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

## INSIDE:

Delicious Dining on 30-A  
30-A's Special Communities  
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& More...

## The Holiday Spirit



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*— Frank Lloyd Wright*

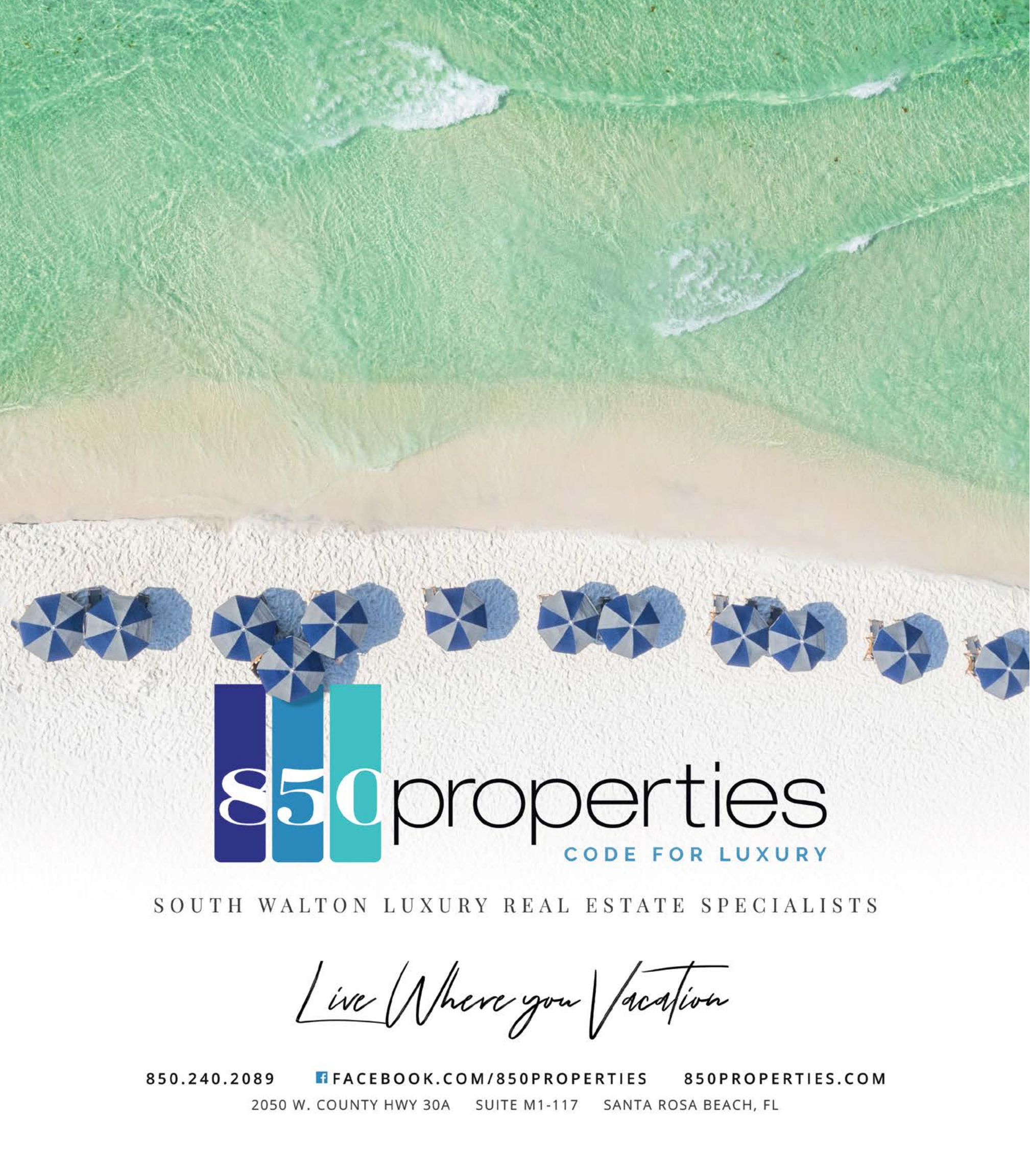


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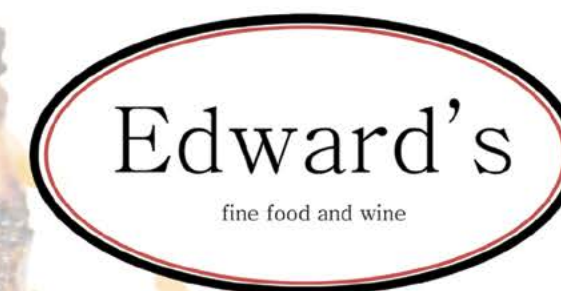
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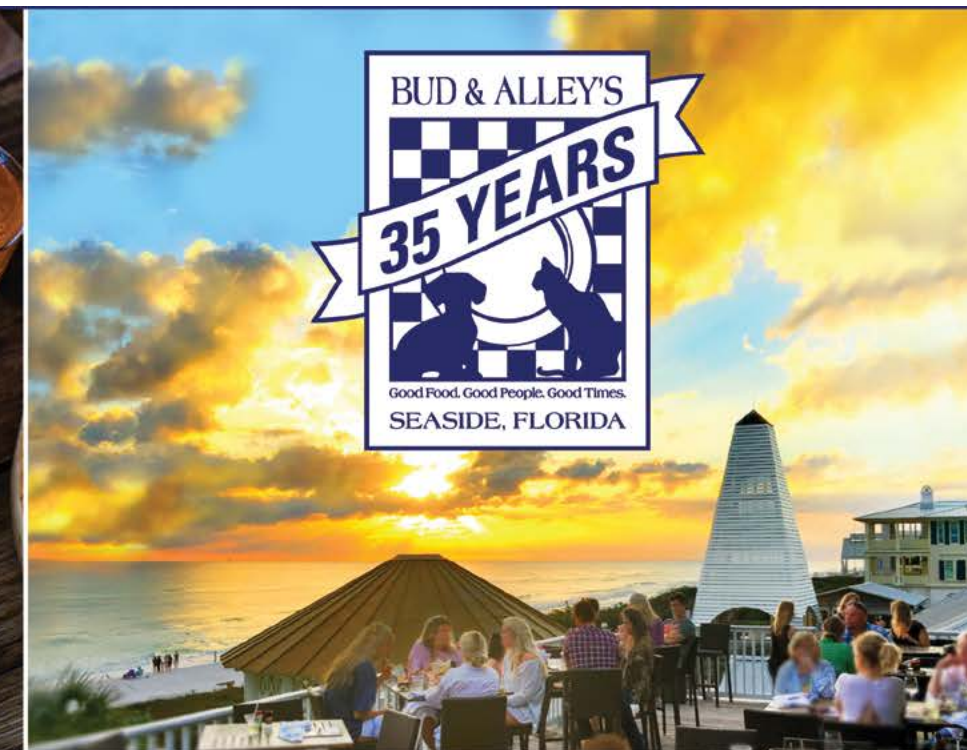
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THE HOLIDAYS




As the holidays approach, we count our blessings. Giving thanks, enjoying and appreciating family, and making new memories are the cornerstones of life. And there is no better place to do those things than on 30-A.

We invite you to celebrate life between the pages of this issue. We profile the people, places, and things that make 30-A and South Walton great. We hope you have just as much fun reading about them as we did writing about them.

We encourage you to try out these restaurants, retailers, galleries, and hot spots that make our community the special place that it is today.

Until next issue, we wish you and your family a happy and safe holiday and send you all the light, love, and positive vibes in the world.

