

BE OUR *Guest*

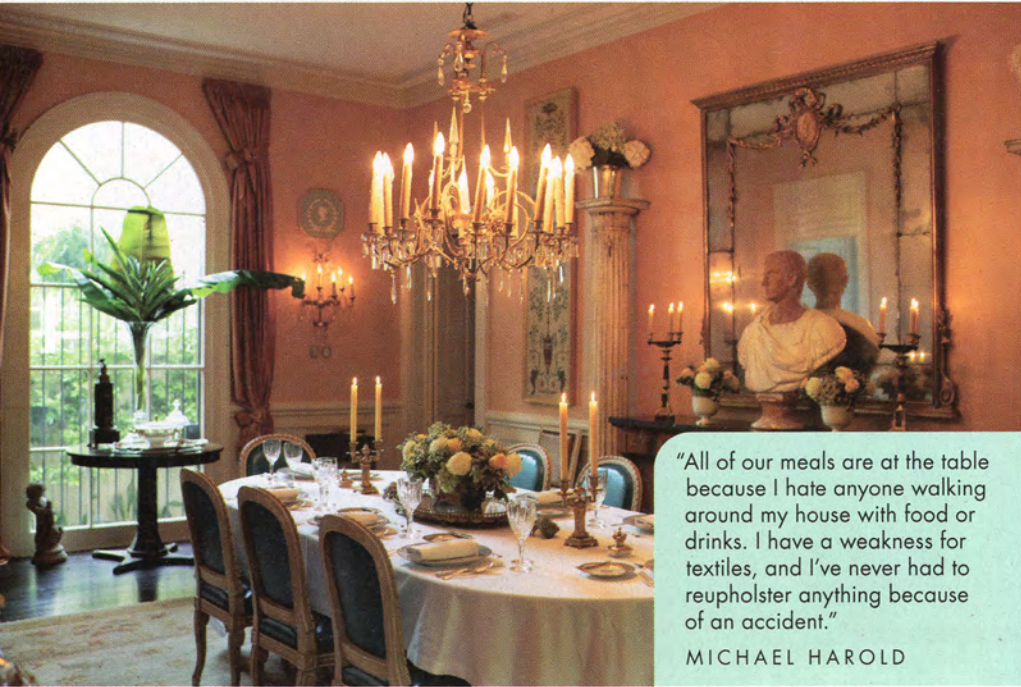
BY MICHAELA BECHLER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
MICHAEL HAROLD AND QUINN PEEPER

Michael Harold (left) and Quinn Peepers (right)
PHOTO BY PAUL COSTELLO

Hosting is an art, and after flipping through Michael Harold and Quinn Peepers's new coffee table book, it's clear that the couple has mastered it. *Classical Shindig: Amateur Artistry from the Simple to the Sublime* offers a taste of the parties the New Orleanians are known for and post about on their popular joint Instagram page, @classicalshindig. Anecdotes, recipes, illustrations, and hundreds of photographs from fêtes over the years sprinkle the pages, and the joy that Michael and Quinn take in hosting exudes on each one.





"All of our meals are at the table because I hate anyone walking around my house with food or drinks. I have a weakness for textiles, and I've never had to reupholster anything because of an accident."

MICHAEL HAROLD

ELIZABETH DONDIS

Michael, an attorney, and Quinn, an obstetrician-gynecologist, got their first glimpse of hosting as children by watching their mothers and grandmothers. Quinn was expected to set the table from a young age, and Michael attempted cooking meals in his college dorm. "Eventually, it led to more experimentation in a kitchen and the acquiring of china and glassware," they share. "The day that we closed on our first home, we threw an open house and served food on moving company boxes. And since then, it's been nonstop entertaining."

The duo's early roles shaped their current party prep responsibilities: Michael focuses on the menu, cooking, catering, and beverages, while Quinn handles the china, crystal, silver,

An advertisement for Galatoire's Restaurant. The background is a close-up of a plate of food, likely a salad or pasta with a tomato slice. The text "Galatoire's Restaurant" is written in a large, elegant, cursive font. Below it, the text "What's Your TRADITION?" is written in a smaller, elegant font, with "TRADITION?" in a larger, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the website "www.galatoires.com" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. A small lantern icon is positioned above the word "Restaurant".

When hosting al fresco in warmer weather, the couple suggests renting massive fans to cool guests and keep bugs away.



