

# *soup to nuts*

*About Suzanne Zimmer Lowery*

## **It's a Showroom. It's a Party Room, It's For Charity!**

Ulrich, the Ridgewood custom kitchen company, invites you to bid on a dinner for 10, cooked by a professional chef, with wine served, in its posh showroom, all proceeds going to charity.

By Suzanne Zimmer Lowery | May 30, 2016



Guest enjoying hors oeuvres at a 2015 dinner at the Ulrich showroom.

The showroom at Ulrich Inc., a Ridgewood kitchen and bath design firm, has a functioning kitchen and dining room. What can you do with that, the owners of the company asked themselves, aside from the obvious—that is, selling custom kitchens and baths?

Well, Ulrich happens to be owned by its 25 employees. A few years ago, they came up with a rather cool idea, one that takes advantage of the state-of-the-art facilities at their showroom to give back to the community the company serves.



Guest at an Ulrich charity dinner at the Ulrich showroom in Ridgewood.

Ulrich invites people to bid for the right to win a dinner for 10, to be cooked and served at the chic showroom, with all proceeds going to charity.



The working kitchen at the Ulrich showroom in Ridgewood.

“It’s a win-win for everybody,” says showroom and marketing manager Linda Alvino. “We are very selective, but we offer the proceeds to whatever organization we feel is a good fit.”

Past recipients have included Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, Paterson Habitat for Humanity, Allendale Foundation for Educational Excellence and the Wyckoff Family YMCA.

The next showroom dinner—with date to be determined by the winning bidder—will benefit **Valley Hospital in Ridgewood** and will be prepared by **chef Claudia Rovegno of Italia di Gusto in Ridgewood.**



Table setting at an Ulrich Showroom charity dinner.

Once a bidder wins, Alvino finds the right chef for the gathering. The chefs donate their time and services. Ulrich pays for the food and drink. Volunteers serve and clean up.

Some folks turn the evening into a cooking class, learning to make pasta, for example, or pair wines with the dishes on the menu.

Drinks and hors d'oeuvres are usually served in one part of the showroom, but “another of our displays includes a dining table with a fireplace, where we serve the sit-down portion of the meal, usually at least three courses,” Alvino says. “We like to keep it cozy and homey, creating an ambience with fresh flowers on the table.

“It’s a novel way to spend an evening out with friends, enjoying a gourmet meal and supporting your favorite charity,” she adds. “It’s like having your own little private restaurant.”

[ulrichinc.com](http://ulrichinc.com)

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