

2019 ICA CATIE AWARDS SUBMISSION

Best Barbeque or Picnic Menu



Backyard Barbeque Soirée

Best Barbeque or Picnic Menu

Synopsis

Our client requested a spectacular summer barbeque soirée for a VIP gathering of his business associates and friends. He wanted us to “pull out all the stops” to create a very high-end dining experience, but he didn’t want it to feel like a formal affair. Elegant yet casual backyard setting. Local and seasonal food at its best. Craft cocktails and premium wine pairings. Six-course dinner designed around an apex entrée of mesquite-grilled, dry-aged, bone-in, Wagyu tomahawk ribeyes! The barbeque became a mind-blowing culinary collage of textures, colors, flavors and aromas—an incredible flow of exquisite dishes.



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Concept, design and objectives

There's nothing more exciting for a caterer than a client that trusts you and encourages you to flex your culinary muscles! The host of this dinner simply explained, "I want to treat my guests to some truly special food and wine. Assuming money is no object, what would you serve to your own VIP guests? What would you yourselves want to eat and drink? That's what I want!"

Although offering more total food, and featuring more luxurious options, this menu is a good representation of how we actually cook for our own friends in our own homes. This metric became our mantra for the menu concept, "if money were not an object, what we would we cook for ourselves?"

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Qualities that make this menu appropriate for the event

The menu embodied the very best of the season, the very best of our locale, and the very best of our team. There's no way we'd rather cook. We wish all our events could be like this one!

To be sure though, creating this menu was a challenge. Especially striking a balance between seemingly opposed directives and goals. Food to fill 7+ hours, but not excessive. The best meal they'd eat all year, but not too fussy. 5 star delicacies, but fitting for a casual backyard bbq. Cuisine unique to our mountains, but that will immediately impress well-traveled international guests.

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Qualities that make this menu appropriate for the event (cont'd)

Ultimately, we built the menu primarily around of a core of our favorites (especially the steak course and the whole pig rotisserie). We tried to keep each individual dish and course simple. Yet at every stage, we asked ourselves, “how could this be even better without getting any more complicated?” Eventually when the answer was, “it can’t”, we knew we had landed on the right balance.

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Quality of the presentation

Just like the menu itself, the presentation was an exercise in contrasts, with a focus on the season, the backyard, and the mountain view.

We set the dining table on the lawn. We used our best heirloom china for the table scape and salad course, then moved on to contemporary china and even a cutting board for the ribeye entrée course, but we didn't use tablecloths. We polished our shiniest gold napkin rings and crystal stemware, yet we reached to the back shelves for our candlesticks with the most patina. We ordered brand new flatware just for this dinner, but resurrected our most weathered and loved wood boards from the dregs of the warehouse. We wore our dressiest chef and waiter coats, but we kept our sleeves rolled up all evening.



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Quality of the presentation (cont'd)

We'll be honest and blunt: in general, we hate having to plate with tweezers. This menu was a joy to plate and present, because although premium and elaborate, it was intentionally not fussy. We hand picked each side, accoutrement, and garnish, in bright, summery, and contrasting colors. Yet we also tried to make each plate feel, casual, almost homemade.

Perhaps our favorite elements of the presentation came from the “room” layout. We parked a small camper style trailer on the driveway to serve the cocktails. We set the ovens, grills, and rotisserie on the lawn, mere feet away from the dining tables. We removed any line between the back and front of house. Guests were immersed in the every stage of the meal.



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Quality of the presentation (cont'd)

A small but crucial touch was simply the candles we kept lit to allow guests to continue to dine well past dusk. Sometimes, it's the little things!

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Here is what we served...

Cocktail Hour

Butler Passed Hors d'oeuvres

- Butter dipped French Breakfast radishes with Utah sea salt
- Fried Brussels sprout with balsamic bacon jam
- Savory Parmesan macaron with lemon thyme gelato and candied sage

Craft Cocktails

- Leather-aged Vieux Carré featuring High West Rendezvous Rye
- Siphon-infused pea blossom and violet Gin and Tonic featuring Beehive Jackrabbit gin

Dinner

Salad

- Fresh heirloom tomatoes with rosemary crisps, basil granola, Snuck Farms micro greens, EVOO, sea salt, and fresh cracked pepper
- Artisan breads baked fresh tableside in wood ovens with raw honey, sea salted butter, and homemade jam