Sincerely,

  
Miles K. Neiman

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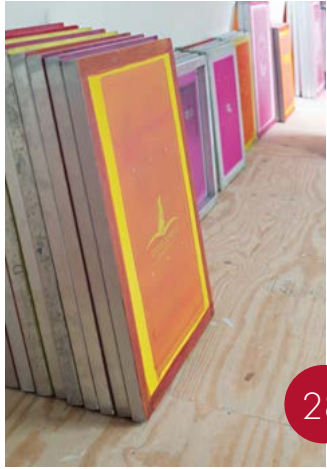
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Win or Lose, Play with Character



# Pazzo Italiano Keeps Local Tradition Alive in Santa Rosa Beach

BY TESS FARMER



Business partners and friends Alfonso Di Bonito and Levente Tischler opened their first restaurant together four years ago in Destin. The success of Pazzo Italiano has been crazy in those few short years, just as the name suggests. The popular Italian restaurant and bar has become a favorite among locals and tourists... so much so that Di Bonito and Tischler expanded with their second location in Santa Rosa Beach.

"We truly are a family run business in every sense, and pride ourselves on quality and commitment to our regular customers and visitors," says Di Bonito. "We had just begun construction on the second restaurant early in 2020, and for a moment wondered if we should continue once the restrictions on operating restaurants began. We're glad we forged ahead."

Since opening in July that year (2020) the restaurant has grown in popularity, and like Destin has many customers who return for the personalized service, authentic Italian dishes, and sophisticated yet comfortable atmosphere.

Santa Rosa Beach local Tracy Miller was happy to come upon Pazzo Italiano in Destin years ago. "Their stylish and welcoming atmosphere was apparent from the moment we entered the door. And being fans for years, our family was so excited when they opened their new location in Santa Rosa Beach," says Miller. "Both spaces are open, modern, and authentic, and a welcome change."

Both partners' families are involved in day-to-day operations of the business, with both wives helping everything seamlessly behind the scenes, as well as

bringing the style and classic design elements to life in the restaurants. "We wanted to create an almost city-like atmosphere where if people feel like dressing up and going out to dinner, they can... at the same time, flip flops are welcome," adds Di Bonito.

Almost all the staff have been with the restaurant since opening in Destin four years ago, a rarity in a market driven by seasonal tourism, and a testament to the family culture honed by the owners.

Di Bonito is an Italian native and award-winning pizza chef who has been learning, growing, and perfecting his craft since he started working in a bakery in his native Napoli at age 14. His passion for cooking and pride in his work comes from his upbringing, because for Italians food is the centerpiece of human interaction; it's their language of love.

Tischler's entrepreneurial spirit led him to Destin from a small town in Romania where he started his career in the restaurant business as a teenager. He always held the vision and dream of opening his own restaurant and met Di Bonito working in a local restaurant after coming to the area in 2004. The two friends are two devoted family men, restaurant lovers and now businessmen, and have been serving and delighting their customers here for over 20 years.

"It's been our heart and soul. We are passionate about this business and providing the best experience," says Di Bonito.

"Our menu has been carefully pieced together to bring a combination of favorite Italian staples, some with

more sophisticated flavors and a touch of fun and some new crazy combinations," he continues. "I'm always open to new ideas from our chef to incorporate seasonal seafood and produce, which along with our traditional staples, keep bringing our regulars back for more."

"Pazzo's food is what really sets them apart," adds Miller. "We can't visit without enjoying their Vegetali Di Stagione salad, and our son never strays from his favorite, chicken parmigiana. We have enjoyed trying many of their dishes: some of our favorites are the lasagna, egg-plant parmigiana, piccata, and their wood-fired pizza is the best in the area."

With housemade pizza dough, sauces, and pasta, Pazzo Italiano is known for their pizzas, pasta, calzones, salads, homemade desserts, and chef specialties. They only cook their pizza in wood-fired ovens that provide the rich flavor and taste that comes from true artisanal pizza.

"On our most recent visit with our extended family for our son's birthday, we enjoyed their Nutella calzone, which I am sure we will be required to order on all future visits," says Miller. "With a fun kid's menu and an extensive wine, beer, and drink menu, it's a great fit for the whole family. As locals, we feel lucky to have Pazzo Italiano right down the street and are happy for their continued success."

**Pazzo Italiano , 111 North Highway 393, Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 213-4581, [www.pazzodestin.com](http://www.pazzodestin.com) for hours and menu details**



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# Fresh Ideas and Fresh Ingredients: LaCo Latin Coastal Kitchen in Seacrest Beach

BY DENISE K. JAMES

Looking for a tasty and unique menu along the 30-A corridor in Seacrest Beach? La Cocina—now known as LaCo—Latin Coastal Kitchen is well worth your time. Featuring fresh ingredients, delicious cocktails, and an atmosphere that will enhance everyday life, LaCo is the perfect spot for lunch, dinner, and now brunch, no matter the season. We caught up with general manager Sarah Hampton to learn more about this iconic restaurant, and our mouths are watering just thinking about our next visit.

## Explain the history of LaCo Latin Coastal Kitchen.

Rick Spell and his daughter and business partner, Christy Spell Terry, were already owners of a successful sports pub in Memphis when they started looking around 30-A to add to the Spell Restaurant Group. In February 2015, they purchased both La Cocina and George's at Alys Beach. The first (La Cocina) renovation took place in 2017, and in 2018 Eric Bartholomew was hired as executive chef and tasked with overhauling the menu. Chef Eric used his years of experience cooking south of the border to upgrade the appetizers, expand the taco selection, and add traditional coastal Latin dishes. In January of 2021, the restaurant underwent its second major renovation. La Cocina was recently rebranded as LaCo, with a new logo to match the elegance of the menu.

## What does it mean to have a Latin and Coastal kitchen?

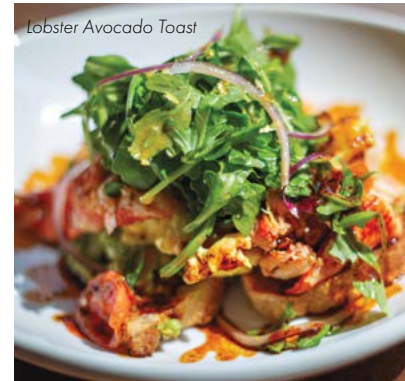
Chef Eric has utilized his many years of experience with Mexican and Latin cuisine to showcase traditional Latin flavors and put a twist on classic dishes. He strives to create dishes that highlight coastal cuisine, mainly from Mexico but also from Central and South America. We strive to expose guests to flavors and ingredients they may be unfamiliar with. The freshness and precise execution are what makes our food special. We utilize fresh Gulf seafood, locally sourced grass-fed beef from Tall Pines in Bonifay, Florida, and other regional purveyors.

## What is the cocktail program like at LaCo?

Over the past few years, we have been focused on elevating the specialty cocktails available from our bar. Our fresh-made margaritas and the addition of several



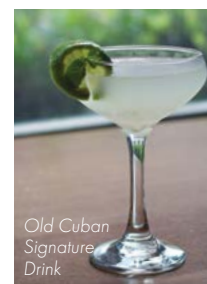
Pork Belly & Brisket Baracoa Tacos



Lobster Avocado Toast



Breakfast Burrito



Old Cuban Signature Drink

craft cocktails has made all the difference. The key ingredient in our margaritas is fresh lime juice, squeezed daily in the restaurant. Then we add a kiss of agave and your choice of tequila.

We also serve several Latin-inspired cocktails. One of the newer ones is the Old Cuban, made with silver rum, fresh lime juice, fresh mint, orange bitters, and topped with champagne. Our classic Caipirinha is made with cachaça, fresh orange, and lemon and lime juices. Lastly, the Latin Fashion is a play on an Old Fashioned but made with reposado tequila, ancho reyes, smoked chili, and orange bitters.

## What are the most popular menu items that keep customers coming back?

We have a few items that have become favorites. Our local catch of fresh red snapper, served over shishito

fried rice with a habanero citrus glaze, is a crowd-pleaser. We also have 10 unique tacos to choose from, including pork belly with pineapple jicama salsa; housemade chorizo with salsa verde, red onion, cotija cheese, and cilantro; and a veggie taco with adobo-roasted shiitake mushrooms, grilled peppers and onions, cotija cheese, charred corn, kale slaw, and salsa macha.

