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Ask Connie

What are some winter home selling tips?

1 Create a Cozy Atmosphere During winter, potential buyers will appreciate a warm and inviting atmosphere inside your home. Make sure your heating system is working efficiently and set the temperature at a comfortable level. Consider adding some cozy touches like soft blankets, plush rugs, and scented candles to create a welcoming ambiance. Also, maximize natural light by keeping curtains and blinds open during daytime showings.

2 Highlight Winter Features Emphasize the unique features of your home that are particularly appealing during the winter months. For example, if you have a fireplace, have a warm, inviting fire going. If your home has a hot tub or a spa, highlight the relaxation and comfort it offers during the colder season. These winter-specific features can help your home stand out from the competition.



3 Showcase Winter Activities Take advantage of the season by showcasing nearby winter activities and attractions. Create a list of local winter sports, ice skating rinks, holiday events, or nearby ski resorts to provide to potential buyers. This can help them envision the lifestyle and experiences they can enjoy if they choose to make your home their own.

4 Professional Photography Good quality photos are essential for any real estate listing, regardless of the season. Hire a professional photographer who can capture the beauty of your home during winter. They will know how to use lighting and angles to showcase your property's best features, even in the colder months.

Remember, selling a home in the winter is all about creating a warm and inviting atmosphere, emphasizing unique winter features, and showcasing the charm of the season. By following these tips, you can increase your chances of attracting serious buyers and selling your home successfully.

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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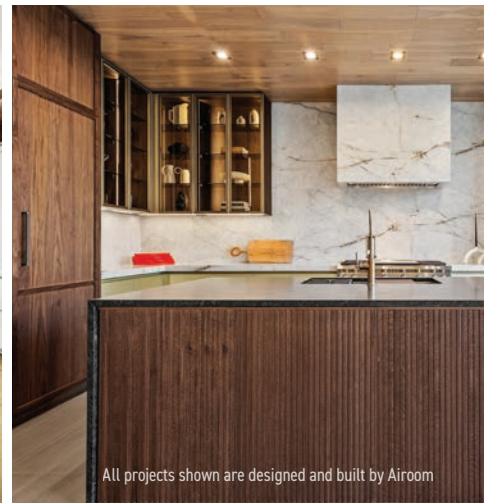
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M. J. Miller & Co. Announces New President

BARRINGTON, IL. M.J. Miller & Co. and its founder and owner, Michael J. Miller, are thrilled to announce Matthew Gabler as its new President. Michael has been in business for 55 years and is set to continue for another 55 years. Michael recognized Matthew's passion and experience in jewelry and, being his stepson, has turned this into a family jewelry business, ensuring its legacy continues to thrive.

Founded in 1970, M.J. Miller & Co. has been a symbol of exquisite craftsmanship, impeccable quality, and unparalleled customer service. Over the years, the business has earned a distinguished reputation for creating timeless pieces of jewelry that mark life's most significant moments.

"I am both honored and excited to continue working closely with my family to uphold the legacy that I have built from the ground up," says Michael. "Together, we will ensure that our customers can expect the same commitment to excellence that they have come to know and trust."

Honoring the timeless traditions that have defined M.J. Miller & Co. is at the forefront of Michael's plan to prepare for the future while he continues to mentor and teach the next generation. Customers can look forward to a seamless blend of heritage and innovation, ensuring that their jewelry purchases remain as meaningful as ever.



Michael J. Miller with step-son Matthew Gabler

M.J. Miller & Co. expresses its heartfelt gratitude to its loyal customers who have supported the business over the years. The entire team at M.J. Miller & Co. is excited to continue serving the community and creating cherished pieces of jewelry that celebrate life's most precious moments for decades to come.

For more information about our beautifully curated collection and upcoming events please check our website www.millerjewels.com or stop in our store at 123 W Main St. Barrington, IL 60010.



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Let loose this winter season on the slopes. Flip to *Fashion* for wardrobe inspiration to keep you in style on your ski trips.

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<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>	MEGAN WEISBERG
<i>Contributing Editors</i>	MICHELLE CROWE, ERIN DONALDSON, DUSTIN O'REGAN
<i>Executive Projects Director</i>	KEMMIE RYAN
<i>Style Director</i>	THERESA DEMARIA
<i>Contributing Writers</i>	LEAH COHEN, MITCH HURST, BILL MCLEAN, MIRA PATEL, ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER
<i>Copy Editor</i>	MORGAN HOGERTY
<i>Production Manager/ Graphic Designer</i>	LINDA LEWIS
<i>Advertising Coordinator/ Graphic Designer</i>	CHRIS GEIMER
<i>Graphic Designer</i>	SAM SUAREZ
<i>Contributing Photographers</i>	MARIA PONCE BERRE, IAN MCLEOD, EMIL SINANAGIC
<i>Illustrator</i>	ROBERT RISKO
<i>Advertising Sales</i>	GRETCHEN BARNARD, JENNIFER STURGEON
<i>Assistant to the Publisher</i>	CHEYANNE LENCIONI

How to reach COUNTRY Magazine

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Although this may be contrary to popular opinion, I've recently begun to love the month of February. After the charm of the holidays and New Year begins to fade, it's a short month where we can continue to hibernate (so to speak), and recharge our batteries before the beauty of spring, well, springs. During this cold winter month, there's nothing I delight in more than sitting by the fire with a hot drink in hand and reading magazines. Hopefully, this month *Country* is at the top of your magazine list of reads.

Our cover star, Alejandra Guerrero, hails from Mexico and now with her unique and incredible style she's made Lake Barrington home for her family. Family also plays a defining role in Megan Gehrisch's life, this month's inspiring *Country vs. Town*. I love how Gehrisch's advice to her younger self is to "own it," and how Guerrero looks for inspiration "everywhere."

Barrington's Gina Kaiser did just that, and the owner of It Gym (in Hoffman Estates) boldly works to create opportunity for orphans in Zimbabwe, one move at a time, read all about it in *A Community's Strength*. Also a testament to our community's strength, is the story of how when Darby Hills was stunned by the volume of children in Barrington School District 220 participating in the free or subsidized meal program, she started the nonprofit, Barrington Children's Charities. Now, with a team of volunteers,

the organization distributes food for outside of school through a program called Packs of Plenty (P.O.P.). Learn more about this incredible endeavor in *Children's Champion*. And equally strong, but through his vocal talents, is renowned opera singer William Powers featured in *Singing Volumes*.

And lastly, a Barrington family embarked on a home renovation with KED Interiors on their 100-year-old Wisconsin country home, a former ice house. How cool is that? Pun intended. Enjoy the last magic of deep winter.

