



PROFILE

Lesli Schwartz

WORLD TRAVELER • **FOOD BLOGGER** • CHEF

BY AMY MEADOWS

Lesli Schwartz felt like Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* when she moved back to East Cobb in 2013 after living abroad for three years with her husband, Randy. During that time, the couple resided in Gothenburg, Sweden, to allow Randy to accept a temporary position with his company, a Swedish-based medical firm. And even though they traveled around Europe having exciting adventures, Lesli was ready to be stateside again.

“There’s no place like home,” Lesli says. “We have so many great friends in East Cobb. Our kids grew up here. We love our neighborhood, and this is just a lovely place to live and raise a family.”

MY GOAL
IS TO MAKE IT
HEALTHY,
EASY AND VERY
FLAVORFUL.

Upon returning to Marietta, Lesli brought with her more than a suitcase full of wonderful memories. She had, in fact, developed a new passion during her European excursion: Asian cuisine. Yes—Asian cuisine. How does someone develop a love for Asian food while residing in a Scandinavian nation? Serendipity.

“While I was in Sweden, I met Damien Aw. He’s from Singapore, and he’s an amazing cook,” she says of Damien, whose partner, Cheng Wei, works with Randy. “We began to cook together. We shopped together. We threw dinner parties together. It was so fun for me. I love the flavor profiles of Asian food, and I became enamored with cooking it. It became a real passion for me.”

When it was time to head home to the U.S., Schwartz had a plan.

She wanted to start a food blog. Although she had a professional

background in marketing and public relations, she had never worked on a blog—let alone one about food. Just as she began pulling her ideas together, she learned that Aw and Wei also were moving back to metro



LESLI SCHWARTZ AND HER COOKING PARTNER, DAMIEN AW, WHIP UP AN ASIAN FEAST FOR THEIR FOOD BLOG, ASIANCAUCASIAN.COM.

Atlanta. “I had no idea that Damien and Cheng were moving to the States as well,” she notes. “It worked out great.”

This past February, Schwartz launched AsianCaucasian.com, an Asian-inspired food blog that shares simple, healthy Asian recipes that can be prepared at home. Recipes include traditional Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese dishes, as well as “westernized” dishes with an Asian twist. Damien serves as a consultant on the project, cooking with Lesli as she develops recipes. Her goal is to show home chefs that Asian cooking doesn’t have to be intimidating and also can be good for you, unlike some of today’s standard takeout cuisine. “My goal is to make it healthy, easy and very flavorful,” she reveals. From substituting cauliflower rice for regular rice to shying away from frying, she makes Asian cuisine both wholesome and uncomplicated. And soon, she hopes to add in-home cooking parties and demos to her repertoire, as well as cooking videos to her blog, which was developed by East Cobb web designer Lisa Tiger of The Tiger Eyes Web Design.

When she’s not at home chopping vegetables with her Wheaten Terrier, Winston, at her feet or sharing recipe ideas with her children, Brad, 27, and Kimberly, 24, Schwartz can be found shopping at the local **Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s** and other grocers, as well as farmers’ markets, looking for unique produce, exotic spices and staple ingredients—often with Aw. A bona fide foodie, she also enjoys partaking of East Cobb’s burgeoning restaurant scene, with spots like **Drift Fish House & Oyster Bar, Stem Wine Bar** and **Hong Kong Star** at the top of her go-to list.

In the past few years, Schwartz has learned that East Cobb is not only a great place to live, but also to work from home. “My kitchen is my office. I’m passionate about cooking, and the fact that I can do this out of my house is just wonderful,” she concludes. “I want people to enjoy Asian food and cooking as much as we do. Being able to share this with others is the icing on the cake.” 

Lesli's Top 5 Pantry Must-Haves

- 1 **Coconut milk** is perfect for sauces and dishes like coconut rice. And don't be afraid to use the light version—it tastes the same, but cuts the calorie count way down.
- 2 **Red curry paste** is a staple in Thai cooking. It offers a deliciously spicy kick to any dish.
- 3 **Soy sauce**, of course, is one of the most well-known condiments in Asian cooking. Fortunately for those who have a gluten sensitivity or allergy, there are gluten-free options at most grocery stores.
- 4 **Sambal Oelek** is a spicy Southeast Asian chili sauce (or paste) made from hot red chili peppers. You can find it at your local grocery store (even Target!), and you don't need a lot to make a big impact.
- 5 **Fish sauce** is something used on a more occasional basis, but this liquid condiment can bring special flavor to a variety of dishes, from dipping sauces to soups and casseroles.

