

PERFECT PAIRINGS

A *PAPERCITY*-CURATED DINNER WITH RECIPE FOR SUCCESS. PHOTOGRAPHY BROOKE SCHWAB.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN *PAPERCITY* COLLABORATES WITH SOME OF THE CITY'S MOST TASTE-MAKING DECORATORS, A STYLISH NEW STATIONERY DESIGNER AND A SEASONED CULINARY STAR? IT'S A PERFECT RECIPE FOR SUCCESS. EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND SELF-PROFESSED FOODIE KATE STUKENBERG TELLS TALES FROM THE KITCHEN.

FIRST COURSE.

Gracie Cavnar's Recipe House is an intimate 360-square-foot kitchen and dining room in Montrose, located above the offices for Recipe for Success — the charity Cavnar and her husband, Bob, founded in 2005 to combat childhood obesity and encourage long-term health through signature programs. For children, Recipe House offers summer and spring-break cooking camps; for adults, it offers a variety of culinary classes. The most coveted ticket is the once-a-month Chef Surprise night, where local celebrity chefs craft immaculate dinners up close and personal, all to benefit the epicurean cause.

NEXT COURSE.

Celebrated chefs ranging from **Katsuya's David Coffman** and **Hori Manabu** to **Haven's Randy Evans** have presided over Recipe House as chef du jour. On the menu for spring are **Kiran Verma** of namesake **Kiran's** (March 4), **América's David Cordúa** (April 1) and **Cold Cove Bar's Jean Philippe Gaston** (May 6). For more dish on Recipe for Success or to book a Recipe House cooking class, camp or private event, e-mail lauren@recipe4success.org or visit recipe4success.org.

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CHEF POPE

The stylish crowd cooking in the kitchen and indulging in chef Pope's creations included Recipe for Success co-founder Gracie Cavnar, David and Estela Cockrell, Henry Richardson and Monsour Taghdisi, Ali and Haydeh Davoudi, Steve and Ashley Putman, Lucia and John Clark, Found's Ruth Moore Davis, *PaperCity's* Monica Bickers and *moi*.

DESIGN & TABLESCAPE.

PaperCity entrusted the room design to the experts, Found's Aaron Rambo and Ruth Moore Davis. They transformed Recipe House with burlap wall panels and table linens, custom lighting made with vintage porcelain fittings on metal plates, clusters of internationally sourced white display pieces, acrylic chairs and David Hicks-inspired patterned plates (the latter two, on loan from event planner Elizabeth Swift) to create the ambience of a modern farmhouse dinner — a clean aesthetic allowing chef Pope's food to be the star. For more information on Found, visit foundforthehome.com.



The scene set by Aaron Rambo



Kate Stukenberg welcomes the dinner guests.



Fearless leader Gracie Cavnar



Chef Monica Pope and her assistants hard at work



Chef Monica Pope regales the crowd.



Calligraphed menus by Meg Barclay



John Clark, Monica Bickers, Steve Putman



Haydeh Davoudi

Aaron Rambo on entertaining:

- Pull together items of similar color that you already own and cluster on the table for a statement centerpiece.
- Lighting is key. Add candles en masse, change existing bulbs or add a dimmer to your chandelier.
- Choose one flower, in one color and buy a lot of them. They require no arranging if you cluster several small single-stem vases.

STATIONERY SUITE.

Graphic designer Meg Barclay saw a listing for a letterpress, bought it on a whim, hauled the 800-pound machine back to her garage and taught herself how to use it. After receiving an MFA from Savannah College of Art & Design and a stint at paperlesspost.com in New York, plus a small detour to Charlotte, NC, she and her husband moved back to Houston to be closer to family. Here, her hobbies, which include custom calligraphy, have become her full-time pursuit. Her designs for our evening included save-the-dates and invitations, name and menu cards, and stationery take-away for the guests, each imprinted singularly and in wallpaper prints with her hand-drawn fork, knife, spoon and plate, a nod to the evening's farm-to-table theme, enriched in *PaperCity's* signature vivid orange. Her Etsy shop, with a variety of letterpress cards, stationery and other goodies, just launched at etsy.com/shop/megbarclay. For custom stationery, e-mail meg@megbarclay.com.

TOP TOQUE.

Guests wrapped around the extended chef's table in the kitchen to catch a glimpse of celebrated chef Pope preparing the meal — divine dishes straight from the menu of her revamped restaurant, Sparrow Bar & Cookshop (previously, T'afia). Pope delighted guests with interesting and humorous tidbits about each course, ranging from where the honey came from (her own backyard; she has the bee stings on her derriere to prove it) to the Moroccan chermoula sauce she loves and uses in several dishes at the restaurant, but perhaps most often in her addicting Date with a Pig appetizer, which she insists she could never purge from her menu even if she tried. Pope has been on board with Recipe for Success since its humble beginnings, when she and Cavnar would visit area schools together to teach young children the importance of healthy eating through what is now known as the RFS program Chefs in Schools. For details on Pope's restaurant, visit sparrowhouston.com.

"I AM PARTICULARLY FOND OF NATURE-INSPIRED DECOR THAT IS SPECTACULAR BUT NOT THE LEAST BIT STUFFY. THAT'S HOW I THINK OF MONICA'S FOOD AS WELL: CELEBRATING THE BEST PRODUCE OF THE SEASON, BY LIFTING IT TO THE SUBLIME BUT PRESENTING IT SIMPLY." — GRACIE CAVNAR