

Wine Spectator

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THE *LIST*

A GUIDE TO
3,793 RESTAURANTS
THAT EARN OUR
AWARDS FOR WINE
EXCELLENCE IN 2013

AUSTRALIA:
MORE THAN 600 REDS
AND WHITES REVIEWED

SUMMER WHITES
FROM CALIFORNIA

GREAT WINE BARS
IN BARCELONA



THOMAS KELLER EARNS
A GRAND AWARD AT
NEW YORK'S PER SE

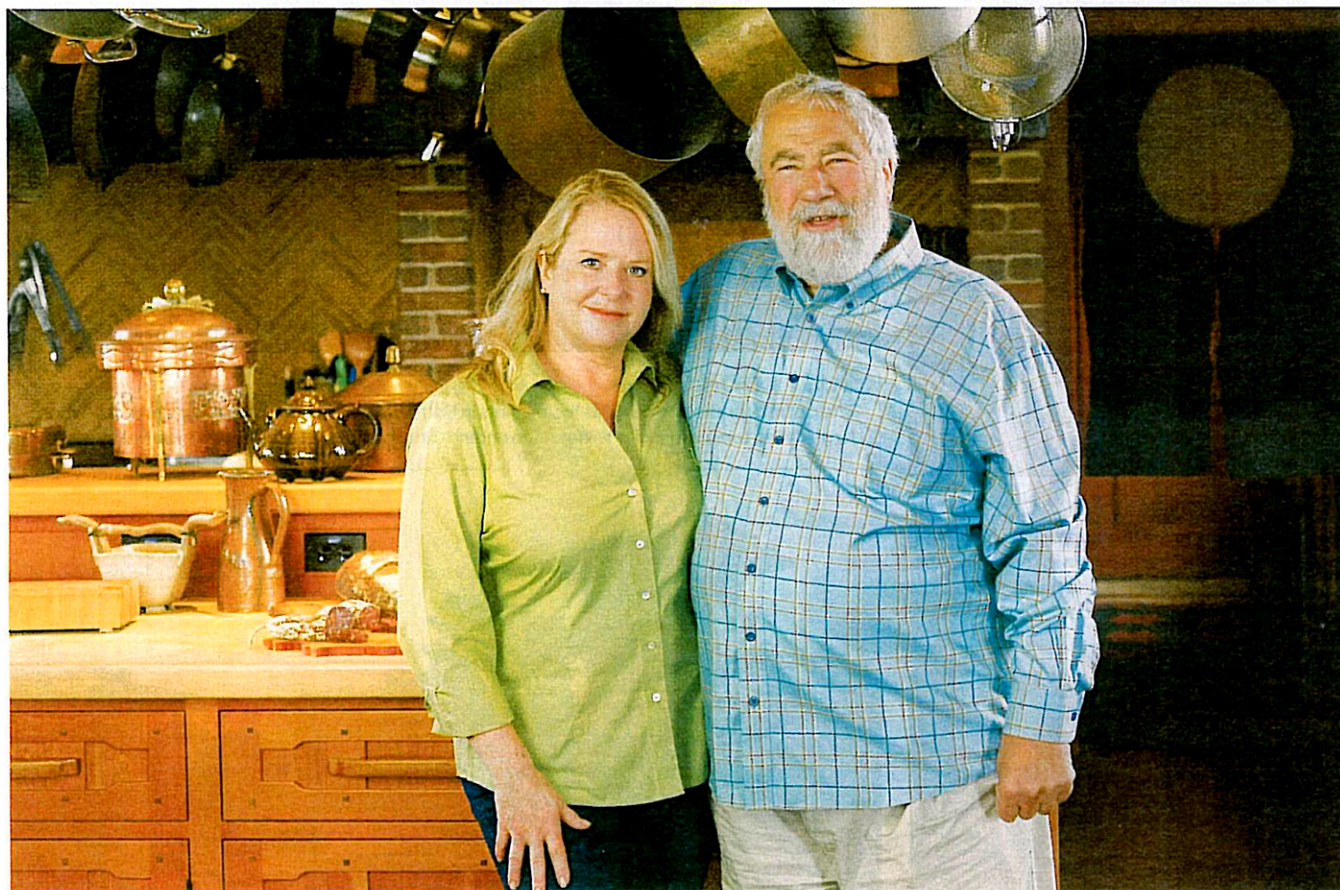
AUG. 31, 2013
\$5.95 US

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A Kitchen Built for Two

Bay Area chefs Nancy Oakes and Bruce Aidells collaborated on their dream kitchen



BY MARYANN WOROBIEC

Too many cooks can spoil the broth, but two accomplished chefs can create a dream home kitchen. Culinary power couple Nancy Oakes and Bruce Aidells' Sonoma bungalow mixes an architectural Arts and Crafts aesthetic with the design sensibilities of two people who love to cook.

