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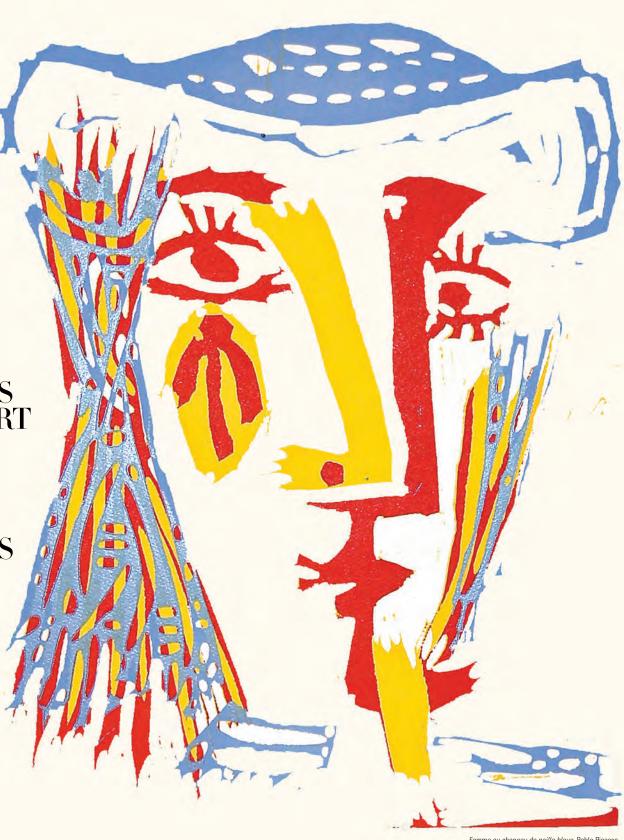
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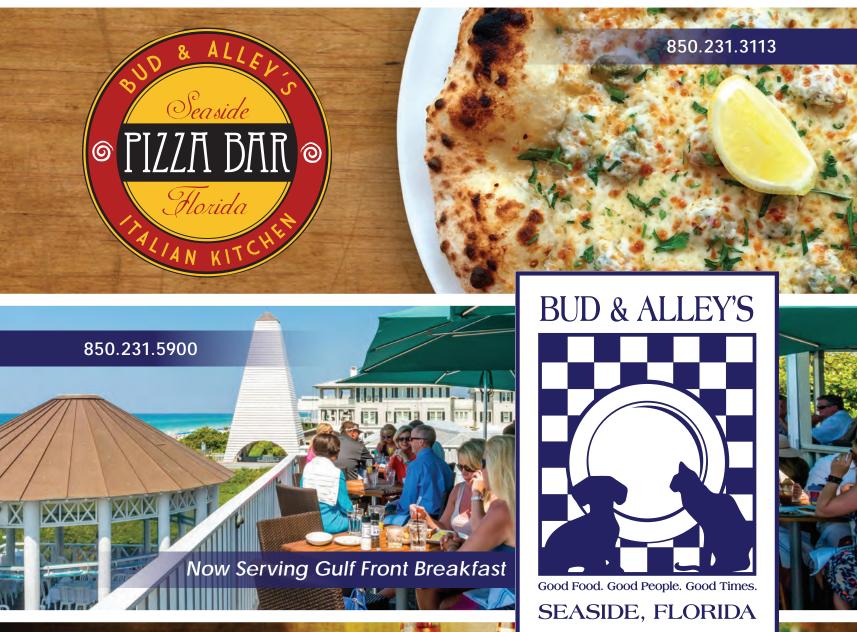
Femme au chapeau de paille bleue, Pablo Picasso Linocut in colors (1962)

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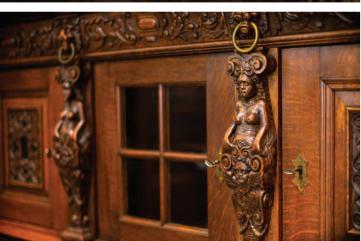
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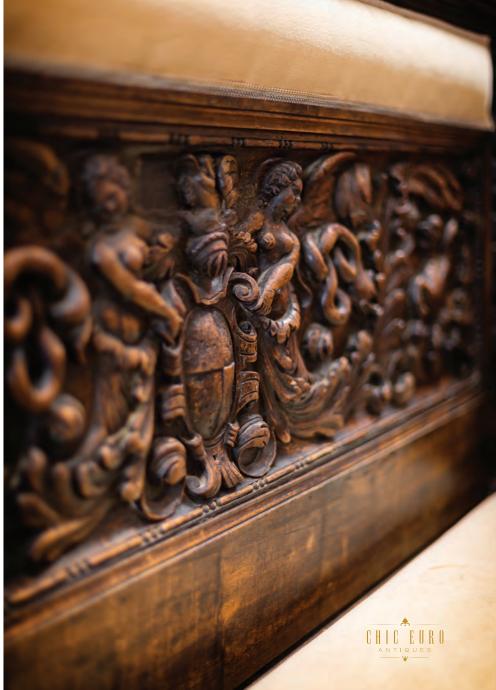
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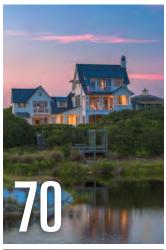


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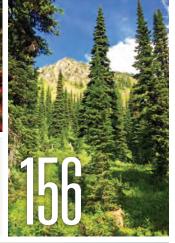


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ON THE COVER:



Through the generations, certain artists have been labeled as the ones who changed everything. Whether because of their methods or their styles, these masters have made a lasting impression on the world. *VIE* was honored to attend New River Fine Art's *Masters: Modern to Contemporary* exhibit at Tommy Crow Studios in Rosemary Beach, Florida, this past July. The show featured some of the most notable artists of all time, including Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Andy Warhol, among others. The cover of this issue is a piece from the exhibit: Picasso's *Femme au chapeau de paille bleue* (*Woman in a Blue Straw Hat*), an original color linocut printed in 1962. Read all about the exhibit in "Masters: Modern to Contemporary" by Melanie Cissone.



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"He has made everything beautiful in its time."

-Ecclesiastes 3:11

Since the printing of the very first issue of *VIE*, it has been our goal to focus on the good, the beautiful, and the positive by telling stories with heart and soul. A prodigious range of topics, quality writing, rich photography and design, and superb craftsmanship have been the brand promises that we strive for with each and every issue.

To say that I'm nearly speechless to have Pablo Picasso's Femme au chapeau de paille bleue (Woman in a Blue Straw Hat) on the cover would be an understatement. Thank you, Tommy Crow and Lisa Burgess, owner of New River Fine Art, for hosting the exquisite art show at Tommy Crow Studios in Rosemary Beach, Florida, this past summer. Be sure to read Melanie Cissone's story, "Masters: Modern to Contemporary," to learn more about this intriguing art exhibition.

Home is truly where the heart is. Within this issue of *VIE*, one can see the passion, the effort, and the detail that were given to some magnificent homes located in the beachside communities of Northwest Florida. Our heartfelt thanks go to the gracious homeowners who opened their doors so that others may view the brilliant works of art they have created and are blessed to call home.

Our annual Home & Garden issue has been a favorite of our readers these past eight years, and with this



Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, Lisa and Gerald Burwell

issue I think it's fitting to announce the launch of our newly designed website. VIE's third-generation website, which has been carefully tailored to showcase our noteworthy stories and beautiful photography, is likely to be a digital magazine experience like you have never had before. Please visit www.VieMagazine.com and let us know what you think.

Also, we introduce the newest arrival to the magazine: C'est la VIE—a curated collection of luxury goods handpicked by our creative team. With keen eyes monitoring trends in fashion, home furnishings, and personal treasures, we wanted to showcase a collection of the best-of-the-best that reflects our lifestyle brand. Happy shopping!

And, last but not least, a special thank-you goes out to our loyal advertisers and readers. I hope you enjoy this issue!

To Life
—Lisa Marie



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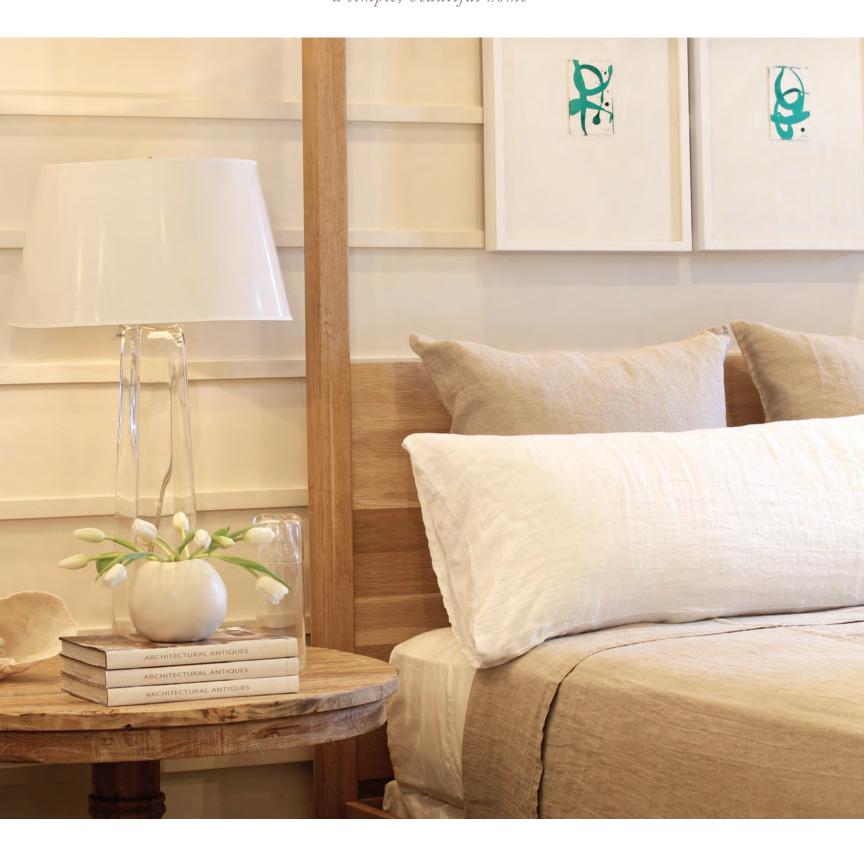


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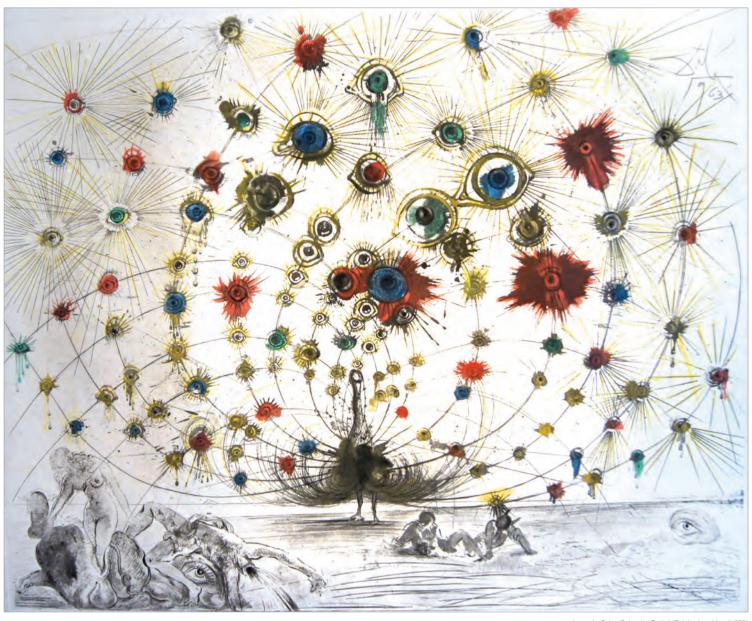
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MASTERS: Modern to Contemporary

BY MELANIE CISSONE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOMMY CROW



Argus in Color, Salvador Dalí | Original etching (1963)







Sculptures, Joan Miró | Lithograph in color (1971)

The coast—any coast, really—has been and will likely always be a source of inspiration for artists.

Whether it's the fishing village of Port Lligat along northeastern Spain's jagged Costa Brava where Salvador Dalí and his wife, Gala, lived; the lavender-scented Côte d'Azur perch of Pablo Picasso's home in Vallauris and later in Mougins; Marc Chagall's Saint-Paul-de-Vence; the hills above the Tiber River where Frank Stella did a residency from 1982 to 1983 at the American Academy in Rome; or the misty shores of Andy Warhol's Montauk compound, the sight, scent, and sound of water are incomparable in rousing creative thoughts, emotions, and mindful quietude.

In the spirit of coastal artistic respites, a special art collection, *Masters: Modern to Contemporary*, made the seaside village of Rosemary Beach its home for ten days in July. Area residents and vacationers together received it warmly and excitedly. The reaction to the show was astounding; other gallery owners, designers, and art consultants also flocked to July's exhibit of works by Marc Chagall, Salvador Dalí, Sam Francis, Roy Lichtenstein, Joan Miró, Manuel Marin, Pablo Picasso, and Andy Warhol.

The exhibition is the second collaboration between commercial and fine photographer Tommy Crow, of Tommy Crow Studios in Rosemary Beach, and Lisa Burgess, owner of New River Fine Art in Fort Lauderdale. New River



Fine Art is one of South Florida's oldest and most prestigious fine art galleries and a premier source for masterworks and fine contemporary paintings, sculpture, and glass art. The two gallery owners anticipate mounting similar special exhibits annually for the foreseeable future.

Crow, who hosted *Dali: Sublime to Surreal* in conjunction with New River in 2014, said, "I didn't realize how impactful bringing a fine art collection to our area would be for me personally or to the exhibit's visitors until after last year's show closed."

He continues, "Over and over during the *Dali* show and during this year's *Masters* exhibit, I heard people say, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe these are here." Pointing to the spot where his favorite Dalí hung in July, Crow said, "Last year, I couldn't put art on the walls for about two and a half weeks after New River's collection had been taken down." There was something

so powerful and compelling about the Spanish surrealist's work that it left a sort of virtual shadow in his mind's eye, a friendly phantom image, and he waited for it to fade before rehanging his own work.

Atlanta resident Heidi Graf, an artist whose recent work was just acquired by the High Museum for *Sprawl! Drawing Outside the Lines* (July 18–October 4), has been visiting the 30-A area since she was three years old. On a date-night stroll through Rosemary Beach in July, the Boston native and her boyfriend wandered around town when, she recalls, "My boyfriend said, 'Hey look, contemporary art." She recounts her astonishment when she peered into the window at Tommy Crow Studios and said, "That looks like a Warhol."

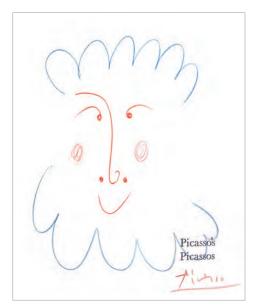
"I was blown away," said Graf, who has an MFA in drawing and painting from Georgia State University. Moved by the experience and contrasting the difference between a more austere museum experience and that of an intimate gallery exhibit, she said, "It's one thing to go to the Dalí Museum. That night had a completely different feeling; nothing can compare to seeing modern and contemporary art in a relaxed beach setting while being served chocolate chip cookies. It was so beautiful, so astounding and wonderful to me. It was a complete transcendence of art and place."

Like a vernissage—a private, invitation-only preview—it felt almost as though Andy Warhol or Salvador Dalí might turn the corner, smile, and offer a glass of wine at the Main Street exhibit. Graf concludes, "I enjoyed the beauty and surprise factor; it felt so completely deconstructed," which is probably how most of these artists would have wanted their work displayed.

Crow calls attention to *Argus in Color* (1963) and says, "That's going to be mine." The large hand-colored etching was part of Dalí's *Mythologie* series and



Through the imagery, it's as if Picasso was saying about his good friend and biographer's book, "Enjoy."



Original Drawing from Picasso's Picassos | Drawing in Conté crayon (1961)

carries the imprimatur of longtime friend and publisher Pierre Argillet. Drawing on the symbolism of ancient Greek myth and legend, Dalí depicts Argus as a peacock. A servant of Hera, Zeus's wife, the "all-seeing" Argus had a hundred eyes. Trouble started when Zeus bedded the nymph Io, whom he later transformed into a white heifer to conceal her identity from Hera. Not fooled, Hera insisted on having the heifer as her own and charged Argus with watching and keeping the cow away from Zeus. Despite being able to sleep with some of his eyes closed while other eyes kept watch, Hermes, on Zeus's dispatch, used his storytelling talent to lull Argus to sleep so that he could slay him. Hera later rewarded Argus's service by placing his many eyes onto the plumage of her sacred bird, the peacock.

Dalí's Argus in Color is one of sixteen mixed media prints in a portfolio he created from 1963 to 1965. Pegasus (1963) is another in New River Fine Art's collection from the Mythologie suite. Both Argus and Pegasus demonstrate Dalí's use of a technique he developed called *hasard objectif* (loosely translated as "objective chance encounters"), which was derived from André Breton's Surrealist Manifesto. In other words, from an abstract paint or ink smudge, the overlying theme of Dalí's work would present itself and he would develop it from there into a work of art.

During the Masters: Modern to Contemporary show, longtime Santa Rosa Beach residents (who wish to remain anonymous) acquired an original drawing by Pablo Picasso that they describe as "something that we saw in the exhibit that just made us happy." Similar in style to the famous colored-pencil line drawing La Colombe (The Dove), the smiling, rouge-faced blue-and-red character was an illustration he made when signing the inside front page of photojournalist David Douglas Duncan's 1961 Picasso's Picassos. Through the imagery, it's as if Picasso was saying about his good friend and biographer's book, "Enjoy."

Especially exciting during the summer exhibition was the sale of Frank Stella's 1991 Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale from an edition of twenty-seven. A departure from the colorful geometric works for which he



Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale, Frank Stella | Etching (1991)

is best known, the large 76 1/4-inch by 53 3/4-inch etching is the work of the 79-year-old American painter, printmaker, and sculptor who is being honored with *Frank Stella: A Retrospective* at the Whitney Museum of American Art (October 30, 2015–February 7, 2016) in New York.

Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale is a print from a series of 266 painted reliefs and sculptures inspired by and named for the 135 chapters in Herman Melville's 1851 classic, Moby Dick. Stella considers the series central to his career. In chapter 73 of the book about Captain Ahab's elusive quest to find Moby Dick, the sperm whale that caused him to lose his leg, the Pequod's second and third mates spot and kill a less valuable right whale.

In its description of the forthcoming show, the Whitney writes that Stella is "one of the most important living American artists." *Stubb and Flask* is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Stella himself will be at the opening of the



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Director Wissam El Ghoul and Director of Masterworks Larry White of New River Fine Art with studio owner and photographer Tommy Crow



Young Wood Owl, Pablo Picasso | Ceramic sculpture (1952)

Every work of art in New River Fine Art's modern and contemporary collection has a storied provenance, often one that was supported, at least in part, by art patrons.

Whitney's special exhibition as the museum enjoys its inaugural year in its new Renzo Piano building.

Other noted modern and contemporary artists whose works graced the walls of Tommy Crow Studios in July were American abstract painter and printmaker Sam Francis; famed graphic artist turned pop-art legend Andy Warhol; Spanish sculptor and mobile artist Manuel Marin; and Catalan painter, sculptor, and ceramicist Joan Miró.

At the Rosemary Beach exhibit, the breadth of Picasso's range was evident; on display were an original drawing; two ceramic vessels (Petit oiseau avec visage bleue [1951] and Young Wood Owl [1952]); linocut block prints (Man's Face [1966] and Little Sun [1968]); and a linocut poster advertising the Exposition Vallauris of 1957.

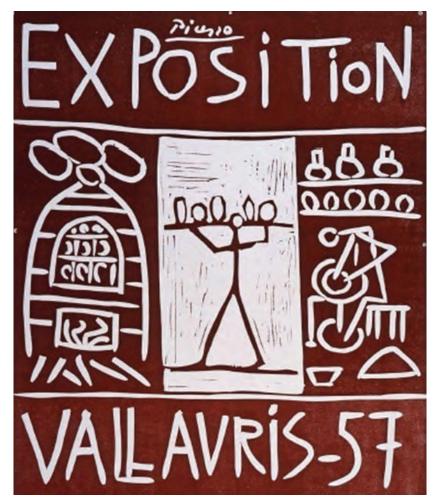
Vallauris is a small town in the south of France where, in 1946, Picasso met Suzanne and Georges Ramié, owners of the Madoura Pottery studio. Due to their mutual fascination with postwar experimentation in other media, namely ceramics, a love affair was born. Picasso moved to Vallauris and lived there from 1948 to 1955, delighting in the prolific creation of ceramics and linocuts. Exposition Vallauris is an ongoing ceramics fair for which Picasso created the posters during several years of his residency and beyond; one such poster, Exposition Vallauris-57 (1957), was on view at Masters: Modern to Contemporary.

Thinking at first that the central image was a server carrying a tray filled with cups and glasses, the new owner of Exposition Vallauris-57 is Ed Reese, Executive Chef and Owner of Edward's in Rosemary Beach. "I never thought that I'd own a Picasso but when I went to visit Tommy's studio, there it was and I loved it. Reese said.

He continues, "There was a lot of artwork at that show that I had never seen in my life. Now, my Picasso hangs in the restaurant and I'm going to have to visit Vallauris to see where Picasso worked on his ceramics." No doubt Reese, who supplied the delicious saffron shrimp hors d'oeuvres for the exhibit's closing reception, will feel inclined to explore the cafés, bistros, and auberges that the south of France has to offer while he's there.

Every work of art in New River Fine Art's modern and contemporary collection has a storied provenance, often one that was supported, at least in part, by art patrons. Although the word benefactor usually calls to mind a moneyed social class, supporters of modern masters and contemporary artists of the various art movements of the mid- and late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries also included gallery owners, publishers, barbers, local restaurateurs, innkeepers, landlords, and friends. There were also the European and American landed gentry and prescient, wealthy bohemians who were truly interested in and compelled to own works from a new era of art that theretofore hadn't existed and that represented an about-face from the classical and Renaissance art on which they were raised. Think never-before-seen impressionist, avant-garde, surrealist, abstract, cubist, and pop art oeuvres as presented to the attentive and ravenous eyes of French art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel; American heiress Peggy Guggenheim; French nobles Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles; physician, chemist, and art collector Dr. Albert Barnes; collectors John and Dominique de Menil; and emerging blueblooded social elites and celebrities of Manhattan and Hollywood.

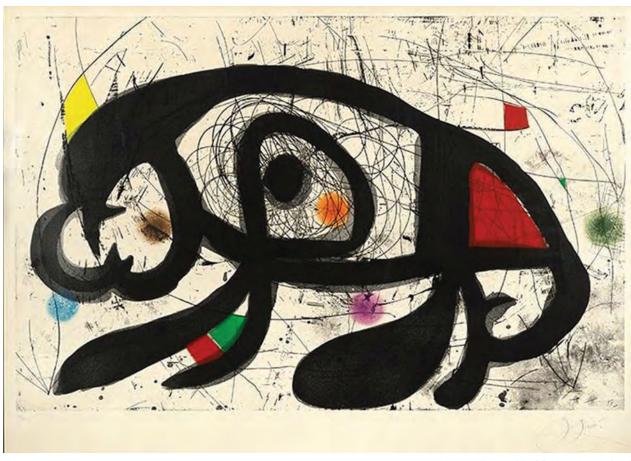
New River Fine Art's director of masterworks and overall tour guide for July's special exhibit, Larry White, said about one of his show favorites, Joan Miró's La taupe hilare (1975), "I used to think it



Exposition Vallauris, Pablo Picasso | Linocut in colors (1957)



Halston Advertising Campaign: Fragrance and Cosmetics, Andy Warhol | Color screenprint (1982)



La taupe hilare, Joan Miró | Etching and aquatint (1975)

Moreover, fall in love with art that moves you and then just enjoy the ride.

[modern art] was the silliest thing in the 1970s. But I kept looking at it and a lightbulb went off, and I started reading voraciously about these artists and their work." In the case of La taupe hilare, Miró himself, according to White, "found it as amusing and delightful as I do." He continues, "Art has so much to do with a feeling that's personal. Now, when a client falls in love with a piece, it affects me too."

Mentorship, tutelage, and art patronage are as important today as ever. The fascinating masterworks of New River Fine Art, which recall a seemingly bygone era of art benefaction, command a visit to see what Lisa Burgess and Tommy Crow have in store for next year in the intimate gallery setting that Crow's studio affords. Taking a piece home, on the other hand, is like writing a new chapter in the story of the work itself. Ownership of original art brings with it a certain responsibility to its creator; its new owner becomes its custodian, the keeper of the story, the motivation or inspiration behind its very existence. To become an actual character in the story, support an artist by commissioning a piece; sponsor an expert gallery talk; provide an artist residency in a place that inspires and provokes; get to know an artist whose work interests you; and buy works that are meaningful to you. Moreover, fall in love with art that moves you and then just enjoy the ride.

Visit www.tommycrow.com for more information on the studio and www.newriverfineart.com to see more from the gallery.

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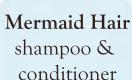




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Alys Beach

A True Work of Art

BY LAUREN LEGÉ PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ALYS BEACH

True to additive color theory, the stark-white town that is Alys Beach has become the region's most colorful in terms of concept and design since its inception in 2003. The pinnacle of color arrives at white, just as the culmination of land, logic, talent, and elegance peaks at Alys Beach, a New Urbanist coastal town located along Scenic Highway 30-A in Northwest Florida.

he existence of such a town along the Emerald Coast is the result of a multifaceted equation; its variables are rooted in ingenious vision, cunning craftsmanship, and

expert execution, all in perfect combination with the patience and financial breadth to outlast a six-year stretch of quiescence. The yield: Alys Beach-a Gesamtkunstwerk, or "total work of art."

Purchased at auction by Elton B. Stephens in the late 1970s, Alys Beach is a 158-acre sanctuary of longleaf pines, deer moss, and sea oats along a sparkling emerald coastline. Having built his company, EBSCO, from the ground up, Stephens was a seasoned businessman with a mind for growth and a vision for opportunity. What started as the seed of an idea grew into what is now Florida's-perhaps the South's—most sophisticated town.

Alys Beach is designed in such a way that all streets orient to the Gulf of Mexico, providing Gulf views and cool breezes. Alys Beach also stays cool by maintaining white roofs and walls to reflect much of the sun's heat.

Marieanne Khoury-Vogt and her husband, Erik Vogt, are not only the Town Architects, but are also Alys Beach residents. They are the creative minds behind the community's impressive infrastructure as well as the award-winning Caliza Pool and a growing number of single-family residences.

