

GET TO KNOW THE PRO *Fred Bettin*

PRIVATE BUTLER, INC.

You may recall my saying in your *Effortless Entertaining* guide that no host should feel like he or she has to go it alone on the entertaining front. When the occasion calls for it, I don't hesitate to welcome trusted pros into my kitchen, and neither should you!

One of my favorite friends and go-to pros is Fred Bettin. Recommended to us years ago by good friend Posey Mealy, Fred owns Charlotte-based Private Butler, Inc., though his services go far beyond the limits of that title. A self-described Renaissance man, Fred does it all – event and menu planning, cooking, serving, flower arranging, gardening, housecleaning, and, I would add, serving as unofficial sanity preserver. He will even decorate your Christmas tree!

Fred has spent years helping clients create memorable events and parties. He may wear a lot of hats, but Fred wants his clients to feel confident that he's got their backs – no matter what.

"I'm there to take every bit of stress and pressure off the host," he says. "When I arrive, the host needs to pour a drink, sit down, and relax or meet guests at the door, and not worry about another thing that's going to happen there that night."

This spirit of service was instilled early in Fred. He grew up on a farm and started cooking for his family when he was only eight years old, while his mother healed from an accident. This desire to help people followed him through college and

into adulthood as he worked in the restaurant business, then started a cleaning business that has evolved into his current role.

"I like making people happy," says Fred. "If I know you, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you. It's how I am." I can vouch for that, as Fred has helped me make many occasions extra special. I'm always grateful to see him walk through my door!

Fred says the best parts of his job are the people and relationships he's built over the years. "I have such a great time – it's instant gratification."

You can do a few things to help ensure that all goes smoothly when you invite someone into your home to help, says Fred. First, "Trust the expert you've hired!" Next, if there are multiple hosts, designate one person to be the chief decision-maker and liaison to staff. Then, demystify your kitchen. Explain the oven controls or let staff know about any other equipment idiosyncrasies. Point out important staples, such as dish towels or baggies and storage containers for packing up leftovers.

"No one ever puts dish towels where you think they'd be," he laughs. "I hate to bother the host when they have guests, so I just make myself at home."



For myself and others who count on his services, having Fred make himself at home in our kitchens means we have fewer worries and more time to focus on making our guests feel welcome. A recipe for entertaining success all the way around!



FUN FACTS ABOUT FRED

- Has two grown children, Trinity and August, who live in Alabama
- Studied biology, chemistry, and physics in college
- Is an avid gardener, photographer, and world traveler
- Has 400 rose bushes and has won over 400 ribbons in competition, 26 of them in national competitions
- Keeps chickens and ducks
- Memorable moment: Sitting by the water in Mykonos, Greece, eating freshly grilled sardines

Private Butler is primarily referral-based, and Fred has now assembled his own team of trusted pros to help him with everything from cooking to stocking and tending bar, from flower arranging to cleanup. He considers Joe Jordan his right-hand man, and the two often work events together. You can reach Fred at fredbettin@aol.com.