PERFECT AIRINGS

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

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's Night Out, where local celebrity chefs craft intricate dinners up close and personal, all to benefit the epicurean cause.

NEXT COURSE.
Celebrated chefs ranging from Katsuya's David Coffman and Noel Manalansan to Monica's Ruth Moore of namesake Katsuya (April 4) and America's Cup 2011 Cold Cove Bar & Grille's Joan-Philippe Gaston (May 6). For more on Recipe for Success or to book a Recipe House cooking class, camp or private event, e-mail recipe@recipe4success.org or visit recipeseasonsuccess.org.

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CHEF POPE
The adult crowd cooking in the kitchen and indulging in chef Pope's creations included Recipe for Success co-founder Gracie Cavnar; David and Estella Cockrell, Henry Richardson and Monica Tagtis, Ali and Haydeh Davoudi; Steve and Ashley Putman; Lucas and John Clark; Frundi Ruth-Moses Deiks, PaperCity's Monica Bickers and me.

DESIGN & TABLESCAPE.
PaperCity entrusted the room design to the experts, Found's Aaron Rambos and Ruth-Moses Deiks. They transformed Recipe House with handwritten menu and table liner, custom lighting made with vintage porcelain fittings on metal plates, clusters of internationally sourced white dinnerware pieces, acrylic chairs and David Hicks-inspired patterned plates (the latter two, on loan from event planner Elizabeth Swift) to create the ambiance 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.

Aaron Rambos on entertaining: • Put together items of similar color that you already own and cluster on the table for a statement centerpiece. • Lighting is key. Add candles on, change out 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 bloom sizes.

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 paperespoot.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 this evening included save-the-dates and invitations, name and menu cards, and stationary take-away for the guests, each imprinted elegantly 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 EBay shop, with a variety of letterpress cards, stationary and other goodies, just launched at etsy.com/shop/megabarclay. For custom stationary e-mail megabarclay@gmail.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 — deconstructed dishes straight from the menu of her revamped restaurant, Sparrow Bar & Cookshop (previously, T'afi a). Pope delighted guests with inventive and humorous tidbits about each course, ranging from where the honey came from (her own backyard), the honey bee stings she could never purge from her menu e-mail list. 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 eating healthy through what is now known as the IRS program Chef's Clubs. For details on Recipe House, visit sparrowshouston.com.

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-proclaimed foodie Kate Stukenberg tells tales from the kitchen.

“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.” — GACECAAN

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