

The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden's 'The Hamptons in the Heights' benefit

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With the warmth and accessibility that have made her one of America's most beloved cooks, Ina Garten made her way through a crowd of 425 guests Saturday, posing for photos with fans and listening politely to everyone's favorite recipe story. Gracious in the face of a dignified ambush, Ms. Garten was showered with the kind of attention that used to be reserved for royalty.

Then again, in the food world, Ms. Garten is queen. Her best-selling cookbooks and top-rated Food Network program have helped to convince us that anyone can cook. "How easy is that?" she often asks as she whips together the fresh ingredients she champions. That many come straight from the garden is one reason she agreed to serve as honorary chair of "The Hamptons in the Heights," the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden benefit at Allegheny Country Club. The evening raised more than \$200,000 to help build the region's first comprehensive outdoor botanic garden, situated on 460 acres near the city.

With a theme that celebrated the best of summer on a night that turned out to be, guests could pretend they were in the Hamptons or anywhere beautiful people, beautiful flowers (by Toadflax, Hepatica, Cuttings, Bill Chisnell, Roxanne's Dried Flowers and Allison McGeary) and a breathtaking view collaborate on a chic garden party. The rolling grounds of the Sewickley Heights club provided the perfect backdrop for cocktails before a buffet dinner of lamb burgers, swordfish and grilled chicken was served.

A silent auction and dancing to the fab MVP band kept guests moving through the lovely spaces created by Nancy Byrnes Events and chairs David Thor, Brigitte Pavlik and Bill Kolano.

Mounds of blue hydrangeas, umbrellas and flip-flops in sand buckets spelled summer fun for Botanic Garden president Greg Nace with BJ, Bill and Lisa Worms, Jen and TJ McCrady, Alice Snyder, Peggy and Steve McKnight, Kitty Hillman, Rich and Cindy Engler, David Kozloff and Mark Meaders, Lee and Betsy Deiseroth, Maris Bondi, Annie and Gus Engel, Catherine Loevner, Selma Sherman, Jim and Laurie Bly, Liz and Dan Wilson, Nancy and Dick Zappala, Lou and Amy Weiss, Mike and Debbie Barbarita, Elliott Kramer and Bill Modrak, Jackie Dixon, Gary Gentile and Jean Malinic, Bobbie and Keith Smith, Coco and John Rudolph, Gail and Steve Mosites. Laurie and Rick Johnson, Patty and Jeff Kendell, Jim Constantin, Barbara Tucker, William Van Kirk, Gweneth Gaul, Kevin Jenkins, Debbie and Bob Beck, Jack Wolf and the envy of everyone there, Ms. Garten's delightful husband, Jeffrey.