

# Savor

Wednesday, August 22, 2018

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ETHNOSH NOSHUP: RETO'S KITCHEN

## A FUN FRENCH GARDEN PARTY



### WANT TO GO?

**WHAT:** Ethnosh presents a French garden party featuring Reto's Kitchen  
**WHEN:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Sept. 6  
**WHERE:** Double Oaks Bed & Breakfast, 204 N. Mendenhall St., Greensboro  
**COST:** \$35 at [ethno.sh/GSO](http://ethno.sh/GSO)  
**INFORMATION:** [ethnosh.org](http://ethnosh.org)  
**ETC.:** The meal will include multiple courses of Reto's French cocktail party cuisine. Beer and wine are available at an additional cost.



BY TINA FIRESHEETS  
Special to the News & Record

It could be said that most of Reto Biaggi's life has been one party after another.

It started in his youth. His mother, Franziska, loved to host parties at their home. The family held dinners and themed parties at least once a month. He and his sister always helped their mother prepare the food.

Beef Wellington.  
Salmon with hollandaise sauce. Stuffed baked sole.

The food was always thoughtfully planned and prepared. They also paid



attention to the extra details.

"There is not a dinner at her house without flowers on the table and place mats," Biaggi says. "Every meal is a special occasion."

Biaggi continues to live that lifestyle today. Except that the parties are for his clients, not his family.

His Lindley Park business, Reto's Kitchen, provides personal chef and catering services. He also leads cooking classes and kids cooking camps.

Biaggi, who is Swiss and French, was raised in France. He has called Greensboro home for the past 21 years.



*"What my parents taught me was hospitality and the pleasure it can be to serve others," Reto Biaggi says. "I cater because I make people happy. And it's fun!"*

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From left, Baby Thick Burgers with Sesame Buns; Mini Chocolate Mousse Bites; and Zucchini Rolls with Basil Cream.



## SAVOR



Photos courtesy of Dhanraj Emanuel

**Spiced Carrot Skewers are made with cumin, coriander, carrot, black olives and orange.**

## Ethnosh

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His story and cuisine will be the focus of the next Ethnosh, a monthly dining event that introduces Triad diners to ethnic food and culture in the community.

His NoshUp will be Sept. 6 at Double Oaks Bed & Breakfast. Guests that evening can expect a French garden party with live jazz, beer, paired wine and a sampling of the kind of classic cocktail party food Reto tends to serve.

Such as ...

Duck breast with basil pesto and olive tapenade.

Bite-sized portions of garlicky shrimp scampi.

Sashimi grade tuna bites marinated in an Asian sauce.

Zucchini rolls with basil cream.

Or cumin and coriander spiced carrot skewers.

And for dessert?

Perhaps there will be creme brulee spoons. Or housemade petite macarons. Chocolate mousse bites, if you're lucky.

Biaggi's culinary and hospitality experience includes luxury hotels in France and Canada. In Greensboro, he helped open Green Valley Grill and the restaurant at Grandover Resort. But Biaggi says the work he's doing now is the most creative of his career.

"Every event is its own custom thing," Biaggi says. "I've never done the same menu twice."

He strives to make his food fresh, simple and delicious. He prefers using natural, locally raised or locally made ingredients.

Take the BLTs he made recently for the Greensboro Farmers Curb Market's BLT Challenge. Biaggi used juicy tomatoes from Farlow Farm, bread from a local French baker, thick, crispy bacon and fresh basil. And he won.

This preference for farm fresh food goes back to his European upbringing. He jokes that French people new to the area will find the farmer's market right away. It may take them months, however, to realize that Harris Teeter is a grocery store.

He first learned to cook alongside his grandma Frieda. He describes her as "a really cute little grandma, cheery and full of life. Her smile brightened her whole face. She smiled with her eyes, with her cheekbones and with her wrinkles."

She made you smile, Biaggi says.

Grandma could always be found in either the kitchen or her vegetable garden. She would make polenta, then let it cool. The next day, she fried them like pancakes for breakfast. Biaggi's Swiss-Italian granddaddy loved her risotto with mushrooms.

The Biaggis moved from Switzerland to France when he was just 5 years old. That's when his parents began entertaining regularly, often to raise money for charitable causes.

"In France, it is very common to invite friends over for a dinner party," Biaggi says.

His parents' parties often had themes. For their



**Reto Biaggi and some of his staff relax outside the kitchen at Reto's Kitchen, in the heart of Greensboro's historic Lindley Park. From left: John Navarro Pendergraft, Amanda Row, Reto Biaggi and Chris Clegg.**



**From left: Housemade Petite Macarons (with chocolate mousse and pastry cream), Creme Brulee Spoons (inspired by France and perfected in Reto's Kitchen), Mini Lemon Tartlets and Mini Chocolate Mousse Bites.**

housewarming party, they had guests plant trees in the yard. On Bastille Day, the French national holiday, they placed signs and flags in front of their home to replicate City Hall. His father dressed up as the mayor.

"My dad was the one who liked having parties the most. He was always generous when it came to parties, celebrations, having dinner. He always

pulled out the best wines, rented the best places and ordered the nice menus," Biaggi recalls.

It was his dad who taught him to work hard and be generous, he says.

Biaggi remembers at age 12 melting a wheel of Swiss raclette cheese over the fireplace in the kitchen. He knew then that he wanted to be a chef. That desire was reinforced by his family's extensive travels to Africa, Asia and throughout Europe. They stayed in luxury hotels and ate in fine restaurants. Those were strong memories for a child, inspiring him to dream of one day creating his own exquisite dishes, he says.

Their travels, combined with his parents' love for entertaining led him to his life's work.

"What my parents taught me was hospitality and the pleasure it can be to serve others," Biaggi says. "I cater because I make people happy. And it's fun!"

Tina Firesheets has been a journalist, an editor and freelance writer. She now works in school P.R. and continues to write for various publications. Her favorite assignments are those that involve food — especially ethnic cuisine.