

25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

COLLECTOR'S
EDITION

MARTHA STEWART

Living

**time to
celebrate!**

**229
SEASONAL
DELIGHTS &
SURPRISES**

Martha works her magic in a sugar-crafted fantasyland, as painted by artist Will Cotton.

December 2015/January 2016
\$4.99 USA (CAN \$5.99)
marthastewart.com



Our Silver Anniversary

Celebrating 25 glorious years of amazing creativity and inspiration.

It seems like yesterday that we published our very first issue of *Martha Stewart Living*. Each and every one of our 260 issues has been true to my original vision that a true lifestyle publication must instruct, inspire, and enhance the reader's life in as many ways as possible.

This anniversary issue continues to do just that, with some extraordinary bonuses, such as the cover and the “Visions of Sugar” story (page 105), developed and orchestrated by artist Will Cotton and our talented editor in chief Eric Pike, style editor Kate Berry, and pastry chef Jason Schreiber.

In his sweet heaven of a studio in downtown Manhattan, Will Cotton works not just with paint and paper and brushes, but with sugar, flour, and egg whites. He also, as artists are wont to do, brings in other materials—in this case, a flexible and inedible substance with which he embellished my Valentino dress. He transformed it from a lacy

summer linen frock into an object worthy of inclusion in his idea of a sugary, white winter wonderland, into which he painted me so artistically and beautifully.

I think that our ability to stay true to our mission and vision has kept you, the reader, interested and avid, ready to expand your knowledge and hone your homemaking skills as we expand and enlarge our universe of “living well.” I know we are striking a chord with you—our readership has continued to grow. We thank you so much for your ongoing support, and we promise that our next 260 issues will be as definitive and unique and inspiring as the last.

I would like to wish you and your families a very happy holiday season. And let us know (at living@marthastewart.com) how you liked this special magazine—the imaginative Christmas trees, the wrapped entrées, the delectable desserts. And, of course, the cover.

—Martha Stewart

AN ARTIST AT WORK
1. Here I am with Will, wearing the dress with his intricate piping. **2.** He used star and round tips in a variety of sizes. **3.** Will used a maulstick to steady his hand as he painted details. **4.** He taped up a picture of a real snowy scene to provide a true sense of space and color as he painted. The cookie tree, at right, provided another reference. **5.** Will piping a cookie, which was reproduced in grand scale in the painting. If you would like to know more about the artist, look for his book *Will Cotton: Paintings and Works on Paper* (Rizzoli, 2011).

DECEMBER / JANUARY

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL ANDERSON



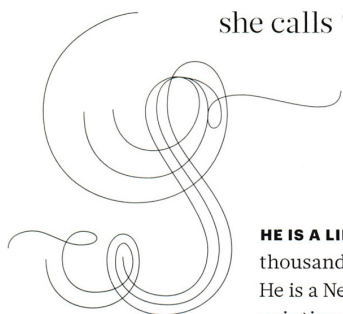
A COOKIE A DAY...

In honor of our magazine's 25th anniversary, we've gathered our favorite cookies and hidden them, countdown-style, behind little doors in this sweet winter wonderland. There's a treat to anticipate for every day in December through Christmas—each from one of the years *Martha Stewart Living* has been published. Find all the recipes at marthastewart.com/cookie-calendar.

► For a key with the names of each of these cookies, turn to the How-to Handbook.

VISIONS OF SUGAR

When Martha and artist Will Cotton embarked on what she calls “a painterly journey” to a confectionary fantasyland, the partnership yielded an exquisite portrait—and inspired a collection of dreamy holiday desserts.



HE IS A LIFELONG BAKER AND THE CREATOR OF thousands of recipes for delectable desserts. He is a New York City artist whose celebrated paintings feature cakes, cookies, ice cream, and candies in fantastical landscapes. Like sugar and spice, Martha and Will Cotton are different but complementary—and they both beckon others into the worlds they create. Since *Living*'s first issue, in 1990, Martha has invited readers to escape into its pages: to dream, to learn, to be inspired—and then to take the ideas and make them their own. And through his paintings, Cotton sets forth on an adventure, creating a destination where viewers are enticed into joining him. “I want the scene to feel like I was actually there,” he says. “I want you to believe it’s a real place.”

Just as much of Martha’s creativity is rooted in skills she learned as a girl—cooking, gardening, and crafting—Cotton’s current work has origins in his childhood. While his early pieces reference desire through advertising icons and consumer culture, his themes of consumption and insatiability took a new direction in the mid-1990s: While visiting his cousins, he came across the Candy Land game (“an earthly paradise,” says Cotton) that they had played as children. With its colorful depictions of Molasses Swamp, Lollypop Woods, and Peppermint Stick Forest, the vintage game board became the jumping-off point for the powerful, evocative scenes (they are never simply “sweet”) that the artist is now known for.

Cotton’s work doesn’t begin with paint or a canvas, but with sugar, eggs, and butter. Around the same time that he stumbled across the board game, he moved into a loft

apartment that had nothing in it, not even a real kitchen. The day Cotton finally got an oven, “I was so excited, I baked a cake,” he says. He started baking more and more. “I would wonder, *How do you do that?*” he says. “Then I would consult Martha’s recipes in her books and magazines, and I felt like I was learning from her. It was illuminating.” Her recipes for gingerbread houses, sugar cookies, angel food cake, and pralines became part of his repertoire.

Cotton has since had some formal culinary training (including studying macarons with pastry chef Philippe Andrieu at France’s famed Ladurée). His painting process involves using his own baked goods—macarons, meringues, cakes, and other confections—to make maquettes, or scale models, of the scenes he imagines. Eventually, Cotton began incorporating people into his work (he is well known for having created the cover art for *Teenage Dream*, Katy Perry’s 2010 album), who are often wearing his sugary creations. “He tampers with high fashion in a most unusual way,” says Martha, referring to her Valentino linen dress, which Cotton encrusted with beautiful, intricate piping. (He used an inedible material that looks like royal icing but won’t break when bent.) After photographing both his subjects and the sweets—oftentimes separately—Cotton assembles the pictures into collages that serve as visual references as he paints.

The finished works are hyperreal and, as such, sometimes mistaken for photographs. But look closely at his paintings and you’ll see Cotton’s brushstrokes. “You might think that it looks easy,” says Martha. “But there’s nothing easy about it. It’s art.” —Amy Conway