

Merry Christmas!

It's the time of the year we love best at Hill Street Grocer and Augusta Foodstore. Both stores are filling up with lovely looking, delicacies – prettily packaged puddings, stollen, gingerbread houses and chocolates. We are securing plentiful supplies of ducks, turkeys, chickens, hams, crayfish, salmon, raspberries, strawberries, cherries, cheeses and all your Christmas staples.

Our Christmas order form is now available. It's bigger and better than last year – so much so, it needs its own explanatory brochure! Pick up both from the front counter at either store.

Kerran (our very own Christmas elf) is working away upstairs on our famous Christmas hampers. An easy and impressive gift priced from \$29 - \$185, you can save yourself stress and shoe leather in one easy step by placing your order now. For full details on our 2004 hamper collection see our Hamper brochure – also available at the front counter.

As well as lovely new stock, our stores are filling up with new staff, especially now that exams are over. We welcome Sophie, Marty, Larissa, Matthew, Ross, Jonathan, Fergus and Uwais, who will be helping us over the busy Christmas period and next year.

This issue of *Provisions* focuses on nibbles. 'Tis the season to be jolly, so quick, easy finger food, a glass of Tasmanian sparkling wine and a few friends is all you need to get into the swing of party time. Karen Goodwin-Roberts and Peter Althaus give you some tips on both.

Whether your Christmas is an intimate dinner for two, drinks and nibbles for 10 or a huge family lunch for 35, we trust you have a happy, relaxing Christmas day and a healthy and prosperous year to come.

Peace on earth,

Nick and Marco Nikitaras

Something to nibble on

"Come over for a drink and a few nibbles." is the sort of invitation that's easily given at this time of year, when goodness knows, we are all busy enough without having to spend hours over a dozen different little do-dads that end up taking more time and effort than the Christmas spread itself. What a shame though to miss out on renewing contact and informal entertaining because it's all too much bother.

"Nibbles" is a vague term that some interpret as 20 different intricate little morsels, others as ripping open a packet of crisps. In this issue of *Provisions*, Karen Goodwin-Roberts has some ideas for easy nibbles to make from scratch (or perhaps with assistance from the deli counter). We also have some ideas for putting together a platter straight from the deli, chiller and shelves, and the middle ground – some of your own work together with something you have bought.

Whether you will be making most things yourself or buying the lot, plan ahead to save stress at the time. For a short drinks party plan to serve four to five pieces of food to each person each hour. If the party is to last the whole afternoon or evening, between 12 and 14 pieces of food per person will be enough.

A mix of cold and hot food is a good idea, and do as much as you can ahead to store in the freezer or an air-tight container until it's needed. It's very pleasant to have the smell of something cooking to greet guests and some "serve immediately" food is great – but make sure it is balanced with things that you can whip the lid from or just unpeel the cling wrap for it to be ready to serve.

Antipasto platter

An antipasto plate can come straight from the deli and jars. Select from cured and cold meats such as prosciutto, salami and ham; marinated mushrooms, artichoke hearts and

feta; marinated eggplant and capsicum; tender pieces of fresh fennel, tender celery sticks from inside the celery bunch, semi-sundried tomatoes; pickled green tomatoes, pepper "dews" and chilli stuffed with cheese, caperberries and olives are all easy to assemble.

Or stay with a seafood theme with Barilla Bay oysters in their shell, Freemantle sardines, pickled baby squid, octopus and cuttlefish, crumbed squid rings and a dipping sauce and/or mayonnaise and lemon wedges.

We have tiny Ligurian olives or you can dress up fleshy olives by marinating them for a week or two before the event – rinse and dry 750g of black olives, crush them slightly, then put them in a jar with a couple of tablespoons of crushed fennel or cumin seeds, a tablespoon each of crushed cardamom pods, allspice berries and dried red chillies, a dozen bay leaves and a strip of bruised orange zest. Cover with olive oil that has been heated then slightly cooled. Seal when cooled. Or you could do the same with thyme, crushed garlic and bay leaves.

