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ELLE LIVING



Free style:
Snow (right)
and her
sister Anne
Apparu

THE RECESSION PICNIC

Artist Agathe Snow is a kamikaze, punk rock Martha Stewart. At Snow's latest culinary happening, Julia Chaplin finds a treasure trove of penny-pinching tips to keep us partying through the hard times. Photographed by Paul Costello

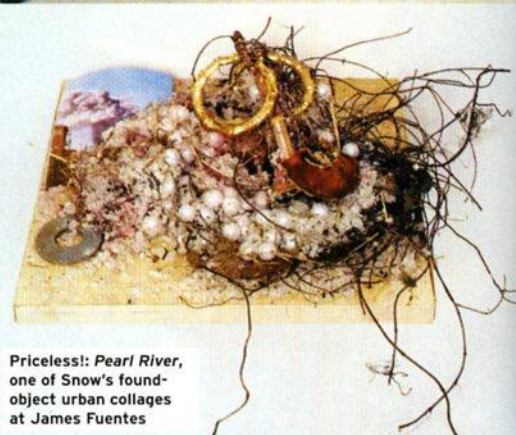
Hair and makeup by Sheri Darilyn Terry for Dior Beauty at ArtHouseManagement.com



Bleacher seats: (From left) Patrick Duncan, a member of the art-event producer Steadfast Associates; Victoria Sounthavong of Peres Projects; Friday Chamberlain; Krista Donargo, an artist; Apparu, chopping bananas for the apple filling. On U-Haul: Alanna Higgins, bassist for ModRocket



Cool that money can't buy: (From left) Deitch Projects Director Grayson and artist Schmidt



Priceless! Pearl River, one of Snow's found-object urban collages at James Fuentes

can't wait till the recession *really* hits," enthuses artist Agathe Snow. "I love it when I have to fight."

In a blue lingerie top, black kimono jacket, and fuchsia hair, Snow, 32, lugs bags of sand from the back of a U-Haul truck for a DIY beach she is building on the cement dock of Deitch Projects' new gallery and art event space on the East River in New York's Long Island City neighborhood. She is tricking out her bear-economy picnic, the latest of her trademark culinary happenings—part performance art, part starving-artist soup kitchen—that Snow has been staging for more than a decade.

Whether you are actually broke or

afflicted with the ominous sense that you soon will be, the current climate encourages you to hang your head and declare the party over. Which is why, when we needed a 2008 summer party guru to teach us how to dine in the face of disaster, we turned to Snow.

Her sculptures of found objects reworked into exquisite tales of urban archaeology embody an apocalyptic joy that the rest of us are just getting hip to. Like last spring, when Snow was evicted from her downtown loft: She chopped and diced all her furniture, put it into the back of a Los Angeles-bound U-Haul—her nomadic caravan of choice—and used it for a solo show at the adventuresome Peres Projects gallery. (Punk rock, sure, but the conventional art world is taking her seriously. *Über*-collector Charles Saatchi recently snapped up work, and she's exhib-

ited in group shows at Gagosian Gallery and, this summer, at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton.)

Her sideshow, Chop Shop, which she runs along with Marianne Vitale, her sister, Anne Apparu, and a roving artist cast, including painter Rita Ackermann, brings the same resourceful *joie de vivre* to food. Chop Shop has busted out prep knives at such no-frills locales as the Staten Island Ferry, the Beatrice Inn nightclub, and—most recently, a gypsy feast, complete with roasted pig served atop a cardboard box—the Park Avenue Armory, an off-site venue of the Whitney Biennial.

For today's Americana-by-way-of-the-Lower East Side menu, Snow subtly sublimed bargain basics: grilled quesadillas spiked with jalapeños and corn; hamburgers customized with eggs and fresh herbs; and marinated chicken placed, with an art-

Rich (in spirit) Menu

FULL-FOR-A-WEEK MAINS

BBQ chicken, marinated in cilantro vinegar and jalapeño peppers, on a bed of purple cabbage salad

Quesadillas with corn, cheese, and jalapeños on pita bread

Hamburgers with chopped herbs, onions, and eggs, served in pita. ("I usually cook my own rolls, but I don't have a house or an oven right now," Snow says.)

SAVE-ON SIDES

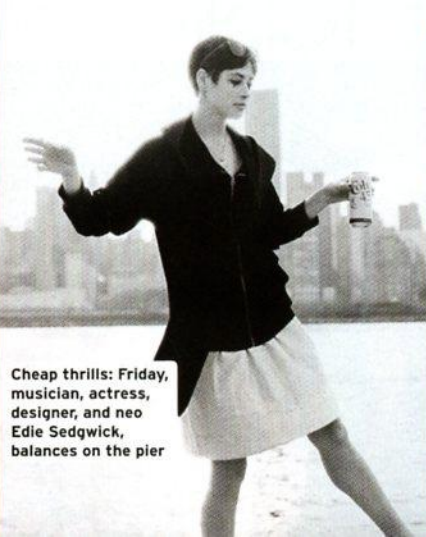
- Mango salsa
- Hummus
- Grilled pita

DON'T-BREAK-THE-BANK BEVERAGES

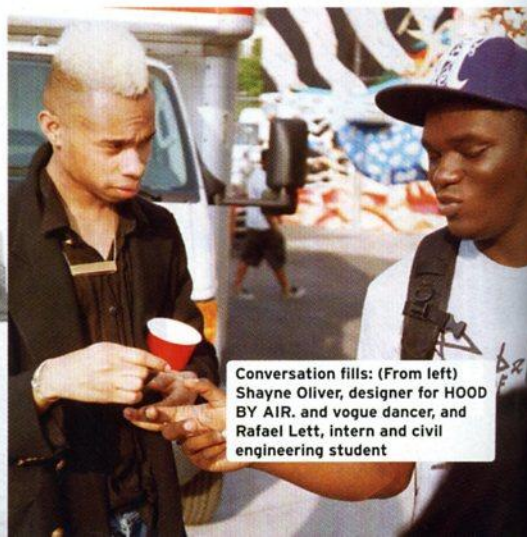
- Budweiser
- Watermelon lemonade

DESSERT ON A DIME

Baked Dulce de Leche Apples



Cheap thrills: Friday, musician, actress, designer, and neo Edie Sedgwick, balances on the pier



