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Ask Connie

Connie Antoniou answers all of your real estate questions, please email me at questionsforconnie@gmail.com

Is this a good time to list my home or should I wait until the day after the Super Bowl to put it on the market as I heard that is when the Spring Market officially starts?

I love to answer this question! I get asked this every year. Occasionally, some of my existing sellers will ask if they should take their house off the market over the holidays. My response is this... "Why would you do that? How many showings do you think we will have? One? Two? Guess what, those are buyers, not people out looking for decorating ideas!" And more importantly, real estate is a numbers game. We only need ONE buyer. While sales tend to drop off between November and January, there are actually some good reasons to sell your home during these months:

Serious Buyers: Buyers who are actively looking for homes during the holidays often have specific reasons, such as job transfers, tax considerations or academic schedules. These motivated buyers can be more serious about closing a deal.



More Time for House-Hunting: Some buyers take advantage of the holiday season when they have time off work and when family members are together to start their house-hunting journey. This can lead to increased interest in available homes.

Available Services: Real estate professionals like agents, lenders, inspectors, appraisers, and title companies may have more availability during the holiday season, as business tends to slow down. This means they can provide more personalized attention to their clients.

Winter Staging: Homes can look cozy and inviting when decorated for the holidays. This can create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for potential buyers, making it easier for them to imagine themselves living in the space. We're selling a "lifestyle" - not a house.

However, it's essential to consider the potential drawbacks as well. Some buyers might be too busy with holiday commitments or travel plans to focus on house-hunting. Ultimately, the decision to sell a home during the holiday season depends on your individual circumstances, your motivation to sell, and the local real estate market conditions. Finding a qualified real estate agent who understands your specific market can help you make an informed decision and navigate the process effectively. *Happy Holidays!*

If you would like to discuss your unique real estate needs confidentially, you may call or text me at +1 847.508.7775 or email connie.antoniou@sothebysrealty.com.



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Happy Holidays



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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2024

FEATURES

56 HORSES ABOUND

Home is where the horses are for Oakwood Farms Director of Operations Ashlee LeCompte Lazic, and they're always at the core of the Barrington Hills-based boarding stable and training facility's mission.

60 TOUCHDOWN, GOOD CITIZENS!

The Barrington High School Quarterback Club—formed in 1950—tees it up for the school's perennially successful football team.

DEPARTMENTS

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ON THE COVER

In this issue's Country vs. Town, executive homemaker Amanda Leopardo shares what's inspiring her lately. Here she stuns wearing Badgley Mishka sequin dress, neimanmarcus.com.

ON THIS PAGE

An Austrian property featured in *Luxury Offerings*.





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DEAR BARRINGTON:

We love your local traditions that bring joy to the community during the wintertime. We love getting into the holiday spirit at the tree lighting ceremony and Winter Wonderfest. We love dining under the lights at Kelsey Road House and enjoying wood-fired pizzas by the warmth of Neoteca's brick oven. We love Barrington's White House, Barrington Giving Days, and your cozy boutiques. Barrington, we love YOU.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dinner Date featuring
Gigi Wine Bar & Bistro



Our December/January double issue is packed with so much goodness. I hope it provides you joy and inspiration throughout the holidays and into the New Year.

Our *Beauty, Fashion, and Home* sections are full of gift-giving ideas and looks to take you into January. For maximum sparkle, Razny Jewelers has some gorgeous pieces for the season.

Our *Living & Giving* section showcases spectacular events where our community puts their best foot forward to help those in need. You'll be

sure to want to stop into Gigi Wine & Bistro after reading all about the newest Barrington hot spot in *Dinner Date*.

Oakwood Farms, the 125-acre gorgeous equestrian property in Barrington, is now under the helm of Ashlee and Nemanja Lazic. Their incredible journey is highlighted in the story *Horses Abound*. In our *Features* story, "Touchdown, Good Citizens!," we learn about the continuing tradition of the Barrington High School Quarterback Club—formed in 1950—through the current leadership of Doreen Muhs.

I'm thrilled to share with you details about the collaboration between GiGi's Playhouse, a volunteer-run, nonprofit organization supporting those impacted with Down syndrome, and Diamonds Direct, one of the nation's leaders in diamond importing and direct-to-consumer jewelry companies, in *One Last Thing*.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Megan Weisberg
Editor-in-Chief
megan.weisberg@jwcmedia.com



MY WISH LIST

Wearing to holiday parties the newest debut from Tiffany & Co., the Tiffany Forge necklace, tiffany.com



Feeling festive in Clé de Peau Beauté's lip glorifier in pink, net-a-porter.com



Carrying into the New Year, the new Gianvito Rossi Vali bag, net-a-porter.com



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UP FRONT

CULTURE, MURMURS & STYLE



*The holiday season and start of the New Year can at times feel like a balancing act. Here's wishing we all handle it with **style, grace, and aplomb.***

ILLUSTRATION BY MORTEN MORLAND



MCLAREN AUTOMOTIVE & BOWERS & WILKINS

McLaren Automotive, the UK-based supercar company, and Bowers & Wilkins, the renowned British premium audio brand, celebrate the enduring success of their partnership with the new Zeppelin McLaren Edition and special 60th Anniversary Edition wireless speakers. The new McLaren-inspired speaker includes Galvanic Grey and Papaya Orange finishes. The 60th Anniversary Edition models are a limited-production version of the Zeppelin created to celebrate the 60th anniversary of McLaren and Bruce McLaren's legacy. These special edition models contain a vibrant orange finish giving the Zeppelin's instantly recognizable silhouette an even more distinctive aesthetic. The Zeppelin McLaren Edition is available from the Bowers & Wilkins website and selected retailers at \$899. bowerswilkins.com/en-us



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Barberia Pisterzi was founded in 2015 in Milan by Gian Antonio Pisterzi, previously Master Barber of luxury brands including Dolce & Gabbana and Acqua Di Parma. With a recently launched 'Made In Italy' product line, Pisterzi Italian Grooming Art, they have released multifunctional products designed with 95 percent recycled packaging and are refillable, reducing their carbon footprint by 70 percent. Formulated with naturally sourced ingredients from Italy, every product is nickel-free and dermatologist-tested for even the most sensitive skin. us.barberpisterzi.com





SPARKLE LIGHT FESTIVAL RETURNS TO ROSEMONT'S IMPACT FIELD

Sparkle Light Festival guests will stroll through five illuminated villages including the Frozen Forest, Snowflake Circle, Winter Wonderland, the North Pole, and Deck the Walls. Guests are invited to visit Santa Claus, ice-skate with friends, enjoy free train rides on the "Holly Trolley" train, and go tubing down the Alpine Slide. Festive food and beverage options will also be available. Sparkle Light Festival runs now through Sunday, December 31. *Tickets available at sparklerosemont.com.*



SHINE BRIGHT LIKE JEWELRY

On December 14, Doyle will host an upcoming "Important Jewelry" auction. Highlighting the sale will be the Irving Berlin Platinum, Sapphire, and Diamond Ring, which has an estimated value of \$200,000 to \$400,000. Bidding is open at doyle.com.

Mallory Vasquez is a Barrington wife, mother, publicist, and youth-centered philanthropist.

EDITED BY **MORGAN HOGERTY**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **EMIL SINANAGIC**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **MARGARETA KOMLENAC**
STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

MALLORY VASQUEZ LOVES



Gadget: I'm a Peloton addict but my latest find is the Loopy phone case. It's like having another hand since my iPhone is a permanent accessory. **Scent:** Burberry London
Barrington spot: Wine tasting room at the South Barrington Cooper's Hawk **Hostess gift to receive:** Champagne **Gift to give:** Custom embossing stamp



Mallory Vasquez is a Barrington wife, mother, publicist, and youth-centered philanthropist.

What actress would play you in a movie? Jessica Alba strikes me as a very purpose-driven person. As a fellow “girl mom,” I admire her charitable efforts and her entrepreneurial spirit. She also seems to genuinely care about the future of America’s youth judging by the nonprofits she supports. I share that passion in my role as co-chair of Safety Town for Barrington Junior Women’s Club, volunteer cheerleading coach at Signature, and fundraising for my husband’s annual Make-a-Wish Walk or Wishes team.

Who from history would you want to travel with? Any of my great-grandparents. I dream of retracing my family tree through Ireland and Norway one day, hopefully with my parents.

Where do you look for inspiration? My husband and daughters are my “why.” My husband is constantly working to better himself whether that’s learning about real estate for Landshark (our side hustle), in fitness, or by giving back to the community. He’s also a very present and fun dad!

Favorite book? I lead corporate public relations for Allstate and The Allstate Foundation so I’m constantly reading and consuming news. For pleasure, I enjoy a stark but healthy contrast between reading fiction and autobiographies and listening to pop culture podcasts.

Most beloved cookbook? Pinterest! I find tons of options for whatever’s in the fridge.

Best dinner party hack? Dry erase wine glass markers. We love to host and bring different groups of friends together. Sometimes remembering names after first introductions doesn’t happen. So, this glass “name tag” is helpful, prevents accidentally swapping germs, and doesn’t clash with an outfit like a normal sticky name tag.

What’s in your bag right now? Diapers, Band-Aids, and a wide assortment of snacks. With four daughters ages 6 and under, my handbag collection collects dust these days.





