

Tri Set

by Ucaomihu

As befits its title, this puzzle will give you **tributes** and **trigrams** (three-letter sequences) galore. These are found via other party-related items; namely, entertaining GUESTS, one of my favorite DISHes, a festive NOISEMAKER, and a METAPUZZLE, of course.

GUESTS. In most clues, a bigram (two-letter sequence) must be replaced by a single letter before solving. These letters, in clue order, will identify a trio of guests; the corresponding bigrams will form their three individual tributes, which, when a single bigram is deleted from each, all become the same identical **tribute**. The single letters corresponding to the deleted bigrams form a **trigram** saying what those bigrams are.

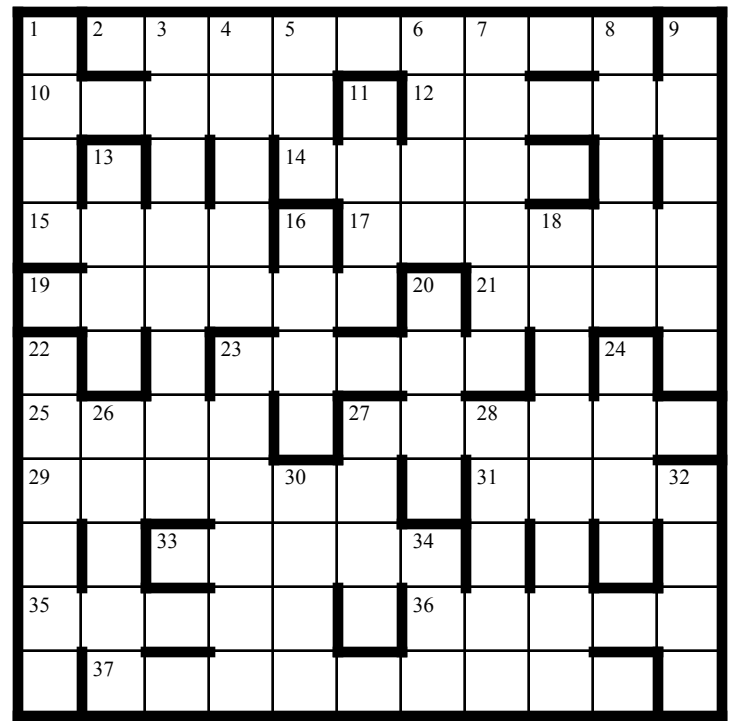
DISH. All other clues work normally, but for some of them, entering the answer requires you to (in one instance) fill one box with two or three tasty letters! These bi- and tri-grams, read left to right and top to bottom, form another **tribute**. Also, if you draw lines connecting the *bigrams* in that order, you will see the dish itself; if you rotate the grid so that each *trigram* in turn is in the “12:00” position, and note what the dish looks like each time, you will get one more **trigram**.

NOISEMAKER. For most of the other clues, entering the answer requires you to put two or three letters outside the grid where they can be heard! These bi- and tri-grams, read around the grid, will form yet another **tribute**. To indicate where you start and which way you go, a conduit (appropriately) will meander through the grid from the box near the starting bi-or-tri-gram to the box near the second one, always going from box to box horizontally or vertically. That first bi-or-tri-gram, followed by the letters in the conduit, will form one four-word phrase that says what this tribute is, and also clues yet another **trigram**.

METAPUZZLE. There are, in fact, a final tribute and trigram — or rather, a first. Specifically, the tributes you have found are really the fourth, third, and second in a set of four, and from them you should be able to deduce the first **tribute**. Meanwhile, the noisemaker and the dish are labeled in appropriate places in the grid, and a label for the guests can be inferred from what they do, which is given by the final bigrams of the three remaining clues. From all these labels you can figure out who organized all of this; what might precede his name is the first **trigram**.

Trigrams:

Tributes:



ACROSS

2. Adds venom to over 50% of smelts, including gutted fish from Fifi
10. Birdlike one in contact with faery undressed giant
12. Rent *DOA*, *Rent*, and *Twister*
14. Actor Elliott’s initially uninterested fan highly valued metal
15. Stop after Charlie gets miffed, and relax
17. Waldo in one Italian river with Austrian and one-legged supporter
19. Fishy individual’s manuscript contains 101 grammatical errors
21. Later result of a needleworker “parenting” alpacas out west (*hyph.*)
23. Celebrity takes fashionable counterpart to feast
25. Thought *Doon* would not appear in first half of recording
27. Sites for the worshipful sailors chasing after Ariel’s coati
29. To sit at both ends and fuss with Mexican food (*var.*)
31. Finish filming dwarf asp, ignoring anything that’s odd
33. Development sites in Utah were bare and icy without Fay
35. Moe’s colleague almost swallows cube containing more grease
36. Origins of something false that both yearn to put aside (*2 wds.*)
37. Steer east of hotel housing half-centimeter-high Catholic cleric of the sixteenth century (*2 wds.*)

DOWN

1. Comfort-seekers, at first, love open-work fabric
3. Letters exhibiting how Currier’s partner’s daughter might be stymied?
4. Parse “idol” to mean “peels”
5. Athenian lawgiver, at the pivotal point, might see you (*2 wds.*)
6. Shock at finally being surrounded by your Tiberian navy
7. Round-grained stone ring duplicated by the Parisian reporting it
8. Memorable part of *Cyrano de Bergerac* soon melted pardoner’s heart
9. Salad Roy tossed for 24 hours, according to the sundial (*2 wds.*)
11. Mind us in Marseille
13. Knapsack of man who has fared north of Cork’s borders
16. Agent who nabs counterfeiters with fake Manet after faxing Earl (*hyph.*)
18. Throw TiVo at rap singer Luciano
20. Just said, “Have a troutier brand”
22. Lone fly has landed on fork
23. Start of film where Letterman’s comedic limits begin to expand
24. State question right after Dora
26. Old comic about an orphan repinning clothes from island no. 500
27. Decorate Spot or Dobbin’s tail
28. Say “An 11-year-old amphibian about to eat a dodo” in Morse code
30. Cupid ought to be covered with aluminum particles when floating aloft
32. Taxonomic groups of organisms found in photography lab
34. French river is . . . um, English