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Spring BRIDAL



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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023

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Page/Graphic Designer

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Editor

Anthony Richards
Staff Writer

April Snyder
Sales Assistant

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Account Executive

Adele McGraw
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Debbie Apple
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Joe Wilhelm
Circulation Manager

Contributors:
Leigh Cort
Lisa Barton
Jennifer Logue

about the cover



The cover features a bride and groom on Jacksonville Beach.

PHOTO COURTESY OF



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ONE OF US

Susan Siegmund

as told to **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

photo courtesy of **SUSAN SIEGMUND**

Susan Siegmund took over as owner of the art gallery Art on Centre in downtown Fernandina Beach in 2018 after choosing a different career path after years of working in management for several Chamber of Commerce's. She takes pride in her gallery having a welcoming atmosphere and featuring nearly 30 artists, including many locals.

Can you please briefly tell us about your background and where you are from?

I am a native of Jacksonville, and my career in Chamber of Commerce management took me from Fernandina Beach to Jacksonville Beach, on to downtown Jacksonville and ending in St. Augustine.

I have gone from helping small businesses flourish to owning one myself, a journey in and out of retirement with my Pepsi exec husband David, to representing nearly 30 established artists from all over the U.S. in my fine art gallery that specializes in "contemporary coastal" pieces.

I love this area because it's just a little beach town. I enjoy offshore fishing, fashion and mentoring is the most important thing for me as a human.

What led you to get involved with and becoming owner of Art on Centre in Fernandina Beach?

Art on Centre was opened in 2014 by two very enterprising couples who took early retirement from their respective industries, moved to Amelia Island, and created a sensational art gallery.

Four years later they sold it to me, and we've tried to maintain their original concept of providing an approachable yet provocative atmosphere.

A visit to Art on Centre, located in the heart of the Historic District of the quaint city of Fernandina Beach right

up A1A from Ponte Vedra Beach, is where you can find happiness in many different shapes and sizes.

What are your goals and approach for Art on Centre?

Purchasing the gallery began in a "behind the scenes" capacity, with my daughter Courtney at the helm for the first 30 months.

David and I now run the show, selling, delivering and installing art all over the North Florida region, and personal service is the hallmark of our approach.

Like many retail businesses, fine art galleries have a discriminating customer base, but the sheer numbers of new residents to the area has brought a newer, younger group of art collectors.

Their tastes run the gamut and are met by artists and businesses all over the First Coast.

What are the most rewarding parts of your role as owner of the gallery?

The art displayed in your home has an immediate impact. It establishes an atmosphere from serene to eclectic; it declares your taste as traditional or avant garde; but best of all, it makes you happy.

The most important thing a successful gallery must accomplish is to bring personalized service to each and every one who walks through the door.

This is what makes Art on Centre so special, according to our customers. There is no judgement and no preconceived expectations, just a friendly smile and information offered about each piece of art and details about the artists' background. It seems to be working for us.

A visit to Art on Centre in downtown Fernandina Beach might result in finding just the right addition to your



Susan Siegmund (far left) is the owner of Art on Centre in downtown Fernandina Beach.

home, or you could just have a great conversation with interesting people surrounded by great art. You should give it a try.

How would you describe the local arts community?

The art community, from St. Augustine to Amelia Island, is very vibrant and the local galleries reflect the diversity of this creativity.

We have to distinguish ourselves to succeed and our customers always comment on the variety and quality of our art.

St. Augustine based artists Claire Jane Kendrick and Phillip Anthony are here, along with Jacksonville Beach's Russ Wilson.

Two amazing Tallahassee artists, Paul Tamanian and sculptor Mark Dickson, display their works here, too. Add about twenty-five more of this caliber, and you start to get the picture, literally.



UNITED WAY OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY CELEBRATES PHILANTHROPY AT GALA

Contributed photos

A bidding generosity was the theme of the 6th annual United Way of St. Johns County Givers Gala, as community leaders and partners gathered to support and celebrate the agency’s continuing community service.

In all, \$170,000 was raised at the black-tie gala held Jan. 28 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton St. Augustine Beach Oceanfront Resort. The evening featured cocktails, dinner, a lively auction by U.S. Rep. Aaron Bean and dancing under the stars to the sounds of the Bold City Classics band. But the focus of the evening was on honoring those who provide lasting inspiration for all that United Way of St. Johns County does to serve its community.

Joe Pickens, chairman of the United Way board of directors, agreed.

“Every year at the Givers Gala, we recognize and celebrate generosity in our community,” he said. “We understand that generosity comes in many shapes and forms — funding, organizing, volunteering and advocating. Tonight’s award recipients truly demonstrate that the actions of one can change the lives of many.”

He added that, “In 2022, United Way invested over \$1 million to help improve the health, education and financial stability of our neighbors, resulting in a total leveraged impact of \$2.5 million for our communities.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 ■

Light a fire under your feet! Sign up for the 3rd Annual Great Fire Run

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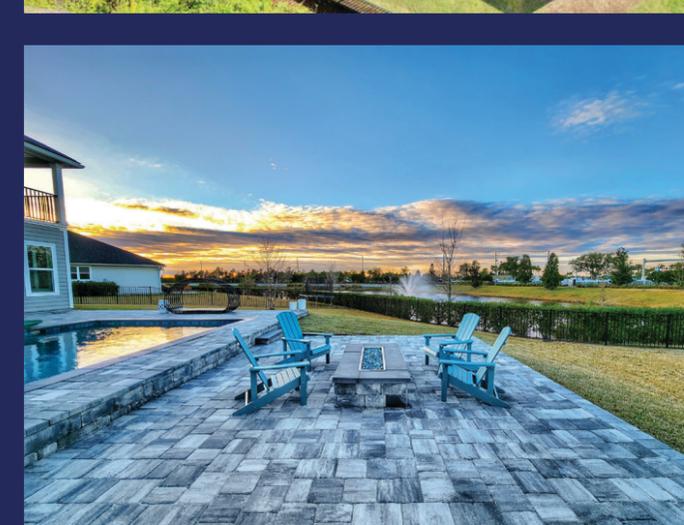
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THE HANGAR ADDS UNIQUE TWISTS WITH INAUGURAL CAR SHOW

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**
photo courtesy of **CARCOTERIE**

Event is set for March 4 at Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport

There are many classic car shows and shows that feature vintage aircraft, but very few that offer a combination of the two.

That is exactly what CarCoterie is set to do when it launches the inaugural event called The Hangar, which will be held at Bent Wing Flight Services at Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport March 4 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Shamin Abas and Jeffrey Einhorn co-founded CarCoterie in 2022 with the vision of bringing original and distinctive events for those passionate about classic cars. They both had worked in the automotive and super car world in the past and they believe that experience provides them with a great understanding.

For six years, the two have sought to bring an entirely new vibe to the traditional culture surrounding classic car shows, following the introduction of The Bridge, which has taken place in Bridgehampton, New York each September for the past half dozen years.

Amelia Island has an established rich history in the car world, and the

date of The Hangar coincides with the 28th Annual The Amelia Concours d'Elegance which will have event taking place throughout the weekend as well.

According to Einhorn, he understands and respects the history of The Amelia and only wishes to add to the weekend by offering yet another event that is put on with car lovers in mind.

"There's a wonderful history with the Concours here, but we also thought that it was time bring something different to the table as well," Einhorn said. "It's the flow and feel of the event that makes it unique and unusual."

Some of the cars showcased at the inaugural event will include a 1939 Delahaye, 1960 Auto Union 1,000 Sp, 1964 Ferrari Lusso and a 1955 Mercedes-Benz Gullwing 300SL, as well newer hyper cars made by Aston Martin, Czinger and Rimac.

The event's unique vibe is created by the fact that the cars will not be judged unlike most car shows.

By doing this, the hope is to create a more relaxed social environment that promotes people talking about classic cars and just enjoying their presence at the event.

"We've found that it's really about building relationships and creating connections for all those that love collecting cars," Einhorn said. "We hear from a lot them that this is the show that their significant other wants to go to."

He grew up around and racing

historic cars and had the privilege of attending several classic car shows over the years, including Amelia Island and Pebble Beach in California.

According to Einhorn, they take pride in The Bridge being commonly referred to as the "world's best garden party but just with cars," which is a name that he believes completely sums up the accomplishment of the atmosphere they were hoping to create when they first started it.

"We want to take that same feeling and bring it to Amelia Island," Einhorn said.

Especially since The Amelia, with its March date, marks the first marquee event of the car collector's calendar and 2023 is no different.