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4



Refresh

6 *The newest in hydration and brightening, along with a color palette update this holiday season and into the New Year.*

EDITED BY MEGAN WEISBERG



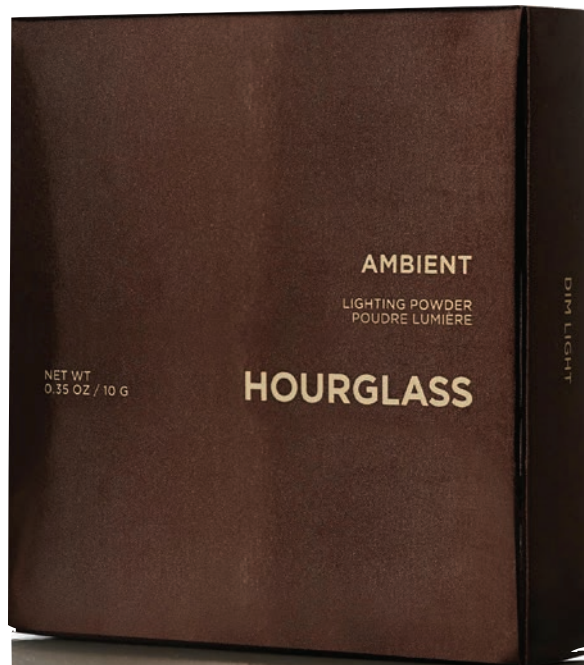
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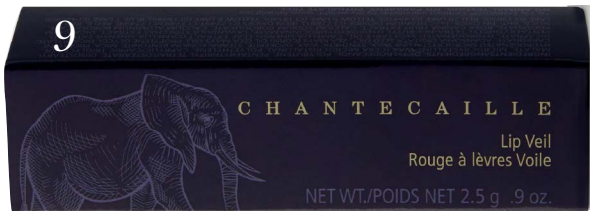
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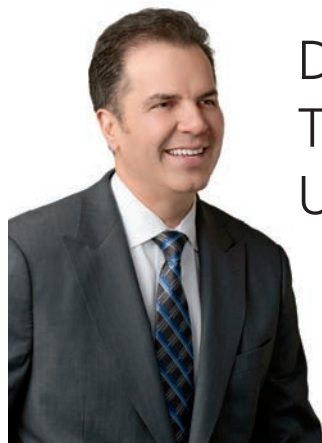
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1 Tata Harper, Crème Riche, net-a-porter.com 2 3LAB, Oil Brightening Complex, net-a-porter.com 3 Tom Ford Beauty, Shade And Illuminate Blush Duo in Intensity 2, net-a-porter.com 4 111SKIN, Rose Quartz Exfoliating Mask, net-a-porter.com 5 Chantecaille, Wild Meadows Lip Chic in Crocus, net-a-porter.com 6 Sisley, Phyto-Khol Star Waterproof Eyeliner in Mystic Blue, net-a-porter.com 7 Chantecaille, Lip Veil in Baobab, net-a-porter.com 8 Hourglass, Ambient Lighting Powder in Luminous Light, net-a-porter.com 9 Clé de Peau Beauté, The Lipstick in Camellia 5, net-a-porter.com 10 Westman Atelier, Bonne Brow Defining Pencil in Slate, net-a-porter.com



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DENTAL TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

WORDS BY
JAMES T. GAVRILOS

New technologies help shape our future. Dentistry's future is no exception. With advances in electronics, software and 3D printing, dentistry is on track to bring these technologies to patients and make a visit to the dentist more comprehensive than ever.

3D printing does not need any introduction. Its incorporation into healthcare has been newsworthy with the technology's potential to print medicines, prosthetics, and even organ replicas. Its importance was further highlighted during the COVID-19 crisis to bypass supply chains to meet hospitals' demands. As the technology is set to become an integral part of healthcare practice, it will also become incorporated in dental labs.

Computer-assisted design (CAD) and computer-assisted manufacture (CAM), including 3D printing, are already changing the way dental lab technicians do their work. Traditionally, when a patient

needs a crown, a dentist must make an impression of the tooth, ship it to the dental laboratory and then wait for them to make a permanent crown.



With CAD/CAM technology, the tooth is drilled to prepare it for the crown and a three-dimensional scan is taken of all the patient's teeth. This image is then emailed to a laboratory that CAD designs the new tooth and begins the process of creating an oven fired glass-like crown. With a 3D printer doing the hard work, dental labs eliminate the bottleneck of manual modeling and can get the final product back to dental offices faster than ever before.

3D printers are also able to produce orthodontic models, surgical guides, aligners, retainers and more dental equipment faster and precisely; tasks that would take longer with traditional methods. This helps in improving workflows and reducing errors.

While there is currently CAM, that allows a dentist to have a crown milled right in the office, the materials in the final product do not have the same glass-like finish as the materials that are created in a dental lab. But as 3D printing materials improve, the dental office may be able to completely bypass the dental laboratory all together.

The dental profession is always looking for ways to improve the care of its patients. Technology is paving the way for making a visit to the dentist more comprehensive than ever. CAD/CAM will certainly play one of the biggest roles in this improvement.

Dr. James T. Gavrilos is located at 129 Park Avenue in Barrington. For more information, call 847-381-4040 or visit barringtondentist.com.

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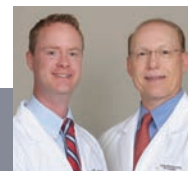
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FLORAL WORKSHOP WITH KED INTERIORS & MIKE HINES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE JOYCE

KED Interiors recently had the pleasure of welcoming friends and clients to a vibrant Halloween-themed floral workshop led by world-renowned, and Instagram guru of all things floral, Mike Hines from epoch. floral who shared his wealth of expertise throughout the lively and fun event.

kedinteriors.com



Hilary Atamian



Lisa Trimberger, Jyl Holland,
Sondra Rader





Co-chairs Aimee Sheeran and Lydia Holsteen



Molly Knecht, William Stoettner, and BDE dancers

BARRINGTON DANCE ENSEMBLE KICKS OFF GALA SEASON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALI LIBBURY

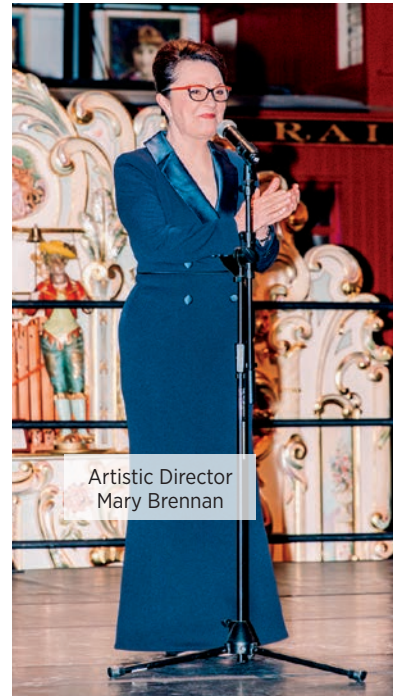
Co-chairs Lydia Holsteen and Aimee Sheeran, along with the Parent Auxiliary and Board of Directors of the Barrington Dance Ensemble (BDE) hosted close to 200 dance devotees at "Come Dance With Me," the organization's fall gala and fundraiser in Barrington Hills at the Eden Palais Carousel House on the grounds of the Sanfilippo Estate. "Come Dance With Me" raised over \$100,000 to support scholarships and programming for student dancers, as well as the entire 2023-2024 season, and the rebuild, refurbishment and restoration of BDE's

Nutcracker set.

barringtondance.org



BDE dancer Ava Lutsi performs



Artistic Director Mary Brennan



Lesley Broederdorf, Tracy Garcia, Kiran Advani



Bhavik & Reena Pandya, Catherine Kim Gavino



BACT President Matt Vondra takes the stage, ready to unveil the raffle's winners.



BACT Board members James Hulshof, Matt Wilkens



AJ Trzaska with cousin

TARTANS FOR THE TRUST

PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY BACT

At Valley View Farm, Barrington Area Conservation Trust's (BACT) annual event celebrated community and conservation. At Tartans for the Trust, attendees enjoyed live Irish music, scotch tasting, therapy horses, and Kona Ice. Board President Matt Vondra announced nearly additional 100 acres were preserves in conservation easements this year, underscoring the community's dedication to preserving open space.

For more information or to support BACT's mission, please visit bactrust.org.



Lauren Trzaska



Sarah Voska, Melissa Kinast



Richard Lamkey, Betsy Bramsen, Matt Wilkens, Karen Trzaska, Larry Ekstrom, Jan Nestrud, Charlie Keppel, Matt Vondra, BACT Board members



Dennis Schlemmer, John Roberts



Betsy Bramsen, founding board member of BACT, Melissa Kinast, Executive Director of BACT



Robert McGinley, Jan Dirk Leuders, Betsy Bramsen



"Battle of the Glens" scotch tasting



Tartans for the Trust was hosted by Colleen and Bill Noyes at their beautiful Valley View Farm.



The Bridgeport Ramblers played Irish melodies all afternoon.



Ed and Rene McKinlay, Greg Trzaska



Brian Long, Mimi Noyes, Leslie Roberts



Kona Ice Truck



The Bridgeport Ramblers playing Irish melodies.



Harpist Janelle Lake



Donut Display



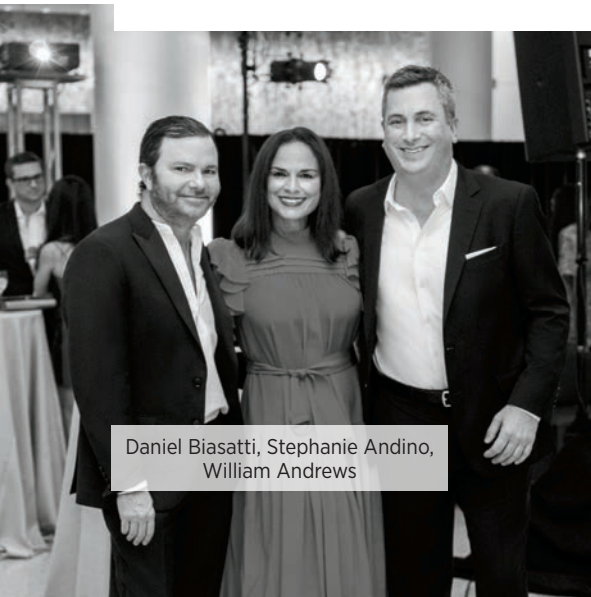
Tom & Wendy Herb,
Marvin Herb

THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER'S 2023 FALL BENEFIT: PILLARS OF IMPACT: STORIES OF SERVICE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEIGHA WONDERGEM

