

My EFFORTLESS ENTERTAINING

Open your home, open your heart, and give the gift of hospitality.



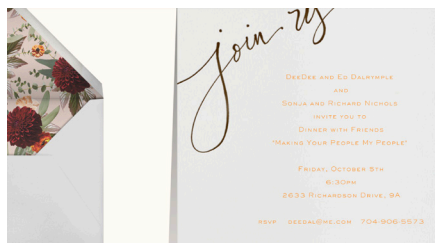
FALL 2018

From Our Home to Yours

While working on *Effortless Entertaining*, my graphic designer and my editor kindly observed that there were “no people of color” shown sitting around my table. I responded that I had noticed that, too. While Ed and I have experienced great diversity in our community work and in the schools our children attended, we have not enjoyed that as deeply or as meaningfully in our home. Our personal lives have been pretty monochromatic.

I told Christine and Lisa that I shared their concern, but that it didn't feel right to manufacture something. A few months after the book was released, I attended a women's dinner at our church. The speaker, Sonja Nichols, was dynamic, and her message was compelling. The thread that ran through Sonja's talk was the Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi – the devotion of Naomi to Ruth and her commitment that Ruth's people would be her people. Sonja, a black woman, asked the room full of white women if anyone had a Ruth-and-Naomi story of their own. I raised my hand and explained that I didn't have such a story, but wondered if we could write one together. I talked about my book and how it revealed what had been missing in our lives.

Following that evening, Sonja and I



Our invitation to the first of many dinners we hope to host with Sonja and Richard.

got together for coffee, then lunch, and started getting to know each other. We joyfully discovered how much we had in common. This October we, along with our husbands, Ed and Richard, hosted a dinner bringing together friends. We called our dinner Making Your People My People. In this issue, we want to share the menu from that special evening with you. Most of all, we want to share the spirit of genuine friendship that made it possible and that continues today.

I hope this issue will inspire you to think beyond your norms, to write new stories in your home and around your table.

With gratitude,

DeeDee



Richard, Sonja, Ed, and me the following night at the Star-Spangled Gala for Veteran's Bridge Home, an organization that supports veterans transitioning to civilian life – one of our many shared interests.

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Executive Chef and Proprietor
il Centro Kitchen*

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*“Where you go I will go,
and where you stay
I will stay. Your people
will be my people and
your God my God.”*

– RUTH 1:16

I'm excited to introduce you to Darren Atkins, a dear friend and trusted resource who always makes entertaining more effortless! Warning: you will want to visit his store, plan a trip to Italy, or both!

Walk into chef Darren Atkins's il Centro Kitchen, and you might forget you're in a stylish shop in the middle of Burlington, North Carolina. Crossing the threshold into il Centro is like walking into an authentic Italian town where you and your senses will want to take your sweet time savoring the local cuisine.

Il Centro is part neighborhood specialty shop, where you can find fresh, seasonal "daily provisions" of prepared foods, and part upscale catering business that serves individual and corporate clientele. Darren's international background and nontraditional path to becoming a chef allow him to bring a variety of culinary influences and experiences to his work.

Darren is from a small town north of Sydney, Australia, where he lived until he was seventeen. He moved to Sydney to pursue a career in the fashion business, which ultimately brought him to New York. "I was infatuated with America," he says. As a modeling agent, he worked with international clients, often in places like Milan. He became close friends with a group of Italians who talked to Darren about how they had grown up. He became enamored with Italy and the Italian culture.

"Ask any Italian where they go to find their favorite dish, and they'll say their mother's house or their grandmother's house. Food is essential to the culture there. Italian cooking is about memories, about returning to a place that was enjoyable with family and friends."

This philosophy appealed so much to Darren that he enrolled in night classes at the French Culinary Institute, now known as the International Culinary



Center, where luminaries such as Jacques Torres and Bobby Flay trained before him. There, Darren interned with acclaimed Italian chef Cesare Casella, who became his mentor and taught him the secret of authentic Tuscan home cooking: use the best quality ingredients; use what's available locally. Darren would go on to work with Casella at his two featured restaurants, Beppe and Salumeria Rosi.

