

Bites from Chef's Table included pancetta and cheddar quiche and an apple and pear salad with local greens, candied pecans, aged goat cheese, poached apples and pears, and cider vinaigrette.

The Brunch BUNCH

A CASUALLY ELEGANT
GET-TOGETHER IN
NORTH RIVER SHORES

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photography by JERRY RABINOWITZ

Catered by Chef's Table

Georgiana Hawken set
her table with fine china,
Waterford Crystal glassware,
and antique Gorham silver;
the hostess created her own
flower arrangements.

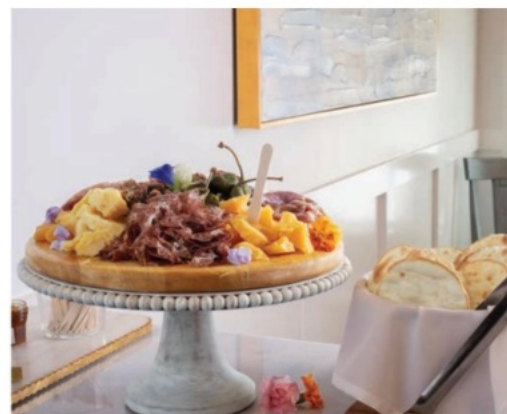


Above: The cocktail bar included Veuve Clicquot Champagne, watermelon and orange juices mixers, and fresh fruit garnishes. Right and below: spinach and Gruyère quiche, deviled eggs, chicken and waffles, and charcuterie by Chef's Table.

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GROWING UP, MY FAMILY SPENT A LOT OF TIME IN NEW ORLEANS.... MIMOSAS, BLOODY MARYS, BRUNCH, AND JAZZ GO HAND IN HAND!"

—Georgiana Hawken



It's late morning in Stuart in February, and the weather is typical South Florida ambiguity. The sun is shining, then suddenly the sky is overcast and a mist of rain spouts only to end a few minutes later. Inside her home in North River Shores, Georgiana Hawken is sipping a mimosa and putting finishing touches on the decor, as Carra Crehan, general manager of Chef's Table, is busy setting up the food and drinks the restaurant has catered for the day's festivities. It's brunch day with the girls, and Hawken is ready for her friends to arrive.

This isn't her first rodeo. In the 10 years she has lived in the neighborhood with her husband, Kevin, Hawken has hosted many events at their home, including a 200-guest Kentucky Derby party to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, youth events for Young Life Martin County, an annual Fourth of July party for family and friends, Halloween parties, and college football watch parties.

"I have always loved entertaining!" she says. "When I was younger, I used to love to help my mother prepare for hosting her bridge clubs or whatever social event was happening that day. Of course, I always got assigned the undesirable



Hawken added color to the dining table with a DIY arrangement of hydrangeas, garden roses, Queen Anne's lace, succulents, and white tulips.



Foreground from left: Ashley Rukeyser, Stacy Plymale, Kelly Garner, Jennifer Lentine. Background from left: Carolyn Strom, Kari Polhemus, Georgiana Hawken, Cara Perry. Watermelon and feta bites (in foreground) by Chef's Table.

task of polishing silver or ironing linens, but I enjoyed the excitement and formality of it all."

Throughout her college years at the University of Mississippi, she worked at a bed and breakfast. "We would host everything from holiday parties to weddings to baby showers," she says. "That's where my love for creating tablescape started."

Her passion for entertaining is apparent. She created all of the stunning flower arrangements herself, which include hydrangeas, garden roses, Queen Anne's lace, succulents, and white tulips. The table setting is equally impressive, with Pickard fine china placed atop gold chargers and antique sterling silver Gorham flatware. "I like to mix the old and the trendy together," she says, noting that the Camellia-pattern silver belonged to her

grandmother. The water and wine glasses are Waterford Crystal; the fun gold stemless Champagne flutes were purchased from Bed Bath & Beyond.

Originally from Mississippi, the self-employed mom of two boys moved to Stuart for love. She was studying business at Ole Miss in the 1990s when she met Stuart native Kevin Hawken. Kevin grew up in North River Shores, where the couple lives now, and attended Martin County High School. Now president of Stuart Web Printing, a local business founded by his late father in 1981, he was also a business student at Ole Miss in the '90s when he and Georgiana met. The two lost touch after graduating, but they reconnected in 2010 at a college football game at their alma mater. Georgiana was living in Jackson at the time; Kevin had moved

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IT'S DEFINITELY GOOD FOR THE SOUL TO BE ABLE TO ALL COME TOGETHER AND SHARE ADVICE, TELL FUNNY STORIES, SHED A TEAR IF NEEDED, AND ENJOY GREAT FOOD AND DRINKS." —Georgiana Hawken

back to Stuart. They started dating long distance and married in Jupiter in 2012.

They purchased a plot of land and began designing their dream house, hiring architect Reed Collins of R.C. Designs and home builder Team Parks (owned by Ryan Strom, whose wife, Carolyn, is one of Georgiana's dear friends and is a guest at today's brunch) to make their vision come true. Situated along the St. Lucie River, the two-story home takes full advantage of the water views, which can be enjoyed from all of the upstairs bedrooms (and balconies) as well as the three outdoor patios that face the water and dock they built for their boats.

Southern touches like large wooden front-entrance doors flanked by burning gas lanterns made in New Orleans and white columns wrapping the house reflect Georgiana's roots, while custom staircases and baseboards and carefully selected antique door knobs make the space truly unique. The walls are decorated with paintings and artwork from their travels, telling stories of special times in the couple's life.

Her friends are arriving now, and Hawken greets each woman enthusiastically and escorts them straight to the mimosa bar. The ladies sip and chat, as the soothing sound of jazz fills the air. The music selection, says Hawken, was a no-brainer: "Growing up, my family spent a lot of time in New Orleans visiting family and friends. Jazz brunches are a big part of the culture there, so I've always associated jazz music with brunch.

Mimosas, bloody Marys, brunch, and jazz go hand in hand!"

The catered brunch is artfully laid out in different areas of the home. The menu includes deviled eggs, charcuterie, pancetta and cheddar quiche, spinach and Gruyère quiche, chicken and waffles with rosemary honey, apple and pear salad, and watermelon and feta bites with a jalapeño mint drizzle. As the women graze, they catch up on one another's lives, which Hawken notes usually includes a lot of talk about being a mom. "[Over the years], we have gone from sharing experiences with kindergarten field trips, then middle school dances, and now moving our children hundreds of miles away to begin college careers," she says.

As the sun emerges once again, everyone heads outside to enjoy cocktails and take in the beautiful view. There's lots of laughter, as days like these have been less frequent in the past couple of years because of the pandemic and it's clear these friends are enjoying the moment.

"I feel like we're all finally getting back to pre-COVID get-togethers, and hopefully we will be able to comfortably enjoy 2022," says Hawken. "It's definitely good for the soul to be able to all come together and share advice, tell funny stories, shed a tear if needed, and enjoy great food and drinks." ♦



From left: Jennifer Lentine, Stacy Plymale, and Kelly Garner enjoy the Hawken's backyard, which overlooks the St. Lucie River.