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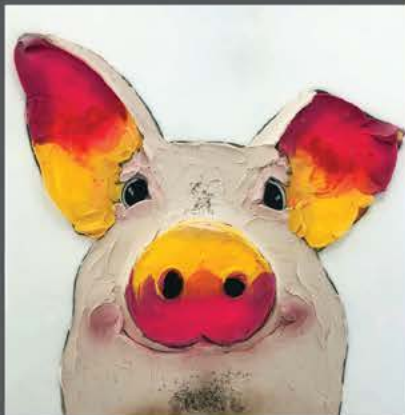
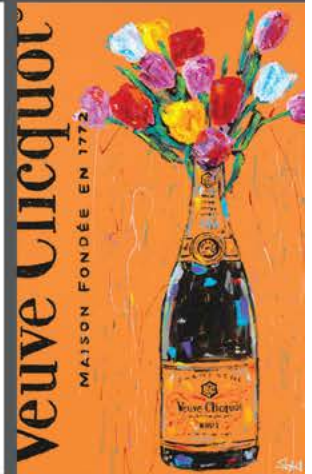


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letter from the publisher

SUMMER, SOULS & BEAUTY



As summer approaches on 30-A, we all embrace what makes the beach special. Family. Friends. New memories. These things, combined with the sand beneath our feet, keep us grounded and coming back for more.

30-A and South Walton beach is constantly renewing itself. New businesses, new hospitality, new creations. Perhaps nowhere is this creative spirit embodied more than within our community artists. These souls seem to see and feel from a deeper place. Absorbing both the pain and pleasure of life in a way that gives the rest of us added meaning through their work.

In this issue, local foodie and artist Susan Benton embodies this free spirit that is prevalent on 30-A. Her dedication to her art and capturing the beauty of the area indeed makes 30-A a more enriched place. We salute Susan and the other artists of South Walton who work every day to share their sense of beauty and a little bit of their heart and soul with the rest of us.

As always, this issue is full of the people, places and things that make 30-A and the surrounding areas great. Turn the pages and enhance your stay by building your awareness of the treasures that await.

Cheers,

Miles K. Neiman

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12



16



10



8



14



18

8 dining
Down Island Gulf Seafood
Lola's Coastal Italian

12 30-a adventurers
A Minimalist Mindset

14 local artist
Susan Benton

16 goodwill
Fore Her Tea in the Garden
Crescendo 2022

20 real estate
Erin Oden

22 wellness
Eight Weight Loss Issues: Beyond Food

24 legal eagles
When Should You Plan Your Estate?

26 turf talk
Putting on the Green

Down Island Gulf Seafood Opens to Local Fanfare in Santa Rosa Beach

BY TESS FARMER

The newest restaurant to come to town has been embraced by locals and visitors alike. Down Island Gulf Seafood opened in January 2022 and has already become one of the newest hot spots... just off 30-A on Highway 98 in Santa Rosa Beach.

Chef Brannon Janca, who many know from his years with longtime favorite Stinky's Fish Camp, opened the restaurant along with his wife Stefani. Originally from Pascagoula on the coast of Mississippi, Janca also was part of multiple successful restaurant ventures in New Orleans, attending culinary school there and honing his craft.

"The local support upon our opening earlier this year really astounded us," says Janca. "Opening in the winter season in a tourism market and having the locals show up and support us like they did really helped propel us to where we are now."

Down Island combines Janca's passion for Gulf South cuisine and his southern hospitality roots to create a creative, fun, and inviting atmosphere. He said Down Island is the realization of a vision he had after witnessing a resurrection of locally owned, family-owned, and chef-owned restaurants in the years following Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

"It was a tense time in the city, but the vibrancy and sense of renewed community created by these locally owned restaurants serving world-class food using local products and offering great service made the city come alive again," adds Janca. "I held that vision and finally decided it was time to create it here."

From baked oysters, small plates, fresh fish, and Gulf seafood, the artistry and quality of each menu item is impeccably prepared. The menu is small and seasonal and based upon available local and regional products. Chef Janca gets his produce and meats from farms in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina and his seafood direct from the Gulf of Mexico from Apalachicola to Louisiana.



Ribbon Cutting

Janca takes a classic dish like barbeque shrimp and elevates it... using homemade Worcestershire sauce, smoked butter, and amber ale from Fairhope Brewing Company. The depth of flavor in the wood-fired Gulf seafood prepared in an Italian brick pizza oven is unmatched. The miso, sake, and butter oysters and broiled octopus with smoked paprika and sake braise and celery root puree are not to be missed!

Stefani Janca is a registered and licensed dietitian, and her influence on the menu is also felt, providing plenty of options for non-seafood lovers and accommodations for those with special diets. The menu features scratch made dishes, so many selections can be modified to fit any dietary needs by simply swapping out or omitting ingredients.

Down Island is located at the former site of Dave's Glas Haus, a long standing building that Dave Hillgenberg originally modeled after a Seaside home he admired when it was built in the early '90s. Janca wanted to preserve as much of the original structure as possible. The former two-car garage became the dining room and he only needed to add on the kitchen and an elevator. The second floor offers additional seating and room for private events.



Down Island Cioppino with grilled Gambino's French bread

After convincing Hillgenberg to sell the building, Janca worked with him for a year learning the art of glass and mirror work. Hillgenberg continues to do glass work in Freeport and helped Janca install glass and mirrors throughout the restaurant. He already has plans to celebrate his 90th birthday at Down Island this summer.

