

# ADDORE

*fashion, home design, decor*





# Rach and Bach

## MICHAEL HAROLD & QUINN PEEPER

BY KATY DANOS | PHOTOS BY CHRIS GRANGER

New Orleanian Quinn Peeper, a renowned and scholarly obstetrician-gynecologist, is the national president of the English-Speaking Union, a non-profit organization that is near and dear to his heart. The ESU, founded in 1918 and headquartered in New York City, uses the English language to foster global peace and the exchange of ideas through educational opportunities and cultural programs. With the group approaching its 100th anniversary under his leadership, Quinn wanted to mark the deserving occasion in a memorable way. First steps were to compel the ESU to hold its convention here in New Orleans and to reserve the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra for the appropriate dates. With those initial decisions in place, Quinn would have two years to see his vision come to fruition. And that's where his husband Michael Harold, an attorney, comes in to play. Literally.

Armed with their mutual love for entertaining and experience in fundraising for the arts, the couple founded "Rach and Bach" – a wildly creative benefit gala developed around the work of composers Sergei Rachmaninoff and Johann Sebastian Bach. As classically trained pianists





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the sun bound traveler takes his holiday

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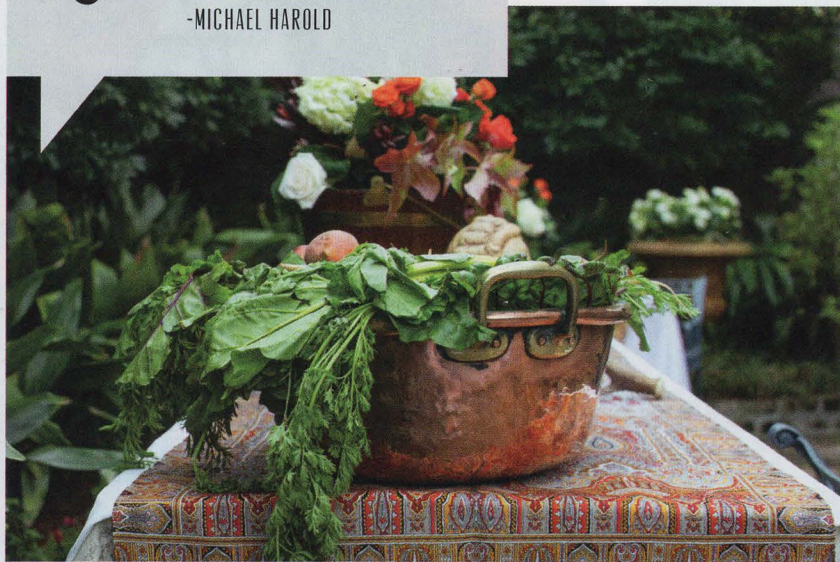
Michael Harold (left)  
and Quinn Peepers





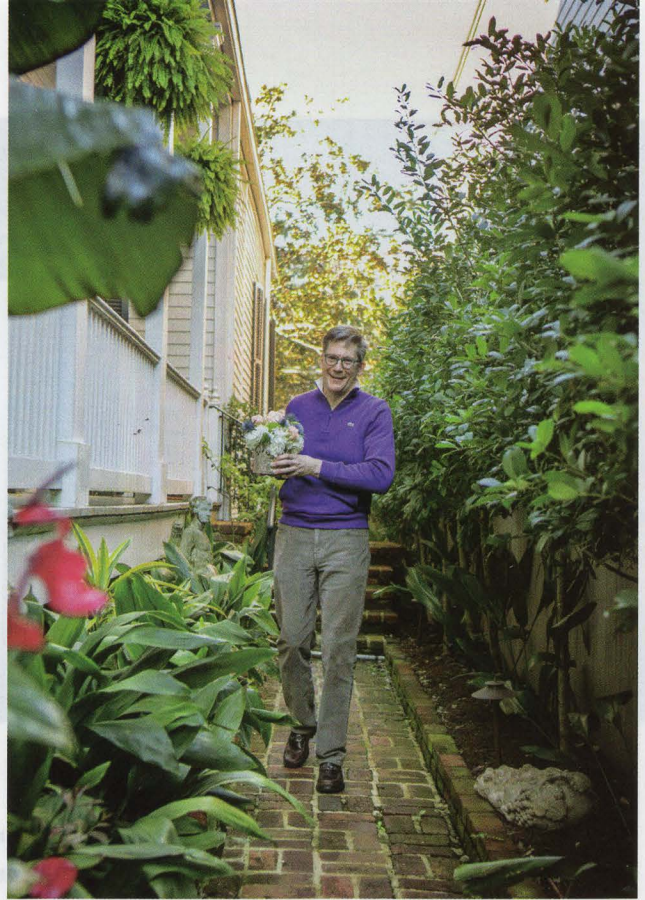
Quinn designed the eighteen-foot outdoor mirror to bring a greater sense of light and space to the brick patio.