"All of the buildings at Alys are built to 'fortified' standards, as well as to the standards of the Florida Green Building Coalition," says Marieanne. Achieving "fortified" status comes after passing an inspection by the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), which launched a national program in 2000 to ensure homes are built with disaster-resistant

What started as the seed of an idea grew into what is now Florida's—perhaps the South's most sophisticated town.

Planned by Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company (DPZ), Alys Beach is a traditional neighborhood development, or TND. TNDs are planned at the human scale with the intention of creating value within the town by paying careful attention to the placement of its features. Close proximity to residential areas and mixed-use centers establishes the incentive to walk rather than drive to destinations, generating a deeper sense of community among residents. DPZ was already seasoned in the TND or New Urbanist style and no stranger to the Northwest Florida coast; its original and most famous TND is Seaside, located just a few miles west of Alys Beach and named one of Time's ten "Best of the Decade" in the field of design for the 1980s. About a mile east of Alys Beach, Rosemary Beach is another successful DPZ neighborhood project.

features from the ground up. Every home in Alys Beach is registered fortified by the IBHS and will continue to be as they are built, making the town the first fully fortified community in the country. "The directive to be sustainable is wholeheartedly encouraged by EBSCO, our parent company, who believe that they should be excellent stewards of this beautiful land, as well as the different departments within Alys Beach, who try to incorporate good practices into their everyday operations."

Rewarded with the Shutze Award by the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art and three-time winners of the Palladio Award honoring outstanding achievement in traditional design, Marieanne and Erik create contemporary structures with historical undertones—a sort of instant tradition.

"All of the buildings at Alys are built to 'fortified' standards, as well as to the standards of the Florida Green Building Coalition."







"The directive to be sustainable is wholeheartedly encouraged by EBSCO, our parent company, who believe that they should be excellent stewards of this beautiful land."



"We would like to think that with every design assignment we tackle, we build upon the cumulative knowledge and experience gained from past projects, be it about typology or architectural style," says Marieanne. "Designing at Alys since its inception has allowed us to become intimately familiar with courtyard building types. We have sought inspiration from many areas around the world, starting with Bermuda and Antigua, Guatemala." She goes on to describe the three predominant types of houses at Alys Beach: the courtyard, the compound, and the villa. All three types are encouraged to incorporate courtyards into their designs.

The courtyard type is very conducive to Florida's climate and allows one to use this space and all attached galleries, porches, and loggias as additional livable rooms.

A courtyard house is a zero-lot-line house, meaning one can build all the way to the property lines, in essence, taking the space that would otherwise be given over to the side setbacks (yard spaces) and converting this to a private court. The building type can be organized around one or more private courts. This is a flexible type because it can shield the private, open space of a court from the more intense public realm.



A compound sits on a lot that is at least six thousand square feet, accommodating a single-family house that contains a cluster of buildings organized either around a central courtyard or around several smaller courts at the perimeter of the lot. Compound buildings are joined by perimeter walls, loggias, or galleries, allowing for the overall massing of structures to be modulated.

A villa or house is an all-edge-yard building type. This is what most Americans are used to—a single-family house on a lot with setbacks all around that may be shared by an ancillary building, such as a garage or carriage house. A courtyard is always featured in villa designs.

In just a decade, Alys Beach has made tremendous progress to become what is now a critically acclaimed

design icon on the Emerald Coast. With its growing number of amenities, such as the Town Center, the Alys Shoppe, and the Amphitheatre, Alys Beach is becoming a thriving coastal community just like the villages around the world that inspired it.

WWW.ALYSBEACH.COM



Lauren Legé is a local of the Highway 30-A community and has covered many stories for 30A.com. She is also a realtor at La Florida Coastal Properties based in Grayton Beach. lslege@laflorida.com

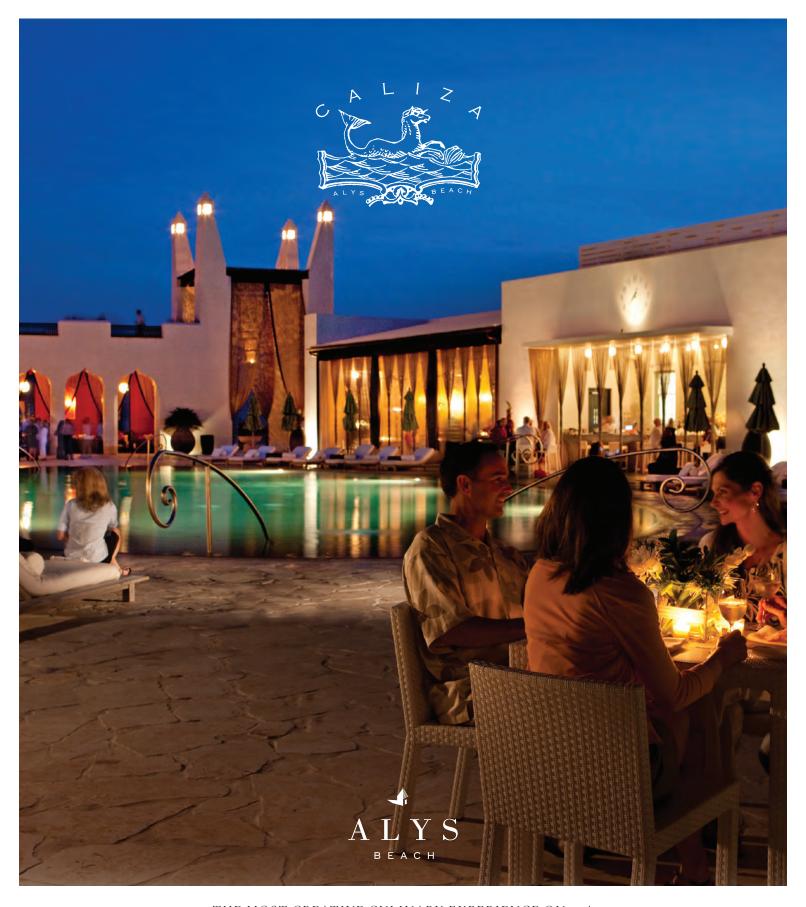






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n-demand photographer Brett Bulthuis specializes in capturing not just the look but also the feel of remarkable interiors and architecture.

Brett Bulthuis is an awful painter. He knows this because multiple teachers have told him so. It was tough to hear at the time, but those candid evaluations turned out to be a blessing. Instead of exhausting his creative talent chasing the wrong career, he's thriving as a photographer known for bringing spaces to life.

Bulthuis's uncanny ability to coax character out of inanimate objects—primarily the interiors of homes and the exteriors of buildings—makes him the go-to photographer for everything from a real estate listing to an ad for one of BMW's latest models. It's a gift, certainly, but it's also the result of a lot of hard work.

Bulthuis grew up outside of Chicago with a crew of artistic friends and a mother who encouraged him to explore any outlet that sparked his passion. A family friend who worked as a wedding photographer gave a young Bulthuis his first camera and introduced him to the field. Bulthuis thought photography was interesting, but, like his friends, he thought that his future lay in painting and drawing.

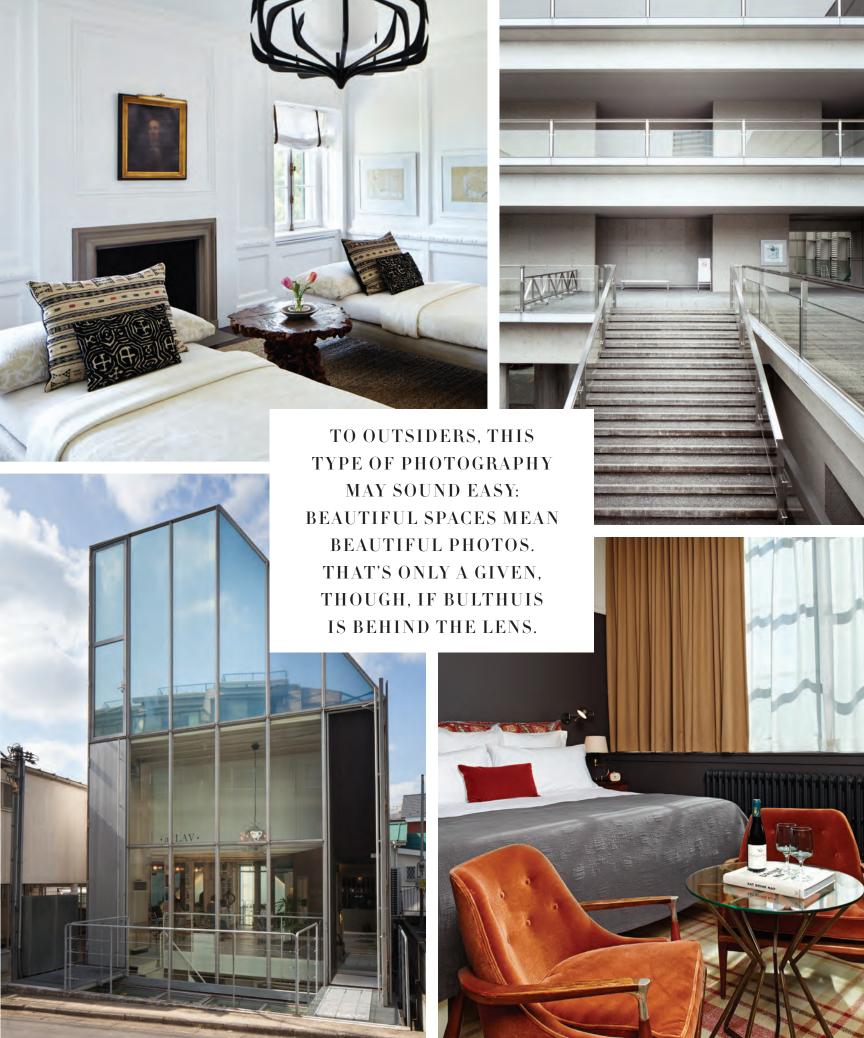
Enter his brutally honest art teachers.

Fortunately, Bulthuis took a photography class in high school that helped him revive his passion for cameras. With college on the horizon and Bulthuis showing a newfound interest in becoming a professional photographer, his mom made a strategic move. She sent him to photography camp over the summer to see if he was still as enamored of the profession after spending eight hours a day with a camera around his neck. He was. In fact, he decided to attend college where the camp took place: the Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California.

While most of his peers were majoring in fashion photography, Bulthuis studied commercial photography. It was less a calculated move and more a fear-induced one. "I was too nervous to talk to people and ask if I could photograph them," he admits. "The more beautiful someone was, the more I didn't want to approach them."

That shyness, thankfully long gone, helped steer him toward a lasting passion for interior and architecture photography. It's also possible that a penchant for great design simply runs in his blood; his great-grandfather was a master furniture maker, a pursuit Bulthuis says he wouldn't mind taking a crack at someday.

His clients, however, undoubtedly hope he sticks to photography. Based once again in Chicago, he works primarily with interior designers to showcase their completed projects. To outsiders, this type of photography may sound easy: beautiful spaces mean beautiful photos. That's only a given, though, if Bulthuis is behind the lens.





A meticulous documentarian, he believes that great photography starts at the beginning, rather than the end. "These spaces go through many stages before they're done, and while they're presented as finished products, I try to see what the designer saw from the beginning," he explains. "I get to know the space."

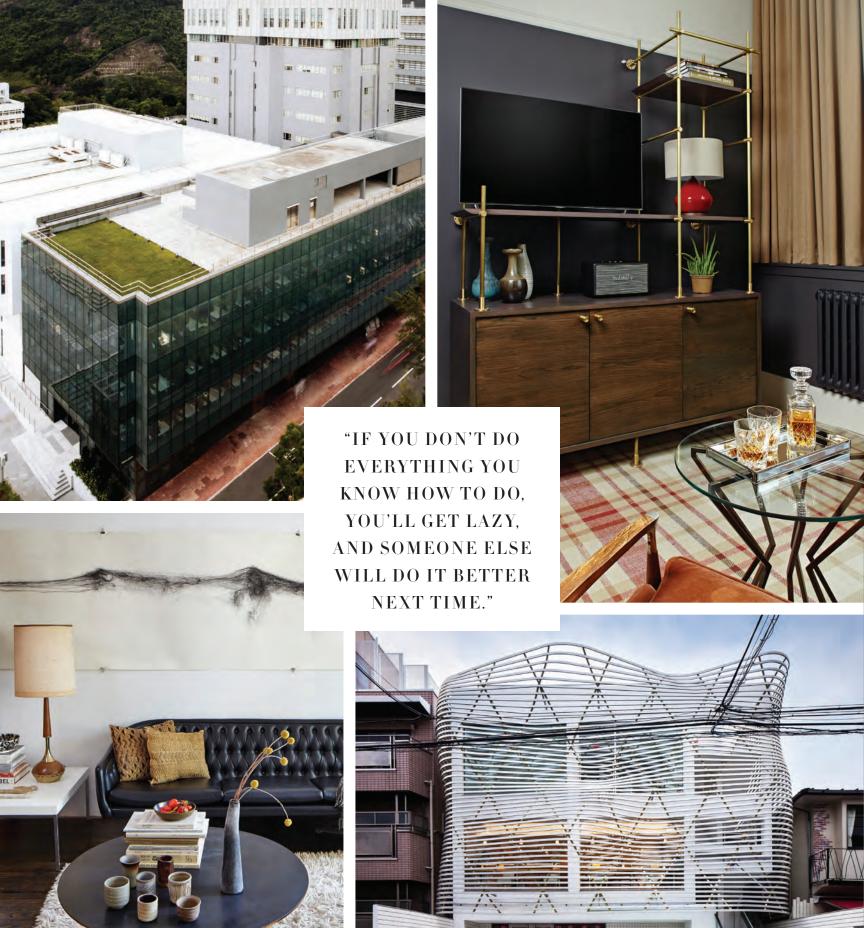
The resulting images preserve a mood and, hopefully, capture the designer's thought process. It all goes back to Bulthuis's conviction that photography should act as a record, going beyond what's physically present; as he points out, anyone can see what an object *is*. His goal is to replicate a moment in time. "If I'm successful, someone else could see the picture a hundred years from now and feel what I feel," he says. "It's transcendent."

Is that really necessary for a picture of a couch? Bulthuis believes so, as our memories are often tied to things as much as to people. When shooting the interior of someone's home, even if the object is to sell that home, he knows that his photos will always trigger memories of time spent in that house. What life changes took place there? What did it mean to live in that place? His clients have that record—and those memories—safely tucked away.

Bulthuis's success is due to much more than a philosophy, however. He's put in the hours. A top-notch education honed his technical skills while allowing him to learn from and study with experts in the field. He brings those core fundamentals to every job. He also brings a laid-back personality that's quick with a solution rather than a diva tantrum. His advice for fellow shutterbugs is astute: "Be the person you want to hang out with."







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Clearly, plenty of people want to hang out with Bulthuis. In addition to interior designers and architects, corporate clients like Groupon and BMW flock to his services. One time, a client asked him to soar to new heights—literally. For an aerial photography assignment, Bulthuis hung from the side of a tiny two-person helicopter, praying that a glorified car seat belt would keep him from plummeting 1,500 feet to the earth. To be successful in his line of work, he argues, "You have to be the person willing to hang out the open door of a helicopter."

The truth is that Bulthuis's talent is the draw, rather than his willingness to risk life and limb for the shot. His résumé includes shoots all over the United States as well as international locations such as China. Even when he's not working, he's working. He and a videographer buddy recently traveled to Japan to study the relationships between the country's old-world and modern architectural styles. In Japan, he explains, new buildings are seamlessly interwoven with structures that are hundreds of years old. They wondered how that was possible. The Japanese design aesthetic turned out to be a lot like Bulthuis's approach to beautiful pictures: details, details, details. From the play of light to the silhouettes to the materials, every aspect is carefully thought out. This insight reinforced his desire to get the details right every time.

Bulthuis adores the travel aspect of his career almost as much as getting paid to do what he loves. It still boggles his mind, even after six years as a professional, that he is living his childhood dream. Apparently, it's a shock to others as well.

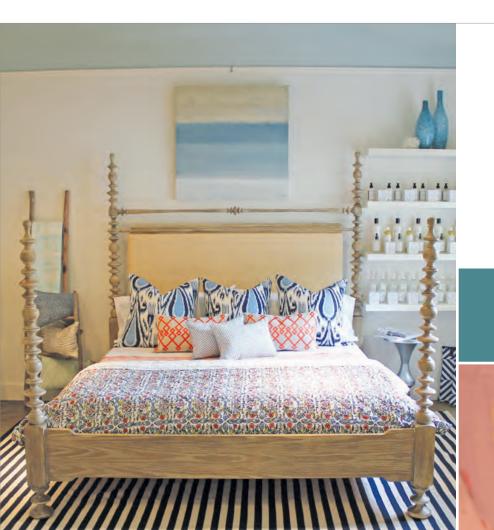
He shares, "I spoke with an old high school teacher recently who said she was surprised that, of my group of artistically talented friends, I was the one working in the arts."

Boy, those Chicago teachers don't mess around. That anecdote does, however, lead to a question: what separates Bulthuis from the millions of wannabe photographers out there? He says he was just too stubborn to quit. More likely, however, it's his more-further-better attitude. He approaches every client, big or small, with the same thoughts: What more can I do? Have I done enough? He insists, "If you don't do everything you know how to do, you'll get lazy, and someone else will do it better next time."

Bulthuis is not willing to risk that happening, so he continues to push himself creatively even though he has achieved a certain level of success—*especially* because he has achieved that success. On a mission to leave something lasting behind, he's focused on doing one thing—and doing it well. After that, perhaps he'll be on to new adventures. "If I'm good at this, I want to be great at the next thing."

It just probably won't be painting. ■

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 Interiors | urbangrace.com
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- B Apple Watch Leather Strap Bexar Goods Co. | \$130 | bexargoods.com
- C Replica Indian Head Penny Cuff Links Brooks Brothers | \$165 | brooksbrothers.com
- D CM | GOLD chain metal watch Larsson & Jennings | \$380 | larssonandjennings.com













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- B Library Double Old Fashioned six-piece set
 POTTERY BARN | \$72 | potterybarn.com
- C Saddle Leather Cocktail Shaker
 POTTERY BARN | \$39.50 | potterybarn.com
- D Cade Plisson razor and rich shaving cream duo
 L'Occitane en Provence | \$67 | usa.loccitane.com
- E Eau des Baux eau de toilette
 L'Occitane en Provence | \$58 | usa.loccitane.com
- F Traditional Florentine-Style Briefcase

 I MEDICI ITALIAN LEATHER | \$465 | imedicileather.com













finishing touches

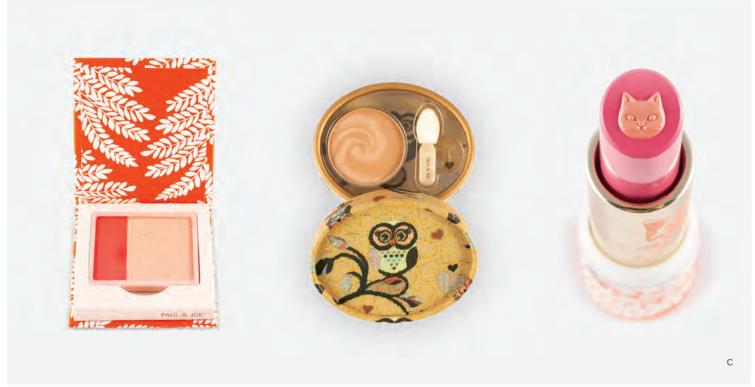
Accessorizing never looked so good! These little numbers can change the world—or at least your outfit. Feel complete from head to toe with accessories that add something extra to your #OOTD.

- A Pink beaded scarf necklace

 MIGNONNE GAVIGAN | \$575 | wearwillow.com
- B Leandra embroidered organza floral jacket
 Anne Fontaine | \$346 | annefontaine.com
- C Darcy simulated pearl and golden brass disc ring
 Chloé | \$350 | neimanmarcus.com
- D Tosca jeweled tie-front collar
 Anne Fontaine | \$225 | annefontaine.com
- E Holly leather thong sandal,
 MICHAEL KORS | \$120 | michaelkors.com











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 LOLLIA | \$10 | lollialife.com
- B Mineral Tealight Holder Set

 Calypso St. Barth | \$50 | calypsostbarth.com
- C Limited edition beauty products

 PAUL & JOE BEAUTE | \$7-\$28 | paulandjoe.com
- D Marsala Metalshine Liquid Liner
 Sephora + Pantone Universe | \$18 | sephora.com



pattern-al instincts

You'll never be accused of being boring when you trot these out at your next get-together. Bright, bold prints and delicious designs bring a pop of fun to the home.

- A Femme Fatale Chocolate

 Kelly Wearstler x Compartés | \$13 | kellywearstler.com
- B Wooden utensils variety pack

 SUCRE SHOP | \$12 | sucreshop.com
- C May Designs notebooks and journals

 May Designs | \$15-\$25 | maydesigns.com
- D Patchwork Jungle Napkin Set
 Arro Home | \$32 | arrohome.com











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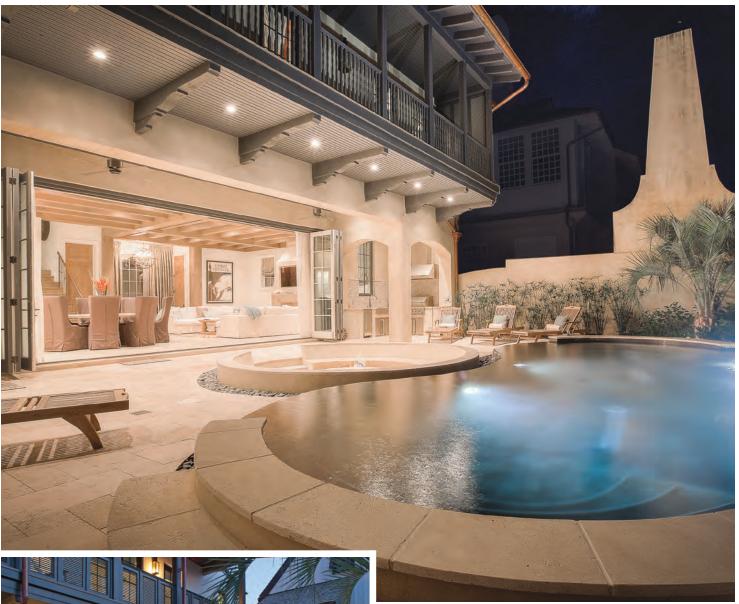


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*Claim based on Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau 2014 Bed Tax Revenue report.

OUTDOOR ROOMS AND SPACES







Many of our clients these days indicate that outdoor living is as important to them as indoor space. This importance brings with it detailed exterior functionality and design requirements, careful integration of architecture with landscape design, and a hefty price tag. Although many of the residential building lots in our geographic area of the Northwest Florida coast are small, outdoor living has evolved as an expansion of the indoor living space. Many homeowners desire exterior entertainment spaces such as $\,$ beautiful sitting rooms, outdoor bars and dining rooms, elaborate kitchens, fire pits, pools, and grottoes.

In order to understand how clients plan to use these outdoor spaces, we find ourselves asking many of the same questions we ask in discussing the interiors of each house.

How do you envision using the outdoor space of your house? It may be an extension of the home that connects by a doorway to one or more rooms, or a backyard oasis designed for peace and quiet. Or maybe you want the ultimate party pool, big enough for all your friends, the children, and other guests to romp and play in. Deciding how your outdoor room or space will connect to your home and what its function will be is step number one to making it perfect.

Building a pool area comes with its own set of things to consider. Your pool may be for entertaining, pool volleyball games, and kids' parties. For avid swimmers, maybe a lap pool is a better choice. Some homes just need a small pool area—perhaps with a unique fountain or other water feature—to liven up the space even if it won't be used very often. Adding a sizable sun deck is great if you love to soak up the rays and relax in the warm months. Make sure the deck is big enough for the number of chairs you and your guests will need. You might even decide on an in-pool sun deck, or tanning shelf, for easy cooling off!

Other water-related features in your outdoor living area could include a hot tub or spa, a fountain, or an outdoor shower or bath. Landscape features, such as a garden, a lawn for children and pets, a fishpond, or maybe an exercise or meditation area will need to be planned in advance of building your home to ensure the right materials are available and that the space can accommodate your needs.

An important thing to remember is that your space should feel comfortable to you and your guests. If you throw large dinner parties often, opt for a spacious patio or deck area that allows for plenty of seating and space to entertain. No one wants to feel cramped or crowded when they're trying to have a nice barbecue. Maybe you want to include dining tables, chairs, or a living room—style seating area for eating outside or playing games. Talk to your designer about how much seating you think you'll need and the best way to incorporate it into your space.

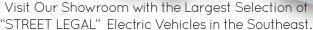
Entertainment areas such as outdoor kitchens, fire pits, and television areas are great ways to bring everyone together. If you will be cooking or serving outside, you might want built-in grills with countertops and storage. A designer can help determine what type of outdoor kitchen will best suit your lifestyle and then include features such as fryers, woks, refrigeration, wine storage, ice makers, sinks, herb gardens, utensil and dish storage, wood-burning pizza ovens, serving buffets, and fireplaces with Italian grills into the design.

It is important to consider your desired outdoor furniture layout and any landscape requirements when designing a home. As real estate in our area is very valuable, our clients often want to maximize their building footprints. This can lead to irregularly shaped (and sometimes small) outdoor spaces. Careful planning from the beginning can help ensure that these spaces reach their full potential by creating an outdoor living area that is an extension of the home, rather than an afterthought.











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Once the function of the outdoor space has been defined, we must delve into the details of the design, the feeling that the clients want to evoke, and any desired materials or decorative elements they want. The selection of finish materials (floors, walls, countertops, backsplashes, ceilings for covered areas, and cabinetry) is affected by intended use, routine maintenance, durability, desired aesthetic, and price. Much like with the interior of a house, the selected materials should complement each other so the exterior spaces flow.

Finally, care should be given to the selection of furniture, fabrics, pots, and accessories; these will add the finishing touches to the space. The options for durable outdoor furniture and fabrics are ever expanding, and new products are constantly being introduced.