A way of dressing up olives that takes less thinking ahead is to put about 300g in a dish with the zest of two lemons, a couple of diced cloves of garlic a glass of red wine, two bay leaves, some finely sliced sundried tomatoes and couple of sprigs of fresh thyme and a good grinding of pepper. Stir it all together and put them, covered, in a moderate oven for 20 minutes.

You could marinate your own feta – we have Fage ewe milk feta from Greece – or bocconcini or yoghurt cheese. Try pureeing two cloves of garlic, ½ a cup of parsley leaves, ¼ cup of basil, ¾ cup of extra virgin olive oil, a teaspoon of toasted fennel seeds, the pared rind of a lemon and some cracked blackpepper. Pour that over about 300g of cubed feta or cheese balls and leave in the fridge overnight. As with everything on your antipasto platter, bring it to room temperature for serving.

provisions

from Hill Street Grocer

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Cheese platter

Don't go overboard with too many types of cheese, three is plenty. Choose a firm cheese, a soft ripened cheese and a blue, goat or ewe cheese. Avoid too many extras, but chose from berries, grapes, muscatel raisins, walnuts. Pears go particularly well with blue cheese, as does a drizzle of VPC's Truffle Honey. VPC's Amber Walnuts also go well with cheese. Then there are all the fruit pastes. Maggie Beer has a new range that includes a Fig Paste that's good with goat cheese, Parmigiano and cheddar, a Seville Paste that goes well with a sharp blue cheese, as does her Cabernet Paste.

Base line

A mouthful of 41° South Aquaculture smoked baby salmon with a special mayonnaise, or 41° South rillettes with gravlax and a dollop of salmon eggs, rare beef and mustard with basil, a teaspoon of paté alongside Maggie Beer Caramelised Onion – all it needs is your imagination and something to put the tasty bits on.

There are many bases you can buy at the store and then just work out your toppings – crispbreads, wafers, melba toasts, Finn crisps, pumpernickel, mini oat cakes and vol-au-vent cases.

Then there are simple ideas, such as rounds of cucumber topped with something fishy or, to be seasonal, turkey and avocado with a dollop of cranberry sauce. Boiled eggs scooped out and refilled – say with anchovy and mayonnaise added to the yolk – are another standby.

In Karen's recipe for tomato, leek and marinated feta tartlets, she tells you how to make a tartlet base from frozen pastry, which can also be used for other fillings – tomato and goat cheese perhaps.

Use a muffin tray to easily make cases to hold whatever takes your fancy. Cut the crusts from slices of thick toasting

wholemeal bread, roll them with the rolling pin, then cut out rounds with a biscuit cutter. Press each round into the muffin hole and brush with melted butter or spray with oil and bake a 200C oven until crisp – between 7 and 10 minutes. Keep in an airtight tin until ready to use them. The same thing can be done with bought wonton wrappers. Spray a mini muffin tray with oil, push in the wonton wrappers, spray again and bake for 7 minutes at about 180C. Fill them with your favourite crab-meat recipe, Thai chicken or pork mix.

Make crostini by slicing a baguette into 1cm slices, brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt then bake in a 200C oven until golden.

It's a wrap

Go Asian with a wrap of rice paper or spring roll pastry, or find a Middle Eastern favourite to wrap in mountain bread. Karen has a recipe using eggplant as the wrap.

A favourite wrap is prosciutto – wrap it around fresh melon, fresh figs or dates, dried figs, pears, grissini or asparagus spears that have been blanched, wrap them in prosciutto, brush with olive oil and then grill for half a minute on each side and serve immediately.

Dip into it

Once again there is a great deal you can buy straight from the chiller cabinet, such as our house label dips – avocado, tzatziki, taramosalata, olive red pesto, coriander and, of course, hummus.

Buzz up bought hummus with some cooked, peeled and chopped beetroot or half a cup of chopped mixed herbs or chopped semi-sundried tomatoes, a touch of chilli oil or some good extra virgin olive oil.

