



how maria met martha

Every morning in 2006, Portland's Maria Alexandra Vettese woke up and made a plunger of French press coffee. Black. Then, "mav," as she's known online, cranked up her computer, checked her email, and started blogging.

Three thousand, one hundred and ninety-one miles away in Portland, Oregon, Stephanie Congdon Barnes, or "steph," was doing the same thing.

By mid-afternoon, the two had posted a diptych of images taken from their mornings on separate coasts on the same blog. Hard-boiled egg, oven mitt. Doug's toast, a teakettle. Swiss chard, crumpled sheets. Coffee cup, daisies.

"Seeing her mornings was like seeing my own," Vettese says. "The connection was magical. Things in them would seem oddly similar. People would say that we planned them."

They didn't. The two aren't old college friends. They don't talk regularly on the phone. They met by coincidence online. Except for a segment with Martha Stewart in September and a 15-minute meeting over coffee in the fall of 2005, the two don't know each other.

But the two have collaborated on a forthcoming book, *A Year in Mornings: 3191 Miles Apart*, due out in December (Princeton Architectural Press, \$19.95). It's a result of their yearlong photographic homage to domestic life.

And they have another project, *A Year in Evenings*, viewable online at 3191.visualblogging.com. After that, Vettese hopes to take a step back from digital communication, starting with some face-to-face collaboration at More., her shop on 72 India Street in Portland, where she runs a piece of analog equipment: a letterpress.

"I'm done," she says. "In '09, I'm off-line. I really like taking time to do things." •PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MARCHESI