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about this magazine

The First Coast Register is a bimonthly general interest magazine published by The Ponte Vedra Recorder and OPC News, LLC. The magazine can be found throughout the upscale areas of greater Jacksonville. For advertising inquiries call 904.285.8831.

Hugh Osteen, Florida Market Manager
 Susan Griffin, Publisher
 Jon Blauvelt, Editor
 Paris Moulden, Publication Designer/Staff Writer
 Amber Lake, Staff Writer
 Ed Johnson, Senior Account Executive
 Kristin Flanagan, Account Executive
 April Snyder, Sales Assistant
 Bob Bueno, Circulation Manager

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on the cover

The cover of this Register features a photo of a First Coast bride at a wedding at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club in Jacksonville. Photo by Mallory Aussem of Evergold Photography (www.evergoldphotography.com/). Mallory focuses on small intimate weddings in the area, as well as elopements and other lifestyle sessions.



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interview by
JON BLAUVELT

photos by JON BLAUVELT

DARNELL SMITH

Darnell Smith is Florida Blue's market president for the North Florida Region.

Can you please briefly tell us about your background?

I was born and raised in the Lincolnville neighborhood of St. Augustine. People say we lived in poverty, and I think we did. But my mom did an awesome job taking care of my siblings and me. She was a single mom, and she worked as a cook six days a week, 12-plus hours a day. Regardless, she still did an incredible job instilling values in me that have shaped who I am.

I went to Florida State after high school at age 17. My mother passed away when I was a freshman. I had nowhere to go. Home had literally disappeared. 86 St. Francis Street was no longer home, and so, I really had to think to myself, what do I want to do? Losing my mom, I blamed my faith and challenged so many things for about a year. I woke up one morning, however, and said, "Get over yourself, kid. If you don't like what's happening, go do something about it." That day, I committed to not going to the streets and finding something that would allow me to be successful in society and give back.

I was really, really good at math, so somehow, I landed on electrical engineering and got a degree in that. After graduating, I ended up working for Maxwell House in Jacksonville, where I worked for three years. They had a downsizing, and I was the odd man out. I applied to Florida Blue and got a job. I didn't expect to stay long, but I loved it and ultimately did stay. I will be celebrating 29 years with the company in April.

I've been married for 30 years to my wonderful wife, who I met at Florida State. We have three kids.



As market president for the North Florida region, what are your primary roles and responsibilities?

I have an awesome job in that I have an opportunity to help with our margin and our mission. When you look at all of North Florida for Florida Blue, I have the accountability for our operating income, our revenue, how well we're perceived in the market, brand, you name it. Then, when you look at the mission side, it's about how well we give to the community and help the commu-

nity to achieve its goals in taking care of our neighbors. Whether it's Hurricane Michael in Panama City or whether it is hungry or homeless kids in Duval County, we're a company that cares enough to be able to give and help. I get to help make those types of decisions about us giving and what we give in North Florida. It's an amazing opportunity. I've been in this role for about five years. The previous 13 years, I led our service organization. I loved that job as well.



Darnell Smith gathers with Kortney Wesley and Terrye Mosley at a recent Florida Forum address, which is presented by Florida Blue.

What makes Florida Blue different?

I think we're a company with soul. With a heart. I've had a chance to work under three CEOs: Bill Flaherty, Michael Cascone Jr., Bob Lufrano and Pat Geraghty. I didn't really know Mr. Flaherty that well, but I really got to know the previous three, and it was always about the individual, the person, the employee, the customer. It's always about how do you help individuals reach their potential, be the very best versions of themselves. And so, I believe it's a company with heart. We care. We work hard to take care of the community. We take care of our employees. We try to do right by them in that regard. We make tough calls. We're willing to make certain that it comes down to putting the individual first and doing the right thing first, realizing it might not allow you to be as successful as you want to be. But knowing that in the long-term, it really is the right thing, and it's going to help in the long run, because you're living out all the things that you said were important.

We understand you're active in the community yourself.

What are you involved with?

I sit on the board of the Sulzbacher Center, of which I am the chair of the Health Services Committee. I also sit on the board for Cathedral Arts Projects. I've served on the JAX Chamber board, of which I served as the chair in 2017. I also love mentoring and helping kids.

When you reflect on your life, what do you attribute to your success?

First and foremost, I am a recipient of incredible blessings by my lord and savior. Second, I had an incredible parent who literally instilled incredible values in me that I call upon every day. The third component is almost as important as the other two. There were times in my life where I hit a crossroads, and I could have easily made a wrong turn, and someone stood in the gap, almost as an angel. For example, when my mother passed away, there was a professor at Florida State. He told me I could stay at his house. He said, "I'm not giving you any money, you can't use my car, you have to buy your own food, but you'll always have a place to come and stay." This man gave me a place to go. It blew

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Darnell Smith (center) gathers with the 2018 Women with Heart honorees for local nonprofit Volunteers in Medicine (VIM), as well as VIM staff and board members.
 Photo courtesy of VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

my mind that someone could be so caring. He had no reason and yet he did it. Examples like that shaped me to be able to say, all you have to do is be there for people. Those are the three things that I can now look at and say that's why I am who I am.

What are you most proud of in your life?

Being married to a wonderful, wonderful lady for almost 30 years. It's going to sound crazy, but it's not the norm. I broke a cycle. It was intentional for me to break that cycle. I'm really proud of that. We really, really love each other. Also seeing my kids graduate and even go further than me, from the standpoint of their education, was something that made me extremely proud. And then recently, to see my oldest son get married, as well as my niece, who is like a daughter to me and getting married later this year, those are amazing experiences to see. I've also been proud to see kids I've mentored also be successful.

What do you enjoy most about living on the First Coast?

