

## Looking for a slice of the market

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Renata Papadopoulos of Norwalk thought she wanted to fly airplanes for a living, but then a new business idea took flight.

Papadopoulos always enjoyed baking, but the response to one her homemade cakes was so positive it led her to start a custom cake business called Lovely Cakes LLC.

"It all started when I made a baby shower cake for my sister-in-law. I was working with fondant, a sugar paste to make the cakes. I molded babies on it and it was a big hit. People were telling me I should do it for a living," said Papadopoulos, who is originally from Brazil.

Papadopoulos began selling her cakes in February. They are prepared at a bakery in Norwalk, but Papadopoulos wants to open her own storefront. For now, she markets her cakes online at [www.lovelycakes.net](http://www.lovelycakes.net).

Lovely Cakes can be made for birthdays, graduations, christenings, weddings and other events, she said. She often designs cakes that are fashioned after an individual's interests or hobbies, such as fishing or golf. Papadopoulos also enjoys making her cakes appear lifelike.

"I designed a tote bag with a monogram on it with a magazine coming out, flowers, a Coca-Cola can, envelopes, an iPod and car keys - everything is edible on it" she said.

How did you get your start?

I made cakes for family and friends for about a year-and-a-half to two years until I felt confident. I did all my kids' birthday cakes and cakes for others to get a chance to put my ideas into shape.

When I decided that I wanted to do this for a living, I went to pastry school. I went for a mini-program, three months at the French Culinary Institute in New York.

What are the challenges?

It's very time-consuming; it's a lot more challenging than people think. Modeling something from a figurine or a picture takes time to make it look real.

Where do your customers come from?

Mostly Norwalk, Wilton, Ridgefield and some from New York - Greenwich to Torrington.

How has the response been for your cakes?