

GO T H A M

JESSICA BIEL

Is it **HOT** in here?

WHAT'S
COOKING?

**RECIPES FROM NYC
CULINARY STARS**

GAEL GREENE,
ERIC RIPERT,
DAVID BOULEY,
PINO LUONGO
AND MORE

HAUTE BREWS,
NEW EATERIES
& KID CUISINE

**New &
Improved**
THE RETURN
OF THE
MONKEY BAR
AND THE PIERRE

**NEW YORKERS
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EDIE FALCO
HENRY BUHL
DANI STAHL
JULIAN NICCOLINI
ALLISON STERN

Fête Accompli

From menu to guest list, creating the perfect low-key city soirée this summer requires careful planning. Here, Creative Edge Parties shows how it's done.

BY CARLA RUBEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARILI FORASTIERI

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, every party is a surprise party. That's what I love about my business: No matter what kind of affair I plan, I'm always dreaming up ways to introduce an element of the unexpected, from location and décor to food. And an early-summer bash provides many opportunities for out-of-the-box thinking.

Consider the word "entertaining." When you host a party, you're inviting guests to be entertained—by you. They're your audience, and like a great actor, a great host knows how to turn his or her singular sensibilities into an unforgettable experience for an audience. Never forget that every choice you make should reflect your personality, and that every choice counts.

The Sky Room at the New Museum is a perfect room with a view of downtown Manhattan.





PASSED HORS D'OEUVRES

*Scottish smoked salmon,
chive crêpes and crème fraîche*

*Apple tart filled with foie gras terrine
and caramel*

*Yellowtail ceviche
in anise-seed cones*

*Five-mushroom-ragout tartlet
with truffled crème fraîche*

*Artichoke fondue in
oregano-pistachio puffs*

*Filet mignon bruschetta with
red-wine mayonnaise and shallot rings*

*Parmesan pudding on
roasted-tomato crackers*

*Chicken summer roll of curried
vermicelli and Vietnamese basil
in rice paper*

DINNER

First Course

*Chilled English pea soup with basil
sorbet and pea shoots*

Main Course

*Lobster-filled filet of beef, smoked
drawn butter, twice-baked fingerling
potatoes and chives, and charred
asparagus*