The idea to combine historic automobiles and aircraft came about because due to the event's venue being held at the Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport, which was created during World War II by the United States Navy and originally served as a training facility.

"With the history of the airport, we thought it was just fitting to include aircrafts as part of the show," Abas said.

Abas stated that there are some extraordinary planes lined up to attend this year and that number is expected to grow in the years to come.

Limited tickets remain available for the event and can be purchased by going to TheHangarAmelia.com.



The Hangar will offer a unique approach on car shows, as the cars entered will not be judged.



GALA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Suzanne Haven received the Nancy Burns Trailblazer Award that recognizes an individual who creates new opportunities for “Living United.”

The Legacy Award was presented to lifelong St. Augustine residents Tracy and Beth Upchurch for their multigenerational legacy of tireless and heartfelt leadership.

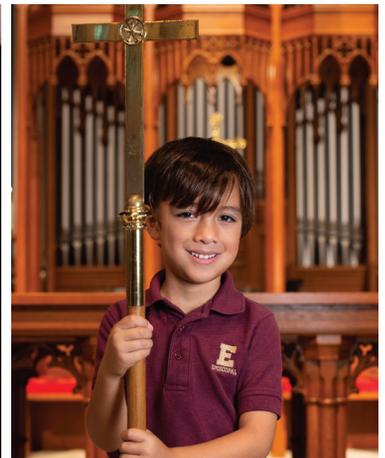
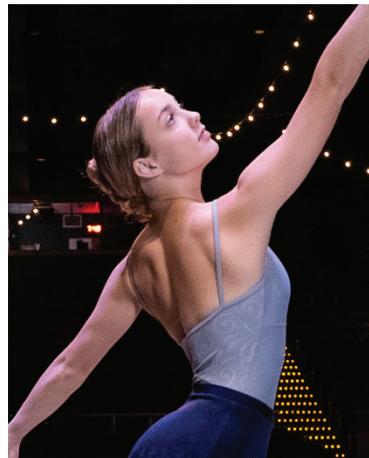
In recognition of her ongoing commitment to improving our community, Susan Ponder Stansel was awarded the John and Peggy Bailey Sr.



Community Leadership Award.

The 6th annual Givers Gala also marked the inaugural year of the Chairs’ Award. This year, in recognition of their time, expertise, advocacy and friendship, the award was presented to United Way of St. Johns County board members Bobby Crum and Kelly Green.

“As we think about addressing our community’s needs, those outstanding individuals we honored tonight show us the kind of long-term generosity really needed,” United Way President/CEO Mark LeMaire said. “Together, with this brand of sustainable, selfless giving, we can tackle any challenge.”



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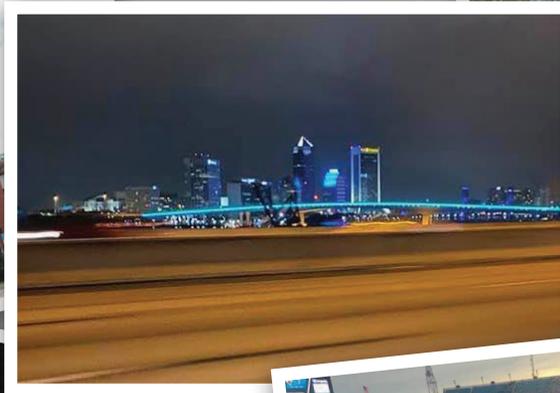
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Lucky me! I have been a Realtor in my home, Northeast Florida, for over 30 years. I grew up in Jacksonville and moved to the beach in my 20s. I studied architecture and interior design in college, feeding my love of homes and style. After graduation, I worked in media, where I learned the art of listening and asking questions, marketing and advertising.

In 1985, I transitioned from media to real estate, joining Watson Realty’s Ponte Vedra office. It was meant to be! Serving customers by customizing promotions for their homes and researching housing options for buyers is exciting. The reward of finding a seller or a buyer the perfect home is what keeps me charged up about real estate. In 1990, I moved to the original Marsh Landing Realty, where I learned about lots and builders and the development process.

In 1993, I opened my own brokerage, Berry & Co. Real Estate. Our first listing was The Ponte Vedra Carlyle, 48 new condominiums on Ponte Vedra Boulevard. That was an exciting time – new residences in a premier location, with Lodge membership included for every purchaser!

Berry & Co. Real Estate continues to be a robust general brokerage. We have helped hundreds of buyers and sellers with their residential real estate needs. We take pride in our market knowledge – it is the foundation for the extra level of service we provide our customers.

My customers describe me as “one of our most trusted advisors”... “responsive, kind and honest”... “always felt we were in good hands”...”stands out from the rest regarding professionalism, true customer satisfaction and a real passion to do things the right way.” I am committed to share my knowledge and insights to help make the real estate buying and selling process efficient, enjoyable and rewarding.

While homebase for our office is Ponte Vedra Beach, we also are active in neighboring Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Nocatee as well as greater Jacksonville. Our real estate market is ever-changing and always intriguing. I’m so grateful for the challenges and opportunities each new day brings.



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OUR TEAM

Jamie Seim has over 12 years of investment experience as a Financial Advisor. He attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University Arkansas at Little Rock on golf scholarships, graduating cum laude. He later graduated with an MBA in Accounting & Finance from Jacksonville University. Over the years, Jamie has devoted much of his time to local organizations and charities.

Stephen T. Foody has 38 years of Capital Markets experience. He

holds a BA in Economics and History from Fordham University. He was chairman of the board of trustees for the Guardian Catholic School, and a founding member of Ponte Vedra High School PTO.

Evonne T. Heykens, Senior Registered Client Associate, has 40 years of financial services industry experience. She started within the financial industry in 1982, and most of her career has been in Jacksonville or Ponte Vedra.

Melissa Scott, Client Associate, has almost 20 years of financial services experience. Born and raised in Indiana, she joined the United States Air Force out of high school and spent 10 years living in many states around the country and some abroad.

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Early American typewriters. From left, Williams No. 2, c. 1897; Bar-Lock by the Columbia Typewriter Mfg. Co., c. 1889; and the Corona No. 3, folding typewriter, c. 1912.



The American Ideal, 1888
Gormully and Jeffrey Manufacturing Co.,
Chicago, Illinois

LIGHTNER EXHIBITS

vintage bikes, historic photos and more

story and photos by
SHAUN RYAN

Growing up, Keith Pariani just never took to bicycles. Instead, he enjoyed riding mini-bikes and, later, motorcycles. In fact, as a teen, he competed in motorcycle races.

But bicycles simply weren't his thing. That is, until a friend got him involved in cycling and he found himself riding in an Easter parade at Disneyland.

There was no going back. He developed an interest in vintage, 19th-century bicycles and began to collect them.

"One turned into two and two turned into eight and eight turned into 20," he said. Today, the St. Augustine man owns about 50 antique bikes.

Many of them can be seen at a special exhibit at the Lightner Museum that runs until Sept. 30. "Ride On! Historic Bicycles from the Collection of Keith Pariani" celebrates the beauty, engineering and innovative designs found in bicycles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Pariani was on hand Feb. 2 for the



Keith Pariani has collected dozens of vintage bicycles, many of which are currently on display at the Lightner Museum.

exhibit's opening to meet members of the public who marveled at his collection.

Pariani has ridden in several parades and celebrations, including the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee,

and the opening of EPCOT Center that same year. He rode in a Super Bowl parade in Tampa and in 1984 rode a bicycle across the United States.

In addition, he belongs to an international club for vintage bicycle enthusiasts, The Wheelmen.

The oldest bike he owns dates back to 1868, which was about seven years before people began to call these contraptions "bicycles."

"It's got a cast-iron eagle head on the front of it, which is very, very unusual for an American bike," Pariani explained. "There are only two American bikes that had some type of animal motif. The Europeans did it quite a lot."

One of Pariani's bikes is an early form of what we today call the bicycle. It's a velocipede, and it rides on iron "tires." There's little doubt as to why people called them "bone-shakers."

Pariani prefers to ride one of his high-wheel bikes, a style that made its American debut in 1878. Careful observers will notice that some of these

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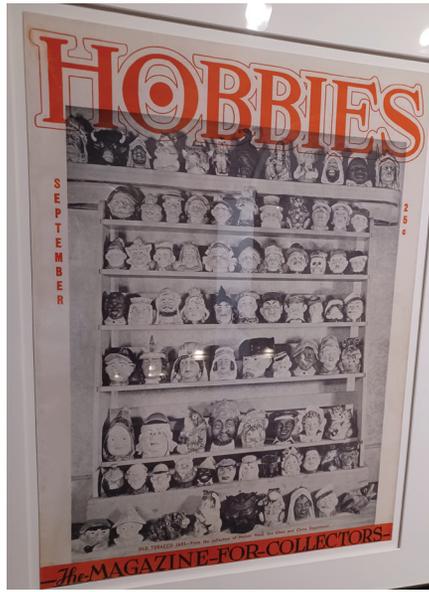
The velocipede was an early bicycle, made in the late 1860s. Note the iron "tires."



