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

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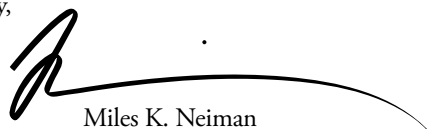


Spring at the beach is the quintessential gathering time on 30-A. It's been growing for many years and has become the traditional time for families, friends, lovers, and strangers to gather and meet at the beach to celebrate all things 30-A.

Some people call it a madhouse, others call it heaven, but you can bet that everyone calls it fun. The weather is still a bit cooler, so you can spend extra time on the sand without getting too overheated. And the early spring sun reminds us that the beach is the place we can let ourselves and our troubles go. Businesses are open to serve and whether you're throwing down fresh Gulf shrimp at one of the local eateries or dancing away the night at a beach bar, the vibes are packed full of good times.

This issue, as always, is packed full of the people, places, and things that make 30-A and the surrounding areas amazing. We delve into the personalities as well as the businesses that make 30-A delicious and special. We hope you enjoy reading about them as much as we enjoyed researching them. We wish you and your family and friends the most enjoyable experience on 30-A possible.

Sincerely,


Miles K. Neiman

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Better Than the Day Before

For 30-A locals and visitors, all-day café Black Bear Bread Co. never gets old

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT

Our approach to foods at Black Bear is pretty simple,” states Executive Chef and Partner Phillip McDonald of Black Bear Bread Co. on 30-A. “Make it for yourself, the cook. When you cook and approach food with pride in your work, the customer benefits greatly. Win-win.”

Black Bear began in 2017 when McDonald and his business partner, restaurateur Dave Rauschkolb, decided to open a restaurant that offered superb food—with equal parts fellowship.

“We wanted a place in our community that focused on the community itself, a place where people could get high quality bread made the classic way. A meeting and gathering place, and a place locals could call their own,” McDonald describes. “Black Bear is more than just a restaurant. It’s a campus full of artisans and enthusiastic staff members and customers.”

The uniquely branded venture is named for the illusive black bears that live in the forests surrounding the restaurant’s home base location in Grayton Beach. “When we were primarily operating out of what was then a catering kitchen, we used to have a family of bears that would raid our dumpster for the extra natural leaven that goes in our sourdough,” McDonald shares. “We would toss the extra leaven out each night and they would get all into it and leave behind yeasted paw prints in the parking lot. So it’s an homage, so to speak.”

With three locations—the aforementioned Grayton Beach, a second at Grand Boulevard, and the Bar Room in Grayton Beach adjacent to Black Bear—there is always something cooking.

“With a fully staffed bakery delivering to our locations daily, we pride ourselves on freshness and quality,” notes McDonald, adding, “From the sumptuous kouign-amann (a sweet Breton cake) to our handmade pop tarts and cinnamon rolls, there is something for even the most discerning palates.” And he says this commitment starts with using the freshest of ingredients. “We prepare dishes that are thoughtful and align with the seasons; we look to our local farmers and seafood purveyors to guide our menus.”

No matter which culinary twists the Executive Chef takes, Black Bear Bread Co.’s menu is devotedly based around the bread program in its name (where one of its bakers was nominated for a coveted James Beard award in 2019). Patrons will find assorted tartines and sandwiches with fresh, seasonal produce, a description to which McDonald adds a tantalizing flourish, “Right now, we are doing a delicious braised field peas dish with



French Toast



Croque Madame

Photos by Alissa Aryn



Banana Tartine



Chocolate Croissants

Photo by Jacqueline Ward

roasted kabocha squash, pickled chilis, charred sourdough croutons, and parmesan.”

The Bar Room, as a venue that stands out a bit from the other two, has a few culinary proclivities. “Our philosophy is to be hyper seasonal with our specials and our nightly menu in the Bar Room,” McDonald confirms. “We like to create dishes that brighten the palate by using a combination of salinity, fat, sweet, sour, fresh, spice, and crunch.”

He continues, sharing his philosophy and approach all across the board with Black Bear’s fare. “So we are definitely technique-driven in the café kitchen. The bakery, however, is more rooted in tradition and recipes, but also a huge emphasis on technique through recipes.”

One wonders where the Executive Chef achieved such obvious culinary sophistication, and McDonald reveals: “From here on 30-A to New York City and San Francisco, I was very fortunate to work under amazing chefs who taught me not only cookery and technique but also discipline and accountability.”

He adds a dash, “I started working on 30-A in 2001 at Criolla’s in Grayton Beach. It was ranked one of the top restaurants in America at the time, and it was an amazing time of discovery and technique for me.”

But it’s not long in the discussion that he circles back passionately to both his restaurants’ cuisine and flair for community, evidenced in a bustling and energetic daily atmosphere. “Our most popular offering on the menu would have to be our house bagel and lox board, avocado toast with pickled cauliflower, and zaatar and the jambon de Paris on baguette... The cowbell item from Black Bear is the country sourdough loaf, which is naturally leavened, tangy, and delicious.” Then he adds, “I would be remiss if I didn’t mention our amazing coffee program from Stumptown Coffee Roasters.”

Clearly, under McDonald’s enthusiastic devotion, every item on Black Bear’s menu is truly made better than it was the day before. So Bon Appetit, 30-A, you’ll need your napkin.

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Enlightened, Simon Kenevan



Timeless Seaside, Steven Quartly



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The Citizen

The community's new gathering spot continues to flourish in Alys Beach

BY TESS FARMER

Inspired by coastal cuisine around the world, The Citizen has taken root as a popular seaside tavern nestled within the town center of Alys Beach. Here, local and seasonal ingredients are the inspiration for both the food and beverages offered; and combined with the ambiance and welcoming environment, patrons keep coming back for more.

The Citizen came on the scene a year ago in January 2021, amidst the changing landscape of the pandemic. And despite early challenges, the tavern has witnessed growth and popularity among locals and visitors to Alys Beach and South Walton.

Owner and Managing Partner Jeremy Walton has had a working relationship with the Alys Beach community for several years. So when he and his wife Angela had the opportunity to bring The Citizen to fruition they saw it as a way to continue to contribute to the growth of the community while also giving them a chance to pursue their entrepreneurial vision.

"When we thought about going on this adventure of building a brand and a company, we wanted to think about what it could look like beyond just creating experiences through food, drinks, and service, and play a bigger part in our community," says Walton. "The name itself was meant to speak to the idea of what it means to be a good citizen."

