

AT HOME WITH *Cornelia Hoover*

WISDOM FROM A SEASONED
HOME COOK & HOST

The Dalrymples and the Hoovers – Rod, Cornelia, and their four girls, Leila (27), twins Julia and Alex (24), and Grace (16) – have been friends for years, and together we’ve shared more meals than I can count. Cornelia and Rod love to entertain, and they do so often and with ease. This makes Cornelia the perfect person to feature in this column, where I’ll ask members of the EE community to share their thoughts about the joy of welcoming guests into our homes.

As the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and a homemaker, Cornelia grew up in a home where hospitality was second nature. She says her mother was a great cook, and meal times were an important focal point for the family and their friends.

This is something Cornelia and Rod carried into their lives together. As newlyweds in a small apartment in New York City, they could only invite one couple over at a time. Still, she says, it was a good way to experiment with new recipes. Later, when living in London, she took cooking classes to further expand her repertoire. When their girls were very young, Cornelia used the girls’ nap times to dream up new menus and plan dinner parties.

“The whole reason I like entertaining,” she says, “is that I like being with my

friends. It’s so much easier to do that at home versus a restaurant.” She often tells people not to worry about bringing anything. “I want people to have that whole Saturday to relax and then come to our house and enjoy themselves.”

From the moment one arrives in the Hoovers’ home, Cornelia and Rod’s gracious hospitality overflows. They are always at the door to happily welcome their guests, and their home is filled with special touches – a simple vase of flowers on the coffee table, candles on the terrace, a bud vase with a single flower in the powder room. In simple but gracious ways, they are saying, “Welcome! We’re glad you’re here.”

Cornelia’s favorite part of entertaining is the cooking, though she admits she has so many tried and true recipes, it’s getting harder to make decisions. She looks for menus that rely on fresh ingredients, while keeping guests’ preferences and dietary needs top of mind. She follows a recipe closely the first few times, then starts tinkering with it to make it her own.

Unlike yours truly, who has been known to wait until the day before to decide what to serve to guests, Cornelia doesn’t wait to plan her menus. “I like to have everything ready when people arrive,” she says, and uses her smartphone or a



home assistant, such as Alexa, to set timers and keep things on track.

Cornelia loves to share recipes with friends and takes cooking classes when the opportunity arises. In this issue, I’m thrilled she’s sharing her recipe for lamb, which is an exciting addition for our members. Given that no one in my family except me enjoys lamb, I never have the opportunity to cook it. On the night we gathered at the Hoovers’ to enjoy this dish, Cornelia also thoughtfully grilled a steak for Ed.

It is always an extraordinary pleasure to be treated by Cornelia and Rod to a superb dinner served in a warm and beautiful setting. We are grateful she is willing to share a few of her favorites with our EE members!

