

Business & Real Estate

Anastasia's Table solves your dinner dilemma



DERRY NEWS/PENNY WILLIAMS

Patti Anastasia establishes the cook/client relationship by first interviewing her clients and assessing their dietary needs and restrictions. She is available on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis.

By Penny Williams
DERRY NEWS STAFF

"What's for dinner?"

More often than not, that question is asked with frantic weariness after a long day at work. But there is a solution.

The solution is Anastasia's Table, a new business with Patti Anastasia acting as your personal chef.

While eating out or grabbing take-out food for supper on the drive home is easy to do, there are drawbacks including cost and nutrition.

"I want to help very busy people by making their life easier and more enjoyable by providing the solution to their 'What's for dinner?' dilemma," Anastasia said. "I want to help those who don't like to cook. My solution is to provide you with healthy, delicious meals, prepared in your own kitchen, using recipes you like. You decide what you want to eat and I do all the rest including planning, shopping, cooking and clean-up."

Anastasia explained she came to this business by having solved her own dilemma by becoming her own personal chef. She and her husband both worked and had a long commute home so they would grocery shop once a month and she



would cook a week's worth of meals on the weekend, package them in the freezer and the dilemma was solved.

"I didn't know a personal chef was a real profession at that time," she said. "I enjoy cooking, having started at about age 5 with my mother, who thankfully taught me a recipe is only a guideline. So experiment, be creative."

She read cooking magazines and discovered that being a personal chef could be a career. When her technical writing job was outsourced, leaving her unemployed, she decided to do what she really enjoyed. She decided to turn her love of cooking into a personal chef business and Anastasia's Table was born.

The cook/client relationship begins with an interview where the client's needs and desires are assessed, food preferences established, and allergies and dietary restrictions discussed. The interview is conducted in

the client's home so Anastasia can become familiar with the kitchen and its equipment.

"I like to see what the client has available in their kitchen to work with," she said. "Anything they have is one thing less that I have to carry. But, I am particular about my spices and I always bring my own knives. For those kitchens that are not well-equipped, I can bring everything I need."

Once the client decides on which of her standard services — weekly, biweekly or monthly — a decision is made on whether to choose the select package (entrees and side dishes) or economy package (entrees only). Anastasia and the client figure out a grocery-shopping deposit that is paid up front and she does the rest. The client pays a set fee for her services. Because the client pays for the groceries, they are free to choose whatever foods they want.

"The cost for anyone of putting dinner on the table includes more than just the cost of the food," she said. "When you add up the time and money spent on planning, shopping, cooking and clean-up, the cost per meal is comparable to eating out. However, by having me as your personal chef, you don't have to

take the time to plan, grocery shop, prepare or clean up from cooking. I will create a special cooking program to meet specific client needs if need-be. The goal is to allow you to eat meals customized to your tastes and needs and allow you to use the extra time saved however you like."

Her clients are generally two-income professional couples. She has a few clients that have a special diet. She emphasizes that eating exactly what the client wants in their own home is much healthier than eating out.

She has developed a relationship with various grocery department heads which enables her to meet her client's needs on a regular basis and makes grocery shopping much easier. She said if a client prefers a particular store for some specific reason, she is happy to use that grocer.

"Mine is a very personalized service," she said. "In-home cooking, prepared to the client's requests and recipes, in their own homes, makes it very personal. Great meals and the time to enjoy them is what Anastasia's Table is all about."

For more information, call 818-9991 or visit www.AnastasiaTable.com.