## Share a new dish or drink you are excited about.

This season we added a brunch menu. The lobster avocado toast—made with sourdough toast, avocado, scrambled eggs, lobster, arugula, charred baby heirloom tomatoes, and salsa macha—is my personal favorite. But we have something for everyone, including French toast sticks or a s'mores waffle for the kids.

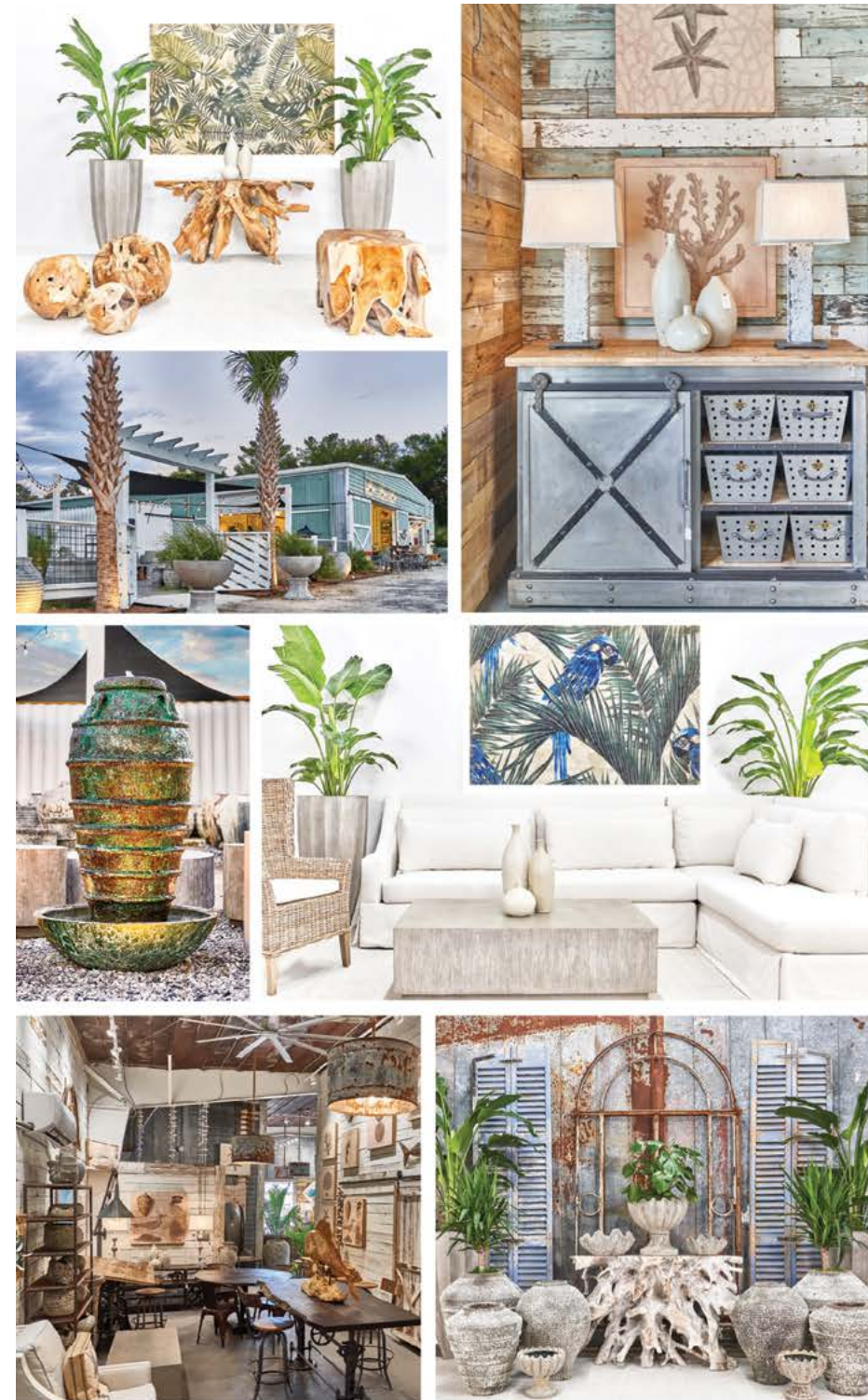
## Describe the atmosphere at LaCo.

LaCo is located in the heart of Seacrest Beach, and our crowds vary with the seasons of 30-A. During the height of the vacation season, we are busy during peak times, but getting a table is still easy if you plan your visit right. I always encourage guests to arrive when our dining room opens, at 11 a.m. for lunch, or 5 p.m. for dinner to find a table. Our Happy Hour is another great reason to visit. The bar stays open from 3 p.m. until 5, serving a scaled-down menu with great drink specials.

## Any news or future plans you want to share with readers?

We are regularly updating and refreshing our libations, and Chef Eric is always experimenting with new menu items. For example, he recently featured a new ahi tuna taco for “National Taco Day” that was amazing! Stay tuned to our social media for specials, as well as new menu items and cocktails.

To learn more, visit [laco30a.com](http://laco30a.com), or LaCo 30A on Facebook.



  
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## Parma, Italy Comes to 30-A

BY TESS FARMER

Strolling into Curate 30A on Main Street in Rosemary Beach, it's hard not to immediately notice the vibrant hues, grand scale, and just overall happiness on the walls represented in the artwork of Italian artist, Nicoletta Belletti.

"The aim of my art is to make people feel good, happy, joyful," says Belletti. "That's why I typically use bright colors and paint funny animals... Happiness is the key of life, sometimes hard to achieve but always worthy to pursue."

Her hometown studio has been open for more than 10 years in historic Parma, Italy, a city in the northern Italian region famous for its art, architecture, and culinary specialties. Belletti has had several artistic collaborations, including the Centro Botanico Moutan in Viterbo, which keeps the world's greatest collection of Chinese Peonies; as well as with Salumificio Terre Ducale (producer of Italian deli meats, and Codap (producer of fine milk and cream products). She has been exhibiting since 2000 exclusively in Italy and now has an expanding public interest... which led to her discovery by Gary Handler, gallery owner of Curate.

Her personal technique has become a substantial and characterizing part of her paintings. She especially loves to paint natural scenes depicting animals, flowers, and sea creatures as subjects. Her pet portraits have become popular too, giving collectors a chance to work one-on-one with Belletti in the creative process.

"I love working on custom pieces because interacting with customers becomes a sort of learning experience," Belletti adds. "It may happen that their requests push me beyond my routine with new subjects, new points of view, new ideas."

"For the pet portraits in particular, the challenge is catching the pet's personality so that my customers truly see THEIR pet, not just a dog or a cat," she says.

"Considering the great success of Nicoletta's pet portraits, we'd say she's quite successful at it," adds Handler.

Her work often begins as a charcoal sketch with the hint of acrylic paint on a wooden board. She then creates her final wonders by using an acrylic paste medium. It is often laid on with a trowel or spatula and in some cases includes the addition of natural elements such as sand and stone.



Featured Artist Nicoletta Belletti

This paste brings dimension and wonder to the piece. We asked Belletti about the base for the paste and she described it "as a kind of acrylic resin but the recipe is secret and guarded together with Coca Cola's recipe!" It is produced by a small company there in Parma specifically for her. Together, years ago, they attempted several tries to achieve a product with the right features: strength, lightness, compactness, and capacity to keep vivid colors.

Her original muse, however, was a simple flower blossom. Her blossoms are cheerful, colorful, and modern, exploding in all their vividness. The flower remains one of her favorite subjects. They are a source of continual discovery as so many varieties exist; each with their own shapes and details to reinvent. She also has a water series which was initially produced when she began to experiment with artistic resins. This new medium allowed her to "drown" her drawings, creating a thick wet looking layer on the board.

