

Gaston *Alive!*

Home • Garden • Style • Fun • Food • Happenings

A man with light brown hair, smiling, is wearing a tan jacket over a green shirt and a red and green plaid scarf. He is holding a red basket filled with fresh produce, including red bell peppers, an orange, and a jar of jam, along with some greenery. The background is dark with white snowflakes falling.

Local Folks, Local Food The Farmers Fork p10

10 Steps To A Designer Tree p7

Ring In The Holidays With Baked Brie p14

Christmas Town, Christmas Song p19

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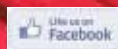
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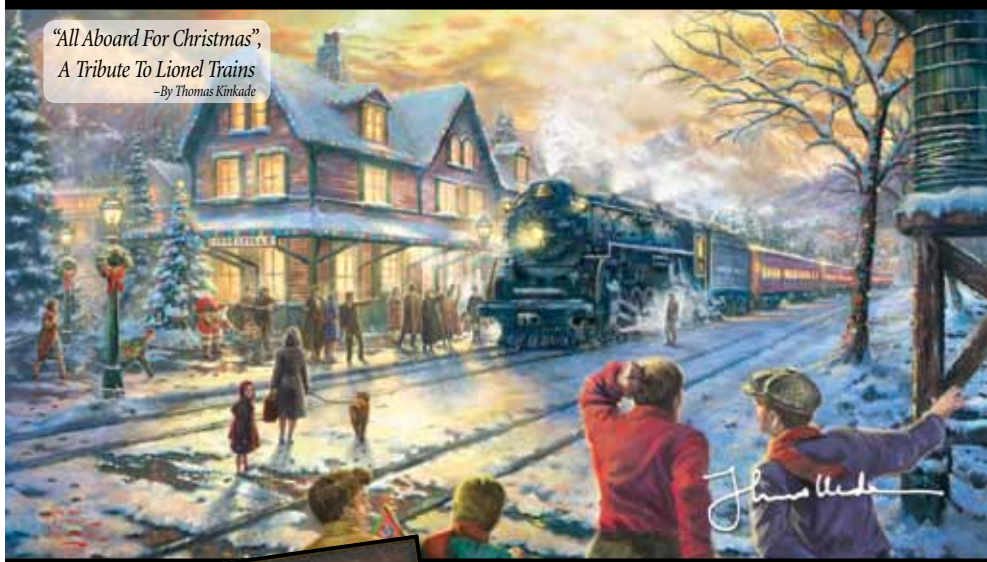
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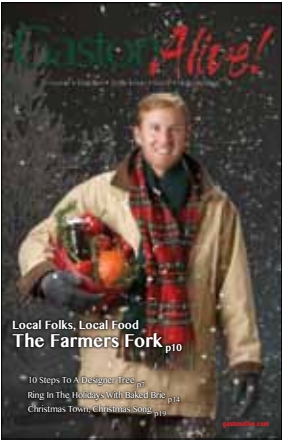
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about the cover



Our holiday cover was shot in studio by Rick Haithcox. All of the produce shown was local and fresh at the time of the cover shoot. Pictured is Job White of The Farmers Fork. See related story, page 10. Digital design and art direction by Rick Haithcox. Cover graphic design by David James.

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RING IN THE HOLIDAYS
WITH BAKED BRIE



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10 STEPS TO A SPECTACULAR CHRISTMAS TREE!

By Deborah Rosetti, Owner of Bella Rosetti's Home Interiors



It is the holiday season and Christmas is approaching. It's a magical time of year where everything sparkles, the smell of cinnamon and apples are in the air and where trials and tribulations of everyday life are swept away under the skirt of your Christmas tree.

It is the time of year where decorating the tree is a tradition that most of us look forward to year after year and the time of year and the idea of decorating is overwhelming. Well, I am here to make things a little easier and give you the 10 steps to decorating a Christmas tree called the Layering System.

1. Decide on the over all color scheme that you would be using on your tree. Consider using colors that compliment your room. Try not to use too many colors; two to three is usually a good rule of thumb.

2. Before decorating add your lights. Many designers use clear or white lights for that professional look. Place them evenly throughout the tree and close to the trunk to give depth. One hundred lights per foot is suggested, but this is the time where more can never be enough especially if you like a heavily decorated tree.

3. The topper is perhaps the most important ornament on your Christmas tree. Classic or alternative, it is the final touch to your holiday design that would make guests stand in awe. Some use heirloom toppers such as angels and stars, but if you want that designer flair, try using pheasant feathers, eucalyptus, sparkling branches, or a combination of the three and fan them out. This will give you that sophisticated look.