AMUSE OF SWEETS

*Chocolate soda
and passion fruit soda shooters*

Toasted-almond panna cotta

*Coconut tapioca with passion fruit
gelée and caramel puffed rice*

*Mini vanilla cupcakes
with coconut frosting*

*Mini chocolate cupcakes
with chocolate frosting*

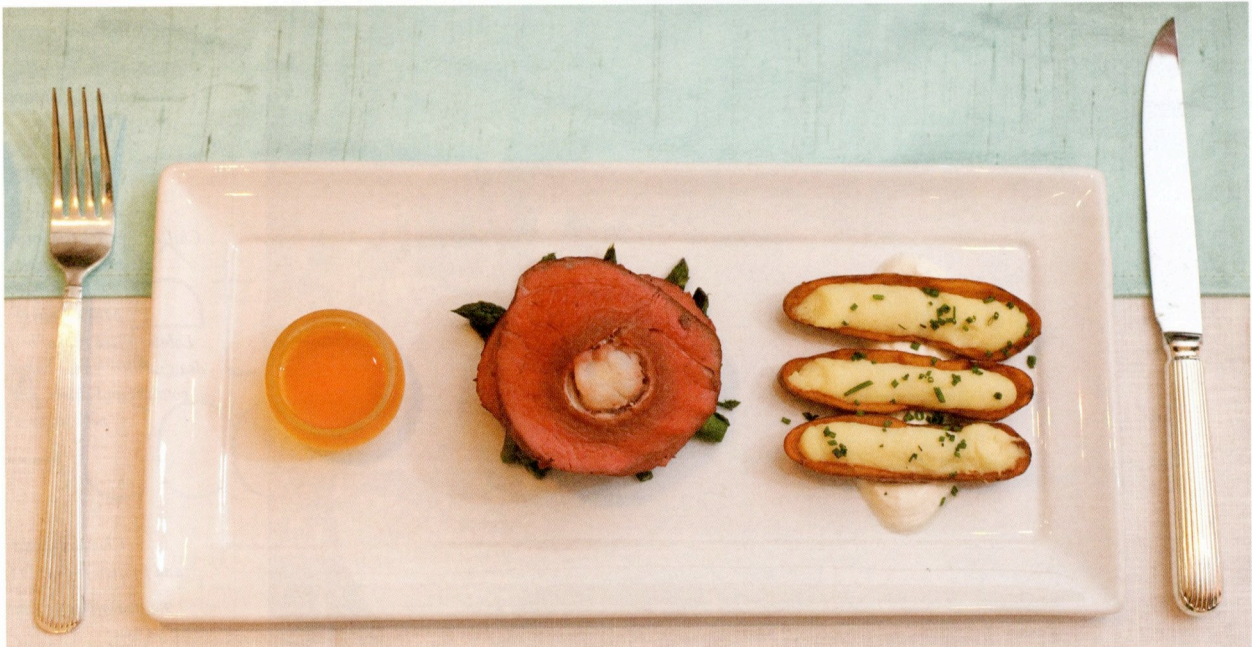
Whiskey pineapple with crème fraîche

*Cherry mousse with
macerated cherries*

Chocolate-rosemary ganache financier

Assorted petits fours

Champagne: Piper-Heidsieck



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Whiskey pineapple with crème fraîche and cherry mousse with macerated cherries; mini vanilla cupcakes with coconut frosting and mini chocolate cupcakes with chocolate frosting; lobster-filled filet of beef on charred asparagus with smoked drawn butter and twice-baked fingerling potatoes

When choosing a location, remember that it can be fun to bring guests someplace they've never been before—a new part of town or a new space. But even if you're throwing a party at home, you can make the setting feel new by designing for contrast. If you're entertaining at a downtown loft, use tables and serving stations to create a flow of intimate spaces. Or warm things up with color: I like soft gray as an anchor, accented with yellows.

When it comes to food, it's tempting to go a little crazy. I can't tell you how many parties I've attended where each dish seems overthought and a touch tortured. Take food seriously. Bob Spiegel, my business partner, is a highly respected chef who is passionate about the food he prepares. He's traveled the world in search of the best cuisines, techniques and ingredients.

"I love local, seasonal ingredients," he says. "Fiddlehead ferns, ramps, fava beans, savory herbs for flavoring." (He's also a fan of using herbs to

spice cocktails, so please, think past pink drinks!) For a gorgeous start, offer a plate of simply grilled veggies. "Seasonal produce like chive asparagus and cranberry fingerlings puts a ton of color on the plate," he explains.

Food isn't just what you're giving your guests to eat. The way each course is served dictates how people interact, and the food becomes part of the atmosphere. Give guests time up front to intersperse and mingle, but give them a proper sit-down dinner, too. Let small talk turn to real conversation. When people are in one room for a night, tempo changes are important.

Dessert is an opportunity to switch up the pace, and a dessert bar is a perfect way to do just that. Think creatively—dessert presentation can be a conversation-starter and an excuse for guests to get back on their feet after dinner. The energy comes up instantly. And what better way to end things than on a high note?

In Attendance...



Alexandra Shiva



Marcy Warren, Anna Chapman and Sarah Meikle



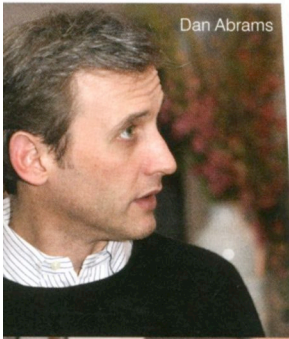
Beth Blake Day



Andrew Buffalino and Rita Schragger



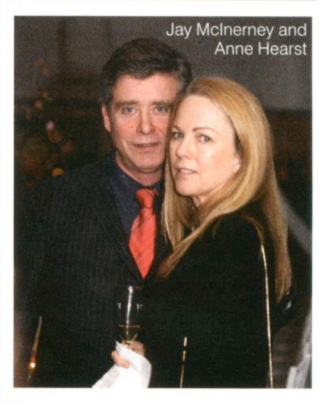
Mario and Anne Grauso



Dan Abrams



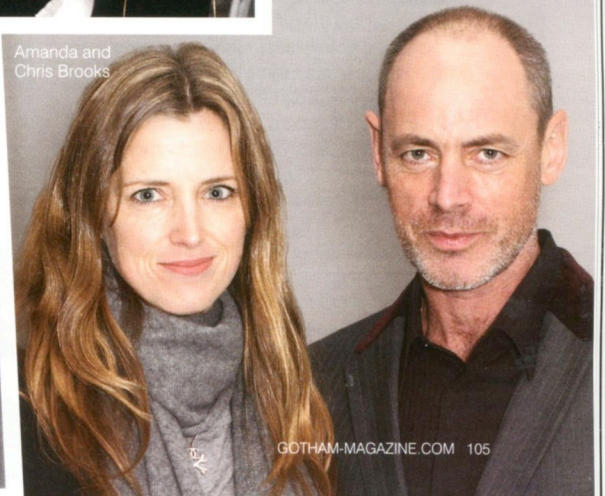
Cellist Dave Eggar and singer Sasha Lazard