Desert Encampment, c. 1870
By Victor Pierre Huguet. Oil on canvas



King Street from the Plaza, St. Augustine, Florida, c. 1890s



The cover of the September 1942 issue of Hobbies, The Magazine for Collectors from the Lightner Publishing Co., Chicago, Illinois. Otto Lightner was the publication's founder.



Steer Horn Armchair, c. 1880s
Horn, brass, upholstery



Tribune Pacing Bicycle, 1899
Black Manufacturing Co., Erie, Pennsylvania



Dragonfly Library Lamp, c. 1905
Clara Driscoll, designer, for Tiffany Studios
Leaded glass and bronze

LIGHTNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

feature the larger wheel in the front while others place them in the back.

The bicycles on display all have antique headlamps on the front. When the bicycle was still a rarity, such lamps ensured that people could see them in the dark.

Pariani seeks out bicycles at auctions, on eBay and even at flea markets.

"I bought some tremendous bikes at a flea market here in Florida," he said.

With so many people moving here from out of state, they bring their treasures with them — including vintage bikes. Eventually, they or members of their families decide to sell.

This is the 75th anniversary of the Lightner Museum in St. Augustine, and "Ride On!" is only one of the exhibits in its yearlong celebration.

Also on display is "75 for 75: Lightner Museum Diamond Anniversary Exhibition," which runs until Feb. 16, 2024, and features artwork and objects from the museum's collection.

Founded in 1948 by Otto C. Lightner as the Lightner Museum of Hobbies, the museum has its origins in the hobby boom that swept America in the early 20th century. The museum exhibits countless objects in its collection, including lamps by Louis Comfort Tiffany, exquisite shells and geological specimens from the world over, porcelain produced at Sèvres

and Victorian mechanical musical instruments.

In addition, a new permanent exhibit opened on Feb. 2. "St. Augustine Through the Lens of William Henry Jackson" showcases large, high-definition photographs taken by Jackson in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Lightner Museum, located at 75 King St. in St. Augustine, is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is \$17 for adults; \$14 for seniors (65+), military and college students; \$10 for youth ages 12-17; and free to children 11 and younger.

For further information, go to lightnermuseum.org.

[spring bridal preview]

CHOOSING THE *perfect dress* FOR THE BIG DAY

story and photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

Trends include a mix of outside the box, traditional

A couple's wedding day is a memory they will never forget, and a big part of it is a bride's dress.

Be-In Bridal Studio in Atlantic Beach is doing its part to make sure each bride finds the perfect dress that they are both comfortable and beautiful.

"I've had my own studio since September, but I worked in bridal for about four or five years in a past life and that's where I learned everything," Be-In owner Haley Guiette said. "I just fell in love with it so much, and not because I'm obsessed with weddings, but I'm really obsessed with bridal fashion and going to New York for fashion week."

An interesting concept Guiette has brought to Be-In is that her entire selection of dresses is made from sustainable and ethically sourced materials.

"All of my designers have a hand in every step of the process," Guiette said. "It's not just shipped off to a production company overseas, but everything is made right in their studios, which is something I value a lot. When you have control over your design, you can do just about anything."

Trends are ever evolving, and new ones are always being as brides and their views of fashion change.

"It's crazy looking back to what the trends were when I started in bridal and what it is like now," Guiette said. "It is so amazing to see brides as the ones setting the trends and doing what they want and making it happen."

As with the planning of the wedding itself, choosing a wedding dress is often an involved process that takes place about a year in advance.

As a result, many of the trends this year are a product of what brides found popular while shopping for dresses last year.

"What we're seeing a lot this year is sheer side panels, which I think are beautiful because they really elongate the waist and give a little bit of sexiness without it being a too risqué," Guiette said. "Square necklines are also a huge trend right now, which are also such a classic look, and brides are going more dramatic in terms of low backs and going with more sparkle."



According to Be-in Bridal Studio owner Haley Guiette, wedding dresses should be an extension of the bride's personality.



Big wedding gown trains are one of the popular trends for brides this year.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 ■



Tim Hofacker

VIDEO ENHANCES WEDDING MEMORIES

story by **SHAUN RYAN** Contributed photo

Quality wedding photography has long been a staple for couples as they celebrate the big day. Increasingly, however, they've been adding videography to the services they want. Both forms capture and preserve the event, but in very different ways.

"If you want one thing documented in your life, you want it to be your wedding," said Tim Hofacker of Ponte Vedra, a videographer who records weddings and other events.

As with still photography, a video record of the celebration brings out

the emotion of the moment. But video also provides an extra degree of context and, viewed later, can take viewers back to that special day.

When Hofacker covers a wedding, he devotes eight hours to it. Because he offers different tiers of service, what the couple receives will vary. But some items are standard. For instance, each tier includes highlight and ceremony videos. At the upper tiers, however, more can be added.

Hofacker includes what he calls

"If you want one thing documented in your life, you want it to be your wedding."

- TIM HOFACKER

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 ■

The Ocean and You ...



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Brittany Karol is seen in PRIM Salon's newly renovated space, formerly the location of her father's dental practice.

SALON TEAM HELPS MAKE *the big day memorable*

PRIM Salon expands

story by **SHAUN RYAN**
Contributed photos

If there's one day a woman wants to look her very best, it's her wedding day, an occasion when all eyes will be trained on her. It's also a day that

will be captured for posterity in photographs.

That's why brides-to-be seek out top hair and makeup artists well in advance of the big day. These are not things to be left to chance.

One provider many area women trust is PRIM Salon, located

at 2105 Sawgrass Village Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach. Owner Brittany Karol has worked on about 1,000 weddings and received recognition and won awards for her efforts. Some of her clients have been chosen to appear in bridal magazines — in part due to the hair styling and makeup Karol and her team have provided for them.

And now, PRIM Salon has expanded, adding to the possibilities.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

As far back as her teen years, Karol was the go-to person when friends wanted someone to do their hair or makeup. Even then, people recognized her natural skill. But when it came time to select a career, it hadn't occurred to her to pursue hair styling.

She majored in exercise science at the University of North Florida with a goal of earning her master's degree in physical therapy. But in her senior year the requirements changed, with physical therapists mandated to possess a doctoral-level degree. The idea of extending her post-graduate education held little appeal for Karol.

"It was a pivotal moment for me, because this was all I thought I was going to do," she said.

At the same time, she really enjoyed helping people feel good about themselves. So, realizing the place for her was hair design school, she switched careers and completed her apprenticeship at Volume One Salon in Pensacola.

She quickly realized how much she enjoyed creating a beautiful work of art using hair as the medium. Her specialty is custom-colored hair extensions, which are in high demand among brides-to-be, and the results showcase her talent.

"It's amazing to see the reaction you get when they see themselves," Karol said. "They're like, 'How did you do that?'"

She began doing hair professionally about 10 years ago and began to do weddings while living on the Gulf coast. She's also been teaching other stylists the trade for about seven years. A Ponte Vedra native, she eventually moved back to The First Coast and continued working on weddings here.

Her father, Dr. Robert Karol, was a greatly respected dentist who had been practicing for decades from his office on Sawgrass Village Drive. He suggested she open a salon in a unit adjacent to his practice. So, PRIM Salon officially opened in July 2019.

Within months, the pandemic arrived, forcing people to stay home and salons to temporarily close. But Karol found a way to keep her business going.

"I actually did really well," she said. "I created these at-

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ■

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PRIM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

home color kits, so clients could come pick them up.”

At a time when people were unable to get their hair done, this service was quickly embraced. In fact, people would purchase Karol’s kits to send to friends and relatives who lived elsewhere, because no one could get these services during that time.

When PRIM Salon reopened to the public, business continued as though it had never been interrupted.

Then, as her father was preparing to retire, he talked to his daughter about expanding her salon into his unit, which is much larger than the one she was in. They began to renovate the space together, transforming it into an elegant, roomy space with lots of stations for the many services PRIM offers.

Sadly, Dr. Karol passed away in October, but not before setting his daughter on the road to greater success.



