

the thirty-a REVIEW

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



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Tami Owen
& Brelan Owen
Pearson of
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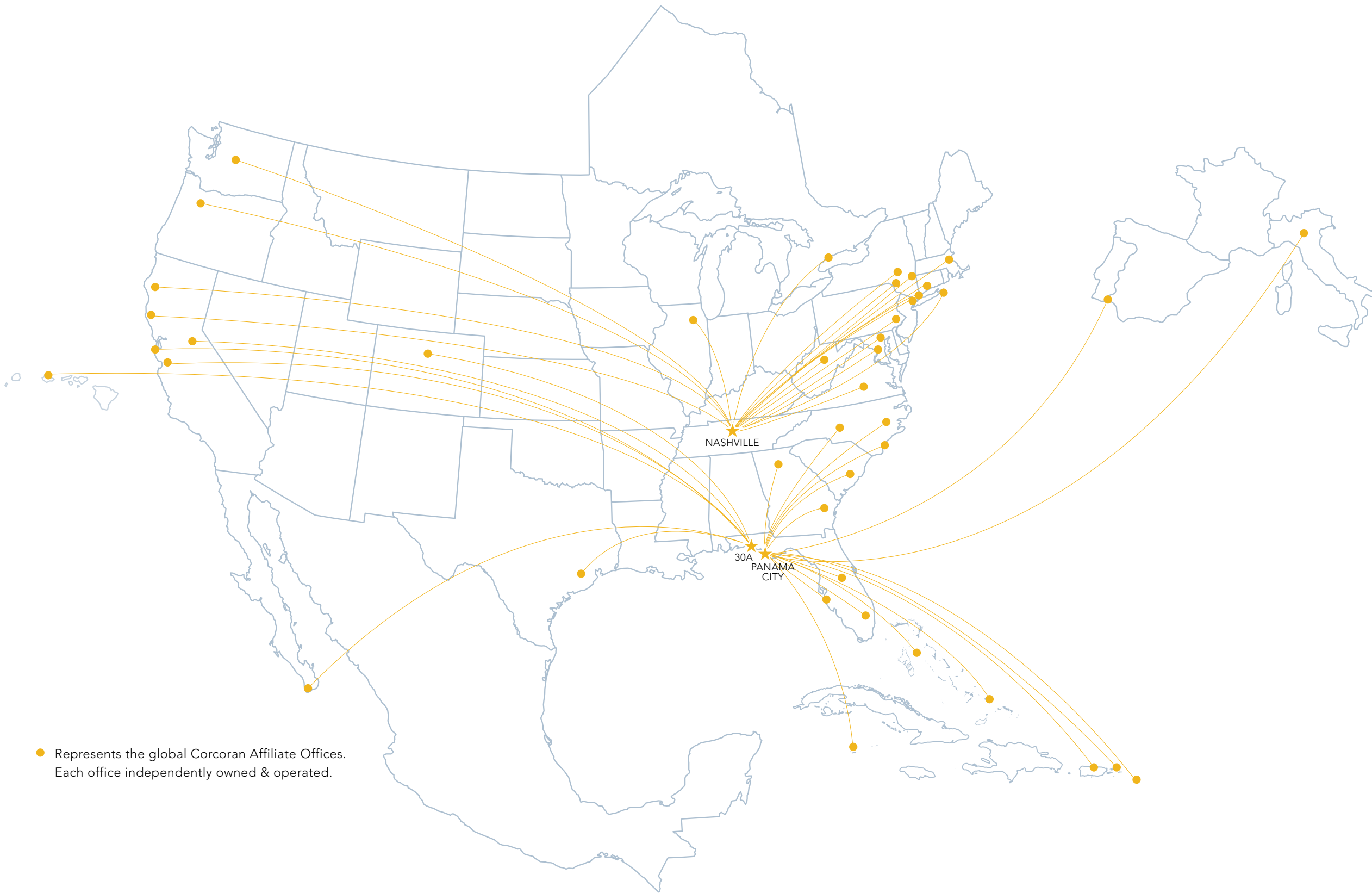
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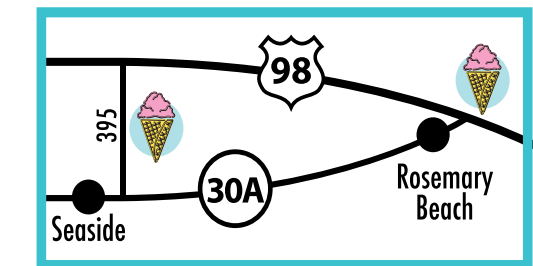
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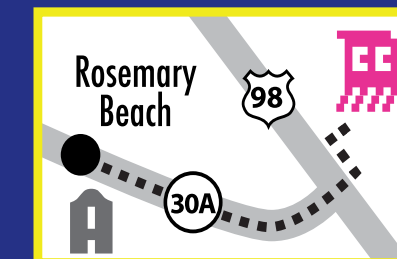


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letter from the publisher

SUMMER IS HOT. 30-A IS HOTTER.



Early summer at the beach is a lot of fun. The season is getting back into full swing and the vibes are energetic. It's business as usual and the crowds are manageable.

As always, this issue is packed full of the people, places and things that make 30-A and the surrounds great. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. Within these pages you will find hidden treasures and activities that will enhance your time on 30-A. Whether you're a local or a visitor, you will be sure to discover new delights.

From the best places to eat, to great interior design to perfecting your golf swing, it's all inside.

Until next issue, we wish you good luck and good vibes.

Warmly,

[Signature]

Miles K. Neiman

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about the cover

Pictured
Tami Owen and Brelan Owen Pearson of Owen Group Interiors, in front of the mixed media on canvas piece "Life Script Rewrite" by Louisiana artist Robin Bailey Hamaker @robinhamakerartdesign.

Photography
Rachel Alyse Photography

Stylist
Jessica Holtam Studios

Also Pictured
Restaurant Paradis is a culinary mainstay in Rosemary Beach

Hello Sugar delivers smiles & sunshine with mobile sweet treats. Photo by Hello Miss Lovely Photography

Go to www.ThirtyAReview.com to view the entire publication online.



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Theatre and Events in May and June



ALYS BEACH TUESDAYS

Wine & Song at NEAT
Enjoy live music and tasting specials at NEAT with tableside wine tastings and live music from 5-7 p.m. 11 N. Castle Harbour Dr.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach
May 16-17
Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach is an art festival that employs the latest in digital technologies to project original works onto the town's iconic white walls. Around 70 works of art will be projected onto the canvases of exterior walls and architectural features, pathways and landscapes with additional events and panels throughout the weekend, including awards for best in show. www.digitalgraffiti.com.

“Sinfonia Salutes” Memorial Day concert and drone show
May 25
Sinfonia Salutes Memorial Day

Concert and drone show is presented by the Merchants of Alys Beach at the Alys Beach Amphitheatre. The event is free to attend and food will be available to purchase from vendors as well as Town Center merchants. 7:30 p.m.

The Cleverlys Concert
June 25
The Cleverlys are a bluegrass and comedy cover band that has credits playing at The Grand Ole Opry stage. The event is presented by the Merchants of Alys Beach at the Alys Beach Amphitheatre. The event is free to attend and food will be available to purchase from vendors as well as Town Center merchants. 6 p.m.

**ROSEMARY BEACH
TUESDAYS**
Enchanted Carnival of Magic
(Starting May 27) Step right up to the Pittman Production's 2025 Enchanted Carnival of Magic. Share a whimsical evening of

pure imagination with international award-winning, husband-wife magical variety duo, Julian and Melody Pittman. The Enchanted Carnival of Magic is where the impossible and the absurd collide and nothing is ever quite what it seems! There will also be a behind-the-scenes look at how magic is made. 7 p.m. St. Augustine Green/ Owners Pavilion.

WEDNESDAYS
Snow White
(Starting May 28) Enjoy a well-loved classic fairytale brought to life by The REP Theatre. Join Snow White on her thrilling adventure through the enchanted forest as she befriends seven lovable dwarfs and discovers the true meaning of friendship and kindness. This enchanting version of the classic Brothers Grimm fairytale features a heartwarming story and many laughs for the whole family. 6:30 p.m. at the St. Augustine Green/ Owners Pavilion.

