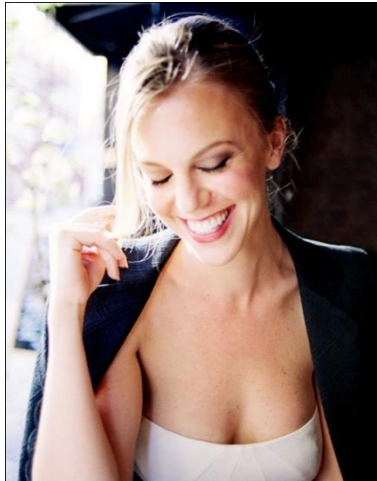




John Cabot University

ALUMNI PROFILE



Brooke Parkhurst
JCU Study Abroad, Fall 2000 and Spring 2001
Author and Culinary Journalist
New York, New York
Interviewed June 2009

What brought you to John Cabot University?

At Davidson College, I was majoring in Romance Languages, but I knew that the best way to really learn Italian would be to live in Italy. Among study abroad programs, John Cabot stood out because of its amazing location in the heart of Rome and the fact that Italian students also attended the school. I was on a mission to learn the language, and I loved that I would be able to integrate myself into the city.

What was your career path after graduation?

I moved to New York City at age 22 to follow my interest in television journalism, but quickly realized this wasn't for me. Since then, I've focused on cooking and writing. In 2008, Scribner published my debut book, *Belle in the Big Apple*, a novel with recipes. I've also hosted ABC and the James Beard Foundation's television and online cooking series, *Eat & Greet*. In addition to my blog, www.brookeparkhurst.com, I write a couples cooking column for MyScoop.com as well as for the Pensacola News Journal.

What about your time at John Cabot shaped you most?

Learning the Italian language and getting to know Italian food culture are things that I still carry with me. Because of my time in Italy, I know how real Italian food tastes and looks. Writing food-centric novels and cookbooks, I draw from my experiences in Italy for almost everything in my professional life.

What are you working on now?

This summer, I'll be busy promoting the paperback edition of *Belle in the Big Apple*, speaking and doing readings in New York and the Southeast. *Belle* was recently optioned by a Los Angeles-based producer; we're currently working on adapting it for the small screen, making the book into a television series.

What's your next project?

Scribner just acquired my and my husband's first cookbook, *Just Married and Cooking*. This cookbook for the newly married and kitchen-challenged will hit the shelves in 2011. I'm blessed that my husband, Jamie, is a very talented chef. In addition to appearing on Food Network's latest primetime hit, *Chopped*, he's featured in food and wine festivals around the world. This summer will take us everywhere from Cuba to South Carolina to Ohio. While he's the professional with the technical expertise, I'm the one who translates that knowledge into recipes that the average home cook can understand.

How did you and your husband meet?

Jamie was my 4th grade camp boyfriend, but we lost touch. One day, fifteen years later, I walked into the Birmingham, Alabama restaurant where he was the chef de cuisine. Inseparable ever since, we were married at Palmetto Bluff in November 2008. Our baby girl, Parker Lee, was born this April.

What do you miss most about Rome?

I love the way that family and friends gather in parks, piazzas, doorways, the street--you name it! I really miss that great sense of community. Now that I'm a mother, I also appreciate how much Italians love their children and are tolerant of babies and kids and the craziness that comes with them. The Romans seem to focus more on family; they spend more time together, enjoy meals together, take care of one another's children, and know what's going on in each other's lives.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would that be?

Within the next two years, we hope to move from New York City to Charleston, South Carolina. It's a very walkable city full of friendly, warm people. And the local, Lowcountry cuisine is out-of-this-world! In

South Carolina you also get to enjoy the four seasons, but with milder winters than we have now in New York City. Charleston reminds me of Rome in so many ways. Rome really was the beginning of so many things for me. I can easily say that it's influenced every aspect of my life-- even where I will live next and how I want to live my life.