"We want to become a place that is truly welcoming to everyone as a citizen of the world. Outside of the restaurant, we are partnering with local organizations to better serve and give back to our community."

Even the design of the interior and exterior spaces was driven by the love for the community and the desire to create something unique specifically for Alys Beach and South Walton. The Citizen was designed by the local firm Khoury-Vogt Architects. The result of the design team and owners' vision: a seamless customer experience and ideal destination restaurant. A large, well-ventilated retractable screen turns the patio into another dining oasis overlooking Alys Beach amphitheater and Scenic Highway 30-A.

"We wanted to bring a city-like atmosphere to the beach," says Walton. "Somewhere with the sophistication, elegance, and style but that felt more relaxed, comfortable, and fully welcoming."



Photos courtesy of Modus Photography

Guests have a choice between an 18-seat bar, 12-seat raw bar, or the 120-seat dining room in addition to the outdoor patio seating. The aesthetics are alluring but it's the fresh and vibrant flavors showcased in a variety of menu items with a nod to coastal, Southern fare that are the real showstoppers.

The restaurant's cuisine draws inspiration from many coastal cities from all over the world. By working with local and regional purveyors to source high-quality, seasonal ingredients and fresh seafood from the gulf, The Citizen provides a variety of seafood-inspired dishes ranging from comfort to clean, with a mix of familiar and innovative options. There's truly something for all palates.

Signature items include the shareable gulf shrimp with Calabrian chilies, shallots, and fresh herbs served with focaccia; roasted carrot hummus and grilled naan, or Wagyu beef tartare served with a farm egg, pickled

onions, smoked shiitake, and arugula. Also from the sea, The Citizen purveys an impressive selection of oysters and the black grouper entree with red quinoa, green mole, and citrus salad is a fan favorite.

House 'land' specialties include the smoked beef short rib with charred cabbage and the Berkwood Farms pork schnitzel with Yukon gold potatoes. Executive Chef Drew Dzejak, Chef de Cuisine Coleman Jernigan, and team cook over a live fire in a seven-foot wood burning hearth bringing another earth element to the food.

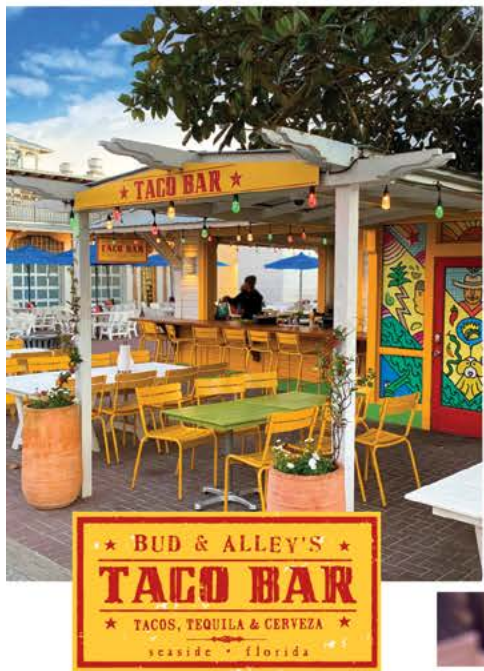
The cocktail menu offers a selection of creative, seasonal libations organized by flavor profile featuring reimagined classics and familiar favorites. A curated wine and beer list is available, featuring a variety of pours, including local craft beers. The beverage program was created in collaboration with Christine Tarpey of Better Together Beverage and continues to evolve.

Standout cocktails from their ever-changing menu include Flower Power made with Hayman's Gin, St. George Spiced Pear, St. Germaine, Tempus Fugit Violette, and lemon; and Old Man and the Sea featuring Earl Grey Infused Panama Pacific Rum, Luxardo Marachino, lavender, lime, and grapefruit. The menu also

includes a zero-proof offering for elevated mocktail creations utilizing distilled, non-alcoholic spirits.

Committed to finding purpose, the ethos fostered at The Citizen aspires to define what it means to be a community citizen. The restaurant team of creative and collaborative associates work hard to enhance experiences and apply those principles to one another and guests just the same. Dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all, a place where appreciation and respect is paramount, it's not a surprise The Citizen has become the new spot to gather on 30-A.

The Citizen, 20 Mark Twain Lane, Unit #101, Inlet Beach, www.citizenalys.com for hours @thecitizenalys, facebook.com/thecitizenalys. Reservations for large parties accepted through Resy.



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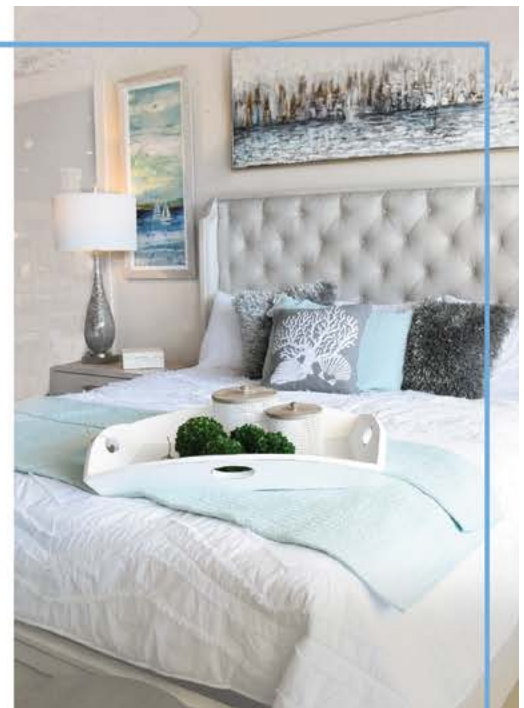
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Meet the New Pizza Bar

Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar + Trattoria gets a new home in Seaside

BY TESS FARMER



Local restaurateur and businessman Dave Rauschkolb along with his team have unveiled the new, grand-scale renovation of Bud & Alley's restaurant, which has been a mainstay on the gulf in Seaside for 36 years. The design of the building also allowed for the relocation of Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar + Trattoria.

"Former Seaside town architect and author Dhiru Thadani did a wonderful job marrying the old and the new to carry Bud & Alleys into the next generation," Rauschkolb says. "The new building design allowed for the consolidation of all the restaurants, which also created more space to serve our customers," says Rauschkolb. "The open air seating and location along 30-A has brought even more vibrancy to the bustling setting in the heart of Seaside."