>>Article continued on page 23.

Gaston *Alive!* STORE

*Gifts inspired by the history,
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of Gaston County.*

There's no place like home!

This silverplate pendant showcases a copy of a vintage map of Gaston County found in a 1932 encyclopedia. Is your hometown included under the glass of this pendant? The map is adhered with a special gloss, then sealed with glass to magnify and enhance the colors and printing. A silver colored 2mm ball chain finishes the nostalgic look of this 1 inch pendant. Handmade by a Gaston County Artist.



Map Pendant \$22

Sundrop Glass Pendant

Carry a bit of Gaston County with you with this fun pendant created exclusively for Gaston Alive! magazine. Kiln fired glass from upcycled Sundrop bottles, these pendants are each one of a kind, handmade by a Gaston County Artist. The back of the pendant features a textured surface which magnifies through the front of the smooth round green glass. Approximately 1.5 inches in diameter, the pendant is finished with sterling silver wire and hung on a silver colored 2 mm, 24 inch ball chain.



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Meet Job White,
Restaurateur, Farmer, Foodie

The Farmers Fork

By David Hamrick



GA!: Job- congrats on your new restaurant! Tell us about the concept for The Farmers Fork...

Job: Thanks! Our concept is to bring fresh, locally produced food to our restaurant table for you to enjoy. Everything from local produce- literally out of the field-to certified meats, honey, even locally produced goat milk cheesecakes.

GA!: Job, last time we talked with you, you were a farmer raising specialty mushrooms, keeping bees, riding a tractor...what prompted you to open a restaurant?

Job: It's been an evolution of all of the things I am interested in and believe in. I love good fresh food, and care about things like farm to table, sustainable agriculture, and teaching people about what is possible and available concerning their food choices here in Gaston County especially.

GA!: What makes The Farmers Fork unique?

Job: Being able to make healthy comfort dishes with local farmers as suppliers, local folks as customers, and even our employees are from the community-it's a great feeling.

GA!: Who are some of your local providers?

Job: Rosemary Pete, Nise's Herbs, Whitefeather Produce, Thomas Family Farm Cheesecakes, and many others.

GA!: Is everything straight from a local farm?

Job: As much as possible. Obviously we can't get local strawberries in February, but we serve as much of what's fresh and in season as we can.

GA!: What is SSAWG? I know you have been active in that organization..

Job: It stands for Southern Sustainable Agricultural working Group. They are a group that is interested in everyone having access to wholesome food from sustainable farming, and also supporting good environmental and quality of life practices. We are interested in local farm to table initiatives, but also making local farming a viable concept-meaning economically viable for the farmer too. It's a win-win for the dining public and the local producer.



The Farmers Fork staff, co-owner Job White center.

GA!: The food sounds great-tell me about your staff...

Job: With her food service experience and great personality, our manager Kristen Clark does a great job at keeping the dining room smiling. Cat Graham, Alesha Rogers, and Teresa Dover make great things happen in the kitchen-having happy cooks is a good thing! My partner Preston Wilson and I get complimented on our staff almost daily.

GA!: Do you have daily specials?

Job: We do- you can check them out on our Facebook page every day, just look for The Farmers Fork. We try to highlight whatever is fresh and in season-healthy comfort food with a kick! You can also check out our chalk boards daily for entree and dessert specials, and see who some of our local suppliers are that day.

GA!: What would you like to say to local farmers?

Job: Local farmers and producers are encouraged to contact Kristen Clark, letting us know what products they have for sale, along with a price list. If it is locally produced and a good fit we would love to add them to our list of vendors.

GA!: What are some of the more popular dishes?

Job: Our fresh, hot daily specials have become a lunch favorite. Our shrimp and grits are really popular, as well as our tacos that come with shrimp, or pulled chicken or pork. And last and everyone loves our daily complimentary soups! We have homemade mason jar desserts made fresh daily – Key Lime Pie, Apple Crisp, Magic Coconut – and every other dessert favorite.

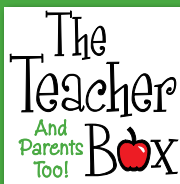


GA!: Right now you are open for breakfast and lunch. Any plans to open for dinner?

Job: We have been very pleased and grateful for the response we have gotten so far, and we have plans to open for dinner, but right now we are just open for breakfast and lunch-but a breakfast or lunch that we hope you will enjoy as much as we enjoy preparing it for you!