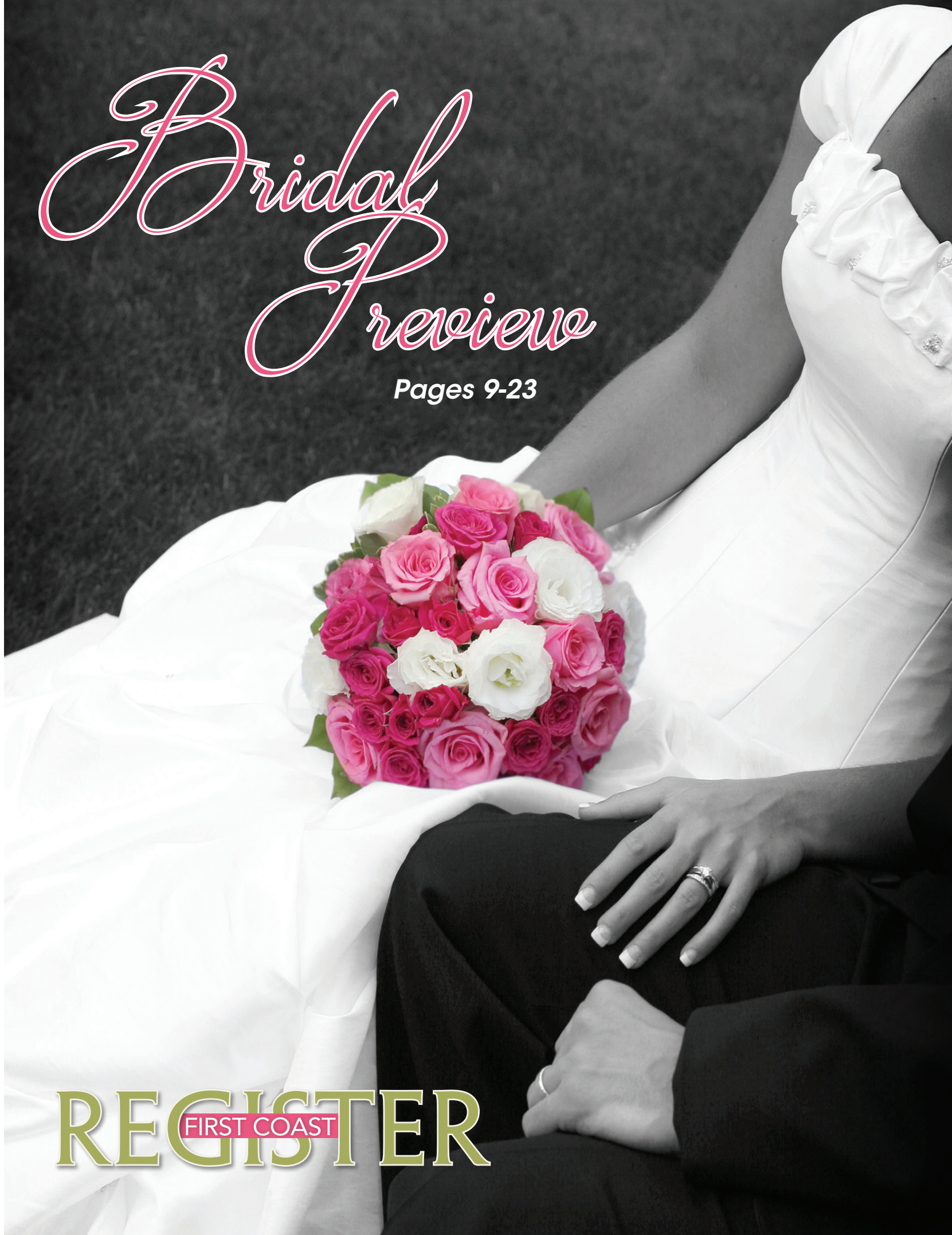
I love the people, I love the climate. We're a big city with a small-town feel. There's so much to do, so many places to go. You can pull up at almost any table and be welcome here in Jacksonville. You just have to want to be part of it. You can also work hard and really make it here. You can reach out and help people and see the fruit of your labor in that regard. It's like a playground for me. I love it. As I look back on it, if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't change one thing. It would be Jacksonville, Florida time and again.



Smith with his wife Celestine
 Photo courtesy of DARNELL SMITH

Bridal Preview

Pages 9-23



REGISTER
FIRST COAST

Something Old

Two brides share a maternal link through time

by AMBER LAKE

When Alexandra Adams Tyre walked down the aisle, she was stepping into a new chapter of her life. In another way, however, she was paying homage to her past.

Tyre's dress was the same one her mother had married her father in over 30 years before. Luckily for her, the dress stood the test of time. This is due in part to its classic design, but also, more importantly, to her mother's decision to professionally preserve the dress after her wedding all those years ago.

"I never really thought when I preserved it that my daughter would actually be wearing it someday," says Marsha Adams, Tyre's mother. "But it was really amazing to see her."

Adams also says the dress she picked out for her wedding was very similar to the one her mother, Tyre's grandmother, had worn on her wedding day. She says in this way, it was almost like three generations in the dress.

"(Many) people that saw it had no idea how special it actually was," Tyre says. "It definitely made the day more memorable. We took lots of pictures prior to me walking down the aisle with my mom. Those were some of the most special pictures to me. (Somewhat) even more so than just walking down the aisle was taking those pictures with her."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 ■





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Chandler Oaks Barn is an elegant, white barn venue boasting southern charm. The barn is nestled among mature oak trees on twenty secluded acres located in Saint Augustine, Florida.

Our property has several charming features including a beautiful pond with a quaint bridge and gazebo, an adorable Old Country Store with farm fresh eggs, old-fashioned candy and handmade gifts, a large pasture with friendly farm animals, and mossy oak trees throughout the grounds. Chandler Oaks Barn was designed with detail in mind, from shiplap walls, elegant chandeliers, modern floral rings and the timeless farm house tables from Magnolia home.

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Alexandra Tyre poses on her wedding day wearing her mother's dress. Photos courtesy of THE VEIL WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY



Marsha Adams on her wedding day
Photo courtesy of MARSHA ADAMS



A wedding dress waiting to be preserved by Oceanside Cleaners.
Photo by AMBER LAKE



A wedding dress preserved by Oceanside Cleaners
Photo by SARAH DIPITY, provided by OCEANSIDE CLEANERS

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

A few of the wedding guests did know the history of the dress and were taken aback when they saw her.

“My brother (Tyre’s uncle) came up to me afterward,” Adams says. “He said, ‘When she walked down the aisle, I just burst into tears because she looked just like you.’”

For many, either donning their mother’s gown or hoping their future daughter will wear theirs is mostly just wishful thinking. Too many factors need to align for a scenario such as Marsha’s and Alexandra’s. In reality, most women don’t share the same taste, styles fluctuate or people simply don’t have the same body type. One element that can be controlled, however, is ensuring the dress doesn’t deteriorate after many years of storage.

“I never really thought when I preserved it that my daughter would actually be wearing it someday. But it was really amazing to see her.”



Alexandra Tyre poses with her mother, Marsha Adams, on her wedding day wearing her mother's dress.

Clare Harris of Oceanside Cleaners specializes in wedding dress preservation. After Tyre decided she wanted to wear her mother's gown, she took it there to have them help restore it.

Harris says the process of preservation involves an extremely thorough cleaning and packing using acid-free materials. This keeps the dress from not only deteriorating but yellowing over time from exposure to light and air.

"All contaminants are eliminated from the gown," Harris says. "The dress is folded with a piece of tissue beneath each layer, and that ensures that it doesn't touch itself."

In this way, the dress can endure 25 to 30 years before it needs to be brought back in for replacement tissues.

Outside of storing the dress for sentimental value or hoping family reuses it, many people are opting to eventually repurpose their dresses in other ways. Harris says she has heard of people redesigning the gown into christening dresses, veils, pillows, quilts or even once, a Christmas tree skirt.

Part of Tyre hopes that one day her daughter will opt to wear the dress as she had done, and her mother before her. She doesn't want to pressure her, however. She recognizes the dress is a choice the bride ultimately has to make. Nonetheless, Tyre's dress will be preserved for up to 150 years. Tyre knows the decision to wear it could present itself as it did to her — the moment she put it on.

"When we pulled it out, I really didn't think it was going to fit," she says. "But as soon as I put it on, it truly fit like a glove. The dress was beautiful, it really was. It seemed it was meant to be."

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10

quick tips to make your wedding grand

by SHERRA JONES • Special to the Register



As the owner of Pop Décor, LLC, in Palm Coast, Sherra Jones specializes in designing unique customized gift bags and other stylish party favors that can be shipped anywhere in the United States. In addition, she offers detailed wedding coordination and honeymoon travel arrangements. Jones shares with the First Coast Register 10 quick tips to make your wedding grand.

1. Your invitation sets the tone for your wedding. The appearance should be flawless — grammatically worded, properly addressed and hand-cancelled to prevent damage that usually happens when envelopes are sent through a machine. Not all post offices will be accommodating, but search for those that will be considerate enough to help you.

2. To add a touch of color to the wedding invitation ensemble, choose a bold color for the return envelope. When the invitation is opened, the colored envelope adds interest.



3. Number the invitation response card on the back per the numbered guest list. Often, you receive a response with no name indicated. In cases such as this, you can verify the name based on the number on the back as it corresponds to the guest list.



4. If you were the sole planner for your wedding, then choose a day coordinator on the day of the wedding. You want to ensure things go smoothly, and this decision allows you to relax and enjoy the day.

