

Dinner party marks the end of an era, helps put pandemic in the past

THE OCCASION for the dinner party was simple enough. Our friend, Hakan Zor, a rug merchant from Turkey, was visiting. However, the implications were more momentous.

“We aren’t in the market for more rugs, but we’d love to see you,” I wrote in response to the text Hakan sent letting me know he was in town. I was so relieved to hear from him.

Like so many businesses, his had suffered during the pandemic. The cruise ships on which his rug shop in Turkey relies were grounded, and so was he. He could not travel to the States to see clients, the basis of the rest of his business.

“I’ll invite some friends,” I said, as if that were normal.

A few nights later, seven of us — two couples from the neighborhood, my husband and I and Hakan — were sitting around my dining room table, eating and talking and laughing. I noticed a foreign feeling in my chest, one I hadn’t felt for some time: Joy.

After 15 months of hibernation, going out only when necessary armed with a face mask and hand sanitizer, steering clear of humanity, perpetually accompanied by dark feelings of foreboding, hosting a dinner party felt insanely brazen.

And I did it with impunity.

We were all fully vaccinated, relieved and ready to put this era behind us. We were also grateful for what up until 15 months ago we had taken for granted: the simple act of gathering.

“This period reminds us that creating art, being together, engaging in ritual, is something that humans will always need to do,” said historian Keith Johnston, of



AT HOME WITH
Marni Jameson

Canada, in a recent radio interview that rang true to me. “We do well when we figure out ways to do that well.”

Johnston was comparing the

recent pandemic to one that swept through Naples, Italy, in 1656. “Neapolitans lost their connection to social life and civic traditions.”

But, after the shared experience of the pandemic, the town celebrated with a 10-day festival. “Art played an important role in the lives of Neapolitans during this period, not just for its aesthetics but also for its believed capacity to heal people.”

Heal indeed. Perhaps that’s why an impromptu dinner party with an ancient art form as inspiration felt so on point, as exactly the way to put a period at the end of the pandemic.

As I took in the table and those

around me, the candles glowed more magically. The crystal had more sparkle. My friends felt dearer. Of course, the fact that we were also talking about art, in this case, area rugs, as home décor brought the evening to the peak of perfection in my mind. (My husband, D.C., might disagree on that point.)

D.C. poured wine. We raised

our goblets and took turns toasting:

“To friends.”
“To health.”
“To freedom.”
“To living.”
“To joy.”

After dinner, Hakan, who always brings a van full of rugs he’s

SEE **MARNI, 5H**



PREMIUM HOME WARRANTY, LLC.

Proudly owned in Milton, WV

With us on your side, you have peace of mind.



Keep it Local ask for Premium Home Warranty.

Three Options to Choose From.

APPLIANCE PLANS • SYSTEM PLANS • COMBO PLANS

Best Value!



We only use the top-ranking service providers to perform the repairs and replacements you need. All service providers are prescreened to insure they are licensed, trained, insured and are a top-notch company for your protection and our reputation.

304-390-4534

www.PremiumHomeWarranty.com

HD-45326



**Charleston Gazette-Mail
Real Estate**

SELLING OR RENTING PROPERTY?



We can get your property in front of the largest number of people for the lowest price. With options for every budget and a variety of print & digital solutions, maximizing your reach has never been easier.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT OUR
REAL ESTATE ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
ASHLEY MANN AT 304-348-4852**

www.WannaGoHome.com | Ashley.Mann@HDMediaLLC.com

HD-453142