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floral fantasies

We gave celebrity cake-maker Ron Ben-Israel free rein to create five dazzling confections. His designs feature sugary blooms so detailed they look real, even up close

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Clusters of large sugar peonies in burgundy, claret, coral and deep pink (see detail, opposite) top the fondant icing of this dark-chocolate cake; it's filled with dulce de leche and raspberry buttercream. "I wanted to capture the lusciousness of the flowers in full bloom," says Ben-Israel, who works in N.Y.C.



CAKES

For this beauty—vanilla and chocolate cakes separated by roasted-pineapple buttercream and chopped pistachios—Ben-Israel used still lifes by Dutch and Flemish old masters as inspiration (hence the cascade of tulips adorning the pale peach-pink quilted icing).





Almond-infused tiers, featuring layers of ganache and apricot preserves, are shaped like a Victorian wire basket filled with flowers, including daffodils, hyacinth and lily of the valley. The design is meant to evoke an English country garden, says Ben-Israel.





CAKES

This striking cake resembles a huge, single rose made up of 150 individual petals. It took four people two days to hand-make and -paint each piece of it, a white Meyer lemon confection complemented by papaya and blood-orange buttercream filling.







As in a Rembrandt painting, a profusion of sweet peas, hydrangeas and amaryllis creates a riot of color. Says Ben-Israel, "We spend a lot of time making it all seem accidental." The pear-vanilla cake is filled with cinnamon-cappuccino cream and hazelnut nougat. ■

