

*new* **ON AND OFF THE AVENUE**  
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**T**HIS is perhaps a pointless reflection, or at least one that is not especially appropriate to these practical columns, but I have frequently noticed that whereas English intellectuals are content with worse food than any other single group on earth—with American writers almost nosing them out of bottom place—the intelligentsia of Continental Europe have always had an extraordinarily discriminating palate, collectively, and the female writers, professors, artists, and so on from that part of the world turn out remarkably fine dishes. I was forcibly struck by the truth of all this when I recently sampled some pastry made by Mrs. Ferenc Kormendi, who is the wife of a Hungarian writer and an intellectual lady of parts herself, and who makes and sells pastries that are nothing short of perfection.

The fact that this Hungarian pastry maker does not include strudel—the tour de force of every mediocre Hungarian baker in town—in her repertory is itself a distinction. What she does offer is a small selection of sweets that, I am told, were rarely, if ever, seen in shops or restaurants even in prewar Budapest but were met with in old-fashioned homes where work in the kitchen held no terrors for the lady of the house. Chief among these Hungarian specialties, and one that I predict will have a dazzling New York future, is a fragile little tart called *kosárka*, the shell of which is a *pâte brisée* made of flour, egg yolks, and sweet butter, and the filling of which is a paste of ground walnuts. These exquisite creations (they are exquisite to the eye as well as to the palate) are classed as coffeecakes in their native land, and they do make an ideal accompaniment for either coffee or tea, being not too sweet, and of a lightness that leads to their consumption in shameless quantities during a sociable afternoon. For New York hostesses, the *kosárkas* should provide a perfect solution to the vexing problem of

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dessert for a buffet party, since they are neither overly moist nor the least bit sticky, and can easily be eaten in the fingers. Moreover, a heaped platter of the cakes, each of which is topped with a fanciful little twist that looks like a pastry butterfly, makes a striking decoration. They are about the size of cupcakes, and they cost \$2 a dozen.

Less unusual, but also delicious, is a confection called Rigo Jancsi, which is baked either in individual pieces or as a large *torte*. It is made of two layers of very rich chocolate cake put together with coffee-flavored whipped cream and iced with a black bitter chocolate that has only a hint of sweetness. Eight individual servings cost \$2.80, and a nine-inch *torte*, enough for a dozen or more servings, costs \$4.50. A cake that makes a magnificent dinner dessert is the Malakhov loaf, which consists of three or four layers of ladyfingers, a buttercream

filling mixed with parched almonds and flavored with rum, and an icing of cherry-strewn whipped cream. A nine-inch Malakhov, enough to serve nine or ten people, costs \$4.50, and a twelve-inch one costs \$5. It will give you an idea of this scrupulous pastry maker's standards when I say that in listing the ingredients of the Malakhov for me, she assumed that it went without saying that the ladyfingers used in its construction are homemade. Mrs. Kormendi's address is 56 East 89th Street, her telephone number is Enright 9-1040, and orders must be placed twenty-four hours in advance. There is a fifty-cent charge for delivery.

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His article: "H's rebellious muse" ~~see in~~  
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