

catersource®

*Holiday
Cheer!*

everything you need
to cater great events



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Luxury brand

Robin Selden, Managing Partner & Executive Chef

Marcia Selden Catering & Event Planning

Stamford, Connecticut



FOR ROBIN'S DECONSTRUCTED WELLINGTON, SHE MAKES TINY CROWNS OF PUFF PASTRY; INSTEAD OF A MUSHROOM DUXELLE SHE SAUTÉS MUSHROOMS IN HERBED BUTTER AND FINISHES THEM WITH A HEAVY CREAM. FINALLY, THE FOIE GRAS SHOWN IS PAN SEARED. BETWEEN THE LOBSTER AND THE FOIE, SAYS SELDEN, IT'S INCREDIBLY RICH—OY!

Business brief

Selden, who was voted Chef of the Year by the International Caterers Association at CSES2016 this year, runs a 14-chef kitchen and manages a midtown Manhattan event space, Above 12, which is shared with old family friend, Food Network star, and business partner Ron Ben Israel. She was recently named a Most Innovative Chef for the sixth annual Greenwich Wine + Food Festival

(September 23–24, 2016), presented by *Serendipity* magazine.

Philosophy

“We see ourselves as a luxury brand. Our clients always expect a high level of creativity and service. Year round, we conduct chef challenges to come up with things we’ve never done before. We’re inspired by trends, but we want to make things our own.”



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Worth noting

“We have a Greenwich, Connecticut client who throws an annual holiday party for 400 guests. The request this year was ‘over the top,’ so we’re planning a Great Gatsby theme. We’ll have raw bars, smoked salmon, Bloody Mary oyster shooters, and caviar stations with a variety of blinis. Of course, the vodka will be flowing. One of the special dishes we’re creating is a deconstructed Wellington using butter-poached, butterflied lobster tail with pan-seared foie gras. It will be served with sautéed chanterelle mushrooms and crowned with puff pastry.”

Known for

“We make our own ice cream and gelato, and we have a very popular holiday ice cream dessert we call The Trio: gingerbread with crushed gingerbread cookies mixed in and chopped spiced gumdrops sprinkled on top; pumpkin with candied pepitas and chocolate with our housemade white chocolate peppermint bark mixed in. We do that as a passed dessert, in a sundae bar, or in small shot glasses.”

Surviving the season

“You just need to power through the crazy times and run on adrenaline a little bit. The good news is I’ve curated the most amazing team. I trust them and care about them, and we’ve created an environment that makes them want to take ownership. It’s a kind, fun, nurturing place. Everyone has a voice and an opinion in our kitchen.”

Favorite holiday food memory

“My grandmother was Miss Cuba 1938. Part of the prize was a trip to New York, where she landed a modeling contract and became a Ziegfeld Girl. My grandfather, a Jewish dentist, saw her in a show, and pursued her ardently for a year before they married. Thanks to them, my family background is what I call ‘Cubish’ (Cuban-Jewish). I especially loved my grandmother’s traditional Cuban food at the holidays. We use her recipe for the coconut flan we serve at parties today.”

BUTTER POACHED LOBSTER TAILS

YIELD: 6

INGREDIENTS

8 T clarified butter
½ cup onion, peeled and chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 piece carrot, peeled and chopped
1 piece shallot, peeled and chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 cup white wine – sweet
1 cup fish stock
Salt and pepper to taste
6 (6-oz) lobster tails
1 T fresh lemon juice

METHOD

1. Place 8 T of the butter in a saucepan and turn the heat to medium. When butter is melted, add the onion, celery, carrot, shallot, and garlic. Cook, stirring until the vegetables soften.
2. Add the wine and stock; reduce the mixture by about half. Strain, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible, and set aside.
3. Bring a pan (big enough to fit the tails) fill with butter mix and bring to a boil. Poach the tails in the shell for 4–6 minutes, until cooked through and hot. Transfer the lobster to a warm place. Add the lemon juice, salt, and cayenne to taste. Spoon over lobster and serve.

*by Robin Selden

THE HOLIDAY PARTY IS BACK!

Four ways to have a party they won't forget

It's summer and the sun is shining, so of course it's time to prepare for the upcoming holiday party madness!

We start brainstorming ideas and looking for trends in fashion, food, lifestyle, and the design arenas. Many times my best ideas come from a dream that I wake up from and write down in the middle of the night. They subsequently turn into some of our best concepts! We try to pull out all the stops, as our clients have seen it all and therefore they push us to create and deliver fresh, exciting, and new ideas.



BLOW THEIR MINDS WITH A
SEAFOOD STATION ON STEROIDS!

