

Toques

A stylized sun with a white chef's hat in the center, surrounded by yellow rays. The word "Toques" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font, with the "ff!" part of the word positioned below the sun.

Today's great chefs have fans that rival those of George Clooney or Angelina Jolie. OK, maybe they're not stalked by the paparazzi and are allowed a bit of anonymity (Mr. Puck possibly excepted). But let's face it: Those of us who love great food constantly want more.

We flock to the restaurants of these "stars." We buy their books. We watch their TV shows. We're willing to book reservations months in advance. We crave their creations and a perfectly staged

who have at least one thing in common: All are James Beard Award recipients. It's clear that their histories and their regions inform their food and entertaining style.

experience, from that first sip of a mojito to that last bite of summer pudding. But I wonder: How do these perfectionist chefs entertain at home on a typical laid-back summer day? We spoke to three incredible chefs, in various stages of their careers,



WOLFGANG PUCK
Based in Los Angeles, his food empire includes Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining, Wolfgang Puck Catering, and Wolfgang Puck Worldwide Inc. This visionary was awarded the James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012. wolfgangpuck.com

What does summer entertaining look like for you?

Sunday lunch. I like to start out with a peach Bellini — and women love them more than anything! I cook white peaches in a little sugar and vanilla and then puree them until they are very fine. I push the peaches through a sieve, put them in a pitcher when cool, and add

ILLUSTRATION BY COCO MASUDA

prosecco or Champagne. I usually serve fish, baked and served at room temperature, Veracruz style. I make a variety of salads, some with corn, raisins, great produce, and I spice it up a little. I like a little heat.

Any special touches you can share?

We go to the market and get fresh flowers. My wife's really good at that. But we keep it simple and let the food take center stage.

OK, there's casual and there's casual. What about shoes — on or off?

I'm the only one with no shoes on [laughing]. I always walk around barefoot, but no, I don't force anyone to take their shoes off.

Are there any summer foods you've enjoyed since childhood and just have to have at least once a summer?

Fried chicken — Viennese style, like wiener schnitzel, but it's easier to make. Keep the bone in, take the skin off, brine it a bit, then bread it and fry it. I serve it room temperature with a warm or room-temperature potato salad made from fingerlings, with Champagne or white-wine vinegar. Then I make a cucumber salad with caraway seeds and sour cream. Also a tomato salad.

What's your summer drink of choice?

Rosé or cold Champagne. I love a good rosé, as I used to live in Provence.

What do you love best about having your own . . . let's call it . . . food empire?

What I love is that what we have is a family business. Most employees are not blood relatives, although some are. Many of these people have been with me for twenty or thirty years.

Anyone under ten years is new.

I'm sitting here in your newest restaurant: Wolfgang Puck Pizza/Bar. I can't wait to dig in. Is there any other big news you can share?

I'd say that the most exciting news is that I'm redoing our flagship Spago restaurant, in Beverly Hills. It has been in its current location for sixteen years, and we're going to reopen it next month. We're going to take all the dishes off the menu and create all new ones. We're redoing everything. I'm now thinking about the menu; there will be small plates, and vegetables will be important. I always try to change things, because nothing is ever perfect. Why did I change my pizza dough after thirty years? I think we didn't have it perfect.



If I surprised you with a big tub of fresh figs what might you do with them?

Sometimes I'll make a fig tart. Bake the tart in the oven a little bit, then add figs and sugar until they caramelize. Also, sometimes I just peel and slice them and put them on vanilla ice cream and top with a raspberry puree. —WOLFGANG PUCK



BARBARA LYNCH

Barbara is the chef, founder, and CEO of Barbara Lynch Gruppo. Based in Boston, the company includes Boston's No. 9 Park, B&G Oysters, Drink, The Butcher Shop, Menton, Sportello, Stir, and 9 at Home. This year, Barbara adds to her many accolades the James Beard Award for Outstanding Wine Program at No. 9 Park. barbaralynch.com

What does summer entertaining look like for you?

Summer is my favorite time to entertain here in New England.

