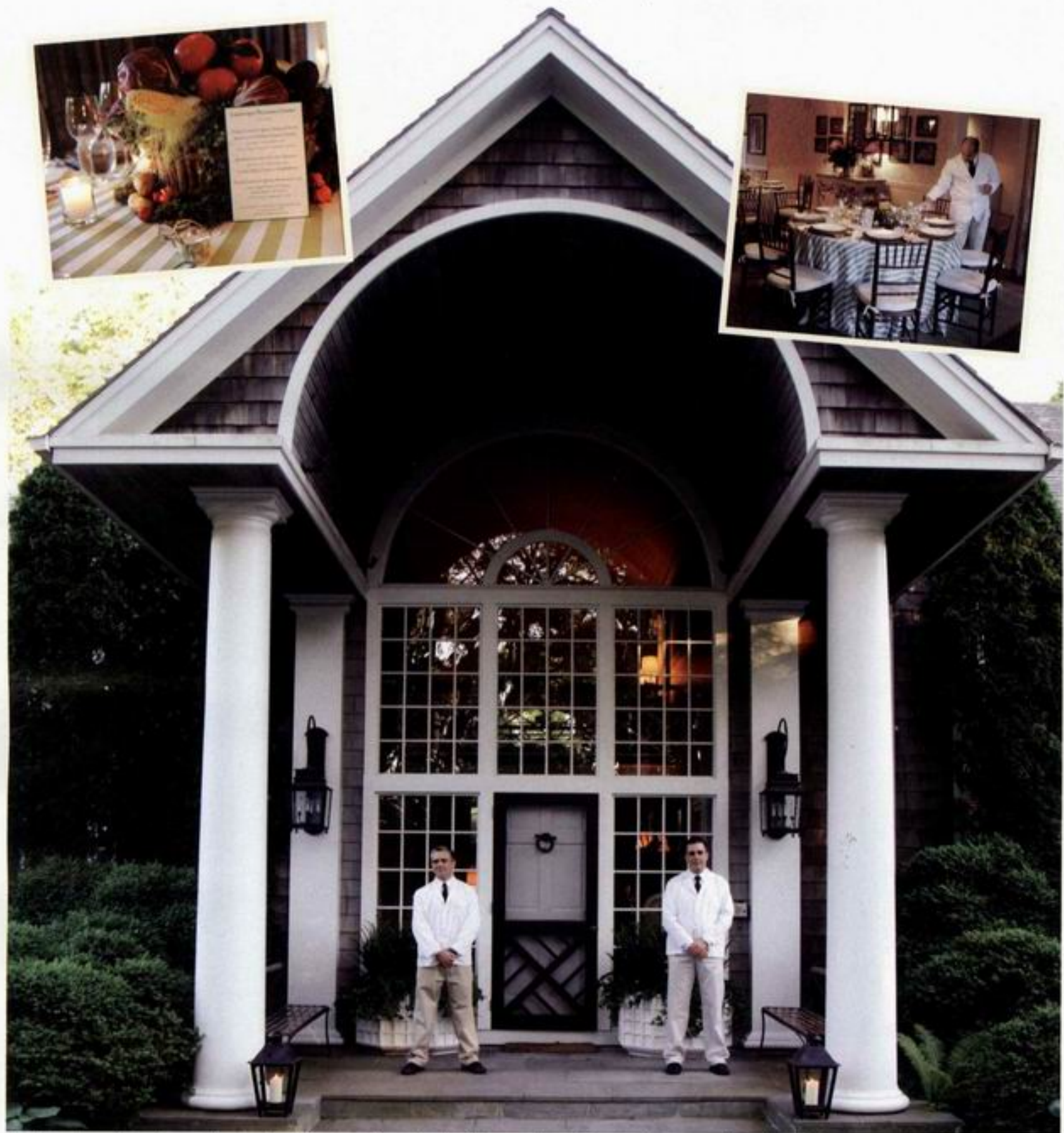


Welcome to Charlotte's Web

On a sultry early-summer evening, ultragracious interior-design supernova **Charlotte Moss** hosted a festive dinner at her East Hampton home, to fête the Parrish Art Museum's Landscape Pleasures weekend.

by Jason Oliver Nixon ~ photographs by Zev Starr-Tambor



A welcoming entrance to a perfect party: the front portico at the East Hampton home of interior designer and Landscape Pleasures cochair Charlotte Moss and her husband, Barry Friedberg.



A bird's-eye view of the party in full swing.

On Your Mark...