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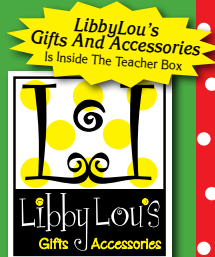


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COOKING WITH THE GLENN'S





Brie en Croute

Dressed to Impress

'Tis the season... for parties, decorating, guests, dinners, shopping, so much to do and never enough time-plus plenty of opportunities to bring something truly wonderful to an event! The best part is, this is pretty easy and takes less than an hour to make. You can keep the simple ingredients around and be ready to impress in a flash. This is such a beautiful dish. I get requests for it every year at my annual 'Ring in the Season' event.

Brie en Croute

The toppings used with the brie are as variable as your imagination, but keep in mind when taking this to a party there are lots of food allergies (nuts especially) when you pick your combinations. I love the combination with nuts and fruit and the warm cheese, but sometimes you have to make substitutions when cooking for a group.

Ingredients:

Puff Pastry (store bought, its just way too time consuming to make)

Brie (smaller parties I use a 4-6 inch round)

Apples or other fillings (cranberries, figs, etc.)

Lemon

Sugar and spices (nutmeg, cinnamon, cardamon, allspice)

Egg (for egg wash)

Method:

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Slice two apples as you would for an apple pie, mix with 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp nutmeg (or use 1 1/2 tsp of apple pie spice), 1/4 cup of brown sugar, a pinch of salt, and a squeeze of lemon juice. Then saute with 1/2 a stick of butter for five minutes, until the fruit softens and the sugar melts to a nice syrup. Remove from heat and set aside. There should be about a cup and a half of filling, if more it may not all fit in the puff pastry.

Alternative fillings, when I last made this I used dried figs, chopped and simmered them in port wine with cardamon and a clementine orange. Fresh cranberries can be used in the same way; simmering them just as you would a cranberry sauce. Even canned pie filling can be used if you need to save a few minutes.

Carefully slice the top of the brie off, you can skip this step if in a rush and just put some slashes in the top rind.

Unfold the puff pastry and place in a lightly greased, oven safe, pie plate. Place brie in center of pastry. Pour filling over the top, pull the corners of the pastry up around the brie, and pinch the edges together to seal. This will create a shape a bit like a monsignor's hat.

If you have a bit more time, unfold the next sheet of pastry and use cookie cutters to create shapes. Lay these over the top of the sealed brie, covering any thin spots, and creating a nice pattern. Create an egg wash by separating the white into a small bowl and adding a tablespoon of water. Mix this together with a fork, then paint the top of the brie and your cutout shapes. In the picture I used snow flakes and sprinkled with edible silver stars for a bit of sparkle. If you are feeling creative, you can color the egg wash and 'paint' the cutouts different colors. Just keep in mind they will darken when baking.

Bake for 15-20 minutes watching for the top to nicely brown. Turn the brie in the oven after 10 minutes to ensure even browning. Serve warm.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all, Glenn

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MUSIC CAROLINA CHRISTMAS

American entrepreneur and author Seth Godin recently wrote on his blog that our culture is always in a rush for 'new'. He went on to say that there's "an increasing desire, almost a panic, for something new."

I think he's onto something. It does always seem we are on a quest for something new all the time. We need to get the new iPhone or the new iPad the day it comes out. Technology moves so fast these days, that it plays into our quest for the next (new) big thing.

We live to consume the new - that is, until Christmas rolls around.

Christmas is that one time of year where the new takes a backseat to the old. People love to reach back to hear the classic Christmas songs of yesteryear. People want more Bing and less Beiber. More Johnny Mathis and less Jennifer Lopez.

It's the only time of year I know of where people actually prefer to watch black and white movies featuring Jimmy Stewart and Edmund Gwenn.

After the fullness of Thanksgiving subsides, it doesn't take long for nostalgia to creep in.

The word nostalgia comes from two Greek words nostos (to return) and algos (suffering). So based on this, the definition of nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeared yearning to return.

I never have thought of nostalgia as a form of suffering, but it does feel bittersweet and comforting all at the same time.

That's why it makes sense as to why singer-songwriter Pat Harris wrote a Christmas song about North Carolina. Harris is not a native North Carolinian. In fact, she grew up in Princeton, NJ and currently calls Pennsylvania



Pat Harris



Photo courtesy of Steve Rankin.

home. However, when the holidays roll around, in her mind she goes to Carolina.

As a young girl, she would spend summers and holidays with her grandmother who just so happened to live in Gastonia. Just like James Taylor, she too has written a Carolina song of her very own entitled "Carolina Christmas".

And according to Harris, you can't write a Christmas song about North Carolina and not mention McAdenville in it.

