

Charlotte

DECEMBER 2018

# HOMIE

DESIGN & DECOR<sup>®</sup>



## GREAT GATHERINGS

A "FAMILY" AFFAIR  
TWINE & TWIG STYLE

**PLUS:**

DINE BY DESIGN  
WITH BARRIE BENSON

DESIGN-INSPIRED GIFTING

Contributor

SOUL  
FOOD



J I M  
N O B L E



FOOD +  
FELLOWSHIP

**G**rowing up, Christmas was my favorite. And it wasn't because of the presents. It was because I liked food. A lot. Our family gathered together every Christmas afternoon around – what seemed to a teenage football player – an unlimited supply of food. I always went back for seconds. And thirds.

There was green bean casserole or asparagus casserole. Ham and turkey. The turkey of my youth wasn't very good – the birds were too big back then – but it was great in a sandwich with stuffing and gravy.

My Aunt Esther would make a brown sugar pound cake. She and her husband, Uriah, worked at a bakery in Virginia. She'd also make lemon tarts and little pecan pies. Uncle Uriah was the donut guy. He could crack four eggs at a time; he'd put two in each hand, smack them together, crack them open, and toss them. Over and over. It was rhythmic and mesmerizing.

The holidays are special for their ability to create memories like these, specific ones that seem to center around food but are really rooted in fellowship. People that don't usually cook much during the year start cooking and baking. Everybody pulls out those special family recipes, the ones where if you get the faintest whiff of them cooking, it will instantly take you back to childhood. Maybe even the mere mention of them can do that.

Peanut butter cookies. See?

Here's another one: my dad always did what he called a "whitewash gravy" for the turkey. The name for this giblet gravy comes from his childhood, which involved a lot of painting. His dad was a preacher; all of the kids in his family painted or hung wallpaper to help the family make ends meet. I still make this gravy now, though I've adapted it over the years.

Being in the restaurant business makes getting together around the holidays a little harder. I've been working weekends and holidays pretty much since college, and we usually hold our staff holiday party in January, when the pace slows.





We do what we can, though, to reserve time for fellowship with friends and family. That usually means keeping it simple. We'll smoke a prime rib roast and open a really good bottle of wine. My daughter will make a broccoli casserole, and we'll have mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, turnips, and some kind of greens. Nothing complicated. To do otherwise would be to miss the point.

Sometimes, we'll rush through the holidays and get so worn out that we're happy when it's over instead of being happy when it's happening. Whatever your entertaining calendar looks like this year,

try to slow down enough to make room for those memories to be created. Christmas only comes but once a year, after all. ♦

Chef Jim Noble is the executive chef and owner of Noble Food & Pursuits. His belief in providing restoration through food led him to launch The King's Kitchen, a non-profit restaurant in Uptown Charlotte, as well as the Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center. These days, you'll likely find Chef Noble sitting at Table 11 in Rooster's SouthPark working on his latest projects, Noble Smoke, Copain, and Bossy Beaut's, which are set to open in early 2019. For more information, visit [www.noblefoodandpursuits.com](http://www.noblefoodandpursuits.com).