



Steve Poses chats with old friend Sandy Adolf of Doylestown. His goal for the blowout was the best, most beautiful food at the firm's best party ever.

State-of-the-art catering

Frog-Commissary, which knows a thing or two about parties, threw itself a doozy to celebrate its new catering digs. The menu illustrates how the catering scene has changed.



The Philadelphia Inquirer / ELIZABETH MALBY

At the Poses party, Ellen Schmidt tries Italian selections. Food stations with individual themes are a new and popular concept in catering.



A tier of desserts greeted guests at Poses' Frog-Commissary party.

It's early April in 1973. For months the sign in the big front window at 264 S. 16th St. has been teasing passersby with the prospect of a new restaurant — Frog — that will be "coming soon."

Frog's doors will open in minutes. Meanwhile, a young man is hurrying to clean up the bathrooms.

Don Falconio finishes, washes up, puts on a tie and begins his food-business career with a firm that its founder, Steve Poses, will ultimately call Shooting Stars.

Twenty-one years later, Falconio is still on the Poses team, having risen through the ranks from bathroom cleaner-busboy to VP.

He's seen the Poses enterprise grow into an empire. From the fairly uncomplicated neighborhood restaurant that was Frog, the Poses domain expanded to include other restaurants, such as the innovative City Bites, the self-service Commissary, and fast-food fidens.

In 1976, the firm added a catering division. While the original restaurants have either closed, been sold or renamed, Frog-Commissary Ca-

tering continues to grow and prosper.

Recently, Frog-Commissary Catering moved from cramped quarters in Center City to a big and beautiful facility in Northern Lib-

ertown. Some of the best-known firms and charities have feted Philadelphians at fabulous Frog-Commissary Catering functions.

Included in this party menu was an extravagant array of tidbits made with lobster, duck, salmon, crab, chicken, shrimp, swordfish, veggies, grilled lamb, marinated mushrooms, salads, fritters, pastas and super salad fixings.

But what caught my eye was that there was but a single beef item, an entrecote with thyme served at the Mediterranean grill station.

Just one!

Falconio remembers a time, and so do I, when all local party givers had to do to impress guests was order filet mignon.

Scare talk about beef and cholesterol has changed things, Falconio said. "Now when someone is bold enough to plan a menu around beef, 20 percent of the people attending will ask for something else."

Beef isn't the only thing that has vanished from the local party scene. Gone, too, is the old 40-