THURSDAYS
Moonlight & Movies with face painting
(Starting May 29) Bring the family for a wholesome and fun movie night under the stars! Blankets and lawn chairs are welcome! Come early and get your face painted by one of our talented artists! Enjoy popcorn and the best hot dogs on the beach from Dog Man Du! Face Painting starts at 5 p.m., movie starts at 8 p.m. on the Eastern Green

FRIDAYS
Trucker Hat Bar
(Starting May 30) Join us for some crafty fun on the green! Create your very own custom trucker hat to commemorate your trip to the beach. This event is for children and teens only. Hats are limited to 150 each week. 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. at East Long Green.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Memorial Day Concert featuring Rubiks Groove
May 26
Bring your red, white and blue dancing shoes for the kickoff to summer Memorial Day Concert & Dance Party with Rubiks Groove, an "outside of the box" 80's, 90's and 00's Tribute Band. This high energy, character-driven act will take you back to the best eras of music with a complete 360-degree interactive experience that includes live music from rock to hip hop, characters, costumes and videos. 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the St. Augustine Green.

**SEASIDE
MONDAYS**
Children's Theater
Favorite fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk is brought to life by The REP Theatre. Join Jack, a quick-witted youngster with a talent for mischief. Get ready to climb into a magical world of wonders and

grumpy giants in this heartwarming tale of courage, family, and finding magic in the most unexpected places. This is a free event made possible by the Merchants of Seaside. 5 p.m. at the Seaside Amphitheater.

TUESDAYS
Free Beach Volleyball in SEASIDE®
SEASIDE® Swim and Tennis is thrilled to offer complimentary beach volleyball at the Coleman Pavilion Beach every Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., weather permitting. Everyone's welcome—come spike, serve and socialize. Players get a ticket to redeem for \$5 off beer buckets at The Shrimp Shack or Pickle's Sandbar.

Huck & Lilly
Join Huck & Lilly for a fun-filled evening of characters and music for kids and the grown-ups who love them. 5 p.m. at the Seaside Amphitheater, weather permitting.

WEDNESDAYS
Live Music with DJ 30A
An evening of music with DJ30A at the Seaside Amphitheater from 6-8 p.m. This complimentary music session invites you to relax, dance and enjoy the music.

THURSDAYS
Free Beach Volleyball in SEASIDE®
SEASIDE® Swim and Tennis is thrilled to offer complimentary beach volleyball at the Coleman Pavilion Beach every Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., weather permitting. Everyone's welcome—come spike, serve, and socialize. Players get a ticket to redeem for \$5 off beer buckets at The Shrimp Shack or Pickle's Sandbar.

Huck & Lilly
Join Huck & Lilly for a fun-filled evening of characters and music for kids and the grown-ups who love them. 5 p.m. in the Seaside Amphitheater, weather permitting.

FRIDAYS
Central Square Cinema
Grab your blankets and chairs and head to the Seaside Amphitheater for a family movie under the stars. The movie begins at 7:30 p.m., weather permitting. Get the movie schedule at seasidefl.com/events/

SUNDAYS
Central Square Cinema
Grab your blankets and chairs and head to the Seaside Amphitheater for a family movie under the stars. The movie begins at 7:30 p.m., weather permitting. Get the movie schedule at seasidefl.com/events/

**WATERCOLOR
TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, & FRIDAYS**
Yoga in the park
Join us in Marina Park for a relaxing yoga class with certified instructors. Bring your mat, as limited mats are available. The class fee of \$20 is

payable via Venmo to the instructor before class. 8 a.m. 238 Watercolor Blvd W, Santa Rosa Beach.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Memorial Day Celebration
May 26
Join us in Marina Park in Santa Rosa Beach from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and celebrate Memorial Day with an array of activities, snow cones available for purchase from the Kona Ice Truck, a craft table, DJ 30A, face painting, an inflatable water slide and more.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Memorial Day Weekend Concert
May 25
A Memorial Day Weekend concert will be held on Saturday, May 25 at 7 p.m. with Ken and Andi & friends performing in the Seaside Amphitheater. It's set to be an evening filled with live music and fun. Grab your lawn chairs and

blankets and join us for an evening filled with live music. 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

FARMER'S MARKETS
Grand Boulevard Farmers' Market
600 Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach
Saturdays year-round 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
30A Farmers' Market
28 N. Barrett Square, Rosemary Beach
Sundays year-round 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Watersound Town Center Farmers' Market
85 Origins Main Street, Watersound
Sundays year-round 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
SEASIDE® Farmers Market
Saturdays year-round from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Seaside Amphitheater.



Coastal Fine Dining

Restaurant Paradis is a culinary mainstay in Rosemary Beach

BY TESS FARMER

In the heart of Rosemary Beach, Restaurant Paradis has offered coastal fine dining since its doors opened in March 2009. As one of the longest-standing establishments in the Gulfside community, Paradis seamlessly blends elegance with a welcoming atmosphere, offering a dining experience that is both refined and fun.

From its inception, Paradis has been defined by its unwavering commitment to quality, service and community.

General Manager Michael Wood has been at the helm since day one, ensuring that every guest feels like part of the Paradis family.

The restaurant's team is a tightly-knit group, with many staff members having been part of the establishment since its early days. The sense of camaraderie extends beyond the workplace, as multiple married couples work alongside each other and their children often take on roles as hosts and hostesses.

"It truly is a family atmosphere," says owner Danny Cosenzi. "Our history in Rosemary is a testament to our commitment to our customers and the community around us."

The Paradis menu is a celebration of fresh, local ingredients.

The restaurant forgoes freezers and walk-in coolers, instead sourcing seafood, seasonal produce and other ingredients daily from nearby purveyors. Chef Mark Eichin, a culinary artist with a knack for blending classic flavors with innovative touches, crafts dishes that highlight the region's bounty.

Signature offerings include fresh Gulf snapper served over Mediterranean gnocchi with lemon basil beurre blanc, exquisite crab cakes bursting with flavor and vibrant salads accompanied by house-baked focaccia.

Each dish is designed to let the ingredients shine, ensuring that every bite is as fresh and flavorful as possible.

No meal is complete without indulging in the decadent, made-from-scratch desserts. The selection changes with the seasons, offering a delightful array of sweet treats, including house-made gelato in an ever-evolving variety of flavors.

The attention to detail extends to

every course, from the first sip of a handcrafted cocktail in the cozy lounge speakeasy to the final, lingering taste of dessert.

A true standout of Restaurant Paradis is its impressive wine selection, meticulously curated to complement the menu's flavors. Whether diners seek a bold red to accompany a perfectly-seared steak or a crisp white to enhance the delicate notes of fresh seafood, Paradis delivers a wine list that satisfies both casual sippers and connoisseurs alike.

The restaurant also offers a popular happy hour in its intimate lounge, where guests can unwind with expertly-crafted cocktails and mocktails and small plates before settling in for a memorable meal.

Beyond its culinary excellence, Restaurant Paradis has cemented itself as a pillar of the Rosemary Beach community. Owners Danny and Monica Cosenzi are deeply committed to giving back, supporting various charitable initiatives, including their partnership with the Neurodiversity Resource of the Panhandle.

One of the restaurant's most charming and beloved traditions is its ever-changing front-door decor. The creative mastermind behind these festive arrangements is one of the restaurant's longest-standing employees, Ronnie Sellers, affectionately dubbed the MVP by Danny Cosenzi. These stunning displays make the perfect backdrop for pre-dinner photos.

Whether celebrating a milestone, enjoying a romantic evening, or simply indulging in a night of fine dining, guests will find that Paradis delivers on every level. The restaurant's ability to maintain its high standards and sense of hospitality for over 15 years speaks volumes about its dedication to excellence.

Restaurant Paradis is open seven nights a week, welcoming both longtime

patrons and first-time visitors to experience its exceptional hospitality. As you step through the beautifully-adorned entrance and settle in for a meal that delights the senses, you'll quickly understand why Paradis has been a cherished mainstay in Rosemary Beach. Reservations are highly

Chef Mark Eichin—a culinary artist with a knack for blending classic flavors with innovative touches—crafts dishes that highlight the region's bounty.

recommended, as this beloved establishment continues to be one of the most sought-after dining destinations along Florida's Gulf Coast.