After graduation, Darren tried cooking in other styles – Vietnamese, French, the American bistro style – before returning to Italian cuisine. In 2008, he worked for *Food and Wine* magazine and award-winning chef Jim Burke of New York's Caffè Storico. Later he would work

for renowned media personality and cookbook chef Lidia Bastianich at her flagship restaurant, Felidia, co-owned with Joe Bastianich and Mario Batali and led by executive chef and Michelin-star recipient Fortunato Nicotra.

Fast-forward several years, and Darren and his wife, Jan, were looking for a change of scenery; coming to Jan's native North Carolina seemed like the perfect choice. In addition to growing his specialty catering business, Darren says his mission for il Centro is "to offer nice, home-cooked Italian food that people can pick up and take home, knowing it's been prepared using local and seasonal ingredients."

Asked if he has any advice for the EE community, Darren again draws on the timeless wisdom from his mentors – all of whom, he notes, started off as home cooks:

"It's important to know what you can and can't do. Keep things simple – maybe use a dish that only takes five ingredients. Make sure those ingredients are really fresh. A big mistake is to complicate things. You need to find the right balance in a dish – salty, fatty, acid, and sweet. If you execute the cooking of these quality ingredients well, people will be happy."

Porchetta Dinner

Salumi (*Charcuterie, p. 271 in your guide*)

Tuscan Bean Dip (*p. 189 in your guide*)

Porchetta with Salsa Verde

Roasted Fall Vegetables

Broccolini

Mixed Lettuces with Sherry Vinaigrette

Rosemary Bread

Gelato with Berries and Chocolate Sauce (*p. 288 in your guide*)

Chef Darren's menu welcomes fall and carries us through winter with all its flavors and deep colors, evoking memories of traveling in Italy and traditional Tuscan fare. A salumi is the Italian version of our charcuterie – simply a tray of meats and cheeses. Porchetta is an Italian pork roast wrapped with pork belly and stuffed with herbs. The preparation must be done in advance, which makes things easy for the night of your party. If three sides seem like more than you'd like, choose two and you will still serve a beautiful meal.

GAMEPLAN

Monday

- Shop for non-perishables.

Wednesday

- Shop for perishables
- Prepare Tuscan Bean Dip
- Prepare Chocolate Sauce

Thursday

- Prepare Lemon-Anchovy Vinaigrette
- Prepare Sherry Vinaigrette

Friday

- Prep Porchetta

Saturday

Early in the day . . .

- Prep Toasted Baguette (*p. 280 in your guide*)
- Prep Salumi
- Prepare Salsa Verde
- Prep Roasted Vegetables
- Prep Broccolini
- Slice Rosemary Bread and wrap in foil

2:45

- Bring Porchetta to room temperature

3:15

- Roast Porchetta, 275°, 4 hrs*
- Blanch Broccolini, 2 min

5:00

- Get dressed – enjoy dressing drink!

6:00

- Plate Salumi, Tuscan Bean Dip
- Chop herbs for Roasted Vegetables

6:45

- Enjoy a quiet moment

7:15

- Raise oven temperature for Porchetta to 450°, roast 35 min
- Roast Beets, 400°, 45 min

7:30

- Add Fall Vegetables to oven with beets; roast 30 min



7:50

- Remove Porchetta from oven; rest 20 min, then slice

8:00

- Warm Rosemary Bread
- Toss Roasted Vegetables with herbs and vinaigrette; arrange on platter and garnish
- Sauté Broccolini, med-high heat, 2 min
- Toss Mixed Lettuces with Sherry Vinaigrette

8:15

- Serve and enjoy!

* If you only have one oven, you may roast the Porchetta beginning at 2:40 p.m. At 6:40, turn the oven temperature to 450°, and when the Porchetta comes out of the oven at 7:15, turn the temperature down to 400° and roast the Fall Vegetables, beginning with the beets at 7:15 and continuing with remaining vegetables at 7:30.

MENU, GAMEPLAN, SHOPPING LIST, and RECIPES are available in the Members section on MyEffortlessEntertaining.com, so you can download, print, and add to your binder.