Have corn chips, toasted pitta bread or crisp vegetables such as radishes, celery, carrots, fennel or cherry tomatoes to dip into the dip. Make the pieces small so they are one mouthful only and no-one is tempted to double-dip.

Size down

Choose a recipe you are familiar with and adapt it or do a mini version of it - mini pizza (keep the slices or rounds small so that the toppings don't slide off), meat balls, sushi, Thai fish cakes, frittata, tartlets, fritters, marinated chicken wings (with the tips cut off), tiny pork spare ribs or scotch eggs made with quail eggs.

Sandwich it

Sandwiches can seem so naff, but often are favourites at parties; just keep well away from anything reminiscent of school lunches.

Ask the deli assistant to shave some Wursthaus or Ziggy's leg ham very finely and put it between pieces of crustless bread in "wavy" layers with some Dijon mustard. Use poached chicken chopped finely and mix it with finely chopped celery and walnuts and mayonnaise and put in crustless bread with a few leaves of rocket.

Mix canned tuna, celery, spring onion, a dash of Tabasco sauce, a squeeze of lemon and mayonnaise. Make asparagus rolls – spread grainy bread with soft cream cheese, lay blanched asparagus spear on the diagonal and roll from corner to corner. Keep prepared sandwiches fresh by covering them with a wetted tea towel well wrung out.

Sparklers

Bubbly is festive, elegant, simple and suitable for any meal of day from breakfast to a late-night dessert.

Sparkling wines are particularly suited to oysters, smoked salmon, caviar, abalone or strawberries dipped in chocolate. Chill a bottle for about an hour before enjoying it.

Peter Althaus of Domain A/Stoney Vineyard supplied these tasting notes for the Tasmanian sparkling wines we have at Hill Street Grocer most of the time,

although some, like the Lake Barrington, can be in scant supply.

1996 Iron Pot Bay Kyra

Medium straw colour with some green highlights: moderate to fine bead. Toasty hazelnut nose. Plenty of flavour; dry and complex but with time began to show an orange/mandarin/botrytis character. Lingering acidity, interesting mouthfuls of flavour.

1998 Clover Hill

This wine is remarkably fresh for a four-year-old. Very pale in the glass, it has fine, persistent bead and an intense citrusy palate with marvelous fluffy creaminess. Superb drinking for a special occasion.

1997 Radenti Chardonnay Pinot Noir.

A sparkling wine full of finesse. Classic, creamy, well balanced sparkling wine with good length. For the very special occasion.

Stefano Lubiana Non vintage Sparkling

Classic, non vintage sparkling wine, not too dry, good persistent bead. A good aperitif wine.

1998 Dalrymple Blanc de Blancs

A dry clean refreshing sparkling wine. Full, with good acidity, goes well with oysters.

Lake Barrington Alexandra

Dry, aromatic, good balance, excellent aperitif or with seafood. Made by Stefano Lubiana.

Cooking with Karen Goodwin-Roberts

Karen Goodwin-Roberts has created some finger-food recipes that won't leave you feeling stressed. To be really convinced, see her make some of them at Hill Street Grocer on Sunday, December 5 (see events).

Eggplant and goat cheese rolls

2 eggplants
300g goat cheese
1/2 bunch Italian parsley
100g walnuts
zest and juice 1 lemon
olive oil for frying

Wash and cut the eggplant lengthways into slices, salt and leave 20 minutes, rinse and dry thoroughly. Heat the olive oil in a frypan and when hot cook each slice of eggplant until golden brown, drain on absorbent paper. Toast the walnuts under the grill or in an oven until golden.

Chop the parsley and walnuts finely and place into a bowl with the goat cheese, lemon zest and juice. Mix thoroughly and season with pepper.

Lay the eggplant slices out, and divide the cheese mixture evenly. Roll up each eggplant slice. Chill until required.

Grilled marinated eggplant slices from the deli counter can be used as a quick alternative. Grilled marinated capsicum from the deli counter can be substituted as a quick alternative to roasting fresh capsicum and use Hill Street Grocer pesto to top the soup.

