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Magazine

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## EXCLUSIVE! HOLIDAY MADNESS

*Christmas with Kimora  
Lee Simmons, Djimon Hounsou  
and baby Kenzo*

## RECIPE FOR DISASTER?

*Inside the unlikely romance of the  
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TOP CHEF'S

# PADMA LAKSHMI

*"I like me better*

*Naked"*

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HOT  
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BUYS

# HOLLY go LIGHTLY

For a chic holiday feast, forget heavy-handed holiday themes. New York City's hottest kitchenistas put subtle twists on traditional favorites—with magical results.



Diana Yen and Lisel Arroyo sit perched in a candlelit corner of Carroll Gardens bar Brooklyn Social sipping old-fashioned bourbon cocktails. They nod approvingly at the pretty concoctions in front of them.

"They do things beautifully here," says Diana, her dark hair pulled back in a chic headband. "There are all these little gemlike places in Brooklyn," says Lisel, her wavy brown mane framing her fine features. "People who are doing handmade, thoughtful things make everyday experiences really special."

It's a sentiment that could well be the mantra for the stylish catering and baking business the two share, *The Jewels of New York*.

Diana and Lisel met while working as product designers for Colin Cowie, the celebrity party planner for the likes of Tom Cruise and Oprah, and forged a friendship over the stove in Diana's apartment at the time, a loft space in Soho with a roof deck that was perfect for impromptu dinner parties. Growing up in California with her Chinese parents, says Diana, "it was all about the big meal. Asian families show affection by cooking meals for each other." Lisel, who grew up in Puerto Rico, also learned to love the ritual of cooking as a child. "Where I come from, we are used to knowing where things come from," she



This page, from top: Brie with honey and almonds; Lisel Arroyo and Diana Yen at the stove; pear and mascarpone tart. Opposite: Forget turkey—the girls recommend pork for the holidays.



says simply. "Maybe your uncle raises the pig, and everyone gathers around and eats it together."

In December of 2008, a friend who worked for Martha Stewart suggested that Lisel and Diana appear on Stewart's show to make some of the jewel-like cookies they'd been baking and decorating for friends as gifts. "Martha is a force to be reckoned with," says Diana. "She was baking and on her BlackBerry at the same time. We were in awe." After that appearance, they were inundated with orders and began fielding requests to cater private dinner parties and small, tasteful soirées at hip venues like the Fort Greene clothing boutique Thistle & Clover. Eventually they began doing weddings, and they're now planning a foodie affair for Fame Game creator Jose Serrano-Reyes and his fiancée, the perfumer Anne McClain.

When they're not donning aprons to create their classic American dishes, they can be spotted out at understated Brooklyn restaurants like Cobble Hill's Henry Public and Dumbo's Vinegar Hill House. "I love the unpretentious places that make straightforward food," says Diana. "My sister and I tried to get a reservation at Ko [David Chang's trendy East Village restaurant boasting a \$100 tasting menu], and there's something about those places that just drives me mad. By the time you've gotten through the reservation saga and you're eating at 10 p.m., it doesn't matter how good it is. I just wish I could get home and throw a really lovely dinner party. Entertaining at home feels like a gift."



## Crown Roast of Pork and Wild Rice and Winter Fruit Stuffing with Port Sauce

"We ordered the pork roast from Staubitz in Brooklyn. It's so tender, it will blow your mind." —DIANA

### WILD RICE AND WINTER FRUIT STUFFING

- 1 ½ cups dried cranberries and apricots
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- ½ lb. ground pork (usually comes with crown roast)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tbsp. chopped fresh sage and thyme
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 4–6 cups cooked wild rice
- 1 cup cooked chestnuts, coarsely chopped

Soak the fruit in hot water for 15 minutes, then drain and set aside. In a skillet over medium heat, sauté the onions in the butter until soft, about 10 minutes. Add the pork, salt and pepper. Stir occasionally until the meat is browned, about 8 minutes. Add the herbs and wine and stir, scraping any brown bits from the bottom of the pan. When the liquid is evaporated, add the rice, chestnuts and fruit. Set aside.

