

House guests

House or apartment guests — I love them.

Several weeks ago, my nephew and godson, David, and his lovely wife, Jen, and their two kids, David Patrick and Lauren, came to visit and stayed with us in the city for several days. (I was, like, 13 years old when David was born! My family is so big that it gets complicated. His father, my brother, who is ten years older than me, got married at 21 and started having kids right away. David is number two out of seven, and therefore we are not that far apart in age.)

This family, they were the perfect guests! Really. They didn't mind if dinner started a little late (I think I was a little bit ambitious with the meal planning considering it was on weeknights), they were easy going, helped slice garlic, cut potatoes, clean up and brought plenty of wine. What more could one ask for? When they left, we truly missed them. They were so much fun to have around and I was delighted to have a chance to get to know their kids a little better. They live in my hometown of St. Louis.

David Patrick is 14, about to enter high school in September and is really interested in cooking. I wouldn't be surprised if he becomes a chef. He was so exuberant about my food. I loved it! The second night, my dinner consisted of homemade Caesar salad, roast pork tenderloin with sage, mint and caramelized onions, roasted potatoes and ginger honey carrots. He sort of danced on the seat of his chair and said, "Aunt Mary, I want all of these recipes," as he circled his

plate!





Lauren is 12. Not a fish lover, she was digging the Caesar salad until she figured out that there were anchovies in it. Here we are at the table. Jen is taking the

picture



Now this is the best part. Right after dinner on the first night, Lauren jumps up from the table and asks if she can *please* clean up the dishes and wash the wine



As I said, wonderful house guests!!