The restaurant is truly a labor of love for Janca. He built the bar, raw bar, and shelving throughout



Peruvian style ceviche with fresh Gulf fish, shrimp, and Florida field peas



Wood fired blueberry pie served a la mode with homemade caramel sauce



Handmade pottery by Chef Janca

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

Joining the ranks of locally owned restaurants and dive bars along the Highway 98 corridor, Down Island is also family-friendly, offering a kids' menu and soon outdoor games to keep everyone entertained. Plans are also in place for lunch hours and a Sunday brunch.

"I really wanted to bring something to our local community that all people would enjoy, families, single-party diners, and tourists," says Janca. "We are excited to serve the community and be the gathering space we all need right now."

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Lola's Coastal Italian

Keeping it Fresh in Year Two

BY TESS FARMER

Since opening in Seacrest Beach one and a half years ago, Lola's Coastal Italian has become a favorite spot among locals during the off season and a constant crowd pleaser during the high season.

Led by chef Tom Catherall, Lola's Coastal Italian serves fresh, house made Italian fare six days a week. From wood-fired pizzas, homemade pasta dishes combining fresh Gulf seafood, and from-scratch desserts including cannolis, tiramisu, and key lime pie, there's something for all palettes and hungry, post-beach appetites.

"It's been a real pleasure to welcome so many kind people and have them return to the restaurant," says Catherall. "Everyone is happy on vacation, and we like to keep them that way."

Catherall has been one of the defining and influential forces of the Atlanta restaurant scene for over three decades. A certified master chef, Catherall's Here to Serve Restaurants group was the successful hospitality umbrella for 12 unique restaurant concepts, from steak, seafood, and sushi to Spanish tapas, with 15 locations in the Atlanta area, which he operated from 1996 until he sold the group in October 2014.

He retired to WaterColor, Florida in 2019 but soon realized he missed the community the restaurant scene offered and wanted to put his touch on the growing food scene here on 30-A.

In addition to Catherall, Lola's General Manager Ute Albrect has overseen the vision and growth of the restaurant.

"We're getting fresh oysters from the Gulf, to the Northeast, Northwest, Virginia and up," says Catherall. "We're aiming to offer the best quality and something different from what's typically available here." New in 2022 is the addition of the oyster bar and sushi bar, which are expected to be a welcome addition to the offerings on the east end of 30-A.



Oyster Bar

Sourcing from local farms and seafood straight from the Gulf, Lola's offers quality food in a convenient and casual atmosphere.



Expanded Bar



Homemade Cannolis



People visiting from Atlanta will recognize Catherall's name on the door and are eager to experience his take on a coastal cuisine. Some favorites to note are the stuffed shrimp and Chef's famous garlic bread with Pomodoro sauce. Daily specials are offered to highlight seasonal fare and fresh catches.

And the pizza. Two wood-fired ovens churn out 120 pizzas each day in the summer. Chef even adds some surprises to the daily menu like his take on a pot pie, which sold out instantly. The fresh made dough and pasta is a star of the show but be sure there are gluten free options as well.

Catherall continues to add value to the communities he serves by opening restaurants with inspired menus that are both innovative and always fresh, offering some of his best culinary work and passion to serve the residents and guests on 30-A.

Sourcing from local farms and seafood straight from the Gulf, Lola's offers quality food in a convenient and casual atmosphere. Guests walk up to order and then can select a table indoors, at the bar, or outside to take in the scene along 30-A. Bench seating is perfect for families gathering around for pizza and pasta... and the new high-top tables inside offer the perfect spot to meet for happy hour drinks and appetizers.

"Our to-go service options have been very popular, too, making it easy to grab freshly made meals and snacks to take along to the beach or back to the beach house," adds Catherall. "Many people who join us for dinner mention they wish they had discovered Lola's on the first day of their visit. Those are the kind of comments that keep us motivated."

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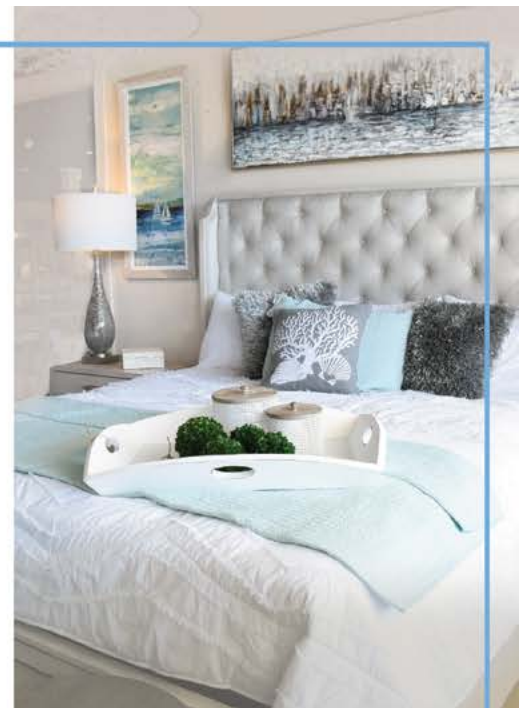
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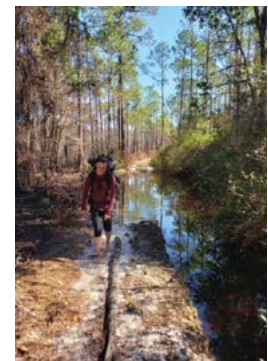
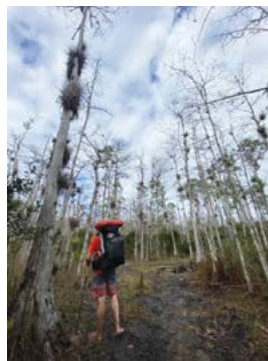
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A Minimalist Mindset

Two hikers take on the Florida Trail—barefoot

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT



First, they ate. Then they slept. And finally, they reflected. These are the things hikers and friends David Bulger and Devin Black did once they completed an 1,100-mile, two-month trek of the Florida Trail at the end of February 2022.

