



George Christy



Kaplan Archives

Spago's senior partner Tom Kaplan at play with wife Liz and son Austin at their Las Vegas residence.

Birthdays, birthdays ...

Wolfgang Puck, very likely the most famous chef of all time, celebrated **Tom Kaplan's** 60th birthday in Wolfgang's posh dining room at the Hotel Bel-Air. Now, if you don't know who Tom Kaplan is, you don't know the world of Wolfgang.

Tom's the resident genius who oversees and coordinates the Puck empire, ranging, as Wolfgang tells us, from "Bahrain to Singapore." While the Spago restaurant flagship remains on North Canon Drive in Beverly Hills, Wolfgang and Tom have opened additional popular Spagos and other Puck-affiliated dining rooms throughout the globe.

Tom lives in Las Vegas, where he masterminds what we call "Puck Central."

Tough work? Of course. But nobody does it better than our Tom. With enthusiasm, ease, charm and fair play.

Tom's a happy daddy with a 6-year-old son named **Austin**.

Arriving in Los Angeles and taking an evening off from his myriad worldly chores, Tom greeted twenty confreres from the dining establishment that included **Bella Lantsman**, the general manager who keeps Wolfgang's Chinois on Main in Santa Monica on top of the pyramid for the best Chinese food.

A personal friend, filmmaker **John Goldwyn**, having been Tom's classmate at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, joined the dinner guests. He noted that daughter **Emily**, whose mom is **Colleen Camp**, is knocking out

top television scripts. "I'm very proud of her."

The Hotel Bel-Air menu for Tom's dinner was tantalizing. How can choices offering France's fine *loup de mer* and a stone fruit *vacheron* not be wonderful?

We met Tom in 1982, when Spago opened on Sunset Boulevard at Horn Avenue. Occupying the former space of the Armenian restaurant Kavkaz, where the rack of lamb marinated in pomegranate juice was the hot ticket from the kitchen of **Miriam Markarian**.

We early predicted that Tom's enthusiasm, expertise and knowledge would go far. As he has, overseeing the countless Spago enterprises.

Bravo, dear Tom, we are, indebted and indeed proud of you, and wish plenty more happy birthdays in the years to come.

She's our hostess with the mostest. **Mitzi Gaynor**, who birthday-partied us with her 10 friends at her new palatial digs in Beverly Hills. And where she informed that she's begun writing her not-to-be-missed memoir. Likely to be a pistol firing up the best seller lists, and may we suggest that she complete a chapter about her entertaining smarts.

On birthday night, her tablescape shimmered with candlelight, Baccarat crystal and hallmarked silverware.

Savoring every minute at the mahogany table were the brilliant and beloved **Steve Wallace**, who created Wally's Wines and Spirits on Pico Boulevard in West Los Angeles, where we met decades ago.

Steve brought high eloquence to the wine-and-dining scene. His palate was/is remarkable, never mincing words about the yeas and nays of quality.

Retired now, he loves traversing the world with friends, fishing and dining well.

To join Mitzi on birthday night, he flew in from a holiday in the Bahamas.

He applauded her menu. Gravlax with the mustard-dill sauce that Mitzi prepared that afternoon. A Hungarian "casino" salad of fresh vegetables with sour cream, tender and flavorful chicken portions, and a dessert of prize-worthy vanilla cake with homemade ice cream.

Working in the kitchen was Mitzi's co-manager **Shane Rosamonda**.

While co-manager **Rene Reyes**, an executive with The Paley Center, joined Mitzi in welcoming the guests. Ballerina **Kate Cahn**, dancing man/choreographer **Joe Tremaine**, born a New Orleanian who extolled his love of the Cajun dishes thereabouts, even named his dogs **Boudin** and **Gumbo**. He finds Antoine's his favorite dining room, as are the popular red-beans-and-rice cafés.

Also, El Cholo's catering manager **Steven Byrket** and **Milan Adam**, a veteran restaurant advisor who celebrated his birthday the following day.

We were introduced to **Sanborn McGraw IV**, whose family pioneered the city of Detroit. Sanborn now looks after the renowned pianist and performer and terrific musical archivist, **Michael Feinstein**, who lately purchased the historic Cravens mansion on Pasadena's Millionaire's Row for \$7 million. And now he's selling his Los Feliz mansion for \$26 million. The estate of 22,000 square feet was created by Louis Hobart, who designed the magnificent Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill in San Francisco.

We discovered Michael Feinstein during an

annual New Year's Day party hosted by another great hostess Jean Howard, who partied Bogey and Lauren Bacall, Sammy Davis Jr., Judy Garland, Rex Harrison, the Oliviers, etc.

On that New Year's Day, Michael was performing as a friend, having been invited by June (Mrs. Oscar) Levant.

His music enchanted, and we recommended him to play at a reception for *Vogue* editor, **Shirley Lord**, hosted by Bob and **Rosemarie Stack**. His fee was \$100. At the Stack party, we brought him together with **Liza Minnelli**, and the twosome never stopped duetting to the pleasure of everyone.

We made a match belonging in Heaven. They are bosom buddies to this day.

His glorious success is now legend, performing around the world for big bucks. Yet he's never forgotten that his father was a butcher in Columbus, Ohio, and Mom Maisie a tap dancer.

Mitzi invariably brings people you should know to her table together to wine and dine with her.

Certainly one of her starry nights.

P.S. If you haven't seen Mitzi's *Razzle Dazzle! The Special Years*, videos on PBS, then why not join the music and dance to her fabulous shows choreographed by the hotshot **Tony Charmoli**? You'll be on cloud nine!

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Celebrity Photo/Scott Downie

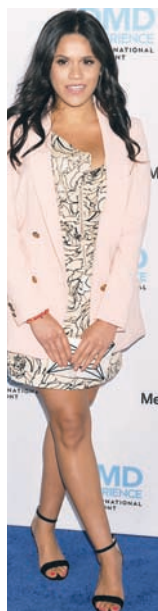
Eddie Cibrian and Rachel Bilson attended the Disney/ABC International Upfronts at the Walt Disney Studio Lot



Sibongile Mlambo



Robin Tunney



Justina Adorno



Francia Raisa



Eline Powell



Chris Warren



Anne Winters