



CANTEEN

catering

Jennifer Schulte, our Catering Manager and Pastry Chef, got married this past Saturday night here in Denver. Before the new Mrs. Gaudry got swept up in last minute wedding prep, she wrote a personal piece for this month's newsletter, along with the recipes for the bruschetta toppings on the Bruschetta Bar at the wedding reception. So easy, and so perfect for summer entertaining. Enjoy!

The Romance of a Perfect Meal

Jennifer Gaudry

The perfect menu, like a happy ending to a relationship, actually requires a lot of work. A lot of love, patience, and planning are vital to the success of both a dinner party and a relationship.

Here, in a few short paragraphs, is the story of my happy ending, both with my fiancé and our wedding menu.

I am not one to be easily impressed, whether with a meal or on a date, so my second date with Matt was a true test. We had reservations at Fruition, a much hyped local Denver restaurant. I had been meaning to go to Fruition for months, but worried it wouldn't live up to its reputation. The evening was bound to be a brilliant success or an epic failure.

As we sat down to dinner, I scanned the menu and thought that it was fantastic...and that there was absolutely no way Matt was going to like it. I picked my starter, a roasted beet salad with basil-infused oil, creamy Chevre and crisp Phyllo squares, and mentally pegged Matt as an "I'll have the beef" sort of guy. What I actually heard was, "I'll have the pepper crusted Ahi tuna." I was impressed but still skeptical. As we talked and laughed, I forgot entirely about our food. He was great: funny, charming,



Jen & Matt

handsome and captivating. When the starters arrived, I remembered my previous skepticism; under the pretense of taking a slow sip of wine, I watched Matt's first bite of perfectly seared Ahi. Surely any second he would swallow it whole and drink an abnormal amount of water to wash away the taste. What really happened was much more surprising. Matt put down his fork, pushed the plate toward me and said "I think this might be the best thing I have ever eaten; you have to try it". I did try it and it was in fact one of the most perfect bites I have had the pleasure of tasting. We spent the entire night trying new things and talking about the flavors, textures and perfection of each dish. I was smitten.

Our evening at Fruition turned out to be one of many perfect meals and extraordinary dates. While we had plenty of fantastic dates that didn't involve food, there is a certain romance to sharing a meal with someone you are beginning to love. And perhaps even more with someone you already do.

As we began to plan our wedding, Matt and I thought about what we wanted to share with our friends and family. We wanted to let them see the things we fell in love with while we were falling in love with each other. And so a menu was created. On June 18th, our guests will hear about our most memorable dates and will be able to enjoy the highlights from each of these dates in hors d'oeuvres form. We are serving versions of all of our favorites: sushi, truffle oil-infused french fries with shaved parmesan, lamb sliders, chicken kabobs, the lovely beet salad from our first date, a bruschetta bar, and even a s'more station.

As you prepare or order food for special occasions this summer, consider the wonderful memories you will be creating with your family and friends. Some of those memories may just last a lifetime.

Roasted Red Pepper Bruschetta

[Print this recipe](#)

- 3 Red Peppers, roasted, peeled and cut into thin julienne
- 1 c. Kalamata olives, pitted, chopped
- 1/2 c. capers
- 1/2 c. basil, chiffonade
- 2 - 4 T. good quality balsamic vinegar
- 1/8 c. Olive oil
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- 2 long French baguettes, sliced 1-inch thick (about 36 slices)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Combine all ingredients except basil and baguettes. Can be made 1 - 2 hours ahead of time. Add basil at the last minute, just before serving.
3. On a baking sheet, line up baguette slices. Toast in oven for about 3 minutes or until light golden brown. Working quickly, rub the remaining garlic on the toasted side of each slice.