5. Have your ushers manage crowd control. They should be the first to arrive before the ceremony and prepared to eagerly answer questions that a guest may have. For example, where is the bathroom or water fountain? Do you have directions to the reception venue? Where should I sit?

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6. On the reception menu, add the bride and groom's name at the top to make a keepsake for family members. If you can afford it, print each guest's name on the menu. The latter adds a personal touch and makes each guest feel welcome and appreciated.

7. The older family members should be seated in an area that provides an optimal view of the activities during the reception. Often, the guests will surround the dance floor, especially when the bride and groom arrive, and the view is blocked for the elderly who are seated.

8. To ward off possible theft, assign a reliable family member to monitor the gifts as they are received.

9. Purchase wedding insurance, specifically liability insurance.

10. To ensure the wedding couple's safety, have a private driver/chauffeur pick them up after the sendoff at the reception.

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HOW TO PLAN YOUR

Heartfelt Honeymoon

by JON BLAUVELT

After experiencing the stress of wedding planning and a range of emotions on your big day, your honeymoon should provide a chance to take a breath, celebrate your marriage and look forward to a lifetime of love. But where will you go and what will you do? The Register consulted the expertise of First Coast luxury travel advisor Maria Poole with Maria Poole Travel to help you plan your ultimate post-wedding vacation.

CONSIDER A FEW QUESTIONS FIRST

When Poole works with honeymooners, she typically asks a series of questions first to determine which location and experience would be best for each respective couple. Consider these questions typically asked by Poole to jumpstart your honeymoon planning process.

- How do you see your honeymoon?
- Do you want to simply relax, eat and drink, and take naps? Or do you want to be super active and have each day planned?
- How do you see your outfits? What do you want your pictures to look like?
- What do you want to pack?
- How long do you want your honeymoon to be? Poole recommends seven days minimum...
- What's your budget?
- What do you want to feel or have experienced by the time you return home?

DETERMINE YOUR EXPERIENCE

According to Poole, today's honeymooners head to Instagram and/or Pinterest to search for one-of-a-kind experiences for their dream getaways.

"They desire a deeper level of personalization with their honeymoon," Poole says. "They want every detail personalized. The right hotel, the best table at a hot restaurant. They want somewhere no one is talking about, yet."

What does that mean for you? Here are a few ideas from Poole to get you dreaming.

- Culinary classic — Take a few cooking classes, visit some wineries and eat with locals. This is the foodie's top choice for sure!
- Bless your body — Spoil yourself at the spa, hike the hills or set sail on a sunny day. The body is your oyster!
- Me to we — Instead of the experience being about you, Poole says some honeymooners are deciding to take a trip that allows them to volunteer and give back to the community.



Maria Poole of Maria Poole Travel
Photo by JON BLAUVELT

- Spiritual setting — Become even closer with your spouse by exploring deeper into your spiritual sense and/or faith.
- Traditional Trip — In no way is traditional boring or bad, if that's your thing. Head to an all-inclusive hotel or resort at the beach, sink your feet in the sand and eat and drink until your heart is content.

FIND THE RIGHT HONEYMOON HOTSPOT FOR YOU

So now that you have conducted some self-reflection and established what's most important for you, it's time to decide on the location of your honeymoon.

According to Poole, traditional honeymooners seeking that romantic getaway are still heading to the always-popular Caribbean for an all-inclusive experience. Italy, Greece, Cabo, Hawaii and France are other top choices predicted for 2019, she says. Becoming more and more popular, Poole says, are exotic locations such as over-the-water bungalows in Indonesia and the Maldives, which Poole says is another top choice for 2019.

For her adventure travelers, Poole says honeymooners are choosing Japan, Croatia, Iceland, Portugal and Egypt. Safaris in Africa are also becoming big, she says, as well as similar experiential honeymoons, such as visiting an all-inclusive ranch in Montana.

Whatever you decide to do and wherever you decide to go, your honeymoon will be your version of perfect, and mark your beginning of forever with that special someone. Enjoy!

Maria Poole Travel is a Virtuoso Member and Odyssey Travel Affiliate. Visit mariapooletravel.com for more information.

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Hammock Beach celebrates engagement season with

Wedding Open House

by JON BLAUVELT

Situated just south of St. Augustine in Palm Coast is Hammock Beach, a popular location for First Coast weddings featuring a backdrop of blue skies and swaying palms, cinnamon sand beach and views of the Atlantic Ocean.


Engaged couples, wedding planners and brides-to-be recently had the opportunity to preview all of this and more, when the resort hosted a wedding open house on Jan. 13. The event provided future newlyweds with a look at the resort's event space and banquet menu, with property tours showcasing mock set-ups of a cocktail hour, ceremony and reception.

As seen by attendees of the open house, Hammock Beach features 75,000 square feet of ocean, golf course, Intracoastal Waterway and ball-room venues. The resort's ceremony venues include five outdoor options, ranging in aesthetics, style and size. For example, the Champions Event Lawn overlooks the 18th hole of the resort's Ocean Course and accommodates a maximum of 300 guests, while the Lodge Event Lawn accommodates a maximum of 140 guests.



A table is set at the wedding open house as part of a mock set-up for a reception.

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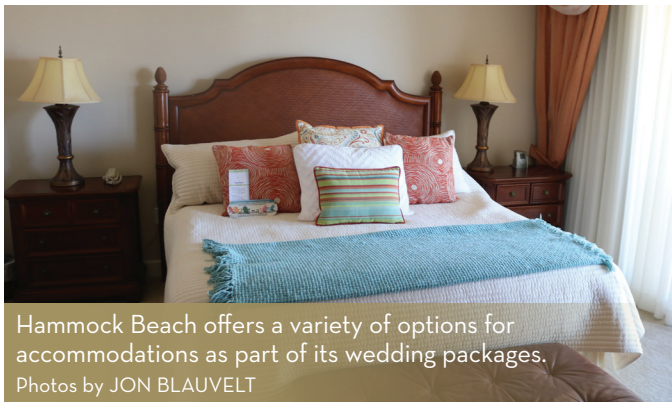
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Photo by HAMMOCK BEACH, A SALAMANDER RESORT



Hammock Beach offers a variety of options for accommodations as part of its wedding packages.

Photos by JON BLAUVELT

Hammock Beach offers receptions in its Ocean Ballroom, which is ideal for large weddings with a maximum of 300 people, and in its Atlantic Ballroom, which is better for smaller weddings with a maximum of 150 guests. The Conservatory Clubhouse, which accommodates 100 guests, brings the outdoors in, with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a natural Florida preserve. Hammock Beach also offers three venues for outdoor receptions that range in space from a maximum of 140 guests to 300.

Before and after tours of the property, guests at the open house enjoyed tasting hors d'oeuvres and drinks from the resort's banquet menu to get a sneak peek of what the menu may entail on their big day. Couples getting married at Hammock Beach have a variety of culinary options to choose from, with buffet options including barbecue (\$52+ per person), South West (\$50+ per person), Florida marsh (\$56+ per person) and seafood (\$80+ per person). Those electing to have plated dinners choose a soup or salad, entrée and dessert; prices depend on what the couple chooses. A "Best Wishes Brunch" is also available for \$34.95 per person, with unlimited bloody marys and mimosas offered for \$12 per person.

Attendees of the open house also had the chance to view a few guest rooms that are included in the resort's wedding packages. Options for accommodations range from a one-bedroom ocean view suite in the Main Tower to a three-bedroom resort view condo in The Villas.

Wedding packages at Hammock Beach, which include an on-site wedding coordinator, start at \$140+ per person. In addition, Hammock Beach also features two championship golf courses designed by Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson, a 10,000-square-foot spa and fitness center, a 6.5-acre multi-level pool complex, restaurants and bars and more.

