

# BY INVITATION ONLY

Inside an eco-chic dinner replete with fresh, local fare and some of the East End's brightest stars.

BY DI PETROFF | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARILI FORASTIERI



It's a Saturday afternoon in early June and Alyse Ruth is standing in the loggia of her Water Mill home, set on seven acres of divine lush greenery with a dock on Mill Pond. Ruth is a decorator, so she knows how to pair soothing shades of blue with punchy white stripes. She understands that certain colors, especially those in the beige, brown and blue families, can help people relax—which is why she's tirelessly fawning over every detail of the dinner, décor and menu for an invitation-only celebration of summer.

The white rectangular plates give the table an updated look; the hammered silverware adds sparkle while the soft blue glasses on the blue-cotton-and-linen table draping add to the calming backdrop. The mood Ruth manages to capture for the evening's fête (also reflected in her natural personal style) is elegant-casual with a splash of

summer. Her inspiration for the outdoor dining table's décor is based on her family's trips to India and St. Barths. Natural elements like cotton, linen, bamboo chairs and driftwood are delicately placed to accent the flowers and candles on the table. "My goal is to get together with friends and catch up in an informal and chic setting while enjoying local and organic fare," said Ruth. "What's better than eating what our land has to offer locally?"

The best foods and wines have a sense of place that comes from the soil, climate, tradition and all the local influences that as a group exist nowhere else. So who better to be in charge of the feast than chef Cheryl Stair from Art of Eating Event Planning and Catering, a local company. Even the Corey Creek Domaines 2007 Rosé flowing into everyone's glasses came from the North Fork. Guests like IMG's Fern Mallis and Fox's Rosanna Scotto were greeted with locally made kielbasa

## EVENT DETAILS

**What:** Eco-chic dinner in Water Mill and Steven Swartzman, Jane and Ned Sadaka, Jeffrey and Linda Chodorow, Wendy and Stephen Siegel, Lisa and Lance West, Lori Shabtai, Vanessa Brahm and Todd Rome

**Where:** Home of Dr. Gary Ruth and interior designer Alyse Ruth

**When:** June 6

**Guests:** Dr. Steven Butensky, Alina Cho, Kristen Jones, Sue Devitt, Audun Huslid, Sessa von Richtofen, Rosanna Scotto and Louis Ruggiero, Eric Villency, Fern Mallis, Rory Hermelee, Harry Dubin, Leah

**Catering:** Art of Eating Event Planning and Catering

**Cocktails provided by:** Absolut Mango

**Chef:** Cheryl Stair

Guests mingle at Alyse Ruth's Water Mill home



and andouille from Cromer's Market, Villa Italian Specialties turkey sausage, North and South Fork oysters served on a half-shell and Sang Lee Farms radishes with French bread. "Dinner at Alyse Ruth's beautiful home felt like the kickoff for the season," said Mallis. "Her home is grand and gracious."

While dinner was being served, Absolut Mango cocktails were poured and conversations about movies, books and art exhibits could be heard. Guests dove into grilled chorizo appetizers and crusty smashed potatoes with sea salt. "I tasted the freshness of the food with every bite. I was told the fish were actually caught with poles!" said Scotto, who was catching up with her old friend Alina Cho of CNN, radiant from her recent trip to Rome for Bulgari's 125th anniversary spectacular. "Going green never looked so glamorous." Eric Villency and Dr. Steven Butensky dove into stories about skiing, rock climbing—and the strip loin from Pineland Farms. "I think the theme of this evening

is enjoying the simple pleasures of friends and family," said Villency. "People are really gravitating toward things that feel good to them."

Another stellar highlight was the strawberry-themed desserts: Catapano Dairy Farm goat yogurt panna cotta with strawberries and warmed green-thumb honey; strawberry rhubarb shortcake parfait; tiny strawberry gelato sandwiched in pepper-spiced cookies (my favorite!); and, of course, the big bowl of sun-warmed strawberries with crème fraîche.

So it was on this summer eve that all the insanity of city life was left behind and a group of friends gathered to celebrate gourmet creations, grown and nurtured right here in the Hamptons. H



#### MENU

##### STARTERS

- Locally made kielbasa, andouille and turkey sausage with grape ketchup, fig chutney and two mustards
- North and South Fork oysters served on the half-shell with traditional cocktail sauce and classic mignonette
- Grilled North and South Fork oysters with Southampton Publick House ale and horse-radish butter
- Radishes with French bread, sea salt and New England sweet butter
- Bowls of crispy kale chips

##### DINNER

- Spinach and garlic risotto
- Strip loin with toasted

- breadcrumb salsa and wild boar doe wine sauce
- Local blackfish with a salad of sprouts, cresses, tempura leeks and zucchini flowers
- Asparagus, mushrooms, arugula and cress
- Crusty smashed potatoes with sea salt

##### DESSERT

- Sun-warmed strawberries with crème fraîche
- Goat yogurt panna cotta with strawberries and warmed green-thumb honey
- Strawberry rhubarb shortcake parfait
- Tiny strawberry gelato sandwiched in pepper-spiced cookies
- AOEQS "The Big Kids Oreo"
- Teas

##### Local Farmers and Vendors Used

Cromer's Market, Villa Italian Specialties, Sang Lee Farms, K.K.'s "The Farm," Balsam Farms, Art of Eating Garden, Green Thumb Organic Farm, Pineland Farms, Shinn Estate Vineyards, Koppert Cress, Open Minded Organics/David Falkowski, Country Gardens, Catapano Dairy Farm, Mecox Bay Dairy, Southampton Publick House

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Eric Villency and Di Petroff; the casual yet elegant dinner table; Kristen Jones, Alina Cho and Rory Hermelee; Absolut Mango; Sue Devitt, Dr. Steven Butensky and Fern Mallis; fresh local ingredients; Alyse and Dr. Gary Ruth

