

taste^{of the} south



Our Annual
CAST-IRON
Issue

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CAST-IRON RECIPES

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Classic SOUTHERN RECIPES
you can make tonight!



AFTER *the* HUNT

The brunch that follows the
Tyron Hounds morning trot in
South Carolina is steeped in tradition.

BY SANDY LANG // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN O'SHAGAN

If you're in the right place along a fence line in the South Carolina foothills, you can't miss them. A line of horses and hounds bound through the woods and farm fields, the riders wearing natty red or black coats and just-polished boots. The scene on a frosty January morning is a fox hunt of the Tyron Hounds, a hunting and social club founded in the 1920s just over the state line in Tryon, North Carolina.

"If you view a fox, point your hat or your hunting whip," states the protocol for this sport of genteel horsemanship. South Carolina equestrian and innkeeper Mary Wolters has saddled up for the hunts but lately takes part in another tradition, the post-meet gatherings that feature plenty of food and drink. While the hunting party and tricolored hounds spend a couple of hours



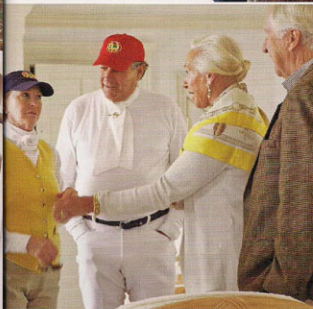
outdoors, hunt-savvy hosts and hostesses such as Mary cook and bake for the brunch that follows the ride.

"Twenty-five years ago, the brunches were usually catered," Mary remembers. "Then each of us started to take turns hosting, and people would have their own specialty—one woman made a delicious dish of onions, sausages, and apples. As hunts started coming back later in the day, the menus of sandwiches and soups began taking over."

When Mary hosts Tryon Hounds events at the hilltop Red Horse Inn that she owns with her husband, Roger, inn guests are also invited to join the gathering. Mary often serves homemade soups—maybe a creamy Blue Ridge pumpkin soup or a rustic favorite made of split yellow peas and purple onions in a broth that she seasons with a ham bone. "On a winter day, I love doing the soups," she says. "They are so wonderful and hearty." Also on the table often is Mary's popular chicken salad, which includes dried cranberries and toasted almonds. At the inn's brunch, guests gather by the fireplace and mountain-facing windows or out on the inn's patio that overlooks a fenced horse pasture. Regardless if they participate in the ride, most of the crowd is decked out in hunt country attire of wool and tweed jackets, silk scarves, and cravat ties. Besides arriving hungry and tired, the riders are always a good-natured group, even when they're a bit tousled and maddly from the morning hunt, Mary says. "Later in the season when we all see each other dressed up for the formal Hunt Ball, the most common greeting is 'You sure clean up good!'"



While the actual fox hunt is still the main event, the post-hunt brunch is quite the occasion for Tryon Hounds.





The RED HORSE INN

Located north of Greenville, South Carolina, and southeast of Asheville, North Carolina, the Red Horse Inn sits atop a nearly-200-acre property in the heart of hunt country, about a 10-minute drive from the quaint town of Landrum, South Carolina. Walking trails have just been added, and guests may choose from six inn rooms and six private cottages with porches and tin roofs. The handsome décor in white and wheat colors, which includes fireplaces and custom woodwork, is the creation of the married owners, who met while they were students at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. (Pssst...Equestrian-minded guests should ask about the inn's resident horse, My Little Secret, a great granddaughter of the champion racehorse Secretariat.) 864-895-4968, theredhorseinn.com



CARRIAGE BAY PUMPKIN SOUP

*Recipe courtesy of Mary Wolfers,
Innkeeper, The Red Horse Inn*

Yield: 10 to 12 servings

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, minced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans pumpkin
- 4 to 6 cups chicken broth (add a little less if you like your soup thick and creamy)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric or curry powder
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream

Garnish: sour cream, fresh thyme, salt, and pepper

1. In a large Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, and cook until translucent. Add pumpkin, chicken broth, nutmeg, and turmeric or curry powder. Stir until well blended. Bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat and simmer until soup is heated through. Just before serving, add cream, and heat until warm.
3. To serve, ladle soup into bowls, and top with a dollop of sour cream. Garnish with thyme, salt, and pepper.