The roughly 1,300-mile trail—one of 11 National Scenic Trails in the U.S.—meanders through the state from the Big Cypress National Preserve next to Everglades National Park to Fort Pickens at Gulf Islands National Seashore at Pensacola Beach, Florida.

The purpose of Bulger and Black's journey was to raise awareness and money for Hike for Mental Health, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Friendswood, Texas, that's dedicated to helping people who're suffering with mental illness.

Bulger, a U.S. military veteran who has lived in Panama City Beach since he was a child, along with Black, a henna artist at a boutique in Seaside and a Santa Rosa Beach resident, are friends and fellow outdoor enthusiasts.

Banding together around the rallying cause of mental health awareness and the natural healing that occurs with time spent in the outdoors, Black and Bulger decided to tackle the challenge of their Florida Trail hike and to simply see where it would lead. In addition, Bulger included an element into their trek that he is personally passionate about: going barefoot.

"David was always the barefoot enthusiast," Black states. "I wasn't sure it was something I was willing to do, but decided... why not?"

The military veteran has reasons for his penchant for going barefoot in life. "I've experienced the physical difficulties of wearing steel toe boots continuously for

Returning to simple methods,
such as eating healthier,
stretching, getting out into
nature (and of course,
going barefoot more often)
led me to a desire to share
these tools with others—
the simple, yet effective
tools we've always had.

years," he says. "And after exiting the military and beginning to exercise and live barefoot more often, I was blessed by an understanding of how much healthier most of us are without regular [footwear]."

For Bulger, the subtleties of strength, balance, and awareness of his immediate surroundings—things that can be experienced best when barefoot—directly correlate to improved mental health.

Even though the Florida Trail lacks obstacles like mountain ranges and snow that test a person's mettle, it does present considerable challenges like vast wetlands, thick pine forests, white sand beaches, and endless stretches of rocks and road walks, or portions of trail that are paved.

The duo's first 40 miles proved to be an immediate challenge. "The insight you receive on mental health as a whole on a long distance backpacking trip is one thing," Black notes. "To experience it barefoot was like pushing it to the extreme."

Then she adds, "To be more connected to the Earth and to be mindful with every step, as you experience your own inner turmoil coming to the surface, is very psychedelic to say the least." And, she admits, after 400 miles she put her shoes back on.

For Bulger, though, the whole barefoot experience was cathartic. "The military was a strong kick-start for the pursued betterment of my own mental health," he says. "Returning to simple methods, such as eating healthier, stretching, getting out into nature (and of course, going barefoot more often) led me to a desire to share these tools with others—the simple, yet effective tools we've always had. This is the ultimate takeaway."

Despite the challenges of things like cypress nubs, mud, limestone rocks, and leeches, "the sweet rewarding encounters with animals and nature," made the difficulties more bearable for Black. "I often think back to all of those sunrises and sunsets, and am filled with awe and gratitude that I got to experience such magic."

For Bulger, even the extremes came with their rewards. "Snakes, bore, bear, big cats, leeches, spiders, and ticks and mosquitoes were regular concerns. As were the lightning storms, sun-drenched days, and icy nights. But with the struggle and fear comes balance. Locking eyes with a grazing deer through the morning mist... these moments feel more precious after a bit of suffering!"

He closes, "Developing minimalism as a mindset and way of life can do wonders to show you, you have everything you need to thrive."



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Paint Me Back Home

How Susan Benton turned a near fatal accident into a passion for a lifetime

BY MICHAEL J. PALLERINO

The story—the memories—never fade. In 1998, after a head on collision, Susan Benton fractured everything on her body except for her right arm and the bones in her face. She also had a lacerated liver and two punctured lungs. After multiple blood and platelet transfusions and surgeries, along with several weeks in SINU at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, she ended up on the orthopedic floor for the next month.

It was there her physical and mental fight for recovery ensued. Uninterested in TV, Benton was given a sketch pad and began to draw. Upon finally making it home and another eight weeks before she could bear any weight, her mother, a watercolor artist, gave her some colored pencils and a small paint set to pass the time.

Before you get to the part of the story where art helped inspire Benton's recovery and alter the course of her life's work, you have to go back to the beginning. Graduating from Louisiana State University in 1988, she studied art in a variety of forms. As an educator, Benton taught art to her early childhood and elementary school students. She eventually put the brushes down and pursued grant writing.

The accident, and all its toil, changed that. Changed her. "Due to my accident, I learned more than I ever planned regarding the human body. My early sketches began as female figures in nude. My accident was a significant trauma in my life. I found healing through the Gulf waters, the bay, and the lakes of South Walton."

Benton says that while water holds myriad symbolic meanings, for her it provides purity and tranquility. She seeks to create appealing shades that look welcoming and inviting, with an element of movement and action.

"The world and our society are chaotic. I have lived in unintentional chaos throughout most of my life. I find painting to be cathartic, healing. I like to translate positivity onto my canvases through calm and light. Spending time in nature reduces stress. A number of studies have found it can help lower blood pressure and alleviate depression and anxiety. I'm a homebody, drawn to quiet spaces. But the vastness of the Gulf, along with our rare coastal dune lakes, springs, and the bay, offers a certain kind of expanse and flow. The water is large, but it draws you in close. Like a big hug. I want people to feel that through my art."

In 1999, Benton followed her parents who lived in South Walton. She began painting regularly with her mother, eventually selling some of her abstracts and

coastal landscape work via word of mouth, and at a local business in Seaside. She joined the Cultural Arts Alliance in 1999 and, in 2018, held her first showing. Currently, her work can be found in fine art galleries in the Southeast, in private and select public collections locally and nationally, and has been the design focus in multiple editorial features.



