

CULINARY * PLAYGROUND

THIS MODERN-RUSTIC KITCHEN IS SANCTUARY FOR
A COUPLE THAT LIVES TO COOK AND ENTERTAIN

Written by Lia Picard / Photographed by Kyle Ripley, Haigwood Studios



KELLY AND ADAM RABINOWITZ's charming blue bungalow is nestled within the intown neighborhood of Lake Claire. The couple purchased it as their first home five years ago and knew immediately that a kitchen renovation was in order. The dwelling, built in the 1920s, with a second floor added in the '70s, had a kitchen that left much to be desired for the two culinary aficionados.



Adam and Kelly are social butterflies who met while living as neighbors in Inman Park. Both are fans of the local dining scene and knew their home had to be in a neighborhood near their favorite eateries and bars. Lake Claire made perfect sense with its proximity to the dining meccas of Inman Park and Decatur.

As much as they love to dine out, they also love to cook and entertain at home. When they went house hunting, a gourmet kitchen was a top priority. The kitchen they wound up with was the antithesis of gourmet with cramped quarters, underwhelming appliances, checkered floors and laminate counters, but where others may have seen despair, the two saw potential.

After a master bedroom and bathroom renovation in 2016, they were ready to work on creating their dream kitchen. Adam, a salesman for high-end kitchen and bath fixture company Dornbracht, is tapped into the interior design community. On hearing from colleagues about the Candler Park-based firm Balance Design, he and Kelly knew they had found the perfect match for their redesign. It turned out that the project would become a neighborhood effort as the designer, contractor and architect all live in Lake Claire.

The goal of the kitchen redesign, besides upgrading their '70s appliances, was to create an at-home restaurant [and comfortable dining space for their family



(above) Adam and Kelly Rabinowitz incorporated their shared passion for home cooking and entertaining into their redesigned kitchen. (opposite) Glimmering quartzite counters and open shelves lend a bright airiness to the kitchen. Kelly added personal touches with prized objects and a bold Persian tribal rug.



What was once a vaulted mudroom is now a wet bar with a custom beer tower and sliding cabinet on one side, and a deli counter made of live edge antique white oak on the other.

of three]. “We like to be out and about and we wanted that environment here, even if it’s just us,” explains Adam.

First, they created more working area by consulting with Tony Constantino of Constantino Architects. Combining the wasted space of a vaulted mudroom with the kitchen allowed them to create better flow and provided two entry points. Then, they unified the uneven ceiling heights by adding reclaimed wooden beams with a clear oil finish. “Every designer we talked to about the vaulted ceiling wanted to close it in to make it an even height. But we love our vaulted ceiling,” says Adam. The beams provide an illusion of a continuous ceiling height while allowing the vaulted area to soar above them. A nondescript kitchen door on the back wall was replaced with a

French door that fills the space with light along with four other windows.

The kitchen has a modern-rustic aesthetic, a compromise between Adam’s industrial preferences and Kelly’s traditional leanings. Quartzite counters, chosen for their resemblance to marble, gleam in the sunshine. Cabinets painted in a soft blue-grey add to the rustic vibe while marrying the kitchen to the home’s overarching coastal palette.

The couple’s commitment to establishing a restaurant-like ambience is apparent throughout the space, particularly with their appliance choices. The commercial-grade BlueStar range with high BTUs and a convection oven is Kelly’s prized possession, helping to elevate her home cooking.



Slow-Cooked Pulled Pork Sliders

Recipe by Kelly and Adam Rabinowitz

Yield: 12 to 15 servings

- 1 7-pound pork shoulder roast, fat trimmed
- Spice Rub** (recipe included)
- 1 white onion
- 12 ounces amber beer or Coca-Cola
- 2 cups ketchup
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne powder
- slider buns as needed
- 1 cup pickled red onions

Cut pork roast into 1-pound chunks. Generously rub all sides of pork pieces with **Spice Rub**.

Cut onion into 8 pieces and place in slow cooker. Pour beer or soda into cooker over onions, then place pork chunks on top of onions. Sprinkle any leftover rub over ingredients in cooker. Cover with lid and cook on high for 5 to 6 hours, or on low for 8 to 10 hours.

Toward end of pork cooking process, start sauce. In a medium saucepan, combine next 10 ingredients (ketchup through cayenne) and bring to a boil over medium heat. As soon as mixture comes to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. If sauce looks too thin, continue to simmer for up to 10 additional minutes; just remember that sauce will thicken as it cools.

