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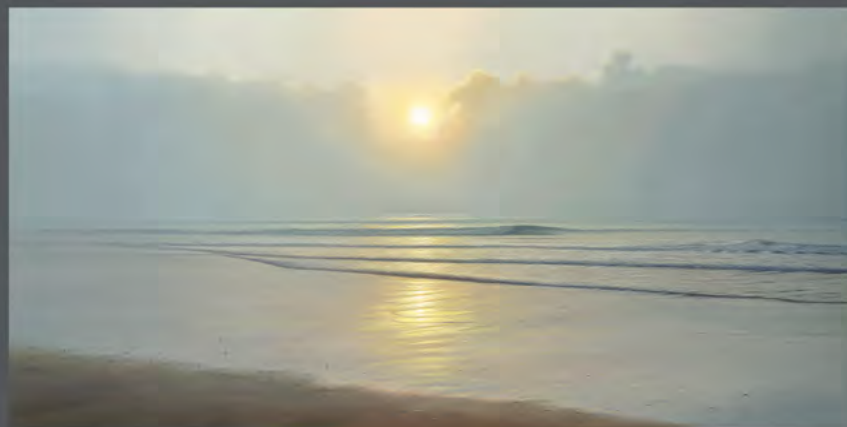
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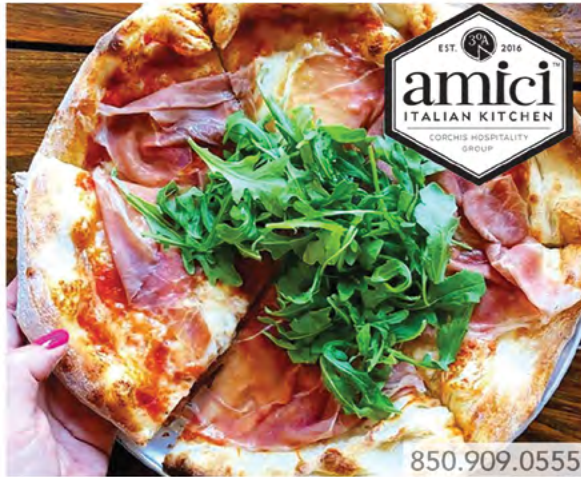


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# letter from the publisher

## 30-A STRONG



We've been through it. Quarantines. Social distancing. Wearing masks as we shop. Very few of us could have imagined these conditions of a "new normal" a year ago. Yet here we are.

With every obstacle, we have two choices in life: Let it stop us in our tracks and defeat us, or pivot, stand tall and embrace the challenges and fight that come

with every obstacle. In the spirit of the latter, we have coined the phrase, 30-A Strong.

30-A Strong stands for anyone who is doing their best to keep life, art, community, and commerce on 30-A moving forward. It stands for the mavericks, business-people, chefs, lifeguards, artists and community leaders who have stood tall, come dressed to play ball, and keep our community thriving.

If you know of someone like this personally, who you feel deserves recognition, send me an email about them. We'd love to include them in future stories.

In the meantime, stay strong in the storm. Fight the good fight. And know that we are all in this together and we will be together when it's over. 30-A Strong.

Sincerely,

Miles K. Neiman

View the entire publication online at [www.ThirtyAReview.com](http://www.ThirtyAReview.com)



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# Wear Your Best Shorts and Flip-flops

*Edward's Fine Food and Wine Offers Laid-Back Atmosphere with Great Cuisine*

BY DENISE K. JAMES

Edward's Fine Food and Wine has deep roots in the Rosemary Beach community, from the restaurant's early days onward. Opened by a local chef named Ed Reese and part of the Spell Restaurant Group since 2017, many things have remained constant at Edward's and kept loyal patrons returning—namely, the quality ingredients on the menu.

“While the restaurant has continued to evolve with an extensive remodel, new menu items, and an award-winning wine list, it continues to serve the freshest, locally sourced ingredients,” says Christy Spell Terry, who runs Spell Restaurant Group with her father and business partner, Rick Spell.

Edward's was the perfect addition to the Spell Restaurant Group's collection of six dining establishments on the Florida Gulf Coast. Considering all six have different concepts and each one offers something delicious, foodies who live on the Gulf or who frequently vacation in the area have likely dined at others on the list: La Crema for Spanish tapas; Grits & Grind for breakfast favorites; La Cocina for Latin fare; Saltwater Grill for steaks and seafood; and George's for Southern coastal cuisine. The Spell Restaurant Group also has establishments in Memphis, Tennessee and Jackson, Mississippi.

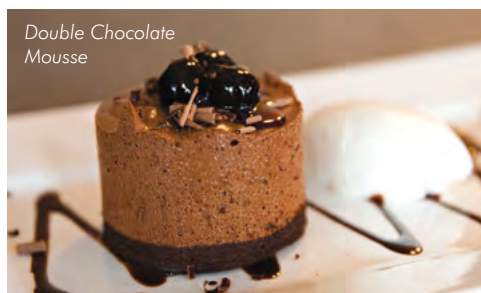
“Each of our restaurants is special in its own way, with Edward's providing a high-quality dining experience without the formality,” says Terry. “We welcome you to enjoy a meal with us in your best shorts and flip-flops!”

The highlight of Edward's is its dedication to partnering with small local farms and purveyors to ensure seasonal and fresh ingredients at all times. As of this article, Terry and the rest of the restaurant staff were looking forward to heirloom tomatoes and South Carolina peaches, both seasonal during the balmy summer months and perfect for use in special salads, appetizers, and desserts.

Thanks to the talents of Chef Josh Smith, mouth-watering features on the Edward's menu change regularly and are perfectly paired with the wine list. Popular items that restaurant patrons regularly ask for include the za'atar crusted yellowfin tuna, the heritage pork chop with tomato chutney, the grilled blackened grouper, and the jumbo lump crab cakes, according to Terry.