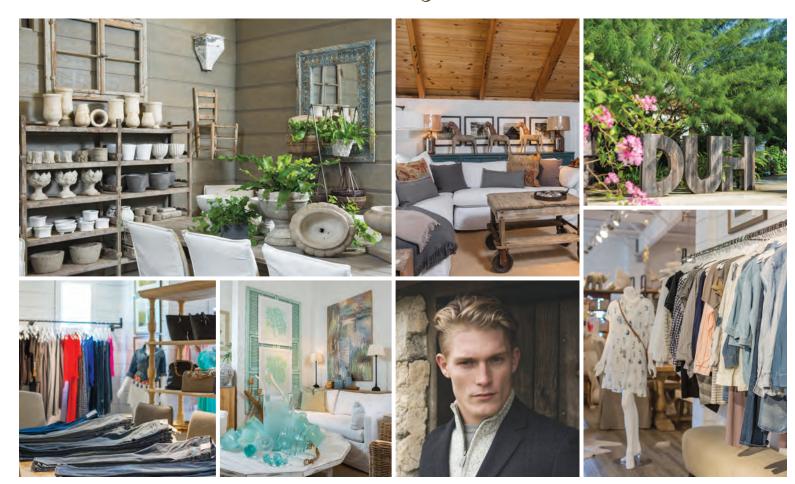
When determining a budget, clients typically assume that the exterior spaces will be significantly less expensive than the interior spaces. They are accustomed to referencing real estate values and construction costs in dollars per heated and cooled square foot. Porches, outdoor rooms, terraces, pools, garages (often air-conditioned), cabanas, kitchens, and bars have significant associated costs, and the cost per square foot can easily be as much as or more than interior construction on the same project. Therefore, when budgeting construction costs for a new home here at the beach, it is critical to include all desired gross square footage.

In my opinion, there is little difference in the quality of a house's interiors and a high-quality exterior room. Clearly defining the function and desired style for your outdoor spaces—as well as providing an adequate budget for the integration of architecture, design, hardscape, and landscape planting—will positively kick-start your project.

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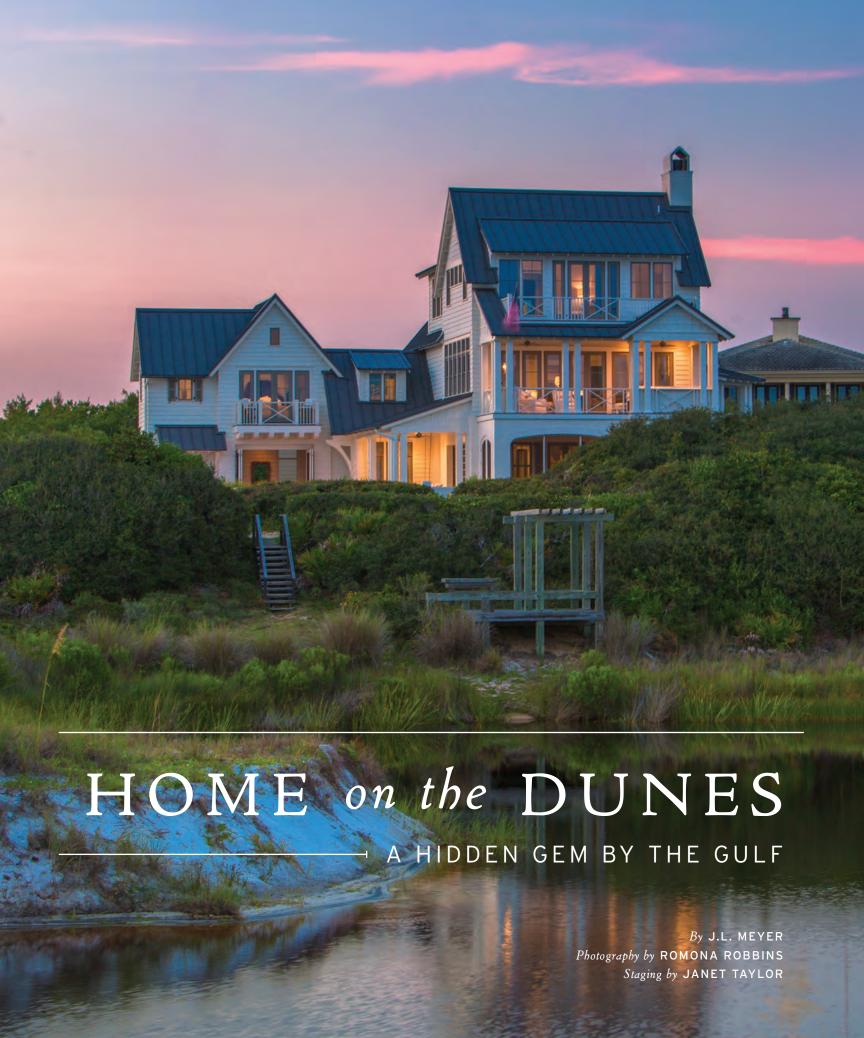
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SOMEWHERE ALONG THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA COAST IS A TREASURE NOT BURIED IN A CHEST OR A SUNKEN SHIP, BUT PROUDLY STANDING AMID TOWERING WHITE SAND DUNES, UNDULATING SEA OATS, AND RARE COASTAL DUNE LAKES. THE TREASURE IS A THREE-STORY HOME SITUATED BETWEEN THE GRAYTON BEACH AND BLUE MOUNTAIN BEACH COMMUNITIES OF SCENIC HIGHWAY 30-A.

The proud homeowners are an Atlanta-based couple who longed for a private oasis with a view of the shimmering Gulf of Mexico. They enlisted architect Paul Geary of T.S. Adams Studio and builder John Brown of Gulfview Construction to create their ultimate family retreat. (Brown also built their previous vacation home in 30-A's planned community of WaterColor.) "Comfort was very important, and the architect had the challenge of only having one-fourth of the lot

available to work with," says the home's interior designer and decorator, Janet Taylor of Taylor and Kelly Interiors, who was involved in the home's design from the beginning. "In addition to the home's common areas and master suite, the owners wanted the design to allow Gulf views from their two children's bedrooms." The team delivered in a big way, working alongside landscape architect Bradford Davis to create a home that is all at once majestic, inviting, and full of personal touches.

"One of the client's design wishes was to incorporate elements of permanence that can be found in stately Atlanta residences but aren't as widely used here at the beach," Geary says. "The owners love the look and feel of painted brick, so we incorporated it as the veneer for the first level and the main entry gable. It gives a sense of permanence as you approach the home."

THE HOME'S BEST FEATURE OF ALL-THE STUNNING VIEWS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO, LITTLE REDFISH LAKE, AND CRYSTALLINE BEACHES-WAS THE KEY FACTOR IN MUCH OF THE DESIGN TEAM'S DECISIONS.

"The site affords beautiful first-floor views on the west end, while the east end was obscured by natural growth that couldn't be disturbed due to the proximity of the coastal dune lake," Geary says. "When considering the home's positioning and the location of the pool terrace, we used these site characteristics to our full advantage." The outdoor living area and pool have a direct view over Little Redfish Lake to the Gulf, and Geary and his team maximized that space by incorporating an indoor sitting room just off the pool deck, as well as an indoor/outdoor dining space with telescoping slide-away glass doors that is perfect for spring and fall entertaining. "Since the home's main living space is on the second level, we also created what we call the Summer House—an outdoor living room that flows off the pool but is covered and screened to make it a wonderful retreat."

While designing the home to commune with its natural surroundings, the team worked out the conceptual process using hand-drawn sketches rather than formally drafted plans so the process could evolve more organically. "The owners were after a coastal native look," Davis says of the landscaping plans. "We hand-pruned the sand live oak hammock and kept as much of the native vegetation as possible. Lots of massing, native grasses, and ground covers give the property a bold look." Coastal Gem magnolias were chosen to surround the motor court, lending privacy and blocking wind in the front of the home. "We were all very interactive throughout the process, and it was fun to help the owners realize their dream."





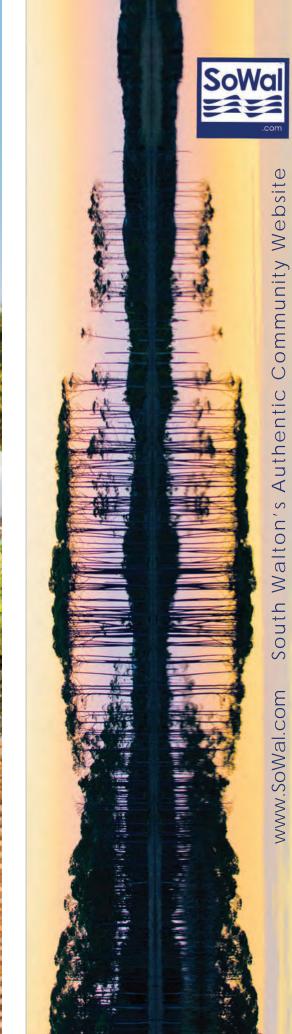












TAYLOR WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE HOMEOWNERS TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE HOME'S FIVE BEDROOMS, MASTER SUITE, LIVING SPACES, AND POOL AREA.

Highlights include beautiful flooring from reclaimed barn wood throughout, custom tile work, antique and custom furniture, driftwood art pieces, and more.

"About the time their house was in its finishing stages, the couple's son got married," Taylor says. "They used my sister's company, Drift with Anne, for the centerpieces at the rehearsal dinner at Eden Gardens State Park. We knew we would transition the pieces into the home afterward. All the driftwood and shell pieces in the house are from her company, and they really bring the outside in." Taylor frequently uses her sister's creations and other seaside-inspired designs to make a home coastal "without being too beachy," she says. The homeowners have used art pieces from their own collection in the house, along with some additional pieces sourced locally by Taylor. "We avoided mass production pieces that said things like 'Beach This Way' in favor of custom items that are timeless."

There is no doubt this breathtaking beach home is a gem among the dunes whose true value lies in the hearts of its inhabitants. \blacksquare









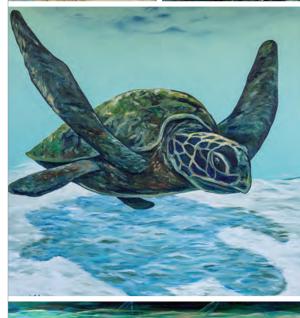


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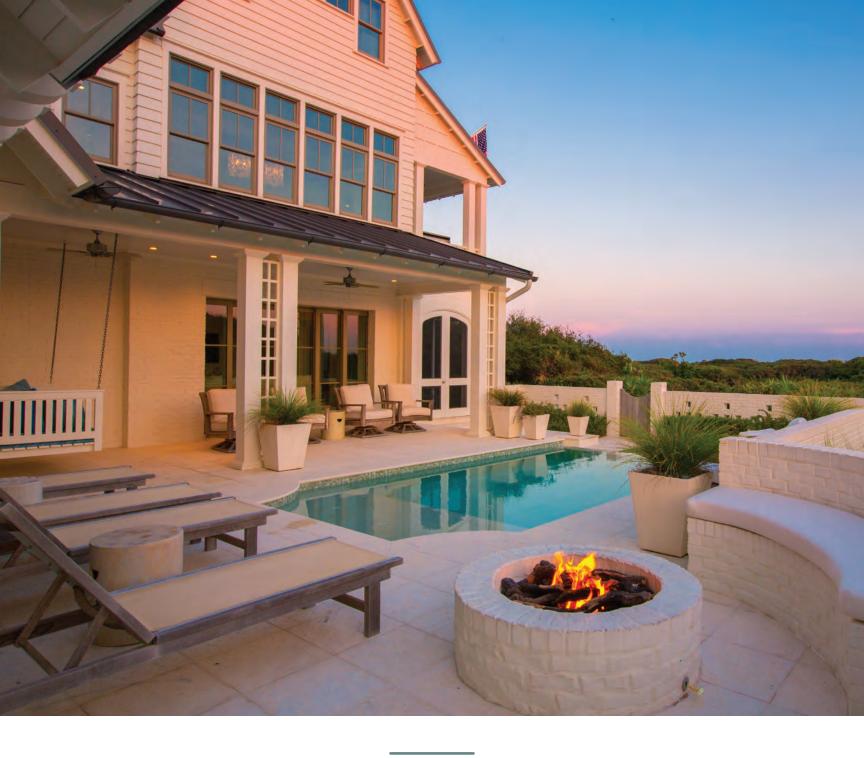








Scenic 30A · Destin



Tile work: Q TILE

Driftwood artwork and lamps: DRIFT WITH ANNE

Upholstery: Four seasons from beau interiors in grayton beach, lee industries from pizitz home and cottage in seaside Lighting: lowcountry originals from beau interiors, currey and company from beautiful lights in destin Antiques: Scott antique markets in atlanta

Art: FAMILY'S OWN COLLECTION, SOME PIECES FROM RED BIRD GALLERY IN SEASIDE

Rugs: JAIPUR FROM BEAU INTERIORS, SISAL FROM DESTIN FLOORING AMERICA

Linens: BELLA NOTTE FROM PIZITZ HOME AND COTTAGE, POM POM AT HOME

Tableware: DINING ROOM CHARGERS FROM BEAU INTERIORS, OUTDOOR DINING CHARGERS FROM PIZITZ HOME AND COTTAGE

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amy

Although it seems that multitasking has become a way of life in today's society, sometimes you just don't have time to do it all. Enter the vivacious and stylish Amy Giles, an Alabama native who moved to the Northwest Florida coast with her husband, John, fifteen years ago. Amy is the owner and founder of Wardrobe Made Simple, a personal styling service that provides wardrobe evaluation and cleanout, personal shopping, and styling for clients who need a helping hand to "find their own chic," as Amy says.

"A lot of my clients want several different things," Amy explains. Often, she'll begin with a closet cleanout, helping clients go through the clothing and accessories they own and cleaning out things they no longer need or want, or repurposing things they may not have worn in a while. Then, Amy works with the client to build her (or his) new wardrobe with personal shopping services. "I can show clients how the new pieces will fit into their existing wardrobes."

Amy works with local boutiques and other retailers, mostly in the Northwest Florida area, to find pieces that will fit her clients' wardrobes, personalities, and lifestyles. "It's rewarding because I feel that I can empower people and help them get dressed and feel confident every day," she says. "There are a lot of people who feel unsure when they walk out the door, and it's so rewarding to help my clients feel that they are putting their best self forward when they get dressed each day."

For this project, VIE recruited Amy to demonstrate her wardrobe consulting and styling expertise on four beautiful women: Ellen Wolter, a mother of three and coffee shop owner living in Durban, South Africa; Amanda Sause, a photographer and mother who was already a client of Wardrobe Made Simple; Beachy Beach Real Estate owner Hilary Farnum, who is also a previous client of Amy's; and VIE graphic designer Lucy Mashburn.

"IT'S REWARDING BECAUSE I FEEL THAT I CAN EMPOWER PEOPLE AND HELP THEM GET DRESSED AND FEEL CONFIDENT EVERY DAY."





Ellen

"I tried to give Ellen a little variety to take back to her South African lifestyle," Amy says. "She is the mother of three children and spends a lot of time with them, so she needs to be casual yet pulled together. She also wanted some looks to wear to an occasional party or a dinner out with her husband."

Ellen describes her everyday style as comfortable and functional, as she spends her mornings getting her three children ready for school in Durban, South Africa, and works on projects such as woodworking, sculpting, and more during her free time. "There's not a lot of glam," she admits, adding that she doesn't usually go for bright colors or anything that stands out too much. "I love blues and neutrals like gray, white, and denim. In Durban, everyday footwear is pretty much flip-flops and sandals. The style there is coastal and laid back, very similar to Northwest Florida."

Before moving to Durban with her husband, Clint, Ellen lived and worked in Seaside, Florida, at Cornerstone Marketing & Advertising, Inc. - The Idea Boutique under owner Lisa Burwell, VIE's publisher. "It was a match made in heaven!" Ellen says about her former job. "I was able to learn so much from Lisa in a relaxed environment. We spent a lot of time going out to meet clients, going to events and dinners, and doing photo shoots." Now, in addition to raising Jackson, Eden, and Sienna, Ellen and Clint own Jacksonville Coffee, a coffee bar with two locations in Durban.

"I wanted to add some flirty, chic, and feminine pieces without being too fussy," Amy says about choosing looks for Ellen during her shopping excursion and styling session. She chose three looks that complemented Ellen's lifestyle and personality while adding a little "wow" factor that was missing from her wardrobe before. "The floaty dress was perfect because she could easily throw it on with flat leather sandals and be ready for a meeting with a teacher or lunch with her friends." Amy continued the session with a day-to-night look. "The shorts and silk top with the beaded scarf necklace was breathtaking on Ellen. So simple, yet elegant and fun. It gives her an option other than a dress or white jeans. She could wear this look during the day with flats or throw on a pair of gray sassy heels and wear it to dinner!" For more formal occasions, Amy chose a dress that, although



I WANTED TO ADD SOME FLIRTY, CHIC, AND FEMININE PIECES WITHOUT BEING TOO FUSSY. —AMY





 ${\tt PREVIOUS\ PAGE} \quad {\tt DRESS:}\ Chan\ Luu\ from\ Beachfolly\ |\ {\tt EARRINGS:}\ Vintage\ Green\ |\ {\tt BRACELET:}\ Shelly\ Brown\ from\ Willow$

THIS PAGE DRESS: Viviana Uchitel from the Alys Shoppe | SANDALS: Le Swim from the Alys Shoppe | ARROWHEAD NECKLACE: Chan Luu from Beachfolly | LONG NECKLACE: Vintage La Rose from Willow | BRACELET: Coastal Road from the Alys Shoppe | EARRINGS: Rebecca Lankford from Beachfolly | HAT from Willow + Mercer

AS FOR WORKING WITH AMY, ELLEN SAYS SHE HAD FUN WHILE ALSO FINDING WAYS TO UP THE GAME ON HER PERSONAL STYLE AND FEEL MORE CONFIDENT AS A RESULT.

neutral, certainly wasn't lacking in punch. "That gray beaded dress was gorgeous on Ellen with her skin and eye color—the perfect choice for her to wear to a special event or nice evening out with her husband. Classic and simple, just like her."

As for working with Amy, Ellen says she had fun while also finding ways to up the game on her personal style and feel more confident as a result. "It's incredible how Amy can pull things together that I would never actually choose for myself in the shops," Ellen says. "She puts it on you and you feel like a million bucks! You go from kind of dull and average to having a real "wow" factor. It's nice to have someone who can help you think outside of your own comfort zone and style. Any girl wants to be affirmed, and it's nice to have someone who will be honest and say if something isn't working. She's so easy to be around and not intimidating.

"I definitely think I spend most of my life feeling 'average'—and to have someone like Amy help make me feel more comfortable in things that might have made me feel more conspicuous before like a red dress or a statement necklace—is great. Sometimes I feel I wouldn't be able to pull off some of the fashionable things or maybe I'll look like I'm trying to be something I'm not, but she can help you realize that you're not sticking out like a sore thumb. You're looking good and putting your best face forward."





amanda

Family and children's photographer Amanda Sause met Amy at an event at the school their children attend and have been friends since then, but when Amanda was given Amy's wardrobe evaluation and styling services as a gift by her husband, she was a little nervous about it at first. "Your closet is such a personal space, and allowing someone to come into it is a big deal," Amanda admits. But her doubts quickly melted away as she worked with Wardrobe Made Simple. "Amy was so great and fun to work with and made me feel very comfortable. She helped me both with personal shopping and taking items I already had in my closet and then making them into a daytime look that can transition into night. It's great to have a look that can do double duty instead of thinking of it as only one or the other."

Amanda spends much of her time outside on the beach or in the park taking portraits of families and children, a passion that she followed after spending seven years as an elementary school teacher. Her wardrobe tends to work with her. Amanda says she typically chooses light fabrics, such as linen, for everyday wear and that "a good hat is a must!" She is also a mother to two young boys, Kelley and Karsten, and says Amy was a huge help in finding her personal style.

"SHE HELPED ME BOTH WITH PERSONAL SHOPPING AND TAKING ITEMS I ALREADY HAD IN MY CLOSET AND THEN MAKING THEM INTO A DAYTIME LOOK THAT CAN TRANSITION INTO NIGHT."

"My problem is when I go into stores, I tend to love everything," Amanda laughs. "Amy really helped me take the pieces I had and shop for things that would coordinate with them. She also helped me find new things to go with my changing body—after having two kids in the last four years—and my changing career. Even after the makeover is finished, it's great to be able to call Amy up and ask for advice. If I'm looking for a new fedora, I can call her and she'll tell me 'Oh, Mercer has great ones!' and that's such a help because I don't really have a lot of time to go out and look all over for one."

For Amanda's shoot, Amy chose a day-to-night look featuring a delicious berrycolored romper. "Her look fits her personality to a tee!" Amy says. "I chose the romper because of the color and the style. The raspberry color was amazing with Amanda's coloring and skin tone. It is also youthful and current without being too 'trendy.' I felt that she could easily dress it down with flat leather sandals and a hat for a photo shoot on the beach (but still look professional and pulled together) and then put on heels and add some flirty jewelry and be ready for a date with her husband. She is definitely a little hottie in that romper!"





PREVIOUS PAGE BLOUSE: Raquel Allegra from Willow | SHORTS: Vince from Willow | NECKLACE: Mignonne Gavigan from Willow + Mercer | BRACELET: Scosha from Beachfolly SHOES: Joie from Willow

THIS PAGE ROMPER: Karina Grimaldi | SMALL CUSTOM "LOVE" NECKLACE from Willow | EARRINGS: J. Crew | LEATHER CLUTCH: Coastal Road from the Alys Shoppe | SHOES: Splendid



Hilary

"I chose this look for Hilary because I felt it fit her personality so well," Amy says of the oh-so-chic jumpsuit she styled for Hilary Farnum, mother of two and owner of Beachy Beach Real Estate. "She always needs to look pulled together and professional without wearing a suit—after all, we are at the beach!"

Hilary first hired Amy to help her find pieces she could wear on special occasions. "I have to go to a lot of events and I often speak at them, and I can't wear the same thing all the time," she says. "Amy definitely brought colors and accessories into my look; I always went more with black, gray, and other neutral colors with minimal accessories, just to get out the door looking decent." With Amy's help, Hilary's wardrobe was taken to the next level. "She went through my closet, taking what I already had and creating new outfits that I never would have thought of—some from pieces that I was about to throw away!"

"I GO FROM BUSINESS TO CASUAL ALL DAY LONG, AND AMY'S REALLY HELPED ME FIND A BALANCE FOR STYLE IN MY LIFE."

Of Hilary's look for the shoot, Amy says, "The navy jumpsuit is current while the color is a true classic, just like Hilary. Putting the white structured vest over it gave it a more professional feel without being too stuffy. She would definitely be ready for a client meeting in that outfit. We took off the vest and added heels and beautiful jewelry for her to transition from work to a chic dinner event on Highway 30-A."

"I go from business to casual all day long, and amy's really helped me find a balance for style in my life," Hilary adds.







lucy

Fresh out of Auburn University and taking on her career as a graphic designer for The Idea Boutique last year, Lucy Mashburn was helping out behind the scenes of this shoot when she was recruited to model—and she brought her A game for the camera!

Though she was admittedly surprised to be roped into modeling for the afternoon, Lucy says being styled by Amy was "a real treat!" As for her everyday style, Lucy says, "Living at the beach certainly calls for a laid-back style, but I think I've always dressed that way. I gravitate towards simple, classic pieces with a pop of color every now and then."

"Lucy's sweet, bubbly personality came through like a ray of sunshine with the adorable yellow and white romper. It was the perfect choice for her!" Amy gushes. A pop of raspberry lipstick and Amy's fun throw pillows certainly brought a lot of color to the shot, though they played second fiddle to Lucy's dazzling smile. "The cream goddess gown was another choice that was beautiful for her," Amy

continues. "It was comfortable and not fussy, but so very classic. Adding the fun snake vertebrae necklace with the vintage broach was just the right touch to make it current for her age. Just beautiful!"

"I ENJOYED GETTING TO SEE HOW HER PROCESS UNFOLDS, FROM THE INITIAL CLIENT MEETING TO THE FINISHED PRODUCT."

Working on research and prep work for the photoshoot gave Lucy an in-depth look into Amy's work that even her clients might not usually see. "I enjoyed getting to see how her process unfolds, from the initial client meeting to the finished product," Lucy says. "It was a fun surprise when she picked out a few pieces for me to wear! Amy made sure to make me feel comfortable and like myself in her selections. By working with her behind the scenes and then actually becoming a client for the day, I got the full experience of working with Wardrobe Made Simple."

PREVIOUS PAGE JUMPSUIT: Calypso St. Barth from Beachfolly | NECKLACE: Pink Powder from the Alys Shoppe | BRACELETS: Shelly Brown from Willow | CLUTCH: Kayu from Willow | SHOES: J. Crew | VEST: Townsen from Willow | (right) BRACELETS: Tory Burch | GOLD CUFF: J.Crew | DRESS (on Amy): Letarte from the Alys Shoppe | NECKLACE (on Amy): S. Carter Designs from the Alys Shoppe

THIS PAGE ROMPER: Karina Grimaldi | Long Necklace: Kar-bn from Willow | BRACELET: Coastal Road from the Alys Shoppe | WHITE DRESS: Rachel Pally from the Alys Shoppe | SNAKE VERTEBRAE AND VINTAGE BROACH NECKLACE from Willow + Mercer

COMPLETING THE LOOK

Hairstylist Brooke Miller and makeup artist Yvette Nation joined us for the shoot to bring Amy's visions together and round out the looks she created for each model.



styles. "From Bohemian to glam; I like to dress up, but I love the laid-back beach style, and I don't like to spend a lot of time getting ready," she says. "You might call it Janis Joplin meets Grace Kelly!"

Her inspiration for this photo shoot came from the models themselves as well as Amy's styling. "Most of the looks for this shoot are very natural," Brooke explains. "I wanted to do some beachy waves to reflect our area and the lifestyles of our models. The goal was just to enhance their natural beauty and give them looks that they could easily wear every day."

Brooke and her husband, Josh, just welcomed their first child, a boy named Milo born on August 26. Congrats, Miller family!

Brooke

Although she has modeled in photo shoots, video shoots, and on the catwalk herself, stylist Brooke Miller claims she is more at home behind the chair, wielding ablow-dryer and bobby pins, than in front of the camera.

"I started assisting for a stylist named Marie in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, when I was sixteen," Brooke recalls. "She was kind of like my second mom." It was during that time that Brooke discovered styling hair was something she wanted to pursue as a career. "Until I learned I would have to do coloring too," she jokes. Still, she followed her love of creating hairstyles that suit the needs and personalities of her clients and hasn't looked back. She works mainly out of 10th Avenue Hair Designs in Pensacola, Florida, but travels for weddings and photo shoots, which are her favorites, and other events.

"Photo shoots and weddings are perfect for me, because I just get to style all day," Brooke says. "I enjoy the one-on-one interaction with people. I was kind of shy starting out, so it's also been a great way for me to build relationships with people."

