

# the thirty-a REVIEW™

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

**AIRSTREAM**

**BBQ  
ON 30-A!**

## **INSIDE:**

30-A's Finest Dining

Fall Fun at the Beach!

Theatre, Music, Art and More!

Local Real Estate

The Finest Things to do at the Beach

Murphy, in his Barefoot BBQ Airstream, a Seaside fixture.

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# Going Green

is a term that is becoming more commonly talked about today. However, the vacation rental industry is one area where you rarely hear this term. Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes, in South Walton County, are working to take the first steps toward Going Green. Chandler Williams, Director of Operations for these two companies explains, "We understand this is a huge undertaking and are going to start with baby steps to improve our impact on the environment and increase awareness." Guests don't only come here to visit amusement parks and such; it is the pure attraction to the untouched environment. The powdery white sand, the emerald green waters, the nature preserves, and endless bike and hiking paths are what people are here to see and enjoy.

Williams has begun to greatly modify the housekeeping process and procedures for Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes. For example, schedules for the housekeepers are emailed weekly rather than being printed, to eliminate paper usage. Linens for the homes are packaged in reusable plastic storage bins and the used linen is returned to the laundry department in cloth laundry bags, instead of plastic garbage bags. This eliminates the use of up to 5 or 6 bags per home that would otherwise be thrown away after each use.



While in the homes the housekeeping staff is encouraged to use refillable bottles for cleaning supplies rather than continuously purchasing new cleaners to be thrown away after each use. Williams hopes to move to making it mandatory that cleaning supplies, used in the homes, be more environmentally friendly and less toxic. He is currently researching and testing new green cleaners and products.

The housekeepers stock each home with organic soaps, lotions, and after sun aloe that is all produced locally and custom made for Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes. Soaps are packaged in 100% recycled paper and the logo is printed with soy ink. The toilet paper and paper towels are Greenwise, 100% recycled products, and are purchased locally through Publix grocery stores. "This eliminates a shipping impact and of course the product is made from recycled materials, but

most importantly we are giving back to our local community," Williams explains. Guests are given a starter set of household necessities and are encouraged to purchase items that are environmentally friendly from local businesses for the remainder of their stay.



The next step that Williams took was to team up with Walton County on the 'blue bag' recycling initiative. Each home receives a blue bag for recyclable materials to be collected on trash pick up day. The blue bag concept has also been implemented in the offices of both Beach Seekers, in Seagrove Beach, and Sandcastle Escapes, in Miramar Beach. Also, all trash bags that are placed in the homes are made of biodegradable materials rather than typical non-biodegradable plastic bags.

Unused food and household items, left in the homes, get returned to the offices and are then donated to area food banks for distribution at their consent. When towels become unusable due to wear or stains, they are donated to the Alaqua Animal Refuge for their use. "We hope that we can help out the community with things that are usually discarded by donating them for others to use," states Williams.

From the maintenance side of things for Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes we talked with Lloyd Williams, Director of Maintenance. Lloyd explains, "The first steps the maintenance department has taken is to have work orders for maintenance

persons emailed to them rather than each one being printed. Light bulbs in the homes are being replaced as needed with the more energy efficient Compact Fluorescent Light (CFLs). The next step we have planned is to switch the batteries we use in the homes with rechargeable rather than throwing them away after each use."

As for what Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes are doing in the customer relations department, we spoke with Wes Shelton. Shelton explains, "Guests make their reservations and receive email confirmation of their arrangements. There is an email for the deposit request, final payment and one for the check-in instructions. This eliminates over 10 pages of documents being printed and three separate mail outs." Guests are emailed information pertaining to 'Leave No Trace' Walton County's initiative to keep the beaches clean, ways to best control the thermostat in the home and in the refrigerator for most energy conservation and guests are asked to hang their towels to air-dry and reuse them.

Taylor Williams, president, and Justin Shelton, vice president, of Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes; explained the steps they are taking in the management area of the industry. "Homeowners receive their statements via email and rental income is done by direct deposit rather than monthly mail outs. Owners also have the option to log on to the website to check the status of their rental property and download past monthly statements as well" Shelton explained.

Beach Seekers and Sandcastle Escapes are hoping to do their part in helping improve the environment one step at a time. Their impact may be small at first, but their ultimate goal is to raise environmental awareness!

You can reach Sandcastle Escapes or Beach Seekers by phone: 1-866-934-4240 or check out the web site at [www.beachseekers.com/30A](http://www.beachseekers.com/30A)

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photo by Sheila Goode

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# letter from the publisher

## FALL FORWARD



As another hot summer on 30-A adjusts itself in our rear view mirror, we can only give thanks to all the wonderful visitors we've had this summer on 30-A. The past couple of years have been a bit rough, between the oil spill, the real estate market, etc. But it just goes to show, beauty is beautiful no matter what the economy is doing. And Mother Nature is a

very powerful lady. Our waters and white sandy beaches look as healthy and as pretty as ever.

As fall envelops our fine communities along 30-A, there is no better time to give thanks. Thanks for our families, thanks for our businesses, thanks for our visitors and thanks to our beautiful shorelines. As the saying goes, so often we don't know what we've got until it's gone. Well, I think most of us on 30-A do know what we've got. And for those of us who either live on or visit the beaches of South Walton, this appreciation of life is often what brings us here in the first place.

Speaking of the beaches of South Walton, congrats on their new logo. They worked hard to create a brand image that was fresh and would keep positive attention on the communities within South Walton Beach for years to come.

As always, this issue is packed full of the people, places, and things that make 30-A and the surrounding areas so special. Within these pages you will find the magic that makes our community such an endearing place. Whether it's the food, the style, the architecture or the fun, 30-A never stops giving. And for that, we ALL give thanks.

Sincerely,

Miles K. Neiman

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### corrections

We all make mistakes but we still feel bad when they happen. In the last issue, we showed 3 incorrect photos in the Alys Beach article. These photos were actually from Lynn Nesmith's new book, 30-A Style. We apologize for the mishap. Apparently, our layout person was on the beach, taking in a beautiful 30-A sunset when we sent the memo. I guess we can't blame her, but we wanted to set the record straight. Our sincere apologies to our dear friends at Alys Beach, and of course our good friend Lynn Nesmith. Lynn was one of the folks who turned our publisher onto 30-A years ago! Please see the two-page spread in this issue of Alys Beach with the correct photos. They are beautiful indeed. In *Let's Be Frank*, David DeGregorio of DeGregorio Design created the logo and worked with Bill Dawson. We apologize for the misprint.

### about the cover

**Photography:** Shelly Swanger

**Location:** Barefoot BBQ in Seaside

**Go to [www.ThirtyAReview.com](http://www.ThirtyAReview.com) to view the entire publication online.**

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# Showbiz and Events in September and October

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### Cinema Under the Stars

*Saturday, September 3, 7:30pm*  
Bring blankets and low back chairs to enjoy a movie under the stars in the Amphitheatre at Alys Beach  
40 N Somerset Street, Alys Beach, FL  
FREE

### Live music by Sean Dietrich Jazz Trio

*Saturday, September 3 & Sunday, September 4 7-11pm*  
Enjoy live music by Sean Dietrich while dining at Caliza Restaurant.  
23 Nonesuch Way, Alys Beach, FL  
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### Howl\*O\*Ween Pet Parade & Costume Contest benefiting Alaqua Animal Refuge

*Friday, October 21, 4-6pm*  
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### Noche de los Muertos Costume Party at Caliza Pool

*Friday, October 28, 8-11:30pm*  
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### Moonlight & Movies

*September 4, 8:15 pm*  
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### Rosemary Beach Fall Writers' Conference

*September 21 – 25*  
Town Hall  
www.conferenceforwriters.com

### Rosemary Beach Tennis Classic

*September 23 - 25,*  
Racquet Club  
850-278-2061

### Town Center Sidewalk Sale

*September 30 & October 1*  
*10:00 am – 5:00 pm*  
Town Center Shops

### Taste of Rosemary

*October 7, 4:00 – 6:00 pm*  
Town Hall  
850-231-1861

### Jim DelMauro Rosemary Run (5k)

*October 8, 7:30 am*  
Western Green  
850-231-1861

### Rosemary Beach Uncorked

*October 22, 1:00 – 5:00 pm*  
Town Center Restaurants  
www.rosemarybeachuncorked.com

### Harvest Market & Monstrous Halloween Celebration

*October 29, 10:00 am – 5:30 pm*  
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## SEASIDE

### Labor Day Weekend Celebration

*Friday-Sunday, September 2-4*  
*Seaside Amphitheater*  
The Merchants of Seaside host an end of summer celebration with a host of events including two nights of movies under the stars and live music from the new stage! Join us on Friday & Sunday for Central Square Cinema with a family-friendly flick on the giant 35' inflatable screen. On Saturday, don't miss a performance from Birmingham-native Ryan Kinder as he brings his mix of pop and rock sounds to Seaside. There is no better way to say goodbye to a spectacular summer season and gear up for another busy fall of exciting events!

### "First Friday" ArtWalk

*Friday, September 2, 5-8pm*  
*Friday, October 7, 5-8pm*  
*Ruskin Place & Central Square*  
Enjoy live music and view beautiful works of art and artist demos at the galleries and shops of Ruskin Place and select Central Square merchants.

### Seaside Farmers Market

*Saturdays, September 3, 10, 17 & 24, 9am-1pm*  
*Saturdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 9am-1pm*  
*Seaside Amphitheater*  
Get your pick of fresh produce, baked goods, dairy products, native plants and other unique offerings during our Market on Saturday mornings. Find local specialties that will help sustain our growers! Enjoy special cooking demos and activities sure to liven up your morning! Held behind Raw & Juicy.

### Seaside Community Yard Sale

*Saturday, October 1, 8am-2pm*  
*Seaside Amphitheater*  
The Merchants of Seaside host this semi-annual Yard Sale as a part of the Autumn Tides series of events along the Beaches of South Walton. The event will be held in the Seaside Amphitheater, along Scenic Highway 30A, and features nearly 100 vendors from across the country with a variety of unique offerings. Entertainment will be provided by 30A Radio, your community radio station.

### Back to Nature Festival – Seaside Celebration

*Friday & Saturday, October 14 & 15*  
*Seaside Amphitheater*  
Mark the fall season with a fun-filled day geared to get everyone into the autumn spirit. In a partnership with the Back to Nature Festival, this unique event brings together the best of the natural elements that makes our area so special and wonderful entertainment options for the entire family. Also, we present an outdoor movie on Friday evening in the Amphitheater.

### Trick or Treat in Seaside

*Halloween, Monday, October 31, 4-6Ppm*  
It's time for ghosts, goblins and princesses to go door-to-door collecting candy from the Seaside merchants to feed their sugary appetites. Hop on the haunted hayride with our friends from CRA, hear spooky stories with the Seaside Repertory Theatre and do the monster mash with terrifying tunes from 30A Radio, our community radio station!