Grilled Pork Chop



Double Chocolate Mousse

With happy hour from 5 until 6 p.m. seven days a week, it's easy to reward yourself with a well-priced bottle to accompany a meal. Or try a specialty wine cocktail, such as the Edward's Champagne Cocktail, with fresh berries, sparkling , and Cocchi Americano; or the White Wine Moscow Mule, with white wine, ginger beer, mint, strawberries, and lime. If you and your table can't finish the whole bottle, a friendly server is happy to package the rest up for enjoyment at home. Guests can also elect to bring wine from their own personal collection for a \$25 corking fee.

In regard to recent concerns surrounding the Covid-19 virus, Edward's is taking care to make customers feel comfortable and happy. As with the entire Spell



Za'atar Crusted Yellow Fin Tuna

Group of restaurants, safety and cleanliness is paramount. Because Edward's has an abundance of outdoor seating — in front of the restaurant on Main Street, as well as in the courtyard — patrons can choose to “spread out and enjoy the fresh air while they dine,” according to Terry. She adds that all state and federal guidelines are carefully followed, including masks and temperature checks for staff, cleaning and sanitizing tables between parties, and half-capacity seating.

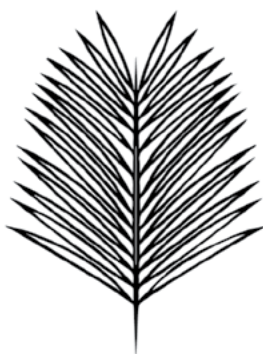
Terry adds that the nature of Rosemary Beach — a tight-knit community where neighbors trust each other's restaurant endorsements — makes Edward's a continued success—as well as the dedication of the experienced staff. “Just a few months ago, none of us could have imagined the new world we all live in now,” she says. “However, with the strong management and staff

we have in place at Edward's, we are confident it will continue to thrive in Rosemary Beach.

“Our staff, with its many years of service, pay attention to details to ensure each guest has a wonderful experience. Our meals are memorable, which brings guests back. We are part of a close community on 30-A, and we have valued guests who continue to visit from across the country,” she concludes.

**To find out more about Edward's Fine Food and Wine, visit their website at [edwards30a.com](http://edwards30a.com), or call them at (850) 231-0550. The restaurant is open from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. daily, on a first-come, first-served basis.**





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# Capt. Anderson's Restaurant & Waterfront Market

## Landmark Restaurant Continues to Celebrate Milestones Alongside Generations of Customers and Friends

BY TESS FARMER



Wine Locker

Capt. Anderson's has become synonymous with family tradition. Serving local seafood for all and marking special occasions for visitors for over 53 years, the waterfront restaurant has become a community beacon on the marina in Panama City Beach.

"We come as a big family to Capt. Anderson's every June for my brother's birthday... It's his request each year that we all meet there, and he always gets the steak and lobster," says Kansas Pitts, Santa Rosa Beach resident. "It's a true experience, with the kids getting to watch the fishing boats come in and all the fish caught that day. It's become a special place for our family... and of course the crab claws and homemade desserts are amazing!"

Two brothers, Jimmy and Johnny Patronis, took over the restaurant in 1967, which was then a small breakfast house; and with hard work and dedication created what it is today. Patriarchs of both their families and the community, both were successful businessmen and philanthropists in Panama City and beyond. Jimmy Patronis, Sr. passed away this January (2020) at the age of 88; Johnny is 91 and still stops in at the restaurant to visit with guests. The second and third generations of the Patronis's family now run the restaurant, which has grown to seat 725 and serving dinner six nights a week to over 250,000 guests during the eight-month season.

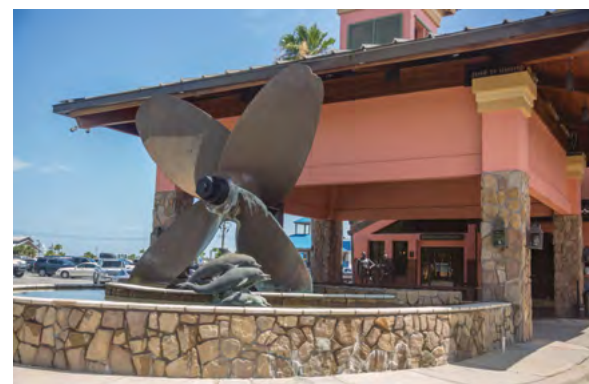
This classic restaurant has always believed in quality and simplicity. No heavy sauces are used here. As Johnny Patronis explains, "Nothing should drown the natural

goodness of fresh, fresh fish. Just let it absorb a little of the aroma of oak from the coals... drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil... a squeeze of lemon... maybe a touch of oregano and serve it while it's still hot. You know, we were the first on this coast to cook like this over real hardwood coals. But on the coast of Greece where my family grew up, it has been a tradition for hundreds... maybe thousands of years!"

Add fresh baked bread and a perfect bottle of wine and it's a true culinary experience. When it comes to Panama City Beach restaurants, Capt. Anderson's is among the elite, consistently winning the best restaurant and best seafood categories in Bay County; it was also recipient of the "Best Seafood Restaurant" award from Southern Living magazine.

Capt. Anderson's is one of those rare family restaurants that not only survives, but strengthens and improves through the years. Every year the restaurant has witnessed remarkable growth without loss of quality. It's also the only Bay County restaurant to receive Wine Spectator's 2020 Award of Excellence, and has been an annual recipient since 2005.

Yonnie Patronis, one of Jimmy's four sons, has been instrumental in this element of the restaurant's success which led to the founding of Capt. Anderson's Wine Club in 2017. "This doesn't feel like a job for me, it's a true joy and passion," says Yonnie Patronis. "The relationships built in this building over the years are very powerful, it's like one big family, everyone knows each other and supports each other." His daughter Anna



Patronis is also involved in the daily operations and is the restaurant's resident wine sommelier.

"There's the Captain's Cellar selections, which offer unparalleled wine varieties. Here you'll find some of the most unique regions and wine makers," says Anna Patronis. "The wine club offers three memberships with one thing in common: each comes with a collection of

very rare highly-allocated wines and/or champagne valued higher than the cost of membership."

