



MULTI-TIERED CAKE

When it comes to grand celebrations, you can't go wrong with a spectacular multi-tiered cake. In general, a three- or five-tier cake is perfect for most parties. Use wooden or plastic dowels to hold the layers together; the cake sizes should reduce as you go up—12 inches, 9 inches, and 6 inches. Take your creation to another level (literally!) by using a floating cake spacer with a sidebar to make an anti-gravity cake. Use flowers and foliage to hide the sidebar and along the base of each tier to create the illusion of a suspended cake.

DESSERT DRAMA

These show-stopper sweet treats are perfect for the year-end celebratory season!

By PRACHI JOSHI

It's that time of the year when party invites are in abundance, and you must pull out all stops if you want to be known as the host with the most. Get everyone talking with a centrepiece dessert designed to impress and delight your guests. From towering creations to theatrical presentations, these dramatic desserts not only taste great but also bring a wow factor to your table.



CHRISTMAS TRIFLE

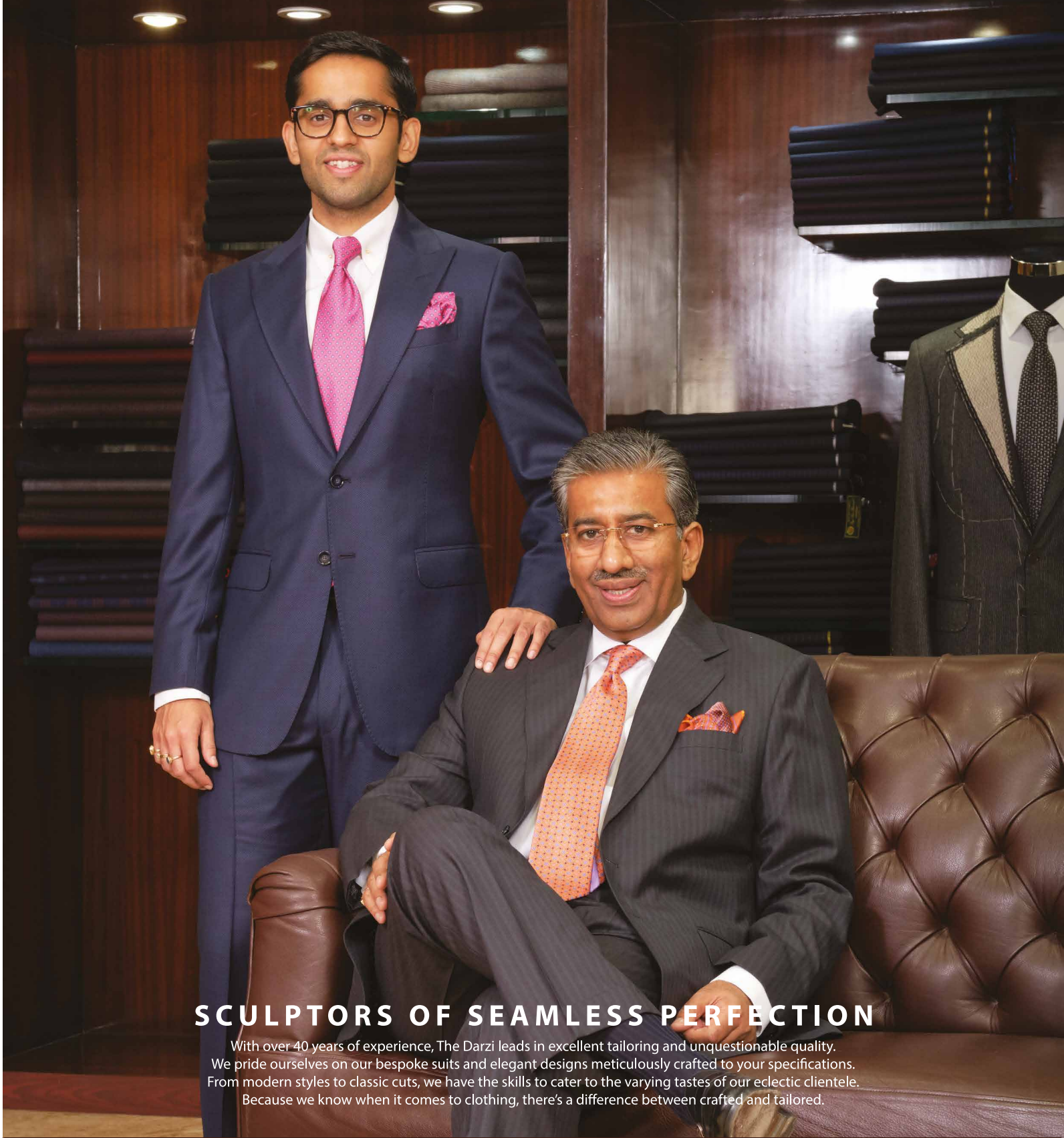
Pressed for time? Let the gorgeous yet easy-to-make English trifle come to your rescue! Choose clear glass serveware and fill it with alternating layers of sponge cake, custard, and fruit. This will ensure the delectable layers are visible. Give the trifle a Yuletide twist by using red fruit like raspberries and strawberries. Embellish it with whipped cream and a Christmas tree cut-out from kiwi to make a delightful topper.

