

Ideal Day: Christina Barrueta

Written by Editorial

Monday, 21 November 2016 14:48 -



As a food and beverage journalist, our thriving culinary and cocktail scene keeps me busy. A typical day includes writing deadlines, recipe development, working on my Web site WriteOnRubee.com and, of course, visiting some of the Valley's best restaurants. I am also a full-time medical documentation editor, but since this is my ideal day, I took the day off instead of juggling both jobs.



8:45 a.m. I worked late the night before so would usually sleep in, but I have a deadline due.

9 a.m. Breakfast. My husband has been craving chilaquiles so I make his brother Mike's recipe, a quick and easy stovetop method. Hmmmm...I really should put it up on my Web site. I take a few photos.

9:30 a.m. I shower and get dressed before tackling e-mails and meeting a deadline.

10:05 a.m. I make final edits to an article due this morning and send it off to Experience Scottsdale, the official travel site for Scottsdale. It was a fun assignment where I moderated a roundtable discussion with three talented chefs: Mel Mecinas of Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, Beau MacMillan of Sanctuary Camelback Mountain, and Charleen Badman of FnB. It will run in the winter issue of the Scottsdale Visitor Guide.

10:15 a.m. I work on e-mails and my Web site. My inbox is filled with press releases, restaurant announcements, food and beverage events and requests for coverage. I answer the time-sensitive ones, add events to my online calendar and compile a list of questions for an upcoming interview with celebrity chef Scott Conant. I've also been asked to mentor a student at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and chat with Emma, who is studying to be a travel journalist. I'll be taking a hardhat tour of the new Andaz Scottsdale Resort & Spa, and I invite her to join me.

11:30 a.m. My husband and I head out for Tomaso's Italian Restaurant's 40-year anniversary celebration and luncheon. Mayor Stanton has also designated it Tomaso's Day, so there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

12 p.m. We arrive at Tomaso's Italian Restaurant where we celebrate with fellow media professionals and friends of chef/owner Tomaso Maggiore and his family. A delicious four-course luncheon includes casarecce pasta with langostinos and lemon-caper prawns with cauliflower and ricotta croquettes.

2:10 p.m. Back home, I check e-mails and update the Web site. I add event recaps, press releases and work on the recipe section. I'm participating in Fry's Taste of Italy campaign and received a gift basket of imported ingredients for inspiration. I've created and posted a recipe for stuffed lumaconi pasta, and now I'm adding photos of last night's antipasti platter (pictured).

3:20 p.m. I work in the garden fertilizing citrus trees (Meyer, Lisbon and Ponderosa lemons, grapefruit, lime, kumquat, Valencia and Moro Blood oranges) and planting winter produce including lettuce, arugula, kale, Swiss chard, carrots, radishes and beets.

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3:55 p.m. I clean up and get ready for two events I've been invited to tonight. One is a 5 p.m. cocktail class, so we snack on leftover antipasti.

4:35 p.m. We leave for Rico's American Grille at the Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort.

5 p.m. Rico's has launched a monthly cocktail class (pictured), and I join fellow media for their first one featuring tequila. Led by Chef Rebecca Tillman and mixologist Sara Powers, we learn to how to infuse strawberries and jalapenos and to shake up libations like the Headstrong with elderflower, lime, blueberry and Thai basil as we enjoy fish tacos and cheesecake with basil-strawberry sauce.

6:15 p.m. We're off to LON's at the Hermosa for a special dinner with guest chef Justin Beckett and Sonoran Brewing Company beers.

6:30 p.m. We meet the other guests on the patio, chat with Executive Chef Jeremy Pacheco, and nibble on head cheese croquettes with lemon jam as we sip raspberry ale.

7 p.m. We are seated for what would be an amazing dinner, and I'm happy to find my tablemates are PR maven Keeley Ast and her husband Stephen, managing director of The Hermosa Inn. We start with a salad of smoked McClendon beets, ham, arugula and chocolate vinaigrette paired with White Chocolate Ale before dining on scallops with crispy pork trotter, fennel-carrot puree and pink peppercorn-almond crumble paired with Seven Wives Saison, porchetta with spicy broccolini and goat cheese polenta paired with Burning Bird IPA, and a decadent dessert of peanut butter mousse, marshmallow and chocolate-covered bacon paired with Inebriator Stout.

10:15 p.m. Back home after a fun-filled culinary day in the Valley of the Sun. I would normally work until the wee hours, but since this is my ideal day, we settle in with a nightcap in front of the TV. We catch up on "The Blacklist," "New Girl" and "The Catch," as my husband savors a brandy and I make myself a Negroni.