Growing up, Belletti's parents were always encouraging of her love of art and creating. Her mother was also



an artist and allowed her to try whatever she wanted. "That's why I always say to let children express themselves in any way and have fun with what they are doing. They do not have to feel judged and be discouraged, particularly when they are very young."

"A good technique comes from experience, I mean a lot of experience, a lot of tries and a lot of mistakes too," says Belletti.

Curate offers a selection of the most sought-after artists, ranging from the most alluring rising new talents to nationally recognized museum artists, in an impressive array of original paintings, mixed media, and sculpture. Belletti is planning to visit the gallery in 2022 for a free public event.

**Curate 30A, (850) 231-1808, [info@curate30a.com](mailto:info@curate30a.com)  
72 Main St., Rosemary Beach, Mon-Sat: 10am – 9pm  
Sunday: 12pm – 8pm**

## Decking the Halls This Year with Melissa Skowlund The Owner of Summer House Lifestyle Talks Holidays

BY DENISE K. JAMES

### Share the background of Summer House Lifestyle.

Summer House Lifestyle has been designing homes in Walton County and beyond for over 10 years—we work on homes all over the country with various design styles. We focus on custom work with attention to detail throughout the home. This past year, we have worked on homes in Connecticut, Wisconsin, Park City, Dallas, and Tennessee. We are a full-service boutique design firm, and we work on CAD drawings, lighting and plumbing specs, space designing both indoor and out, and window treatments, wallpaper, and tile design. Our focus is on customizing a space for the way our clients want to live in their home. We try to create spaces that are sophisticated, light, airy, and inviting. When decorating for the holidays, we try to bring the beauty of nature indoors.

### What trends are you noticing for this year's holiday season?

I think the trend is to keep it simple and elegant... or maybe that is just how I like to decorate for the holidays! Take what foundation you already have in the home and accent it with some sparkle and shimmer.

I'm seeing a lot of mixing metals—silver and gold throughout the home. Red and green are making strong comebacks, and holiday plaid is also making a comeback. I think the look this year is very classic Ralph Lauren: plaid and Americana Christmas. There is also a trend to bring in natural stone materials. For instance, I am seeing a lot of quartz and selenite and crystal being used, and a lot of onyx bowls and containers. These bring a natural, textural element to any decor. And of course, boxwoods — wreaths, topiaries, and boxwoods are a holiday staple that is here to stay.



Melissa Skowlund, Bess Pooler and Stephanie Wiesel

### What are "must-haves" for holiday decor?

Visuals and festive scents. I love to have plants be the focus during the holidays, whether a boxwood wreath, amaryllis, paperwhites, or poinsettias. I love a home full of greens. I also love candles to add some ambience. Throw in some gold and crystal accents, and this just screams holiday to me. I also think the house should look and smell like the holiday. I burn a candle every day to keep the aroma lingering. Ribbons are also essential! Take the best of each room in your house and accentuate it with greens, ribbons, and some gold or silver accents.

### Share a time you decorated "on the fly" for a holiday gathering or dinner and what your tips are in those situations.

Greenery and flowers—you can never go wrong with floral arrangements and greenery. These are always my go-to for quick dinner parties: orchids, roses, and lots of greenery. Add some ribbons and fun placemats or napkins with a brass napkin ring, plus festive stemware, and you are all set.

### Answer this question once and for all: when is the time to bust out festive decorations? And when is the appropriate time to put them away?

I refuse to put up Christmas decorations until after Halloween, and my husband prefers me to wait until after Thanksgiving, as he likes one holiday at a time. I generally put them all out the day after Thanksgiving, so I follow his rules! I take them down at the end of January. It really bothers me if I still see Christmas in February, but some people cannot let it go, ha. I think that is a Northern thing though—I'm from Wisconsin, and people tend to leave them out until it thaws out. But I say please put them away by the end of January; that is almost two months of enjoyment, and it is time by then to move on!

As a side note, I always want to redo a room after I take down Christmas decor. It makes the rooms feel like something is missing. Early spring is a great time to refresh and redecorate, so I say move on from the holidays and start your spring decorating project in late January. The way furniture is selling, you might have new items in time for next year!

[summerhouselifestyle.com/melissa-skowlund-interiors](https://summerhouselifestyle.com/melissa-skowlund-interiors)



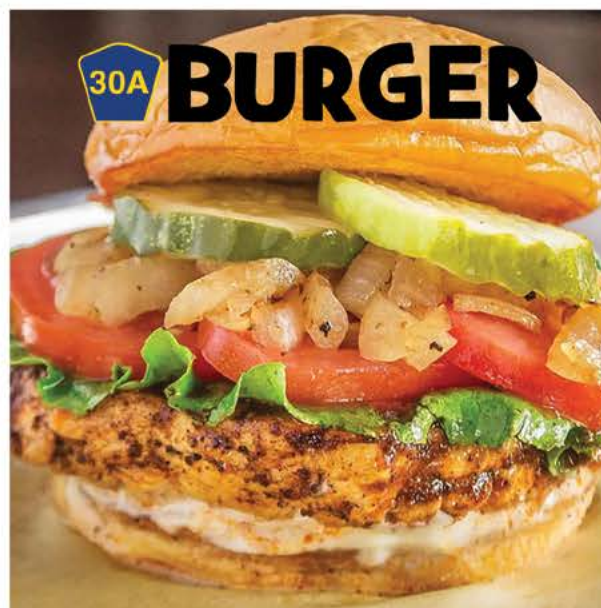
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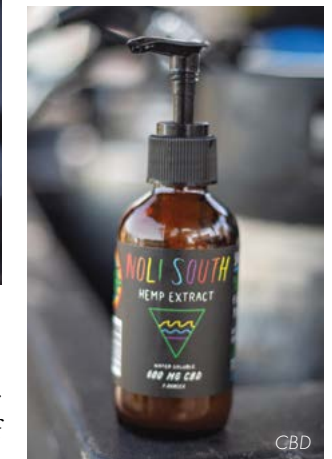
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## Kombucha Tribe

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



If you're like most people, you've been to the grocery store, the health market, or even just a health food café and noticed the trend that has exploded with kombucha over the past few years. And again, if you're like most people, you've wondered what the heck it is and why it's so popular.

A fermented, lightly effervescent, sweetened black or green tea drink, kombucha is touted for health benefits. And while the process for making it may seem strange, companies across the globe are cashing in on their own bottled brew of the stuff—and people are drinking it up.

For Summer and Stephen Kole, brewing kombucha themselves started out as a hobby as well as a way to feed their food-sensitive daughter, Noli. “As an exclusively breastfed infant, she was having a hard time keeping her milk down,” Stephen explains. “Upon realizing it was the food Summer was eating, we made tremendous cuts in our diets. When Noli hit about the age to start eating food, we decided to try giving her a small daily dose of our kombucha. We then re-introduced those foods to her through breastmilk, and we were amazed to find that she

was no longer reacting. This really opened our eyes to the raw power of kombucha and a healthy gut flora.”

Naturally, the success they had with Noli sparked an idea to start a company and provided the impetus for Stephen to leave his job as the manager of Finn's Island Style Grub in Panama City Beach, while Summer left waitressing on 30-A. And, of course, they named the company NOLI South. “Noli was one of the main reasons we started seeing the major health benefits of kombucha, so we thought it felt right to name it after her, our firstborn daughter,” says Stephen. “She also loves kombucha more than anybody we know and is our number one taste tester for new flavors.”

Since 2016, NOLI South has been offering bottled kombucha in creative flavor combos that have a smooth taste, making them in small batches that allow for greater control of quality and consistency. And while their perfectionism is one of the secrets to their success, so are

their ingredients. “We seek out only the best, organic and environmentally friendly ingredients for our brew. Since we are USDA certified organic, we are always keeping up with our suppliers to be sure they are staying up to date on their certifications and providing us with exclusively organic ingredients.”

