



# ISLAND STYLE

On most summer nights, Seth and Angela Raynor are busy hosting the celebrities and A-listers who flock to their two stylish Nantucket restaurants. But when they steal the rare night away, the simple pleasures of family, farm-fresh, mouth-watering food, and an unpretentious little cottage on the beach are the real stars of the evening.

BY KIM ATKINSON RECIPES BY SETH AND ANGELA RAYNOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELLER AND KELLER

**RELATIVE EASE:** This page, Seth and Angela Raynor gather with their children and Angela's parents for a summer dinner at the family's beach house; opposite, littlenecks on the grill; Seth's surfboards.





Angela Raynor is buzzing around the kitchen in Prada mules, a Hawaiian shirt, and capri pants, vigorously shaking tonight's dinner—marinated flank steak—in a baggie. It comes as no surprise that the menu for this evening's summer feast is as elegantly casual and perfectly chic as Raynor herself, who, with her husband, chef Seth, owns two of Nantucket's hottest restaurants. The flank steak in the bag will be rich and juicy thanks to a soaking in bourbon, while the clams Seth is scrubbing in the kitchen sink will be grilled just long enough to show off their briny, fresh flavor.

"The bottom line is that we love good food, but being together as a family is the point of it all," Seth says, preparing the clams for the grill. "It has to taste good, but we don't want to fuss over anything."

Tonight that means gathering their children—Nathaniel, 10, and Jacqueline (she prefers Jacq), who is 8—along with Angela's parents, Richard ("Dr. B") and Diane Buechel, for an impromptu dinner party at the Buechels' beachfront Nantucket house. The setting couldn't be more perfect. The house, which the family affectionately calls the "Shack-teau," is a renovated hunting cottage sandwiched between Hummock Pond and Cisco Beach that serves as a favorite escape from the busy summer season back in town. The waterfront location gives avid surfer Seth, who has sun-

bleached, perfectly mussed hair, the chance to catch a few waves with Nathaniel and Jacq before firing up the grill, while Angela, herself a tall, raven-haired beauty, prepares the ingredients for dinner.

"The Shack is very grounding," Angela says. "Because of the high wind out here and erosion and weather, it's a fragile place. It sounds cheesy, but the beauty and the 'it-could-be-gone-at-any-moment' potential forces us to really pay attention to the here and now and the people we are with."

Like most meals the Raynors put together, this one is built around approachable dishes that make good use of local ingredients at their peak. It's the same philosophy they apply at the Boarding House, which the couple opened 12 years ago in the heart of Nantucket town after graduating together from the New England Culinary Institute. Its next-door neighbor, the Pearl, came four years ago and features a more sophisticated dining room with striking, opalescent décor and a setting that gives Seth a place to showcase his flair for Asian-influenced cooking.

Though the menu at the Boarding House is more casual than the Pearl's, both feature the same kind of fresh ingredients that are on tonight's menu. The round, firm tomatoes in shades of gold, orange, and red that will be used

in a summer tomato salad were found this morning at the local produce stand, Bartlett's Ocean View Farm, while the fish that will be coated in herbed bread crumbs and broiled in the oven was bought at Sayle's Seafood, a fish market down the road.

"Summer is about what's ripe, not about manipulation," Angela says. "Like these tomatoes—they are so stellar. They're just bursting in flavor. You just want to pop them in your mouth." Finding such bounty takes daily trips to the local markets, which in the summer on Nantucket are brimming with fresh fish and vegetables. "It's a very European lifestyle to not grab 10 days' worth of canned this and that, but to buy corn or fluke—whatever is fresh. It makes sense, but it's also good to support the local farmers and fishermen."

Another must for a successful summer dinner is to incorporate everyone's favorites—the dishes that appear at every gathering and hold special meaning for the family. For the Raynors, that includes a recipe for corn on the cob borrowed from a family friend who lives on island, and Dr. B's own garlic bread. Before heading to the market, Angela takes orders for special requests. "The strategy of preplanning, even if it's just a short list on the back of a phone bill, makes all the difference in the world," says Angela. "Once we're out at the Shack, we aren't going to leave to get an ingredient."

Simplicity is key. Take the flank steak. "It couldn't be easier, and it is sooo

**GETTING FRESH:** Opposite, the flavor of fresh tomatoes makes a summer salad sing; this page, Angela and Seth shop for just-picked produce at Nantucket's Bartlett's Ocean View Farm.





**BEACH PARTY:** This page, Angela, Diane, Dr. B, Jacq, Seth, and Nathaniel on Cisco Beach; Jacq offers a helping hand; making Pope Leo bread; opposite, grilled littlenecks, ready to eat.

good," says Angela, who added dashes of sugar and soy sauce to the bourbon in the bag before shaking it with the steak. For Seth, who spends his days supervising the busy kitchen team at the Pearl, a night off from meticulous details is essential. "If we decide to grill something and Nathaniel wants to help, it doesn't matter if all the pieces are the same size or the vegetables are cut perfectly," he says. "It's more about him having fun and learning."