PORCHETTA WITH SALSA VERDE

SERVES 6–8 Darren Atkins

INGREDIENTS

SALT RUB

2 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped
2 tsp fennel seed, crushed
1 tbsp kosher salt
2 tsp chili flakes
2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
Zest of 1 lemon

HERB RUB

2 tbsp roughly chopped
Italian parsley
2 tbsp fresh rosemary

PORCHETTA

12-in slab of skin-on pork belly,
*lightly scored**
2-lb pork tenderloin
Olive oil

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Kitchen twine
Deep roasting pan

** To score pork belly, cut diagonal lines in the skin about one inch apart, then repeat at a 90° angle to make a crisscross pattern. Cut through the skin but not into the meat.*

Place rosemary and fennel seed in a small skillet over medium-low heat until fragrant and starting to brown, about 5 min. Transfer to cutting board and crush with the side of a large knife. Combine rosemary and fennel with remaining ingredients for the salt rub in a small bowl.

Lay pork belly skin side down and lightly sprinkle with half the salt rub. Sprinkle the herb rub over the salt rub, and place the tenderloin in the center of the belly. Tightly roll up the belly around the tenderloin and tie together with kitchen twine. Rub the skin generously with oil and remaining salt rub. Place porchetta in a covered container and refrigerate for at least 12 hrs. You may do this the day before.

Bring porchetta to room temperature approx 30 min before roasting. Place porchetta on a rack in a deep (about 2.5 inches) roasting pan. Roast on the center rack at 275° for 4 hrs. Use a meat thermometer to check that the internal temperature is 160°. Increase oven temperature to 450° and continue to roast for 35 min, keeping an eye on the skin. You want the crackling golden brown and crispy, not burned.

Remove from the oven, let rest for 15–20 min, slice, and serve with Salsa Verde (see recipe next page) on the side.

DEEDEE'S NOTES:

- Porchetta should be prepped at least one day in advance and must begin roasting 5 hrs before serving.



SALSA VERDE

YIELDS ~1½ CUPS

Darren Atkins

Blend all ingredients in a food processor or blender.

DEEDEE'S NOTES:

- Salsa Verde may be prepared one day in advance.
- Citric acid is an organic acid that occurs in citrus fruits. You can typically find in gourmet markets or health food stores, or with canning supplies in a regular grocery store. Citric acid in small amounts will keep the salsa verde a brighter green for longer. If you can't find the citric acid, it's fine to omit.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup plus 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 anchovy fillets
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup chopped basil
3 cloves garlic
1 tbsp capers
1 tbsp chopped fresh chives
1 tbsp San Pelligrino
juice of two lemons
zest of one lemon
¼ tsp ground fennel seed
¼ tsp citric acid
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
Pinch cayenne pepper



ROASTED FALL VEGETABLES

SERVES 6-8 Darren Atkins

INGREDIENTS

LEMON-ANCHOVY VINAIGRETTE

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 anchovies, finely chopped

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

Juice of 3 lemons

¾ cup olive oil

ROASTED VEGETABLES

5 heirloom carrots (yellow, gold, orange) peeled and halved lengthwise

1 lb Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved or quartered

3 beets, peeled and quartered

1 fennel bulb, trimmed and quartered lengthwise

5 parsnips, peeled and halved lengthwise

1 turnip, peeled and quartered

1 red onion, peeled and quartered

¼–½ cup olive oil

Kosher salt and pepper

CHOPPED HERBS

2 tbsp chopped parsley

1 tbsp chopped fresh oregano

1 tbsp chopped mint

1 tbsp chopped sage

1 tbsp chopped rosemary

GARNISH

¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds

¼–½ cup Pecorino Romano, shaved

To make vinaigrette, whisk ingredients except olive oil. Add olive oil slowly, whisking to combine.

In a large bowl, toss all vegetables except beets with olive oil and kosher salt. In a separate bowl, toss beets with olive oil and kosher salt.

Place beets on a sheet pan and roast at 400° until crispy on outside and easily pierced with a paring knife, about 45 min. Place other vegetables on a sheet pan and roast at 400° for 30 min until golden. Toss vegetables with vinaigrette and chopped herbs. Serve on platter topped with beets, toasted pumpkin seeds, and shaved Pecorino Romano.

DEEDEE'S NOTES:

- Vinaigrette may be prepared up to two days in advance.
- Vegetables may be prepped earlier in the day. Submerge carrots and parsnips in water to prevent browning. Pat dry before tossing with olive oil.



