



Fête with *Friends*

by *Lauren Reinhard* | Photos by Christine M.J. Hathaway

A weekly gathering becomes
a decade long tradition



PRIVATE PATIO: A dining area in the side yard is flanked by olive trees and is reminiscent of Provence.

HOME GROWN: Interior Designer Charles Dunlap cuts rosemary from the garden for his menu.





DYNAMIC DUO: Dunlap and Hart select two wines from their cellar, and work together to prepare dinner.

Above, right: Hart puts the finishing touch on golden pancakes with pecorino.

Like a treasured family secret, the Venetian boutique hotel owner passed a scribbled recipe to Interior Designer Charles Dunlap of *Dunlap Design Group*. He explained, with pride, in his thick northern Italian accent that it was a recipe for Spritz, the official drink of Venice. Dunlap placed the souvenir in his wallet, and has been serving this perfect aperitif at his parties since the hotelier shared it with him two years ago. “The fizziness of the prosecco and the florescence of the orange Aperol make the Spritz a great drink to begin an evening in a festive way,” says Dunlap.

It’s Friday, early evening, and Dunlap and his partner Lee Hart are working in concert to prepare dinner and plate hors d’oeuvres in their 1936 Georgian colonial in Pleasant Ridge. The two entertain groups of friends every week, usually on Fridays. “We love to share new recipes for food and drinks with our friends and family,” says Dunlap, “and we love introducing people to one another.”

The inspiration for this gathering was the Spritz. Taking cues from its autumnal colors and country of origin, Dunlap and Hart created a menu of Italian courses including roasted chicken, penne, and country ragu. The table was beautifully decorated using bold colors, textures, and succulents to compliment the Mediterranean supper.

“Tablescapes don’t have to be flowers and two tapered candles. I’ve made runners with pea gravel, and out of sod. Centerpieces with found objects from around the house are easy and much more memorable,” says Dunlap.

Their home is situated on three different lots, creating a number of indoor and outdoor spaces perfect for entertaining. In the winter a group might enjoy wine in the paneled library, or in the fall, appetizers on the grilling terrace. “We have several dining areas, and we’re able to create different experiences out of our home and garden,” says Dunlap.

feature: **entertaining**

Entertaining once a week may be daunting to most, but Dunlap and Hart use technology to simplify planning. Orchestrated by an iPad, they organize recipes and control the music both inside and out. "I've been to parties with no music

playing," jokes Dunlap, "it's like a wake." They even use an app to access a list of their wine cellar's inventory, which allows them to make notes when they enjoyed a certain wine, and with whom.

Dunlap suggests starting with a feature drink, then creating a menu for a gathering. This supper was a collection

of old recipes that Hart has modified and perfected over the decade the two have lived in their Pleasant Ridge home.

The couple enjoys entertaining, and just as the hotel owner in Venice shared the recipe for the Spritz, they will, once a week, share their home with friends.



Menu

HORS D'OEUVRES

Marinated Bocconcini
Spiced Mediterranean Nuts
Assorted Cheeses, Sausages, and Olives

DRINKS

Aperol Spritz
Barolo Wine
Barbaresco Wine

FIRST COURSE

Golden Pancakes with Pecorino
accompanied by Prosciutto-Wrapped
Shrimp

SECOND COURSE

Penne and Country Ragù

THIRD COURSE

Roast Chicken Stuffed with Fennel and
Garlic

DESSERT

Torta Caprese (Chocolate Almond Torte)



Marinated Bocconcini

- 3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp minced fresh rosemary
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- 10 to 12 bocconcini
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

In a medium bowl, combine olive oil, garlic, rosemary, and pepper flakes. Mix well. Add cheese balls and toss until they are covered evenly with the sauce. Add salt and pepper, tossing a few more times. Add the parsley and toss until evenly distributed.

—from *Dean & DeLuca*



Aperol Spritz

- 2 oz prosecco
 - 1½ oz Aperol
 - Splash of seltzer
 - Orange slice to garnish
- Pour over ice and enjoy.

Spiced Nuts

- 6 Tbsp fresh rosemary leaves (minced)
- 1-2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp coarse salt
- 3 Tbsp melted butter
- 1½ cups each of unsalted and shelled cashews, pecans, walnuts, and almonds

Place nuts in 350 degree oven until toasted golden (about ten minutes). Mix together rosemary, cayenne, brown sugar, salt and butter. Toss warm, toasted nuts with the butter mixture.

—from *Lois Johnson*

Prosciutto-Wrapped Shrimp

- 16 jumbo shrimp (about one pound) peeled and deveined
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped garlic
- 1½ Tbsp finely chopped fresh dill
- ¼ tsp freshly ground pepper
- 8 paper-thin slices prosciutto
- Olive oil for brushing shrimp
- Metal skewers

In a bowl combine shrimp, garlic, dill, and pepper. Toss the shrimp to coat. Cut the prosciutto slices in half lengthwise. Wrap each shrimp in a half slice of prosciutto, then thread it onto the end of a skewer. Lightly brush the shrimp with olive oil.

Grill the shrimp directly over medium heat, turning once, until just opaque, about four minutes total. Serve warm or at room temperature.

—from *Weber's Art of the Grill*



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