



AYA SARAVIA

Photography: Viejas Production

Aya Saravia is the assistant pastry chef at Viejas Casino & Resort in Alpine, CA. She was introduced to her favorite cake decorating tool by her former head chef at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver, CO.

Why does this bench scraper have such significance for you?

When I started at the Brown Palace Hotel, I was still struggling to achieve a perfect buttercream finish on cakes. My chef at the time handed me this tool and suddenly, I could do what I had been trying to do! It was the ah-ha moment I needed to take my skills to the next level.

Do you use different bench scrapers to achieve different results?

I actually have two of these Ateco bench scrapers just in case one goes missing; because even though I can decorate a cake with other spatulas or tools, I don't feel comfortable using them. In my experience, a tool has to feel like an extension of my hands. This scraper is light and fits well and allows me to stand more upright than a traditional metal spatula. If I feel comfortable, my artistic abilities come through more naturally.

“A TOOL HAS TO FEEL LIKE AN EXTENSION OF MY HANDS... IF I FEEL COMFORTABLE, MY ARTISTIC ABILITIES COME THROUGH MORE NATURALLY.”

What can you accomplish with this bench scraper?

I can get the smoothest buttercream finish and the sharpest edges. For a round cake on a turntable, I use it to push the buttercream in and up as the cake rotates, then I go around again and cut the extra buttercream off. Smoothing out the top is a little trickier. I lay the scraper flat on the top of the cake and spin, pushing the buttercream down and flat. Then I'll go around the sides again and cut that extra buttercream off, repeating these two steps until I'm happy with the smoothness/sharpness of the finish.

To cover a square cake in fondant I drape the fondant and using two of these scrapers “cut” the fondant at each corner, then smooth the edge, although this method can leave a seam.



Any other tips or tricks to using this?

I always find random ways to use this little guy. I've used it to indent fondant on cakes to get vertical lines. I've used it as a measuring guide if I'm making fondant pieces to dry out. I've even used it as a straight edge when drawing out cake designs. But for the most basic use of smoothing buttercream, I'd suggest having a pot of hot water at your work station to dip the smoother in and then a clean towel to wipe it dry. This helps get rid of seams and bubbles and adds to the overall smoothness. | ACD

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