

Charlotte

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2018

HOMIE

DESIGN & DECOR®

DESIGNERS
AT HOME

JANE SCHWAB

TIMELESS DESIGN
IN MYERS PARK

PLUS

ALL-THINGS
HIGH POINT MARKET

THE ART OF LAYERING

Contributor

SOUL
FOODJ I M
N O B L ESUNDAY
SUPPERS

In the South, we like to celebrate friendship. There are a million ways to do that, but I can't think of a better, more personal way than to invite folks into your home to share a meal.

Even if busy schedules mean that your meal must be catered, it can still be a thoughtful extension of yourself, your home life, and your upbringing. This personal history is what Sarah Wrenn, arts and sales director for Noble Food and Pursuits, tries to get out of our clients and onto the table because that's where the magic happens. Five-star meals have their place, but the unexpected result of real food that has meaning to the ones serving it is downright provocative. It starts conversation. It welcomes storytelling. It elicits true joy.

We recently catered such a meal at the home of interior designer Barrie Benson who, along with SOCO Gallery owner Chandra Johnson, was hosting a book launch for their friend Dara Caponigro, creative director of the textile house Schumacher.

Fittingly, Caponigro and co-author Melanie Acevedo have put together a book called *The Authentics*, an intimate exploration of the lives and homes of creative people. Such an occasion practically demanded that authenticity show up on the plate. We talked to Benson about her favorite food memories and found that many of them revolved around the simple yet beautiful meals made by her mother and grandmother.

So we started things out with a clean-cut salad that Wrenn's grandmother loved: grapefruit, avocado, and Bibb lettuce with a classic poppy seed dressing. The main course was chicken curry, a dish that Benson's mother and grandmother both made.

We added a flourish with assorted accoutrements like house-made chutney, crushed peanuts, yogurt, and torn herbs. Dessert was chocolate chess pie and pecan pie because Benson and Johnson didn't want to have to choose between the two. (And why should they?)

"Everything was served family-style and the whole night just felt comfortable," Benson recalls. "We loved it, and the guests did, too."

I started Copain to help folks have more gatherings like these, ones where lifelong memories are made. Meals like these are almost always inextricably linked to special people in our lives. It's the reason why Copain's three smoking vessels are named after my aunts and uncle. It's why my newest concept, a chicken shack we're calling Bossy Beaut's, is named after the aunt who I believe perfected the chicken sandwich. I would not feel the way I do about food without them. To me, getting to celebrate their memory while making new ones with friends at the table is part of any great meal. ♦

Chef Jim Noble is the executive chef and owner of Noble Food & Pursuits. His belief in providing restoration through food led him to launch The King's Kitchen, a non-profit restaurant in Uptown Charlotte, as well as the Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center. These days, you'll likely find Chef Noble sitting at Table 11 in Rooster's SouthPark working on his latest projects, Noble Smoke, Copain, and Bossy Beaut's, which are set to open in early 2019. For more information, visit www.noblefoodandpursuits.com.