Polenta with semi-sundried tomatoes and rocket pesto

1 1/2 cups water
1/4 cup milk
3/4 cup polenta
pinch salt

semi-sundried tomatoes
pecorino or parmesan cheese, shaved

Lightly oil a 19x29cm rectangular slice pan. Place water and milk in a pan, heat until just before boiling point, slowly add polenta. Stir for 10 minutes on a low heat until all liquid is absorbed.

Place evenly in the prepared slice pan and cover with Gladwrap or greaseproof paper, refrigerate for 1 hour until firm.

Turn out onto a board – trim edges and cut into 18.5x5cm squares. Cut each square into a triangle.

Pesto:

1 bunch of rocket (fresh basil is also very nice)
2 cloves of garlic
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
olive oil
parmesan cheese

Blend all ingredients in a food processor until almost smooth.

Char-grill polenta triangles on an oiled grill and brown both sides. Top with pesto, tomato and cheese.

Use Hill Street Grocer pesto as a quick substitute for the rocket pesto. The polenta is also good topped with Hill Street Grocer Red Capsicum Pesto.

Chicken wrapped in pancetta and sage with a cider vinegar dressing

2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
6 very thin slices of pancetta, rind removed, cut in half
12 fresh sage leaves
2 tablespoons olive oil
salad leaves to serve
Dressing: 125ml olive oil, 80ml cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon flatleaf parsley chopped.

Cut the chicken breast lengthways in half, and cut each half into three chunks. Lay the

half slices of pancetta on a clean surface, place a sage leaf on top of each pancetta slice and wrap around the chicken chunks.

Drizzle with oil, grill on a medium heat on barbecue, being careful not to burn the pancetta (this should take about 10 minutes).

Meanwhile make the dressing, place all ingredients in a bowl and fork through until mixture thickens slightly.

Remove chicken bites and drain on paper towel, arrange on a serving platter drizzle with dressing over some salad greens. Serve immediately.

Zucchini and Ricotta Puffs

10g butter plus 10g extra, melted
1 1/2 cups grated yellow zucchini
100g ricotta cheese
2 tablespoons plain flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 chilli, seeded and finely sliced
2 spring onions, finely sliced
salt and pepper
oil for frying
red pesto or sour cream to serve

Melt butter and add the zucchini and cook for about 5 minutes, until tender. Drain on paper.

Place the zucchini, ricotta, extra butter, flour, baking powder, egg, chilli, onion and salt and pepper into bowl and mix until combined. Heat the vegetable oil in a deep saucepan and, in batches, deep-fry 1 tablespoon of the mixture for about 1 minute or until golden and puffed. Drain on paper towel and serve with red pesto and/or sour cream

Tomato, leek and marinated feta tartlets

1 leek
20g butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 sheets ready rolled puff pastry
1 punnet cherry tomatoes, thinly sliced

1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 piece marinated feta
Preheat oven to 200C. Wash leek and slice thinly. Heat the butter and oil in pan and add the leek, cook slowly for about 15 minutes until the leek is soft.

Cut the pastry into 12 6x8cm rectangles, place onto lightly oiled oven tray. Fold in each side to form a 2mm border. Prick pastry bases with a fork. Bake in oven for about 10 minutes, or until browned lightly.

Meanwhile place the tomato into a bowl with the thyme and vinegar, toss gently to combine. Spread some leek over each pastry base, top with the crumbled feta and then arrange sliced tomato on top. Bake in oven for a few minutes until warmed through.

Fruit and nut kofta

500g minced lean lamb
1 small onion finely diced
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
25g pine nuts
2 dried apricots, chopped finely
25g seedless raisins, chopped finely
1 egg, lightly beaten
pinch of allspice
30g butter
1/2 cup plain flour
1/2 cup grated parmesan
olive oil
salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a large pan and add the onion, garlic and pine nuts and sauté until they just begin to brown. Transfer these to a mixing bowl and mix together with the meat, fruit, eggs, allspice and salt and pepper. Form into walnut-size balls

On a tray combine the flour and cheese and season well. Roll the meatballs in the flour mixture. Heat the oil in a pan and cook the meatballs gently until golden brown. Serve warm with minted yoghurt.

