



LET'S MEET

Where: Tashan, 777 S. Broad St., 267-687-2170; mytashan.com

When: Lunch, Monday-Saturday, 12 PM-2:30 PM; dinner, daily starting at 5 PM; brunch, Sunday, 11 AM-2:30 PM

What: Modern Indian cuisine



FAR LEFT: The table is not only for eating: Petrosky (LEFT) and Burke often brainstorm new projects over meals. ABOVE: Chicken vindaloo, a traditional curry dish known for packing heat, is a favorite of Petrosky's. LEFT: Tashan's setting and cuisine pair contemporary design with Indian tradition.

Life of the Party

TV PERSONALITY, CHEF, AND AUTHOR MAUREEN PETROSKY KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT ENTERTAINING, BUT WHEN IT'S HER TURN TO ENJOY A SPECIAL OCCASION, THE BUCKS COUNTY RESIDENT RETREATS TO TASHAN WITH HER SISTER, COLEEN CHRISTIAN BURKE. BY ALEXANDRA LESHNER

If Wonder Woman wore an apron, she'd probably look a lot like Maureen Petrosky. Described as the ultimate hostess, Petrosky is not only a professional chef, sommelier, and food stylist who has been featured on the *Today* show, the Food Network, and CNN; she's also the founding editor of *foodrepublic.com* and author of *The Wine Club: A Month-by-Month Guide to Learning About Wine with Friends*. A passion for food, writing, and entertaining runs in her blood, as we learned when *Philadelphia Style* sat down with the Villanova University alumna and her sister, interior designer and fellow author Coleen Christian Burke, at one of Petrosky's favorite city haunts.

With both of your busy schedules, do you often find time to dine out in the city?

MAUREEN PETROSKY: When we have a chance to get together, it's definitely something special for us. It's hard to find really good Indian

food, and Tashan has a totally different spin on it. It hits on all of the important things: the ambience, good food, and good drinks.

What's for lunch today?

MP: I love the chicken tikka vindaloo and dal roti. The tandoori shrimp and samosa chaat are amazing, and they have a killer crème brûlée.

COLEEN CHRISTIAN BURKE: Since I haven't eaten here before, I'm letting Maureen lead the way—she's the best when it comes to what's trending in food. I really like the gin cocktail they call the Agni.

Has food and entertaining always been a part of your lives?

CCB: Growing up, our table was constantly filled with decorations. Our mom is better than Martha Stewart—we learned everything we know from her. Whether it was a centerpiece, candied apples at Thanksgiving, or candles, there were always beautiful touches on the table. We've

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TOP: Petrosky and Burke toast to future joint ventures. MIDDLE: Fresh-baked naan, in truffle and goat cheese varieties, is perfect for scooping up dal roti. BOTTOM: The Agni cocktail.

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learned you can never have too many decorations; no space should be left untouched.

MP: It could be Valentine's Day, Christmas, Halloween, or even St. Patrick's Day, and our mom will have decorations out. She loves entertaining and always made it seem easy. So for us, we're not afraid to have 10 different sets of dishes and glassware. It was a holiday every day, and now we want to do that for our kids.

Decorations aside, have you started any of your own family traditions?

MP: We do Sunday dinners, which are really fun. Coleen recently moved back from Northern New Jersey, so it's nice to have all of the cousins together, and we each take a turn hosting. My husband and I grow a lot of our own vegetables, and we belong to a CSA [community-supported agriculture] farm share, so there's always a big salad. Food has brought us together more now than when we were kids—Sunday dinner is a big deal.

Are there any restaurants that you frequent during the holidays?

MP: I always hit Rouge after holiday shopping in Rittenhouse Square. It's as much a part of the holidays as a visit to Santa.

CCB: I love all of the great hotel restaurants because they always have the best Christmas decorations. I'll be sure to go to the Ritz-Carlton and the Four Seasons. I love to see what they do, and of course I imagine how I would decorate their spaces myself.

This must be a hectic time of year for you two. How do you keep entertaining easy?

MP: Nowadays, the tips have to be about incorporating the entire family—things like making sure there are activities for the kids to do while the guests are having drinks. Signature drinks are great, especially in big batches. That way you don't have to play bartender all night. Also, don't be afraid to let people bring something. When people offer and want to help, let them.

CCB: Letting your guests bring something might be the first step to them hosting their own party. People can be intimidated by holiday entertaining, but there really are no rules. Decorating and entertaining is about making memories; it doesn't have to be overwhelming.

Are there any new projects in the works?

CCB: I wrote a book called *Christmas With the First Ladies*, and every holiday season I go on a media tour, which is fast and furious but a lot of fun. This year Mrs. Obama invited me back to be a part of the decorating team at the White House, and I will also be working on the Pennsylvania Governor's Mansion.

MP: I am super excited for the recently launched site makerlifestyle.com, which has all of our great ideas about how to live the maker lifestyle that we have. Also, my new book *The Cocktail Club* will come out in the spring. The project that we're most excited about, though, is that we've been tapped to do a television show together. It's still in the beginning stages, but there will be a lot more to come from us. **PS**



“Entertaining doesn't have to be overwhelming.”
—COLEEN CHRISTIAN BURKE



THE AGNI

- 1 1/2 oz. Bluecoat gin
- 3/4 oz. honey syrup (1:1)
- 3/4 oz. lemon juice
- 2 droppers Bittermens Hellfire Habanero Shrub

• Shake over ice and pour into a tall glass. Garnish with a dried red chili.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PERSICO