Best,

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

Country Loves
Megan Gehrisch
wearing Veronica
Beard head to toe,
neimanmarcus.com



It Gym owner, Gina Kaiser, creates opportunity for orphans in Zimbabwe. Here Kaiser wears Ralph Lauren Purple Label cheetah silk top and Theory pants, neimanmarcus.com

MY WISH LIST

Adding an extra warmth layer with Bogner's Feli hooded shearling vest, net-a-porter.com



Staying bundled in Perfect Moment's Claudia intarsia merino wool turtleneck sweater, net-a-porter.com

Packing Rudsak's Ady ribbed-knit trimmed, quilted soft-stretch down ski jacket for a mid-winter ski vacation, net-a-porter.com



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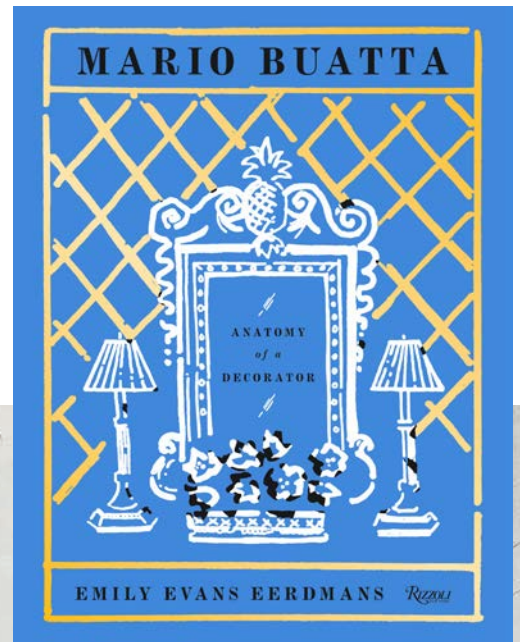
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UP FRONT

CULTURE, MURMURS & STYLE

*Emily Evans Eerdman's new book, **Mario Buatta: Anatomy of a Decorator**, is the first authoritative assessment of legendary American interior designer Mario Buatta. Eerdman, a protégée of the decorator, uses never-before-seen archival material to present the design master as someone whose influence continues to shape today's world of maximalist interiors. This book is an essential addition to the libraries of design aficionados, providing a masterclass in decorating à la Buatta.*

rizzoli.com



ALLISON BORNSTEIN STYLING

Looking for something new this year? Stylist Allison Bornstein wants you to start with your closet. Believing that fashion is wellness, Bornstein views getting dressed as a version of self-care. She's an advocate of shopping your own closet and offers seven questions for a buyer to consider before purchasing an item to make sure it's worth it. Bornstein also helps clients to pinpoint their style and refine their closets by using her TikTok-famous "three-word method." Her online styling sessions are designed to improve women's lives by improving their closets. allisonbornstein.com



GLADWELL & PATTERSON

Gladwell & Patterson is an internationally renowned gallery with a proud history that can be traced back to the mid-18th century. During its 275-year history, the gallery has enjoyed a long and distinguished reputation for discovering those "beautiful things." Dealing only in works of the highest quality and condition, their focus is on fine oil paintings, watercolors, and sculpture, from 19th and 20th-century works to contemporary landscapes and portraits. Their flagship gallery is located on London's famous Beauchamp Place, and they are proud to have recently opened Gladwells Rutland in the picturesque market town of Oakham. Behind the gallery's distinctive monochrome windows on Beauchamp Place, owner Anthony Fuller embodies the establishment's calling. "My job," he explains, "is to look around for beautiful things. Nothing gives me more pleasure than a great picture." gladwellpatterson.com



Modest Huys,
The Harvest,
oil on canvas,
28" x 32¼"

Gustave
Loiseau,
*Paysage en
Normandie*,
1926, oil on
canvas, 21"
x 25¼"





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YACHT ROCK: A NIGHT ON THE S.S. BYFS

Barrington Youth and Family Services (BYFS) is holding its annual BYFS Gala, "Yacht Rock: A Night on the S.S. BYFS," at the Biltmore Country Club on April 20. The incredible night will benefit the BYFS, which has proudly served the mental health needs of the Barrington area for over 50 years. Tickets for this usually sold-out event go on sale at the beginning of March. *For event details, sponsorship opportunities, or information on auction items, follow BYFS on Facebook and Instagram or visit barringtonbyfs.org.*





Guerrero wearing J.Crew mohair sweater, model's own, skirt, stylist's own.

Born and raised in Mexico, **ALEJANDRA GUERRERO** is a designer by education and a homemaker by trade. Since 2019, Guerrero, her husband, and their wonderful family of three kids and one dog have called Lake Barrington home.

EDITED BY **MORGAN HOGERTY**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE BERRE**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST**
STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

ALEJANDRA GUERRERO LOVES

Gadget: My Apple Watch, especially when it helps me find my phone. **Scent:** For the house, “Volcano” candles by Capri Blue. In nature, my favorite smell is when it starts to rain. For myself, “Replica Under The Lemon Trees” by Maison Margiela. **Barrington spot:**

CrossFit Barrington, makes me a better version of myself. **Hostess gift to receive:** I never expect anything, but sharing a cabernet is always lovely. **Gift to give:** Right now I love giving the LEGO Flowers Bouquet.



Guerrero
in alice +
olivia blouse,
vest, pant,
and belt are
model's own.

What actress would play you in a movie? Salma Hayek—I like her acting in *Frida*, love her accent, and I believe she is authentic and funny. **Who from history would you want to travel with?** Salvador Dalí. He was the first person who came to mind. Dalí was an incredible surrealist, so I could only imagine how interesting the conversation could have been. I like to think he was a little crazy, and on top of everything, he had the perfect mustache. **Where do you look for inspiration?** I think it's everywhere (that's a bit generic but true). I feel like I pick up on the little things. I love to observe and then apply a bit of my own touch. **Favorite book?** That is a tough one, but within the last year my favorite book has been *The Midnight Library*

by Matt Haig. It is an easy read with a big message: No regrets. **Most beloved cookbook?** The one I use most often now is *The Whole30* by Melissa and Dallas Hartwig. It's full of my favorite recipes for dressings and seasonings. I also like *Run Fast. Cook Fast. Eat Slow.* by Shalane Flanagan and Elyse Kopecky; but intuition is one of my best friends while cooking. **Best dinner party hack?** I love making homemade dressings because they go with pretty much everything, from salads to meat to fish, or as a spread. When I need something fast, my go-to is a plate of a few different types of nuts and grapes. **What's in your bag right now?** I don't carry a big bag, so it's mostly my wallet, phone, and my favorite lip balm: Mymatcha by Cocokind.