Yard sale at Seaside





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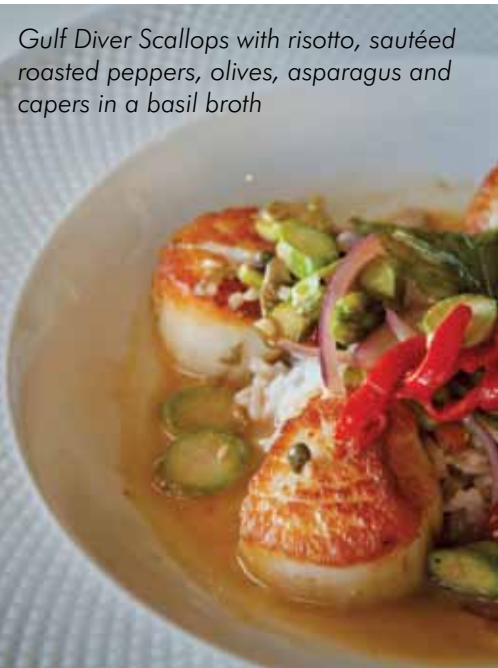
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# The Best “Vue” on 30-A

BY CHELSIE NEIMAN

*Gulf Diver Scallops with risotto, sautéed roasted peppers, olives, asparagus and capers in a basil broth*



*Deconstructed Caesar Salad with focaccia crostini*

*Chef Giovanni Filipponi*



Chef surprised us in the second course with a watermelon salad, composed of bite sized segments of watermelon topped with spicy arugula, crumbled feta, raw red onion, a house white wine vinaigrette, and what appeared to be a standard caprese salad. However, this was not your grandmother's caprese. Their secret: house-made mozzarella from local curd that would certainly pass the most sophisticated “Italy-test.”

Our main courses arrived just as our salads were being polished off: a pistachio crusted grouper with risotto, asparagus, and finished with a pistachio cream sauce; and a roasted duck with asparagus and polenta in a Madeira, cherry, and duck stock reduction. I started with the duck and PL took the grouper. The duck was a sweet, fatty, delicious creation paired with perfectly prepared polenta. Chef

used sweet gratin cherries soaked in Madeira, lending a delightful zest to the reduction. Though I was slightly hesitant to part with my duck, I was equally pleased with the surprisingly large grouper dish; and surprised that PL gave it up so easily. The pistachios offered a wonderful sweetness and texture to the very hearty fish, and the risotto was exquisitely prepared. Both dishes came with the fresh local veggie, which changes with the season and the harvest.

As if we were not yet satisfied, Chef Giovanni sent out his most popular desserts, prepared by his pastry chef, Brianna. Raspberry sorbet for my no-dairy friend, a hand-made ice cream sandwich for PL's son, chocolate trio for me, and a puffed pastry topped with fresh berries and mascarpone with a strawberry honey glaze. My trio included a wonderfully airy chocolate mouse quenelle, white chocolate crème brulee (every girl's dream dessert), and a chocolate cake cylinder drizzled with a salted caramel sauce.

It was the perfect ending to a perfect holiday. My family will certainly be adding the Vue to our list of MUST restaurants.

*The Vue is located at 4801 W. Co Hwy 30A in Santa Rosa Beach, 3 miles east of the US Hwy 98 and West 30A intersection. For hours, menus, specials, and a gallery visit their web site at [www.vueon30a.com](http://www.vueon30a.com) or call (850) 267-2305.*

Previously an exclusive “members only” for Santa Rosa Golf and Beach Club, the Vue in Santa Rosa Beach is now available to all patrons of 30-A after an extensive renovation and reopening. This fabulous restaurant is situated just west of WaterColor in the un-touristy stretch of our scenic highway.

My good friend LP and

I took our young sons to Rosemary Beach for National Son's Week 2011. We spent most of the week in the surf, sun and sand, but decided to spend our last evening at a more adult venue and had recently heard about the Vue. We made the very short trek over to Santa Rosa Beach and easily found the elegant restaurant just around the bend from Big Redfish Lake.

We were greeted by John, the Food and Beverage Manager, who very promptly and courteously showed us and our young dates to our table with the best view I have seen on 30-A to date. He was closely followed by our server, Janel. As always, I immediately informed our server of our dietary restrictions, since my son is severely allergic to dairy, to which she said, “no problem.” As good as her word, Janel ordered for him a specially made appetizer, entrée, and dessert. PL and I requested a special



*Chocolate Trio with chocolate mousse, crème brulee, and chocolate sponge cake with caramel sauce*

chef's selection dinner and awaited our first course, while enjoying the pristine white sands. Even the stormy skies were made beautiful from our vantage, with views reminiscent of Nantucket's shores.

Chef Giovanni Filipponi, a very personable, charismatic New Jersey native, came out to inquire again about

allergies, preferences, and dietary restrictions. We talked with him for a bit about his training at the Culinary Institute of America and a 2009 Hell's Kitchen appearance. He then excused himself after our beverages arrived.

Our first course consisted of a lobster trio, tempura shrimp, DA's venison rolls (the featured “off-menu” starter), and tempura portabellas. After a few bites, Chef Giovanni returned and we immediately asked about the veal rolls. He told us about his January hunting trips to Alabama, where he learned the recipe from his local hunting pal, D.A. (hence DA's venison rolls), and they were exceptional: thin cuts of veal rolled around banana peppers and then wrapped with applewood smoked bacon. The sweet smoky from the bacon was complemented by the tang of the banana peppers and it was, of course, the table fan favorite.





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# Barefoot Barbecue

BY TAYLOR ARNOLD

Located in the heart of Seaside is a stick-to-your-ribs kind of restaurant, and the best part is you don't even have to wear shoes to order your meal. Just ask James Murphy and his wife Jenny, owners of Barefoot Barbecue in Santa Rosa Beach. "It's the 'no shirt, no shoes, no problem' vibe here," he says. "We want guests to feel welcome, and to come sun drenched from the beach, barefoot and sandy for great Southern, Caribbean, Texas fusion barbecue."

Murphy, as the locals call him, has plenty of experience in this arena. In fact, he and Jenny spent 12 years living in St. Thomas where they ran a barbecue restaurant called Sib's, famous for ribs. "I definitely feel like the Caribbean influenced my cooking," he says. "It's a little spicier and fruitier, and I always work with fresh products."

After just one visit to Grayton Beach, the Murphys were ready to call 30-A home, and it wasn't long before they opened Barefoot Barbecue in Seaside's Airstream District. "We recognized the need for a reasonably priced, large portion restaurant," Murphy says. "Ultimately, the recipes came from a melting pot of Caribbean, Southern and Texas barbecue influences."

The result is a silver food truck that attracts visitors and locals alike. "Here in this part of the South, pork rules by 60 percent," Murphy says. "However, when Texas comes to town, we can barely keep the brisket on the shelves. Our ribs are an everyday specialty." For this reason, he has a selection of barbecue sauce to suit every taste. His menu includes traditional tomato, vinegar, and mustard-based sauces as well as a spicy variety.

The menu at Barefoot Barbecue also includes traditional favorites like pulled pork and beef brisket sandwiches, as well as signature items like barbecue nachos and tuna dip. "We are really proud of our sushi-grade, two hour, pecan wood smoked tuna dip," Murphy says. "The barbecue nachos are one of our biggest sellers, but tradition wins in the end. The garlic-buttered Texas toast pork sandwich is the number one dish."

It is Murphy's selection of sides, however, that really showcase his barbecue fusion. "Two of the popular side dishes, pineapple cole slaw and potato salad, are a close



Barefoot Barbecue



James Murphy

friend's family recipes," he says. The menu also offers some Quick Bites, including a turkey leg, a bucket of ribs, and sausage on a stick. And guests who want to take Barefoot Barbecue to go can ask for a picnic package that includes either a full or half pound of pork, chicken, ribs, or brisket.

When it comes to his philosophy barbecue, Murphy's rule is simple. "We believe if you start with a good product, you end with a good product," he says. "All of our meats are hormone-free, steroid-free,

and antibiotic-free; and the produce is fresh, local and organic. There is no cutting corners. Our smokers are very modern, but we use old school cook tables: 24-hour pork, 9-hour brisket, 5-hour ribs, 4 and a half hour chicken, and 3-hour turkey legs."

If you ask Murphy what inspires him after all these years, he is quick to name some of his favorite chefs. "When I first got serious about creating a barbecue restaurant, I looked to several of the barbecue greats, including Mike Mills and Ray Lampe," he says. "I also follow Bobby Flay, Anthony Bourdain, and Wolfgang Puck...I've read all their books. But if you gave me the chance to sit down and have a beer with any chef, hands down, Guy Fiere would be my first choice."

The best part of his job, however, is serving his famous beachside barbecue to happy guests day after day. "It is great meeting new people everyday, yet getting to see familiar faces year after year," he says. "We have built a good following on 30-A based on repeat visitors to the area and super supportive locals. We couldn't and wouldn't be where we are today without the best of both of these worlds."

***Barefoot Barbecue is located at 2235 East County Highway in Santa Rosa Beach. For more information, call (850) 534-0313 or visit [www.facebook.com/barefootbbq](http://www.facebook.com/barefootbbq).***



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# A Good Rosé

BY PERRINE PRIEUR

Originally from Burgundy, France, just a few miles from Chablis, Perrine Prieur grew up in the epicenter of the French wine region, where her family planted their first grapes in 1990. Prieur developed a passion for food and wine at a very early age. At 14, she attended a private school focused primarily on

the culinary arts and the hospitality business. For four years she extensively traveled throughout France, working in various kitchens until eventually deciding to pursue her passion for wine. Upon graduating from the highly regarded Le Castel sommelier school, she worked as a sommelier in the Michelin 3-star restaurant Le Gavroche,

which has the highest regarded wine cellar in London. She earned a challenge medal for the best young sommelier in Bordeaux in 2004.

When she arrived in Atlanta in 2006 she only spoke French. So she learned English while earning a sommelier certification from the Master of Sommelier Institute. Prieur also worked as the sommelier at JOËL Brasserie for 4 years.

Below are her Rosé picks for the summer and beyond. Enjoy these recommendations from one of Atlanta's most knowledgeable and interesting sommeliers!

Perrine's Picks:

## 2010 CHATEAU D'ESCLANS, WHISPERING ANGEL, COTE DE PROVENCE

Whispering Angel is the introductory wine to the Chateau's line of Rosé. Noted for its fresh, fruity yet bone dry characteristics, the grapes are picked from the ripest vines (southern exposure) from the chalky clay slopes. Whispering Angel is a blend of 73% Grenache, 4% Rolle, 9% Cinsault, 8% Syrah, and 5% Mourvedre. Grapes are harvested by hand only in small crates between sunrise and noon to avoid oxidation. The grapes are then sorted 3 times. De-stemming and slight crushing is at 50F to avoid coloration. Both the free run and pressed juices are vinified in stainless steel and batonnage is done twice a week.

## 2009 CHATEAU D'ESCLANS, GARRUS, COTE DE PROVENCE

Heralded as the greatest Rosé in the world, its limited quantity (6 barrels per vintage) makes it a highly select wine. Noted for its creaminess and lush mineral finish, this wine is uncommonly elegant and has achieved cult status among the wealthy elite of the French Riviera. The vines are 80 years old with a south/southeast exposure, with chalky clay slopes. The wine is a blend of 70% Grenache (100% 80 year old vines) and 30% Rolle (100% 80 year old vines). Harvesting is performed between at sunrise to noon by hand only and in small crates to avoid oxidation. Grapes are then sorted electronically and manually 3 times.

## 2010 DOMAINE SORIN, BANDOL

This Bandol Rosé is a blend of Mourvèdre 60% and Grenache 40%, then vinified and aged in large oak vats. This wine comes from one of the classic rosé producing regions in France, Bandol, and it delivers. With a big nose of strawberry and rose, followed by a nicely textured palate that finishes full and dry, this wine has great length and intensity.

Food pairing – I would do the “summer dinner” with this one. Thinly sliced Italian meats, oil brined olives, and some thin slices of Ossau-Iraty (killer cheese from the Pyrenees.) Make sure to serve this rosé with a nice long chill on it.

