



4TH QUARTER 2005

THE CLAIRE DIARIES

Hi All,

I must start off by telling everyone how humbled I have been as folks constantly asked me why they haven't gotten "The Claire Diaries." To all of you that have asked it definitely gave me a warm feeling in my heart and to those of you who didn't...well? You know who you are...kidding. I promise to get back on track with doing the diaries quarterly. But for now here is my year in review. Since I'm trying to cover an entire year this issue is a little longer than normal, but still equally as entertaining.

Taking it from the top: the things that I have learned in 2005 or at least some of them...

When working in the Paris Airshow this summer, I found it very difficult to get Grey Goose Vodka even though it is a French Vodka! Leave it to the French.

I am seeing more and more crème brûlees in various flavors. Chefs are getting away from your traditional vanilla bean or raspberry. I have been seeing Barqu's Root Beer, Mango, Pistachio, Grand Marnier—basically, if it is a flavor, the chef should be able to make it. For smaller groups ask if the dessert can be served a touch on the warm side as it brings out the flavors of the brulee.

Dessert trios are good IF, and I am saying IF, you can get away from the traditional trio of french pastries. As of this writing I am not digging french pastries—they are so BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. For example, last fall we did a trio of "drunken berries," which was berries marinated in port wine, a mini crème brûlée and a shot glass that had a chocolate chipotle shooter. Another sexy touch would be a LONG, and I do mean LONG, stemmed chocolate dipped strawberry. Get creative with what you are doing as part of your trio.

Talk about creative: for smaller groups, serve an accompanying sauce in a small blood test tube. Hector Santiago, one of the most creative chefs in Atlanta, did a small test tube that had a hibiscus flower sauce and he used the end of the test tube to skewer a piece of mango. You eat the mango off the end of the test tube, and then squirt the sauce in your mouth to finish out the combo. He also did a coffee flan on a soup spoon with a coco sauce in the test tube.

"I don't even butter my bread; I consider that cooking."—Katherine Cebrian & Claire R. Gould

As many of you know, my townhouse complex was purchased by an exclusive private school in Atlanta and here is what I learned from moving:

- * I have WAY too much stuff and the garbage dumpster was my new best friend.
- * Why didn't this offer come through before I renovated my townhouse?
- * That I need to call all the utility companies at least three times to change my address because the first two times just didn't sink in.
- * And, all together now...**moving sucks!**

Around Valentine's Day this year I worked a gig for Coca-Cola and Burger King executives at Montage Resort and Spa in Laguna Beach, California (and to you long time CD readers, my relationship with Montage hasn't improved, but thank you for asking). In the spirit of V-Day I designed an aphrodisiac cooking class. To get ideas, I surveyed my friends on what they consider to be appropriate foods to get in the mood. What I found out from the guys is that a lot of them said fondue. It didn't matter what kind—chocolate or cheese—as long as it is fondue. What I also learned is that my friends are not too creative, or they aren't interested in eating before doing the deed, as I designed the rest of the menu on my own. Do know the cooking class was a huge success and many of the executives attending said it was the sleeper hit of the weekend.

I have learned that anything citrus in the culinary world is here to stay for awhile. Why you ask? The one word answer is “versatility.” Whether it is in salads, desserts or main entrees, there are now so many breeds of citrus that you can work it into any course of the meal, whether it is in the sauce for the entree or sliced and diced for the salad, starch or dessert.

I think God's going to come down and pull civilization over for speeding.—Steven Wright

Aaahhhh - the innocence of a 5-year-old boy. My sister Lois asked my 5-year-old nephew Benny if he was going to miss his girlfriends (notice the plural) when he moved from Augusta, GA to Pittsburgh, PA. Benny didn't even skip a beat and said, “NO, Aunt Lo Lo, I will just get new ones!” (notice the plural). That's the spirit.

An oldie but goodie is go back to using Wellingtons—either beef or chicken. I have reintroduced them this past year with great success. Use Beef Wellington as an action station during an evening reception and finish out the station with a bibb lettuce, blue cheese crumbles, dried cranberry and candied walnut salad along with an au gratin potato.

A trendy drink right now, and no it isn't mojitos—is the Caipirinhas—Brazil's national drink. The beauty is that each drink is made by hand, individually, first by squishing the limes, adding some sugar and ice and then filling the rest of the glass up with cachaca, Brasil's version of jet fuel.

