

Brandywine Table

Get Ready for 'Rosé All Day'

MAY KICKS OFF THE SEASON OF SIPPING AT TAILGATES

Courtney H. Diener-Stokes



Judy Irwin Sagal, left, and Carolyn Desfor

CAROLYN DESFOR REMEMBERS BEING 4 WHEN she was packed into her family's sports car along with all the accouterments for a perfect horse show tailgate. When her parents competed in weekend shows, a typical departure checklist included a cooler filled with wine and champagne, crudité tray and tea sandwiches. At the horse show, she remembers snatching carrots off the tailgate table to feed the horses. "My life evolved around tailgating," Desfor says.

Born into an equestrian family, Desfor, who lives in Chester County, spent years on the show circuit before training accomplished show jumpers professionally. Today she splits her time between Chester County and Palm Beach, Florida, where she carries on her family tailgating tradition. Only these days, she's become the hostess along with fellow equestrian and Chester Countian Judy Irwin Sagal.

The two became fast friends when Sagal began training with Desfor 15 years ago. On weekends you can find them mixing and mingling ringside or fieldside at local polo matches. "Equestrian sports and tailgating go hand in hand," Sagal says. The gatherings — whether polo matches, steeplechase races or horse show competitions — serve as an excuse to dress up and catch up with friends both in and out of the equestrian world.

Carolyn Desfor, fourth from left, and Judy Irwin Sagal, fourth from right, hosting a tailgate.



Sagal recently reserved a tailgate spot for Brandywine Polo's upcoming season. At their tailgate, nicknamed "Rosé All Day," Desfor and Sagal host guests on weekends, starting opening day on May 28th. In addition to having plenty of rosé on hand, Desfor serves her specialty rum cocktail — Polo Punch. Guests nibble on tea sandwiches, canapés, kabobs and sweet treats as they enjoy matches on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons. They can also cheer on Desfor's boyfriend, Mark Still, a local polo player.

In addition to regular guests, the pair also enjoys switching things up by inviting new guests each week. They also occasionally have fun with a suggested dress theme, like wearing white for the final match of the season. "I dried hydrangeas and sprayed them silver for the centerpiece for the white-themed party," Desfor says.

Although Desfor and Sagal encourage guests to bring a dish to share at their tailgates, there's always a hardy selection of appetizers, with a nod to kids' tastes and adults' dietary restrictions. Here are some of their favorite offerings and shortcuts that enable them to offer an inviting spread each week.



Carolyn Desfor, far left, and Judy Irwin Sagal, second from left, with friends at the Radnor Hunt Races

Polo Punch

Carolyn loves to create a specialty cocktail for each tailgate get-together. Her Polo Punch has become a much-loved go-to that's easy to prepare and never fails to please. She elevates the appearance of reusable glass bottles used for dispensing the punch with a sticker of a polo player pasted on each one. This festive punch dresses up the occasion and cools everyone down on warm summer days by the polo field. Tip: Use disposable wine glasses for ease in transport. Pair with a spread of finger foods.

Serves 12, over ice (depending on glass size and amount of ice)



- 750 ml bottle of Bacardi Limón Rum
- 3 C. ginger ale
- 3 C. fruit punch
- 1 lime, juiced, peel discarded
- 1 lemon, juiced, peel discarded
- 1 lime, cut into wedges for garnish
- 12 sprigs of fresh Mohito Mint (or your favorite variety)

In a pitcher add rum, ginger ale, fruit punch, lime and lemon juices, and stir to combine.

Pour into reusable glass bottles using a culinary funnel (or pour carefully from pitcher). Cap with a tight-fitting lid and refrigerate for at least one hour to chill.

When ready to serve, pour into stemmed wine glasses over ice. Garnish with a wedge of lime and a sprig of mint.

Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed bottle for up to three days.

Homegrown Caprese Kabobs

Judy uses homegrown basil to boost the fresh flavor of these tasty kabobs. This dish requires some time to assemble the kabobs. The result is a very-

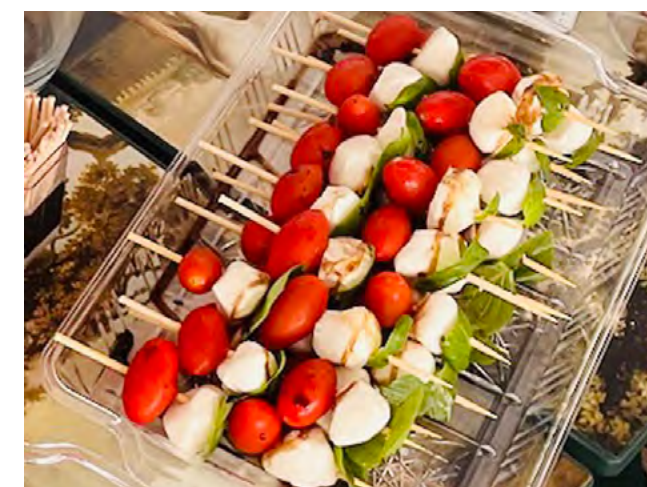
Tips on Tailgating from the Pros

Carolyn Desfor and Judy Irwin Sagal share their tips for entertaining tailgate style. Whether you're fieldside at a polo match, on the rail at a steeplechase or in a skybox at the Devon Horse Show, these ideas should make the day easier.

