MIDNIGHT *magic*

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THE SHOPS ARE CLOSED AND THE KIDS ARE TUCKED IN—POP OPEN SOME BUBBLY, RUSTLE UP A SNACK AND RELAX TO THE SOUNDS OF OUR NOTE-PERFECT MUSIC PICKS.

Swept up in the madness of the holidays—parties, commitments, obligations, chores and everything you have to do for others—it's easy to lose yourself. You've been dashing through the snow, the shops and crowded malls. The provisions for that spectacular holiday meal you'll be putting on the table in a day or two have been collected and stashed away. Tonight though, as the last gift is perfectly wrapped, the final touches put on the decorations, and all the wee ones in dreamland, it's time for you. Time to reconnect with that special someone. Cook together and enjoy some luscious flavours, just the two of you. Slip into something comfortable, slide something soulful into the CD player, and (quietly) pop the cork on something cool and sparkling while you whip up a sophisticated midnight snack for two.

Spiced Shrimp WITH COOL CITRUS-YOGURT DIP

This low-effort dish is spicy-hot and sweetly cool, like spending a winter's eve by a roaring fire. To get out of the kitchen faster, buy peeled and deveined shrimp, and choose tail-on for elegant gripping and dipping. Frozen shrimp are fine. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

- 3 tbsp (45 mL) 2% yogurt
- 1 tsp (5 mL) sweet paprika
- 1 tsp (5 mL) ground coriander seeds
- 1 tsp (5 mL) coarsely ground black pepper
- ⅛ tsp (0.5 mL) ground green cardamom seeds
- ⅛ tsp (0.5 mL) cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp (2 mL) lemon zest
- ½ tsp (2 mL) finely chopped ginger
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) finely chopped garlic
- 1 lb (500 g) large shrimp, peeled and deveined, tail-on, approx. 20 to 25 pieces
- Kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 450°F (230°C).
2. Combine yogurt, paprika, coriander, black pepper, cardamom, cayenne, lemon zest, ginger and garlic in a large mixing bowl, and stir until well combined.

RECIPE CONTINUED ON PAGE 291

SET THE MOOD

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS,
DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES, 2006, U-WATCH RECORDS/UNIVERSAL

From rousing gospel to the sweetly sentimental, to classic Hall and Oates folk-rock, this album will have you boppin' in the kitchen and snuggling by the fire.

SERVE WITH

VEUVE CLICQUOT DEMI-SEC CHAMPAGNE

LCBO 38307 • $63.80

Demi-sec is a slightly sweet style of Champagne that works wonderfully with a wide variety of dishes. This example's pear, citrus, mineral tones and creamy texture will embrace the flavours of the shrimp and citrus yogurt dip. The wine's hint of sweetness and carbonation help quell the spice and refresh the palate.

Truffled Honey AND PARMESAN BITES

Simplicity is the word of the day. The better the ingredients, the less we need to do. Splash out for a really well aged Parmesan, the best truffle oil you can afford—black—and some spectacular French honey: try lavender, or perhaps *miel de sapin* from fir trees. All that will be required of you is your desire to indulge.

- ½ tsp (2 mL) ground Szechuan peppercorns
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) honey
- 1½ tsp (7 mL) black truffle oil
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Inniskillin Reserve Riesling 2006 (LCBO 34025, $14.25), or another off-dry white
- ½ lb (250 g) Parmigiano Reggiano

1. In a mixing bowl, whisk peppercorns, honey, truffle oil and Riesling until smooth and syrupy. Transfer to a serving bowl and set aside.
2. Using a good, sharp knife, remove the tough outer rind from the Parmigiano. Break Parmigiano into bite-size chunks and place on a serving platter with the honey dip. Dunk and enjoy.

Serves 2

SET THE MOOD

***AN OSCAR PETERSON CHRISTMAS,* OSCAR PETERSON, 1995, TELARC JAZZ**

Swinging effortless jazz—sparkling piano, smooth brass, bright vibraphone—from a Canadian icon lends mellow elegance to the night.

SERVE WITH

INNISKILLIN SPARKLING ICEWINE

VINTAGES 86884, 375 mL • $69.95 (December 6 release)

Crafted from an icewine base, this sparkler is a rare treat that is sure to delight. Its luscious ripe pear, apricot and caramel flavours, balanced acidity and fine mousse provide both a complement and contrast to the sweetness of the honey, rich saltiness of the cheese and earthiness of the truffle oil.

Corn and Chorizo Fritters WITH CRANBERRY CHUTNEY

Golden and crisp, these easy fritters are fun to make and will put even the most holiday-fatigued into a festive mood. And because some like it hot and some not, you can choose a mild or spicy chorizo.

- ½ cup (125 mL) yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup (250 mL) all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) baking soda
- ½ tsp (2 mL) kosher salt
- 1½ tbsp (22 mL) finely chopped shallot
- 1½ cups (375 mL) 2% milk
- ⅔ cup (150 mL) peeled, diced chorizo sausage
- Vegetable oil for deep frying

GARNISH

- Coarse salt, optional

1. In a large bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add shallots and milk and, using a whisk, mix into a smooth pancake-like batter.
2. Peel the outer casing off the chorizo sausage using a paring knife, then dice—pieces should be about the size of frozen peas. Add diced chorizo to the batter, and set aside to rest for 10 minutes.

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SET THE MOOD

CHRISTMAS PRESENT, BONEY JAMES, 2007, CONCORD/UNIVERSAL

From the mellow saxophone of this modern jazz master comes a smooth and sexy holiday sound, perfect for two.

SERVE WITH

CHAMPAGNE LAURENT-PERRIER CUVÉE ROSÉ BRUT

VINTAGES ESSENTIALS 158550 • $99.95

This vivacious rosé Champagne combines balanced acidity and lively, citrus and red fruit flavours that proffer both a complement and contrast to the flavours and textures in the fritters. The bubbles and pink colour also add a festive mood to the occasion.