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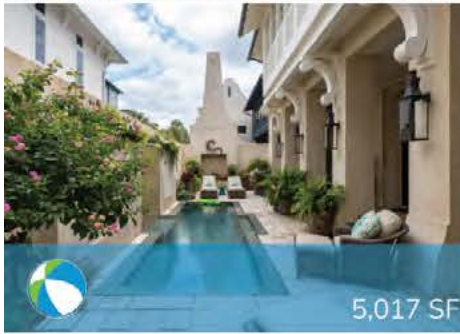
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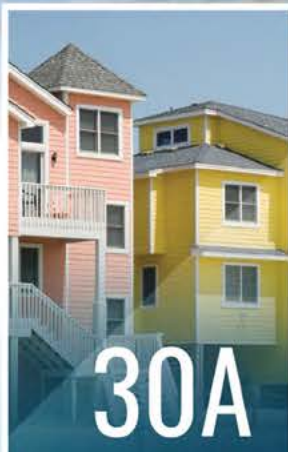
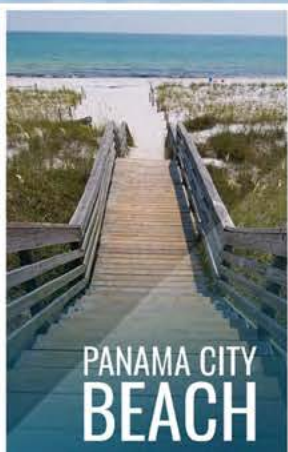
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Gateway to 30A®



letter from the publisher

SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVING IS EASY.



It's been a wild ride. Four months ago, the world looked like something out of a Sci-Fi novel. Today, on 30-A, life is startling to look a lot more "normal". Folks are working on their tans, socializing with friends and family, and eating out in our fabulous restaurants. Almost as if the quarantine never happened.

I guess this can be a reminder to us, that everything passes. Mother Nature has a way to keep things cyclical. Just as life is temporary, so is pain and fear. It's our faith in a better tomorrow and a brighter today, that makes us the resilient, beautiful souls we are on this planet. It's also what will ensure that goodness, hope and progress will remain the cornerstones of our civilization.

Our nation and world has been through so many big moments this year. Whether we are focusing on social distancing or social responsibility and standing by our fellow humans in need, our present times mold us and shape us.

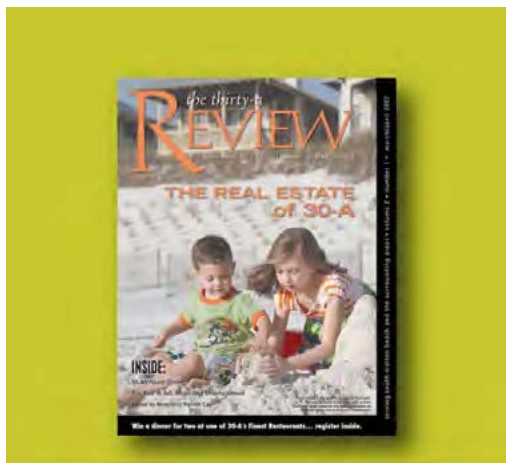
Let's remember the legacy we have on this planet and what we've been through these past months, to make us better people, neighbors, friends and family members. After all, the lessons we learn today, shape our children's tomorrow.

Until next time, catch a wave, play in the sand, and enjoy what life brings.

Cheers,

Miles K. Neiman

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Paradis, Found

How One Local Restaurant Stands the Test of Time

BY DENISE K. JAMES

The menu concept of Paradis is “local and coastal”, in the words of Cosenzi, and the offerings consist of a variety of mouth-watering land and sea favorites for the most discerning palates.

There’s something special about going out to eat when you’re on vacation – or, for that matter, when you’re fortunate to live in a place that feels like vacation all the time. For locals and visitors who discover Restaurant Paradis, it’s not hard to put the worries of “real life” away and enjoy a fine meal and a well-crafted cocktail, while taking in breathtaking views of Rosemary Beach. Owner Danny Cosenzi and his team purchased the restaurant more than six years ago, and they have taken care to maintain these beloved qualities, as well as introduce new concepts and garner new fans.

According to Cosenzi, his invaluable staff is the reason that the restaurant is what it is today. Referring to them as “a senior staff,” he explains how many of them have been around since Paradis’s beginning, making customers feel at home and helping things run smoothly.

“They really take care of the restaurant,” he emphasizes. “For example, Donnie Sellers, who is now referred to as ‘The MVP’, started out as a painter for a project at the restaurant and then asked us for a job. He took a job as a dishwasher—and now he does everything! The regulars who come into the restaurant know him better than they know me.”

It’s most certainly a family environment at Paradis. Besides Sellers, there are bartenders who’ve stood the test



Roasted Chicken Breast



Fresh Fish Entree



Shiso Dusted Ahi Tuna

of time—Jeff Troy, Byron Lewis, Lindsey Hedglin—as well as Chef Mark Eichin and General Manager Michael Wood, both on staff since day one. When the restaurant closed on March 20, due to COVID-19, it was just five days before the anniversary of being open for 11 years. Everyone was pleased to return to the restaurant once conditions were safe, and Cosenzi says he “had a new appreciation for what is offered.”

“When we opened back up on May 7, it was great for my wife and I to see everyone,” he says. “At the time, we offered three new dishes to kick off spring—our snapper, chicken, and tuna entrees were updated — even though the menu was limited. It was nice to see everyone come back and help.”

The menu concept of Paradis is “local and coastal”, in the words of Cosenzi, and the offerings consist of a variety of mouth-watering land and sea favorites for the most discerning palates. The limited spring menu still listed many of the favorites that patrons have come to know and love: diver scallops with wild mushroom and sweet pea risotto; fresh grouper encrusted with lobster and pistou; Shiso dusted ahi tuna; the cast iron filet with black truffle demi-glace; and more. Cosenzi promises the full menu will be back soon.

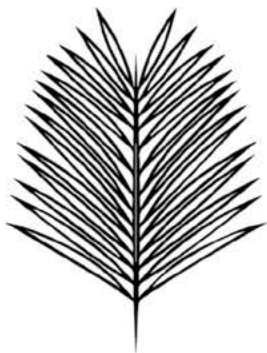
Cocktails, meanwhile, are still as popular as ever inside the Paradis Lounge, and the iconic Agave Maria continues to steal hearts with its blend of reposado tequila, watermelon puree, fresh citrus, and jalapeno. Those who prefer vodka are sure to love the Ruby Red Sunset, made with Deep Eddy Ruby Red grapefruit vodka, fresh citrus, a splash of ginger ale, and a sugared rim. And, for bourbon drinkers, we suggest The French Quarter: Buffalo Trace Bourbon, green chartreuse, and orange bitters. Of course, the cocktail menu also offers a number of other libations, including martinis, wines, and dessert cordials.

Cosenzi and the rest of the Paradis staff look forward to still being able to celebrate 11 years of excellent cuisine and are working on a rescheduled anniversary event. Until then, they are excited to greet visitors and share the love of the island over a fabulous meal.

“We’ve been very blessed during these tough times,”

Cosenzi comments with a smile.

To make a reservation or see the menus online, please visit www.restaurantparadis.com, or call (850) 534-0400.



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A Southern Staple in Seaside

The Great Southern Café

BY TESS FARMER



A mainstay on Central Square for nearly 15 years, the Great Southern Café is now a part of the Seaside tradition. The coastal casual restaurant fuses Southern cooking with flavors from around the world, and features local produce, meat, and dairy from nearby farms and fresh seafood from the Gulf of Mexico.

“We pride ourselves on our connection to the local community and strive to be a cornerstone of support and reliability to our people. It’s the foundation of our company’s mission,” says owner and Chef Jim Shirley.

In the mid-90s, Shirley opened his first restaurant in Pensacola: Madison’s Diner (named after his daughter Madison). This was followed by the Screaming Coyote and The Fish House in 1998. Following these successes, he launched the Great Southern Café in 2006.

Sunday brunch is a tradition on 30-A, and at Great Southern Café it’s met with beignets and coffee, crowd-pleasing Bloody Marys, and a fried green tomato benedict, to name a few customer favorites. Be sure to top your classic breakfast off with Big Jim’s World Famous Oyster Juice in the tequila bottles on each table.

Shirley’s signature dish, Grits à Ya Ya, is a customer favorite and celebrated around the nation. The dish was named “best Southern dish in the state of Florida” by Florida Travel and Life magazine. It was also chosen by U.S. Congressman Jeff Miller (former Florida state representative) to take to Washington, D.C. for A Taste of the South, an event held on Capitol Hill for over 1000 dignitaries.

Shirley and his team incorporate Southern accents into new culinary ideas and trends, select fine wines, and seek out partnerships with local farmers to supply fresh produce, meats and dairy. As a Pensacola native, Chef Shirley applies his knowledge of local waters and his family’s farming histories to promote sustainable agriculture and fishing.