Some of PRIM Salon’s original team, from left, Brittney Shipes (lash and blonde specialist), Brittany Karol (owner and specialist in bridal services, color and extensions), Vada Spell (hairstylist and specialist in extensions and bridal services) and Kathryn Francis (salon coordinator and makeup artist).

“I know he would be proud of it,” Brittney Karol said.

WEDDING SERVICES

On a day-to-day basis, PRIM Salon offers its usual array of services. Clients can book an appointment online or by calling the salon.

For weddings, the process is a bit different. Brides-to-be fill out a form online. They sign a contract and make a

deposit, which locks in the date.

Frequently, PRIM is asked to serve the bride’s entire entourage, which is typically about eight people. Several members of Karol’s team are brought in to work with the group.

First, there is a trial run. That gives everyone a preview of the big day and time to make changes.

Karol emphasized the importance of booking services early, typically once a venue and wedding date are selected. That’s also critical if the bride wants a specific stylist, because they can be booked up fast.

PRIM’s new, larger space is a good location to have the actual work done before the wedding, and it solves a potential problem. Some venues don’t allow wedding parties access before a certain time, and that can complicate the bride’s timeline.

PRIM Salon can be found at primsalons.com and on Instagram at [instagram.com/primsalon.jax](https://www.instagram.com/primsalon.jax). It can be reached by email at primsalons@gmail.com. Or by calling 904-962-4247.

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DRESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Big wedding gown trains are also a trend that she has seen begin to take effect, as well as the return of veils which are becoming more and more popular after it had become a tradition Guiette had seen brides were shying away from for a while.

“Now we’re seeing embroidered and colored veils are also becoming a thing,” Guiette said. “Girls are really just going out of their comfort zone and realizing that this is a very special experience. I always tell my brides that, yes, it is a very special day, but you still want your dress to be an extension of you.”

There are so many different types of wedding dresses because there are many different personalities of the people that will be wearing them.

Guiette takes it upon herself as a studio owner to be a soundboard that brides can rely on as they engage in the process of making their dream wedding dress a reality. Sometimes, it has been a dream that has developed since childhood.

“My whole goal is to give them that platform, and that there shouldn’t be any rules,” Guiette said. “I’m here to give direction but they what they like.”

One of the things she has noticed is that brides walk into the studio with so much more knowledge and a much more refined idea of what they want their potential dress to look like than ever before.



Be-in Bridal Studio in Atlantic Beach offers a wide range of wedding attire for all brides.

Guiette credits social media and all of the information that is available to brides that past generations did not have access to gather ideas from.

“It’s amazing the tools that we all have now that really help with inspiration,” Guiette said. “I’ve had brides send me mood boards and pictures of what they are looking for, and I think that’s only a good thing. The challenge that I love to accept is knowing how to reign it in, because almost every bride that has ever tried on a dress will tell you that she’ll walk in with one idea and then go in a different direction after trying stuff on.”

Another aspect that Guiette takes pride in at Be-In is that she understands that not all brides are the same and that includes the shape of their body.

She makes sure to have a variety of dress sizes and styles not only available through her design partners but also to



Choosing a wedding dress is an involved process, but one that should be fun.

choose from in studio at its location at 20 Seminole Road in Atlantic Beach.

The in-store selection is something she likes to have for those planning to have a wedding on a tighter deadline.

At the end of the day, weddings are a moment that will be cherished forever, as it is the beginning of the next phase of a person’s life, which with it can naturally bring about stress to get everything “right.”

However, Guiette believes choosing a dress should not be something that adds to that stress level, and she has strived to create a fun and relaxing atmosphere in her studio for brides and their bridal parties.

“I’m creating a space of calmness and happiness, because I feel that’s what people want and need,” Guiette said. “This should be the fun part.”

MEMORIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

“first looks.” Examples might be the bride and her friends preparing for the wedding, the couple’s parents and the groom seeing his bride for the first time. “This,” Hofacker said, “is a priceless moment.”

Images of the bride’s jewelry, the couple’s rings, the location and bouquets add to the end product. In addition, Hofacker can create a montage of still photos from the couple’s evolving relationship and

incorporate it into the video. And he works with his clients to select the background music.

He can also “mic up” guests as they make speeches at the festivities. And during the informality of the reception, he can mix with attendees to record their testimonials. This element is sure to grow increasingly precious over the ensuing years.

“When a couple is in the midst of one of the busiest days of their lives, they want to just talk to everybody,” Hofacker said. “There are so many loved ones that they may not get

around to.”

Who can put a price on the spoken sentiments of a favorite aunt or uncle or grandparent?

When selecting a videographer, it’s important to find out how much training and knowledge they have. Hofacker graduated in November 2022 from F.I.R.S.T. Institute near Orlando with a diploma in filmmaking and video production.

To learn more about Hofacker’s video services, go to hofackermedia.com.



No two outfits are the same.



Each article of clothing in Anchor's selection is one of a kind.



The sleeves of this blouse are lined with numerous safety pins.

Artistic expression THROUGH APPAREL

Anchor offers unique, hand crafted clothing and custom creations

story by **SHAUN RYAN**
Contributed photos

When Molly Beard met her future husband, she noticed that he always had paint on his jeans. But then, that's just one of the hazards of his profession. John Beard is an artist — a painter, to be precise.

Other people, however, interpreted it as a means of self-expression.

"Wherever we went everyone said, 'Where did you get those jeans?'" Molly Beard recalled. "So, I was like, 'You need to make me some.'"

He did as she asked, a process they nicknamed "anchoring." At the time, they were living and working in High Point, North Carolina, where they launched a small enterprise called Anchor Jean.



Acrylic paint is used to make articles of clothing into works of art.

Last year, the couple opened John Beard Gallery and Molly Beard Design in the Cumberland Industrial Park, 110 Cumberland Park Drive, just west of Beachwalk. That process kept them busy, and Anchor kind of fell by the

wayside for a time.

Now, it's back, and it's grown beyond jeans. The enterprise eventually came to mean re-purposed, re-fashioned and vintage clothing. For Molly Beard and Rachel Farmer, the gallery's operations director, it was a kind of diversion from the day-to-day work at the gallery, where reproductions are made of John Beard's work to be packaged and sent off to customers.

"Rachel and I just got kind of super-tired of worrying about production, and we wanted something creative to focus on," explained Molly Beard.

The women would go thrift-shopping on the weekends, and they would purchase vintage apparel and an array of clothing items to "anchor." Back at the gallery, they radically altered their purchases — though never the vintage articles — painted them, sewed other elements onto them and more.

And, of course, wore them.

"I would get a lot of compliments on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ■

[fashion trends]

APPAREL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

what I was wearing and asked where I got it," Farmer said. "Not everyone would believe me when I said I made it."

Farmer does much of the sewing, a skill she learned from her grandmother. All sewing is done by hand; no machine is used. The paint used on some items is acrylic, which won't wash off when laundered. The stock is represented in a variety of women's sizes.

Each article of clothing is unique, which is part of the appeal. These creations now occupy the new Anchor, which is located in a room within the gallery and is open when the gallery is open. Here, one finds an eclectic collection of jackets, blazers, vintage dresses, tank tops, T-shirts, trousers and more. There is active wear, party wear and a few surprises.

"We have a little bit for everybody," said Molly Beard. "We wanted some pieces to be colorful and light-hearted.



The clothing expresses the personality of the wearer.

Of course, we wanted some other pieces to make a statement, too."

One such article bears the message: "Art Comes First."

Beyond the stock immediately at hand, Farmer and Beard do custom "anchoring." Customers can bring in their own clothing to have it altered in keeping with the shop's unique approach. They sit down and consult with Beard and Farmer to determine



Wearing an article of clothing from Anchor is making a statement.

what will be created and how. In the end, the customer owns a unique article of clothing where they themselves have had a role in its creation.

For its stock, Anchor offers a variety of price points.

"We're not really trying to make money," Molly Beard said. "We're trying to share our vision and our talent and our art through clothing."

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Panache salon and spa offers a whole range of services at its location on A1A Beach Boulevard.



Panache owners Kristy Weeks and Michelle Vijgen are seen at the Love Your Mother Eco Fashion Show where more than \$130,000 for the local Riverkeeper was raised.

SERVICE FROM THE HEART

Values important to Panache salon and spa

story by **SHAUN RYAN** Contributed photos

Over its nearly 36 years, Panache salon and spa has built a solid reputation for exceptional service, which keeps clients coming back.

Located at 1089 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine, Panache is owned by Michelle Vijgen and Kristy Weeks and employs 50 people.

