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FOOD & BEVERAGE

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Excerpted from

The Best of New Orleans **by Marla Cimini**



How far would you go for a cupcake? This tiny café in the gentrified Faubourg Marigny section of town is positioned under-the-radar, but has caught the eyes of many loyal fans. Owner Steve Himelfarb, A.K.A. "The Cake Man" is a fixture in this up-and-coming neighborhood, and together with business partner and pastry chef Allison Gorlin bakes heavenly cakes and cupcakes with flavors like red velvet, chocolate mint and pineapple upside-down.

With its upbeat atmosphere and impressive down home comfort food, New Orleans Cake Café and Bakery invites guests to linger leisurely over chicory coffee or simply dash in for a quick bite. A friendly, hard-working staff warmly greets hungry visitors from all walks of life to this cozy, homey café. Though space can be a bit cramped here, an eclectic crowd of hipsters enjoys delectable breakfast and lunch specials next to long-time neighborhood residents, along with a few tourists seeking a little adventure.

Loyal customers may come for the sublime cakes, bagels, croissants and cupcakes, but return for the salads, omelets, sandwiches -- and even crab and oyster specials. The French toast with fresh challah atop homemade orange-pecan syrup is a sure bet, as well as the shrimp and organic grits with sautéed tomato and onion.