

**MELBOURNE  
BUZZ**

THE CITY AWAKENS  
IN SPRING

SYDNEY'S INNER  
SOUTH REDUX

AUSTRALIA'S  
QUEEN OF CAKES

STAMFORD LIFE

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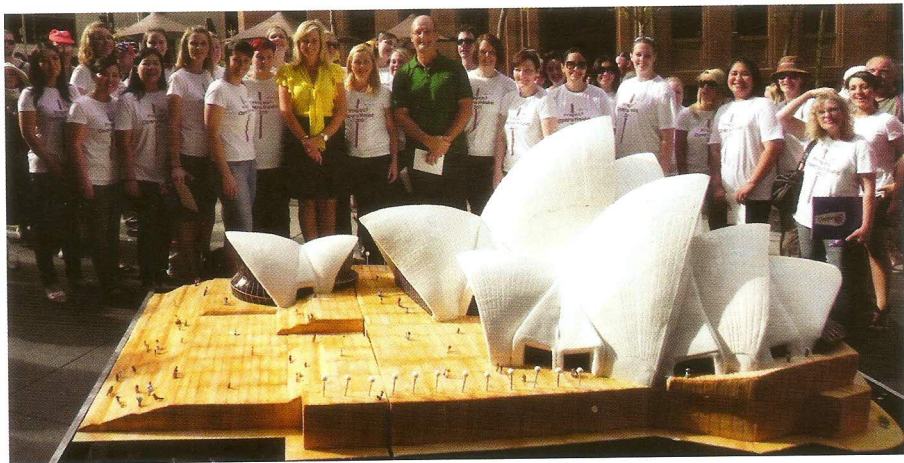


# PLANET OF THE CAKES

▶ BAKING TAKES ON A NEW DEFINITION WHEN PARIS CUTLER'S INVOLVED, AS FIONA HARPER FINDS OUT



PARIS CUTLER WITH HER AWE-INSPIRING ALICE IN WONDERLAND CAKE. FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PLANET CAKE'S 800KG EDIBLE REPLICA OF THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE; ANIMAL-PRINT DESIGN FOR THOSE WITH ATTITUDE; POPULAR CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE NOAH'S ARK.



**CAN YOU IMAGINE A CAKE THAT TIPS THE SCALES AT 800KG?**

One so enormous that a semi-trailer is required to transport it? One that took 10 cake experts, 20 volunteers and 2,000 hours to make? A sugar-coated, 1:50-scale edible replica of the Sydney Opera House, no less? Paris Cutler can.

Not only can she visualise such a deliciously thrilling creation, she has the ability – and the audacity – to create it. She does confess, though, to almost having a nervous breakdown during its production in time for 2011's Australia Day celebrations. A rare moment of vulnerability, one suspects, from a spirited woman with savvy commercial nous, who has enjoyed inconceivable success through her specialist cake business, Planet Cake.

It wasn't a passion for baking that led her into the business, though. It was more her desire to stamp her mark on something and a gap in the market presented itself in the guise of a dud wedding cake.

"I looked at the AUD1,400 cake and could have set fire to it – it was so horrible," says Cutler. "But instead, it sparked an idea."

When Cutler purchased Planet Cake in 2003, it was a one-woman operation laboriously turning out one cake a week. Nine years later, the little Balmain corner-store set-up is an empire with an annual turnover exceeding AUD2.5 million.

Today, Planet Cake designs more than 1,000 cakes annually, each one a handcrafted edible art form, customised to each customer's desires, including the likes of Rihanna, Celine Dion and Megan Gale. Planet Cake's in-house cake-decorating school attracts more than 4,000 eager students each year, who were no doubt inspired by the striking cakes created on the eight-part, reality-TV series *Planet Cake*, which aired in late 2011.

Before defining her vision for Planet Cake, Cutler trundled along a winding career path that crossed into legal, stockbroking and recruitment industries, constantly seeking an idea that she could focus her attention on. She found it and had the smarts to back herself.



Any business venture attracts an element of risk, but Cutler's belief in her idea and gung-ho attitude spurred her on.

A self-confessed adrenaline junkie, she'll strap herself into a harness and jump out of a plane when she's "really stressed". Thirty-two skydives later, she declares: "The adrenaline rush dissolves all of the pressure. For me, it is heaven."

At ease dropping out of the sky, she's no shrinking violet when it comes to the ocean, either, trying her hand at jet-boat racing as well as swimming with sharks – but "only three times".

"Most entrepreneurs are risk takers," says Cutler, "and there's usually a touch of craziness, too."

Cutler is seemingly unstoppable since finding her niche at the helm of Planet Cake, so don't be surprised to see her delicious creations popping up across the globe. She is committed to sending her team of cake decorators around the world to teach, with London and Malaysia first up in 2013. To see more of Cutler's over-the-top creations, go to [WWW.PLANETCAKE.COM.AU](http://WWW.PLANETCAKE.COM.AU). SL