

# PEEL

NEWS • TASTES • TRENDS  
FOR CULINARY PROFESSIONALS

Holiday 2020

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## RETHINK HOLIDAY PROMOTIONS FOR 2020

### HELP PEOPLE FEEL FESTIVE AT A TIME WHEN CELEBRATING FEELS DIFFERENT

This time last year, you were likely decorating your facility for the holidays and placing large food orders in anticipation of end-of-year celebrations. Alas, 2020 has had other plans for us. But even though consumers have not been able to dine and host events in the same ways as they have in the past - and the holidays will feel different this year - people still crave what you serve. They will still look to you to bring festivity to their holiday table.

How can you best do that this year? Try to reinvent your holiday offerings so they can be given as gifts to others or enjoyed at home by smaller groups. Build giftable, customizable baskets containing speciality food items, candy, baking supplies and liquor. Suggest festive wine pairings for the holiday entrées on your menu. Wrap your holiday take-away meal bundles in festive packaging - or with

*(continued, p.2)*



*Find ways to celebrate that build brand loyalty.*

# CHEF SPOTLIGHT

ROBIN SELDEN, MANAGING PARTNER &  
EXECUTIVE CHEF OF MARCIA SELDEN CATERING



Marcia Selden Catering was born over 30 years ago when Marcia Selden, a jewelry designer with a flair for cooking and entertaining, was asked if she knew of a good caterer for a small wedding – then stepped up to handle it herself. Now the award-winning company orchestrates 850 events a year for clients including corporations, universities, charitable organizations and political dignitaries in the New York metropolitan area and beyond. Robin Selden, Marcia’s daughter, has guided the company’s kitchen for nearly two decades. She works alongside her mother, brother, Jeffrey, and a team of chefs and event planners to design memorable, creative events large and small – even during a year when events must be reimaged on a sometimes-daily basis.

**Q: How has business changed for you in 2020? What safety adjustments have you made?**

**A:** We have been strategizing, reinventing and reimagining our business since Friday the 13th of March. Fitting, right?! We went from being a luxury, restaurant-experience caterer to a socially distant, safely served and serviced caterer. Masks are the new fashion statement so we make them nice enough so clients, their guests and our staff are jazzed about wearing them! For food presentation we’ve designed thoughtful ways to deliver individual hors d’oeuvres under a tiny cloche or on plates no more than two inches in diameter, package items on buffets so guests grab and go, have individual disposable tongs for guests to serve themselves, and use demi cups and shooters to serve individual portions of everything from soup to ceviches.

**Q: What new catering ideas have you put into practice this year?**

**A:** In the last several months, our clients have enjoyed entertaining safely outdoors, with carefully planned parties, intimate weddings, mitzvahs, birthdays and milestone celebrations. I’m most excited about our newest concept, “Dinner-Party,” a turn-key dinner party complete with curated menus, custom-printed menu cards, tabletops designed on the menu theme, florals, awesome wines and specialty crafted cocktails. It takes the stress and work out of entertaining to provide everything clients need to host the perfect dinner party at home. We also came up with the idea of contacting marinas within an hour of our commissary to offer a maritime menu for boaters docked there. It was hugely successful. Then we thought about clients who fly privately, so Marcia’s Medallion Club was born from that idea, offering those clients great ways to dine on their flights.

**Q: Are you using technology in any especially helpful ways right now?**

**A:** We developed a weekly menu that people can order safely with contact-free delivery and pickups. We set up a Shopify page and now have people ordering pre-packaged meals, weekly, as well as holiday specialty menus (including Thanksgiving) from there, which helps keep our sales team working on the special details required for safe and socially distant in-person events. We will do every creative thing possible to come through this pandemic stronger, wiser and better than we were before!

**Q: How can chefs find ways to serve memorable food and drink in the current environment?**

**A:** Our food brings so much happiness to people as it’s made with love. Even if our food is arriving as a party in a box, I guarantee you will feel the love. Chefs need to knock the chips off of their shoulder, not wait for business to come to them and celebrate the little wins. Throw your business plan out the window. Be okay with reinventing your branding and style as all rules are off now. Make your clients and guests feel special and appreciated. Do the same for your team. Relationships are the most important thing right now. I’m okay if I have to make deliveries, wash dishes, do whatever it takes to get the job done. We need to wear a lot of hats now!

# Robin's "Kitchen Sink" Cookies

*Recipe provided by Robin Selden, Managing Partner & Executive Chef of Marcia Selden Catering*



**PEEL**  
**HOLIDAY**  
**RECIPE**

## Ingredients:

2 cups cake flour  
1 2/3 cups bread flour  
1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 1/2 teaspoons coarse salt  
2 1/2 sticks unsalted butter  
1 1/4 cups (10 ounces) light brown sugar  
1 cup granulated sugar  
2 large eggs  
2 teaspoons natural vanilla extract  
2 1/2 cups add-ins (see below)

Kitchen sink add-ins: crushed pretzels, potato chips, chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, white chocolate chips, crushed Oreos, Cheerios (or your fave cereal), mini marshmallows, Heath bar crunch bits, sprinkles, cut up chocolate candy bars (we love Snickers or Kitkat bars), dried cranberries or cherries, shredded coconut, chopped nuts (whatever you fancy), crushed candy canes, Maldon sea salt (if you love salted cookies - very lightly sprinkle on top before baking...yum!)

## Method:

1. Sift flours, baking soda, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Set aside.
2. Using a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugars together until very light, about 5 minutes. Add eggs & vanilla and blend until incorporated. Reduce speed to low, slowly add dry ingredients and mix until combined. Add kitchen sink add-ins; mix until incorporated. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
3. When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350°F.
4. Scoop dough (the size of generous golf balls) onto baking sheet. They spread out so be sure to leave enough space between the dough. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt (if you're like me and enjoy sweet & salty goodness) and bake until golden brown, 15 to 18 minutes.