Restaurant Paradis
82 South Barrett Square, Rosemary Beach
Open daily at 5 p.m. for dinner, currently by reservations only
Sunday through Thursday 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday & Saturday 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
The bar/lounge is open until midnight
restaurantparadis.com



Clockwise: Banana pudding cheesecake, arugula salad, Gulf Coast snapper, and crab cakes at Restaurant Paradis.



Roasted chicken breast is served with a sweet potato gratin, baby carrots and herb velouté.



Crab cakes bursting with flavor over chipotle cream corn, rendered bacon and a colorful roasted red bell pepper coulis.

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Celebrating 40 Years of Memorable Meals in Seaside

Bud & Alley's unveils new renovations to mark the milestone

BY TESS FARMER

Bud & Alley's, Seaside's first official restaurant, has undergone a major transformation in preparation for its upcoming 40th anniversary.

A true hallmark of the community, this iconic Gulf-front dining establishment has been serving locals and visitors alike since 1986, when a 24-year-old Dave Rauschkolb opened its doors in the then-tiny town of Seaside.

Now, after years of thoughtful renovations, the restaurant is not only celebrating its rich history, but also ushering in a

new era of accessibility and comfort for its guests, making it an even more inviting place to gather and enjoy delicious food against the backdrop of stunning Gulf views, complete with a rooftop bar.

Bud & Alley's has always been at the heart of Seaside, a place where memories are made over any meal of the day and drinks with a view.



As Seaside itself has grown from a small development into a bustling coastal community, so, too, has the restaurant.

Rauschkolb, a local businessman, restaurateur and philanthropist, has been a key player in that growth, evolving Bud & Alley's to meet the needs of an ever-expanding customer base.

From the early days with just a handful of employees, Rauschkolb has built a legacy, employing hundreds of people annually and overseeing not only the original Bud & Alley's,

but also the Taco Bar and Pizza Bar.

To keep pace with the growth of the community and the rising demand for great dining, the latest renovation project has unified its restaurant spaces.

The Taco Bar, a popular spot for casual fare, has relocated under the footprint of Bud & Alley's, with all the restaurant's locations now housed within the main building. This thoughtful

update enhances the accessibility of the entire restaurant complex while preserving the warm, inviting atmosphere that has drawn people to Seaside for decades.

"The renovations we've done really focus on making our space more accessible, comfortable and enjoyable for everyone who walks through our doors," said Rauschkolb. "With the Taco Bar and Pizza Bar now housed

under the same roof as Bud & Alley's, it's all about providing our guests with more options while still delivering that signature Seaside experience. We're able to create a flow that makes it easier for people to explore our different dining offerings, whether they're in the mood for tacos, a slice of pizza, or our classic seafood dishes."

"There's something undeniably magical about watching the sun dip below the horizon while savoring Bud & Alley's famous crab cakes or freshly prepared tacos," added Rauschkolb.

The new configuration also makes the restaurant more accessible, allowing for better flow between the spaces.

With more seating options, wider walkways, and improved visibility of the sparkling Gulf waters, it's now easier for guests to enjoy their meals in an open, airy environment that connects them with the beauty of the natural surroundings.

"Whether you're enjoying a casual bite at the Taco Bar or indulging in fine dining at Bud & Alley's main restaurant, it's our hope the renovations make every visit memorable," he added. "We also can now better accommodate families and larger groups, while still keeping that intimate, relaxed atmosphere that has always been a part of our charm. It's important to us that people feel at home here."

The renovation project is not just a physical transformation but a testament to the long-lasting impact



Various culinary delights from Bud & Alley's

Bud & Alley's has had on the Seaside community.

In its early days, Seaside was still being developed, and Bud & Alley's was one of the first businesses to open its doors, helping to set the tone for what the community would eventually become—a beloved destination for families, artists and travelers seeking beauty, culture, and excellent food.

Rauschkolb's dedication to Seaside has remained unwavering, and his commitment to community is just as apparent in his work outside the restaurant as it is within it.

In recognition of its lasting influence, Bud & Alley's has been featured in prominent publications like *Southern Living* and *Garden & Gun*, and was recently named one of Florida's top 17 legendary restaurants alongside notable establishments like Bern's Steak House in Tampa and Joe's Stone Crab in Miami Beach. It's a well-deserved honor for a restaurant that has truly stood the test of time.

"Being in Seaside for 40 years feels like an incredible privilege," added Rauschkolb. "When I first opened Bud & Alley's in 1986, this was a tiny little beach community, and we've been able to grow and evolve along with it."

As Bud & Alley's prepares to celebrate 40 years in business, Rauschkolb is quick to credit the long-standing team members who have helped make the restaurant such a success.

"The camaraderie and sense of family that permeates the staff and the restaurant's operations are a big part of what makes Bud & Alley's so special," he added.

For Rauschkolb, it's not just about great food and drinks—it's about creating a place where people feel welcomed, valued, and part of the larger Seaside community going on 40 years.

Bud & Alley's

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From Runway to Canvas

Marilyn Sparks' Southern Soul at Curate 30a

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

Marilyn Sparks' paintings are more than bold, vibrant landscapes; they are vivid memories, rendered in oil paint and a palette knife.

A self-taught artist with a background in the fashion industry, Sparks brings a designer's eye to her stunning depictions of barns, fields and coastal scenes.

Each canvas is a tribute to her southern roots, evoking the warmth and nostalgia of a simpler time. Her memories of pastoral scenes from childhood leave viewers surrounded by the scents, sounds and charms of her Southern heritage.

Represented locally at Curate 30a in Rosemary Beach, Sparks' work resonates with the Florida community seeking authenticity and emotional connection in their art. Sparks, who grew up in Tennessee, says her southern background is her greatest inspiration.

"I paint what I know and love," she says. "That's where my heart is."

Before ever dabbling in paint, Sparks had a career producing fashion shows nationwide. But with dramatic shifts in the fashion industry (moving primarily online in 2000), she knew it was time for a change.

"One day I thought, 'I think I'll paint,'" she laughs, which led her to experiment with leftover house paint and extra canvases in her garage. "I got down on my hands and knees and just started painting. After that first canvas, I rewarded myself by going to Blick and getting an actual easel and getting off the floor."

What began as an experiment quickly blossomed into a new career.

"I was just painting to paint, and before I knew it, I was in a dozen galleries across the Southeast," Sparks says. "I didn't even have to ask — they found me. One thing led to another."

She approaches her art much like she did fashion: with an eye for composition, color and texture.

"In many ways, I'm doing the same thing," she reflects. "I'm just using different mediums. Instead of models and a runway, I have paint and canvas."

Her instinctual style developed as she realized she didn't have to follow traditional methods. "I thought I was supposed to paint using a brush and listening to classical music," she says. "But both were driving me crazy!"

The turning point came when a friend gifted her a bag of old oil paints and palette knives. She naturally discovered her preference for palette knives, finding them better suited to her textured style.

"I can cover a lot more territory with a palette knife than a brush," Sparks says. "I appreciate realism and the artists who do it so beautifully, but I don't have the patience for all that."

Instead, she paints in a bold, wet-into-wet (alla prima) style, beginning by blocking in her compositions with oil crayon and then layering thick swaths of oil paint directly from the tube.

Barns are a recurring theme in her work, a nod to the vanishing landscapes of rural America. Many clients commission paintings of barns from their childhood homes, sending Sparks photographs to work from.

"They're tearing down so many barns across the country," she says. "It's an honor to preserve those memories."

Working out of her studio in Cumming, Ga., Sparks creates from instinct, with no formal training, and she wouldn't have it any other way. Her vivid paintings are heartfelt tributes to places and memories. She has also created commissions for businesses, including banks and hospitals. A business often picks a genre of her work and asks for similar artwork.

"No two pieces are ever alike," she says. "Even with commissions, I just let it happen naturally."

When she's not working on commissions, Sparks lets her mood guide her.

