

# *Dinner Party of Ten*

Chef Deb Karnes

CHRISTMAS 2023 — #20

Event Assistant Chay Karnes

## DP10 Dinner 2023

### Menu:

#### Notes D'œuvres:

Mini meatballs in sweet & spicy  
sauce

Appetizer Christmas tree - cucumbers,  
red grapes, assorted cheeses,  
soppressata, dried figs, olives, pickles,  
accompanied by crackers

#### Sorbet:

Orange

#### Salad:

Caramelized onion, grapefruit, fennel,  
& dried cranberries in a red wine honey  
 vinaigrette

#### Dinner:

Pork tenderloin with bacon onion jam  
Oven roasted chicken piccata  
Honey crisp/granny smith applesauce  
Truce baked mash potato casserole  
Roasted asparagus w/ prosciutto, pine  
nuts & shaved parmesan  
Baguette with honey butter

#### Dessert:

Surprise. . .



A benchmark! For twenty Christmases, starting in 2003, and missing only 2020 (COVID), some combination of DP8 has gathered at Pine Meadow Lane. And once again, in 2023, friends gathered.

Turning up the roadway, a clump of darker blue lights on one tree led to the view from the driveway, with each tree and shrub festooned with lights. Everyone noticed, as if Chay decorated above and beyond the usual. (He says it is the same ole!) Twenty years ago, few or none of the festooned even existed.

Upon our entry, Kalli wanted so badly to heed the human female's (Mom?) admonitions to behave but why change this year. The galloping around the island gradually subsided after the Quinns made their appearance. Kalli has graced the scene since 2011.

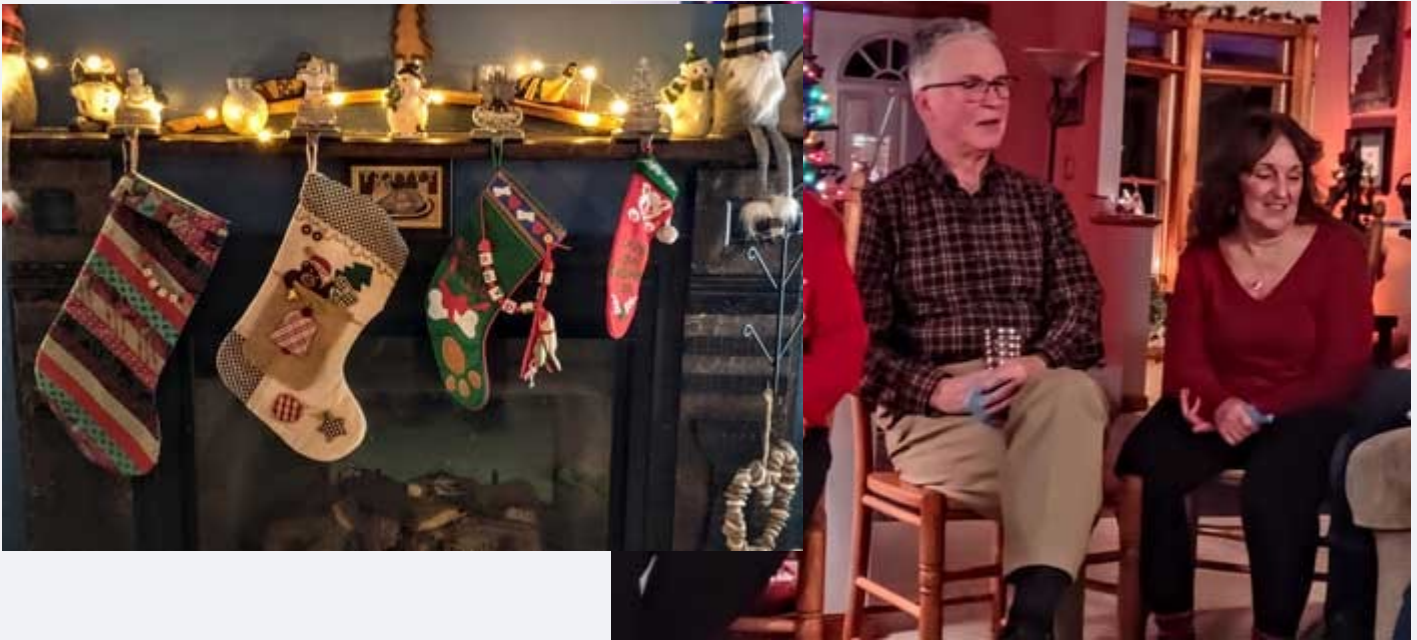


It should be noted here, at the beginning, that, once again, Deb K crafted the entire dinner, with apt assistance from Chay! We were in awe, at her hard work, creativity, and culinary excellence! Words on paper do little to express the fullness of our appreciation.

And once again, Christmastime, with friends of shared experiences, whether it be of a few or of many years, wrote one more chapter of sharing light during a seasonal dark time. Humor, caring, and joy mingle and meld for another opportunity to enjoy and remember.

Back to the scene. 2023 found familiar company. The Quinns complemented the Karneses, Teators, Notarnicolas, and Monteverds. Although there was ample sitting outside the kitchen area, it was at the two counters we congregated. Even more noticeable this year was the congregating of the women at the kitchen island and of the men around the den island.





