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BAYOU BAKERY'S
DAVID GUAS



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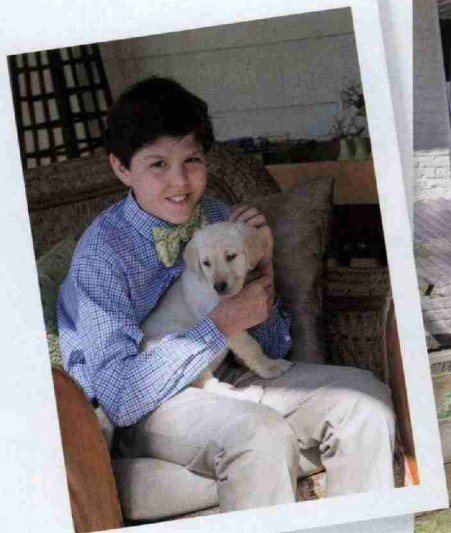


David Guas and his family bring New Orleans
to DC with fabulous food and curated style

BY DAVID HAGEDORN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFFREY HODGDON

PRIVATE TOUR



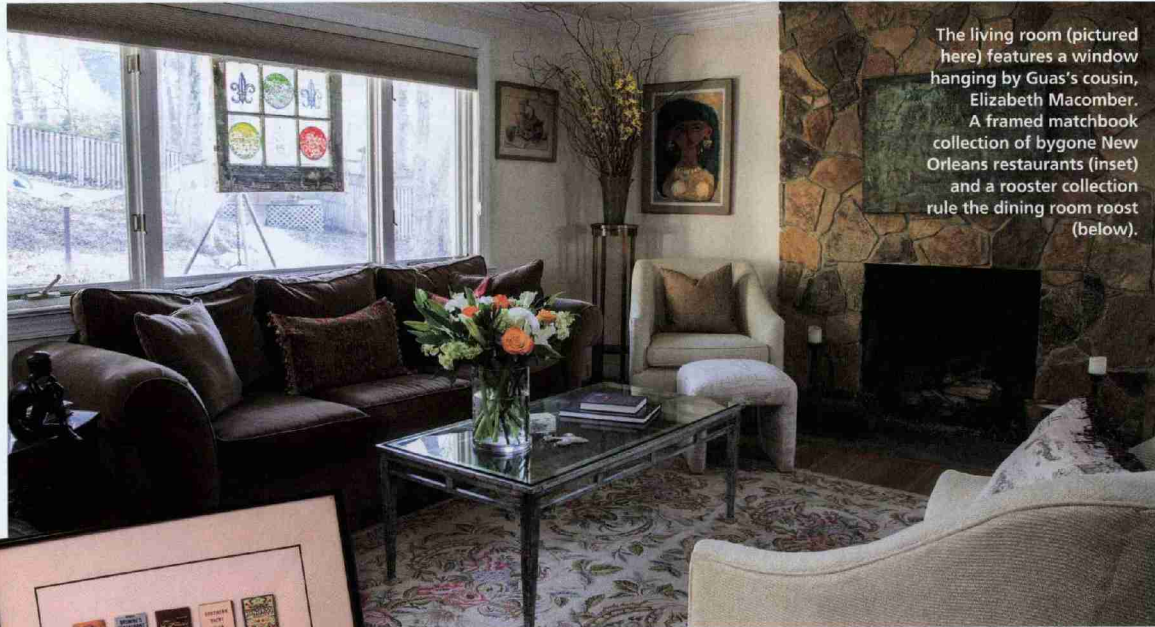
It's suppertime in the McLean home of David Guas, the chef and owner of Bayou Bakery in Arlington, and the smell of cornbread fills the kitchen. Guas stands at the stove vigorously whisking stone-ground white cornmeal, sourced from George Washington's grist mill in Mount Vernon, into a pot of boiling water. His 10-year-old son, Spencer, taking time out from playing with the family's Labrador puppy, Roux, mashes garlic with a mortar and pestle. That will be part of the Worcestershire-based sauce for shrimp skewers that Guas will barbecue outside on a wood-burning Cowboy Cauldron grill he ignites with a spray of fire from an industrial blowtorch.

On a dusk-lit, screened porch just off the kitchen, Guas's wife, PR maven Simone Rathlé, sets the table with cobalt blue camp plates, sky-blue Mason jar glasses, a whitewashed picket basket of napkins depicting street maps of the couple's native New Orleans and a birch vase of cheery sunflowers.