"Sometimes I start out thinking I'm going to paint a boat, but I end up doing a barn," she says. "Sometimes it feels like I have no control, and that's the beauty of it."

Sparks' connection to the 30-A region is profound, dating back to when Seaside was just a small collection of shops. Over the past 15 years, she's drawn inspiration from the area's coastal beauty, laid-back spirit and family traditions.

"Marilyn's work captures the very soul of the coastal



1879 Soft Summer Breeze, 36x36

lifestyle we celebrate at Curate 30a," says Gary Handler, owner of Curate 30a gallery, where her work is available. "Her paintings bring a sense of joy, serenity and timeless beauty to our gallery and collectors, embodying this community's spirit and the dreams that draw people here."

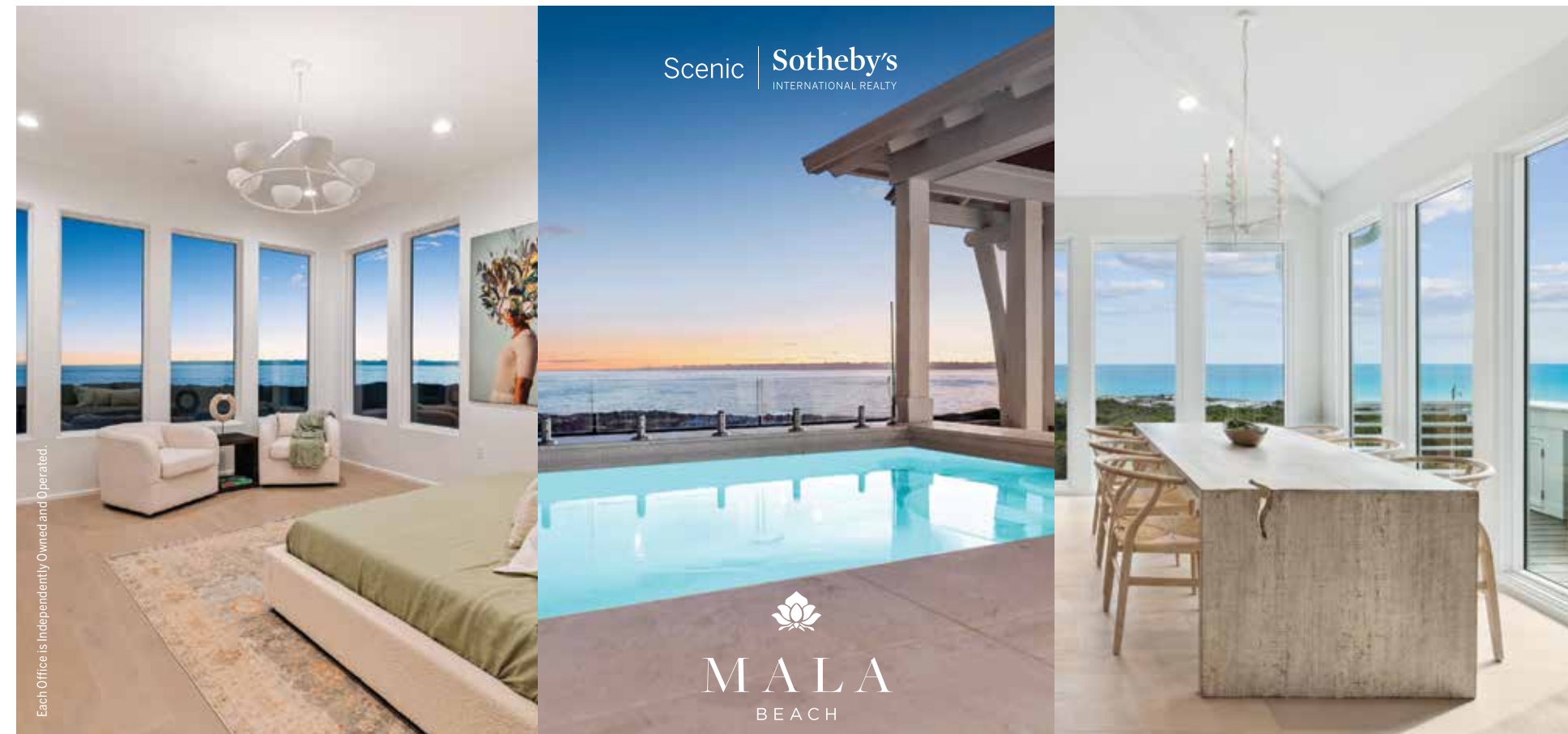
Two new beach scenes are air-drying in her studio and will soon be transported to Curate 30a.

"Spending time on 30-A inspires me," she says. "You see these generations of families creating happy memories, and of course, the bicycles—they inspire me, too." Viewers will see them regularly featured in her work on display at Curate 30a.

For Sparks, passion has been the driving force behind both of her careers. "Everyone should have a passion," she says. "I feel so fortunate and blessed to get up and do what I love every day."

Her advice to aspiring artists is simple: "Follow your heart. That's all I know to say."

Marilyn Sparks at Curate 30a
72 Main St., Rosemary Beach
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curate30a.com
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Experience Shell Island wildlife and unforgettable adventures with Blue Dolphin Tours

BY TESS FARMER

For those seeking an unforgettable aquatic adventure, Blue Dolphin Tours offers a unique opportunity to swim and snorkel with Panama City's resident pod of wild bottlenose dolphins and other marine life in their natural habitat.

These wild dolphins are known for their playful nature and curious demeanor and Blue Dolphin Tours provides an intimate, environmentally-respectful way to get up close and personal with these magnificent creatures.

With over 40 years in business, Blue Dolphin has become the area's premier tour provider, offering an exclusive, personalized experience that allows you to explore the waters of Shell Island, St. Andrews Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

Unlike larger tour companies that carry as many as 150 passengers on their boats, Blue Dolphin keeps it small and personal. Their boats carry only six passengers (children welcome), ensuring an intimate, private experience on the water. This smaller group size allows Blue Dolphin's knowledgeable captains to focus on providing guests with a more meaningful connection to nature.

As Captain Guy, one of the experienced guides, explains, "We can have you in the water with your snorkel gear on quickly and without all the splashing and disruptions that large groups create, often frightening the dolphins away."

This careful attention to the dolphins' comfort means guests have a better chance of interacting with them in a calm and respectful environment, creating a once-in-a-lifetime experience for everyone aboard.

For larger parties, Blue Dolphin has five identical boats for group tours, as well as two new large family cruisers that can accommodate up to 17 passengers per boat. Whether you're part of an intimate family outing or a larger group, the team at Blue Dolphin ensures every guest can enjoy the magic of swimming with dolphins in a way that respects the animals' natural behaviors and environment.

Blue Dolphin Tours isn't just about dolphins—though they certainly take center stage. The tours also provide ample opportunities to explore the underwater world of Panama City Beach's coastal waters, home to sea turtles, stingrays, seahorses and starfish.

These captivating marine creatures can often be



Blue Dolphin Tours has several size boats in its fleet to accommodate various size groups.

spotted while snorkeling through the shallow waters around Shell Island, where the tour takes visitors to discover some of the area's most beautiful and pristine spots.

For those who enjoy beachcombing, Shell Island is a treasure trove of natural wonders, including an abundance of shells, sand dollars and other marine debris washed ashore by the gentle waves. The experience is perfect for families, as kids and adults can enjoy searching for these beautiful ocean treasures.

Whether you're part of an intimate family outing or a larger group, the team at Blue Dolphin ensures every guest can enjoy the magic of swimming with dolphins in a way that respects the animals' natural behaviors and environment.

The relaxed atmosphere of the smaller boat size and the expertise of Blue Dolphin's captains makes this an ideal family activity. The captains are not only experts in finding the dolphins, but are also well-versed in keeping the whole family engaged with educational tidbits about the local wildlife.

The opportunity to get in the water and snorkel with the dolphins is a safe, accessible experience for all

ages, with children encouraged to participate and explore.

"Whether you're looking to introduce young ones to the wonders of the sea or enjoy a fun day on the water with loved ones, we take pride in creating an environment that's welcoming and inclusive," added Captain Guy.