"Life is constantly moving and evolving, and I want my artwork to do the same. My faith is a huge part of my life. I want to capture God's presence in my work. We encounter his creations every single day in everything around us, and that's what I'm trying to capture."

As much as painting drives her, she has another passion. She's a foodie. Her blog, 30Aeats.com, was the first one in the area. In addition, Benton has written and published two corporate cookbooks, and serves as a food and travel writer for various outlets across the country.

As for the future, Benton will continue painting, cooking, and serving the community she loves. "I've learned the hard way not to make too many plans, but to live each day and moment to its fullest. I have a few



Susan Benton

things up my sleeve, like expanding my artwork to incorporate different mediums, and completing my own cookbook I've had on the back burner. But I'm most ecstatic about the arrival of my first grandbaby. My late husband always said that life is not a dress rehearsal, so I'm trying to live by that mantra."

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BY KEMPTEN TAYLOR



Board Members Ginny Richerson, Daphne Martin, Amy Walsh, Kellyanne Bartleson, Jennifer Crawford



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Funds raised are used to pay for mortgage, rent, utilities, or helping with auto repairs for patients to get to treatments.

A sea of bright sundresses and coordinating fascinators to pair gathered in the charming gardens at Clay 30A during the Fore Her 8th Annual Tea fundraiser on Sunday, March 6th. This year over 85 attendees dressed up and joined friends for afternoon tea in support of Fore Her's mission to raise funds for those battling breast cancer on the Emerald Coast. The Afternoon Tea raised more than nine thousand dollars for breast cancer survivors, which was a record-breaking amount for the organization.

"The Fore Her board members and I are grateful for the support of the Tea by Clay Garden & Gifts and Emerald Coast Hospice, as well as many other sponsors, donors, and attendees. The funds raised have already been able to financially help a local breast cancer patient. We are blessed to be able to make an impact on the lives of those battling breast cancer," says Fore Her Founder, Amy Walsh.

Fore Her was established not long after Walsh's mother and aunt lost their battles with breast cancer. The organization originally started as a gathering of Walsh's family for a golf outing to celebrate their memory; but as she remembered how financially taxing breast cancer was on their own family, she wanted to help others that were on that same uncertain journey. The Walsh Family transformed their golf day into a fundraiser and created the Jeanette Hansen/Barb Schultz Golf Outing in Saginaw, Michigan.

When Walsh moved to the Emerald Coast, she wanted to continue to make an impact, founding Fore Her and organizing the organization's first fundraising golf outing. Now, Fore Her has expanded into a far-reaching support organization for breast cancer patients and hosts three signature events each year (Tea Fore Her, The Fore Her Golf Outing, and the Pink Walk) to raise funds and financially assist local individuals diagnosed with breast cancer and undergoing treatment. Funds raised are used to pay for mortgage, rent, utilities, or helping with auto repairs for patients to get to treatments. Fore Her

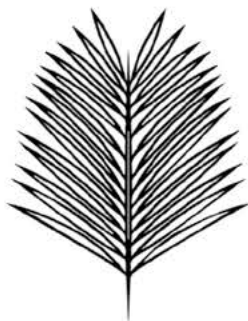
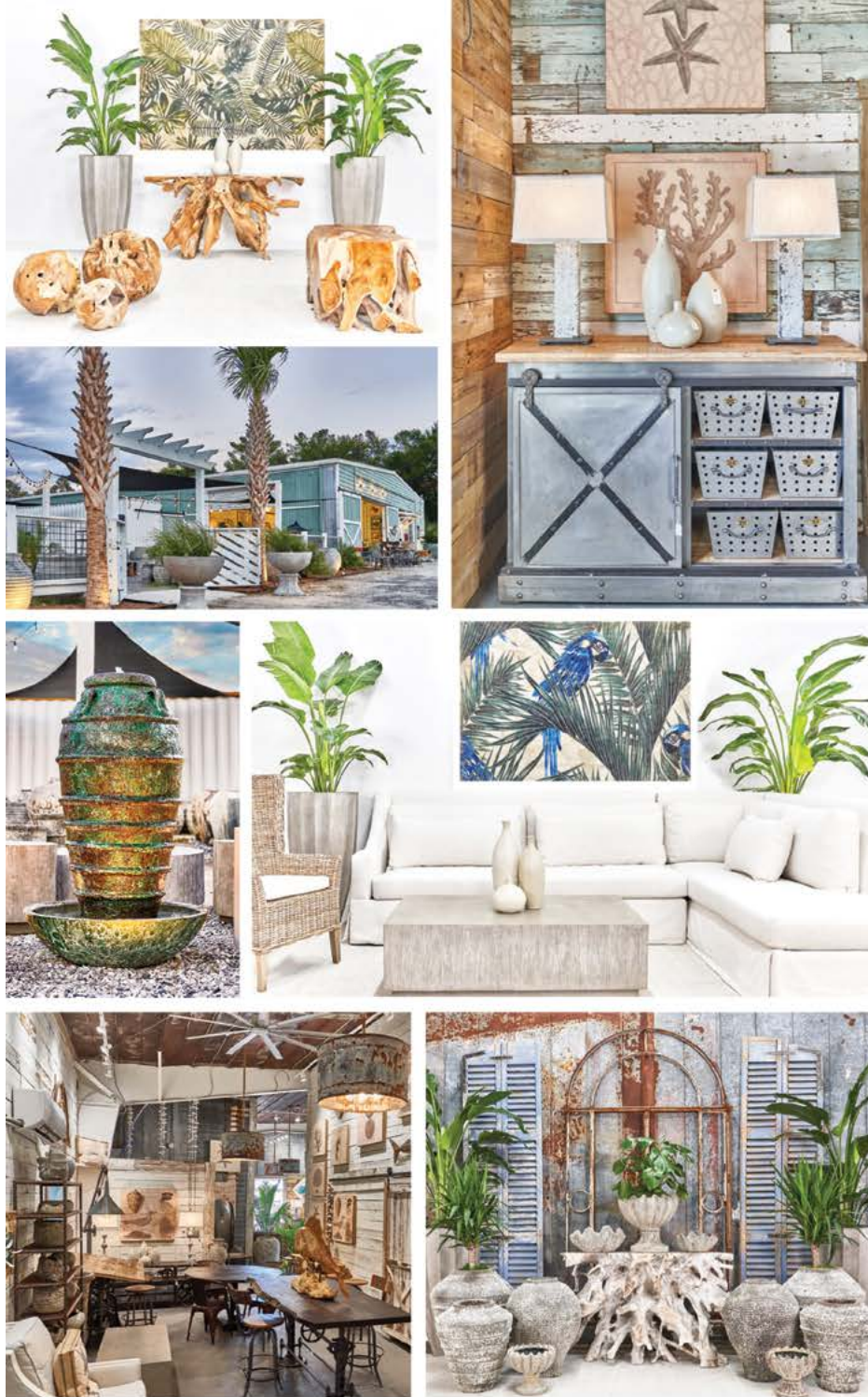
offers these resources and more to those currently battling breast cancer on the Emerald Coast.

Clay 30A provided a picturesque setting for the second year in a row for the Fore Her Afternoon Tea. The sense of community and enthusiasm was visible that afternoon as supporters and survivors came together and raised money for the cause. Attendees nibbled on light bites, sipped on rose, enjoyed live music, a photobooth, and silent auction. One lucky guest even took home the prize and the title of "Best Hat" to add to the fun.

"We are thankful for the support of our community and local businesses who allow us to hold events like the annual Tea and help breast cancer patients in Northwest Florida," Walsh says.

According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF), breast cancer is the most common cancer in females, excluding skin cancer, and one in eight in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Get involved and join the fight against breast cancer with Fore Her. The organization's next fundraiser, the 10th Annual Golf Outing, is scheduled for Friday, October 21 at The Links. Visit foreher.org/giveback-1 for additional information on this event.

Fore Her offers resources, hope, compassion, and education for all who are affected by breast cancer. For additional information about volunteering, available resources, and how you can help, visit ForeHer.org. For sponsorship opportunities, email info@thehivecreativeconsulting.com.



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Crescendo 2022

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

Crescendo! culminated at the end of Feb 2022 with the weekend-long “Carnivale” experience, celebrating cultural and culinary arts featuring world-class vintners and spirit purveyors, incredible auction items, and an electrifying orchestra musical performance.

Whether you’re a local resident or a frequent visitor to 30-A, you know dining and entertainment is part of the culture around here.

This year, the Crescendo! 2022 event paid homage to that theme with a cultural and culinary extravaganza for the Gulf Coast, featuring six vintner dinners in stunning venues, along with a main event that included world-class vintners from around the world.

Now in its fifth year, Crescendo! is a fundraising event benefitting Sinfonia Gulf Coast, the region’s only professional symphony orchestra, and its music education programs throughout Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay Counties.

“This year, for the first time ever, Crescendo! included a small ensemble from our youth orchestra, showcasing a piece of what this event helps create,” says Beth Clavier, Sinfonia’s Director of Events and Patron Services. “Students were weaved into the main performance with Ezinma; not only did they rehearse and perform with Ezinma, but all the students in our youth orchestra also received an hour-long master class with her.”

Crescendo! culminated at the end of Feb 2022 with the weekend-long “Carnivale” experience, celebrating cultural and culinary arts featuring world-class vintners and spirit purveyors, incredible auction items, and an electrifying orchestra musical performance at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort. Leading up to the Carnivale main event was a “Vintner Dinner” event held in various elegant homes and venues throughout the Emerald Coast. Dinner guests were treated to a meal from local and regional celebrity chefs, with food pairings with some



Photos by Desiree Gardner Photography

of the most acclaimed vineyards in the country: Darioush, Fleury Estate, Thompson 31 Fifty, Oakville Ranch, Chateau Gaby, and Frias Family Vineyards, creating a truly exceptional dining experience.

“Crescendo! is our largest fundraiser by far, it’s a humongous percent of what keeps the business going, which directly impacts what we are able to provide to the community,” explains Clavier.

A large part of that funding bring musicians and guest artists into local schools, proffers free concerts for the community, and supports initiatives like Sinfonia’s Youth Orchestra and LINK UP concerts for 3rd-5th graders in partnership with Carnegie Hall.

Outside of Crescendo!, Sinfonia has several main season events and an annual free concert. Many events (not on the public calendar) are for special groups: Local



school programs and performances for nursing home residents, at-risk children, special needs groups, and more.

“We have our mission at the forefront of our minds in everything we do: Striving to provide not only a musical, but an educational experience for our regional schools,” says Demetrius Fuller, Sinfonia Founder and Artistic Director. “The musicians not only perform, but they also interact, teach, and play; they talk about music and how it relates to history, mathematics, and even science.”

Sinfonia Gulf Coast was founded in 2005 with a mission to redefine the symphony experience. The nonprofit orchestra is celebrating its sweet 16 season of innovative musical programming

designed to entertain, educate, and inspire the community. To date, Fuller and his team (plus a dedicated board of directors) have brought more than 600 concerts to hundreds of thousands of patrons.

For more information on upcoming events, learn about becoming a volunteer or how you can support the orchestra, visit www.sinfoniagulfcoast.org or contact (850) 460-8800 and info@sinfoniagulfcoast.org.

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The Coastal Towns of Northwest Florida's Scenic 30A Gain in Popularity as the Most Desirable Beach Communities

BY ERIN ODEN



Visitors and residents appreciate, in awe, the masterfully and intentionally developed communities based on new urbanism fundamentals.

Once a rural, undiscovered expanse of sugar sand paradise, the Florida Gulf Coast's 30-A corridor has now emerged as one of the most sought-after areas in which to live, vacation, and invest. Our area has received an immense amount of national coverage recently, from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Condé Nast* to *Architectural Digest*, just to name a few. Clearly, our early developers and visionaries were on to something magnificent when Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-

Zyberk joined with Seaside founders Daryl and Robert Davis to create the most idyllic beach community on the principals of new urbanism. They laid the groundwork for building the most intentionally designed series of beach communities along our treasured coastline.

The visible growth of our area and vibrant home market is a testament to the appeal of our coastal communities. Once somewhat unknown, our coastline is now in the limelight. At times, we long for our yesterday beach town of days gone by. But, as will be with any place that is so uniquely special, we are now sharing the love of our precious coast with the many others who have discovered paradise and want to join in with us and *call it home*.

Yahoo Finance recently showcased 30-A, reporting "the small communities of Santa Rosa Beach, Rosemary Beach, Seaside and others ooze small-town charm yet still maintain the strengths of the industry, namely gorgeous beaches, delicious seafood, and friendly locals. As more and more visitors desire "authentic" travel experience, places like 30-A are well-positioned to be great investments." Trip Advisor recently echoed a new nickname for the 30-A area of Northwest Florida as the "Martha's Vineyard of the South."

Many credit the appearance and success of new urbanism. The planned community of Seaside sparked the trend, when designers Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk teamed up with founders Daryl and Robert Davis to lay the groundwork for the idyllic community. They certainly set a high bar that each new development appears to raise. Writer Jennifer Parker, of the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture documents Seaside as the "first new urban community," which she defines as "an argument against suburban sprawl and the re-awakening of the American city. Its principles state that walkable, connected, mixed use community will yield a better quality of life." The full 30-A coastline, especially in Walton County, has its roots in new urbanism. A coastline drive, shopping tour, or art hop through Rosemary Beach, Watercolor, Alys Beach, and others will dazzle the senses. Visitors and residents appreciate, in awe, the masterfully and intentionally developed communities based on new urbanism fundamentals. Congress for the New Urbanism lists, among others, the following principles of new urbanism:

- Walkable from the center of town to any edge in five minutes.
- Streets are built for people using multiple forms of transportation (walk, bike, bus, car).
- Public spaces are crucial and should encourage interaction.

- Developers use a collaborate approach in design to include engineers, appraisers, lenders, public works officials, community leaders, and others.
- Mixed-use properties are commonplace but aesthetically well-appointed.

References on National News and Magazines:

The Wall Street Journal clarifies the character of the panhandle in its 2020 article "The Emerald Coast Emerges as Florida's Crown Jewel." Writer Beth DeCarbo explains that the Emerald Coast is a high-end, luxurious playground of yachts, visual and performing arts, private jets, and architectural masterpieces in lovely villages filled with down-to-earth locals and appreciative visitors and investors.

The 2021 Condé Nast Traveler Reader's Choice Awards named Rosemary Beach's The Pearl Hotel as the tenth top hotel in Florida.

Architectural Digest.com urges readers to explore Alys Beach, describing the development as, "a skyline of white stucco buildings that evokes Santorini, complete with sensuous curves and angled rooftops to punctuate blazing sunsets and perfect blue skies. Combine the luxurious hospitality of a posh resort with the friendly vibe of a low-key beach town."

Multiple industry reports document the increased demand for Florida destinations "within driving distance," spurring exploding popularity since the onset of the pandemic. Walton County has experienced remarkable population growth and profitable growth of the real estate vacation rental markets. Along 30-A, home prices appreciated 24% in 2021 following a similar, astounding appreciation of 23% in 2020.

The coastline of beachfront communities in Walton County share many blessings beyond the eclectic yet cohesive beauty and daily convenience of new urbanism. The azure waves and tropical breezes soothe souls as they recline on clean beaches. Browsers and diners are dazzled by one-of-a-kind galleries and restaurants. Annual festivals and friendly locals welcome guests from all over the world. While they share many wonderful characteristics, the communities of 30-A are also each known for unique offerings.

Erin Oden is the principal broker and owner of Coastal Luxury, a real estate firm that maintains a strong emphasis on intimate market knowledge and expertise in the luxury and Gulf-front market. Erin can be reached at (850) 502-1220 or erin@coastalluxury.com. Or, stop by Coastal Luxury, located directly on 30-A, the first office east of Alys Beach. Search all available properties at coastalluxury.com/SEARCH.