Eventually, the ten foot table beckoned, with table cloth and cloth napkins, comfortable silverware, centerpieces, and, as is the Karnes tradition, the dinner favor. This year's favor was a five inch seasonal bowl filled with a wrapped Sweeter Side crafted collection of English toffee, with pecans and dark chocolate.

### **Course #1 - hors d'oeuvres**

- mini meatballs in sweet and spicy sauce
- a shaped Christmas tree comprised of cucumber, red grapes, assorted cheeses, soppressata, dried figs, olives, pickles, accompanied by crackers

We spent almost an hour toothpick-spearng, noshing, talking, laughing, almost finishing off the ample choices.

### **Course #2 – salad**

The veteran wooden salad bowl purchased at a Rt 100 bowl shop in Vermont continues to attract respectful stares. A fifteen inch bowl of greens, caramelized onion, fennel, and dried cranberries, almost obscured by grapefruit sections, dressed in a Mason jar of red wine honey vinaigrette made a statement. And despite Deb K's urgings to eat more, we paced ourselves, knowing the entrée course needed room to enjoy.

### **Course #3 – the palate cleanser**

A fifteen inch platter holding ten decorated cups of orange sorbet followed. Memories of past sorbets, especially the pineapple year, were recalled.

### **Course #4 – Entrée Course**

After a pause to let food settle and for kitchen prep to finish, Deb and Chay brought a wave of food:

- pork tenderloin
- with bacon onion jam\*
- oven roasted chicken piccata
- honey crisp / Granny Smith applesauce
- twice baked mashed potato casserole
- roasted asparagus with prosciutto, pine nuts and shaved Parmesan
- baguette with honey butter



Accompanying the entire evening were choices of libation: water; soda; wine: a CA chenin blanc, a chianti classico, and a McGregor pinot noir; and worthy choices of beer. Coffee, of course, for Ken (Rule #7) was in abundant supply.

Stories, tales, and gossip started tailing off, sated bellies were telling the minds they were sleepy but someone reminded the table that gifts awaited. Off to the den we ambled, took a seat, and waited for the passing of selection numbers that Chay just remembered to create.



The usual rules applied: the holder of #1 picked first, #2 went next and could steal a previous gift, and so on to #10, with the proceedings concluding with #1 allowed to steal any one gift. One only theft happened, from Deb Karnes in the spirit of Judy Adams. We then called the Adamses in Florida to connect once again for an event they attended so often.

Up for grabs this year:

- certificate for Furlongs
- a three wooden square-bowl unit in a metal frame
- Josh wine with a label showing last year's DP8 group
- a batch of lottery tickets
- certificate for Amazon
- olive oil, oil sprayer, and pot holders
- bright lights and a gift certificate
- a cutting board and serving tray
- serving platter
- .



At the appropriate moment, the clarion call for dessert was issued, four table chairs were returned to the table, and waiting on the table were two specialties of Deb K.

- a fifteen inch (seemed bigger) torte, with a shiny & rich chocolate spread over a macadamia nut base
- a dark cherry double-crusted pie



We did make a dent but twenty years has made a difference in the quantity we can eat.

## Among the topics for the evening:

An important discussion: a possible gift format change for next year. Instead of buying the usual gifts, we would combine our resources and contribute to a charity. Ideas to be generated during the year.

And quite a bit of heat and pestering was directed at the underwear model. The pair of briefs from Venice, a Adams purchase for the model, purportedly has been seen by everyone, except for one person. And that one person is as determined to see Venice as the wearer is persistently coy. Chay was not helpful for the persistent one that a dorsal fin might be sighted, if you know what I mean. And we hooted and smirked and made perhaps a few off-color comments.

Other topics: mild weather, with no snow on the ground or even in the forecast; the rainy forecast, which was storming in FL when we called the Adamses; upcoming snowbird trips for the winter to FL; an expensive remodeling of a house on Pine Crest; snow; Windham Mt's new club (\$175K entry fee) and its effect on the regular skier; the Teator Shutterfly book of Portugal & Spain; a couple of recent colds that seemed mostly better by DP8 time; doctors' appointments, something we chided ourselves for mentioning more than once (both chiding and mentioning); Christmas plans; Christmases of years past; early Christmas memories; a Karnes visit to Furlongs and a congenial greeting; a last minute cake to be baked by Sweeter Side; a birthday coming up on the 20th; Buffalo Bills play; store clerk a Bills fan and an apartment fire; bad ways of dying (no good ways offered); pickpockets – in New Orleans and in Spain; what is happening with the kids; what is happening with the grand-kids; trips coming up – Deb a couple or more, Monteverdi in the spring; relationships of friends – gossip-worthy; and a bunch of topics around the women-island I was not privy to!



Another half-hour. Almost eleven was approaching. Dinner was done, and the afterglow of story-telling, reminiscing, and wishing well for the future was wafting away. Before darkness could whisk us away, we hoped that 2024 would be as productive and worthy as this past year. And should times be challenging, may we have the grace and strength and support to see our way ahead.

We humbly and gratefully accepted this generosity of one our culinary highlights of the year. Thank you, Deb and Chay, for your efforts and such grand hospitality.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL**