

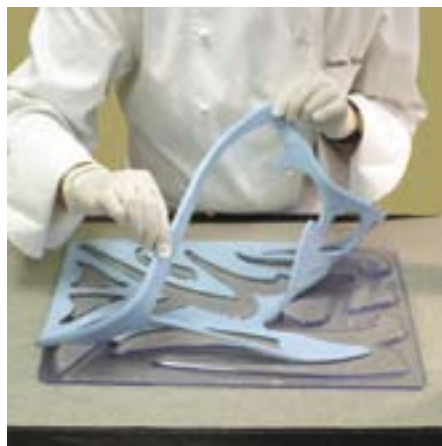
Calligraphy composition

Part II

Susan Notter has spent more than twenty years traveling the world teaching and demonstrating sugar artistry to chefs, pastry chefs and culinary students. She is a seasoned competitor and a master of blown and pulled sugar decoration, as well a co-author and contributor to several pastry books. Mindful of the time constraints that chefs face and the realities of the industry, Chef Notter has chosen to demonstrate how quickly and easily a casting mat can be used to create modern, expressive centerpieces.



1. Pour Isomalt at 330° F:
Chef Notter places the silicone casting mat atop a sheet of vinyl. Whenever pouring Isomalt onto vinyl, you must put parchment paper beneath it; otherwise, the heat will cause the vinyl to stick to the work surface below.



2. Allow to cool and then unmold:
The silicone casting mat is only ¼" thick and must be unmolded carefully. *Helpful hint:* When finished with the casting mat, store it flat in a sheet pan. Silicone has a memory and will warp if folded for a long period of time.



3. Peel the vinyl off the sugar:
Chef Notter slides the vinyl partially off the table so she can pull the vinyl down and away from the casting. (If you try to lift the sugar off the flat vinyl, you will run the risk of cracking the casting.)



4. Assemble the cast pieces:
For this composition, Chef Notter chooses to assemble a winged figure. It looks very similar to the original calligraphy shape.



5. Hand shape small pieces:
Using two of the extra shapes made with the casting mat, Chef Notter softens them under a heat lamp and folds them into a flower casing.



6. Position and attach:
To help visually balance this composition, Chef Notter chooses to place the flower casing at the foot of the figure.



7. Casting multicolored spheres:
To add a splash of color to the centerpiece, Chef Notter casts sugar spheres. She makes a multicolored sphere by filling the pop-up mold half-way with clear Isomalt.



8. Marbleize the color:
While the clear Isomalt is still liquid inside of the mold, Chef Notter tops off the mold with bright red sugar mixed with a touch of luster dust.



9. Allow to cool and then unmold:
In about 45 minutes the spheres can be unmolded. The silicone mold is flexible enough to pop the spheres out without tearing.



10. Clear the spheres with a torch:
Whenever casting sugar into a silicone mold, micro-bubbles will appear on the surface. To bring out the depth of color in the casting, the spheres must be 'cleared' with a torch. This removes the surface bubbles and creates a glossy shine on the surface.



11. Attach the sphere:
When choosing a place to add color, select an area where you want the viewer's eye to focus. Resist the temptation of filling up empty areas. Sometimes, less is more. (See photograph 27 for a close up of the sphere.)



12. Add a hand made element:
Chef Notter blows a white sugar bulb. Here, she opened the bulb and is softening the edges.



13. Attach the flower:
From start to finish, this centerpiece took less than 15 minutes to assemble.



14. Final composition:
Chef Notter has created an elegant composition with a good balance between hand blown and molded elements.

“The addition of pulled and blown decorative elements is a choice for each chef to make. Even without these finishing touches, the centerpieces are eye catching and beautiful in their simplicity.”
- Susan Notter

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Characters with a twist

The beautiful thing about casting mats is their unlimited potential. It is easy to pour several shapes quickly and still have the freedom to alter and change them as you wish. In the previous section, Chef Notter assembled a centerpiece similar to the original calligraphy character. Now, have a look and see how she adds a slight twist to her work.



15. Pour Isomalt:

Chef Notter has added black pigment to the clear Isomalt. Once mixed, white pearlescent powder is added to create a metallic effect. (The front shape has been poured in clear.)



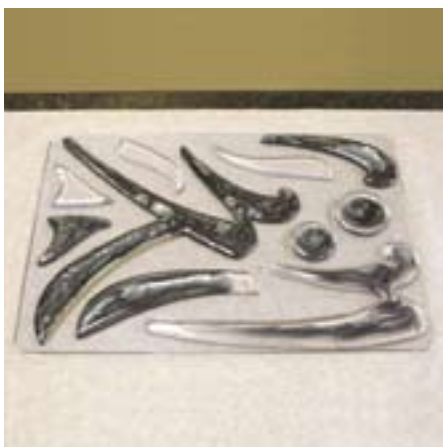
16. Pull the color:

For extra depth of color, Chef Notter has poured a stream of black Isomalt over the clear Isomalt (front). She then uses a knife to pull the color through the clear Isomalt. The result is a swirling streak.



17. Unmold the casting mat:

As mentioned previously, thin casting mats are delicate pieces of equipment that require care in handling. A casting mat made from platinum cured silicone will last for many years.



18. Vary tone and depth of color:

Notice the variety of tone Chef Notter has achieved. Keeping your colors in the same tonal range will help make your work look unified and balanced.



19. Remove castings from vinyl:

Chef Notter shows you the original 'core' shape of the calligraphy figure. As before, slide the vinyl off the table and pull the vinyl down, away from the casting.



20. Alter the shape:

To create a completely new composition, Chef Notter warms the casting under a heat lamp, inverts it and twists the legs.



21. Add pieces to the construction:
Additional cast pieces are added to the trunk. When working with dark colors, keep the darkest color at the base and the lighter colors towards the top.



22. Pulling the sugar:
Chef Notter begins to make a white sugar flower by pulling several flat petals from a mass of malleable sugar.



23. Rolling the pedals:
While the sugar is still pliable, the outside edges of the pedal are rolled towards each other.



24. Make lots of petals:
For the flower blossom, Chef Notter will need several cone-like petals. Notice that great pearlescent shine!



25. Assemble the flower bloom:
An alcohol lamp is used to melt the bottom of each flower petal. One by one, they are attached to each other. The result is a miniature bouquet of delicate flower petals. (With proficiency, it will be possible to make a flower like this in just a few minutes.)



26. Adding the decoration:
Using two spheres (cast earlier), Chef Notter looks for the best location to attach them. Since she already knows the white sugar flower will go in the center of the base, she uses the red spheres to create a visual frame that will 'book-end' the delicate handwork.



27. Multicolored sugar sphere:
Look at the glass-like depth of color in this sphere; simple and elegant. Remember, it only took two colors with a touch of luster dust to create this jewel. (See photographs 7 & 8.)



28. Position the flower:
As a finishing touch, Chef Notter attaches the hand-made flower to the base. Would you have guessed this piece was made from the same casting mat?



29. Diverse compositions:
The potential is limitless. With a few simple tools and a sense of composition, an endless variety of sculptures can be made.