Southern Hospitality

May 26, 2008

What could etiquette possibly have to do with sustainability? Quite a bit I'd like to suggest. Having just spoken at the *Mommy and Me* week at the **Greenhouse Spa** in Arlington, TX I am more inspired by the power of the environment to bring even the most unlikely of acquaintances together. Going to the Greenhouse, built by the Neiman Marcus family over 40 years ago, feels like stepping back in time. Though close to the airport and just blocks from the freeway, upon entering the vast doors, I immediately felt like I had been transported to a set of an old movie and expected Greta Garbo to appear any minute, with feathered negligee trailing behind. Silence. Peace. A gentle easiness and sincere grace among the staff, especially hostess **Jennifer**, yogini **Angel**, and sweet esthetician **Emma**, who has been doing President's wives nails for over 40 years (and gave me my first pedicure ever!).

When I began my talk, I knew the message would be well received by Heather Stouffer, founder of the organic baby line, **Mom Made Foods**, but I wondered how other guests, such as Mrs. Bernadette Watkins of **Broadwell's Elegant Etiquette** would respond. While several admitted to some early reticence, by the end of the evening, everyone was excited about our positive and proactive goals. In the words of Mrs. Jennifer Fisher, of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, "You've got a whole bunch of new EcoMoms after tonight!" Even Mrs. Watkins, who shared graciously, "Yes, yes, this is just wonderful." It goes back to our *Sustain Your Home, Sustain Your Planet, Sustain Your Self* mantra. I don't know that it is so much about proper use of fork and knife but I do know that if we could all begin to approach one another, ourselves, and the environment, with a more genuine consideration and respect, we would find ourselves in a much healthier manner and creating a more sustainable way of being. And good table manners doesn't hurt either.

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