Pack a punch

Punch bowls are back, and we don't mean your Mother's recipe with sherbet! These are a festive and cheery way to serve a signature cocktail to your guests. It looks beautiful and guests can help themselves if they choose. We like to bring in the flavors of the season and use cranberries, ginger, pomegranates, or citrus in our recipes. Our current favorite is a Gingery Pomegranate Punch with vodka and fresh lime juice—turn to page 74 for the full recipe and photo.

Seafood on steroids

Blow their minds with a guaranteed crowd pleaser; a festive "seafood on steroids" station! We take ours to a whole different level, starting with sashimi sliced tableside by our sushi chef, delicious bites of fresh and oh-so-trendy Hawaiian poke, brightly flavored ceviche, seared tuna pizzettas, jumbo lump crabmeat, and grilled lobster tails. We add crunch and color with yummy plantain, yucca, and wonton chips because everything's better with a little something crunchy! To add to the drama we take the classic and often expected shrimp cocktail off and hand deliver it right to the guests via our fun lucite boxes and stunning 'Shrimp Girls.'



OUR SHRIMP GIRLS CARRY FUN LUCITE BOXES FULL OF DELICIOUS SEAFOOD



PEKING DUCK IS AN EYE-GRABBER



MINCED CHICKEN LETTUCE CUPS

Wok this way

What's not to love about Chinese food? Serve mouthwatering hand-rolled Peking duck extra crispy with sweet plum sauce, sautéed shiitakes, and scallion pancakes alongside wok-fried Asian vegetables, chicken in broccoli (for the less adventurous guest), blistered shishito peppers, and minced chicken lettuce cups. This station has a lot of action and movement which guests are excited and intrigued by, particularly it promotes interaction and fun.

Deck the halls dessert station

Move over cupcakes and come 'foraging' for your food in a beautiful dessert garden. Our show-stopping dessert tree dazzles guests and keeps the interactive nature of any party going right through dessert. We hang clear glass globes, "ornaments" so to speak, filled with several types of layered cake (can also be done with a Christmas tree), which is really merry and beautiful. The hanging sweet treats loom over an equally lush table of bite-sized desserts. Creating an edible visual design element that has height, movement, and an interactive element is something we strive for because it becomes an "experience" rather than just a buffet station. **CS**



GUESTS ENJOY THE ACTION AND MOVEMENT OF A WOK STATION



Robin Selden is Executive Chef and Managing Partner, Marcia Selden Catering & Event Planning, ICA Chef of the Year 2016 and current ICA president.



IF YOU WANT YOUR GUESTS ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE, GO WITH PINE, AND YOU HAVE A STUNNING DESSERT CENTERPIECE



By Kathleen Stoehr



HOLIDAYS WITH A PUNCH!

It's a word on the lips of many a bartender across the US—batching. A terrific timesaver, cocktail batching reduces the number of bottles you need to touch with each drink order.

I saw many a bartender at the recent Tales of the Cocktail conference in New Orleans do a quick pour from a nearby pitcher into a Boston shake with ice for dilution/chill, quickly strain into a vessel, tuck in a pre-skewered garnish, and serve. What could be better? Well, punches can be, actually.

Please note: batching is great, especially if you want the energy and liveliness that the shake or stir can bring to an event, and the welcomed garnish flair. However, for those events a bit more laid back with the potential for an aspect of serve-your-own, a tasty and colorful punch alleviates the need for a full bar set up, can keep the receipts for liquor lower, and also imparts that “specialty cocktail” cache. Plus, the garnish is on view in the bowl, be it pomegranate seeds, orange wheels or peels, or a floating flower.

When developing a punch, think about it the same way you might put together a beloved cocktail: a combination of bitter and/or sour (such as citrus, bitters), sweet (simple syrup, sweet vermouth), strong (the spirit), and weak (low ABV such as champagne, an ice block, soda water, ginger beer).

But no worries about putting together your own punch recipe—we have a few here to dazzle you! Happy holidays!

POMEGRANATE GINGERY PUNCH

Recipe & photo courtesy Jeffrey Selden,
Marcia Selden Catering & Event Planning

YIELD: 12 (DEPENDENT UPON GLASSWARE)

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups pomegranate juice, chilled
- 4 cups vodka
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice, plus 1 lime, thinly sliced
- 6 cups ginger beer, chilled
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pomegranate seeds

METHOD

1. In a large punch bowl, combine the pomegranate juice, vodka, and lime juice. Chill up to 12 hours or overnight.
2. Right before serving, add the ginger beer, pomegranate seeds, and lime slices.