



THE PRE-CHRISTMAS
EVE DINNER

A formal family tradition in midtown





The Sparkling Citrus Cocktail

YIELD:
7-8 cocktails

- 1 750-ml bottle pink champagne or sparkling rosé
- 8 oz. vodka, orange or citrus flavour
- 4 oz. Triple Sec or orange liqueur
- 1 small lemon or orange

1. Pour chilled pink champagne or sparkling rosé into a large pitcher, then add the vodka and Triple Sec. Stir.
2. Fill champagne flutes with the mixture and garnish with an orange or lemon wheel. Optional: add a splash of sparkling water or soda.



THE HOSTS:
Sebastien Centner, founder and creative director of Eatertainment, and Sheila Centner

THE GUESTS:
12-15 family members and friends dressed to the nines

THE OCCASION:
A lavish pre-Christmas dinner to make the family matriarch proud

says. "And my mum's Christmas Eve dinner was legendary." The Centners now hold their dinner on the evening of December 23, but the traditions haven't changed: formal attire and, most important, polished shoes that are to be placed under the tree—"If you don't put clean shoes under the tree," the party's younger guests were always told, "then Santa's not going to come." The menu hasn't changed, either. To start: champagne cocktails and thick-sliced smoked salmon on toast, with salt, pepper and lemon. That's followed by a terrine of foie gras with cracked sea salt and jam, and the main course: lobster with French mayonnaise and melted butter, and, in European fashion, a big green salad to finish the meal.

"It's not exactly my mom's dinner, but the end result is we have a table filled with people who got all dressed up and came out for this amazing, beautiful meal and to celebrate together," Centner says, "which is exactly what my mom would have wanted."

AS HEAD OF A high-end special events firm, Sebastien Centner is a professional host. But despite the stream of splashy fêtes the company produces across the city—some 1,700 per year—it's the pre-Christmas family gathering Centner hosts with his wife, Sheila, that tops the list.

It's as much a celebration of the holiday as it is a homage to Centner's late mother, Maryvone, who appears to have passed down to her son a passion for lavish entertaining. "She was a great cook, but more than anything she had this ability to always have her table filled with friends and family," Centner