### CROWN ROAST OF PORK

- 9- to 10-lb. crown roast of pork, bones frenched (ask your butcher to do this for you)
- 4 fresh sage leaves
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary and 1 sprig fresh thyme, stems removed
- 2 garlic cloves
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste



#### HOW TO INFUSE

For the simple syrup: Simmer 1 cup sugar and 1 ½ cup water with the splurge for about 15 minutes; strain.

For the honey: Heat the honey, rosemary and 4 tsp. water over low heat for 15 minutes; strain.

Pat dry the room-temperature pork roast and place it in a shallow roasting pan. Pulse the herbs, garlic, oil, and salt and pepper in a food processor until smooth. Rub the mixture all over the roast and in the cavity. Loosely fill the cavity with the assembled stuffing, spoon the rest into a buttered baking dish, cover the dish with foil, and set aside. Cover the roast's rib tips with aluminum foil. Roast it at 350° F for about 2 to 2 ¼ hours, covering the cavity with foil after 30 minutes. Let the meat rest for 20 minutes. Bake the remaining stuffing for 30 minutes at 350° F.

### PORT SAUCE

- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup ruby port
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 2 tsp. cornstarch
- 2 tsp. water

In a saucepan over medium heat, sauté the shallot in butter until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the seasonings, port, broth and honey, then boil until the liquid is reduced by half, about 20 minutes. In a bowl, mix together the cornstarch and water until smooth; slowly add it to the sauce, whisking constantly. Let the sauce simmer for 15 more minutes. Strain the sauce into a serving dish; discard solids.

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### MAPLE-GLAZED ROASTED BABY CARROTS

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. maple syrup
- Salt to taste
- 2 lbs. rainbow baby carrots, peeled and trimmed, leaving a half-inch of green tops

In a bowl, whisk together the oil, syrup, and salt. Add the carrots and toss to coat. Arrange them on a baking sheet; cover with foil. Roast at 400° F for 15–20 minutes.

"When the weather turns, people love a starter that's warm and gooey on the inside." —LISEL



## Baked Brie with Honey and Almonds on a Crusty Baguette

- 10-ounce brie round, top part of the rind removed
- ¼ cup honey, infused with a sprig of rosemary (see blue bubble, opposite)
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted in a skillet
- Baguette, sliced

Place the brie on a baking sheet. Drizzle it with the rosemary honey. Bake at 350° F for 8 minutes. Sprinkle with almonds, then serve immediately with slices of baguette.

## Sparkling Citrus-Anise Punch

"There's something about the rich red color of this drink that makes it festive." —DIANA

- 1 ½ cups simple syrup, infused with orange zest, star anise and cinnamon stick (see blue bubble, opposite)
- 3 cups fresh pink grapefruit juice
- 2 cups blood-orange juice
- 1 bottle Prosecco

In a pitcher, combine the simple syrup, the juices and the Prosecco. Pour into glasses and garnish with orange slices and cinnamon sticks.



Above: Diana and Lisel bike to local food purveyors like Sahadi's Middle Eastern store on Atlantic Ave. in Brooklyn and the Union Square Greenmarket.



## Caramelized Pear Tart

"Pears are in season in late autumn and early winter, and this recipe puts them front and center." —LISEL

- 8 ripe Bartlett pears, peeled, cored and sliced into wedges
- 5 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 ½ cups mascarpone
- 2 tsp. finely grated fresh lemon zest
- Pinch salt
- 10 Daphne sweet tart shells, thawed
- Edible gold leaf for garnish (optional)

In a bowl, toss the pears with the lemon juice and vanilla. Melt the butter in an ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add 1 cup of the sugar, stirring well, then the pears, drizzling them with the leftover juice from the bowl. Cook, shaking the pan, until the sugar begins to dissolve and the liquid bubbles, about 5 minutes. Transfer the skillet to a 400° F oven; bake until the pears are soft and caramelized, about 15 minutes. Whisk together sour cream, mascarpone, remaining sugar, zest, and salt in a bowl. Fill each tart shell with some of the mascarpone-cream mixture and top with the pears, adding another dollop of cream. Sprinkle with edible gold leaf.

