

On the Town



Russell Yip / The Chronicle

MeMe Pederson

Taste Catering's CEO dishes up her top picks, from nail spots to eyeglasses to art galleries

If you've ever been a guest at a well-heeled event here in town — a gala night, a boutique opening-night party or a private anniversary dinner for 40 — chances are you've nibbled on foodstuffs by Taste Catering, one of the Bay Area's most innovative catering companies. And chances are, hovering quietly in the background, you've seen MeMe Pederson, a tall, slim and bespectacled woman who is its public face.

Pederson, a native of Burlington, Iowa, majored in business sciences at Mills College. Afterward, she founded Edible Art catering with a friend, Janet Griggs, which merged with Timothy Maxon's Taste Catering

in 1992.

It's hard for Pederson to pinpoint a favorite food creation. "It changes day to day, because our

"I have a small obsession with 1950s cocktail glasses. ... Enjoying a cocktail from a vintage glass is always a good thing."

chefs create new menu items all the time," she said, "and the newest item becomes my favorite."

During the busiest months of the social calendar (September through May), Pederson has little down time. When she does

relax with her husband, Bruce, it's at a family cottage at Lake Bemidji in Minnesota or in Palm Springs, where she indulges in hamburger sliders at a hole-in-the-wall joint named Tyler's Burgers that originated as a Greyhound bus depot in 1936. Her other guilty pleasure is a Midwestern treat, Sterzing's potato chips, which she enjoys once a year, at Christmas.

Pederson dreamed of being an actress when she grew up. No matter. For food lovers, her productions are like gastronomic plays in which you're never quite sure what you'll see when the curtain comes up.

—Carolynne Zinko

Taste Catering CEO MeMe Pederson likes the mix of artists represented at 12 Gallagher Lane gallery.

MeMe Pederson's favorite hangouts

▼ **Alameda Point Antiques Faire**, 2900 Navy Way at Main Street, Alameda. "To me, it's really a flea market. It's the first Sunday of every month. I have a small obsession with 1950s cocktail glasses, and I always find an addition to my collection. Enjoying a cocktail from a vintage glass is always a good thing."



Stephanie Wright Hession / Special to The Chronicle 2010

▼ **Bamboo**, 2284-B Union St. "This is best place for a manicure and pedicure, because it's so relaxing and quiet. I love to go on a Sunday morning after working late at an event on Saturday."

▼ **Boulevard restaurant**, 1 Mission St. "Boulevard feels like a neighborhood bar with amazing food. I love to go, sit at the end of the bar and order from the left side of the menu. The menu changes so often, reflecting what is in season, that I think you could eat there every night and have something new."



Jim Merrieth / The Chronicle 2006

▼ **City Optix**, 2154 Chestnut St. "Some women love shoes. Well, I love eyeglasses, and this is the place for me. The variety of styles is extraordinary — they carry interesting shapes, colors and designers such as Judith Leiber, Badgley Mischka, Kieselstein-Cord and many more. No basic black frames to be found in this eye boutique."

▼ **Dandelion**, 55 Potrero Ave. "If you need a special gift, this is the place to go. Dandelion has everything from gardening accessories to cast-iron Japanese teapots. They have an amazing collection of books on travel, fashion, architectural, design and cooking. ... It's just fun to look."

▼ **Ferry Plaza Farmers Market**, 1 Ferry Building. "There is nothing like a beautiful San Francisco Saturday morning at the farmers' market. I am usually buying food for our family Sunday dinner. For me, the market has that small-town feeling of community. I usually run into friends and catch up with some of my favorite vendors. I love everything from the outside farmers' market to

▼ **Mr. and Mrs. Miscellaneous ice cream**, 699 22nd St. "So much is happening in Dogpatch, and this is such a great addition. They have delicious ice creams, and the flavors change constantly. No signature dish here, but if you see the chocolate malt crunch, it is certainly worth a taste!"



Russell Yip / The Chronicle 2011

▼ **Slanted Door and Out the Door**, Ferry Building and 2232 Bush St. "Sometimes I just don't want to cook, and this is a favorite place for takeout. The pork ribs and the imperial rolls are crazy good."



Chris Stewart / The Chronicle 2007

▼ **12 Gallagher Lane gallery**, 12 Gallagher Lane. "Un salon d'art and a great space to view art. I really like the mix of established and young, up-and-coming artists. Hidden away on an alley in SoMa, the gallery has a Manhattan feel with the right amount of San Francisco."