

the thirty-a REVIEW™

a review of 30-A's finest people • places • things

INSIDE:

30-A's Delicious Dining, Fashion & Style, Real Estate, Health & Wellness, Art, Culture, Business and More...

Shelby's Beach
Bar and Grill



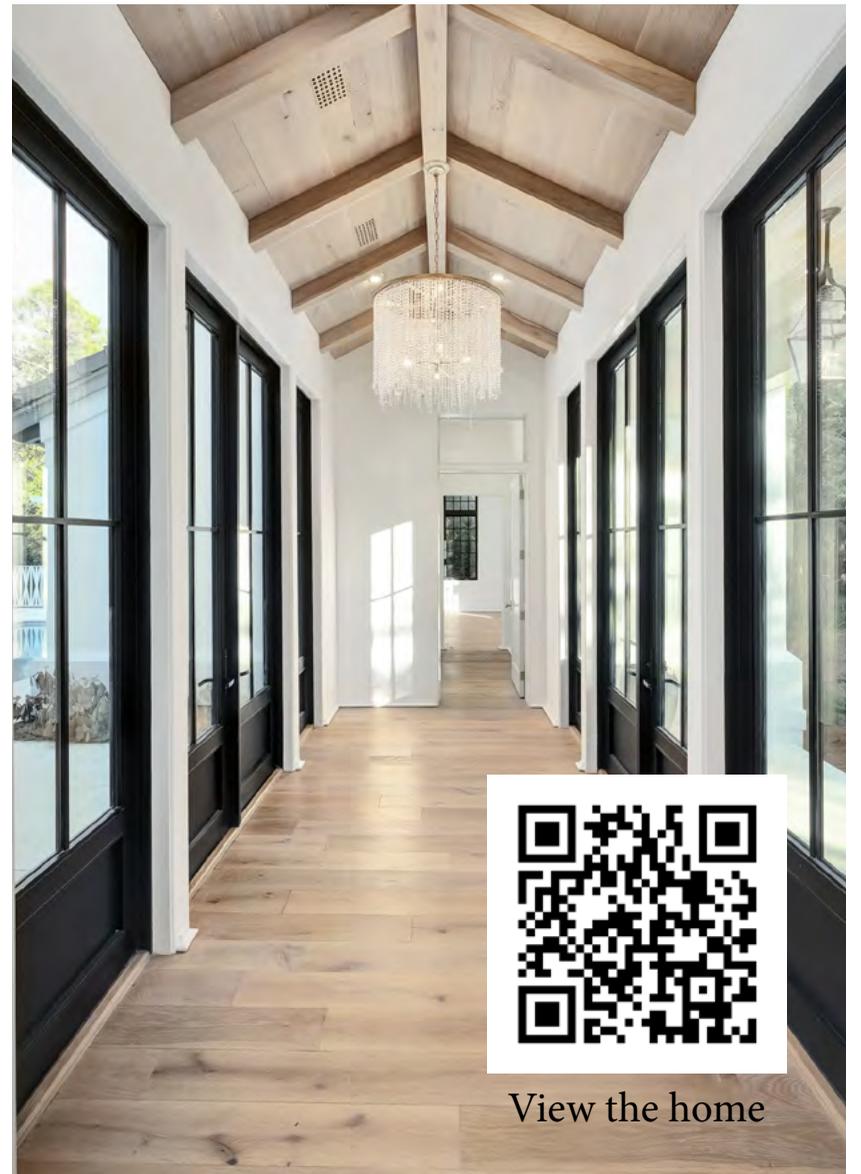
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curate

Spring-It's Better at the Beach!



Anna Sweet, Donut



Nicoletta Belletti, No Worries



Josef Kote, Somehow It Felt Right



Stephen Harlan, Shade of Pale



Simon Kenevan, The Sublime Prophecy



Steven Quartly, Into the Light

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letter from the publisher

SPRING IS IN THE AIR



Spring at the beach is full of life and rebirth. The flowers are blooming and the dune grasses and shrubbery are beginning to take on more life and vibrancy. At the same time, various amazing events begin popping up like daffodils up and down the 30-A corridor.

Of course, spring also brings its throngs of beach lovers for “spring break” and the condominiums, homes, and AirBnBs begin to fill up like corn heating up in a pop-corn machine. This issue is also filled up with various goodies about the people, places and things that make 30-A and the surrounding areas so special and meaningful.

Whether it’s our cover story on “The Shelby” or the plethora of stories on the businesses, individuals and events that give 30-A its special personality, we are confident you will find this lovely magazine helpful. We have been covering 30-A for the past 19 years and we look forward to continuing to be your guide and eyes for everything wonderful on 30-A.

Until next issue, please enjoy the pages that follow. We wish you happiness, success and fun on the beach.

Cheers,

Miles K. Neiman

View the entire publication online at www.ThirtyAReview.com



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about the cover

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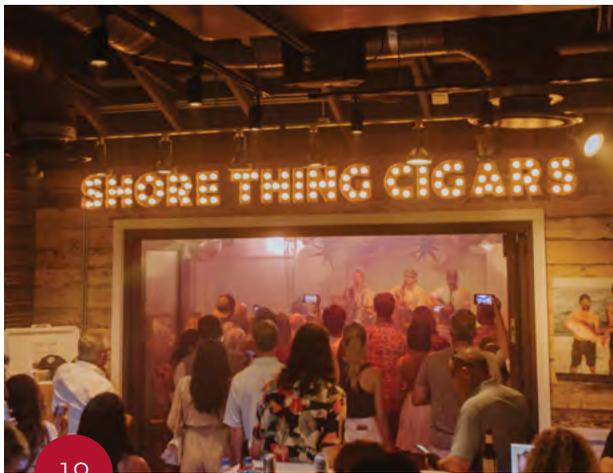
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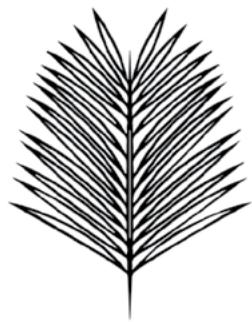
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CLASSICAL CONNECTIONS

feat. Geneva Lewis, violin
Demetrius Fuller, conductor

New Zealand-born award-winning violinist Geneva Lewis to perform Felix Mendelssohn's *Concert for Violin in E minor, Op. 64* and Robert Schumann's *Symphony No. 2, Op. 61*.

SAT. MARCH 11

7:30 PM

DESTIN HIGH SCHOOL



BEETHOVEN V. COLDPLAY

A Merging of Musical Giants

Music visionary Steve Hackman conducts this transformation of the *Eroica* into an oratorio weaving the melodies and lyrics of Coldplay's *Yellow*, *Viva La Vida* and *Clocks* into Beethoven's original score.

SAT. APRIL 29

7:30 PM

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Theatre and Events in March and April

ALYS BEACH

Adventures in Alys by the REP

Mondays & Wednesdays in March, April 3rd & Wednesday April 5th, 10am

AMPHITHEATRE

Join the REP Theatre for a completely original storytelling experience for children of all ages. Watch as a new, one-of-a-kind Adventure in Alys is created by the audience (and maybe even join in the stories yourselves)!

Tie Dye in the Amphitheatre

Tuesdays in March, April 4, 9am

Bring the children to make an Alys Beach Tie-Dyed T-shirt to take home. The shirts are \$15 each. Space is limited to 30 children. Please sign up at alysbeach.com/events.

Wine and Song at NEAT

Tuesdays 5-7pm

Join us for tableside wine tastings and live music. Wines will be posted every Tuesday on Facebook & Instagram. 4 Wines, \$30 per person

Concert Series

Wednesdays in March and April 5th, 6pm

AMPHITHEATRE

Bring your low-back chairs and blankets to enjoy live music in the Alys Beach Amphitheatre. Food & beverage available for purchase at Henry's Pizza Truck.