Lemon Ricotta Bruschetta

[Print this recipe](#)

- 3 1/2 c. Ricotta



- Zest of 1 1/2 lemons
- 2 - 4 T. lemon juice
- 1/4 c. olive oil
- 1/2 c. basil, chiffonade
- S & P to taste
- 2 long French baguettes, sliced 1-inch thick (about 36 slices)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. On a baking sheet, line up baguette slices. Toast in oven for about 3 minutes or until light golden brown. Working quickly, rub the remaining garlic on the toasted side of each slice

Classic Tomato/Basil/Mozzarella Bruschetta

[Print this recipe](#)

Yield: 36

- 4 c. diced fresh tomatoes, drained
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, washed and spun dry, chiffonaded + 2 T. for garnish
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled, whole
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 long French baguettes, sliced 1-inch thick (about 36 slices)
- 1 1/2 pounds fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced 1/4-inch thick



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. In a bowl, combine drained tomatoes, 1 cup basil leaves, olive oil and 2 cloves garlic. Mix thoroughly and season with salt and pepper. Set aside for flavors to blend.
3. On a baking sheet, line up baguette slices. Toast in oven for about 3 minutes or until light golden brown. Working quickly, rub the remaining garlic on the toasted side of each slice and then lay a piece of mozzarella cheese on top. Place bread back in oven and melt cheese slightly, about 45 seconds. Remove from oven and top each with 1 tablespoon of the tomato mixture on each piece.

Note: To more easily slice fresh mozzarella, place it in the freezer for 30 minutes - 1 hour prior to slicing.

The Romance of a Perfect Meal, Italian Style

When I try to recall a "perfect" meal I'd had, many dishes come to mind, for many different reasons. In Rome, I tasted seared foie gras medallions drizzled with a 25-year-old balsamic vinegar for the first time. I was transported to a higher culinary plane, from which there was no return. That was a perfect appetizer. The wood-grilled sinagrida (red snapper), brightened with a squeeze of lemon, at [Barba Yorgi's](#) in Astoria, Queens is my perfect entree. Perfect dessert? Now THAT's a tough



one! My mom's Bisquick strawberry shortcake, served with Cool Whip, an enduring childhood favorite? The Crème Brulee at [Lavandou](#) in D.C. that I ate for the first time in the mid-eighties? Or the chocolate and fleur de sel caramel tart with milk chocolate gelato I had this past Mother's Day on the patio at [Olivea](#) here in Denver? All are rivals for the "Perfect Dessert" title.



Mary Fabrikant

Each of these culinary gems was perfect at the time, due not only to the culinary skill of the chef, but to the context in which it occurred - the company, the ambience, and the surprise and satisfaction of a truly great taste combination.

The company is the key to any truly great fine dining experience. You know the age-old question...If a tree falls in an empty forest, does it make a sound? If culinary perfection occurs, but you have no one with whom to rave about it, can it be truly perfect? Just writing this article and recalling these meals has me tripping down memory lane with those I love.

"Ambience" isn't limited to white linen, soft music and candlelight. I've been to Barba Yiorgi's probably 30 times over the years and the taverna ambience contributes greatly to my overall experience. The smell of wood smoke, the lamb and whole chickens sizzling on a rotating spit in the front window, brusque waiters, high volume and tight seating are all seasonings which add to my enjoyment of my perfectly grilled red snapper.

That July 1997 Roman foie gras was a taste combination revelation for me. I tell you, it's like I ate it yesterday! Until that time, I had not experienced so many layers of flavor, combined in such a perfectly orchestrated dish. Come... seat yourself in my red plush chair in Rome and close your eyes. Imagine the taste and mouth feel of the warm foie gras with its caramelized seared exterior and rich, silky interior. Combine it with the peppery bite of the arugula on which it was laid. Spread it on the lightly crisped slices of ciabatta, and add the thick sweet-tart balsamic vinegar reduction (forget what you know about grocery-store balsamic vinegars in this vision). With your eyes closed, you can taste and enjoy each sensation separately. Then open your eyes and let all the flavors combine into taste perfection. See Notes, below.

The morning after that elegant dinner in Rome, my fiancé Lev and I picked up a rental car and drove (the wrong way down a one-way street briefly, the horns of approaching Roman drivers blaring) back to the hotel to pick up our luggage and head out of town. We'd arranged to rent a villa in Umbria with 4 other couples for a week. We were all to meet at the villa around noon.

Lev and I missed our exit off of the A1 to the east-west highway that would've taken us straight to Spoleto. No worries... my superior navigational abilities identified another, smaller highway on the map that looked as though an upcoming right turn would get us to Spoleto by a parallel, if somewhat slower route. My brilliant Plan B exit took us onto a two-lane country road through picturesque tiny towns not shown on our map. Behind agricultural trucks, we slowed to a crawl. Around 2:00 PM, we declared ourselves officially lost, and very hungry. We hadn't seen many restaurants at all in the towns we'd driven through, and no open ones. In fact, the towns seemed deserted. It was the siesta time between 1 - 4 PM when shop owners (and restaurant owners apparently head home for lunch.

