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Twenty-first century **Flash Soirées**, where celebrity chefs stage one-night-only parties in borrowed venues, are standing restaurateurship on its head.

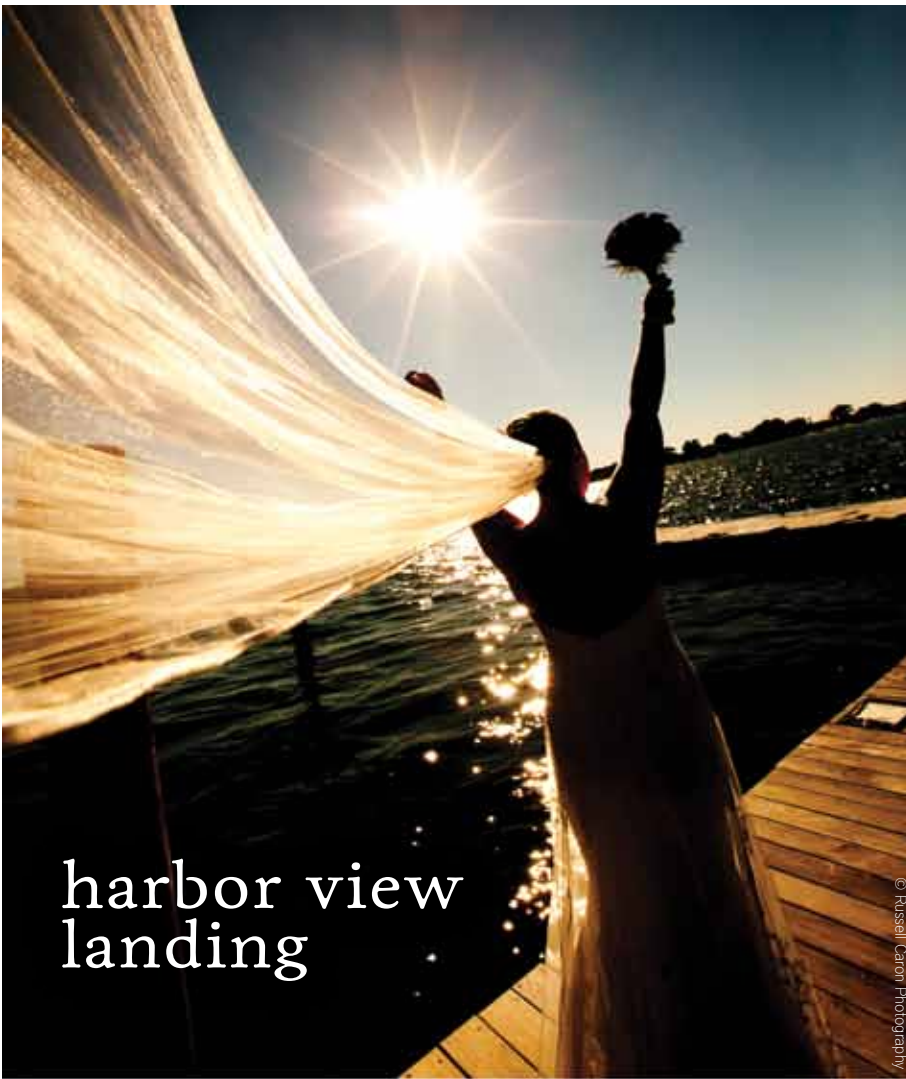
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Feasts



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Here's a new buzz word for your urban lexicon: **POCKET BRUNCH**, a monthly experimental meal/experience, is the brainchild of four local foodies. Katie Schier-Potocki, husband Josh Potocki, Joel Beauchamp, and Nathaniel Meiklejohn have so far pulled off three flash soirées and plan to continue into the spring.

Want to join in? Diners eager to join the spontaneous event buy tickets from their website, pocketbrunch.com, for \$30-\$50.

The drive here, Katie says, "is celebrating this very cool creative community. We live and work among some very talented chefs."

Each event, vibrant and intimate, showcases a guest chef. "The July Brunch was at Joel's house," Katie says. "We went with a twist on a classic brunch. We worked with Rocco Salvatore Talarico to come up with some classics that pushed the limits a bit."