Describing her own personal fashion taste, Brooke says it could be called an eclectic mix of different



Yvette

"For me, the process starts with the inspiration and story for a shoot or a fashion show; I like having a picture in my mind of what the makeup should look like to go with the mood or the overall story," says makeup artist Yvette Nation, who worked magic with blush, lipstick, and eyeshadow to bring Amy's looks for each model to the finish line. And, she gave the lovely ladies pointers on makeup techniques they could easily replicate in their everyday routines. "I like to make it a collaboration with the models and talk to them about what they like. From there, I like being able to play and evolve as I go, like 'Let's do some highlights there or a pop of color here.' Who doesn't like to play dress-up?"

Yvette is a New York native who acted in theatre and commercials before going on a beach trip with her husband, Patrick, and deciding to make it a more permanent vacation. She was one of the first makeup artists in the Northwest Florida coastal region to work weddings, and she has also worked at MAC Cosmetics inside Belk at Destin Commons and inside Dillard's at Pier Park shopping center.

"I fell in love with makeup at a very young age, watching my mom put hers on," Yvette muses. "She was beautiful, always with such gorgeous hair and everything. And then being in theatre, I learned stage makeup. I did a lot of off-Broadway productions and commercials in New York—I loved acting and had a lot of fun, but I worried about how competitive the business was. Makeup is so fun and creative; it's a lot like theatre in that I'm creating a character and a whole look and feel. It was one of those things that I always loved and the career really chose *me*."

For photo shoots or weddings, Yvette says it's important to see how the inspiration or story for an event unfolds and to build on those when choosing a shade or overall look with makeup. "Being in such beautiful locations for a shoot, sometimes less is more," she says. "I feel that makeup and hair really complete a look, but we don't want to take away from the overall feel of what we're shooting; we just want to enhance and highlight what's being done. It's always fun to do makeup, but the people are really what make the shoot special."



PHOTO BY CHAS GALLOWAY

THE HOME

The backdrop for the shoot with Wardrobe Made Simple was none other than the Gileses' own home, where Amy resides with her husband (the home's builder), John, and their twin daughters, Cooper and Riley. Amy says that John, co-owner of Corestruction based in Grayton Beach, Florida, along with his business partner Matt Parenzan, is always planning with his next home in mind. The couple moved into this home in the luxurious community of Watersound Origins after its completion in February 2013. Before that, they lived just two doors down.

"We loved Watersound Origins from the start," Amy says. "We love that it is not a short-term rental community. It's truly more like a real neighborhood, like where we grew up in Alabama—filled with trees and a huge green space and a beautiful community pool for our family and still close to the beach! John especially loves having access to a wonderful golf course."

The neighborhood boasts an abundance of nature along with modern luxury amenities, all just a couple of miles from the sugar-white beaches of South Walton. Residents can golf at the pristine six-hole Origins Course and make use of hiking and walking trails and a dock on the bank of Lake Powell that's perfect for fishing and paddling excursions. The community center includes the Watersound Café, a swimming pool, a fitness center, and event spaces

that often host live music and other fun activities for families. "You have a sense of community here," Amy continues. "It's nice actually knowing your neighbors! This has been the perfect community for our family (especially with grandparents that just moved in around the corner!) and we hope to stay here for a long time."

The Gileses' home is clean and fresh and has clean lines and simple decor throughout; the blue exterior of the house evokes the feeling of the coast without being over the top. Some of John's recent business has been updating and remodeling homes in the area, Amy says, and touches of old and new can be seen in their home as well, even though it is only two years old. "One of my favorite details is the ceilings, which are pecky cypress with a whitewash over them," Amy says. "They add a beautiful dimension and natural element to the space. I also love our reclaimed wood beams in the living and dining areas. We feel they really give the home character."

Amy worked with her best friend from college, designer Libby Greene of Libby Greene Interiors, and Anna Kay Porch of Tracery Interiors to bring her and John's personal style into the home, which Amy describes as clean and simple. "We wanted it to still be livable since we have two young girls," Amy says. "People think we're nuts having white interiors everywhere, but we've managed to keep it clean. My





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rule is no food in the living room: white grape juice only!" She laughs. "John and I are neat; we like to keep the house picked up and organized. It helps that we are both organized people, and we're trying to teach that to our daughters."

Neat and organized certainly describes Amy's personal wardrobe—another word to describe it could be "Wow!" The Hollywood-worthy closet was designed by John and Amy and is the perfect nook in the house to display her clothing, jewelry, and, of course, shoes. The closet is accessorized with a functional and movable vanity, pretty shopping bags from Amy's travels, and a pin board of clippings and inspirations she has collected from magazines and catalogs. "I do spend a lot of time in my wardrobe!" Amy admits. "But as a family, we spend the majority of our time in spring and fall out on the patio—we eat every meal out there and pretty much live out there. In the summer and the colder months, we love the large, open living area."

The art and accessories are in keeping with the simple and clean theme of the Gileses' home, with custom pieces bringing a truly personal touch for the family. "My favorite piece of art is our commissioned piece by local artist Allison Wickey, which is hanging in the girls' room." Amy says. "It's a painting of a bird's nest with two beautiful blue eggs nestled in it. The two eggs represent my two girls, and it always reminds me of how blessed we are to have them."

Another meaningful possession in their home is a leaning mirror, a one-of-a-kind piece created by Brett Martin of Made on 30A. "Brett used reclaimed wood pulled up from the WaterSound Beach Club boardwalk," Amy explains. "That boardwalk was the place where the girls had their first beach experience—we actually walked on that same wooden boardwalk together as a family. How meaningful and precious is that? I will always have that piece and be able to tell the girls the story."

Although the family will soon be moving from their present nest, Amy and John are excited about beginning the process of building a new one in Watersound Origins. "It's bittersweet because I really love our home," Amy admits, "but I'm married to a builder and that's just part of the deal. John loves the creative process of building a new home for our family. And I get to design a new closet—yay!" No doubt it will be swoon worthy!











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THE MANY ADVENTURES OF

Photography by GREG RIEGLER

Duh for Garden and Home is Pensacola, Florida's premier destination for home furnishings and garden decor, landscaping and interior design, men's and women's clothing, and even lunch! Having celebrated its fifteenth anniversary this past February, Duh is focused on continuing to provide quality goods and design services as well as an overall fun experience to its customers and clients. "The collective concept of this compound was to create a place where individuals could find an adventure for the day," says Duh co-owner Jim Rigsbee. He and co-owner Quinn Stinson took time away from helping people create beautiful spaces to talk with VIE about their business and inspiration.

What does the name Duh mean to you and vour business?

From the very beginning, the name was meant to convey a fun, unpretentious atmosphere and a shopping experience like no other.

What kind of growth has happened since you began Duh fifteen years ago?

We started Duh in a 1,500-square-foot repurposed cinder-block liquor store using garden and home elements from around the world. Growth started within the first year of operation, and we introduced the Farmhouse, a two-story showroom. From there, we took on twelve thousand square feet of warehouse space across the street. This allowed us to diversify our inventory to include more imports from around the world, expanding to Asia to complement our European and American buying. Currently we have sixteen thousand square feet of showrooms, offices, luxuriously landscaped courtyards, and two restaurants.

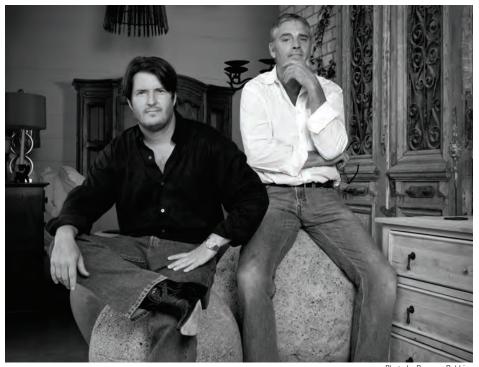


Photo by Romona Robbins



NOTHING BRINGS A ROOM TO LIFE LIKE A MAGNIFICENT FLOWERING PLANT.

Can you tell us a little about each space?

The Barn holds home decor, both interior and exterior, and includes our design center.

The Villa also houses home decor as well as Ginger Bender Papers, Fig women's boutique, the Men's Shop, and the Spotted Dog. These entities include a vast array of choices: furniture, invitations, greeting cards, specialty stationery, children's clothing, books, stemware, a bridal registry, tabletop accessories, china, jewelry, and dog food. Our clothing lines include Lacoste, Grayers, and Rodd and Gunn for men and Current/Elliott, Frank and Eileen, CP Shades, and Calypso St. Barth for women.

The Garden Center has outdoor home decor, various planters from all over the world, outdoor stemware and tableware, found objects, antiques, select architectural salvage decor, and interior and exterior plants.

What would you consider to be Duh's signature service or brand characteristic?

Our passion for bringing style, creativity, and experience to our diverse clientele really sets us apart. Be it for a beach residence, a mountain retreat, a primary residence, a studio loft, or an expansive family home, our favorite thing to do is help our clients realize their dreams both aesthetically and functionally.

What are some of the best tips for outdoor spaces and gardens?

It's always best if one can create a feeling of transition from indoor to outdoor so there is a flow and continuity—a sense that you're progressing from room to room. I feel that nothing brings a room to life like a magnificent flowering plant. It adds instant vitality to any home, hence our decision to bring our Garden Center and plant area back into full bloom.

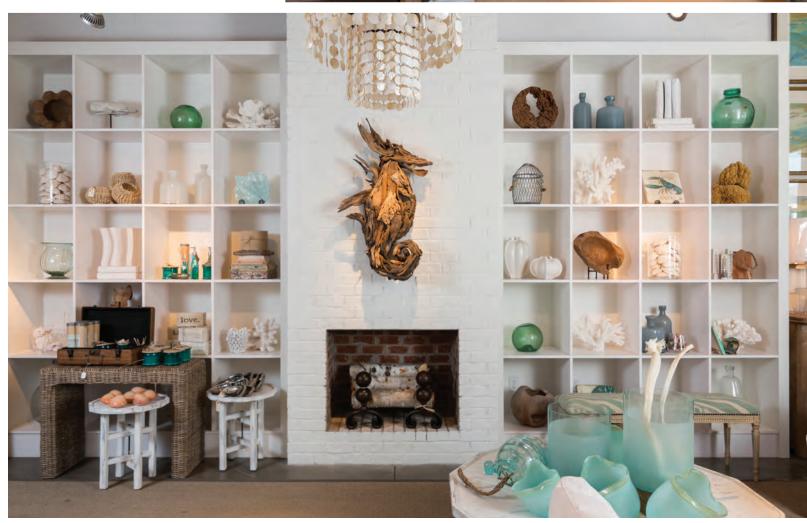






WHEN CREATING
AN INVITING SPACE
THAT IS A NATURAL
EXTENSION OF THE
HOME, YOU MUST
CONSIDER SEATING,
PRIVACY, CLIMATE,
SPACE RESTRAINTS,
AND COMFORT.









What is your process for designing a garden or outdoor space for a client?

For outdoor design, one needs to know what objective the client is trying to achieve: form, function, entertainment, relaxation, or all of the above? When creating an inviting space that is a natural extension of the home, you must consider seating, privacy, climate, space restraints, and comfort. We really try to consider each project with the lifestyle of the customer, as well as the project location, in mind. For example, is this area in full sun, is it shaded, or is it coastal, and how much time will the client have to devote to the maintenance of the landscape and garden? Often, we really have to show the client the above-mentioned elements because it really does affect the overall design. You wouldn't want to plant something just because you love the look of it and, before you know it, have it dominating your entire space.

What are some of your favorite brands for outdoor furniture? And what about planters and accessories?

Our favorite furniture brands would be Elegant Earth, Lee Industries, Kingsley-Bate, Lane Venture, and Brown Jordan. For planters, we love Italian terra-cotta and rustic glazed pots from Asia. We also have a lot of fun at Duh repurposing unique objects such as antique cattle troughs, bathtubs,

statues, grain bins, chicken feeders, and more and turning them into containers.

Which types of plants would you recommend for the novice gardener or someone who doesn't exactly have a green thumb?

Succulents, succulents, succulents! The succulent family is so vast that there is really something for everyone here! Black thumbs, rejoice! Also, in our tropical climate, succulents thrive in almost any size planter.

We also have a love for reseeding annuals; they plant themselves! And, if you're not happy with the location they've decided on, you can dig them up and replant somewhere else. As an added bonus, they tend to attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Visit the folks at Duh for Garden and Home for more tips, design services, home goods, and a day of adventurous shopping and dining in downtown Pensacola!

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On the Home Front

The Scenic 30-A Real Estate Market Performs Well in First Half of 2015

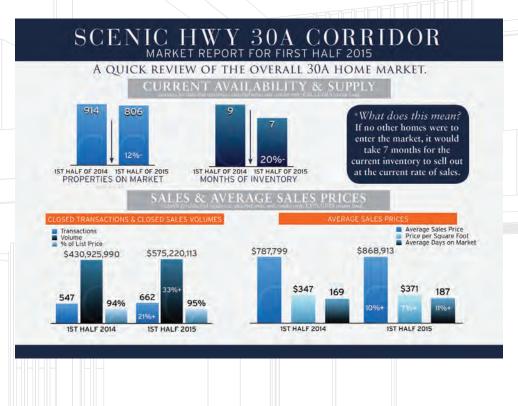
By Erin Oden

The Scenic Highway 30-A home market has continued to strengthen in 2015. The volume of 30-A home and condo sales for the first half of the year was up an impressive 33 percent over last year's first half. Inventory dipped to a low supply of just seven months. Average sales price rose 10 percent over last year's first half. These are positive key indicators.

Following is a look at the most popular 30-A submarkets: the planned communities and the Gulf-front and high-end markets.

WaterSound Beach continues its popularity among discriminating buyers. Transactions and sales volume were up significantly in the second quarter, driving sales volume for the first half to near \$48 million, a 40 percent increase from last year. Average sale price and average price per square foot are up 9 percent and 15 percent, respectively, for the year. Sales have been robust with the time on market being six months for the first half versus eleven months for the same period last year. Inventory is fairly low and these indicators point to demand for WaterSound Beach properties remaining high as the community continues building out.

WaterColor home sales volume remains solid at \$64 million through the first half of 2015. Following a very strong first quarter, home sales volume was about the same in the second quarter. Prior year second-quarter sales volume was very strong, driving our first-half volume below last year.





Pricing continues to tick up. The average home and condo sale price for this year has been \$1.46 million, a 33 percent increase over the first half of last year. We can expect demand to remain strong with sales and pricing continuing to reflect buyer demand as we progress through the year.

Rosemary trends remain exceptional. Residential (home and condo) sales volume for the second quarter was up 14 percent at \$43 million. First-half sales volume is almost \$80 million, up 22 percent from the same period last year. Sale prices have averaged \$1.8 million this year, an 8 percent increase over the prior year. Price per square foot and dayson-market trends continue to be impressive—good news for homeowners interested in selling.

The **30-A Gulf-front** home and condo sales volume for the first half of 2015 was a remarkable \$123.9 million, 24 percent above last year's first half. It is important to recognize that the past two years have been historic banner years for the 30-A Gulf-front market, so this sales volume is positive and noteworthy in seeing a continual increase. Average sale price of closed Gulf-front homes and condos for the first half was \$1.51 million, 3 percent above last year's strong first half. Time on market has decreased and current inventory is relatively low at seven months, with just over a hundred Gulf-front homes and condos on the market near the end of the first half.

The **30-A high-end luxury** home market remains very strong, with a first-half sales volume of \$82.5 million in closed homes and condos priced at \$3 million or higher—up an impressive 64 percent over last year's first half. The average sale price of these high-end properties was \$4.3 million, with

the average time on market being just 6.2 months versus 8.5 in the first half of 2014. We anticipate the high-end market to remain healthy throughout the coming quarters.

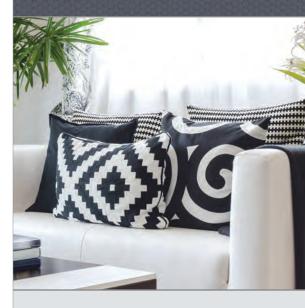
The real-estate trends for 30-A's overall market, as well as for its planned communities and most coveted segments, are compelling. We look forward to the continued momentum.



Erin Oden is the principal broker and owner of Coastal Luxury, a boutique brokerage that emphasizes an intimate knowledge and expertise in the luxury and Gulf-front markets. Erin can be reached at (850) 502-1220 or erin@coastalluxury.com. Or, stop by Coastal Luxury, located directly on 30-A, the first office east of Alys Beach. Search all available properties at coastalluxury.com/search.



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MONICAN VISIONS

IN FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA

BY ANNE W. SCHULTZ

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEVAN ALLEGRI WATKINS & FONTAINE HOWARD

What could be more utopian than a community where barefoot children attend classes outdoors at a progressive school that doesn't give out homework assignments so students have more time to play? A community where flowers are so prevalent that even the tops of trash receptacles display lipstick-red geraniums blooming in profusion? Where everyone is so welcoming and cordial that strangers become instant friends? How about a place where early residents were paid to plant trees? Where the bay offers up a sumptuous seafood buffet that folks scoop up with nets during jubilee, a rare phenomenon occurring only here in Mobile Bay and Tokyo Bay in Japan?

People dream of such an idyllic place, which English statesman Sir Thomas More called Utopia in his 1516 book of the same name. In the late nineteenth century, a group of freethinking visionaries, mostly from Iowa, did more than dream. They explored six states until they discovered the perfect location in southern Alabama with a warm climate and scenic bluffs along Mobile Bay—there, they believed their utopian vision had a "fair hope" for success.

This beautiful site has always attracted visitors. First were the Native Americans, followed by European superpowers who tossed the region back and forth in hotly contested battles for New World territory. Settlements never quite materialized. The Revolutionary War stymied ones begun by French Creoles. Alabama City, a grandiose community envisioned by New Orleans developers, did not make it past the planning stages. It seems this region in Baldwin County lay in wait for its founders, who based their colony on populist ideals and the single land tax concept of nineteenth-century economist Henry George.







Fairhope Museum of History director Donnie Barrett spoke about Ernest Gaston, one of Fairhope's founding fathers, in a lecture series. "During the 1870s, a large political movement emerged in response to rampant growth in the corporate, banking, and railroad industries and their effects on society. Farmers' Alliance organizations in most every state started the People's Party, also known as Populism," Barrett explained. "Gaston, a follower of that movement, wrote up the Fairhope Plan and, accompanied by other interested individuals, headed to the Eastern Shore—only accessible by water—to implement Populist policies such as a money system, home phone systems, bay boats, and the People's Railroad."

The Fairhope Museum of History is the ideal place to investigate this fascinating community through its collection of artifacts, heirloom photos, and interpretive displays. You learn from literature at the museum that Fairhope's beauty is more than skin deep: "The unique village drew progressives, Populists, Socialists, Quakers, artists and intellectuals, and even nudists and free-love advocates. Many of the major social reformers of the early twentieth century—from Dewey to Darrow—made pilgrimages to Fairhope. Strong individualists, fine minds, independent spirits, and colorful characters of all sorts came to inhabit the town founded on principle." Fairhope cherishes its unique character, so often lost in the generic landscapes common to many American communities.

In 1907, the well-respected educator Marietta Johnson founded the idyllic school mentioned above. She called it the School of Organic Education, as it followed the natural growth of the pupil. This progressive school attracted the attention of some famous people of that era, including Upton Sinclair and the family of renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead. Students learned by unorthodox methods like constructing teepee villages in their study of American history. Nearby gullies became outdoor textbooks for nature studies, and students used their earthen walls as chalkboards! Johnson wrote, "The greatest minds are those able to use the play spirit in work." Visit the Marietta Johnson Museum in the historic Bell Building for more information.



Stroll around town, through neighborhoods, and along the bay to see how all this progressive idealism filtered down to the present. The compact downtown with its human-scaled architecture feels like a European village with cosmopolitan vibes, offering exclusive goods and services normally found in a much larger metropolis. European antique shops and art galleries line sidewalks along with upscale boutiques. Listed on the National Historic Register, Fairhope is a visual feast of twentieth-century architectural gems embellished by aesthetics like seasonal flowers brimming from hanging baskets, flower boxes, and in beds planted along sidewalks shaded by leafy trees. No wonder this vibrant town of around seventeen thousand has attracted creative types like Fannie Flagg, Jimmy Buffett, Pulitzer Prize—winning journalist Rick Bragg, and Winston Groom, the author of Forrest Gump.

The town's European ambience is reinforced at two walled-off enclaves of shops and restaurants built over several blocks. Turn a corner, and you're transported to the Mediterranean in Pinzone's Italian Village on Fairhope Avenue. Wander down a narrow lane past restaurants, a wine bar, and a tasting room all housed in cream-colored stucco buildings adorned by carriage lanterns, wrought-iron balconies, and terra-cotta tile roofs. Join locals for lunch at the Village Deli, a sidewalk café located between Isabella's steak house and Pinzone's Italian Downtown Restaurant. Owners of longtime favorite Mary Ann's Deli provide the same delicious sandwiches, salads, and sides that have become a Fairhope institution.

A French–Louisiana influence prevails at the French Quarter, where you can shop and dine outdoors in a courtyard shaded by live oaks while listening to a splashing fountain. Featured on the Food Network, Panini Pete's Cafe and Bakeshoppe is a local favorite. Enjoy fresh beignets and egg specialties for breakfast and terrific lunches featuring panini, gourmet hamburgers, and hot dogs. Chocoholics will drool over the Neuhaus Belgian chocolates featured at FMC Chocolates and Confectionaries. Other distinctive shops include the Fairhope Soap Company and In the Company of Angels, a store providing inspirational gifts.

Browse to your heart's content at Page and Palette, an independent bookstore owned by the same family for three generations, where staff reviews make book selections easy. In a town with



Camellia Cafe
Grilled triggerfish served with roasted vegetables grown by local farmer Vince Allegri camelliacafe.com

PREVIOUS PAGE:

Top: The Fairhope Pharmacy is in the heart of town on the corner of Fairhope Avenue and Section Street.

Middle: The iconic Fairhope Clock

Bottom: Sunset over Mobile Bay

THIS PAGE:

The Fairhope Museum of History







more authors per capita than anywhere in the country, the bookstore hosts events for both local talent and best-selling celebrities. Settle in with a cup of freshly roasted coffee at Latte Da, their adjoining coffee shop, and see why "some customers never leave the store." An ice cream cone for a dollar sweetens the deal.

Walk from downtown to the Eastern Shore Trail, a paved path following the natural contours of the bluff. Believing in communal ownership of property, the founders set aside vast public parks and open spaces. Now, everyone enjoys the natural surroundings that convinced the founders to settle here. Walk past lush gardens of lovely homes with private piers stretching over the water. Pass a unique portable library where you can deposit your book in exchange for a free one. Notice the family of dolphins sculpted in bronze at the Orange Avenue Pier Park, one of the public art projects scattered around Fairhope.

Local environmental projects indicate residents understand that quality of life and beautiful surroundings depend on a healthy natural environment. They open their hearts to all God's creatures: both those indigenous to the region and those passing through in migration. A butterfly sanctuary preserves native wildflowers that attract more than a hundred varieties of butterflies. At the Fairhope Pier, dozens of birdhouses shelter purple martins

in an Audubon project. The swallows reciprocate by consuming thousands of insects every year.

Try Thyme by the Bay for bay-view dining. Adrian and Rachael Yots, both classically trained chefs, bring a combined three decades of experience to their charming restaurant in a quaint cottage on scenic Highway 98. The couple met while working at the celebrated Fish Out of Water at WaterColor Inn and Resort in Northwest Florida. They now live in Robertsdale, Alabama, at Black Fence Farm, where they grow all the produce for Thyme. Sit on the patio (where pets are welcome) and watch the sunset before sampling innovative dishes, such as Moroccan lamb chops with lentil puree.

For a "Sweet Home Alabama" experience, bed down at the Bay Breeze Guest House, secluded in a three-acre pine forest on Mobile Bay. Savor the restful Fairhope lifestyle listening to birds singing and pond frogs croaking while enjoying a gourmet breakfast at the main house, built in 1930. Lifelong residents Bill and Becky Jones have operated the B and B for twenty-two years, so they're more than qualified to suggest uniquely Fairhope places and things to do that you won't find on TripAdvisor. Spacious cottages landscaped with azalea bushes and flowers make you feel right at home while backyard decks and a private pier offer quiet places to commune with nature.



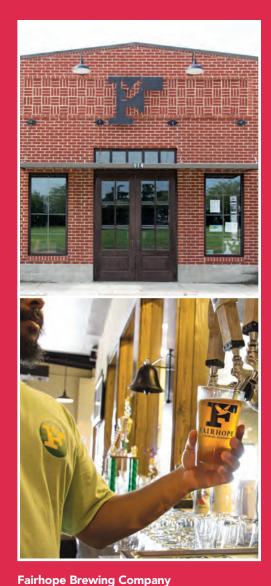


EASTERN SHORE DAY TRIPS

For a change of pace, don't miss the cannon firing ceremony that takes place every afternoon at the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort. The booming sound shatters the tranquility as it did during Civil War battles on Mobile Bay. More than three hundred Confederate casualties are buried at a cemetery near the hotel grounds. Built in 1847, the hotel once served as a military hospital and training facility for the Army. Today, it offers Southern hospitality in 405 guest rooms and nine restaurants.

Don't be put off by the name or the shack-like exterior of the Wash House Restaurant, not far from the resort. Although located in an old building that once served as a washhouse, there is nothing utilitarian about it. Step inside and it's like discovering the luminous beauty of a pearl concealed by the ugliness of an oyster shell. The interior expands from intimate seating to glassed-in porches and large rooms with ceilings decorated in tree branches entwined by twinkling lights that also twist around antler horns on the wall.

"My doctor in Atlanta told me about this place," a woman confides to a couple seated nearby. "He said the food is unbelievable." One bite of the Wash House's specialties, such as the chateaubriand, will convince you he's right. For dessert, the key lime crème brûlée is bliss on a spoon.



Darius Daniels serves a glass of Fairhope's home brew. fairhopebrewing.com

OPPOSITE PAGE: Clockwise:

Fairhope Municipal Pier and Fountain

A couple getting ready to watch the sunset over Mobile Bay

Ryan Easterling relaxes on his porch drinking coffee from his Fairhope Store mug.