For more information, visit www.hammockbeach.com.

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by JENNIFER MELVILLE
special to the Register

Why settle for good enough when you can incorporate all your favorite elements of design into a dream dress that perfectly reflects your style and individuality?

Jacksonville resident Jalona Marie Falkner of Jalona Marie Bridal has helped over 100 brides do just that and make their wedding dress dreams a reality.

"I'm a creative, innovative problem solver," Falkner says. "My whole goal is to get to the root of the problem and create solutions that are easy, flexible and accessible. Jalona Marie Bridal is the perfect example of that because the business is all about giving brides access to affordable, custom bridal gowns that are made in a couple of months and we do this remotely — we use technology, Facetime and all kinds of tools."

Falkner started sewing in her late 20s, and the moment she started making garments for herself, she felt like a "prodigy" because the process of creating garments, grading, creating patterns and learning the terms and technologies came quickly to her. It didn't take long for that to become apparent to others too.

"Eventually, everyone started to notice my outfits ... and they started asking if I could make things for them too," Falkner says.

.....
“I'm a wedding dress fanatic because
of what that one dress means. ”
It's a symbol of transformation. ”
.....

Jalona Marie Falkner of Jalona
Marie Bridal in Jacksonville
Photo courtesy of JALONA MARIE FALKNER



Dress by Jalona Marie Bridal
Photo courtesy of PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAISY

Doll Face Custom Made Clothing for Women was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and customers soon began inquiring if she would consider making their wedding gowns. During her third bridal project, the client desired a particularly complicated dress, featuring various design details and encrusted jewelry that Falkner had never used before. So, she made several sample dresses for the client and refined her process for that project.

“When she tried that dress on, it was a perfect fit,” Falkner says. “Those beads fell and hit her in places that made her look angelic and she cried. I cried. In that moment, I really felt like, ‘I’ve got something here. This is where I’m supposed to be.’”

Falkner’s husband accepted a job transfer to Jacksonville, and she decided to devote herself exclusively to wedding wear. The mother of two now runs Jalona Marie Bridal from Jacksonville’s Southside, and she absolutely loves what she does.

“I’m a wedding dress fanatic because of what that one dress means,” she says. “It’s a symbol of transformation. Once a woman puts on a wedding dress, it means she’s no longer a young lady. She’s a woman. She’s a wife. She’s walking into a completely new phase of her life.”

Following an initial consultation, Jalona Marie gowns are created in three phases, beginning with design. The wedding dress planner feature on her website assists brides in narrowing down dress elements, and her weekly Facebook broadcast — The Wedding Dress Lab — helps brides understand everything from choosing fabric, to getting measurements done, to selecting the best silhouette for their body types.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ■

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Dresses by Jalona Marie Bridal
Photo courtesy of PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAISY



Photo courtesy of
LAVISH TOUCH PHOTOS



■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

“In this phase, we pin down the details of your dress,” Falkner says, “We give you a sketch, an illustration of your dress. There are unlimited revisions to that sketch.

“Once we get final approval on the sketch and the fabric, we move to phase 2, which is the creation or the production phase,” Falkner continues. “This phase takes about 45 days. Your dress is being made. You get sneak peeks of the dress and you get to approve the dress before it’s actually shipped.”

Phase 3 is delivery, when the bride receives her dress in a decorated box and protective wedding dress bag. Each bride chooses a complementary veil to match the gown or a crystal tiara, in addition to an alterations credit of \$75.

“That’s actually cash we send out to the bride when their dress is ready,” Falkner says. “Sometimes the dress fits perfectly, sometimes she’s lost weight, sometimes she may even have gained weight in certain areas. It’s her opportunity to perfect the fit. We feel like it makes for a better experience if she doesn’t have to come out of her pocket



Photo by YAZI DAVI

again for alterations. If she ends up not needing them, she can go get a pedicure or manicure or massage or whatever it is. It’s her money to do what she will with.”

Falkner may not have a brick-and-mortar showroom, but you can view her work on her website, Facebook, Instagram or Pinterest pages.

“I feel like every bride deserves to be her own dream bride,” she says. “We talk a lot about the dream dress. We talk about the dream wedding. But we don’t talk a lot about being your own dream bride.

“I feel like that’s something every bride deserves regardless of her wedding budget, regardless of how much time she has to get ready for the wedding,”

Falkner adds. “I feel like every bride deserves to be flawless and in a dress that’s totally a reflection of their personality and style.”

For more information, check out www.jalonamariebridal.com or find her on Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest at Jalona Marie Bridal.

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Ancient City takes center stage for ninth annual SAINT AUGUSTINE FILM FESTIVAL

by JON BLAUVELT

The magical, artistic aura of St. Augustine was especially evident the weekend of Jan. 17-20, when the nation's oldest city hosted the ninth annual Saint Augustine Film Festival.

The event featured 47 films, including features, documentaries and short films. Attendees of the Festival screened the films at the Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, all three theaters at the Corazon Cinema and Café and the Gamache-Koger Theater inside the Ringhaver Student Center at Flagler. New this year, the St. Augustine Distillery hosted a special screening on Jan. 17.

More than a dozen filmmakers, actors or people who are the focus of documentaries were in attendance of the Festival, including actress and director Karen Allen, who is known for her roles as Marion Ravenwood in "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and Katy in "Animal House," among others. She showed her directorial debut of "A Tree. A Rock. A Cloud.," and also received the Saint Augustine Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award. A few of Allen's other films, including "Year by the Sea," were also shown at the Festival. The acclaimed actor also used the time in St. Augustine to scout locations for a film she's in the process of making.

"The Alligator Farm is in the film; the Lightner Museum is in the film," said Allen, who visited St. Augustine for the first time. "It's an incredibly beautiful, scenic location to make a film."

Allen was among the filmmakers and actors/actresses at the Festival with high praise of the Ancient City. Actor Ray Abruzzo, who played Carmine Lupertazzi Jr. in "The Sopranos," said it's hard not to love the area.



Actress and director Karen Allen (center) stands with The Corazon Cinema & Café Owner Karla Wagner and husband Bob.
Photos by JON BLAUVELT



Edward George, Sandra Brum and St. Augustine Beach Mayor Undine George



Jill This, Roberta Harris and David and Bonnie Hobbs

“It’s an incredibly beautiful, scenic location to make a film.”



Artist and sculptor Frosty Myers, wife and producer Debra Myers, actress and producer Kathryn Witt and actor and writer Ray Abruzzo



Juliana Koutouzakis and Sway DiFeo

“This is my first time in St. Augustine, and I’m just amazed how beautiful it is and the history that goes along with it, back to the slave trade through the civil rights movement to where we are today,” Abruzzo said. “It’s pretty interesting to see how the American story is told here in St. Augustine. It’s pretty impressive.”

Actor Vincent De Paul, whose film “His Wives” played at the festival, returned to St. Augustine for the second time and said he wants to create a film in the town.

“It is so cinematic,” he said. “I would love to do a movie back in time.”

The Festival also featured a few local celebrities, including St. Augustine resident, actor and sculptor Frosty Myers, whose documentary about his life, “The Art & Times of Frosty Myers,” was screened at the event.

“This is like a dream come true,” Myers said. “It’s a chance to show my film, which I’m very proud of. It’s a story of my life in pictures, and the art that I do and all of the famous artist friends that I had in the 60s and 70s. ... It’s a great thrill to be here and be part of this film festival. It’s the kind of stuff you can’t make up.”

Racing legend and St. Augustine resident Hurley Haywood was also in attendance for the screening of his film, “Hurley,” which focuses on his life and decision to publicly come out as gay.

