

## Chapter 27

## Creative Additions

# Edible Art

**Directions:** Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

Learning creative techniques in dealing with food preparation and presentation not only adds eye appeal. Sometimes, it raises food to the level of fine art.

That is precisely the term critics and food journalists have used to describe the work of award-winning pastry chef and culinary teacher Steve Klc. Klc, who spends the majority of his time shuttling back and forth between Washington, D.C. and New York City. He frequently tours the country to teach classes on the art of food decoration.

One of Klc's areas of specialization is capturing lifelike food images of flowers. His flowers, crafted of chocolate and set within a chocolate and caramel "wooden" framework, earned him a place as a finalist in the Patisfrance U.S. Pastry Chef of the Year Competition. Klc is also a recipient of the Soci t  Culinaire Philanthropique's gold Medal of Honor, the top award in pastry decoration.

### Tools of the Artist

Klc creates his edible artworks using some of the same techniques and media that painters and sculptors use in their fields. These include spray-painting and molding. His artwork in the Patisfrance competition was created using spray paint. He sprayed most of the surfaces with a melted chocolate mixture, using a paint sprayer.

He created the leaves and flower by brushing tempered chocolate on the back of real leaves, as well as on molds made of acetate or silicone. (Tempered chocolate is chocolate that has been heated to a precise temperature that gives it a high, lustrous sheen that also prevents the chocolate from seizing up, or separating as it cools.) Tempered chocolate also served as "glue" to connect all the leaves together and, ultimately, to attach the flowers to the frame.

The frame itself was made by pouring tempered chocolate between caramel rods and then brushing with chocolate in a way that simulated the grain of actual wood.



### Special Challenges

According to Klc, work in edible art carries its own set of special challenges. The most rigorous challenge is keeping the chocolate from melting. Klc meets this challenge by briefly freezing pieces of chocolate prior to the final construction. He also wears thin cotton gloves during the final assembly stage. Unlike plastic or latex, this material shields the chocolate from the heat of the artist's hands and also prevents fingerprints from appearing on the brilliant polished surface of his tempered chocolate opus.

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## Thinking Critically

1. Imagine that you overheard the following remark made about an edible sculpture that you had created using some of the painstaking techniques mentioned in the article: “It’s too beautiful to eat.” From what you have learned about food preparation in the textbook, think about how you would reply, and write your response on the lines below.

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2. What do you think is the most challenging aspect of Steve Kle’s work? What do you think is his greatest reward?

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3. Could garnishes such as a lemon basket and pickle fan be called edible art? Why or why not?

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## For Further Study

- ◆ Research the work of Korean-American sculptor Ik-Joong Kang, whose credits include “8,490 Days of Memory.” The centerpiece of this work is an 8-foot-high sculpture of General Douglas MacArthur cast entirely in chocolate. Learn the meaning behind Kang’s work. Share your findings in an oral—and, if possible, illustrated—report.
- ◆ One cultural phenomenon in which artful presentation plays an especially central role is the Japanese art of sushi making. Use on-line resources to locate and download examples of some of the world’s foremost sushi masterpieces. Print these out for a classroom art display.