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# Louis Louis

BY LAUREN GALL

I can honestly say that it might be the best Key Lime Pie that we have ever tasted. Overall, the dinner was honestly delightful. We left smiling and stuffed.

On the corner of Highway 98 and Mussett Bayou Road, in Santa Rosa Beach, there is a magical spot marked with fleur de lis and a bright gold and red sign that reads “Louis Louis.” The restaurant, named after the father-son duo that owns and manages it, is a fun mix of eclectic atmosphere, really good food, and great service. (However, you probably already expected this if you knew the owners’ other hot spot in Grayton Beach, Pico’s Restaurant, and The Red Bar.)

I went in for my culinary adventure around 5:30 p.m. (the restaurant opens at 5 p.m.) on a Tuesday night and was pleasantly surprised to be seated almost immediately. After all, it is summer in Walton County and our restaurants are always busy here during this time. My husband and I were extremely excited to dine here, as we are already huge Red Bar fans. The expectations were set high...and, as expected, Louis Louis delivered!

The very first thing we noted, after being seated, was that the restaurant just emits a vibe of coolness. We ordered our beverages and began talking about what each of us would order for our meal. While I have to admit that the menu is not very large, don’t let that fool you. Each of the selections packs a powerful punch, and there really is something for everyone (even the kids.)

When asked about the most requested item on the menu, Philippe Petit (Louis’s other son who also works at the restaurant, making it truly a family affair) quickly answers, “The fresh fishes, sautéed and grilled, are



Father and son Louis Petit and Louis Petit



Crab Cakes



also raving about the dressing, yes the house dressing, on his salad. After eating until our hearts, and stomachs, were content, we both requested to-go boxes, but couldn’t resist at least ordering a dessert for us to “try” and “share”. We settled on the Key Lime Pie, a staple here in the state of Florida, and... wow! I can honestly say that it might be the best Key Lime Pie

popular, but of course, the crab cakes!” So, for me that evening it was the crab cakes. For my husband, it was a cup of gumbo to start and the also frequently requested Panne Chicken for his entrée.

When my husband’s gumbo starter arrived, I could not help but ask to “taste” it. The gumbo was a scrumptious mix of seafood heaven and my husband had to fight me to get the spoon back. Soon after the entrees arrived. My crab cakes, served with an amazing beurre blanc sauce, sent my taste buds spinning with delight. My husband dove right into his Panne Chicken, while

that we have ever tasted. Overall, the dinner was honestly delightful. We left smiling and stuffed.

So, you might ask, “What could be better than an awesome atmosphere, excellent service, and a dream culinary experience?” If you arrive between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., it’s happy hour!

**For more information about Louis Louis, call (850) 267.1500 or visit [www.louislouis.net](http://www.louislouis.net). The restaurant is open daily from 5 – 10 p.m. and accepts cash or check only. There is an ATM on site.**





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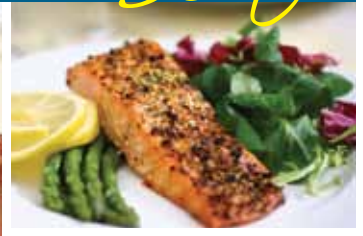
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# Mac Farms:

## Using Hydroponics to Grow the Highest Quality Produce

BY RYAN LOFTIS

Imagine a system that allows food to be grown in places where traditional agriculture is impossible. Imagine a system that requires mere fractions of the water, nutrients and fertilizers that soil-based agriculture requires. Imagine a system that reduces transportation requirements, thereby reducing prices and greenhouse gas emissions as well. Not to mention a system that offers a shorter harvest time.

Imagine? You don't have to. It's a branch of agriculture called hydroponics, and it's what Andy and Jennifer McAlexander use to grow produce for their Mac Farms in South Walton.

With hydroponics, plants are not grown in soil. Instead, water is the delivery system for all required nutrients. The McAlexanders chose to use hydroponics because it offered more stability in plant growth without the constant need to amend the sandy soil of South Walton. But they aren't the first: The history of hydroponics spans thousands of years. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, built around 600 B.C. are widely believed to have functioned by following hydroponic principles. The Aztecs developed a system of floating gardens based on hydroponics during the 10th and 11th centuries. Formal research and publications on hydroponics began in the 17th century, although it wasn't until 1929 that experiments were conducted to determine its commercial crop growing ability. William Gericke, a Berkeley scientist, coined the term "hydroponics" after growing enormous tomatoes in his home using water and nutrient solutions.

The McAlexanders' own history goes like this: Married for 10 years with two children, they have lived in South Walton for a decade. "We have always loved fine food and the culinary arts," Jennifer says. "Andy grew up with a family of farmers. He has always had an interest in growing vegetables as a hobby." Conversation with local chefs helped turn that interest into a business. "We love the density of talented chefs along 30-A and had come to know a few. We had asked about the availability of local products and their desire for it. The answer was always, 'We would love it.' As our community has grown, we felt the need to somehow contribute to the local food movement." Mac Farms opened in January of 2009.



Andy and Jennifer McAlexander



Rather than an enclosed greenhouse, Mac Farms produce is grown in the brilliant 30-A sun. Produce is watered through the hydroponic drip system, in which a nutrient solution is added to the well water through an injector pump and is distributed through drip lines into many pots filled with coconut core fiber and perlite. The McAlexanders use organic seed sources and cultivate their own heirloom tomato seeds. Predator pests and organic oil sprays, not synthetic pesticides, are their means of fighting bugs and fungus. "We have high standards for cleanliness while harvesting," Jennifer says. "We are conscious of food safety and try to employ the best methods to deliver the best product. Our goal has been to grow the highest quality produce in South Walton for our local chefs."

What will you find growing on a stroll through the garden? Arugula, for starters, with lobed green leaves and spicy flavor. With an assortment of up to 20 varieties of lettuce, the spring mix offers a variety of color, shape, taste

and texture. Add arugula and three varieties of mustards and you have the Mesclun Mix. And there's more, including basil, dill, cilantro, flat leaf parsley, fingerling potatoes and heirloom tomatoes.

"It is important to think not only about what you are eating, but where it comes from, when it was harvested and how long it has traveled," Jennifer says. "The ability to provide some of the finest produce consumed on 30-A is something that we are proud of. It helps that the chefs using it are extremely talented. When you taste our arugula, tomatoes or other produce, there is a distinct difference in flavor. Chefs enjoy the ability to request certain products and have things delivered quickly if needed."

Jennifer considers good relationships with clients and the ability to increase production the highlights of Mac Farms' first 2 years. She also wants to give credit where credit's due: "If it wasn't for the support of Jim Richard and staff at Stinky's Fish Camp, Ken Duenes at Café 30-A, and Ed Reese at Alys Beach, we would not be where we are today. We can't thank them and our other local chefs enough for their support! Thank you!"

And the goal for Mac Farms' future? "Keep growing!"

**For more information, visit [www.macfarmsfl.com](http://www.macfarmsfl.com).**



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# Gigi's Lemonade Stand Stops Summer Boredom

*Kid's store sets up lemonade stand with proceeds going to rescue animals*

BY MARY WELCH

**G**igi's Fabulous Kid's Fashions and Toys has an eclectic product line that includes clothes for boys, girls, and babies as well as gifts and toys. But Gigi's is bigger than its great merchandise. Gigi's also is a place where kids can get together and sell lemonade – and help save animals.

put up a lemonade stand in front of our shop and we let them. It started from there. Sometimes they would give the money to charity; sometimes they just made money so they could go buy themselves something in the store.”

That fun activity continued until Higgs read a story about a local woman, Laura Hood, who founded the Alaqua Animal Refuge on Whitfield Road in Freeport. “She said she saw the need for a no-kill shelter and no one else was stepping up. You know how you always say maybe one day I'd like to do something – and you don't? Well, she just decided to do it. She went for it. I

“We make sure they tell customers that by purchasing lemonade they are helping animals,” says Diggs. They also practice salesmanship. “We teach them it's a suggested donation of \$1,” she says. “Sometimes people may put \$20 in the money jar because they know it's helping animals and sometimes someone may only have 80 cents. We don't turn anyone away. It's a suggested price.”

Those suggested prices add up. In 2008, Gigi's lemonade stand earned \$2,384 for Alaqua; 2009, \$2,405; 2010, \$2,764. With the season half over, Gigi's has raised \$1,231 and hopes to top \$3,000 before Labor Day.

Alaqua's Hood is impressed.

“Gigi's Fabulous Kids is truly fostering the next generation of volunteers. The store's children's program shows kids that giving back to your community is not only the right thing to do, but it can be fun, too,” she says. “Through their efforts with the lemonade stand, and painting memorial rocks, these kids are making a difference. And more specifically, they are learning to respect all living things when they help our no-kill refuge and adoption center.”

The kids have found other ways to help and earn more money. The refuge started a memorial garden. For a suggested \$50 donation, one of the kids will paint a picture of the departed pet on a large stone that is then placed in the memorial garden. The children also have painted pictures of adoptable pets that are then turned into cards and sold at Gigi's. In addition, a local girl, EmJane, sold cupcakes as part of a ninth birthday celebration.

“For us, the donations the kids give are very helpful, and we are grateful to these kind-hearted children,” says Hood. “But it is also amazing to watch these kids embrace our mission. They come back, summer after summer, and we watch them grow and learn. There is nothing like seeing the spark of philanthropy ignite in a child, because you know it will burn brightly for a lifetime.”

Higgs has been thrilled with the result. “It attracts energy to the store and the kids feel special. But most of all, it feels great getting involved and really helping those animals be safe and find homes.”

**For more information about Alaqua Refuge, go to [www.AlaquaAnimalRefuge.com](http://www.AlaquaAnimalRefuge.com). To find out more about Gigi's fabulous kids, go to [www.gigisfabkids.com](http://www.gigisfabkids.com). All photos courtesy of Cocoa L. Photography**

*Birthday girl EmJane Miller chose to have a cupcake stand alongside the lemonade stand to raise even more money for AAR.*



*Volunteers Curran Casey and Maddie Swainhart take their turn behind the stand.*



*Volunteer Maggie Steelman serves lemonade with a red twizzler straw.*

That's a big job but it's incredibly successful one for the popular Rosemary Beach store as well as for the kids, parents, and, of course, the rescued animals.

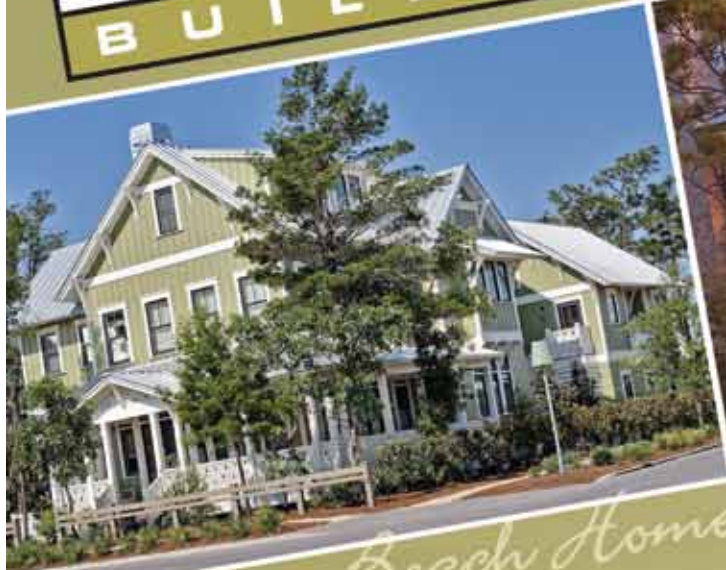
“Well, let's face it, even at the beach kids get bored. They would come shopping with their parents and I would hear them talking about wanting to do something,” says Geri Golding Higgs, who runs the store with her husband David Higgs. “Then one day someone asked if they could

showing adoptable Alaqua animals is prominently displayed.