They have an extensive list of flavors, including Strawberry Guava, Blackberry Lavender, Ginger Lime, Blueberry Lemon, Citrus CBD, and Orange Ginger CBD; and feature special seasonal flavors depending on what fruits are in season and available at the farmers markets. Their recently featured Halloween-inspired kombucha, for instance, was flavored with lemon, lime, and activated charcoal. “There is just enough charcoal in it to turn it black and spooky, but a small enough amount to still get the benefits from the probiotics and B-vitamins,” Stephen explains. Still, as interesting as they can get, the most popular flavors are among the more tame: Strawberry Guava, Blackberry Lavender, and—interestingly—their CBD flavors.

Keeping it local, NOLI South products are sold at over 60 different locations from Pensacola to Tallahassee. They also set up on Saturdays at the Palafox Market in Pensacola and the Market in Seaside, as well as every Sunday in Rosemary Beach.

As much success as they've had with the bottles, they see a change-up in their future. “Our current plan that we are executing in the near future is canning our kombucha,” Stephen says. “Cans are more sustainable than bottles, and we think using them for our little beach towns makes perfect sense. With our transition to cans, we will be able to ship our kombucha to nearby states. We also have hopes to open a taproom at some point, maybe in a little airstream or something groovy.”

Owning a business and getting it into the black—and keeping it that way—is, of course, a rollercoaster that sometimes makes you question yourself. But the Koles have found their bliss in their business and the way it has freed them for what is most important to them. “One of the things we love most about the business is that we get to spend a lot of time with the kids and that we can show them what hard work looks like by having them participate in our kombucha brewing journey,” says Stephen. “Whether it's during production week at the brewery or at the farmers market on the weekend, you can always find our kids with us.”

For more information, visit [nolisouth.com](http://nolisouth.com).



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# Need Help with a Custom Print? Just Ask Johnny.

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

Johnny Shine, that is, Shine Print and Design, opened in its newest Santa Rosa Beach location Dec. 2019. But Shine's been working on custom print and design since 2009. Literally starting in his garage more than a decade ago, it all began with a small investment to buy the equipment, and a friend from Gainesville who sporadically drove to crash at Johnny's while the duo banged out any recent printing jobs they picked up.

Shine landed in design after trying his hand at managing a local Starbucks—realizing the corporate workplace wasn't where he wanted to spend his days.

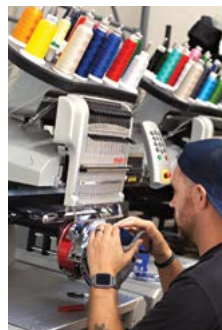
"At that point, I was prepared to do anything on my own... I'm not naturally artistic; I love music and art but I'm terrible at them," Shine says with a laugh. "This gives me an outlet for creativity, bringing other people's artwork to life on a garment or poster."

Whether you need custom shirts, hats, or bags for your team or customers; something special for an upcoming event; or anything in between, Shine Print and Design has got your back.

With services for personal, promotional, and complete branding projects, the company aims for quick turnaround time, quality products and competitive pricing—not to mention some stellar customer service. A self-taught designer, Shine learned Photoshop® and Adobe Illustrator®, watching plenty of tutorials and (just as importantly) understanding his own limitations. "Depending on what people want, sometimes I can't do everything [for a project]; if that happens, we have external recommendations to bring projects to where they need to be," he describes.

While Shine started out with small indie lines and bands, they print for many different companies today, including growing regional brands like Coastal Hippie. If you're looking for testimonials, ask around—customers include a plethora of 30-A staples: Yolo Board, Seaside retail, Raw and Juicy, Central Square Records, Sundog Books, Amavida, and more.

And chances are, Shine will return the favor.



Justin Bystol, Robby Fagan, and Johnny Shine



away from the steady job to work at Shine Print and Design full-time, everything fell into place. "I wish I had done it years before! The business was here, I was just scared to take that leap," he says. "Every time I move into a bigger space or get better equipment, the business is always here to support it."

That business started bursting at the seams once Shine had time to answer calls and emails ("in a timely fashion"). As things progressed, equipment was upgraded, more staff came on board, and he moved into the current large space. With Shine Print and Design in its newest spot since before the pandemic, his entrepreneurial spirit used the down time in early 2020 to add embroidery to the line-up of services.

"We had the time to get the new equipment and learn that side of the business. It's been great

—we haven't done much promotion besides word-of-mouth, and embroidery jobs keep coming in," he says.

Something you might be surprised to learn is Shine's not a "beach person". The St. Louis, Missouri, native came to 30-A in 2005 for a one-year deal after high school.

"It was never going to be permanent here. Then I met my wife, and it became permanent," he says with a smile. "This area is so beautiful, safe, and clean. With young kids [6 and 8], it's a great place to raise a family."

**Shine Print and Design operates "roughly" 9-5 weekdays. Visit in person at the Cobia Building, 316 S Co. Hwy. 83 in Santa Rosa Beach, or [shineprints.com](http://shineprints.com), call (850) 396-1836, or email [helo@shineprints.com](mailto:helo@shineprints.com). Connect socially (and find design inspiration) on Facebook and Instagram (@shine\_printing).**

# Meet Michelle and Craig Frickey Owners of For the Health of It in Blue Mountain Beach

BY TESS FARMER

For the Health of It provides certified-organic and fresh produce, grass fed meats, gluten free foods, raw foods, local and regional foods, prepared foods, and organic beer and wine; this is just the tip of the offerings.

Looking around you can see many changes along scenic Highway of 30-A. Some of those are taking place at the at the organic grocery store and juice bar in Blue Mountain Beach. For the Health of It has been a staple in the area since 1995 when it was established by local entrepreneur Ed Berry. This mainstay has now found new owners: Michelle and Craig Frickey.

Craig shared how it all came to be. He and his wife Michelle were visiting 30-A soon after the Santa Rosa Beach/Musset Bayou fire in May 2020 to check in on the beach town where they vacationed for many years. They are originally from Pell City, Alabama.

"While driving through Blue Mountain Beach we noticed an event with live music and people, so we stopped to check it out," Craig says. "Turns out it was an event hosted by Blue Mountain Bakery, Big Daddy's Bike Shop, and several local vendors, to raise funds for those who had lost homes and belongings to the wildfire.

"I instantly knew this was the community we wanted to be a part of," says Craig. "I was on the phone right away with Ed to tell him we were interested in buying the store if he was ready."

The Frickeys will carry on Berry's original vision to create a space where customers can one-stop-shop for their organic and healthy lifestyle needs. For the Health of It provides certified-organic and fresh produce, grass fed meats, gluten free foods, raw foods, local and regional foods, prepared foods, and organic beer and wine; this is just the tip of the offerings.

"We've added many new products and have expanded the prepared food items, making it easy to grab fresh, organic sandwiches, wraps, dips and snacks to take down



Plated Wraps, Meats, & Chicken Salad

later in the butcher shop. He remembers how much the store brought together the community and that is what he sees blossoming here in Santa Rosa Beach.

"It's all about the people and having an avenue to give back to this place, supporting local causes and having an impact on the health and well-being of so many, especially during this time," he adds. "Our customers are committed to a healthy lifestyle, and we are happy to see many more embracing true health through real food and supporting the body holistically."

The store stocks a full range of nutritional supplements from vitamins, minerals, herbs, and homeopathic remedies and tinctures, and the staff is always ready to offer recommendations and more information on what may be the best fit for the customer. There's also an array of natural body care products, including locally

made soap, sun care, and remedies for the ever-changing seasons that go along with life at the beach.

The longest established massage therapy clinic in the area also continues to operate out of For the Health of It. With three treatment rooms and four licensed therapists offering craniosacral therapy, neuromuscular sports massage, pregnancy massage, and Swedish massage, you are sure to find a way to make a rainy day better or just escape everyday stress for a bit.

"As we approach the one-year mark of becoming part of the 30-A community, we look forward to serving and welcoming more guests and locals alike," adds Craig. "We are here to be your partner and resource in life and health."