Now located street-side below Bud & Alley's main restaurant, Pizza Bar is serving up the authentic Neapolitan wood-fired pizzas and house made pastas they are known for from their new home. With a passion rooted in traditional cooking technique, from the mixing of dough to the shaping of each pizza to maintaining the proper flame in wood-fired ovens, the menu remains the same but with new additions, including sharing plates, more pastas, and specialty dishes.

Under the creative leadership of Chef Phil McDonald and Chef de cuisine Chris Alhborn, everything at Pizza Bar is made by hand, including the fresh mozzarella and naturally-leavened sourdough baked daily for the seasonal

Our vision for Pizza Bar began with a trip to Italy over 13 years ago and our desire to bring a completely authentic Naples-style pizza to Northwest Florida.

bruschetta sourced from Black Bear Bread Company, McDonald and Rauschkolb's other restaurant venture.

The menu is also complemented by a carefully curated list of handcrafted cocktails, wine, and craft beer.

"We strive daily to create a menu that celebrates where we live, offering the best from both land and sea," says Rauschkolb. The restaurant offers the freshest ingredients sourced as close to home as possible.

"Our vision for Pizza Bar began with a trip to Italy over 13 years ago and our desire to bring a completely authentic Naples-style pizza to Northwest Florida," adds Rauschkolb. Prominent Italian chef and restaurateur, Roberto Caporusio, one of the world's leading experts and teachers of Neapolitan pizza-making, has twice consulted at Pizza Bar to give his guidance on creating the perfect leopard-spotted Neapolitan pizzas.

"In the beginning I wanted to remain so authentic to the pizzas that we didn't offer pepperoni on our

pizzas," Rauschkolb muses. "Pepperoni, believe it or not, is not traditionally used in Italy as a pizza topping."

"But ultimately we want to keep customers happy and now offer pepperoni in addition to other options like our house-made roasted fennel sausage."

Other notable menu items are the meatballs made with grass-fed beef and Berkshire pork, fried Brussel sprouts, kale Caesar salad and the clam pie made with Cedar Key clams.

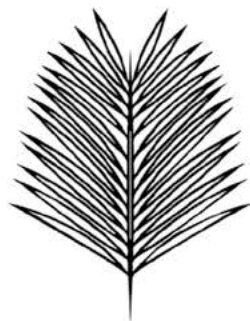
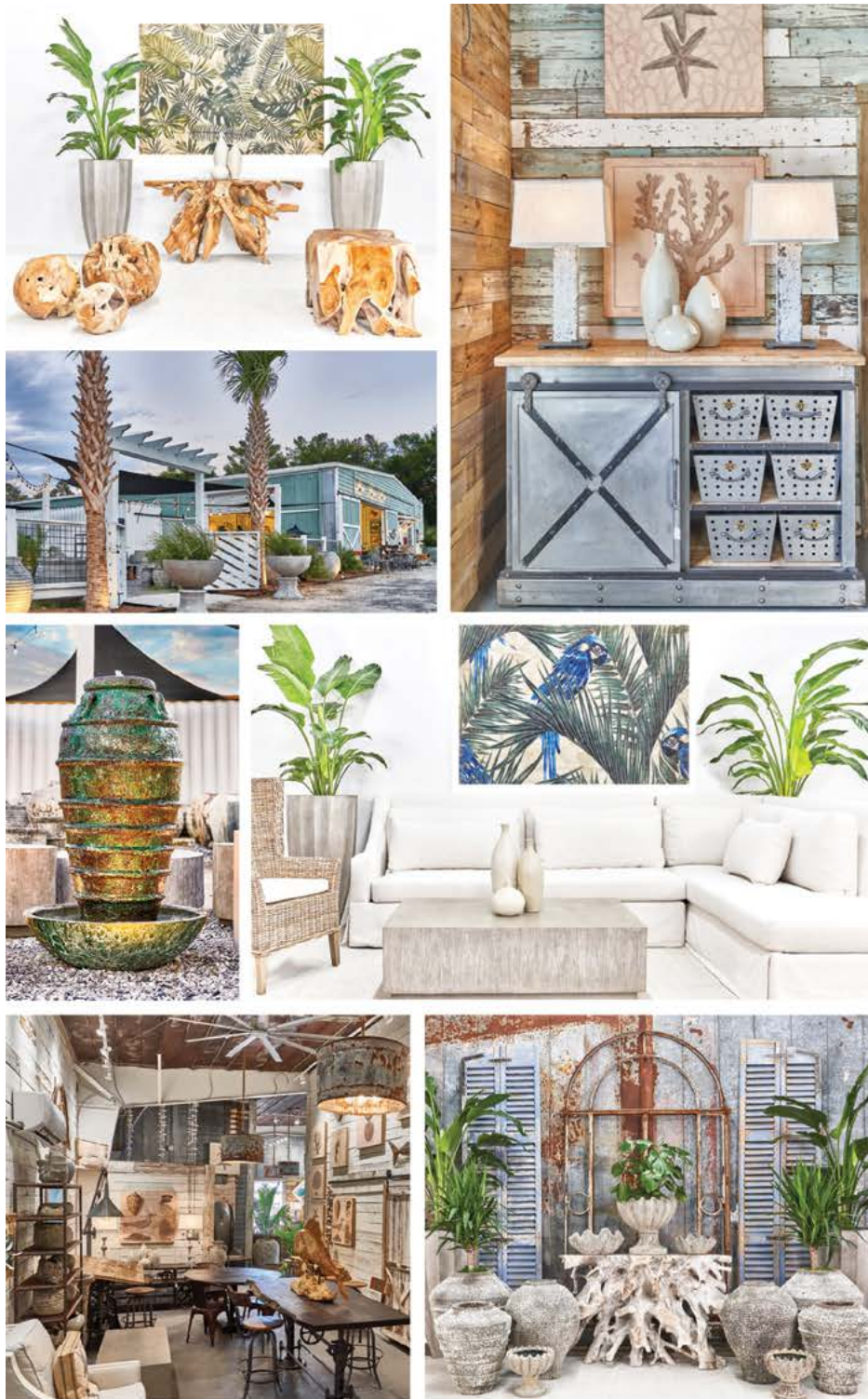
The new space has also allowed room for a second wood-stone pizza oven, coming in handy for the summer season when chefs are serving up to 500 pizzas each day.

The new Pizza Bar offers walk-up service in a casual, beachside setting, but will always bring fresh ingredients and the same commitment to quality driven from its inception years ago.

"I am most excited to have this amazing roadside location adjacent to the brand new gorgeous and expansive Krier Plaza," adds Rauschkolb. "Pizza Bar's new home is exceptional and the response from our guests has been incredible."

Delicious authentic Neapolitan pizzas and dishes in the most beautiful beachside setting. What more could you ask for?!

Bud & Alley's Pizza Bar + Trattoria, 2236 East County Highway 30-A, Seaside. (850) 231-3113, budandalleypizzabar.com



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A Curation of Passion

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Art and wine seem to have a natural affinity for one another; and in an area like Rosemary Beach where fine art is savored with as equal an appreciation as the finest vintage, Gary Handler couldn't have found a better location to open a gallery for showcasing the works of some of his favorite artists and bringing the beautiful beachside community a taste of what has always captured his passion. "I wanted to create something different here, a gallery offering a wide variety of different works and different artists who span from the locally known talent to those who are nationally and internationally represented," says Handler, who took the years of experience he's had as the owner of Vinings Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia, and used it to create Curate, which has been open since 2016. "Every artist represented in my galleries is one that I would personally collect. I have to love their work, and I have to love them as a person."

At its core, Curate is a collaborative art space that seems to pulse with creativity; and over the past six years, Handler has watched that pulse strengthen under the warmth of the Florida sunshine. And herein lies the intersection of where business meets pleasure: when the 2014 Destin Charity Wine and Food Auction brought about the chance meetings of Handler with a number of people who had long been his clients at Vinings in Atlanta. Naturally enough, Handler was there in a professional capacity, participating in the event along with his long-time friend and top-selling artist, Thomas Arvid, America's preeminent painter of wine whose work Handler had represented for many years. As an area rife with secondary homes owned by people from all across the globe, Rosemary Beach became part of an even smaller world for Handler; and his existing relationships formed the foundation he needed to make a successful go of bringing more color to the art scene at 30-A.



In addition to Arvid, Curate represents such talents as Simon Kenevan, whose realistic seascapes capture the essence of the Emerald Coast and the spell it cast on the U.K. native; Nicoletta Belletti, known for her textured mixed media paintings as well as her stunning pet portraiture; and Steven Quartly, whose romantic expressionism is the perfect canvas for his 30-A seascapes.

Among Curate's most dynamic and unique artists is David Wight, a native of Washington whose ability to capture the strength, beauty, and unpredictability of the wave in glass is unmatched. Having started his career in glass blowing as a craftsman of water features, he realized that capturing moving water could be done in glass as a

Work of David Wight



sculpture rather than merely a vessel. After learning how to manipulate the molten glass into pieces that embody the changing beauty and dynamic form of waves, Wight channeled his energy into this passion.

For Handler, Wight's waves were the perfect addition to the pieces at Curate—like a love story to the water that is so much of part of Wight's life as well as the beautiful seascape that edges along the community of 30-A. As such, Wight created a series for Curate entitled *Serenity*. "I saw David's work while I was on vacation on the West Coast and fell in love with the pieces I saw," says Handler. "His work is incredible and possess this amazingly deep concentration of color that make them impossibly realistic. The blues, the turquoise, and cobalt...I believe in his talent and

that he will go incredibly far as an artist whose work becomes highly collected."

Bringing his eye for talent to Curate, Handler hopes that the artists he represents in this new space will experience their own transformation and growth, brought into greater light in a place where they are given appreciation and respect. He has created a place for this art to thrive, in an atmosphere that is welcoming and approachable, where collectors become friends and pieces are delivered to homes to ensure that the "perfect pieces" have found the right space. At his essence, Handler is a curator of art—and, in his way, a curator of dreams.

Curate is located at 72 Main Street, Rosemary Beach, Florida 32461. For more information, call (850) 231-1808 or visit www.curate30a.com.

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 Hottie. 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

"I worked at Amavida for several years and I got to know lots of local business owners. I'm not salesy by nature, but I'd mention this job to people if they were looking for shirts for their staff—which brought in lots of orders," Shine explains. "My boss taught me a lot about this business; spend your money locally as much as possible, and support the businesses who support you. For example, if we print shirts for a restaurant and we're getting ready for a holiday party, hey, let's have it there. I think that's one of the coolest things about this area."

Amavida was Johnny's steady paycheck that helped him bridge printing from "side gig" to full-time endeavor. Because even after orders started rolling in, he took his time jumping in completely.

"I spent a few years trying to do both—basically working all day at the print shop, getting the kids from pre-K, bringing them to the shop and giving them to the wife when she got off work at 5," he says. "Then I'd run to Amavida and work until midnight."

As a person in recovery, Shine believes in second chances and taking a leap of faith. When he walked 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, call (850) 396-1836, or email helo@shineprints.com. Connect socially (and find design inspiration) on Facebook and Instagram (@shine_printing).

Touring Through the Changing Tides of Time

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT



We are busier than ever since May 2020,” states the manager of 30-A’s Blue Dolphin Tours in Panama City Beach. The 30-something-year-old family business continually draws repeat customers and maintains a loyal, knowledgeable staff.

Blue Dolphin Tours is known for its focus on the purity of the local environment, its no-stress, family-focused approach, and its fabulous tours to see the wildlife living in the blue placid waters. It’s about looking outward, and it’s about the journey.

Although Blue Dolphin Tours and its offerings haven’t changed since the world did in 2019, the home states of its patrons have. “We’re getting lots of new visitors from states like Virginia, Illinois, D.C., Michigan, Washington, Oregon, and California,” the business’s manager confirms. Regulars, too, remain continually among the mix, with about 50% of Blue Dolphin Tour’s business being repeat, and many of its returning guests’ faces have been long since etched into the minds of the Blue Dolphin Tours staff.

In a world where so many things are in flux over time, Blue Dolphin Tours offers visitors something steady: friendly faces, experienced Coast Guard Captains, custom-built boats, the beautiful waters of the Gulf Coast, and many sea creatures that make the stunning 14 miles between the Bay and Gulf waters their homes.

But even though the customer service that Blue Dolphin Tours delivers is reliably constant, its tours remain delightfully different each time a boat leaves the dock. “We go out, swim and snorkel, and before too long

inquisitive dolphins will come to watch us,” he describes. “We observe in the wild and have encounters. The experience is 100% different every single time.”

One of the reasons that Blue Dolphin Tours has consistent success giving visitors extraordinary experiences is that several hundred wild dolphins live in the area of Panama City Beach—an ample amount of the inquisitive mammals to interact with the boats that are out on the water all day long. The dolphins have made this stretch of waterway their home due to the 45-foot depth of the shipping channel, which provides an abundance of fresh food.

“Deep water means lots of different marine life,” the business manager confirms. And for the dolphin, it’s like having the perfect buffet waiting for them in their own backyard.

In addition, the surrounding area’s rich bays and estuaries are icing on the cake for the dolphins that travel all through the waters back and forth between Panama City, Destin, and Apalachicola.

Although the connection to nature that families get to experience on a Blue Dolphin tour is rare, so is the chance to connect with one’s own family, in the moment—a moment where family members don’t want to blink for fear of missing something extraordinary. Families on Blue Dolphin tours get to meet other families in the form of bottlenose dolphin pods, and many tourists, in particular, have never experienced such a thing.

At present, numerous dolphins are joined by turtles, different birds of prey, shells, starfish, and sand

dollars to make up the cast on guests’ tours. Manatee, too, are joining the lineup of late.

Yet, Blue Dolphin Tours is careful to ensure that the presence of its boats and families doesn’t interfere with this wildlife. “Our Captains respect the dolphins and their natural habitat, and avoid disturbing them,” he emphasizes. Respect is something the Blue Dolphin Tours team seeks to instill in every visitor to its business, as well, leaving them with these lessons, “Protect our environment and enjoy your family and friends—as well as the great outdoors that God has blessed us with.” Counting blessings and paying them forward, the Blue Dolphin Tours business donates to several local and foreign non-profits.

Circling back to the present moment, the business manager considers the incredible creatures that make Blue Dolphin Tours so special. “They’re just naturally inquisitive creatures. You see mothers teaching babies how to feed. We’ve witnessed birthings. People from all over the country come here to see what a dolphin acts like in the real world.”

And for anyone who hasn’t yet witnessed these wonders—many across the country live a lifetime without experiencing them—the manager of Blue Dolphin Tours extends an open invitation: “We are experts in family fun. Come see why!”

Blue Dolphin Tours, 3601 Thomas Drive, Panama City Beach, Florida 32408, www.bluedolphintour.com

Tee Time

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

There's a natural marriage that seems to exist between airy, breathtaking views of glittering waves crashing along the shore and the relaxed pace of golf, a freshness and brightness that only sea, sunshine, sand, and the verdancy of a fairway could provide. It stands to reason, then, that the beachfront location claimed by Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club has become such a popular choice for avid golfers along 30-A, as this highly celebrated landmark offers not only a stunning course but an unparalleled setting.

Owned by equity members totaling 400, Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club offers a unique membership experience. Through the board, equity members direct the operations of the club, including plans for the future of the business. "The golf club is now fully private to members," says membership and marketing director Sarah Brazwell. "In the past, the golf club has been open for public play, but with the overwhelming demand for golf and membership, the club's leadership felt going private would enhance the member experience even more."

Further enhancing the experience is, of course, that view. "We're located in the heart of 30-A, directly on the Gulf of Mexico," Brazwell says. "Players can experience beautiful sea breezes on the front nine, with two holes overlooking the water."

Led by Bergin Golf Designs, the redesign took ten months, so extensive was the project. "Literally everything changed," Brazwell notes. "The footprint of the property remained the same, but every inch of grass, drainage and more was redone, and the course is completely new. The full scope of the project included a new course, a renovated club house, renovated grounds at the club house that included landscaping and hardscapes, a new short course/driving range combo, and a renovated training facility with updated technology and PXG partnership."

Reopened since October of 2021, amenities include an 18-hole private golf facility, private pool and beach access for its members, member-only social events and golf tournaments, dining discounts, and more. The club also provides various options in golf instruction for juniors and adults ranging from one-on-one to group clinics. In addition, an indoor, year-round golf instruction



Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club



facility showcases expert teaching and learning programs, along with certified club fittings through the club's partnership with PXG. The club also offers access to some of the best golf instruction technology in the world, providing an experience that is not unlike having a group of experts in the room at all times. "While other training facilities have similar building and instruction, SRGBC's full technology package and the level of instruction by the PGA staff make this facility far superior to any other on the Emerald Coast," says Brazwell. "The facility includes industry-leading technology like the Trackman 4, with optically enhanced dual radar tracking technology. This system allows tracking of all types of shots and putts with unrivaled accuracy, which allows for a perfect analysis with fact-based confidence."

"We are thrilled to be able to not only provide an upgraded course but also a new teaching facility that will truly make Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club stand out amongst other golf facilities in the Emerald Coast area," says Carter Murchison, director of instruction for the club

We are thrilled to be able to not only provide an upgraded course but also a new teaching facility that will truly make Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club stand out amongst other golf facilities in the Emerald Coast area.

"For the avid golfer in Northwest Florida, Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club would be the top choice for many reasons," Brazwell adds. "The course provides a challenge for the better players and allows grace for newer players, and the design brings the beach to the course, providing a beautiful backdrop of sand, sea oats, and beautiful mature oak trees as well as

unique elevation changes created by the natural sea dunes that run along the Dune Allen area. The course is also the best course in town to 'walk', giving our members a healthier option for play versus riding, which is big for golfers. In addition, the practice areas complete the package for avid golfers. We have a training facility for PGA instruction, a large putting green, a short course with a par 3 and 6 hole, a driving range, and a short game area for players to practice putting and chipping."

With all that Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club offers, this is clearly one course that beckons those with a passion not only for the tee, but also for the tide.

Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club is located at 334 Golf Club Dr, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. For more information, visit santarosacub.com. Call (850) 267-2229 for the golf club or (850) 267-1240 for the beach club.

Rave Reviews on Repeat

How Dune Vacation Rentals Earns Five Stars on 30-A

BY DENISE K. JAMES

When Bob Dickhaus and his wife built a new home along the beautiful Florida coast of 30-A 11 years ago, they didn't realize, initially, that their second home would become their primary residence—and that a successful vacation rental business would follow closely behind. Today, Dune Vacation Rentals, based in picturesque Grayton Beach, garners repeated five-star reviews based on Bob and his team's passionate attention to detail. A boutique vacation rental company, Dune Vacation Rentals employs a unique approach that results in ultimate owner and guest satisfaction—and their reviews and referrals prove it.

An entrepreneur for 25 years, Dickhaus previously worked with real estate companies, property management companies, and maintenance companies, including serving as President of Johnson Controls, a global property management company. As he got to know the 30-A community, he discovered an intriguing truth about the area's vacation rental companies: "I found that no one had done a great job with the maintenance on properties, revenues aside," he says.

With that observation, he realized his own maintenance expertise could help him optimally manage vacation rental properties, resulting in a stellar experience for both property owners as well as the vacationers. So, Dickhaus set about building a solid team based on the "strategy of being good asset managers" and now has a company made up of 25 employees, half of whom are in the maintenance department.

Being a good asset manager, by the way, extends far beyond each rental home having a working television and microwave—Dune Vacation Rentals ensures a completely fine-tuned experience, right down to the roof and the air conditioner. "We have people who can manage projects like painting, putting on roofs, decks, complete renovations, as well as preventative maintenance for the AC, for example," Dickhaus says. "Smart owners appreciate this. We value professionalism, so we have high standards—we know people are looking for local providers, as well as professionalism."

One of the cornerstones of Dune Vacation Rentals is a business book called *Raving Fans*, written by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles. The book echoes Dickhaus's own beliefs that any successful business needs more than just a steady stream of customers—those



Dune Vacation Rentals Team

customers must become raving fans, who then share their memorable experiences with other future raving fans. Such is the case with owners who trust their homes to Dune Vacation Rentals; many live in other places and are confident in the team giving their property the ultimate care—which means more happy vacationers, and a better return on their investment.

The beauty and desirability of 30-A draws a wide variety of owners, and Dune Vacation Rentals works with them all: from investors with multiple properties to families with second homes to football players, actors, and other entertainers, all who delight in having a home on the Florida coast. All have helped the company grow—many receive a lower commissions rate for spreading the word to other owners. "Most of our growth has come organically through our satisfied owners," Dickhaus explains. "If we can satisfy the guest and get a five-star review, we focus on that experience. And with those five-star reviews, the home becomes more valuable because people look at reviews."

As the owner of Dune Vacation Rentals, Dickhaus makes it his mission to relate to both the owners and the vacationers—both receive the best treatment. "I relate to the owners because I am one of them," he says. "I understand how they think. When someone buys a multi-million-dollar home, they don't want to turn it over to someone they can't trust. We've focused on high-end homes, and these homes take a lot of work, but we would rather focus on them—because of that, we have high-end renters."

Though the business is booming, Dickhaus intends to keep the number of homes managed by Dune Property Rentals capped at 100, he says, to ensure quality over quantity. "We don't want to become a bigger company," he muses. "My experience from what I've seen is that you have to organize differently when you get too large. We want to stay at 100 homes or fewer and have everything be amazing."


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The Wide World of Merry Morgan

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT



Photos courtesy of Merry Morgan

She and her team know 30-A real estate inside and out, but Merry Morgan of Inlet Beach knows much more. And it's the kind of "more" that circles back around and makes her an even better business woman.

A real estate broker and owner of Summit 30A Luxury Realty in Grayton Beach, Morgan is also one of only 600 women in history to summit Mount Everest. "I summited May 23, 2019, right before all the 2020 Covid [crisis] happened," she describes of the stunning feat. "I went from Tibet, was up there around 50 days, and this was my third of seven summits," which include Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Morgan's timing in her summit of Everest is also stunning in a solemn way: 2019 was not only a treacherous year of Covid for the world, it was the deadliest year ever for climbers on Mount Everest. This fact makes Morgan's undertaking even more hard-core and increasingly bittersweet. In her quest to reach the summit, Mor-

gan climbed all night alongside a Sherpa interestingly named "Karma". Although she was in a long line of climbers, "I got to be on top of Everest for three minutes that year, alone, just me and Karma. What a special blessing."

All the training, the discipline, the Iron Mans, marathons, and other athletic endeavors (hours on the treadmill in hiking boots while wearing a 30-pound backpack, for instance) that Morgan used leading up to her summits of mountains around the globe have turned out to be strengths she uses in her business today—a business that opened in January of 2021.

Morgan's husband, Nic Henderson, is a 30-A native, builder and developer, owner of Henderson Construction Custom Homes, and also a realtor and consultant for his wife's company. The pair are joined by realtor Taylor Henderson, Henderson's daughter and Morgan's stepdaughter. Of her family team, which

now includes a baby under age two, she says, "It's just a fun process." And of working with her husband, in particular, she gushes, "I love to work with my husband. He brings so much knowledge. He knows the area so well, knows how homes are built, and he's just a great resource for someone who's buying a house."

When it comes to the challenges of opening a business during Covid, Morgan says, "As far as life goes, in general, I feel like everyone thinks of the challenges. But in climbing Mount Everest, and being able to find joy in the process, has given me an attitude of gratefulness and thankfulness."

She adds, "I got to a place of quiet, from all the noise of life, and I got closer to God and to all the things we have to be thankful for."

This outlook on life that the Everest summit gave her is now something Morgan tries to draw upon and hopefully pass along in her business life, helping people find amazing properties on 30-A. As she puts it, "Some people look at real estate and think that it's a daunting process. We try to take away the stress and help people enjoy the experience, to help people enjoy the process and not find it to be so daunting and overwhelming. We take the stress on ourselves and make it as easy as possible for people."

Then there are some other, more philosophical lessons that summiting Mount Everest has helped Morgan uncover and share with others. "I wasn't a super athlete when I was young," she notes. "But I was a pediatric nurse for a few years, and the experience opened my eyes to the fact that life is a precious gift and that we shouldn't waste a second. We should live life to the fullest."

And so the journey continues. The realtor-climber-dreamer was training for an Iron Man in New Zealand before lockdown shut a door on it. But next up, she has her sights set on a climb of Mount Elbrus in Russia.

"It can be done in 8-10 days," she notes. "It depends on if the mountains are open and we're able to travel. And then maybe Denali in Alaska. My goal is to do all the summits, eventually."



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Five Strategies to Live Longer (and Better!)

BY DR. BART PRECOURT

These past two years have created a tidal wave of health strategies; some simple and easy to understand, and others way out there. These outside-the-box ones, often referred to as ‘bio-hacks’, frequently seem unattainable, complicated, or only for the extremists. To live longer and better, it doesn’t have to be complicated. The five strategies in this article are simple, time tested, and attainable for everyone.

Some argue, oddly, they don’t want to live longer, they just want to enjoy each day and get the most out of life. I agree and disagree. Getting the most out of life will require you to be healthy. Stamina, strength, mental capacity, passion, and creativity—these are what make our days amazing. All of these require a strategy, the same one that helps you live longer.

These are simple and spot on!

1. Move your body.

Humans are built to move about life daily. Our spines (lifeline) do not like when we sit and compress them. Unfortunately, this is what most of us do for the majority of our waking hours; sit in our cars, desk, dinner table, couch, etc. Losing our range of motion, losing our flexibility happens primarily due to becoming sedentary. Losing range of motion, becoming stiff and rigid, is a sign of degeneration and aging. Even walking twenty minutes a day is amazing for our health. Move it or lose it. Join a yoga class, reach for the sky, or go for a bike ride... get moving!

2. Achieve your ideal weight.

This one will take some work. Many people are overweight. Getting to your ideal weight can solve many health challenges due to what it takes to get there, which is a healthy lifestyle. What’s your ideal weight? Hard to say, we are all different. A good starting point is to ask yourself “What’s my ideal weight?”. Get honest with yourself. Then create a plan, find a coach, or do whatever you need to do to move in that direction. Most likely this will require adjustments to diet and exercise. Maybe less alcohol and chips. Easy breezy.

3. Eat real food.

What are real foods? Real foods are Organic, have no chemicals, are non-GMO and toxin-free; what I call God’s Garden. It’s not complicated. What gets complicated is trying to determine the best diet plan. Vegan, keto, carnivore, plant based, Mediterranean? All of these are good, yet they are specific diet strategies for specific

Stamina, strength, mental capacity, passion, and creativity—these are what make our days amazing. All of these require a strategy, the same one that helps you live longer.



Dr. Bart Precourt

types of results. I use them ALL in my clinic. Different strategies for different outcomes. The foundation for ALL of these is God’s Garden, real organic foods without chemicals and toxins.

One of the biggest challenges with diet is emotional eating. Most of us are emotional eaters. When bored, tired, or stressed we aren’t looking for a plate of salad. Sugar and processed foods are at all-time record sales. Why? Emotions are running high. Improve your diet and you will improve your life!

4. Don’t smoke.

I know... Duuuh. Smoking damages the mucosal lining in the throat and lungs. Lung damage of any sort reduces ‘Chi’, our ‘life force’ or energy. This massively inhibits our immune response and defense. What does this include? All forms of smoke are damaging to our lungs. Cigarettes, marijuana, vaping etc. doing any of these regularly can compromise your health. Decades of statistics back up reasons why we should avoid smoking. Self-love and a desire to thrive help this happen.

5. Manage stress.

Better said... increase your capacity. Get stronger! Become so healthy you can handle stress. Rarely will stress go away. We either get stronger, by having a healthier lifestyle, or the stress beats us down.

Stress is a beast! It could be linked to almost every health condition there is. No one is immune to it. Physical, chemical, emotional.... Often, we don’t even recognize it. This may require some life inventory and perspective. Most stress is derived from either family or finances. Can we improve here? Forgive others, reduce spending, earn more, improve self-love, release guilt, or blame?

Clinically when I recognize that stress is a major component of my patient’s health concerns it’s rare that we focus on stress reduction. The attention is put on getting stronger. Eating better, proper rest, supporting stress glands (adrenals), and exercising. You get the point, all the things that help us live longer.

No matter where you are on your health journey... there is always room for improvement. Take action and get stronger. Live longer. Be awesome!

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, FL at Balance Health Studio, www.balance30a.com. For a consultation, contact Balance Health Studio at (850) 231-9288.

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Runners Return to Seaside

20th Annual Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K celebrates 25 years of Florida's oldest operating public charter school

BY TESS FARMER

The long-standing Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K returned to Seaside this year after moving the school's largest fundraiser to a virtual option in 2021. The race is a huge community effort bringing together students, staff, volunteers, community partners, and runners from across the country.

Every registration for the Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K goes to support The Seaside School, which was recently ranked the number three combination school in the state and celebrated 25 years in the community last year.

"This annual event means so much to our school and beyond," says Teresa Horton, executive director of the Seaside School Foundation. "Its primary purpose is to raise funds, but also provides a chance to gather with members of our special community, celebrate successes and share our vision for the future."

Founded in 1996, The Seaside School, Inc. was one of the first and is now the oldest operating public charter school in the State of Florida. The original goal of Seaside School, Inc. was simple—create a school to address the need for better middle school education in Walton County—and it hasn't stopped since. The Seaside School, Inc. currently serves nearly 400 students across three campuses encompassing 5th through 12th grades.

The vision of the school is admirable: to maintain a small school with faculty knowledgeable to each student's abilities and challenges. The staff offers increased support to each student to meet challenges, cultivate talents and increase skills to perform successfully in all academic areas. The smaller setting and lower-class size make this possible.

The curriculum at The Seaside School, Inc. is developmentally responsive – actively engaging students in learning skills in context, integrative – directing students to connect learning to daily lives. This enables students to discover their abilities, interests, unique learning styles, and explore ways that they can make contributions to their world.

"The Seaside Neighborhood School was an attempt to prove that a small school, fully integrated into a neighborhood and a community, could achieve better outcomes and help children mature better than the currently conventional large schools built on land a

considerable distance from houses, shops, and cultural centers," says Seaside founders Robert and Daryl Davis. "Such a school could draw on cultural and community resources and engage citizens in the education of its students."

"The school has been a remarkable success, even if the idea of small schools embedded in their neighborhoods has not spread as widely, so far, as we had hoped," adds Davis.

This idea was an important element of the South Walton Conservation and Development Plan of the mid-nineties; an anticipated update of the plan may help Walton County more effectively plan for future growth

students scored an average of more than 140 points higher than the state average on the PSAT.

"Certainly the performance of The Seaside School, even with a small population of students, plays an integral part in the success of Walton County School District's grade," says Mr. A. Russell Hughes, Superintendent of Walton County School District. "We treasure this relationship and the willing, intentional collaboration that we engage in for each child to receive a world-class education, contributing to the success of all students."

The general race proceeds go directly to support the operations of the schools and additional fundraising ef-



Photo by Lynn Crow Photography



and shift away from mega-schools on sites that could not allow kids to walk or bike to school or be part of a supportive neighborhood.

The Seaside School, Inc. students continue to earn high marks on annual state testing year after year. Results from the most recent state assessments show that Seaside is a top-ranked combination school in Florida, performing above the majority of combination schools statewide, and continually scores higher on college entrance exams compared to the national student average.

Notably, data from the most recently administered tests in 2021 show Seaside School, Inc. scored number two in the State of Florida for 7th and 8th grade mathematics, number seven in the State of Florida for 10th grade English Language Arts (ELA), and number 6 in the State of Florida in 8th grade science. Additionally,

forts will be allocated towards the capital and endowment campaign supporting students at Seaside Neighborhood School and Seacoast Collegiate High.

"The Educate + Gather + Grow capital and endowment campaign will be driven not only by short-term needs, but also by a plan of what the future will hold for our schools," adds Horton. "Led by continual support, exploration, accountability, scholarship, independence, dreams and effort, our students cultivate their diversity and begin to understand ways they can make unique contributions to our society."

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Probate and Estate Administration

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON



Kimberly Watson Sewell
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You have just executed your Revocable Living Trust (“RLT”). Congratulations. You are finished and your assets are free and clear of probate should you become disabled or die. Right? Wrong!!

Like a fine automobile without fuel in the tank, an RLT is not going to perform as designed without “fueling” (i.e., “funding”) it. Is this a “one and done” event? No—you must title some assets in the RLT without delay and others by beneficiary designation upon your passing. Remember, assets that are not titled in your trust may be subject to probate. Consider this an introduction to the three steps to successful trust funding and a look at the two unique assets requiring additional consideration.

Identify

The first step is to determine what you currently own, its location, and how title is presently held. Make a list of your various holdings. The greater the detail, the more successful your funding. The list you make will also serve double-duty. If you become disabled or die, your successor trustee will know exactly what assets are in the RLT or outside the RLT. This can avoid an unpleasant “treasure hunt” that can be expensive and time consuming.

Transfer

Once your assets have been identified, notify the various financial institutions that you have created an RLT. They will want to know the name of the trustee, the trust name, and the trust date. Do not be surprised if an institution wants a copy of the whole trust or just certain pages to ensure accurate retitling. It is also important to request written confirmation from each institution that the requested retitling has successfully occurred. *Note:* Some assets should be directly titled in the trust and others by a “beneficiary designation” for postmortem funding. For example, life insurance may be owned outright by the insured with his or her RLT as the primary beneficiary.

Maintain

Buying and selling, selling and buying. Life goes on after you sign and complete the initial funding of your RLT. You should make sure that you take title to assets in

Two types of assets require careful attention when funding your RLT: real estate and retirement funds. A misstep in either instance can be very costly.

the name of your RLT as you acquire them, or carefully establish the appropriate beneficiary designations for them to fund the trust at death. While you are at it, update the initial list used to begin the funding process. This “inventory” will be essential when your successor trustee needs to act.

Special Consideration Assets

Two types of assets require careful attention when funding your RLT: real estate and retirement funds. A misstep in either instance can be very costly.

Real Estate: If you need or want to transfer your own primary personal residence, secured by a mortgage, to your RLT, chances are good that you may retitle it to your RLT without written permission from the lender in advance. Nevertheless, if you want to be sure that no “due on transfer” clause will be triggered, the safest approach would be to get prior approval from the mortgage holder. Before retitling any real estate that is not your own primary personal residence, make sure you obtain written prior approval.

Retirement Funds: These are some of the trickiest of all assets, especially when it comes to designating a contingent beneficiary after the surviving spouse. No designations should be made without legal and tax advice.



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Keep the Golf Club Outside the Hands

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



Figure 1



Figure 2

Amateurs and pros alike can find themselves dragging the handle thru impact, or worse yet flipping the club head through impact, providing no real compression to the golf ball when hit.



Figure 3



Rafa Nadal

Figure 3: A simple drill is to lower your right hand below your left by three inches. Swing back slowly keeping the grip pointed at your navel while the right arm feels higher than the left.

Here's a pro tip to make it easier to do so: start the swing by pushing the left shoulder down and the lead hand back. It instantly starts the club head on its proper track while the hands stay close to your right thigh.

Figure 4: The tennis stroke is similar. Rafa Nadal's arms travel back only a short distance at

The goal in golf is to return the club to the ball at impact in the same position that it started at address. Once a good grip is established, the handle should start back on an inside track while the club head moves on an outside track. It's called keeping the club head outside the hands. I like to feel the grip almost brush my right pant leg on the way back. It automatically sets the club head outside the handle with the face still looking at the ball the first two feet of the backswing.

Likewise I like to feel the grip brush the pant leg on the way down. That way I know the club will likely return to impact in that same position it held at address. Feel this concept come to life with a 20-yard pitch shot. If you can keep the handle tucked in close to your right thigh, your arms and body will be more synchronized.

You basically are putting the club in the most powerful pre-impact position. You will sense where the shaft best needs to be as it starts its descent into the ball. That's a really big deal in golf. So often the sum of the swing prior to this descent position determines these vital three feet that the club head travels into the ball. Amateurs and pros alike can find themselves dragging the handle thru impact, or worse yet flipping the club head through impact, providing no real compression to the golf ball when hit.

Figures 1 & 2: The zone that the club head stays outside the hands is from when the shaft is horizontal back to horizontal thru. The grip should feel low, not high, thru impact. An added benefit to a low grip at impact is that it helps you maintain your spine angle and not stand up on the shot.

which point the wrists are loaded yet the racket is still outside his hands. The fascinating part is that his racket points slightly downward to meet the ball—that's the same as in golf. As he strides into the shot the racket continues to be outside his hands—all the way to the finish! Rafa, who is an avid golfer, swings the golf club the same way!

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