THIS PAGE:

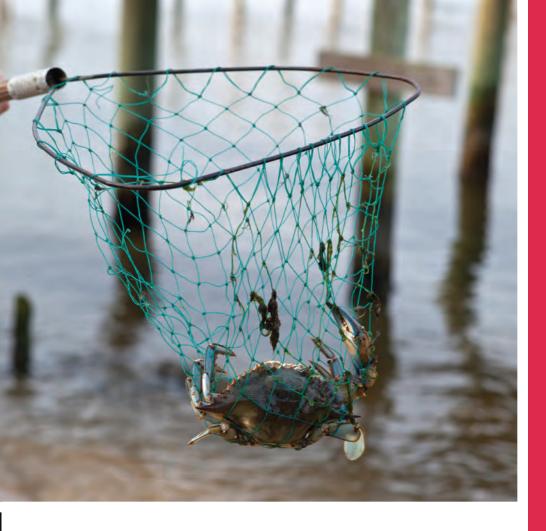
Top: A scenic rose garden surrounds the Fairhope Fountain. Bottom: Fairhope Artist Gallery











WEEKS BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

Visit Weeks Bay on Highway 98 between Fairhope and Foley, Alabama, to learn how the preservation of coastal resources keeps this region special. One of the nation's twenty-eight national estuarine reserves, Weeks Bay is Alabama's most pristine. "As 90 percent of our wetlands have been destroyed, we need this unspoiled one to determine what a healthy system looks like for restoration purposes," explains L. G. Adams, manager of the reserve. "We have programs to educate school children as well as higher education for municipalities, lawyers, and engineers for planning and legislation."

Stop by the visitor's center to learn how an estuary becomes one of the most productive ecosystems on earth as nutrient-rich river water mingles with salty seawater. Walk down the boardwalk to see trees and plants that thrive here, including the state champion sweet bay magnolia tree. At the water's edge, pause to enjoy the peace and serenity of the open bay and look for some of the nearly 350 species of resident and migratory birds that use the wetlands for breeding, nesting, feeding, or wintering over.

Another boardwalk takes you over a Gulf Coast pitcher plant bog where you see plants and animals that are found nowhere else on earth. Pitcher plants adapt to the nutrient-poor acidic soil by consuming insects. White-topped pitcher plants with tall tubular leaves mix with purple pitcher plants in a sea of sedges, grasses, and wildflowers that include six species of native orchids. The most noticeable is the yellow-fringed orchid, which can grow to three feet tall.



Windmill Market

Delicious blueberry muffins from Sweet Olive inside Windmill Market. The market is full of adorable retail vendors and some great food options.

windmillmarket.org

OPPOSITE PAGE: Clockwise:

Isabella's serves some of the town's finest cuisine.

Beignets from Panini Pete's are Fairhope must-haves! Photo by Fontaine Howard

Fairhope's French Quarter boasts unique shops and Panini Pete's Cafe and Bakeshoppe.

Inside Lyons Share Gallery

THIS PAGE:

Catching blue crabs in Mobile Bay Photo by Fontaine Howard



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MAGNOLIA SPRINGS

An automobile feels downright intrusive in this storybook hamlet where boats still deliver mail along the only remaining river route in the country. The Magnolia River and its many springs are the heart of a community that developed from an 1800 land grant. After the Civil War, soldiers from both sides settled here and lived in harmony along these quiet riverbanks shaded by ancient magnolia trees.

On lovely Oak Street, aptly named because it tunnels beneath a canopy of live oak trees, sits Jesse's Restaurant, a fixture of the community since 1998 when it was opened by Charles and Janie Houser. They named it after Jesse King, the beloved shopkeeper of Moore Brothers General Merchandise, which had occupied the adjacent building since 1922. Eastern snowbirds accustomed to New York's superlative dining, tourists passing through, and longtime natives all rave about the food at Jesse's, including specialties such as bourbon-soaked steaks. New owners Steve and Angie Coltharp aim to keep the same high quality and make Jesse's "the most talked about steak house on the Gulf Coast."

In places like Fairhope and Magnolia Springs where nature is preserved, creativity and quality are nurtured, differences are embraced, and individualism is applauded, the well-being of all is championed, and it seems everyone has a "fair hope" of crafting a lifestyle shaped by their own utopian visions. \blacksquare







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Photography by JOE ALONZO









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Materials:

2 pounds shea butter glycerin soap base • 1 cup organic rolled oats 2 tablespoons almond oil • 2 tablespoons raw honey 1 soap-making loaf mold • 1 pot • 1 soap cutter or sharp knife

Directions:



Cut the glycerin soap base into small chunks and melt. You can do this in the microwave or in a pot over the stove on low to medium heat.



Once the soap base is melted, stir in 1/2 cup of oats, honey, and almond oil until mixed thoroughly. Carefully pour your mixture into the loaf mold.



Sprinkle the top of your mold with reserved rolled oats. Let it sit for about four to five hours to harden. (You can also put the mold in the fridge to harden faster.)



Once the soap has cooled and hardened, remove soap from the mold.



Use a soap cutter or sharp knife to cut the soap into bars.





Materials:

4 flowerpots (can be the same or different sizes) • 4 plants (Succulents are great!) • Spray paint • A roll of washi tape • Gold leaf kit (can be found on Amazon.com) • Small paint brush • Potting soil

Directions:



Spray paint the flowerpots in colors of your choice. (A couple paint coats will do.) Let them dry completely.



Apply washi tape to section off the area you'd like to gold leaf. Then apply a thin layer of glue to the area so the gold leaf can stick. Brush on the gold leaf and let it dry, then remove tape. Optional: If your planters will be placed outdoors, spray them with a coat of clear sealant to protect them against the elements.



Add a layer of soil and you're ready for planting! We chose these adorable and hearty succulents for easy maintenance, indoors or out.

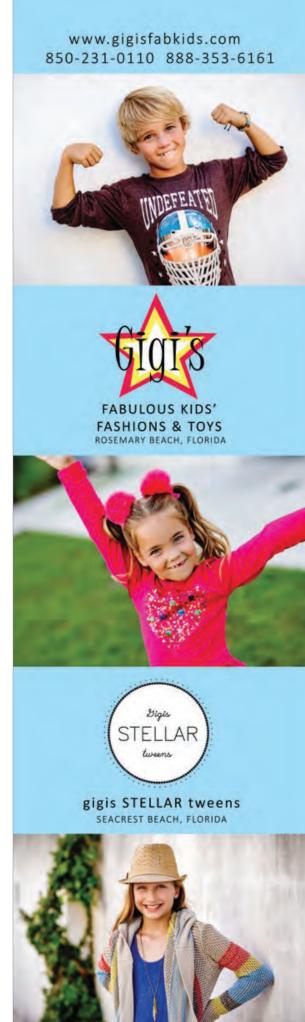
















Materials:

Mason jar in your choice of size • 1 block of 100% beeswax or natural wax of your choice • 1 natural wick • Pressed flowers or herbs 1 clean, empty can and 1 small saucepan or pot (or use a double boiler) • 1 small paintbrush • Knife • Cutting board • Lavender oil

Directions:



On a cutting board, use a knife to chop the wax into small chunks that will fit in the empty can.



Place chunks of wax into the can, place the can into the pot, and add water to the pot until it is about two inches above the level of the wax. Heat on medium until the wax is completely melted.



Dip the paintbrush into the melted wax, brush onto the pressed flowers, and apply flowers to the inside of your jar. Sprinkle lavender oil to coat the inside of your jar as desired. To keep your wick from sinking, gently tie it around a pencil or chopstick and set across the top of your jar. To anchor the wick, dip the metal end of the wick into the melted wax and lower it to the bottom of the jar. The melted wax will adhere the wick to the jar.



Use an oven mitt to carefully remove the can from the pot and gently pour the wax into your jar, filling it to about 1/4 inch from the top. Allow the wax to cool completely; trim the wick to about 1/4 inch before burning.









We'd love to see your DIY come to life. Share your favorite projects with us on Instagram by tagging @vie_magazine!

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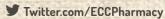
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DESIGNING THE GULF COAST

BY TORI PHELPS

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GEOFF CHICK AND ASSOCIATES



Architecture is more than a vocation for Geoff Chick. It's an obsession. He loves thinking about it, designing it, and working with clients to get their dream homes exactly right. But talking about it? Not so much. As he explains, "I prefer my work to speak for itself. There are a lot of people who can talk a good game about architecture, but you know a great project when you see it."

Geoff is in no danger of being labeled "all talk." The owner of Geoff Chick and Associates is the real deal, the talent behind hundreds of superbly designed Gulf Coast homes built in the last decade and a half. And while he would rather use pictures than words to describe those projects, he's game for a rare chat to fill in the story behind his work.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

A Boston kid who developed an early interest in fine arts, Geoff got hooked on architecture during a high school class dedicated to the subject. As he worked on watercolor renderings of buildings, he realized architecture perfectly married his love of creativity

and technical skill. With his sights firmly set on architecture as a career, the next stop was Cornell University, one of the top-ranked architecture schools in the country.

During his senior year in college, Geoff took a trip to Destin with friends and fell in love with the area. Never one to stand still, he had a job offer from a builder before the vacation was over. The position wasn't a "take what he could get" placeholder, but rather a deliberate move. The truth, he confesses, is that there's only so much you can learn in the classroom. "Until you have the practical knowledge of observing the construction process from the ground up, it's a struggle to transition from the academic architectural environment to the real world," he says. "In school, you don't have any budget constraints or structural issues that make certain things impractical."

Twenty years ago, much of the scenic corridor along Highway 30-A was largely undeveloped—a blank canvas that Geoff couldn't wait to paint with his creative ideas. Unfortunately, contractor-driven

home building provided few opportunities to indulge that ingenuity. Everything from ceiling heights to the size of windows and doors were standardized so it would be easier—and less expensive—to complete construction. He found it increasingly difficult to contain himself to the prescribed formulas and, with great appreciation for what he calls an "invaluable" experience, decided to strike out on his own.

The timing couldn't have been better. WaterColor, Rosemary Beach, and other local communities were starting to spring up, and these developments dictated that homes be designed by an architect. With rubberstamp houses strictly forbidden, Geoff's skills were suddenly very much in demand.

Clients immediately gravitated to his design approach, a style that balances natural materials and modern sensibilities, creating structures that transcend popular fashion, are built to last, and merit preservation. They're also adapted to the way American families live today, which is a complete shift from the elements he—and the rest of us—grew up









with. Gone are the low ceilings and floor plans with lots of cut-up rooms. Clients want soaring ceilings, tons of natural light, and open floor plans where the kitchen, dining, and living areas are connected. "Our architecture tries to emulate a feeling of traditional architecture in that the outside has classic lines and features like gable roofs and exposed rafter tails, but the floor plans are wide open," he says. "It really pushes the limits of what you can do structurally to minimize those compartmentalized plans."

Some of his original homes are nearly fifteen years old, but designwise they are still very relevant. Geoff points to a house in WaterColor he designed ten years ago-part of his Houzz.com portfoliothat continues to elicit raves from clients who want to borrow everything from building materials to paint colors.

His entire portfolio consists of standout designs, some of which have caught the attention of celebrities. Geoff has designed homes for notable names like country music star Luke Bryan, San Diego Chargers

quarterback Philip Rivers, and Oakland Raiders coach Jack Del Rio. He enjoyed the opportunity to get to know them, but overall, he insists the projects weren't any different than what he does every day. Celebrities, it seems, are just like the rest of us when it comes to wanting an exceptional home to share with their families.

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Despite being able to name-drop celeb clients though he tends to do the opposite, downplaying his connection to famous faces—Geoff insists his most rewarding projects have been the ones he's created for his own family. What makes the process (and the results) different is that when he designs for himself, he has help from his wife, Shawn. The couple has collaborated on three homes so far, taking risks Geoff typically isn't afforded with most projects, no matter how adventurous the client. These experiments, though, often make their way into future clients' homes once they see the beauty and practicality of his finished products.

A good example of an experiment-gone-right is the exposed concrete floors Geoff and his wife added to their last home's living areas. What started out as regular old gray concrete was polished and waxed until it resembled slabs of bluestone. The result was a shockingly inexpensive, eye-catching floor that held up remarkably well—even with their kids roller-skating in the living room. "Most people cover up their concrete slabs, but they're beautiful," he insists, adding that concrete also stays cool in Florida's sweltering summers.













An Ally in the Field

While Chick and Associates' clients don't have access to Shawn, who stays busy running her children's clothing store, they do have access to Geoff. In fact, he's personally involved in the design of every home, as are staffers Zack Quinn and Iva Gonscakova, who he says provide invaluable contributions to the business. But even with such talented colleagues, Geoff intentionally keeps the firm's workload relatively small to ensure clients receive an extraordinary level of service.

So inclusive is the service that it continues even after the design is complete. Geoff doesn't simply hand clients off to a contractor and wish them luck. He sees projects all the way through, staying involved in the building process to ensure homes are built correctly and running interference when necessary. Geoff is better at that aspect of the job than most architects, thanks to his years spent working for a contractor. Because he knows the construction process from the inside out, he's able to be a real ally for his clients, especially when builders insist they can't do something or that a cost will be exorbitant. Geoff has the expertise to cry foul and get construction back on track and within budget.

His building experience has also taught him to maximize the efficiency of materials, meaning less waste is tossed into the trash. And while many architects don't necessarily take waste into consideration, construction crews notice the difference between a Geoff Chick house and other houses. "A lot of builders, after they do one of our houses, say, 'We didn't spend as much on that house as we thought we were going to;" he relates. "And I tell them it's because I thought about issues of material efficiency during the design process." In fact, some of those same builders become clients after working from his plans—a huge compliment, Geoff says.

Having the respect of contractors and providing clients uncommon building insights are just two reasons Chick and Associates is thriving. Another is the firm's straightforward approach to budgets. After building several hundred houses, they're experts in what things cost on the Emerald Coast, allowing them to better steer clients on materials, construction methods, and

contractors. Costs have skyrocketed over the last year and a half as builders have attempted to keep up with demand, and Geoff would rather clients have sticker shock at the beginning of the process—and try to work around it—than at the end. "There's nothing worse than the bait and switch," he bemoans. "We design to your budget from the beginning because it's hard on clients, after drawing their dream house, to cut things out when the builder tells them it's not in the budget. It really sours the process."

Geoff doesn't simply hand clients off to a contractor and wish them luck. He sees projects all the way through, staying involved in the building process to ensure homes are built correctly and running interference when necessary.

The industry is experiencing such a spike that Geoff advises people to consult an architect before buying a site. He's seen too many people purchase land and then realize they can't afford to develop it. In a fast-changing construction market, realtors often aren't up to date on costs, so an assurance that clients can build a home for, say, two hundred dollars a square foot may not translate to a house their clients will actually want to live in.

Geoff has mastered the art of guiding client expectations in order to prevent disappointment. The upshot is a long list of very satisfied customers who provide Chick and Associates with all the free advertising the company can handle. And thanks to the Internet, new clients are often familiar with the firm's work. In the days before Facebook and sites like Houzz.com, Geoff spent a lot more time in the discussion phase with clients. But now, these online portfolios allow people to decide on an aesthetic before the first meeting. "They fall in love with a style or a particular house we've done and can move right to 'we like this but want to change that," he explains.



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Most of the homes Geoff designs for clients feature traditional—as opposed to modern—architecture. It turns out that, while a lot of people move to the area looking for a change, they don't want to change everything they're used to. Clients want the sloped roofs and double-hung windows that give traditional homes some personality rather than the übersleek lines of modern architecture. And while Geoff would love to design more modern architecture, he understands traditional elements communicate a sense of "home" in a way modern features rarely do. "Modern architecture is more sterile and usually doesn't make people feel the same way emotionally that a traditional home does," he says.

"When you're passionate about something, you tend to chase it and, often, become successful at it. Once I was exposed to architecture as an art form, it just took over everything."

Steering clients toward or away from design elements isn't something Geoff generally does. The only exception: if the architecture isn't a good fit for a home's neighborhood. Things like an all-white exterior and well-appointed courtyard—"the Alys Beach effect"—are incredibly popular all over the area. The style is gorgeous, he agrees, as long as it doesn't look like a fish out of water. Geoff believes a house should respect the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood and "not try so hard to be unique that it alienates the neighbors," he says.

It's a pretty safe bet that nothing Geoff designs will alienate the neighbors or anyone else. His attention to detail, cross industry expertise, and creative repertoire are reflected in houses that stand out in the best possible way: as examples of a master craftsman at work. He chalks it up to purpose rather than prowess. "When you're passionate about something, you tend to chase it and, often, become successful at it," he muses. "Once I was exposed to architecture as an art form, it just took over everything."

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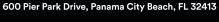


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A BOHEME DESIGN

"I call architecture frozen music..." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Holida

by LYNN NESMITH Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP

Paige Sumblin Schnell of Tracery Interiors in Rosemary Beach, Florida, offers ideas and inspiration for casual coastal entertaining guaranteed to make guests immediately feel right at home.

ntertaining is a way of life if you live along the Gulf Coast. Friends, family, and mere acquaintances will come to visit its crystalline beaches and warm waters, so be prepared. You might find yourself stressed about playing host, but by creating a little "home away from home" for your guests, you'll make it easy on yourself and fun for everyone involved. Extravagance is not necessary—just a touch of warm Southern hospitality and a beachy atmosphere will help you create an inviting space for casual entertainment and overnight guests.

From Beachside to Poolside

Any party is more fun when it's outdoors with a cool breeze and a view of the Gulf of Mexico. A colorful tablecloth quickly transforms an outdoor table into a movable buffet. For this table, Paige chose a large glass hurricane vase, which

doubles as a centerpiece. It's heavy enough to literally anchor the table, so there's no need to worry that a gust of wind will tip it over.

As for the food, delicious doesn't mean you need to spend all day in the kitchen. Ordering carryout from a local hot spot such as Cowgirl Kitchen means you can spend the day on the beach with your guests and then lay out a spread in minutes.

Ice at the beach isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. A large wicker tub helps make sure there's plenty of room for an array of cold drinks that will stay cool and refreshing as the party goes on.



Nothing says "Welcome to the beach!" like a signature cocktail. The festive concoction you see here is lovingly called the Seagrove Fizz. The drink was inspired by a cocktail found in the biography *Everybody Was So Young*, which described it as a favorite of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and other writers of the Lost Generation. Combine two ounces of gin, three ounces of ruby red grapefruit juice, one ounce of St. Germain, and one ounce of sparkling water—take liberties as you wish! Serve over crushed ice and garnish with lime, mint, or both. If you're staying in Rosemary Beach, a namesake sprig works too!

The Kitchen Is Open

From the grandest courtyard homes in Alys Beach to the historic Cracker cottages in Grayton Beach, an open floor plan just makes sense for life along Scenic Highway 30-A. It's a proven fact that everyone always ends up in the kitchen, whether you're hosting a festive end-of-the-summer party or a simple family gathering. No matter the size or style of your coastal





Open shelves and glass-fronted cabinets encourage easy access and allow guests to find items without rummaging through drawers.

kitchen, be creative with the layout, storage, and counter seating. If a fend-for-yourself philosophy of entertaining is the order of the day, open shelves and glass-fronted cabinets encourage easy access and allow guests to find items without rummaging through drawers. Early risers can grab a coffee cup, night owls in search of a drink of water can help themselves, and wine glasses on display just seem to whisper, "It's five o'clock somewhere." Of course, stocking purchased prepared foods in the fridge and pantry is always a good idea when guests are coming!

Two Islands Are Better Than One

We already established that the kitchen is the hub for casual coastal entertaining. If space allows, consider implementing two kitchen islands. For the serious cook, a back-to-back configuration carves out an efficient galley-style arrangement that not only allows the cook to be part of the party but also creates just enough separation between the work area and a place for friends to gather. A side-to-side configuration differentiates a large kitchen from the adjoining dining area. Comfy stools provide extra seating when the table is full.

A bench at the foot of the bed can create a cozy reading spot when paired with coffee-table books.

$Home\,Away\,from\,Home$

Gracious hospitality is in the details. The best guest bedroom is not just a place to lay your head. Everyone on vacation wants a quiet spot to retreat. Use a chest of drawers alongside the bed so there's extra storage available, as guest bedrooms often must accommodate more than one person. A small posy of fresh flowers or a palm frond is always a special welcoming touch. If space allows, add a comfortable upholstered chair for guests to retreat to for quiet time or light summer reading. A bench at the foot of the bed can create a cozy reading spot when paired with coffeetable books—try placing titles that highlight the local area so your guests can learn more about your beloved hometown.

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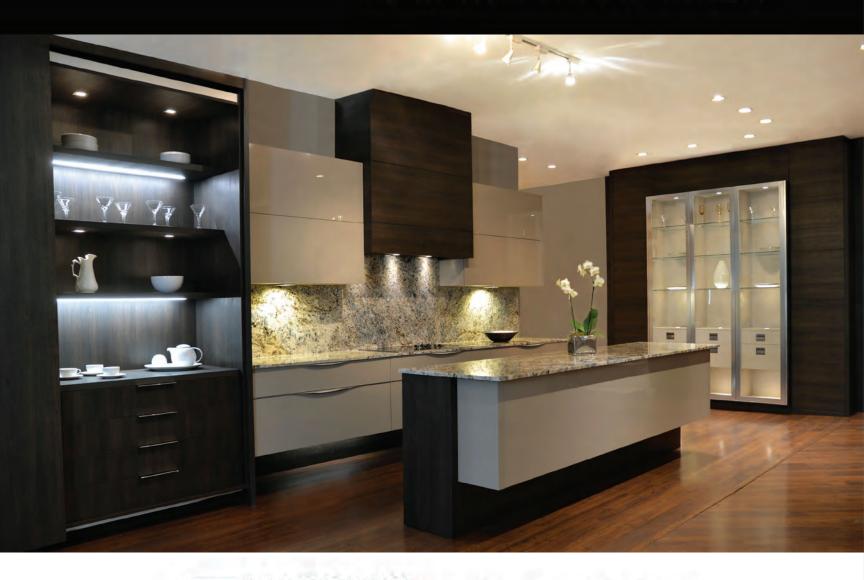
If you like seeing these photographs from waterfront homes and entertaining ideas by Paige Schnell, this fall you'll have the opportunity to tour her latest effort in person. Paige was selected to design the *Coastal Living* Beach Cottage, which is located on Forest Street in historic Seagrove Beach, Florida. This will be *Coastal Living*'s first-ever remodel project. Paige and her husband, architect Mark Schnell, purchased the cottage with a vision for a fresh take on a classic Old Florida cottage. The couple has partnered with Artisan Builds for construction, and the house will be open for tours in October and November. For more information about dates and hours, visit www.CoastalLiving.com/beachcottage.





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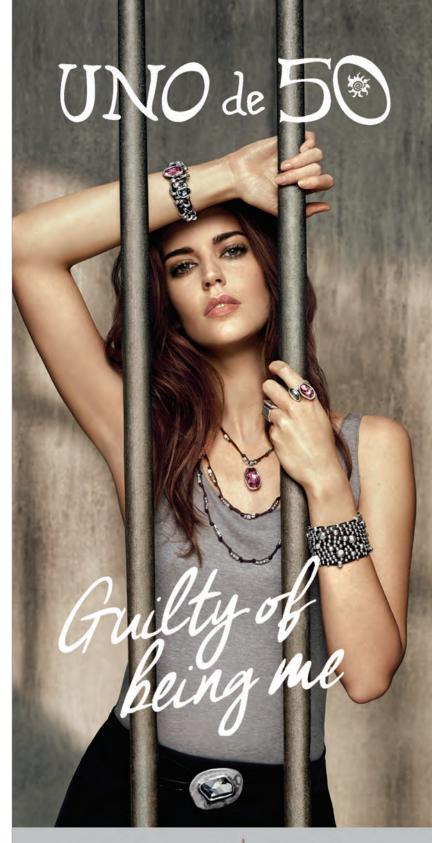
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IN THE SUN

BY CINDY COLE
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CINDY COLE FINE HOMES

I BELIEVE THAT THE STORY OF A PLACE IS BEST TOLD BY ITS DWELLINGS. WHETHER A PERFECTLY PLANNED NEIGHBORHOOD OR A SINGLE HOME CAREFULLY CRAFTED TO MATCH THE AREA'S NATURAL AESTHETIC, REAL ESTATE WILL MAKE KNOWN THE CADENCE OF A COMMUNITY.

Homes all over the Emerald Coast are by-products of the lives they represent. Tuscan estates with perfectly manicured lawns and blooming buds signify year-round residents, likely retired. Courtyard-centered, high-density neighborhoods attract city dwellers who have come for an escape but still want an urban feel.

On Destin's Holiday Isle, its residents, culture, and recreation are, as my theory proposes, as varied as the houses. This rare three-mile-long and half-mile-wide peninsula bordered by beach, harbor, and pass and intersected with man-made canals is organically grown. It still manages to exist without a predetermined path and certainly without limitations.

Holiday Isle's charmed and weathered seaside cottages are virtually unchanged since their inception in the early 1970s. Their owners choose to embrace a simpler time. Study its warm-colored Mediterranean estates, and you imagine celebrations of cheerful guests connecting over blue-green seas. Modernist masterpieces overlooking high sea dunes begin to fill in blank spaces, offering a hint at progressive thinking and an acceptance of new ideas.

Residents like vacation home-owner Bill Smith, who spends most weekends with his wife in their Waterview Towers Yacht Club condominium, came to Holiday Isle looking for adventure. Waterview Towers units embrace the sprawling space of their



627 Gulf Shore Drive, Destin, Florida

"WHERE ELSE COULD I RELAX ON A BALCONY OVERLOOKING FISHING BOATS HEADED OUT TO THE GULF, BIKE RIDE WITH A GROUP OF LOCAL **GUYS, HANG OUT AT THE BEACH WITH THE KIDS,** AND ENJOY AN AFTERNOON RIDE IN MY BOAT— **ALL WITHOUT GETTING IN MY CAR?"**

1990s architecture, but most, like the Smiths', have been updated in today's finishes and colors. The building overlooks Destin's East Pass, which links the harbor to the Gulf and its rocky jetties. The Smiths take in one of Destin's most spectacular views through floor-to-ceiling windows.

"My family and I would never leave Holiday Isle," Bill says. "Where else could I relax on a balcony overlooking fishing boats headed out to the Gulf, bike ride with a group of local guys, hang out at the beach with the kids, and enjoy an afternoon ride in my boat—all without getting in my car?"

With the exception of two public access points, Holiday Isle's seductive, sugar-white beaches are private to homeowners and their guests. There are no restaurants or retail sites on Holiday Isle, and there is virtually no traffic. Trendy establishments, like Bric à Brac—a sister restaurant to Grayton Beach's Red Bar—and Capriccio Cafe, have started to claim spaces just up the road.

David and Julie Schneider of the Cincinnati area have been vacationing in Destin for more than twenty years. In 2013, they stumbled across Holiday Isle for the first time. Their nine-thousand-square-foot glass and concrete contemporary compound overlooking the Gulf of Mexico is under construction. "Julie is an award-winning builder back home. We are almost empty nesters, so we were ready for our dream home, but it had to be big enough for all of our kids to visit. Julie had a dream for a home where every room faced the Gulf. My only requirements were peace and solitude," David says. "When we stumbled across Holiday Isle and this one-hundred-foot lot, we knew we had found our sanctuary."