The lemonade stand is a lot of fun, but the children are also getting lots of life lessons. Each child is given a task so they feel invested and have a sense of accomplishment. One may be in charge of ice, another of putting the Twizzler into the lemonade as a straw, while another may collect donations. More importantly, each child learns about Alaqua.



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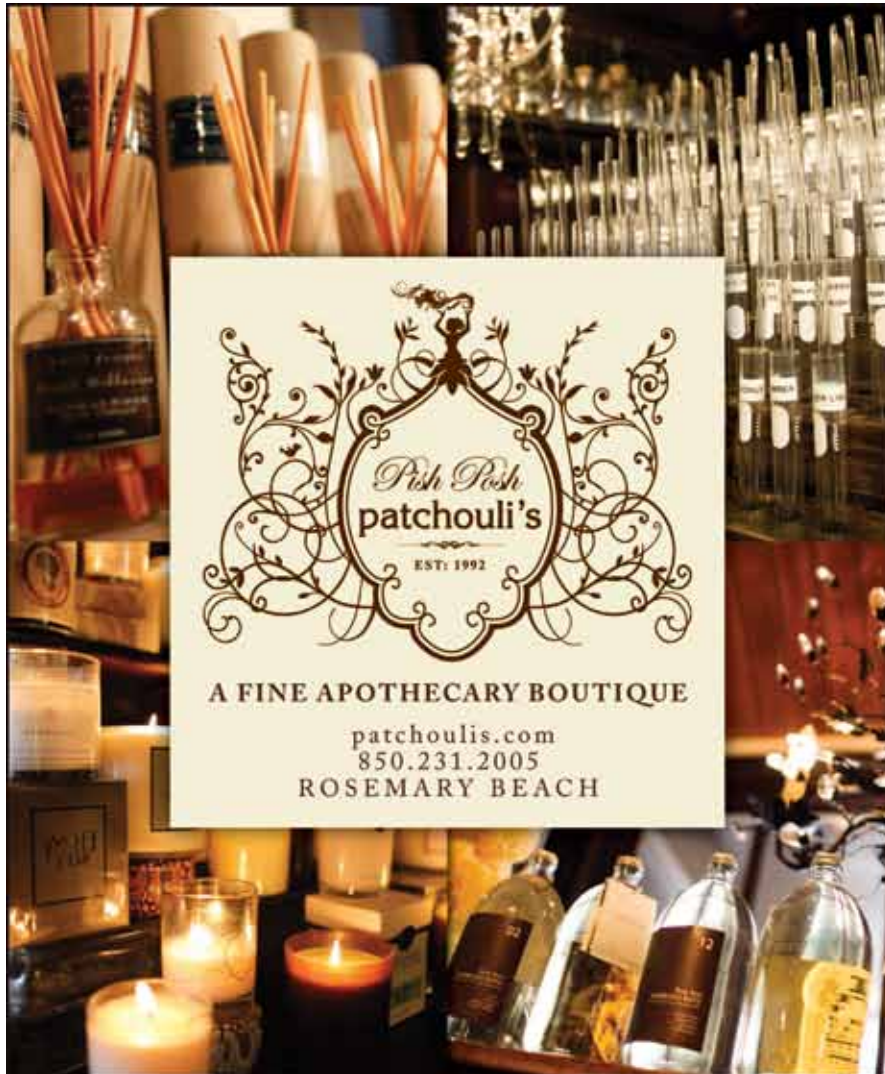
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# Photographing Family Legacies - and Much More

BY RYAN LOFTIS

“I truly believe photography is an art,” Carletta Watkins says. “It’s not something that we snap some pictures and give a disk to someone. It is our family, our prized possession, our legacy.”

It’s this passion that Watkins brings to Focus, the Seaside portrait boutique she opened in Seaside in March, 2011. Her passion was born from pain. “We as parents should all give our children the gift of a family portrait. As a child of divorce and the major impact it had on my life, I know how important it is for a child. I remember looking for a portrait of my family and there wasn’t one. When I photograph a family, I often photograph that parent with the child individually also. No matter what happens, that child can look at that family portrait or them with their parent and know that they were important and that they were loved.” She places special emphasis on the last word. “I know I’m making a difference in a family’s life. It is why I love my job.”



Carletta Watkins

Not that family portraits are your only option should you decide to visit Focus. Maternity, newborn, children, and senior portrait sessions are also available. Do you want an in studio portrait or do you feel like taking advantage of one of the many glorious 30-A backdrops? Either way, Focus has you covered. Every portrait needs a frame. Fortunately, Focus offers plenty to choose from. “We offer a very unique line of wall frames that offer several styles and many colors to choose from,” Watkins says. “We also offer many different styles of desk frames.”

Opening her Seaside studio meant Watkins had to skillfully juggle commitments. At the end of 2008, she had opened a 3,000-square-foot studio in London, Ky., which is now managed by her son, Matt, and a longtime client named Leah. “I fly into town, photograph my clients, and then Leah and Matt take care of the rest,” Watkins says.

“Also, when we are the busiest in Seaside we are slower in Kentucky, and our busiest months in Kentucky are the slower months in Florida, so the schedule just works.”

Not bad for an entirely self-taught photographer. After closing her gift and floral design shop, Watkins spent several years as a stay at home mom. A simple shopping trip with friends would point her career in a new direction. “I bought a new camera, a Nikon N90S,

and as soon I went out to shoot with it for the first time it was magic. I can’t really explain it any better. It fit in my hands perfectly, and I knew this is where I was supposed to be.” Her baby daughter was a perfect model for her earliest portraits.

“Shortly after, I had friends who wanted me to photograph their babies, and gradually, my business grew. I



started in my basement, then we added an addition to our home, then we moved to a neighboring town as I was getting clients from Cincinnati to Knoxville.” The Kentucky studio she describes as her “dream” was entirely designed by her. “I never dreamed I would leave it, and here we are in Seaside.”

Why did she choose Seaside for her second studio? Recalling her family’s introduction to the city, Watkins

says, “As soon as we drove down 30-A we felt like this was home. From that point on, we vacationed here. At first it was once a year, then twice, then more and more. This place is magical. When I think of Seaside I think



Focus studio in Seaside

of family, children, happiness, love, beauty, and all things good. That is exactly what we value and what we want our photography to express. I was constantly looking at what I thought the area needed and I did see a need for our style of photography. I do believe we bring a bit of whimsy to the area. I know what it means when you give your word, and I love getting to know our clients personally. I think that is what makes a nice session a fabulous session, when you learn as much about a family as you can.”

For keeping the business running smoothly, Watkins wants to give proper credit to Tim, her husband of 23 years, and her children Matt, Brody, and Sophie. “I could not have achieved this much success without them. Our business is tough and it takes all of us, but what a ride it has been. It is a lot of work, but we are living the dream - and we are together.”

**For more information, visit [www.carlettawatkins.com](http://www.carlettawatkins.com) or call (850) 231-1842.**



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# Social Security: A Woman's Perspective

BY CHRIS OGLE

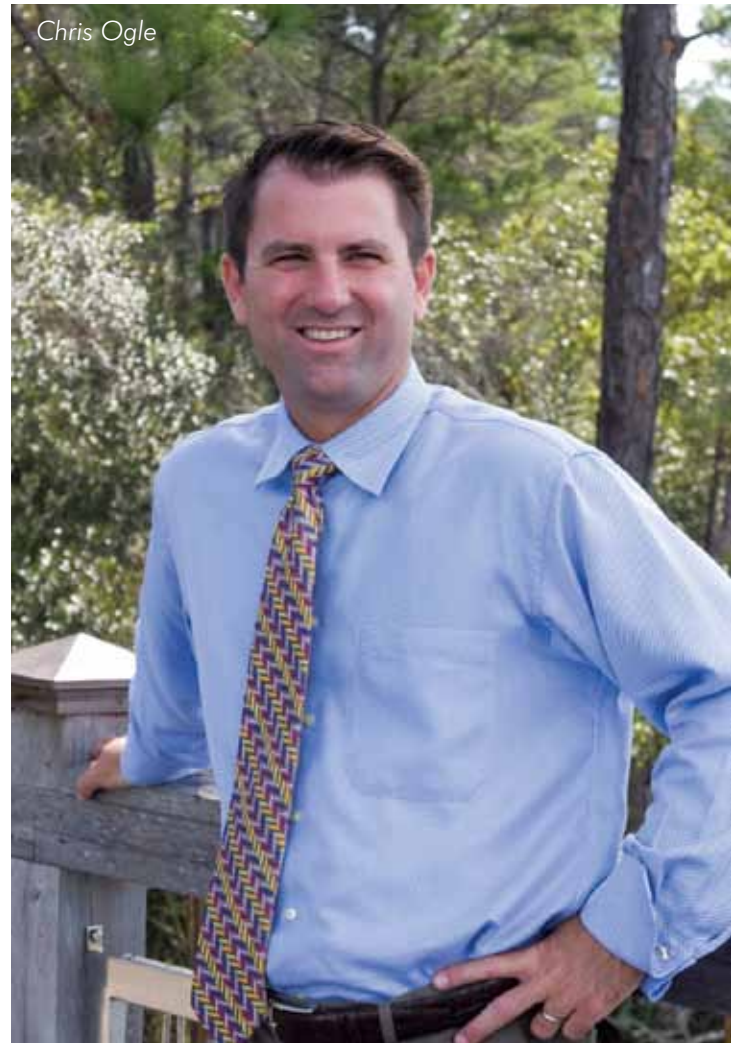
Social Security will not – and was never designed to – provide all of the income you'll need to live comfortably during retirement. At best, your income from Social Security will supplement that from other sources. So if you're planning to factor Social Security into your retirement plan – regardless of whether you're a man or a woman – you should learn all you can about how to enhance your benefits and how much income you may need from other sources to be financially comfortable during your retirement years.

But for females, there are some unique factors to consider in the equation. Because Social Security generally has annual cost-of-living adjustments, you have an inflation-protected benefit for as long as you live — and for women, those increases are vital since women generally live longer than men. In addition, Social Security provides dependent benefits to spouses, divorced spouses, elderly widows and widows with young children.

Consider these numbers released by the Social Security Administration Office of Research and Statistics:

Obviously, the lack of pensions is directly related to spending time out of the workforce, working at small companies that lack employer-sponsored benefit programs and holding part-time positions. On average, women spend 12 years out of the workforce caring for others\* — thereby reducing their projected Social Security benefits. Your retirement plan needs to factor in ways to offset this gap – be sure to invest in your employer's retirement and pension plans if these benefits are offered.

Finally, research by the Social Security Administration found that elderly women are less likely than elderly men to have significant income from private pensions. In contrast, Social Security benefits comprised 37 percent of unmarried elderly men's retirement income and 30 percent of elderly couples' income. And did you know that 47



So if you're planning to factor Social Security into your retirement plan – regardless of whether you're a man or a woman – you should learn all you can about how to enhance your benefits...

- Women who reach age 65 need to prepare for approximately 20 years of living expenses. In 2007, women represented 57 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries age 62 and older and approximately 69 percent of beneficiaries age 85 and older.
- The average annual Social Security income received by women 65 years and older was \$10,685, compared to \$14,055 for men.
- For unmarried women age 65 and older (including widows), Social Security comprised 48 percent of their total income in 2007.
- In 2004, statistics showed that only 24 percent of unmarried women aged 65 or older were receiving their own pensions (either as a retired worker or survivor), compared to 30 percent of men.

percent of unmarried elderly women depended on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their income?

