

# IN ANY EVENT

*If you're hosting a do this summer, don't be stuck in the kitchen while your guests enjoy themselves. Call in local food and event company Mackintosh's to do all the hard work.*  
*Vanessa Grall reports*



NICKY AND CINDY MACKINTOSH

July is the month for entertaining: garden parties, terrace cocktail dos and summer balls. But while they're fun to attend, are they as fun to host? As guests are knocking back champagne and scoffing down the hors d'oeuvres, can you really enjoy your own party when you've got to think about how long you can even converse with anyone before the next round of blinis start to burn? Not to mention all the work that goes into planning and preparing exactly the right food menu.

Hors d'oeuvres, canapés, finger foods, amuse-bouches – whatever you choose to call them, they're tricky little treats to manage on your own. From the ingredients you choose to the presentation, the outcome will reflect on you as a host – and, in some particularly tough circles, as a human being. Hors d'oeuvres should be perfectly punchy mouthfuls and should never erupt, dribble, crumble or otherwise fall apart when picked up.

Enter west London-based catering service, Mackintosh's, a family-run company taking finger food to new heights. Offering creative and inspiring recipes, Chiswick husband and wife team Nicky and Cindy Mackintosh sure know how to throw a party. With inventive ideas such as the "bangers and mash ball" and "lemon meringue launches", Mackintosh's is fast becoming west London's most talked about



catering and event company.

In an industry where fancy design and experimental cooking are now taking a back seat to a more traditional approach to dining, Mackintosh's is setting the trend for brazen finger food. "When all is said and done, nothing beats honey and mustard-glazed sausages dipped in mash," says Cindy.

Formerly owners of Chiswick's beloved Mackintosh's Brasserie, the power couple began catering after the restaurant's closure in 1999. "Running a restaurant is seven days a week and often 24 hours a day, but at least with the catering

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company, we have a little more time to ourselves" says Cindy. Using the same organic and ethical food suppliers, Mackintosh's opted to stay local as their catering company evolved and expanded. From the canapés to the drinks, styling, venue choice and entertainment, Nicky and Cindy do it all.

Earlier this spring, the fashion house Mulberry chose Mackintosh's to impress their clients for an evening of star-studded schmoozing, as celebrities nibbled on wilted sorrel, fresh pea and emmental tartlets. More recently, Mackintosh's showed off their culinary skills with a taste of the Deep South for the premiere of the West End musical, *Gone with the Wind*. The 700 guests were greeted with creole jambalaya, southern sausages in cajun sauce and mini pecan pie sweeteners.

But what of summer diets and guests trying to keep to their beach body regimes? "Anything deep fried such as our delicious lemon risotto balls should be avoided, of course," says Cindy with a twinkle

## MACKINTOSH'S RECIPE

### Wilted sorrel, fresh pea and emmental tartlets



#### Ingredients

500g shortcrust pastry  
1tbsp olive oil  
100g crushed peas  
250g sorrel leaves, washed and picked  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
4 free-range eggs  
200ml double cream  
Salt and cracked black pepper  
Emmental cheese

#### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (gas mark 6).
2. Roll out the pastry and line a 16cm spring-form tin. Prick the base of the pastry and chill.
3. Blind bake cases at about 150°C until firmed up.
4. Sprinkle peas and shredded sorrel over the tart base.
5. Beat the eggs and cream and add the pureed garlic clove. Season with salt and pepper. Pour the mixture into the case.
6. Sprinkle with grated emmental.
7. Bake in the middle of the oven for 45 minutes or until set.
8. Serve warm with crisp leaf garnish and chive and lemon crème fraiche.

in her eye, "but our marinated prawns served on a spoon and the watermelon boxes filled with crab are perfect indulgences to still allow you to slip into that bikini." Nicky, the company's director and executive chef, has been preparing a delicious summer menu. "We'll be serving salads at our events this summer, such as a beetroot carpaccio with goats' cheese mousse, beetroot jellies and red chard cress."

Whether it be a private prawn skewer picnic, crab salad conference or white chocolate wedding, Mackintosh's has mastered the art of throwing exceptional events. This is the family that has got everyone talking passionately about their food and most certainly already has your mouth watering.

*Mackintosh's (020 8453 1020; mackintoshs.co.uk)*