Oakes is chef and owner of San Francisco's Boulevard restaurant, which opened 20 years ago and has remained one of the city's most popular establishments. After winning numerous awards from the James Beard Foundation, including that of "Best Chef in California," Oakes opened a second San Francisco restaurant, Prospect, in 2010 with business partners Pam Mazzola and Kathy King.

Oakes' husband of 22 years is Bruce Aidells, a contributing editor at *Bon Appétit* and *Eating Well* magazines, and the author of 11 cookbooks. However, he is perhaps best known as the smiling, bearded face on packages of Aidells' chicken and apple sausages (among other varieties), made by his eponymous gourmet sausage company, which he founded in 1983.

Following the sale of the sausage company in 2002, the couple purchased 100 acres of rolling hills near the town of Healdsburg, Calif. They wanted to build their own version of a Greene and Greene-style home. Named for the influential 20th-century architects who exemplified

GREENE LIVING

Though chefs Nancy Oakes and Bruce Aidells enlisted an architect to design their Greene and Greene-inspired home in Northern California, they had very specific plans for the kitchen. Customized to their needs, the space blends convenience and usability with Arts and Crafts style.

the American Arts and Crafts movement, the Greene brothers' designs (which include the Thorsen House in Berkeley, Calif., and the Gamble House in Pasadena) are marked by exposed paneling, stained glass accents and elaborate, interlocking woodwork and joints, as well as custom light fixtures and furniture.

The couple also knew what they wanted in a kitchen, and that part they designed themselves. "Don't ever let an architect design a kitchen," quips Aidells. Built around Aidells' idea for a mammoth pot rack—which holds nearly 50 pots and pans but is placed up high so that it doesn't block any light—the kitchen illustrates the thinking that Oakes and her husband put into customizing the space.

Beneath the pot rack is an equally large island surfaced with a butcher block, making it entirely knife-friendly, while the counter is higher than average to accommodate the chefs' tall frames. A middle pedestal is equipped with electrical outlets, and the surrounding cabinetry provides easy access to all of their cooking needs, including a pull-out drawer for the ice cream maker. The kitchen is furnished with two stoves with a



EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE

Pull-out drawers in the oversized island hold various appliances, including an ice cream maker. Separate drawers store lids and platters, making them easy to grab when needed.



WEEKEND RETREAT

Oakes often welcomes her Prospect restaurant partners Kathy King (left) and Pam Mazzola for a stay at her Healdsburg home. The three have been in business together for more than a decade.



JUST LOOK UP

The pot rack and island serve as focal points in both the kitchen and adjoining great room, whose large dining table is ideal for buffet-style entertaining, complete with Russian River Valley views.



SET IN STONE

When there are too many cooks in the kitchen, Oakes and Aidells head outside. A wood-fired pizza oven and grill, set into Greene and Greene-style stonework, are anchored by concrete countertops.

total of six burners, topped with a hand-hammered copper hood, as well as a wood-burning hearth.

Both Oakes and Aidells love to cook, but they rarely do so at once, and they tend to stay out of each other's way. "We have different styles of cooking," explains Oakes. Instead, they take turns, and there's plenty of ribbing. "Bruce says my specialty is burning toast," says Oakes with a laugh.

When they need additional space, they head outdoors, where they have a wood-burning oven and a large Viking grill to roast meats or make pizzas. Oakes planted cooking herbs—rosemary, thyme and basil—close to the cooking areas so they are within reach, along with a separate raised-bed vegetable garden, where she grows tomatoes and greens. In a nearby building, Aidells has a "sausage kitchen" stocked with sausage-making equipment. Here, the large sink and concrete

floors make for easy cleaning.

Being in the heart of Sonoma, Oakes and Aidells take advantage of the local wines, regional cheeses and purveyors. "You should be eating and drinking where you are," says Oakes. She prefers red and white Burgundy-style wines, and uses Riedel glassware at home—both the restaurant and extreme series. However, Oakes admits to being a Margarita purist in the summer.

Though the couple hosts large dinners of up to 150 people several times a year, their bungalow is mostly a retreat from their busy lives, and also serves as a place where Oakes can spend time with her Prospect partners, Mazzola and King. But oftentimes on weekends, it's just the two chefs, talking about what to cook for dinner and enjoying their private escape. "We didn't design it to sell, we designed it for ourselves," explains Aidells. □