His style of cooking is one he calls modern southern cuisine. As the son of a Navy pilot who was stationed all around the world, Shirley learned to enjoy a variety of foods from many cultures. But he always goes back to his roots—his grandmother’s traditional Southern cooking.

“I believe our histories are told by the food we cook and eat and Great Southern tells the story of my history,

of the great food and people I’ve met along the road,” says Shirley. “Here in Seaside, we mix a taste for international cuisines with Southern cooking and sustainably-sourced, local food.”

Even the building has a storied history. Legend has it that around 1988, several houses in nearby Chattahoochee, Florida were to be practically given away to make room for a road project. A young couple had become enchanted with Seaside and wanted to live there. In an effort to forego architects and builders they set out to convince town founders, Robert and Daryl Rose Davis, to allow them to move one of the Chattahoochee houses to a lot on East Ruskin Street.

Not too long after Seaside was becoming known and upon learning the house on East Ruskin Street was for sale, the Davises bought the small cottage from the couple and moved it to Central Square. They knew some food options and a few wine selections would be a hit; and once again the little house was on the move and opened as The Rose Cafe. Down the road years later, Shirley bought the restaurant and it became the Great Southern Café in 2006, paying homage ever since to the building’s rich history, and reflecting a menu that is truly Southern in every way.

For details on hours of operation and to view a menu, visit thegreatsoutherncafe.com. Attached to the Great Southern Cafe, B.f.f. specializes in boozy bush-wackers, frosé and frozen beverages. Chef Shirley’s family of restaurants also includes other local favorites: Meltdown on 30A, 45 Central Wine and Sushi Bar, The Bay, and Farm & Fire Southern Pizzeria.

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Growing on the Gulf

Bud & Alley's Restaurant Set to Unveil its Expansion in Seaside

BY TESS FARMER

Our goal is to bring more of the sweeping Gulf views and open-air dining that our guests love and appreciate.

After 34 years in Seaside, Bud and Alley's Waterfront Restaurant and Bar is undergoing a major enhancement project and unveiling improvements, including an expansive rooftop deck this summer.

Whether just coming off the beach for a crab cake at lunch, celebrating a milestone life event, or a toast with friends at sunset, generations of visitors and locals alike have been making memories at the iconic restaurant anchoring Seaside's commercial district on the south side of Highway 30-A.

"Our loyal customers keep returning year after year and we are always looking for ways to give back to them in the ways of atmosphere and fresh coastal cuisine," says owner Dave Rauschkolb.

Bud & Alley's was one of the first and is now among the few beachfront fine dining options along Highway 30A. It's a beloved institution that over the years has helped make Seaside what it is today.

Improvements and expansion of the building include a bell tower with elevator, ten new restrooms, upgraded roof deck, and a road-side portion of the restaurant providing a new vantage point looking out and over the town center. Noted author and former town architect Dhiru Thadani of Seaside completed the design of the project with a focus on incorporating the old with the new.

Rauschkolb has expanded his restaurant business as the town of Seaside has grown. He and business partner Scott Witcotski established Bud & Alley's in the early days of the burgeoning coastal community's development in the 80s. The restaurant opened in January of 1986 and was named for Seaside founder Robert Davis's dachshund and Witcotski's cat. The restaurant soon developed a loyal following that continues today, three decades later.

"It's been an incredible opportunity to be a part of the fabric of Seaside and our local community here," says Rauschkolb. He adds that the restaurant's expansion



Bud & Alley's Crab Cakes



Grilled Gulf Fish of the Day



Bud & Alley's Baked Oysters

Photos by Alissa Aryn Photography

project, which includes additional dining space on the roof deck and the lookout bell tower, wasn't necessarily to make room for more guests but to enhance the Bud & Alley's experience and provide new vantage points to the Gulf and overlooking Central Square. "The customer experience on the roof deck will be much improved because you'll be able to sit at the bar and look out over the Gulf," Rauschkolb says. "Our goal is to bring more of the sweeping Gulf views and open-air dining that our guests love and appreciate."



Dave Rauschkolb

Photo by Marla Carter Photography

An additional 850 square feet has been added to the dining area upstairs, providing more room and views of central square to the north side of 30-A as well as the Gulf of Mexico. The road-side portion of the restaurant will offer a grab-and-go extension of Bud & Alley's.

Rauschkolb and his team's devotion to farm- and sea-to-table dining extends to two other casual eateries overlooking the Gulf in Seaside. The Pizza Bar's authentic stylings of wood-fired artisan pizza pies are direct from the cucina's of Italy, while the Taco Bar's fresh flavors and funky vibe are reminiscent of the authentic taquerias on the Mexican border. The Taco Bar has also expanded to include more kitchen space and a wrap-around roadside bar.

As much as things have grown and changed in Seaside and along 30-A, many things remain constant at Bud & Alley's, including the fresh local seafood (the crab cakes being the gold standard), ice-cold cocktails, and friendly atmosphere. A longstanding tradition is the ringing of a cast-iron bell from an 1888 steam train each day at sunset; the bell will be housed in the new bell tower.

"Our motto from day one has been good food, good people, good times," Rauschkolb says. "And it still rings true almost 35 years later. We're looking forward to the next three decades."

The Bud & Alley's team is also made up of Chief of Operations Michael Broadway and Executive Chef David Bishop. Rauschkolb credits their unwavering dedication and leadership for the continued success of the restaurant.

Bud & Alley's is open daily for lunch and dinner. It supports local farmers and fisherman, including GreenMan's Garden, Covey Rise Farms, WaterStreet Seafood, Cool Fish Seafood, and Louisiana Lagniappe. For more information and to make reservations visit budandalleys.com or call (850) 231-5900.



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Brought into Existence, Magically

Local Artist Jonah Allen's Ocean Photography

BY DENISE K. JAMES



It took a few years for Jonah Allen to realize his artistic calling. His first love, music, was fostered by his parents, who generously took Jonah to concerts and encouraged his passion for playing instruments. Then, in high school he picked up a different kind of instrument—his first camera, and, in his words, he “hasn’t put one down since.”

“My first camera was a basic underwater camera,” he says. “It wasn’t great, but it was one of the first cameras you could take underwater. I’m a surfer, and I fell in love with photographing the ocean.”

In college, Allen began taking his love for photography more seriously. As a student at the University of Georgia, he majored in marketing, with double minors in art and music business. Deep down, Allen knew his dream was to be a creative entrepreneur.

“When people think of an artist, they think of ultimate freedom,” he says. “And yes, there is freedom, and I’m thankful to align my passion with making a living. But what most people don’t know is that art is a fight. It takes a mindset of persistence, passion, and patience.”

Scouting the perfect photograph is a delicate balance of atmospheric conditions and being in the right place at the right time. Allen says each image requires three key qualities: intriguing subject matter, a moment that cannot be duplicated, and the ability to elicit emotion in a viewer.

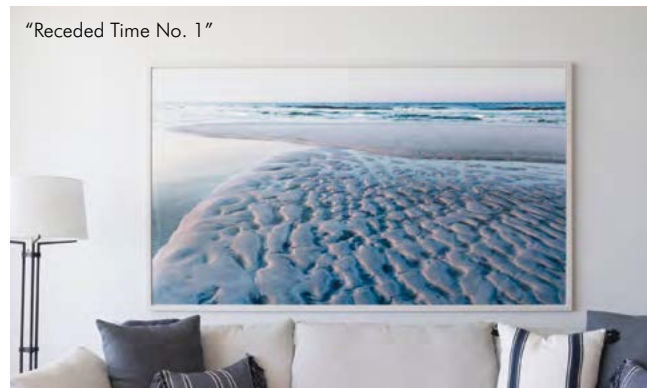
“A picture could be thought of as latent, or even nonexistent—it has to be brought into existence, almost magically,” he says. “A photograph must be made from a precise point: something that I see, that only occurs in one spot, in one particular moment.”

His work encompasses three types of images: aerial photos of the ocean; photos of the sand’s patterns against the shoreline; and photos of breaking waves in the water. He uses a variety of tools, including a chartered helicopter when necessary.

“The inspiration comes from a number of sources, but the greatest two are the relationship between water and light, and the relationship between humans and landscape,” he says. “I do what I can to get the right perspective. Sometimes, I wait for two months for the right conditions to align. That’s what makes these images special—they can never happen again. As soon as conditions present themselves, they are gone in the blink of an eye.”

Allen specializes in large format photography, so the viewer feels like they are looking at the ocean and becomes spiritually submerged within the image. While he values film — and will still occasionally use film for fun—he feels digital photography is more forgiving.

“I treat my process with intensity, determination, and consistency,” he says. “Most of the images I make will never be printed or shared. This is because I fail



quite often. But the failure and disappointment motivate me to work harder and make incredible images.”