The opening night film at Lewis Auditorium on Jan. 18 was “The Return of the Hero,” featuring Jean Dujardin, who won the Academy Award for Best Actor in 2012 for the film, “The Artist.” The centerpiece film on Jan. 19 was “Fiddlin,” a documentary about the world’s oldest fiddler’s convention in the Appalachian Mountains. The closing night film on Jan. 20 was the Canadian documentary, “Sharkwater Extinction,” which is about the illegal shark fin industry.

For more information on the Saint Augustine Film Festival, visit www.staugfilmfest.com.



Gregory von Hausch, the CEO of the Saint Augustine Film Festival and the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, stands with Cathie and Allen Altman of St. Augustine, longtime patrons and sponsors of the St. Augustine Film Festival.



Luke Victor, actor Vincent De Paul and Umberto Gaudino

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A FEW OF OUR *Favorite Things*

From St. Augustine to Amelia Island and the Beaches communities to San Marco, the First Coast has a long list of places, businesses, events and food that makes it unique. Impossible to highlight them all, the First Coast Register shares a few of their favorite things in the area.



A beautiful day in St. Augustine



A small bottle of Rombauer Vineyards from Coastal Wine Market + Tasting Room in Nocatee



Art at Cutter + Cutter in St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra



Seared duck breast at Bistro Aix in San Marco



Shopping for home décor at Sidney Cardel's in Jacksonville Beach



Searching for surfboards at Fort George Surf Shop on Heckscher Drive in Jacksonville



A YETI from The Spa at Ponte Vedra Inn + Club



Listening to music at Roscolusa Songwriters Festival in Nocatee



A relaxing afternoon at Cap's on the Water in St. Augustine



A trip to Fernandina's Fantastic Fudge in Fernandina Beach

A stroll through Washington Oaks Gardens State Park in Palm Coast



Sweet cars from the Ponte Vedra Auto Show



World of Nations in Jacksonville



A spirit from St. Augustine Distillery

Dog walking in the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve



The HEAL Foundation's surf camp in Neptune Beach



The stunning design of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Fernandina Beach



Spending some time with the lions at San Marco Square



Filet mignon from Cowford Chophouse in Jacksonville



Deck the Chairs in Jacksonville Beach

JASON TETLAK

changes the way we view art (literally)

by AMBER LAKE

Some people see the cup as half empty and some see it as half full. Interactive artist Jason Tetlak wants you to see it both ways and in 3D.

Tetlak works with various forms of optical illusions in his art, which can be found both hanging in galleries and decorating the walls of downtown Jacksonville as massive murals. One of which was recently named the “largest anaglyph 3D mural” by Guinness World Records.

The mural is titled “Brooklyn” after the neighborhood in which it resides in downtown Jacksonville. It features the hip-hop group, the Beastie Boys. Tetlak got the idea from his daughter who suggested the song, “No Sleep Till Brooklyn,” when hearing about the potential location.

According to the Guinness World Records, the mural is 1,930 square feet and took Tetlak 50 hours over the course of a week to complete. The certificate was awarded to him on March 14, 2018.

Tetlak is a graduate of the arts from Flagler College in St. Augustine. He founded the Murray Hill Mural Project and has been working on implementing optical illusion in his work for the past 15 years. He has used QR codes, 3D, augmented reality and red “reveal” to create work that engages with viewers and distorts their perception. Tetlak says he just wants people to take their time.



Photos by AMBER LAKE

ABOVE: Jason Tetlak (right) auctions his work before it hits the fire at his gallery event “Burn After Reading” on Jan. 12 at Space 42 in Jacksonville.

LEFT: Tetlak burns his work at “Burn After Reading.”



A gallery show features the “red reveal” style of interactive art.



Fire dancers entertain at "Burn After Reading."

"A major influence, in all honesty, is the way people engage with art," he says. "I've done arts markets and the Art Walk and those kind of things. When you're sitting there, you're just watching people engage with the artwork and more often than not it's very superficial. People are kind of just strolling past and going, 'That's cool,' and they just keep right on walking. They don't spend a whole lot of time actually studying the paintings or engaging with them."

Recently, Tetlak grabbed people's attention with his gallery show event titled, "Burn After Reading." On the last day of his show on Jan. 12, Tetlak hosted a party to burn all the unsold artwork featured in the gallery. The theme of the show featured the idea of hidden messages in the red reveal style illusion, which uses red light to uncover hidden typographic messages within the paintings. The idea of burning the work afterwards fit with the theme's "secret message" context so "the message doesn't fall into the wrong hands," Tetlak says.

Luckily for Tetlak, only two pieces ended up being burned that night. The rest were sold, auctioned or "won" in a raffle. He referred to the event as, "probably the best-case scenario."

Right now, Tetlak is taking some time to plan and pursue opportunities. For people looking to enjoy his work, however, you might drive by and see him working from the street. Just as he wants his work to be engaging for people, he finds painting murals to be more "interactive" for himself.



"Brooklyn" features the hip-hop group, the Beastie Boys. The mural won "largest anaglyph 3D mural" by Guinness World Records.

Photo courtesy of JASON TETLAK

"Painting on a canvas is kind of a solitary process, you know you're in your studio by yourself, it's just you and the canvas," he says. "When you're out on the street painting there are people driving by and honking. ... I have people come over who are super excited saying, 'You know we've been watching you paint from our living room all week!'"

For more information on his work or to buy prints, visit his website at art.tetlak.com.

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Givers Gala

by JON BLAUVELT

raises nearly \$150,000 for United Way-SJC, celebrates philanthropy

The United Way of St. Johns County and its supporters raised nearly \$150,000 at the organization's second annual Givers Gala on Jan. 25 at Embassy Suites by Hilton St. Augustine Beach.

With 260 people attending the sold-out event, funds were raised through ticket proceeds, sponsorships, a live auction led by state Sen. Aaron Bean, a silent auction and other donations made at the event. According to Melissa Nelson, president and CEO of the United Way of St. Johns County, the proceeds will go toward the organization's Community Impact Fund, which is designed to make program grants for nonprofit partners.

"This is one of several ways we are able to make a difference in the community," Nelson told the Register via email. "For example, we typically have 28 to 30 nonprofits present programs to us during the spring process. The portal to make a request for funding has just opened. In the next few months, we will work with volunteers to vet the organizations and programs to determine what should be funded and at what level."



ABOVE: Jane and Joseph Bolles receive the John and Peggy Bailey Sr. Community Leadership Award, with United Way-SJC Board Chair Bobby Crum standing by.



LEFT: Steve Walker accepts the Corporate Award on behalf of Publix.

Photos by JON BLAUVELT



Paula and Randall Ringhaver, alongside Melissa Nelson and Bev Slough, address the crowd after receiving the Legacy Award.



The team from Alpha-Omega Miracle Home accepts the Nonprofit Award.



Gregory B. White receives the Trailblazer Award from Melissa Nelson.



Donna and Glenn Guzzo



Clay Nettles, Jay Owen and Noah Bailey

In addition to dinner and dancing, thanks to music from The Royals, the local organization also presented a series of awards throughout the evening. Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, which provides housing, counseling and education to single mothers and their children and senior women, received the Nonprofit Award. Jim and Kathy Lobinsky received the Emerging Philanthropist Award. Their efforts include, among others, supporting the Special Olympics; Hugs Across the County; the Nicholas Wozniak Foundation; and the United Way's RealSense Tax Prep program.

The United Way awarded Publix the Corporate Award for demonstrating a "company-wide commitment to support the community and nonprofits financial-

ly, with volunteers and through advocacy." Gregory B. White received the Trailblazer Award for his efforts in supporting and improving the quality of life for those in the West Augustine community. Randal and Paula Ringhaver were awarded the Legacy Award for "multi-generational philanthropic giving and their commitment to nonprofits."

