

## The Event of the Season

by David Hulley

Soon, the sheer number of seasonal parties will be taxing all of our schedules. I would also guess that you are planning to add a party of your own. But what result do we really want from our gathering beyond a joyous time? In an ocean of holiday get-togethers you want your event to be remembered. So what is the secret to standing out? Successful hosts know that it's all about the food, the wine and the special "wow" factor. As great food is the most important element of the triplet, why not use the food with proper wine pairings as the featured "wow" factor?

Most parties at this time of year are stand-up style consisting mostly of small nibbles and glasses of wine. With such a physical dynamic your best chance to make an impression is with the "bite" and following "splash". Is it possible to make your food and the accompanying wine so good that they'll stop a conversation? The answer is yes and I have a suggested guide to move you to that enviable position.

Author and lover of all things gastronomic, Shari Darling has just released a new book called **Orgasmic Appetizers and Matching Wines**. She playfully describes her book as "*tiny bites with the moan factor*". Well, anything with a title like that will certainly grab the attention of any "foodie" or wine lover. In past columns we've described the ecstasy of great food and wine pairing. We've even gone so far as to hold up Disney's cartoon gourmet rat, "Remy" from the movie *Ratatouille*, as the quintessential taster. The colours, fireworks and explosions that Remy imagined as he savoured his food and wine is what Darling's book is all about. She explains with great joy, easy to create food and wine excellence that leads to the, "*spine-tingling ecstasy of the culinary orgasm*". Who wouldn't want a bite of that?

With over 100 tested recipes, the book gives you the power to create appetizers with accompanying wine selections that will make your guests go weak in the knees. In addition, be sure to personally circulate the first few rounds of any new appetizer offered with small splashes of pre-poured wine as you will want to hear all of the accolades. As your visitor's eyes return to focus after the last morsel has been swallowed they will be begging you for the recipe. Have something prepared and the shared culinary experience will have your guests talking long after the party is over.

As a responsible host you must always provide food when wine or any alcoholic beverage is offered. You also need to monitor all of your guests' alcohol consumption and know when to say "when". So why not take that social responsibility and turn it into a social triumph? Provide food that "wows" and circulate it yourself so you may interact with everyone and keep an eye on the pulse of the party. Keep it simple, seductive and make it memorable.