Architect Lance Baxter designed the Schneider's home so that outdoor and indoor spaces blend seamlessly. Telescoping walls of glass open to a dramatic lagoonstyle pool with a fire feature, all overlooking alluring beaches. The home includes seven bedrooms, a game room, a screening room, and a climate-controlled wine cellar.

There is a certain sense of ease that envelops people on this island that isn't really an island. They slow down a bit and smile before pausing to remember why. Even on the busier harbor side, the carefree overwhelms the eventful.

For a year, my husband and I lived on the harbor side of Holiday Isle. From our back balcony, we watched sun-worn fishermen clean their boats in well-rehearsed motion. Excited children checked their traps for the day's catch that was seldom captured.



627 Gulf Shore Drive, Destin, Florida

HOMES ON THE HARBOR FIND THEIR MOST IMPORTANT CALLING IN PROVIDING SAFE PORT FOR THE FISHING VESSELS THAT LINE HOLIDAY ISLE'S SHORE. RETRO-MODERN NEWCOMERS COEXIST HARMONIOUSLY WITH LOW-SLUNG RANCHES, AND YACHTS NOD A RESPECTFUL PASSAGE TO WELL-INTENDED DINGHIES.



Photo by Steven Frame/Shutterstock

From our front balcony, there were mesmeric sunsets that lingered for hours, tour boats with guides telling stories over their loudspeakers that we never heard anywhere else, and antique planes with pilots who risked their lives for the love of the show.

Homes on the harbor find their most important calling in providing safe port for the fishing vessels

that line Holiday Isle's shore. Retro-modern newcomers coexist harmoniously with low-slung ranches, and yachts nod a respectful passage to well-intended dinghies.

Cynthia Wilson has lovingly renovated two homes on Destin's harbor front. Cynthia says, "That harbor provided an endless playground for my sons." Cynthia's iconic Mediterranean home on Lagoon Drive is for sale. It includes four deep-water boat slips, one large enough to accommodate a one-hundred-plus-foot boat.



Photo by Bill Weckel

Longtime residents are passionate about Holiday Isle's history and are intent on maintaining its slower pace of life. While there is an ongoing attempt to limit the number of people who may occupy a house operated as a vacation rental, locals don't seem to mind when a few admirers drop in on their clandestine serenity.

It is amazing how architecture seems to work together with the natural inspiration of only the sun, the moon, and the sand. This island of random people and places appears to have relegated class and status to the fishermen comparing the sizes of their catches.

With ten new housing starts on Holiday Isle in the past year, island life seems to be catching on again. The essence of its new homes remains as interestingly unintentional as the spirit of its older ones. I'm sure that the residents of Holiday Isle would love the chance to show you a glimpse of their eternally charmed lives. For your own study in island lifestyles through architecture, try a Sunday drive through Destin's Holiday Isle.

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A TESTIMONIAL

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Given the above I thought you would be interested to learn how your work was evaluated 8 years after the home was completed. Recently we listed our Watersound Beach property and it sold for its full listing price the second day it was on the market. We used one of the largest, most respected firms on 30-A to handle the transaction. Their person who is responsible for completing the inspections reports on their listings sent us the following message when our report was complete: "FOR THE SIZE OF YOUR HOME AND THE PROXIMITY TO THE WATER, THAT IS THE CLEANEST INSPECTION REPORT I HAVE EVER SEEN".

They say the proof is in the pudding and the above statement confirms for me that you did exactly what you said you were going to do when you built our house. It has been a great, low maintenance, home that we have loved living in, and I anticipate the new owners are going have a similar experience.

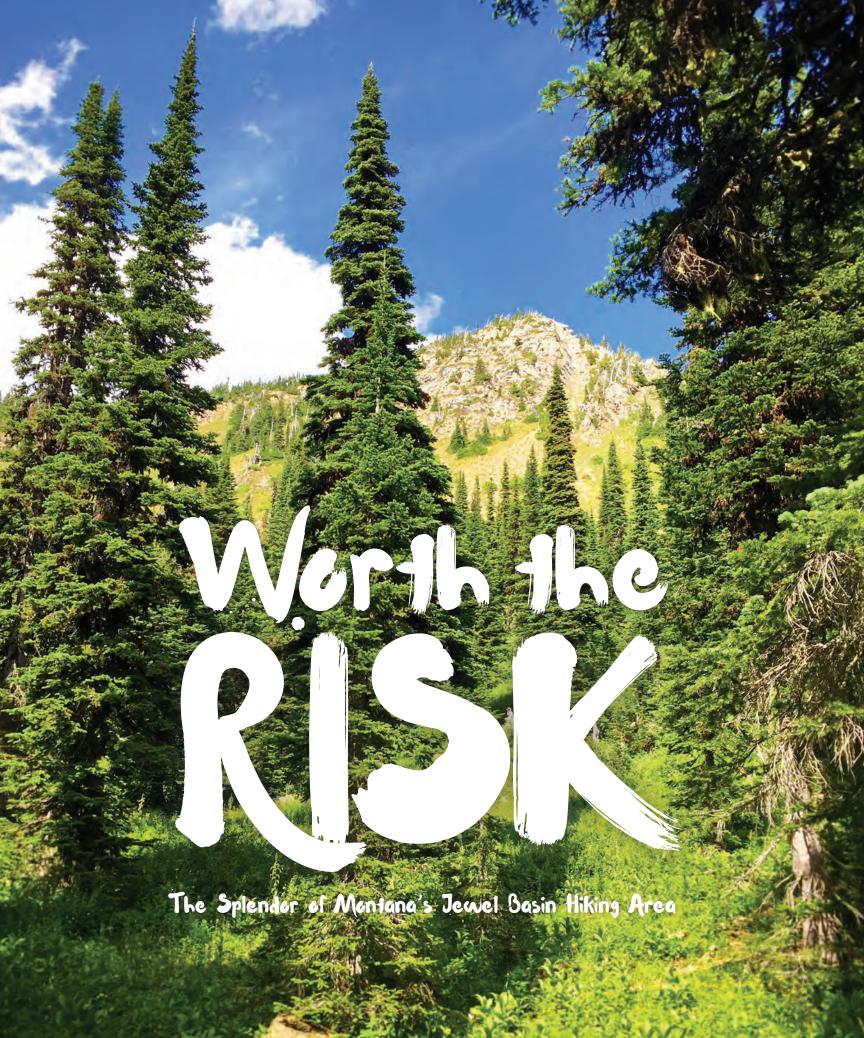
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STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLY BEASLEY



LOCATED IN NORTHWESTERN MONTANA DUE EAST OF KALISPELL IS AN AREA OF WILDERNESS WHOSE BEAUTY RIVALS THAT OF THE POPULAR GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. THE AREA, A FAVORITE OF THE LOCALS, IS CALLED JEWEL BASIN AND IT HOLDS OVER FIFTEEN THOUSAND ACRES OF UNSPOILED MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS. WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES ARE TWENTY-SEVEN LAKES AND THIRTY-FIVE MILES OF TRAILS AWAITING EXPLORATION. WITH OFFERINGS OF HIKING AND FISHING IN THE SUMMER AND SNOWSHOEING IN THE WINTER, JEWEL BASIN IS CERTAINLY NOT LACKING IN ADVENTURE.

> Getting up to the Jewel Basin parking area can be a challenge. The journey consists of a narrow gravel road with ridges and switchback curves hugging some vertical drop-offs that just might induce acrophobia and sweaty palms. The road is only five miles long, but it can take a whopping thirty minutes to reach the top, depending on the time of year. (Later in the summer, the road's condition tends to worsen.) On my trips up, I frequently found my hands tightening around the steering wheel and I wondered, "Why am I doing this? Is it really worth it?"

> I knew the answer almost immediately: I was making this harrowing drive for the same reason that so many others do it. It was because of my love for nature and beauty, and I knew that the risks of continuing up the hazardous road were completely worth the treasure at the top.

> About three-quarters of the way up, vertical drop-offs at the edges of the road allow for the occasional view of the Flathead Valley, and further in, of the mountains across the way. All the mountains are nearly covered with grand pines that tower up into the air and resemble a thick wall of giant Christmas trees. The dusty wildflowers along the road are merely a tease for the show of brightly colored flowers that line the trails ahead.

> Once you make it to the parking lot—Camp Misery—there are two trails to choose from, both of which expand into many other trails. One is located right next to the ranger station and the other to the right of a nearby announcement board.

> I chose the path beside the ranger station. It has a lot of switchbacks, but the climb is relatively comfortable. Thick vegetation threatens to intrude on the narrow trail if it goes unused for any length of time. Huckleberries line the trail

intermittently, offering up delicious little rewards along the way. Tall pines protect you from the sun for about half of your hike. Foliage, roots, and trees offer interesting geometric shapes and patterns for your eyes to explore. If you are lucky, you might spot a mountain goat, a bear, or an elk. Chipmunks, squirrels, and butterflies are often seen along the way.

Along the first part of the hike, I passed returning hikers. Then, slowly, the forest became intimately mine. She impressed me with her small meadow openings, wildflowers, rocks, and roots along the path, in addition to grand-scale views of mountaintops across the valley. At one point, the trail was only as wide as the width of my two feet, and the thick vegetation down below masked the fact that the drop-off was steep and dangerous.



The curves of the trail beckon you to keep exploring what is around each corner







Top left. Fritillaries are commonly seen exploring mountain asters in the summer. Top right. Open meadow with cow parsnip, groundsel, and fireweed growing along the drive up to Jewel Basin Bottom. Licks of red dotting the trails courtesy of the Great Plains paintbrush flower Opposite: Fritillary with perfect symmetry offering complementary colors of purple and orange





ONCE THE ROCKY MOUNTAINTOPS CAME INTO VIEW, I WAS SMITTEN. THE TREES OPENED UP TO OFFER A VIEW OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE THAT ONLY GOD COULD CREATE.

I hiked on the Mount Aeneas Trail (#717) but did not reach the peak due to time constraints. Still, the trail's beauty was straight out of a storybook. Once the rocky mountaintops came into view, I was smitten. The trees opened up to offer a view of the mountain range that only God could create. It struck me that we are all small, fragile beings who are blessed to be on this magnificent planet for any length of time.

I am sure that I have not seen all the beauty this area has to offer. I have been on a few hikes at Jewel and

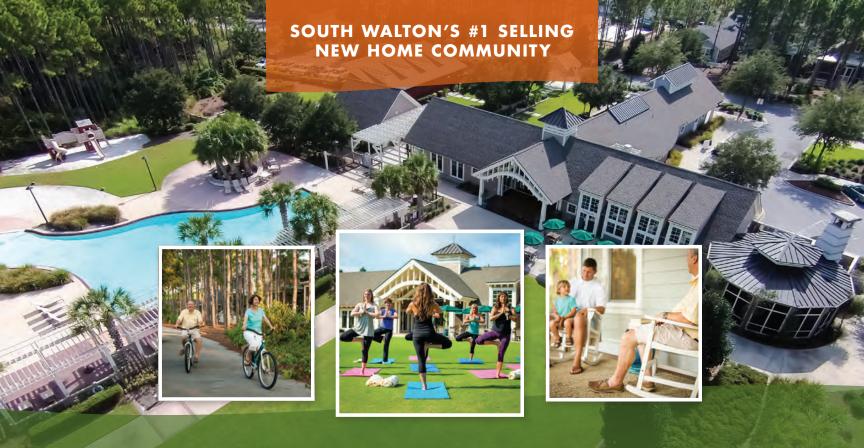
have barely scratched her surface. There are lakes, waterfalls, and miles of trails still awaiting discovery. I will have to hike deeper into the area for that.

You can bet that I will.

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PASSION

Chris Burch Builds Dreams and Dream Homes



By Sallie W. Boyles | Photography courtesy of Grand Bay Construction

MANY, INCLUDING SOME OF THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED INDIVIDUALS, SPEND DECADES ON VARIOUS PURSUITS BEFORE REALIZING THEIR INTENDED CALLING. COLONEL HARLAND SANDERS, THE ICONIC FOUNDER OF KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN, WAS SIXTY-TWO WHEN HE OPENED HIS FIRST RESTAURANT—AFTER WORKING ON THE RAILROAD, RUNNING A MOTEL, AND NUMEROUS OTHER JOBS. OTHERS IDENTIFY THEIR PASSIONS EARLY ON. MICROSOFT MOGUL BILL GATES, FOR INSTANCE, STARTED PROGRAMMING COMPUTERS AT THIRTEEN, AND CHRIS BURCH, PRESIDENT OF GRAND BAY CONSTRUCTION IN GRAYTON BEACH, FLORIDA, DECIDED AS A BOY THAT HE WANTED TO BUILD.

"People always ask if my family was in the business," Chris says. "I had to teach myself how to use a screwdriver!" Introduced to building when some houses near his home were under construction, he would wait for the workers to leave each day and then check on their progress. "I'd walk around the houses and smell the pine, trying to guess what each room would be," Chris recalls. "It got into my system."

During the summer in high school, Chris went to work shadowing his uncle, a builder in Chicago. The hands-on experience helped him decide to attend Auburn University for his undergraduate degree in building science. He and his college buddy, Lee Carroll, also started their own remodeling company. "When it was time to graduate," says Chris, "Lee and I thought about continuing, but we were young and inexperienced." Apprehensive over making a mistake that would shut them down, the friends parted ways. To gain experience, Chris accepted a position with Rudolph and Sletten, Inc., a prominent, California-based construction company that would expose him to large commercial projects.

Shortly before leaving Auburn, Chris met a young lady in a coffee shop. "She asked me what I was doing after graduation," he relays of their conversation. He told her about a backpacking trip of Europe he planned before relocating to the San Francisco

Left: Rendering designed by Archiscapes Above: Design by Thurber Architecture, P.A.

Bay area for his job. Coincidentally, her parents were living in California for her father's corporate position, so she invited him to visit. "I later took her up on her offer and called," Chris says, remembering how he and her father, Ed Lewis, immediately hit it off. "Within five minutes he was saying we should go into business someday," Chris recalls.

Three years later, Chris returned to Auburn for his MBA with a minor in economic development. "I like everything related to building-architecture, engineering, business, real estate, economic development," he says, mentioning that he has both real estate and home inspection licenses. "I'm always trying to learn better ways to do things. I'm also interested in the macro- and micro-level issues involving how cities grow." Chris finds that his economic insights enable him to spot up-and-coming areas.

Chris credits Ed Lewis for guiding him to Northwest Florida. He was completing grad school in 2004 when Ed, who'd moved back to Auburn with his family, revealed how much potential the Panhandle presented for a new construction company. Ed would provide the financial backing and Chris would do the building. Already a fan of the area, Chris says, "As a child, my family would vacation just about every summer in Panama City." Proclaiming "Let's do it!" they launched in 2005. Although the two are no longer partners, they remain great friends.

The market was booming, but Grand Bay Construction had to build a reputation. "Our first project down here was a one-car garage," says Chris. As he began to build homes, Chris did not share the attitude of some who were cranking out houses on spec, thinking they were "too good" to deal directly with homeowners. "I'd learned that to be diversified you needed a presence in the remodel business." A few years later, when the collapse occurred and work became scarce,

SINCE 2009, THE MINISTRY HAS DONATED CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO FACILITATE LIFE-CHANGING PROJECTS IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER MISSION ORGANIZATIONS.





Top: Third Lens Ministries mission team

Bottom: Medical clinic in Olancho Province, Honduras, designed and built by Third Lens Ministries

he divulges, "We actually did sidewalk jobs for the Florida DOT, funded with stimulus money."

Today, in addition to residential construction and renovations, Grand Bay also specializes in building out commercial spaces according to clients' unique specifications. "We pride ourselves on building anything the client wants," Chris says.

Curious and open-minded about unusual requests, Chris and his team are known for custom homes that are nothing less than spectacular. "We're blessed to work in an area that attracts many talented architects," he says. Occasionally, he admits, "I'll look at the architectural plans and say, 'You've got to be kidding me!' But a cutting-edge project with two window walls meeting in the corner—that's the fun part of my job!" In fact, instead of bearing a distinctive Grand Bay look, the company's portfolio shows a range of styles relative to each owner's vision.

A glass and concrete Gulf-front beauty under way now in Seagrove Beach particularly excites Chris. "It's super out of the ordinary," he says, calling attention to the angled and curved steel beams. When completed in 2016, the home will encompass more than eight thousand square feet.

Whether for a contemporary home or an Old Florida–style cottage, the finishing details, inside and out, certainly enhance the "wow" factor and pose interesting challenges. "We can get almost any material," says Chris, naming old Chicago brick and Italian stone as examples. "We'll find whatever the homeowner wants. It's an interesting time to be in the building business, with all the advances in technology and the array of new products being introduced into the market. We're also understanding and adopting stricter wind and energy codes." Likewise, he says, "We're always willing to try new products and cutting-edge techniques that don't conflict with tried-and-true methods."

In the business of fulfilling dreams, Chris says, "I never dreamed that I would be able to make a living here one day doing what I was created to do." His purpose, Chris further realizes, extends well beyond Northwest Florida to Central America, South America, and Africa (so far) through the time and expertise he gives to Third Lens Ministries, an Atlanta-based nonprofit founded by his college buddy and onetime business partner, Lee Carroll.

Since 2009, the ministry has donated construction management services to facilitate life-changing projects in coordination with other mission organizations. "We're focused on delivering expertise for needs like site planning, researching, running





Grand Bay Construction owner/founder Chris Burch and project managers Matt Ellington and Chris Harp

costs, designing architectural plans, and finding people to oversee and do the work," says Chris. Their largest endeavor to date entails assisting Orphan's Heart (based in Lakeland, Florida) in developing a full community in the Dominican Republic with a hundred single-family homes, a community transformation center, and a church plant.

Typically, North Point Ministries, also based in Atlanta, vets and refers projects to Third Lens, but Chris found one opportunity by being in the right place at the right time. Invited to a church service in nearby DeFuniak Springs, Florida, Chris says he had to push himself to attend. "On that day," he reveals, "I heard a man speak about building a live-in job-training facility in Uganda." When Chris later pressed the speaker about the details, he knew the ambitious undertaking's success required professional planning and oversight. Third Lens has since committed multiple resources to the endeavor, including months of on-site construction management.

Considering all of his so-called chance encounters in life, from finding homes under construction as a kid to meeting Ed's daughter in a coffee shop, Chris believes each has ultimately led him to serve others. "God had a plan for me," he says.

Readers can learn more about Grand Bay Construction Company by visiting granbayconstruction.com or calling (850) 231-1437. Information about Third Lens Ministries is available at third-lens.org.



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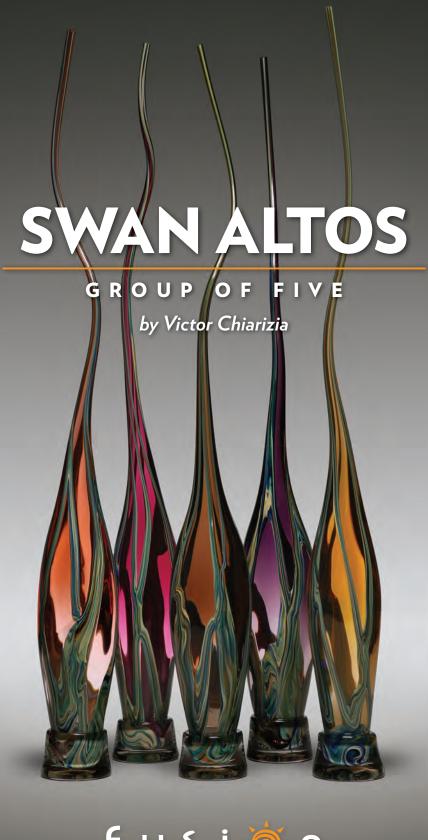
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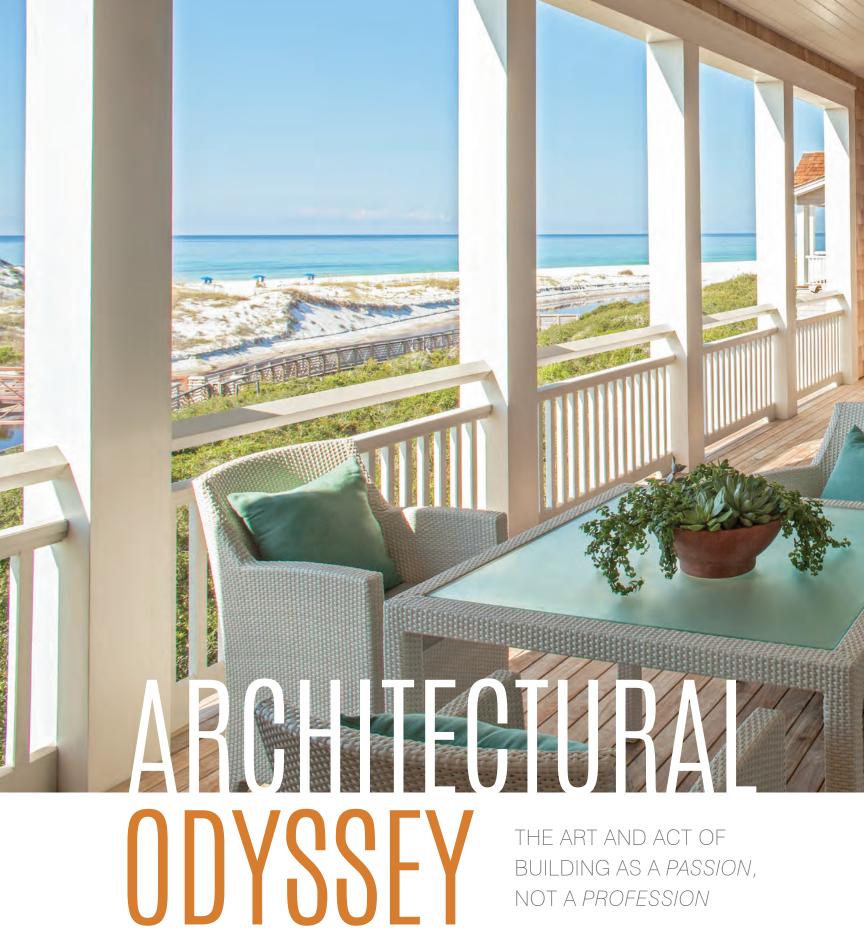
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If "life is a journey, not a destination," then some might make the case that when it comes to building a home, it's the process—not necessarily the final product—that counts.

David and Marsha Dowler certainly enjoy every step along the way. "I like to think of myself as an architectural patron, or maybe I'm just a serial home builder," laughs David. By any name, it's obvious that the Dowlers are thoughtful clients who are doing their part to enrich the built environment through creating engaging structures with a sense of place.

A Texas native, David grew up going to Panama City Beach in the summers and admits he always longed for a house right on the Gulf of Mexico. "With this project, I guess I achieved my goal. I had the opportunity to design and build my dream home on a most amazing piece of waterfront property," he says. "Now I'm content to let it go so someone else can own it and enjoy it."

This latest residential journey started more than a decade ago in the early days of the WaterSound Beach community on Scenic Highway 30-A in Northwest Florida, when David and Marsha purchased a prime lot overlooking Camp Creek Lake and the Gulf. They were already big fans of the area usually known simply as "30-A," having built two houses there in the New Urban community of Seaside. The couple was married there twenty years ago, and Marsha is one of the founders of Seaside's Escape to Create artist-in-residency program.

David was ready for a construction project, and upon seeing the expansive dunes and meandering outflow of the rare coastal dune lake at Camp Creek, he knew this was the place to embark on his next architectural adventure. Living full time in Dallas, the Dowlers had recently moved into a new house designed by Scott Merrill of Merrill, Pastor and Colgan Architects. Scott had served as Seaside's town architect years ago when David was building his first home in the fledgling town. Now the firm has offices in Atlanta and Vero Beach, Florida.





"David and Marsha had a vision and brought their ideas to the table. We pushed each other. It was a true collaboration in the best sense of the word."

For his home on the Gulf, David turned to Scott's partner David Colgan. In keeping with WaterSound's ordained Shingle style architecture, Colgan looked to timeless East Coast precedents from Nantucket, Cape Cod, and Nags Head for inspiration, yet his design stays clearly focused on the Panhandle's weather and ways. "David and Marsha had a vision and brought their ideas to the table," recalls Colgan. "We pushed each other. It was a true collaboration in the best sense of the word."

The three-story home incorporates customary cedar shingles and familiar forms, yet the more romantic illusions of the genre are clarified and simplified. The home's silhouette cuts a striking profile against the sky that seems traditional and contemporary at the same time.

From the street, the house presents a cordial yet reserved face to the outside world and only gradually reveals itself. Rather than try to hide the garage, the architect opted for a pair of symmetrical sheds; each is crowned with a simple gable roof and enlivened with clinging flowering vines. The sheds flank a wooden pathway that steps up to the entry courtyard and the front door. A sense of restraint is the architectural order.

As in many present-day beach houses, the main floor of the home is hoisted upward to capture views and breezes. An open, nautical-inspired stairway ascends to the loftlike second floor where interiors unfold in gracious continuous living spaces bathed in natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows.

Coming to the beach is about being in touch with nature, and the design of this house encourages an ongoing dialogue between the inside and the great outdoors with a variety of open-air rooms, each boasting a distinctive personality. A deep second-floor porch running the length of the house embraces the big view from sunrise to sunset. A cloistered screened terrace off the downstairs master suite offers welcome shading at midday.

The interiors throughout echo the sophisticated, spartan architecture of the house. Marsha worked closely with Georgina O'Hara and Cheryl Troxel to choose furnishings and accessories that are deliberately subtle and have clean lines. The palette of soft blues, greens, and grays and the textured neutrals interact differently throughout the day, sometimes evoking the warm tones of the wood surfaces and other times mirroring shades of the sand and the sea. The understated character of the design is the perfect backdrop for the Dowlers' collection of fine art photography.











From every vantage point, broad stokes of genius and attention to detail come together in a graceful harmony. The stage is set as Marsha and David put their masterpiece on the market; let the next act in the ongoing narrative of this home begin!





