

FEATURES & BUSINESS

CSL Heart of the Home Tour Mediterranean in upper Rockridge a brand new work of art



Photo by Treve Johnson

Shown on this year's CSL House Tour, April 27-28, is a home whose kitchen offers every convenience a modern cook could want, all served with a dash of style.

HEART OF THE HOME TOUR

The Children's Support League's Heart of the Home Tour returns April 27 and 28 for its 30th Anniversary celebration. Tour attendees will be welcomed to view five remarkable homes in Piedmont and Oakland, a festive lunch served by gourmet food trucks at the Piedmont Community Center, and shopping at the Pop-up Boutique.

One of the exceptional homes on the tour this year, a stunning, recently constructed Mediterranean home in upper Rockridge, is a masterpiece in serene grays and white that serve as a backdrop for a lively, eclectic décor. The minimalist landscaping on the approach to the home sets the tone

for the interior, and the hilltop setting and oversized windows allow the entertaining areas to embrace the sweeping view.

The homeowners, who purchased this house directly from the builder, already lived in the neighborhood and walked by many times during its construction. They liked the neighborhood and were not actively looking to move. However, as the house took shape, they began to feel that this might be a house for them. It was fresh, but not modern, and provided a clean canvas that allowed them to add character and age to the home through a mix of furnishings and décor.

The truly spacious kitchen and

dining area is one of the features that the home owners were looking for. They realize that everyone always gathers in the kitchen, so why not make it large, warm, and inviting? This kitchen has ample storage and counter space as well as every convenience a cook would want. The expansive center island, with mercury glass pendant lights, is a perfect place for everyone to gather round while preparing the latest gourmet meal. The seven-foot round dining table makes this the perfect place for large gatherings.

Light, both natural and electric, is something to pay attention to in this home. In addition to the windows that open to the view, a private loggia located in the center fills the house with light. Upstairs, a wall of windows leads to the master retreat. Carefully chosen light fixtures throughout are one of the many interesting aspects of the décor. In the guest room, the unique Moorish fixture plays off the light in the room to create a fabulous effect on the ceiling.

One of the most exciting features of this house is that most of the art (both photography and paintings) is the work of the owners.

On Tour days, the lovely backyard and patio will provide the setting for several vendors who will be on site to create a mini boutique for Tour patrons. These include Sanvitalia, Christina's Creations, and Especially for You Biscotti. Remember, you do not need a tour ticket to visit the boutique at the Piedmont Community Center.

To purchase tickets to CSL's 30th anniversary tour, go to our website www.childrensupportleague.org. Tickets are also available at several local East Bay stores -- a list can be found on the website

Join the VIP Celebration at CSL's 30th Home Tour

There are many reasons to buy a VIP ticket to the Children's Support League's 30th Anniversary Heart of the Home Tour the weekend of April 27-28. VIP guests will see two homes open only to VIP ticket holders.

The tour for VIP guests begins on Wednesday evening, April 25, with a 30th anniversary Kickoff Gala at a luxurious Italianate estate designed by Newsom and Newsom with catering by Barbara Llewellyn and music by the Make Jazz Quartet.

Friday morning VIP guests will enjoy breakfast in the beautiful garden of a sleek and stunning remodeled home. The breakfast speaker will be Lori Fogarty, the award-winning Director and CEO of the Oakland

Museum of California, who will talk about the role of the museum in the community and how it reaches out to children.

After breakfast guests can visit the other five homes on the Tour. Tour hours on both Friday and Saturday are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All the homes this year are distinctive and reflect each family's personal style. All have been refreshed and remodeled with careful attention to detail, the best craftsmanship, and all the most modern conveniences. Enjoy lunch at the Piedmont Community Center and the pop-up boutique offering local craft foods and other gifts perfect for favorite teachers and Mother's Day.



VIP tickets are \$150 and are available online at ChildrensSupportLeague.org. Children's Support League is an all-volunteer organization that donates the proceeds of the tour to non-profits helping at-risk children in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.



Farmers Market Spring Lo Mein



By Deborah Quok

Spring is finally here, and with it come varieties of peas and plenty of asparagus. This recipe is inspired by my mom, who made a similar version throughout my childhood.

The recipe is written with adjustable quantities according to your taste and what you have on hand to include in the mix.

By all means adjust the quantities to your desired VTN ratio (vegetables-to-noodles).

The bulk of your time preparing this dish will be in slicing the vegetables. Once you have all the vegetables sliced, the cooking only takes about 15-20 minutes.

The flavoring condiments are salty, so I've not included additional salt. Start slow with the oyster and soy sauces; it's easy to add more and adjust to taste as you go.

Lo mein is meant to be moist and chewy; not crisp nor slurp-y, but in a wonderful middle ground. Cantonese dishes are not often spicy, but if that's your preference, douse on the chili oil. Asian comfort food for spring -- as you like it.

Farmers Market Spring Lo Mein

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 pound fresh Chinese wheat noodles; substitute dry chow mein noodles, ramen, even (slight gasp) spaghetti

1 - 2 cups asparagus, sliced into 1-inch lengths. Select medium spears, about pencil diameter

1 - 2 cups sugar snap peas, remove the stems and tough "strings"

1 - 2 cups fresh shitake mushroom, in 1/4-inch slices

1 medium leek, white and pale green parts; cut in half lengthwise, then into 1-inch lengths before slicing lengthwise again into matchsticks

1/2 cup carrot, cut into 1-inch long matchsticks

1 tablespoon neutral oil for stir-frying

1/8 teaspoon white pepper, or to taste

1 tablespoon oyster sauce, to taste

1 teaspoon Chinese "thin" soy sauce, to taste

1 teaspoon Chinese "dark" soy sauce, to taste

1 teaspoon toasted sesame seed oil

1/4 - 1/2 cup vegetable or chicken broth ("Better than Bouillon" comes in handy for this small amount)

3 - 4 green onions, sliced in 1/4-inch lengths

Fresh cilantro for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the noodles until barely tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain into a large colander and quickly run cold water over, tossing the noodles under the water to cool as quickly as possible to stop the cooking. Drain well.

2. Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat, coat with the oil, and stir-fry the leek until browned, 5 - 6 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook until just browned. Add the carrots, asparagus and snap peas. Stir fry until just barely tender.

3. Add the white pepper, toasted sesame seed oil, oyster sauce, and soy sauces. Stir to mix together and coating the vegetables evenly.

4. Add in the cooled, cooked noodles and stir to thoroughly mix in the vegetables. Tongs or long chopsticks will do the task nicely. Add the stock to loosen up the noodles. Make sure the noodles are heated through before removing from heat.

Garnish generously with sliced green onions and cilantro. Serve hot.

For more information and to suggest a food to be reviewed, see the blog of Piedmont resident and cook Deborah Quok: Piedmont-Pantry.com