

Title:

It's no Sugar Shack

Word Count:

393

Summary:

This article tells the reader about the Westin hotel in San Francisco and their latest confectionary marvel, a 12 foot sugar castle.

Keywords:

westin, hotels, san francisco, castle

Article Body:

It's a tradition now at the Westin St. Francis in San Francisco. Executive Pastry Chef, Jean-François Houdré, aka "King of the Castle," is diligently working day and night perfecting his signature 12-foot rotating holiday Sugar Castle, to be unveiled in the Tower Lobby of The Westin St. Francis on Friday, November 23.

"The creation of the Sugar Castle is truly a labor of love," says Chef Houdré. "Each year, I begin working on it two months in advance, adding more special touches and details each time. This year's version promises to be the best yet!" The inspiration to create this one-of-a-kind, grandiose Sugar Castle came from Chef Houdré's trip to Europe with his family in 2005. While traveling around Bordeaux, the Houdré family visited many remarkable châteaux, particularly Mont Saint Michel and La Cité de Carcassonne, which is one of Europe's most complete examples of a fortified abbey.

As the Houdré family toured these extravagant castles, his son Henri, age ten, and his daughter, Claudia, age eight, were able to experience an earlier time when royalty once occupied these magnificent castles centuries ago. From that experience, the children were able to convince their father that he must build a sugar castle at The Westin St. Francis to rival the royal castles in France and display it for children to visit during the holiday season.

Resembling a French Chateau from Chef Houdre's hometown of Bordeaux, the 100% edible castle is made of pastillage (a combination of powdered sugar, egg whites and gelatin dough), gingerbread, sugar, molasses, flour and candy. Weighing over 1200 pounds, this magical castle features more than 20 grand circular towers, approximately 30 rooms, illuminated windows, and is surrounded by a quaint village and a running train.

The castle is entirely edible, and is comprised of: 70 pounds of gingerbread, 130 pounds of pastillage (Powder sugar egg white and gelatin dough), 40 pounds of pulled and bubble sugar, Royal icing made of 300 pounds of sugar and egg whites, 40 pounds of molasses, 60 pounds of flour and 100 pounds of assorted Christmas Candy. It takes approximately 360 hours to complete the holiday masterpiece.

Opened more than a century ago on March 21, 1904, The Westin St. Francis is the only hotel located on San Francisco's famous Union Square, The Westin St. Francis is just steps from The City's best shopping, dining, theatres and art galleries. For reservations and more information, visit www.westinfrancis.com.