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CHEF RICK MACE PAIRS HAUTE CUISINE WITH SUSTAINABILITY TO CREATE A LOCAVORE'S DELIGHT AT THE PALM BEACH HOME OF ANNE FAIRFAX AND RICHARD SAMMONS

BY LINDA MARX | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY RABINOWITZ





RICK MACE, EXECUTIVE CHEF OF CAFÉ BOULUD AT THE BRAZILIAN COURT HOTEL ON PALM BEACH, PREPARED A FARM-TO-TABLE MEAL AT THE HOME OF ARCHITECTS ANNE FAIRFAX AND RICHARD SAMMONS.



Food is the route to a better future for farms, animals, and people. Rick Mace, executive chef at Café Boulud on Palm Beach, knows this better than most. Raised on a 100-acre farm outside of Cleveland, Ohio, that's been in his family for five generations, he grew up surrounded by gardening, fishing, and agriculture. He says his simple connection to food inspired his culinary pursuits at an early age—and sparked his commitment to food sustainability.

"We farmed the fields for corn and soybeans and had huge gardens," says Mace. "I cleaned vegetables, canned, preserved black walnuts, hunted, and fished. We practiced resourcefulness and were rural, the grocery store being 30 minutes away. That is how I got into a career in cooking."



TERESA VALLANTE DESIGNED THE TABLE USING FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY TOM MATHIEU. OPPOSITE PAGE: THE EVENING BEGAN WITH WHITE COSMOPOLITAN COCKTAILS.



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When his father's military career took Mace and his family abroad, he learned about farther-flung cuisines—further solidifying his desire to command the kitchen. "I even remember my dad coming back from Greece all excited about Greek food," Mace recalls. "I was 15 when he talked about shepherd's salad, which was the tipping point for me. I saw food offering a huge world."

Between his experience in the kitchen and his knowledge of commercial agricultural systems, Mace knows that the key to a sustainable future for food lies with individuals—from making ethical food choices to prioritizing food safety to committing to regenerative agriculture and refertilization of farmland. "We can have chickens, cows, and pigs to help rehab the soil," he says. "If we commit to doing things in a better way, we understand that food has a powerful effect."

Mace's homegrown approach to food made him the perfect choice to prepare the meal for a dinner party hosted by architects Anne Fairfax and Richard Sammons, owners of the classical architectural firm of Fairfax & Sammons in Palm Beach and New York. The couple has a deep respect for fine farm-to-table cuisine, for preserving the environment, and for Café Boulud, which features a frequently changing menu that showcases South Florida's local harvest of fish and produce. Mace says it's this commitment to freshness and seasonality that gives the cuisine a sense of place and time.

Of course, as architects, Fairfax and Sammons also appreciate the physical beauty of the restaurant. "The courtyard there is the most incredible place to have breakfast in a landscaped dream," says Fairfax.

Like Mace, the architects, who met while students at the University of Virginia and studied in Italy and England, are committed to preserving the best aspects of the past while designing for the future. Fairfax



and Sammons believe that classicism offers creative solutions that are both timeless and beautiful. Their buildings look and feel as if they have always been there. They respect history and understand it, but they also use their creativity to bring the architecture forward.

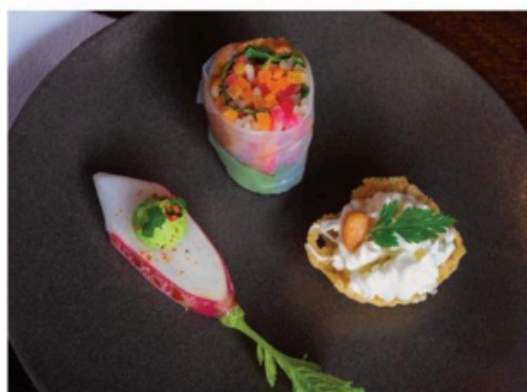
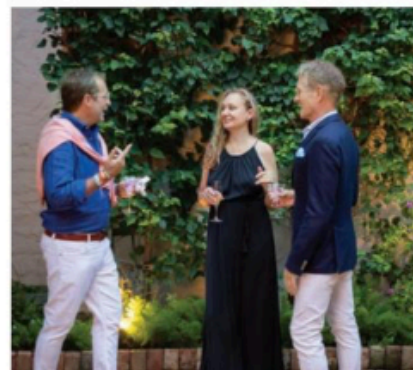
"We look at climate, history, building materials, the precedents of building culture... They compose the building blocks which inform the design process," says Fairfax. "We do not build monuments to our own idiosyncratic vision."

By designing from a classical tradition, they have developed a body of work that reflects the theories of proportion passed down through scholarship and practice for generations. "I like Palm Beach because of its old, traditional architecture," says Sammons, who, like Mace, grew up in Ohio. "For us, there are very few towns in America where architecture respects traditional period design as well as innovation."