Members also have a chance to participate in the annual trip to Champagne, France for tours, tastings and education from the top wineries there. Plus, throughout the year, all Capt. Anderson's Wine Club members save on wine and champagne purchases and receive insider offers on rare wines as they become available. "For the wine aficionados, locals and visitors alike, it's a perfect match, plus some really wonderful friendships have been made over the years," says Anna Patronis.

"I've watched children sitting in high-chairs who are now putting their own children in high-chairs," adds Yonnie Patronis. "There are couples who celebrate each and every anniversary with us. We are proud to continue to offer the family-oriented service and the freshest food, and plan on doing so for many more years to come."

[www.captandersons.com](http://www.captandersons.com)

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# Chef Drew of Alys Beach

BY ANDY BUTCHER

But for some limp lettuce, Drew Dzejak might not have pursued a life in the kitchen. While working towards his degree in culinary arts and food service management at Johnson & Wales University in Charleston, South Carolina, he had gigs as a banquet captain by night and cook by day. With a forthcoming marriage, he took a better-paying front-of-house job thinking that might be the wiser career choice.

Three months in, he was carrying salads to a VIP dinner when he looked down and decided he just couldn't serve them the way they looked: all wilted. "I re-plated them all," he recalls. "I couldn't walk into the room with them the way they were."

That moment pivoted Dzejak back to the kitchen, taking a pay cut as a breakfast cook at the five-star Woodlands Inn in Somerville, South Carolina, for the chance to work under celebrated executive chef Ken Vedrinski. "He was a genius when it comes to food," Dzejak says. "He was flexible; not a by-the-book type. I remember one night we changed the menu during dinner service, because he didn't like the way it was coming out."

Those two formative experiences—the impact of appearance and the importance of adaptability—have been his drivers since becoming Executive Chef for Alys Beach four years ago. In this role he oversees a wide range of operations that defy a cookie-cutter approach: Instagram-worthy poolside dining at the flagship Caliza restaurant, stylish nibbles at Neat, and simple grab-and-go from Piper's Kitchen (run by his wife, Stephanie). And coming soon: the restaurant at the new homeowner-exclusive Beach Club at Alys Beach, opening on the beach side of 30-A.

In addition to offering a new culinary challenge, coming to Alys Beach has reunited Dzejak with former colleagues and brought him back closer to his roots: he grew up in Kissimmee, getting a first love for cooking from helping his grandmother. Another bonus is being even closer to the beach for his children: Aurora and John.

Given that a good meal engages all the senses, it's no wonder that a creative chef like Dzejak pays attention to both palate and palette. Caliza's al fresco setting means serving romaine ("It's hardier; stands up a little longer") rather than softer butter and red oak lettuces ("They

don't last long") in the summer; while in the winter, plates are presented more tightly to retain the heat.

That's not the only seasonality to take into account. Dzejak has also learned to tweak the offerings depending on who's in town for spring break: homeowners and guests alike. Texas week perhaps expectedly means an additional meat for Lone Star State visitors, while Nashville's arrivals crave extra fish ("They're a little more landlocked, and they want to try seafood.").

Ask him about a signature dish and he demurs in the down-to-earth manner that characterizes his fluid approach to an up-market clientele. "It's all about what the diners want," he says. "I might have a favorite, but if it's the bottom seller, then I am sorry, it has to go." There are two perennial Caliza diner favorites, however: octopus and, surprisingly on hot summer evenings, soup: corn, asparagus, and pea. ("It's just one of those things you don't make at home," is how he explains the appeal.)

With female diners outnumbering the men, Caliza's menu emphasizes light ("No heavy marinades, no heavy sauces"), and shareable. Appetizers like jumbo lump crab

In this role he oversees a wide range of operations that defy a cookie-cutter approach: Instagram-worthy poolside dining at the flagship Caliza restaurant, stylish nibbles at Neat, and simple grab-and-go from Piper's Kitchen.

wrap and burrata toast are popular, along with entrees such as grilled tuna escabeche, seared scallop, and crispy skin snapper. Slow-cook desserts trend to the shareable too: banana bread pudding, key lime pie, buttermilk cheesecake, chocolate mousse.

Overall, Dzejak acknowledges a Mediterranean shade to the menu, fitting with the strikingly blue-watered and white-walled environment, though he notes that doesn't simply mean Greek. "The Mediterranean touches France, Spain, and Italy," he points out, allowing for lots of variations on a theme. "Egypt touches the Mediterranean, and Turkey, with the spice road. It's all the Mediterranean." An additional flavor twist is brought by the Peruvian influence of Caliza's chef Renato Falconi.

Naturally, in keeping with Caliza's outdoor allure, there is an emphasis on fresh. Except for the Spanish octopus, seafood is "probably right from the Gulf you've just been looking at," while vegetables are sourced from a farming collective in Louisiana. And sometimes, in a pinch when one is needed, some basil from Drew's own home garden.

**Caliza Restaurant is located at 23 Nonesuch Way, Alys Beach, Florida 32461 Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Go to [www.calizarestaurant.com](http://www.calizarestaurant.com) or call (850) 213-5700.**



Drew Dzejak



A photograph of a rack filled with various fabric samples, each held by a wooden clothespin. The fabrics feature different patterns, including floral, geometric, and abstract designs in colors like blue, red, green, and gold. The image has a soft, slightly blurred background.