McAdenville is a little town in Gaston County that comes alive with big excitement between Thanksgiving and New Year's each year. And with the flip of a switch, McAdenville transforms itself into Christmas Town, USA.

Now in its 57th year, families all over make the annual pilgrimage to McAdenville each year to take in over 450,000 red, green and white lights that are spread throughout the two-mile stretch of road that takes you through town.

This annual tradition is just another way for us to connect with Christmases gone by and the people we shared them with.

Like it or not, nostalgia is a slice of the Christmas pie. It's how we're wired. We just express it in different ways.

Harris expressed it by writing a song. You or I may express this yearning to return to the past in a different way. McAdenville is a great way to travel back in time.

And it's like they say - it ain't Christmas without the 'Cadenville. And now we have a song to prove it!



by Ben Dungan
bdungan@charter.net

Ben is the membership coordinator at Gaston College's WSGE Radio.



Photo courtesy of Steve Rankin.

To learn more about Pat Harris and to listen to her song, "Carolina Christmas", visit the Montcross Area Chamber of Commerce's website at www.montcrossareachamber.com. More information on the Town of McAdenville is available online at www.mcadenville-christmastown.com.

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Ask Donna!**

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own rehab facility, and do I need a prescription?**

Donna: Yes, the choice is yours- patients love the new Union Road location because it is next to Riverwood Medical making it convenient for those patients in that area; Court Drive location is close to the hospital area. No prescription is necessary - we have direct access if your insurance company does not require a prescription.

GA!: Compleat Rehab has two convenient locations-do they offer the same services?

Donna: We offer aquatic therapy at both Gastonia locations. Aquatic Therapy is great for patients with arthritis, fibromyalgia, joint replacements. Balance therapy and therapy to relieve Vertigo is popular and therapeutic massage is located at both locations. Compleat KiDZ offers pediatric therapy for Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy at the Court Drive location. Questions...call us at 704-824-7800.

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Buy 1 massage
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Offer good on 30 min, 60 min and 90 minute
massages. Cannot be combined with any
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704-824-7800
www.CompleatRehab.com

2675 Court Drive
Gastonia, NC 28054

3719 Union Road
Gastonia, NC 28056

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*Excludes Heavy Outerwear, Evening & Formal Wear, Household & Special Care Items

703 Union Road • Suite 1 • Gastonia, NC 28054

>>Article continued from page 7.

- Use two color branches of pine. This will add texture and color to your tree. Place your branches on top of your tree's branches and weave them together. Use a longer branch throughout the tree to create distance and provide a space for larger ornaments.
- Use at least 3 assortments of ribbons in different sizes to make your bows. A solid, texture, and pattern are good examples. Use one of the ribbons to curve in and out of the tree along with a garland to give you depth. A French wired ribbon works best to hold its shape.
- Now it's time to add the props. Props are your focal points. They are your themes that tell a story. Use oversized and larger than standard ornaments to get that designer look such as: birdcages, lanterns, and elves. This is the time to use your imagination.
- Add flowers and natural elements such as hydrangeas, magnolias, berries, pinecones to create decorative sprays and add texture. Magnolia leaves are great because they add shine as their brown undersides acts as an accent color. For the front of a full standard tree I recommend seven clusters. Bundle three stems of artificial flowers, fruits or leaves together and tie the stems with string or floral wire. Move to the right side of the tree and insert another cluster into the branches; secure and then return to the left, creating a tilted zigzag across the front of the tree as shown.
- Add in any large to mid-size finials and crystals to give it that extra edge.
- Now it is time to add fillers. These are your smaller decorations used to fill in all the extra space such as: family heirlooms, decorative balls and assorted ornaments. The trick is to nestle them into the tree so that they don't jut out and look awkward.
- Last but not least, dim your lights sit back and enjoy.



Have a wonderful holiday season!

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Gaston County Restaurant & Dining Guide

LEGEND	BREAKFAST	B	CATERING	C	S	LESS THAN \$10
	LUNCH	L	OUTDOOR DINING	SS	SS	\$11-\$20
	DINNER	D	BEER/WINE	SSS	SSS	\$21 AND UP
	SUNDAY BRUNCH	SB	LIVE MUSIC			

AmberJack Seafood & Steaks

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704-824-5502 • www.amberjackseafood.com
\$-SSS **B D O SB C Y**