Mark Sanné, the director of culinary education at Loaves & Fishes Cookshop in Bridgehampton, wowed partygoers with the simply chic, super-summery meal he prepared. So, what was it like cooking for the revered Alice Waters?

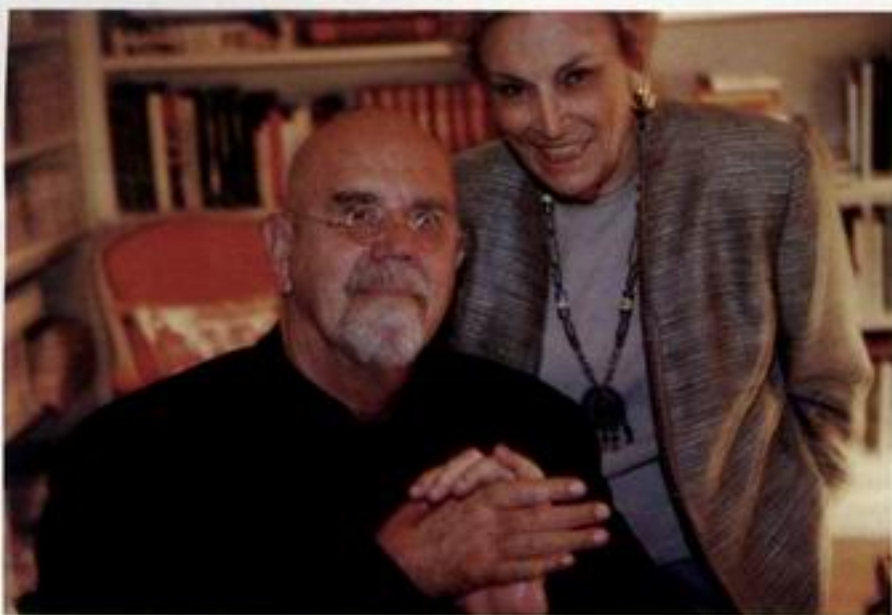
COOKING FOR ALICE WATERS WAS THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME, as she's one of my culinary idols—I was so honored that Charlotte Moss entrusted me with this project. The theme of this year's Landscape Pleasures was the Edible Garden, and since Alice is one of the foremost proponents of organic produce and locally grown foods, I tried to create a menu taking advantage of the wonderful bounty and variety we have on the East End. However, as the dinner took place in early June, the choices for produce were a bit more limited—especially since the weather didn't cooperate. Flexibility is the key, as you can always substitute an ingredient if another becomes unavailable.

I created a very simple menu featuring the freshest and tastiest of our local ingredients, and cooked them in a way that would highlight their intrinsic flavors, colors, and textures—the ingredients were the stars, not the techniques. The gorgeous organic produce came from two of my favorite sources: the **Green Thumb** in Water Mill (829 Montauk Highway, 726-1900) and **Satur Farms** in Cutchogue (3705 Alvah's Lane, 734-4219). They always amaze and delight me with their variety and superb quality. In addition to the greens for the salad, I was lucky enough to use some of the

delicious Shawondasee tomme cheese, handmade by Art Ludlow of **Mecox Bay Dairy** (855 Mecox Road, Bridgehampton, 537-0335).

I think the best chickens in the world come from **Iacono Farms** in East Hampton (106 Long Lane, 324-1107). Their flavor and texture can't be beat, and always make even the simplest of dishes stand out. I roasted them with Peconic Bay Riesling from my favorite wine store, **Wines by Morrell** in East Hampton (Montauk Highway, 324-1230), and seasoned them with Murray River Apricot Flake Salt from my spice company, Global Palate, available at **Loaves & Fishes Cookshop** in Bridgehampton (2422 Montauk Highway, 537-6066).

Finally, the perfect ending to an early-summer meal: the beautiful strawberries I got from another one of my favorite farm stands, **Jim Pike's** in Sagaponack (Sagg Main Street). I combined them with a gorgeous homemade saffron-and-black-pepper ice cream, drizzled with a 75-year-old traditional aged balsamic vinegar and topped off with amazing cardamom-pistachio *tailes* prepared by my sous-chef and fellow instructor at Loaves & Fishes, Jeanne Cuddy-Peretz.