Art in the Amphitheatre

Thursdays in March and April 6th, 9:30am

Bring the children to learn how to make a masterpiece to take home. The class is \$25. Space is limited. Please sign up at alysbeach.com/events.

Reels in the Amphitheatre

Thursdays in March and April 6th, 7:30pm

Enjoy a movie under the stars! Bring your low-back chairs and blankets, and delight in a fun-filled family evening. Food & beverage available for purchase at Henry's Pizza Truck.

Alys Improv Hour by the REP in the Amphitheatre

Fridays in March, April 7th, 10am

Join the REP Theatre as they take the audience on an unscripted and hilarious ride with interactive improv games that the whole family will enjoy.

Blood Drive

Friday March 10th

IN FRONT OF RAW & JUICY

Good Friday Concert

Friday April 7th

AMPHITHEATRE

Bring blankets and low-back chairs. Food and beverage available for purchase.

ROSEMARY BEACH

MONDAYS

Spring it On! Concert Series

March 13, 20, 27 and April 3 & 10, 6:00 to 8:00pm

ST. AUGUSTINE GREEN/OWNERS PAVILION

Bring your chairs and blankets and enjoy an evening of entertaining musical performances. Each week is a different band...be sure to catch one or all!

TUESDAYS

We Must Believe in Magic—Magic Show

March 14, 21, 28 and April 4 & 11, 7:00pm to 8:00pm

ST. AUGUSTINE GREEN/OWNERS PAVILION

Prepare for a vintage-feel, modern-day crusade of magic with the International Award-Winning dynamic duo, Julian and Melody Pittman. Come immerse yourself in a magical, "modernly vintage," evening with Pittman Magic Productions.

WEDNESDAYS

Cinderella—Kids Theatre

6:00pm

NORTH BARRETT SQUARE

Another favorite fairy tale brought to life by The REP Theatre! A group of traveling actors create



Photo courtesy of Moon Creek Studios

much onstage merriment by presenting their own version of the classic children's story, *Cinderella*. Blankets and lawn chairs are welcome.

THURSDAYS

Moonlight & Movies and Face Painting

Face Painting starts at 4:30pm, Movie at 7:30pm

March 16, 23, 30 and April 6 & 13

WESTERN GREEN

Bring the family for a wholesome and fun movie night under the stars! Come early and get your face painted by one of our talented artists! Enjoy popcorn and the best hot dogs on the beach from DogManDu! Blankets and lawn chairs are welcome.

FRIDAYS

Treasure Jars, Airbrush Caps & Tunes

March 17, 24, 31 and April 7 & 14, 9am to 12:00pm

WESTERN GREEN

Join us for some crafty fun on the green! Create your very own treasure jar to commemorate your trip to the beach! Plus, design a custom-created airbrushed hat complete with your name!

SEASIDE

SEASIDE® Farmers Market

Saturdays 9:00am to 1:00pm

CENTRAL SQUARE

Join us for our weekly Seaside Farmers Market each Saturday!

Stories by the Sea

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00am

AMPHITHEATER

Central Square Cinema

Fridays at 7:30pm

AMPHITHEATER

Grab your blankets and head to the Seaside Amphitheater for a family movie under the stars.

Huck & Lilly

Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6pm

SEASIDE AMPHITHEATER

Lyceum Lawn Cinema

Sundays at 7:30pm

LYCEUM LAWN

Easter Celebration

Sunday, April 9, 11am – 2pm

Visit seasidefl.com for more events and updates.

WATERCOLOR

St. Patrick's Day Pub Crawl

Friday, March 17, All day

Make your way throughout

WaterColor Beach Club to try all things Irish and festive! Enjoy drink specials at WaterColor Grill Bar, Costa Chica, Beach Cow and the Tiki Bar.

St. Patty's Day Celebration

March 17, 4 - 10pm

FISH OUT OF WATER,

Green, Green and more Green! Join us for Irish style live music and Chef-inspired features. Green beer and cocktails available for purchase to get the party started!

Easter Breakfast

April 9, 7am

FISH OUT OF WATER

Enjoy an early start time, offering a Chef's Menu of Springtime Favorites, Mimosa Bar, and Dessert Bar.

Bike Tour Throughout WaterColor

Daily

Bring your own bike, pick up the map at Gather, and follow along on the bicycle tour/selfie scavenger hunt. Submit your selfies to wcisocialevents@stjoe.com for a chance of appearing in the weekly WaterSound Club newsletter. Those who make the newsletter win a Gather gift certificate!

Great Southern Restaurant Group

Father and daughter team up to promote 30-A's most popular eating and drinking spots

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON



Photo courtesy of Clutch Media Works

Chef Jim Shirley

In addition to longtime Seaside favorite The Great Southern Café—located in Central Square—Chef Jim Shirley's successful endeavors include the Sea Bar, Meltdown, the Chicken Shack, and the new 331 hangout North Beach Social.

Madison Shirley, Chef Jim Shirley's daughter, is not about to trigger a string of braggadocious alerts by referring to her father's restaurants and bars an empire, but it wouldn't be far off.

In addition to longtime Seaside favorite The Great Southern Café—located in Central Square—Chef Jim's successful endeavors include the Sea Bar, Meltdown, the Chicken Shack, and the new 331 hangout North Beach Social.

The Chicken Shack specializes in “fried chicken made fresh,” says Madison Shirley. “All chicken is sweet tea brined.” It opened in March of 2022, along with the Sea Bar.

There's also BFF, where you'll find frozen to-go drinks.

“If you're not looking for it, it's hard to spot,” says Madison Shirley, unless maybe you're hankering for a “Frosé”—a frozen rosé—or perhaps a frozen espresso with bourbon. Margaritas and the like are also here for the drinking. BFF's signature/title concoction is a “super delicious” frozen bourbon drink. “If you're into frozen drinks, it's a must.”

Chef Jim Shirley's other places include The Bay on 331 and the recently remodeled Farm & Fire. The family-friendly Bay—fittingly located on the Choctawhatchee Bay—is noted for “mouth-watering Gulf Coast cuisine.”

Madison Shirley describes Farm & Fire as, “an eclectic new American restaurant with two bars focused on craft cocktails.” The gorgeous sunsets contribute to

the beach bar vibe and the restaurant has carved out a niche for itself as “The Meeting Place—where friends meet, where ideas are made, and where the farm meets the fire.”

Chef Jim Shirley can boast nearly 30 years in the business. He started in Pensacola, where some of his restaurants continue to thrive, but his daughter says he's focused on the 30-A area. Great Southern opened in 2006 and has been going strong ever since, a staple of the Seaside area.

Madison Shirley, whose current title is director of brand and storytelling, joined the team after a 10-year stint working for the wine, beer and hard cider industry in Oregon and Northwest California. After a decade away forging her own path, she decided it was time to come home.

Now she works in marketing the family restaurants while training in day-to-day operations.

“I'm getting a holistic view of all the businesses,” she says. “A typical workday includes something different every day, because I wear so many hats. My Monday started with a conversation with our payroll company, followed by communicating with the Department of Labor about a Visa program we're launching,” she says. “I'm also designing T-shirts for North Beach Social and a photo shoot at The Bay, among other things.”

That's in addition to outlining quarterly marketing plans and having conversations with the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association.

Madison Shirley lives in Santa Rosa Beach with her fiancée, along with two dogs and two cats.

“It's a very furry household!” she says.

It's fitting that most of the Shirley establishments are pet friendly.

“We have outdoor patio seating, and pets are completely welcome,” she says.