Don't be put off by the anchovy! As Darren explains, anchovy is the "secret sauce" in seasoning. It's added to enhance the flavor, but no one knows it's there. You can't taste it, but it makes all the other ingredients taste better.

BROCCOLINI

SERVES 6–8 Darren Atkins

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add broccolini and set timer for 2 min. Fill a large bowl with ice water. When timer goes off, drain broccolini and transfer immediately to ice water, then drain and pat dry.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil and sauté garlic and red pepper flakes until garlic is slightly golden, about 2 min. Add the broccolini and toss until warmed through. Serve immediately on a platter. Garnish with grated lemon zest.

DEEDEE'S NOTES:

- Broccolini may be blanched earlier in the day. Dry thoroughly and keep refrigerated. Heat with sautéed garlic and red pepper prior to serving.

INGREDIENTS

3 bunches broccolini, ends trimmed

3 tbsp olive oil

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 tsp crushed red pepper

Zest of 1 lemon

MIXED LETTUCES WITH SHERRY VINAIGRETTE

SERVES 6–8 Darren Atkins

Stir shallot, vinegar, lemon juice, and mustard in a small bowl and let macerate for at least 15 min. Gradually whisk in oil. You may also stir first 4 ingredients in a jar with a lid, add oil, screw on lid, and shake to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss with mixed lettuces.

DEEDEE'S NOTES:

- Sherry vinaigrette may be prepared up to a week in advance. Cover and refrigerate. To freshen the flavor of the dressing after a few days, add a squeeze of fresh lime or lemon juice.

INGREDIENTS

1 med shallot, minced

2 tbsp sherry vinegar

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp Dijon mustard

9 tbsp olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

6–8 cups mixed lettuces, your choice

Over the last year, I've had the privilege of speaking to many groups of women . . . and a few men, too! As you have invited me into your homes, your garden clubs, your churches, and community organizations, I'm reminded over and over again why I wrote *Effortless Entertaining*. Wherever I go, guests talk about how much they enjoy being in each other's homes, and yet most also tell me they don't entertain as often as they would like. This is why I wrote *Effortless Entertaining* – to help others welcome family and friends into their homes easily and graciously.

Although we all want to entertain, the reasons we don't are familiar. We may feel the need for our homes to be stylish and ship-shape. All of a sudden the throw pillows on the porch sofa that were perfectly fine yesterday look like a bunch of teenagers have been using them in a pillow fight – and maybe they have! We begin to feel a little anxious about who to invite, what to cook, and whether we have everything we need . . . plates, napkins, and then the flowers! Some like to cook, but don't want to set tables and do flowers. Others like to do flowers and set the table, but don't like to cook. Some of the reasons we're reluctant to entertain seem to resonate with everyone. Even the seasoned host has reservations.

As I was working on this newsletter, I attended a fundraising event and was chatting with a lovely woman about entertaining in our homes. She lamented that she feels the need for everything to “be perfect” here in Charlotte, whereas in the mountains she feels a little more at ease. She told me that although she loves to cook and is a good cook, she worries about everything being “just so.” She often hires a caterer. I shared with her some of my thoughts on entertaining, beginning with Step One: *Entertaining Is Not a Performance. It's a Gift of Friendship*. By the end of the conversation, I could see

the relief and renewed enthusiasm she was feeling.

One guest at a recent event had gotten out of the habit of entertaining. Upon receiving *Effortless Entertaining* for Christmas last year, she committed to hosting a dinner party every month. It was exciting to hear how much fun she was having! Another guest shared that she had prepared the Lawdashion's Pork Tenderloin for a recent dinner party. She said it was fabulous and, for the first time, she was relaxed and had everything done when her guests arrived. She did have an unfortunate encounter with her mandoline while slicing the potatoes. Warning – do not watch football and use a mandoline! If you insist on doing both, wear cut-resistant gloves. See *Tips & Quips*, page 350, and *Sources & Resources*, page 380. Remember, you can also find these items on the website.

Knowing that I'm helping hosts – from the most reluctant to the most experienced – gain more confidence about entertaining is what I love most about the impact of *Effortless Entertaining*. The minute you realize everything doesn't need to be “perfect” when you invite someone to your home, the more you'll enjoy entertaining. The time we spend together is what really matters. You don't have to do things the way I do them, or the way other friends do. Find your own style, then file those negative voices in your head in the way-way back of the linen closet. It bears repeating: Your guests will enjoy themselves more if they see you having fun and not taking yourself too seriously.

