

## SMITHSONIAN SPEECH

Hello everyone! Thank you, Marc [*Marc Pachter, acting director of the National Museum of American History*], for the kind introduction and [*to audience*] thank you all for coming! I'm very happy to see you, and so honored to be here under the auspices of the Smithsonian, an institution I greatly respect and admire.

Before I sit down for a talk with Marc Pachter, I wanted to share with you some of the gatherings included in my new book, *Martha's Entertaining*, as well as some images from my archive.

This new book is a very personal one that features various celebrations I have hosted in my homes at various times of day and in different seasons.

### BEDFORD

Entertaining has a long and rich history in this country. In the colonial era, there were no large cities and few towns of great size. People socialized at home. Did you know that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century—before becoming the first president and the first First Lady—George and Martha Washington hosted dinner guests two-thirds of the days in the year? They hosted overnight guests nearly as often.

I love to entertain at home. My farm in Bedford, NY is my primary residence and the base of operations for all that I do and create.

A working farm with expansive fields as well as vegetable and flower gardens, it is a wonderful place to entertain indoors and out, all year

round, as you can see here. [SERIES OF IMAGES FROM ENTERTAINING AT BEDFORD]

My love for entertaining is matched by a passion for collecting antiques. I love history and have a deep appreciation for the past—the artistry and craftsmanship that distinguish things like this 19<sup>th</sup> century clear glass epergne and cut-glass hurricanes. They make a glistening display with the mercury glass spheres and tinsel ornaments.

When I entertain, I often use items from my personal collections—dishes, silver, antique linens and decorative objects. They help to make the setting and, in turn, the event more special. I don't believe in putting treasured objects on a shelf for safekeeping. I love to use my antiques as they were intended. [SERIES OF OBJECTS]

Antique glass domes make wonderfully whimsical bell jars for Easter collectibles at this holiday brunch.

## THANKSGIVING AT BEDFORD

[OPENING SPREAD]

With Thanksgiving nearly upon us, I had to share this particular celebration with all of you! The farm is an archetypal place to celebrate this most American of holidays.

I approach each holiday during the year as a pleasant challenge. I certainly am not of the “do it the exact same way: school of entertaining.” I am an enthusiast for change, for subtly altering the traditional to make it more interesting, more creative, more inventive.

One year, I even hosted Thanksgiving in the stable on my farm!

Of course you don't have to relocate your gathering to make it feel new or different. I am a firm believer that there are almost infinite choices for a single thing, such as the turkey. We now have access not only to the supermarket varieties and to frozen, factory-raised birds but also to many heritage breeds, including Bourbon Red, Black Spanish and Narragansett, and others, as well as to wild turkeys, hybrid turkeys with extra-broad breasts, organically raised birds, and free-ranging specialty breeds.

For this Thanksgiving, the heritage turkey was a Bourbon Red raised in Connecticut. Just as there are many different varieties of turkey, there are many different ways of preparing the bird, including oven-roasting, smoking, deep-frying, spit-roasting, grilling, poaching, steaming, "turduckening," and so on.

This particular turkey was oven-roasted and very, very delicious.

#### [LEFTOVER TURKEY SANDWICH]

My favorite thing on the Thanksgiving weekend is actually a delicious turkey club sandwich made from leftovers. And cold stuffing? I love it.

#### LILY POND

Lily Pond, my home in East Hampton, is a great old house with a mature, formally planted garden. It is an especially wonderful place to entertain during the summer—ideally out of doors...

be it an ice cream social... [IMAGES]

...a summer cocktail party fundraiser for a local organization...

[IMAGES]

or a dinner for a dear friend—in this case Dan Hinkley, a famous plant explorer. [IMAGES]

## SKYLANDS

My Maine home was built by Edsel B. Ford in 1925 and it is a much more successful construction than the car that bore his name. I actually love my Edsel and its avant-garde design.

I bought Skylands in 1997 from the second owner and it came with all the cars, trucks, furnishings and appliances, including four of the most wonderful waffle irons. I still open drawers and find things like a gold letter opener signed Tiffany.

The purchase of Skylands expanded my collection of antique linens by an order of magnitude. [LINEN COLLECTION AND IMAGES FROM BOOK]

I put these linens to good use!

## BLUEBERRY BREAKFAST

[OPENING IMAGE]

The kitchen at Skylands is really the hub of the household, just as it is in so many homes. Everything happens there and no matter how hard I try to move some of the action elsewhere, it all invariably ends up at the kitchen table or the counter.

American domestic life and our approach to entertaining has certainly evolved since Skylands was built in 1925. Back then, the kitchen, with its great stoves, heavy sinks, large center worktables and multiple pantries and refrigerators, was off bounds to the family and guests. It was the “back of the house,” the domain of the staff only. Meals were

eaten in the dining room, at the breakfast table by the window, or at the great table in front of the fireplace.

[KITCHEN STOOLS]

When I bought the house, I changed the ebb and flow of the traffic, and could be eaten at the new giant table. Stools at different heights ensure that guests, short or tall, can sit where they are most comfortable around the metal-topped table.

While everyone loves the kitchen, we take full advantage of this glorious setting.

After I purchased Skylands, I wanted to learn more about Mount Desert Island—its history, geography and topography. The maps on display in antiques shops and hiking shops became an important part of my education. I was fascinated by them and soon became an avid map collector. Many of which were featured in an exhibit at the College of the Atlantic last summer. [MAP COLLECTION IMAGES FROM AMERICAN TREASURE]

These maps are a source of information—and inspiration, as you can see here with this menu cover, which depicts a Seal Harbor and the islands to the south.

Skylands is also home to my personal collection of vintage faux bois or “false wood.”[SHOW IMAGES]

I’ve always liked things that fool the eye, especially when they emulate the real thing in the best possible way.

Faux bois was popular in France, Italy, Japan and Mexico in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Large faux bois tables are nearly impossible to find. I had heard about an artist who specializes in faux bois or “false wood” construction. His name is Carlos Cortes and he is a fourth generation sculptor of this artisanal art form. I commissioned Carlos to make a very large faux bois table for the living hall at Skylands, along with four benches. It was shipped from Texas to Maine by truck. Installation was almost as complicated as placing a major piece of bronze sculpture! [FAUX BOIS INSTALLATION PAGE]

It is the perfect backdrop for an incredible array of delectable offerings, as you can see here. [PATE CAMPAGNARD p. 77 and POSSIBLY MORE IMAGERY]

Entertaining is one of life’s great pleasures. It is an opportunity to share things that we appreciate—favorite foods and flavors and treasured objects—with the people we care about and whose company we enjoy.

Thank you!