North Beach Social has eclipsed most of the South Walton joints as a popular live music venue. Award-winning Forrest Williams, of the Forrest Williams Band, plays there often, along with a rotating cast of crowd-pleasing music makers. Madison Shirley says March will be “music month,” with a major concert and other must-attend events going on every weekend.

North Beach Social is again teaming up with a Nashville company for at least a couple of all-day mini music festivals and beach parties. And keep your calendar clear for the March anniversary spectacular. Stay up to date with them on social media at @northbeachsocial.

“It's going to be a very busy month and will be lots of fun,” says Madison Shirley.

Great Southern Café, located in Seaside's Central Square, is open daily until 9:30 p.m. Discover more about Great Southern and Chef Jim Shirley's restaurants at www.thegreatsoutherncafe.com.



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Food with a View

Shelby's Beach Bar and Grill gears up for second season at Gulf Place

BY TESS FARMER

The outdoor restaurant space at the corner of Gulf Place on Highway 30-A has seen multiple variations of bars and restaurants over the years. But with the opening of Shelby's Beach Bar and Grill, the space has an updated and elevated look and liveliness, not to mention the backing of owners Vickie, Jeff and Shelby Miller, who also own and operate the popular Perfect Pig restaurants in and around the area.

The Millers opened the first Perfect Pig restaurant in Seagrove Beach in 2012, followed by the Gulf Place location in 2015, and most recently at Watercolor Crossing in 2019. The family-owned franchise ran restaurants for forty years, but branched out into creating and operating their own branded restaurant with the Perfect Pig.

When the gulf-view restaurant space became available in Gulf Place, Jeff and Vickie Miller were anxious to submit a design proposal for their vision for Shelby's Beach Bar.

The next step was getting their daughters, Shelby Miller and Courtney Stuble on board. Both have been involved in the family business for years.

"The passion for running restaurants runs deep in our family," says Shelby Miller. "This space offers us a new opportunity to bring another stellar dining experience to locals and visitors, this time with a fun beach bar atmosphere, light and fresh food and our familiar friendly service."

The restaurant seating is mostly all outdoor with views of the gulf. The new roof design was inspired by the Louvre Museum and allows gulf breezes to enter while providing shade from the Florida sun. Shelby's offers a prime spot for people watching, sunset viewing, listening to live music, grabbing a drink and enjoying a relaxing lunch or dinner.

"We really see this as the place for people to come together for a good time with great, nourishing food in a relaxed, beautiful setting," added Shelby. "We're excited to share what we've created."

The menu includes dishes combining the freshest, seasonal ingredients with local seafood being a highlight. Customer favorites include the grilled shrimp tacos with vegetable slaw; skirt steak kabobs; street corn nachos with cotija cheese and chipotle crema and the decadent pimento cheese wontons. There's also a foot-long hot dog served with a mango salsa.

The beach bar also serves up mixed drinks and frozen cocktails in addition to wine and beer. Happy hour specials are offered all year long as well as live entertainment with local and visiting musicians to the area performing daily on the patio.

Shelby's offers a prime spot for people watching, sunset viewing and listening to live music. The roof design was inspired by the Louvre Museum and allows gulf breezes to enter while providing shade from the Florida sun.



Tidal Wave Hotdog



Seasonal Salad



Grouper Sandwich

Photos courtesy of Jordan Holsomback

Grab-and-go fresh seasonal items are available for takeout and include many housemade favorites like dips, sides, wraps and desserts.

At both Shelby's Beach Bar and the Perfect Pig, the chefs, managers and waitstaff all become part of the family.

"It's a family-run business in every way," says Vickie Miller. "Our chefs have been with us for years as well as many of our managers and team members. Everyone contributes to making it all run as smoothly as possible, even on those days when we're serving non-stop in the thick of summer season."

Shelby's Beach Bar opened in the middle of the season last summer and all hands were on deck to launch the restaurant and welcome customers.

"With the growth of our surrounding area, we are happy to be neighbors with all the establishments in Gulf Place and to offer memorable dining experiences," says Vickie Miller.

Shelby's Beach Bar and Grill is located at 37 Town Center Loop, Santa Rosa Beach. Hours are Monday – Sunday from 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Learn more at www.shelbysbeachbar30a.com

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Birds of a Feather

Gretchen Weller Howard's paintings at Adaro Art tell a love story about The Big Easy

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

Her background is steeped in southern roots, like moss dripping off the trees in her home state of Louisiana. Art has always been part of Gretchen Weller Howard's life, from the moment her parents met in Jackson Square. A traditional oil painter, her father stopped in the French Quarter on his way from Mexico to New York and never left. He caught one sight of her mother and she, an art major from Louisiana State University, became the artist's wife.

"We had a very idyllic life...when I was in it, it was just my life; we were always creating things," Weller Howard describes.

Weller Howard shares tidbits of her past—her mother was part of an all-women's artist group called the Whimseys; she watched her father draw and paint in the square on the weekends (complete with beignets, of course); she and her siblings learned wood cutting and batik dyeing at a young age, using sharp tools and hot wax.

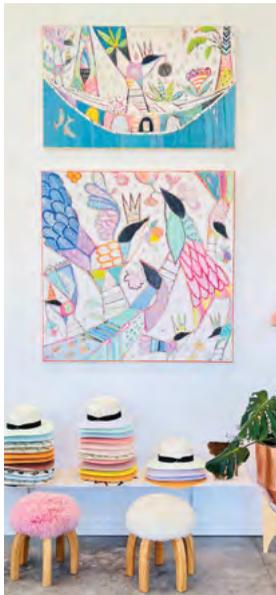
"Looking back, there was little to no concern about our safety," she laughs. "My mother would bring our little prints to shows and sell them."

Like Weller Howard, her mother was a colorist working in acrylic (later becoming a locally-renowned seamstress, who now teaches art classes in Hattiesburg). Gretchen went to school for graphic design, but later as she began free-form painting, symbols started appearing. "It became my language. It is my little repertoire, getting richer and richer over time," she says.

But let's back up a few hurricanes ago... In 2005, she and her family were living in Pass Christian, Miss. Five months after moving there, they lost everything during Hurricane Katrina, the land scrubbed clean.

"All you could recognize was the foundation and an oak tree, and paintings were leaning up against the tree," she recalls. "John Prebble's painting was one of the ones we had; I had gotten it at New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. This was the first one I remember stripping from its frame. Everything was waterlogged and funky with debris. I gathered up this huge stack of stripped paintings—works by my father, art my husband and I had collected over time—we took them all with us."

She moved to New Orleans and began painting; her art was a way to repurpose and rebuild, giving those



Photos courtesy of Adaro Gallery



Gretchen Weller Howard

A Seaside visitor for the past three decades, Weller Howard has always loved soaking up the good vibes. She felt her boats were well-suited for a gallery and everything fell into place in 2022, with shows in the spring and fall. To curate an original piece, look no further than Adaro Gallery in WaterSound, a gallery she describes as a "visual feast."

"It's all about joy in Adaro," she says. "It draws you in with color and you see textures and get a tactile experience, which is rare. The gallery is all about family – and that's really what 30-A is all about."

Family is what she's all about, too. Her husband might be an investment banker, but artists also run in his family. Today, her two daughters and stepdaughter are bringing their own creative nature to various painting, design and music projects.

"What would a world be without art? Well, I can't imagine being in a family without art. It makes us different, but I embrace that we are not the typical nuclear family," she says. "I feel like I landed in a family that was already creative, each of us is carrying on the tradition while taking on our own path."

stripped canvases new life. Her first symbol was a vessel, a boat where she put pieces of those lost paintings "for safekeeping." She began painting bridges symbolizing planting roots back home and elements are often connected by ladders. Rain represents cleansing.