The salon offers haircuts and styling, color and lash services, manicures, pedicures and more. Among the spa services are deep-tissue massage, couples massage, facial massage and HydraFacial treatment.

“My favorite is our Stress-Fix, which is a 75-minute massage that’s really geared toward stress points on our body, which would be like our shoulders and neck – where a lot of people hold tension,” said Vijgen.

One of the keys to the business’s success is the brand of products it uses: Aveda. These products are vegan and plant-derived with packaging that’s 94% post-consumer recycled.



Panache salon and spa recently celebrated 35 years in business.

In addition, all of the products are cruelty-free, which means there is no animal testing.

And all Aveda products are produced using wind power. “It’s an amazing company to be aligned with,” Vijgen said. In addition to their use in the services Panache offers,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ■

KEEPING KIDS STYLISH WHILE SAVING MONEY

story and photo by **SHAUN RYAN**

Sometimes, ensuring that your kids are wearing the current styles can prove pricey — especially since they keep growing out of everything. But there is an alternative when it comes to children’s fashions: consignment shops.

Amber’s Turn Kids Consignment in Neptune Beach sells second-hand apparel in sizes infant through 14. Owner Amber Fuchs said her stock is either very gently used or, sometimes, in new condition. But it is offered at a discounted price from what customers would pay for brand new.

The shop at 1541 Atlantic Blvd. also rotates its stock quarterly to keep up with the seasons and customer demand. It accepts consignments for whatever season is next.

“Right now, in December, January and February, we’re only accepting spring items,” Fuchs said.

That may sound obvious, but this is also a time when people are cleaning out closets and wanting to bring winter items to the store.

“When we’re looking at spring items, we’re really looking at lightweight pants and short sleeves and maybe a light sweater,” Fuchs said.

Soon, however, the shop will be taking items for summer. That means



Amber Fuchs, owner of Amber’s Turn Kids Consignment, uses software to help her keep up with what customers are seeking.

sleeveless items, tank tops, shorts and things like that.

There are some exceptions to the seasonal changeovers, though. Because this is Florida, the shop accepts swimwear all year round.

“It’s always relevant here,” Fuchs said.

To help with inventory management, Fuchs and her team use software to determine what is selling. And that helps keep styles fresh.

“Using the analytics that we have, we’re really focusing on the seasonality, the brand, the color and the sell-through rate,” Fuchs said. “In spring, we could probably take some shorts and pants and jeans, but if the analytics are telling us that we need jeans more than anything else, we try to find the right jean with the right brand.”

Amber’s Turn sells items online, too. To learn more, go to ambersturn.com.

PANACHE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

Aveda products are available for purchase.

Panache is also a Green Circle Salon, which means 95% of the waste produced by the salon is repurposed or recycled. In fact, Panache is a carbon-neutral business.

“We participate in an initiative to negate your carbon footprint when you come to the salon as a guest,” said

Vijgen. “And we negate the carbon footprint of all of our employees coming to work.”

Panache recycles hair foils, cotton swabs, wax strips – even the hair.

“We serve from the heart,” Vijgen said, “and it is our joy to make everyone feel and look their best.”

The business is also recognized for how it supports its people and their success, offering opportunities for continuing education and career advancement.

Its commitment to excellence and to its core ethical principles help to set Panache apart from many of its competitors.

“The mission of Panache is to care for our team, our guests and our community from scalp to soul and bring joy one service at a time,” said Vijgen. “Our ultimate goal is that you leave here feeling your most beautiful from the inside out.”

To learn more, go to getpanache.com.

TABLE TALK

Tasteful Experiences

Ancient City Cooking Experience bursts onto St. Augustine's culinary landscape

story and photos by LEIGH CORT



St. Augustine has blossomed into one of the top Southern cities that has risen into the ranks of being considered a burgeoning culinary

destination — from the downtown historic district to the sprawl of Anastasia Island and throughout the endless neighborhoods surrounding the

Ancient City.

For the past year, the Ancient City Brunch Bar — a beautiful little eatery steps from the Plaza de la Constitución on famed St. George Street — has been wowing guests with handcrafted bruncharcuterie, coffees, curated and chef-made specialties and personalized edibles. Their captivating space has been re-designed into the new Ancient City Cooking Experience, dreamed and organized by owners Barbara Golden and Melissa Schroeder. Both partners have decades of food and hospitality know-how that, when combined, they

know exactly how to make their new venture a thundering success.

It's impossible to recall another similar culinary business in St. Augustine during the past few decades, especially with the classes and demonstrations that they present by local and internationally known chefs and food experts. Their mantra is definitely "Local" — as they share the flavorful influences that are a significant part of the actual St.

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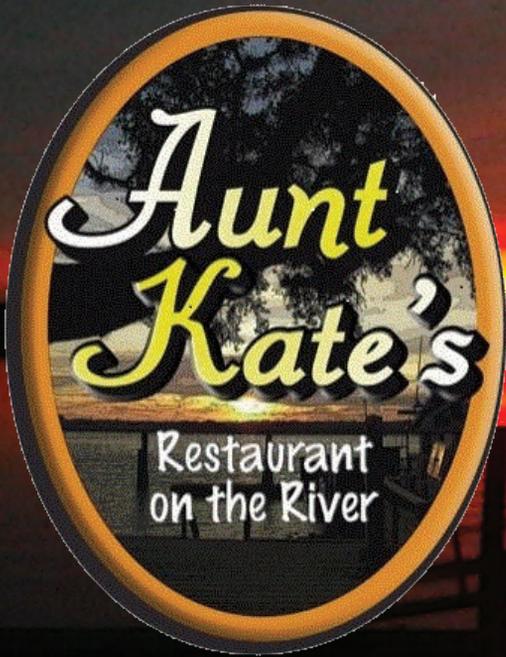


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EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26



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Barbara Golden and Melissa Schroeder are the owners of Ancient City Cooking Experience.

Augustine experience, too. They 100% support local agriculture, the seafood industry and restaurants, chefs, culinarians and high-energy trendsetters in the food scene of Northeast Florida.

Hosting intimate groups in the new Ancient City Cooking Experience of 10-12 guests, the unforgettable experience

is not only deliciously fun but educational. Imagine attending a dinner presentation and watching (then dining on) sorghum-glazed carrots and fennel-lemon flounder — described, presented, cooked and served by the editor-in-chief of Edible Magazine, Lauren Titus. She explained the background of sorghum and invited guests to sample a few of the sweet carrot top greens, too — both ingredients amazingly factual and detailed.

Both Barbara and Melissa are focusing their cooking experiences on seasonality, eating local, fishing the rich waterways for seafood and discovering the exciting agricultural “community” where they live and work. They are scheduling many themed demonstrations and hands-on classes, too — remembering that chefs are usually born in home kitchens. Thus, their “kitchen” on St. George Street will feel as if it’s your kitchen when you attend one of the experiences.

When you arrive, the event begins with a warm welcome and a glass of wine, locally brewed beer or soft beverage that enlivens the culinary theme, accompanied by an hors d’oeuvres that might be a mini charcuterie. After the chef presentation or hands-on class, the dishes are served and followed with a scrumptious chef’s choice dessert.



Chef Dennis Littley
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chef Dennis Littley, an extremely accomplished cooking expert featured on NBC News, iHeartRadio, CBS and in The Wall Street Journal, is one of the highly recognized chefs who demystifies the cooking process for the Ancient City Cooking Experience’s students. His authentic and time-tested, restaurant-style recipes are not only finger-licking good but also easy to cook at home.

Dennis’ signature “30 Minute Meals” are perfect for those who don’t like spending all day in the kitchen. And one of his favorite dishes that will debut in St. Augustine is his pecan snapper with shrimp!

“One of my great joys in life is helping people learn how to make delicious restaurant-quality dishes in their home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ■

[wine & dine]

EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

kitchens,” he said. “I am very happy to be able to do that at the Ancient City Cooking Experience in St. Augustine, my new winter home. Food brings people together, and cooking classes are a great way to turn strangers into friends. I’m looking forward to making new friends and helping them find the joy in cooking.”

With cooking boot camps popping up everywhere offering home cooks a culinary experience that is immersive, this new fine-tuned “kitchen” can make even the most timid cooks more comfortable and creative in their own kitchens. The Ancient City Cooking Experience offers a regional overview of St. Augustine and 450-plus years of international dining influences. It’s a recreational cooking class that lures small birthday parties, team-building, corporate events and just about everyone who loves their food sprinkled and blended into a fun two-hour



A “mini charcuterie” at Ancient City Cooking Experience.