Blue Dolphin Tours also offers additional options for guests who want to extend their water adventures. They provide pontoon and Boston Whaler boat rentals, allowing guests to explore the waters at their own pace.

For those looking to experience the Gulf's famous sunsets, a chartered sunset tour is the perfect way to unwind and take in the breathtaking views as the sun dips below the horizon.



Blue Dolphin Tours brings guests out to Shell Island, a treasure trove of natural wonders and an abundance of shells, sand dollars and more.

At the helm of Blue Dolphin Tours is a local resident who is not only passionate about the ocean and its wildlife, but also dedicated to giving back to the community at home and abroad. The owner of Blue Dolphin is an active participant in the non-profit organization Global Effect, which aims to bring sustainable transformation to impoverished communities around the world.

From swimming with wild dolphins in their natural habitat to exploring the marine life of Shell Island, this small, family-owned company provides an unforgettable way to connect with the Gulf's wildlife while enjoying the natural beauty of the area.

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Pop Up Cotton Candy

Hello Sugar delivers smiles & sunshine with mobile sweet treats

BY TESS FARMER



If you're lucky enough to catch the Hello Sugar airstream at an event in 30-A this season, you're in for, well, a treat. From the delightful custom cotton candy to the cheerful atmosphere, it's an experience that's sure to leave a lasting impression.

Alisabeth Wilkerson, a beloved local entrepreneur, has recently launched Hello Sugar, a mobile sweet treat business that promises to bring a smile to both children and adults alike.

Serving the 30-A area and beyond, Hello Sugar is a pop-up confectionary business housed in a fully-renovated Airstream, offering everything from freshly made cotton candy to custom birthday cakes.

Whether it's a public event, private party, wedding or local market, this charming Airstream can be spotted at various events around 30-A and beyond, creating a delightful experience for anyone with a sweet tooth.

Wilkerson, a native of the area, brings a wealth of experience to her new venture.

Before opening Hello Sugar, she was a partner at The Candy Bar, a popular and iconic stop in WaterColor that has been a favorite destination for locals and tourists.

Her time there taught her the value of interacting with customers who became familiar faces year after year, many of whom returned to the area for vacations and special events. These interactions left a lasting impact on Wilkerson, and she found her true calling in bringing joy to people through candy and treats.

Although Wilkerson had stints working in real estate, it was the memories of smiling faces in the candy shop that ultimately led her back to the world of confections. With four young children under 10, she wanted to create a

business that would allow her to spend time with her family while also doing something she loves. Hello Sugar became the perfect opportunity to combine her passion for sweets, her love for her community and her desire to be present for her family. Now, she and her team are bringing the magic of cotton candy and other sweets to families, visitors and event-goers along 30-A.

One of the main attractions of Hello Sugar is the custom cotton candy bar. At events, visitors can enjoy freshly-made cotton candy, spun to order and available in a range of custom flavors. From traditional options like classic

cotton candy to creative and exciting flavors like chocolate or sour fruit, there's something to satisfy every sweet tooth. Hello Sugar also caters to those with dietary preferences or restrictions, offering dye-free options that are just as enticing and delicious. The cotton candy also doesn't contain high-fructose corn syrup, making it a cleaner, more natural option. It's a perfect treat for those looking to indulge while still keeping things a little bit cleaner, especially on vacation.

In addition to cotton candy, Hello Sugar is also offering custom cotton candy birthday cakes, a unique and fun alternative to the traditional cake. These cotton candy cakes are pre-orderable for any special occasion, whether it's a birthday, anniversary, or simply a reason to celebrate. The soft, fluffy cotton candy creates a memorable experience and conversation starters that are both visually stunning and delicious. It's the kind of treat that can make any event stand out.

Wilkerson is dedicated to giving back to the community.

offers a respite for families going through the hardships of childhood cancer. These are the moments that mean the most to her—seeing the joy on people's faces and knowing Hello Sugar is playing a small role in making their day a little brighter.

The Hello Sugar airstream has quickly become a hit with both locals and visitors, offering a convenient way to enjoy delicious sweets while supporting a local business that's passionate about its community. As their motto goes, "Everything is fine when there is cotton candy and sunshine!" Whether it's at a local market, a wedding, or a pop-up event, Wilkerson and her team are sure to bring sweetness, joy and sunshine wherever they go.

If you're lucky enough to catch the Hello Sugar airstream at an event this season, you're in for, well, a treat. From the delightful custom cotton candy to the cheerful atmosphere, it's an

experience that's sure to leave a lasting impression. And with Wilkerson's personal touch, it's clear that Hello Sugar is not just about sweets—it's about creating moments of happiness that will be remembered long after the cotton candy has melted away.



Hello Sugar offers a custom cotton candy bar, spun to order with a range of custom flavors.

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She's deeply involved in supporting local non-profits and regularly participates in charitable events, including the Lighthouse Retreat's annual event at the beach. The retreat

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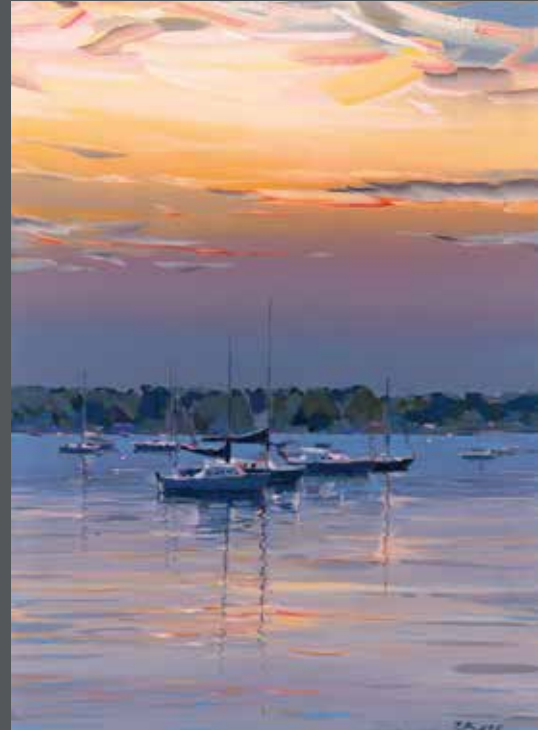
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Beauty by Design

Visionaries at Owen Group Interiors blend form and function in harmony

BY TESS FARMER

With a blend of timeless elegance and forward-thinking creativity, Owen Group Interiors has established itself as one of the country's most sought-after full-service interior design firms. Helmed by the dynamic mother-daughter duo, Tami Owen and Brelan Owen Pearson, the firm operates out of both Houston and WaterColor—serving clients from coast to coast with a signature approach that balances classic design and personal expression.

From initial architectural plans to the final touch of custom bedding, Owen Group Interiors delivers projects with precision and passion.

"We start most projects with reviewing architectural drawings and editing them to achieve client requirements," says founder Tami Owen. "We work with the builder, architect or other construction professional throughout, to ensure the vision is met and the home is finished—from flooring, tile, lighting and hardware to drapery and furniture. We often create custom furniture designs so we can achieve a result tailored to the client."

With over two decades of experience in residential and commercial design, Tami Owen has earned her place as a design visionary. Though known for her sophisticated yet livable residential interiors, she's

Together, Tami and Brelan Owen form a seamless partnership built on trust, creativity and a shared passion for helping people love where they live.

crafted spaces for high-profile hospitality brands like the Intercontinental Hotel chain and received accolades including multiple ASID Ruby Awards. Her work has been featured in *Luxe Interiors + Design*, *Southern Home*, *House Beautiful*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Modern Luxury Interiors Texas*, *The Boston Globe* and even a prestigious cookbook, *COOK: Cocktails. Cuisine. Culture*.

Most recently, *Architectural Digest* included Owen Group Interiors in its 2024 list of 'The Best Houston Interior Designers on the AD PRO Directory.'

Projects have spanned urban high-rises,



beachfront retreats and sprawling farmhouses. Owen's design philosophy is rooted in a deep understanding of how a space should feel and function.

"We design properties from the city to the beach to the farm," she explains. "Our interiors serve as a foundation for each individual client's way of life," she said.