WINE PAIRING Domaine Weinbach Pinot Gris Altenbourg 2014

Entrée Trio

- Smoked Rocky Mountain trout, with peach pico de gallo and apple kohlrabi slaw with caraway cider dressing

WINE PAIRING Charles Heidsieck Rose Reserve

- Suckling pig with apricot gastrique sweet corn and roasted broccoli rabe

WINE PAIRING Lucienne Pinot Noir Santa Lucia 2013

- Mesquite-grilled dry-aged beef tomahawk steaks with whiskey, onion and cilantro relish
- Black truffle and ricotta malfatti
- Grilled cauliflower steak as vegetarian alternative

WINE PAIRING Silver Oak Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2011

Intermezzo

Fresh plums and sparkling water

Dessert

- Homemade Bear Lake berry Dutch oven cobbler with vanilla cream, rose petals, and lime zest

WINE PAIRING Schramsberg Cremante Demi Sec Napa 2012

After Dinner

- Local artisan cheese selections from Beehive, Heber Valley, and Gold Creek

WINE PAIRING Paul Lato Syrah Bien Nacido 2014

- Local artisan chocolate selections from Amano, Ritual, Solstice, Millcreek, Chocolate Conspiracy, and Durci

BEVERAGE PAIRING Sandeman 20 year Tawny Port

Departing Taste

- Coal roasted pears with strawberry thyme curd

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Menu Details

PASSED HORS D'OEUVRE TRIO

Butter dipped French breakfast radish with sea salt,
Fried Brussels sprout with balsamic bacon jam
Savory Parmesan macaron with lemon thyme gelato
and candied sage



CRAFT COCKTAILS

Leather-aged Vieux Carré featuring High West Ren-
dezvous Rye
Siphon-infused pea blossom and violet Gin and
Tonic featuring Beehive Jackrabbit gin

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Menu Details (cont'd)

SALAD

Fresh heirloom tomatoes with rosemary crisps, basil granola, Snuck Farms micro greens, EVOO, sea salt, and fresh cracked pepper



ARTISAN BREADS

Artisan breads baked fresh tableside in wood ovens with raw honey, sea salted butter, and homemade jam

WINE PAIRING *Domaine Weinbach Pinot Gris Altenbourg 2014*

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Menu Details (cont'd)

ENTRÉE 1

Smoked Rocky Mountain trout with peach pico de gallo and apple kohlrabi slaw with caraway cider dressing

WINE PAIRING Charles Heidsieck Rose Reserve

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Menu Details (cont'd)

ENTRÉE 2

Suckling pig with apricot gastrique, sweet corn and roasted broccoli rabe

WINE PAIRING Lucienne Pinot Noir Santa Lucia 2013

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Menu Details (cont'd)

ENTRÉE 3

Mesquite-grilled dry-aged beef tomahawk steaks with whiskey, onion and cilantro relish black truffle and ricotta malfatti (grilled cauliflower steak as vegetarian alternative)

WINE PAIRING Silver Oak Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2011

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Menu Details (cont'd)

INTERMEZZO

Fresh plums and sparkling water

DESSERT

Homemade Bear Lake berry Dutch oven cobbler with vanilla cream, edible flowers, and lime zest

WINE PAIRING Schramsberg Cremante Demi Sec Napa 2012

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Menu Details (cont'd)

AFTER DINNER CHESSES

Local artisan cheese selections from Beehive, Heber Valley, and Gold Creek

WINE PAIRING Private label Syrah blend Santa Ynez & Mendocino 2012

AFTER DINNER CHOCOLATES

Local artisan chocolate selections from Amano, Ritual, Solstice, Millcreek, Chocolate Conspiracy, and Durci

BEVERAGE PAIRING Dow 20 year Tawny Port

DEPARTING TASTE

Coal roasted pears with strawberry thyme curd



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WINE PAIRINGS



NON-ALCOHOLIC PAIRING OPTIONS

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Production details at the event

Although this was a casual affair, it was nonetheless a major production. As we unloaded and set up, we kept asking ourselves, “this is only for a hundred guests?” It felt like we were getting ready for several thousand!

Everything from wood ovens, charcoal grills, open fire rotisserie, stainless prep tables, refrigeration units, warming cabinets, and more was brought in the morning of the event to create the full field kitchen right on the lawn. The bar trailer had to be towed in and then rolled and placed by hand (4 strong guys) on the delicate paving stones. Shade sails and umbrellas were used to shade our work and storage areas. These had to be moved every hour or so during the day, then just before guests arrived, these had to be struck and stored in the garage out of sight.