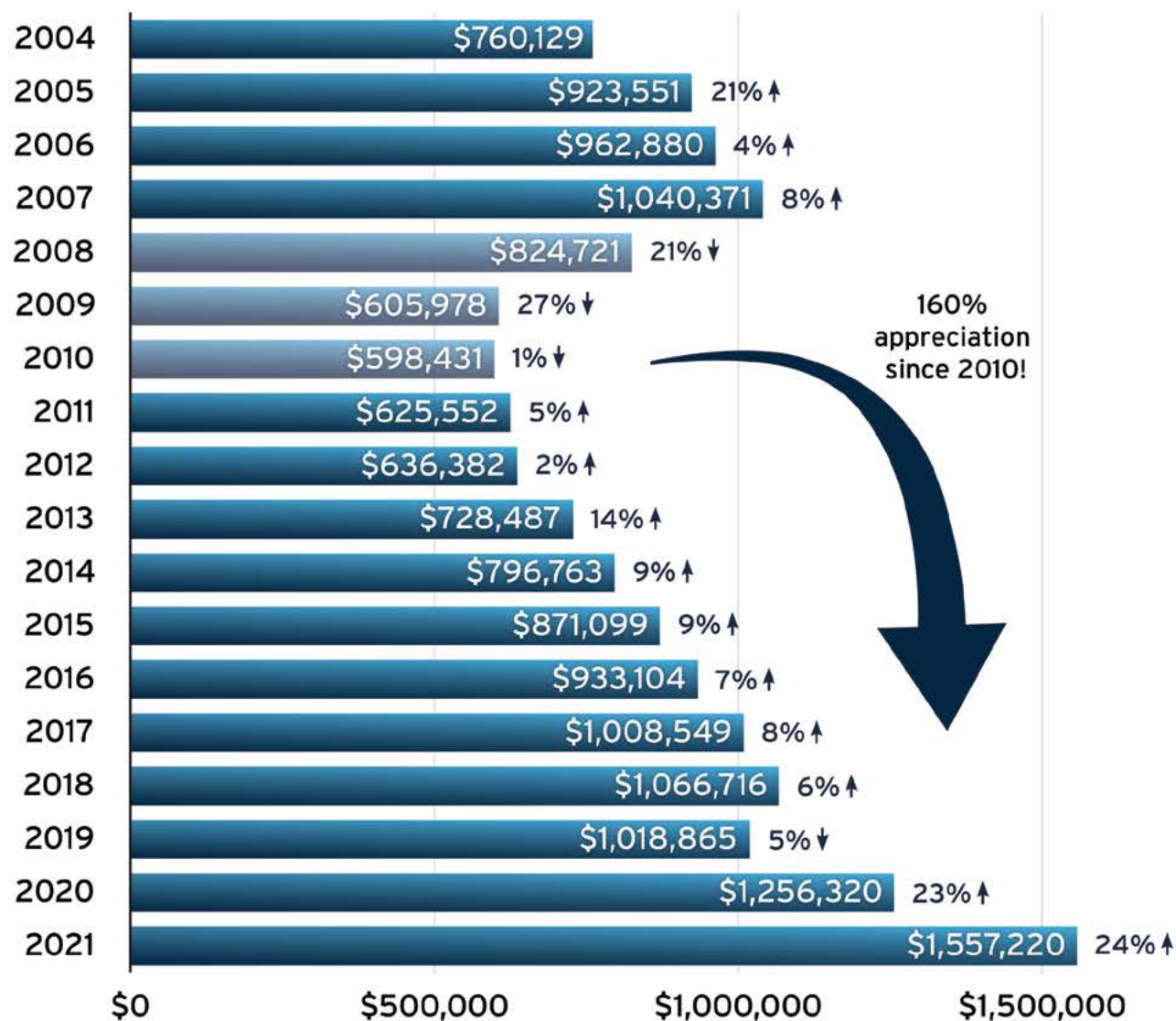


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Eight Weight Loss Issues: Beyond Food

BY DR. BART PRECOURT

Is it possible that you are eating all the right things, exercising, avoiding sugar, no gluten, no processed foods, and many other modifications and you still can't lose weight? Yes!

Unfortunately, this is very common. Don't give up! Sometimes you just need a new strategy.

Below are eight reasons why some people don't lose weight, even when exercise and diet are good. *(Note: In clinic, I notice that usually people are experiencing more than one of the following at any given time.)*

INFLAMMATION: This is probably the most common. In simple terms, inflammation interrupts insulin signaling. This can lead to decreased energy and, even worse, Insulin Resistance. Insulin is a fat storage hormone. The more you produce, the more you store in your fat cells. Inflammation also impedes immune function. This in turn causes you to use more stress hormones such as cortisol, another hormone that leads to fat storage. Mold, bacteria, viruses, food allergens all can cause inflammation. Cytokine reactions from viruses can block input from insulin, leading to more insulin resistance. This is why we saw so many people gain weight after having COVID.

NUTRIENT DEFICIENCY: Classic over fed and under nourished. Too many calories, not enough nutrients. One of the biggest contributors is the depletion of vitamins and minerals from our soil. Empty calories tell your body to eat more. These are found in simple carbs such as bread, muffins, pasta, etc.

MICROBIOME DYSFUNCTION: This is all about your gut health. When the bad bacteria overwhelm the good bacteria, the result is stubborn weight loss and gain. The primary culprit is the use of antibiotics. Often, they destroy good and bad bacteria. It's not uncommon to see weight gains start roughly eight weeks after antibiotic use.

SOCIAL NETWORK: This may be the most overlooked on this list. Your personal network of friends determines your lifestyle. Behavior is very influenced by your social network. For example: your friends drink wine at lunch, then so will you. These behaviors often impede weight loss goals. Conversely, they do yoga and have green juice after, so will you. Our behaviors are contagious to those around us. Consider putting yourself in environments that serve your wants.

Several will benefit from having the proper lab work done and then creating a strategy with your health practitioner to pinpoint your course of action.

LIVER TOXICITY: Environmental toxins, or what we call "obesogens" are everywhere. GMO foods, glyphosate, lotions, makeup, water, any non-Organic foods: these ALL have chemicals that your liver must deal with. Slowing your liver down with toxins slows down your entire metabolic system. Toxins are cumulative. So, it's no surprise that for many their ability to lose weight is harder as they get older. Yet it's not age, its toxins slowing down liver function. Learn to love your liver.