**For the Health of It Organic Grocery: Highpoint Center in Blue Mountain Beach, 2217 W. County Highway 30-A, [Shopforthehealthofit.com](http://Shopforthehealthofit.com), (850) 267-0588**



# Browse. Linger. Buy. Repeat.

## How The Art of Simple Became the 30-A Store You Cannot Help But Love

BY MICHAEL J. PALLERINO



Our customers like to take their time and wander throughout; some even stop in the shop every day to discover another find that they had not seen on a previous visit.

Whiskey glasses featuring skull and crossbones that scream, “Pick Your Poison”. Hemp-sewn flasks. A small, invitingly curious mix of sea-shells. Bath fuzzies. Scores of candles. If you’re looking for something your mind has not quite said you want, chances are The Art of Simple has it.

Laura and Michael Granberry promise that is by design. Their retail shops, The Art of Simple,—with locations in Santa Rosa Beach and Seaside—are filled with an eclectic mix of curiosities and necessities such as apothecary, tabletop, home decor, gifts, fine art, and everything and anything two creatively driven minds with backgrounds in graphic design and photography can fathom.

The method to their diverse product selection madness is, well, rather simple. In 2003, looking to open a retail shop that mirrored their creative and entrepreneurial spirits, the Granberrys settled on an interior design shop in Grayton Beach. Over the years, morphing from a shop to a gallery and back again, The Art of Simple was born. “Laura and I both have an eye for aesthetics,” Michael says. “We both also enjoy the hunt for pieces that

speak to us. Add a little crazy, optimism, and our vision to share these finds with others; and somehow a shop was formed.”

Browse. Linger. Be inspired. The internal joke among the Granberrys is that The Art of Simple has nothing you need, but everything you want. Every single item in the store is there to inspire customers to buy something that makes them feel a certain way when they see it in the moment. “I guess that’s why it is the perfect gift shop,” Laura says. “We try not to overthink things. We use our gut instincts. That is the joy of finding the items we select. It is like magic when we walk into a crowded showroom full of merchandise and we both go straight to the same object.”

The true secret behind their beachside retail retreat is that you can visit over and over again and never see the same item twice. It is a retail experience that one customer reviewed as being “full of fun, unique and sassy items that tickle your fancy”. The strategy is that simple, Laura admits. “Our customers like to take their time and wander throughout; some even stop in the shop every day to discover another find that they had not seen on a

previous visit. They become our friends and we enjoy making them happy.”

As the Granberrys freely admit, the journey to get their customers to experience that type of euphoria does not come without a price. In a retail game where presentation is everything, the presentation at The Art of Simple is anything but simple. “The layout and placement of the shop is another story,” Michael says. “That takes a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. When you enter the store, everything you see has been thought out, and then tweaked, turned, stacked, and unstacked until we can step away.”

And yet, even in the selection, merchandising, and sometimes remerchandising of every single product a customer buys, there is a story worth sharing. For example, because there are items that Laura and Michael may love more than the other, when and where it is sold can become a bit of contest—even among the staff. “Everyone loves getting involved and keeping us posted on whose item is more popular,” Laura says.

In the end, when beachgoers hit the shopping and relaxing part of the trip, The Art of Simple is designed to add a few more memories into the experience. “We are fortunate to have a shop located in a resort area, so we get to meet people from all walks of life and all parts of the country,” Laura says. “And the bonus is they are on vacation, so they have time to slow down and enjoy the beach life.”

It’s that simple, really.

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# Michael Savage of the Savage Group

BY JESSA JANSEN

His involvement through each marketing process, to the point of sale and the management of rental properties, has allowed Savage to guide his clients to their perfect version of their next home within the community.



Becoming better known in a community is a fundamental part of finding success as a real estate agent. Through connecting within the community, it allows for a deeper appreciation of that neighborhood and those who live there. Michael Savage intrinsically has a deep connection to those moving to the area and can share with his clients about the place they are looking to move. His deep roots within the community allow for the sincerity expressed through his words about what a wonderful place it is to live.

Michael Savage grew up in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, with family roots dating back to the area since the 1940s. After attending Florida State University before starting his real estate career, he began working with a firm in 2013. What started as a small firm when Michael joined in 2013 blossomed into a large management firm by 2017. In 2018, Savage made the switch and started with Engel and Volkers, one of the highest-grossing firms in the area.

Using his opportunities in real estate and familiarity with the community demographics has allowed for more opportunities when working with clients from start to finish. This includes the initial stages of home design, running the specs, construction, on to the sale or rental of the home, and everything in between. His involvement through each marketing process, to the point of sale and the management of rental properties, has allowed Savage to guide his clients to their perfect version of their next home within the community.

Savage's goals are that of family, and with two girls under the age of two, he is learning what it is like to be a "Girl Dad". Building his roots within the Santa Rosa Beach and Destin areas has provided him with a personal and professional reputation within the community. Enjoying local pleasures like fishing and golf has helped expand his sphere of influence through his continued efforts to meet new people and build his brand. As a member of both Kelly Plantations and Santa Rosa Golf

Club, this community involvement has helped Savage become more familiar with the people around him and better understand the dynamics of the community.

Launching a vacation rental business alongside his wife is another prime example of keeping plugged into the opportunities the community and surrounding communities have to offer. Savage remains hands-on when investing himself. This commitment reflects a genuine emotion about the community that Michael Savage and his family call home.

*Visit 30-A Properties with Engel and Volkers to view Michael's listings at [www.all30aproperties.com](http://www.all30aproperties.com) and @michaelsavage.realtor on Instagram.*

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## Rock It Like a Listing Agent

Engel & Völkers' Bobby Johnson on why the profession may (or may not be) for you

BY MICHAEL J. PALLERINO



Bobby Johnson

Just how strong has the housing market been over the past 18-plus months or so? One chief economist recently said, “We’ve been tracking housing prices for over 20 years, and we’ve never seen anything like this.” With everyone, everywhere seemingly looking to buy, sell, or both, that means being in today’s real estate transaction business is the place to be.

Bobby Johnson tends to think it depends on who you are, what you are looking for, and just how much time, patience, and moxie you have for the game. A longtime fixture on the 30-A beaches scene, today Johnson is a Real Estate Advisor/Partner for Engel & Völkers 30a Beaches. In fact, he entered the real estate game years ago when an old broker friend shared a piece of advice that Johnson has never forgotten: “Listers last.”

Sidestepping the great debate between whether it is better to be a listing agent or selling agent, Johnson believes you go to where your heart leads. And yes, if you want to be responsible for helping sellers navigate each step of the sales process—things like running comparative market analysis, pricing properties, and producing all the materials needed to sell and market a home, being a listing agent rocks.

**So, to be a listing agent or not to be a listing agent, what do you say?**

Being a listing agent doesn’t really rock for everyone. It does for me because I love working with sellers. In one of my past careers, I was a nurse, so I think the caregiver in me comes out. Listings require care and experience. I love the freedom they allow for my schedule.

Also, they rock for me because my previous buyers become my sellers. At this point of my 20-plus year career, I am working full circle. Seventy-five percent of my clients or more are repeat clients.

**Can every real estate professional be a listing agent?**

It’s not for everyone. It’s a highly competitive game with zero guarantee of a return. We have developed systems that take time, money, and experience. Some agents prefer not to work with sellers, as it’s just not the way they like to structure their business.

**What are the biggest advantages?**

A long time ago a colleague told me that “listers last”. I am pretty simple minded and that comment really registered with me. The big picture is listings lead to buyers. When you have listings, you control your own destiny.

**What are the downsides?**

You can get a lot of resources into a listing with no assurance of a return. Also, when things go wrong, regardless of why, you can sometimes get the blame. There are many things that can go wrong in a real estate transaction—things that are just out of your control.