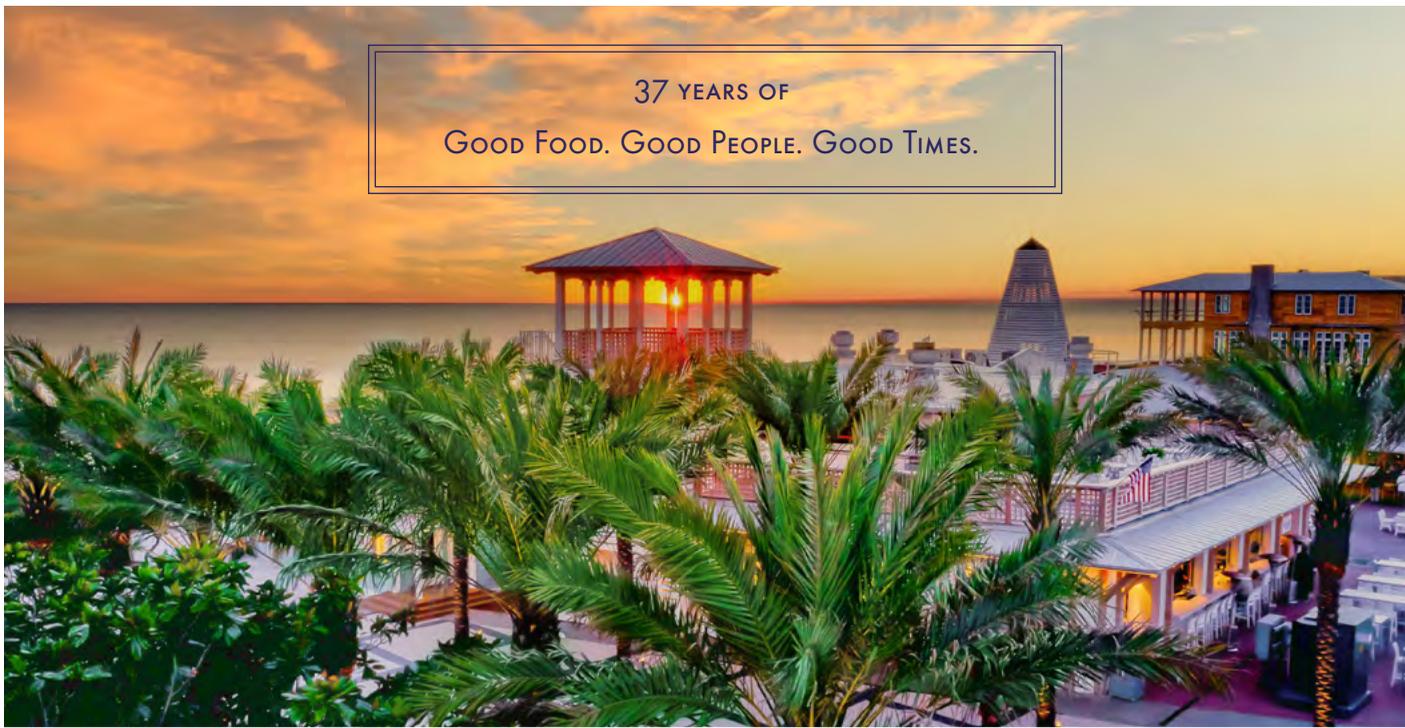
"I created one painting with a bird perched on a bridge, outside a cage, poised for flight—not flying yet, but ready for the next chapter," she says. "That's when I really began including birds in my work; they might symbolize people and their relationships."

A bird's legs might be ladders, or the tail a banana leaf. Look closer and find more of the celebrations and people of New Orleans, like a hat or an instrument, and other scenes you might happenstance on a street corner in the city. Horses have also become integral to her latest works, part of a love story.

"As I paint, I tell myself the story of my creation. Each part of the painting represents something to me," Weller Howard says. "As people hear my story, they realize their own stories; to give it to them, it becomes their story...When I connect with people through my art, there's nothing better."

To view Gretchen Weller Howard's work, visit www.AdaroArt.com/gretchen-weller-howard-art or stop by Adaro Art at The Shops and The Hub, 21 Hub Lane, WaterSound. Many of her paintings are available at Adaro, along with galleries in New Orleans. You can find her on Instagram @gretchenwellerhowardart

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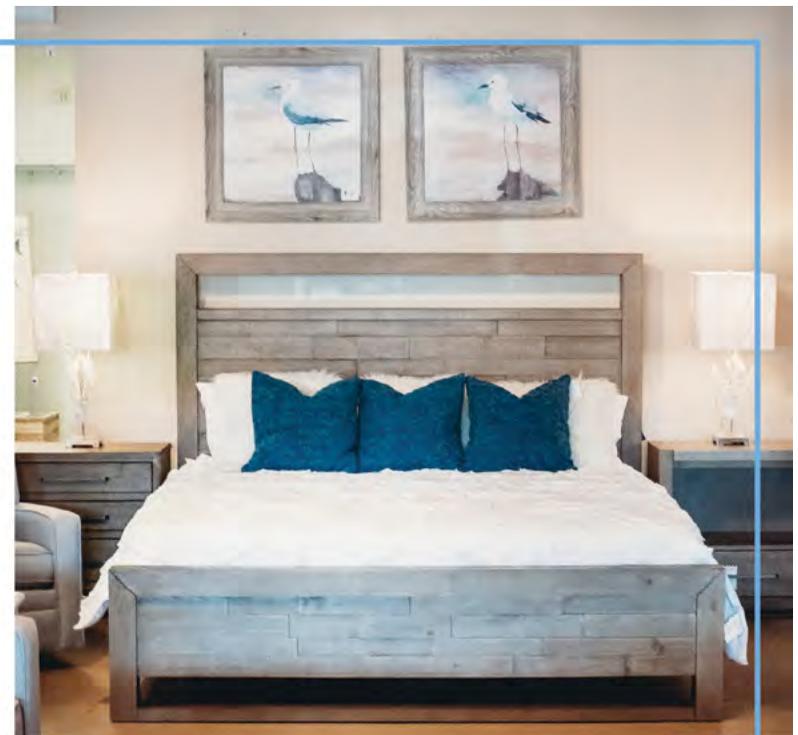
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"EXPECT SOMETHING DIFFERENT"

Sustainable Fashion and Beauty at Nicole Paloma Handsewn Designs

BY TESS FARMER

Paloma's creations, which are stunning in their design, enhance the innate beauty of the person wearing them.

The common thread in designer Nicole Paloma's work is the dedication to her craft and desire to help people remember their beauty. As a result, she's had ripple effects in the world and on those around her, whether that person is a customer, a young designer learning the business or the women in recovery she works with through Love_sewn, the community outreach arm of her brand.

Paloma is a large part of the robust creative community in and around 30-A. She began her entrepreneurial journey in 2011 with a children's clothing line she produced and sold out of Duckie's children's store in Seaside. Her line of women's clothing has expanded over the years and Paloma recently opened Nicole Paloma Handsewn Designs in a larger retail space at the Shops at the Hub on 30-A.

"My work in the world has always been connected to a bigger purpose and meaning," Paloma reflects. "It's never been about me, but making an impact by conveying a deeper message."

Rejecting a lot of the mainstream fashion world and focusing on natural beauty and relating to the humanness in us all, Paloma's creations, which are stunning in their design, enhance the innate beauty of the person wearing them.

"The connection with my customers is one of the most rewarding aspects of what I do," she added. "Working with them to create a custom piece and witnessing their reaction to trying it on is what keeps me inspired."

With the expansion into the larger retail space, Paloma combines her studio with the store allowing for more interaction with clients.

Her natural talent and gift as a designer and artist is reflected in her handsewn designs ranging from couture to streetwear fashions, including a popular line of hand-painted t-shirts reflecting quotes of inspiration and human connection.