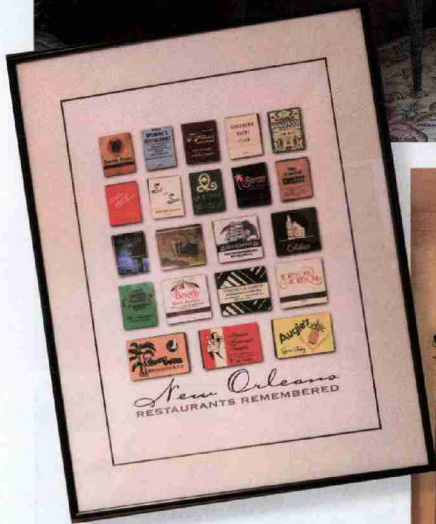
Considering his calm demeanor, you wouldn't know that Guas is in the middle of opening a second Bayou Bakery (this one on Capitol Hill) and promoting a new cookbook, *Grill Nation* (Oxmoor House, New York; April 28, 2015). He is as cool as the cucumber that his other son, 12-year-old Kemp, slices to add some zing



Previous page: David Guas, Simone Rathlé and sons Kemp (left) and Spencer on their front porch in McLean. This page: Kemp holds Roux, the family's new Labrador puppy (top, left). Guas sets the grate over his backyard Cowboy Cauldron grill (top, right). The boys help with dinner preparations (above) in the kitchen that opens to the dining room.



The living room (pictured here) features a window hanging by Guas's cousin, Elizabeth Macomber. A framed matchbook collection of bygone New Orleans restaurants (inset) and a rooster collection rule the dining room roost (below).



*"We love to go picking.
We bought all our
furniture together."*

—DAVID GUAS



to lemon iced tea. (The cookbook is filled with simple-to-prepare dishes and tips for home cooks and was inspired by Guas's TV show, "American Grilled," which aired on the Travel Channel last year.)

Guas's home kitchen is small, especially by chef standards, but efficient. The Viking four-burner range, Bosch refrigerator and dishwasher form a tight work triangle. A panoply of pots, pans and utensils hangs

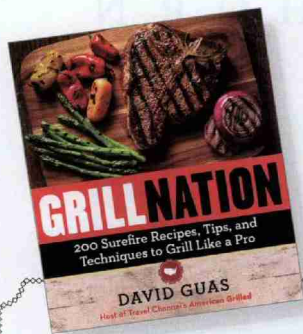
from racks over the sink. On the blond granite countertop is a collection of salts, honeys and sorghums, with even more of those things packed into the maple cabinets above. (Guas is the spokesperson for the National Honey Board.)

Guas and Rathlé met in 1998 at the construction site of Washington's DC Coast restaurant. Chef Jeff Tunks, who had previously been Guas's boss at the

Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans, lured Guas to DC to take the opening pastry position. Not only did the couple have New Orleans in common, but the hotel, too—Rathlé had once been its in-house publicist.

The two married in 1999 and moved into a small house in Arlington. Once Kemp was born in 2002, they realized they needed a larger abode. They bought

PRIVATE TOUR



David Guas's FAMILY BARBECUE

Grilled New Orleans-Style BBQ
Shrimp on the Cowboy Cauldron,
served with
Stone-Ground White Corn Grits
Cast-Iron Cornbread
Lemon-Lime Icebox Pie
with Almond Cream
Iced Tea with Cucumber & Lemon

their 1950s five-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom rambler, set back on a spacious wooded corner lot, on Mother's Day in 2003.

The furnishings of their home reflect an eclectic country style centering on comfort, tradition and memories. "We love to go picking," says Guas. "We bought all the furniture together. The two hutches in the dining room, the church pew next to the living room. We found someone to make the dining room table (from reclaimed oak barn floor planks) at the Georgetown flea market." Adirondack chairs around the table came from a furniture maker near Lake Placid, where Rathlé once had a client.

Paintings by Rathlé's father, Raymond, hang on the walls and many of his Persian carpets adorn the floors. The hutches display treasured gifts from Guas's mother, among them plates from the Roosevelt Hotel and Galatoire's in New Orleans.

The garage is filled with acquisitions for the new Bayou Bakery that Guas and Rathlé purchased last summer on a trip along the Civil War Trail from New Orleans to Vicksburg and onward to Washington. The bakery's building on Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, was a carriage house for the first Civil



War naval hospital (now the Hill Center), whose land Lincoln sanctioned. A centerpiece is a large metal chandelier custom-made in Alabama that bears a lesser-known Lincoln quote: "I can make generals, but horses are expensive."

New Orleans's trademark symbol, the fleur-de-lis, makes numerous appearances in the Guas home, as do red-combed roosters of various sizes and ilks: porcelain vases, straw baskets, painted goblets, metal sculptures, glass figurines, lamp shades.

"Roosters are signs of hospitality," says Rathlé. That is something in great abundance at the Guases'. ♦

Writer David Hagedorn is based in Washington, DC. Geoffrey Hodgdon is a photographer in Deale, Maryland.

The Guas family reads the porch table for a casual weeknight supper (pictured here) after the chef has grilled the shrimp and prepared the sauce (left, top and bottom). All the recipes are in Guas's new cookbook (far left), *Grill Nation*.