The Woman's Board of Rush University Medical Center hosted its 2023 Fall Benefit, themed "Pillars of Impact: Stories of Service," on Saturday, September 30 at the new, state-of-the-art Joan and Paul Rubschlager Building at RUSH. Approximately 300 guests gathered for an inspiring evening that celebrated The Woman's Board's nearly 140 years of philanthropic impact on the medical center. Event chair Melissa Hennessy, with support from her committee and Woman's Board president Wendy Herb, put the focus on each of RUSH's "Six Pillars of Impact" - cancer, neurosciences, bone and joint, health equity, education and workforce, and innovation. Funds from the evening will be directed toward RUSH's investment in the "Six Pillars," thus contributing to the health of the region for decades to come.

thewomansboard.org



Daniel Biasatti, Stephanie Andino,
William Andrews



Kerri Schoonyoung, Meg Sauer



Melanie Munoz,
Jamila St. Julien



James Hess, Ellaine Sambo-Reyther, Jakub Amrogowicz, Mary Favia, Jim Duff



WINGS 23RD ANNUAL PURPLE TIE BALL

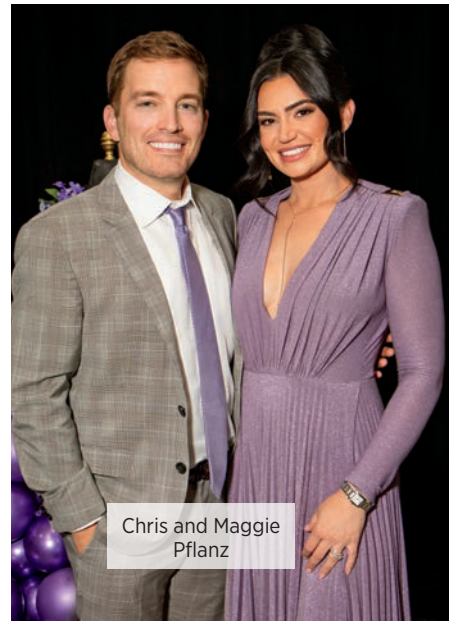
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WINGS

On October 7, WINGS held their 23rd Annual Purple Tie Ball. It was an inspirational evening that raised a record amount of over \$1 million. Guests enjoyed music by Bluewater Kings Band, dinner and drinks, one-of-a-kind live auction, amazing raffle prizes and an exciting Parisian Nights-theme filled with tons of surprises. The speakers and WINGS graduate shared powerful stories about surviving domestic violence and thriving.

wingsprogram.com



Ned and Shanna Nikolic



Chris and Maggie Pflanz



Amanda McCaskey, Helen Kalantzis, Elly Greenspahn, Stephanie Ouellette, Karla Persky, Victoria Howard



Dolly McCarthy, Rita Canning, Rebecca Darr



SHANA VITEK

EQUITY PARTNER
BEERMANN LLP

Shana Vitek is an Equity Partner at Beermann LLP, the largest family law firm in Illinois. For the past 20 years, she has practiced divorce and family law exclusively. She handles a wide range of cases, including divorces for business owners, high-profile and high-net-worth clients. Vitek's ability to handle any type of case has allowed her to become one of only a handful of attorneys in Illinois to be Board Certified in Family Trial Law by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. She is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and serves on the Board of Governors for the Illinois Chapter. "Every family is different, so each case that we handle needs an individualized approach," she says. "I enjoy going to court and arguing my client's position, but that typically isn't a client's first choice." In addition to being a litigator, Vitek is also a trained mediator, arbitrator, and collaborative attorney. If a case can be handled using a cooperative approach, that is her preferred process as it allows the parties to decide what is best for their family and maintain confidentiality, keeping personal matters out of the public record. Vitek believes it is important to give back to the community. She is Chair of the Beermann LLP Family Law Clinic. In partnership with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services, this first of its kind family law clinic provides pro bono legal services to individuals going through domestic relations proceedings who could not otherwise afford legal representation. "We feel strongly about giving back to the community, and given the size of our firm, we are in a unique position to make a big difference for clients who would otherwise go unrepresented in family law matters," says Vitek.

For more information, visit beermannlaw.com/team/shana-l-vitek.

312.621.1263

slvitek@beermannlaw.com



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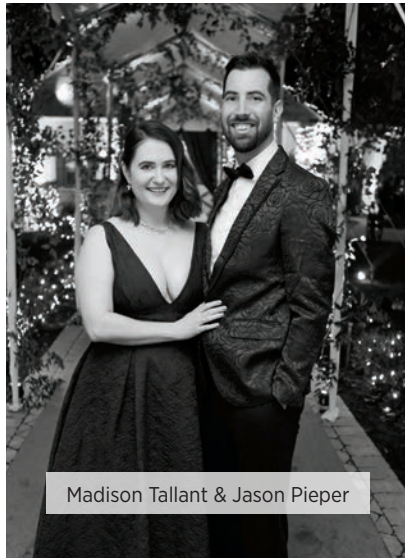
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Madison Tallant & Jason Pieper



Vonzell Soloman

32ND ANNUAL CURES GALA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN MCLEOD

The 32nd annual Cures Gala held on November 4, 2023, hosted by Gateway for Cancer Research, a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding, funding, and furthering innovative cancer clinical trials around the world, brought like-minded, passionate individuals together to celebrate the impact Gateway's research has had on more than 10,000 cancer patients over the past three decades.

gatewaycr.org



Robin Thicke



Morgan & Shawn Stephenson



Erica Marchese & Sean Patrick Kane



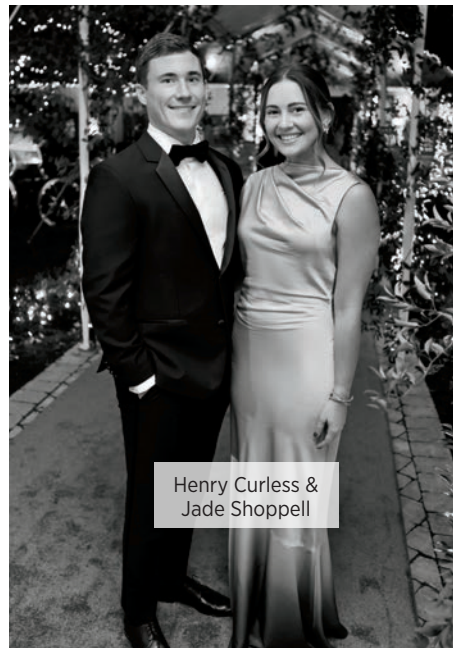
Sean & Lauren Brynjelsen



Maddie Oliver



Aaron & Alexa Wright,
Allison & Matt Loveland



Henry Curless &
Jade Shoppell



Emcee Joey Fatone



Mike & Jennifer Sawant,
Kira & Karl Albrecht





Co-chair Julianne Brown, Catalina Gilbert



Sharon Simone, Jill Ryder, Jacey Silverberg



BJWC FALL FASHION SHOW FUNDRAISER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN MCLEOD

Barrington Junior Women's Club hosted its annual Fall Fashion Show Fundraiser, raising funds to benefit women, children, and seniors in the community.

bjwc.org



Medbh Huschitt, Jennifer Miller



Lauren Hansen, Caroline Kennath, Courtney Johnson, Kristen Mecker, Chelsie Otto, Stephanie Surz, Emmelie Reilly

UP FRONT | LIVING & GIVING



Jill Dunstan, Meghan Van Daele, Medbh Huschitt, Mary Jo Piombroeck, Rana Dawson, Samantha Snetselaar, Katie Burbach, Jennifer Miller, Melissa Johnson



Co-chair Julianne Brown, President Jacqui Pieroni, Co-chair Abby Biondi



Christina Hendricks, Dr. Renee Burke, Christine Livingston, Luiza Ramanoska



Jill Ford, Carolyn Moore



Audrey Waltenburg,
Debbie Wolff



Kelly Desino,
Tracy Henriques



WOMEN UNITED'S POWER OF THE PURSE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN MCLEOD

Women United's Power of the Purse event was held this year at Royal Melbourne Country Club in Long Grove. More than 200 women attended to raise critical funds for early childhood education in our community.

liveunitedlakecounty.org/women-united/



Claudia Walder,
Bethany Patricia Sanchez



Lillian Riedy, Regini Kinyui,
Maggie Lubia, Lucy Crist



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Amanda Leopardo

is an executive homemaker with three incredible kids Lynn, Livy, and Levi. Leopardo likes to keep herself and her kids busy by serving others in their church's food pantry and nursing home ministries. She also loves coaching and volunteering in as many of their activities as possible. Being in construction, Leopardo's husband is very helpful with all the home projects she loves to throw at him. The family of five have an English bulldog, Rambo, who keeps them entertained. Leopardo is also an active member of the Barrington Women's Junior Club.

EDITED BY **MORGAN HOGERTY** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE**
STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA** / HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **MARGARETA KOMLENAC**



In a moment of calm, Leopardo in Ralph Lauren Purple iridescent blouse and Brunello Cucinelli pants, neimanmarcus.com.