Paloma is self-trained in sewing and design. Raised on Long Island and influenced by her mother who was a



Photos courtesy of Nicole Paloma

fine artist and photographer herself, Paloma grew up observing her mom and going to museums around the city. She developed an appreciation for art and design and excelled in those areas herself.

She is motivated by learning what women want in their clothing and understanding how to create a garment that makes them feel their best.

Using natural and sustainable natural fibers and fabrics, Paloma's well-known for her skirts and dresses of flowing and draping jersey and silk. Her new shop is

brimming with these and more pieces from recent collections including tops and tanks, jackets, t-shirts and pants. Each is designed with all sizes and comfort levels in mind.

Even the monochromatic color palette Paloma works with gives a nod to the natural order of the world and the human experience.

"I've always been drawn to black and white and think there's something refreshing about welcoming the darkness to allow the light," says Paloma. "It's an acknowledgement of polarity and the human condition we all experience."

At the same time, Paloma admits she'll get a wild hair and include pops of color or florals in a collection. Her expanded retail space in the shops at the Hub has given her more interaction with customers, especially as more consumers are realizing the importance of sourcing clothing from local makers who care about the quality of the garment and how it's made.

In an age of fast fashion, consumers are becoming more conscious of where and how their purchases are impacting the world around them

"The community here has been so supportive and instrumental to our growth over the years," says Paloma. "Often people ask me why not expand to larger cities and I remind them that for me, this is the goal... the beach and a community that nurtures artists and entrepreneurs and I'm grateful to be a part of it."

Paloma also has given back to her community. She mentors interns and young designers, supporting their pursuits and teaching them the things she's learned throughout her own journey.

She's also created an internship program for women in recovery for addiction and mental illness through Love_sewn. Giving the women an opportunity to create something themselves and feel a sense of empowerment and confidence has represented the same sentiment for Paloma. Knowing that addiction, mental illness and abuse can create a crippling sense of shame, Love_sewn tackles that shame head-on with inspiration, love and wellness.

As such, so much of what Paloma creates is rooted in portraying a deeper message, a reminder of the innate beauty and interconnection of us all.

Nicole Paloma Handsewn Designs is located at 27 Hub Lane, Watersound. To learn more, visit www.nicolepaloma.com.



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Lighting It Up

Shore Thing, 30-A's only cigar lounge, cultivates a female-friendly atmosphere

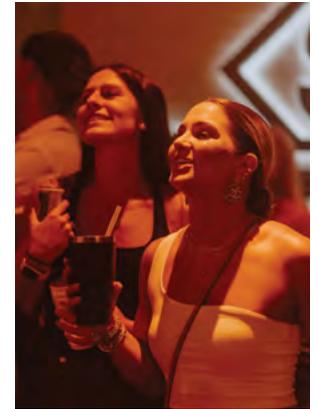
BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

If your idea of a cigar bar is a bunch of old geezers puffing away, a visit to Watersound Beach's Shore Thing Cigars is sure to change your perspective.

Riley Clark, Shore Thing's general manager, says ownership has worked hard to create "a different atmosphere to make it female-friendly."

Clark is a certified tobacconist and says the half-dozen all-female staff members at Shore Thing all know their stuff. The shop will celebrate its seven-year anniversary in July with special guests from Nashville.

Could one of those special guests be county music superstar Luke Bryan—co-owner of Shore Things with Paul Copeland? Clark is hesitant to say, but notes that, "he comes by once in a while."



The shop offers a premium selection of cigars and a bar that highlights local brews, wine and canned cocktails, plus co-owner Luke Bryan's Two Lane, a good daytime, easy-drinking golden lager.



Photos courtesy of Hello Miss Lovely

Shore Thing Cigars has lots of lively regularly-scheduled events on the books, including karaoke on Fridays as well as live music on Sunday afternoons with such luminaries as Jamah Terry and Lex Burroughs.

The shop offers a premium selection of cigars and a bar that highlights local brews, wine and canned cocktails. Plus co-owner Luke Bryan's Two Lane, a golden lager that Clark calls "a good daytime, easy-drinking beer. Low carbs and low calorie."

Clark has been enjoying cigars for 10 years now, and says the all-female staff was a deliberate choice.

"We try to create a different atmosphere to make it female-friendly," she says.

Among the cigar selections are Bryan's Davidoff exclusives, personally blended and selected by the country music superstar.

"It's a one-of-a-kind brand you can't find anywhere in the country," says Clark. The Dominican Republic brand is 'the most premium cigar in the world.'"

When you walk into Shore Thing Cigars, you're greeted with an atmosphere that is not dark, but very inviting and well-ventilated, along with an upbeat playlist of music.

Clark got into the business after meeting co-owner Paul Copeland at a music festival in 2019.

"We got to talking about opportunities, and I became the general manager two years ago," she says.

Clark is big on education, teaching her staff and patrons about cigars. The venue recently hosted an event called "Female Cigar 101."

"There's so much to know—like with wine," says Clark. "The region, the soil. You're more empowered when you know what you're talking about."

The 21-and-up establishment boasts a staff that loves enjoying a good smoke. They tend to sample everything in Shore Thing's humidor.

"It's a lot easier to talk about a cigar you've tried," Clark says.

Along with some Luke Bryan Davidoff signed cigar boxes, the store offers a Shore Thing exclusive cigar made in Honduras by Camacho.

Clark is about to embark on a visit to the Camacho factory accompanied by some of Shore Thing's humidified locker holders. The list of locker holders who keep fine cigars at the store does include co-owner Luke Bryan. Clark says that there is a waiting list for lockers.

During her time at Shore Thing Cigars, Clark has learned that "anybody can be introduced to the world of tobacco. With enough information, they can learn to

love the cigar culture. It's a community here. It's really cool," she says.

Clark resides in Watersound with a goldendoodle named Aero, named after the band Aerosmith. She's a native who grew up as an Air Force brat on Tyndall Air Force Base.

Copeland, co-owner, is a musician from Nashville. He played on Lower Broadway and owned the Franklin Cigar Shop. One day, Luke Bryan popped in and Copeland introduced him to cigars. They became friends, went kayak trout fishing, and eventually decided they'd go into business together. Shore Thing Cigars was born.

Shore Thing Cigars hosts private events and weddings and has a strong following on social media. Clark gives a shout-out to her social media director and assistant manager, Mackenzie Bennett, who has built up the Facebook and Instagram followers. In fact, you'll spot a "live" Instagram follower counter when you belly up to the bar. Follow along @shorethingcigars.

Shore Thing Cigars, located at 37 Hub Lane in Watersound Beach, is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, Friday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 9 p.m. Find out more at www.shorethingcigars.com.



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Bygone Days on the River

BY BRODY JOHNSON

Uncle Bubba wanted a “tremendous fish.” He wanted gar, or mudfish, trout or any other river monster that would put up a fight.

Do you remember the first time you fell in love? I do. I first fell in love with the water the day my Uncle Bubba took me fishing up the Choctawhatchee River. I was about eight years old and had been waiting on the invitation to fish with my uncle (who is a local fishing legend) since I could cast a reel.

I remember hugging my mom before we left the dock, and her asking if there was water for us to drink on the boat for the hot day. Uncle Bubba looked at us both like the cheese slid off our crackers. This was his way of saying, “Who needs water when we got Diet Dew?” Then the boat started with a little bit of smoke coming out of the exhaust and we set off with our hair blowing in the wind.

Catching a fish wasn't necessarily my goal. I was simply excited to be on the river with just me and my uncle. He doesn't live that close to me—the Choctawhatchee Bay separates us—and it sometimes seems like that imaginary line we learned about in history, the Mason-Dixon, has him on one side, me on the other. I cherish every time he crosses the bridge to come see my family. But him coming to pick me up for a day on the water in his bass boat, just the two of us, meant so much.

