

WARMING UP WINTER

BY DIANA CERCONO

With temperatures plummeting into the frigid zone, winter is the perfect time to head back into the kitchen for entertaining. Candlelit dinners or cozy ones by the fire or around the kitchen table are just some of the reasons to move the party indoors. To help warm up your winter, we asked four of our county's popular chefs to create a season of menus and entertaining ideas that are sure to keep Jack Frost away from your table and you and your guests in a celebration mood.

We begin with Chef Georges Perrier, best known for his restaurant Le Bec-Fin in Center City and, now, his newest, Georges' in Wayne. What better way to start the winter season than with Christmas dinner. For this, we go to his Haverford home where the dinner is both merry and very French.

Chef Alison Barshak, owner of Alison at Blue Bell, knows the winter holidays, though jolly, can be hectic and not conducive to a girls' nite-out. Come January, however, Alison finds it the perfect time to get together at her home in Blue Bell for great food and an evening of "catching up" and laughter.

Chef Ralph Pallarino, one of the owners of Stella Blu and The Gypsy Saloon, both in

Conshohocken, and a recently featured chef on the Food Network's Date Plate show, was a natural as our pick for February—the month of romance and chocolate. Ralph invites us into his Center City home and lets us in on some of his tricks for creating a romantic dinner for two.

With winter lingering well into March, Chef Nadhir Moatemri, food consultant and executive chef at Pane e Vino in Doylestown, knows how to throw a party to forget the icy winds and ensure that everyone has a good time. At his invitation, we're treated to a very special evening with his wife, Deborah, and their guests in their Gilbertsville home.

Diverse as they are, what all four chefs have in common are their love of food, their understanding of what flavors marry well with others, their culinary creativity and bravado, their intermingling of their families' food traditions with spins of their own, their use of local farms for produce, meats and dairy and, finally, their enjoyment in sharing these with their guests—both in their homes and in their restaurants.

Along with their advice for entertaining this winter, we've included some of the recipes our chefs created for these special dinners. We hope they help warm up your winter.

From left to right, beginning at the top, Christmas with Georges Perrier: main entrée of roasted capon, chestnut stuffing and wild rice, foie gras and mushroom fricassee, served with a 2002 Fonthill "Silk" Shiraz; Georges making Soufflé Glacé Grand Marnier; cutting the traditional bouché Noël. Girls' Nite-Out with Chef Alison Barshak: Alison uses a sharp knife to extract the avocado pit; after filling and rolling a chicken tacquito, she secures it with a wooden skewer; Alison's kitchen counter serves as a perfect buffet table. Dinner for Two with Ralph Pallarino: Broccoli Rabe with Prosciutto, White Beans and Shrimp starts the romantic dinner; Ralph tastes the sauce for seasoning in the main entrée of Pork Tenderloin; grating chocolate for the surprise dessert. Party Time with Nadhir Moatemri: Nadhir greets his guests with champagne and hors d'oeuvres of Grilled Lamb Chops with harissa and a Charcuterie, an assortment of imported cured meats; Nadhir preparing fresh pasta; seasoning butternut squash for his soup: Butternut Squash and Pumpkin Velouté.