



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANTICIPATION, EXCITEMENT HERALD THE ARRIVAL OF CUPCAKE SEASON: LOCAL BAKER EXPECTING BUMPER CROP

Santa Fe, NM—Autumn has come to Santa Fe. Recent weeks have seen hurricanes make their way across the Gulf, bringing rain and falling mercury to this historic New Mexico town high in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. In the heart of the city, amid the earthen tones of adobe architecture, signs of summer recede as residents prepare for the coming winter. Out in the nearby agricultural communities that pepper the New Mexico landscape, harvest is on everyone’s mind. And while the gentle beginnings of fall typically see a gradual tapering off of the produce offered by local providers, there’s been tremendous growth from at least one local crop: cupcakes.

“Cupcakes are a notoriously difficult to grow at this elevation,” says Maria Elena Bustamante-Bernal, a local artisan baker and owner of Tree House Pastry Shop and Café, “but this year has been just astounding. In the past, we’ve had far greater yield from more traditional crops like muffins, cookies, and cakes.

This year, our cupcakes have surpassed them all. And, strangely, no matter how many cupcakes we sell, they just keep coming.”

That they ‘just keep coming’ is both a testament to the irresistible nature of cupcakes themselves and to the unique flavors and unsurpassed quality of Tree House’s incomparable cakes. Perhaps the only provider of all-organic cupcakes in northern New Mexico, Tree House Pastry Shop and Café offers an ever-changing lineup of cupcakes—each adapted to the high desert environment—in flavors that range from seriously sinful to spectacularly sublime.

“Chocolate Devil’s Food and Vanilla Bean are the most popular,” says Bustamante-Bernal, “and we harvest those fresh each morning. But we also have developed varieties—Carrot Cake, Caramel with sea salt, Chocolate-Mocha, and Chai Spice—that



Maria Elena Bustamante-Bernal, owner of Tree House Pastry Shop and Cafe demonstrates the proper method of harvesting one of Tree House’s unique varieties of vine-ripened, organic, chocolate-mocha cupcakes.

are drought tolerant and seem to do particularly well at this elevation. We usually offer three or four different flavors each day depending on what's ripe and what suits our fancy. The variety keeps us on our toes, and our customers seem to enjoy the novelty."

And enjoy it they do. If the old saw "variety is the spice of life" is true, Tree House—with a rotating menu of 13 different flavors—serves up cupcakes 'spicy' enough to rival that better-known New Mexican staple: the chile pepper. "Well," says Bustamante-Bernal, "we haven't tried creating green chile cupcakes yet—I suppose that would be a more typical 'New Mexico' flavor—but from time to time we've served varieties of our Mayan Chile Chocolate cupcakes. They're pretty hot."



"Hotness," it seems, isn't only in the chile. This season, cupcakes are on fire. Despite a recent drop in the temperature, desire seems to be on the rise. Cupcakes are one crop ostensibly immune to the famously volatile New Mexico weather.

"When it comes to cupcakes, I don't think the weather matters much," says Bustamante-Bernal, "cold or hot, sun or rain, cupcakes are something you can enjoy anytime, no matter who or where you are. You just have to want to be there. The cupcakes will do the rest."

Sweet sentiment, richly deserved. With Tree House cupcakes on the menu, this looks to be one harvest season everyone can look forward to.

Location: Tree House Pastry Shop & Café, 3095 Agua Fria, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
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INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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