

# ENTERTAINING IDEAS

## Dinner Party Tips From Celebrity Chef Michael Chiarello

(NAPSA)—When I was the executive chef of Tra Vigne restaurant in the Napa Valley, hosting a dinner party was always easy for me. Armed with a sous-chef to purchase and prep the ingredients and one or two apprentices to set the tables and clean the kitchen, I had plenty of time to entertain my guests and enjoy the last glass of red wine. My parties were stress-free and fun, and I was always in bed by eleven!

But for you—and for me when I remove my professional apron—the dynamics are much different. We must keep our best host smile going while we are putting the finishing touches on the main course, greeting new guests, serving beverages and participating in several conversations.

As stressful as hosting a dinner party can be, it is still a wonderful opportunity to bring together the people you care about and enjoy an evening of great food and conversation. Here are some tips I've honed over the past few years from hosting both casual and formal dinner parties:

- **Encourage guests to mingle.** I like to place my hors d'oeuvres on a kitchen island or open table to create a casual setting that puts everyone at ease.

- **Think outside the dining room.** From drinks on the patio to dessert in the garden, the unexpectedness of an unlikely location can add flavor to the meal.

- **Inspire memorable conversation.** My guests love it when cards labeled with topics, such as

“Favorite Vacation” or “Best Childhood Memory,” are passed around to commence an evening filled with reminiscence and laughter.

- **Keep it fresh.** Delicious food is the key ingredient to any great dinner party. When making my favorite Italian dishes, I opt for fresh, high-quality ingredients, and BUITONI® refrigerated pastas and sauces. The difference in taste and flavor is amazing!

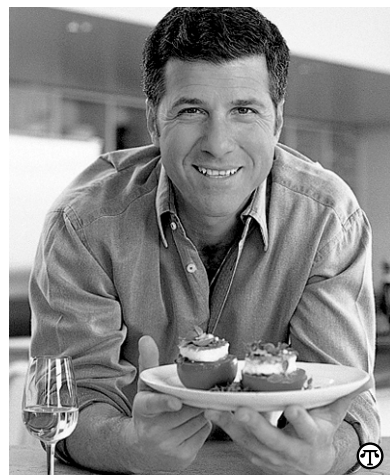
The next time you plan on having friends and family over for dinner, try this recipe for *Pesto and Pasta with Tiny Potatoes*. It's quick and easy and tastes delicious.

### Pesto And Pasta With Tiny Potatoes

(Makes 6 servings)

- ¾ lb. marble-size potatoes\*
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 package (20 oz.) BUITONI® Family Size Three Cheese Tortellini
- 1 container (7 oz.) BUITONI® Refrigerated Pesto with Basil
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Place potatoes in medium-size saucepan with 2 quarts of water; add salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce and simmer until potatoes are tender. Drain, cool, cut in half. Sauté potatoes in olive oil over medium heat



**Chef Michael Chiarello takes the stress out of dinner party planning.**

until browned and crispy. Keep warm. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain; mix pasta, pesto, potatoes, pepper and ¼ cup Parmesan together. Toss well; dust with remaining Parmesan before serving.

\*Can substitute with small new potatoes; quarter after cooling.

No matter what your level of cooking experience is, entertaining should be easy and fun. My new cookbook, *At Home with Michael Chiarello*, offers a variety of tips and recipes to help make dinner parties less stressful and more enjoyable for everyone. Order a copy or search for other delicious meal ideas on [Buitoni.com](http://Buitoni.com).