-MICHAEL HAROLD





and seasoned performers, the plan was for Quinn (Rach) and Michael (Bach) to play selected masterpieces with all proceeds going to the ESU. It would be their debut on the Orpheum stage and with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, no less. Ambitious, right? Well, in looking at their witty Rach and Bach website, it is abundantly clear that this couple is loaded with passion for European history, a potent sense of humor, and the musical chops required to pull this off without a hitch. Their benefit concert surpassed goals and the farewell brunch they hosted at their Uptown home at the end of the three-day conference was a spectacular send off for local and out of town guests. The entire project – New Orleans meets England meets Rach and Bach – was indeed a labor of love.



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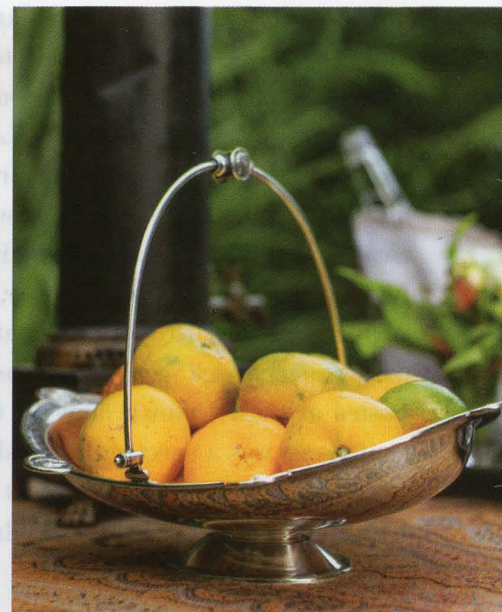
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*Answers of a reply is requested  
 is the second of January*

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For planning the brunch, and, let's be honest, for two people who love research, clever details, and all the decorative arts, a great theme with a party to plan is a match made in heaven. They pored over copious reading materials about the personalities of the famed composers and brainstormed ideas for entertaining the ESU sponsors and patrons in keeping with the theme. For invitations, they turned to noted local stationary designers. The letterpress invitation that features a charming sketch of Shakespeare and an envelope lined with witty words from his play "As You Like It" is from Scriptura. The engraved card with a custom monogram, sized smaller so that out of town guests would

be able to tuck the information into a pocket or purse, was created by Alexa Pulitzer. The envelope has a Byzantine outline referencing Rachmaninoff's Russia in a subtle and sophisticated way.

The vecherinka, as Rach would say, or soiree, as we would, was held at eight a.m. on a sparkling November morning last Fall. Many of the guests were visiting from cold weather climes, so being outdoors "Big Easy" style was quite a treat. Michael and Quinn's home, which was built in 1862, has main entrances on the sides rather than the front of the house. It's a renovated duplex that the couple converted to







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a single residence and, as Quinn likes to quip, "It's bellum. Not antebellum, not post, just plain old bellum." What this not-so-plain house has is a lush backyard garden and two fabulous side yards – one with a great side porch and bricked patio perfect for entertaining. A pair of Japanese Blueberry trees flank a fountain and outdoor mirror that reflects Savannah Holly trees and lush Kimberly Queen ferns from the porch.

A bananas foster station was presented as something quintessentially New Orleans. The classic dessert, featuring brown sugar, rum, and creme de banana, was made-to-order and served with vanilla bean ice cream. Decorations included a New Orleans Toile tablecloth and an 18th century Russian samovar that Quinn found in a Paris flea market. In the back garden, The Last Straws played traditional jazz and omelets were made-to-order with crabmeat or shrimp. And, just to be sure guests knew they were in old school New Orleans, spinach madeleine was on hand. Both good old German Bach and Russian Rach were well-represented with their favorite foods and drink. Some of the offerings were sausages with cabbage pancakes, applesauce and sour cream, and blinis with caviar and creme fraiche, all washed down with shots of chilled Russian vodka.