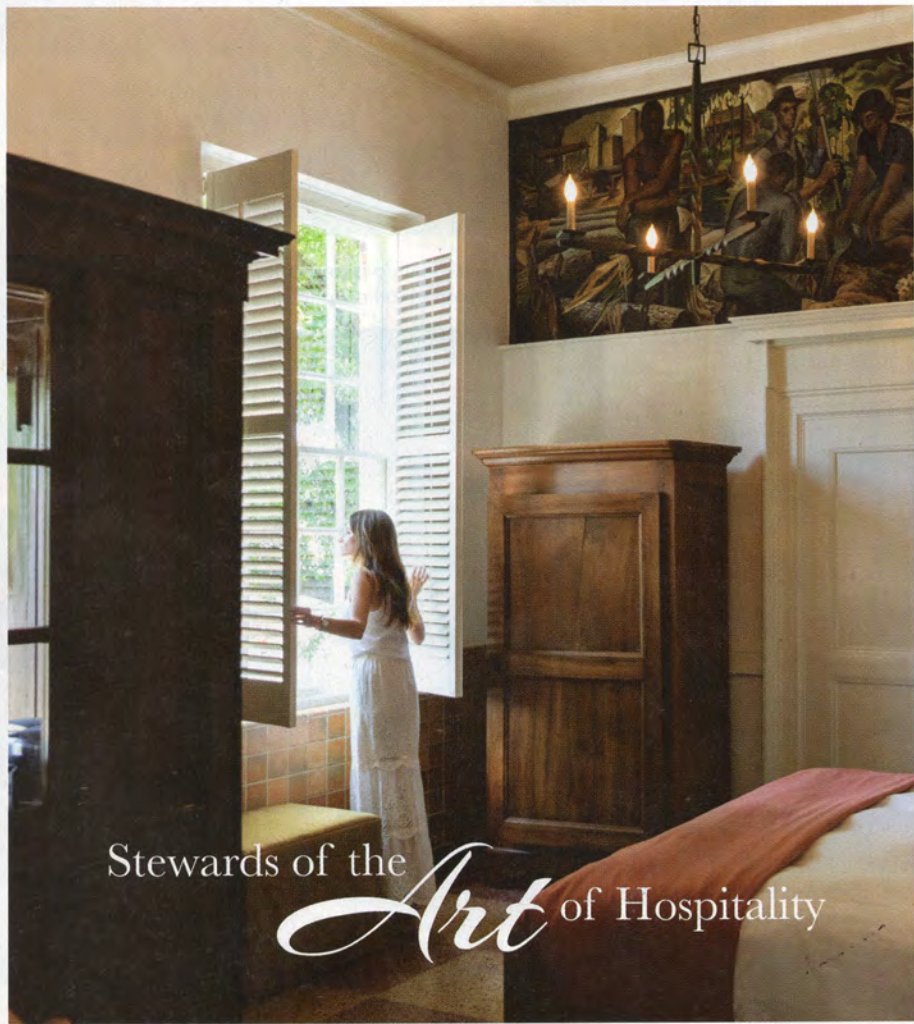
Choosing the parties proved to be difficult, especially with the thousands of professionally taken photos Quinn and Michael had in their possession.

CLASSICAL SHINDIG

glassware, linens, and flowers. "From the moment we schedule it, we are thinking of the menu and table settings. The actual setting of the table is done a few days in advance in case there's a medical emergency. If there is an emergency, the party can proceed."

Parties can take many forms, but some of their favorites have been themed soirées. Whether it's a gorgeous Mardi Gras spread, commemorating the birthday of an author or composer, or going over the top for book club, there is clearly always a reason to celebrate.

Classical Shindig, published by Susan Schadt Press and designed by Doug Turshen, was conceived after a party, of course. In 2018, after playing the piano with the Louisiana Philharmonic



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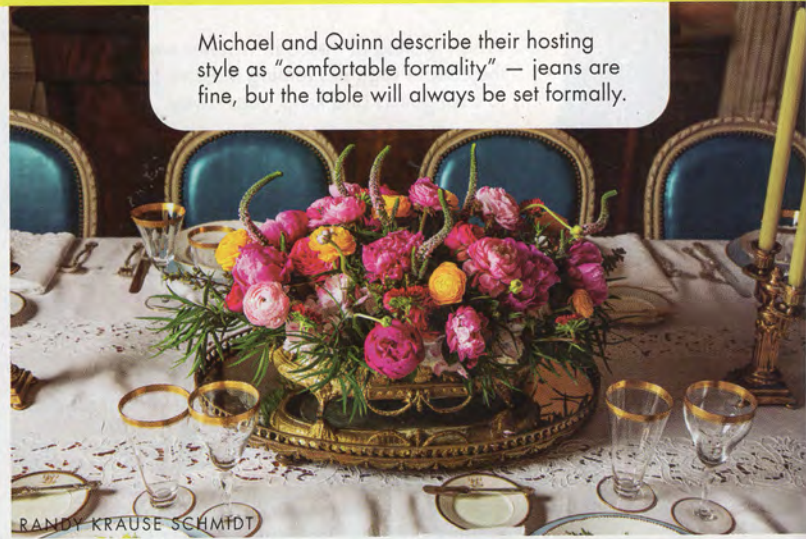


CLASSICAL SHINDIG

Orchestra in a benefit concert for the English-Speaking Union, the couple hosted a creative reception which was covered by *Adore*. “After the excitement of the concert, ‘postpartum depression’ kicked in (Quinn is a published researcher on this subject) so we developed the idea of the book together, writing chapters in earnest when Covid-19 forced us all into quarantine,” Michael shares. Many late nights and weekends were spent going over photographs from an event or party, and frequent Zoom meetings were held with Susan and Lauren Esthus to help narrow down hundreds of photos.