As for the table—which most nights is the large, weathered dining table on the Shack's patio with its dramatic views of the sunset and Hummock Pond—Angela likes to keep the decorations as uncomplicated but elegant as the menu. There are gorgeous wildflower stems from the local farmers' market, and hurricane lamps to add romantic lighting. Everything at the cottage is designed to make summer entertaining easy.

"That's where my mom's design sense comes in," Angela says. "First of all, when they renovated the house, Mom put her energy into making it a place to gather and entertain. And she added a well-appointed kitchen with little touches like two dishwashers, so no one is stuck in the kitchen after dinner."

Which is when the family happily practices a long-standing tradition: spoon-balancing contests pitting the adults against the children. On this evening, as on most, Dr. B wins by a long shot, and is treated to a glass of Seth's limoncello, which he makes

from scratch. For the kids, dessert is their favorite fruit sherbet. It's a fresh, tartly sweet ending to a memorable summer evening.

"Summer is about maximizing outdoor time," Angela says, as the family retreats from the table for some stargazing on the beach. "And the food and entertaining we do is so much more visceral. It's nourishment on so many levels."

#### FRENCH TOMATO SALAD

Angela Raynor learned this recipe during her culinary training with acclaimed chef Christian Massot at his French restaurant Le Petit Prince. When they're available, choosing a variety of tomatoes in shades from vibrant yellow to bold orange to deepest red will give the salad visual appeal. Leave enough time for the tomatoes to marinate, and don't let the amount of salt alarm you: Most of it will be discarded. Serves eight.

- 1 pound fresh ripe tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. cracked sea salt
- 1–2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 4 Tbsp. red wine or balsamic vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Slice tomatoes into 1/2-inch rounds and in a large bowl combine with salt,

pepper, vinegar, and two tablespoons of the olive oil. Let marinate one to three hours at room temperature. Carefully slide tomatoes into a colander set in the sink to drain juices. Arrange tomatoes on a serving plate. Sprinkle chopped herbs over the tomatoes and drizzle with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil.

#### JACQ'S GRILLED LITTLENECKS

This is a dish that invites guests to gather around the grill in anticipation and with forks at the ready. The Raynors find that most people eat right over the bowl. The compound butter can be made in advance and refrigerated for several days or frozen for many weeks. Serves eight.

- 4 dozen littleneck clams  
(The Raynors choose the smallest littlenecks available.)
- 3 shallots, finely diced
- 1 bunch cilantro; separate stems and leaves, chopping and reserving the stems
- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley leaves; discard stems
- 1/2 bunch chives cut into 1-inch batons
- cracked sea salt
- cracked white pepper
- 1/2 pound (2 sticks) salted butter at room temperature
- 1 Tbsp. sriracha hot sauce
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice
- zest of 1 fresh lime





**SEA WORTHY:** This page, easy summer fish broil; opposite, Jacq and Dr. B, ready for dinner; Seth and Angela prepare the corn; Dr. B and Diane leave the cooking to Seth and Angela.

Rinse and scrub clams under cold water, then place in a large bowl. Cover with a clean, damp towel and refrigerate. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Fill a large bowl with ice water. Drop herbs into the boiling water for 30 seconds, remove with a slotted spoon, and place in the ice water. Quickly remove from the water and dry on a clean towel. Repeat with the shallots for one minute. Into a food processor fitted with a metal blade, place the cilantro and parsley leaves, shallots, one teaspoon each of salt and pepper, hot sauce, and lime zest and juice. Pulse until finely chopped. Add the butter in small amounts to form a vibrant green paste. Place in a large metal bowl.

Preheat grill to medium-high. Spread the clams over the grill (using a shellfish attachment if the grates on your grill are too far apart) and cover with grill lid. As the clams pop open, use long tongs to transfer them to the metal bowl. Toss with butter and reserved cilantro stems.

#### DEAN'S CARAMELIZED GRILLED CORN

Seth Raynor's former neighbor and surfing pal Dean Gestal prepares his rendition of grilled corn at the beach over hot driftwood coals, but his technique is easily adapted for home fires. Plan on one and a half cobs per person and put the kids to work outside husking the corn. Serves eight.