Center Street Tavern

115 Center Street, Cramerton
704-823-3000 • www.centerstreetaavern.com
\$-SS **B L D O SB C Y T J**

Christy's Place

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704-827-2411
\$ **B L**

City Café

128 South Main Street, Mount Holly
704-822-1450 • www.citycafe.us
\$-SS **L D O SB C Y T J**

Friends Sports Bar & Grill

16 North Main Street, Belmont
704-917-1401 • www.friendsportsbarandgrill.net
\$-SS **L D O Y T J**

Hickory Tavern

1925 Hoffman Road, Gastonia
704-917-0450 • www.thehickorytavern.com
\$-SS **L D O Y T**

JAX Backstreet Tavern

55 Glenway Street, Belmont
704-825-1776 • www.JAXBackstreet.com
\$-SS **L D O C Y T J**

Jia Asian Fusion and Sushi Bar

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\$-SS **L D**

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1327 E. Franklin Blvd., Gastonia • 704-864-4466
349 W. Charlotte Ave. Mt. Holly • 704-827-4819
www.thesakeexpress.com
\$-SS **L D O Y**

Sharkey's Place

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704-867-7427 • www.sharkeysplace.com
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Tequila's Mexican Grill & Taqueria

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704-867-8050 • www.tequilasgastonia.com
\$-SS **L D O Y T**

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704-823-1797 • www.thaihouse.us.com
\$-SS **L D O Y T**

The Farmers Fork

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704-820-6030
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FREE APPETIZER



With Purchase
of 2 Dinner
Entrées

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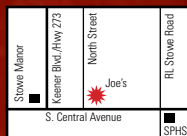
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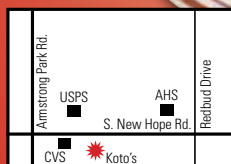
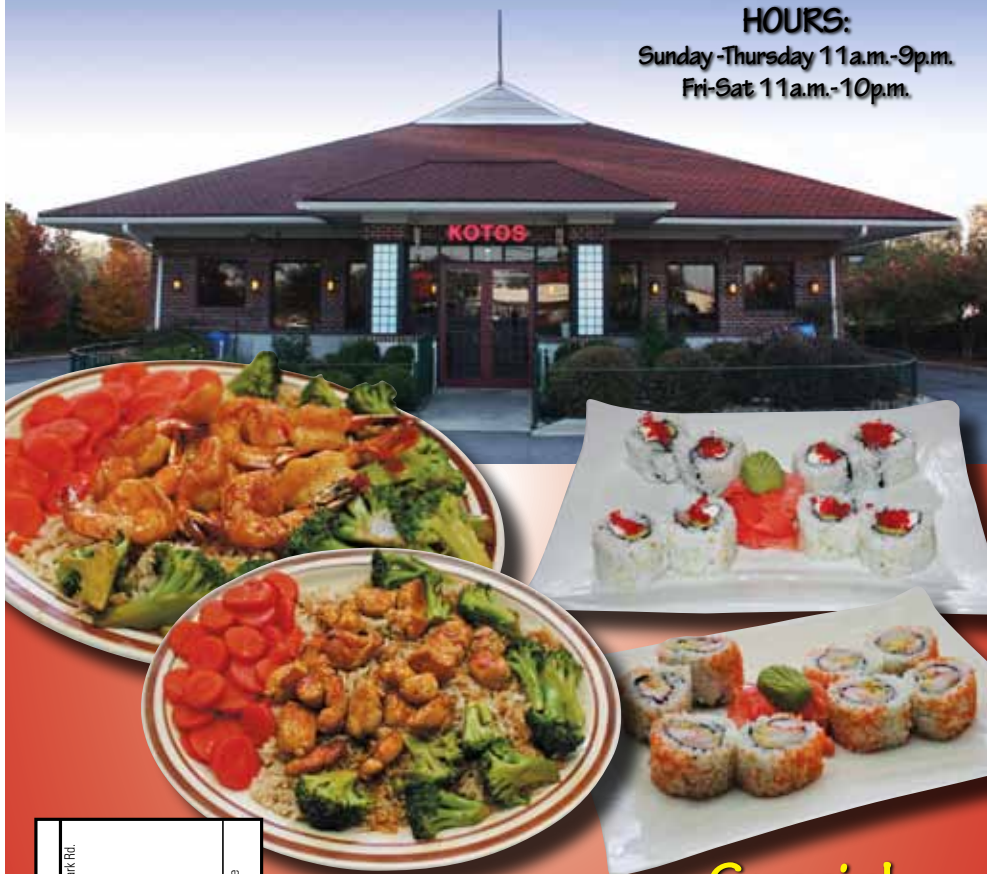
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Expires 1.15.13.

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5081 Charlotte Hwy • Lake Wylie

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Includes 2 lunch specials and drinks
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