This holistic approach is one reason clients return again and again—and refer others. "We get a lot of referrals and repeat customers," says Owen, "which is a testament to our longstanding client relationships."

The firm's expansion along the Gulf Coast has been a natural evolution. The Owen family has long vacationed on the Emerald Coast, and Tami began working on projects from Destin to 30-A years ago. In 2020, she opened a dedicated

office in WaterColor to better serve the firm's growing clientele along 30-A. Recent projects include new construction homes in Inlet Beach and WaterSound, as well as renovations in the longstanding communities of Seaside, Grayton and WaterColor.

Tami notes the demand for high-end design remains strong in both Texas and Florida.

"The construction and renovation market at the beach is booming," she says, "especially in communities like WaterColor, Seaside and Rosemary Beach. As for Houston, we are always seeing high demand for construction projects."

Integral to the firm's success is partner and principal designer Brelan Owen Pearson, who leads both the Houston and WaterColor teams alongside her mom.

Growing up on job sites and design studios, Brelan was destined for this path. She pursued an interior design degree at LSU and brought a fresh perspective to the firm—one that clients quickly embraced.

"Brelan has a subtly contemporary edge that pairs beautifully with our classic foundation," says Tami. "Clients love her eye for detail and the energy she brings to each project."

Together, Tami and Brelan form a seamless partnership built on trust, creativity and a shared passion for helping people love where they live. Every project—whether a family home, an executive office, or a vacation retreat—is approached with the same care and commitment. For the Owens, clients truly are like family.

"Our work is so personal," says Brelan. "We get to know our clients really well. It's not just about the pretty furniture—it's about creating a functional, beautiful space where memories are made."



As their firm continues to grow, so does their family. Tami's grandchildren now tag along for beach trips in WaterColor, just as Brelan once followed her mother to work sites. The beach has become more than just a source of inspiration—it's home.

And for the Owens, creating home, wherever it may be, is the ultimate goal.

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Authentic Walton

From boardwalks to nature trails, discover the best hidden gems in Florida

BY THE WALTON COUNTY TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Authentic Walton's welcoming communities are filled with incredible historic treasures and pastoral landscapes in Walton County. Encompassing Freeport, Paxton and DeFuniak Springs, you'll find a place that perfectly balances all the charm of its colorful past with great amenities and vibrant culture.

Take in the sights of Authentic Walton's communities, from charming, historical architecture to picturesque, wide-open spaces. Experience scenic views in Walton County atop the highest point in Florida, scan the night skies for shooting stars, or stroll along the historic district of DeFuniak Springs lined with architecture that transports you to a bygone era.

- At Britton Hill in Paxton's beautiful Lakewood Park, you can roam the trails among lush, green countryside to the highest point of geographical elevation in all of Florida—345 feet above sea level. Camp under the stars at one of Authentic Walton's many campgrounds. Local favorites include DeFuniak Springs campgrounds Sapphire Island or Twin Lakes Camp Resort with its lovely lake views. Walk the trails at Gaskin Park and have a picnic while the kids enjoy the playground, or stroll the boardwalks and nature trails of Glendale Memorial

Tour historic sites in DeFuniak Springs, where buildings around Lake DeFuniak date back to the Victorian era, complete with gingerbread trim.

Nature Preserve. This 350-acre, eco-friendly "green" cemetery is one of the best hidden nature spots in Walton County, so soak up the serene environment of the longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem and bamboo forests.



Morrison Springs is one of the most popular scuba diving spots in northwest Florida on a 161-acre park that includes a 250-foot diameter spring pool with crystal-clear water. Photo by Walton County Tourism

- Looking for reflective outdoor spots in Freeport? The Veterans Memorial at Casey Park honors all veterans—active, retired and those who have fallen. Take your time exploring the multiple venues, including an eternal Freedom Flame and the Grace Project, which honors women in service. The memorial embodies heartfelt gratitude for the courageous men and women who have served our nation.
- On a hot afternoon, take a dip in Morrison Springs, a premier Florida spring diving destination just east of DeFuniak Springs, where a crystal-clear, spring-fed pool invites swimmers and divers alike. The surrounding 161-acre state park is a perfect destination for enjoying cool, refreshing water as well as stunning scenery.

- For spectacular sunset views, paddleboarding or kayaking in Choctawhatchee Bay is a must-do for water sports enthusiasts. Visitors to Walton County will find several boat ramps, including at Grady Brown Park, to launch adventures on the bay. Stop by other Walton County parks with striking views, such as Choctaw Beach Park, where you can enjoy a picnic or hop in a canoe and paddle the cove.

- Catch a glimpse of wildlife, including bald eagles and gopher tortoises, at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center. Surrounded by natural wonders, this environmental education center educates visitors on the importance of biodiversity, promoting sustainability and encouraging conservation, preservation and restoration of ecosystems. The center is open to the public during June and July on Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- Tour historic sites in DeFuniak Springs, where buildings around Lake DeFuniak date back to the Victorian era, complete with gingerbread trim. The Walton-DeFuniak Public Library is a perfect place to experience a slice of culture, housing nearly 800 historically significant books – including a first edition of To Kill a Mockingbird signed by author



Frist opened in 1887, The historic Walton-DeFuniak Library in DeFuniak Springs is the oldest continuously running library in the state. Photo by Walton County Tourism Department

Harper Lee. Take a peek at the historic weapons collection, from Japanese handguns and African spears to Kentucky muskets, adorning the walls.

For the best views in Authentic Walton, let these natural and cultural treasures open your eyes to Walton County's history and scenic splendor. Find more ways to explore at AuthenticWalton.com.

Photos by Walton County Tourism Department

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Leading with purpose How Corcoran Reverie became the go-to luxury brokers in the region

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

By all accounts, launching a luxury real estate brokerage during a global pandemic might have seemed like a risky move. But for Hilary Farnum-Fasth, founder and owner of Corcoran Reverie, it marked the beginning of a bold new chapter—one grounded in vision, resilience and a strong belief in the power of possibility.

“We started on April 21, 2020—the exact day the beaches shut down due to COVID,” Farnum-Fasth recalls. “It was the middle of a global crisis, but I knew we had something special to build.”

Five years later, that vision has become one of the most successful luxury brokerages in the region, with a footprint that stretches across Florida’s Emerald Coast and into Nashville’s Music City.

Corcoran Reverie is known not just for multimillion-dollar listings and stunning beachfront homes, but for an ethos that runs deeper than property; it’s about inspiring lives.

The first five years were managed within a partnership; Farnum-Fasth ran the company with her partner, who recently left to pursue his own endeavors. For Hilary, transitioning into leading the company independently has been an amazing step into the future.

“As a woman in business, this has been a transformative step,” she said. “I’m confident in my capabilities to move us forward. I’m passionate about building people’s businesses, and I believe women in leadership—especially in real estate—need more advocates.”

That belief is more than lip service. With a female COO and a brokerage model that encourages agents to elevate their expertise, Farnum-Fasth is cultivating an environment where education, growth and personal well-being take center stage. One top-producing agent holds every designation available to real estate professionals nationwide, something Farnum-Fasth sees as a point of pride.

“My dream is to have a brokerage full of brokers,” she said. “When our agents grow, it benefits the company, our clients and each of them individually. I always say you are the CEO of your own business—and I want to be the leader of all these CEOs.”



At the Foundations of Influence, Women Driving Real Estate Forward event. From left: Emily Paquette, CEO of Inman, Stephanie Anton, President, Corcoran Affiliates, Hilary Farnum-Fasth, Owner & Broker, Corcoran Reverie, Pamela Liebman, President & CEO The Corcoran Group and Jere Metcalf, Breakthrough Luxury Real Estate Coach.

But perhaps Farnum-Fasth’s greatest vision for the future is her emerging focus on wellness—both in how homes are built and how real estate agents are supported.

“Wellness real estate is the future,” she said. “Our jobs are high stress. We are dealing with people’s largest assets—their homes, their dreams. We need to bring mental wellness into this world, not just for clients, but also for our professionals.”

