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PORTLAND

spaces

In the Kitchen

Smart design for small spaces,
cooking up a modern family room,
and high Italian style

Local chefs share their
favorite kitchen tools
from \$1 to \$7,500



MAY / JUNE 2008 \$4.99

Discover Nostrana
owner Cathy Whims's
picks for her Southeast
Portland kitchen on
page 109.

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Portland Spaces: Kitchens 2008

CHEF'S CHOICE

 Five local foodies—**Cathy Whims**, **Tony Brush**, **Robert Reynolds**, **Monique Siu**, and **Joe Guth**—invite us into their homes to share the tools and gadgets they prize most, plus their big dreams for their own kitchens.

by **Jon Hart**
photographs by **Daniel Root**



* THE ITALIANATE

CLASSICS AND COOKING have always been synonymous for chef Cathy Whims, of Portland's two-and-a-half-year-old Italian sensation Nostrana. Whims learned to cook alongside her mother, who methodically worked her way through *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Julia Childs's famed 1960s tome that revealed French cuisine to Americans. But Italian food has dominated Whims's career since 1971, when legendary local restaurateur Mike Vidor offered her a job at Genoa, Southeast Portland's esteemed Italian establishment.

"I was so excited, I hung up the phone and ran into the street," she recalls. "They used the best ingredients and really cared about how things were made."

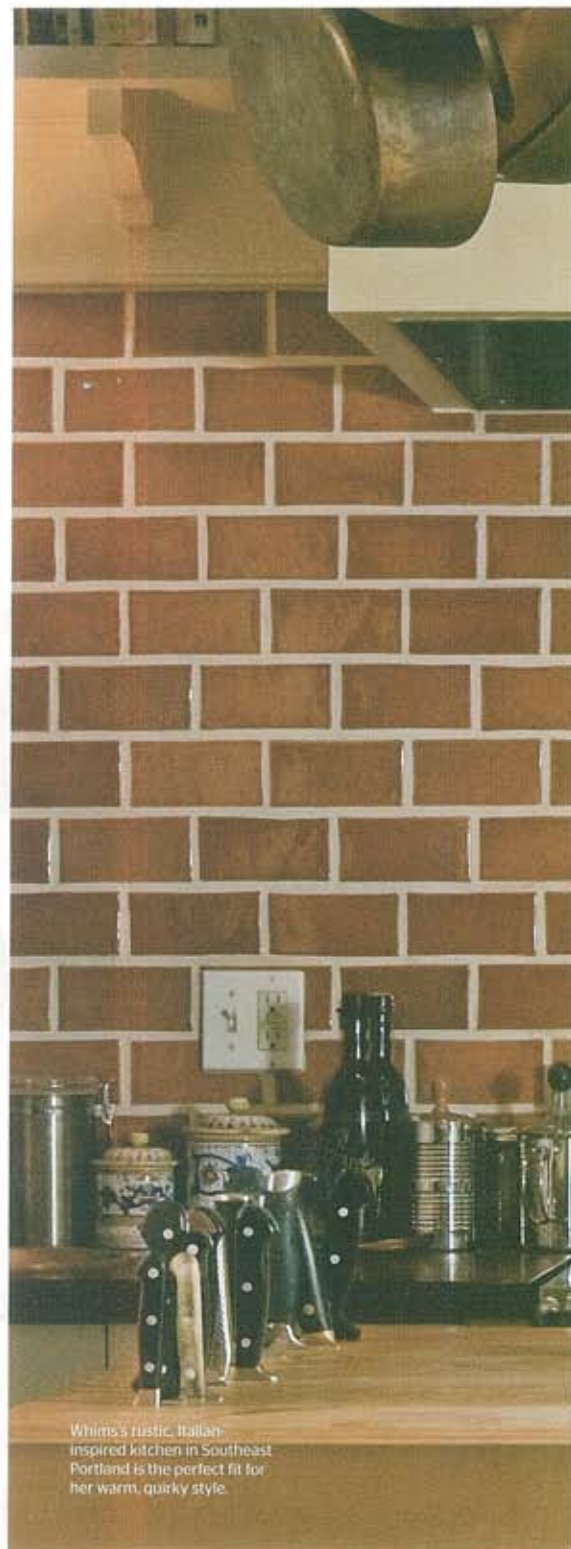
Whims eventually became a co-owner of the restaurant, running the kitchen for more than two decades.

In the early 2000s, she and life partner David West began traveling regularly throughout Italy. "My focus began to change," she reflects. "The food in Italy was so much simpler and more ingredient-driven."

In 2003 she sold her share of Genoa and began to explore Italy more deeply, studying the language, traveling, and cooking at home. "Our house was the drop-off point for Tastebud Farms CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Sometimes people wouldn't be able to pick up their vegetables, so I was cooking a lot," says Whims, who was determined to make sure none of the ingredients went to waste. A friend brought over a mobile, wood-fired oven, and presto: An award-winning marriage of the Northwest's fresh bounty to classic, rustic Italian cuisine was born.

"I entertained three times a week, making pizzas in my yard," Whims says. "It was really this period that formed how we cook at Nostrana."

* CATHY WHIMS*



Whims's rustic, Italian-inspired kitchen in Southeast Portland is the perfect fit for her warm, quirky style.



TOP TOOLS

01 Good Grips pastry scraper

These handy items have another name in the culinary world: bench knives. Most commonly used to clean off the bits of dough that stick to the inside of a bowl, they are handy tools every cook will find particular uses for over time. \$9. Kitchen Kaboodle, 404 NW 23rd Ave.

● BUY



02 Mortar and pestle

Whims carried her large marble mortar and pestle home from Venice, Italy. You get to know your ingredients better when you treat them by hand, she explains.

\$80, Williams-Sonoma, 638 SW Fifth Ave.

●● INVEST



KITCHEN DREAM

Whims says her ideal kitchen is actually her own. "It's not terribly large," she says, "but it's all that I want." Her pistachio-colored La Cornue stove from France has a lot to do with it. But she does long for a small farmhouse in Italy with a little land for growing herbs and vegetables. "All I would need is running water and a wood-burning oven," she says, "and I would be happy."



03 **Deruta Collection pasta bowl**
Classic Deruta ceramics will give any version of spaghetti and meatballs an air of authenticity. Made of terra-cotta, these colorful, hand-painted vessels have been produced in the Umbria region of central Italy since the Middle Ages.

\$50, Sur La Table, 1102 NW Couch St

●● INVEST



04 **Mugnaini Prima 100 oven**
Whims would love to have this wood-fired oven in her backyard. "The heat is so even," she raves. "It produces very different results than gas ovens, which tend to heat, then cool. Put in a pot of beans, cover it with hot coals, and come morning, they will emerge amazingly tender and creamy." Approx. \$4,000, Mugnaini, www.mugnaini.com

●●● SPLURGE