

Sobremesa

Outdoors in Brooklyn

This New York supper club signs up guests who are keen to meet new people. It makes the menu, venue and guestlist (for a fee); you roll up your sleeves, learn a recipe and cook.

Samantha Rees' backyard must be the most biodiverse in Crown Heights. "My boyfriend works for Brooklyn Botanic Garden," she says as we admire a tomato. Rees is hosting an iteration of Sobremesa, a series of dinners created and organised by Karen Mordechai's food-and-design firm Sunday Suppers. Rees is assisted in the kitchen by childhood friend Cyrus Hernstadt. While not a professional chef, he has taken classes at Manhattan's Institute of Culinary Education. The series of dinners involves events in 17 cities

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worldwide. Each is based on a common menu created by the Sunday Suppers team but variation is welcome.

At the Brooklyn chapter the table is decorated with linen from Laine & Alliage and the brand's founder Tania Leipold is in attendance. There's a demonstration in the kitchen of how to make this evening's crème caramel dessert before the 12 guests move outdoors for the first course: a salad of mozzarella, cantaloupe, basil and prosciutto. Kristen, a lawyer, is here with husband Charlie. "In New York you eat and drink out all the time," she says. "It's hyper-social but can also be strangely isolating. I've come to value community events like this much more highly."

Prospective Sunday Supper hosts apply on the company's website. "We're looking for people who share a love of food, design and celebrating community," says Rees. "We help eliminate the pressure around hosting with a manual that includes recipes, timelines and shopping lists. There's excitement from hosts about bringing a Sobremesa dinner to their city." — HRS sunday-suppers.com/sobremesa



(1) Chef Cyrus Hernstadt (2) Samantha Rees (on right) (3) Garden dining (4) Sobremesa toast (5) Carousel entrance (6) Cooking pigeon breast (7) Nomura Daisuke (on right) with friends (8) Chef Mark Tutti with host Gigi Isola



In numbers:

Species of plant in Rees' garden: **70**
Varieties of fruit and vegetables from the garden used as ingredients: **8**
Bottles of wine served: **8**
Cities in which Sobremesa dinners were held this summer: **17**
Guests in attendance in Brooklyn: **12**
Chefs: **2**

The menu:

Welcome snack
Whipped aubergine purée; seeded crackers with crudités

First course
Summer salad of mozzarella, cantaloupe, basil and prosciutto

Second course
Spaghetti and clams in wine, garlic, parsley or spaghetti and roasted cauliflower with lemon and parsley

On the table
Lemon bread

To finish
Crème caramel; espresso

