

Innovative INSIGHT

Summer 2001 Volume I Issue II

an imaginative concept in gourmet catering



Exceeding Expectations

Tony Pearson, General Manager

Just call him the "Party Animal."

Tony Pearson, general manager of Innovative Gourmet, loves to throw parties.

"People have great times when they have parties," says Pearson. "I love to show people a good time."

And he's always the last to leave. He makes it a point to be the first one there for set up, too. He's like an artist with a canvas when it comes to parties. He makes them a work of art.

"I'm a great organizer," notes Pearson. "My pet peeve is making sure that everything is exactly as it should be, all the way down to the napkins."

Pearson started in the foodservice business in 1980 as a busboy at Pimlico Race Track, later becoming Maitre `D. He joined Innovative Gourmet in 1988 as a part-time server and progressed through the ranks to catering director and then to general manager this January.

His average day includes planning and running parties, supervising staff, overseeing equipment, designing the layout of a room, decorating, coordinating and training salespeople and working with clients.

"People know things are in control when Tony's around," he beams. "They don't have to worry when I'm around!"

But at home, his wife Cassandra is the party planner. After long evenings and weekends working at the events he plans, Pearson enjoys kicking back and spending time at home with his sons Alex, 6, and Antoine, 3.

As he reflects on 20 years in the business, Pearson still gets a charge out of pleasing the client. "I always love to exceed expectations," he says. "Serving food to people and seeing them smile, that's what it's all about."

The Succulent Summer Season

Barry Fleischmann, President and Executive Chef

Step outside and take a deep breath. A pleasant aroma fills the air, making your mouth water. It's the aroma of a juicy steak, dripping with flavor as it smokes on the backyard grill.

Grilling season is here. It's quick, it's easy, and it's virtually mess-free.

The grill can cook for many at once, without crowding your kitchen and setting off your smoke alarm. And what better way to bring out the most of your meats, chicken and fish than grilling with a savory marinade?

To create a flavorful marinade, use the best olive oil available and fresh herbs instead of bottled seasonings. Or make the marinade healthy and low calorie by adding fresh herbs to mustard, vinegar or wine.

When marinating, it's essential to be aware of the cut of meat or type of fish. A whole chicken, with bones and skin intact, can be marinated overnight to produce the most flavorful results. Salmon, shrimp and boneless cuts of meats need just a small period of time to absorb the seasonings. If you leave them marinating too long, the fibers in the food break down and they become mushy. The rule of thumb is, the smaller and more prepared the meat is, the less time it needs to marinate.

In the summer, there's no need to slave over the stove at all. The grill can serve double duty. It's the perfect place to prepare vegetables like tomatoes and mushrooms, and even tofu. Or a side cold couscous salad can complement the meal perfectly.

Compliment your grilled meals with a nice summer wine. I recommend a dry, French rosé. Not only is it very refreshing, but also with a low alcohol content it's the perfect accompaniment to the heat of summer.

Happy grilling!



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Recipe Corner



Italian Marinade

Ingredients:

1/4 cup	Dijon Mustard
1/2 cup	Virgin Olive Oil
2 oz.	Lemon Juice
1 tbs. + 1 tsp.	Garlic (finely chopped)
1 tbs. + 1 tsp.	Shallots (finely chopped)
2 tbs.	Fresh Basil (coarsely chopped)
1 tbs.	Fresh Tarragon (coarsely chopped)
1 tbs.	Fresh Rosemary (coarsely chopped)
2 tbs.	Fresh Parsley (coarsely chopped)
To taste	Black Pepper
To taste	Kosher Salt

Directions:

Combine all ingredients except for olive oil into a large mixing bowl. Whisk olive oil into mixture until incorporated.

Note:

Great on everything from poultry and seafood to red meats. For best results: salt and pepper the product first, then baste with marinade.

Oriental Marinade

Ingredients

4 oz.	Soy Sauce
1 tbs.	Sesame Oil
2 oz.	Vegetable Oil
1 oz.	Frozen Orange Juice concentrate
1 oz.	Rice Wine Vinegar
2 tbs.	Garlic (finely chopped)
1/3 cup	Cilantro (separate leaves from stems and coarsely chop leaves but finely chop stems)
3 tbs.	Scallions (thinly sliced)
2 tbs.	Ginger (peeled and finely chopped)
2 tbs.	Honey
1 tsp.	Black pepper
To taste	Chili pepper (fresh or dry) if you want a little spice

Directions:

- Combine all ingredients except oils in a large container.
- Whisk in oils and mix well.
- Use as needed.
- Use as a marinade or au jus.

Note:

The best soy sauce is the one with the least amount of ingredients. Best purchased at Oriental market.