These numbers strongly suggest that women need to get retirement plans in place so that Social Security benefits are an *income supplement* and not a *mainstay*. To help you determine a retirement strategy that is the most beneficial for your personal financial situation, talk with your Financial Advisor.

*\*Source: Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, 2009*

**Chris J. Ogle is a local financial advisor who lives on 30A. When not working, he spends his free time stand-up paddling with his wife and four children.**

**This article was written by Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Chris J. Ogle, First Vice President-Investment Officer, in Destin, FL. He can be reached**

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We realize how complex it is to build a custom home so close to the ocean on the sand, but your confidence and reassurance continuously put us at ease. The subcontractors you hired were professional and delivered high quality work. The experience of you and your superintendent, Kenny, is so evident in every area of the construction. We appreciated the directness and honesty of both you and Kenny. We felt so confident in leaving every detail to you and the people that work for you.

You were so accessible to us with any questions we had and would always work around our schedule. It truly was our pleasure to work with you and we enjoy our "new" home so very much.

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# La Florida's Jeff Landreth

BY RIDGELEY STANDARD



Gay and Jeff Landreth

honors from the United States Air Force Academy, Landreth served as a “combat pilot in the United States Air Force responsible for planning and executing complex operations in combat and exercises with US forces and allied countries.” Additionally, Landreth served as Chief of Scheduling, Mobility and Test Targets and Simulations while earning his MBA.

Applying the “leadership, management, and ethical principles” Landreth utilized during his military career to La Florida’s daily operations has resulted in “strong and managed growth.” Landreth identifies strengths

President George H. W. Bush congratulating Jeff Landreth



By incorporating an analytical rather than emotional approach to their business paradigm, Landreth and team are able to present a true market analysis to clients. “We capitalize on our experience with developers and apply it to individual home sales. First we start with a checklist of things we want to achieve. That’s critical. Additionally, when considering properties we perform a complete market analysis. Our results are then tailored to individuals based on the best product mix, best pricing, and the validity and viability of the product.”

“Our results are all about statistical versus anecdotal data,” explains Landreth. “It’s easy for someone to hear about a market trend and make a buying decision accordingly. Our approach is to harvest all that hearsay, glean the data, and then determine what information is applicable to potential buyers and sellers based on trends, economic conditions, and vulnerabilities. Then we present the information in a fashion that is easily accessible and provided quickly.”

Operationally, La Florida continues to leverage technology as a part of continuous improvement goals. “The reported data we provide is done electronically and in a manner that is most accessible for the client, be it in Word or graph form. Furthermore, we have a customized sales tracker designed to facilitate communications and ensure accuracy of data.”

Yes, purchasing a home is a lifestyle decision, but it is also a numbers decision.

It’s hard to imagine that military disciplines and real estate brokerage would be synonymous. But in the circumstance of Jeff Landreth, Co-founder and Director of Business Development and Operations of La Florida, that is exactly the case.

In 2002, Landreth, along with his wife and partner Gay, started La Florida, a boutique real estate firm “comprised of an elite group of handpicked, experienced real estate professionals.” With over 30 years of experience, the dedicated team of experts offers a passion for business and real estate investing along Florida’s Emerald Coast. “Our scope of services are real estate sales, marketing and consulting with core competency as market expert advisors for buyers and sellers alike,” explains Landreth. “The combined experience we bring has resulted in a one-source location for expertise, advice, and financial support within the markets we serve.”

Prior to starting La Florida, however, Landreth was a lifelong military specialist. After graduating with

and weaknesses with the “brief, execute, and debrief” approach to his business maneuvers just as he did when he instructed F15C fighter pilots.

“The type of structure, attention to detail, and technological savvy needed in the military is very similar to running a successful business,” Landreth believes. “The military is all about dotting your I’s and crossing your T’s and figuring ways to streamline.”

“We take a more businesslike approach to real estate than other more conventional firms,” explains Landreth. “While it is still an emotional sell, we treat it like a multimillion dollar business, because it is a multi-million dollar business,” he stresses. “Yes, purchasing a home is a lifestyle decision, but it is also a numbers decision. This is an investment and one wants to be sure they are getting the best return on that investment.”

“Ultimately, we are all about providing service with good results for our client’s satisfaction, not our own,” says Landreth. “Speaking as a former combat pilot, I say forget the whole Top Gun image. Fighter pilots by nature are really quiet and humble. The best guy is not bragging about what he is doing, he is just doing it and feeling blessed.”

The same motivation applies to all the team at La Florida,” he says. “We keep a low profile and keep it all about the customer and their needs, goals and desires. Our results speak for themselves.”

**La Florida is located at 32 East County Highway 30A in Santa Rosa Beach, FL. To learn more about how they may service your needs, you can call (850) 231-7896 or visit online at [www.laflorida.com/30A](http://www.laflorida.com/30A).**



# Live Well Bikes & Concierge

BY TAYLOR ARNOLD

If you are looking for a first rate vacation on the beaches of 30-A, look no further than Live Well Bikes and Concierge. From bike rentals and babysitters to grocery shopping and spa services, they've got all of your vacation needs covered. Just ask John Wellborn, the man behind this company. "We make it easy," he says. "Our staff adds the extra touches to your vacation that make it simple and fun, no matter how complex your group is."

Wellborn spent his childhood summers on the beaches of 30-A, so it was only a matter of time before he returned to his roots. "The beach had been calling my name since I can remember," he says. "When the opportunity presented itself, I decided to make 30-A my permanent home. I took a year off and enjoyed everything the area had to offer. After a year of pondering different business ideas, I decided to start a property management and concierge company."

The result is a full service concierge company that caters to a vacationer's every need. "The focus from the beginning has always been about taking care of customers," Wellborn says. "After years of visiting and one year of living here, I knew that every homeowner and every guest had to call many different people for many different services. Every home had 'the book'

If you are in need of bikes, they can arrange free delivery, pick-up, helmets, and locks. For the little ones, they've got kid's bikes, trailers and baby seats that can be rented by the day or the week. They've also got full size cribs, pack and plays, jogging strollers, and high chairs. And when you want a family photo against the beautiful backdrop of the ocean, Live Well has a range of package deals.

When you're looking for some outdoor fun, Live Well can arrange a fishing trip for the whole family or just the adults. Each boat includes a full cooler, and can be chartered for a half day or a full day. If you'd rather treat yourself to some spa services, Live Well can hook you up with a massage, manicure, pedicure, or any other spa treatment you can think of.

For visitors planning a trip during a peak week like spring



John Wellborn

Our staff adds the extra touches to your vacation that make it simple and fun, no matter how complex your group is.

that contained menus, repair men, places to rent bikes, places to rent a golf cart, people to go fishing with, etc, etc, etc. I wanted to be someone who could answer all of your questions about 30-A – make things simple on the customer."

Live Well Bikes & Concierge will do just that. From the time you arrive to 30-A, they've got you covered. With airport transportation and shuttle services, vacationers always have a convenient ride to restaurants, bars, and shopping trips. If you'd rather not brave the lines at the grocery store, Live Well can stock your pantry and fridge before your arrival. Just give them one to two hours to complete the order.

break, Wellborn recommends calling about their concierge services a week in advance. "That said, it's never too late to call us," he says. "We have had some interesting requests, but we've never had a situation where we couldn't take care of a guest."

Today he says the majority of his growth comes from word-of-mouth. "We are very aware that our success solely depends on the level of care we give to our customers," he says. "The ultimate goal is to serve our customers in a way that allows them more vacation time and less hassle time. If I can save you half a day of your week's vacation by helping you plan and coordinate, I feel like that is a very

valuable service to offer. I love this area so much that I've chosen to make it my home. I want the guests to get the most out of their time here. It is a special place indeed."

As for the future of Live Well Bikes & Concierge, Wellborn just hopes to make his customers' experience the best it can be. "I think we will continue to be considered the highest quality concierge service provider on 30-A for many years to come," he says. "As long as the guests keep coming, we want to be here to help them enjoy their vacation!"

**For more information call (850) 468-0006**



# ROLLORS:

*Bringing an Element of Surprise to Your Backyard Fun*

BY RYAN LOFTIS

It's a sunny day, and you're outside playing a game on the lawn. You roll your disk and it doesn't stop until it rests against the goal. Can't have a roll better than that. Not to mention the number six is showing, which means you get 12 points because a rollor resting against the goal brings double points, a definite advantage in a game requiring a minimum of 21 points to win. What are you playing? ROLLORS.

If you haven't heard of ROLLORS yet, don't feel bad. Inventor Matt Butler of Destin has only had a utility patent for the game since February of 2009. But chances are you'll be hearing a lot more about it in the future. Go to Meijer, Menards, or MC Sports and you can buy the game, or you can purchase it from several Web sites including Amazon. Last summer Popular Mechanics profiled ROLLORS in its article *10 Fun, Wild DIY Backyard Games*. Butler estimates 10,000 units were sold in 2010, with another estimated 20,000 sold so far this year.

The name comes from the six hardwood maple disks – three red, three blue – numbered on the side from one to six that are included in each game kit with two goals – one red, one blue. The goals are to be positioned approximately 25 feet apart on a level terrain. During the first round of play, each player uses one color set of rollors, with the blue player going first. Once the blue player is finished, the red player rolls. Only the player with the rollor closest to the goal – it must be within a 5-foot radius of the goal's center – can score in each round. Fortunately, the measuring cord attached to each goal will easily ensure that requirement is met. There are two ways to score. A rollor landing on its side gives the player a point value equal to the number showing, while the player receives a point value equal to the sum of both sides when the rollor stops on the edge.

Four or six players can compete as well, but that's hardly the only variation option. Your kids want to play? Make it easier for them by setting the goals 15 – 20 feet apart instead. On the other hand, you have plenty of ways to make it more difficult. Lengthen the distance between

I knew it was going to be fun when I saw kids who were 4 years old beat their parents.



Matt Butler

the goals for starters, and require rollors fall within a 3-foot radius to score. Why not set up the goals on terrain that's not level or has natural obstructions like trees or bushes between the goals?

A major in the United States Air Force currently stationed at Hurlburt Field in Mary Esther, FL, Butler spent 5 years flying over the Middle East on missions sometimes lasting 17 hours. "Staring at the land all day,

it's dusty, it's hot, all I could think about was being back in 30-A and the greens and trees and colors with my friends and family," he recalls. During that time, he had a vision for what eventually became the ROLLORS sold today. He hired military veterans to cut the prototype for him (ROLLORS is a member of the National Veteran-Owned Business Association), then began a marketing push, donating units as prizes at tournaments and events and selling them at arts and crafts shows. "I knew it was going to be fun when I saw kids who were 4 years old beat their parents. That gave me such energy to keep moving on with it. I've literally seen moms saying, 'We've got to go,' and kids want to keep playing. It's very reassuring."

Bringing families – along with a little competitiveness – together is a reason Butler describes ROLLORS as "going back to the classic game. It was a tool to help people get together and enjoy the time they have together." He considers 30-A the perfect environment for such a game: "I always saw it as a very family oriented, relaxing environment where people got out and did outdoor things."

One of his main goals is to sell the game at a lot of specialty stores. "It's important for me to get to the mom and pop stores that are out there. These small stores really stimulate the local economy." Wherever his games are ultimately sold, can anything equal the reaction Butler had when he first saw ROLLORS on a store shelf? "I don't think I could describe the feeling. I was on Cloud Nine all day."