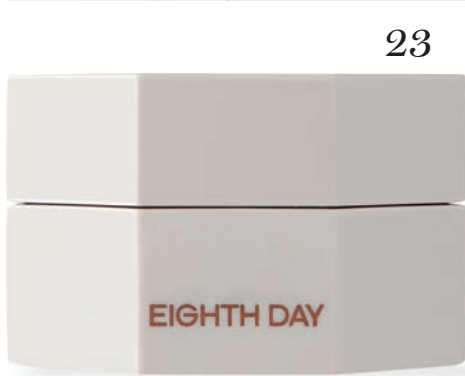
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BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

WORDS BY
DR. JAMES T. GAVRILOS

Cosmetic and restorative dentistry is like many other fields. It requires planning and execution with a talented team that can perform their individual responsibilities. One of the members of this team is the laboratory technician that helps create the blueprint for a new smile.

When creating a new smile for a patient, the dentist listens to the patient's concerns and reviews expectations with them. They will sit together and look at close-up photographs of the "before" smile and list all the changes that need to be made. This includes length, width, color, shape, translucency, position, and gum relationships. The patient is encouraged to bring photographs of smiles they like so we can use it as a communication tool. Once

the dentist has all of the information, the patient's teeth are scanned and emailed to the laboratory for the next step.

Dental technicians had to use impressions of teeth when making the blueprint for a new smile. They used wax that they added to the models of the teeth and then carved the wax into the shape of what the new teeth should look like. This was called a "wax-up." Today we use a digital scan of the teeth and the blueprint is created digitally. The technician can merge the new design into photographs of the patient so that we can see if our cosmetic goals are being met. Once the dentist approves the digital blueprint, the technician digitally prints models and guides for the dentist to use while he is preparing the teeth for their new cosmetic restorations.

This process is such an advantage for the patient. When they visit for their preparation appointment, they leave with temporary restorations that look exactly like the blueprint. They get an entire week to smile with them, eat with them and speak with them. At their one week follow up visit, we ask if there are any changes they would like to make. In most cases, the answer is no but if they wish to make a change in length or shape, we can make those changes in the temporary restorations. Once the patient approves, we scan the temporary restorations and send it to the lab so that they know exactly how to make the final porcelain restorations. This way there are no surprises and the patient ends up with the smile of their dreams.

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

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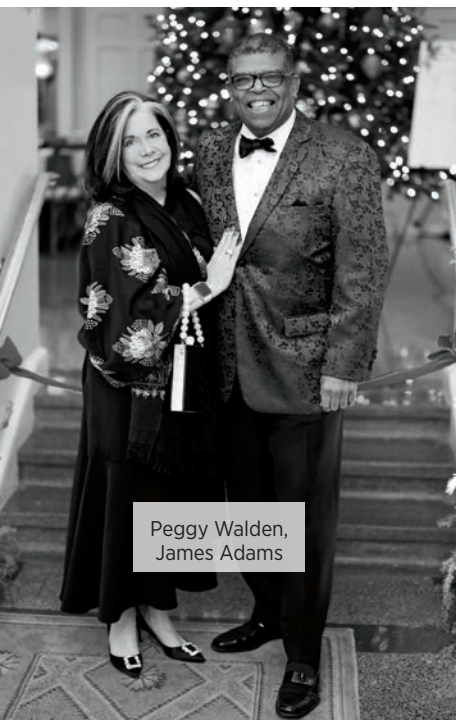


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FOUNDER'S CLUB & TOP 10 OFFICE PRODUCER SINCE 2012



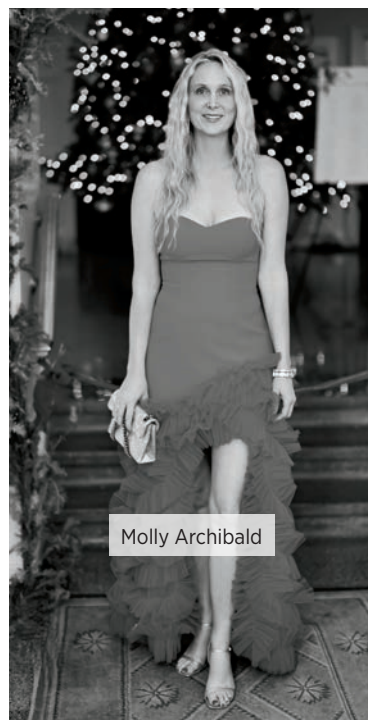
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Peggy Walden,
James Adams



Doug & Karen Darch



Molly Archibald

BARRINGTON CHILDREN'S CHARITIES' HOLLY BALL FUNDRAISER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN MCLEOD

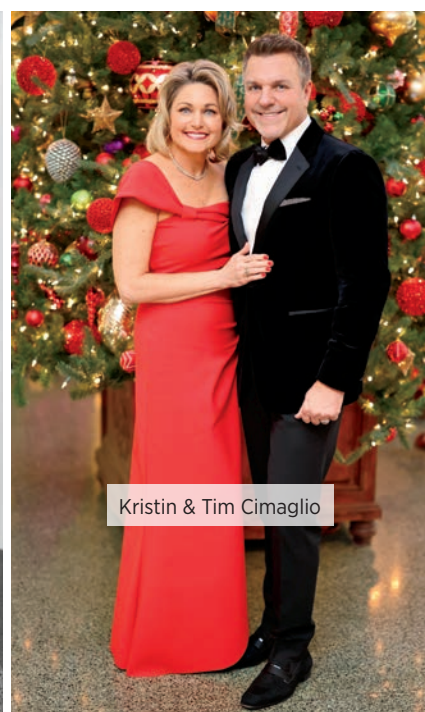
Barrington Children's Charities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to helping children in need within District 220. Holly Ball '23 raised over \$175,000 which will be used to support their essential needs programs. Learn more at barringtonchildrenscharities.com



Brian Cressey,
Dr. Iliana Sweis



Crystal & Matt DiDomenico



Kristin & Tim Cimaglio



Jaun & Kristel Van Vuren



Cindy Galley



Andre Van Vuren,
Tricia Switski



Brian & Julianne Long, Darby & Tom Hills



Steve & Lexie Robins



Zachary & Molly Paisley



Lauren & Sean Brynjelsen



Mandy & Matt Lewandowski



Claire Erdman,
Yoselin Castillo



Madeline Vines, Melanie Rousseau, Ashely Fern,
Hope Perrault, Lily Sutton, Tanner Skowronski



Dr. John Moy & Donna Moy

FOCUS GALA

PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY
FITZGERALD STUDIO

The Greatest FOCUS Gala at the Sanfilippo Estate was a wonderful success with over \$250,000 raised toward the fight against preventable global blindness.