In honor of John Bailey Sr., the founding member and past president of the United Way of St. Johns County, the John and Peggy Bailey Sr. Community Leadership Award was presented to Joseph and Jane Boles Jr.

"They loved this community," Mark Bailey, son of John and Peggy Bailey, said about his parents. "Our recipients are no different."



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Christine Griggs,
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Photo by
LAURA MOREY

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Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL "Blood, Breath & Tears" annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has been awarded the AV preeminent rating™ from Martindale-Hubbell® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys. She also appears as a legal commentator on CNN and HLN.

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The Ponte Vedra Beach location features seating for 220 guests in the main dining room, plus room for up to 38 guests in the Library Room, a private dining and event space. Photo by LAURA MOREY

Ruth's Chris Steak House in Ponte Vedra Beach was bustling on an evening in late December 2018, as women gathered to mix and mingle, celebrating new friends and the restaurant. The "Friends of Ruth" event — one of two, back-to-back events at the restaurant — was hosted by General Manager Christine Griggs as a thank you to guests and a way of giving back to the people who have enthusiastically supported the restaurant for almost 20 years at the Beaches.

Griggs says the event was all about building relationships and community. She was struck by how connected the "Friends of Ruth" group was.

"Many of the guests knew each other, enjoying the opportunity for camaraderie and making new friendships," says Griggs. "Whether they are a weekly guest, or a once-a-year, special occasion guest, we strive to give everyone the best steakhouse experience. Our guests know when they come here, they are amongst friends, and that includes our staff."

The restaurant, which recently completed a \$1.3 million renovation, will celebrate 20 years in Ponte Vedra Beach this October.

A Ponte Vedra Beach native, Griggs began her career at the Ponte Vedra location three years ago, first as an intern, and then working her way up to manager. She felt that connection to the people within the community has helped her in her role at the restaurant. Six months ago, Griggs was promoted to general manager. She attended the Episcopal School of Jacksonville and is a graduate of Florida State University.

Pete Tambini, regional vice president of operations for the southeast region, focused on the tradition of hospitality established by Founder Ruth Fertel in 1965.

"Ruth made people feel like friends," Tambini explains. "We want to continue Ruth's tradition of southern hospitality and thank the people of the Beaches for being our friends. The 'Friends Of Ruth' event is just one of the many ways we give back to the community."

Tambini says the support of the local community is an important part of the philosophy of the restaurant. Ruth's Chris Steak House is a sponsor of the DONNA Marathon Weekend, held Feb. 8-10 in 2019. The DONNA Marathon Weekend is an official event by the DONNA Foundation, supporting those affected by breast cancer and funding important breast cancer research.

The Ponte Vedra Beach location features seating for 220 guests in the main dining room, plus room for up to 38 guests in the Library Room, a private dining and event space. The Library Room is equipped with HD satellite conferencing technology, connecting to 115 Ruth's Chris restaurants across the country.

Ruth's Chris Steak House has 153 locations worldwide, including 15 locations in Florida; two of which are located in Northeast Florida — Ponte Vedra Beach and Jacksonville's Riverfront in the Doubletree by Hilton. Ruth's Chris Steak House Ponte Vedra Beach is located at 814 A1A North, #103.

Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance

returns for 24th year



by JON BLAUVELT

Photos by DEREMERSTUDIOS.COM

The first time Chris Brewer attended the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, he felt like he was experiencing some sort of weird yet perfect dream.

"Everything that I could imagine would be there from a car standpoint was there," says Brewer, now the director of communications for the event. "The way that the cars are detailed, the way they're restored, the quality of the paint, the quality of the interiors. Everything is just to a level that it's hard to believe it even exists. It's such a high standard and high quality."

With the Amelia returning to the First Coast for the 24th consecutive year March 7-10, Brewer is encouraging others to experience this "dream world" for themselves. Held on the grounds of the Golf Club of Amelia Island at the Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, the event boasts hundreds and hundreds of cars and motorcycles, including higher-end, luxury and premium brands, as well as "survivor cars" that have remained untouched



since the day they were built.

Starting as a one-day event in 1996 with less than 100 cars, the Amelia has grown into a multi-day experience featuring 300 show cars in the field on Sunday, March 10 alone. Brewer says they expect approximately 25,000 people to attend from around the world and 600 people to volunteer.

"We really like to think of it as a lifestyle event," Brewer says. "A lot of people get dressed up for it. You wouldn't be surprised to see guys in suits, ladies in dresses. It's like a day out on the town."

As is the case every year, the Amelia celebrates a figure who is steeped in racing heritage and legend. This year, the event is honoring Jacky Ickx, who is known for his six victories in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France. Ickx, who will be in attendance of the Amelia, is also the 1967 European Formula 2 champion and owns eight World Championship F1 victories (and three non-championship wins),

plus second place in the 1969 and 1970 F1 World Championships. Ickx scored 37 individual race victories in the World Sports Car Championship and back-to-back World Sports Car Championships in 1982 and 1983, among other accomplishments.

According to Brewer, the 2019 Amelia will also honor and celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Porsche 962, which is considered one of the greatest and most accomplished sports racing cars of all time. On Saturday, March 9, a seminar will be held in the morning featuring a panel with Ickx, Hurley Haywood and other drivers who will tell stories of racing the car. In addition, says Brewer, the event is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta, and the 50th anniversary of NHRA Gainesville Raceway, the site of the Gatornationals.

New this year, the Amelia will feature the “Cars of the Rock Stars 2019,” which is a collection of vehicles and guitars owned by John Oates of Hall and Oates, as well as additional vehicles owned or closely associated with well-known rock stars. The display will allow access to the instruments Oates has played, as well as an opportunity to meet the musician in person.



In addition, Cincinnati-based artist David Snyder has hand painted a Fender Stratocaster guitar with images of automobiles owned or closely associated with musicians, such as Janis Joplin’s 1964 Porsche 356C, a 1959 Chevrolet Stingray Racer driven by Elvis Presley and a Porsche 911 GT3-R customized to celebrate Eddie Van Halen. The guitar will be sold on March 9 during the RM Sotheby’s

Amelia Island auction to support The Amelia Island Concours d’Elegance Foundation, which has donated more than \$3.45 million to North Florida-based charities.

Continuing an annual tradition, the Amelia will feature the Mercedes-Benz Cocktail Reception and Gala Dinner on Saturday, March 9. Other events throughout the four-day event include a Guardians of Porsche Wine Maker’s Dinner on Thursday, March 7, the Porsche Driving experience on Friday, March 8, silent auctions and more. A full schedule of events, along with details about the Amelia and tickets, can be found online at www.ameliacconcours.org.

“I think there’s just sort of that magical quality that a Concours has that no other event has,” Brewer says. “It allows you to dream for the day.”

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by AMBER LAKE

Yellow House is located at 577 King St. in Jacksonville.

YELLOW

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HOUSE

The Yellow House is technically a gallery. It is a physical space that displays art from artists around the region while promoting and selling the work to the public.

It isn't one for technicalities, however. Just like the artists that display there, the Yellow House won't fit into a box. More aptly, one could describe the location as a "hub" or "collaboration" or even simply, a "home."

Not that it doesn't lack direction; Yellow House is where "Art + Action Meet Change." According to the mission statement, the space is, "connecting art and community to build understanding, inspire empathy and spark civic engagement." It does this by not only hosting activist artists but also public events that stimulate dialogue and promote diversity.

Yellow House is the brain-child of the former director of the Cummer Museum, Hope McMath. She opened the nonprofit House in August 2017, with the aspiration of combining her love of activism and art. The house is consciously located within the mixed-income region that stands on the cusp of the CoRK Arts District — between the Riverside, Lackawanna and Mixon Town communities.