*For more information, visit [www.rollors.net](http://www.rollors.net).*





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Central Park



A shot from the south side looking onto the town of Alys Beach.



# Oceana Blue Boutique

BY RYAN LOFTIS



Merchandise from Oceana Blue



in the area,” Von Hoene says. “I have traveled to Paris, Rome and Milan many times and have always admired the European flair for style and fashion. In my conversations with Suzanne it soon became apparent that we shared a similar passion for beautiful clothes. I was lucky enough to convince her that we should be partners in the boutique and to further combine her sales expertise with my business

acumen. And here we are today!”

Fittingly, many of Oceana Blue’s clothes and accessories come from Paris, Rome, and Milan. A handpicked selection of embroidered boots from Old Gringo and Frye are for sale. The jewelry selection includes vintage pieces, as well as an exclusive line from retro-contemporary designer Piedra Stone. When buying jeans you can choose between Victoria Beckham, Made-In-Heaven and Rich ‘N Skinny. Hollywood Trading Company provides shoes and accessories. To the owners’ surprise, the limited edition embroidered cowboy boots and Rich ‘N Skinny distressed jeans both sold out in Oceana Blue’s first three weeks of business. The men’s Robert Graham detailed shirts have been a hot item, and the

owners anticipate the new line of linen men’s clothes and the women’s Frye boots will also be extremely popular. Not from the area? No problem, just have your purchase shipped to your door.

“We believe that quality clothes are timeless and will make the customer feel good every time they wear them,” Nilsen says. “We love it when a client comes in and tells us they just attended a cocktail party and received several compliments on their outfit. The clothes you get from Oceana Blue will leave you feeling special and sexy every time you wear them. As the compliments roll in, you will know you made the right choice.”

Knowing their customers’ individual tastes is a point of pride for the owners. Nilsen explains: “When we are at market we are constantly looking for those designers that offer a quality and style of product that we feel is what best meets our customer’s tastes. We get to know our customers and what they like. Every month we receive new shipments, and we offer an exclusive e-mail peek for our returning customers, so that they are aware the new items they are interested in have arrived. The customers love it.”

What inspired the boutique’s name? “Amongst the white sandy beaches, plentiful sunshine and tropical breezes, the one thing that stands out the most is the color of the cool blue ocean!” Nilsen says. The beauty doesn’t end there. Step inside and you’ll be greeted by a brilliant cobalt blue blown glass jellyfish chandelier. Take advantage of one of the leather chairs available. While you relax, enjoy a soda, bottled water, or chilled champagne. Don’t worry about your items, either; an employee will bring them to you. “We never want you to feel rushed, hurried or pressured. Relax and enjoy the experience.”

For Nilsen and Von Hoene, the boutique’s success so far is only the beginning. “Our main goal is to make shopping at Oceana Blue Boutique an experience that customers truly enjoy,” Nilsen says. “We want to continue to offer our customers options in clothing that can’t be found anywhere else on 30-A or in the surrounding area. We also are looking forward to expanding our jewelry line substantially. The store is our passion. We want to say thank you to every customer. They are our success.”



William Von Hoene and Suzanne Nilsen

**For more information, call (850) 333-1758 or drop in the store located on Spires Lane at Gulf Place. You can also find them at [www.Facebook.com/OceanaBlueBoutique](http://www.Facebook.com/OceanaBlueBoutique).**



# Hissyfits brings unique, trendy merchandise to Rosemary Beach

BY MARY WELCH



Amie Wiley

**T**rust us, when you enter this Rosemary Beach boutique you will have a hissy fit. And that's only appropriate because the store is called Hissyfits. The cause of your tantrum is simple: There is so much amazing merchandise – dresses, shoes, flipflops, jewelry, accessories – that you will want it all.

“We specialize in unique items and I’m always looking for items that have a story to tell. We like to say that we have the best gifts and accessories in the Wiregrass,” says Amie Wiley, who recently opened the store. Wiley, who vacationed on 30-A as a child, had already opened Hissyfits in Dothan, AL, but couldn’t put the area out of her mind. “It’s been a dream of mine to open a store on 30-A,” she says. “A location in beautiful Rosemary Beach became available and it was a perfect match. The location is as unique and different as me and my merchandise.”

While both stores have Wiley’s love of trendy, flirty, and fun merchandise, they are not exactly alike. For instance, the Dothan store is the exclusive retailer in the area for Izabella and Brusfire Designs as well as Sorrelli. The store also introduced a new jewelry line, Mahlon Grace, which is available in both stores. Mahlon Grace is



designed in Israel and features Swarovski crystals that are carefully handset in to each and every piece of jewelry.

“Our customers come from all over the world,” she says. “They are fun-loving, upbeat, and always fashionable.”

In fact, for those who may be bit fashion challenged, don’t worry. Wiley and her staff love to help put a look together or offer suggestions. “We love to help our customers with their selections and we also offer personal shopping for those one-of-a-kind gifts and accessories that people are looking for.”

Wiley says that the best thing about owning Hissyfits is, in fact, working with her customers. “My favorite part

of owning Hissyfits has been getting to know my customers and becoming part of their lives,” she says. “I have been here for a short while and already fallen in love with my extended Rosemary family.”

Frequent trunk shows with designers also bring the latest in fashions and accessories to Rosemary Beach and help connect customers with their favorite designers. The store recently hosted Cecile Hardy, whose NOLA Couture lines of ties and accessories put a fresh spin on Southern preppy.

Wiley intends to become even more entrenched in Rosemary Beach. “My future plans are to get involved with the community,” she says. “One day I would love to donate my time to the people and animals in the Walton County area.”

But for now, she is thrilled to be back in Rosemary Beach and handling both stores. “You will find that most of our accessories and gifts are made in the USA or Israel,” she said. “We are proud to support both countries. When you’re not in the area, you can always find fabulous, unique items at [www.hissyfitsboutique.net](http://www.hissyfitsboutique.net) but we really love it for people to stop by, shop, and let us become friends.”

***Hissyfits in Rosemary Beach is at 31 Main Street in Rosemary Beach. Their phone number is (850) 231-0311.***



# Live to a Healthy 100!

BY DR. NITIN BAWA, MD

Here are a few tips to staying alive and well beyond a 100 years.

## 1. CHECK NOT JUST CHOLESTEROL BUT ALSO AN INTIMAL MEDIAL THICKNESS (IMT):

We all know that it helps to check to see if the arteries are starting to get thickened with a test called the IMT. This is because 50% of people who have heart attacks and strokes have normal cholesterol, so it helps to see who is starting to develop plaque or thickening of the inner lining of the artery. An ultrasound is done of the big artery in the neck and numerous detailed measurements are taken of the inner lining of the artery to see who is starting to develop thickening of the artery.

## 2. CONSIDER GENETIC TESTING:

With all the new information we have about genes it is now common to do a genetic test to see what diseases one might be at risk for. We use the same company that is used by Duke University and Mayo Clinic for genetic testing as part of their executive physical. If you know what genetic susceptibilities you have, you can be more aggressive in prevention and testing for those conditions. For example, if you have the genes that put you at risk for colon cancer then you can get a colonoscopy done a little earlier in life to make sure you are not developing any colon cancer.

## 3. CHECK HORMONE LEVELS:

Men and women tend to age more rapidly due to declining hormones. For women, there are bio-identical hormones that can be custom made by compounding pharmacies based on specialized tests for hormone levels. Saliva testing is the best way to see what hormones might be low or off balance. Low testosterone is very common in men but most physicians do not test for this. If testosterone is low, there are ways to supplement it or boost it in order to help restore energy and youthful vigor.

## 4. EAT PLENTY OF ANTI-OXIDANTS:

Anti-oxidants are the nutrients in foods such as green vegetables and red berries that help to protect against oxidative damage. Americans generally do not eat the five helpings of fruit and vegetables and so we often do not get the necessary anti-oxidants. I like a couple of supplements called Nano-green and Nano-red that have numerous different anti-oxidants in a “nano” form that is easily absorbed.



## 5. INCREASE OMEGA 3 INTAKE:

We should be having an equal amount of omega 3 oils verses other oils. However, the American diet has 10 times the bad oils to one portion of good oils. Omega-3 fats help brain function, protect the heart and serve as anti-oxidants. So, eat plenty of fish and take some fish oil capsules daily.

## 6. VITAMIN D:

A lot of Americans have low vitamin D, which is a very important hormone. It has been shown to protect against different cancers and strengthen bones. Take at least 2,000 International Units of Vitamin D daily.

## 7. GOOD MULTIVITAMIN:

It is important to take a good multivitamin that has supplements that can be easily absorbed. I use a multivitamin that has different minerals in a chelate form that is a lot better absorbed.

## 8. DIET AND EXERCISE:

If you want to live long, you have to watch your diet and exercise regularly. Keeps the body fit and mind sharp. But you knew that one...

*Dr. Bawa is a board certified Internal Medicine physician with a special interest in holistic medicine, bio-identical hormones, and weight loss. He is accepting new patients and appointments can be made at (850) 534-4170.*



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Chris Ogle is a local financial advisor with over 10 years service, a lifelong Emerald Coast resident, and lives on 30A with his wife and four children.

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# The Hidden Lantern Bookstore and Gallery

BY JULIE HERRON CARSON

The lights are on at The Hidden Lantern Bookstore and Gallery in Rosemary Beach Town Center, and the friendly staff and enticing collections of books and art are welcoming visitors to browse, relax, and let their imaginations soar. The Hidden Lantern is owned by Diane and Tony Carvalho, and combines two of their family's passions: great books and original art. Daughter Lauren Carvalho, is the Gallery Director and Paige Daugherty is the Bookstore Manager.

"We have owned a home in Rosemary Beach for several years and always felt the town needed a bookstore," says Diane Carvalho.



Photos courtesy of Jackie Ward



"When Lauren graduated from college with a Fine Arts degree we knew the timing was right to open The Hidden Lantern. It's been gratifying to see so much support from residents and visitors right from the beginning," she adds.

The Hidden Lantern's name is derived from the iconic lamp in the woods of Narnia, the magical country envisioned by author C.S. Lewis. The name plays on the fact that literature and art can both illuminate every day experiences and shine light on new ideas and emotions. Visitors pass easily from books to art through French doors and since the two managers change the art exhibits and book displays frequently, there is always something new to experience.

Diane Carvalho says great care was taken with the design and construction of the new space. "We want our visitors to enjoy The Hidden Lantern's architectural details. The bookstore design incorporates warm wooden floors and shelves, and features creative surprises like our ship chandelier. The gallery is crafted with curved white walls to showcase the art and to encourage patrons to move through the space to see all that's on display. We worked with a wonderful creative team to design and



build the space. Darrell Russell of A Boheme Design was our architect, Peter Horn of Artisan of Seagrove Beach was our builder, and Jennifer Orne of Jennifer Orne Design helped with the space's interior design."

"We have over 6,000 books including an extensive children's section, a Christian section, and popular fiction, biographies, and mysteries," says Daugherty. "We host children's story time and book signings, and we also have a Bible study group and book clubs for adults and children. We offer a lot of fun activities like 'Where's Waldo' parties and 'Talk Like a Pirate Day'. The space includes comfy seating areas and Wi-Fi to encourage people to linger."

"It's a thrill for me to seek out artists to showcase at the gallery," says Lauren Carvalho, a mixed-media artist. "I display my own work, and then bring in new works from other local and regional artists. We change the exhibits

every six weeks to keep them fresh. We host exhibit openings and meet the artist gatherings, along with workshops and classes throughout the year."