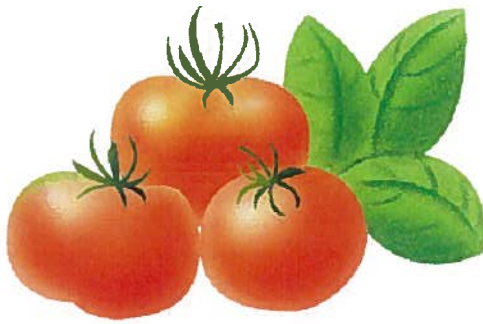
I share a house in Truro during August with my good friend Ana [chef Ana Sortun of Oleana] and her husband, Chris Kurth, who owns Siena Farms. Chris brings down the most amazing produce, and all of a sudden our very long hallway becomes its own farm stand.

We always have the one menu item I love after the girls (my eight-year-old daughter, Marchesa, and Ana's daughter, Siena) go to plant clam beds or seeds. After many hours of seeding, they come home with bushels of delicious littleneck clams that are screaming to get slowly cooked over ripe tomatoes, crushed red peppers, and garlic in a very slow oven until they open. For dessert, I'll make a simple fresh fruit tart.

Tell us about your ideal location and setting.

The house we rent on Cape Cod! It's on the calmer side of





If I surprised you with a big tub of fresh heirloom tomatoes, what might you do with them? I'd make a tomato-basil salad with toasted garlic bread, along with salted cucumbers and mint, olive oil, and leftover corn off the cob. —BARBARA LYNCH



the ocean, and it's always cool at night. We have lots of open space and an incredible deck and grounds. A monarch butterfly seems to be there every year when we arrive, which is amazing — she's huge and hangs out most days, and the girls love her. There's a large grill for grilling pizzas, and the owners of the house love to cook so the kitchen is well-stocked.

OK, there's casual and there's casual. What about shoes — on or off?

Off, off, off! Except when I drive the Jeep, and that's it.

What's your summer drink of choice?

Drinks are always Negronis or gin and tonics. For wine, we drink mostly rosé, grüner veltliner, Chablis, and of course Sancerre — can't forget the Sancerre. My favorites are from Lucien Crochet: the rosé, the Sancerre, and the Sancerre Rouge.

If you could invite any four people to your dinner party, who would it be and why?

Meryl Streep because I just love her; Pedro Almodóvar — I love his films; Dries Van Noten

because I love his clothes; and Jacques Pépin because we always have a great time together.

Any news you can share about Barbara Lynch Gruppo?

Menton recently became Boston's first Relais & Chateaux restaurant, and No. 9 Park received this year's James Beard Award for Outstanding Wine Program, which is a huge tribute to the amazing talent of Cat Silirie, my wine director. Drink has been named Best Bar in the Country, and I have incredible teams doing great work in each space — I'm so proud of them!

Click here for Barbara Lynch's calamari recipe.



MIKE LATA

A rising star, Mike is the chef and co-owner at FIG (Food Is Good) in Charleston, South Carolina. He won the 2009 James Beard Award for Best Chef in the Southeast. eatatfig.com

What does summer entertaining look like for you?

It'll always be casual. I like to serve food that can be eaten at room temperature, like fried chicken, bean salads, corn on the cob, and tomato sandwiches.

Tell us about your ideal location and setting.

My business partner has a sweet lake house in Sunset, South Carolina, where we have spent the last several Fourth of Julys. It's in the mountains on a big,

cool, beautiful lake, and we spend the afternoons lazily on the dock or in the water on floats. It's the very definition of summer!

Any special touches you can share?

There's no easier way to express yourself than a personally selected music playlist. It should touch on some current, classic, and obscure songs.

If I surprised you with a big tub of fresh okra, what might you do with it?

Okra is really good charred on a grill. It has to be tender, and the flames need to be high. Add a squeeze of lemon, some olive oil, and sprinkle benne seeds over the top.

What's your summer drink of choice?

A Negroni — sunset in a glass.

If you could invite any three people whom you've never met to your dinner party, who would it be and why?

Since it's a summer party, we should keep it light and focus on laughs and fun. Bill Murray, Sarah Silverman, and Kristen Wiig.

Any news at FIG you care to share?

We're opening a new seafood restaurant/oyster bar this fall called The Ordinary. I'm enjoying that process very much, but it has forced us to look at FIG through a different lens. It will always be our flagship, and as our tenth year is upon us, we are very focused on raising the bar to even new heights. I wake up thinking about that more than I do The Ordinary . . . for now. 🍷

Click here for Mike Lata's Negroni recipe.

