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[Local chefs share cooking expertise in learning events](#)

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Local chefs share cooking expertise in learning events

BLADE TO KNUCKLE -

Jude DeLorca

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WHEAT RIDGE –

On a recent Tuesday evening exclamations of “Hot pan!” and “Behind you!, and exhortations of “Blade to knuckle!” rang loud and clear amid the sociable laughter and intense concentration as participants in the third Green Apron ICE (Inter-active Culinary Experience) clustered around the kitchen in a private home in Wheat Ridge.

Clad in the signature green apron of the school, complete with his own custom tasting spoon, J.R. Johnson, dedicated self-taught cook and gourmand stated, “It’s more than a cooking class – Chef Deb Moodey and I fashioned

this as teaching culinary techniques within the scope of a social atmosphere of a prepared sit-down dinner and wine-pairing in a private home.”

Professional local Chef Deb Moodey added, “It’s about passionate cooks who love sharing recipes and expertise with other cooks of any skill level.” Chef Moodey has earned her chops over a 30-year culinary career that included owning her own restaurant and bearing the toque as Executive Chef in many leading local houses.

Uniquely presented in the elegant and inviting Wheat Ridge home of Jerry Danner, who graciously hosts (and participates) at each event, his chef’s dream kitchen and wrap-around counter is an ideal setting for ICE participants. With plenty of room to maneuver on counter tops, chopping boards, and the kitchen range, the green aproned participant and guests observed, added, and interacted amid candlelight and kitchen flood lights; artwork and chopped prep; international music and the constant call and response of the chef and student – the evening flowed as the night’s menu evolved.

At the appetizer table, a wicker basket contained individual herb pots prepared by Wheat Ridge’s Southwest Gardens for taking home with instruction on the care and the use of each.

In beautiful calligraphy script, Chef Deb had prepared an easel menu and individual hand-lettered recipe cards for each participant and guest to start their culinary library. Every class features a full menu from start to finish. The three ICEs to date have featured a main entrée prepared two or three ways to emphasize creativity. This ICE event features bacon & black pepper salmon, filet mignon and salmon filet mignon with grapefruit & anise, paired with black quinoa & kale with feta & arugula yukons. Last ICE it was three pastas, all handmade at the event: butternut squash ravioli with saffron pasta; black pepper tagliatelle with alfredo sauce; and spinach gnocchi.

Sommeliers Brian and Kim Slanovich, owners of the highly- acclaimed boutique TOAST! Wine & Spirits in the heart of northwest Denver’s Berkeley neighborhood, and the 2010 winner of ABC’s 7 A-List Best of Denver for #1 Wine Shop, host the wine pairing for each menu selection. With incredible attention to detail, they introduce complete information on the grape, the terroir, the history, and alternatives. This evening’s pairings included aperitifs, sherries, full body cabs, vovvays, sauvignon blancs, and a luscious apricot moscato d’asti.

The participants gather around as each step of preparation is carefully explained and executed by Chef Moodey and by J.R. – to be replicated by the guests who would like to try their hand. Knife skills are covered from the beginning – “blade to knuckle” is the mantra ... hand bends, blade against and not higher than the second knuckle.

Most people meet up for the first time at each event and a rich diversity creates good conversation. Green Apron has fueled more than one “first date” as well as friendships that continue beyond the initial event.

“It’s so easy to have something to talk about – everyone prepares and eats the same delicious food,” explained one young guest. This Tuesday evening event brought together individuals as diverse as a healthcare executive, ranch owner, middle school principal, forensic accident investigator, real estate salesman, endodontist, furniture designer, auto body and frame owner, mixologist, professional chef, construction restitution renovator, surgical assistant, and a Capitol Hill City Hall insider – all found a common meeting ground in the passion for cooking and creating that Chef Deb loves to nurture.

“I didn’t expect it to be this fun; I want to come to all of them,” declared a caregiver nurse practitioner. The 4th ICE scheduled on December 14th is filled but Chef Moodey could add another Tuesday evening for December if demand requires it. Bookings are open in the new year for Tuesday, Jan. 11 and Friday, January 28.

Each event is limited to only eight participants at \$65 per person per event, which with chefs, host and guest, sommelier, brings a total social gathering of 12 or 13, a perfect number to fill two tables with china and silver. On this night the creative floral centerpiece was created by Rosie of the Englewood family-owned Banister’s Flowers. Spray of exquisite nosegays, jewel-toned flowers were each individually wrapped to take home.

At each setting, a handmade chocolate truffle from Roberta's Chocolates on W. 29th sealed the evening's dessert of zabaglione custard w/salted caramel sauce.

Chef Deb plated first displaying the art of the presentation – and each guest in turn plates for another guest. Seated at the candlelit tables, flushed with the success of a good meal, Sommelier Kim poured a glass and toasted to a great collective bonhomie.

Green Apron – ICE

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Generally- Tuesdays 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

\$65/pp per event

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