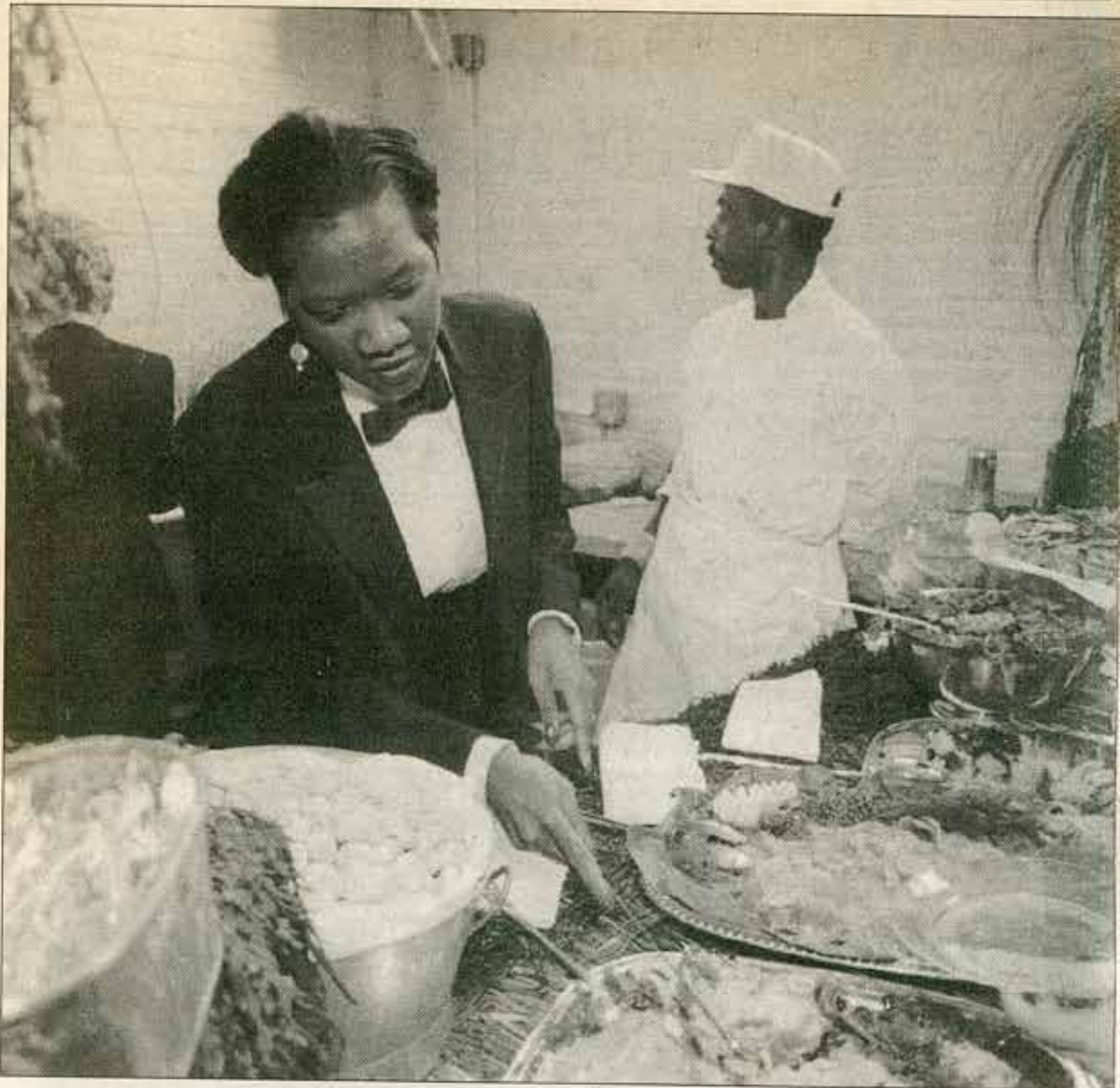
Elaine Tait

erties, an occasion celebrated by a spectacular party spread over two days — Thursday, April 7, and Friday, April 8.

Falconio let me peek at the March 24 memo from Poses to key staff members. It showed a directive from the boss that read: "Remember our goal: The best and most beautiful food at the best party we have ever done."

That was a big order. Some of the most famous hosts and hostesses in the area have had their dinner parties and family celebrations ca-

By ELAINE TAIT on K4



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Yvette Webb serves swordfish at the Frog-Commissary party introducing the new catering facility. Two decades ago, fish was rarely served as an entree. Now, it's the choice at one of six parties.

Frog-Commissary's posh party spotlights the latest in catering

ELAINE TAIT from K1
quette that says you eat what a host or hostess has placed on your plate, whether it's something you like or not.

"Today, everyone wants what they want. Even out in the field, in a tent, we're expected to have other choices," said Falconio. "You'll have 12 orders of special pasta, no oil, tons of vegetables and 15 who want salmon."

Two decades ago, the caterer rarely served fish as an entree. "Now it's the entree of choice at one out of

month on the site of the original Frog, served Caribbean-style heart of palm fritters, corn and crab fritters, conch and pasta salad, chili salsa and fresh grapefruit-lime marmalade.

An Asian station offered roast mahogany duck, Thai chicken curry, shrimp lo mein and condiments including peanuts, coconut and chutney. Guests could return to a favorite station for plate refills, or sample from each station, ending with dessert.

Corporate customers are especially enthusiastic about the food station

ess ordered for her 100 guests. "We had to get someone to dive for them in the Pacific," Falconio said. (Asked if guests appreciated the spiny-shelled, exotic-tasting creatures, Falconio diplomatically changed the subject.)

Today's party planners are more sophisticated than those of the '70s. They expect a caterer to provide fine dining. But they aren't always prepared for what that will cost, Falconio said.

"Rental costs, for example, are a big expense for our parties," he said.