Leopardo shines wearing Badgley Mishka sequin dress, neimanmarcus.com



Mantra? I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me **Best grooming tip?** Before bed I comb my hair with a wide-tooth comb, apply a few pumps of Mr. Smith hair serum, and sleep with a silk bonnet. I wake up with my hair ready for the day. Perfect for a busy mom! **Guilty pleasure?** The TV show *Cheers*. The only other person I know my age who enjoys the show is my twin sister. We quote lines from the show constantly **Favorite foods?** Italian never gets old for me **Music you love?** Any and all music. Every genre has great hits! My kids put on the Descendants and *Zombie* movie soundtracks daily and I'll admit they're pretty good. **Best advice ever given to you?** "The road to success is always under construction" **Best advice you've given?** Serve others. It's good for you and good for them **Earliest memory?** I remember my third birthday party. I remember what I wore and clinging to my favorite aunt the whole time **Before bed, you?** Catch up with messages and news on my phone **What's on your bookshelf?** Bunch of kids' books stacked up and my Bible **You can't live without?** My family and sunshine **Love to escape to?** My in-laws have a place in Palm Desert, and we try to go every chance we get. It's so kid friendly and the weather is amazing **Advice you would give to your younger self?** Don't touch your eyebrows



WHEN IN THE COUNTRY

Your style is? My cold weather uniform is UGGs with slouchy socks and a long, hooded, puffer vest **Can't leave the house without?** My emotional support water bottle **Transportation?** Being a passenger in my husband's car is my ideal mode of transportation **Driving music?** I recently discovered a country singer, Jason Fletcher. I enjoy a lot of his songs especially "Thoughts and Prayers" **Place to eat?** I love going to the South Barrington Arboretum, which has lots of great options for food. The Hampton Social never disappoints, and I also love grabbing mini cupcakes from Smallcakes Cupcakery & Creamery for many occasions **Shop?** I am at G&G Women's Boutique a lot. They always have new items **Best thing about country?** My backyard has great sunsets **Worst thing about country?** I call stink bugs "The Barrington Bug" because I never heard of them until I moved here **The perfect day is?** Enjoying a sunny day with my kids playing in the yard while my husband is smoking a brisket



WHEN IN TOWN

Your style is? Sexy dress with a hot bag **Can't leave the house without?** Diaper bag **Transportation?** The family sprinter. Getting dropped off right where I need to be and picked up at the door is such a relief **Driving music?** I seriously enjoy anything **Place to eat?** Gibsons Italia or Erie Cafe **Shop?** Oak Street **Best thing about town?** The options! Options for food, shopping, and entertainment **Worst thing about town?** My only complaint ever is the traffic **The perfect day is?** Chicago in the summer is absolutely the best! A sunny day showing my kids all around the city I grew up in is always long but so fun



1



2



4



DAY TO

6



3



5



NIGHT

Looks that work from lunches to glamorous evenings.

10

EDITED BY MEGAN WEISBERG

7



9



11



8





1 Jimmy Choo, Azia 95 Suede Pumps, matchesfashion.com.us 2 Bode, Sweater, net-a-porter.com 3 Fortela, Jodi T Cotton-Corduroy Cargo Trousers, matchesfashion.com.us 4 Bode, Dress, net-a-porter.com 5 Polo Ralph Lauren, Polo ID Suede Shoulder Bag, matchesfashion.com.us 6 Burberry, Faux Fur-Trimmed Cotton Gabardine Trench Coat, net-a-porter.com 7 Ralph Lauren Collection, Cantrelle Strapless Silk Twill-Trimmed Stretch-Velvet Midi Dress, net-a-porter.com 8 Rosantica, Vela Crystal Embellished Handbag, matchesfashion.com.us 9 Elleme, Raisin Suede Handbag, matchesfashion.com.us 10 Bode, Pants, net-a-porter.com 11 Nour Hammour, Hatti Cropped Belted Croc Effect Leather Jacket, net-a-porter.com 12 Raey, Oversized Belted Funnel Neck Bouclé Blanket Coat, matchesfashion.com.us 13 Ralph Lauren, White Jumpsuit, net-a-porter.com 14 Zimmermann, Sensory Floral-Appliqué Velvet Maxi Dress, matchesfashion.com.us 15 Gabriela Hearst, Reed Double-Breasted Recycled Cashmere Bouclé Coat, matchesfashion.com.us 16 Ralph Lauren Collection, Satin-Trimmed Wool Coat, net-a-porter.com 17 Rainbow K, Handcuff Diamond, Enamel & 9kt Gold Earring, matchesfashion.com.us 18 Rabanne, 1969 Moon Small Chainmail Shoulder Bag, matchesfashion.com.us 19 Nour Hammour, Birthday Reversible Shearling Coat, net-a-porter.com 20 Balenciaga, Knife 110 Velvet Pumps, matchesfashion.com.us 21 Moncler X adidas, Oreiller Padded Long Coat, matchesfashion.com.us

IN THE PRESS



WATCHPRO

INDEPENDENT WATCH RETAILER
OF THE YEAR **WINNER**

WATCHPRO

TOP 100 RETAIL POWER PLAYERS

NATIONAL Jeweler

2023 RETAILER HALL OF FAME

AS SEEN IN

VOGUE

WATCHPRO

RAZNY JEWELERS AWARDED INDEPENDENT WATCH RETAILER OF THE YEAR:

We are proud to have been named the Independent Watch Retailer of the Year at the first-ever U.S. WatchPro Awards in New York City. Over seven decades of dedication, an unwavering commitment to perfection, and a deep love of jewelry making and timekeeping have marked our journey to this award. This award is a testament to the power of storytelling through jewelry, and we promise to continue crafting pieces that capture the essence of love, art, and imagination. Thank you to WatchPro, the judges, and everyone who contributed to this remarkable celebration.

RAZNY JEWELERS NAMED TOP 100:

Razny Jewelers is honored to have made this year's Hot 100 list in the Retail Power Players category. Published by WatchPro magazine, the premier publication for news on timepieces and jewelry for collectors around the globe, this designation is reserved for elite American jewelers who display exceptional growth and success.

TALKING TIMEPIECES:

Editor and founder of WatchPro, Rob Corder, sat with

Stan Razny to talk timepieces, discuss the ever-changing landscape of the luxury watch market, and breakdown how family-owned independents provide the value that direct-to-consumer brands struggle to match.

Deemed "The Big Interview," it also showed how seriously Razny Jewelers takes its position as the only authorized dealer for Patek Philippe in a territory that stretches across Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin, surpassing 220,000 square miles.*



NATIONAL JEWELER:

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

National Jeweler, the leading New York-based news source for jewelry industry insiders, has chosen the latest group of inductees for its prestigious Retailer Hall of Fame. Stan and Ingrid Razny, second-generation owners of Razny Jewelers, are receiving the 2023 honor as forward-thinking multi-store independent jewelers.*

AS SEEN IN VOGUE

Over 75 years ago, the Razny family immigrated to America with the vision of building a legacy they could pass on to their children. Today, they are proud to have developed their dream into something far grander than they could have imagined. Ingrid Razny and Christine Razny-Porter share their family's story in this September's issue of Vogue Magazine.*

*Links to full articles on razny.com/press

AS SEEN IN **VOGUE** Influential Women of Chicago

Over 75 years ago, the Razny family immigrated to America with the vision of building a legacy they could pass on to their children. Today, they are proud to have developed their dream into something far grander than they could have imagined. We recently spoke with Ingrid and Christine, second and third-generation owners of Razny Jewelers, about their history and mission. Here's what they shared.

How have you become known as Chicago's source for luxury?
We bring the world's most brilliant diamonds, fine jewelry, and timepieces by Rolex, Patek Philippe, Cartier, and Breitling to the front doors of Chicago's families and communities.

You've said that hospitality has been key to your growth. Why?
From our watchmakers to our sales associates, we are all dedicated to curating a shopping experience that is comfortable and inclusive – no matter which Razny Jewelers location you visit. This mission is aided by the fact that we understand our clients because we are their neighbors, friends, and peers.

What has been the result of the symbiotic relationships you've built with diamond sources in Africa?
We offer the widest selection of exceptional diamonds without the extra cost that comes from relying on middlemen. We can also guarantee that our points of supply meet international standards of ethics and give priority to the health and happiness of locals. We are incredibly proud to know that our client's future heirloom is helping to support the people and lands that give us the treasures that have become our passion.

Photography by Katrina Wittkamp

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THE CLOSET TREASURE HUNTER

Luxury handbags & couture auctions with Hindman's Tanner Branson.

WORDS BY **TANNER BRANSON** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KATRINA WITTKAMP** / STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

I often say that my favorite place in the home is the closet. Going into clients' closets throughout the country, I often feel like a treasure hunter who gets to uncover hidden gems and give them new life by bringing them to auction. I love nothing more than when clients share the experiences they had wearing their pieces and the smiles on their faces at the prospect of someone else getting to create new experiences with them.

I come from the fashion world having worked for some of the top luxury houses and my new role at Hindman gives me the opportunity to combine my endless passion for luxury and deep knowledge of fashion history. The auction world is where I am meant to be. From a young age, I had an interest in auctions, so to say this role is a dream job is an understatement.

I began my time in Chicago attending Columbia College Chicago where I received a bachelor's degree in Fashion Business. Though I was a business major, I spent a considerable amount of time in their fashion study collection, where I was exposed to haute couture garments and had the opportunity to familiarize myself with examples of high fashion, learning about construction techniques, and much more. This has greatly contributed to my professional career and provided me with a sharp eye that I now use every day at Hindman.

My role as Head of Sales and Specialist in Hindman's Luxury Handbags & Couture department allows me to curate luxury sales with an assortment of couture treasures that speak to the latest trends not only in fashion but in collecting. Our Holiday Fashion auction represented the first auction I've gotten to curate from start to finish and I couldn't have been more excited. The sale was filled with luxury handbags and examples of high fashion from leading names in luxury, whether bidders were hunting for an exotic skin Hermès bag or a unique dress for their next holiday soirée.

I was particularly fond of the fabulous collection of Birkin and Kelly bags offered in the auction, especially an exceptional Hermès Birkin 35 in Shiny Porosus Crocodile. This very rare two-tone bag was one of the

finest examples of an exotic skin Birkin that I have ever had the good fortune to handle and is sure to become a favorite of the buyer.

For those with an avant-garde flair, there were rare examples of Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, and Jean Paul Gaultier, taking bidders on a style journey spanning more than forty years. Most of the collection was purchased through the former Oak Street fashion emporium Ultimo, a boutique that was well-known for outfitting the



Hermès Birkin 35 Shiny Porosus Crocodile, 2007



Tanner Branson, Head of Sales and Specialist in Hindman's Luxury Handbags & Couture department

dangerously chic. The collection was steeped in fashion and Chicago history and even though Ultimo is sadly long gone, the pieces stood the test of time.

Speaking of history, Holiday Fashion also featured a single-owner collection of Bob Mackie gowns, including a duplicate of the iconic gown that Cher wore to the 1985 Costume Institute Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which she attended with Mackie himself. The sequin-encrusted and bugle-beaded gown was perfect for anyone looking to make an unforgettable impression at a holiday gala or New Year's Eve party.