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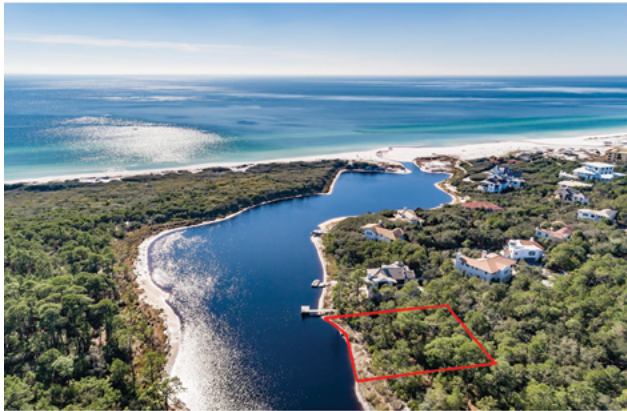
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# Art and Texture

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



There's a clear love of dimension, whimsy, and texture that is as characteristic as a signature on the paintings bearing the name of Justin Gaffrey. One after another, his works show a unique perspective and a fantastic imagination—even on the most ordinary of subjects—often interweaving two worlds that otherwise have no relation. The result is something eye-catching and memorable; and for this tireless seeker of the next creative challenge, it is what has made him successful in the art world.

An avid lover of all things creative, it was Gaffrey's desire to be independent and work for himself that eventually led him to seriously delve into the world of painting in 2001. "I have always been creative, which drove me both in my previous career as a chef as well as in making furniture," he says. "In my early twenties, I knew I could not work for other people, so I had to figure out a way to be independent. Being an artist was a good way."

And while he may never have had formal training, his determination to learn and never stop learning has served him well over the past 20 years. "I have figured out various techniques and perfected processes by intense study and obsessive work habits," says Gaffrey, whose 30-A studio is constantly in the midst of projects. "I believe in learning through evolution and a lot of trial and error. Surprisingly, the ratio of error keeps growing because I keep taking on harder challenges. Over the last year, I have been learning chemistry in order to create and manufacture my own line of heavy texture acrylic paints."

Those heavy texture acrylic paints are on full display throughout his pieces; most notably in his florals and seascapes, where textural play can be most appreciated. He uses those textures almost the way that color is used, sculpting them to make various features of his paintings pop, drawing the eye—and inevitably the hand—to alight on whatever he has chosen to accentuate. The swirls, the peaks, the valleys... All of them are created by the deft technique of Gaffrey's tools as they move his paints in whatever direction his imagination has determined they must go, eventually becoming the vision that was once only held in his mind's eye.

Clearly, Gaffrey draws inspiration from the beautiful beaches he calls home. His many paintings of seascapes and waves testify to the many hours he's spent watching the water and traversing the sand to explore the unique landscapes so characteristic of 30-A. Nature is at the heart of most of his pieces, regardless of the subject, as he puts his hand to work painting everything from moonscapes and flowers to birds' nests and life stills. And despite the fact that such themes may seem overdone, Gaffrey's take on them makes them fresh and unexpected—especially when he livens them up with dogs, rabbits, and even the occasional monkey.

Whatever the subject captured in his acrylics, the emotion that spills from them is as rich as his colors and gives them a dimension far greater than the boards on which they rest. There's turmoil and pain, happiness, and even enchantment—all held right there in the paint and frozen to be forever pondered. "My favorite painting

subjects usually deal with human emotion," Gaffrey says. "Over the years, my ideas of art have become completely different than when I started. I did not understand at the time how integrated art is in the expression of humanity, but now I have come to realize that art through history tells an amazing story about us."

For Gaffrey, the story is an ongoing one—not only about the paintings he creates, but the actual paint itself. Not one to use the off-the-shelf paints for his creations, Gaffrey manufactures his own heavy and medium body acrylics and will also officially launch Gaffrey Art Material later this summer. The line will feature his paint, colors, and tools as well as instructional techniques, supplying everything an artist needs for their work. It will begin exclusively as an e-commerce company with the hope of later expanding into other markets. All of the paint is produced in Santa Rosa Beach of pure acrylic, with no fillers, and is a unique formula that makes it of superior quality. And despite the fact that Gaffrey has branched out into manufacturing, he is ever the artist, always seeking ways to express the world he sees and feels in a way that is not easily forgotten.

*Justin Gaffrey Gallery is located at 21 Blue Gulf Drive, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32549. For more information, visit [justingaffrey.com](http://justingaffrey.com) or call (850) 267-2022.*





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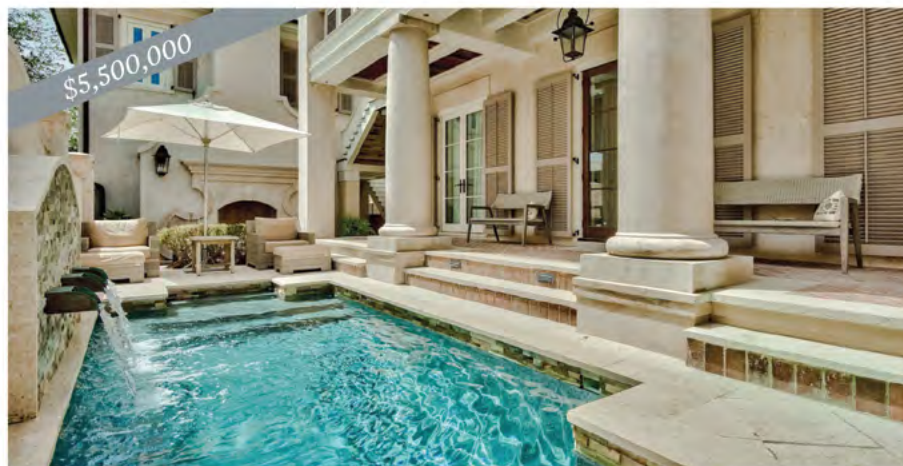
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# An Interview with Artist Bradley Copeland

BY ANNE HUNTER



Bradley Copeland

Copeland arrived at the beach in January with her boyfriend, Hudson. “His family and work led him here, which could not have worked out more perfectly for me. I’ve always wanted to live near the beach, and I knew there was a great art scene here.” They have both loved every second so far. “I could name any place on 30-A and I wouldn’t be lying if I called it my favorite.”

*When did you begin painting? Why?*

I don’t really remember a “beginning” as far as painting goes. My earliest memories all involve some kind of art. I was constantly coloring as a child, and art immediately became my favorite subject in school. I always enjoyed painting and drawing on my own too but didn’t really take it seriously until I got to college.