The boat ride was about 10 minutes of weaving in and out of tall, swinging cypress trees. Their knots rising out of the water to provide the perfect perch for river cooters. We saw toothy gators, hunting ospreys and even some hogs. I remember each time we would slow down, the water would catch up from the back of the boat, the smell of oil, gas and exhaust filled my head. I looked

down and the bilge created a rainbow. And like the story of Noah, it was a comforting reminder to not be scared to be on the water with all of the gators, cottonmouths, and snapping turtles. I was just there to soak in the day.

My uncle Bubba, who spends most of his days on the water drowning elys (a type of bait fish), is the type of person who would get bit by a rattlesnake and not go to the doctor, then be bitten by a gator in the same week. He reminds me of the fish that was caught in the poem by Elizabeth Bishop...unafraid and scarred from a long life in the elements. Like the fish, my uncle also lived a long, eventful life from fishing in the deep sea to the shallow waters for redbfish. Both unafraid of their destiny, both speckled...the fish with barnacles; Uncle Bubba with spots from too long in the sun.

All of the sudden, the river banks changed. The air got thick and smelled like earth. The bald trees now reached up to a canopy. Uncle Bubba pointed to the cypress stumps that grew tall out of the black water.

“That's where they bed,” he said, as he cut the engine and we drifted back to an old half-rotted dock. Wordless, he hopped off the old boat and easily caught some brim. I knew that brim wasn't his goal, he wanted the big one. He wanted a “tremendous fish.” He wanted gar, or mudfish, trout or any other river monster that would put up a fight. Eventually, we tied different lines and hooks onto the reels.

I vaguely remember him saying some cuss words along the line of “Sun of a %&3@” because the fish he had on the hook had already fallen off. I set my hook in the water with the cricket and since we didn't have a lead weight to sink the hook, the cricket just stayed on top of the water trying to avoid its death. After a few seconds of the cricket squirming and wiggling around, SPLASH! My reel was whining, and my rod was bent. I picked up my rod and there it was—a fish with a small mouth and red belly. It was a Redbreast Sunfish. My uncle said “Well there's supper, let's catch some more.”

Uncle Bubba is a man of great skill, but few words. So, when he started to tell me of the times his uncle skulled him up the river to fish the hidden slews, I paid close attention. He grinned with a faraway look in his eyes as he spoke about secret river camps, buried Dutch treasure and sightings of giant woodpeckers that “Yan-



Brody Johnson

Photo by Dawn Whitty

kee” scientists say are extinct. I absorbed his stories like white bread tossed to bait fish.

After a bit, and a stringer full of brim, we called it a day and headed back to the dock where my mom was waiting (with water). Uncle Bubba didn't get the monster he was looking for, but we both got to spend a day on the river with someone we loved, and loved well, and that was enough.

Brody Johnson is an avid fisherman, surfer, nature lover, boating enthusiast and a supporter of sustainability and environmental conservation on 30-A. He's grown up on South Walton Beach and embodies the heart and soul of South Walton's Emersonian vibe.

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TOM'S GOLF TIP

Double the Joy for 30-A's 'Real Estate Mama'

New mom to twin girls and 20 years of selling the Emerald Coast, Christina Meinen has lots to celebrate

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Customers have all kinds of twin stories, and we love hearing them. Twin children, twin grandchildren, twins in the family. We've made a lot of connections.

Christina and Andy Meinen specialize in real estate, second homes and investment properties along Scenic Highway 30-A, as well as in Destin and Miramar Beach. Christina has been at it for nearly 20 years, and Andy came on board in 2009. Both are licensed Broker Associates and proudly carry their Florida broker licenses.

Christina, a native of Germantown, Tennessee, majored in real estate and mortgage appraisal financing at Mississippi State University. She and her family vacationed in the area for many years, and Christina developed a love for the area. The Meinenes are experts on all things real estate in Seaside, WaterColor, Watersound, Alys Beach, Seacrest Beach, Grayton Beach, Rosemary Beach, Seagrove and many of the other "quaint communities along the white sugary beaches."

Andy Meinen is an Auburn graduate. As a journalism degree holder, he worked for several newspapers in Northwest Florida before embarking on a new career. He grew up just north of Chicago in Lake Forest, an area that is renowned for its own unique beaches. This is his 14th year in real estate.

The Meinenes' website provides more than just real estate listings, with separate, easy-to-navigate tabs for Destin, Sandestin and 30-A that include news items, information about local events and testimonials from clients.

"The Meinenes are simply the best realtors in the area," writes Jamie from Memphis, Tennessee. "We are not the easiest people in the world to deal with, and they remained unbelievably positive and patient with us through the entire process. They have a line on all the properties that are coming on the market, and they have good intuition on what it will take to buy a property."

Christina and Andy Meinen and their twin girls



Photo by Kansas Pitts Photography

Art and Susan from Sharpsburg, Georgia, are forever grateful to the Meinenes for their "patience, guidance and expertise in helping us find the property of our dreams." In addition to the Meinenes' solid track record selling luxury real estate—\$38.9 million in closed sales—the couple became first-time parents a few years ago.

"I was blessed to have twin girls," says Christina Meinen. "They just turned three. Turns out, twins are a big thing."

With that life-altering event, the real estate business took a fun spin for the couple.

"Customers have all kinds of twin stories, and we love hearing them. Twin children, twin grandchildren, twins in the family. We've made a lot of connections," she says.

The twins both weighed in at under four pounds, so the Meinenes spent a month with them in a Pensacola Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Upon leaving, COVID was beginning to make headlines. The Meinenes waited years to have children because they were focused on their respective careers and found a beautiful balance managing both work and parenthood.

"We feel so blessed to be able to have our wonderful children and still work full-time, and it has definitely made me a better realtor," says Christina Meinen. "It has made our careers stronger and enabled us to have many more connections and more meaningful relationships with our customers. It has been the biggest blessing."

She adds, "I knew early one morning when I was on my gratitude walk and saw a double rainbow in the sky. It was a sign that I was having twins, and I was right. You can have a great career, as well as a wonderful family."

Looking for a piece of paradise? Learn more at www.andyandchristinameinen.com. For more information, reach Christina Meinen at 850-974-9704 or email Beach@ChristinaMeinen.com. Reach Andy Meinen at 850-419-4777 or email at Beach@AndyMeinen.com.



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Janca's Jingle Bell Jamboree

Community rallies to support local Chef Brannon Janca and Down Island Restaurant

BY TESS FARMER

Janca's Jingle Bell Jamboree fundraiser was assembled in a matter of weeks with hundreds of eager volunteers to make it happen. The fundraiser and holiday party was organized in support of Brannon and Stefani Janca, long-time locals, neighbors, friends, and small business owners of Down Island Restaurant in Santa Rosa Beach.

Brannon Janca was the former chef and partner at Stinky's Fish Camp for years alongside his partner and mentor, Jim Richard, but it was always his dream to open his own spot. In 2017, he sold his part of Stinky's and began the process of building his dream restaurant, Down Island.

Halfway through renovations, however, Brannon Janca was diagnosed with lung cancer. He didn't want this to stop him, so he kept working on the restaurant while fighting his health battle behind the scenes.

"His passion is the restaurant business, creating incredible dishes and interacting with customers each night," says Kim Pall, his mother-in-law. "He truly wasn't letting anything stop him."

While building a team and renovating a historic building, Brannon Janca was involved in every detail of bringing the restaurant to life. Down Island is truly his labor of love. He built the bar, raw bar and shelving throughout and even made the yunomi pottery cups water is served in.