I share these thoughts to encourage and inspire you to entertain others in your home. Don't forget, though . . . you actually have to invite people over! EE is not a theoretical exercise. Roll up your sleeves and set the table! In addition to your *Effortless Entertaining* guide, members have received monthly newsletters adding



186 pages to the guide since January! Choose a menu – the recipes are easy to prepare, and it's all made even easier with the GamePlan and Shopping List. Access *Sources & Resources* to find tabletop items so that you . . . *Don't Wait for the Party to Be Ready for the Party* (Step Eight).

Be in touch with me to ask any questions you might have. I would love to hear from you! Welcoming friends into our homes starts with a few simple first steps. Take the time to sit with a cup of coffee, look at your calendar, find a night, make a list of people you would like to invite, and choose a menu. Pick up the phone or send an email. Just do it! You'll be glad you did!

DeeDee

I close my talks with this
quote from John Lennon:

*“It matters not who you
love, where you love, why
you love, when you love,
or how you love. It matters
only that you love.”*

So, let's get on with it!
Let's love our family and friends
and invite them to dinner!

Shopping Local

As we come into the holiday season, our attention shifts to family celebrations. Before we know it, we'll be making our lists and checking them twice. If you're like me, maybe ten times. Of course, many of you already know that Effortless Entertaining makes the perfect gift! You can order through our website or find in one of our retail shops.

With this newsletter, I'd like to help you find a few gifts and encourage you to shop local. That's why you'll see me filling these pages with a few of my favorite things – items that I've tried and tested and think you'll like as much as I do. Our local shops are an invaluable resource. They can recommend items you may not have considered and will often order special items.

I hope you'll find wonderful gifts – something for everyone – and maybe a little something for yourself, too! Of course, you won't be surprised that my focus is on the home and table . . . this is, after all, where the heart is!



Anne Neilson's scripture cards bring inspiration to my kitchen and will do the same for the special people on your list.

3 French Hens | 704-366-1074



Abigail's Hurricanes are perfect for candles or flowers. I gave these to my sister-in-law and sister last Christmas . . . and also gave myself a pair! Also shown are beautiful McKenzie Child Glow candles to warm any table or room.



Southern Jubilee Glasses with customized stamps are a handsome gift for the men on your list.

The Buttercup | 704-332-5329 | buttercupcharlotte.net



Wonderful Pampa Bay serveware goes from oven to table. Available with gold or silver trim.

"Behind the success of every small business is a family."



Vietri's Hibiscus vase is a lovely Christmas gift for the powder room, guest bedroom, or foyer. Keep a few on hand already wrapped for the perfect host/hostess gift.

Bailey's Fine Jewelry
baileys.bridgcatalog.com



For those on your list (including yourself!) who might want a little holiday bling, Betty Kelly's gift shop offers a beautiful selection of Julie Vos. Betty Kelly's
bettykellygifts.com



Who wouldn't love these Vietri Christmas mugs for hot chocolate, a hot toddy, or even Jane's Eggnog (see last December's *Dash* on the EE website for recipe.)

Southern Home & Kitchen
336-777-3660
shopsohnc.com



One of my favorite linen companies is Couleur Nature, with their selection of warm seasonal colors. Vance Kitira tree-shaped candles are great for styling up the table or foyer.

Couleur Nature placemats and napkins pair so nicely with these small serving bowls.

Good News Shop at Christ Episcopal Church | 704-372-5906



Whimsical plates with a unique named character on each. I also love the place-card holders, which can be reused.

Gorgeously styled table with contemporary candlesticks and votives.

Paysage Home | 910-256-5060 | paysage.com



Oven to table, these refined Mary Jurek servers are one of my go-to favorites and will be a go-to for your gift recipients too.

Calasio Woven servers are good-looking, the highest quality, and practical, adding style and function.

John Dabbs | .704-334-5040 | johndabbsltd.com



Silver makes any table more elegant. Choose a unique piece for a special gift. Shown here are beautiful serving pieces, compotes, wine coaster, goblets, small vases. One of my favorite pieces in this photo is the biscuit box, which doubles as a wonderful container for flowers. Start or add to a collection for someone you love!

