



Eric Lanlard has big plans for 2014...

THE CAKE BOY TAKEOVER

Ahead of his upcoming Taste of Dubai appearance, master patissier Eric Lanlard tells Pratyush Sarup why he loves to share his passion for baking all over the world - especially in the UAE

Eric Lanlard is no stranger to celebrities and baking. He created Madonna's wedding cake, Brooklyn Beckham's first birthday cake and he's even baked for Queen Elizabeth II.

But ask him which was the most stressful cake he's ever baked and he'll say it's the one he created for Claudia Schiffer's wedding – a three-tier classic milk chocolate cake decorated with edible flowers.

Why was it so tricky? "She wanted milk chocolate inside the cake," he

says. "But as that doesn't set hard like dark chocolate, we had to insert it on the day and then ice the cake in the marquee." Thankfully it worked and it was one of the most talked-about baking experiments for a long time.

Now looking forward to Taste of Dubai coming up on March 13 to 15, he is excited about the city and the possibilities it offers to food lovers.

In an exclusive interview with *Friday*, the master baker reveals what he loves about Dubai, his view on hospitality and what this year means to him and to the food world:

What was your first experience of Dubai and the UAE?

In 1999 I was invited to the opening of the Burj Al Arab. While I was blown away by the opulence of the hotel's decor and its groundbreaking structure, I was touched by Dubai's respect for local traditions.

On my second visit to Dubai it was my birthday and I stayed at the One&Only Royal Mirage – another favourite of mine. The set-up was magical and the hotel organised a chef to cook me an authentic Middle Eastern meal. It did not feel touristy at all.