When pork is done cooking, transfer meat to a large bowl. Using 2 forks, pull meat apart. For a moister pork, use a large spoon or fat separator to skim off fat from cooking liquid remaining in slow cooker, then add 1/2 cup skimmed liquid at a time to meat and mix.

To serve, top bun bottoms with meat and sauce, garnish with pickled onions as desired and cover with top bun.

Spice Rub

- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne powder, optional

For the Spice Rub

Combine all ingredients and mix well.

*** AS MUCH AS THEY LOVE TO DINE OUT, THEY ALSO LOVE TO COOK AND ENTERTAIN AT HOME. ***

The sleek Thermador fridge is also commercial-grade and blends into the pantry wall. Hidden within the ample drawers of the pantry are Kelly's kitchen toys such as the Instant Pot and sous-vide machine.

Open shelves, reminiscent of a stylish eatery, are neatly lined with dinnerware, spices and Kelly's favorite cookbooks. They also give her a place to display items of sentimental value, such as mugs from a trip to Spain and a figurine from her grandfather. He and Kelly had a shared passion for cooking, so it's her way of honoring him. While white subway tiles are usually reserved for backsplashes, in this room they create movement by extending across an entire wall.

When the couple goes out, they are self-proclaimed "bar people." Says Kelly, "We sit at the bar and we know all the bartenders at our local haunts." The creative addition of a deli counter, hung on the wall of windows in what was once a mudroom, reflects their communal spirit. It's where they do most of their eating and coffee sipping—even the youngest Rabinowitz gets fed there. The counter comes with a

pedigreed history. Sourced and finished by the Jack Ellis Company in Avondale Estates, the wood is 110-year-old live edge white oak from the Emory University campus. Above it are three concrete light fixtures, a subtle touch of modernity in the rustic area.

The deli counter runs parallel to the waterfall edge wet bar. "Good food needs a good drink with it," says Adam, which is why it was important to him that the bar area receive special attention. Their custom bar features a handpicked beer tower made from upcycled iron pipes. (Adam makes sure to always have something local on tap.) Above the bar are custom-made dark blue cabinets. Their sliding doors give way to the spirits and drinkware on hand. Adam also incorporated one of Dornbracht's hot- and cold-water dispensers.

Always prepared for visitors, the couple keeps an infused-spirit on hand for impromptu cocktails. As guests to the Rabinowitzes' home can attest, Atlanta's best-kept foodie secret isn't on a hottest restaurant list, but right here in this Lake Claire bungalow.



The vaulted mudroom and flat ceilings were married by antique wooden beams.

GOOD FOOD NEEDS A GOOD DRINK WITH IT



Habanero-Pineapple Margarita

Recipe by Kelly and Adam Rabinowitz

Yield: 1 drink

- 1 ounce fresh lime juice
- 1 ounce triple sec
- 1 ounce pineapple juice
- 2 ounces **Habanero-Pineapple Infused Tequila** (recipe included)
- salt for rimming glass
- fresh pineapple wedge for garnish
- 1 seedless habanero slice for garnish (optional)

In cocktail shaker, shake ingredients with ice. Strain over ice in a rocks glass with a salted rim, garnish with fresh pineapple wedge and, if you're daring, slice of habanero.

Habanero-Pineapple Infused Tequila

Yield: 750 ml infused tequila

- 2 20-ounce cans pineapple chunks in juice, drained
- 750 ml 100 percent agave silver tequila
- 1 habanero pepper or other spicy pepper of preference (used at end of 2-week infusion steeping time)

For the Habanero-Pineapple Infused Tequila

In large, sealable glass container, place pineapple chunks (you can add a good splash of pineapple juice for extra sweetness). Add full bottle of tequila and shake well.

Store tequila mixture in a pantry or other cool dark place for 2 weeks, giving container a small shake every few days. After 2 weeks, strain tequila through a fine mesh sieve and cheesecloth into a large bowl. Press on pineapple to get all of the liquid out.

Cut pepper in half and remove seeds. Drop seeded pepper halves into strained tequila, reseal and shake well.

Place container back into pantry for 12 hours. After 12 hours, shake and taste for heat preference. If not spicy enough, continue infusion up to 36 more hours or until heat level is to your liking.

Store in cabinet and use in place of regular tequila for cocktails. Or, it makes a great sipper over ice.