Ifocus.org



Kyla Tovar, Fiona Cotter



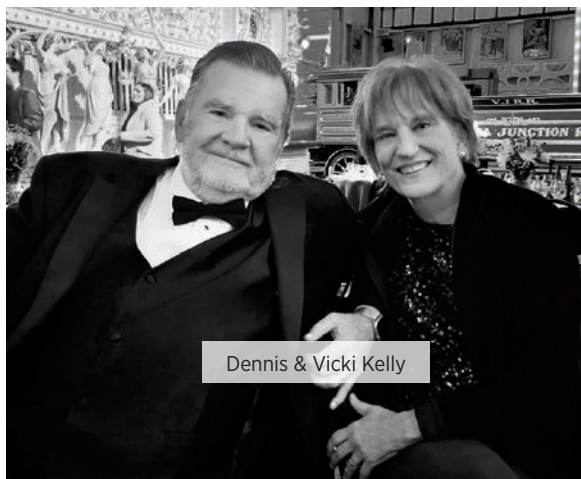
Champagne Lady



Yoselin Castillo, Helen Sussex, Nancy Siepman,
Mary Pat Resch, Clare Mantelman



Dr. Pete Setabutr, Dr. Bryan Kim, Dr. Christopher Woodfin, FOCUS Board Member Dr. R.V. Paul Chan, Dr. Thasarat Vajaranant, Dr. Amy Kim



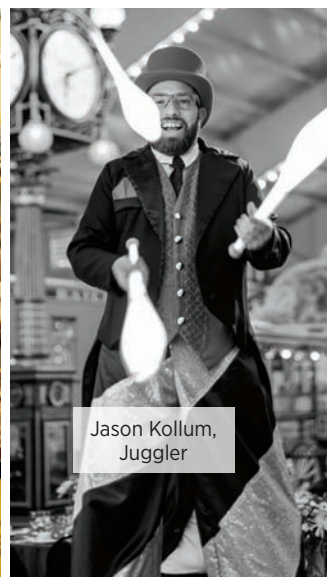
Dennis & Vicki Kelly



Dr. Jean Claude Niyonzima, Dr. Nosedalie Tiris, FOCUS President Dr. Dan Alter, Dr. Yamilee Cherubin



Jacob Chacko, Celine Chacko and friends



Jason Kollum, Juggler



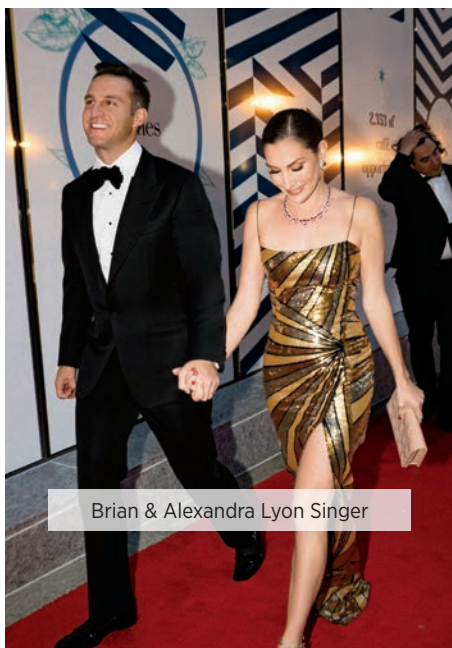
Laura Alter, Dr. Dan Alter, Laura Alter, Scott Alter, Laura Alter



Matt McManus, Ira Schulman, Elayne Schulman, Stacie McManus, Jake McManus, Michael McManus



Jordan & Sarah Valleskey



Brian & Alexandra Lyon Singer



Dancer from Tease Productions

HOOSIER BALL 2023

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILIA JANE PHOTOGRAPHY

On October 27, 2023, the Lyon Family Foundation hosted Hoosier Cabaret, the 6th Annual Hoosier Ball, at "Chez Lyon" at RPM Events. It was an evening like no other as Parisian nightlife came alive full of sultry surprises, spectacular performances, and an elevated food and beverage experience complete with caviar and endless champagne, plus an afterparty at Pizzeria Portofino hosted by Ferrari Lake Forest. The event raised over \$600,000 to benefit Lyon's Way, an initiative with the University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital's Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program.

lyonsway.org



Jodie Barbera, Colleen Noyes



Audrey Wilson, Cindy Tinkoff



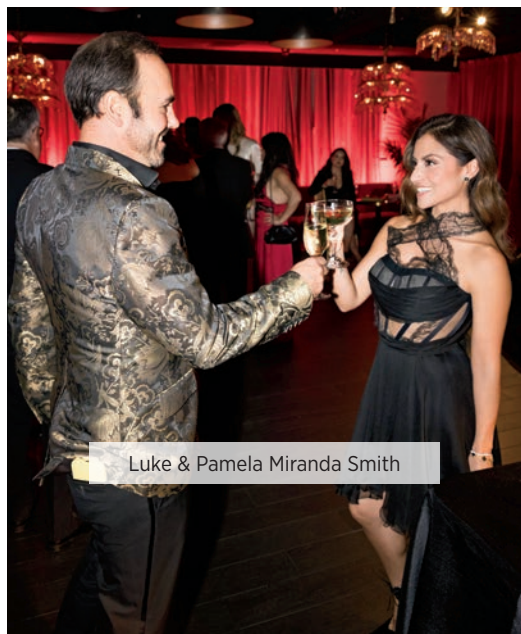
Ryan & Michelle (Pajerski) Blues



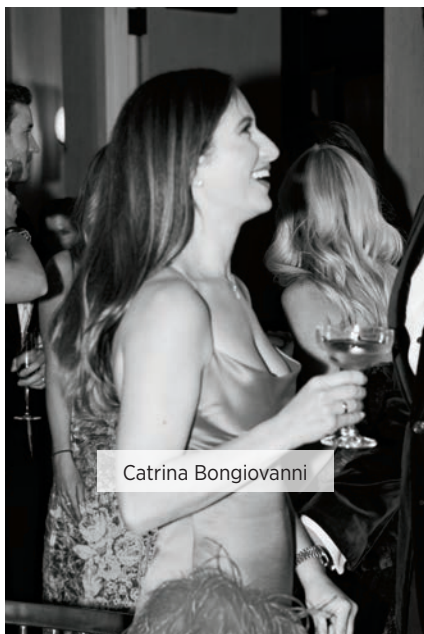
Courtney Moskowitz, Jaclyn Griffin, Lauren Black, Abbey Perkins, Allyson Montalto, Alexandra Lyon Singer



