

COULD IT  
CATCH ON?

# Retro Desserts REVAMPED

Most new recipes aren't new at all. "A pound cake is a pound cake. A chiffon cake is a chiffon cake. You can't really reinvent the wheel," says Valerie Gordon, co-owner of Valerie Confections in Los Angeles. "What you can do is apply your own perspective and personality onto desserts."

That's what she did when she launched her eatery in 2004 with chocolate-dipped toffee inspired by historic confectioner See's Candies' Victoria Toffee. A few years later, she

began resurrecting historic cakes, like the famous Coffee Crunch Cake from now-closed Blum's Bakery in San Francisco, which created the iconic dessert in 1941.

Gordon isn't the only one with an appetite for bygone sweets. At Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken in Washington, D.C., retro flavors take new form in a pineapple upside-down cake donut made with a brown sugar glaze, diced caramelized pineapple and pineapple-caramel drizzle.

Ready to build a retro-inspired

Does your bakery make a  
**RETRO DESSERT?**  
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creation? Start by deconstructing classics and use garnishes that hint at the desserts' traditional forms, says Ali Graeme, owner of Sweet Ali's Gluten Free Bakery in Hinsdale, Illinois. "You eat with your eyes, so you have to pay

attention to both the presentation and the flavor," she says. Sweet Ali's banana split cupcake is made with bananas and vanilla buttercream frosting and topped with nuts, hot fudge, cherries and sprinkles.

And don't forget to tell a great story. Gordon explains her desserts' origins on Valerie Confections' menu and website. "It's all about getting to the heart of the dessert and really honoring the original," she says.

— Matt Alderton

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BEST  
PRACTICE

## School's in Session: Marketing to College Kids

Test these tried-and-true ways to  
turn students into loyal customers.

It's no secret college kids love free food.

And some bakeries are using nontraditional methods to get their attention. Instead of word-of-mouth marketing, Legendary Doughnuts practices into-mouth marketing. When new students at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, tour the area, guides bring them into the shop for a free donut.

The freebies pay off; newcomers quickly turn into regulars. They're drawn to the bakery not only by its unique creations topped with novelty ingredients like Fruity PEBBLES™, but also because it offers coffee and free Wi-Fi. "Students just naturally gather here," says Manager Shari Watkins.

Free treats and amenities aren't the only way to attract college kids. See how else bakeries turn students into loyal customers:

