

Globe Life

COCKTAIL PARTY EFFECT

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No pig-in-blanket special orders this year

» Listeria and salmonella scares aside, local, sustainable eating has also become a powerful social movement – documented here this week by the film *Food Inc.*, which featured such food activists as Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore's Dilemma*) and Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*).

Because the charity at the heart of RBC's event focuses on water stewardship, there was a de facto no-water-bottle rule – even at pre-party planning meetings. And each dish – from the Rowe Farms Ontario lamb chop and Lake Huron whitefish to the wild Ontario blueberry tarts and walnut cakes made with honey harvested from the hotel's roof – included either something local, something organic or something sustainable.

"Five years ago, when you asked us to do an event, it was very different," he said. "But it's not difficult because there are a lot of options this time of year. February would have been difficult."

Mr. Garcelon's reputation for sustainable cooking – and his rooftop garden – sealed the deal. "We were quite aware that the chef was very much into organic and locally grown food, so it was a pretty quick, ideal arrangement," said Shari Austin, vice-president of corporate citizenship for the bank.

Highlighting the fresh and the local is front of mind for many of his clients this year, said Roger Mooking, the executive chef of two hot Toronto eateries, Kultura and Nyood. Thus far, Mr. Mooking has fed such stars as Edward Norton, Jessica Biel and Colin Firth.

While servers can't memorize every ingredient, they're well versed in the farms and butch-



As executive chef at the Fairmont Royal York hotel in Toronto, David Garcelon has developed a reputation for sustainable cooking, including a garden on the hotel rooftop.
YVONNE BERG FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

ers these chefs buys from, and they're able to answer the growing number of queries guests have today about their food.

"You know they're real people making our food," said Mr. Garcelon, who has personally visited many of his suppliers. "And we want our guests to be able to trust us."

That can even include seemingly risky items such as raw oysters in Mr. Garcelon's case, or red snapper ceviche in Mr. Mooking's.

It's all about buying fresh, they say. "And serving it as quickly as possible and purchasing only what we need," Mr. Mooking says.

With all the homework they're already doing, many chefs also say, events such as TIFF don't inspire them to

source trendy new items on the fly – just the opposite. Because they're cooking in quantity, they don't want to do too much menu-bending.

That's what chef Mark McEwan is finding at One, his restaurant in Yorkville's Hazelton Hotel. For events such as the four parties he's done this year for Kate Hudson, he says, planners aren't making any out-of-the-ordinary requests – as Tom Cruise did last year, asking for pigs in a blanket – instead sticking to his homey, simple fare built on staple ingredients such as heirloom tomatoes from Ontario's Colmeyer Farms.

"We've been able to please celebrities with what we have on the menu," he said. "They're focusing on eating healthy, eating organic."