I started collecting antiques when I moved here twenty-five years ago. With my heavy student loans, I couldn't even open an account at Sears. But the proprietors at Royal Antiques encouraged me to acquire nice things slowly and to pay over time. I'd pass this same kind advice on to anyone just starting out.

- QUINN PEEPER











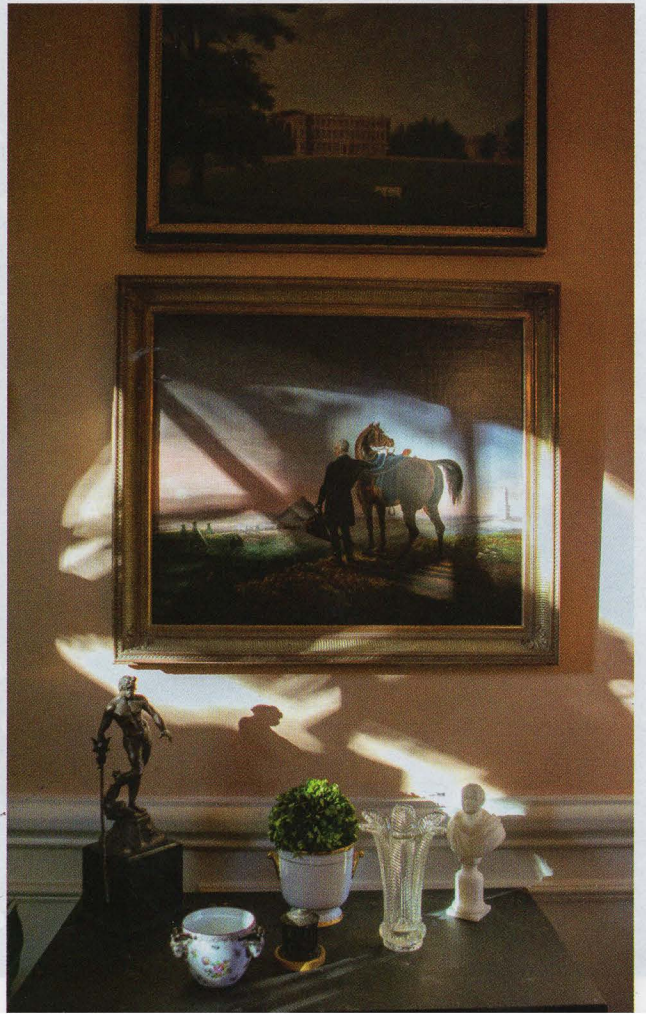
As consummate collectors of all things china, silver, and antique, Quinn and Michael have tableware, objects d'art, and fine furnishings gathered over a lifetime of travel, antique hunting, and caring for inherited sentimental treasures. Like all avid collectors, the thrill is in the hunt and using your favorite things often and in unexpected ways.

A bust of Bach – a Christmas gift for Quinn at age eight – Michael's grandmother's sterling flatware, malachite Russian worry beads which were a gift from their decorating muse Rosemary James, and antlers from Quinn's grandfather's office in rural Arkansas are tucked here and there in thoughtfully composed tablescapes loaded with personal style. Standout pieces include a William Yeoward caviar server signed by the designer when he was at the couple's home for dinner, a 19th century Baccarat crystal surtout de table from Lucullus used as the dining table centerpiece, and a three-tiered porcelain desserterie from the New Orleans Auction filled with Quinn's favorite sweet, Turkish Delight, from London's Fortnum and Mason. For the event, Quinn took to eBay to unearth a Russian, painted tole tray for the Russian vodka chiller





and to some extent, starting London's first shops in  
used as table topware. And a quick trip to the farmer's market



AMON





and to score several stunning Pavlovo Posad fringed shawls he used as table toppers. And a quick trip to the farmer's market for satsumas and autumnal root vegetables added organic bursts of color to the outdoor setting connecting it beautifully to the cantaloupe formal dining room. In a home appointed with fine paintings, furniture, and accessories, the easy and charming touches are what deliver authentic style. A small figurine of the Crown Mother, a favorite wedding gift, sums it up best. Share the things that you enjoy most and, like this special weekend in New Orleans, it all comes together perfectly.

**I** love to spend hours hunting on eBay and researching great finds. What else is there to do overnight while waiting to deliver a baby?

- QUINN PEEPER

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