For this intimate dinner party, the couple welcomed their guests to



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT; BLACK MISSION FIG AND ARBOUGLA SALAD; MITCHELL BROWN, ANNE FAIRFAX, AND RICK MOESER; THE APPETIZERS FEATURED PRODUCE FROM KAI-KAI FARM; KAMPACHI WITH BLACK-EYED PEA FALAFEL AND SWEET-AND-SOUR EGGPLANT.



an alfresco evening in their beautiful historic home, which won a Mizner Medal last February for best renovation/addition. Guests entered through the front door and made their way to the dining room and adjoining courtyard, featuring coquina antique brick with a teak dining table and chairs, all backed by a landscape of orchids and guava trees. "Such beauty here, yet it's so comforting," says guest Susan Meyer. "I love the courtyard and how the house design offers so many surprises."

"Coming to Anne and Richard's house is like taking a holiday in Italy," adds Mitchell Brown, an interior designer in Palm Beach. "I appreciate their love of traditional period design and smart conversation."

Sammons agrees. "What I like most about hosting is good conversation with interesting people who appreciate fine food the way we do," he says.

Chef Mace kicked off the evening with a signature cocktail: a White Cosmopolitan made with Stolichnaya vodka, St-Germain elderflower liqueur, white cranberry juice, lime juice, and a pesticide-free orchid ice ball served in a martini glass. Appetizers featuring fresh produce from Kai-Kai Farm in Martin County included buttered radishes, goat cheese in a parmesan basket, and shrimp summer rolls with peanut sauce.

Theresa Valiante, director of catering at Daniel Boulud's restaurant group, created the tablescape design. The couple's narrow Italian rectory table and Spanish wood chairs topped with colorful throw pillows provided a space for easy conversation. "I bor-





rowed a wood theme design from the outside and made the look casual since the indoor and outdoor spaces unite so naturally," Valiante says. Antique bronze candlesticks stood in the center of the dining table, with an elegant floral mix of coral charm peonies, capriccio garden roses, and white phalaenopsis orchids arranged by Tom Mathieu.

Turquoise sea-glass water glasses, Riedel wine goblets, and silver deco flatware surrounded a variety of beautiful dinnerware, including brown chargers and Bernardaud French porcelain to plate the main course. Matching oatmeal linen tablecloth and napkins rounded out the evening's casually elegant outdoor theme.

With the table set and the conversation flowing, Mace let the guests know that—as always in his cooking—what would be on the menu depended on the season and the weather, the food's freshness, and the day's catch from the sea.

"Florida is unique because we have so much local sourcing," Mace says. "Amazing fisheries, Central Florida pigs and beef, a farm in North Florida, and a farmer in Loxahatchee offering beautiful mushrooms, ginger, papaya, and turmeric." Mace is careful and diverse with his sources for bringing the farm to the table. "Often, I get exotic fruits from one place, golden crabs from another," he adds. For this party, in addition to providing radishes, Kai-Kai offered its homegrown arugula, eggplant, and black-eyed peas.

To start the meal, guests were treated to a Black Mission fig and arugula salad with fennel, fig crisp, and goat cheese. Imre Papp, executive sommelier at Café Boulud, matched the course with a flinty 2018 Roger Neveu & Fils Sancerre Côte des Embouffants. Next up, an entree of grilled Kanpachi—a rich, oily fish served with creamy tahini sauce, black-eyed pea falafel, and sweet-and-sour eggplant—was paired with the buttery and complex 2017 Bret Brothers La Soufrandière Saint-Véran La Combe Des Roches. To end, dessert prepared by Café Boulud's executive pastry chef Julie Franceschini: a honey cheesecake with fresh berries and lemon sorbet, enjoyed with the lushly balanced Hungarian 2013 Simkó Pince, Tokaji Aszú 5 Puttonyos.

"The integrated flavors and tastes were wonderful," says Joe Meyer, a technology entrepreneur and polo ambassador. "Everything from Café Boulud is classic and timeless."



Daniel Boulud himself gave his stamp of approval to chef Mace from afar. "Rick is consistent with respect for good ingredients and great taste," says Boulud. "Plus, he is a brilliant craftsman."

Never one to rest on his laurels, Mace says he challenges himself to learn something new about sustainable cuisine every day—from technique to sourcing to influence. "I constantly grow as a cook," he notes. "I have learned so much after working with Daniel on French cuisine."

For Mace, the central message of sustainability enhances his guests' appreciation for where and how they get their food. "We are being resourceful and we get a sense of place, which gives us an identity of our own," he says. "I am able to lead the kitchen and do things the right way, leading to a better and healthier future for all of us in the world of food." <<

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOE AND SUSAN MEYER WITH RICHARD SAMMONS; HONEY CHEESECAKE BY CAFÉ BOULUD EXECUTIVE PASTRY CHEF JULIE FRANCESCHINI; SAMMONS AT THE DINNER TABLE WITH MEYER, MOESER, AND FAIRFAX.