Interestingly, he tends to avoid scrolling through other photographer’s feeds on Instagram, in an effort to preserve his own muse.

“I try not to look at too many photographers

on Instagram because I don’t want my creative eye diluted,” he says. “I do look at a lot of painting and sculpture. And there are photographers who have inspired me over the years—Edward Burtynsky, a Canadian, is a huge influence. Also, Ansel Adams and Clyde Butcher.”

While his work is presented at a few galleries across the South—New Orleans and Naples, FL, among others—Allen values the opportunity to connect directly with patrons in person and on his website. He feels that the digital age has brought more flexibility to all creatives, giving them the power to share a message with a broader fanbase.

“At the end of the day, there are two things that are important to me. Art is about conveying emotion. So, if my work can allow someone to feel a certain way, I’ve done my job,” he says. “But, on a deeper level, you can’t get people to care about things unless they experience them firsthand. If my images can inspire someone to go out to the ocean and feel it, they might just care about the future of it.”

Learn more about Jonah Allen's fine art at www.jonahallen.com.

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Curate

BY RYAN LOFTIS



What inspired Gary Handler and his wife Cindy, already the owners of two art galleries in Atlanta, to open a third one, Curate, in Rosemary Beach? It started when Handler became enamored with 30-A while attending the Destin Charity Wine Auction and he decided it would be a good vacation spot for his family. “We started to try out different areas of 30-A and then we discovered and fell in love with Rosemary Beach,” Handler says. “We started having thoughts of spending more time down here than just an annual vacation, and during one of our visits, I discovered a gallery space that was becoming available and felt it was the perfect location—in the heart of Rosemary, directly across the street from The Pearl Hotel—for the personality of our brands and how we do business. Not wanting to let the space get away, we acted quickly, and then our dream came true when we opened up Curate. It all happened fast, but definitely feels like it was meant to be.”

Just what is Curate’s personality? “Our approach is relationship-based, friendly, and very approachable,” Handler says. “We create a no-pressure environment for our clients to acquire artwork. We’re very customer service driven. If we have the opportunity to take the piece of art from the gallery to the client’s home before they purchase, we love to do that so they can see the piece in their own environment.”

When Curate opened over the 2016 Labor Day weekend, Handler displayed some of the work that had

been most successful in his Atlanta galleries, but he learned quickly that this work wasn’t necessarily what beach clients preferred. “The collection has evolved over the years,” Handler says. “Some of the art is fun and casual, some of it has greater sophistication, but most has an underlying beach theme. Many of the people that visit us here are on vacation. They’re kind of in their happy place, and we have an opportunity for them to take home a beautiful, lasting memory in the form of a painting or sculpture that will constantly remind them of being here.”

Handler has high praise for the local art scene on 30-A. “There are galleries all up and down 30-A with very talented, gifted local artists, many of whom have their own signature galleries.” One unique feature of the Curate experience is the regular artist events it holds approximately six times a year. “Our artists from all over the country love to visit here. For our events, we set them up with an easel, and as clients walk in, they have a chance to meet and connect with the artist on a personal level while watching them paint live.” A different artist is featured at every event, and the goal of establishing con-

nections between them and clients seems to have worked. In fact, “Some clients even schedule their vacation time around the dates certain artists will be in town.”

Curate has approximately two dozen featured artists. Selecting the artists comes naturally now for Handler, who has been in the business more than 25 years: “I have to love the work and I have to love the artist. Having a close, friendly business relation-

ship with all of our artists is very important to me.” Artists range from emerging to more well-established and hail from all over the United States, as well as from Europe and beyond. Some foreign-born artists, like Simon Kenevan from London, eventually came to the United States, while others, like Nicoletta Belletti, who lives and works in Parma, Italy, did not. During their careers, the featured artists have created paintings, glass sculptures, copper sculptures, wood sculptures, bronze frogs, and kaleidoscopes.

While the Handlers currently divide their time between Atlanta and 30-A, they plan to start spending more time in Florida each year and ultimately make the Sunshine State their permanent residence. The Curate team currently has four members and hopes to add one more with the gallery’s long hours. “Five to me seems to be the sweet spot. I don’t want anyone on my team to ever get burned out,” he says. “My business model in Atlanta has always centered on community and my team strives to be supportive, active members and contribute on many levels. We participate in charity events and are interested in seeing our communities thrive and grow. That certainly applies to Rosemary Beach as well. We just love it here, and the chance to offer something special to visitors and full-time residents alike is something we are not only grateful for, but take great pride in. My goal is to continue to bring new and exciting art to the walls of Curate and be a longstanding fixture in the Rosemary Beach community.”

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



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A Slice of History from The Smith House

BY ANNE HUNTER AND KELLY BUZZETT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK GARDNER

A spirited mix of vintage furnishings, historic art, and charming amenities, owners Kelly and Billy Buzzett crafted The Smith House into a welcoming, guest-friendly Grayton home with Old-Florida sophistication. Originally located on a corner lot across from The Red Bar, The Smith House was built as a one-room beach cottage. Now, one of South Walton County's great historic homes, this local treasure has been a fixture in Grayton Beach for the last 95 years.

Built in 1925 by Tuff and Alline Smith, the house is constructed from rough-sawn cypress that was salvaged from a ship that caught fire and sank off of Grayton in the Gulf of Mexico. "As the story is told," Kelly explains, "the lumber from this ship lined the beaches from Seagrove to Blue Mountain. Mr. W.H. Butler, one of the original Grayton residents, used a horse-drawn wagon to collect the wood, which he then provided to family and friends so that they could build their beach homes." The roof rafters in the living area and kitchen of The Smith House are blackened by burns from the ship fire, where a charred wooden oar also hangs.

Tuff and Alline Smith lived in DeFuniak Springs full-time while spending as much time as they could in Grayton. Tuff's father, Percy Warren Smith, had first visited the area looking for a new home for his family—someplace far from the hard, cold winters of South Dakota. One of his early visits to the area, in 1898, included a long camping trip to Grayton Beach. He later told his children about the wild and desolate beauty of Grayton Beach, which must have impressed young Tuff. In 1903, the family moved to DeFuniak Springs, where Tuff's father became a prosperous merchant and dairy farmer.

The Smiths both loved to fish and were well known for their fishing abilities. They also loved dogs and always brought one or two to the beach. Tuff wrote poetry and



was a self-taught artist. In fact, one of his paintings (an abstract rendering of a seahorse) and several of his drawings and etchings hang in The Smith House today, along with a copy of one of his untitled poems from 1930, in which he eulogizes a favorite dog.

When the Smiths originally built the house, they would travel to Grayton from DeFuniak Springs using a sandy trail, decades before Scenic Highway 30A was constructed. On several occasions, Tuff and Alline missed the turn-off and ended up in Seagrove Beach, where they would have to travel across the dunes to get to Grayton. Tuff took preventative measures by hand-painting a sign that said "Grayton Beach" and nailing it to a tree at the place where a traveler would turn south to get to the beach. That sign welcomed and guided travelers for many years until it was no longer needed, and Tuff erected it at the Smith House.

After Tuff's death, Alline continued to enjoy the house, but in the early 1990s she sold it to an old family friend and Grayton regular, Richard Stafford, after making him and his wife Carol promise to never tear it down or change it substantially. In 1995, after Hurricane Opal flooded much of Grayton, Richard and Carol moved the Smith House to its present location on Defuniak Street to protect it from future storms. True to their word, the Staffords preserved its original condition, adding glass to the window openings, shoring up the sagging roofline with large cypress beams, and covering the interior walls with board and batten style "sinker" cypress sawn from giant cypress logs that were salvaged from the bottom of the Choctawhatchee River.

When its third owners, Kelly and Billy Buzzett, purchased the Smith House in 2009, they continued to preserve the historical legacy of the Grayton Beach cottage. Over time Kelly and Billy added contemporary touches while staying true to the original style of the house. They added a modern kitchen, updated the bathroom, and converted part of the long, screened porch into a cozy bunk room. The Buzzetts cherish the Smith House and plan on sharing its vintage charms for many years to come.



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Color and Care for Summer Hair

Tips from Maria Heckscher at MHSalon

WITH DENISE JAMES

Our hair is our crowning glory, so don't let that crown slip in the summer sun! Maria Heckscher, owner of MHSalon, has plenty of tips and product suggestions to ensure that our hair remains glossy and gorgeous all season long. For professional advice, color, and care, visit the new MHSalon 30A, in Rosemary Beach, Florida.

How can I prevent harm to summer hair?

Sun, saltwater, and chlorine are very drying to hair. To accommodate this, you must do a few things, like make sure you are using a solid conditioner and treating your hair to the occasional mask. Try not to over-use heat. I know we all like our hair to look top-notch but giving it a break from the heat will help maintain the integrity of your hair.

Should I wear a swim cap when I swim?

Does showering with fresh water before and after help?