- Don't make too much food, since people may be more into drinking than eating.
- Take seasonal decorations to make your tailgate look festive, such as tulips and fresh flowers in spring or mums and pumpkins around Halloween.
- Have enough folding chairs or camp chairs handy for guests (or suggest they bring them). Standing for several hours can get old.
- If you have leftover food, offer it to neighboring tailgaters so it doesn't go to waste.
- Create a specialty drink to make the occasion feel even more special. Have plenty of flat and sparkling water on hand, especially on hot days.
- Set a theme to spice up weekly tailgates, such a dress code of wearing white to celebrate the last tailgate of the season.
- Consider dietary preferences of your guests and offer a variety of food to accommodate all, including kids.
- Use disposable wine glasses for ease in transport. Wash them afterward to use again and again.
- Serve at least one sweet treat to round out your menu.
- Stick to finger foods to let guests more easily navigate the food table while holding a drink.
- Offer at least one kid-friendly appetizer.

colorful display of finger food that your guests can easily pop into their mouth as they mingle and watch the action. Pairs beautifully with a warm summer day.

Makes approximately 1 dozen



24 fresh basil leaves
 1, 8-oz. container of fresh mozzarella balls
 1 pint organic grape tomatoes, kept whole
 Reduced balsamic vinegar, store bought
 Mini bamboo skewers
 Kosher salt

Place the basil leaves, mozzarella and tomatoes in separate bowls and arrange in a row on the counter.

On each skewer, stack the ingredients in this order: basil leaf, mozzarella ball, tomato. Repeat.

Arrange kabobs on a serving platter and lightly drizzle with your favorite reduced balsamic vinegar. Finish with a light sprinkle of salt.

Store leftovers in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to two days.

Simple Tuna Tea Sandwiches

Tea sandwiches are a signature of equestrian events in Chester County. Judy loves making these simple sandwiches that require just five ingredients, and celery isn't one of them. The key to this recipe is merging the tuna mixture with a super soft bread. Pair with a fresh-cut fruit salad.

Makes 16 tea sandwiches



2, 5-oz. cans of white albacore tuna fish in water, drained
 ½ C. mayonnaise
 Fresh ground pepper to taste
 16 slices of soft honey wheat sandwich bread, crusts removed
 Romaine lettuce leaves, rinsed and patted dry

In a medium bowl, add tuna fish and break it up with a fork so there are no chunks. Add mayonnaise and pepper to taste. Stir to combine.

Spread the tuna generously on four slices of bread. Then place the remaining slices on top. Cut each sandwich in half on a diagonal.

Place romaine lettuce leaves on a serving platter as a colorful backdrop before adding sandwiches.

If you have leftovers, storage is not recommended.

Palm Beach Lobster Deviled Eggs

Inspired by the Florida restaurant, Todd's of West Palm that closed a few years ago, this is one of Carolyn's favorite tailgate dishes to make. Before Todd's closed, Carolyn asked the chef for the recipe, and she used his guidance to concoct a close replica. Carolyn suggests garnishing only half the eggs with jalapeño since not all are fans of the extra kick.

Makes 24



4 slices of bacon
 Brown sugar
 1 dozen eggs, hard boiled and peeled
 ¾ C. mayonnaise
 1 C. cooked lobster meat (steamed lobster tails ideally), coarsely chopped
 1½ tsp. Dijon mustard
 1 tsp. dill, finely chopped
 1 jalapeño, seeds removed and diced
 Salt to taste
 ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 375°.

Candy bacon by placing slices on a baking sheet and dusting each slice with a sprinkle of brown sugar. Place in the oven and bake until fully cooked and crispy, about 18 minutes. After fully cooked, remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Once cooled, break bacon into small bits.

Cut hard boiled eggs in half lengthwise. Place yolks in a medium bowl and whites on a serving platter. Mash yolks with a fork until crumbly. Add mayonnaise, lobster, mustard, dill, ¾ of the jalapeños, ¾ of the bacon, salt and pepper. Stir to combine until smooth.

Spoon a generous dollop of filling into each egg white. Sprinkle remaining bacon bits and jalapeños on top (sprinkle jalapeños on only half the eggs and leave the rest without).

Optional: If you'd like to top each egg with one chunk of lobster meat in addition to the jalapeños and bacon bits, steam an additional lobster tail and reserve those chunks for garnish.

Cover and chill until ready to serve. If you have leftovers at your tailgate, storage is not recommended.

Seven Stars Strawberry Shortcake

This hand-held sweet treat highlights cream from Seven Stars Farm in Kimberton. The shortcut of purchasing pre-made dessert shells leaves you having only to pull off chopping, whipping and assembling. Judy doesn't

add additional sugar to the whipped cream because the sweetened strawberries add just the right amount of sweet. To avoid sogginess, transport the whipped cream and strawberries in sealed containers in a cooler and assemble everything at the tailgate before guests arrive. Makes a wonderful dessert.

Makes 1 dozen



1 qt. fresh strawberries, sliced
 1 tsp. granulated white sugar
 1 C. heavy cream
 2 packages pre-made sponge cake dessert shells

Slice strawberries and place in a medium bowl. Add sugar and stir to combine. Set aside while you prepare the whipped cream.

Place cream in a large mixing bowl, and whip until stiff peaks are formed.

Place dessert shells on a serving platter. Spoon sweetened strawberries evenly into the bowl of each shell. Top strawberries with a dollop of whipped cream.

Serve immediately. If you have leftovers, storage is not recommended. ♦

About Brandywine Polo Club

Spectating is open to the public with general admission (kids 12 and under are free).

Opening Day, May 28, 2023

Polo schedule: BrandywinePolo.com.

Courtney Diener-Stokes is an award-winning journalist, author, food writer, photographer and food stylist. Most recently she co-authored the Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook and Farmhouse Manna: Nourishing Recipes and Rituals for Head, Heart, Hands & Soul. She lives in the Oley Valley countryside with her husband, three children, two Babydoll Southdown sheep, a flock of bantam chickens and a Bernedoodle named Daisy.



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