"At a time when independent book stores seem to be closing all over the country, the opening of The Hidden Lantern is a great addition to Rosemary Beach. It's warm and inviting and has a great selection of books that are chosen with obvious care. The gallery space is a good showcase for local and visiting artists," says clay artist Vaughan Greene, wife of Rosemary Beach architect Frank Greene.

Diane Carvalho says opening The Hidden Lantern has been a wonderful way for the entire family to contribute to Rosemary Beach. "Although my husband, Tony, still works full-time in the energy business in Dallas, we are finding more and more opportunities to come to our Rosemary Beach home, and hope one day to move here full-time," she says. "Our older daughter, Jennifer, owns an art advisory company and has been a big help with the gallery. Our son, Tony, is creating his own business in the area, so he works in the shop when he can. I help out in the bookstore, and love interacting with my Rosemary Beach neighbors and all of our visitors."

***The Hidden Lantern is located at 84 North Barrett Square. It's open Mondays-Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sundays 1-5 p.m. Visit [www.thehiddenlantern.com](http://www.thehiddenlantern.com) or see the shop's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/hiddenlanternbookstore](http://www.facebook.com/hiddenlanternbookstore)) for a schedule of special events and programs. The phone number is (850) 231-0091.***



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# R. W. Lowe

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS

Phrases such as cohesive vision, aesthetic complements, emphasis on appropriateness, spatial and material interplay, harmony of proportions, elegant lines, fluid movement, and an intuitive facility of craft are just a few of the depictions Rick Lowe uses to describe his work.

As an architect, Lowe has found a home base for his firm in Santa Rosa Beach. In 2003 he moved to 30-A Rick Lowe's personal residence



Before



After

are feeling a bit more balanced. I can't express enough how thankful I am for my path," Lowe describes. "Beyond 30-A, we have been pushing forward with Class A residential and commercial work in Mississippi and Alabama and are currently looking at projects in Texas and Arkansas. But my personal home and the base office will remain here in South Walton."



Lowe names the relaxing atmosphere of 30-A as the number one reason he calls this



After

roofline are reminiscent of sharks, paying homage to the concept of fierce gargoyles scaring away evil spirits."

Meanwhile, in the current economic climate the extreme ends of the spectrum will start moving on 30-A. But Lowe feels the expansion should become more stable in years to come.

"The momentum for residential properties will be long, slow, evenly placed growth," Lowe explains. "It's a good time to build here on 30-A, whether you have the funds to move on a project without requiring bank funding, or if you're able to swoop in on a very low price or excess in inventory."

With rather humble beginnings and an additional educational background in psychology, Lowe believes he is afforded a down to earth, quality connection when getting to know his client. This is especially true in designing a residence, where Lowe can create a home that truly speaks to how that particular client lives.

"I enjoy focusing on the materials that can frame a living space in terms of not only the real and natural, which speak to a certain authenticity, but also green construction," Lowe says. "These concepts are already in my nature."

The 30-A area has proven to be an ideal location for urban-inspired Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND). The scenic route has provided a blank slate, in which these TND's have effectively created their own "identities and characters." On the other hand, outside of a planned community, Lowe says an architectural design can flourish even more. "In either setting, with the key ingredients in place," he says, "30-A is the right environment to nurture a quality project."

And what might those key ingredients be? Factor in the land's physical features, (as well as location and price point); the client's desires and the right professionals; and you've got yourself the recipe for an architectural success.

But Lowe points out those ingredients don't necessarily require a huge bank account. "The concept of 'Class A work' is a mentality. Achieving a high quality design can, yes, often involve a higher amount of money – but not always," he explains. "The right proportions, textures, colors, and choices you make are all free, creative decisions."

from Birmingham, AL as the "Architect of Residence" for another firm while designing the WaterSound Beach Club. Two years later, in 2005, R. W. Lowe was conceptualized as his own. During the past six years, in spite of a recession and loosely funded projects, his firm has continued to grow west through the states that form the Gulf of Mexico coastline.

"The firm has completed two 'Town Architect' positions and has secured work in other states, so things

particular spot home, adding that it's helped considerably with a former high blood pressure problem. Regarding the design for his personal Santa Rosa Beach cottage, Lowe says he afforded himself the opportunity to have a little fun.

"It highlights a progressive strike, which will have some traditional twists (but never a total departure from historical reference) and an independent demeanor," he said. "For example, the exposed rafter tails at the high

***R. W. Lowe specializes in turnkey, Class A projects. Lowe particularly focuses on ways to incorporate the interior design and a location's site into the landscape of his designs. His background is steeped in a rich history of residential designs, and with the boutique hotels under construction he is quickly adding to his hospitality and commercial portfolio. Learn more at [www.rwlowearchitecture.com](http://www.rwlowearchitecture.com).***



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# Team Stevens at Rosemary Beach Realty

BY SUSAN CANNIZZARO

**T**hey dreamed of an active retirement and being able to help people realize their dreams of owning real estate along the Emerald Coast. Steve and Jan Stevens are now making those dreams a reality.

Prior to becoming realtors, Jan and Steve each had corporate business careers in the Atlanta area. Jan was a Senior VP of Sales for Spherion Corporation and Steve had a 35-year career with UPS (United Parcel Service) in Human Resources and other Senior Executive Level positions. “At the time of our retirement in 2002, after long and successful careers with our respective corporations, we really never felt we would ever stop working all together,” says Steve.

They had dabbled in real estate on a personal level at Lake Lanier, Hilton Head Island, and Rosemary Beach by buying, fixing up, and selling properties to stay busy and generate extra income. “From these experiences, we felt we could be equally successful assisting others in their quest for ‘that little cottage at the beach,’” says Jan. They moved to Rosemary Beach in 2004 and in April 2010 they passed the Florida State Real Estate exam. In that following October they received the opportunity to join Rosemary Beach Realty as Team Stevens.

In the short time since joining Rosemary Beach Realty they have sold 8 homes, 3 condominiums, and one residential lot. Team Stevens currently has listings in Rosemary Beach, Wild Heron, and Draper Lake. “We are very fortunate and blessed to work and live here. It’s a very interesting dynamic when our buying clients become new neighbors and friends. We see them in restaurants, on bikes, in stores and we know that people are enjoying what a unique lifestyle we have here. It is exciting to see people investing in real estate again, as their confidence has rebounded,” says Steve.

The Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport has made a big impact on the number of visitors coming to the area and has helped the real estate market



Jan and Steve Stevens

rebound strongly. “People used to drive to Rosemary Beach, but now they can fly from cities like Nashville, which is a 50 minute flight versus an eight hour drive. The number of anticipated air travel passengers is triple what officials had originally estimated,” says Steve.

Jan and Steve both are very active within Rosemary Beach and the surrounding community, working hard to really make a difference for those less fortunate. Steve is the current Board President of the Rosemary Beach Foundation. Fellow Board member Claire Bannerman speaks highly of both Steve and Jan, and their efforts to help the Muscogee Indian Nation of Northwest Florida and

the Community of Bruce, Florida, an area that has been hard hit by job losses, especially in the construction trade. Through the support of Community Walton and several area faith-based organizations, the Stevens have been able to help the Bruce community create an FDA-certified food pantry that provides food to over 200 people twice a month. “Steve and Jan have also helped deliver many car-loads of donated food, diapers, and baby formula to this community that is 25+ miles away, and even helped fix a fried chicken dinner one night,” says Bannerman.

Jan has helped raise over \$10,000 annually for Caring and Sharing, a local Food Bank through the Girls Getaway Project sponsored by the Rosemary Beach Foundation. This fundraising weekend, which Jan has been a part of for the past 5 years, enables women to spend a quality weekend together with great speakers, reflection, and fellowship, while helping a good cause. “If you need a casserole or anything, Jan will have it at your door,” says Bannerman.

Linda Miller is the Broker for Rosemary Beach Realty and believes Team Stevens is successful due to their strength in building relationships and their ability to create strong bonds with customers. “Steve and Jan are so good at working with our walk-in customers; they really listen to them and they in turn

become buyers. They relate so well with families with small children and often let the children play games and watch videos on their personal i-Pad that their grandchildren have downloaded fun things on to” says Miller.

**Contact Steve and Jan to discover the variety of beach home possibilities in Rosemary Beach and the 30-A corridor. They can be reached by Steve’s cell (678) 777-8805, Jan’s cell (678) 777-8806, or Rosemary Beach Realty (850) 278-2000; and at [teamstevens@rosemarybeachsales.com](mailto:teamstevens@rosemarybeachsales.com).**



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# The Beach Group

BY JESSICA HOLTHAUS

**R**on Romano started as a visitor to 30-A in 2000 after a recommendation from some world travelers he met on the island of Grand Cayman. He and his wife immediately fell in love with the area and knew they wanted to move here. In 2003, Romano and Andy Wiggins (buddies since high school), took a group family vacation to the area. Little did they know the trip would lead to an impromptu partnership and creation of The Beach Group Properties.

“30-A is so undiscovered and unspoiled, I only wish we had moved here sooner,” Romano says. “I suggested he move here too. Later that year, we opened our first small office with just a couple desks; we didn’t know a soul but we decided we’d figure it out together.”

And eight years later, they certainly have done just that. The Beach Group Properties has grown into one of the bigger firms in the panhandle in terms of volume, with three offices and 34 agents. “We looked at growing more but we like where we are now,” Romano explains. “We want to remain a boutique firm and continue to concentrate on our clients and communities in this area. We moved here for the lifestyle and growing the company any larger defeats that purpose.”

As everyone knows, the three most important things in the real estate biz is “location, location, location.” With arguably the best beaches in the world, the pioneering market of 30-A has provided a great opportunity for The Beach Group, which specializes in properties along the scenic route. Romano says the addition of a new area airport will only help things continue to grow – but in a limited fashion.

“You have height restrictions along 30-A, and a majority of the land is dedicated to state parks and state forest. At this point, most of what can be developed is already in some state of development,” he describes. “This is a very special place and as it grows, it only continues to add more culture, arts, and events. 30-A has become a destination, not ‘just a beach’ that closes down in the winter.”

The Beach Group’s agents all pride themselves on having the most current knowledge of the market, which aids clients on both the buying and selling sides

of the fence. The firm features an extensive background in marketing expertise and, while many area companies consist of “transaction brokers” who referee both parties in a real estate transaction, The Beach Group’s agents only represent their own client (and thus their client’s

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina drastically slowed the panhandle’s housing market. Despite 30-A sitting on the highest point on the Gulf, the perception stopped potential buyers in their tracks. Thankfully, Romano feels much of that is in the past.

“Prices have gone down, but the bottom of our market was probably a year ago. There are still great deals, but it’s not going to get any worse in this region,” he points out.

And the desire for something tangible is evident.

As 30-A continues its shift from an investment market to a second home market, it has transformed communities. More people live here full time, less people are looking for a “vacation” property, and more are looking for a primary home.

“This is not an endless market,” Romano warns. “For people with specific real estate criteria (a four bed two bath, for example), there may only be a handful of options for them to choose from. And every day, houses are being bought and disappearing from the market.”

Romano says there is still plenty of opportunity for interested clients – whether they want a close-knit community with amenities and events, or just a quiet place off the beaten path.

“30-A offers both options,” Romano explains. “People who come to 30-A to live do so by choice; it’s a different lifestyle. The tranquility and natural beauty help you define your priorities and realize what’s important in your life.”

Wiggins and Romano bring more than 40 years of combined real estate experience. During their careers, Romano has been responsible for more than \$300 million in real estate transactions and Wiggins has averaged more than 50 annual sales since 1991, putting him in the RE/MAX Hall of Fame.