BAKED ALASKA

Retro is cool again! And it's no surprise that the much-loved Baked Alaska (also called Bombe Alaska) is making a comeback. This dome-shaped ice cream-and-cake concoction encased in meringue makes for a fun dessert centrepiece. Make sure to freeze the ice cream for a few hours (ideally overnight) before popping it over the baked cake. Slather the meringue all over it—the meringue should be at least half an inch thick and completely cover the ice cream and cake with no gaps. Bake until the meringue is light brown. Alternatively, toast the meringue with a kitchen torch. You can even flambé it for an impressive finale!



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GINGERBREAD HOUSE

'Tis the season, and if you're throwing a Christmas-themed party, a classic gingerbread house is perfect for your holiday table. It can be as elaborate as you want, so unleash your creativity—add a chimney with graham crackers, icing, and red chewy candy. Or have yourself a white Christmas with royal icing and coarse sugar to make a snow-kissed roof. Of course, you don't have to stick to a 'house'; try a gingerbread castle or cabin, instead. Finally, string some fairy lights on the outside or use LED lights on the inside for a cosy vibe.



CROQUEMBOUCHE

If you're a fan of baking shows, you must be familiar with this classic French dessert, which aptly translates as 'crunch in the mouth'. A tall pyramid of choux pastry puffs, all held together by threads of caramel, it's a delightful sight for sure! The classic version uses vanilla pastry cream, but you can experiment with coffee, lemon, and chocolate flavours. Use fresh flowers, sprigs of greenery, or sparklers to add to the drama and an exciting dollop of Parisian flair to your event!

COCONUT LADOOS

Did you think ladoos are synonymous with the Diwali season? Then think again! Enjoy the versatility of this adored Indian sweet at your New Year party. Give the traditional laddoo a delicious 'coconut' twist and present these confections stacked in a tower on a buffet table or serve in individual copper cups for sit-down meals. Add a modern taste by rolling them in grated chocolate, finely chopped pecans, or colourful sprinkles. Coconut ladoos are a great make-ahead option so you don't have to deal with dessert stress on the day of your celebration!



A renaissance in modern matchmaking

Find 'The One' with Vows for Eternity's personalised and holistic search

A healthy relationship resembles an elegant tapestry. A mindful coming together of two partners is also a coming together of their individual strands to weave a lifelong commitment. The thread holding it all, together, is interdependence. At Vows For Eternity, this delicate, holistic approach to relationships is channelled into their matchmaking process. For the global matrimonial service, understanding you as an individual is the first step in finding you the right life partner. Led by seasoned matchmaker and Founder CEO, Anuradha Gupta, the New York-headquartered firm has an established presence across London, Toronto, Delhi, and Mumbai. The goal is to work together, on the same team, to find a comfortable starting point, through an arranged introduction. One where both of you are true and in sync with each other and what's important to you, including your worldviews, value systems and social compatibility. "A certain emotional and temporal 'investment' is required when getting to know someone and that vetting process can be overwhelming for many. That is where we come in," says the team.

"We offer a purely 'offline' service, as our curated search is not based on inflexible biodatas, algorithms and other cookie cutter methods of traditional matchmaking. The company today is a global leader in offline matrimonial searches serving affluent and high-profile members, in over 65 countries. The client base includes corporate executives, business leaders, industrialists, and celebrities. Members range in age from 22-65 years old, and are well-educated and well-travelled Indians and NRIs. In their serious search for marriage, members meet an uncompromising eligibility criteria before committing, with quality of their global network taking precedence over quantity.

"We nurture equitable partnerships built on the four tenets of acceptance, love, respect, and friendship. Our youngest member is 23 years and eldest is 68. It's a wonderful reminder of how love can and should happen at any age." The service will also extend to those who believe in the power of chances and are seeking companionship, a second time around. The brand's base level membership, The Circle, hosts members who are well educated

with global exposure, and are matched with other members in the same tier. The Icon membership curates a niche search where a dedicated relationship manager aligns expectations and provides guidance, with Anuradha having the initial "getting to know you" call with the family or individual.

In the service's premium offering, Private Club, Anuradha personally handholds the members, usually belonging to reputable business or industrialist families. "Our Founder brings a decade of matchmaking expertise, a strong sense of intuitiveness and understanding of cultural subtleties that are integral to the fabric of the search." By melding the East-West divide and uniting two like-minded persons, the team also works closely to bridge gaps in gender equality, parental expectations, and diverse thought processes.

Executing the founder's intuitive and holistic outlook towards modern-day marriages, the matchmaking journey relies on introspection and self-discovery. "The process results in members often wanting to focus on all areas of their lives, identifying where they may be looking for greater enrichment." To achieve this, the brand has introduced a Wellness Panel with experts across multiple areas available exclusively to the Private Club members for personal consultations.

Finding love is about finding yourself, finding chemistry, finding something new, all with the warmth of "coming home". The brand relishes its focus not on the destination, but the journey leading up to the foundation of a beautiful, lifelong bond. Embark your search to find a love that's worthy of an eternity.

With Anuradha visiting India in December to meet with the service's Private Club members, her personal touch cements the foundation of the search and instills a deep sense of trust in the process to help you find that special someone.



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