



Soirée

Entertaining with Style

By: Danielle Rollins

For this review, we strayed a bit from our typical novel. The club went rogue and ventured into the realm of entertaining. We couldn't pass up a road trip to Baltimore's premier private restaurant club, The Center Club.

Lifebridge Health held a fundraising event featuring Danielle Rollins' book, *Soirée*. Rollins was in town not only to promote her book, but to publicly thank the medical and surgical team that saved her daughter's leg after a traumatic accident. She was inspired. She is no stranger to fine dining or writing as she is a frequent contributor to *Vermada* magazine and *Southern Living*. Her motto is a variation of the "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade" ...but she adds vodka, a floral garnish, and puts a striped straw in it! The other basic message is that presentation really is everything.

The book is a mid-sized coffee table book with glorious photographs interspersed with recipes. But, if you actually read the text, you will be brought into Rollins' inner sanctum of some very personal and private moments in her life. She states that entertaining isn't about the money... however, it is evident that a hefty budget surely helps. It would be hard to really think that these extensive table settings weren't assembled by a dutiful staff under the masterful forelady. Regardless, the end result shows her hours of detailed planning.

She introduces some interesting themes and dress guidelines such as "Bonfire Chic". She suggests bribery with cookies to solve noise issues with the neighbors (but why not just invite them?).

THE CLUB WOULD GIVE *SOIRÉE*, BY DANIELLE ROLLINS



READ BETWEEN THE WINES BOOK CLUB IS AN INFORMAL GROUP OF WOMEN WHO GATHER ONCE A MONTH TO DISCUSS A BOOK THEY HAVE READ WHILE SHARING A MEAL, WINE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Some of the negative comments regarding the book in other reviews are based on the author's lifestyle and personal preferences. Clearly, themes such as "I'm Dreaming of a Blonde Christmas" will only appeal to a very narrow audience and may in fact be offensive to some. So, why take the risk and include it? The answer is fairly obvious since the book is not about us; it is about Danielle Rollins.

Recommendations: Do try some of Ms. Rollins' clever tricks such as encasing vodka bottles in decorative ice for a cold weather party or hunting for accessories at flea markets. Most recipes in the book are do-able with some substitutions for those hard to find or expensive ingredients so give a few a try. Rollins uses a lot of simple syrup variations for her signature cocktails. Many are champagne-based drinks, which we sampled, then returned to our glasses of wine, staying true to our book club charter.

What Martha Stewart achieves in jeans with a garden trowel in hand, Danielle Rollins does in a silk frock and vintage silver. It's enough to make you want to grab a can of metallic spray paint and have a little fun being creative. So, until next time



Read Between the Wines Book Club

(l-r standing) *Cassandra Tomarchio, Carolyn Evans, Judy Stewart, Diane Senstacke, Susan Theuns, Debi Williams, Kim Wagner, Kirstie Durr, Beth Hendrix*
(l-r sitting) *Susan Luckan, Marge Pearce*