I wake up every day in disbelief that my job is to handle such incredible pieces. I hope one day you'll give me the pleasure of hunting for treasure in your closet but if you're still in a buying mood, have I got just the piece for you!

For more information, visit hindmanauctions.com.

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GENERATIONS OF GEMS

Steven Holtzman and Chelsea Holtzman Lawrence carry on the multigenerational, family-owned, and family-run traditions of the fine jewelry retailer CD Peacock.

WORDS BY MITCH HURST
PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN MCLEOD

Early in 1837, Elijah Peacock and his wife, Rebecca Haylock, immigrated to Chicago from the Isle of Chatteris, Cambridge, England. Soon after arriving Peacock opened the House of Peacock on Lake Street, a jewelry store that still stands as the oldest and most enduring retailer in Chicago's history.

Elijah eventually handed control of the company to his son, Charles Daniel, who renamed it C.D. Peacock, and subsequent generations of Peacocks ran the company for well more than a century. The company eventually fell on hard times under new ownership and was slated to shut down in 1993 when jewelry industry veteran Seymour Holtzman took ownership and revived CD Peacock with the same multi-generational, family-owned vision of its founder and original owner.

Seymour's son, Steven Holtzman, a seasoned distribution and luxury brand builder, joined CD Peacock. In 2022 he assumed the role of Vice Chairman. Steven's daughter, Chelsea Holtzman Lawrence, joined CD Peacock in 2017 as Vice President of Communications and Marketing.

"When my father called and asked me to join the business, my wife and I, along with our youngest daughter, were living in Switzerland," Steven says. "At the time my eldest daughter, Chelsea, was already working for CD Peacock. As I considered joining the company and relocating, I realized that I was not simply being asked to build a business, but to carry on a legacy, much like the Peacock family had done before ours."

Chelsea Holtzman Lawrence's husband, Brandon Lawrence, worked with CD Peacock in 2016 when her grandfather, Seymour, brought him in to redesign the company's online presence and marketing.

"I was drawn to the opportunity to learn from my grandfather's extensive history in the industry and my husband's ability to bridge that into current technology," Chelsea says. "I knew it was a special opportunity to have multiple generations of the family working together to elevate the company."

Steven has extensive experience in the watch industry, having been involved in sales, manufacturing, distribution, the creation of his own brand, and collecting high-end timepieces for most of his life.

"The world of luxury has always fascinated me, and I



find jewelry complements watches perfectly," he says. "Like watches, I greatly admire the artistry and dedication of jewelry craftsmen, and I appreciate the beauty of a perfectly conceived piece—few things are as elegant as flawless jewelry."

"The first time I experienced a true reverence for quality jewelry was when I was planning my wedding. My engagement ring belonged to my mother-in-law, and it has always felt like I'm carrying a piece of family with me," Chelsea says. "Jewelry and watches are life milestones that carry memories, which is why I feel so honored when clients allow us the opportunity to be part of their story."

CD Peacock plans on opening a new flagship Mansion at Oakbrook Center in 2024, which Steven says is a testament to the company's commitment and perseverance. He says CD Peacock has always been a part of Chicago and plans to continue that tradition.

Furthering its commitment to Chicago, Chelsea spearheaded and manages the multi-year partnership as the Official Jeweler of the Chicago Cubs, which includes the naming rights to Wrigley Field's Premier Entrance and sponsorship of the Cubs' Player of the Month Award.

"It's both awe inspiring and humbling to be entrusted with the responsibility of preserving CD Peacock. Chelsea and I, along with the rest of the family working in the business, do not take this responsibility lightly," Steven says. "Overseeing CD Peacock is important to our family, but it is also integral to our multi-generational clients."

"It's incredible to work with my father and learn from his years in the industry," says Chelsea. "My father is someone who just genuinely loves timepieces and jewelry, and that kind of passion is contagious."

Visit CD Peacock at cdpeacock.com.



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Relationships formed are the power behind this team, without all of your trust in our services we couldn't have shaped our business model to match our vision and for that, we are forever grateful. We wish you all the best as you embark on the new year ahead!



Robbie.Morrison@cbexchange.com
847.212.0966
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Ashlee wearing
Marchesa tulle dress
neimanmarcus.com.



Horses *Abound*



In the arena, Ashlee wearing Veronica Beard blouse and jacket, Ralph Lauren Purple Label pant, neimanmarcus.com.



Ashlee staying warm in Ralph Lauren Purple Label, neimanmarcus.com.



Cathy LeCompte (Ashlee's Mother) wearing head to toe Burberry, Ashlee dressed in Ralph Lauren Purple Label, and Nemo wearing looks by Brunello Cucinelli neimanmarcus.com.

Home is where the horses are for Oakwood Farms Director of Operations Ashlee LeCompte Lazic, and they're always at the core of the Barrington Hills-based boarding stable and training facility's mission.

WORDS BY **BILL MCLEAN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JAMES GUSTIN**

STYLED BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST**
AND **MARGARETA KOMLENAC**

From 2015 to 2021, the figurative hole in Ashlee LeCompte Lazic's heart grew larger with each year.

A horse had been the comforting constant for the Barrington Hills native, beginning with her first pony, Bonnie, and later with Trixie, an off the track thoroughbred mare who lived to 31 and had joined Lazic at Michigan's Hillsdale College and Michigan State University, where she earned an undergraduate degree in biology and a graduate degree in equine physiology.

Post-college life found Lazic living in Nebraska and Florida and dismounted the horse lover from horses for six years. "My heart's 'hole' was horse-shaped," she surmises.

But it didn't take her long to fill that void. Lazic moved back to where she grew up—the striking Bateman house at the sprawling estate Oakwood Farms, a Barrington Hills horse boarding stable and training facility dedicated to the passion, tradition, and legacy of the equestrian lifestyle. Established in 1996, it had been operated by Ashlee's parents, Berry and Cathy LeCompte, for more than two decades.

Ashlee, 33, and her 32-year-old husband, Nemanja Lazic, took over the reins at Oakwood Farms in 2021, three years after they got married on the grounds of the 125-acre (laser-level polo field included) property. Ashlee serves as director of operations, while Nemanja oversees Oakwood Farms' marketing.

Oakwood Farms—named for Oakwood the downstate village where Cathy grew up—offers boarding, training, lessons, and sales. It's a community that



Ashlee wearing Veronica Beard dress and jean jacket, Sofia Cashmere scarf, Nemanja in head-to-toe Vince, neimanmarcus.com.

welcomes horses and riders of every discipline, skill level, and age. Boarders compete, trail ride, and participate in Natural Horsemanship events. Berry and Cathy LeCompte sought to provide a safe, clean, and enjoyable atmosphere for the horses and riders of the Greater Chicago area, and that's exactly what Oakwood Farms became.

Among its amenities are 60 stalls, all-day turn out (horses' freedom to run, play, and graze), outdoor and indoor arenas, semi-private tack rooms, all-weather paddocks, and 24-7 on-site management. Plus, it's located next to the Cook County Forest Preserve and a few strides (across the street, actually) from the Barrington Hills Riding Center on Bateman Road.

Damian Malagon has been Oakwood Farms' barn manager for eight years, and an employee of the farm for 15 years. He calls Oakwood Farms home, too.

"Animal husbandry is our No. 1 priority at Oakwood Farms," Ashlee says. "Nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of our boarders. Damian takes so much pride in the barn and the happiness of our clients. He's phenomenal."

"What sets us apart from most other farms," she adds, "is, how my husband describes it, our wide range of eclectic offerings. We're not a place for just hunter jumper or just dressage or just showing. We're focused on hands-on full care, not one discipline. Our business model has never been a hard-sell operation."

A few of Ashlee's early experiences on a pony were rough ones. Bonnie "dumped me a whole lot of times," Ashlee, a former Fox River Valley Pony Club member, recalls. But her love for horses—mirroring her mother's passion—ruled out any attempt to seek another top activity. She was 9 when Trixie entered the picture, and the two connected instantly.

"When I didn't have an answer, Trixie did," Ashlee says. "She was reliable and quick. She took care of me. She was a good girl."

Ashlee's primary horse today is Andrew, a 17-year-old, chestnut Belgian Thoroughbred cross. They recently competed in a Three-Day Event, a triathlon-esque equestrian competition (dressage, cross country, show jumping), in Lexington, Kentucky.

"When I'm on the back of Andrew, it's like we're going to battle," she says. "When he goes, it sounds like thunder. It's exhilarating, every time I'm on a horse. I'm fascinated with horses, captivated by them. Chaos disappears when I'm riding."

"I love what Winston Churchill once said about horses. He said, 'There's something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.'"

In addition to running the show at Oakwood Farms, Ashlee works remotely as director of health product development for SmartPak, an equine nutrition company based in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

"My entire day," a smiling, grateful Ashlee observes, "is horses."

Oakwood Farms, meanwhile, remains an integral part of the equestrian tradition in Barrington Hills, a village that protects and celebrates the equine lifestyle.

"There's something about it, something special, the horse-agriculture community in which we live," Ashlee says. "There's this wonderful feeling of community in Barrington Hills, with horses serving as the common denominator, that energizes and lifts all who live here. What we have here, it's hard to find."

"Operating Oakwood Farms," she continues, "was a labor of love for my mom. That's what it is for me, too."

No wonder Cathy LeCompte can't stop beaming.

"Berry and I," the matriarch says, "feel blessed that Ashlee, who inherited her love for horses at an early age, will be carrying the legacy of Oakwood Farms into the next generation and beyond."

For more information, visit oakwoodfarmsequestrian.com or call 847-809-3843. Oakwood Farms is located at 362 Bateman Road, Barrington Hills.



Ashlee wearing vintage dress from Paris from stylist's own, Nemo in camel colored suede shirt by Canali, neimanmarcus.com.

Touchdown, Good Citizens!

The Barrington High School Quarterback Club's support helps the perennially successful football team score touchdowns on the field, while off the field its philanthropic programs shape Broncos' players into selfless role models.