With upcoming developments designed around wellness principles, Farnum-Fasth is blending her background in new construction with a renewed sense of purpose. From spaces that support work-from-home

I’m passionate about building people’s businesses and I believe women in leadership—especially in real estate—need more advocates.” - Hilary Farnum-Fasth, founder and owner of Corcoran Reverie

lifestyles to features that promote wellbeing, her upcoming projects reflect post-pandemic shifts in how we live—and what we value.

“The beach is wellness, but the home needs to be, too,” she said. “It’s about tying those two things together, — creating places that nourish us.”

The Corcoran Reverie team is on board: “They know this is a focus, and they’re excited,” she adds. “COVID changed all of us. It’s time to build a future with that in mind.”

That deep human-centered approach extends beyond architecture. As a working mother of three, including a five-



Corcoran Reverie agents, interns and family of founder Hilary Farnum-Fasth at the Grayton Beach Parade Fourth of July parade.

year-old, Farnum-Fasth loves to show other women what’s possible and build each other up.

“I’ve had a family the entire time I’ve worked in real estate. I try to lead as an example; it can be really hard, and I’m not perfect. But it’s also incredibly rewarding,” she said. “I want women to know they don’t have to choose between a family and a fulfilling career. Both are important.”

She shares that her top-selling agent, who joined her on day one, is also a mother of two who had never sold a home before joining Corcoran Reverie.

“I kept telling her, ‘You need to come into real estate,’” she said. “And she did. Now she’s one of our best. That flexibility, that belief in what women can do, I love being a part of that.”

As Corcoran Reverie celebrates its fifth anniversary, Hilary is focused on building not just homes, but a culture of leadership, wellness, education and human connection.

“I’ve been in this career for 25 years, and I plan to do it for another 25—or as long as I’m able to,” she says with a laugh. “I have a passion for this career and a strong vision for this company. I’m ready to start the legacy of that vision moving forward.”



Founder, Hilary Farnum-Fasth

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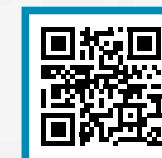
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Food or Fraud?

How to give your body the nutrients it needs to thrive

BY DR. BART M. PRECOURT, D.C.

Let's not "sugarcoat" this—what you eat either supports your health, or undermines it. As a functional medicine practitioner for over 30 years, I've seen firsthand how powerful food is, not just for energy or weight management, but as a direct driver of health or disease.

And finally!! Finally!! we're seeing a real shift. More and more people are waking up to the truth: much of the food sold in the U.S. is loaded with chemicals, additives and ingredients banned in other countries. People are beginning to ask better questions, read labels and demand transparency. It's no longer a fringe concern—it's becoming a movement.

Organic Isn't a Trend—It's a Line in the Sand

Choosing organic food isn't about joining a trend or trying to eat "clean" just for appearances. It should be a non-negotiable line in the sand for your health.

Pesticides, herbicides, GMOs and synthetic fertilizers commonly used in conventional farming don't simply rinse off. These toxins accumulate in the body over time, stressing your detox pathways and potentially disrupting everything from hormones to immune function.

When you choose organic, you're choosing to reduce that toxic load. You're voting for food that supports your body's natural intelligence instead of sabotaging it. Functional medicine teaches us to eliminate the interference—chemical, emotional or environmental—so the body can do what it was designed to do: heal.

Think of it this way: you wouldn't fill a high-performance sports car with dirty fuel and expect it to run smoothly. Your body deserves that same high-grade attention. Every organic apple, every grass-fed burger is a message to your body: "I'm on your side."

And here's the good news—we're seeing progress. Schools are starting to question processed lunches. More companies are removing toxic dyes and preservatives. Families are making the shift from convenience to consciousness. The momentum is real.

Nutrients Are the Building Blocks of Health

Let's talk essentials. Your cells, hormones, brain function and immune resilience all rely on nutrients:



Dr. Bart Precourt

amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins, minerals.

Amino acids (from high-quality protein) are the building blocks for your muscles, enzymes and even neurotransmitters. Omega-3s, found in fatty fish and

nuts, reduce inflammation and support cognitive health. These are not optional—they're foundational.

Yet so much of what fills grocery carts and pantries today is ultra-processed food with artificial flavors and empty calories. These products

fill your stomach but starve your cells. They leave the body nutrient-depleted, sluggish and vulnerable to chronic disease.

Nourish yourself with real food like organic leafy greens, clean proteins and healthy fats—foods your great-grandparents would recognize as food. This isn't

about deprivation, it's about giving your body what it truly needs to thrive.

And with awareness growing, healthier options are becoming more accessible. You don't need to be perfect, you just need to be aware. Every small shift matters.

Are You Justifying Choices You Know Are Hurting You?

One of the biggest traps we fall into is the justification loop. "It's just one cookie." "I deserve this glass of wine." "I've had a long day." We've all been there. But when those moments become daily patterns, they create damage that adds up—slowly, quietly and sometimes irreversibly.

Refined sugar? It's linked to inflammation, insulin resistance, gut dysfunction and mood swings. Alcohol? It's a poison. It compromises liver function, alters brain chemistry and disrupts gut health, even in "moderation."

In functional medicine, we don't wag fingers, we hold up mirrors. You don't have to be perfect. Are you honoring your long-term health with this choice or sacrificing it by seeking short term pleasure?

Being honest with yourself is the first step toward reclaiming control. You deserve to feel good. Feeling good tomorrow starts with the choices you make today.

Final Thought: Every Bite Is a Choice Toward Health—or Away From It

Functional medicine isn't about rigid rules or fad diets. It's about truth. The truth is this: food is either fueling your healing or feeding your dysfunction.

Choose organic, not because it's trendy, but because it's safe. Choose whole, nutrient-rich foods because your body runs on them. Choose to stop making excuses, not because you're being "bad," but because you want better.

There is a momentum building—a collective awakening. The more we question, the more we change. Change starts at the table.

Each meal is an opportunity—a powerful, personal act of either medicine or poison. Choose wisely, you're worth it!

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

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Blended family basics

Protecting your inheritance

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON

Are you a member of a blended family, either directly or indirectly? If not now, then you may be in the future. If so, you are in good company. Did you know one of three Americans is a blended family member? In fact, there will always be blended families as long as there are divorces and deaths among married couples. Regardless of the composition of your blended family, this fact of life presents unique social, psychological, economic and legal challenges.

In this article, we consider some fundamental legal challenges, so you can address them now to protect everyone you love and everything you have later. Specifically, how will you disinherit your ex-spouse, provide for both your new spouse and your own children, and protect the inheritance from unintended consequences?

Disinherit your ex-spouse

Problem 1: If you have minor children, than your ex-spouse will remain the legal guardian over their “person and their purse” until they reach the age of majority under state law. While only a legal finding of “unfitness” by a court order will keep your ex-spouse from parenting your minor children, your estate plan can provide that someone of your own choosing will manage any inheritance for your children. Without careful planning, your ex-spouse could actually inherit from you through the estates of your children should they die single and childless.

Problem 2: Unless you have “cleaned up” the beneficiary designations to your ERISA retirement plan (e.g., 401k), then your ex-spouse will inherit the proceeds, if he or she is still the designated beneficiary. That was the ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in Egelhoff v. Egelhoff, 532 US 141 (2001). Consequently, one of the first steps post-divorce should be to update the beneficiaries of your life insurance and retirement plans.

Provide for Your New Spouse

Likely you exchanged some solemn vows on your wedding day. For example, you likely promised to take care of your new spouse physically and maybe even financially. Even if you did not exchange such traditional vows, the laws of your state exchanged them for you...absent a premarital agreement...defining your mutual rights and responsibilities as married individuals.

So, how do you honor your new responsibilities to your

new spouse, if you pre-decease that spouse? You do so through very careful estate planning, including careful attention to detail regarding asset titles and beneficiary designations. Many families, blended and original, have been torn apart when the estate planning legal documents were not coordinated with the asset titles and beneficiary designations.

For example, your estate plan may provide for your children, but your assets may be arranged to pass directly to your new spouse. Alternatively, your new spouse could be cut out of the inheritance to a degree you did not intend. Surely you do not want your inheritance to be consumed in a courtroom through legal fees as your new spouse and your own children fight it out.

