

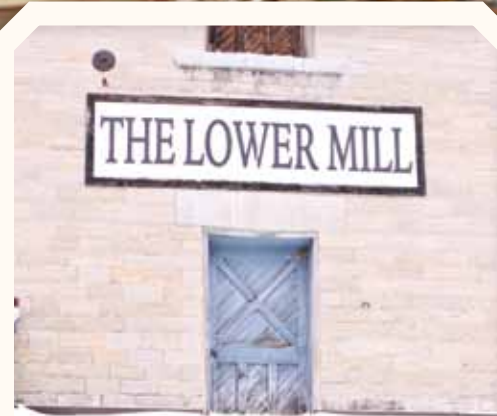
Where Women Cook Roadshow THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY

by Tamara Stopinski



On the cold and flurried day of February 12th, attendees weathered the storm, arriving with enthusiastic anticipation and festive attire for the second annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party, presented by Talulah's Fancy and Friends Gift Shop. To say it was over the top and way beyond mad would be a modest understatement! The location of the event made it a creative destination not to be missed. One step into The Lower Mill, built in 1827, with its post-and-beam architecture and old limestone walls, gave guests a sense that perhaps like Alice, they too may have journeyed to a far away place or time.

Within the walls of the four-story flour mill, located in the historical village of Honeoye Falls, New York, a collaborative arrangement of talent was found. The Rabbit Room Restaurant hosted the tea and brunch that was served for the Mad Hatter's event. Delectable dishes and scrumptious desserts were abundant and artfully arranged for the most discerning of palettes. The works of dollsculptor and illustrator Nancy Wiley, who was the featured artist of the event, were the



muse for Executive Chef Andrew Penner, Chef de Cuisine Chris Januzzi, and Pastry Chefs Liz Schultz and Erica Peck. Utilizing handcrafted teas from Talulah's Fancy and Friends to create signature dishes that would enhance the tea party theme was a challenge that was successfully accomplished.

Liz, who is inspired by any cake challenge, remembers the first cake she made with her Easy Bake Oven at the age of 8. Liz's love affair with cake continued into her adult life, and when her mom gave her cake-decorating classes in 1998 she was thrilled. After the first class Liz was hooked, and she went on to take more classes, including teaching courses. Teaching to art clubs and youth and women's

groups was just the beginning, and in 2002 she opened her very own bakery called Signature Cakes. The name was inspired by baking beautiful cakes as an art form — and each was signed by Liz! The Rabbit Room, known for creating signature weddings and special events, started commissioning Liz to bake for them. After almost a decade of running her own business, Liz decided to work for The Rabbit Room exclusively, and in 2011 she was hired by them full time as their wedding cake specialist. In her world, "Dinner should begin with dessert!"