Conversation fills: (From left) Shayne Oliver, designer for HOOD BY AIR, and vogue dancer, and Rafael Lett, intern and civil engineering student



Aluminum siding: "Red cabbage only costs 99 cents a pound!" gushes Snow, one of the few women who could turn a depression staple delicious and glamorous.



ist's eye, on a bed of electric-purple cabbage. The grand finale was very sticky but brilliantly delicious BBQ-baked apples stuffed with marshmallows. But where were the forks?

"I like serving things that are awkward to eat at a picnic," Snow giggles. "Like spaghetti with chopsticks."

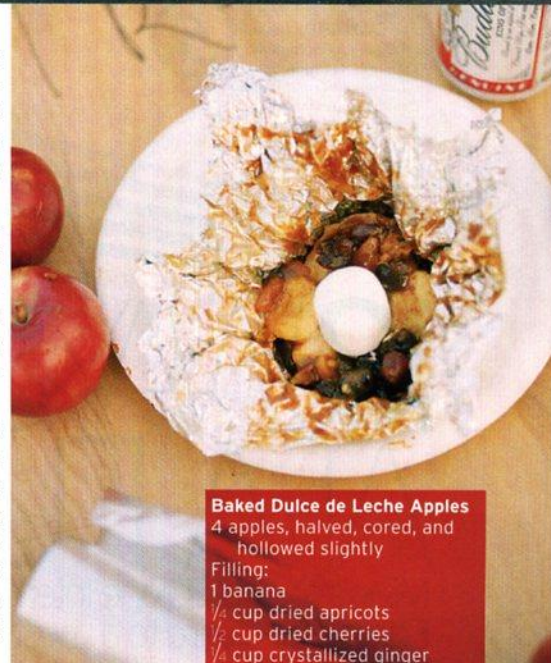
Snow pulled off the menu in two hours for a mere \$200, mostly from independent kiosks in the Essex Street market, where the food is fresh, local, and cheap, Snow says. Then she herded 20 or so friends—teen girls from the band ModRocket, vogue dancers, young artists—off a Manhattan corner into the back of the U-Haul and headed to her conceptual discount Riviera.

Snow grew up helping her parents run restaurants in Manhattan and Corsica, where she was born, so she naturally as-

sumed the role of den nutritionist for the current ranks of gritty downtown NYC artists before they were famous (like Nate Lowman, Dan Colen, and Dash Snow, her ex, legendary for turning hotel rooms into human hamster nests).

"Part of her art is that she creates a community," says Deitch Projects Director Kathy Grayson, sipping Snow's watermelon lemonade next to the artists Hanna Liden and Aurel Schmidt and galactic caftan-wearing members of the art collective Assume Vivid Astro Focus.

"Make it an event and people will want to become part of it," says Snow, who was in full hostess mode, skipping and dancing around. But Snow's best price-chopping wisdom could be the smartest policy since the New Deal. "Invite as many friends as possible," Snow says. "It costs the same to feed 10 people as it does 20."



Baked Dulce de Leche Apples

4 apples, halved, cored, and hollowed slightly

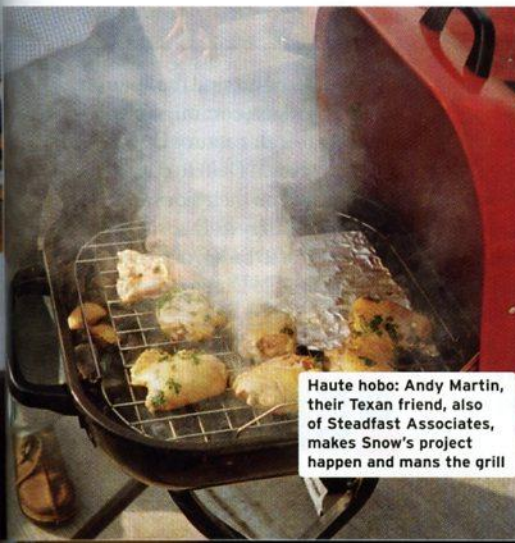
Filling:

- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup dried apricots
- 1/2 cup dried cherries
- 1/4 cup crystallized ginger
- 1/2 can dulce de leche
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1/4 tsp chili powder
- 1 pinch cinnamon
- Marshmallows

Serves 8

Chop and mix filling, then stuff the apples and wrap in tinfoil. Place on semihot coals and cook for about 20 minutes. Each guest should carefully open foil, place one or two marshmallows in apple center, close up again for a few minutes, then open and eat.

Labor unions: Apparu places apples in the coal. Snow on group improvisation: "You just put the ingredients out and tell someone to make it with no instructions, like the mango salsa. It turns out different every time."



Haute hobo: Andy Martin, their Texan friend, also of Steadfast Associates, makes Snow's project happen and mans the grill