Ron Romano and Andy Wiggins at their office in Blue Mountain Beach

best interest). Additionally, The Beach Group is adept at looking at the big picture; be it with finding the right location within an existing development or in new construction with its conceptualization and costs.

**To learn more about The Beach Group, visit [www.TheBeachGroup.com](http://www.TheBeachGroup.com). The main office is located at 3648 W. Co. Hwy. 30-A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. Contact the office by phone at (850) 622-0107 or toll free (877) 231-9007, or via email at [info@TheBeachGroup.com](mailto:info@TheBeachGroup.com).**





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# South Walton Gets a Makeover

BY JULIE HERRON CARSON

You may feel something a little different as you move about the 15 beach communities that have long been known as *Beaches of South Walton*. After 20 years, the Walton County Tourist Development Council is retiring the lengthy moniker and three red-and-white umbrellas logo in favor of a simplified logo, *VISIT South Walton*, with the tagline *Find Your Perfect Beach*.

“Designating our area of the Gulf Coast has always been a challenge, since there is no major city located within South Walton to pinpoint the location,” says Dawn Moliterno, executive director of the Walton County Tourist Development Council. “We realized we needed to revise the brand last year, when we received so much media attention during the oil spill. Even though our beaches were virtually untouched by the oil, reporters descended on South Walton, and they struggled to convey their location for readers and

viewers. It quickly became apparent to us that we had to simplify the message and clarify where South Walton is and what it has to offer. We needed a brand that was easy to say, that encompassed all of the area’s many attributes, and that represented the 15 distinctive beach neighborhoods along our coastline. In other words, we needed a brand that would make the plural, singular.”

The new logo features a stylized script and uses turquoise and white to reflect the prominent colors of sea and sand. The campaign was created by LKM Agency of Charlotte, NC after months of research and input from residents, visitors, merchants, and others who live, work, and play in the area.

“*Find Your Perfect Beach* invites people to explore South Walton’s 15 beach neighborhoods that make up the county’s 26 miles of shimmering coastline,” says Moliterno. “From Miramar Beach at the west to Inlet Beach at the east, the communities are like a strand of pearls: each is distinct with its own cultural traditions



South Walton’s new logo



Photos courtesy of South Walton TDC

and its own visual style. They are linked not only to each other, but also to the surrounding natural beauty. We are confident

that along this stretch of coastline, everyone will find his or her perfect place that epitomizes what the word beach means to them and that here they will create special memories that will keep them coming back year after year.”

Residents and visitors alike will begin to feel and see the new brand come to life locally, regionally, and nationally. The new logo is currently being integrated into the area’s signage and beach kiosks. New South Walton merchandise will soon be available at the Visitor Information Center and at select retailers in the area. A new advertising campaign is kicking off in regional and national media, while new printed materials are being delivered hot off the press. A comprehensive new website, [www.visitSouthWalton.com](http://www.visitSouthWalton.com), provides information, history, and photos for each beach neighborhood, and refreshed Facebook ([www.facebook.com/VisitSouthWalton](http://www.facebook.com/VisitSouthWalton)) and Twitter (@SouthWalton) pages offer the opportunity for everyone to engage with

the new South Walton brand, by sharing photos and stories about their perfect beach and treasured memories. The site will also include contests and giveaways.

“Nine out of ten visitors are repeat visitors, and they tell us that on their trip home from South Walton they are already planning their next visit,” says Tracy Louthain, director of communications for the TDC. “Everyone who has visited South Walton has their favorite beach, favorite restaurant, and favorite activity and we want to help them find something new on every return trip. Why not visit a state park or go YOLO boarding on a dune lake? Play tennis or golf. Go horseback riding or sailing. Take an art class or gallery tour. The possibilities are endless,” she continues. “We consider our new tagline an invitation to experience even more of what South Walton has to offer.”

***As a way to engage visitors and invite them to share their personal stories and special vacation memories, the TDC is launching “Your Perfect Beach Contest” with a chance for visitors to win a trip to their South Walton beach, as well as other exciting prizes including gift cards and more. To learn more, “like” South Walton on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/VisitSouthWalton](http://www.facebook.com/VisitSouthWalton).***



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ending areas • volume 5 • number 4 • July/August 2010



# Blended Family Basics

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON



Kimberly Watson Sewell and Frank Watson

Here are two trivia questions for you movie and television buffs. First, what big name Hollywood stars played on-screen spouses in the 1968 film *Yours, Mine & Ours*? The basic storyline of the movie paired a widow and her eight children with a widower and his ten children. Second, a year later Sherwood Schwartz (creator of *Gilligan's Island*) took the same basic storyline and rolled out a hit television series that ran for 117 episodes. Can you name that show? [The answers are at the end of this article.]

One reason commonly given for the popularity of these two classics is that they gave traditional nuclear families a lighthearted glimpse into the lives of *blended families*. Times have changed. In the new millennium, blended families now outnumber traditional nuclear families. And the number is likely to grow, based on current statistics and trends.

Unlike the movies or 30-minute sitcoms, real life is not always so lighthearted for blended families, whether due to widowhood or divorce. Many face unique social, psychological, and economic challenges.

## THE CHALLENGES

More than 60 percent of second marriages end in divorce. Fortunately, there are numerous organizations and support groups dedicated to helping blended families with these challenges. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the critical Life & Estate Planning challenges confronting blended families. These challenges include *disinheriting* your ex-spouse, *providing for* your new spouse, and *providing for* your own children and protecting their inheritance.

## YOUR EX-SPOUSE

Without proper legal planning, your ex-spouse (as surviving parent/guardian) would likely be appointed by the probate court to manage the inheritance you leave to your children. To make matters worse, what if your children predecease your ex-spouse, and are single and childless at that time? Who would inherit your assets then? That is right ...your ex-spouse, as the next-of-kin of your children.

## YOUR NEW SPOUSE

Chances are you made a few solemn promises to your new spouse on your wedding day. Among them were promises to be there through thick and thin, personally and financially. Accordingly, most spouses in blended families tend to blend their wealth, too.

Warning: If you predecease your new spouse, then you may forever disinherit your own children from your share of such blended wealth! Thereafter, upon the death of your new spouse, your assets may be inherited by your stepchildren, or even by your new spouse's next spouse and their children.

## YOUR OWN CHILDREN

Whether children are reared in a traditional nuclear family or in a blended family, great care should be given to protect any inheritance both *for them* and *from them*. Wealth representing a lifetime of your hard work and thrift can be squandered in very short order, or can quickly vanish through divorces, lawsuits, or bankruptcies.

## INHERITANCE PROTECTION

Want to make your Life & Estate Plan *heir tight*? If so, you should consider a *Discretionary Trust*. As the name implies, such a trust makes distributions only on the sole and absolute discretion of the Trustee. The key to a successful Discretionary Trust is selecting and entrusting an appropriate Trustee with broad discretionary authority

to protect your wealth *for and from* your heirs. The non-fiduciary position of Trust Protector can be created to appoint and even remove such a Trustee to ensure fulfillment of your objectives. As such, the Trust Protector serves as an ongoing "Guardian Angel".

## FINAL THOUGHTS

This has been a very cursory examination of a very complex subject. Be sure to engage appropriate legal counsel before you pursue any financial or legal strategy to overcome blended family challenges.

First answer: *Henry Fonda and Lucille Ball*.

Second answer: *The Brady Bunch*, of course!

## ASK YOURSELF...

*These Questions Regarding "Blended Family Basics."*

1. Have I protected the inheritance of my children from being managed by or even inherited by my ex-spouse?  
Yes      No      Not Sure
2. Have I protected the inheritance of my children from their potential squandering, divorces, lawsuits and bankruptcies?  
Yes      No      Not Sure
3. Have I made legal arrangements to provide for the lifetime financial support of my new spouse, yet to control the ultimate disposition of my assets for my own children?  
Yes      No      Not Sure
4. Have my new spouse and I arranged our legal affairs to protect the inheritance of our own respective children from their potential squandering, divorces, lawsuits or even bankruptcies?  
Yes      No      Not Sure
5. Have I coordinated my financial and legal plans to increase my estate value and equalize the inheritance left to my new spouse and my own children upon my death.  
Yes      No      Not Sure

**Frank Watson is Bay and Walton Counties' Only Board Certified Real Estate Attorney. For more information contact Watson Sewell, PL, Attorneys at Law (850) 231-3465, [www.watsonsewell.com](http://www.watsonsewell.com) or South Walton Title (850) 231-3467 [www.southwaltontitle.com](http://www.southwaltontitle.com). Estate Planning - Real Property Law - Real Estate Closings**





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# Golf Tips

BY TOM FITZPATRICK

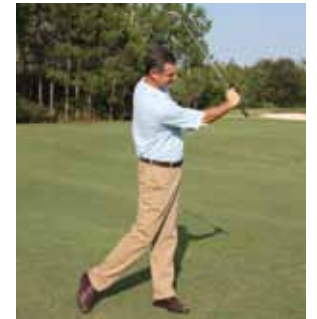
One time I asked a PGA Tour winner why he played golf. His answer...he didn't have one. That really hit home for me. It also shocked the player himself when he realized he did not have an answer as well. Here is a top player who has designed his whole life around the game of golf, and he did not know why he even played the game. A few weeks later he approached me with the reason why he did play: for the challenge the game presents.

Most of us are motivated by the challenge to improve. I like the way that David Lane, former CEO for One.org and U2 singer Bono, expressed to me why he started playing golf recently. He likes "figuring out how to make the ball go a certain way". That is a neat and simple way to put it.

In this issue, 30-A Review presents some great golf tips to help get you on the road to figuring out golf. We'll keep it simple by focusing only the right side and arm for right-handed golfers. Lefties will use the left arm only for the following drills. So take note and finish out the year strong on the links.

## EQUIPMENT TIPS

- A new golf glove and hybrid shoes will keep you more relaxed.
- The new white drivers help you see the top edge of the club better.
- Replace your 3 thru 5 irons with those easier to hit hybrid clubs.



### RIGHT ARM ONLY DRILLS

- Here is a simple drill that can capture the feel for putting quickly. Grip the putter in your right hand and rest your left hand on your right shoulder. Next, make some putting strokes by moving your right shoulder up and down. Finally, as you putt, keep the angle in the back of the right wrist. Follow the right wrist to see if the angle stays constant throughout the stroke – critical for great putting!

- Finally, make some half swings with the right arm only. Start with an early wrist hinge in the backswing. Get the club pointing upward quickly towards the sky no later than halfway back. You may miss the ball or top it the first several tries, but after awhile you will get a hold of one and understand what it takes to hit a ball solidly with the right arm only.

**Extra Credit:** For great timing, keep your upper arms close to the side of your body for half swings. Take the small towel they give you in your golf cart and place it across your chest whereby the ends of the towel are held in place by your upper arms. Now make some practice chipping swings, then a few with the ball. Then move to half swings. Observe how the arms and shoulders work together. If you get this part down, golf will become much easier.

*Tom Fitzpatrick, a realtor with Premier Property Group in WaterColor and Seacrest Beach, was ranked #1 on 30-A in properties sold in 2008. He's had clients discuss homes and condos with him on the course and range as it's a great way to identify communities and narrow down choices. Call if you'd like to hear about 30-A's great real estate opportunities over golf. Fitzpatrick can be reached at (850) 225-4674 or tom.fitz@att.net*



- Let's continue the same right hand only theme with chipping. This drill teaches timing and rhythm. Use a wedge to chip a few balls just off the edge of the green. Notice how the motion slows down and feels more natural, instead of rushed, when using just the right arm.







*juckie ward*



*allison craft*



*sheila good*



*shelly swanger*

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