Get the Blues



Will Brubacher can expect to keep his wits about him well into his old age – he grows blueberries and eats lots of the fruit that has

been shown by researchers at Tufts University in the US to make old rats more coordinated, learn faster and to have improved their motor skills. Perhaps more work needs to be done, but in the meantime the same researchers are making sure they get their cup of blueberries a day.

Blueberries, because of their high levels of antioxidants, have also been found to lower cholesterol levels – without the side-effects of drugs prescribed for the task. And the antioxidants remain when the fruit is made into wine, as Will does under his Poverty Point Wines label.

Not that Will and his partner Elaine Reeves were aware of any of that when they took over, in 1991, the first blueberry farm in Tasmania, Tassie Blue – planted by Les Kingston in 1981. Will happily gave up work as a carpenter for a lifestyle that has its peaks of activity – from 7am to 7pm seven days a week over summer – but also leaves plenty of time to play golf at other times of the year.

"Blueberries are a friendly sort of crop," he says. "The bush has no thorns and, if you prune properly, they are not too tall or too short for comfortable picking." A reasonable degree of comfort is important, because, unlike grapes or currants, blueberries are not picked by the bunch, but one by one by hand as they become ripe. Pickers at the patch at Petchey's Bay south of Cygnet work through the 2000 bushes as many as five times at intervals over the peak season in January and February.

For three years now, Tassie Blue has been certified organic with NASAA. It means brush-cutting all the grass and weeds instead of using a herbicide and using only organic fertiliser, but as Will had been

farming that way for years it seemed sensible to formalise things with certification.

Will looks after the pruning in winter by himself, and plants and harvests garlic and strawberries, but when the blueberry canes are weighed down with fruit, a team of 10 or 12 pickers and packers comes in to work the long summer days.

Christmas Gift Ideas

Stuck for ideas and short on time? Here are some ideas for the gift-challenged this Christmas, all available on our shelves!

Always an acceptable and welcome gift is a bottle of wine. Choose from our extensive range of Tasmanian wines, starting from \$16 for our Hill Street Grocer/Stoney Vineyard Chardonnay. You can also add a bottle of wine to any of our Christmas hampers (see separate brochure) for a really special gift.

Our 2004 Hamper Collection is full of gift ideas ranging from \$29 - \$185. You can please gourmets, wine drinkers and chocolate lovers alike, and have them delivered locally or interstate for a small courier fee.

Our Gingerbread houses are just delightful. Made by patissiere extraordinaire Jean-Pascal, they are a hit with kids and grannies alike. Make sure you order early (using our Christmas order form) as they sell out fast.

If you don't want to go empty handed when visiting over Christmas, pick up some delicious Tasmanian made D'anvers truffles or fudge, locally made Biscotelli boxed biscuits (in Carnivale and Traditional Shortbread), or a boxed panforte or panettone. Tie a red ribbon around any of these and you have an instantly festive gift.

Events

ON the four Sundays before Christmas, Karen Goodwin-Roberts will be in the store at Hill Street between 10am and 2pm to demonstrate and answer questions on Christmas cooking.

There's no time to be lost on preparing Christmas cakes and puddings, so on November 28 Karen will show how to make them, along with stollen and other baked treats.

Then on December 5, Karen will demonstrate nibbles and entrees for easy entertaining over the Christmas period, including many of the recipes in this issue of *Provisions*.

On December 12, Karen will show you how to get a big bird or ham ready, including stuffing and glaze recipes.

Seafood has become a modern tradition for the Australian Christmas. Karen will talk about ideas for whole salmon, oysters and crayfish on December 19.



