

THE TASTE MAKERS

Meet the catering teams that will ensure your next gathering is the talk of the town, whether it's an unforgettable evening for family and friends or a business event that simply has to impress

Words **KIMBERLEY LOVATO**
Photography **JOHN SHORT**

Morsels of delight: Canapés made by Peardrop London for Christie's International Real Estate magazine's photo shoot include pulled pork donuts with sour cream, crab eggs benedict, and mushroom ceviche on seaweed crackers.

Behind the bespoke catering industry are companies that do far more than just make and serve canapés.

The best in the business are illusionists who have mastered the art of the showstopper, and pull all the strings from out of sight. From selecting themes and personalizing menus to lighting, furniture, tableware, and flowers, to entertainment and flawless photography, an experienced caterer does it all. For clients this means unforgettable affairs that their guests will remember for years. We meet the maestros of event organizing for whom the wow factor comes as standard.



The foraging fashionista

PEARDROP, LONDON, UK

Only five years ago, recipe-obsessed Rose Lloyd Owen (pictured) turned her back on a career in film and theater (she was an assistant to a talent agent), and started Peardrop so she could deliver salads to offices

around London. Not formally trained, Lloyd Owen had cooked since childhood and was always interested in healthy eating. Since then, Peardrop has blossomed into a full-scale event planning and catering company for titans in fashion, film, and media, including Jimmy Choo, Stella McCartney, and Vivienne Westwood, as well as *Vogue* and Apple. Recently Lloyd Owen catered a music industry party, during which a “very famous pop star” (she’s too discreet to name names) came into the kitchen to wax lyrical about the food, then booked Peardrop on the spot for an upcoming party.

“Lots of people eating our food is the best marketing, and it makes me incredibly proud when clients repeat book with us,” she says.

Peardrop champions every detail of planning, from concept to the final moment, whether for a small sit-down dinner, an important client lunch, a busy press event or launch, or full-on night to remember.

Lloyd Owen brings the same uncompromising commitment to her food, often foraging for new ingredients while traveling. On a recent trip to the Isles of Scilly, for example, she snipped gorse flowers, citing their coconut scent and almond taste as perfect for sorbet.

Book her for your next event and you might enjoy her standout Parma ham cups with quails’ eggs, asparagus, and hollandaise, for example; seared lamb with apricot on a homemade flatbread and rosemary labneh; or spicy pulled pork donuts with sour cream.

With all the work throwing parties for others, Lloyd Owen keeps it simple for her own gatherings.

“I buy a large mason jar and fill it with sangria or summer cup and tell people to help themselves to drinks whenever they want. I can never enjoy myself when I see friends with empty glasses.”

peardroplondon.com



The mood setter

TASTINGS NYC, NEW YORK, USA

Alexandra Morris has been catering to the Big Apple’s most discerning hosts for almost two decades, launching Tastings NYC in 2001. Working with chef Cédric Durand and sous chef Jeremy Enriquez, Tastings NYC’s clients include Upper East Side families, political officials, and fashion brands looking to make a splash with a stylish product launch.

When Margherita Missoni and fashion brand Splendid partnered for a private shopping experience, Morris and her team created a flower crown-making station, and served traditional Italian Aperol spritz, along with savory bites and candy stations piled with colorful Italian sweets.

“It was an event that left everyone smiling,” says Morris, who studied marketing and advertising before deciding to focus on her true love: food. “It was exactly what the client wanted and we were delighted to be a part of such a memorable affair.”

Tastings has planned and catered events for Dior and Jimmy Choo, the French Consulate, and countless private clients, among them an executive producer for entertainment company Purveyors of Pop, who asked Morris to help throw an elegant summer garden party in the Hamptons.

Her menus are as varied as the events she caters: you might find fresh strawberry gazpacho with yellow tomatoes, lamb burger sliders with yogurt harissa sauce, roasted monkfish loin with fava bean purée, or a simple yet sublime roasted chicken. The choices are limitless, says Morris, and carefully tailored to please each client.

The one thing Morris is a stickler for, even when entertaining at home, is setting the right mood.

“Aura is key—the lighting, candles, flowers, music, the right mix of guests,” she says. “People know right away when they walk in a room if they’re going to ease into the night or not.”

tastingsnyc.com

“The Missoni event was one that left everyone smiling—it was exactly what the client wanted.”
Alexandra Morris



The heavyweight chef

INVISIBLE KITCHEN, HONG KONG, CHINA

A professional chef who’s trained in Michelin-starred kitchens, among them England’s legendary Fat Duck, Tom Burney counts a five-week stint as the private chef for Keanu Reeves and Chris Hemsworth, and a media lunch for Bentley Motors among his top-tier gigs as a private chef. When his clients began requesting his culinary prowess for high-profile events and special occasions, he launched Invisible Kitchen. That was in 2014, and today his bespoke, tailor-made events are seriously in demand among Hong Kong’s discerning gourmands.