A school bus is parked outside Yellow House and decorated with art.



Yellow House founder Hope McMath with volunteers, Phyllis Bell Davis and Arlette Hernandez.
Photos by AMBER LAKE

McMath dreamed of creating a space, “where 20 people can sit in a room and share ideas to tackle challenges.” That is why she designed the gallery to be “set up like a living room,” she says.

“The thing we’re trying to do is to provide a venue for artists where it’s not necessarily about the art looking good over the couch, but it’s art that has a really powerful story to tell,” McMath says. “I think there’s been a misconception that art that is socially relevant isn’t collectible. Yet, with every show we’ve done, we’ve almost completely sold out. This reinforces for these artists that this is a viable work to be doing.”

In addition to showcasing a diverse array of artists and messages, Yellow House is engaged with a variety of community projects. Notably, these include its involvement with Hurricane Irma recovery relief and partnerships with the Mayo Clinic, The 5 & Dime theatre, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and Jewish Family and Community Services.

The Yellow House’s engagement with the community is just another way to help cross boundaries and bring people together. In some ways, simply by hosting an artist’s work, people are invited to discuss and evaluate the message, opening dialogue that bridges gaps between cultures.

Recently, Yellow House hosted an exhibit by Thony Aiuppy, titled, “Piercing the Veil.”



Thony Aiuppy’s paintings “Establish the Work” and “Down Since I Began to Crawl,” both are mixed media on canvas.

Aiuppy is currently an adjunct college art professor at University of North Florida and a former elementary art teacher for a Duval County school. His 28-piece collection reflects on his journey researching and uncovering historical racism and discrimination in America, predominately on a regional level.

“I’ve been doing a lot of research and learning about the history of the city and history about how the South was built and taking that history and weaving it with my own

personal story of (uncovering) my own privilege as a white man,” Aiuppy says. “I use these paintings as a way for me to learn to dig deeper. The art that I make is the research, just the dreaming and the learning process.”

During the exhibition reception, Aiuppy answered many questions regarding his work and his reasons behind it.

“I’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback and have gotten to have a lot of good conversations with people about the work,” Aiuppy says. “Especially people who may not have positive feelings toward what I am doing. Through conversation they become more open to hearing and understanding more of the ‘why’ part of making it. And then it’s like this personal connection (is made.)”

For more information on the Yellow House, events or to donate, visit YellowHouseArt.org.

Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room

A Nocatee haven for wine and food lovers alike

by JON BLAUVELT



One day in 2014, Steve and Shaun Lourie were driving down Crosswater Parkway in Nocatee and examining the land that had been cleared when a light went off in their respective minds.

“We said, ‘We should do something,’” Steve Lourie remembers. “We should go for it.”

The couple at that moment decided to act on their entrepreneurial spirit and embark on opening a new business in the burgeoning community. Wheels spinning, they came down to wine, which they both shared a passion for, and thought many in the community enjoyed too. They were right.

Opening in 2016, Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room at the Nocatee Town Center has become a favorite hangout spot for many in the community. A “blended experience,” as described by Steve, Coastal Wine offers retail wine for sale, wine by the glass, gourmet cheeses and meats and a diverse small plates and tapas menu. The Nocatee business also holds various tastings and events with winemakers, private events and off-site events, too.

“It’s been an absolute blessing, and we are endlessly grateful for the support of the community,” says Steve, who moved to Nocatee with Shaun in 2013. “We see new faces every day. It’s just a testament to



ABOVE: Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room Co-owners Steve and Shaun Lourie

Photo courtesy of STEVE LOURIE

TOP LEFT: The ultimate burger paired with a glass of wine

Photos by JON BLAUVELT



Coastal comfort cheese steak



LEFT: Coastal Wine Market offers wines from all over the world.

RIGHT: Coastal Wine Market Chef Jody Petronella

BELOW: Roasted Brussels sprouts with Italian sausage



how much this community has grown. It's just a wonderful gathering place that has seemed to catch on. So, we're very lucky."

Encompassing 1,200 square feet and featuring exposed brick walls and wood flooring, Coastal Wine exudes an intimate yet comfortable style with a rustic flair.

Several wooden high-top tables and chairs are scattered throughout the market for guests to sit and enjoy their drinks and snacks. One side of the business is lined with bottles of wine from all over the world, while the other features a bar and spread of craft beers.



While previously only offering cheeses and meats, Coastal Wine now offers a small plates and tapas menu that has taken off within the last six months thanks to the addition of Chef Jody Petronella, who joined the market in September 2018.

"We wanted to enhance our wines by the glass and craft beer selection, and we wanted to compliment that with a really elevated tapas menu," Steve says. "We wanted to offer just a little more than simply cheese boards."

Previously working in the food industry as a chef in several restaurants himself, Steve wanted to ensure the business was continually changing and evolving. Thanks to Petronella's influx of new ideas, that has become a reality for Coastal Wine.

The market now offers snacks such as olive tapenade and crab dip nachos, as well as larger dishes such as the crispy Cantonese pork quesadilla and coastal comfort cheese steak.

"We find a lot of times people come and whereas they would have left and gone somewhere to eat and come back or not," Petronella says, "now they have an option of having something close to a full meal so they can sit here and continue their conversation, continue their good time having wine."

The market is proud to offer food and wine pairings. Just recently, the business hosted an event at which Petronella created a six-course menu to pair with six wines.

"Food-wise, we're on the same page," Petronella says. "Steve's a serious foodie. ... It's always good to have him to bounce ideas off of or for him to not be apprehensive about my ideas because he knows what I'm going for."

With 20 years in culinary arts working at several restaurants and businesses across the country, some of which he owned and ran, Petronella has seen it all in the industry, and he says what they're doing at Coastal Wine is different.

"It's the vibe here," Petronella says. "That's something that's kind of hard to put a finger on what it is and what it isn't. ... He's (Steve) got a really unique thing here. People love it."

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ART & ANTIQUES SHOW GALA BRINGS BACK

Glamour OF OLD PALM BEACH

The 42nd annual Art & Antiques Show gala kicked off the holiday season of giving for The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital on Nov. 30.

The show's theme, "A Place in the Sun," featured Lilly Pulitzer-inspired decor with hundreds of guests in attendance. The gala, giving nod to old Palm Beach glamour, brought together benefactors, Women's Board members and residents throughout Northeast Florida and South Georgia. Held at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in downtown Jacksonville, the occasion celebrated the Women's Board's five-year, \$4 million pledge to raise awareness and support the creation of a new NICU at Wolfson Children's Hospital, made to care for the smallest patients.

The 2018 Art & Antiques Show was held Nov. 29 through Dec. 2, featuring art, jewelry, fashion, textiles and furnishings from Old World to contemporary design periods, under one roof. The four-day event also featured a children's fashion show with current and former patients of Wolfson Children's Hospital, as well as lecturers and special guests.



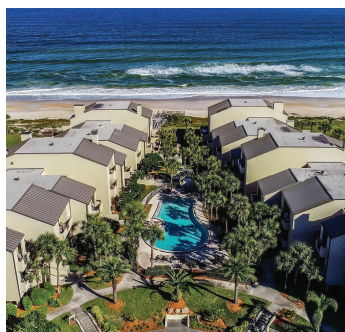
Art & Antiques Show Chairs Claudia Adams (from left), Holland Gibbs, Marleigh Gulliford and Liza Barnett Emmet

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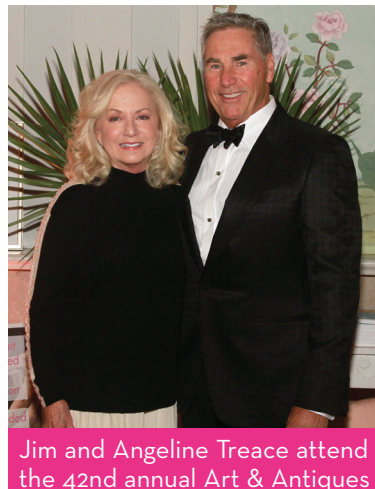
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Jim and Angeline Treace attend the 42nd annual Art & Antiques Show gala Nov. 30.



