

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Stone's Cove Kitbar

2403 Centreville Road, Herndon
703-434-3615; www.stonescove.com

Ever notice how most home-based dinner parties naturally gravitate toward the kitchen?

First-time restaurateurs B. J. Stone and Scott Mowrey sure have. And they're hoping to capitalize on the follow-the-food-for-guaranteed-fun phenomenon with their Stone's Cove Kitbar (kitchen + bar) concept.

Stone and Mowrey earned their hospitality stripes in the corporate dining trenches, boasting tours with a who's who of casual dining heavies, including: Cheesecake Factory, TGI Fridays, Bennigan's, Copeland's, Outback and Bonefish Grill.

Stone acknowledges that nostalgia—he was part of the team that introduced Outback to Herndon nearly 20 years ago—helped play a part in returning to Western Fairfax County for his first solo venture, but notes that the community feel and explosive growth informed the decision as well.

"It is a very engaging, sharing environment," Stone says of the informal vibe they're hoping will strike a chord with Stone's Cove patrons.

The restaurant's menu, which was helped along by KOR Food Innovation founder and chef John L. Csukor, shuns epic portions in favor of shareable plates ("Appetapas") and finger foods ("Grabbers").

"We don't even have entrees," Stone explains of the smaller, snappier meals they're betting on to build their brand. Menu selections will include: filet mignon sliders, lobster cones and specialty "box lunches."

They do say the best things come in small packages. *Open for lunch and dinner daily, late-night dining Monday through Saturday.*



RECIPE CENTRAL

GATHER 'ROUND

SUPPER CLUB MAVEN COOKS UP CAMARADERIE

Social media and smart phones are supposed to keep us interconnected with the world around us. Yet each new app/platform/gadget merely adds to the ranks of zombified texters who can't seem to see past their fast-flying thumbs.

Debi Shawcross believes there's a better tool for bringing folks together: the dinner table.

The hospitality pro shares tips on getting reacquainted with home entertaining in "Friends at the Table," a distillation of the cooking and hosting courses Shawcross has taught in Richmond throughout the past decade.

"A supper club really forces you to get together ... it's a committed relationship," Shawcross says of the once-popular get-togethers she's hoping to resurrect.

The book is part supper club primer and part cookbook, beginning with step-by-step instructions—setting budgets, deciding on dress codes, devising clean-up strategies—on establishing your own supper club and graduating to multi-point check lists (see "Countdown to Dinner") designed to preempt any night-of glitches.

Shawcross also shares a treasure trove of recipes, all categorized by season and loosely arranged by complementary culinary threads (farmers market, Southwestern, gourmet classics). Noteworthy selections include: brandied wild mushroom pate, won tons with smoked salmon and wasabi cream, citrus-scented orzo salad with fresh fennel, creamy green chile rice, crispy halibut with lemon-y basil sauce (see full recipe at: www.northernvirginiamag.com/fattfeatures), lemon biscotti cheesecake bars and Italian rum cake with custard filling.

Shawcross recommends keeping fresh bread, cheese, nuts and fruit on hand as a fail-safe snack. —WR

Countdown to Dinner

T-minus: 24 hours

Set your table. Finalize your beer/wine/cocktail pairings.

T-minus: 6 hours

Run/empty your dishwasher. Finalize your play list/music selections.

T-minus: 2 hours

Lay out the bowl/pans/ingredients for meal assembly.

T-minus: 1 hour

Take a shower. Enjoy a glass of wine. Relax/clear your head.

HUNGRY FOR MORE? Preview a few recipes at www.northernvirginiamag.com/fattfeatures

"Friends at the Table: The Ultimate Supper Club Cookbook" by Debi Shawcross. Franklin Green Publishing, 256 pgs., \$24.95