

AS PROPRIETRESS OF THE FARMHOUSE, MARIE NYGREN REINFORCES FARM-TO-TABLE MOVEMENT, AUTHENTIC SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY & FAMILY HERITAGE

Serenbe's Co-Founder Returns to the Historic Kitchen, Advances Use of Local and Organic Ingredients in Southern Cuisine

Chattahoochee Hills, GA (March 11, 2009) -- The Farmhouse, located in the Inn at Serenbe, has received much critical acclaim, including a recent glowing review in the *New York Times*, for its farm-to-table approach—serving beloved recipes made with farm-fresh organic ingredients grown just steps away. Marie Nygren, who founded Serenbe with her husband Steve, and operated it with the family as a bed-and-breakfast before the community developed, is returning to her kitchen in the historic home as proprietress to guide the art of southern cuisine utilizing local products.

“When we first opened the dining room at the bed-and-breakfast, our three young daughters, Garnie, Kara and Quinn, helped Steve and me prepare dishes using ingredients from our little organic garden out back. Guests loved it—we were serving authentic, healthy Southern comfort food,” says Marie. “Now, two of our daughters have graduated from college and returned to work at Serenbe, and we have a successful organic farm supplying bountiful produce. We never could have imagined how our family business would grow, but we realize those early days were a glimpse of the future.”

The menu will be rich with Southern delicacies straight from Marie’s storied recipe box, prepared in a style that highlights the flavor and nutrients of farm-fresh produce. While the entrees and complementary sides embody Atlanta’s rich culinary heritage, there are updated cooking styles that can lead to a healthier, more fresh-tasting outcome than traditional Southern cooking methods. Explains Marie, “For example, my mother would cook collard greens in fatback for hours before serving them. I, however, simply sauté them in some garlic and olive oil. The result is my collards are fresher tasting and far healthier. And you may feel more inclined to pair it with a good wine rather than sweet tea.”

The weekly-changing menu reflects what is ripe from the Serenbe Organic Farm and what is available from other local purveyors. During heavy growing season (April – November), it’s likely that every bite consumed will include something from the Serenbe Farm. “Whether in the restaurants at Serenbe or in our home, we enjoy watching people’s reactions as they taste locally-grown, freshly-harvested food. If you’ve never had an egg that was gathered that same morning, or a turnip or tomato that was picked yesterday, tasting it for the first time is like coming home,” says Marie.

The atmosphere at The Farmhouse reflects a return to family and community—patrons often comment that dining there feels like having dinner in the home of a gracious Southern hostess. “The kitchen at The Farmhouse literally was my family’s kitchen when we lived in the historic home, which now serves as the Inn at Serenbe’s main house. I love that it still has that warm authenticity,” says Marie.

Many diners may fondly remember Marie’s mother, Margaret Lupo, and her days as the owner of famed Mary Mac’s Tea Room in Midtown Atlanta. “When mother owned Mary Mac’s, it was the one restaurant that every Southern politician visited when he came to Atlanta—you could walk in on any given day and see a table of senators from Tifton and Moultrie or even former President Carter enjoying a plate of soul food,” remembers Marie. “What Mary Mac’s had—that Southern comfort that exuded an easy grace—has always been our vision for The Farmhouse. Even though mother was serving 350 people, she always treated it as her private dining room. I’m excited that we can share that authentic Southern hospitality with our patrons as well.”

On Thursday through Saturday nights, The Farmhouse serves a weekly-changing menu, determined by Marie and her daughter Garnie Nygren (who serves as Director of Operations for Serenbe). Dinner features a small, seasonal a la carte menu with appetizer, entrée and dessert options. “Fried Chicken Sundays” have become a beloved tradition at The Farmhouse — patrons often comment that the Farmhouse’s fried chicken is the “best they’ve ever had” and “true, southern fried chicken). It is served with seasonal sides with a dessert option.

The Farmhouse has a full bar with “two for one” happy hours Thursday – Saturday, 4 – 6 p.m.

The Farmhouse is located in the Inn at Serenbe at 10950 Hutcheson Ferry Road the the city of Chattahoochee Hills. The restaurant has received critical acclaim for its farm-to-table approach, has been featured in the New York Times, Bon Appetit & Gourmet, and was named a “Best New Restaurant” in 2007 by Atlanta Magazine. The Farmhouse accepts reservations Thursday – Saturday, 5 – 9 p.m., and Sunday, noon – 5 p.m. Reservations are highly recommended; call 770.463.2622. Serenbe is a 1,000-acre community that’s home to the Serenbe Organic Farms, three critically-acclaimed restaurants (Blue Eyed Daisy Bakeshop, The Farmhouse and The Hil), art galleries, original boutiques, and private residences. The community is recognized as a national model for environmentally responsible development. Serenbe is located approximately 30 miles southwest of Atlanta; directions are found at www.serenbe.com.