*Can you describe your undergraduate education? Share the story of the moment you decided to pursue art instead of another major.*

Although I clearly had a passion for art my entire life, I never considered pursuing it as a career; growing up, I didn’t even realize it was an option. I attended Auburn University and changed my major almost every semester I was there. I bounced around all of the artsy fields without fully committing to studio art until my junior year. I finally switched my major to art because I found myself miserable doing anything else and

imagining a life-long career of (insert anything-other-than-art here) felt like a prison sentence.

*What is the inspiration behind the lingerie, lipstick, and drag queen desires?*

The thing that ties these symbols together is the way they represent and celebrate femininity. Femininity is something that is usually, at least traditionally, perceived

as weak, frail, delicate, and gentle. My paintings are an attempt to challenge this notion. I want to depict frilly, pretty imagery but with harsh lines and texture and roughness. I want my paintings to have bite and grit because I’m trying to illustrate feminine toughness. I feel like most people hear the words “feminine toughness” and immediately think it’s an oxymoron. But this toughness is the most defining characteristic of femininity, and in my opinion, the most beautiful thing about it, not the misconstrued “softness” that is overrepresented.

*What is your advice to young, aspiring female artists?*

This advice applies to anyone of any age, but I definitely would have benefited if someone had explained this to me when I was little. Art is NOT a talent that is gifted to you at birth. The only thing you’re born with is the passion, and talent develops over time with practice just like everything else. When people tell me that they love painting, but they never do because they aren’t ‘talented’, I just want to shake them and say, “That’s all it takes!!!” If you have a passion for art, please don’t starve it. Art is such a relative concept, there really isn’t any way to determine what’s good. I truly think a lot of the masters that we’ve all heard of weren’t really recognized for their talent; they were recognized for their passion.

*Who is a female artist that you respect and admire?*

This is probably the hardest questions I’ve had to answer so far because there are so many that come to mind for so many different reasons. Frida Kahlo is probably my go-to answer because she has been a favorite ever since I learned of her and most people know who she is. She inspires me daily because of her deep passion for art. Her life was full of tragedy and she painted through every second of pain. She was well before her time, unapologetically painting vulnerable pieces that exposed the truths and tragedies of her life as she lived it.

***For more information visit Anne Hunter Galleries, 25 Central Square, Seaside, Florida 32459; [annehuntergalleries.com](http://annehuntergalleries.com) or [bradleycopelandstudio.com](http://bradleycopelandstudio.com)***

When Bradley Copeland moved to Walton County earlier this year, she was grateful to live here and be part of the community. “I felt so welcomed and accepted in such a short period of time, which is even more amazing considering this has all happened in the midst of a global pandemic,” the artist says. “It’s beautiful here and everyone is mind-blowingly kind.”





# WATCH INTERVIEWS *with the* STARS *of 30~A!*



In this first of a series, Thirty A Review Magazine steps into the TV arena. This episode, Ada Bowman interviews Jim Loznicka — He says, "After 20 years on TV, I am now unplugged but using my on-camera skills to help support our real estate team in the Florida panhandle".

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# Bow Wow Meow Celebrates 10 Years on 30-A

BY TESS FARMER



**H**olistic, eco-friendly, and unique... what more could you need from a pet store?!

Bow Wow Meow Pet Company has catered to the dog and cat aficionados in Seagrove Beach for ten years now. New owner William Overton has taken the reins from founder John Scanlan earlier this year to continue the tradition of offering top-notch food, treats, and products for the luckiest four-legged visitors to 30-A.

The locally-run business provides a wide selection of healthy and organic food, treats, and unique pet gear for both dogs and cats. There are also two private self-washing rooms and a dog bakery inside the shop, located near Eastern Lake on Highway 30-A.

"We live in a wonderful, tight-knit and caring community where we all look out for each other, including our pets, guests and their pets as well," says owner William Overton. "It's a treat for us to meet so many wonderful people from different places and get to know their furry friends at the same time."

With a friendly and knowledgeable staff, the team at Bow Wow Meow can make suggestions and recommendations based on your particular pet's needs and all you need to live a happy, healthy life with your pet. "We appreciate our customers trust and support of our small business here on 30-A," adds Overton.

Originally from Memphis and then residents of CO for 15 years, Overton and his family have been life-long visitors to the area prior to moving to 30-A full time in

February 2020. The family includes their Australian Shepherd, Blue and English Bulldog puppy, Petunia, who's living the beach life quite stylishly as you can witness through her Instagram page, @petunia\_of30a.

Bow Wow Meow prides itself on offering holistic, eco-friendly, innovative product lines, and everything needed for your daily dog adventures. From trails and camping in the state parks and forests, to boating and paddle boarding on the bay, there are many options for visitors to enjoy the great outdoors with their pooches along scenic highway 30-A.

Some of the dog and cat food product lines available at the shop includes Merrick, Taste of the Wild, Evanger's, Orijen, NutriSource, Fromm, Pure Vita, Zignature, Dr. Harvey's, Stella & Chewy's, and Victor. They also offer a variety of healthy natural treats, chews, bones, and unique pet gear.

Looking for a dog lead made from recycled inner tubes? They've got you covered! There's also a full line of CBD hemp products to support a range of ailments and calming aids for pups who may not appreciate the fireworks at the beach.

No need to pack all of your pet accessories when coming to the beach either. Bow Wow Meow offers crate rentals of all sizes and a one-stop shop for food and treats, eco-friendly toys, and pet bedding. A new outdoor pool for dogs that pops up with a flick of the wrist has been a customer favorite during the summer months.

Also made in the shop are the original "Beach Dog Biscuits". These customer favorites are one-of-a-kind homemade dog biscuits made with organic flour, eggs, peanut butter, banana, local honey, and recycled spent barley from Idyll Hounds Brewing Co. in Santa Rosa Beach. The wholesome, organic dog biscuits are made and baked daily at Bow Wow Meow.