ON December 17 between 6pm and 7pm the authors of the new Tasmanian culinary book *When We Eat* - Liz McLeod, Bernard Lloyd, Judith Sweet and Paul County – will be at Hill Street Grocer to sign copies of their book, the second course to *Before We Eat*, published last year.

When We Eat is the kitchen companion to *Before We Eat*, which dealt with restaurateurs and producers. In 230 pages, *When We Eat* lays out the ingredients and recipes that have made Tasmania famous.

The book catalogues the foods that thrive in Tasmania, especially what grows only in Tasmania. It then explains where to get it, when it is at its peak, how to prepare it and recipes for it. At the heart of this book are 50 ingredients Tasmania is famous for, including cheese, wine, fruit, berries, beer, seafood and 160 recipes from 40 of Tasmania's most popular eateries.

ON January 6 next year, Judith Sweet is organising a Four Hats dinner for 145 people at the Town Hall as part of the Hobart Summer Festival. Wearing the chefs' hats are Philippe Pascale, Lisa Thorsen, Mark Wilsdon and Jean-Pascal Lepretre. The dinner costs \$125, which includes wine. Book at the TSO booking office on 1800 001 190.

At Fullers

Elizabeth David's Christmas, compiled by Jill Norman
The late, great Elizabeth David could fairly



be said to have a jaundiced view of Christmas – "If I had my way – and I shan't – my Christmas Day eating and drinking would consist of an omelette and cold ham and nice bottle of wine at

lunchtime, and a smoked salmon sandwich with a glass of champagne on a tray in bed in the evening," she writes in *Elizabeth David's Christmas*.

"Christmas, at any rate the way we are supposed to celebrate it nowadays, does tend to unbalance people, particularly those people responsible for the catering, the cooking, the presents, the tree, the decorations. There are times indeed when it's difficult not to regret the failure of the Cromwell regime's bid to suppress the whole thing."

However, nearly 20 years as a cookery journalist, preparing Christmas features in August for glossy magazines, and many years catering for big family gatherings of her sisters and their families did equip the retiring David with a great deal of Christmas know-how.

Before her death, David planned to put together a book of all the recipes and articles she had given to friends and family. She did not complete the task, but her friend and executor Jill Norman has, and this Christmas Fullers has the hardback book on special at half its usual price.

It has information on how to cook duck, turkey, ham, spiced beef, puddings, soups – with a winter focus – but also salads and what to put together for "the members of the family who tend to make their meal off snacks and bits and pieces" all conveyed with the verve and style that makes it worth reading even if your Christmas lunch will be just an omelette and a glass of wine.

Elizabeth David's Christmas, compiled by Jill Norman, Michael Joseph, \$19.95 at Fullers Bookshop.

Type	Examples	Wines	Bread	Nibbles
Fresh	feta, chevre, ODA	Riesling, gewurztraminer, sauvignon blanc, young sparkling wines	Walnut bread, olive bread	Fresh berries, semi dried tomatoes
White rind	brie, camembert	Oaked chardonnay, wooded semillon, pinot noir, sparkling, fortified	Baguette, white sourdough, almond bread	Grapes, quince paste
Washed rind	Red Square, Lady Mella, Stormy	Heavy pinot noir, vintage sparkling, late harvest riesling, fortified wines, beer	Raisin bread, spiced fruit bread	Pears, hazelnuts, sultanas
Blue		Sticky, dessert wines, tokay, Muscat, port	Walnut bread, rye bread	Walnuts, dates
Eye	Emmenthal, gruyere, fontina, gouda, havarti	Chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon	Walnut bread, oat cakes	Pickles, gherkins, dried fruit
Semi hard	Cheddar, Lancashire, raclette, Meadow	Chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, apple cider	Sourdough bread, oatmeal biscuits,	Celery, apples, quince paste
Hard	Parmigiano reggiano, grana padano, pecorino	Tokay and muscat, mature sweet sherry, old red wines, sparkling, a few drops of real balsamic vinegar with Parmigiano	Fruit bread	Grapes, walnuts, olives, prosciutto