Wearing a swim cap does help — especially if you are going to a community pool, which is often more heavily chlorinated and can be harsh on your hair. It is helpful to wet your hair first and then apply a conditioner before you swim, since the conditioner will act as a barrier to protect the hair. Then, I suggest shampooing afterward with a gentle, moisturizing shampoo to remove any residue or chlorine.

We all hear about SPF for our skin, so what about SPF for our hair? Are there products to protect our hair in the summer sun

There are definitely products to help with summer sun. The company I work for, Framesi, is based in Milan, Italy. It is a family-owned company that has been creating products since the 1970s. Framesi products all have sunscreen and are thermal protectants. PRIMER 11, one of my favorites, does 11 different things, including preventing static electricity, detangling, eliminating frizz, retaining color, and more.

Is there anything I can do to prepare my hair for my vacation in the summer sun?

As a treatment prior to your trip, you can use coconut oil or olive oil to put moisture into your hair and leave it in 20 minutes or longer. Just remember to apply shampoo directly to the hair afterward and give it a second wash. Bring all your moisturizing products to help what the



Maria at work



heat and sun have removed. After the trip, you can visit your stylist, and they may suggest a treatment or a gloss that can add a bit of tone to unwanted brassy ends. Or, if your hair has gotten too light in the sun, conditioning and tone will help.

using less heat but still look put together.

Learn more about MHSalon at www.mhsalon30a.com

If our hair is color treated, what special care should we implement during summer months?

For brunettes, a hat is always suggested, since brunette color can get a little brassy in the sun. For blondes, the sun and saltwater can make hair dry, so use plenty of moisturizing shampoos and conditioners with sunscreen.

Is aging a factor in summer hair damage?

As we age, we do get greyer and our hair can become dryer. Due to hormone changes, grey hair has a different texture and the color can fade quicker. Keep in mind that if you use quality hair color, your hair is less likely to fade. Good color will also help minimize how dry your hair will be.

What about tips for ethnic or curly hair texture?

It's all about moisture. Argan oil is a great product to put on the hair to maintain moisture in the sun. Curly and ethnic hair has a tendency to look dry because the cuticle is not flat like someone with straight hair. To help with frizz, I suggest Stop Frizz by Framesi. This product is great and will not leave your hair feeling oily.

What trends are you seeing for the summer?

Less is better, and a lot of people are sticking with low-maintenance hair. If you want to go lighter, I would suggest some subtle baby lights. These are low maintenance but add a natural sun-kissed look. A simple, beachy style would be to let your hair dry naturally, and once it is done, use a hairspray to control the fly-aways. Afterward, get your curling iron and add a few soft curls, then run your brush through your hair. It will look like a very effortless blowout. This style is perfect for summer because you are

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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 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 consultations, 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.



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ATL & 30A

Six Feet at the Beach

BY JULIE HERRON CARSON

“When I opened the doors on May 7, you wouldn’t believe all the smiles. Social distancing kept us from hugging hello, but didn’t dampen our enthusiasm.”

The many excellent dining options in the area are a key component of the 30-A experience. Families and friends flock to favorite watering holes to celebrate milestones, and vacationers love to return to “their” special restaurant year after year. In an industry where longevity is an exception rather than the rule, a number of local restaurateurs have enjoyed years of success by combining warm hospitality, consistent high quality, outstanding service; and plain, old-fashioned hard work.

But 2020 is a year like no other, and local restaurant owners and staff have had to quickly adapt and innovate to safely prepare food and serve their customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. During March and April, some restaurants temporarily closed, while others offered take-out service only. In early May, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued an executive order allowing restaurants to re-open under Phase I Guidelines, and expanded those guidelines a couple of weeks later. However, Seaside’s founders and leadership took a more cautious approach, closing all commercial businesses in mid-March with an announced reopening of May 29.

While the loss of business was unexpected and unwelcome, 30-A restaurant owners immediately began figuring out how to safely take care of customers and staff in the short term, while preparing to later welcome back patrons.

“We began putting safety protocols in place immediately, so we would be ready to reopen for in-house dining when the restrictions were lifted,” says Nikki Nickerson, who owns Cowgirl Kitchen Restaurant & Bar and CK Feed & Supply Provisions & Gifts in Rosemary Beach, Cowgirl Kitchen Market & Café in Seagrave Beach, and Blue Mabel Smokehouse & Provisions in Blue Mountain Beach. “I made the decision early on that our restaurants would remain open for curbside meals to go, and we created cowgirltogo.com to facilitate ordering. Not only was I concerned about keeping my staff employed, but I wanted to offer some comfort to area residents with delicious, home-made food they could enjoy at home.

“All of our locations are family friendly, with reasonably priced menu options and retail-driven wine and signature cocktails. The contactless payments and safe ways to get food proved to be valuable to so many people who just don’t enjoy cooking everyday. A lot of people were very happy we were open, and I am so grateful to our regular customers who made it a point to order from our restaurants once or twice a week. They lifted our spirits, kept us connected, and enabled me to keep over half of my regular staff employed. We’ve increased our outdoor seating at all three restaurants and are excited to welcome everyone back. We are fully staffed again, and are keeping the shelves at all locations fully stocked with provisions and food to go.”

www.cowgirlkitchen.com,
www.bluemabel.com

Danny and Monica Cosenzi, owners of Rosemary Beach’s fine dining destination Restaurant Paradis, developed another creative solution. “We made the decision not to offer take-out here in Rosemary Beach. Instead, we offered local delivery from our sister restaurant, Back Beach Barbecue in Panama City Beach,” says Danny Cosenzi. “While the restaurant was closed, we stayed connected to our customers via social media, inviting them to send us photos and videos so we could all stay in touch. We even hosted a virtual celebration in late March for the 11th Anniversary of Restaurant Paradis.

“Monica and I want to thank everyone who reached out to us, purchased gift cards, and called to make sure our staff was doing OK. Their love and support were absolutely amazing. We were more than ready to reopen for dinner when the guidelines lifted, and our award-winning chef, Mark Eichin, has created three new entrees to kick off the season. When I opened the doors on May 7, you wouldn’t believe all the smiles. Social distanc-

Bud & Alley’s:
Boiled Shrimp



The Great Southern Café:
Crab Cakes and Fried Green Tomatoes



ing kept us from hugging hello, but didn’t dampen our enthusiasm.”

www.restaurantparadis.com

Just up the road, Christy Spell Terry, owner of George’s at Alys Beach, is thankful her restaurant group had already begun working on a new online app for ordering and payment prior to the pandemic. “When we saw what was happening, our restaurant group escalated the process to create the Heartland Guest app so we would have options for touchless customer interaction,” says Terry. “From a strictly business point of view, it would have made the most sense to close the restaurant, but we knew our employees and many of our customers wanted and needed us to stay open. The new app was a big help as we focused on takeout service and limiting

George's: Seared Sea Scallops



operating as 'Seaside Al Fresco,'" says Dan Tinghitella, director of culture and operations for Great Southern Café in the heart of Seaside. "There are tents lining the Square, creating an open-air market for guests to enjoy as they dine or wait to enter our shops and restaurants. With the parking spaces temporarily removed, Great Southern Café has a wonderful opportunity to expand our footprint outside and safely accommodate additional diners for lunch and dinner under a large tent at our entrance. We're known for both outstanding food and the lively dining scene on our front patio, so we view the new setup as an enhancement to what people already love about Great Southern.



Restaurant Paradis: Fresh Fish Entree

person-to-person contact. Now that we're back open for lunch and dinner, we're encouraging our guests to continue to use the system even with in-house dining.

"During the spring, we kept our patrons up-to-date on new menu offerings and specials via George's Facebook page," she continues. "It was a wonderful way for us all to stay connected, too. We also prepared food packages for employees who needed help, and added a gratuity to take-out orders to benefit our furloughed staff. George's parent company, Spell Restaurant Group, created an online fundraiser for employees of the company's local restaurants, and we are so grateful for the support this effort received."

www.spellrestaurantgroup.com

"When visitors return to Seaside this summer, they will immediately notice some changes. The most obvious is that Central Square has been closed to cars and is now



James Murphy of Barefoot BBQ

"We offered curbside pick-up during the spring, but as we move into the summer, we will discontinue the pick-up operation and focus on seated dining for lunch and dinner. As we modify the restaurant and train our staff to incorporate all of the required safety protocols, we will pause Great Southern's breakfast service for now, and hope to bring it back later in the season. Along with all of the businesses in Seaside and along 30-A, we will evaluate and adjust as needed to keep patrons and employees safe."

www.thegreatsoutherncafe.com

James Murphy, who has operated one of Seaside's most popular airstream walk-up restaurants, Barefoot BBQ, for over a decade with his business partner Jenny Murphy, made good use of the weeks Seaside was closed to make necessary changes in preparation for a late May re-opening. "As an airstream operation, we didn't have in-house dining, but we needed to figure out how our staff could safely operate in close quarters and how we could adjust interactions with our customers as they

order and pick up food," says Murphy. "We now take orders in advance by phone and apps; and spent some of the down time as if it was a soft opening, working any kinks out of the new system. My two priorities are to operate as safely as possible, while maintaining as much of the Barefoot BBQ airstream experience that our patrons love."