Burney and his team recently catered for the VIP spectators of the Volvo Ocean Race during its Hong Kong stop, which meant feeding 1,000 people spread over 50 boats with free-flowing food and drink. He recently catered a family birthday party where the dad was a keen cook, and had been dining in top restaurants for more than 30 years. He was apparently reluctant to hand over his kitchen to Burney, who focuses on modern European cuisine, though eventually happy he did.

“In the end he said it was the best meal they had ever eaten and the family was blown away,” says Burney. “That was really nice to see and we loved bringing joy to this family. He’s already invited us back to help him with an event for his office.”

His menus might include lobster and tomato salad with asparagus and tomato consommé; Angus beef Wellington with black truffle, dauphinoise potatoes, and red wine *jus*; and a lemon and raspberry tart with charred pastry and bruléed top served with crème fraîche ice cream. But menus constantly update and change based on seasons and client requests. »
invisiblekitchen.com



The (perfectly) seasoned professionals

DANIEL ET DANIEL, TORONTO, CANADA

With decades of experience under their toques, the team at Daniel et Daniel are known for creating innovative and memorable events. “Our event planners and chefs know what it takes to create something really unique,” says managing partner Dave Stratton.

While menus lean toward French-Mediterranean, a nod to Parisian founders Daniel Megly and Daniel Clairret, any wish can be fulfilled at this full-service catering company. From vegetarian canapés such as watermelon poke, to sit-down dinners of braised short ribs and pan-seared halibut, one need only look at a sample menu to relish the mouthwatering choice and creativity. At one outdoor event for more than 3,000 people, Daniel et Daniel had waiters riding mini trains to various parts of the venue, stepping off with trays laden with *hors d’oeuvres* and beverages that showcased various regions of Canada.

“We are constantly challenged to create authentic and unique experiences and cuisine for our guests, and there is joy on a daily basis when they see the result. It is an amazing feeling,” says Stratton. ● danieletdaniel.ca

Kimberley Lovato writes about food and travel for National Geographic Traveler, Virtuoso Life and travelandleisure.com



On the market

HOMES TO SAVOR

Sea Level

Nassau Harbor, Paradise Island, Bahamas
\$16,500,000
H.G. Christie Ltd
John Christie
+1 242 322 1041



Perfect for entertaining, this six-bedroom, 10-bath compound is set within the gated community of Ocean Club and has 17,000 sq ft (1,579 sq m) of living space. Only the finest quality materials have been used—the great room boasts a mahogany and onyx bar and marble fireplace, while French doors open to expansive balconies and views of the bay, harbor, and ocean.

Hawk’s Nest Castle Minnetrista, Minnesota, USA

\$9,980,000
First Team Real Estate
Howard Poulton
+1 949 759 5747



With cobblestones sourced from the grounds of the White House, this truly majestic property was once visited by a vice president of the United States and 400 guests. The eight-bedroom home has a ballroom, four kitchens including a professional catering kitchen, plus two caretaker residences and parking for 90 cars. There is also 190 ft (58 m) of private beach.

Let’s dance

PARTIES OF LEGEND



Truman Capote’s Black and White Ball

The Plaza, New York, 1966

The guest list for Capote’s 1966 masked ball included Frank Sinatra and Mia Farrow, Tennessee Williams, and Sammy Davis Jr. It was held in honor of Katharine Graham, the former

Washington Post publisher, and reportedly inspired by the Ascot scene from the film *My Fair Lady*. Capote is pictured above at the event with the then Princess Lee Radziwill.

The Surrealist Ball

Château de Ferrières, near Paris, 1972

Guests had to find their way into Marie-Hélène de Rothschild’s party through a labyrinth of black ribbon, aided by staff dressed as cats. Dinner was served on a mannequin prostrate on a bed of fresh roses, bread rolls were dyed blue, and plates were covered in fur. Guests included Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, and Audrey Hepburn.

Elton John’s 50th birthday party

Hammersmith Palais, London, 1997

Never one for dressing down, for his landmark birthday the British singer dressed as Louis XIV, in an enormous wig topped with a mini galleon, and a costume of silver and pearls that was so large he had to be transported to the event in the back of a truck. Guests included composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and singer Shirley Bassey.

CHRISTINE LIM; GETTY IMAGES