Pecan snapper with shrimp



Lauren Titus leads a culinary demonstration at Ancient City Cooking Experience.

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FLAGLER FISH COMPANY

THERE'S SERIOUS SEAFOOD GOING ON HERE!

story and photos by LEIGH CORT



So many lists and headlines when you're a Florida seafood restaurant: Explore the Top 10 Seafood Restaurants in Florida, Get On The Road to Hunt for The Top 25 Hidden

Seafood Gems on the Atlantic or Discover the Top 50 Florida Seafood Restaurants With a View.

Without doubt, Florida dining is synonymous with seafood, and everyone has their own favorite “bucket list” — whether they're crazy about shellfish or the swimming beauties that come from deep-water fishing. Combine an oceanfront historic hamlet like Flagler Beach, Florida, to your getaway and dining at Flagler Fish Company for lunch or dinner will remain in your memory, luring you back time and again. The town and the restaurant are both reminiscent of “time standing still” although it's a bustling village all year long with six miles of scenic beach punctuated with old Florida heritage.

This small city by the beach is proud of its friendly welcoming vibe with only 5,000-plus residents. Before its incorporation in 1925, Ocean City was its name from 1913 to 1923. A quiet fishing village and easy to walk, there are collections of artifacts from the town's rich history of pre-historic, Native American and colonial plantation eras. The tiny history museum tells its story about surfing legends and shipwrecked sailors plus the immortal day when Charles Lindbergh landed on the short airstrip not far from the original 1927 Flagler Beach Pier.



This vintage sign welcomes patrons to the Flagler Fish Company

If you're an adventurous foodie and love eating with the locals yet feeling as though you have discovered a hidden treasure, the unpretentious Flagler Fish Company and its rustic weather-beaten sign will “hook you” to come in and personally taste why it's had a renowned reputation for nearly two decades.

Carolyn and Chris Casper landed in town in 2003, leaving behind their famous Atlanta restaurant to everyone's surprise. The Caspers built quite a reputation for The New Yorker Marketplace and Deli that was acclaimed by the international paparazzi. But these two young New Yorkers packed it all up when it was time to find warmer weather that might have landed them, their doggies and baby Cole in Miami or the Florida Panhandle.

Immediately, Flagler Beach seemed like the sleepy village where their new family could thrive while the Caspers figured out what adventure was next. Opening a plant and flower nursery? What about a surf shop? In a little ole' building that had housed an auto repair shop, a dentist and a scuba diving

business, opening a walk-up sandwich/deli counter wasn't quite their plan either. This wasn't Atlanta. It was a quiet little beach town where they chose to create the Flagler Fish Company.

The dream took two years to imagine and develop, opening in 2005 as a premier fish market and restaurant, paying homage to the destination itself with the freshest fish and seafood, all family recipes, indoor and outdoor flip-flop casual and the most accommodating, helpful staff in town!

Today, don't let the informality fool you. There is serious seafood going on here. You can feast on one of the irresistible signature dishes or select your own piece of fish from the icy display, and it will be cooked to order (steamed, fried, seared, grilled or blackened).

The Caspers are still in love with their decision to raise their family in Flagler Beach, especially with their children Cole, Christian and Caylee (all teens) working alongside the amazing team, many of whom have been original employees for 17 years!

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GUEST COLUMN

WINE AND FOOD PAIRINGS: BEYOND THE 'TRIED AND TRUE'

story and photo by **STEVE TERRELL, UNCORKED EVENTS**

February is the month of Presidents, National Cream-Filled Chocolates Day and of course, Valentine's Day! And though the latter is past, you can still show your sweetheart (or yourself!) how much you care. Here are a few ideas to continue your Valentine's Day celebration, focusing on wine and food.

The guidelines of red with beef and white with fish have been gradually shifting over the past several years.

Even so, guidelines are meant to guide us, not force us to follow absolute rules. You have a great chance of making inspired pairings if you follow a few key ideas.

If you want to serve beef, lamb or venison, go with a bold red wine, like a Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, or a Bordeaux blend. The tannins (bitter flavors) in the wine will combine nicely with the fat in the meat. If you plan to have pork loin, a medium bold red wine

like a Merlot, Sangiovese or Côtes du Rhone blend would be delicious and a great pairing. These pairings follow the principle that the wine should have the same flavor intensity as the food.

Maybe you're in the mood for raw oysters, and you'd like a wine to complement that pungent, saline treat. There are a couple of wine categories to choose from that ensure a great pairing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33 ■

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SEAFOOD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

Daily, from lunch through dinner, give yourself time to read the menu. It's impossible to focus on just one choice: homemade soup, the raw bar, appetizer, fish/seafood sandwich, lobster roll, taco, entree that also include hand-cut-to-order USDA prime steak and "sides." You might decide to select many items to share so you can "taste" incredible dishes for your first visit. Even the "sides" that are often overlooked in other restaurants, Cole's slaw, savory grit cake, butter-fried noodles, sweet potato waffle fries and homemade thick-cut chips are all notable.



Crabcakes

Three appetizers made with finesse and personality could easily be an entrée if you're keeping the dish all to yourself. LOL! Fried greens tomatoes — lightly battered and fried, topped with chive cream cheese and fresh basil, over roasted tomato puree drizzled with balsamic glaze and parmesan cheese. Sauteed clams or mussels — in a creamy butter broth with garlic, white wine, parsley, shallots and diced tomatoes. Florida Fish Company crabcakes — A mix of jumbo lump and claw crabmeats, delightfully entwined with spices and



Fried green tomatoes

served with homemade trio of sauces!

If you're a chowder chowhound, three choices are worthy of their place on the menu over the years (especially for \$10/large bowl): lobster bisque with brandy and sherry, white fish chowder featuring chunks of fish swimming alongside potatoes, carrots celery, onions and great spices, and red fish chowder ... with just a few different spices.

Raw bar ravenous? Colossal shrimp cocktail, Maine lobster cocktail, oyster or clams on the half shell — all tempting your appetite on display in the fish market presentation on ice.

Are you a fried shrimp or fried fish fiend? These two legends are worth the drive — and people are coming from hours away to enjoy the fried jumbo shrimp basket with cocktail and tartar sauces, and fried fish sandwich: hand-battered fish choice with crispy panko flakes, Cole's slaw, tomato and tartar sauce on fresh baked roll. Since you have a variety of "sides" — hearty appetites must indulge in the cheesy savory grit cake!



Grilled fresh trout with butter-toasted almond sauce

On vacation and trying to watch your diet, too? It's possible at Flagler Fish Company with all of the daily fresh fish that will woo you back just to stay on that "dreaded" diet when you believe you're suffering instead of indulging in the best. Choose sauteed or grilled, steamed or seared fresh fish. Order it perfectly plain or treat yourself to a magical sauce (lemon butter caper, Creole, Hong Kong, roasted tomato puree, drawn butter or horseradish cream).

The joy of gastronomy at the Flagler Fish Company experience doesn't just begin and end with the menu selections and becoming a foodie fan. Carolyn and



Sauteed clams

Chris are as excited and enthusiastic in 2023 as they were years ago with expansion ideas to finally build a private dining party room and serving full bar liquor, too.

What keeps Chris challenged?

"No two days are the same," he said. "My staff and family work side by side to tackle restaurant challenges and keep our guests happy. I like to win!"

Carolyn continues to believe "we're so happy that we chose Flagler Beach. We're blessed to be embraced by our loyal customers, tourists and our dedicated staff. We're proud that we've been recognized over the years by Southern Living, Garden & Gun, USA Today and so many more publications while we share a wonderful life here with our family!"

So, when you're searching for "The 15 Best Seafood Restaurants in Florida," you can find Flagler Fish Company in USA Today 2022 as a "...one-of-a-kind in this cozy beach town. Whether you want tuna, salmon, Chilean sea bass and lobster, they offer more than 20 types of fresh fish and seafood daily ... 'Food to Knock Your Flops Off' the eatery claims."

Some days I wake up with an appetite for really delicious seafood without breaking the dining budget, food that's made with love. Perhaps you'll find me sitting outside in the Florida sunshine with Atlantic Ocean breezes as I give into dessert first. Who can resist the deep-dish key lime pie, Caylee's jumbo peanut butter brownie served with vanilla ice cream sundae-style and tropical homemade rum cake. Or I could be pondering whether I should really share my mahi tacos and chilled lobster roll at FFC.

Read more from Leigh Cort at PackYourPortmanteau.com.