Coming from a family of artists, his creative side shines in every detail throughout the space. He also enlisted the help of family and friends and credits a true team effort for getting the doors open as quickly as possible in an otherwise long process.

He reached clinical remission soon after the restaurant opened its doors in January of 2022. Everything was going well and the restaurant opened to wonderful local support and quickly became a favorite new hot spot with a busy first tourist season.

Yet, by the fall, scans showed the cancer was active again. The next step was for Brannon Janca to begin chemotherapy while still cooking and operating the restaurant as much as he could.

Brannon Janca's friends and colleagues in the restaurant and hospitality industry quickly assembled to help alleviate some of the financial burden and stress involved when approaching the restaurant's first off-season.

"It was almost seamless how everything came together to make this happen and that's a testament to



Stefani and Brannon Janca

The night was an incredible display of love and support. The hospitality industry is so tight-knit and truly everyone worked together to create a memorable, beautiful night full of so many magical moments.



The Down Island crew



Left to right: Duke and TK Bardwell (father and son) Sam Bush, Kyle Ogle and Mark Gillespie



Signature wood fired oysters from Down Island

Brannon's influence on all of us," says Jim Richard, chef/owner of Stinky's Fish Camp. "Going into the first winter season as a new restaurant is stressful enough and we wanted to show up and support him and the restaurant to ease a bit of stress and allow his focus to be on healing."

The Janca Jingle Bell Jamboree was held December 17 at Down Island Restaurant with over 400 people in attendance. Chefs from the top 30-A and South Walton restaurants each prepared dishes and supplied the finest wine. A silent auction was held and several local bands and musicians performed throughout the night, including Dread Clampitt with TK and Cadillac Willy and a special guest appearance by Sam Bush.

"Janca's Jingle Bell Jamboree was born from love," says Jill Tanner, a friend and neighbor of the Jancas and owner of Clutch Media Works. "More than ten of us came together to host an event that would actually make an impact in Brannon and Stefani's life... and it was a smash hit."

Top chefs from restaurants from the area were there to cook including Paradis, Cafe 30-A, Stinky's Fish Camp, Marrow Private Chefs, Taco 30A, Cava & Cakes, Vin'tij, Grayton Beach Catering and Down Island. Wine vendors donated libations, tent and flower companies donated decorations and bands played for free to support the cause.

"You name it, it was covered," Tanner says. "It was an honor to even be a small part of it."

The final result was a thoughtfully planned wine walkabout with a huge silent auction featuring over 100 items.

"The night was an incredible display of love and support," says Pall. "The hospitality industry is so tight-knit and truly everyone worked together to create a memorable, beautiful night full of so many magical moments, both Chef and Stefani felt all the love."

Due to the outpouring of support through the Jamboree and donations received, Chef Brannon and Stefani Janca were able to keep all of their employees employed during the off season, which meant so much to them. An option would have been to close the restaurant, like other places in the area do during the winter.

"It was a special event because everyone I talked to mentioned they saw people there that they haven't seen in a long time. It was even more special to have everyone in the industry come together, which rarely happens because of the business we are in," says Brannon Janca. "Everyone already knows what the Jamboree did for us, so it's awesome to note that the night had a positive effect on others as well. We still get comments to this day about the night—how incredible it was, how packed it was, how fun it was, and how grateful they are to have been involved. I'm happy to know the feeling was reciprocated."

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How to Beat Seasonal Allergies

BY DR. BART PRECOURT

If you have the same seasonal allergies every year, it's an immune deficiency. It's not just the pollen, it includes your response to the pollen.

Let me start by saying this is an interesting topic. Possibly, we have been led down the wrong path before. The path that thinking what's taking place on the outside is causing how we feel on the inside.

Hence, we start to blame ragweed, pollen etc. for our stuffy noses, sore throat, tiredness and watery eyes.

Is there truth to the idea that an overwhelming amount of these could be to blame for our symptoms? Yes...there's some truth to it, yet it's not the full story. This is good news!

It's good news because there are healthy actions we can take to improve our response (i.e. get stronger) and not need to be a victim to pollen every spring. The key here: take action!

What are seasonal allergies?

Spring means flower buds and blooming trees. Pollen, mold and ragweed everywhere. In an attempt to protect the body, the immune system starts a chain reaction that prompts some of the body's cells to release histamine and other chemicals into the bloodstream. This is what makes us feel bad.

The histamine then acts on a person's eyes, nose, throat, lungs, skin or gastrointestinal tract, causing allergy symptoms.

The role of your liver

The liver's job is to identify toxic substances and make them harmless so they can be expelled from the body. If we cannot expel foreign substances, then we have an immune response (histamine production). So, the cleaner the liver, the less the allergic response.

Step 1: Food & Water

The foods you are consuming will play a significant role in your seasonal allergies. I know you may be thinking, "Wait! That can't be... I've never heard that before."



Dr. Bart Precourt

Certain foods can, in fact, make your seasonal allergies worse. They include alcohol, peanuts, sugar, processed foods, wheat and chocolate. This goes back to your liver function. If your liver is already dealing with toxins like sugar and alcohol, then the alarm system will go off quicker. Hence a histamine response.

Of note, many of the people who think they are having seasonal allergies are having immune responses to the foods/alcohol they are consuming.

If you wake with a stuffy head, nose, sneezing, etc., most likely it was caused by what you consumed the night before. Experiment by cutting alcohol, dairy and gluten out for one week and see if allergy symptoms improve.

Being dehydrated is potentially another issue for allergy sufferers. Plenty of water is a must to reduce the histamine response.

Bitter foods like arugula, ginger and apple cider vinegar can help. Once you clean up your diet you might be surprised how much of your "allergies" clear up.

Step 2: Sleep

A cool thing about our body is we heal when we sleep. Our body's natural process of detoxification happens at night—just one reason why sleep is so important. Specifically, your liver is doing most of its clearing and detox between 1 and 4 a.m.

Consuming alcohol and sugars at night will often interrupt this valuable sleep time.

If you have consumed alcohol, ate pizza (gluten) or a bowl of ice cream (dairy) the night before, the liver is working double-time to remove toxins and inflammatory agents. You may wake up stuffy, see the yellow stuff (pollen) on everything, and blame seasonal allergies. Awareness of yesterday's consumption can shed light on the real cause.

Step 3: Herbs and Vitamins

Fortunately, there are some effective natural remedies to help your seasonal allergy symptoms and help your body better handle the pollen.

After all, allergies are an immune response. Some responses are needed and should not be interfered with, as they are protecting us.

Just blocking immune activity with drugs and medications often will exacerbate future encounters. Some of the tools I use in clinic to help people with seasonal allergies are the following: Cod liver oil to help facilitate any inflammatory response; Antronex from Standard Process, a beef liver extract, that helps the liver drain and creates better capacity to handle influx of allergens like pollen. Also, a little-known herb called black cumin seed can help reduce the inflammatory response in the nasal passage and aid liver function.

If you have the same seasonal allergies every year, it's an immune deficiency. It's not just the pollen; it includes your response to the pollen. Take action to get stronger. You're worth it!

Dr. Bart M. Precourt, D.C., is a holistic doctor, chiropractor, acupuncturist and nutritional consultant. For nearly 20 years he has helped people get healthy, lose weight and create healthy, sustainable lifestyles. He currently practices in Seagrove Beach at Balance Health Studio. For more information or a consultation, visit www.balance30a.com or call 850-231-9288.