MITOCHONDRIA ISSUES: Mitochondria are the powerhouse for the body. When healthy, they are giving us energy and preventing the aging process. Chemicals, stress, alcohol, drugs, poor sleep, and a lifestyle of abuse is what breaks mitochondria down. The first sign is low energy levels. This is metabolism. Fortunately, with new gene testing we can measure how well they are functioning and improve through lifestyle choices.

Imbalanced hormones fall into this category. You can gain and inhibit weight loss when there is a communication breakdown. Stress, especially prolonged, will be the biggest reason for hormone imbalances. High estrogen is another reason your body will hold onto fat. Stress causes an increase in cortisol. Makes you hungrier, essentially so you can eat to have energy to deal with your stress (vicious cycle). This in turn leads to belly fat often accompanied by skinny arms and legs. When eating under stress you can't absorb nutrients. Stress also tells our cells to hold onto fat.



Dr. Bart Precourt

GENES: Some people have a predisposition to easily gain weight. Some have propensity to gain weight fast with certain foods like carbs. Although it may be in your genes, it does not have to be your destiny. Paying attention to what works for you and knowing your own body is key.

If you find yourself unable to lose weight yet are exercising and trying to eat right, don't give up. These are smart and healthy actions to take.


Take a look at the list. Some of these you can get to work on yourself. Several will benefit from having the proper lab work done and then creating a strategy with your health practitioner to pinpoint your course of action.


Whatever it takes. You are worth it!

Dr. Bart M. Precourt, D.C., is a Holistic Doctor, chiropractor, acupuncturist and nutritional consultant. For nearly 20 years he has helped people get healthy, lose weight and create healthy sustainable lifestyles. He currently practices in Seagrove Beach, FL at Balance Health Studio, www.balance30a.com. For a consultation, contact Balance Health Studio at (850) 231-9288.

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When Should You Plan Your Estate?

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON

Did you know yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift, which is why we call it the present?

Anything can happen to any one of us at any time and in any place. Cars crash, strokes strike, and each of us has a date with potential incapacity and certain death. Given this reality, it is never prudent to presume when it comes to the future. Have you created your estate plan? If not, then there is no time like the present.

Upon Adulthood

Young people need to create their own estate plans upon reaching the “age of majority” (i.e., age 18 in most states). Why? On that magical birthday they become newly minted adults who are responsible for their own personal, health care, and financial decisions. Just ask any well-meaning parent who has ever tried to step in and make health care and financial decisions for an incapacitated adult child. Without proper planning for “incapacity probate” the parents cannot make such decisions and a judge will appoint the decision-maker.

Upon Marriage

Just like the parents of incapacitated young adults, spouses cannot make fundamental decisions for one another if incapacitated. This is true whether married for 50 years or five minutes. Of course, minor children need to have guardians (i.e., backup parents) appointed and arrangements need to be made regarding their inheritance. Since some children become adults and other children just get older, inheritance planning deserves the same focus it took to create the inheritance in the first place.

Upon Divorce

As soon as the judge bangs the gavel and you are divorced, update that estate plan without delay. While your spouse may always be the guardian over your shared minor children, that does not mean your spouse needs to manage the inheritance you leave them. Change beneficiary designations, too. Under federal law, your spouse will inherit your ERISA retirement plan if still the designated beneficiary at your death, despite state laws to the contrary.

Have you created your estate plan? If not, then there is no time like the present.

Upon Remarriage

Whether you are divorced or widowed, you may remarry and form a blended family. Without a carefully designed, executed, and maintained premarital agreement, you may disinherit your own children. If you already tied the knot, then you may pursue a post-marital agreement. Either way, you and your new spouse must pay careful attention to how you title assets and arrange beneficiary designations after the ink is dry on any “marital” agreement. What do you call disinherited children? Plaintiffs.

Upon Retirement

Are you approaching or in retirement? If yes, then congratulations! Many retirees move to another state, whether to be closer to family or to someplace warmer all year long. Consequently, such retirees may end up owning real estate in more than one state. Without careful estate planning, this can trigger death probate in each state where real estate is owned. Retirement also is a time to review your life and consider charitable giving to the institutions most dear to you. Recently, the “Charitable IRA Rollover” became a permanent way to direct your required minimum distributions income tax free directly to charity.

Finally, regardless of your current personal circumstances, once you create an estate plan... you are not done. Just like a home, automobile, or your own health, regular maintenance is required to keep it up to date with all of the changes life brings.



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Putting on the Green

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



Flatten the right wrist angle to release the putter



Increase the right wrist angle to set the putter



Use the Tee Gate Drill to make solid contact

Less thinking leads to greater enjoyment from being in that moment. It's been said that being in the moment offers freedom from fear of outcomes or anxiety over technique.

Great putters in golf know that the ball is going in the hole before even looking at the break! They tell themselves they can make any putt. It's based upon an inner confidence. That's the beauty of watching top athletes in general. They exude a 'can do' self-talk that is so fun to watch and be around. Positive thinking is contagious and plays a big role in those that excel at putting. Let's face it, every moment is a choice. What do we choose: no, I can't or yes, I can?

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

Equal Back and Thru Distance Drill

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

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

Tiger's Right Arm Only Drill

This simple drill opens up a world of feel. At address keep your right elbow close to your side. Take the putter

back by increasing the right wrist angle. Then flatten the wrist as you hit the putt. It illustrates how to build rhythm and momentum with little effort. Allow the right shoulder and hand to move in unison. Tiger said this helps him feel the toe release thru the putt.

Tee Gate Direction Drill

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

Be Reactive

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

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



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