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The Challenges

Electricity was a thorn in our sides. At one point the power to the rotisserie motor went out (we plugged in too many immersion circulators on the same circuit). The pit-master had to crank the suckling pig by hand for 40 minutes until the property manager could find the right breaker panel. Later, the lights for the malfatti table went dark (a guest had wandered into the landscaping and kicked our extension cord from the socket). We didn't discover the problem until the course was underway, so the station chef fired the pasta with just the light of the grills and any light that spilled from the house. It turned out perfectly even in the dim light!



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Recipe: Dry-aged, Mesquite-grilled, Wagyu Tomahawk Ribeye

This recipe has very few ingredients - it's really about letting the beef shine. It also has very few steps - just rub, grill, rest, serve. Nonetheless, this recipe requires practice, attention, and finesse. Please

read all the extra notes as they serve to clarify the goal and how to reach it.

Ingredients

Dry-aged (preferably 42-63 days) Snake River Farms Prime (or Wagyu) Tomahawk Steaks*
 Fresh minced garlic
 Chocolate Chili Cayenne and Cardamom dry rub**
 Extra virgin olive oil
 Lake flake sea salt

Instructions

Approximately 8-12 hours prior to service, rub all sides of the steak with a healthy amount of minced garlic. Loosely cover and keep in the cooler until ready for firing and service.

When the service time approaches, lightly pat the beef dry with a paper towel. Rub all sides of the steak with a healthy amount of the dry rub.

Cook the steaks to your desired temperature***. Allow to rest. Carve into slices. Lightly top with extra virgin olive oil and flake sea salt. Serve and enjoy!

***NOTES ON THE STEAK SELECTION** Dry-aged is best. However, if you cannot acquire dry-aged steaks, this recipe can be done with wet-aged beef. In which case, I recommend dry brining the steaks the morning of service.

Simply pack the steaks well with extra coarse salt on all sides and leave uncovered in the cooler. After 2-3 hours, return, drain, rinse well, pat dry, and continue with the recipe. This will remove some of the excess water from the steak, enriching the beef flavor and preparing it for a better sear and more even cook.

****NOTES ON THE DRY RUB** This dry rub is equal parts brown sugar and dark cocoa powder with cardamom, cayenne, and fresh ground black pepper as desired. Note there is no salt. You can use any steak rub you prefer, but look for one with very little to no salt.

In general, I avoid introducing salt to the dry-aged steak before cooking, only add salt as a finishing accoutrement immediately prior to service. This will maintain an ideal texture, allow the rich dry-aged beef flavors to take center stage, and the salt in the end can be hand selected as a precise pairing.

*****NOTES ON COOKING THE TOMAHAWKS** The steak can be wonderfully cooked using various methods and techniques. Most important for a successful outcome worthy of this deserving cut, is to start with a clear understanding of the goal and the challenges this cut poses to the goal.

When grilling such large steaks, I always completely separate the processes of searing and cooking. I treat these individually as very distinct elements. When searing, you want a very, very high heat (practically as high as you can achieve), preferably from a nice mesquite fire. The goal is to create a wonderfully browned crust as quickly and directly as possible so as not to overcook the inside of the steak. When cooking, you want a nice low heat to gently cook while you slowly approach the target temperature.

The order of the searing and cooking can be interchanged. Sometimes we will cook the steak sous vide first, then sear them on an extremely high temp grill. Sometimes we will sear the raw steaks over a roaring fire, and then move them to a low temp zone to finish.

Sometimes we'll start with the steaks on the highest grate over our Santa Maria grill, and once their nicely warmed, drop them straight into the hot coals for a reverse sear (guests love to see searing right in the coals, btw!).

Again, the method and the order of the steps can be manipulated. Most important is to sear and cook separately, so you end up with a very rich sear and crust while still being a medium-rare-plus edge to edge.