Entering the next town, we spotted a sign for a restaurant and an open door. We got out to see if it was open for business. Alas, it was not. We must've looked quite woeful, as the woman who was tidying up there said (we surmised, as our Italian was,

To make a long story a bit shorter, the owner/chef arrived and took smiling pity on us. He quickly cooked what he said was one of his favorite, quick pasta dishes for us, brought us a carafe of house white, confirmed that the road we were on would indeed get us to Spoleto eventually, left "il conto" on the corner of our table and exited, leaving us to enjoy our lunch, alone in his empty restaurant.

You've probably been wondering how this story of misdirection fits into the theme of "the romance of the perfect meal"? Despite the trials of the morning -- almost being hit by a Roman bus after taking that wrong turn from the car-rental garage, getting lost in a foreign country without language skills, building up quite an appetite with no food in the immediate offering -- we had not become shrill or grumpy. No blame was laid on the other. We felt in perfect company in this tiny Italian ristorante in the middle of nowhere, with a lovely, light glass of chilled wine, a deliciously made lunch of [Orechiette with Peas and Pancetta](#) and the growing realization that we worked better together than alone. Perfect.

Note: To replicate the foie gras appetizer for your next special meal, you can purchase [kosher foie gras](#) on-line, or [regular foie gras](#) on-line or in local gourmet food stores.

Penne Pasta with Peas, Pancetta, and Cream

[Print this recipe](#)

Serves 4

- 400g dried penne or spaghetti - cooked
- 350g frozen peas
- 4 shallots peeled and diced
- 150g pancetta diced
- 4 rashers pancetta grilled until crispy for garnish
- 1 clove of garlic peeled and chopped
- 350ml double cream
- 30g butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 60g freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Garnish: fresh basil and Parmesan
- Sea Salt and black pepper



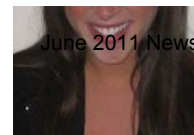
INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oil and butter in a heavy based pan and fry the diced pancetta for 1 minute. Add the shallots and garlic and fry for 3 minutes or until soft. Add the peas and coat them in the mixture and add the double cream and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Add the Parmesan cheese and season well with the salt and black pepper. Toss the sauce into the hot pasta and serve. Garnish with the fresh basil, crispy pancetta and Parmesan cheese.

Meet Abby!

I'd like to introduce you all to Abby Davidson, our new Catering Sales/Event Manager. Abby hails from Ann Arbor, Michigan. She has a degree in Marketing from University of Michigan, is exceptionally organized and detail-oriented, and passionate about food. Those of you who know us well and do business with us frequently will soon come to appreciate these three traits, which together are the perfect recipe for a catering salesperson and event coordinator.





Abby Davidson

Elegant Denver-Area Event Venue

This week I had the pleasure of taking a fun little field trip to see a popular wedding/mitzvah venue called [Villa Parker](#). It was a temperate and sunny Colorado spring afternoon, but as I stood on the gorgeous patio of Villa Parker, which flanks the entire south and east sides of the Villa, I would have sworn I was in the Italian countryside. As you can see in the photo, the patio is broad and wide, shaded by trees, and has a breathtaking vista toward the mountains. The inner ballroom and meeting rooms are equally charming, and are the perfect canvas to decorate for your special event. If elegance and European ambience would compliment your plans, I recommend that you call Erika at Villa Parker for a tour. 303.805.2295.



Italian Countryside or Villa Parker?



What People are Saying...

"Mary, from Canteen Catering, came and did a class at Whole Foods Market Cherry Creek for Passover. She brought 4 recipes, taught us how to make them, and sampled them out. We were able to enjoy her cooking.

She explained her philosophy behind her food choices and answered any questions we had about food observance or food pairings during Passover. She told us what could be eaten together and why. She is a great teacher, and her recipes are delicious.

Mary is a really talented culinary expert. She brings an earthy sensibility to her work. Her dishes are beautifully prepared with care, and it really showed."

Heather L.

Whole Foods Market Cherry Creek



Please call us at 303.521.6343 to discuss your catering needs.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to mary@cateencatering.com by mary@cateencatering.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Canteen Catering LLC | 260 S. Locust St. | Denver | CO | 80224