The shop's two private self-washing rooms are for locals and visitors to utilize during business hours. Each room has a 58-inch long stainless-steel tub with an adjustable platform for smaller breeds, as well as a roll away ramp to assist in guiding pups up into the tub. There is a professional two-speed cool air dryer, towels, aprons, and grooming brushes to use, as well as 16 different shampoo and conditioners, ear and eye wipes, and freshening sprays to finish the bathing experience.

"We have customers who drive from Panama City to use our washing rooms and tubs," says Overton. "We've covered all the details and you get to leave the mess with us."

As a vital member of the local business community, Bow Wow Meow also supports the work and mission of Alaquia Animal Refuge, the premier no-kill refuge providing protection, shelter, and care to animals in need. Alaquia provides a full-service animal adoption center for the area and advocates for animal welfare through educational outreach and community programs.

**Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., (850) 534-0009  
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# Eye for Design

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

Whether you know it or not, there's a distinct difference between furnishing a home and styling it. Furnishing requires little to no vision, no eye for detail and anyone can do it, simply by selecting the basics; places to sit, tables to put things on, lamps for lighting. Styling, however, is what makes a home stand out, what gives it panache and character. It's what makes one's eye stop dead on a page while glancing through an interior design magazine, what makes someone feel truly captivated when they enter a room. And for Melissa Skowlund, styling is the axis on which her world spins.



An interior designer with more than 14 years of experience, in 2011 Skowlund decided to take her expertise and passion and channel it into her own store, opening Melissa Skowlund Interiors and creating her boutique furniture store, Summerhouse Lifestyle. Nearly ten years later, Skowlund has created a reputation along 30-A as someone with an undeniable eye and clear understanding of how to create beautiful spaces that offer luxury as well as function. This reputation came from working with clients all along the seascape, whose homes now bear the fingerprint of her creativity; from the pieces offered in her store to uniquely customized furnishings created specifically for a room, and ever more hands-on projects like full-room renovations and home staging. "We specialize in customizing pieces for our clients. We love to take on a challenge and find just the right piece, from dining tables to custom Sunbrella chairs... we work with how our customers live and what needs they have," Skowlund explains. "This is also what sets us apart from our competition. In addition to the store and the interior design aspect of the company, we have a recently completed Design Bar, where customers can look at our selection of Farrow and Ball paints and our lovely Thibaut fabrics and wall coverings. We encourage clients to make an appointment so that we



Melissa Skowlund, Bess Pooler and Stephanie Wiesel

We've become known for custom high-quality design and furnishings that are unique, and I think that our customers really love that we have items that are not seen everywhere.

can give them our full attention and guide them through each aspect of the Design Bar, making the experience even more hands-on and personalized to them."

The Design Bar to which Skowlund refers is just that—a bar, a veritable buffet, if you will, of customizable details pertaining to a client's needs from which they can pick and choose. Offering such services as room layouts, consultations for window treatments and pillows as well as individual room or whole-home interiors design services, the purview of Melissa Skowlund Interiors is indeed wide, containing a great range of details that all come together in the creation of a beautifully styled home. They also provide wallpaper design consultations, color consultations, project management for remodeling or home renovations, kitchen and bath design consulta-

tions, custom fabric selection, and home staging. And having a team of equally passionate people at hand has kept the company—and the store—at the top of its game, drawing in new clients and making repeat customers out of those who have a chance to work with them. "We've become known for custom high-quality design and furnishings that are unique, and I think that our customers really love that we have items that are not seen everywhere," says Skowlund. "We realize the importance of satisfying our clients, so we will go out of our way to find something special for them."

Looking at the scope of the work bearing the name Melissa Skowlund Interiors, it's easy to see what attracts her clientele: people who appreciate fine living. There's an understanding of how colors play and interact with one another, how different textures add dimension and visual interest, how spatial planning and the use of scale make a room work. And while one could easily lose themselves in the beauty of the pieces she offers in the store—best-sellers like a comfy sectional sofa from Cisco Brothers, John Richard home accessories, and Lucite and brass hardware—the staff

is on hand to make getting lost a pleasant part of the journey, helping you find the absolute perfect pieces to make your perfect space.

After all, there is far more to creating a home than just furnishing it. To love and feel pride in it requires attention to the small details, selecting the pieces of the puzzle that make it all fit like a wonderful picture from which one can't look away... and like a place that one never wants to leave.

**Melissa Skowlund Interiors is located at 57 Uptown Grayton Circle, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. For more information, call (850) 231-0133 or visit [www.melissaskowlundinteriors.com](http://www.melissaskowlundinteriors.com).**





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# Blue Dolphin Tours Takes Families on a Journey of Life

BY CAROL BADARACCO PADGETT

We observe in the wild  
and have encounters.

The experience is 100%  
different every single time.

The owners of Blue Dolphin Tours in Panama City Beach, FL keep their focus outward, which is not hard to do when the 30-A and its waters stretch out before you.

The selfless stance is just part of the allure of the local family business. Because as much as Blue Dolphin Tours is about fabulous boat rides in the mesmerizing waters off the area's bay, with patrons piloted by experienced, licensed, and personable Coast Guard Captains on custom-built boats, it's also about something intrinsically enduring and fundamental: family.

The business's owner, who wants the face of the business to be the business rather than himself, shares this: "We like to teach families how to be a family."

In that vein, a recent Blue Dolphin Tours billboard read: "Make new friends—your family, for instance."

Blue Dolphin Tours is clearly about connecting with the moment; getting in deeper, truer sync with those you love, and then looking outward to another type of family that many—tourists, in particular—don't get a chance to experience up close; and that's bottlenose dolphin.

As any local knows, these extraordinary mammals exist within a pod, interacting with one another, protecting one another, and hunting for food as a team. Automatically the connection to family and what humans can learn there is clear.

But some of the most special experiences of Blue Dolphin Tours are the encounters with the sociable bottlenose dolphins along the 14 miles of Bay and Gulf waters.