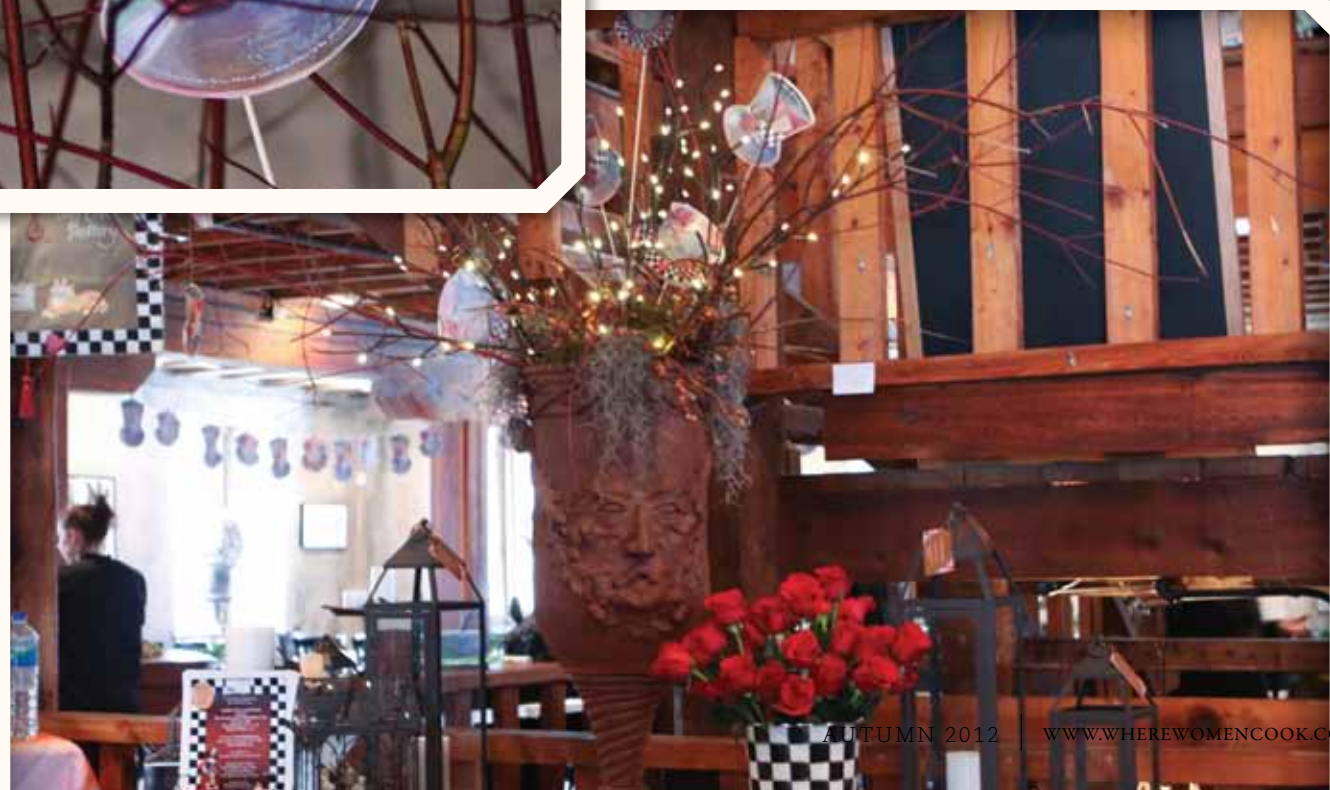
MaryJane Butters



Like Liz, Erica's inspiration for baking began early as well. At just 2 years old, she remembers baking cookies, pies, and cakes with her family. Erica's favorite place from then on was the kitchen, always knowing that a career in pastries would be in her future. Erica took advantage of the educational opportunities offered to her in high school by attending and graduating with honors from the culinary trade program, all while working as a line chef to save money for college. From there Erica went on to Le Cordon Bleu in Pittsburg, finishing with a degree in specialized technology in patisserie and baking. After graduating, she went to work for western New York's largest hotel and convention center, baking and cooking at a high volume level. The Rabbit Room owners, Alison DeMarco and Andy Penner, witnessed firsthand Erica's expert baking skills while at a party where one of her amazing cakes was served, and they asked her to join their team as a pastry chef. Her favorite ingredients are white chocolate, milk chocolate, dark chocolate, and double-dark chocolate. Erica's motto is "Life is uncertain; eat dessert first!"



Holly Becker





Chef de Cuisine Chris Januzzi was instrumental in executing the menu Executive Chef Penner created, a savory story utilizing the freshest ingredients from local and regional purveyors. The outcomes were delicious dishes like the housemade Parisian Gnocchi, Alice's Eggs, and the Cheshire Cat's Oyster Stew ... just to name a few. Chris' first cooking memories were of times spent with both grandmothers in the kitchen when he was a young boy. Each of his grandmothers cooked from scratch and taught Chris the value of farm-to-table wholesome foods, one teaching him her all-America style and the other a style heavily influenced by her Italian heritage. After Chris graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, he set out to expand his knowledge and skills by working as an intern in Umbria Italy for Enea Barbanara. Shortly after returning, Chris went to work full time at The Rabbit Room. The opportunity to work in a kitchen with a staff that has become family, creating recipes from scratch like he did with his grandmothers, is why being a major component of The Rabbit Room team is a perfect fit for Chris.

These very imaginative artists of the kitchen worked endless hours to create a feast for the eyes and mouths of tea party guests. Their passion for their craft was a true inspiration. Pastries of all sorts were in overflowing abundance. Strawberry and blueberry tarts and rich, cream-filled pâte à choux topped with decadent dark chocolate frosting began the extravaganza of mouth-watering treats. Fondants in every color and shape floated softly over the freshest cookies and cakes. Handmade chocolates were filled with creams, mallow, and nougats; it was a heavenly marriage of both sinful and saintly, truly the most exquisite of sweets. The finest handcrafted teas were also carefully selected to accompany these fabulous delectables, and guests were left giddy with a sense of satisfied delight.





Where Women Cook would like to thank Tamara Stopinski for her involvement in our Autumn Issue. To learn about future events, visit talulahfancyandfriends.com and thelowermill.com.