Katie Wilson, Jodie Barbera, Colleen Noyes, Anna Bilton



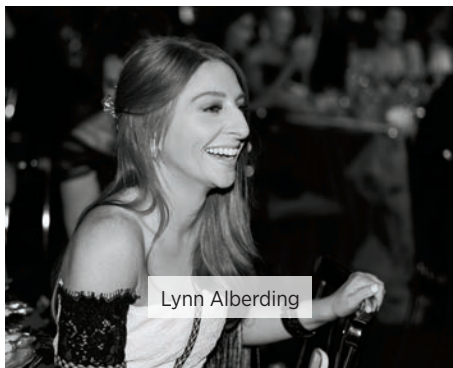
Luke & Pamela Miranda Smith



Catrina Bongiovanni



Alexandra Lyon Singer, Bill Rancic



Lynn Alberding



Leslie Roberts



Gay Daniel



Karla DiGiòia, Francesca Thomson, Emily Rosencrans



Lauren Cole, Emily Rosencrans



Samantha Snetselaar

HOPE FUNDRAISER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER FALAT

Barrington Junior Women's Club hosted its annual HOPE Holiday Fundraiser for members on December 5 at Gigi Wine Bar & Bistro. Funds raised from the event go directly to BJWC's Philanthropy Fund.

bjwc.org



Rachel Menge Flanagan, Jill Douthit



Namuun Digangi, Carmen Wong, Lauren Biestek





Lindsay Dausch, Ashley Thompson, Christine Raley, Claire Mullen



Lindsay Dausch, Maureen Bozduman, Lauren Cole



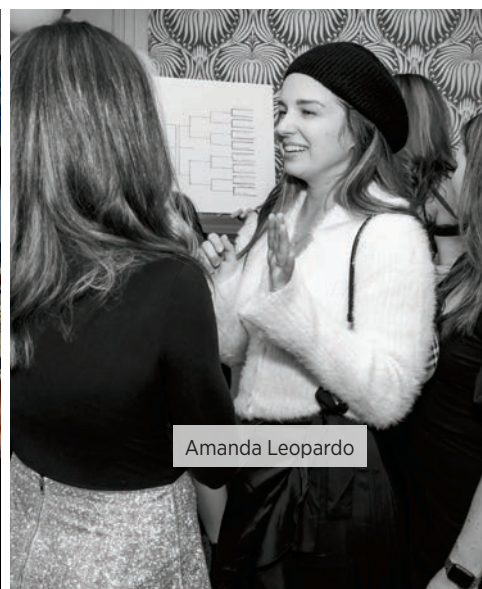
Francesca Thomson, Carolyn McNamara



Abby Biondi, Jacqui Pieroni, Jill Douthit



Sheila Urban, Heather Kieser, Kristina Barnett, Megan Zarling, Kristin Baumann



Amanda Leopard

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Megan Gehrish

has firmly rooted herself in Barrington after transitioning from city life in Chicago. Her decision to relocate was motivated by the desire to create a family-oriented, suburban lifestyle. As a member of the Barrington Junior Women's Club, she proudly serves as the co-chair for the Safety Town summer program. Family plays a central role in Gehrish's life, and she cherishes every moment spent with her husband and three young children. Her educational background as a teacher enhances her kids' development as she also takes on the role of her children's No. 1 fan, offering encouragement and cheers at all their activities.

EDITED BY **MORGAN HOGERTY**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE BERRE**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST**
STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

Gehrish wearing
A.L.C. dress,
saksfifthavenue.com.



Mantra? All things are difficult before they are easy **Best grooming tip?** I love my LumiSpa iO **Guilty pleasure?** All the popcorn **Favorite foods?** Anything potatoes—baked, mashed, roasted, etc. **Music you love?** I listen to a wide variety of music genres from Queen and Billy Joel to Andy Grammer and Pink **Best advice ever given to you?** Everything happens for a reason **Best advice you've given?** Take a breath and slow down **Earliest memory?** One Christmas, my dad brought home winter hats from Sweden for the whole

family. The boys got blue hats, and the girls got white. We wore them for years—my dad still wears his to snow blow his driveway every winter **Before bed, you?** Watch a little *Jimmy Fallon* or *Friends* reruns **What's on your bookshelf?** *Five-Star Weekend* by Elin Hilderbrand and *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* by Amy Chua **You can't live without?** A watch **Love to escape to?** Someplace warm like San Diego, California or Anna Maria Island, Florida **Advice you would give to your younger self?** It's okay to be yourself. Own it



WHEN IN THE COUNTRY

Your style is? Casual, I'm usually in leggings and a cozy shirt **Can't leave the house without?** Water, coffee, and Aquaphor **Transportation?** I drive a Cadillac that's basically a "snack-mobile" to transport the kids to and from all their activities **Driving music?** SiriusXM—my station is usually overruled, then it's "KIDZ BOP" for the rest of the ride **Place to eat?** Wild Onion Brewery, Region, Lindy's Landing, and Brunch Cafe **Shop?** Tattered Tiques, Winterberry, and Costco **Best thing about country?** The beautiful sunrises and sunsets along with the peacefulness of nature **Worst thing about country?** The wildlife that eats all my plants and flowers **The perfect day is?** It begins with an early morning, watching the sunrise. Followed by a peaceful walk along the Grassy Lake path. After that, a matinee movie with the family, and the day concludes with a charming dinner with my husband and some close friends

Gehrisch in Brunello Cucinelli jacket, Giorgio Armani pants, saksfifthavenue.com.



WHEN IN TOWN

Your style is? A little fancier with a little black dress and some heels **Can't leave the house without?** A cute purse and my fresh Sugar Lip Treatment **Transportation?** I love riding around in style in the complimentary Tesla X when staying at the Viceroy Chicago **Driving music?** Anything I can sing along with **Place to eat?** Mastro's Steakhouse, Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse, and S&G's for the best breakfast skillet **Shop?** I love shopping at Christkindlmarket every winter and the boutique shops in Lincoln Square **Best thing about town?** Architectural designs along the Chicago River **Worst thing about town?** Traffic **The perfect day is?** It starts with a delicious breakfast at a classic diner. Moving on to some touristy things like taking an architectural boat tour and visiting museums. Followed by dinner in River North, and concluding the evening with an outdoor concert at Wrigley Field to dance the night away





SKI BREAK

On the slopes, off the slopes, and everything in between.