"We go out, swim and snorkel, and before too long inquisitive dolphins will come to you," the owner describes. "We observe in the wild and have encounters. The experience is 100% different every single time."

He adds, "Our Captains respect the dolphins and their natural habitat and avoid disturbing them."

Blue Dolphin's passengers get to experience other marine life, as well. "We're in the Bay half the time, snorkeling for starfish and crabs. We see turtles quite often, as well as manatees every once in a while, at certain times of the year."

One of the reasons that Blue Dolphin Tours has consistent success giving families 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 4-6 tour boats that are out on the water all day long. The dolphins call this stretch of waterway home because of the 45-foot depth of the shipping channel, which provides an abundance of different types of food for them, the owner reports.

"Deep water means lots of different marine life," Blue Dolphin's leader notes; and for the dolphin, "It's like they have the most perfect buffet breakfast, lunch, and dinner right in their own yard."

Add in the area's rich bays and estuaries and the dolphins' ability to travel all over the waters and feed, back and forth between Destin and Panama City is as good as it gets for a dolphin in the 30-A.

"Being able to show this to families and teach them how to have fun, it's really a dream job," the 30-year business veteran says. "I've been in the marine industry my whole life. My family and I are passionate about families having fun on the water, fishing, and experiencing the local marine life."

With all of this knowledge comes a deep appreciation for safety, as well—always of chief concern for Blue Dolphin Tours, and especially now with the coronavirus.

"With the virus, it works well that we have private boats for just you and your family," he says, adding, "Safety is the no. 1 thing we review before we leave dock. We set expectations, put safety first, and cancel if the weather is bad." Another key safety factor considering COVID-19: Blue Dolphin's vessels carry just six people per boat.

At the end of the day, the family-focused business teaches lessons its passengers carry away with them. "Our whole team of experts is teaching families how to have fun," looking outward to the sea during tour time and inward to one another for a lifetime.

**Blue Dolphin Tours: (850) 236-FINS (236-3467); 3601 Thomas Drive, Panama City Beach, FL 32408; @bluedolphintours; www.bluedolphintour.com**







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# Seasonal Solutions

BY FRANK WATSON AND KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL

Life is lived in stages, and the rhythm of our lives mirrors the rhythm of the natural seasons. Whether you are in the spring, summer, autumn, or winter of life, your Life & Estate Planning objectives will inevitably change. This article is relevant regardless of whether you currently have a Life & Estate plan. If you do not have a Life & Estate Plan, it will help you appreciate the need for property planning. If you already have a Life & Estate Plan, it will reinforce the need to keep your plan up-to-date as you move between seasons.

## SPRING

In the context of Life & Estate Planning, spring begins on your 18th birthday. On that magical day, you become responsible for your own personal, health care, and financial decisions. The adults in your life suddenly become your peers in a legal sense.

Unless you give your parents, or other trusted adults, proper legal authority in advance, they cannot make personal, health care, or financial decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated due to an injury or an illness. For example, they would not be able to select a rehabilitation setting for you, have access to your medical records, represent your interests regarding the course of your treatment or even file your income tax return. The failure to make proper legal plans in advance could force you and your loved ones into the Incapacity Probate process by default, because these decisions must be made even if you are unable to make them yourself. Making proper legal plans now could avoid creating potential problems for your loved ones later.

## SUMMER

As you grow older, you may get married. It has been said that a marriage may be made in heaven, but the maintenance must be done on earth. As part of your marital maintenance, you should review and update your Life & Estate Plan periodically. For instance, your legal plans should be updated to appoint your spouse as the primary decision-maker for personal, health care and financial decisions, if you wish for your spouse to have authority to make such decisions. In addition, you should take steps to ensure that your separate and mutual assets would be distributed as desired should either spouse predecease the other, or in the event of your simultaneous deaths.

First comes love, then comes marriage, often followed by a baby carriage. If you have children, make



certain that your legal plans are updated to appoint guardians should your minor children be left without parents.

## AUTUMN

When your children become adults, you may wish to update your legal plans and appoint your children as secondary decision-makers should your spouse be unable to serve in such a capacity for you. Consider creating Long-Term Discretionary Trusts for your children to protect their inheritance both from them and for them. Otherwise, your financial legacy could be lost to squandering, divorces, lawsuits, or bankruptcies.

While you are at it, consider including remarriage protection provisions in your legal plans to protect the children's inheritance by disinheriting your surviving spouse's next spouse in the event of remarriage.

Is a major asset in your estate a family business? To preserve both the business and your family relationships,

proper business succession planning is a must. (This planning is essential, especially since family businesses have a dismal survival rate.)

## WINTER

Through advanced legal planning, you can even disinherit the IRS and leave more wealth to your descendants by maximizing the Generation-Skipping Transfer Tax Exemption available under the Internal Revenue Code.

Have you made proper legal plans for the distribution of your charitable legacy to your favorite causes and institutions? In fact, many of the charitable legal plans available can help you increase your current income and offer valuable tax deductions!

Regardless, be sure to seek appropriate legal counsel to ensure compliance with tax laws. This is not a "do-it-yourself" project.

## ASK YOURSELF...

*These Questions Regarding "Seasonal Solutions".*

1. Have I made proper legal plans to appoint someone of my own selection to make my personal, health care, and financial decisions should I ever become incapacitated?
2. Have I made proper legal plans to appoint legal guardians for my minor children in the event they ever become orphans?
3. Have I made proper legal plans to protect any inheritance I leave for my children from squandering, divorces, lawsuits or bankruptcies?
4. Have I made proper legal plans to protect any inheritance I leave for my children in the event my surviving spouse remarries?
5. Have I made proper legal plans to continue my family business upon my death?
6. Have I made proper legal plans to leave a financial legacy for my loved ones and a charitable legacy for my favorite causes and institutions?



