

## Downward Dog blends with divine dining

### Work out, then pig out

By Sharon Aschaiek, Special to Sun Media

Home entertaining has just tipped the savvy scale with the arrival of the one of the city's newest at-home services, Yo Dinna'.

A combination of a personalized yoga class and gourmet dinner in the comfort of your own home, Yo Dinna' is resonating with holistic hipsters seeking to spice up their soirees.

"Toronto is a great community for both yoga practitioners and people who like food, and those two communities often overlap," says co-founder and chef Ezra Title, who runs the business with his wife, yoga teacher Elisse Peltz. "People love the fact that they get their bodies moving and feed really good from yoga and then get to indulge a bit in dinner."

Since its launch last fall, Yo Dinna' has spread by word of mouth across the GTA. The pair has been booked for bridal showers, birthdays and anniversary parties. The even take on corporate events, toting portable burners and ovens to conference rooms.

A Yo Dinna' begins with a yoga class that runs just over an hour, wherein Peltz, a full-time psychotherapist and yoga therapist at the Yonge Lawrence Centre for Counselling and Consulting, emphasizes the connection between body, mind and health. It doesn't matter if you're new to yoga, because Peltz is able to tailor her classes to all levels and ages.

"We have people dealing with stress or sleep issues, and I'll cater it to how people want," says Peltz, 32.

Upon completing their yoga session, guests can indulge in a feast Title has prepared in the host's kitchen. A professional cook with 10 years of experience at top-tier restaurants in San Francisco and New York, Title offers clients customized menus that include fresh, local, seasonal and usually organic ingredients.

"We do everything from very casual events, with family-style platters passed around the table communal style, to high-end seven- or eight-course dinners," says 31-year-old Title, founder of boutique catering company Chez Vous Dining, through which Yo Dinna' is offered ([www.chezvousdining.ca](http://www.chezvousdining.ca)).

Guests may also opt to skip yoga and receive a cooking lesson from Title. That was the case last June when Bonnie Carr threw a Yo Dinna' family party at her North York home as a Father's Day gift for her husband. All the men, including the Carrs' three sons, gathered around Title in the backyard and took notes on Title's barbecuing techniques.

"My sons have just gotten married and they're really into barbecuing," says Carr, 60. "Ezra gave everyone paper so they could write down the ingredients he was using and what he was doing."

The women, meanwhile, set up their yoga mats in another part of the yard and followed Peltz's moves while listening to meditative tunes.

"It was wonderful," says Carr. "Elisse is so calming and it was so quiet and peaceful."

Afterward, the gang feasted on barbecued salmon, chicken, hamburgers and salami, along with a variety of side salads. The full-service format meant that everyone had time to savour the delicious meal while Title and Peltz cleaned up.

"Everything was wonderful, delicious," Carr says. "I normally like to cook, but this way I was free to do yoga and didn't have to worry about anything. I set my table and that was it. They even washed all the dishes."

Yo Dinna's don't come cheap (they range from \$85 to \$175 per person) but that hasn't slowed demand - Title and Peltz stage about four of them a month.

That number should climb this spring, when the pair extends its service to Muskoka. Think: yoga by the lake, followed by drinks and dinner on the deck as the sun sets.

"We're looking forward to summertime, when people can do yoga and dine outside," Title says. "There's nothing better than that."