- 12 ears fresh corn
- 1 pound (4 sticks) salted butter
- 1 cup grade "A" maple syrup

Melt the butter in a medium sauce-

pot. Stir in maple syrup, remove from heat, and reserve. Bring a large pot of salted water to a rapid boil. Peel back the corn husks and remove most of the silk. Plunge the exposed corncob tops into the boiling water for one to two minutes, then remove. Using 6-inch sheets of aluminum foil, fasten a "collar" at the base of the cob where it meets the husk. This will prevent the cob from burning and will form an easy-to-handle base for turning the cobs while they're on the grill. Baste each cob with a generous amount of the butter mixture, place the corn on a hot grill, and cook, flipping frequently, for three to five minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and serve immediately.

#### DRUNKEN STEAK

"This recipe couldn't be easier or more delicious—it's almost embarrassing," says Angela. "It can easily be doubled or tripled for large crowds. The alcohol burns off when the steaks are cooked, but the flavors penetrate, and the sugar gives the steak a nice crisp outside." The result, says Angela, is always a hit at the family's annual Independence Day cookout at the beach. Serves eight.

- ½ cup bourbon (whichever brand you favor)
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1 cup light-brown sugar
- ½ orange, sliced into ¼-inch rounds
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, sliced thinly
- 3 fresh shallots, sliced thinly
- 2 pounds trimmed Black Angus flank steak

Place all ingredients except the steak in a sturdy, gallon-size zippable plastic bag, seal securely, and shake until the sugar dissolves. Add the steak, and marinate in the refrigerator for at least two hours or overnight.

Remove from refrigeration and bring steak to room temperature. Preheat grill to medium and place steaks on grate. Cook 8–10 minutes or to desired doneness. Remove from grill, cover loosely with foil, and let rest 10 minutes before serving. Slice and transfer to a serving platter.

#### SHACKTEAU POTATOES

Another recipe that can easily be multiplied for a larger crowd. With careful plate presentation, these potatoes can be prepared in the oven the day before and reheated, using new foil or a gratin dish. Serves eight.

- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 pound of your favorite potatoes, cleaned of any debris. (The Raynors prefer whatever is freshly dug, and often mix varieties. If mixing, be certain to cut larger potatoes to the same size as smaller for uniform cooking times.)
- 1½ cups sautéed mushrooms (Button work well, but to "Guccify," add more flavorful wild varieties, truffle oil, or fresh truffles.)
- 3 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives





- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. sea salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp. freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Place two 18-inch strips of aluminum foil onto a clean work surface and spread the melted butter onto foil. Slice potatoes into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rounds. Mix remaining ingredients together in a large bowl, add potatoes, and toss to coat potatoes well. Place half of the potatoes in the center of one of the aluminum sheets and form into a log. Pull the long sides of the "log" to the center and fold together. Seal the ends. Repeat with remaining potatoes. Place in the oven and bake until tender (approximately 45 minutes). Transfer to a gratin dish, serve as is, or place under the broiler for one to two minutes to brown.

**EASY SUMMER FISH BROIL**

The Raynors make frequent stops at Sayle's Seafood on the way to their beach house. This recipe was the result of using "whatever was in the cupboard." Using the oven to broil the fish frees up valuable grill space for the littleneck clams, corn, and steak. Serves eight.

- 2 cups *panko* (Japanese bread crumbs)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley; discard stems
- $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 bunch fresh chives
- 8 6-oz. trimmed fillets of firm white fish (flounder, sole, and fluke work well)

- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tsp. sea salt
- 1-2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Adjust oven rack to the top position and set oven to broil. Place bread crumbs in food processor with metal blade and pulse until finely ground. Place herbs on top of bread crumbs and pulse until combined and the mixture is green. (Be careful not to overprocess, forming a paste.) Place bread crumbs into a shallow baking dish or pie plate. Pour melted butter into a second shallow baking dish or pie plate. Season both sides of the fillets with salt and pepper. Dip or brush fillets on both sides with the melted butter. Coat top side of fillet with herbed bread crumbs. Place on greased or Teflon baking sheet and place under broiler for two to three minutes or until bread crumbs turn golden brown.

**POPE LEO BREAD**

Dr. B has been preparing his version of garlic bread for more than 40 years and claims, "There's no real science to it. You just add a lot of ingredients you like with a dash of this and that." Dr. B (whose middle name is Leo) hopes for leftovers every time he makes his namesake rich and aromatic baked bread because "the next day, cold from the fridge, it's wonderful." Serves eight.