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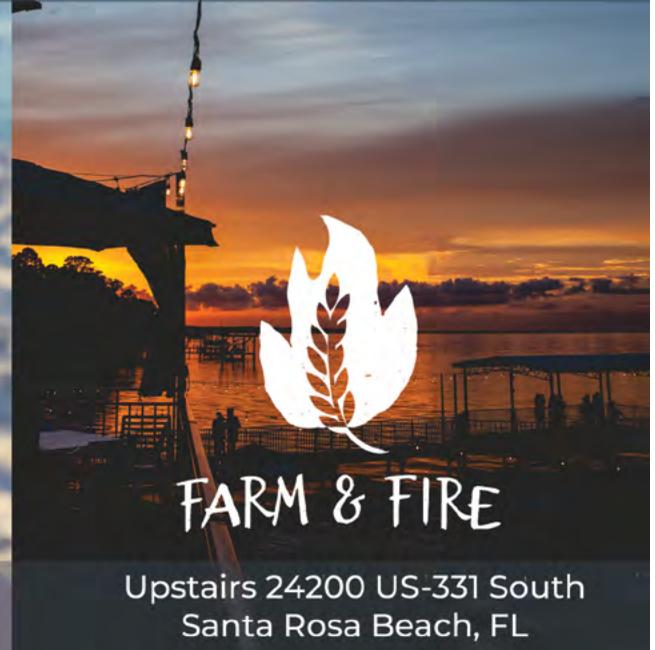


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Beneficiary Designations 101

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN WATSON

Designate a loved one as the beneficiary so that your QRP may be withdrawn in a manner more favorably than if you fail to designate any beneficiary. This simple move can save thousands of dollars in taxes.

There are two things you should never watch while they are being made: one is sausage and the other is tax law.

The same can be said of most tax law changes. They often result in more complex rules and regulations, not to mention stiff penalties for non-compliance.

That said, the IRS has simplified its regulations governing distributions from IRAs and other qualified retirement plans (QRPs) in recent years. In form, these final regulations are intended to liberalize and lengthen payout options during the lifetimes of plan participants and, after their deaths, for their designated beneficiaries under such plans. In substance, however, there are many common pitfalls you need to avoid regarding the designation of beneficiaries for your QRP, or else your retirement assets may plunge into the tax abyss quicker than otherwise required or even wind up with the wrong beneficiary.

Disclaimer: This article is not an exhaustive treatise on this subject matter. Consider it a brief primer regarding the unique nature of QRPs and an advance warning to avoid two common pitfalls regarding a post-mortem transfer.

Brief Background

QRPs are unique assets. Their fundamental purpose is to help plan participants send some of today's dollars ahead for tomorrow's retirement. (Note: QRPs were never intended as vehicles to build large estates for heirs.) To facilitate their fundamental purpose, QRPs enjoy preferential tax treatment during their creation and as they accumulate. They are created with pre-tax dollars and then grow tax-deferred. Consequently, through the



tax-deferred annual compounding of their interest and dividends, QRPs often grow to produce rather impressive account balances. While they enjoy preferential tax treatment during their creation and accumulation stages, all distributions from QRPs are fully taxed as ordinary income (except when made to a charitable beneficiary).

Here is where plan participants and the IRS have competing goals: While plan participants often want to delay distributions from their QRPs and enjoy the tax-deferred compounding as long as possible, the IRS, on the other hand, requires plan participants to begin taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) and to begin paying taxes on their distributions at ordinary income rates no later than April 1st of the year after which they turn age 70 and a half (and each year thereafter).

According to Benjamin Franklin, the only two certainties in life are death and taxes. Upon the death of a plan participant, the final regulations determine how quickly the remaining QRP must be paid and taxed to the designated beneficiary (or beneficiaries) based on a complex variety of factors.

Next are two common pitfalls to avoid:

Failure to Designate

The failure to designate a beneficiary is the most common mistake you can make regarding your QRP, period.

If you pass away after your RMDs begin, then the balance of your QRP must be paid over your remaining life expectancy, using your account balance at the end of each year, your age at death (+1 thereafter) and the applicable divisor found in the Single Life Table (SLT) in IRS Publication 590. If you pass away before your RMD, then the balance of your QRP must be paid out within five years of your death.

Solution: Designate a loved one as the beneficiary so that your QRP may be withdrawn in a manner more favorably than if you fail to designate any beneficiary. This simple move can save thousands of dollars in taxes.

Failure to Re-Designate

Could your ex-spouse inherit your QRP if provided by your employer under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA)? Surprisingly, yes, even if the laws of your state automatically extinguish their interest in your estate.

Solution: Replace your ex-spouse as your primary designated beneficiary as soon as possible. (See the United States Supreme Court decision in *Egelhoff v. Egelhoff*, 121 U.S. 1322 -2001 for the case facts and ruling.)

Beneficiary designations quick facts

1. IRAs and other Qualified Retirement Plans (QRPs) are unique assets, requiring careful planning to avoid unnecessary taxation upon your death.
2. The failure to designate a beneficiary (and even a successor beneficiary) for your QRP can enrich the IRS at the expense of your loved ones.
3. While you cannot foresee when you will pass away, your failure to designate a beneficiary will have greater adverse tax consequences if you pass away before you begin taking Required Minimum Distributions.
4. If you are divorced and your ex-spouse is still the designated beneficiary of your ERISA QRP, then your ex-spouse may inherit such funds upon your death, despite any state laws to the contrary.



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Flatten the right wrist angle to release the putter

Photos courtesy of Tom Fitzpatrick

Aim the putter and stroke it all in the matter of 3-4 seconds...

It's been said that being 'in the moment' offers freedom from fear of outcomes or anxiety over technique.

Great putters in golf know that the ball is going in the hole before even looking at the break! They tell themselves they can make any putt. It's based upon an inner confidence. That's the beauty of watching top athletes in general. They exude a 'can do' self-talk that is so fun to watch and be around.

Positive thinking is contagious and plays a big role in those that excel at putting. Let's face it, every moment is a choice. What do we choose: 'No, I can't?', or 'Yes I can?'

Become a powerful putter by combining a winning attitude with these popular feel drills.

Equal Back & Thru Distance Drill

When faced with a 30-footer, we find ourselves trying to hit it too hard. This often results in a short backstroke and too fast of a pop on the downstroke. That's a recipe for poor contact where the ball ends up short, instead of the preferred 18 inches past the hole. Your number of three putt greens can skyrocket.

For a more efficient use of energy to propel the ball, focus on a longer backstroke. In fact, the backstroke should be the same distance as the follow thru. Try this: make a stroke that matches the width of your feet. Make a backstroke that stops opposite your right toe, then a forward stroke that stops opposite your left toe. For longer putts, adjust the length of the stroke by going twelve inches past your right foot, then twelve inches past your left foot.

Tiger's Right Arm Only Drill

This simple drill opens up a world of feel. At address, keep your right elbow close to your side. Take the putter back by increasing the right wrist angle. Then flatten the wrist as you hit the putt. It illustrates how to build rhythm and momentum with little effort. Allow the right shoulder and hand to move in unison. Tiger said this helps him feel the toe release thru the putt.

Tee Gate Direction Drill

This very popular practice drill works wonders for contacting the ball in the center of the face. Place a tee just outside each end of the putter. When the putter passes thru the tee gate, watch how much straighter the ball travels.

Be Reactive

Learn to be more reactive by standing over the putt for just a short amount of time. See if you can step up to a putt, aim the putter and stroke it all in the matter of 3-4 seconds. Instead of thinking, your body is calculating how hard to hit the putt and in what direction. Less thinking leads to greater enjoyment from being in that moment. It's been said that being "in the moment" offers freedom from fear of outcomes or anxiety over technique.

The Putter Swings on an Arc

The putter travels inside to square to inside, similar to an upside-down smile. An effective putting aid that helps you trace the proper arc is the Wellputt Mat.

Tom Fitzpatrick is a David Leadbetter certified instructor and an active realtor with Scenic Sotheby's Intl Realty. Reach him at (850) 225-4674 or tom@scenicir.com



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