WINE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Sparkling wines such as Champagne, Prosecco and Cava all bring high acidity, and the bubbles provide a nice contrast to the silky smooth texture of the oysters. You could also go with a light white wine without bubbles, such as Chablis, Sauvignon Blanc, Sancerre, Albarino or Vermentino, all of which are light bodied, usually crisp, and often with bracing acidity and citrus notes. I heartily recommend a Vermentino, a varietal I fell in love with owing to a chef friend of mine and after tasting several bottles on a recent trip to Sardinia. It's almost always dry, has flavors of grapefruit and citrus, yet its minerality and salinity make it wonderful with shellfish, as the grapes are heavily influenced by the saltiness of the sea breezes of Sardinia.

Of course, what would a special dinner be without dessert? One of the wonderful wine surprises I had in the past year was a pairing recommended



Steve Terrell of Uncorked Events offers some ideas for pairing wine with your romantic dinner — or any occasion.

by a friend. Leading a wine tasting with all Italian foods and wine, dessert was a dark chocolate gelato paired with a Brachetto d'Acqui, a sweet, sparkling red wine made from the red Brachetto grape grown in the provinces of Asti

and Alessandria. The delicate, light bodied, high-acid wine with bubbles and the taste of strawberries contrasted wonderfully with the rich, dark, creamy chocolate gelato. A vintage Port would also pair well with chocolate. If chocolate isn't your thing, you could go for a crème brûlée paired with a sweet white wine like Moscato, a sweet Riesling, or Chenin Blanc.

The wine world is wonderful, and it's calling your name. You owe it to yourself to answer "yes." Go beyond the "tried and true" to find the "tried and new!" As you celebrate with friends and loved ones, uncork a bottle, raise a glass, and appreciate all the good people and things in your life.

For private wine education and tasting events, in your home or office, phone 757-647-2571 or email Steven.uncorkedevents@gmail.com. The author's Facebook page can be found at facebook.com/UncorkedEventsLLC.



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HOW THE PARTY DOCTORX BLAZED A TRAIL FOR THE WOMEN'S FOOD ALLIANCE

Group celebrating its 10th anniversary

story and photos by LEIGH CORT

Leigh Cort, founder and president of the Women's Food Alliance, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, is also honoring her 40-year career in the hospitality industry since 1983.

She accepted her position as the "party director" at New York City's Trump Tower without knowing how to create huge galas for thousands of guests. Forty years later, she views the journey and the ensuing years brilliantly punctuated with amazing people who came together to be her "ensemble" of professional resources. The small parties became galas and multiple-day retreats.

Today, her gift back to the hospitality industry is the Women's Food Alliance.

Where did it begin? Film producer and restaurateur Dino De Laurentiis thought Cort could handle the position emanating from his new restaurant — the DDL BISTRO. It was nestled inside the iconic Fifth Avenue building on the ground floor at the base of the famed Trump Tower waterfall. Daily "power lunches" brought international celebrities to the table — and at night the space became one of the most popular paparazzi hangouts in the world. Guests shared sightings of foreign diplomats, business leaders, Hollywood moguls, Broadway celebrities, fashionistas and of course the New York pop culture icons who all partied together.

Working with five floors of connected escalators, Cort positioned bars and staff on each promenade and hired beautiful servers passing hors d'oeuvres to the nightly guests who were honored to receive their invitations. Gloved ladies hardly touched a morsel, but the champagne glasses clinked long into the wee hours of the morning.

Cort's first party hosted 1,500 guests honoring famed sculptor Erté — the Russian-born French artist celebrating his 90th

birthday. Imagine coatracks for 1,500 furs and overcoats with 50 people to organize the arrival of guests. Security was stationed everywhere to watch over the gala, and Cort directed 200 staff members to execute every detail, learning how to find these sources that made each event a success.

Cort's template for the Women's Food Alliance began that year when courageous (but very few) women were opening restaurants, bakeries, catering businesses, floral studios, staffing companies and more. They blazed the trail, always caring enough to support, partner and encourage each other. The

Roundtable for Women in Foodservice was launched in NYC in 1983 and was devoted to the advancement of women in all segments of the food service industry.

Similarly today, the Women's Food Alliance is an expansive hospitality organization with members who are in related businesses that include hoteliers, chefs, farmers, event planners, cookbook authors, entertainment and food service, culinary leaders, vintners — even owners of event barns and other distinctive event venues.

For 10 years, WFA has been connecting hard-working, creative women throughout Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia. It's

an organization that is true to its mission to "... cultivate and advance education, collaboration and networking for women in all fields of the hospitality industry."

Through organic growth without advertising, primarily word-of-mouth from members, the alliance has grown from the original eight members to 150, thriving with more amazing entrepreneurs daily. Month after month, the Women's Food Alliance comes up with fabulous programs that feature members and their venues — from barns to attractions, restaurants,



CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 ■

DOCTORX

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

theaters and beyond. Each event is filled with members' current successes — and challenges — with helping hands reaching out and positivity being the centerpiece of networking.

This year for its 10th anniversary, the Women's Food Alliance has plans that continue to stick with the format of prior years — welcoming new members and cherishing the deep relationships that have been flourishing since 2013. There aren't any monthly dinners or lunches, cocktail mixers or hands-on culinary symposiums that are the same.

Cort loves planning events with one goal of getting the members circulating throughout the region and experiencing businesses that take them out of their own daily comfort zones. They explore bakeries, restaurants, catering services, locally manufactured specialty foods and aquaponic farms; they attend cookbook and food-judging conferences and especially enjoy an occasional culinary competition. Each member offers something unique, and it's an exciting

journey to get to see and understand what their pride and joy is offering.

The Women's Food Alliance Leadership Council for 2023 is:

- Leigh Cort — President, Women's Food Alliance, and owner, Leigh Cort Publicity
- Nancy Slatsky — Mr. Greens Produce, culinary sales consultant
- Liz Earnest — The Chef's Garden, owner
- Betsy Hill — Content creator/food, wine & travel, BetsiWorld
- Erin Kelly — Kelly Farms, business development
- Terri Sherman — FBX Business Exchange Inc., business intermediary
- Kelly Mabry — Owner, Tropical Smoothie
- Cindy Stavely — executive director, St. Augustine Pirate/Treasure Museum/ Colonial Quarter
- Sue Lomba — Women's Food Alliance, tech director
- Cassandra Cotoia — Empowered Foodie, chef and owner
- Amy Morales — Creator, Sweets for the Soul

- Jen Wolcott — All About Events, business development and engagement
- Carey Cohill — Hallway Stories, founder

A look into a few of the 2023 events finds the Women's Food Alliance at Mezza Luna in Neptune Beach for dinner, enjoying an Italian pasta-demo dinner at Amici in St. Augustine Beach, attending a happy hour cocktail party at Ember & Iron in St. Johns, at Coop 303 in Atlantic Beach for lunch and food trivia, and enjoying the Golden Pineapple Gala Award Dinner at the Renaissance World Golf Village.

The red-carpet event will honor two legends from each of the past 10 years who have blazed trails and created food trends, mentored up-and-comers, followed their dreams with new businesses and have kept the fire burning without giving up!

Leigh Cort doesn't give up either as she shares this legacy through the "community" that she's built with 40 years of "hospitality in her blood" remembering friendship first!



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Madison Pedreiro

Contributed photos

Madison Pedreiro, formally Miss Ponte Vedra Teen Volunteer, has a new state title. She was recently crowned Miss Florida Teen Volunteer 2023 at the Nathan H. Wilson Center for the Arts in Jacksonville on Jan. 7.

PONTE VEDRA LOCAL WINS

Miss Florida Teen Volunteer

Madison, 15, is the daughter of Michael and Carrie Pedreiro and is a sophomore at Allen D. Nease High School.

Miss Florida Volunteer was founded in 2021 as a preliminary pageant to the Miss Volunteer America Pageant. Miss Volunteer America is a nationwide, service-oriented scholarship program based in Tennessee that seeks to empower young women across the country through educational scholarships and extraordinary opportunities.

The program boasts a five-point crown with each point representing a

principle in the organization's mission. The points spell out SERVE and stand for scholarship, education, responsibility, volunteerism and empowerment.

"This is a two-year dream realized," said Madison, who competed in the same event last year. "I am excited to get to work serving my state and spreading awareness for my SERVE initiative and issues close to the heart of the Miss Florida Volunteer organization."

Madison's SERVE initiative is "Hope in Between," which seeks to support foster children and teens, foster

families, first responders and others involved in foster respite care.