Fresh Strawberries with Ice Cream, Aged Balsamic, and Black Pepper

SERVES 6-8

- 1 quart ripe strawberries, washed, hulled, and cut in half (if large)
- 1 100 ml bottle of aged traditional balsamic vinegar
(Note: Be prepared—a bottle can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$200, but will go a long way.)
- 1 pint of your favorite vanilla ice cream, softened slightly
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Thin, crispy cookies to garnish

Divide the prepared strawberries into 6 to 8 portions and place them into martini glasses. Scoop a small ball of the softened vanilla ice cream on top of the strawberries. Placing your thumb partly over the opening of the bottle, drizzle the berries and ice cream with a teaspoon of the balsamic, then grind a few twists of black pepper on top. Place thin cookies in the ice cream in a "V" shape, and serve immediately.





The Lay of the Land

Hamptons sat down with Charlotte Moss, the interior-design whiz and cochair of the Parrish Art Museum's annual Landscape Pleasures horticultural event, to find out how to plan the perfect party for a stellar cause.

HAMPTONS: Tell us a bit about the Parrish Art Museum's event—what was it, and what were you trying to convey?

CHARLOTTE MOSS: This was a dinner party in honor of the museum's Landscape Pleasures speakers Rosalind Creasy, Scott Chaskey, and Brian Halweil; the renowned keynote speaker, chef Alice Waters of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California; and the patrons and garden owners who graciously offered their own gardens for the tour.

H: How many people attended?

CM: Thirty-two for dinner.

H: What kept the party moving along?

CM: The theme was the Edible Garden, and the group was united by shared interests in gardening, great food, and the Parrish Art Museum.

H: Did you achieve what you wanted with the evening?

CM: Yes, there's been great feedback, and we had new people taking part. Our goals were to increase the audience for the new museum and strengthen our outreach, and this was accomplished.

H: Who were some of the boldfaced names who attended?

CM: Alice Waters, gardening author Rosalind Creasy, artist Chuck Close and his wife, Leslie, *Garden Design* editor Donna Dorian, and landscape architect Deborah Nevins.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Charlotte Moss dresses for a floral occasion; a colorful centerpiece by Jennifer Houser; legendary chef Alice Waters of Chez Panisse holds court. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Fred Seegal and Parrish Art Museum Director Trudy Kramer; enjoying wine in the living room before dinner; Chuck Close and Parrish Art Museum trustee Mildred Brinn.

"To invite someone to one's table is to assume responsibility for his happiness



The Perfect Summer Cocktail

Charlotte Moss is a wine person, and recommends Domaines Ott Rosé for great summer lunches and picnics. But when she opts for a cocktail, her favorite is a classic vodka gimlet. We turned to John Cavallaro, bar manager of Della Femina in East Hampton, for his take on the vodka gimlet.

The Della Femina Gimlet

6 ounces Grey Goose vodka
Splash of simple syrup
Juice of one lime
One lime, sliced (for garnish)

Combine ingredients in an ice-filled shaker and shake. Pour into glass. Garnish with a slice of lime.

during the time he is under your roof.”—Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin



Music Matters

CHARLOTTE MOSS CLUES US IN ON HOW A PRO HANDLES PARTY MUSIC.



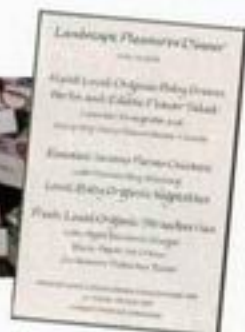
Music goes through **phases** at a party. I like a **lively remix** of vocal and instrumental during cocktails, and only very even **instrumental with a tempo** during dinner. Music has a **nice way** of making the shoulders drop, filling the gaps, and otherwise providing the audio portion of the **backdrop**.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Chef Mark Sanné of Bridgehampton's Leaves & Fishes Cookshop works his magic in the kitchen; Chuck Close contemplates the Iacono Farms roasted chicken as Charlotte Moss looks on; Alice Waters has an animated conversation with Jordan Wright; the abundant organic produce of the East End takes center stage.

God Is in the Details

According to Moss, every single particular of a party must have your undivided attention, including the:

- Invitations and stamped envelopes
- Linens
- Table decorations
- Centerpieces
- Flowers
- Place cards
- Food
- Hand towels



OTHER TIPS:

Remember that it's all about the mix—whether it's a good cocktail or the best placement of guests at the table.

- As the hostess, you should always be relaxed, or your guests won't be.
- Knock yourself out.
- Have fun! The rest will follow.
- Go al fresco as much as possible.
- Make the ambience more casual and relaxed. Find things in your own garden and at roadside vegetable stands—whatever is fresh and local.
- Try decorating with dozens of lanterns hanging from the trees—they'll give the appearance of fireflies, and make the underside of the trees glow.

