STRAWBERRY-MANGO ENTREMET CAKE
(adapted from Modern French Pastry)

for the side-decoration:
50 g butter
56 g powdered sugar
60 g egg whites (about 2 eggs)
56 g all-purpose flour
red food coloring

Mix the butter and sugar in a Kitchen Aid type mixer with the paddle attachment until creamy. Add the egg whites very slowly, a little at a time. Clean the sides of the bowl often. Add the flour and gently mix on very low-speed, then add the food dye.

Lay the stencil you intend to use on a Silpat, or if drawing a pattern free-hand, lay the design on parchment paper to make it easier to draw with the batter. Brush the batter on the stencil, then scrape all excess off with a bench scraper. You will not use all the batter made, but it is easier to work with more than you need. Gently pull the stencil up. See my composite photo under the recipe.

Freeze the design for an hour or so. You can do this step the day before. Do not remove from the freezer until you are ready to bake the cake layer.

Joconde Cake Layer
65 g powdered sugar, sifted
36 g pastry flour
65 g almond flour
100 g eggs (whole eggs, at room temperature)
120 g egg whites (from about 4 eggs)
30 g granulated sugar
75 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Heat the oven to 400 F. Add powdered sugar, flour and almond meal to the bowl of a mixer. Mix gently to incorporate them. Add the eggs and beat on high-speed for about 5 minutes, until very fluffy. Reserve.

Make a meringue with the egg whites and sugar, bringing it to soft peaks. Start with the egg whites in the mixer on low-speed, increase to medium, once you see a trail forming as the mixer is going, start adding the sugar slowly. Once you get to soft peaks, stop. Over-beating the meringue will make it hard to incorporate it in the cake batter. Gently fold the meringue on the egg-flour mixture that you reserved. Add a bit of the mixture to the bowl with melted butter, mix gently. Pour that into the cake batter and gently fold.

Remove the stencil design from the freezer, pour the batter over it, trying to level it as best as you can with an off-set spatula. You want to keep the air incorporated in the

batter, so be gentle. Run the spatula just over the surface, you don't want to risk disturbing the pattern underneath it.

Bake for 12 to 14 minutes. You need to start noticing a little browning on the surface, but not much. If you notice the edges getting crunchy, remove from the oven. Let it cool before proceeding.

Mango-Flavored Meringue
30 g powdered sugar, sifted
30 g pulverized freeze-dried mangos (use a food processor)
80 g egg whites
80 g granulated sugar

Heat the oven to 350 F. Trace two 8 inch circles on parchment paper, and place it over Silpat. Prepare a large piping bag fitted with either a large (1/2 inch) piping tip, or just cut the bag with that dimension.

Mix the powdered sugar with the pulverized mango and reserve. Make a meringue with the egg whites and sugar as described for the Joconde layer. There is a lot of sugar in this version, so you don't have to worry about over-beating. Once you get to stiff peaks, mix the mango-sugar mixture, folding it delicately.

Spoon the mixture in the prepared piping bag, and pipe it on the Silpat, in each of the circles, starting from the center. Leave a little border empty, as you want the meringue to be smaller than the diameter of the cake. You can see in the central picture of the meringue composite that the pencil drawing is about 0.5 inch larger. You could conceivably draw a smaller circle, but it is easier to see where you are and stop short, then risk going too much over it. Still, do whatever feels better for you.

Bake for 20 to 22 minutes. Meringue should feel dry to the touch and just be starting to brown.

Strawberry Mousse
12 g powdered gelatin
60 g cold water to boom gelatin
350 g strawberry puree (use the food processor)
175 g powdered sugar
350 g heavy cream

Combine gelatin with cold water and allow it to bloom for a few minutes. Place the strawberry puree in a saucepan, add the powdered sugar and mix gently over low-heat until warm.

Whisk the cream in a Kitchen Aid type mixer to soft peaks. Do not over-beat. Reserve.

Melt the gelatin in a microwave, in very short bursts, keeping a close eye, as you don't want it to boil, just melt smoothly. Add some of the strawberry puree to the gelatin to incorporate it in, then pour the mixture into the rest of the puree. Mix gently, but well, you want the gelatin to be fully distributed throughout the fruit. Add 1/3 of the puree to the whipped cream, fold. Add the remaining of the puree, fold gently. The mousse is now ready to use.

Strawberry Gelatin Topping
5 g powdered gelatin
25 g cold water
75 g soaking syrup (water and sugar in equal weights, dissolved by heating)
75 g strawberry puree (passed through a sieve to remove seeds)
red food dye, just a tiny drop (optional)

Combine the gelatin with water to bloom for a few minutes. Heat the soaking syrup, add the gelatin and stir until fully melted. Slowly stir the strawberry puree and food coloring, if using. Refrigerate until needed. When ready to finish the cake, warm it in a microwave in very short bursts of heat, until it's about 90 F.

ASSEMBLING THE CAKE
Dust the cool Joconde cake with granulated sugar. Place a parchment paper on top, and flip it. Remove the silicone sheet slowly, and marvel at the pattern that you see! Now you need to decide the dimension of the cake strips. In the book he recommends 1.75 inches, but I did about 2 inches. You need two strips of cake with the exact same dimension, and they will go around the perimeter of an 8-inch diameter cake ring. With what is left of the cake, cut one circle a little smaller than 8-inches in diameter, as it will sit inside the perimeter laid by the cake strips.

Place an acetate strip inside the cake ring. Lay the cake strips with the design facing out, they should fit very snuggly, so it is best to allow them to overlap slightly, then force them into place. Now place one meringue ring at the bottom. Add one-third of the mousse over it. Top the mousse with the cake circle, the design can be facing up or down, it does not matter as you won't see it. Add another third of the mousse. Place the second meringue ring on top, add the rest of the mousse, and spread as flat as you can, trying to make it almost leveled with the top of the cake strips. Freeze overnight. If needed, you can trim the top of the cake layer with scissors before finishing the cake.

Remove from the freezer, and pour the warmed up strawberry topping. Do it quickly, as it will solidify. Remove the cake from the ring, pushing it from the bottom, gently but with authority… Place it on a serving platter, and decorate with freshly cut strawberries.