

Sweet surprise hit

'Cake Boss' the new icing on TLC's lineup

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Tv Critic

Post Rating: ★★☆☆

IF someone had told me that yet another Italian-American family from New Jersey was going to be the hit of cable, I would have said: "Oh, no. Not another mobbed-up, big-haired, horrible-house-dwelling bunch of stereotypes."

And I would have been wrong.

Incredibly -- for TV anyway -- this family

is none of those things and they've moved into the hearts and stomachs of America like the love kids of [Martha Stewart](#) and [Danny Aiello](#).

I'm talking about the family of the **'Cake Boss'**, Bobby Valastro, who is himself the Carravaggio of cakes, the DaVinci of desserts -- and as good an Italian-American role model as you'll find on TV.



JERSEY 'BOSS': Buddy Valastro's family bakery is in Hoboken.

Even though the Valastros didn't take fertility drugs to produce freakishly large litters of kids, they are as good a replacement for the grotesque Gosslins as TLC will ever find.

Unlike other reality TV shows, which just show greed, dysfunction and, yes, criminality, "Cake Boss" shows art, family love and fun.

In case you are not yet one of its loyal fans, the show takes place in a bakery in Hoboken that turns out the most spectacular cakes this side of heaven.

It's a wonder to watch Bobby and his staff create cakes that fit what the customer wants -- everything from buildings to bling, from garments to gardens.

Bobby, of course, is the cake boss, a man who has single-handedly made "fondant" a household word. (That's the edible stuff they wrap around cakes, and with which they create shapes like flowers, shoes, you name it.)

Tonight, as the show's second season begins, Bobby is asked to make a bling cake for a man who wants to propose right in the bakery, since he and his girlfriend stop for pastry there all the time.

The other big order this week is from the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens -- where a publishing party for a book about poisonous plants is taking place.

Bobby is truly in his element figuring out

how to make a cake with a gigantic diamond on the top.

After you see him do it, for sure you'll think you can do it, too. Trust me, don't try this at home.

Then there's the poisonous plants. Unbelievably, Bobby, his family and staff figure out how to make a gigantic Venus Fly Trap cake which is then surrounded by other poisonous plants all made from chocolate and, yes, fondant. (I mean, who knew that eating hydrangeas could cause you to live the rest of your life on the potty?)

Of course, since it's a family working together, there are all the usual -- and unusual -- life crises, as well as the fights, the tricks, the attempts to deliver cakes that are bigger than humans.

Do I believe all these crises are genuine? No.

For example, is it possible that the staff really misplaces the diamond ring? I mean, why would the guy leave the ring there in the first place.

So what if, like the fondant flowers, not everything you see is real? It's tasty nonetheless.

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