WORDS BY **BILL MCLEAN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **EMIL SINANAGIC**

A year after Barrington High School (BHS) opened its doors for the first time in 1949, parents of the school's football players huddled and formed the BHS Quarterback Club (BHS QB Club). The club sought to capture and build on the enthusiasm and interest in high school football and to get the community behind the football program while building tradition.

Those objectives continue to drive the not-for-profit BHS Quarterback Club today, but lately—thanks to the leadership of its No.



Proud champion of the Barrington High School Football program, Doreen Colletti-Muhs.

1 signal caller, second-year club president Doreen Colletti-Muhs, and her squad of resolute parents—the organization's philanthropic arm has flexed for others off the field.

The Broncos' gridders are partaking in Barrington Giving Day's winter event at Barrington Middle School-Station Campus on December 9 and in Wreaths

The football team amongst valued community members.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BHS QUARTERBACK CLUB

Across America Day at Evergreen Cemetery in Barrington on December 16. More than two years ago, before she began her first term as BHS QB Club president, then-volunteer-chair Colletti-Muhs arranged for Barrington's football players to visit the village's police and fire departments and recognize the first responders' valor and indispensability on the 20th anniversary of 9-11.

"Our players gave them donuts, shook their hands, thanked them, and made eye contact with them," recalls Colletti-Muhs, whose youngest son, senior Quentin, was a varsity cornerback on Barrington's 2023 team, which went 9-0 in the regular season and earned the No. 3 seed in the Class 8A state playoff bracket. Barrington then eliminated three opponents and faced Lincoln-Way East in a state semifinal on November 18.

"We want the players to be good citizens," she adds. "And that's what they're doing through their combined 1,000 hours of volunteering, of giving back. Volunteerism builds a kind heart and character, and it teaches leadership and social skills. Our dedicated boys are out there talking with adults other than their teachers and coaches."

BHS football Coach Joe Sanchez has served as the varsity's

helmsman since 2002. In September he set a Mid-Suburban League (MSL) record for most league wins, 154, by a football coach at an MSL school or schools.

The Broncos' undefeated regular season this past fall was the football program's 11th. In 2023, 15 BHS football coaches guided more than 200 players at the varsity, junior varsity/sophomore, and freshman levels.

"The parents in our Quarterback Club are phenomenal," Sanchez says. "The school and the Quarterback Club do so much for us. Anything extra that's needed, such as equipment and uniforms, is taken care of by the club. The club also provides opportunities for the boys to help the community in a variety of ways. Around 2005, one of our players, Dan Brown, and his father, Scott, were active in Broncos Care (the service organization of the football program); that's when football's connection to philanthropy took off."

"We then experienced a lull in giving back during the pandemic," Sanchez continues. "Doreen and this group of parents have revitalized the Quarterback Club's commitment to serving the community while giving our players moments to gain a better perspective on life."

Colletti-Muhs, who's also the BHS QB Club's marketing director and varsity team representative, discovered her knack for thinking of others and planning charity events while attending Prospect High School in Mount Prospect. She was elected Barrington Junior Women's Club president in 2007. For more than 85 years, the mission of that club has been to enhance the lives of women, children, and seniors in the Barrington area. The position of president requires a forward-thinking, energetic, highly organized leader who embraces the challenges of staging fundraisers among other events.

A position that suits Colletti-Muhs to a T.

"One of my passions is giving back, and planning events has been in my wheelhouse for quite some time," says Colletti-Muhs, whose older son, 23-year-old Payton, swam and played water polo for BHS teams. "I consider the process of putting an event together to be fun and easy."

BHS football players have also served as Christmas Tree Lot assistants for the Cary-Grove Jaycees; collected winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves at

home games for Barrington Giving Day; battled in a Turkey Bowl game to raise funds for holiday toy drives; spent hours on Sundays inspiring future Broncos at Barrington Youth Football games; and volunteered their time to help Barrington middle school student-athletes develop their football skills at spring camps.

"Our football players are good-hearted boys," Colletti-Muhs, a Barrington resident since 1995, says. "They're out there, often, representing the community and the school district in the best way possible. What I've tried to instill in my sons, and what I hope all of our football players are finding out, is that you can't always be the best athlete or the best student. But what you can be is a top-notch volunteer.

"And," she adds, "it doesn't cost a thing."

Visit bhsfootball.org for more information.



Barrington High School Football Team.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BHS QUARTERBACK CLUB



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BHS-TV AND DR. JEFF DOLES



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Barrington's newest hot spot, Gigi Wine Bar & Bistro opens; then travel abroad to an ultra-luxury villa in Costa Rica in First Class.

A partial view of Villa Avellana and the pool in Costa Rica.

Wined & Dined

Gigi Wine Bar & Bistro *is more than an homage to France; it's a celebration of dining from a gilded age of North Shore culinary history.*

WORDS BY **PETER AND KATE MICHAEL**

Believe it or not, it was the spuds that made my knees buckle. A full *When Harry Met Sally* reaction. Raised eyebrows. Dramatic head twirls. And more purring from my side of the table than you'll hear during a Broadway performance of the musical *Cats*.

Serve me a really tasty tater, and I'm putty in a chef's hands. Happens infrequently, but probably too often for my wife's liking. The first time it happened was decades ago, in Las Vegas of all places. A server presented me with a bowl of Joël Robuchon's signature *pomme purée* (aka, the silkiest mashed potatoes ever to grace a sauce pot), and I swooned like a teenager at a Taylor Swift concert.

My most recent potato epiphany occurred at Gigi Wine Bar &

Bistro in Barrington. My wife had ordered Executive Chef Jessen Koelling's 16-ounce wagyu ribeye. It's one gorgeous hunk of tender meat. Sourced from a ranch in Texas. Marbled like the walls at Caesar's Palace. Sprinkled with salt and pepper. And cooked to such a luscious plum-red color that it practically screams out for a juicy New World cabernet.

Leaning against the edge of the steak, however, sat its dark and crispy sidekick: one of the best potato pavés I've had in years. One bite and I was already wistful over the spud. May every French chef I've ever interviewed forgive me for what I'm about to type: a good *pavé*, at least for this meat-n-potatoes Chicagoan, is France's dinner-time answer to an early-morning American hashbrown.



Chef Mario Scavuzzo



The bar

You run a potato against a mandolin, slicing it into thin scallop-shaped disks. The sliced potatoes are usually steeped in a cream sauce, then folded criss-cross, one by one, atop each other in a casserole bowl. Dribbles of cream are then poured over each layer until you have a Napoleon-like potato cake. After a bake in the oven, the resulting cake is sliced up like a pound cake and then fried until it's developed a crispy second skin.

Koelling's pavé omits the cream in favor of butter, garlic, and herbs. It's cooked for over an hour, pressed, and then chilled overnight. When an order is placed during service, the edges are crisped, creating a crackly framework around an intensely pillowy center. Don't leave Barrington without trying one—or a half dozen—of them.

When I was younger, potato pavés seemed to be everywhere, as ubiquitous as dense rounds of flourless chocolate cakes. But in recent years, I don't see them—at least good pavés—as often. So whenever I cross paths with a classically trained chef, like Koelling, I become nostalgic for great meals long passed.

Gigi's dinner menu invokes many such sentimental moments. When's the last time, for instance, that you ordered butter-poached lobster and it arrived moated by not one but two sauces: a

bisque-inspired creme and a lobster demi-glace?

If you're a diner of a certain age, with a certain palate, you might get as dewy-eyed and nostalgic as I did. These days, most bistros are built, staged, and designed to look like some fogged-mirror myth of what Toulouse-Lautrec wanted Paris to look like in the late 19th century. That's not exactly Gigi's vibe. There are, of course, some classic French accouterments. The olive-green water bottles. Floral-patterned dishes festooned to the wainscoting. And accent walls covered in Gilded Age burgundy wallpaper. But it seems to be striving for an air of community and hominess instead of kitsch or haughtiness.

It's trying to say something, rather than just impersonating a bucolic French bistro. The fact that the father-and-son team of David and Jessen Koelling have transformed Barrington's iconic Bread Basket restaurant—a long-standing local coffee shop and breakfast spot that COVID-19 forced to shutter—is a triumph in itself. The footprint of the room, rectangular as a row house, feels like it was born to be a bistro. But the menu is undeniably pan-European. One might even argue that it's pan-global.

The menu is flush with offerings—some entrees; others appetizer-sized—inspired by Chef Koelling's picaresque culinary journey. Over the years, he's cooked



A refreshing cocktail



Artichoke angolotti, black truffle butter, grana padano cheese



Tarte flambée, with smoked bacon, sweet onions, and fromage blanc

everywhere from Argentina to Japan with multiple stops in between. Thus the menu feels almost autobiographical, slipping in all sorts of unexpected delights.

Consider his artichoke agnolotti. It's a sublime dish—note the way a farce of artichoke, aged Parmesan, and brioche generates an earthy flavor every bit the equal of a French truffle—inspired by time spent working in the kitchen at Locanda del Pilone in Northern Italy. And then there's his mic drop of an Alsatian tart, which is crispy as a cracker crust pizza yet somehow manages to dial down the intensity of its bacon, onions, and fromage blanc into soft and downright gentle notes. Pair it with some bubbly and you'll generate instant romance.

So, forget Paris. Vive la Barrington. Gigi not only serves tantalizing fare but also portals you back two decades to our recent culinary past. Back to the early 2000s, when salmon tartare wasn't flat but stacked tall with rainbow-colored layers of salmon, guacamole, and sweet potato confetti.

There is a temptation, of course, to read too much into the fact that Koelling runs the restaurant with his father, a legend who helped put Chicago and the northern suburbs on the culinary map in the 1980s. In a sense, you can feel the individual passion of both



Chefs and partners
Mario Scavuzzo,
David Koelling, and
Jessen Koelling

father and son working in unison here. They seem to want to create something that honors the past while respecting the present. This feeling of culinary déjà vu is a blessing that raises the eyebrows, produces smiles, and makes even the pickiest of potato eaters purr with delight.

Gigi Wine Bar & Bistro is located at 131 Park Avenue in Barrington. Please call 847.926.7435 or visit gigiwinebarandbistro.com.