- 1 loaf French bread, sliced  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick at a slight angle partway through

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 Tbsp. fresh oregano or 1 Tbsp. dried
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 packet Lipton's brand dried onion soup mix

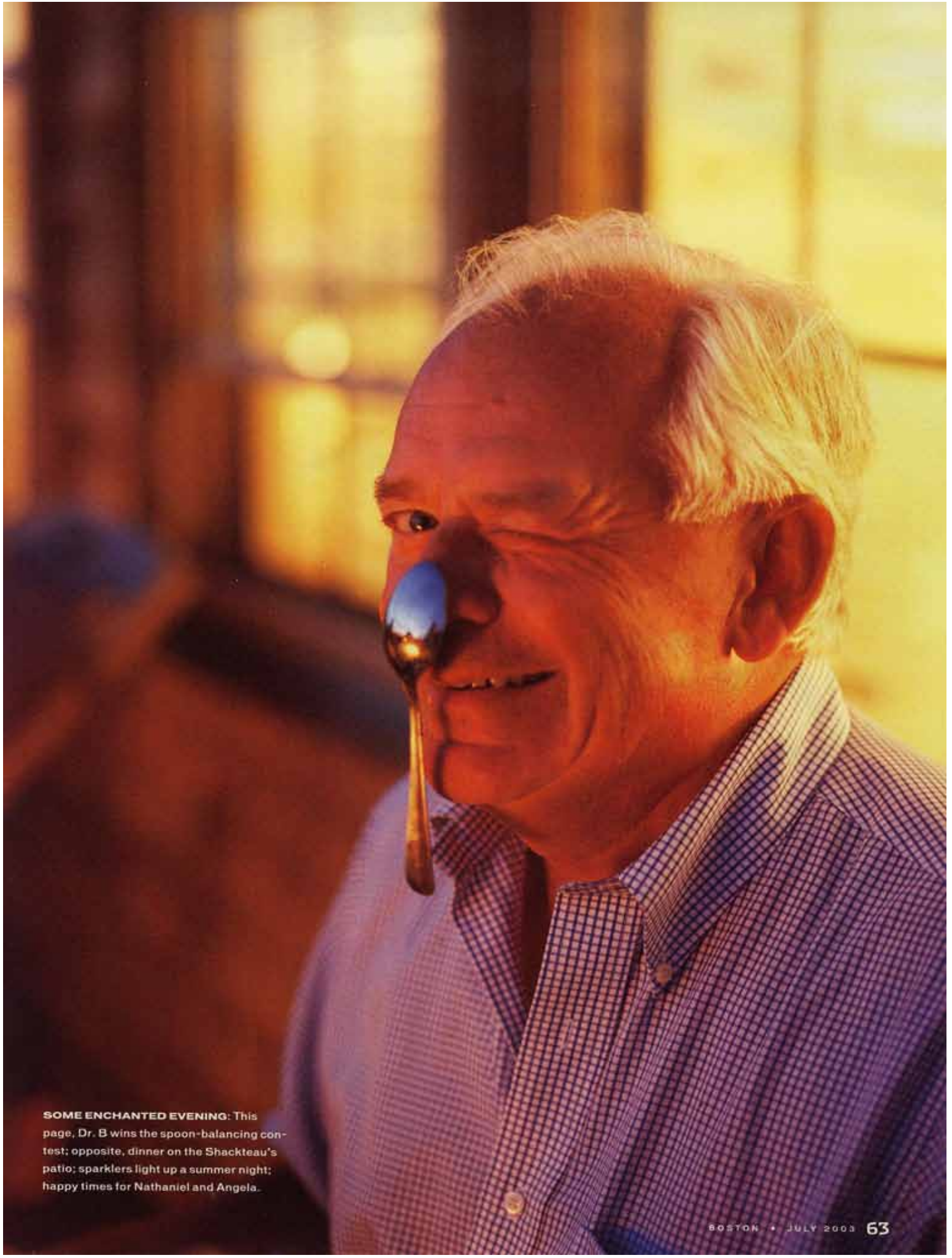
In a medium-sized bowl, place the butter, herbs, garlic, Parmesan cheese (reserve two tablespoons), and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the dried soup mix. Mash with a fork to form a paste, then spread on both sides of the sliced bread. Spread any remaining butter over the top of the loaf. Wrap in two layers of aluminum foil and bake at 300 degrees for 45 minutes. Remove from oven, and peel back foil to expose the top of the loaf. Sprinkle remaining cheese and soup mix, and return bread to the oven (with top exposed) for 15 minutes to crisp.

**LIME SHERBET**

This delicious but simple recipe for sherbet complements the casual theme of the Raynors' summer menu, and is a favorite with the kids. For extra pop, Seth likes to add a "splash of kickass tequila" to the adults' servings. Serves eight.

- 3 cups strained lime juice
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar
- 4 cups milk

In a medium mixing bowl or saucepan, whisk together the lime juice and sugar until combined. Whisk in milk. And the mixture to your ice cream machine and process, following the manufacturer's instructions. **B**



**SOME ENCHANTED EVENING:** This page, Dr. B wins the spoon-balancing contest; opposite, dinner on the Shackteau's patio; sparklers light up a summer night; happy times for Nathaniel and Angela.