

Meet **Tracey West**

Owner, *Tracey West Irresistible Pound Cakes*

SHOUTOUT ATLANTA



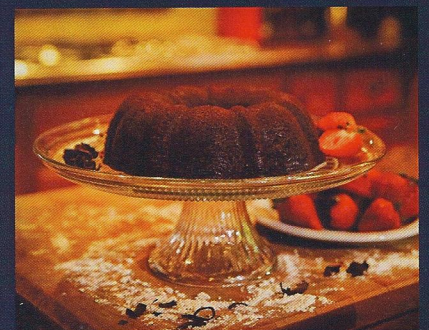
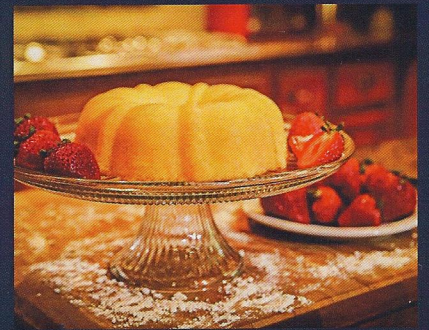
Today we'd like to introduce you to Tracey West

Hi Tracey, we'd love to hear more about how you thought about starting your own business?

I grew up in a family that loved to have family gatherings. On these occasions, each household would contribute a special dish. One of my fondest memories was of my Aunt Ola's pound cake. She made it every week for her husband, my Uncle Benny. Whenever I visited their home, it smelled like pound cake. I never saw how she made this delicious dessert. During those days, I was only interested in getting a slice. Aunt Ola had been deceased about eight years when I asked her daughters for her pound cake recipe. When I made it for the first time, it brought back many happy memories of my aunt and her warm embrace. I was so moved that I had to reach out to my family and share the experience. Of course, my cake did not turn out right, but my house smelled like my aunt's house used to, which triggered something inside me. I never knew that I had a gift for baking, nor did I know I would be taken on a pound cake journey of a lifetime. From that experience, I felt that my Aunt Ola's pound cake was too good not to share. Since my aunt was no longer with us, I wanted to start a business that would show my honor and respect for her and what she did for our family. I also wanted to show how a family tradition could be passed down from generation to generation to become a thriving, successful business.

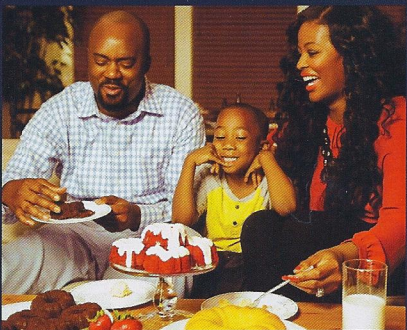
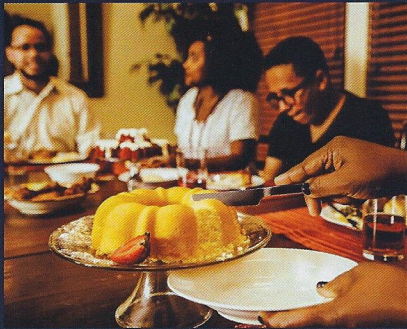
Alright, so for those in our community who might not be familiar with your business, can you tell us more?

Tracey West Irresistible Pound Cakes offers southern-style old fashioned pound cakes to businesses, government organizations, and online customers.



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I started from a family recipe, which is still in use today. The pound cakes come in two sizes – an 8 inch and individual minis. Pound cake flavors are butter, lemon, chocolate, red velvet, and butter rum. Customers can add their company's logo or picture to customize our packaging, which can be used for grab bag gifts, special events, and corporate gifts. The business is located in Atlanta, Georgia, and can ship nationwide. No matter if you order one cake or several thousand, all pound cakes are handcrafted in small batches and maintain my aunt's unique taste, texture, and quality.

One thing I am most proud of is how I gained national recognition just by sharing my aunt's pound cake with others. My business has been featured several times, most notably in Essence Magazine, and I was a vendor at a private party that served over 10,000 people. I had the help of many mentors since starting my business. These mentors have guided me through some of the rough patches that most businesses face in the startup phase. It has not been easy, but well worth it to get me where I am today. The biggest lesson I have learned so far in business and in life is to never give up! No matter how hard it seems, I must continue to move forward. If I make a mistake, I will learn from it and keep moving. I did not get this far on my pound cake journey by quitting, so I am not starting now.

This year has been the most trying because of COVID-19. A part of my business model is centered around large corporate events and conferences. Due to social distancing guidelines, these types of events were canceled. As a part of my pivot strategy, I started working on a new product line, which includes pound cake mixes that customers can bake at home. I look forward to launching it by the second quarter of 2021.

**Any places to eat or things to do that you can share with our readers?
If they have a friend visiting town, what are some spots they could take them to?**

As an alumna of Clark Atlanta University and being from the south, I would take a friend to two iconic soul food restaurants in the Atlanta University Center area: The Busy Bee Cafe and Pascal's. I would then choose several events to attend during the week. There is nothing like the performing arts. You can watch a play, concert, dance recital, or listen to spoken word. To get some exercise in while visiting a beautiful location, I would stop by the Aquarium and the National Civil Rights Museum. Of course, shopping is a must and a great way to spend hours laughing and catching up. I would end the week by taking my friend(s) to my church, Antioch Baptist Church North, and close the day with some ice cream and, of course, my irresistible pound cake.

The Shoutout series is all about recognizing that our success and where we are in life is at least somewhat thanks to the efforts, support, mentorship, love and encouragement of others. So is there someone that you want to dedicate your shoutout to?

If it were not for my family, I would not be where I am today. They have provided me with love, support, and encouragement from the start. I would like to recognize my Aunt Ola's daughters – Alberta Brown, Orine Pelham, and Elizabeth Williams. When I asked them for their mom's recipe, they said yes without any hesitation. They have provided me with childhood memories of baking with their mom, baking tips, and strategies along the way. I have sent them numerous samples of products to taste and have called them too many times to count with questions. My goal is to always honor their mom in whatever I do with her pound cake recipe. This has truly been a labor of love and my family has been with me every step of the way. I would also like to recognize my late sister, Jennifer Elliott, who passed in 2017. She used to call herself the Vice President of the company. Her only job was just to eat pound cake. She was instrumental in supporting me in the beginning and would still be doing so if she were here today.

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