

Hors d'Oeuvres Party ~ Formal

A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

For their 40th anniversary party this particular client requested an over-the-top hors d'oeuvre party with a wild number of choices (twenty-one in all). Rubies are the symbol of the 40th anniversary, so I suggested this as a possible theme for the menu. The client later called and added two additional themes: A Midsummer Night's Dream and Summer Garden Party.

RUBY RED

Ruby Queen and Chioggia Beet Risotto Arancini

Fresh Homemade Mozzarella

Heirloom Tomato Tartlets

Apple Smoked Pancetta

Skewered Balsamic Flank Steak

Grilled Red Pearl Onions and Rubied Pears

Twice Baked Ruby Crescent Potatoes

Porcinis and Truffle Butter

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Wild Mushroom Croustades

Puff Pastry Cups

Wild Boar Sausage and Leek Croustades

Phyllo-Tartlet Cups

Pekin Duck and Venison Loin

Cider-Baked Apples, Radicchio, and Cherry Chutney in Earl Grey Crepes

Broiled Fresh Apricots and Figs

Prosciutto, Gorgonzola, and Walnuts

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

Caviar Crema

In Little Leaf Cucumber Cups

Miniature Camembert and Honey-Glazed Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches

Sugar Plum and Sour Cherry Confit

Miniature Tarragon Chicken Salad Sandwiches

Campari Tomatoes and Micro Greens on Shallot-Walnut Rolls

Curried Scallop Cakes

Green Chili Chutney and Wasabi Micro Greens

Chilled Sweet Pea and Fava Bean Soup

Wood Grilled Shrimp

CHEESE TRAY AND ARTISAN BREADS

Asparagus, Leek, Shiitake Mushroom, and Labneh Terrine

On Ficelle Toasts

Assorted Artisan Cheeses

Fresh Seasonal Fruits

Golden Pan Fried Three Cheese Raviolis

Arrabiata and Homemade Ricotta

White Velvet Batter Bread, Honey Herb Bread, and Walnut Bread Toasts

Home-Churned Butters

DESSERT TRAY

Lemon and Lime Cream Tartlets

Whipped Ginger-Cardamom Cream and Citrus Dust

Chocolate-Cardamom Tartlets

Homemade Mascarpone Ice Cream

Muscovado and Homemade Yogurt Panna Cotta

Red Grape Gelée

TEETOTALERS BAR AND MUNCHIES

Miniature Gougères

Saint Agur Bleu, English Cheddar, and Gruyère

Sweet Herbal Iced Tea

Citrus and Mint

COFFEE SERVICE

Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaf and Assorted Loose Teas

With Accompaniments

MENU DESCRIPTIONS:

RUBY RED

Ruby Queen and Chioggia Beet Risotto Arancini

Fresh Homemade Mozzarella

- We put a jewel colored twist on the traditional Italian cheese stuffed risotto balls. We first start by making a silky smooth risotto with roasted Ruby Queen and Chioggia beets, our homemade chicken stock, white wine and Arborio rice resulting in a creamy ruby red risotto. The cooled rice is formed into small balls, stuffed with freshly homemade mozzarella and lightly fried until golden with a creamy cheesy core. Each arancini is served on miniature cocktail forks in ruby colored demi-cups with bull's blood beet shoots.

Heirloom Tomato Tartlets

Apple Smoked Pancetta

- The season's best selection of heirloom tomatoes is piled high in pâté brisée tartlets (formed in fluted Sandbakkel tartlet tins), topped with our own mozzarella, yellow cheddar, fresh basil, green onions and blood orange infused crème fraîche before being baked until piping hot and caramelized. Topped with apple smoked pancetta, these generous three-bite jewels look like roughly cut rubies. Passed on earthenware platters garnished with red kaiware shoots and a light dusting of our own blood orange powder.

Skewered Balsamic Flank Steak

Grilled Red Pearl Onions and Rubied Pears

- Wonderfully flavorful flank steak is marinated for 48 hours in our freshly squeezed white grape juice, imported aged balsamic vinegar, Muscovado brown sugar, hoisin, tomato paste, garlic and fresh picked rosemary along with red pearl onions and Bosc pears before being skewered on bamboo paddle picks and wood grilled to caramelized perfection. Passed on earthenware platters with marinade reduction and white grapes.

Twice Baked Ruby Crescent Potatoes

Porcinis and Truffle Butter

- Once-baked baby Ruby Crescent Potato skins are generously filled with a creamy mash of potato, sautéed porcini mushrooms, fresh sage leaves, Gruyère, Danish Viking sea salt and black truffle butter before being twice-baked until lightly charred and slightly crispy-skinned. Passed on earthenware platters on a bed of heated dried ruby turtle beans to retain the potatoes heat and complete the ruby theme.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Wild Mushroom Croustades

Puff Pastry Cups

- A forest of fresh wild mushrooms including Chanterelle, Crimini, Porcini, Morel and Oyster are flash sautéed with shallots, garlic chives, citrus, kaffir lime leaves, fresh herbs, sweet cream and white truffle oil before being loaded into buttery puff pastry shells and baked until airy and tender. These little treasures are always a hit and a true midsummer night's dream. Passed on hand-carved wood platters with garlic chives bundles, fresh wild mushroom garnish and lime leaves.