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# Finding Hope and Relief

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



Throughout our struggles,  
it is the ways in which  
we come together that  
truly prove our heart  
as a community—and  
the grants provided  
by these generous  
souls are proof that we  
have a great heart.

change, the organization assesses the diverse needs of the community, rallies whatever care and support is needed, and focuses its resources to the areas that will serve the greatest good. As the world faces the disastrous effects caused by COVID-19, United Way Emerald Coast has released \$215,000 in four phases of grant money to local non profits throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties from their COVID-19 Relief Fund. These grant moneys provide essential support to charities that offer assistance with housing, utility payments, healthcare costs, child-care, and food security to individuals and families impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

“We launched the COVID-19 Relief Fund to support our most vulnerable neighbors—those who might suffer devastating economic and health impacts because of the virus,” says Kelly Jasen, who serves as CEO of United Way Emerald Coast. “We are proud to have strong partnerships with local businesses and individuals who answered the call for help. Because of their generosity and partnerships with other non-profits across Okaloosa and Walton counties, we’re able to quickly get these critical funds to the individuals and families who need them most.”

Naturally, the charities were required to submit COVID-19 relief grant applications in order to be considered for funding; and each of the chosen charities must also submit results that offer data providing specific information regarding the ways in which the funds have

directly impacted the families and individuals that their various organizations support in the local community. The non profits chosen include Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Bridgeway Center, Caterpillar 2 Butterfly Outreach Center, Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida, Children in Crisis, the Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast, the Eleanor J. Johnson Youth Center, Feeding the Gulf Coast, Fresh Start for Children & Families, the Homelessness and Housing Alliance, the Mental Health Association, Okaloosa County Council on Aging, One Hopeful Place, Opportunity Place, S4P Synergy, Sharing & Caring, Habitat for Humanity Okaloosa County, and the Salvation Army—all of which have proven to be essential to the communities they served in years past and have, during these past months, become an even greater source of support.

Without the grants, however, these organizations struggle to provide the help that so many rely on. Fortunately, local businesses across the Emerald Coast have risen to the challenge and offered the money that is so greatly needed in these trying times. Proving that they are truly community-minded, the Gulf Power Foundation, Florida Blue, Publix Super Markets, Eglin Federal Credit Union, Wind Creek Hospitality, Beast Code, the Truist Foundation, Beach Community Bank, Hancock Whitney, Wells Fargo, and Whole Foods as well as more than 40 individual donors have graciously and generously donated money to the United Way Emerald Coast COVID-19 Relief Fund. As one would expect, the impact these funds have made is enormous.

“We are extremely thankful for our partnership with the United Way Emerald Coast, and we have been able to recontinue serving several families in Okaloosa and Walton Counties because of the United Way’s COVID-19 relief funding,” says CEO Shervin of the Boys and Girls Clubs. “As our communities slowly and safely reopen, we are proud to have the support of our local United Way in aiding in our transitions.”

Throughout our struggles, it is the ways in which we come together that truly prove our heart as a community—and the grants provided by these generous souls are proof that we have a great heart.

***For more information on how to support the COVID-19 Relief Fund, please visit [www.united-way.org/relief](http://www.united-way.org/relief).***

These past months have been trying times for all of us—both in business and in our personal lives. We face a great struggle as a nation, and these are days that remind us of the importance of supporting one another in our communities. The Emerald Coast is one that has been through much throughout its history, but its people have proven their heart through it all. As we now find ourselves, along with the rest of the country and the world, in the midst of COVID-19 and the many ways that it is impacting our daily lives, it is organizations like United Way Emerald Coast that prove that they truly have the needs of the community at heart.

Created to be a local, volunteer-governed organization that works with hundreds of partners to act as advocates for the health, education, and financial stability of the people of Okaloosa and Walton counties, United Way Emerald Coast is tireless in its pursuit to better the local community. In the effort to drive positive



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# Four Refresher Keys to Solid Ball Striking

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



1. Long hitting Matt demonstrates the split hands drill to create a wide arc.



2. With the left heel lifted up, you can turn your back to the target and stretch the arms outward.



3. Start the downswing by pushing into a golf ball placed under your left toes.

It's always a good idea every so often to take a refreshed look at your golf technique. Pros are always game for a refresher. Even golf courses get refreshed, like Camp Creek Golf Club which just completed its extensive turf and sand renovation. So how about a refreshed swing for a refreshed golf course with these proven tips:

Start your backswing with a wide takeaway for the first two feet. The grip should point at your right thigh initially. That's a great start towards getting a wide and constant arc. Then 'Feel the Stretch' to the top.

**Drill (photo 1):** Split your hands an inch apart on the grip. Keep the grip pointed at you with the right arm high. This will get you started on a wide arc.

Complete your backswing by letting your left shoulder work under your chin. In doing so your back should then actually be facing the target, with your arms extended away from the target. Don't allow your hands to drift behind your head.

**Drill (photo 2):** Raise your left heel off the ground to encourage a full body turn.

Start the downswing with a great key from Nick Faldo. Move the left shoulder away from your chin and towards your left toes as the arms drop. For those of you who slice the ball: the left arm feels quite high relative to the right arm on the downswing.

**Drill (photo3):** Place a ball under your left front foot. Start your downswing by pushing it into the ground.

At impact feel your left arm and the club straighten into a line with the back of the left wrist facing the target. It's an awesome feel if you can sense at impact that 'YOUR LEFT HAND PULLS WHILE YOUR RIGHT HAND PUSHES'. Notice how the lead leg has straightened. That's a big part of impact.

**Drill (photo 4):** At address, set up with the club opposite your right toe. Try to maintain that hands-ahead relationship as you swing into impact.

And that's it—four relatively easy checkpoints to try on the range:

- Wide start with grip pointed at right thigh the first two feet
- Stretch arms wide to the top with your back to the target
- Left shoulder moves towards the front foot
- Left arm and club form a line and pull against a firm left leg

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



Tom Fitzpatrick



4. Start the swing from opposite your right foot. Create that same feel at impact where the grip leads the clubface at impact.



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