EDITED BY MEGAN WEISBERG





1 Perfect Moment, Mid-Rise Cordova Ski Pant, perfectmoment.com 2 Perfect Moment, Mania Merino Wool Top, perfectmoment.com 3 Sleeper, Convertible Cropped Feather Trimmed Knitted Cardigan, net-a-porter.com 4 Gucci, Horsebit 1955 Shearling-Trimmed Leather Shoulder Bag, net-a-porter.com 5 Zimmermann, Luminosity Fair Isle Beanie, zimmermann.com 6 Brunello Cucinelli, Shearling and Leather Ankle Boots, net-a-porter.com 7 Zimmermann, Radiant Mask in Cherry, zimmermann.com 8 JW Anderson, Two Tone Knitted Turtleneck Sweater, net-a-porter.com 9 Zimmermann, Matchmaker Grosgrain Trimmed Pleated Wool and Silk Blend Duchesse Satin Tapered Pants, net-a-porter.com 10 Suzie Kondi, Zephyra Cotton Blend Velour Wide Leg Track Pants, net-a-porter.com 11 Perfect Moment, Claudia Intarsia-Knit Merino Wool Turtleneck Sweater, net-a-porter.com 12 DÖEN, Kenley Fair Isle Knitted Vest, net-a-porter.com 13 Bogner, St. Moritz Buckled Shearling Lined Textured Leather Ankle Boots, net-a-porter.com 14 Allude, Wool and Cashmere Blend Sweater and Track Pants Set, net-a-porter.com 15 Perfect Moment, Schild Merino Wool Sweater, perfectswearer.com 16 Perfect Moment, High Waist Aurora Flare Pant, perfectmoment.com 17 Zimmermann, Luminosity Cable Scarf, zimmermann.com 18 David Koma, Open Back Crystal Embellished Pointelle Knit Maxi Dress, net-a-porter.com 19 Perfect Moment, Frankie Faux Leather Salopette Pants, perfectmoment.com 20 Perfect Moment, BB Merino Wool Sweater, perfectmoment.com 21 Perfect Moment, Aster Merino Wool Leggings, perfectmoment.com 22 Perfect Moment, Vegan Leather Star Belt Bag, perfectmoment.com 23 Perfect Moment, Sierra Down Vest, perfectmoment.com 24 Fusalp, Matterhorn Mirrored Ski Goggles, net-a-porter.com 25 &Daughter, Fintra Crop Wool Turtleneck Sweater, net-a-porter.com 26 Goldbergh, Pippa Belted Flared Ski Pants, net-a-porter.com 27 Perfect Moment, PM x Dede Johnston Thermal Half-Zip, perfectmoment.com 28 Perfect Moment, PM x Dede Johnston Thermal Legging, perfectmoment.com 29 Perfect Moment, BB Merino Wool Legging, perfectmoment.com 30 Allude, Striped Wool and Cashmere Blend Sweater, net-a-porter.com 31 Perfect Moment, Powder Merino Wool Sweater, perfectmoment.com 32 Perfect Moment, Neve Merino Wool Sweater, perfectmoment.com 33 Perfect Moment, Houndstooth Isola Ski Pant, perfectmoment.com 34 Perfect Moment, Allos Ski Suit, perfectmoment.com



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

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Victoria Falls Boxing Club

a community's STRENGTH

Barrington's Gina Kaiser leverages the power of her gym to create hope and opportunity for orphans in Zimbabwe.

WORDS BY **ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE BERRE**
STYLED BY **THERESA DEMARIA**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **MARGARETA KOMLENAC**

Kaiser in Ralph
Lauren Purple Label
black sequin dress,
neimanmarcus.com.

Gina Kaiser isn't one to believe in coincidences. She believes wholeheartedly that things happen for a reason.

Kaiser opened It Gym inside Hoffman Estate's Bell Works Chicagoland in September 2022. After years spent in marketing and advertising, she felt compelled to open a gym that was geared toward people at all fitness levels.

"I was a CrossFit trainer for more than five years, and at the start of COVID in March of 2020, I started programming workouts and hosting Zoom workout classes to help support those in my fitness community," says Kaiser. "From there, my business grew from people I had known and trained to people in the community. Once we were 'allowed' to meet in person, I hosted daily workout classes at my home. Eventually, I converted our garage into a gym, and I trained people there for a few years.

"I was then finally able to open It Gym. We meet people where they are and tailor our classes to their needs," Kaiser explains. "It Gym's group classes are carefully designed to be safe and challenging for all levels of fitness. Class sizes are limited, so you get the best of both worlds: the attention of personal training and the energy of group fitness."

Shortly after the gym opened, Jacob Ross, one of Kaiser's trainers, shared the remarkable story of his friend, Zimbabwe-born Tobias Mupfeti, with her.

In Zimbabwe, some parents who suffer from extreme poverty believe the only choice they have is to abandon their children. Mupfeti was one of these children. Abandoned as a boy, he learned to fight as a means of survival. As a young man, he fell in love with boxing and his dedication to the sport led him to become a successful boxing coach and owner of the Victoria Falls Boxing Academy. Despite his success, or maybe because of it, his past was never far from his thoughts.

Today, Mupfeti's goal is to save Zimbabwe's youth from enduring a childhood like his. He and his wife, Shuvai, take in the homeless children of Victoria Falls and care for them as their own. Their small home in the back of the Boxing Academy is hardly large enough for the couple's family, so the kids sleep on worn mattresses in the only space available—under the boxing ring.

Mupfeti recently partnered with a U.S. nonprofit organization, MATTER, to rebuild the Victoria Falls Boxing Academy and construct a new orphanage. "When Jacob said he was working with Tobias on this incredible project, I knew that we had to be a part of it," Kaiser says. "Fitness is so empowering. Tobias



"When Jacob said he was working with Tobias on this incredible project, **I knew that we had to be a part of it...**"

is teaching those kids to be strong, to overcome adversity, and to do things they never thought they could do. It made sense for my gym to partner with this Zimbabwean gym. I just had to figure out how.”

So, Kaiser went to work planning a fundraiser. In less than six weeks, It Gym partnered with MATTER, to host the Heart of Gold Fundraiser benefiting the Boxing Academy and its orphanage.

“I’m not someone who really loves fundraisers, but this event was so special, so intimate,” she says. “We had about 90 people attend and everyone who came wanted to be there to help support what Tobias is building. We raised \$50,000. I still can’t believe it. Everything was donated—the venue, the food, and the entertainment. All the money we raised went directly to Tobias’s project. The Boxing Academy reopened officially for business in July. Business is going so well that there are plans for a second phase of this project that includes a bigger orphanage. The current one has enough space for 12 children, and the plans for the expansion would house up to 40 children.”

Buoyed by the success of the Heart of Gold fundraiser,



Boxing Academy students

“I feel so lucky that **It Gym has given me a platform** to make a difference in the Barrington community and in the world...”



Boxing Academy under construction

Boxing
Academy
students



Tobias and a group of children from the community that he teaches boxing to.

on February 17 Kaiser will host an “erg-a-thon” at It Gym (an erg-a-thon is a marathon on rowers, bikes, and ski machines). The event is completed individually or in groups of three or six, with a half or full erg-a-thon option. All proceeds will be donated to the Boxing Academy of Victoria Falls.

“I feel so lucky that It Gym has given me a platform to make a difference in the Barrington community and in the world,” she says. “There are no coincidences in this world. We are exactly where we are for a reason, and my goal is to make the most of that.”

To learn more about It Gym and the Victoria Falls Boxing Academy, please visit it-gym.com/zim.

