, Brunswick Hills Township, "For the Corpse Bride," Anna Weisend, pastry chef.

Plated Individual

First place: Bob Sferra Designs, Cleve-



"STACK-O-LANTERN" — Pastry chef Becky Rink from About the Cake Inc. in Avon used standard round cake pans to start building her three-tiered pumpkin creation. She then carved each cake into the shape she wanted. Rink used a butter cream fondant and white chocolate ganache to create the outer shells. She air-brushed the detail with food coloring to create her stack of jack-o'-lanterns.

land Heights, "The Witch's Brew," Bob Sferra, pastry chef.

Second place: Patisserie Baroque, North Olmsted, "A Boo-tiful Harvest Sampler," Karen Garback, pastry chef.

Third place: Shaker Heights Country Club, Shaker Heights, "Apple Upside Down Cake," Syn Dee Klingenberg, pastry chef.

Most Decadently Delicious Cakes and Tortes

First place: Edible Designs, Streetsboro, "Chocolate Pear Torte," Karen Johnson, pastry chef.

Second place: Around Downtown Catering, Cleveland, "Chocolate Chestnut



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BEST OF SHOW — Eugenia Jimenez Gonzalez of the InterContinental Hotel & Conference Center Cleveland worked for 15 hours on this hand-pulled, formed and blown candy sculpture. The leaf detail was made of pastillage. She said producing blown candy art is difficult and takes a lot of practice.

Pumpkin Torte," Joyce and Susan Brittain, pastry chefs.

Third place: Lorain County Joint Vocational School, Oberlin, "Patty Scream Cake," Alicia Pyles and Alyssa Reed, pastry chefs.

Plated Individual

First place: West Side Bakery, Akron, "Pumpkin Brandy Panna Cotta," Karyn Elkanich, pastry chef.

Second place: Lorain County Joint Vocational School, "Autumn Harvest," Ariana Giberson and Jordan Schramm, pastry chefs.

Third place: Downtown 140, Hudson, "Pumpkin Patch Chocolate Torte," Kim Horner, pastry chef.

Best of Show Highest Combined Score

Intercontinental Hotel & Conference Center Cleveland, "Fall-In Love," Eugenia Jimenez, pastry chef.

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CREAM OF THE CROP — Lorain County Joint Vocational School students Jordan Schramm, 17, and Ariana Giberson, 16, made a pumpkin Bavarian cake coated with Italian meringue and served with a spicy creme anglaise.