Murphy acknowledges the lengthy town shutdown was extremely difficult but appreciates the way the town supported its business owners. "I have to take my hat off to the Seaside leadership. While so many of us were out of work, the Chapel at Seaside launched a fundraising campaign to support the employees of Seaside businesses, and the Davis Family Foundation matched the money raised. Over \$300,000 was distributed, and a second fundraiser has been launched which promises to be just as successful. Everyone at Seaside is working together to adapt to this unprecedented situation, and I'm looking forward to welcoming customers back to Barefoot BBQ." www.facebook.com/barefootbbq

If there's such a thing as a silver lining during a pandemic, it may be that Bud & Alley's Waterfront Restaurant and Rooftop Bar, a Seaside tradition for nearly 25 years, has been undergoing an extensive expansion project. Since late last year, owner Dave Rauschkolb has been overseeing the addition of a spacious boardwalk with seating and bar service overlooking the Gulf, and an expanded Rooftop Bar and Viewing Pavilion with new bathrooms on the north side of the Roof Deck. A long-anticipated addition is a tower housing an elevator to provide additional access to the second floor with an Observation Post at the top of the tower. This will be the new home of Bud & Alley's famous sunset bell. During the construction, Black Bear Bread Company in Grayton Beach, co-owned by Rauschkolb and Phil McDonald, has been offering take-out service, and in mid-May, Bud & Alleys, Pizza Bar, and Taco Bar in Seaside began curbside pick-up service.

"Even though these have been difficult times for all of our local business owners, I believe it was a wise move for Seaside's leadership to shut down the town," says Rauschkolb. "It was the best thing they could do for the health of our residents and visitors. Now, with the collective decision to reopen at the end of May with social distancing and face masks strongly encouraged, the merchants are excited to welcome locals and visitors back to our restaurants and shops. Personally, I can't wait for everyone to see the new spaces at Bud & Alley's. I have a feeling I am going to get a little teary when I get to ring the sunset bell once again."

www.budandalleys.com

Jewelry Care on the Coast

BY CAROLYN BRIGMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF McCASKILL & COMPANY



Carolyn Brigman

As you're planning your beach trip and thinking about what jewelry you want to take, it's important to think of what's best for your jewels. Depending on the components that make up the metal in your jewelry, it can have adverse and long-term reactions to saltwater and chlorine. Some gemstones can even be lightened by long term sun exposure. Therefore, if you're going to wear your beloved jewelry for your fun summertime activities, it's imperative to give your pieces a little extra TLC to keep them sparkling.

Here's some tips.

First things first. Keep in mind that once your hands hit cold water from a pool or the beach, your hands will shrink. We frequently have distraught guest come in, because they have lost their ring in the water. Any rings should come off before you go in, unless they are really tight, and you never take them off. Do not throw them in beach bags. It is always best to keep them in a safe place.

Some metals hold up better than others against the strain of a beach day. When exposed to the high content of salt in saltwater, or harsh chemicals in chlorine, many jewelry types can be affected. Pewter, copper, and sterling silver are the most likely to tarnish. A better choice would be gold or platinum, since they resist tarnish more effectively. Salt, even in your sweat, can be corrosive over time, so it's always best to clean your jewelry from time to time to remove life's elements.

Chlorine, with its harsh chemicals, can affect almost all metal types. Not only can it have adverse reactions to some components in your sterling silver and other metals, causing tarnish and dark spots, but it can also break down soldering spots and make the metal brittle



So, what to do about all the abrasiveness on your jewels during your beach getaway? Clean them asap!

- For a quick clean when you're in a rush, you can give it a basic wipe-down. With a soft damp cleaning cloth, gently wipe the surfaces of your jewelry making sure to get in all the crevasses. This will help make sure any salt, sand, sunscreen or other chemical leftover from your fun day with not stay on your jewelry and continue to corrode, tarnish or cause wear on your beautiful piece.
- Now, for a heavier cleaning. For most stones and metals, it is safe to use a mild soap and warm water treatment.

Make a bowl of warm water with a mild soap addition, (or ammonia for precious metals and stones) and let your jewelry soak for a few minutes to loosen underlying debris and lift oils. Then, with a soft toothbrush, gently work the bristles on the back side first (inside prongs, joints, and all over) and finish with the top. Most debris is stuck on the underside in open spaces.



Jewelry designs by Erica Courtney

Rinse thoroughly with warm water and then dry with a soft cloth. Your jewelry will now be back to sparkling and shining! If your jewelry is not safe to be soaked, use the same warm water and soap solution in a soft cloth and give it a thorough rub down and risk.



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and weak. The higher the carat of gold the better. Lower carat gold contains alloys like copper, silver, nickel, and zinc that can be affected. Rose gold is the exception because it contains copper, which could be susceptible to damage from chemicals. Continuous exposure to chlorine can weaken clasp, prongs, etc., fade your metal, and slowly erode the finish and polish of gemstones. Also be cautious of knowing which gemstones absolutely cannot go in chlorine due to fading and drying out—turquoise, opal, pearl, lapis, etc. Due to the harshness of chemicals in chlorine, best to not wear your jewelry in the pool.

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Nikki Nickerson Discovers New Frontiers

BY TESS FARMER

Born in Texas and raised in the South, Nickerson's enterprising spirit led her away from corporate America that she conquered in the '90s toward new, sun-drenched opportunities at the beach. Founder and owner of Cowgirl Kitchen in Rosemary Beach and Cowgirl Kitchen Market in Seagrove, she and her team have recently opened their newest venture, Blue Mabel Restaurant and Bar in Blue Mountain Beach, on the west end of 30-A.

What was your original idea for opening a restaurant on 30-A?

"I started thinking about the restaurant business in 2004/2005, mostly stemming from my passion for collecting wine. I always enjoyed cooking and entertaining and felt it would provide a good synergy with my real estate clients to have a place to wine and dine while they looked for property. I love the hospitality world, bringing people together to break bread and enjoy each other's time together. Eating and drinking together is one of the greatest joys we can experience in our day-to-day rituals."

How has doing business changed and evolved since then?

"The first ten years were pretty nose to the grindstone. I was working at our flagship location 80-90 hours a week for the first seven years, then my time started to split into the new locations as they were getting off the ground. My focus now is on training my senior leaders to lead with a good amount of autonomy to make smart decisions. I am focused now on culture and innovation—how can we improve everything we do always, for both staff and our customer dining experiences."

Can you describe your vision for the future of your businesses?

"I strongly believe in putting money back into the businesses to make improvements. I recently was awarded a James Beard Foundation Fellowship, which is a truly rewarding experience to be surrounded by other female culinary chefs and owners with the opportunity to collaborate on our work worlds. The experience has provided great feedback and support for continuing to cultivate my businesses and train new young leaders in my company and in the community."

What is your vision for building a successful team?

"Having a great team working along with me has everything to do with our success and growth. A great team for me is not only managers, it is everyone from servers to assistants to dishwashers. How we treat each other and how everyone feels about the company and working together is essential. I have always made it a point to hire based on mindset first. I feel people can learn skills and become more competent with training and development. It's most important to have a mindset of thinking positively, taking responsibility, and having a good work ethic to become an integral part of our team. When you love what you are doing, you can have challenging days and look forward to easier days again. There will always be a mix of both."

"Growing more locations has enabled us to offer more upward mobility with the company long term, as well as better benefits for everyone. Our goal is to continue to provide opportunities for ownership and equity roles for all staff. I really love my team, they have big hearts and make life really fun."

Now let's get to the food! What's your favorite dish at each restaurant?

Cowgirl Kitchen Restaurant and Bar: "Hoo Ha Pizza and our house salad. One of our most popular pizzas is the Drunken Cowgirl, we've had it on the menu since 2007. It sounds strange but it has a special red vodka cream sauce, garlic, tomato, sliced green olives, bacon, mozzarella and fresh parmesan... the Hoo Ha version was created by Rosemary Beach resident Bret Azzarelli and we add jalapeños to it. (Inside tip: It's not on the menu, but the staff know what it is when ordered!)"

Cowgirl Kitchen Market: "Veggie Tacos. We take black bean patties and top them with roasted corn salsa, hatch green chile crema, queso fresco, and avocado. It's a terrific combo and makes for the perfect lunch on a beach day."

Blue Mabel Restaurant and Bar: "Peel and Eat Shrimp Bowl. Executive Chef Steven Sandy makes a smoked kimchi butter which has a nice spice level to it, and adds



Peel & Eat Shrimp



Lump Crab Cake

Brussels sprouts, fingerling potatoes, house sausage, and gulf shrimp. Then we serve it with sage biscuits to mop up the sauce... it's pretty delicious and unique, just right for the patio and paired with margaritas."

