



*Recipes by Mint Kitchen Catering
Photography by Tez Mercer*

There was a time when the word “catering” brought a shudder to any foodie, with expectations barely exceeding soggy sausage rolls and dry mini muffins.

This was a misconception that Jamie Miller and Giselle Trezevant-Miller were determined to overcome. With their culinary brainchild, Mint Kitchen Catering, they set out to re-conceive the ultimate finger food – the canapé – into the most exquisite bite-sized morsels.

“**T**here is a definite focus on catering for well-being – our food is luxurious but without being bad for you,” says Trezevant-Miller. It’s an edge that sets the canapés selections of Mint Kitchen a world apart, from the more “traditional” experience of catering in this country, comprising of sugar-laden, carb-heavy pastries, slices and muffins of pre-mixed, bulk-supplied beginnings. “But you won’t find that here,” insists Miller.

It is a vital point of difference for the heavyweight catering duo, which sees a lot of time and effort invested in balancing the food groups to produce canapés that are not only exquisite in taste but nutritionally sound. Their passion for creating food from scratch, using seasonal, fresh local produce has also not gone unnoticed - especially with the likes of New Zealand Fashion Week, with whom they already share a successful ten-year partnership and counting.

While it seems like a rather glitzy pairing, the collaboration between the two businesses came from humble beginnings with Trezevant-Miller reminiscing that initially, it was “not glamorous at all.” Originally

ensconced at the Halsey Street sheds, the venue was a significant challenge for the caterers, who were nevertheless quick to make a name for themselves in carving out some ground-breaking culinary achievements in addition to their tailor-made canapés. The ambitious endeavour of running a fully functioning, fine dining à la carte pop-up restaurant replete with Champagne for five days running during one Fashion Week – a first in New Zealand – wasn’t the easiest concept to execute amid the freezing cold of Winter and a lack of running water.

The willingness to experiment, to “stick it out” for the long term, and take on projects with no small amount of risk over the years has fostered a mutual respect between the two family-run businesses, which has seen the partnership weather the highs and lows of not only striving to build a sustainable venture but also coping with a recession. “We’re relying on trust and loyalty in relationships with people more and more,” reflects Miller, “It’s been a real partnership because we are a family business and they are too – we get them and they get us.” **M2W**



Kono Oysters

From the pristine waters of the Marlborough Sounds, these oysters, served in the half shell, are a beautiful canapé option showcasing all of what's good about New Zealand seafood produce.

- 1 dozen kono oysters
- 1 shallot
- 1 tbsp chives
- 1 tsp champagne vinegar

Shuck the oysters, leaving them in the half shell. Mix finely cut shallots, chives and champagne vinegar together, and gently spoon over each oyster.

Garnish the dish with small lemon wedges.



When one thinks of canapés, one usually thinks of the savory variety, however, there are also some lovely examples of sweet canapés or “dessert canapés” as Giselle likes to call them.

Strawberry Amaretto

- 8 medium to large strawberries
- 100g mascarpone
- 50ml whipped cream
- 20 Amaretti originali lazzaroni – Amaretti mini biscuits

Ingredient amounts will vary according to how many of these sweet treats you want to make.

Very simply, mix equal amounts of mascarpone and whipped cream, and place into a piping bag.

Slice the strawberries to a thickness where you are able to get approximately three portions per strawberry.

Using the piping bag, add a small amount of the mascarpone to the strawberry slice, and then simply top with your mini Amaretti biscuit.

Whitestone Vintage Windsor Blue Cheese on Crostini with Caramelised Pear

- Crostini
- 300g Whitestone Vintage Windsor Blue cheese
- 1 pear
- 1 tsp butter
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 20 pieces toasted walnuts

Carefully cut portions of the cheese to fit bite-sized crostini portions.

Peel and finely dice the pear. In a medium pan with butter, caramelise the pear with brown sugar for one to two minutes max. Chill the caramelised pear before placing onto the cheese and crostini.

Top with toasted New Zealand walnut halves.