Saffron CousCous Salad

Ingredients:

1	CousCous (10 oz. Box --follow directions)
	Several strands of saffron
1/4 cup	Red Onion (small dice)
1/4 cup	Scallions (thinly sliced)
1/4 cup	Red peppers (small dice)
1/4 cup	Cucumbers (peel, seed, and small dice)
1/2 cup	Tomatoes (peel, seed, small dice)
3 tbs.	Parsley (finely chopped)
3 tbs.	Fresh mint (finely chopped)
1/4 cup	Carrots (grated)
1 tbs.	Capers
1 tsp.	Shallots (finely chopped)
1 oz.	Golden Raisins
1 oz.	Dry Apricots (thinly sliced)
2 oz.	Olive Oil
1 oz.	Lemon Juice
1 oz.	Red Wine Vinegar
To taste	Salt and Black pepper

Directions:

- Cook CousCous according to directions. Add strands of saffron to liquid for flavor, fluff and fold in ingredients.
- Mix vegetables well with fluffed CousCous and serve at room temperature

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Calendar:

8/23/01 - Baltimore Magazine's Best of Baltimore Party
Bohager's at Parrot Island, 6-11pm
701 S. Eden Street, Fells Point
Contact 410-752-4200 x 5204

9/13/01 - Learning for Life Wine Tasting
John's Hopkins University, Glass Pavilion, 7-11pm
Senator Barbara Mikulski
Tickets - \$100.00

For details on these events, please contact our office at **410-363-1317**.

Vendor Spotlight



B&O Railroad Museum

For more than two years, Innovative Gourmet has been the exclusive caterer for the B&O Railroad Museum.

Kathy Hargest, marketing manager, prefers the exclusivity of working with Innovative Gourmet to using a list of preferred caterers, as it did in the past.

"So many of them don't understand the purpose of the museum and what we're trying to accomplish," says Hargest. "Innovative Gourmet understands the challenge of it all. We cherish our relationship with them."

Hargest particularly boasts about the food, never having heard any complaints. "It's amazing in this business," she says. "You can't please everybody all the time, but Innovative Gourmet seems to do just that!"

At the B&O Railroad Museum, Innovative Gourmet may be called on to cater a wedding, gala or corporate event. Party size ranges from a seated reception for a few hundred to a standing buffet for more than two thousand. In every instance, Innovative Gourmet goes out of its way to create special menus to please the palates of diverse clients. It also prepares menus to accommodate any theme. While its specialized Maryland cuisine pleases all B&O Museum patrons looking for a taste of the Chesapeake region.

"The food speaks for itself," notes Hargest. "It is definitely innovative."

Spice it up!

Congratulations to Kathy Jenkins of Columbia, winner of the Spice It Up contest in the last issue of Innovative Insight. Kathy will receive a spectacular dinner for four catered by Innovative Gourmet. Here's your chance for Chef Barry to help spice up your favorite recipe. Submit your favorite holiday party recipe by September 30, and Chef Barry will prepare it, adding his suggestions for enhancing the flavor of your selection. You may win a dinner for 4!

Recipes should be sent to recipes@innovativegourmet.com or faxed to 410-363-1377.



Holiday Happenings

The lights are dim, holiday music is playing in the background, and after sipping on eggnog, you are treated to a deliciously catered meal served by a waiter dressed to the nines. You excuse yourself for a moment, turn the corner to exit the room, and ... you step into your office to check messages.

An elegant holiday party at the office? What's wrong with this picture? Absolutely nothing!

Although the weather is scorching, now's the time to plan for your company's annual holiday party.

When you're ready to begin the planning process, there are several things to consider.

Location: The experts at Innovative Gourmet can cater any party, anywhere, anytime. No party is too big or too small and any location is the perfect place to host it. You may choose to dress up the office for a festive atmosphere or choose one of the many venues we support including the B&O Railroad Museum.

Theme: Over the years, we have planned holiday parties in a variety of themes from Hawaiian Luau to Casino night to a baseball game. We're only limited by your imagination.

Menu: Some parties are fancier and more elegant in nature, and others have a less formal menu and setting. Whatever your preference, Innovative Gourmet will develop a custom menu perfect for your guests and your theme.

Date: Consider the calendar when planning a party, and try to select a few dates that will work within the schedules of the majority of your employees. Remember, party season begins in November and runs throughout January. Try to stay away from dates very close to the holidays, whether Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's, so you can accommodate your employees.

It's never too soon to plan ahead. Even though thoughts are of beaches and baseball, the winter season will be here before you know it and that includes the party season! Call Innovative Gourmet at 410-363-1317 and ask to speak with one of our professional event coordinators who can help you plan your next holiday party.

