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Photos by: Stacey McLeod

Let us eat cake

The quest to find Toronto's best chocolate cake takes us from east to west

by Linda Barnard

<http://www.toronto.com/restaurants/article/000-369-348>

Judging the best chocolate cake should be easy as pie.
It's not.

Who should do the assessment? Pastry chefs? Food pros? A gaggle of restaurant critics? It's best to stick with a group that is never shy of opinions and is completely obsessed with food (especially chocolate) -- runners.

The gang I've been running with for a couple of years -- the Gait Crashers -- are near the end of our training for a spring marathon. Food fanatics all, we talk endlessly when we run about what we will eat next -- and when -- and are all confirmed chocoholics.

This was an informal taste test of a random selection of six chocolate layer cakes. We tasted and scored them individually in seven categories for a rating out of 35 points. Only I knew which bakery made each cake, until the final numbers were tallied. We rated the cakes out of five (with five being the best) for appearance; first taste/first impression; depth of chocolate flavour; sweetness (too much, too little, or perfect); topping/frosting/filling; cake (tender, moist, dry) and the intangible "mmm" factor.

Everybody has a different take on what makes a great cake. We argued about some of the top picks. Occasionally, it got personal. Only 2.5 points separated first and second place, yet there were wildly varying scores for some of the others. The only thing we all agreed on was that the Loblaws' in-house baked layer cake with purple frosting roses strewn across the top was too sweet and artificial tasting. But, for the rest, here's how we ranked them.

Dufflet , 787 Queen St. W. 416-504-2870

Kind of cake: Double Decker Chocolate Fudge
 Price: \$21
 Average score: 28.5/35
 Description: Sour cream fudge layer cake with light chocolate frosting, garnished with large dark chocolate curls. (see photo above)
 Highest scores for: Depth of chocolate flavour; sweetness; first taste/first impression.
 Comments from judges: "Dense, delicious, so good,"
 "You get your money's worth,"
 "I truly enjoyed it, might be too sweet,"
 "Yummy!"
 "Asked for seconds."