



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

APPETIZERS

Shrimp Gnocchi

winter mushrooms, butter sauce, truffle oil

Toasted Chestnut Soup with Spiced Cream

cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger

Black Kale and Israeli Couscous Salad

sweet potatoes, pecan, cranberry, scallion, radish and citrus dressing

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MAIN PLATES

Filet Mignon Brochette

72-hour Mediterranean herb & spice marinated beef tenderloin, rosemary fingerling potato and haricot verts, Pera's homemade steak sauce

Braised Lamb Shank

whole-grain farro, dried apricots, parsley and pine nuts

Pistachio Crusted Striped Bass

ratatouille, grape tomato-asparagus-olive salsa and saffron beurre blanc

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DESSERTS

Warm Pecan Pie

vanilla ice cream gelato

Chocolate Nirvana

warm flourless chocolate, pistachio ice cream

Turkish Fig Tart

brandy fig sauce, hazelnut ice cream

· \$58 per person ·

(not including tax & gratuity)

· Christmas Eve Sommelier Pairing (optional) \$19 ·



THE STORY OF SANTA CLAUS

source: www.stnicholascenter.org

The story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died while Nicholas was still young. Nicholas became the bishop of Myra (current day Demre, Turkey) and became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children and his concern for sailors and their ships.

It was these sailors who carried Nicholas' story throughout the Christian world, and it is widely believed that the Dutch in turn brought the Nicholas traditions to New Amsterdam. The 19th century satirical fiction by Washington Irving, "Knickerbocker's History of New York", made numerous references to a jolly St. Nicholas character. This was not the saintly bishop, rather an elfin Dutch burgher with a clay pipe.

The jolly elf image received another big boost in 1823, from a poem destined to become immensely popular, "A Visit from St. Nicholas", now better known as "The Night Before Christmas".

Finally, in 1863, during the Civil War, political cartoonist Thomas Nast began a series of drawings in *Harper's Weekly*, based on the descriptions found in the poem and Washington Irving's work. Along with appearance changes, the saint's name shifted to Santa Claus – a natural phonetic alteration from the Dutch *Sinter Claes* / *Sinterklaas* or German *Sankt Niklaus*.

It's been a long journey to America's jolly Santa Claus, however, if you peel back the accretions, he is still Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, whose caring surprises continue to model true giving and faithfulness.

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