Gryphon Estate Silver
800-332-6857 | #useyoursilver
gryphonstatesilver.com



Who knew paper and acrylic could be so beautiful? Nofo did! Shown here are selections from Caspari, Hester & Cook, Talking Tables, Slant, and Zokak.

Nofo @ the Pig | 919-821-1240
nofo.com

For an EE event this fall, Schiffman's in Winston-Salem set beautiful tables. Shown here are two of my favorites. Add to someone's table with these selections.



Vietri Lastra White dinner plate with Modello blue salad plate. Bodrum placemat. Saro linen napkins monogrammed locally in Winston-Salem by Monograms, Etc.



Juliska Puro White dinner plate and Wanderlust blue dessert plate with monogram salad plate by Sasha Nicholas.

Schiffman's, Winston-Salem | 336-725-1911 | schiffmans.com



EE girls in our family always love this surprise in their stocking . . . a gift certificate from Woo Cosmetics + Skincare. A gift from Woo to add a little sparkle for ourselves!

Woo Skincare + Cosmetics
704-333-0403
wooskincareandcosmetics.com

TIPS & QUIPS



Floral frog

Shown here are two types of floral frogs. Available from your local florist or hardware stores, floral frogs make arranging flowers . . . *effortless!*



Cheese shaver

For the fall dinner, Darren used a cheese shaver like this for adding the Pecorino Romano to the Roasted Fall Vegetables. Available in your local kitchen stores.

FLEUR DU JOUR

In our first two quarterly newsletters, you enjoyed the immense talent of the floral designers at The Blossom Shop. We're so grateful for their artistry and expertise. For this issue, I forgot to let The Blossom Shop know about Sonja's and my event. As I often say in your EE guide and in my presentations, not everything goes according to plan! So, Mrs. EE had to do the flowers, which I often do anyway. Two days before our dinner, I visited The Blossom Shop and chose a few flowers for

our fall Porchetta Dinner. I recommend you get to know a florist in your town – they can be a wonderful resource. As I mentioned in the guide, I tend to be a little formulaic with flowers, so here is my formula for these fall arrangements, which could transfer to any season.

I used both silver and glass containers. In the larger containers, I used a floral frog (see Tips & Quips) in the bottom to anchor the flowers. Start with boxwood or another evergreen for your base. I didn't

use boxwood for these arrangements, but I usually do. Add a few hydrangeas as your next layer; their size makes them a nice base. I then added deep-orange mums and yellow roses. Finally, I added a few smaller flowers, berries, and greenery. I'm not a professional – obviously – and yet, this simple formula seems to work. I also like to repeat one of the flowers in smaller vases if I'm setting a long table. With these arrangements, I repeated with roses in small silver vases.



FROM THE CELLAR

Italian Wines – Perfect for Fall

As we move into the fall and winter seasons, many hearty Italian dishes come to mind. A natural accompaniment to those dishes would be a bottle of Italian wine. As Italy is not known for outstanding white wines, I'd like to mention a couple of reasonably priced red choices.

If your tastes are inclined toward a smoother, lighter red, I would highly recommend you try a dolcetto (dole-CHET-o). Most dolcettos come from the Piedmont region of Italy, the area in the upper left of the “boot.” You might see wines called dolcetto di Dogliani or dolcetto d’Alba. Although “dolcetto” means “little sweet one” in Italian, these

wines are nice and dry, so don't let the name bother you. Dolcettos are not terribly well known, and you can find very nice ones in the \$15–\$20 price range.

Ever heard of a “Super Tuscan”? You should know that there is nothing “Super” about a Super Tuscan. It was simply a term coined by Tuscan producers to allow them to be creative and produce red wines not subject to some of Italy's restrictive rules. For the most part, these wines are blends of various grapes, although some are single-grape varieties. Prices for Super Tuscan are all over the board; some can be very expensive, but some very reasonably priced ones may be found. Villa Antinori

(\$18), Lucente by Frescobaldi (\$26) and San Felice Toscana Peroll (\$15) come to mind. This would also be a great time to go to your favorite wine store and ask for recommendations. *Salute!*

My Effortless Entertaining

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