



Clockwise from
top left, The
Inn at Hastings
Park's main house,
grilled Arctic
char, seasonal
decorations, chef
and owner Trisha
Pérez Kennealy

Community & Cuisine

Chef/owner Trisha Pérez Kennealy is the consummate host
of an impeccable inn and delicious cooking classes.

By Nancy E. Berry



Opposite, Chef Pérez Kennealy offers cooking technique tips to her students. Above, the inn's formal dining room is inviting.

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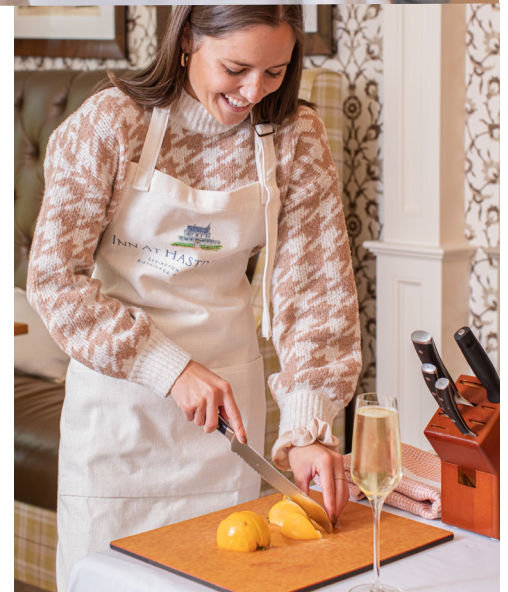
Walking into chef Trisha Pérez Kennealy's Supper Club at the Inn at Hastings Park in Lexington is like walking into a dear friend's kitchen. With a warm, friendly smile, Pérez Kennealy makes you feel right at home. Except perhaps unlike a dear friend, she has earned her Diplôme de Cuisine and Diplôme de Pâtisserie at Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School in London. The culinary journey you are about to experience is unparalleled.

Pérez Kennealy opened the Inn at Hastings Park in 2014 with the vision of creating a place where community comes together over great cuisine and conversation. The inn is the only Relais & Châteaux boutique hotel in the Boston area and provides hospitality and exceptional culinary experiences. The Inn features 22 luxurious

guest rooms that celebrate Lexington's historic heritage and its architecture with bespoke interiors. Well-appointed vintage furnishings, hand-printed wallpapers, and rich fabrics evoke a timeless, comfortable atmosphere.

Somewhat daunted by Pérez Kennealy's background, I felt a bit intimidated before joining a weeknight cooking class. The extent of my culinary education has been trying out recipes from the *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home* cookbook. (My family has always been kind enough to not criticize my lack of finesse in the kitchen.)

The chef's monthly Supper Clubs are interactive, instructing guests through the execution of festive-themed dinner parties. Pérez Kennealy spent most of her childhood in Puerto Rico, and the night I attend the Supper





Pérez Kennealy purchased the inn in 2014.







Opposite, The Town Meeting Bistro offers a Colonial era flair.

Above, Roast chicken served with couscous is cooked to perfection.

Club she is preparing classic dishes with Puerto Rican flavors. She uses fresh ingredients, sourcing from local farms whenever possible, making this a truly farm-to-fork dining experience.

She hands me a delightful glass of bubbly and immediately puts me at ease with the first task at hand. We start with filling dough to make empanadas, one with spicy ground beef for a savory starter and another with quince paste and manchego cheese for a savory-sweet option. As we make these tiny turnovers, Pérez Kennealy shares cooking tips and tricks, stories about her family and living in the Caribbean, and her passion for ballroom dance. I'm

thrilled to learn her dance partner is Chris Johnson, who knows my brother, Richard, from the days they both taught ballroom dancing at Harvard. She moves from station to station effortlessly, almost as though she is on a dance floor. After we pop the empanadas in the oven, she shows us how to prepare garlic shrimp, a crowd pleaser for sure. She deftly tosses the crustacean together with minced garlic, adding just the right amount to avoid overpowering the dish.

Pérez Kennealy has a chicken roasting while we prepare the starters. The bird is resting on a bed of yuca, taro, and yams—all vegetables common to her homeland. She twice fries

plantains, also known as tostones, for a salty Caribbean-style side dish. For a fish option, the chef prepares a pan-seared Arctic char, explaining that this is a milder fish than salmon and a more sustainable option.

As the dishes are being plated, we take our seats in the elegant dining room, named “Artistry on the Green,” with original moldings and millwork, floral wallpaper, linen-upholstered banquettes, crisp white table clothes, and vintage mirrors and artwork on the walls. The waitstaff begins to serve course after course with the perfect wine pairing for each dish.

As the candlelight twinkles off the stemware, conversation and laughter flow among friends old and new and the fabulous food and wine evening continues. Much like Pérez Kennealy had intended, her Supper Clubs reflect her upbringing, with family and friends sitting around the dining table sharing food and stories. ♦ *2027 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington, 781-301-6660, innathastingspark.com*



The Inn at Hastings Park is comprised of three restored buildings—a Victorian-era main house, the barn, and the Isaac Mulliken House. Each guest room offers a unique design, many with fireplaces and sitting areas featuring beautifully tailored upholstery. The modern Colonial-style restaurant serves exceptional New England cuisine using local, seasonal ingredients. To be accepted as a Relais & Chateaux property, dining, hospitality, and accommodations all need to hit the highest bars in luxury standards. The Inn at Hastings Park fits in perfectly with this exclusive group, making it the ideal destination for dining or a weekend getaway close to home.

Above, Hanger steak with roasted potatoes and corn chimichurri.

Chef in her garden; preparing a dish; the guest rooms are well appointed—many with fireplaces.