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Villa Avellana

CON MUCHO GUSTO

Visit Costa Rica's Villa Avellana for an ultra-luxurious vacation where an exceptional staff curates a relaxing respite with a dash of adventure.

WORDS BY **DUSTIN O'REGAN**

Nestled amidst Costa Rica's lush tropical landscape and the Papagayo Peninsula's black beaches is the Villa Avellana. The privately owned villa is buy-out only and is designed for multi-generational families, wellness retreats, or fun-filled vacations with friends. The property perfectly combines the service, quality, and scale of a boutique hotel with the intimacy of a single-family home.

Arriving at Liberia Guanacaste airport, we were greeted by Villa Avellana's Guest Experience Manager Sergio Jaen who whisked us off in a brand-new SUV. After a scenic 45-minute drive, we entered the Papagayo Peninsula via a gorgeous gate bookended by three immense gleaming statues and a dramatic corridor of palms. As we drove along a curving road, howler monkeys greeted us from the trees and coatis nodded "hello" as they searched for hidden terrestrial treasures. Fun fact: Costa Rica is home to approximately half a

million species, about 5 percent of the estimated species on Earth.

After a second gate granted us access to the Prieta Estates gated community, we found Villa Avellana sitting at the end of a long, secluded cul-de-sac on 3 acres of beachfront.

General Manager Thomas Freitag welcomed us into the newly built 10-bedroom, 33,000-square-foot, fully staffed villa, a space he noted as "one to be shared by loved ones creating treasured memories." The winner of the International Property Award's "Best Architecture Single Residence Americas 2022-2023," the villa is stunning to behold. Ascending the grand staircase, you are greeted by an astonishing view of the jungle and ocean through floor-to-ceiling glass walls and doors. A vast yet inviting space contains a kitchen, indoor eating area, and the main living room. The villa's game room is designed for fun while the garden-view bedrooms with outdoor showers and beautiful hillside views are utterly relaxing. Second-floor, ocean-view bedrooms feature gorgeous marble bathrooms and expansive terraces. Bedtime is an otherworldly experience as



Entrance hallway



Suite



Beachside barbecue

Villa Avellana uses 400 thread count cotton hemstitch sheets from the Costa Rican bedding company, Katé.

The Costa Rican design firm SENS carefully selected the villa's color palette to reflect the coastal charm and tropical allure of Papagayo. Shades of blue, ranging from deep navy to serene aquamarine, create a sense of calm and tranquility while various shades of green are reminiscent of the vibrant jungle foliage. Natural textures and materials, such as wood and stone, enhance the organic feel of the spaces while an abundant inclusion of works from local artisans lends cultural authenticity.

Located just outside the main villa is the two-story yoga pavilion built of gleaming teak.

On the other end of the villa and outside the main building is a huge outdoor living area with kitchens, eating areas, pools, pool deck, and a bar, which is manned by an onsite mixologist.

FOOD

Outdoor dining is an essential part of the Costa Rican experience, and the villa offers various areas where groups of all sizes can savor a delightful, al fresco meal. Whether served as plated courses or buffet style, all meals are prepared with the freshest locally grown ingredients and Executive Chef David Moya caters to all dietary preferences.

Each morning, I eagerly awaited the "Menu of the Day." Breakfasts offered the option of a classic Costa Rican dish (alternating daily) and/or a farm fresh egg station. In addition, there was a tempting display of pressed juices (my favorite was the "Green Juice" made of pineapple, cucumber, kale, celery, ginger, and peppermint), homemade bread and pastries, yogurts, fruit, and other goodies.

For one lunch, Chef Mona presented an endless array of choices beautifully displayed on the outdoor kitchen's island. I particularly



Villa Avellana's outdoor living area with kitchens, pools, pool deck, and bar.



White-faced capuchin monkey

adored the multiple vegetable options. Whenever I vacation, I can never find enough vegetables—at Villa Avellana, this was not the case.

Another day, we returned from an excursion to a three-course lunch including a chèvre and apple salad with a coriander dressing followed by a delicate miso-cured sea bass prepared with a fennel puree and asparagus.

Dinners were elaborate affairs served in a relaxed atmosphere. One evening's intoxicating theme featured tapas and wine pairings. Post-meal, the event's team arranged a salsa dancing lesson—we danced the night away putting on quite a show for the monkeys.

ACTIVITIES

Luckily Costa Rica is a vacationer's playground with myriad activities to help burn off those delicious calories. Villa guests have exclusive access to all the Peninsula's offerings, including golf, tennis, private beach clubs, tours, wilderness trails, beautiful beaches, and a two-story fitness facility. Chauffeured SUVs, a fleet of golf carts, and a 2023 Boston Whaler yacht transport guests to and from a multitude of adventures.

One morning we zipped over to a beach favored by white-faced monkeys for an early morning paddle board excursion with Thomas, the villa's general manager. As we glided along, Thomas pointed out different varieties of trees in the "floating" forest. Directing our gaze beneath the water, we saw an assortment of wildlife including rays and schools of fish. Arriving back at the beach we were welcomed by a band of white-faced monkeys who, with infants in tow, leaped, climbed, and swung to our absolute delight. I joked with Thomas that it was so kind of him to cue the monkeys—these kinds of moments happen so often at Villa Avellana that you can't believe they aren't orchestrated. We hopped back in our golf cart knowing our boards and towels would magically reappear at the villa, thoroughly cleaned and carefully stowed.

On another morning, I Located just outside the main villa is the two-story yoga pavilion built of gleaming teak. To reach the yoga studio, perched at the summit and nestled into the hillside, you ascend a sweeping staircase that appears to float over the villa's lush gardens. Another day I opted for a yoga class. As I climbed a sweeping



Pacific Ocean playground

staircase that seemed to float over the villa's lush gardens to the hillside yoga pavilion, I felt filled with peace and gratitude. The session was a delight with the howler monkeys cheering on my downward dog, a gorgeous breeze keeping me cool, and the ocean's roar inviting me to a variety of afternoon activities.

One favorite activity was a day on the ocean aboard the villa's yacht. Captain expertly maneuvered our vessel, pointing out all the best sights and then stopping so we could partake in a bit of snorkeling and cave exploration.

Upon returning, we met in the spacious living room for a chocolate-making class with the owner of a cacao farm. We journeyed through the chocolate-making process from start to finish—we learned how cacao is pollinated, harvested, and how its need for excessive amounts of water means that it flourishes in the rainforest. We opened our own pod to find the fleshy white “seeds” that hold the cacao nubs. We roasted the nubs, removed the husks, and finally ground them into a delicious chocolate paste. Our host allowed us to add milk powder, sugar, and nuts but reminded us that in its pure form, chocolate is the most nutritious food in the world. It is high in antioxidants, magnesium, and rich in flavanols which help protect cells from inflammation, improve brain function, and boost immune health.

On another glorious morning, we headed off for the Private Palmares Aerial Adventure where we zipped through the jungle tethered to a steel cable and followed that thrill by tackling a ropes challenge course. I was quite proud of myself on the ropes course—my trick is speed. If you go too slow, it's harder to keep your balance as you sway high above the jungle floor. Our last challenge of the

day was a three-story free fall. Luckily, the cable attached to our harness slowed just before our feet hit the ground. To toast our athletic abilities and quench our thirst, our guide gathered some coconuts, pulled out a machete, and, with a few “taps” across their tops, produced the sweetest of treats.

Located on the second floor of the yoga pavilion is a little slice of heaven Villa Avellana refers to as the “Wellness Studio.” My open-air hot stone massage was one of the top spa experiences of my many travels. The breeze, essential oils, toasty stones, masseuse's expertise, and the ocean's orchestra elevated the experience from pleasant to glorious.

STAFF

The villa and its location's beauty are an enormous draw for the discerning traveler but what truly makes Villa Avellana unforgettable is the team in front of and behind the scenes. With Thomas at the helm as general manager and a personal concierge team, logistics are easily juggled and activities and itineraries are effortlessly planned. All things are possible at all times. If it's a rainy afternoon when the yacht excursion is planned, the staff replaces boating with spa appointments or chocolate making. No ask is too big or too small for this talented team who replies “con mucho gusto” to every request.

Looking for ultra-luxurious accommodations, world-class cuisine, and stress-free, adventurous itineraries planned by detail-oriented staff? Villa Avellana is waiting (and so are the monkeys).

For more information, visit villaavellana.com.



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AN INSIDE LOOK AT CHICAGO'S MOST EXCLUSIVE ADDRESS—THE BARRINGTONS



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A spectacular ski-in/ski-out chalet in *Austria*, to the slopes of *Les Houches* in *France*, to a stunning French country home in *Barrington* ... all on the market for close to **\$4 million**.

WORDS BY **MEGAN WEISBERG**



ELLMAU
\$3.9 million
AUSTRIA

The Details: 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths • 2,691 square feet, \$1,449 per square foot • Ski-in/ski-out, open fireplace, double garage, wellness area with sauna, large terraces, quiet location, unobstructed view of the Wilder Kaiser, exposed roof beams, larch floorboards **Contact:** Amir Suljic at Cum Laude Immobilia, Kitzbühel, Austria. + 43 5356 650 05, amir.suljic@cumlaudeimmobilia.com

Ellmau is a pleasant and traditional village that forms part of the extensive Skiwelt ski area in the Austrian Tirol region. Skiwelt encompasses eight villages in two valleys, 90 cable cars, and 77 bars, restaurants, cafes, and Alpine

huts. The extent of the ski area is impressive covering more than 2,000 acres, with 165 miles of pistes. This chalet is next to the piste and has stunning uninterrupted views of the mountains, and is walking distance to the village of Ellmau.



LES HOUCHES \$4.2 million

FRANCE

The Details: 6 Bedrooms, 4 Baths • 23,552 square feet, \$1,182 per square foot • Fireplace, multiple balconies, a south-facing terrace, relaxation area with hammam, sauna, and jacuzzi, ski room, wine cellar, and a single garage. **Contact:** Mark Lightfoot, SnowOnly.com, Mark@snowonly.com

This beautiful chalet was entirely renovated in 2019 and is located in the quiet area of the Demi-Quartier, Megeve. It is situated a short distance to the Princess ski slopes and the all local amenities. Built over four floors, this south-

west facing chalet has a spacious and bright living area that combines a lounge and dining room with direct access onto the balcony that offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains.