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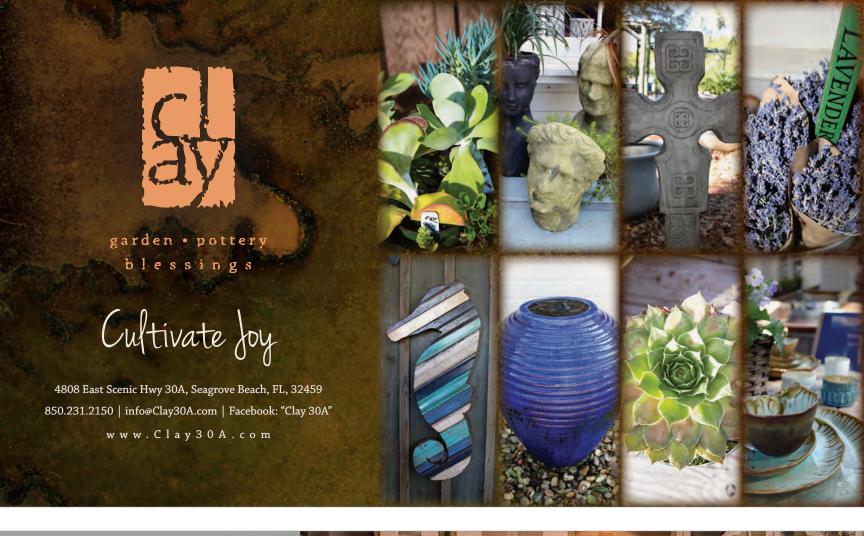


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Building a Business

A CONVERSATION WITH JEANNE DAILEY

BY SALLIE W. BOYLES • PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROMONA ROBBINS

As a freelance journalist, I love interviewing all kinds of fascinating, highly accomplished individuals about their motivations, how they got started, and what makes them persevere. While the willingness to take risks often comes up, Jeanne Dailey's philosophy is especially worth noting and sharing: You can't lose what you don't have, so why not strive for what is possible by working to succeed?

Celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of her company, Newman-Dailey Resort Properties, Jeanne relays how she began her career in real estate management, sales, and rentals from the ground up (in a construction trailer, no less), when the odds of making a living in a largely unknown market were terrible. She might have been naive for diving in, but Jeanne rolled up her sleeves, put her talents to work, and soon realized she had found her calling.

For all of her accomplishments, including her leadership in establishing and promoting the Destin area as an upscale family destination, she remains grateful and down-toearth. What an inspiration!

Admitting she was naïve about the industry and the relatively unknown Destin market, Jeanne dove into the business. She took charge of daily operations and earned her real estate license within six months.

Back in 1983, when Jeanne Dailey first crossed the Destin Bridge to visit her college roommate, the tide was in, reflecting the deepest emerald to cobalt hues of the Choctawhatchee Bay and Gulf of Mexico. Thanks to her girlfriend, she had a few interviews lined up, but the new college grad had no grand illusions about how relocating to the World's Luckiest Fishing Village with her business degree from East Carolina would propel her career. Even so, she easily warmed to the idea of living on a coast that resembled the Caribbean—at least until a future connection led to a "real job." Meanwhile, assessing her student-loan debt, Jeanne decided she had nothing to lose.

Her one offer resulted from an interview conducted in a single-wide trailer at the end of a dirt road (She could have skipped the high heels!). Property developer Randy Newman would pay her a salary of \$12,000—not much for college graduate in the early eighties—to work as his sales agent and property manager for Woodland Shores Townhomes, his development under construction. The trailer would be her office. Jeanne accepted, never imagining that the move was her first step toward running her own enterprise, Newman-Dailey Resort Properties, now celebrating thirty years in business.

In 1983, with the economy emerging from a recession and interest rates hovering above 12 percent, resort property developers assumed big risks. "Those were the days when we'd build it and hope the buyers would come," Jeanne says. "Now the plans are all on paper. We presell units and then the developers build."

Admitting she was naive about the industry and the relatively unknown Destin market, Jeanne dove into the business. She took charge of daily operations and earned her real estate license within six months. "Randy was more of a big-picture guy," Jeanne explains, "not a go-to-the-office kind of person." With Randy more focused on development, Jeanne also handled the bookkeeping, rentals, and housekeeping.

While an employee and later as her own boss, Jeanne never placed herself above certain jobs. "I could always go clean a unit myself to bring in extra

income to cover business expenses," she says. "Also, I knew if I had units to clean, then I'd obviously booked rental business."

They made a good team, so Jeanne and Randy launched Newman-Dailey Resort Properties in 1985 to broker sales and rentals for Randy's developments (Woodland Shores and Crystal Village) and to manage properties for area homeowners associations. Requiring a broker's license as a partner, she says, "I took a two-week crash course taught by an instructor who said, 'If any of you idiots think you'll go out there, hang up your shingle, and start selling, you're crazy. This market's too bad.' I knew all along that's what I would be doing, but I never let the idea of failure worry me."

Remarkably, from the time they first launched Newman-Dailey, neither she nor Randy ever invested their own money in the business. For convenience and cost savings, they set up the office in Woodland Shore's clubhouse rather than rent space. "Randy was a very supportive partner," says Jeanne. "We did not have a ton of overhead." Since advertising costs were also low, their primary expenses included the phone with an 800 number and a computer with vacation-rental software.

By 1988, Randy had his sights on development projects in North Carolina, so he asked Jeanne if she'd like to buy his interest in their partnership. "I put on a poker face and wrote him a check immediately," she says. "I knew it was a great deal and didn't want him to change his mind!"

Since going their separate ways, the two have remained friends. Until Randy recently sold the last of his local rental





Emphasizing the significance of relationships in her business, Jeanne is a big believer in personal contact. "We like to meet our vacationers and know them by name."

properties, Newman-Dailey managed them for him. Likewise, Jeanne initially kept his name in the business to add credence to a company operated by a young female, but never felt compelled to drop it after establishing her own reputation. Admiring her former boss and partner, she also adopted many of the qualities she observed in him.

"For one thing," Jeanne explains, "Randy protected his bottom line, but he was never petty over small amounts. If he had an issue with a contractor, he would rather give the guy the \$500 in question than fight over the bill." She points out that the same mind-set applies to customer relations. "I also learned never to burn a bridge," Jeanne adds, "especially in this small town."

Emphasizing the significance of relationships in her business, Jeanne is a big believer in personal contact. "We like to meet our vacationers and know them by name," she says. Newman-Dailey's renters, therefore, pick up their keys from a person rather than a key box. A positive, face-to-face encounter compels guests to take greater care of the homes they rent and lures them back to Newman-Dailey for future vacations—and potentially, to buy a place of their own.

No matter what category of service a client requires, from leasing an income property to buying that dream home, Jeanne asserts, "We find the best solution for a homeowner so that the investment meets current and future needs. The fact that we're diversified—we also have a long-term rental division—enables us to navigate marketplace ebbs and flows."

Anticipating changes—from economic fluctuations that impact housing prices to technological innovations that affect how people search—and adapting accordingly have enabled Newman-Dailey, a relatively small company, to thrive alongside national competitors. "To compete online with all-inclusive resorts," Jeanne shares as an example, "we showcase value-added amenities that stretch those vacation dollars and give people an incentive to book through us."

Maintaining a strong, positive brand presence is yet another way brokers attract business on behalf of clients. Last year, for instance, Newman-Dailey

partnered with The Idea Boutique (a.k.a. Cornerstone Marketing and Advertising, Inc.) to publish a signature vacation magazine. Promoting all three Newman-Dailey divisions, the publication highlights properties as well as area attractions, shopping, dining, and travel tips. The magazine's name—Where You'd Rather Be (or simply Be)—also became Newman-Dailey's tagline, promoted in all media, including on the company's renovated website.

"The game changes minute by minute," remarks Jeanne. "We used to tweak the marketing plan by the year, but the Internet and social media are now too dynamic."

Just as they recognize when a marketing makeover is in order, Jeanne and her team consult with their clients to ensure they implement appropriate, cost-effective home improvements and updates. Newman-Dailey, in turn, promotes quality over price discounts. "We work with our homeowners to follow market trends," says Jeanne. "We're not the company for everyone. We want business partners—homeowners—who want to do what's necessary to maximize the return on their investments."

Finding ways to add value and curtail costs also applies to managing thirty-four unique properties on behalf of homeowners associations. The formula works. Fourteen of those properties have been under Newman-Dailey's stewardship from the inception of their HOAs.

Noting that Newman-Dailey continually ranks in the top 10 percent of agencies by the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, people who know Jeanne see the correlation between her company's success and the progress she has spearheaded or supported in the community. Joining the South Walton Tourist Development Council when it

formed in 1989, she has long advocated tourism through balanced initiatives that promote a family vacation experience. The Council, in fact, honored her in 2014 with the Van Ness Butler, Jr. Hospitality Award for her leadership and vision.

"We've always marketed to a longer-stay vacation instead of a quick trip that would not give the traveler a strong feel for the city," Jeanne says. Through carefully planned growth, she contends, "We have a wonderful mix of condos, villas, and private homes with fewer hotels, so our ratio of units to land isn't as high as in places like Miami. Measures to protect the environment have also been important."

As a long-time member of the Destin Area Chamber of Commerce and Walton Area Chamber of Commerce, Jeanne is a big supporter of the locally owned boutiques, restaurants, and other enterprises that give Destin and the beaches of South Walton their distinctive feel and appeal. She also serves on the boards of First Florida Bank and the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation. On top of everything, she is currently in the midst of her term as the first female president of the Rotary Club of Destin. "I feel passionately about this community," says Jeanne. "How lucky and blessed I am to have raised my kids and run a business here!"

With all that she has endeavored, including raising her son and daughter (now adults) primarily as a single mom, Jeanne ponders her life over the past thirty years. "I fell into this job because of a college roommate and Randy, who offered me an opportunity," she says. "It happened to be one that allowed me to gravitate toward my strengths, and I realized that I loved the business."

In truth, Jeanne knows that luck did not drive her success and confides that a long time passed before acknowledging that she had some exceptional talents and probably deserved to be the boss of a company that has prospered. Singling out an asset that has expressly served Jeanne and her employees, she mentions her ability to recognize and make the most of others' talents. "Finding a way to play up the strengths of those who come to work with Newman-Dailey has allowed us to attract and keep good people," she says. "I couldn't be where I am without my great, fabulous team behind me."

Grateful for what she has and optimistic over the future, Jeanne says, "I never think anything bad is going to happen; I always believe I have angels watching over me."

Her attitude sets a happy, positive tone that permeates the work environment. "We love what we do and have fun!" she declares. "More laughter takes place at our weekly staff meetings than anything else." On final assessment, she says, "I'm in the vacation business—every day's a luau!"

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JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

AT MIDDLETON PLACE



BY ANNE W. SCHULTZ Photography courtesy of Middleton Place

"Location, location," This real estate axiom applied as much to property values in the colonial South as it does today—especially when it came to selecting land for a rice plantation in the South Carolina Low Country. Successful rice cultivation required large tracts with a water source nearby preferably a river for irrigation, flooding fields, and transporting the finished product by boat to Charleston's port, where it would be shipped abroad.

In the early 1700s, John Williams searched south of Charleston for the perfect location to live out the eighteenth-century English ideal of a country squire with a vast estate. Those lofty ambitions were possible in the New World, as planters amassed huge fortunes in a colonial plantation system where hundreds of enslaved Africans did the grueling work. Over time, this elite planter class evolved into the only genuine aristocracy in America and lived a lavish lifestyle exceeding its members' wildest dreams.

When Williams climbed to the summit of a forty-foot-high bluff overlooking the Ashley River, he must have realized that he'd lucked out. From this high vantage point, the river canal appeared to aim straight at where he stood, and when struck by sunlight, it gleamed like a silver-paved entrance to the ideal site for his three-story Jacobean-style home.

When this manor was completed in 1705, the vertical line of the river aligned with its spacious central hall. The plantation, later called Middleton Place, more closely resembled Downton Abbey than the column-embellished neoclassical manors that evolved later. In his book A Short History of Charleston, Robert Rosen writes, "The character of Charleston reflected Restoration England just as Boston reflected Puritan England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."



Some thirty years later, when Williams's son-in-law Henry Middleton acquired the two-hundred-acre estate as a dowry, he used sixty-five acres of the main property for a garden. He hired an English gardener to transplant the formality of classic design onto the unruly wilderness of Southern shores, following the principles of André Le Nôtre, the landscape architect who laid out the gardens at the Palace of Versailles in France.

The classic design of that age favored symmetry and order above natural flow or colorful flowers. Lawns were clipped as short as golf course greens, stretching snug as skin over the rolling contours of the land. According to historical accounts, a workforce of a hundred slaves took almost a decade to complete the sweeping vistas, the precise geometric shapes and exacting symmetry of outdoor rooms, walkways, allées, and ornamental ponds, and the unique twin lakes shaped like open butterfly wings.

Henry's son Arthur brightened the design by adding the flowering trees and shrubs now considered iconic to the South. It turns out that these favorites were actually imported through Charleston from Asia in the eighteenth century as part of a flurry of global plant exchanges. In the spring, azaleas native to Japan blazed across the landscape in frothy banks of watermelon-pink flowers, and camellias imported from China colored the winter scene with ruffled blossoms in multiple combinations of pink and white, all set off by glossy green leaves.



The plantation, later called Middleton Place, more closely resembled Downton Abbey than the column-embellished neoclassical manors that evolved later.







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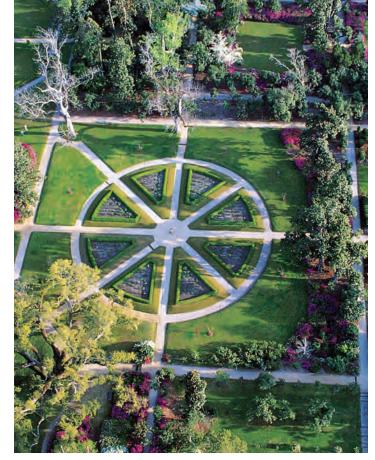
André Michaux—botanist to King Louis XVI of France—gifted his neighbor, Henry Middleton, with a particularly showy camellia variety along with other plants from China, including crape myrtles, sweet olives, and tea plants. Today, the property features both the nation's oldest living camellia (at two hundred and twenty-nine years old) and its oldest single-trunk live oak, which is estimated to be eight hundred to a thousand years old.

The gardens lay neglected for sixty years after the Civil War, until 1925, when Middleton family descendant J. J. Pringle Smith and his wife, Heningham, embarked on a fifteen-year restoration project. Their work paid off. In 1941, the Garden Club of America recognized Middleton Place as America's oldest landscaped gardens and "the most interesting and important garden in America." The overall property is designated as a National Historic Landmark.



Take a garden tour to make the gardens even more fascinating as a trained docent points out subtle nuances and historical landscape details most of us would miss. "See how native trees like live oaks and magnolias provide framework for the secondary gardens at both sides of the house," a docent said to a recent tour group. "Here is where clipped hedges formed leafy walls for outdoor rooms like secret gardens where children played and woman gossiped over tea." She led the group into an enclosed space and continued, "Octagonal-shaped lawns set off by boxwood made nifty spaces for bowling games. Look at these magnolia trees—how they are trimmed severely to resemble Greek columns."

For an introduction to the illustrious Middleton family who lived on the estate for four generations, visit the House Museum in the South Flanker, the only remaining portion of the original house, which was burned down by Union troops. The donated collection of priceless antique furniture, silver, porcelain, and paintings by such notables as Thomas Sully reflects a family who played a major role in our country's earliest history. Henry Middleton became the second president of the First Continental Congress, and his son Arthur signed the Declaration of Independence. Arthur's son, also named Henry, rose to distinction as governor of South Carolina, and his son William signed the Ordinance of Secession.















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A tour of the revitalized stable and barnyards illustrates the essential part enslaved African Americans played in the plantation system. Planters had no idea how to grow rice but depended heavily on the skills and knowledge of slaves who had cultivated rice in Africa. These slaves understood the complicated process of manipulating the interactions of tidal and freshwater systems, which is crucial to rice production, and they endured intensive labor made worse by a hot, humid climate. Costumed docents and heritage barn animals bring these long-ago scenes to life.



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For general information and tour schedules, visit www.middletonplace.org or call (800) 782-3608.

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Launch a kayak from the inn for a watery perspective on Middleton Place as part of a tour by Charleston Kayak Company. For reservations and information, visit www.charlestonkayakcompany.com, call (843) 628-2879, or e-mail info@charlestonkayakcompany.com.





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EVERY SATURDAY, 9AM - 1PM

GRAND BOULEVARD FARMERS' MARKET

APRIL 11

DEATH BY CHOCOLATE

benefiting Rotary Club of South Walton County

APRIL 23 - 26

SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

benefiting Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation

MAY 2

CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION

with Cantina Laredo

MAY 8 - 10

ARTSQUEST FINE ARTS & MUSIC FESTIVAL

benefiting The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County

MAY 28 - JULY 30, 8PM

THEATRE THURSDAYS

presented by Emerald Coast Theatre Company

JUNE 27

BALLET AT TWILIGHT

presented by Northwest Florida Ballet

OCTOBER 5 - 11

SOUTH WALTON FASHION WEEK

benefiting The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County

OCTOBER 16-18 & 23-25

ELEEMOSYNARY

presented by Emerald Coast Theatre Company

OCTOBER 24

BEST OF THE EMERALD COAST

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OCTOBER 31

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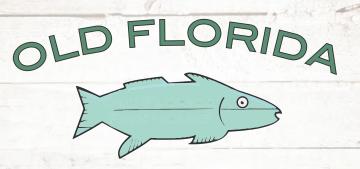
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EYE TO THE SIX

Story and Photography by RUSS SCHLEIPMAN

There is a certain telescope like no other. In fact, those who encounter it often do not guess, or even believe, that it is a telescope. Were it not so optically profound, it would be called sculpture, fine art, or just a sundial. Some think it looks like a swan; others, Spartan armor or even a ginger leaf. But there is one point of universal accord: all find it beautiful. It is a reflecting telescope, that ingenious device invented by Sir Isaac Newton, all mirrors and no smoke, but it has turned the familiar design on its head. The tube is gone, replaced by a slender leaf that holds the optics. The instrument is floral grace incarnate, more tulip than telescope. Sensuous Art Nouveau curves lighten bronze into botany, belying a fortress of robust structure. Comfortable as a garden centerpiece, it surrenders its optics in seconds, transforming to sundial and sculpture in sun or snow, a visual anchor to a landscape.



inety years ago there lived in Vermont a gentleman most enchanted by the night sky. An artist of immense talent, he was captivated by the magic of those unanswerable questions that swirl in a thoughtful man's mind when he contemplates the starry crunch of the Milky Way. So captivated, in fact, that he enticed his fellow workers to step out, look up, and marvel. To better witness the show, he created his own magic, a gift to the world in the form of a telescope so beautiful and astonishingly simple that the Smithsonian holds one in its vast collection. Along with his telescope, he gave a bigger gift: the invitation to gaze upward, contemplate the night sky, be humbled, and join hands with a thousand generations that have done the same, for with his instrument one reaches back in time to an age when the tools we depended on married a reverence for beauty to an elegance of function. By simply aiming one small mirror, embraced by leaves of bronze, one can touch the moon, the planets, and beyond. Men become boys and boys become men in that moment of shared whispered awe when a silent moon and her rubbled craters fill the eyepiece.



OUR HUMBLE TELESCOPE HAS STOOD BY BUGATTIS AND DELAHAYES AT THE CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE AT PEBBLE BEACH. SHARED SPACE WITH GALILEO'S WORLD-CHANGING MIRACLE IN PHILADELPHIA. BOWED TO MILLIONS ON CBS SUNDAY MORNING. AND DELIGHTED THE QUEEN IN LONDON.

That Vermonter was Russell W. Porter, father of amateur astronomy in America, founder of the Springfield Telescope Makers, Arctic explorer and navigator, painter of exquisite Inuit portraits, and instructor of architecture at MIT. He was also an optical engineer in Precision Valley, that bastion of machine tool expertise in southern Vermont, where his passion for astronomy fused his artistry to technology and spawned an instrument like no other. Little did Porter realize that his telescope would later help shape the mechanics of the two-hundred-inch Hale Telescope at Palomar Observatory in California, which he helped create and which he drew magnificently. Nor did he anticipate that his masterpiece would find a home in the nation's glorious attic, the Smithsonian. Or that another Vermonter of similar passions would resurrect his artistry ninety years later.

Enter Fred Schleipman, the grandson of Ernst Bartsch, a Swiss painter who was decorated by Queen Victoria in 1900. He lives in Vermont, perched on a hilltop with a view to make one sigh. His $woodpiles \, are \, perfect - they'll \, outlast \, the \, pyramids - but \, they \, don't \, hold \, a \, candle \, to \, the \, creations \, born \, and \, but \, creations \, born \, constant \, constan$ inside his shop: templates for brain surgery, bearings that float at a million rpm, and the Porter Garden Telescope. Thirty years ago, Schleipman photographed an eclipse in Mauritania, where he befriended fellow Vermonter Bert Willard, an optical engineer, member of the Springfield Telescope Makers, and biographer of Russell Porter. Home from Africa, Schleipman was invited to see the club's collection, where he saw the Porter Garden Telescope, was smitten, and began his quest to reintroduce that treasure. Schleipman's crusade was dauntingly complex. Politics preceded engineering: a thirty-year courtship of the Springfield Telescope Makers finally convinced the skeptical and reluctant organization that with him came the assurance that an instrument worthy of its endorsement would result.

Then came the hard stuff. I know because I'm a Schleipman, too, and I watched, helped, and learned from my dad. We found towering talent across skill sets of dying arts—all in New England. We needed to replace lost patterns for casting the thirty-odd pieces. Because bronze shrinks in devilishly tricky ways, those patterns must be subtly bigger than the piece they yield. Not every foundry can pour the complex and demanding shapes we needed, but we found three who could. Artisans whose work





A new spin-off piece, a customizable bronze sundial birdbath, echoes the design of the telescope.

WHEN BRITISH
ASTRONOMER SIR
PATRICK MOORE SAW
THE TELESCOPE, HE
DUBBED HER "CAPELLA,"
AFTER ONE OF THE
BRIGHTEST STARS,
ALWAYS VISIBLE
IN THE NORTHERN
HEMISPHERE.





graces government buildings around the world claimed the telescope was the hardest work they'd ever done. Castings, like cherry pies, look the same, but when one worries about tenths of thousandths of an inch, they are not. Not at all. Coaxing floral shapes to dimensional conformity required custom jigs and fixtures, and hundreds of hours with each telescope. A telescope needs eyes, so a mirror precise to millionths of an inch in its curvature and the supporting elements emerged from the wisdom of two designers of satellite optics in Boston. To ice the bronze cake, we designed our own screws and eyepiece housings, which we age and burnish to a patina of antiquity.

Our humble telescope has stood by Bugattis and Delahayes at the Concours d'Elegance at Pebble Beach, shared space with Galileo's world-changing miracle in Philadelphia, bowed to millions on *CBS Sunday Morning*, and delighted the queen in London. But most importantly, she has whisked countless folks to the heavens on a trip they'd never taken, creating shared and treasured moments for mothers, daughters, fathers, and sons. When British astronomer Sir Patrick Moore saw the telescope, he dubbed her "Capella," after one of the brightest stars, always visible in the Northern Hemisphere. The name is beautiful and feminine and was bestowed, appropriately, by the man who suggested that a lunar crater be named for Russell Porter.

The world loves Vermont. A tiny nugget better known for cows than commerce, her quiet demeanor and soothing landscape invoke nostalgia for a time before locks, when things were done with a handshake, honestly and well. Very well. "Made in Vermont" has long enjoyed the imprimatur of buyers worldwide—for so long, in fact, that copycat "Vermonts" have been found as far away as Asia. The respect is well earned. We aim to keep it so. \blacksquare

The telescope is available in a limited edition of two hundred serial-numbered units. Please visit www.gardentelescopes.com, write info@gardentelescopes.com, or call (617) 292-5155.





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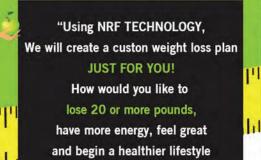
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RAW+ JUCY LE

Sprouts in Seaside

By Madra McDonald Photography by Marla Carter

From the moment you enter the sun-soaked space of the newly opened Raw + Juicy Life, you get the feeling that you've entered a cozy Brooklyn studio apartment.

Just as the Point Washington home of owner Jenifer Kuntz (showcased in *VIE's* September/October 2013 story "A Force of Nature") reflects her spirit, Raw + Juicy Life in Seaside, Florida, is also an extension of Kuntz's everyday life. It's a beautiful hybrid of her company's sought-after "tasty honest organics" with a thoughtfully curated mix of beach, beauty, gift, home, and garden options, all personally sourced by Kuntz. Launching a multifunctional lifestyle shop seemed like a natural next step for the creative and entrepreneurial-minded owner following the growth that Raw & Juicy—the area's original organic juice bar and raw food café—has experienced since first opening its Airstream window for service in 2008.

In the front of the store, you'll find a large butcher-block cooler display stocked with Raw + Juicy Life's latest selection of raw cakes, chocolates, and desserts, all artfully noted on the chalkboard menu with names such as "Coco Lime Cheesecake" and "Chocolate Mudslide Pie." In a blind taste test, the average palate would













"We've always strived to be an educator in the community for natural and organic living."

likely never know that all of Raw + Juicy Life's flavorful desserts are dairy-free, gluten-free, and prepared with no added sugars (proof to skeptics that healthy can taste good). The cooler also shares space with a colorful selection of jarred house-made raw, organic fermented veggies as well as a batch of the beloved juice bar's cold-pressed juices.

Across the way is a refrigerated beverage cooler offering additional selections of cold-pressed juices, kombucha, coconut and aloe waters, and organic wines, sake, and beer-all überconvenient for an afternoon at the beach. Wooden corner shelves are stocked with Raw & Juicy's signature grab-and-go snacks, ranging from granola and kale chips to macaroons and dried mangoes, and an ever-rotating selection of artisanal products, including some local Seaside Farmers Market finds (a suitable display of support as Kuntz is the market's founder). In the adjacent room, there are antique cabinets and plant-adorned window displays full or delightful treasures from all over the United States as well as rare international finds from Mexico, Africa, India, and Turkey.

"We've always strived to be an educator in the community for natural and organic living," says Kuntz. "This new space gives us an indoor retail platform to expand on that by showcasing artisans who create beautiful things in sustainable and reasoned ways. It's been so inspiring and fulfilling to connect with other cultures and artists from all around the world."

Seaside cofounder Daryl Davis—the sophisticated backbone of Seaside Associated Stores—was enthusiastically supportive of Kuntz creating a sister location to add to the New Urbanist town's eclectic merchant mix. One mutual passion shared by Davis and Kuntz is a love for local food artisans and the desire to further educate the community about them. Kuntz first proposed the farmers market concept to Davis in 2008 (partly an attempt to attract people to the newly opened juice bar), and Davis loved the idea. From there, the production-savvy Kuntz rallied her team and started the Seaside Farmers Market, which they continue to manage.