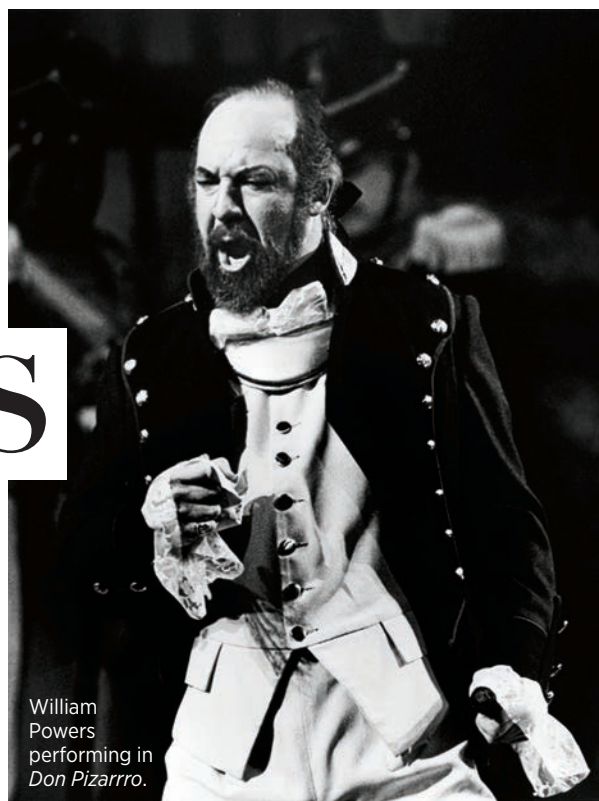
Singing Volumes

Lake Barrington's Bill Powers is a creative trifecta: renowned opera singer; inspiring vocal teacher; and skilled illustrator.

WORDS BY **BILL MCLEAN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE BERRE**

STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**



William Powers performing in *Don Pizarro*.

Make major operatic artist Bill Powers laugh inside a building and you'd risk the collapse of a few walls. Powers' voice is that thunderous, that deep, and that impactful.

When Powers starred as Mephistopheles in the opera *Faust*, the conductor told him, "You have the power to terrify."

A contest pitting Powers' bass-baritone guffaw vs. Vincent Price's evil laugh wouldn't last a round with Powers' pipes winning by resounding knockout.

The 82-year-old Lake Barrington resident describes the elite forces in international opera as "vocal Olympic athletes." And after performing more than 130 leading and supporting roles—mostly and fittingly as either a villain or rogue—in six languages in hundreds of national and international productions, Powers should know.

Yet, Powers is a true multi-hyphenate—pursuing careers not only in opera but also in teaching and illustrating. The man, who made his New York City Opera debut (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*) in 1972, performed in August 2023 with La Grange's Salt Creek Orchestra at its opera in concert, *Don Pasquale*. His 2021 album, *Songs and Dances of Death*, will be aired by 98.7 WFMT host Peter van de Graaff in February. His 17-second commute as a voice teacher/role preparation guru/vocal coach requires climbing a staircase from the living quarters of his house (a converted 19th-century Lake Barrington schoolhouse) to the first floor, aka the Williams Powers Voice Studio. Like his vocal cords, Powers' hands are creative tools. He uses them to craft Halloween greeting cards and produce drawings of local houses.

These successful pursuits were the result of a failed career on the gridiron. "My dream was to become a professional football player," says Powers, whose dream died after sitting on the Illinois Wesleyan University's (IWU) football bench quarter after quarter after quarter during his freshman year. "I had a natural ability to sing, so I turned to that. I had a good ear, but I couldn't play an instrument and I couldn't read music."

Powers grew up in Bensenville, Illinois, and attended Fenton High School, where he played football, wrestled, and ran track. After hearing the mesmerizing voice of tenor/actor Mario Lanza, he became interested in singing and joined the high school chorus. As a high school sophomore and junior, Powers won a state music title in the Boys Low Voice category.

At IWU, he became a BMOC (Best Musician On Campus) and graduated in June 1964. A few days later, he found himself warbling at the Chicago restaurant Matt Iglor's Casino, "Home of the Singing Waiters." Powers made \$7.50 a night, not an hour, and not including tips.

"I made more money than my dad did," he says.

Inhaled more cigarette smoke, too. Most folks back then enjoyed a side of ciggies with their main course. When a voice teacher advised Powers to escape the smoke-filled workspace to safeguard his lungs and vocal cords, Powers left Iglor's after an 18-month stint.

At age 27, he enlisted in the U.S. Army where a Military Occupational Specialty allowed him to perform in the bass section of the U.S. Army Band and Chorus in Washington, D.C.

"The Army has a place for a singer. Did you know that?" Powers says. "I got to entertain three U.S. presidents, U.S. senators and representatives, and political heads and other dignitaries from all over the world," Powers says.

After his military career ended, Powers began auditioning for operatic roles. In 1973, he'd been 0-for-9 in New York City Opera auditions when he noticed renowned operatic bass-baritone Norman Treigle and his wife eating dinner together at an NYC restaurant.

Seeing Treigle, who sang with the New York City Opera for over 20 years and was described by the *New York Times* as having "one of the finest bass voices of his generation," was a powerful moment for Powers.

"I had to say something to Norman, even if it meant interrupting the couple's meal," Powers recalls. "I said, 'I'm sorry, Mr. Treigle. I just wanted you to know that I'm a bass-baritone and I'm absolutely in love with your singing voice and your work. You're my guiding light.'"



Powers, a renowned opera singer and vocal teacher.

Powers was in mid-turn when he heard, “Stay. Have steak with us.”

It was Treigle’s voice.

Powers stayed and became an understudy to Treigle soon thereafter. They were “inseparable for two years,” Powers recalls.

Treigle died at age 47 in 1975.

Concert and operatic bass-baritone George London then emerged as the second major mentor in Powers’ career. Voice coach John Bullock—the late father of actor Sandra Bullock—eventually entered the picture and told Powers, “You need to change your way of singing.”

“John Bullock,” Powers recounts, “claimed my technique had reached a dead end. I asked him, ‘Can you fix me in six months?’ He worked with me and told me I’d probably lose my voice along the way. John was a force of nature, an extraordinary voice coach. My first session with him—scary.”

“So few people make it big in opera,” he adds. “I’ve been incredibly fortunate, having run into all these wonderful, important people who helped me in my career.”

But luck had nothing to do with Powers landing gigantic operatic gigs. His resume boasts iconic roles like Scarpia, Iago, Pizarro, Miracle, Mefisto, Falstaff, Alberich, Celio, Philip, Sarastro, Fiesco,

and Death. He also portrayed John the Baptist in *Salome* and Meyer Wolfsheim in John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby*.

Now, he uses those years of experience to transform the voices of a new generation of singers. Powers proudly recalls how he helped a 13-year-old student prepare for a fast-approaching school contest. After welcoming the girl and her mother to his studio, the girl performed her piece but the student’s cheery rendition of the tune concerned Powers.

“I said to her, ‘You know, the song you just performed is a sad song,’” Powers says.