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Recipe: Malfatti Ricotta Dumplings

Ingredients:

1 cup all purpose flour
2 cups fresh ricotta
1 large egg
6 oz Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
Cheesecloth

Directions:

Dust a sheet pan generously with flour. Take cheesecloth and wring out ricotta. Combine ricotta, egg, Parmesan and salt into a large bowl. Sift in flour while mixing with a wooden spoon just until combined. Do not over mix. Flour your counter, and scrape ricotta mixture onto counter. Divide into 4 pieces and roll each piece into a long rope- about 24" long. Cut rope with a bench knife into 3/4"-1" dumplings. Place dumplings on floured sheet pan. Let dumplings rest for about 20 minutes. Meanwhile bring large pot of water to a boil. Add dumplings in batches of about 25 to water. Cook until they float to the surface. Remove pasta from water with slotted spoon, Combine with sauce of choice and serve.



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Recipe: Black Truffle Sauce

Ingredients:

1 1/2 T garlic
1 1/2 T shallots
5 cups cream
2 T butter
1 T flour
Fresh truffles to taste
Truffle oil to garnish plates
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Melt Butter, Add Flour, stir until it is a combined. Add Shallots and cook till tender, add garlic and stir until fragrant. Add Cream and stir occasionally just until it boils. Add Fresh Truffles.

Recipe: Cilantro Relish

Ingredients:

1/2 cup green onion
1/2 cup yellow onion
1 cup cilantro
2 T lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Mix ingredients together and let rest over night.

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Recipe: Savory Parmesan Macaron Shell

Ingredients

makes 25 sandwiched 1-inch macarons

1 ¼ packed C (165 g) Almond flour
 pinch of Sea salt
 ¾ packed C (165 grams) Confectioners' sugar
 ½ C (115 grams) Aged egg whites, divide into 2 equal parts
 ½ C (38 grams) Water
 ⅝ C (125 grams) Granulated sugar
 2 Tbsp (10 grams) Powdered egg white
 4 drops (gel) or 6 drops (liquid) Food coloring

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 325° F. Pulse almond flour, salt and confectioners' sugar in the bowl of a food processor 4 times for 4 seconds each time. Sift with powdered egg white. Stir in ¼ cup (57 grams) of aged egg whites to form a paste.
2. Put the remaining ¼ cup (58 grams) egg whites in mixer with whisk. Whisk the egg whites on medium speed until soft peaks form. Heat the granulated sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and cook until the sugar reaches beginning or soft ball stage (234° F) (test by removing a drop on a heat-proof spatula). Pour the syrup down the side of the mixer bowl at medium speed. Continue whisking until the meringue forms soft-medium peaks, about 4 minutes.
3. Fold the meringue into the dry ingredient paste in thirds, to gradually lighten it and make a smooth batter (and add food coloring, if using it, when the dry ingredients appear to be just incorporated). It is important to fold the different components just enough, but not too much or the macarons will crack. To make sure that you have reached the right point, once the ingredients appear combined, lift some of the mixture about 1 inch above the bowl with the spatula. If it retains a three-dimensional shape, fold it again. When folded just enough, the mixture should fall right back into the bowl, with no stiffness, in a continuous drip.
4. Using the piping guide, pipe the macarons 1½ inches apart on a silicon baking sheet lined sheet pan. Slam the baking sheet down to remove excess air (slam up to 6 times, from 6" above the table). Let dry at room temperature ½ hour until a skin/crust forms. Bake on 1 sheet pan for 13 minutes, until the macarons just come off the baking sheet when you lift them (the centers will have risen, and will not have any dark indentations). If the macarons darken too quickly, put a wooden spoon in the door of the oven to prop it slightly open. Cool completely before removing and filling.
5. Bake at 250° F in a convection oven about 10 minutes. Brush lightly with browned butter; top with shaved or grated Parmesan, turn off the convection, increase to 325°, and bake another 4-5 minutes.

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Recipe: Lemon Thyme Gelato Filling

Ingredients

4 gallons 10% custard base*

4 gallons of frozen yogurt **

add 1 quart of lemon juice that has been reduced on the stove by half of the original amount

2 cups lemongello (To infuse the thyme, we simply soak a thyme filled cheese-cloth sachet in the limoncello for a couple days before preparing the gelato. Think of it like a cold brewed tea.)

Combine ingredients and process in a gelato machine.

*Custard Base

36 cups whole milk

2 tsp salt

10 2/3 cups sugar

96 egg yolks

10 2/3 cups heavy cream

**Frozen Yogurt

16 quarts whole-milk plain yogurt

8 cups heavy cream

12 cups sugar

1 cup corn syrup

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