"Jen's a natural-born entrepreneur with outstanding leadership skills. I have no doubt that Raw + Juicy Life will be a stunning success, much as both Raw & Juicy and the Seaside Farmers Market have been," Davis says.

There is, however, a beautiful piece of synchronicity to Raw & Juicy launching the market. "I didn't learn until years later that Daryl had started a similar market on the side of Scenic Highway 30-A nearly thirty years ago, giving passersby a reason to stop in Seaside and hear about the New Urbanist neighborhood under way," says Kuntz with a smile. "Daryl offered the best tomatoes you could find, fresh baguettes, beautiful olive oil, and, eventually, clothing and housewares. It was there that she cultivated several of the shops that exist in Seaside today. Essentially, the Seaside Farmers Market has been a fundamental part of the town since the beginning."

A former dancer and yoga instructor turned raw foods chef and certified Ayurvedic Consultant, Kuntz is committed to fostering the Slow Food movement on the Gulf Coast, and her personal touches are







"I have no doubt
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Life will be a
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& Juicy and the
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Market have been."



"We've become good friends with many of the artisans we carry. They take great pride in how their products are made, and we do our best to honor that by sharing bits of their stories with our customers."

evident in the excellent quality, flavor, and fun she brings to her business. Raw & Juicy has been ranked among the top ten juice bars across the country by *USA Today*, and Kuntz has applied those same standards of excellence to Raw + Juicy Life. Also, many of the store's ecofriendly vendors have charitable components to their business models—a practice that's important to Kuntz and her team.

"We've become good friends with many of the artisans we carry," adds Kuntz. "They take great pride in how their products are made, and we do our best to honor that by sharing bits of their stories with our customers."

Some of the specialty products available at Raw + Juicy Life include beach towels from Convivial Cloth Co., handblown glass decanters by Nate Cotterman, Fredericks and Mae's handcrafted bocce sets and kites, S'well's line of reusable insulated water bottles,







Kammok hammocks, Nakuru handbags from Kenya, Loyal Stricklin Aviator Mugs, handcrafted Shwood sunglasses, 100 percent natural Herbivore Botanicals, and many more.

Since quietly opening its doors on June 15, Raw + Juicy Life's vibe and product selection might best be summed up by one of its first customers, West Elm creative director Taylor Bennett. "Your store is lovely!" Bennett says. "Fresh juices, canned goods, herbs, and handmade goods from some of my favorite makers. Currently figuring out a way to move to Seaside, Florida. All I need is a tiny casa nestled in the woods by the beach and a job at Raw + Juicy Life."

Raw + Juicy Life is located in Seaside on the south side of 30-A on the pathway to the Coleman Pavilion beach access, east of Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar. For more info, call (850) 231-5006 or visit www.rawandjuicylife.com.



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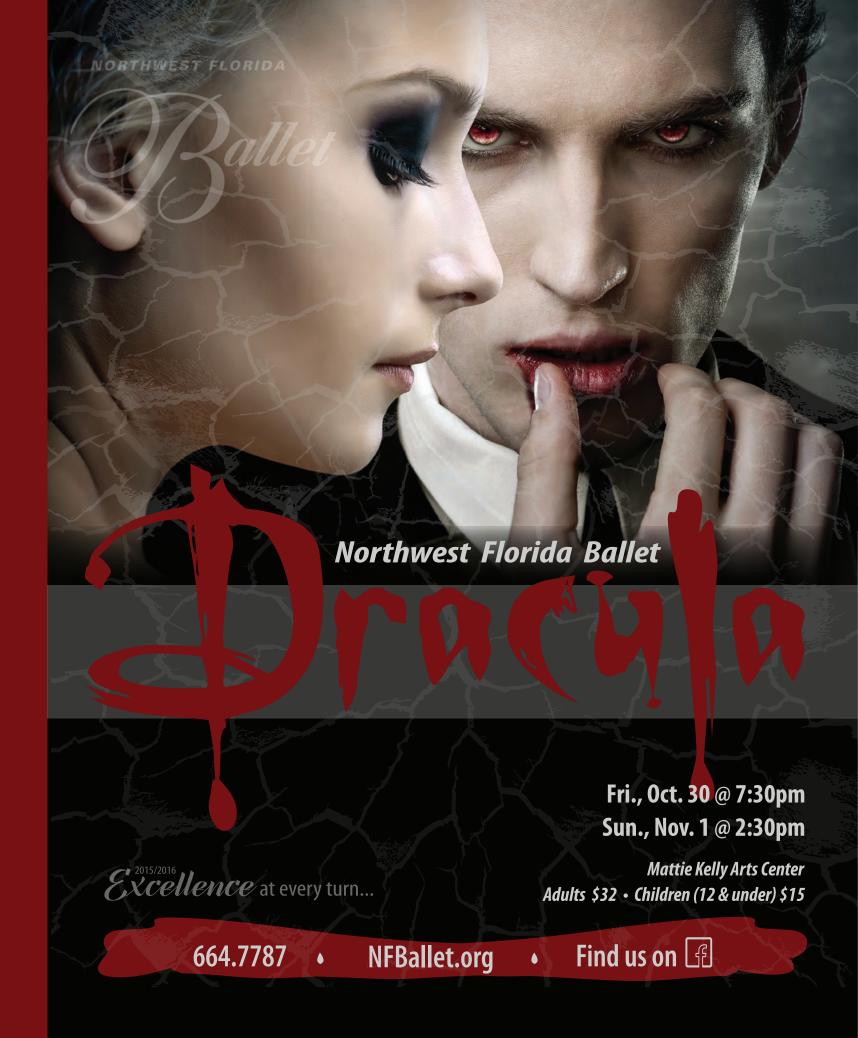
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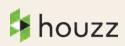




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CASTLES IN THE SAND

77 STALLWORTH BOULEVARD





BY JORDAN STAGGS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM KRAMER

alking along the white sands of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, one might look north from the Gulf and, at first glance, believe one sees a majestic lifesized sand castle nestled among the dunes. Another blink of the eye reveals that it's actually a one-of-a-kind six-thousand-square-foot home overlooking the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. Located in the exclusive gated community of Stallworth Preserve, 77 Stallworth Boulevard is unquestionably one of the most well constructed homes on the Gulf Coast and built to last for generations. Built by the prominent firm of Davis Dunn and designed by Santa Rosa Beach architect Steven Dugan and award-winning Nashville designer Marjorie Feltus Hawkins, the home is truly a unique masterpiece, perfect for a discerning buyer looking for the ultimate in luxury on the coast.

"This project was a collaboration with the owners to create spaces reflecting her interests and provide a soothing respite along the Gulf's edge," says Hawkins, owner of Feltus Hawkins Design. "We looked to the Gulf and nature for the interior palette, bringing the outside indoors. Turquoise is the primary palette color, with natural accents of color and pattern reflecting the sand and sea life."

A private walled courtyard in the front of the home and the arched pergola over the entryway immediately lend an air of luxury. The homeowners, Teresa and David Disiere, love seahorses and mermaids, both seen in design elements



throughout the house. Visitors are captivated by a handmade mosaic tile wall in the foyer featuring seahorses, an octopus, and a mermaid. The turquoise faux-finished Venetian plaster walls and the ceiling with metallic accents complete the magical underwater scene. The bedrooms also feature themes of ocean life, from seahorses and mermaids to seashells and coral.

"We selected ipe wood, also known as Brazilian walnut, for the staircase and flooring," Hawkins says. "Its incredible hardness and strength make it durable and well-suited to withstand traffic."

The first floor is inviting and comprises an open family room with a bar and built-in entertainment center, as well as two bedrooms, while the second level includes the custom designer kitchen and butler's pantry. In the kitchen and dining room, the eye is drawn to the stunning Blue Louise granite. The dining room is in one of the home's "towers" and features a circular herringbone floor with granite and marble inlaid to create the look of sea waves, while the countertops in the kitchen are done in the same Blue Louise granite. The custom ceiling in the dining room is mother-of-pearl and shell, and matching capiz shells are set into the bar cabinet. Whimsical jellyfish pendants serve as the lighting fixtures over the kitchen sink and bar area.

"Genuine turquoise tiles provide a striking backdrop—reminiscent of the Gulf—for the powder room, and small mosaics of the same turquoise are inset into the iron balusters along the stair rail to continue the theme from the first level up to the main family space," Hawkins adds. The second-floor living room has beautiful dark walnut wood ceiling beams and a spectacular view of the Gulf. It also includes a study fit for a king, with exotic bird's-eye maple cabinetry and a unique curved desk with authentic turquoise tile work.

The entire third floor is taken up by the master suite, with vaulted wood ceilings and a curved TV alcove. The spa-inspired bath has granite handpicked especially to complement the emerald-green waters of the Gulf. In addition, the top level features a full bar, an exercise room, and a laundry, as well as an exit to a set of circular stairs and a covered observatory, perfect for enjoying the western view overlooking miles of uninhabited beach at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park.













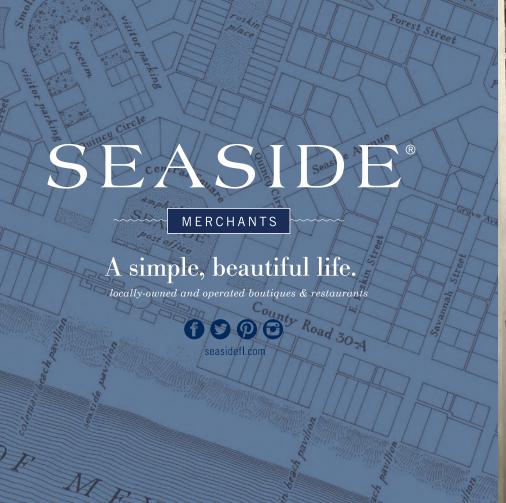




"The master bedroom is a soothing oasis, with neutral colors and accents of sea life and a vaulted wood ceiling," says Hawkins. "For the master bath, we created a spa environment that includes a curved wall of tiles that run vertically to simulate seaweed and sea life. Vanity mirrors are backlit because wall-mounted fixtures would take away from the tile pattern of the wall. An added bonus—backlit mirrors make your complexion look amazing!"

Other luxurious finishes throughout the home include jewelry-grade turquoise walls in the powder room, glazed cabinets with raised woven silk inserts, baths with grass cloth and woven Japanese wall coverings, and more. No doubt the splendor of this magnificent estate is fit for a king—or, dare we say, Poseidon himself!

For more information on 77 Stallworth Boulevard, to view video of the home, or to schedule a showing, visit www.77stallworth.com. Realtors Tracey Clay and Leslie Rudder can be found at www.destinlifestyles.com. traceyclay32@gmail.com
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Throughout the United States, the huge majority of seafood is imported. Most of it is mislabeled. Frozen seafood is sold as "fresh" and imported seafood is sold as "local." According to Oceana, 93% of fish sold as red snapper is actually some other species. 57% of tuna sold at sushi bars throughout the country is not tuna. Most of the tilapia served in this country comes from Viet Nam and Thailand and much of it is farmed in waters with sewage run-off and the source of feed is pig feces.

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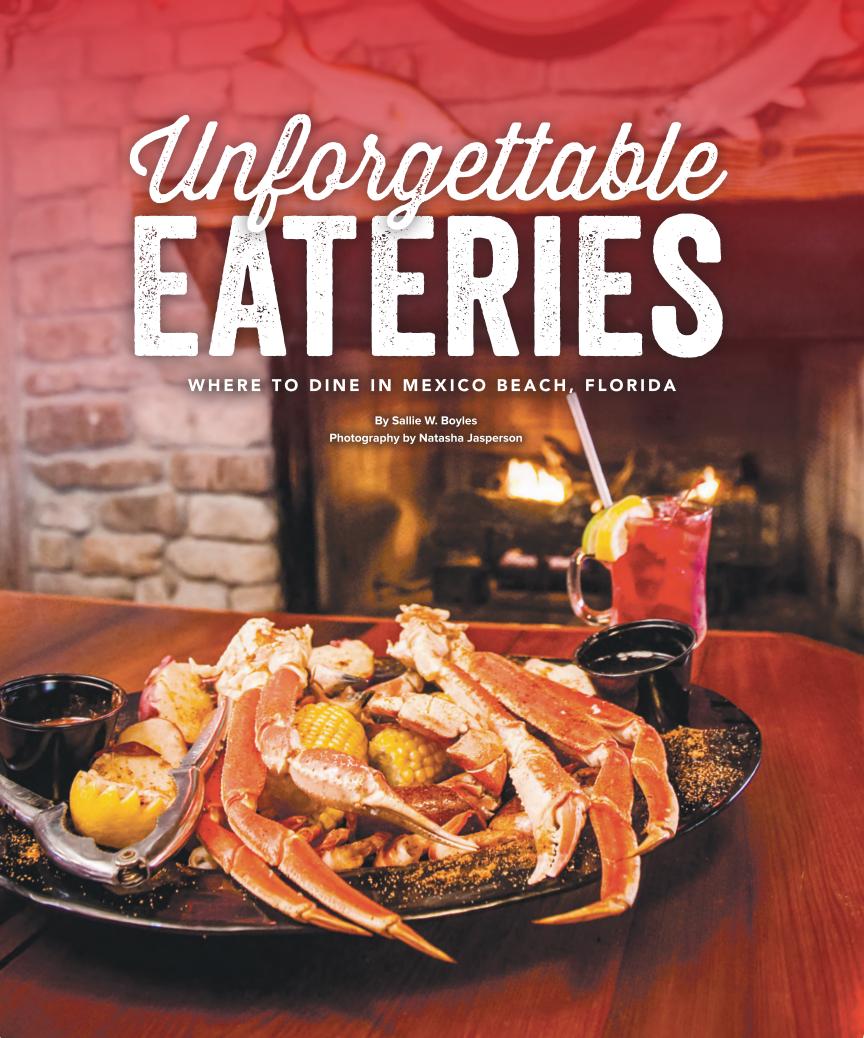
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f you drive between Panama City and Port Saint Joe on Highway 98, you'll encounter Mexico Beach, Florida. You could easily bypass the little coastal town, which has not one traffic light along the five-mile stretch of highway it occupies; however, the speed limit is only thirty-five miles per hour, so why not slow to a complete stop? You'll meet many friendly natives who will eagerly share their gorgeous, uncluttered beaches and related treasures, including fantastic local cuisine.

A lucky fishing destination, Mexico Beach lures many seafood lovers, but only one restaurant—Toucan's—sits directly on the beach for wide-open views of the Gulf of Mexico. Making the most of the location, the family-friendly dining room and upstairs Tiki Bar hum along with an island vibe and dress code to match. "You're welcome to come in right off the beach," says general manager Scott Gordon, a native Floridian with thirty years of restaurant experience. Having managed Toucan's since 2009, when new owners took over, he adds, "People love the relaxed vacation atmosphere." Even the employees seem happy to be at work, and their genuinely friendly service and good food flow from a cheerful, eager-to-please mind-set.

When you arrive with an extra large appetite or a taste for everything on the menu, order the Steam Bucket, which contains snow crab, Jonah crab claws, shrimp, andouille sausage, red potatoes, and corn on the cob. For something that does

MAKING THE MOST OF THE LOCATION, THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY DINING ROOM AND **UPSTAIRS TIKI BAR HUM ALONG WITH AN** ISLAND VIBE AND DRESS CODE TO MATCH.

not require cracking or peeling, the Grouper Imperial, one of the restaurant's most popular dishes, is wonderful. A topping of jumbo lump crabmeat and sherry cream sauce add just enough flavor to the mild fish. Likewise, a combination of lobster sauce and tangy mango make the Key West Pasta with jumbo shrimp and scallops another gratifying option.

Also take time to peruse and enjoy Toucan's adult beverage menu. If you can't decide, go with a Toucan's Sam, a delightful concoction of Cruzan Aged Light Rum, Aristocrat Vodka, and Du Bouchett Peach Schnapps, mixed with pineapple, orange, and cranberry juices. Once you're in a tropical state of mind, you'll definitely want to linger into the evening at the Tiki Bar, where nightfall and DJ music generate a friendly, club-like ambience for grownups.

Another to-die-for seafood establishment is the aptly named Killer Seafood. Owned by a trio who started out in the entertainment industry, the fast-casual setup (you place your order at the counter and then sit down to be served) continues its twelfth year in business with a philosophy of honing a selective menu and preparing it incredibly well. When he first started out with co-owners Kim Halverson and Kevin Crouse, Michael Scoggins, who claims he learned the restaurant business from bartending on the side and watching the Food Channel, wanted to bring a taste of Los Angeles (where the three previously lived) to Mexico Beach.

"To be successful," Scoggins relays, "I knew we had to have something to hang our hat on." One such item, he decided, would be fish tacos. "Twelve years ago, no one in the Southeast was serving fish tacos, but they were everywhere in LA." Although fish tacos more regularly appear these days, Killer Seafood's variety has something special going on—grilled fresh yellowfin tuna, which has spent a day in a teriyaki marinade. The idea to use tuna resulted after a sports fisherman friend provided an overly abundant supply, and the chefs needed a new way to feature it.

"The marinade begins with a teriyaki glaze," says Scoggins, "and we add soy sauce, olive oil, onions, garlic, ginger, sesame seeds, and pineapple juice." You can also order fried grouper for your tacos, and either fish alone is amazing, but the combination of the soft flour tortilla and toppings—lettuce, tomato, and shredded cheese, plus that Killer taco sauce—produce a dish you'll order again and again.

GET READY TO THINK YOU'VE DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN WHEN THAT FIRST BITE OF SHRIMP IN KILLER SEAFOOD SIMMERIN' SAUCE ENTERS YOUR MOUTH.

You can't fully appreciate the menu, however, without treating your taste buds to the Killer Seafood Simmerin' Sauce, originally concocted by Scoggins for a unique barbecue shrimp recipe. "I first cooked it for myself," he says, explaining that he was inspired by New Orleans—style flavors that originate with a tomato base and conclude with a grand finale of spices—fennel seed, rosemary, thyme, and garlic. It's so good! Get ready to think you've died and gone to heaven when that first bite of shrimp in Killer Seafood Simmerin' Sauce enters your mouth.

When you begin to wonder how you'll live without Killer Seafood Simmerin' Sauce back home, you'll be relieved to know that jars are sold in the restaurant, via their website, and in thirty different retail outlets around the Southeast. "Our customers will go home and talk their local gourmet store or fish market into carrying the sauce," says Scoggins, noting that a variety of recipes also come with each jar. "By allowing the sauce to simmer," he says, "it thickens and works well for a wide range of dishes, including chicken cacciatore and meatloaf."

Although the Killer Seafood brand is expanding, don't count on the restaurant getting any bigger (the capacity remains at forty seats) or any fancier (signed dollar bills add character to the rustic walls and ceiling). If the wait is a bit long during the busy











season, take advantage of the chance to observe the kitchen's activities in full view. "People enjoy watching us, and they'll talk with us while we cook," says Scoggins, adding that the open concept compels them to keep things extra clean—a source of pride for the owners and peace of mind for diners!

For a taste of Old Florida, you'll want to visit the Fish House Restaurant, a fixture in Mexico Beach since the 1970s. Erik Spilde, who started there as a cook, purchased the place in 1995 and now has daughters Nichole and Kayla in charge of the dining room. Wife Mishelle McPherson owns a sign business but also helps out as needed, supplying her sinfully good homemade cheesecakes.

"I bake all of the cheesecakes myself," she says. "Sometimes it'll be a chocolate mocha, which has a layer of chocolate and a layer of vanilla mocha on a chocolate cookie crumb crust with a milk chocolate top. Other times it's a tiramisu, which has a mocha cream with a ladyfinger crust and is dusted with chocolate powder." Equally decadent is the peanut butter cream version with a chocolate cookie crust and a chocolate and nut topping.

Another Fish House signature dessert is Aunt Sally's rum (Bundt) cake, crowned with either chocolate or vanilla plus a creamy whipped topping. The moist texture melts in your mouth with more than a hint of rum.

Although you'll see chocolate mentioned a few times on the menu, the made-fromscratch brownies are the supreme option for traditionalists. Ask for them just as they're described—topped with vanilla bean ice cream and caramel syrup. Likewise, if ice cream's your passion, you must try the old-fashioned root beer float, which tastes exactly how it should.

The desserts can steal the show, but don't let them distract you from the main courses. Mishelle confides that the seafood platter has undergone a few changes over the years, but the fried Gulf shrimp, bay scallops, fresh oysters, fish of the day, and crab remain nostalgic in many ways and are universally appealing. The Fish House's gumbo is also a winner in the true sense, having earned first place multiple times in the annual Mexico Beach Gumbo Cook-Off.







You can also taste some of the best wings imaginable while in Mexico Beach, thanks to Mango Marley's. Count on large wings that you can bite into. To select a winner from twenty-five different sauces available, choose the Mango Tango, a crowd favorite, which has a mild oriental flavor. Diehards who insist on hot wings should order the Tsunami, made with habanero peppers and pineapple and described on the menu as "the hottest of hot."

The menu is expansive, but as general manager Jessica Schwark confirms, all of the items are freshly prepared and cooked to order. While waiting, have a glass of wine, a beer, or a signature drink—the beverage menu is extensive. Mango Marley's is known for its margaritas, featuring fresh mango or watermelon. In the meantime, kids and adults (who believe that aging well means having fun) pass the time cheering their sports favorites on one of eight televisions; playing such

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traditional arcade games as foosball, old-school Pac-Man, and pinball; and listening to live singers and musicians, who typically perform three nights per week, except on Saturdays during football season. Given the many reasons to hang out, Mango Marley's is all about taking your time.

"Our staff is laid-back," says Schwark. "They aren't trained to 'turn and burn' customers. We see a lot of locals and regulars who vacation here, so the service is more personal."

As if prepared for friends, entrée sizes are generous. If you like burgers with a twist, try the half-pound Kahuna, made with Jamaican jerk seasoning and a sweet and savory sesame sauce. Served with grilled pineapple and bacon (delicious!), plus onions and lettuce on a toasted bun, the juicy, crunchy textures yield a scrumptious combination of sweet, hot, and salty.

Bacon also makes a splash when paired with shrimp, so forget about cholesterol and have the chargrilled bacon-wrapped shrimp skewers, served over yellow rice with a side of mango salsa. While you're indulging, order a side of red beans that even the pickiest Louisiana food critic would love. They're simmered with pineapple, garlic, andouille sausage, onion, bell pepper, celery, and Cajun seasoning.

If you can't eat it all, request a doggie bag. Incidentally, outdoor seating permits any canines in your family to keep you company—and share a bite!

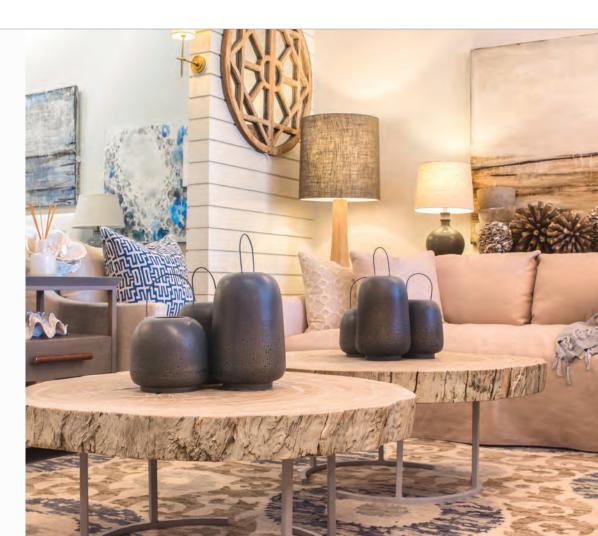


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When the sun rises, find a seat in Sharon's Cafe. Although she firmly believes God led her there, Sharon Call says she seemingly found the café by accident. "A friend of mine had told me a man was opening a breakfast place in Mexico Beach, and at the time I was traveling to Panama City for work. I stopped by before the building was finished and asked if he was hiring." In response, the man, JT Barineau, wanted to know if Sharon could make biscuits. "Yes, sir," she responded, and he hired her on the spot.

She learned to cook from her mother, who was a finalist in the 1970 Pillsbury Bake-Off for her Pronto Enchilada Bake casserole, so she felt right at home in the kitchen and in the dining room. JT ended up leasing the restaurant to Sharon within months, and she bought the property a few years later in 1990.

"It's a friendly atmosphere," says Sharon. "Most of my staff have been with me for years. I have a very good crew. They are happy with their jobs and they take care of our customers, or they wouldn't be here. One has a son who just turned twenty-one, and she was pregnant with him when she came to work for me. I call my crew the 'Cafe Kids' because I feel like I'm their mother, and now that their children are working here, I have 'Cafe Grandkids.'"

"IT'S A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE. MOST OF MY STAFF HAVE BEEN WITH ME FOR YEARS. I HAVE A VERY GOOD CREW. THEY ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR JOBS AND THEY TAKE CARE OF OUR CUSTOMERS."

Always striving to put a smile on children's faces, Sharon began making smiley face pancakes, followed by Mickey Mouse shapes. When adults wanted the same treatment, she decided to spread the joy in all sizes. The waffles will also remind you of your childhood—if you didn't grow up on the frozen variety. Sharon makes hers from scratch with real butter. She'll also add pecans to the batter, if you want, as well as give you toppings like strawberries, blueberries, and whipped cream.

Every item is cooked to order, so feel free to add, subtract, or substitute ingredients. Nevertheless, order the Western hash brown omelet with Sharon's usual blend: onions, tomato, peppers, and cheese, all folded into scrumptious hash browns. Also, as she suggests, request the addition of jalapeños if you like a little heat. The meal in itself is also great with the addition of a delicious Angus breakfast steak. The same Angus quality is noticeable, too, in the lunch burgers and rib eyes. Whether having breakfast or lunch, you can drink all the coffee, soda, and tea you desire with complimentary refills.

"I have some people tell me that when they die and go to heaven, they hope there's a Sharon's Cafe," Sharon reveals. Until that time comes, Mexico Beach—with its idyllic location, kindhearted people, and delicious food—really is a little slice of heaven in Northwest Florida.



















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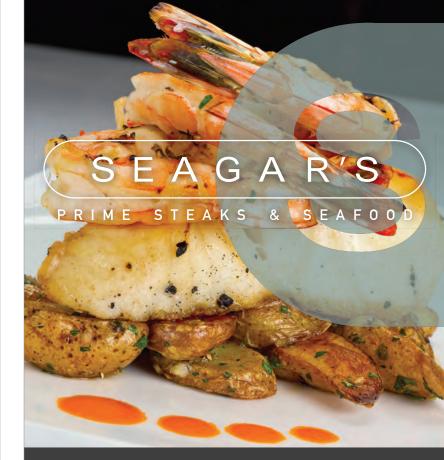
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