Wild Boar Sausage and Leek Croustades

Phyllo-Tartlet Cups

- To ensure the highest quality we grind our own sausage meat made with premium pork tenderloin, wild boar shoulder, fresh herbs and spices. The sweet and earthy flavors mingle beautifully with fresh sautéed leeks, summer savory, chive and parsley, all piled high in phyllo cups with a touch of homemade coddled cream that melts down into the meat as the tartlets bake in the oven. Shakespeare himself would be at a loss for words. Passed on hand-carved wood platters with fresh herb bundles and edible snapdragon blossoms

Pekin Duck and Venison Loin

Cider-Baked Apples, Radicchio, and Cherry Chutney in Earl Grey Crepes

- The hunt is on. A dry rub of black peppercorns, juniper berries, fennel seeds and dry thyme coat loin of venison and Pekin duck breasts which are then slow roasted to medium rare. Thin slices of meat are then layered (separately) inside small crepes imbued with the flavor of Earl Grey tea along with cider baked Summer Pearmain apples, a chiffonade of radicchio and our Sour Cherry Chutney. Here, the illusion of midsummer gives way to the flavors of fall. Each crepe is tied with edible flowering garlic chives and decoratively arranged on hand-carved wood platters.

Broiled Fresh Apricots and Figs

Prosciutto, Gorgonzola, and Walnuts

- The season marks the moment that fresh Goldbar apricots and Black Mission figs make their way to farmer's market and what better way to celebrate their sweet juicy goodness than by wrapping them tightly and broiling with imported salty prosciutto, the tangy bite of gorgonzola and the earthiness of walnuts. Simple yet sublime. Passed on hand-carved wood platters with edible petite amaranth tops.

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

Caviar Crema

In Little Leaf Cucumber Cups

- Let's get this garden party started. Crisp Miniature Little Leaf cucumbers are sliced into thick wheels and hollowed to form cups that are filled with a creamy crème of labneh, fresh picked dill, petite red onion, citrus juice and the large pinkish-orange roe of salmon that pop in the mouth with each bite. Gardner's never had it so good. Each cup is topped with a single lavender-hued micro chive blossom and served on Antique earthenware platters with fresh flowers.

Miniature Camembert and Honey-Glazed Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches

Sugar Plum and Sour Cherry Confit

- Tiny sandwiches made with miniature fresh baked honey-herb rolls, a dollop of fresh sugar plum and fresh sour cherry confit, thick slices of Camembert cheese and grilled pork tenderloin with a honey and plum wine glaze and a fan of honey glazed fresh sugar plum. Each two- to three-bite sandwich screams summer in every conceivable way. Each roll is baked – topped with two baby sage leaves for visual splendor and a pierced with 4-inch twisted skewer. Served on celery-green platters with fresh flowers.

Miniature Tarragon Chicken Salad Sandwiches

Campari Tomatoes and Micro Greens on Shallot-Walnut Rolls

- We fresh bake tiny shallot-walnut rolls, each topped with a single walnut, and stuff them with crème fraîche-poached and then lightly grilled chicken breast that's bathed in homemade mayonnaise, sour cream, walnuts, celery, shallot, handfuls of fresh tarragon and just a hint of crispy bacon. Exactly what I serve my own guests... garden party or not. Each two- to three-bite sandwich is layered with sliced Campari tomato, micro magenta spinach and pierced with a 4-inch twisted skewer and served on floral earthenware platters with fresh flowers.

Curried Scallop Cakes

Green Chili Chutney and Wasabi Micro Greens

- For those that love a little elegance and spice we've taken the traditional crab cake to whole new level. Fresh sea scallops are cubed and mixed with green onions, cilantro, yellow curry, dry mustard, panko and mayonnaise and pan seared into thick little "cakes". Each cake is topped with a small dollop of green chili chutney, micro wasabi tendrils and herbed crème fraîche and served in dim sum spoons with pitchfork picks. Beautifully presented on elegantly curved fish platters in three undulating shapes.

Chilled Sweet Pea and Fava Bean Soup

Wood Grilled Shrimp

- Nothing says summer quite like freshly shucked sweet peas and fava beans, and here we've brought the two together in a creamy chilled soup made with Valencia orange and a light kiss of fresh garden herbs. The soups are served in shooter shot glasses with a large wood-grilled shrimp draped over the lip of the glass with two beautiful popcorn shoots. The bright green of the soup with the subtle pink of the shrimp is as spectacular to see as it is to sip and crunch. Served on Tiffany-blue platters with fresh flowers.

CHEESE TRAY AND ARTISAN BREADS

Asparagus, Leek, Shiitake Mushroom, and Labneh Terrine

On Ficelle Toasts

- I first made this terrine to impress my mother, the consummate cook, and she still mentions it all these years later. A very small yet long terrine mold (12 x 2 ¼ x 1 ¾ -inch resulting in gorgeous little slices), is lined with baby leek leaves and then packed with goat cheese, labneh (Greek yogurt style cheese), pencil

thin asparagus and shiitake mushrooms. The presentation is stunning when sliced. Perfect cross sections of the asparagus and shiitakes dot the creamy white cheeses. Served with slices of toasted ficelle. Placed with the cheese tray on long bamboo cutting boards.