Do you have the only drive thru on 30-A? What other conveniences do you offer vacationers?

"We are the only drive thru on 30-A but it's not yet open at Blue Mabel. What we do provide on the convenience end that most people don't know about is catering drop-off service through our catering company, Southern Belle Catering. We do casual offerings that are perfect for visitors staying for the week and also have a full-scale catering department with a great director overseeing the production of all of our dips, spreads, casseroles, which are for sale at each location."



Tuna Poke

“Our goal is to continue to provide opportunities for ownership and equity roles for all staff. I really love my team, they have big hearts and make life really fun.”



Nikki Nickerson and Chef Steven Sandy

you’re going to a nice place for lunch or dinner but you don’t have to get fully dressed up because after all, it’s the beach! We wanted a menu that encouraged sharing and to be a place for friends to gather. Our space is big enough to have large groups of friends and family and we take reservations, which we think is really important during peak times of the year.”

What are customer favorites at Blue Mabel?

“People are crazy about the brisket. We smoke it in our smokehouse for 24 hours and it is something I am proud of serving here at the beach. We have some tough critics and people love it. We also have a big fan base for our Chicken Confit and Dumplings, it has pulled roasted chicken and housemade gnocchi—a pretty satisfying and hearty dish. And for appetizers our Corn Elote Dip with Tortilla Chips, and our Shishito Pimento Cheese with Housemade Old Bay Crackers, Smoked Red Snapper Dip are our top sellers.

What local farms are your meats and produce sourced from? Why is that important to you and your guests?

“It is always important to know where our food is coming from and I think our guests appreciate our attention to sourcing and making sure we have the highest quality and sustainable product we can provide for our volume of business. For our seafood, we work with Waterstreet out of Apalachicola as well as a couple of locally-licensed fisherman. Meats currently are sourced from Winn Farms out of Texas but I’m also working with Sunset Ranch out of Baker, Florida and Whitehall Farms in Alabama. We get the wood for our smokehouse all from local sources. Our fresh produce is supplied by Two Dog Farms near Vicksburg, Mississippi and Covey Rise Farms in Louisiana.”

What new items/trends can your guests expect to find on the menu this season?

“Blue Mabel has an eclectic menu from comfort food to Asian fusion menu items to fresh and delicious salads. The menu is divided into different sections for shared plates, salads and bowls, brisket/burgers/tacos at lunch, and dinner-only entrees like our bone-in ribeye, lamb chops, fresh red snapper, and our signature Chicken Confit and Dumplings. It’s upscale enough to feel like

What is your favorite menu item currently?

“I am a big fan of our lamb chops. The chops are marinated in a Bulgogi Barbecue Sauce which then become caramelized on our wood-fired grill. I make a Korean pesto and green tomato relish for the chops and layer them with grilled bok choy and shiitakes on top of a potato cake. It is a flavorful, great bite!”

Blue Mabel Restaurant & Bar: Upscale casual with a full service bar. Open Wed thru Mon. Lunch and dinner, with a daily happy hour at the bar from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Open 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. daily. www.bluemabel.com. (850) 744-0040

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Cowgirl Kitchen Market: Serving fast casual breakfast and lunch (breakfast all day). 3005 E County HWY 30A Seagrove Beach, Florida. www.cowgirlkitchen.com. Open 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

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Ahoy the Store

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

These days, you hear a lot about authenticity and transparency, about the reason a company started and its vision. These are often what makes us, as consumers, relate to the brand and the people behind it. We see ourselves in the narrative or we find ourselves admiring them. And when we can follow the story of how and why it began, we become invested in it all the more: shopping at their stores, buying their wares, feeling that we are somehow buying more than just a product, but something special.

For Jim Bradley, the idea of creating something, somewhere, like that began in 1977, when he opened his first store in Panama City Beach. A shop with floors covered in sand from the beach and decorated solely with materials salvaged from old shipwrecks, buoys, and nets found along the local shoreline, Bradley aptly named the store Shipwreck. So began the narrative of his very own legacy. Clearly, the man had dedication, as he lived behind the store in his van with his dog Leeja, working tirelessly to make his dream a success.

Success was realized, and over the next 40-plus years, Bradley and his dog grew the store to somewhat of an icon. Now co-owned with his daughter, Tessa Jensen, Shipwreck has become a local favorite, famously known as one of the oldest stores in the area—all because of Bradley and his unwavering dedication to stay the course and offer his customers something authentic. “Being locally owned and one of the oldest stores on the beach definitely sets us apart,” says Jensen. “We are a family and it shows. We’ve had some of our employees working here since we opened our doors, so when customers come in, they see a familiar face. Our (product) quality is another reason we differ from our competitors. We love to purchase from companies who are striving to do better for our planet, local vendors from PCB, and other family-owned brands. We even have an entire private label line created only for Shipwreck,” she continues with no shortage of pride shining through in her words. “Not only do we want to offer our customers the best products, but we also like to give them lots of options. It’s really hard for someone to come to our store and not find something they like.”

Boasting more than 44,000 square feet of retail space dedicated to everything from resort wear and



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Men's Clothing

boutique clothing, to lifestyle accessories and beach supplies, it's little wonder that a customer would be hard-pressed to leave empty-handed. “Each department has different specializations,” Jensen explains. “Our boutique side focuses on offering the latest trends for men and women...the surf brands, swimwear, and fishing lines on our boutique side always are a best-seller. We also have the largest selection of sunglasses on the beach in our Sunglass Shop and they are one of our top-selling items. On the other end of our store are beach supplies, t-shirts,

and souvenirs that are our vacationers' favorites. Our private label line has been extremely successful for both our local customers and tourists on vacation, and all of our beach supplies and our PCB logo shirts do great, as well!”

And while stores offering these products might seem a dime-a-dozen, Shipwreck has managed to maintain uniqueness, even through it may have come a long way from that sand-covered shop decorated in cast-off materials. “Our store is a great place for the entire family to come and spend a couple of hours while all being entertained,” says Jensen. “While you're waiting on your airbrush t-shirt (from some of the best artists on the beach), you can climb into a shark head, take a photo with Elvis, and sit on a unicorn. On the other side of the store, you can get a henna tattoo, try on a thousand pairs of sunglasses, and have a fashion show in the dressing room with your friends. If shopping isn't your thing, you can come and relax in our new lounge by Saltwater Hoppie or play games in the arcade.”

Clearly, Bradley and Jensen have a vision. And the fact that Shipwreck has successfully weathered more than 40 years of choppy waters—everything from spiraling economies to devastating storms—is much to be proud of. But more than that, father and daughter have reason to hold their heads high for the fact that through it all—through good times and bad—they have kept their dedication to themselves and being authentic, always remembering their humble beginnings and those shipwrecks that once decorated the early dream.

Shipwreck LTD. is located at 10570 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach, FL 32407. For more information, call (850) 233-6750 or visit www.shipwreckltd.com.

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New Opportunities

BY JEFF SCARLATA

Grant and Cooper's passion for real estate is both professional and personal and they are able to provide unique and comprehensive insight on the area and the industry.

Marianne Grant and Blake Cooper have an exciting new focus for 2020. The acquisition/merger of Homes on 30A by Engel & Völkers presents expanded opportunities for them as exclusive real estate advisors. The largest added bonus is for their clients, allowing for increased exposure and marketing solutions for their listings.

Homes on 30A was owned by Brokers/Owners Karen Holder and Marianne Grant for the past 5 years. Beau Blankenship of Engel & Völkers approached them with the proposal to join forces and expand their business to include Homes On 30A's office located on the west end of 30-A, complementing Engel & Völkers's east end location to facilitate convenient coverage of the entire 30-A corridor.

Grant and Cooper have been real estate partners for 16 years and have 40 years of combined experience in the NW Florida Real Estate market. Market knowledge coupled with dedication and consistency describe this dynamic team. Their expertise in the market spans from Sandestin to Inlet Beach, with a primary focus on the



Blake Cooper and Marianne Grant

Scenic 30A corridor and its select communities. Properties within the 30-A area continue to realize heavy demand with appreciation steadily on the rise as the number of new people visiting and moving to the area from all over the country and the world continues to grow.

Grant and Cooper's passion for real estate is both professional and personal and they are able to provide unique and comprehensive insight on the area and the industry. "Marianne and I focus mainly on listening to our clients' needs, while maintaining integrity and delivering exceptional customer service," says Cooper. This experience is greatly appreciated by their clients.

Another critical member of Grant and Cooper's team is Joan Gough who is in charge of data management, web

updates, open houses, and provides support wherever needed. With their team's combined efforts and resources, they pride themselves on ensuring their clients find their perfect spot—or sell their property at the desired price... while most importantly, enjoying the ride.

