

# 10-Mile Gathers the Best of the East End

by Heather Buchanan



Heather Buchanan contributing editor of HC&G, Russ Steele, Pamela Eldridge Publisher of HC&G and Meg Salem of Saunders Real Estate.

As any successful chef knows, the best dishes are made by using the finest ingredients. The Harvest 10-Mile Dinners presented by Hamptons Cottages and Gardens combined delectable food from the East End's top chefs, fine Long Island wines with vintners present to give tasting notes and gorgeous homes to host the dinner guests. Throw in a generous helping of great conversation and a splash of a spectacular sunset and you have a truly memorable meal.

The dinners are part of the second annual Harvest East End, the weekend long fundraising events focused on preserving our working farms and vineyards with proceeds going to the Peconic Land Trust, Group For The East End, and East End Hospice.



Dinner hosts Josiane and Conrad Goerl.

We were lucky enough to attend the Long Island Merlot Alliance Dinner with Chef Joe Isidori of Bridgehampton's Southfork Kitchen presiding and Giles Martin providing the wine notes. The stunning setting was the waterfront home of Conrad and Josiane Goerl in East Hampton. Architect Nick Martin created a modern marvel on the bay in Northwest Harbor, incorporating the natural setting and green technology to meld indoor and outdoor spaces for incredible views -- not to mention one of the most beautiful and sleek wine cellars around.

We had the distinct honor of sitting with hosts WNPR's Faith Middleton and Fern Berman (her beautiful photographs are on view at the Comerford Collection in Bridgehampton.) If you are a journalist and foodie this is like dining with royalty. Faith who is a fan of the East End's seasonal and simple food welcomed the gathering and thanked our hosts with a hosanna nod to the architect of the stunning home. (Readers may remember the professional style kitchen of this home which won a 2011 HC&G Innovation in Design award for Martin Architects.)



Joe Isidori of Southfork Kitchen preparing the food tasting.

Everyone toasted bon appétit to the feast all sourced within ten miles of the Hamptons.

Chef Joe Isidori pledged his commitment to sustainable seafood harvested in an ocean friendly manner and sourcing 90% of his produce for his menu from Long Island farms. He also pointed to 45 Long Island Wines on the list at Southfork Kitchen.

The evening began with Napeague Oysters with Wolffer Verjus and cilantro accompanied by Sherwood House Vineyards 2007 Blanc de Blancs. Giles explained the sparkling wine is made in the “methode champenoise” with a second fermentation in the bottle. He noted that 2007 was a stellar year on the East End rivaled only by 2010 whose fine vintages are maturing as we speak. Having worked around the world from France to Australia to California, Giles arrived on the East End in 1997 and over the years has seen a new generation of serious wine players come to the region.



Lindsey Landes, Faith Middleton and Fern Berman.

The Local Lobster Garden Salad With Organic Buttermilk was a huge hit, especially with the unexpected hint of blue cheese. The accompanying Clovis Point 2007 Barrel-Fermented Chardonnay peaked Faith's interest with a note of sherry which Giles attributed to the aging in French Oak which gave a hint of vanilla.

A Smoked Jurgielewicz Duck Breast with Sagaponack Potatoes, Picholine Olive and Anchovy was perfectly paired with the host Long Island Merlot Alliance's 2008 Merliance. The Merlot Alliance creates what Giles calls "a regional portrait" where Merlot grapes are gathered from numerous vineyards and combined by five winemakers under the label Merliance. When asked if it's difficult to have so many opinions on the wine Giles smiled, "We're not lawyers, we can agree."

A Sheep's Milk Yogurt Panna Cotta with Hasley Farm's Peaches and Blueberries finished the meal with a Wolffer Estate Vineyard 2010 Dios Late Harvest Chardonnay Ice Wine. Sweets for the sweet.

The beauty of these enchanted evenings is also the chance to meet wonderful people and share everything from a third generation eggplant recipe from Joe Isidori's grandmother to Faith's secret love of Stouffer's Swedish Meatballs to another guest's desire to be like the Duchess of Devonshire and raise chickens. The guests may have arrived at this elegant fundraising dinner strangers, but over the course of an evening fine food and wine, emerged friends.