**What made you choose this path?**

It seems all my past careers have led to being a successful agent. My stepfather is a builder, and I was always fascinated by the selling side. I also used to be in the art business. One day after moving an armoire up 21 flights of stairs, I said to myself, “If I’m going to work this hard, I should at least get paid better for my time.” Real estate was just a natural evolution for me and is something to this day I still love doing.

**Is there a story you can share about why you love what you do?**

I love driving down 30-A and seeing my market in the eyes of a new buyer. I grew up along 30-A, so you can imagine that it is easy at times to take for granted how unique and cool this area is. When I see clients look out over one of our coastal dune lakes in awe of what they see, I am reminded how lucky I am to be doing this for a living.

At this point in my life, I find myself wondering about life and purpose. I get reminded how many families are impacted on just one transaction. In a sense, it makes me feel like I am helping people by helping them buy and sell their homes. I just love that.

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## Investing at the Beach

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

As someone who’s been in real estate since 2004, Tom Fitzpatrick has seen the landscape—and the market—change drastically. Starting out as a broker of sales for two new developments in Seacrest Beach and Seagrove Beach, he went on to start 30-A Beach Properties, a vacation rental firm, and became a broker associate at Scenic Sotheby’s Intl Realty, a brand that has redefined “global reach”. He now covers all of 30-A with an emphasis in Rosemary Beach, Watersound, WaterColor and Alys Beach—communities that he and his team tour every week, speaking with owners and guests to develop winning strategies.

**What are your specialties as an agent?**

For one, I like to understand my clients. The beach is the perfect setting to get to know people and their impetus for buying a beach property. Is it an investment purchase that will generate a supplemental income stream, or is it to spend dearly needed time with family? I like to see what type of home inspires them and if the floor plan is a good lifestyle fit.

My team also manages luxury vacation rental properties, so it’s a one stop shop. In addition, I have a great eye for informing clients of the construction quality and potential repair punch items.

**What first interested you in real estate?**

I find it fascinating that so many areas of business are bundled into real estate: finance, sales and marketing, legal contracts, business ethics, and construction techniques.

**Do you think beach real estate will continue to get more valuable?**

VRBO ranked 30-A and Destin as the #1 vacation rental market in the U.S. That’s amazing. Our drivable regional market is growing with flights from the North and Midwest.

National Association of Realtors’ chief economist Lawrence Yun doesn’t see the vacation home market slowing anytime soon. Yun says that they continue to be in high demand, even with companies slowly bringing employees back to the office. The benefits of a flexible work schedule have been discovered, so vacation home pricing itself may moderate—but it’s not likely to decrease in 2022.



Tom Fitzpatrick

substantial. For example, a Rosemary Beach home with carriage can generate \$225,000 to \$300,000.

Your first consideration is location. Is there an area that intrigues you? You’ll be more successful if the location resonates. Where is the beach access and are restaurants walkable?

Next, evaluate the floor plan. Ideally, each bedroom should have a private bathroom. Bunk rooms, preferably on the top floor, are popular. Also, is there a second TV room or play area? Nice community pools are sufficient. You’ll want a courtyard and balconies.

And finally, calculate the “Costs to Own”. Those include property taxes, HOA dues, mortgage interest, and utilities. Compare it against your rental income minus the management fee.

Renters will gladly pay more for homes that showcase our 30-A coastal look and feature cool grays, pale blues, and whites. Venetian plaster, pecky cypress, and wood shiplap can all be combined to create amazing looks. Offer guests a property that is unlike what they live in.

Maximize income with updated countertops. Simple, uncluttered rooms work best. Offer a comfortable living arrangement where three generations can spend time together.

**Is it better to go invest in a property for long-term rentals or short-term vacation rentals?**

The returns are significantly better for short term weekly rentals. Plus, you can decide to only rent three months in summer, profit nicely, and then use it the other nine months. There are different ways to get to your target income.

**What is the market like right now?**

It continues to be a competitive market, where properties don’t stay on the market long. You need to be following inventory changes closely and act quickly when the right property comes along!

**For more information, visit [30abeachproperties.com](http://30abeachproperties.com) or call (850) 225-4674.**

**Why do people love investing at the beach?**

Real estate investing has been a cornerstone towards building personal wealth. Income producing properties can generate a whole new revenue stream that supplements your yearly income. The ability to leverage your purchase by borrowing perhaps 75 percent makes it unique. You only need 25 percent to purchase the asset, whereas other investments could be 100 percent.

**How do you help people find their perfect beach property for investing?**

Families will always travel to take vacations; that won’t change. Therefore, rental income is dependable. Real estate prices have risen, but so have rental rates. The income that a 30-A beach property can generate is



## Are You a Super Human?

BY DR. BART PRECOURT



Dr. Bart Precourt

**Super Humans manage stress well. As we discovered over the past year, running doesn't make them go away. Getting stronger, having a greater capacity to handle them, is the key to being Super Human.**

sick. Rather it's our capacity to handle these stressors. Super Humans manage stress well. As we discovered over the past year, running doesn't make them go away. Getting stronger, having a greater capacity to handle them, is the key to being Super Human.

Is your physical stamina better this year vs 5 years ago? Simple measuring sticks: can you hold your breath for 90 seconds? Can you do 25 pushups? Walk 5 miles?

Your score is not as important as the direction you're headed. If you're not measuring... you're not improving.

How about your mental stamina? Super Humans are strong mentally. Many people are borderline toast, they just want it all to go away (as do I)...

### Leveling up:

Focus on YOU, not the outside world. The stressors will not go away. It is you that must get stronger. Incorporate a daily fitness routine. Avoid people and activities that suck your energy. Chest pump with fist often and say, "I GOT THIS!!"

### Are you toxic?

This applies to both your physical and emotional state. The more toxic we are, the less capacity we have.

Emotionally toxic?... not sure anyone would admit to this yet (I throw it out there for laughs).

If we are filled with judgement, fear, worry, and anger we are toxic to ourselves and others. Anger is super toxic and it's alive and kicking. As a nation we have been baited... and we fell for it. Somehow we believe our neighbor is thy enemy (they are not!).

Physically toxic?... Most likely YES! Alcohol and sugar sales are at record HIGHS!! Exactly what you would consume to become weak and sick.

GMO and processed foods are dominating the store shelves. Chemicals in our water and air. Fortunately, Organic food consumption is trending up.

### Leveling up:

Start by eliminating toxins. If it comes from God's Garden, eat it, if not, leave it! Next, intermittent fast daily for a minimum of 12 hours. This will improve physical and mental capacity.

Lastly... create a daily Gratitude practice first thing in the morning. Hard to be toxic with gratitude flowing through your veins!

Choose to be a Super Human!



Tom Fitzpatrick

Matthew Fitzpatrick

Tom Fitzpatrick

Featured 30-A Review Golf Columnist



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# Shelter House Celebrates Tenth Year of *Purses with a Purpose* Local non-profit holds annual fundraiser to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the Okaloosa and South Walton communities

BY TESS FARMER



**P**urses with a Purpose, a signature Shelter House event, held its 10th-anniversary fundraiser this fall in Destin.

“Over the past decade, Purses with a Purpose has become a must-attend annual shopping experience for ladies across the Emerald Coast,” says Rosalyn Wik, executive director of Shelter House. Shoppers at Purses with a Purpose had the opportunity to select from hundreds of new and gently used purses, wallets, and accessories up for sale or auction.

Since its inception, Purses with a Purpose has raised more than \$125,000 to support Shelter House’s critical services for domestic and sexual violence survivors in the local community. Shelter House accepts donations of new and gently used handbags throughout the year.

New to the event this year, shoppers who were unable to stop by the pop-up shop in Destin Commons had access to virtually bid on the handbags in the silent auction.

Shelter House created a boutique pop-up shop at the Destin Commons where locals and area visitors were able to stop in to shop through the luxury and designer

label bags featured in the virtual silent auction, as well as the shelves filled with hundreds of handbags for immediate purchase.