"The one at Nosh in September was really great. We decked it out with all sorts of 'curiosities' to fit the theme. Jason Loring was our feature chef, and he created an 'edible ocean-in-a-jar' dish, with sea bass, peri-winkles, mussels, and crispy seaweed."

The October event surprises guests with the artistry of Karl Deuben of Miyake, conducted in the borrowed venue of Broadturn Farm in Scarborough. Anticipation ran high. So many diners love his contemporary Japanese fusion cuisine at Miyake (and before that Hugo's, the former Aubergine Bistro, and in Chicago, Alinea). In another setting, what will he surprise them with?

Immediately upon arrival, it's apparent to guests that Pocket Brunch is not a typical late Sunday breakfast. October's adventure brings foodies to Broadturn Farm in Scarborough, the home of hosts John Bliss and Stacy Brenner, who graciously offer the grounds and assist in preparation. Matching the backdrop, the month's theme is "Farmhands."

Guests mingle around the property, sipping cocktails masterfully implemented by Nathaniel in a rustic farm stand bar. The cocktail menu offers "The Green Fist," a Bloody Mary-inspired mix of ginger-infused Hendrick's, cucumber-wasabi purée, lime juice, and ginger beer kept cool with a Sriracha ice cube. The "Farm Hand's Mimosa" blends scotch, cherry heering, Carpano Antica, and fresh orange juice, made fizzy with a sparkling white.

In between snacking on tasty pre-meal bites, which includes hand-pressed cider, fresh doughnuts, beet-red velvet muffins topped with goat cheese frosting and walnuts, and fire-smoked bacon, diners pick bouquets from the farm's flower fields. On the lawn, teams of guests face off at *kubb*, a Swedish game in which players attempt to knock down wooden blocks by tossing thick dowels across the field.

At the end of a championship round of this enthralling combination of lawn darts and bowling, Katie emerges from the barn to invite guests in to feast. The doors roll open to expose two long tables, set with fresh cabbage leaves, dainty flowers, and a spread of pickled vegetables fresh from the farm, accompanied by smoked onion dip and a dish of anchovy dust.

These chefs can be enormously creative in their borrowed settings.

The following courses offer a ham and toasted hay soup with three flavoring pastes comprised of acorn, roasted garlic, and parsley. Far from the typical omelet buffet, an egg course presents a potato stick nest, breakfast mayo and *tamago* (a Japanese grilled egg), enveloped by edible nasturtium leaves and topped with homemade ketchup. The meat course introduced a pig-buck sausage corn dog, complemented by maple syrup, sweet potato dipping sauce, and a Broadturn berry sauce.

Dessert has been sitting on the table throughout the meal. Servers bend over the long tables, pulling tiny wildflowers from suspicious-looking "dirt," which is actually gingerbread with rum-caramel pear butter, and offering delicate scoops of buttermilk ice cream. If that isn't cute enough, each attendee is given not a spoon but a tiny plastic shovel to enjoy the final treat.

Deuben is in his element—yet he's not.

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"Our guest chefs are all people we've worked with for years," Josh explains. "We have a great network. They're our friends

These are **guerrilla events.** Like Internet **pop-ups**, guest chefs **hack** into the **status quo.**

who also happen to be amazing cooks."

Collaboration, the group agrees, is the secret to producing these unique culinary experiences. "That's the exciting part," Katie says. "Everybody creates these events together." For starters, they agree on a

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theme, a chef, and a venue, but not necessarily in that order. "One tends to dictate the other two," Joel says. "The theme helps us define a structure for an open-ended five-course meal."

Katie sums up the planning process perfectly. "It's like mad-lib dining."

As for future events, mum's the word. Imagine a flash mob inked into a calendar for 2013. "There are several tiers of mystery we're maintaining with these events," Katie explains. "Nobody knows what's on the menu until they show up. We don't make substitutions. If people have a food allergy, we can figure out how to work with that, but the entire point is for our guests to open themselves up to an experience and relinquish a little control."

"We're providing something different." ■



For more, visit portland-monthly.com/portmag/2012/10/hungry-eye-extras.



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