

Temptations *A Bite-Sized Look at Entertaining from*



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The Chef

James Corwell, Executive Chef, Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant
The Culinary Institute of America, St. Helena, California

One of less than 60 Certified Master Chefs (C.M.C.) in the United States (the Certified Master Chef examination is considered the world's most difficult culinary accomplishment), Chef Corwell has been in a culinary apprenticeship role since age 13, having sought out and worked with noted C.M.C.s throughout the country.



SAM'S CLUB Source™

Written by Nicole Aloni
Photography by Matthew Cooper

Greystone, the impressive California campus of The Culinary Institute of America®, is a landmark in the Napa Valley. It is very fitting that this center, devoted to the study of food and wine is nestled here among the vineyards that have contributed so much to the American dining scene.

One of the many ways in which The Culinary Institute seeks to expand the understanding of culinary trends and traditions is in their innovative dining room, the Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant. "We believe in the historic idea that a restaurant's purpose is to 'restore' its guests. In that spirit, we invite you to relax and enjoy a new way to begin your dining experience." With that intriguing invitation, the menu introduces *Temptations*—the name they've coined to describe an array of small bites to be shared by all at the table in place of hors d'oeuvres or a first course.

According to executive chef James Corwell, he created *Temptations* to spotlight the enjoyment found in sharing a meal, and to make the time spent at the table more about the experience than just the food.

"*Temptations* are thought-provoking little bursts of flavor designed to be enjoyed at a leisurely pace. This is definitely not fast-food," he added with a smile. "These dishes are distinctly seasonal and regional — driven each day by the culinary artisans, farmers and foragers who bring their fresh products to my kitchen door."

Chef Corwell points out that *Temptations* recipes are often inspired by one of the Pan-Asian and Mediterranean basin cuisines that are emerging as the dynamic flavors of modern American dining. The "small bites" format of *Temptations* also reflects the dining tradition of these fascinating cultures, where mezze, tapas, dim sum and antojitos are essential comfort foods.

At Greystone, *Temptations* are presented on small plates layered on a specially designed lazy-susan, which facilitates a relaxed spin-and-share style of dining. When served preceding a meal, this colorful presentation gives diners a chance to unwind as each *Temptation* is savored.



Quantities are limited on in-Club items.

The Culinary Institute of America®



Temptations at Home

Chef James Corwell has some suggestions if you'd like to try to re-create this relaxing way to entertain at home, either preceding a meal, or from a buffet at your next special cocktail party.

As a first course, plan to serve three to four different tastes. Calculate about one and a half pieces of each dish per person. So, for a party of six, you would make 10 pieces of each *Temptation* recipe. James recommends that you bring these dishes out one or two at a time over a period of 30 minutes, or so.

This style also lends itself to a dazzling hors d'oeuvre buffet. Arrange the small bites on large plates, small platters or baskets. Augment the *Temptations* with larger platters of simple foods typical of the Mediterranean: sliced cucumbers drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and fresh herbs, marinated olives and radishes or chickpeas in spicy cumin oil. Make a large bowl of hummus and surround it with a wreath of pita crisps.

Since there are so many diverse flavors and textures involved, selecting one wine to serve alongside *Temptations* is difficult. At Greystone, this course is often accompanied by a "flight of wines"; that is, a small glass of each of three or more wines with some unifying theme. For instance, Californian zinfandels, three sparkling wines or wines from northern Italy would all be interesting pairings.

Some other items that have also appeared on his *Temptations* menu: Mustard Fried Mackerel with Skordalia, Clams with Romesco Sauce, Radishes with Aioli and Oysters with Ginger Mignonette.

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