Crostini

- 1 loaf ciabatta bread
- 100ml olive oil
- Flaky sea salt
- Pepper

Slice ciabatta into 5mm slices, then into large bite-sized pieces (these will shrink when cooked). Brush with olive oil, and lightly season with salt and pepper.

Bake in oven at 170°C for approximately five minutes, turn for another three to five minutes, or until crostini start to turn golden.





Kahawai Croquettes

You need to start making this the day before.

<i>Croquettes</i>	1 egg
3 onions, thinly sliced with the grain	1 cup milk
3 cloves garlic	Panko breadcrumbs
2 tbsp thyme, fresh if possible	Salt and pepper
50g butter	
1kg Kahawai, deboned and skinned	<i>Bechamel Sauce</i>
250g defrosted frozen peas	1 onion
50g italian parsley, chopped	3 cloves garlic
Salt and pepper	100g flour
Flour	100g butter
	1 litre milk
	1 bay leaf

To make the bechamel sauce, sweat the onion and garlic in a little butter. Add the flour and cook until blonde. Add the scalded milk and bay leaf; cook to thicken on low heat. Strain and cool.

For the croquettes, sweat the onion, garlic and thyme in butter until translucent. Cool, then add kahawai, peas and parsley. Add enough bechamel sauce to bind, then season with salt and pepper before refrigerating overnight.

Using wet hands, roll the croquette mixture into golf ball-sized rounds and try to make the surface as smooth as possible. Dredge in flour. Make an egg wash by whisking the egg and milk together. Dip the croquettes into the egg wash, then into a plate of breadcrumbs.

Deep-fry in vegetable oil at 175°C until golden brown. Drain well on paper towels. Sprinkle with sea salt.

Serve with lemon and garlic mayonnaise.

Whitestone Duntroon Cheese Canapé

- 150g Whitestone Duntroon goats cheese
- Crostini (see recipe on page 111)
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 20 leaves basil

Very simply, a slice of goats cheese on your bite-sized crostini, a slice of cherry tomato, and a small piece of chopped fresh basil as the final garnish.



Kona Mussels

- Cooking oil or butter
- Kona mussels
- White wine
- Tomato
- Onion
- Cucumber
- Parsley
- Salt and pepper

Bring a pan with cooking oil or butter to a high heat, add mussels and a generous splash of white wine, salt and pepper. Lower the heat and cover until the mussels open.

Very finely dice the tomato, finely chop the onion and parsley, and mix together. This is your tomato salsa garnish.

Remove half the mussel shell and carefully garnish.



Tuna Tataki Canapé

4 mini Lebanese cucumbers
500g tuna
Wasabi paste
Aioli
4 tbsp sesame oil

Cut the tuna into bite-sized cubes. Put a pan onto a high heat, add the sesame oil and sear each piece of tuna for approximately 10 seconds on each side, then allow to stand and cool.

Slice the cucumber into 5mm slices, and then using a small, round mould (about the size of a 50 cent piece), cut circular portions from the fleshy part of the cucumber, not the seeded area. This will be the base for your canapé.

Mix approximately one teaspoon of Wasabi paste with half a litre of good quality mayonnaise, and place into a piping bag.

Place the tuna onto the cucumber rounds and gently garnish with your Wasabi mayonnaise from the piping bag.

Rare Beef Tenderloin Canapé with Caramelised Onion Jam

Crostini
500g beef tenderloin
2 onion
2-3 tbsp butter/good cooking oil
300ml balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp brown sugar
Salt
Pepper

Cut beef tenderloin into approximately 1.5cm batons. Season with salt and pepper, and pan sear in the butter/cooking oil on a high heat for three to four minutes. Allow to cool.

Slice into 5mm slices and place onto the crostini.

Onion Jam

Finely slice the onion with the grain and sauté on a medium heat in olive oil, until the onions start to caramelise. Add half a litre of balsamic vinegar and brown sugar, lower the heat and reduce until most of the liquid has gone.

Garnish the beef and crostini with your onion jam.