As the book frequently shows, Michael and Quinn’s most successful gatherings are the traditional sit-down dinners, alternating between plated, family style, or self-serve. They also like to separate couples and arrange guests, with the help of their Scully & Scully seating chart, to promote interesting conversation.

Many local shops and businesses are featured in the book, and Michael and Quinn also share their favorite places to source antiques, furnishings, flowers, invitations, and food. When hosting a shindig, they lean on The Wine Seller to rent glassware (no clean up required!); Martin Wine & Spirits for dips, cheese, and nibbles; Langenstein’s for a first course; and Breaux Mart for freshly squeezed orange juice (which they say make the best mimosas).



Michael and Quinn describe their hosting style as “comfortable formality” — jeans are fine, but the table will always be set formally.



“Our go-to caterer is Chez Nous. The food is dropped off at 4:00 pm and all you must do is put it on silver platters.”



Their 19th century home, filled with beautiful furniture and collected treasures, is featured prominently throughout the new release.



Classical Shindig is dedicated to Michael and Quinn’s mothers and grandmothers.

As classically trained pianists, music is also a part of the hosting equation. Beyond classical music, they enjoy playing anything by Jacques Loussier, Charlie Byrd, Cesária Évora, and old Bryan Ferry and Rod Stewart CDs.

Whether you have experienced Michael and Quinn's phenomenal parties or simply enjoy a beautiful home with exquisite details, readers are in for a highly curated treat. *Classical Shindig* is available August 29th online and locally at the Garden District Book Shop with a signing set for Tuesday, September 12.



KATHY ANDERSON

Michael & Quinn's

HOSTING TIPS

1

You can never have enough ice. Even with an ice maker, we buy three large bags for drinks and chilling wine and champagne.

2

We never serve food that requires having to do work in the kitchen while guests are around. We prefer to have them arrive at the dining room table with food ready to serve on plates.

3

Something always goes wrong. Just laugh it off because there is nothing you can do but improvise. The more stressed and nervous the host, the more uncomfortable the guest.

4

Place cards are generally good fun. They're creative, colorful, and they keep you from having to tell people where to sit because guests invariably ask, "Where would you like us?"

5

If you got it, use it. If a relative decides to leave you some fine china or silver, then make sure to take it out of the cabinets once in a while and think of them when you eat with it.

AUGUST 18-27

SUMMERTIME

WEB SALE

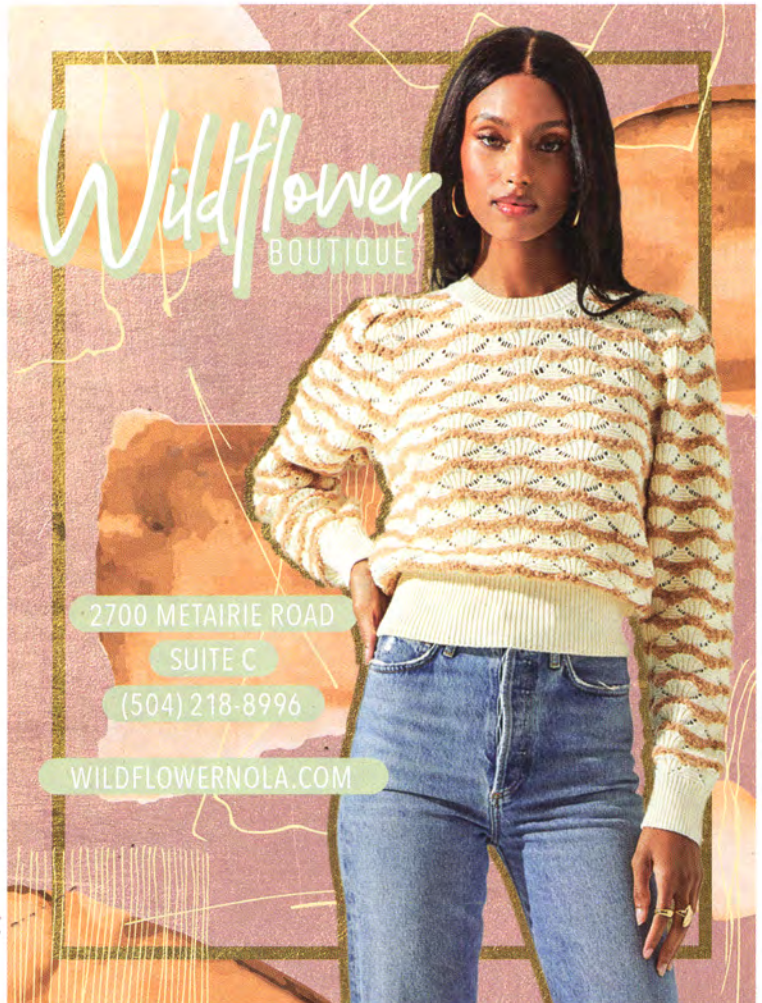
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