Assorted Artisan Cheeses

Fresh Seasonal Fruits

- A selection of three large artisan cheese wedges that are found to be the best at the time of your party are served on large cake stands with grapes, fresh fruits, berries and crackers, so your guests can enjoy a bite during those extremely brief moments when a passed platter of hors d'oeuvres is not within reach. The cheeses are a delight, but equally impressive is the wonderful and dramatic presentation...Ruby Red, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Garden Party in one.

Golden Pan Fried Three Cheese Raviolis

Arrabiata and Homemade Ricotta

- Large three cheese raviolis with fresh herbs are dusted in cornmeal and shallow fried until crispy on the outside and tender and gooey on the inside. Perfect on their own, but absolutely fiery when dipped in our own homemade ricotta cheese and our spicy arrabiata sauce made with fresh vine ripened Roma tomatoes, garlic, onion, imported parmigiano reggiano cheese, and red pepper flakes. Placed in a large low bowl, the ricotta creates a striking white island surrounded by the brilliant red of the arrabiata 'sea'. Looks too good to eat, but you will anyway.

White Velvet Batter Bread, Honey Herb Bread, and Walnut Bread Toasts

Home-Churned Butters

- A selection of three of our favorite breads served with our own hand-churned butter. First, we have the White Velvet Batter Bread which puffs up high above their oval bowls while they bake. I crack up every time I pull the loaves from the oven and see what height they've gained, but I'm soon silenced by the truly velvety, almost creamy, texture of the loaves interior. Second, my favorite loaf of all time, the Honey-Herb Bread whose recipe I wrestled from my mother many years ago. Handfuls of parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme along with both wheat and bread flours, local wild clover honey and fresh whole milk. The third bread is earthy but as light as air. Onion walnut bread is made with toasted walnuts and sweet shallots that are lightly sautéed in walnut oil and a touch of white truffle oil. This bread is perfect when spread with creamy cheeses. Served along with the breads is our own home-churned butter churned from our own homemade crème fraîche. The result is a butter that has a slight tang, slight sweetness and full buttery taste that's been lost for generations. One of each large round loaf is thickly sliced and toasted for the cheese presentation and held in a tall square bowl so they can stand tall and be seen by all.

DESSERT TRAY

Lemon and Lime Cream Tartlets

Whipped Ginger-Cardamom Cream and Citrus Dust

- Pucker up. When you're in the mood for cream, citrus and flaky pâte brisée pastry crust you've found your salvation. Citrus in three forms finds its way into these creamy tartlets with lemon and lime juice, zest and dust. Sandbakkel tartlet tins in 6 unique shapes form the crusts that are filled with the citrus custard and baked until just set. Once cooled the tartlets are dusted with our homemade lemon-lime dust and dolloped with a whipped cream infused with ground ginger and cardamom, Muscovado brown sugar and Tahitian vanilla bean. Placed at your dessert station on white "origami" dessert plates.

Chocolate-Cardamom Tartlets

Homemade Mascarpone Ice Cream

- Baked in the same Sandbakkel tins our creamy deep chocolate tartlets will put an end to your cravings. The unbaked buttery chocolate custard will ooze from its pâte brisée crust the moment it's cut with your spoon. And, you'll want to use a spoon so you can scoop up the homemade mascarpone ice cream with Tahitian vanilla beans. You'll wish the night would end so you can get to this one. Placed at your dessert station on white "sand-dollar" dessert plates.

Muscovado and Homemade Yogurt Panna Cotta

Red Grape Gelée

- A super silky panna cotta made with homemade yogurt and Muscovado brown sugar is the base, or bottom layer, for an out-of-this-world gelée made with white grape juice and red grapes. Each layer is a dessert in itself, but when spooned up together and eaten in one bite, you'll understand why the two were married together in one silken dessert. Sour and sweet, creamy and slick, two worlds in one, but better together. Placed at your dessert station in small white lotus leaf bowls.

TEETOTALERS BAR AND MUNCHIES

Miniature Gougères

Saint Agur Bleu, English Cheddar, and Gruyère

- Little pâte choux pastry puffs (a savory version of the dough used to make éclairs) are each flavored with one of three cheeses - a Saint Agur Blue cheese, English Cheddar and Gruyère. These light pop-over-like treats are a perfect snack to sample while at the bar. A graduated three-tier basket-tower holds handmade decorative paper cones in its upper two tiers. Each cone holds each of the three gougères so your guests can take a cone for the road and get back to mingling while the bottom tier holds more gougères and a wooden scoop for replenishing your cone or snacking on the spot.

Sweet Herbal Iced Tea

Citrus and Mint

- For the teetotalers in your group, we provide a sweet herbal iced tea that's been described as liquid addiction. A selection of green and decaf fruit teas with citrus wheels, fresh mint leaves, simple syrup and plenty of ice are served in an oversized hand-blown glass jar with a large ladle for serving.