Jay McInerney and Anne Hearst



Marjorie Gubbelman and Fernanda Niven



Amanda and Chris Brooks



Passion fruit soda shooters

FILET MIGNON
BRUSCHETTA WITH
RED-WINE MAYONNAISE
AND SHALLOT RINGS

Makes 40

Poached Beef Filet and Shallot Rings

2-pound filet of beef, center-cut
Gray sea salt (or kosher salt)
Freshly ground black pepper
5 large shallots, sliced into 1/8-inch rings
2 cups corn oil

Cut beef into 1 1/2-inch logs. Liberally salt and pepper meat. Place in a plastic bag and squeeze out as much air as possible before sealing. (Scotch tape can be used to secure ends.) Repeat the procedure with another bag to create a double seal. Heat a pot of water to 130 degrees (use a meat thermometer). Place bags in water and poach for 15–20 minutes. Meanwhile, heat corn oil to 350 degrees and fry the shallot rings until brown. Remove from oil with a slotted spoon and cool on a plate lined with paper towels.

Bruschetta

1 ficelle, sliced into thin rounds
2 garlic cloves, cut in half lengthwise
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt



Filet mignon bruschetta with red-wine mayonnaise and shallot rings

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toast ficelle rounds on a cookie sheet for approximately five minutes. Rub each toast round with garlic, then brush with olive oil and season with salt.

Red-Wine Mayonnaise

1 bottle Zinfandel or other full-bodied, fruity red wine
4 egg yolks
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Salt
2 cups olive oil (not extra-virgin)

Put red wine in saucepan and boil at high heat until it has been reduced to a syrup. Be careful not to burn. Allow to cool slightly. In a food processor, combine the wine reduction, egg yolks, mustard, cayenne pepper, lemon juice and salt. With mixer running, add oil in a thin steady stream until the mixture emulsifies. Transfer to a squeeze bottle.

Assembly

Pull bags of meat out of water, unwrap, and cut filet into 1-inch slices. Pat meat dry and put one slice on each toast round. Liberally squeeze red-wine mayonnaise on top of beef. Garnish with one or two fried shallot rings.

YELLOWTAIL CEVICHE IN ANISE-SEED CONES Makes 30

Yellowtail Ceviche

1-pound sushi-grade yellowtail, white meat only
2 teaspoons gray sea salt (or kosher salt)
Freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons lime juice
1 shallot, diced fine
3 shiso leaves, cut fine (chives can be used as a substitute)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Zest from 1 lime

Roughly chop the yellowtail until pieces are the size of cooked rice grains. Mix in salt, pepper, lime juice, shallot, shiso and olive oil. Set aside.

Anise-Seed Cones

2 teaspoons anise seed
1½ cups granulated sugar
4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
2½ oranges, juiced
Scant ½ cup all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with Silpats (silicon nonstick mats). Combine all ingredients and stir well until dough is thick and sticky. Chill for 30 minutes. (Keep dough cold while filling baking sheets.) Use a pastry bag fitted with a plain tip to pipe 1-inch drops of dough onto baking sheets or a melon baller to make balls of approximately ¾ teaspoon each. Place at least 2 to 3 inches apart, as dough will spread considerably in the oven. Bake four to five minutes in preheated oven until cones begin to caramelize, rotating sheets from front to back and top to bottom halfway through. Dough will continue to brown after removal from oven. While dough rounds are still warm and pliable, remove them from baking sheets with a metal spatula and roll each around the base of a cone-shaped Dixie cup. Set cones aside to cool.

Assembly

Fill cones with yellowtail mixture. Garnish with lime zest and serve immediately.



Bob Spiegel
and Carla Ruben of
Creative Edge Parties



Yellowtail ceviche in
anise-seed cones

NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

A few of Creative Edge Parties' favorite things.

Best Tapas

Tia Pol (205 10th Avenue, 212-675-8805)

Best Lamb Shank

Kif (219 Dekalb Avenue, Brooklyn,
718-852-7273)

Best Organic Fare

Union Square Greenmarket
(East 17th Street and Broadway)

Best Fish

The Lobster Place (Chelsea Market,
75 Ninth Avenue, 212-255-5672)

Best Wine Shops

Astor Wines & Spirits (399 Lafayette
Street, 212-674-7500)
Le Du's Wines (600 Washington Street,
212-924-6999)

Best Tabletop Wares

The Future Perfect (115 North Sixth Street,
Brooklyn, 718-599-6278)
Global Table (107 Sullivan Street,
212-431-5839)

Best Catering Space

New Museum (235 Bowery, 212-219-1222)