William and Lisa Barton



ABOVE: Dr. Kevin and Anna Neal



RIGHT: Dr. Amy and Rob Hardeman
Photos by LAURENCE GREENE PHOTOGRAPHY

Jacksonville Beach Pier Dance

COMBINES WITH STERLING'S BIRTHDAY PARTY TO BENEFIT BEAM

The annual Jacksonville Beach Pier Dance, sponsored by Casa Marina and Rock Solid Law, joined forces with Sterling Joyce's annual birthday party for this year's event benefitting Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (B.E.A.M.)

The event, featuring a Havana Nights theme, was held Dec. 18, at Casa Marina, and once again included music from the BayStreet band, of which Rock Solid Law founding attorney John Miller is an original bassist and vocalist. The event also featured a fashion show and performances by Who Rescued Who, DJ McGee and a Latin-inspired dance performance.

The first ever Jacksonville Beach Pier Dance, featuring music by BayStreet, was held in December 1998 and admission was at least one unwrapped toy and nonperishable food item. A new local charity, Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry was selected to distribute the contributions to Beaches families during the holiday season. In 2004, the historical Casa Marina Hotel & Restaurant adopted the event and became an additional sponsor.

Later, Casa Marina Maitre d' Sterling Joyce adopted the blueprint from the Pier Dance for his birthday party, using his annual celebration to increase the donations that BEAM could distribute in the Beaches community.

Last fall, Mark Vandelo, general manager of the Casa Marina, asked Miller and Joyce if they would be willing to combine their events into a single evening at the Casa Marina. The two agreed, and the 21st Annual Jacksonville Beach Pier Dance and Sterling's Birthday Party was born.



John Miller (left) and Sterling Joyce gather at the 21st Annual Jacksonville Beach Pier Dance and Sterling's Birthday Party.

Photo courtesy of ROCK SOLID LAW

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Community Hospice & Palliative Care kicks off 40-year Anniversary with thank-you celebration



Trudy Harris, Connie Kolster and Jackie Aquino — a trio of nurses who were among those instrumental in starting Community Hospice — gather at Community Hospice & Palliative Care's 40th anniversary Light Party on Jan. 25.

On Jan. 25, Community Hospice & Palliative Care kicked off its 40th anniversary with a Light Party at its Earl B. Hadlow Center for Caring to honor and thank the key donors whose contributions have been instrumental in Community Hospice's legacy.

"We are thankful to have been part of shaping modern hospice, bringing it from a movement 40 years ago to an essential part of our system of medical care and a treasured community asset," said Susan Ponder-Stansel, Community Hospice president and CEO.

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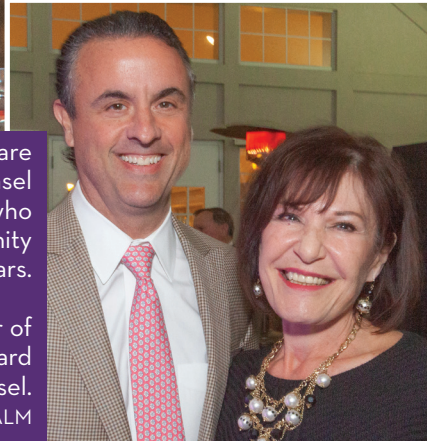
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ABOVE Community Hospice & Palliative Care President & CEO Susan Ponder-Stansel shares her gratitude for the supporters who have shaped the legacy of Community Hospice over the past 40 years.

RIGHT: Dr. Fernando Acosta-Rua, chair of Community Hospice & Palliative Care's Board of Directors, stands with Ponder-Stansel.
Photos by LAIRD BLACPALM



In its 40 years, compassionate care and consideration of the whole patient — along with their loved ones — have remained central to Community Hospice's offerings and to Community Hospice's commitment to the community.

Founded by a group of community volunteers in Jacksonville, Florida in 1979, Community Hospice began as "Friends of Hospice" and quickly became "Hospice of Northeast Florida, Inc." Since then, Community Hospice has served more than 215,000 adults and children in 16 counties in Northeast and North Central Florida.

Since its inception, Community Hospice has expanded to include:

- Partnerships with local hospitals
 - The Earl B. Hadlow Center For Caring — the first of eight Centers for Caring and the first free-standing inpatient center in the state of Florida
 - Community PedsCare® — a program that provides hospice and palliative care services to children from prenatal to age 21
 - New offices in Palatka, Lake City and Nassau County, with more to come in its 16-county service area, including Alachua and Clay offices in 2019
 - The upcoming opening of the Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus in St. Augustine
 - We Honor Veterans — a partnership addressing the physical and emotional healthcare needs of veterans at the end of life
 - The Charles M. Neviasher Educational Institute, which offers educational opportunities with trusted healthcare experts to our communities
- Visit www.communityhospice.com for more information on Community Hospice.

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Chinese artist Tang Wei Min stands in front of his painting "Tang Dynasty Princess" on Jan. 25 at Cutter & Cutter Fine Art in Ponte Vedra Beach.



Photos by AMBER LAKE

Artist **Tang Wei Min** makes appearance at **Cutter & Cutter** in Ponte Vedra Beach

by AMBER LAKE

Family-owned gallery Cutter & Cutter Fine Art recently hosted Chinese artist Tang Wei Min at its Ponte Vedra Beach location in Sawgrass Village.

This was one of the artist's first visits to the United States, although his work has been popular among art enthusiasts here for almost a decade.

Cutter & Cutter has been showcasing the artist's work for the past eight years. This year, the business was finally able to convince him to come to an opening and talk to people about his work. Through his interpreter, Wei Min told the Register on Jan. 25 about the influence of Rembrandt on his work. He said the classic romanticism painter is reflected in his work not only in style but from the intensity of emotion conveyed in the subjects.

"Rembrandt is the classic master," Wei Min said. "Whoever is learning oil painting, he is very influential because his work always provides a thickness of warmth and content with all kinds of thinking and thoughts possible in it."

When viewing Wei Min's work, it's easy to associate the two painters. Just as Rembrandt used chiaroscuro, religious undertones and a refined technical skill, Wei Min's work mirrors the painter in style and intent. In contrast, however, is the culture represented. To

look at Wei Min's work is to see Eastern philosophy through the lens of the romantic masters. By combining the two, an entirely new impression of the classic movement is presented.

"He brings a lot of emotion to the canvas," Mark Cutter said. "When you see the paintings online or elsewhere, you get a little bit of that, but when you see them in person, you really feel his heart and soul and culture into each and every painting."

Wei Min said that he can achieve so much emotion in the subtlety of his work by creating the portraits from his mind, rather than working with a model. By using his own consciousness to create the images, he can convey more of himself within it. He does, however, often conjure a particular face when recreating the women within his paintings — that of his wife.

By studying Wei Min's work, the viewer doesn't only feel the spirit of the painter. Wei Min said he hopes the viewer feels something within themselves as well.

"I hope every work I create all contains a kind of calmness and kind of feeling of religiousness," he said. "(In that) it provides people to think of something that is constantly, always there."

By looking into the eyes of his subjects, anyone can interpret what that "something" is.

Tang Wei Min's work will be displayed at the Ponte Vedra Beach Cutter & Cutter location through February.

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