Shelter House, Inc. is the state-certified domestic and sexual violence center serving Okaloosa and Walton counties and offering emergency confidential shelter, crisis counseling, a 24-hour hotline, children’s programs, information and referrals, education, professional training, safety planning, and prevention services to survivors of domestic violence and their children and sexual violence survivors. All services are free and confidential.

Volunteers and board members worked to open a shelter in Okaloosa County in 1992 that would better serve both Okaloosa and Walton county victims. With the opening of the Kind Heart Kennel in 2013, Shelter House became the only domestic violence shelter in Northwest Florida to allow pets.

“Domestic violence happens everywhere,” says Dawn Hoffman, president of the Shelter House Board of Directors. In a single year, Shelter House provides emergency shelter to more than 220 adults and children,

houses more than 45 women and children in transitional housing apartments, and provides services to nearly 400 adults and children through outreach. “And there are so many more right here in our community who have not yet reached out to us. We are here to help.”

**For more information on the organization, event, find the Purses with a Purpose event on Shelter House’s Facebook or visit [www.shelterhousenwfl.org](http://www.shelterhousenwfl.org) and [bid-pal.net/purseswithapurpose](http://bid-pal.net/purseswithapurpose).**

**Support is available 24/7. If you feel a family member or intimate partner is endangering your physical or emotional safety or if you know someone experiencing this in their home, call Shelter House’s domestic violence hotline at 1-800-44-ABUSE or (850) 863-4777. If you or someone you know has survived a sexual assault, call Shelter House’s sexual assault helpline at (850) 226-2027.**

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# What Happens When A Loved One Dies?

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON



Kimberly Watson Sewell  
and Frank Watson

done a good job of keeping records, it can be like searching for needles in haystacks—a real frustration. It is best to create a list of all your assets, accounts and property while still alive, and keep it safe. Let your spouse or other trusted person know where the list is kept. When you pass, the executor of the estate will have an easier time organizing the assets and settling matters more efficiently. Some of these important documents include:

- The ultra-important copies of the death certificate;
- Will and trust documents;
- Life, health and other insurance policies;
- Recent credit card statements;
- Investment accounts and pensions;
- Checking and other financial account statements;
- Recent mortgage statements;
- The past two years' tax returns;
- All relevant marriage and birth certificates; and
- An up-to-date credit reports.

## Obtain Letters Testamentary or Letters of Administration

You will need proof that you have authority to deal with the decedent's financial affairs prior to contacting the institutions with which the decedent was doing business: you need letters testamentary or letters of administration. An estate planning attorney can handle obtaining these documents and assist with probate. When probate is opened, the will is validated, and the court gives the authority (via the letters testamentary) to settle the estate and act on behalf of the decedent, as specified in the will. Again, get multiple certified copies.

If there is no will, the court can issue letters of administration to a surviving spouse or next of kin after a death certificate has been produced. This individual likely will be the administrator of the estate.

## Make Notifications

Notify these organizations of your loved one's death:

- The Social Security Administration;
- His or her employer;
- Insurance companies;
- Credit bureaus and credit card companies;

- The post office; and
- Creditors.

Cancel subscriptions, memberships, and credit cards right away. You should transfer any utilities, such as the water or cable, to the surviving spouse.

## Speak with an Experienced Estate Planning Attorney

One thing that will reduce stress is to seek the advice of a qualified estate planning attorney. He or she can simplify the process of settling an estate and avoid any issues. Retain an attorney who practices in estate planning and trusts—doing so may relieve some of the stress of going through this process. An estate planning attorney will offer guidance and support to help save you time and energy and give you greater piece of mind.

## Ask yourself these questions regarding what happens when a loved one dies:

- Are you or will you be the executor or executrix of a decedent loved one's estate in the event they pass away?
- Do you know how to obtain critical legal and other documents when the time comes so you can process a decedent loved one's financial affairs?
- Will you be able to easily access the decedent's will and trust documents, insurance policies, credit card statements, investment accounts/pensions, financial/mortgage statements, the past two years' tax returns, relevant marriage and birth certificates, and an up-to-date credit report?
- For proof regarding your authority to deal with the decedent's financial affairs, do you know how to obtain letters testamentary or letters of administration?
- Will you be able to notify the proper organizations upon a loved one's death, such as the Social Security Administration, employer, post office, utilities, creditors, and memberships?
- Have you consulted with an estate planning attorney to ensure the proper documents are in order for your executor in the event of your own passing?



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## Win or Lose, Play with Character

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



Jim Loehr and Tom Fitzpatrick

Going after external goals  
does drive a sense of  
excitement and energy but  
in and of themselves, they  
are not that fulfilling.

Jim Loehr, founder of the J&J Human Performance Institute and sports psychologist, spoke to a group of coaches recently. Jim has worked extensively with top tennis, golf, and corporate stars. He shared his 30 years of research with us below.

We've been duped into believing that achievement is the be all, end all goal. If we achieve great things in life, we are going to be happy. Jim Loehr found that athletes ranked #1 felt extremely unhappy, dissatisfied, and empty inside. They found it difficult to simply feel good about themselves. A common theme to overcome this feeling was to achieve more, win more titles, which led to even more emptiness. If they could become a superstar all over again that might overcome it. Instead, they still felt somewhat empty inside.

We've been taught to believe that external achievements drive confidence, fulfillment, and meaning to our lives. In fact, the J & J Human Performance Institute found that there is no evidence to support that achieving external success brings internal happiness.

Going after external goals does drive a sense of excitement and energy but in and of themselves, they are not that fulfilling. Achievement should instead be based upon being something much greater than serving personal self-interests. Build your character to be a more committed person to causes greater than yourself.

When Andre Agassi re-purposed his tennis career to serve the needs of young people and build a charter school, a transformation took place. He was told that being ranked #1 with titles behind his name was a great thing; but it didn't give him what he had hoped for in terms of satisfaction. The repurposing allowed him to work harder and with more determination than before. So, when he achieved #1 in the world again the happiness that he was looking for started to come.

Let's get the reason for our achievements correct so that we can become extraordinary human beings of great character. Avoid the roadblocks of low and overly high self-esteem. Let the treatment and concern for others grow so something magical in our lives can happen.

The Human Performance Institute studied a group of young athletes and found that the #1 reason for working so hard was actually to be a better, more character driven person. Each day they would pick a virtue and work on it in the context of sport and competition. These virtues included sportsmanship, honesty, kindness, humility, and moral character. The result was the athletes became extraordinary achievers. They also found that their personal growth wasn't linked to success in tournaments. They weren't afraid to lose because if they did it gave them a chance to work on resiliently handling rough outcomes. Everything was put in the context of trying to become a better human being. Who you are as a person is more important than who you are as a competitor.

There is a distinction between performance character and ethical character. You can be a great performer but be a zero in your moral and ethical character if you are taking shortcuts to be a winner at all costs. And this applies in business as well as in sports. The highest level of inner strength that a person has is found in how they treat other people, gratefulness, and compassion. You would think these traits are at the opposite of the spectrum from winning. But in fact, Loehr found that treating other people nicely was at the heart of believing in yourself and feeling good about yourself so that you are a real force in any competitive battle. The moral character is the highest form of health that we can have and can help us achieve sustained success in anything we do.

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



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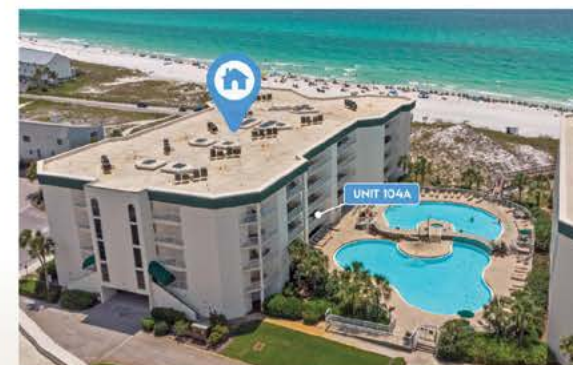


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