Hope In Between strives to educate others on the needs of foster children and teens. It partners with, and lends support to, organizations such as Isaiah 117 House, whose mission is to reduce trauma for children entering the foster system, lighten the load for child welfare services and ease the transition for foster families.

Madison will represent Florida as she competes for the title of Miss Teen Volunteer America in Jackson, Tennessee, March 8-11.

'SYLVIA' TO BE STAGED IN MARCH

A Classic Theatre and SAFE team up during show to rescue animals

story by **SHAUN RYAN**

A Classic Theatre will stage its first show of 2023, "Sylvia" by A.R. Gurney, in March. And the production will double as an opportunity to learn more about a local group that rescues animals facing euthanasia.

It's the story of Greg, a financial trader who hates his job and is going through a mid-life crisis — that is, until one day while at the park he encounters Sylvia, a dog of mixed breeds. Sylvia is homeless, so Greg adopts her, believing that she is the answer to his problems. The question becomes: Who rescued whom?

But this energetic, and occasionally troublesome, mutt soon becomes a major "bone of contention" between Greg and his wife, Kate, a school teacher. Kate sees Sylvia as a rival for Greg's affection.

"Sylvia" has been called "a funny, poignant, reflective look at ourselves and the importance of the bonds that keep us grounded."

Joseph Stearman ("August: Osage County," "The Grapes of Wrath," "Harvey") of Jacksonville plays Greg. Jessica Racaniello, a recent transplant from Connecticut and local actor ("August: Osage County," "Dial M for Murder") plays Kate. And Cameron Maxwell ("The Tempest," "The Revolutionists"), a recent graduate from Flagler College with a B.A. in theater arts, plays Sylvia. Rounding out the cast is singer David Abraham ("Shorts and Giggles," "Lullaby of Broadway"), who showcases his range by playing three diverse roles: a philosophical dog-lover in the park, a former Vassar classmate of Kate's and an androgynous marriage counselor.

But "Sylvia" will be more than a stage production.

A Classic Theatre is teaming with the local rescue organization SAFE (Saving Animals from Euthanasia) to highlight the need for saving animals from dire circumstances.

SAFE will have a table at each performance to provide information, photos of pets in need of adoption and fostering and opportunities to donate. As "Sylvia" revolves around a dog rescue of sorts, Glo MacDonald, marketing director

of A Classic Theatre, thought this would be a good match.

"I'm a big supporter of SAFE, and I volunteer with them all the time," said MacDonald, who has two rescue dogs herself.

Patrons with rescue pets are encouraged to bring a photo of their pets to post on the Wall of Whiskers during performances. Alternately, photos can be mailed to The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine, where A Classic Theatre will present "Sylvia."

Founded in 2008, SAFE has rescued more than 27,000 pets.

"We just wanted to give them some visibility," MacDonald said.

Interest in "Sylvia" has been high. MacDonald said a lot of people have been asking her when tickets will be available.

Performances will be 7:30 p.m. March 3, 4, 10 and 11; and 2 p.m. March 5 and 12.

The Waterworks is available through the support of the City of St. Augustine and the St. Johns Cultural Council.

For more information and to purchase tickets, go to aclassictheatre.org.

For more information on SAFE, call 904-460-0556 or go to safe-pet-rescue-fl.com.



NEW ERA OF RACING GETS UNDERWAY WITH ROLEX 24

photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

The following are photos from the 61st running of the Rolex 24 at Daytona International Speedway, also known as the World Center of Racing. The event was won by Tom Blomqvist, Colin Braun, Helio Castroneves and Simon Pagenaud driving an Acura for Meyer Shank Racing. It was the second straight Rolex 24 victory for the racing team. It was the first race of the new GTP class era in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.



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A scene from "Chicago" was performed by the musical theatre department.



A number of variations of dance were performed during Douglas Anderson's 38th Annual Extravaganza.

38 YEARS OF CREATIVE TRADITION

Douglas Anderson Extravaganza continues to showcase talent while filling creative need locally

story by ANTHONY RICHARDS

photos courtesy of DOUGLAS ANDERSON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville prides itself in offering a unique mix of arts and academics at the highest level to its students.

For the past 38 years, it has held a showcase to give those talents a place to fully shine.

The 2023 Extravaganza was held Feb. 10 in the Moran Theater at the Jacksonville Performing Arts Center, which was packed with many anxious family members of those performing as well as art enthusiasts throughout the community.

Many local government officials were among those in attendance sitting front and center for the production.

One person who has seen the extravaganza evolve over the years in the grand production it is today is Jackie Cornelius, who was principal at Douglas Anderson for years and is now the executive director of the DA Foundation.

"It has grown immensely since I first came to Douglas Anderson in 1988 as the arts director," Cornelius said. "When we did the first Extravaganza downtown it was \$5 a ticket and it was mostly only parents."

According to Cornelius, part of the evolution of the event has been fine tuning things, including the length of the performance which was four hours long in its inaugural year.

"After visiting other art schools in the country, like Booker T. Washington in Dallas, Duke Ellington in Washington



PHOTO BY ANTHONY RICHARDS

An visual art exhibit was on display in the lower lobby of the Jacksonville Performing Arts Center.

D.C. or LaGuardia in New York, it was obvious that it needed to be shorter, but still an event that showcased what students were capable of doing when given the proper resources."

Cornelius is a past president of an international group of art schools throughout the U.S., Canada and England, which she said played a big role in discovering ideas that would be easily transferable for Douglas Anderson and the Jacksonville area.

"What it is all about is visibility for the program and how incredible it is and what it offers to kids that really want intensive art study," Cornelius said. "We have a kid that goes to MIT for engineering, because the arts teach you discipline and confidence, and the ability to really articulate their ideas for any area in the world."

Much of high school is about creating memories that will last through the years, and based on the smiles and emotions exhibited both on stage and

by those in the crowd watching, the 2023 Extravaganza did a perfect job of creating just that.

As an art school, students at Douglas Anderson get about two to three hours of art curriculum each day.

"Research has shown that you need 80% or more of the art teachers at an art high school to be professional artists because cognitively they get what it takes to pursue a career in the art profession," Cornelius said.

Although a similar type of showcase is put on by all the top arts high schools in the country, the Extravaganza had a very obvious Jacksonville vibe at certain times, especially during the portions of the night that highlighted cinematic arts with various films entitled "Creative Landscapes," which focused on various parts of town across Jacksonville.

Students' creativity was spotlighted throughout the night and in a variety of ways, such as musical theatre and chamber orchestra to a jazz ensemble and a string quartet.

There were also examples of creative writing and a visual art exhibit filled the lower lobby for those in attendance to view both beforehand and during the show's intermission.

"I love those kids in our city and throughout northeast Florida that really are talented but just don't have the resources available to express that talent," Cornelius said. "DA was created for the purpose of meeting that special need. And it continues to do so."

NASCAR LEGEND JEFF GORDON NAMED HONOREE FOR 2023 THE AMELIA

story by ANTHONY RICHARDS

photo courtesy of THE AMELIA

Once March rolls around it is time again for another year of The Amelia and the 2023 version has all the makings to continue the marquee car show's historic tradition.

The show has created a vibe associated with excellence both in the cars displayed and the guests honored.

This year's honoree fits that billing to a tee, as it is NASCAR Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon, who left his mark on the series during his racing career.

Gordon compiled four championships, 93 wins and 81 poles. His 93 wins is third all-time for most wins in NASCAR history, behind only Richard Petty and David Pearson.

He will be recognized during the honoree dinner at the Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island March 4 from 6:30 to 10 p.m.

The night will include delicious food stations and cocktail options to go



NASCAR Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon will be honored at The Amelia this year with an honoree dinner at the Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island March 4.

along with live entertainment and an interactive in-person interview with Gordon.

The honoree dinner is just one of several events taking place during The Amelia's festivities which will run from March 2-5.

The 28th Annual Amelia Concours d'Elegance will be the caper to the four days of car lovers paradise, but it

will also include the Cars & Community presented by Griot's Garage taking part during the day on March 4.

Cars & Community will serve as the appetizer to the main course the next day, but there will be more than 500 vehicles present and a lot of family-friendly activities.

The Amelia will take the field the following day on March 5 with 250 cars being part of this year's show, each of which has some sort of historical significance to them.

The vehicles will be split up into 32 different classes and an awards ceremony will end the day naming winners for each class.

Some of this year's featured classes that are sure to capture the imagination of car enthusiasts will be Le Mans Winners, 120th Anniversary of Buick and Fiberglass Racing Spyderys – Porsche.

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