

Karnes – Christmas 2015

A culinary tour de force—presented by Deb Karnes, backed by coordinator/assistant par excellence Chay—delighted Dinner Party of Eight at its December dinner, the thirteenth consecutive event hosted by the Karneses.



complementing this year's array of drinks was a tasty punch.

Permutations of ten (sorry, mathophobes) mixed and chatted, catching up on news and enhancing already

Record weather winter—no measureable snow had fallen at Albany at dinner time, and would not do so until December 29—awaited the ten of us: Karnes, Teator, Adams, Monteverd, Notarnicola. What a difference a year makes. December 2014 had already dumped 25 inches by this date, and then inflicted a cold snap that presaged six weeks of some of the bitterest cold even the old-timers could remember.



A dozen or more gaily lit trees, from roadside to doorway, greeted us guests, with strings of lights lining the back yard. The foyer's Christmas tree exuded its

pumpkin glow, and the house decorations was a confirmation that believers of Santa/Christmas lived here.

Kalli actively greeted us for about five minutes before succumbing to Deb's wishes. A medley of vegetables was set, accompanied by a side dip.

That was soon joined by the Notar prosciutto-wrapped wieners flavored with maple syrup—a tasty nugget for the evening.

Not a throat had a chance to parch with Chay juggling reds and whites and a white zin, along with beer and soda. (no Scotch this year) Deliciously



told stories before Chay served notice the Caesar salad was awaiting. A large bowl attested to the abundance of the season.

Two oblong plates held buttered slices of grilled bread, seasoned with a touch of garlic.

Favors awaited--stuffed animals per couple, and individual small boxes with risqué covers, the rattling inside proving to be chiclets.

The two masters of the house disappeared for a few minutes, only to reappear with the intermezzo—a grapefruit sorbet. Notes of past years have proclaimed that Deb usually outdoes herself but the 2015 version not only captured the subtle flavor of grapefruit but also showed a silkiness surpassing other years.



Chay had let slip earlier that the open Chianti Classico

would be appropriate for the evening, and we soon realized that, in a major change of menu, Deb had prepared Christmas dinner with an Italian theme.

Dinner for 10 (enough for 20), all of Deb's doing:

- butter garlic shrimp
- a Dutch oven of ziti in zesty red sauce
- large serving platter of individual chicken parmesan topped in red sauce and mozzarella cheese
- large bowl of roasted cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, pearl onions
- large baking dish of mushroom-prosciutto lasagna
- more bread



Deb tried the “Manga, manga” plea on us, and we savored every last taste.

Although most of us had controlled ourselves at appetizer time, we were now looking for the next belt buckle hole.

Someone made the wise decision to head in to the living from for our gift exchange, where we played Bad Santa with at least three, maybe four, of us stealing gifts. Many of us were eyeing Deb K’s glass set and decanter but her withering look nailed us to our seats.

Time for dessert and, in keeping with the theme of the evening, Deb had prepared a large plate of cannoli, each with a red tip and a green tip. These were only the preamble to the four layers-of-chocolate cannoli cake, topped with chocolate nuggets, topped by a small pyramid of four cannoli.

Whatever room might have existed after the main course was now gone, we sat back and pleasantly moaned our satisfaction and appreciation, and hoped that slowly sipping tea or coffee or after-dinner drinks would create more room.



Nearing eleven, exits were made, and another Christmas celebration was etched in the DP8 annals.

Several hours allows for dozens of topics, almost all of which I will allow to fade in the glow of the evening. However,



to be noted was attendance of Judy and Tim, who had driven from Virginia, determined not to miss a Karneses’ Christmas. And we all wished for a year of good health (something we no longer take for granted, at our advancing ages, sorry Deb K who just joined the UPPER 50s). Well, we had to mention the

El Nino weather, averaging ten degrees above normal this month so far (the downhill skier is mighty disappointed, the rest not so much).

Thank you, Deb and Chay, for such generosity and hospitality.

Goodbye 2015! May 2016 be as kind.

P.S.

Thank you Deb and Chay for the best night of the year! Your Italian fare was absolutely scrumptious! Looking forward to 2016!

Kriss & Ken

Thank you, Debbie and Chay. Once again (how many years has it been?) you outdid yourselves! We cannot tell you how much we have appreciated all that you did and all that you've done in the many years in the past. Good cheer, dear friends, delicious food, many laughs, and fun gifting. We hope we never have to miss a Karnes Christmas party. Of course, unless you move back to Dunkirk, and then we're not sure we'd drive that far! But then again, maybe.... We'd all come out in a big van!

Luv, j n t