“Life is a dream for the wise, a game for the fool, a comedy for the rich, a tragedy for the poor”—Sholom Aleichem

During Final 4 this past year I did a dessert party for Coca-Cola's guests. Instead of doing those raggedy individual French pastries, Chef and I designed and oversize dessert bar. We made the whole cakes BIG. Eye-popping big, as in 10 to 12 layer cakes. Plus, we designed a Cold Stone Ice Cream Bar—oh so popular. But what I learned is if you are doing an event where you have a 50% male audience, have German Chocolate Cake. I was stunned that with all the other goodies available the guys took one look at that cake and were excited to see “their favorite.” My problem is they are ALL my favorite.

I learned very poignantly this year that it doesn't matter the age or the profession of the man...boys will always be boys. This fall I did a site inspection for a client who is renting out Dave and Busters for an event. Who better to take then my doctor brother for the site inspection? He is the age of the predominately male group who will be attending this event. This was interesting; first, he pretty much pushed me out of the way as he ran to drive the virtual reality 18-wheeler truck. After a couple of tries driving, we both have a newfound respect for truckers and realized Bruce (my brother) needs to keep his day job. But what really made me realized that boys just never grow up was watching Bruce driving the VR police car through the cartoon streets of Tokyo chasing the VR bank robbers. I was watching him play, and as he was driving like a maniac to bring justice to the streets of Tokyo, he got a panicked look on his face. There he is—driving and searching FRANTICALLY on the dashboard, but for what? Who knows? After a couple of seconds his face relaxes in recognition as he hits the button in question. The appropriate noise comes on and he can redirect all his concentration to chasing the yen-stealing bank robbers ...it was the SIREN button!....This 47-year-old triple board certified cancer doc IS NOT going to be driving the cartoon streets of Tokyo in his police car without the siren blaring. Do know the cartoon characters in this Tokyo VR game did rest easier that night knowing Dr. Gould was bringing justice to their city.

BE CAREFUL: The trend is to mix Red Bull with Johnny Walker or Vodka. FOLKS, this is very dangerous, as studies show it can jump start a heart attack. One should not mix an energy drink with an antidepressant...what is a heart to do?

“If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one?”—Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Whenever I am on show site, I make it a priority to spend time with the chefs and talk with them about what they are personally liking and not liking in regards to culinary. It was while working at the Boulders Resort and Spa in Arizona that I had the absolute pleasure of spending time with their banquet chef, Bobby Rose. In speaking about current

food trends, Bobby is one of the few chefs that hits the nail on the head. He said the trend right now is “be true to the food.” Folks, that is such a true statement. Use the freshest ingredients; honor the food and keep the flavors compatible and simple. This statement hit home even more when right after I did culinary negotiations for a Superbowl program, and what did the restaurant propose? Salmon with about 20 ingredients on top of it. BUSY! By the time I read through the menu I forgot what the main ingredient was supposed to be. Bobby’s advice is like a Chanel handbag—it will always be in style.

Last but not least, here are Karen Bremer’s alcohol with a fizz recommendations as we are saying goodbye to the old and bringing in the new:

Sparkling Wines have launched ships, toasted weddings & special occasions, attended countless parties, and shared untold special moments between people. I suggest that you celebrate this year’s holiday season with a little fizz from around the world.

- * Start in France with a rare Blanc de Blanc, made entirely from chardonnay grapes for a lighter and more elegant wine. Veuve de Vernay, Blanc de Blancs, France, NV. \$15.00
- * Another Blanc de Blanc from California comes from Jepson Vineyards, the sole producer of estate still wines, champagnes, and brandies in North America. Jepson, Blanc de Blanc, Mendocino, California, NV \$26.00
- * Touring the world, the Spanish consider their Cava Brut to be the equivalent of talking with God so it served to everyone at baptisms, including the baby whose pacifier is dipped in the wine. Avinyo, Cava Brut, Spain, NV \$17.00
- * The Italians ask that we consider sharing a ‘split’ of the bubbly for breakfast as it is the perfect size for two and goes so well with orange juice. Zardetto, Prosecco Brut D.O.C., N.V. Italy \$13.00

Please check out my website, rxforcatering.com, after January 10th as I am updating it as we speak. For those of you who have a website, updating it is the equivalent to going to the dentist. No one likes to do it, and yet it has to be done.

Along with the web site update we are going to be making it easier for folks to get the Claire Diaries as there will be a place on the site to subscribe and unsubscribe (like who would want to do that?) and in the future instead of sending out an PDF we will forward the link AND hopefully start putting up some pictures of the quarter as well.

“I rant, therefore I am.”—Dennis Miller

As always, thank you for reading the Claire Diaries. Forward any questions or comments you may have and do feel free to pass the diaries along. Please be sure to look at my website after the facelift.

Have a safe and happy holiday season,

Claire R. Gould
Owner
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