

# CALIFORNIA HOMES

THE MAGAZINE OF ARCHITECTURE  
THE ARTS & DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

*the*  
**STATE**  
*of*  
**DESIGN**

ENTERTAINING  
IN THE  
VALLEY







**RIGHT** Designer and winemaker Caren Rideau collaborated with potter Gorky Gonzales for her own set of colorful dishware, nodding to her Southwestern roots.

**OPPOSITE** A table for two is positioned with sweeping views of the mountains and vineyards in Santa Ynez.



## A GOOD YEAR

*Caren Rideau Celebrates A Sweet Trifecta As Designer, Winemaker, And Author*

BY JENNIFER BLAISE KRAMER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEGHAN BEIERLE-O'BRIEN

SHE'S KNOWN FOR CREATING beautiful hearts of the home as founder of The Kitchen Design Group, but Caren Rideau has a couple of other loves. When not obsessing over sinks and stoves for clients, she's contemplating tastings and labels as a wine-maker for Tierra Y Vino. And to tie it all together, she adores cooking and hosting intimate

get-togethers, especially on the vineyard, which caters to casual, easy-going dinners. In her recent book, *Caren Rideau: Kitchen Designer, Vintner, and Entertaining at Home* (Pointed Leaf Press, 2022), the author beautifully weaves together stories, images, and recipes of her favorite things: kitchens, wine, and entertaining.





**ABOVE** Easy appetizers are served, including tomato tarts from Bob's Well Bread.

**TOP RIGHT** Caren Rideau puts the finishing touches on the table, layered in linens she's collected over the years.

effortless.” Which is exactly how she likes to entertain.

Guests who come for dinner usually get a stroll through the vineyard where it might not be surprising to see Rideau herself on the four-wheeler with her dog, Lola, and an ice-cold trough (adorned in a beautiful picnic blanket, of course) of wine bottles coming their way. At the table, a smattering of vintage linens work their way over every surface, paired with wooden bowls, collected silverware, and ceramic dishware. “I’m obsessed with linens and pottery,” she says. “Nothing has to match—they just have to be happy together.”

For pottery, Rideau recently collaborated with Gorky Gonzalez, an artist she admired for a long time, to produce her own signature line. While his work is deeply rooted in Mexican heritage,



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“I’m always doing one of the three—my work life is one long thread that just goes on every day,” Rideau says.

“Switching between kitchens and vineyards is easier than one might think!”

The book documents her crossover of work and play while showing the beauty of life behind the scenes. Rideau splits her time between L.A. and Santa Ynez with her partner and co-winemaker, Andres Ibarra, who has been working on vineyards since he was a teenager. She laughs, “He’s been making wine as long as I’ve been making kitchens!” The two began their own label in 2012 and can’t get enough of life in the country from the vineyards and views to the farmlands and fresh produce. “Being in Santa Ynez, you just fall in love with the setting—it’s more



**LEFT** Collected chairs and textiles (tablecloths and blankets) keep things as casual as the jugs of wildflowers and herbs on the table.

**OPPOSITE BELOW LEFT** Big bowls of fruit are the host’s go-to, doubling as colorful snacks and décor.

**OPPOSITE BELOW RIGHT** Easy picnic baskets are always on hand, ready here with baguettes and bottles.



Rideau looked to her own upbringing in Arizona for inspiration, designing around cacti and desert blooms in shades of green and orange that work perfectly with her linens.

To keep with her casual vibe, Spanish music wafts overhead while jugs of wildflowers grace the tables. “When I’m in the vineyard I don’t like to take away from the view, so I usually go out and cut what’s indigenous like greenery and herbs.”

When it comes to the menu, there’s plenty of flavor and color, much like her kitchens. For this dinner with friends, she and Andres did grilled chicken with an olive tapenade paired with lots of grilled vegetables like eggplant and asparagus. Sides included shishito peppers and grilled lemon, a pear and pecan salad with blue cheese, and tomato



tarts from Bob’s Well Bread. Bowls of peaches and cherries are as appetizing as they are cheerful for quick and pretty snacks.

And much like her popular and wildly published kitchens, everything on the menu is beautiful, but nothing is fussy. “I don’t want it to be complicated, because I don’t entertain that way,” Rideau says. And as the evening rolls on and the wines flow, she has only one strict rule: guests never do dishes. “I try to make things easy so we can all enjoy being together.” Because a good time is always important. **CH**

**ABOVE** Rideau lives by a rule that friends never do dishes when they come over. They just toast and have fun.

**TOP LEFT** Lola, always used to life on the vineyard, is ready for company.



## Grilled Chicken Thighs

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds of skinless boneless chicken thighs
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 shallot, peeled, and thinly sliced
- 4 rosemary sprigs, removed from stem
- Salt and pepper for seasoning

### Preparation

1. Season chicken on both sides with salt and pepper.
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix together olive oil, vinegar, shallots, and rosemary.
3. Add chicken and marinate in refrigerator for a minimum of 3-4 hours.
4. Remove chicken from refrigerator 30-45 minutes prior to grilling. (Caren prefers to grill room-temperature chicken.)
5. Sear chicken thighs on grill over medium-high heat, 3-5 minutes on each side. Ensure chicken is thoroughly cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees at thickest section of chicken thigh.
6. Remove from grill and enjoy!

## Green Olive Gremolata

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Castelvetrano pitted olives, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1/2 cup fresh Italian parsley, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp red chili flakes
- 1 tsp Himalayan salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

### Preparation

1. Mix chopped garlic, red chili flakes, salt, pepper, and olive oil in medium mixing bowl.
2. Add olives, herbs, lemon juice, lemon zest, and red wine vinegar to mixture.
3. Add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Add additional red wine vinegar to preferred acidity.
5. Allow mixture to marinate for at least 30 minutes. Mixture should marinate for 2-6 hours for optimal taste.