300 DONLEA ROAD \$4 million

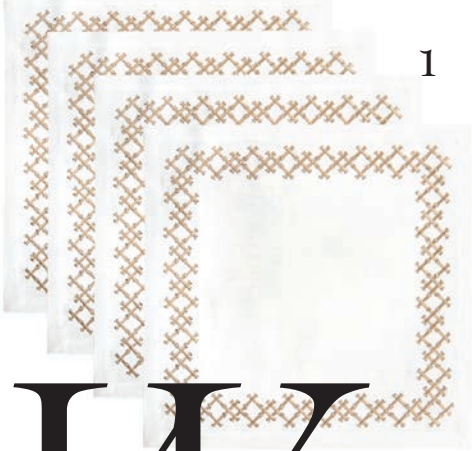
BARRINGTON HILLS

French country home set in a prime Barrington Hills location where landscape, luxury, and lifestyle marry together to create harmony and balance. The thoughtful floor plan is a blend of large-scale entertaining areas and intimate gathering spaces. Soaring glass windows and high-volume ceilings

The Details: 6 Bedrooms, 6.2 Baths • 10,253 square feet, \$390 per square foot • Separate guest house with 2,800+ square feet of living space, 3-car attached garage with porte cochere, plus additional 6-car detached garage. In-ground pool, pool house, and tennis court • Sits on approximately 16.1+ acres **Contact:** John Morrison, @properties Christie's International Real Estate, Barrington, 847-409-0297

fill the space with natural light creating a seamless transition from inside to out. Enjoy breathtaking views of this extraordinary setting from one of the multiple patios or the lovely screened porch. A 4-stall barn and bucolic pastures are on property, along with easy access to horse riding trails adjacent to the property.

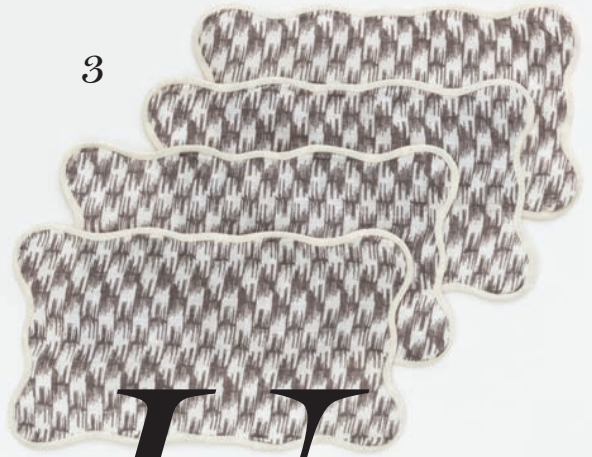




1



2



3

Wrap Up

Stay cozy at home with these delightful housewares.

EDITED BY MEGAN WEISBERG



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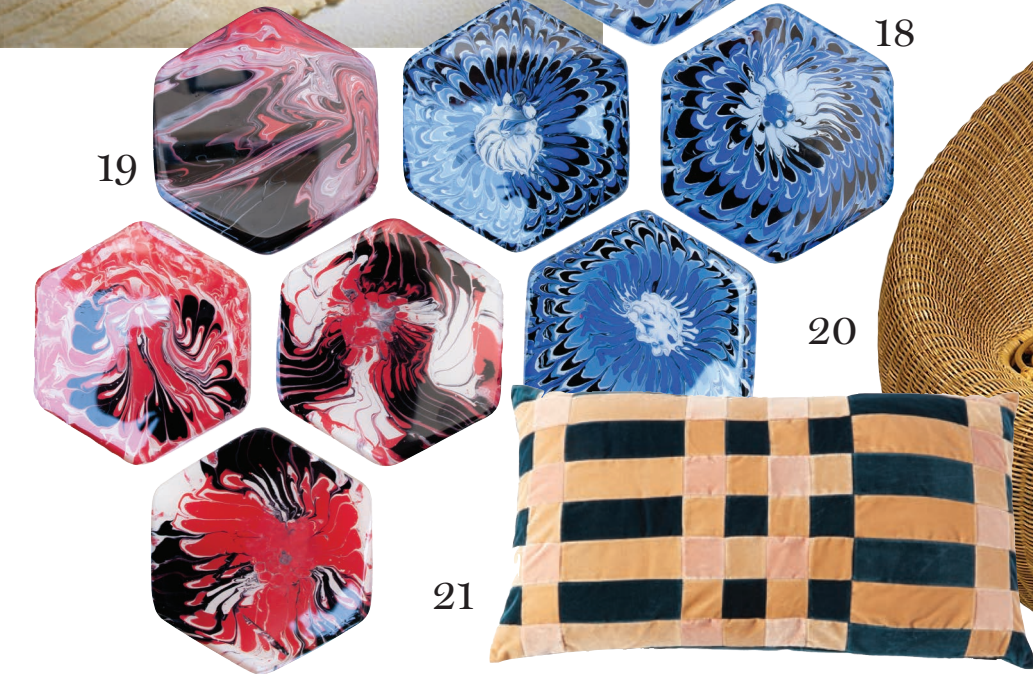


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1 Casa Branca, Essential Ivory Napkins, casabranca.com 2 Cire Trudon, Mary Scented Candle, matchefashion.com.us 3 Casa Branca, Cestino Napkin, casabranca.com 4 Yellow Saucepan, florahenri.com 5 Casa Branca, Rattan Wave Bowl, casabranca.com 6 Casa Branca, Vimini Tray, casabranca.com 7 Tina Vaia, Joan Large Clay Serving Platter, matchefashion.com.us 8 Clear Green Champagne Flute, casabranca.com 9 The Conran Shop, Keijo Reactive Painted Ceramic Mugs, matchefashion.com.us 10 Casa Branca, Wine Glass in Green, casabranca.com 11 Casa Branca, Rattan Placemat, casabranca.com 12 Ginori 1735 x Luke Edward Hall Scented Candles, matchefashion.com.us 13 Linen Aprons from the Matouk Schumacher collection, matouk.com 14 Gisele Placemat Scarlet, matouk.com 15 Apron Giselle, matouk.com 16 Feldspar, Fine China Tea Mugs, matchefashion.com.us 17 Pasta Cutters, florahenri.com 18 Casa Branca, Cathy Bruni Norris Hex Coasters, casabranca.com 19 Cathy Bruni Norris, Hex Coaster, casabranca.com 20 Casa Branca, Vintage Wicker Chair, casabranca.com 21 Christina Lundsteen, Nellie Checked Cotton Velvet Cushion, matchefashion.com.us



A Little *Something* Extra

GiGi's Playhouse and Diamonds Direct Partner with the My Extra Chromosome Pendant.

WORDS BY **JANIS MVK** / ILLUSTRATION BY **ROBERT RISKO**

In an extraordinary and heartwarming collaboration, GiGi's Playhouse, a nonprofit organization supporting those impacted by Down syndrome, has joined hands with Diamonds Direct, one of the nation's leading diamond-importing and direct-to-consumer jewelry companies. Together, they have embarked on a transformative fundraiser to raise awareness of Down syndrome and to advance GiGi's Playhouse's mission of providing free, life-changing therapeutic, educational, and career training programs for those born with an extra chromosome.

The "My Extra Chromosome" campaign with Diamonds Direct brings glitter and grace to the forefront. This campaign, launched in October in honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Month, introduces four versions of the "My Extra Chromosome" pendant, which was designed by GiGi Gianni, a 21-year-old with Down syndrome and the namesake of GiGi's Playhouse.

"The pendants were created to honor people with Down syndrome, who were born with a little something extra," explains Nancy Gianni, mother of GiGi and founder of GiGi's Playhouse. "Wearing your extra chromosome represents your love for people with Down syndrome and your commitment to be accepting of all."

As Down syndrome is represented by the colors yellow and blue, GiGi used yellow gold and sapphires in the pendant's design. Additional pendant styles are available in sterling silver, sterling silver with a sapphire, yellow gold with sapphires, and yellow gold with sapphires and diamonds.

The partnership began as a local initiative with GiGi's Playhouse in Hoffman Estates, specifically for Diamond Direct's Schaumburg location. "Diamonds Direct is a huge advocate of local community partnerships," notes Kelly Flahardy, vice president of Diamonds Direct Chicagoland locations. In a happy coincidence, across the country, numerous GiGi's Playhouses are located close to a Diamonds Direct brick-and-mortar store. Thus, the collaboration was transformed into a national partnership. "Our goal is to spread awareness of Down syndrome as well as raise beneficial funds for GiGi's Playhouse," says Flahardy. "We are passionate about the organization's mission and are thrilled to be able to continue to grow

this partnership."

Today, there are 58 GiGi's Playhouse Achievement Centers across the United States and Mexico serving over 30,000 people of all ages every day. The organization is 99 percent volunteer-run with only 5 percent of funding used on general and administrative expenses.

Part of GiGi's quest for herself is to teach children to be accepting and celebrate everyone. "Whenever my mom brags about having the "My Extra Chromosome" pendant, I say, 'Yeah, but I have it in my whole body!'" she says. "Everyone should be proud of themselves for exactly who they are and because of that, we have My Extra Chromosome tattoos, stickers, and shirts so kids at school can have an extra chromosome, too." The pendants through Diamonds Direct are an extension of the organization's motto of "be accepting, be generous, be kind."

United by a common vision of inclusivity, empowerment, and progress, GiGi's Playhouse and Diamonds Direct are paving the way for where the brilliance of diamonds meets the resilience of the human spirit. The pendants are available in-store and online through the end of the year. Each purchase supports GiGi's Playhouse with 20 percent going directly to the organization.

For more information, visit diamondsdirect.com/gigis-playhouse and gigisplayhouse.org/extra-chromosome.





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