

GEORGE CATERING HAS ONE VAN PARKED BEHIND THE GYPSY TEA ROOM, where the staff works in a joined kitchen. Out of that van, and out of that shared space in Deep Ellum, comes some of Dallas' finest culinary fare.

George Brown has lived in Dallas most of his life. His wife, Katie, grew up in Lake Jackson, near Houston. The two met at the Culinary Institute in New York and married in 1995. George, who used to be the chef at Seventeen Seventeen, handles the savory side while Katie's specialty is desserts. (She creates all the desserts for The Green Room.)

Our taste buds applaud the union.

At a recent job for Stanley Korshak, George made three meaty canapés: venison chili shots topped with cotija (a Mexican crumbling cheese), dried tortillas, and yellow pepper sour cream; prime beef tenderloin tartar, mixed with olive oil and garlic and served on tiny profiteroles; and grilled andouille sausage with Creole mustard mayonnaise and scallions.

Meanwhile, Katie works on the other side of the kitchen, creating a chocolate hazelnut marjolaine you can't stop eating. Another client favorite is the peanut butter stick, a can-



Less Is More

noli filled with peanut butter mousse and served on a strawberry jam sauce, stacked up like little logs. She also makes a killer dried cherry chocolate cookie, which she plans to market on the Internet for holiday gifts.

The Browns are trying to promote a "less is more" attitude. "I think portions are too enormous sometimes," says George, who was selected by *Food and Wine* magazine in 1997 as one of the year's top 10 best new chefs in the country. "My philosophy is when you get done, I don't want you to feel like you just ate Thanksgiving dinner. We use less starch and a normal meat proportion, like six ounces. I'm not going to serve you a 14-ounce veal chop."

Will it work? Who knows in a society where the Cheesecake Factory—with its gargantuan meals of mediocre quality—is a multimillion-dollar business.

George likes to have eight or nine dishes served. His menu includes "things on sticks" and "things on spoons," like apple bacon lollipops and shiitake mushroom salad.

"We're trying to bring the fun back into it," he says.

theme,” says John Gilbert, vice president of operations at Eddie Deen Catering, the folks George W. calls when he’s throwing a barbeque. “Now a lot of them are going to back to partying like Texans—beer, boots, and Stetsons.”

Comfort food is also making a comeback—upscale. Good old Southern cooking has left Momma’s kitchen and now travels in the

George and Katie Brown, one of Dallas’ favorite culinary couples, subscribe to the theory “quality over quantity.”

vans of Dallas’ high-end caterers. We’re talking pesto and olive-rubbed meatloaf with sun-dried tomato mashed potatoes, created by the chefs at Spice of Life Catering.

And hostesses are asking caterers to bring on the beef. High-end party planners report that Dallas’ big-deal menus are filled with wild game. Andrea Hagar and Shelley Barsotti, owners of The Food Company, started their catering company in the mid-’80s, during what Hagar calls “the chicken era.” With a booming economy, Dallas residents are now giving in to their carnivorous cravings.

“People are eating more meat,” Hagar says. “They’re looking at parties as a chance to show their guests a good time. You don’t have to eat this way every day, but let’s celebrate.”

And speaking of celebrating, meet Jan Miller. The Highland Park literary agent is known nationwide as one of the toughest contract negotiators in the business. In Dallas she and her husband, Jeff Rich, are known for their great parties.

Miller hosts a party at her house two, often three, times a month. And we don’t mean wine and cheese with a little Enya in the background. We mean magicians flown in from California and table décor with more attention to detail than an architect gives to his blueprints (a summer soup, for example, served in terra cotta flower pots with bees painted on them for a June party). “I like to do things in a pretty glamorous way,” she says. This winter, she’s planning a Truman Capote dinner with nothing but caviar and champagne.

For much of this party success, she credits her caterer, George Brown, to whom she has remained monogamous for the past two years. (“If he’s not available, I change the date.”)

In a day when time itself seems a most illusive commodity, Miller finds people are, indeed, taking the time to throw parties reminiscent of a world without faxes, web sites, and cell phones. “It would be hard for me to list 10 restaurants in Dallas that we frequent,” she says. “But there are so many wonderful ways to entertain, and I think doing things in your home is very important.”

And so the story of how to plan your perfect party begins.

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ANY BRILLIANT PROJECT BEGINS WITH AN OUTLINE, SO YOU shouldn’t have a party without a detailed agenda. Start with the idea to invite people to your home. From there, let your imagination wander.

What kind of party are you in the mood for? Do you want family and friends to gather around the fireplace for hot chocolate and bread pudding before you go caroling? Or are you thinking more along the lines of crème brûlée and your favorite little black dress?

Create the guest list based on the size of the party and the potential for riveting conversation. Then think entertainment (piano,

TOP 10 FLORISTS

Apples To Zinnias. 4024

Villanova St. 214-361-2200.

European, traditional, and contemporary design.

Avant Garden. 4 Highland

Park Village. 214-559-3432.

www.avantgarden.com.

The lovely, natural arrangements are great for dinner parties.

Dr. Delphinium Designs. 5806

W. Lovers Ln. 214-522-9911.

Upscale, natural designs.

The Design Studio. 2016

Lucas Dr. 214-219-2016.

Russell Glenn’s shop is known as an “old standby” for beautiful, traditional arrangements.

Garden Gate Floral Design.

2615 Routh St. 214-220-

1272. Offers a range of

styles from minimalist, sleek,

New York modern to organic

and natural.

Joy Cook Designs. 4210

Herschel Ave. 214-443-0075.

Specializes in flowers that have an airy, innovative style.

Living Color Flowers. 6055

Sherry Ln. 214-750-7500.

Innovative, fresh, independent and “really with it,” as one caterer says.

Preston Flower Market. 18208

Preston Rd., D-10. 972-599-

9697. The most unbelievable

roses and exotics, including the best orchids in town.

Two Design Group. 1113 Dragon

St. 214-741-3145. High-end

florist often used at the DMA. Known for big productions and phenomenal weddings (like Howard Rachovsky’s).

Zen Floral Design. 1626 Edison

St. 214-741-4001. High-end

prices with creativity to match.

Zen’s has plenty of tropical

and other unusual flowers.

TOP 10 CATERERS

Andrew Ormsby Catering. 3121

Ross Ave. 214-824-4539.

www.ormsbycatering.com.

Eddie Deen. 1104 S. Virginia

St., Terrell. 972-524-0455.

www.eddideen.com. Catered

George W.’s first gubernatorial

inauguration. Still famous

for barbeque, but they’ve

expanded with menus in

other areas as well.

The Food Company. 4115 Lomo

Alto Dr. 214-939-9270.

George Catering. 6303

Ellsworth Ave. 214-752-6851.

www.georgecatering.com.

Gourmet Dallas. The Quad-

rangle, 2800 Routh St., Ste.

144. 214-720-9006. Gourmet

Dallas is one of the largest

caterers in the city. After 14

years, the business just

expanded to include The Silver

Room, a restaurant and private

dining facility in the old 8.0

spot at The Quadrangle.

Local. 2936A Elm St. 214-

752-7500. [www.local-party-](http://www.local-party-foods.com)

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