Blankenship, a licensed partner of Engel & Völkers, is excited about the new merger. "Marianne, along with her associates, have great experience and expertise and we are honored to have them be part of our growing company," says Blankenship. "I feel the heart behind this merger is that it will be a benefit to both companies; as it will create a bigger presence on the west side of 30-A, it will help get high end listings marketed effectively, and also give sellers the broader exposure that they could not provide before," he adds. "We have real estate offices in our feeder markets and in Europe, an opportunity (our) advisors could not present to sellers before, which is a huge advantage. Whether buyers are coming from Denver, London, or Belize—30-A is a great market and it is changing. We will now be able to reach all types of buyers in this market that has changed so much in a short time period," he adds.

To discover more about Grant and Cooper at Engel & Völkers 30A Beaches, visit MarianneAndBlake.com 3092 West County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

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The Beach Group

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS BADOUR

Primary neighborhoods are booming, along with some of the older neighborhoods—even the very high-dollar properties. The demand is up all around.

Here on the beaches of 30-A the sun rises and sets, and the tides go in and out along the shorelines of the Emerald Coast. Some things never change.

During a summer where many things have changed for all of us and the future is uncertain at best, it turns out the desire for beach real estate also hasn't changed. If anything, the demand has only increased as 2020 continues. And if you ask veteran 30-A'er Ron Romano what the "new normal" looks like, he will tell you it's busier than ever and not much has slowed down for businesses like The Beach Group.

"People have realized they don't have to be in the office as much, if at all, anymore," Romano says. "And if you're going to be stuck somewhere, where would you rather be: In an apartment in the city or down here on the beach?"

Romano and Andy Wiggins are co-owners of The Beach Group Real Estate. The local boutique business is non-franchised with about 20 agents specializing in all kinds of clientele and properties, from families to discreet celebrities and high net worth individuals to real estate investment funds. The Beach Group has been around now for 20 years, and in that time, Romano has seen 30-A through a lot of changes.

"We've been through oil spills and hurricanes and plenty of unexpected things that have shut down everything," Romano describes. "After the BP oil spill, people said 'things will never be the same.' For a period of time, that was true."

In other words, the current COVID-19 landscape will hopefully be a period we one day (soon?) leave



Ron Romano

Photo by Little Miss Creative Fantasia Lyons

behind. In the meantime, we are all living our lives differently, to varying degrees.

"People right now are traveling less, working less, and can now work from anywhere in many cases," he says. "In the fall, who knows? There might be another wave. But for now, it's been crazier here than I've ever seen it."

Simply put, the real estate remains constant, with a "seller's market" still the trend for the foreseeable future. Homes on the market here in the Panhandle are primarily secondary houses to begin with, so most properties are unoccupied (meaning showings and tours can happen as normal).

For everyone else with a second home on 30-A? Well, they're already here at the beach (and have been since many people stopped going into work in the early spring).

In fact, it was so busy for Memorial Day weekend, The Beach Group had people calling in desperation for a rental property (which they don't work with). Romano guesses the region was at 100 percent occupancy for the unofficial start of summer.

"People have short memories; coming to 30-A, everyone gets into that vacation mindset," Romano explains. "Families are spending time together and some of the rules [during the quarantine] just don't apply anymore."

Plus, 30-A offers the relaxation and quality of life we all want a slice of. State taxes are low, home prices are reasonable, and there's a stimulus going—all things that point to an increase of primary homeowners who want to live year-round on the beach.

"These past several months have been the opposite of what people feared would happen here," Romano says. "We don't have enough deals to meet the demand. Primary neighborhoods are booming, along with some of the older neighborhoods—even the very high-dollar properties. The demand is up all around."

But don't worry, because a supply of homes continues to be built. If you're a tradesman, you're in luck; there's no shortage of jobs along 30-A, where new construction continues. In fact, Romano says they can't build fast enough.

"When crazy, unexpected things happen, you realize that life is short. When you evaluate what's important to you, quality of life is always at the top of the list," Romano says. "This past spring, the first people allowed to travel in were the homeowners—and everyone else without a house realized they want one."

Romano knows everyone here on 30-A is ready to put the past several months in the rearview mirror.

"Right now, people are still taking precautions, and that's a good thing," he says. "But everything is open for business here on 30-A. Just BYOTP."

That's 'Bring Your Own Toilet Paper'.

Ron Romano is co-owner of The Beach Group with Andy Wiggins. Romano and Wiggins have been Real Estate Brokers for nearly 30 years. The Beach Group is located next to WaterColor on Scenic 395. Learn more at www.TheBeachGroup.com or reach out to Romano at Ron@TheBeachGroup.com.

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Celeste Rustin

BY ANDY BUTCHER



Celeste Rustin

I've gotten great satisfaction from every business I have ever owned, because it has always led me to the next point in my career or in my path.

No matter how far you go, no matter what other great places you get to see, for some people there's just something about home that keeps tugging them back. And so, after a varied and successful business career that has taken her from the frozen reaches of Russia to the warm waters of the Cayman Islands, Celeste Rustin has returned to the Emerald Coast.

"We used to spend every summer here," she recalls of family vacations from Albany, Georgia, where her father ran a roofing company. "My folks bought a place in Laguna Beach and from the time I was in second grade we would make a beeline here every year. It was just fabulous growing up."

Having lived the big city life enough, and with three of seven siblings in the area and a vibrant property market for her to bring her realtor experience to, "I decided this would be a good place to come home," Rustin says.

Things have certainly changed since her childhood visits—her parents bought a lot for around \$600 that today costs two hundred times that—but its distinctive appeal endures. "I've been to beaches literally all over the world, and there is no place quite like this with its white sand and turquoise water," she says. "The beaches here are just spectacular, so inviting. It's just so soothing to my soul."

A Berkshire Hathaway agent and certified international property specialist with an interest in commercial development, she sees at least one silver property market lining in the coronavirus cloud. Stay-at-home orders have made more people realize that remote working is feasible long-term, she observes, perhaps encouraging them to look to this area not just as a second home location, but their primary address.

"I think people may decide they can realize their own vision instead of being tied to a corporate vision," she says. "That they can find a more gracious lifestyle here instead of sitting in traffic for two hours a day each way in a big city."

Rustin has followed an unorthodox career path to the 30-A area. Or, more accurately, she cut her own. Leaving Albany for Atlanta barely out of her teens, she got into publishing and "realized I had a real knack for it." She founded her own ad agency, through clients of which she was then introduced to the world of real estate, where she in turn did well.

Deciding to return to school to complete the studies that had been interrupted by her flourishing businesses, she later moved to New York and enrolled at Columbia University. While there she helped computerize education systems for Wall Street, pioneering distance-learning opportunities that took her to Eastern Europe for several years after the fall of the Iron Curtain as Columbia's vice president for the region. "All these Western companies were buying huge manufacturing plants over there and needed education for their business partners."

What has been described as her distinctive mix of "Southern charm and New York tenacity" subsequently saw her involved in business in the Cayman Islands, (where she lived for a period), and Oklahoma during the oil and gas boom days. Along the way she also ran the president's office at Georgetown University for four years, earned an MBA, and learned Russian, Hungarian, and Spanish.

Though she has no children of her own, she has a passel of nephews and nieces. Concern for the welfare of young people like them and their peers prompted Rustin to use her tech know-how to help develop Drug-Free Georgia, an awareness and prevention program for schools that has been replicated in other states.

"I've gotten great satisfaction from every business I have ever owned, because it has always led me to the next point in my career or in my path," she says. Her advice to young people looking to enjoy similar opportunities: "Get a good education, no matter where it's from."

Where does the moxie to strike out into new areas, especially as a single young woman in post-Communist Eastern Europe, come from? "Having five brothers, I guess," she laughs. "I've just never had any fear. I have always thought, I could do that. I'll take on anybody or anything, really."

That spirit has taken her up in the air ("those ultralights are really fun") and out to sea ("I love boating and seawater fishing"), as well as trekking all over Mexico to visit historic Mayan sites. Machu Picchu is on the bucket list.

Celeste Rustin can be reached at (850) 238-9595 or celeste@bpfla.com

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Admirable Administration

BY FRANK WATSON AND KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL

Question. If today were your last, how would you be remembered regarding your estate planning? Would it be for leaving a mess for others to clean up, or would it be for leaving a thoughtfully drafted, thoroughly implemented, and carefully maintained plan so your appointed fiduciaries could smoothly administer your estate?

Finishing well, in terms of your estate planning, is the focus of this article, as we review general responsibilities fiduciaries assume when administering an estate. Accordingly, you may want to share it with them while there is still time to discuss your wishes.