Provide for Your Own Children

After a divorce or the death of a parent, children can become bitter, better, or just adrift. When a new stepparent enters the picture, let alone stepsiblings, things can get especially interesting. Therefore, it is only prudent to make flexible plans now that will accomplish your objectives.

Accordingly, arrange for the inheritance to be protected both for and from your own children as needed. Otherwise, your lifetime of work and thrift can disappear through the potential squandering, divorces, lawsuits or bankruptcies of your children.

Protect the Inheritance

Did you know you can make the inheritance you leave to your new spouse and to your own children “heir” tight? Outright distributions simply transfer the inheritance directly to a beneficiary and provide absolutely no protection. Staggered distributions are the same as outright distributions in terms of no protection when two or more transfers are made directly to a beneficiary upon reaching certain ages.

In contrast, consider creating a long-term discretionary trust to last throughout the lifetime of a beneficiary, providing income and with principal, as needed. All along the way, whether a beneficiary is your new spouse or your own children, the inheritance is fully protected for and from them.

The key to a successful discretionary trust is selecting an appropriate trustee with broad discretionary authority. In addition, the non-fiduciary position of “trust protector” can be created to appoint and even remove a trustee if needed to fulfill your objectives. Think of the trust protector as the “guardian angel” over the trust.



Kimberly Watson Sewell and Franklin Watson

Avoiding Unintended Consequences

There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to proper estate planning. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy to meet the legal challenges identified in this article, but here is a simple formula to consider: Qualified Terminable Interest Property (QTIP) Trust = Life Insurance = Blended Family Harmony.

Upon your death, this formula can provide an inheritance for the life of your new spouse, insurance proceeds for your own children and ensure that the remainder of the inheritance for your new spouse will then pass to your own children when your new spouse dies.

Review Your Estate Plan

Failing to review your estate plan can result in a train wreck of court processes for your family and loved ones. Be sure to engage appropriate legal counsel before you pursue any financial or legal strategy to overcome blended family challenges.



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Sustained Success

Playing life with character —on and off the green

BY TOM FITZPATRICK

Tennis coach Jim Loehr, founder of the J & J Human Performance Institute, offers an insightful look into high achieving athletes.

We've been duped into believing that achievement is the be-all-end-all goal, says Loehr. If we achieve great things in life we are going to be happy. Jim actually found that athletes ranked #1 felt extremely unhappy, dissatisfied, and empty inside. They found it difficult to simply feel good about themselves.

A common theme to overcome it was to achieve more, win more titles, which led to even more emptiness. If they could become a superstar all over again, that might overcome it. Instead, they still felt somewhat empty inside after having achieved more.

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

Let's get the reason for our achievement correct so that we can become extraordinary human beings of great character.

Going after external goals does drive a sense of excitement and energy, but in and of itself, it's not that fulfilling. Achievement should instead be based upon being something much greater than personal self-interests. Building your character to be a more



Jim Loehr, famed tennis coach and world-renowned performance psychologist, researcher and author of 17 books.



(L-R) Matthew Fitzpatrick, Barbara Nicklaus and Tom Fitzpatrick at Muirfield Village, where Barbara Nicklaus spoke about the tremendous fulfillment that she and her husband, golf legend Jack Nicklaus have found in helping others through their Children's Hospital initiatives.

committed person to important causes can help you achieve fulfillment greater than yourself.

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

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

The Human Performance Institute studied younger athletes and found that the #1 reason for working so hard was actually to be a better, more character-driven person. They would pick a virtue and

work on it in the context of sport and competition. These included sportsmanship, honesty, kindness, humility and moral character. The result was the athletes became extraordinary achievers.

They also found that their personal growth wasn't linked to success in tournaments. They weren't afraid to lose because if they did, it gave them a chance to work on how to resiliently handle those rough outcomes. Everything was put in the context of trying to become a better human being. Who you are as a person is more important than as a competitor.

There is a distinction between performance character and ethical character. You can be a great performer, but be a zero in your moral and ethical character if you are taking shortcuts to be a winner at all costs. And this applies in business as well as in sports.

The highest level of inner strength that a person has is found in how they treat other people, gratefulness and compassion. You would think these traits are at the opposite of the spectrum from winning. But in fact, Loehr found that treating other people nicely was at the heart of believing in yourself and feeling good about yourself so that you are a real force in any competitive battle.

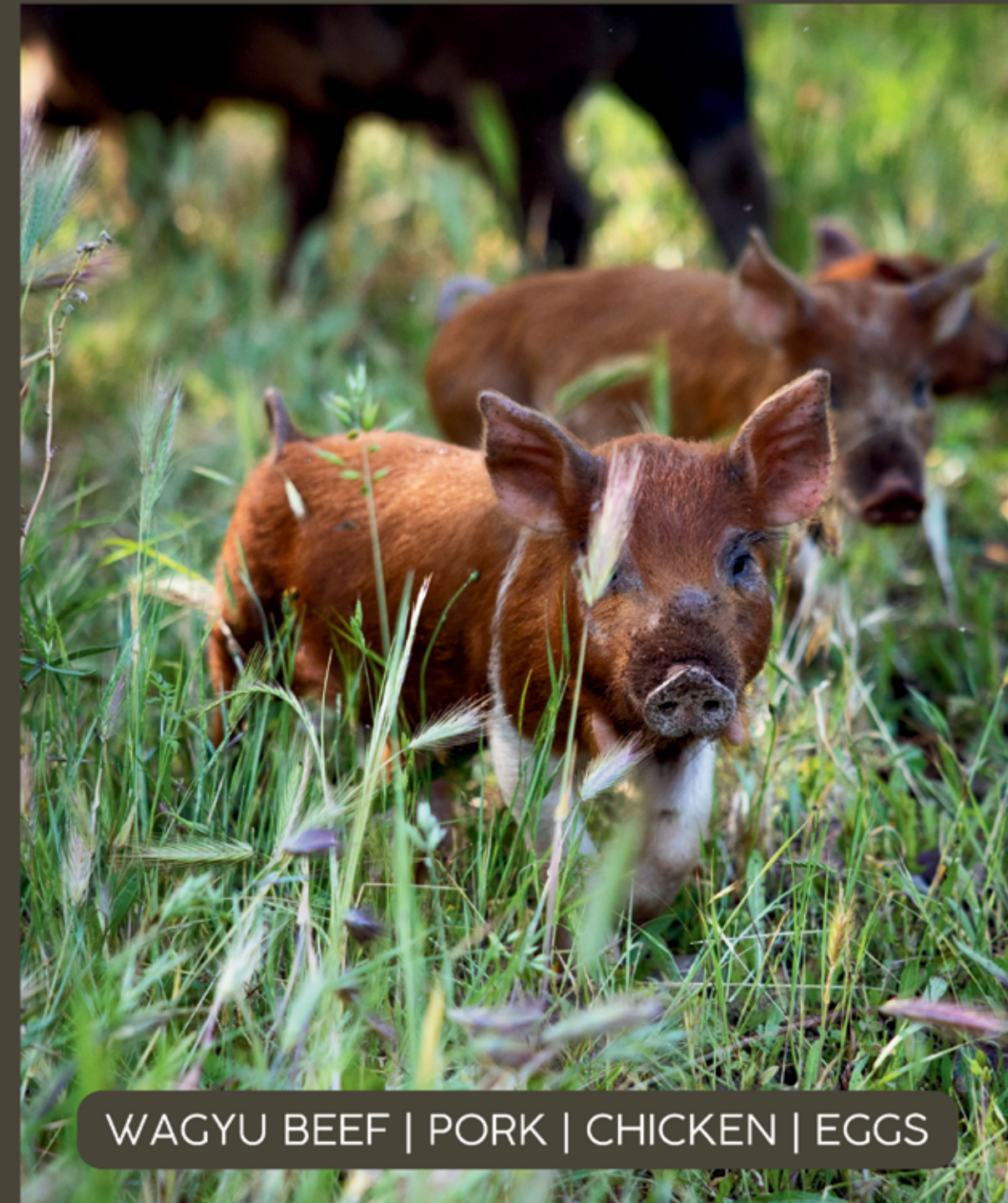
The moral character is the highest form of health that we can have and can help us achieve sustained success in anything we do.

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



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