THE THREE PHASES

Upon your death, the postmortem (i.e., after death) responsibilities of your appointed fiduciaries fall into three phases of estate administration. Whether under your Revocable Living Trust-based plan or under your Will-based plan, these responsibilities are to:

1. Collect and manage your assets;
2. Pay your debts, taxes and expenses; and
3. Administer and distribute your assets for the benefit of your named beneficiaries.

Note: Your fiduciaries should seek appropriate legal counsel throughout each of these three phases to ensure that all of the "i's" are dotted and the "t's" are crossed.

Collection & Management

Without delay, the first responsibility of your fiduciaries is to protect and preserve your assets. This includes taking an inventory of the assets, insuring and safeguarding them, as well as determining their values as of your date of death. Make sure your fiduciaries know where you keep your asset inventory, as well as the account statements, certificates, and titles to back it up.

If you have a *funded* Revocable Living Trust along with up-to-date records of the trust assets (and their respective values), then you will greatly ease this initial burden on your fiduciaries.

Even if you do not have a Revocable Living Trust-based estate plan, maintaining current financial records can save your fiduciaries considerable time (and therefore money) in fulfilling their Collection and Management responsibilities.

Debts, Taxes and Expenses

Once your assets have been collected and are under management, the fiduciaries must arrange for the payment of your just debts, your tax liabilities, and any expenses associated with the post-mortem administration of your estate. Again, time is of the essence.

Consider this: estate tax returns must be filed within nine months of death, and many post-mortem planning opportunities, such as disclaimers and certain elections (e.g., Qualified Terminable Interest Property, alternate valuation, etc.), must be timely made or they are lost...and with them potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in estate tax savings. Failure to comply with applicable legal deadlines can expose your fiduciaries to some rather unpleasant personal liabilities, to include any tax liabilities of your estate, and lawsuits from creditors and disgruntled heirs. Administering your estate can quickly become a lose-lose proposition for your fiduciaries.

Administration & Distribution

Whether your estate plan ultimately provides for the distribution of your assets to your beneficiaries in one lump sum, in multiple distributions, or through ongoing trust administration (to protect your assets *for and from* them), your fiduciaries must ensure that accurate records are maintained, and receipts obtained from each beneficiary. In fact, the failure to account for all income, expenses, and disbursements throughout each of the three phases of estate administration can result in civil and potentially, criminal sanctions.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Post-mortem responsibilities can be very complex. Before you select and appoint fiduciaries for your estate plan or agree to serve as a fiduciary for someone else, you should seek appropriate legal counsel. You (and your fiduciaries) will be glad you did.

ASK YOURSELF...

These Questions Regarding "Admirable Administration"

1. Have I thoughtfully drafted, thoroughly implemented, and carefully maintained my estate plan, so my appointed fiduciaries can smoothly administer my estate after death?



Kimberly Watson Sewell
and Frank Watson

2. Have I created and maintained an up-to-date inventory of my assets to help ease the *Collection and Management* burden for my appointed fiduciaries?
3. Have I prepared my appointed fiduciaries for their responsibilities to pay my debts, taxes, and expenses in a timely manner; and are they aware of their potential personal liability for failing to do so?
4. Have I prepared my appointed fiduciaries for their responsibility to distribute my estate to the beneficiaries I have chosen as provided in my estate plan?
5. Have I prepared my appointed fiduciaries for their responsibility to accurately account for all income, expenses and disbursements throughout each phase of estate administration?



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Rafa Nadal: From Tennis to Golf

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



Rafa airborne



Tom Fitzpatrick and Rafa Nadal



Spanish Peccadillo

Rafa Nadal's victories in both the French and US Opens in 2019 brings his major wins to nineteen, just one behind Roger Federer. I recently traveled to the Nadal Tennis Academy, off the coast of Spain. This sprawling campus in the countryside offers an American International School, modern hotel, and sports complex.

One morning I was invited to watch Rafa's full practice session with coach Carlos Moya. From my perch of a mere ten feet off the court, his display of power and agility was remarkable.

Afterwards, Rafa invited us to his Golf Challenge, sponsored by Sotheby's Intl. Realty, for eighteen holes of competition. He is an avid golfer and often ventures to the course during an off day. Some favorite golf venues include Palm Springs and Miami; and he's teed it up with Bubba, Freddie, and Sergio.

He corrects his handicap when we thought it was two. "No, I am now 1.5" he says with a grin.

He plays tennis lefty, but golf righty. "You have a very good swing," I insist, to which he replies, "No, my swing is no good."

On one hole he had a pitching wedge into the green. He stopped the club quickly after hitting the ball with the left elbow tucked into his left hip.

His powerful legs resist against the ground as he winds his core. With a high right arm on the takeaway he sets the club on a more vertical plane going back. It's a short backswing that builds tremendous torque. There is very little wasted motion. As he starts the downswing, he holds the angle in the back of his right wrist before whipping his arms thru impact, much like a two-handed backhand. He finishes quite forward in a vertical line.

On a par five, I watched him fly his second shot up a big hill and land atop the green twenty feet away. Wow!

After golf, we convened for a reception in an outdoor veranda. Rafa answered questions with the Mediterranean shining behind him. The chef seasoned and garnished the Spanish Peccadillo. Sensational!

We asked if he'd seen the recent *60 Minutes* special on his life in Mallorca. He doesn't like to watch his own interviews but said perhaps he'd watch it on the flight over to Acapulco, which he won just prior to the virus shutting the world down.

I asked what instructional books he like. He replies, "I skipped all the books," but he did like watching Sampras while growing up.

His strategy is if you don't take chances, you don't win tennis tournaments.

He says both he and Federer like normal diets. And the same goes for his fitness routine. At one point he

looked at his phone to say that his fitness trainer has been texting him saying you are thirty minutes late for training! After ignoring the texts, he eventually gave in to the trainer and says with a glowing smile, "Guys it's been fun, but I must go."

At dinner, ESPN's Mike Tenenbaum told some great football stories.

During our Stay at Home, tennis psychologist Jim Loehr held a webinar. The research they found at the Human Performance Institute is that winning more titles can oddly enough create unhappiness. That is, unless the athlete develops their sense of purpose. Nadal has found his—he's complimentary, charitable, and a great guy both on and off the court!



Tom Fitzpatrick

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



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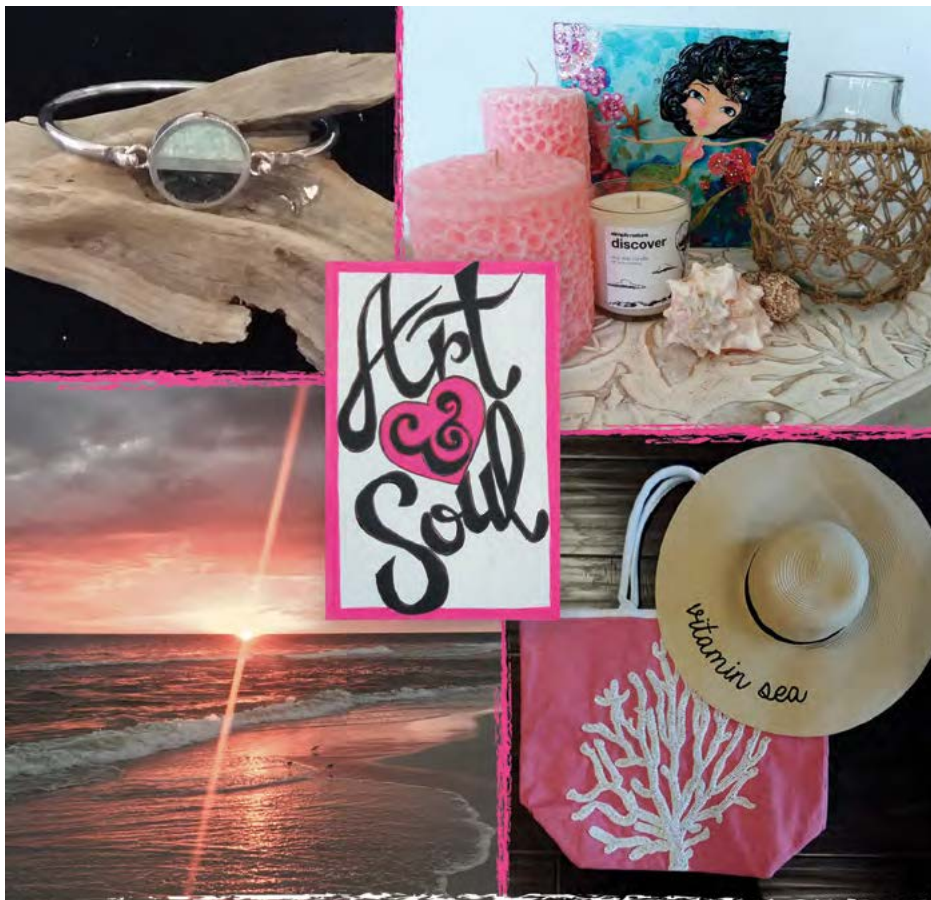
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