The octogenarian then encouraged the teen to sing it again, right then and there, this time while thinking of something terribly sad. The kid nailed it.

“Beautiful. She sang it beautifully,” Powers remembers. “I asked her, ‘What helped you sing it that way?’ She replied, ‘Thinking about my dying hamster.’”

The student won the contest—just another shining moment in Powers’ multi-faceted and fascinating career.

For more information about Bill Powers and his offerings as an instructor, visit barringtonvoicelessons.com. The website also provides contact information for those interested in Powers’ house illustrations.

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

Darby Hills and Barrington Children's Charities work every day to help meet the essential needs of children in the Barrington region.

WORDS BY **MITCH HURST** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARIA PONCE BERRE**
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST** / STYLED BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

It was while working as a prosecutor in the Cook County State's Attorney's office that Darby Hills developed a passion for children who face abuse and neglect. She also volunteered for a number of charities in Chicago where she learned up close how children are affected when their essential needs are not being met.

Hills already had a child of her own when she moved to Barrington and sought out opportunities to continue her dedication to needy children. Twelve years ago, she and her husband, Tom, founded Barrington Children's Charities to explore ways to support children in and around Barrington.

"I wanted to be able to help underprivileged children, so I put my feelers out there and started meeting with other families, teachers, and community leaders," Hills recalls. "I discovered there were children getting breakfast and lunch through free and reduced lunch programs, and I wondered what they were doing for food on the weekends when they weren't in school."

Every school in Barrington School District 220 has students who are eligible for free or subsidized meals, and Hills says she was shocked by the overall number of kids in the program. Her husband suggested she start a nonprofit charity and Barrington Children's Charities was born. Hills and her husband worked to put together a volunteer board of men and women from around the community who bring a broad range of experience to the organization.

Through a close partnership with Barrington School District 220, Barrington Children's Charities provides food for students in subsidized school meal programs that they can take home after school. The organization developed its own food distribution program called Packs of Plenty (P.O.P.). Charity volunteers source and purchase all the food from wholesale food distributors, manage the inventory, set up packing stations, and pack bags every Thursday of the school year. But there it more to it than providing food.

"We started learning more about the other needs the kids have, such as eyeglasses and dental care," explains Hills. "We created a Lens for Learning program for eyeglasses and partnered with Smile Illinois to bring mobile dental units into the community twice a year to do teeth cleanings, fill cavities, and meet other dental needs."

Over the years, Hills says, the organization has evolved into an essential needs charity. Many might be surprised by how broad those needs are, even in wealthier communities where it's assumed there are enough public resources to ensure everyone's needs are met. But

that's just not the case.

"People often say to me, 'Barrington is an affluent community, there's no need there,' and I can tell you we're feeding kids in every single school in our district, including all eight elementary schools, the early learning center, both middle schools, and the high school" she says. "There's a need, and unfortunately, it's increasing with rising food costs. Our numbers are going up but we're able to provide for them."

And Barrington Children's Charities meets these needs without any paid staff. Its board of directors, accountants, fundraisers, menu planners, and food preparers are all volunteers, as well as those who arrange the mobile dental services and eyecare. Supporters of the organization can be assured their donations are going directly to benefit needy children.

"I've been doing this for a long time now and when I first started, I didn't realize it would grow as much as it has," observes Hills. "I've been overwhelmed by the community support, and it's been great to see how the community rallies around us."

Each Thursday, volunteers of all ages gather at Sunny Hill Elementary School in Carpentersville. They come from all over the region. Young moms, seniors who bus in from The Garlands in Barrington, volunteers from area churches. They pack food in an assembly line into bags that are tied and then loaded into large IKEA bags that get delivered to each of the schools in District 220. School staffers then deliver the bags to students.

"It's quite an undertaking but I'll tell you it pretty much works like clockwork at this point. Everyone enjoys their role," Hills says. "It's rare what we're doing because we're not just in one school but an entire school district. The partnership with the district is phenomenal."

Representatives from Barrington Children's Charities regularly meet with the superintendent and principals, some of whom have become Thursday volunteers, to ensure they remain tuned into the charity's work. Hills has also met with some of the families the organization supports and is inspired by those conversations.

"They are all really hard-working families. Single moms and people in all different situations," says Hills. "They are definitely appreciative of the bags and the other services we provide."

For more information about Barrington Children's Charities or to donate, visit barringtonchildrenscharities.com.

Barrington Children Charities' volunteers standing strong: Jessica Hoffman (Director of Programming, Executive Board Member) wearing Akris dress, Gayle Carley (P.O.P. Program Volunteer) in Giorgio Armani, Jennifer Flunker (P.O.P. Program Volunteer) wears CO, Darby Hills (President, Executive Board Member) wearing Dolce & Gabbana, neimanmarus.com.



Highlighted in this photo is the team of four women who manage the Barrington Children's Charities' Packs of Plenty (P.O.P.) food distribution program for local children in need. The P.O.P. program starts several weeks before school begins each August and continues every week until the end of the school year. The team's duties include working with the district on verifying the number of children in need of food, estimating the costs of and purchasing the food, managing the food inventory, overseeing and communicating with the other program volunteers who pack every Thursday, and many more behind-the-scenes program tasks. The charity is also thankful for all the other volunteers who come every week to help pack and deliver the food to all the schools in District 220.



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ARABIAN LAMB PIES

WORDS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND FOOD STYLING BY MONICA KASS ROGERS

Although familiar comforts like mac and cheese, chili, and slow roasts can bring warmth on cold winter nights, now and then I like to spice things up at the dinner table with something more exotic. These little pies do just that. Seasoned with *bzar*, an Emirati mixture of ten spices that has an almost garam masala-like flavor, plus onion, leek, cilantro, and tahini in the lamb filling, the pies are exquisitely flavorful. I've made these with ground beef as an alternative, and you can too—but ground lamb is our family favorite.

I prepare the yeasted dough for the crusts first, then make the *bzar* while the dough rises.

In the Emirates, *bzar* is often made right before Ramadan, a month of fasting, prayer, and community observed by Muslims across the world. Choose freshly bought spices for the blend and you'll be rewarded with the best flavor. (The recipe makes enough spice blend to last you all winter.)

I love the inclusion of tahini in the lamb filling as it adds nutty depth to the flavor.

MAKES 8, 5-INCH PIES AND 1 1/2 CUPS BZAR SPICE BLEND

FOR THE *BZAR* SPICE BLEND:

- 1/2 cup whole Tellicherry black peppercorns
- 1/2 cup whole cumin seeds
- 1/2 cup whole coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons whole cloves
- 2 Ceylon (or Saigon) cinnamon sticks, broken into small pieces to make 2 tablespoons
- 2 tablespoons whole green cardamom pods
- 3 chiles de arbol, seeds and stems discarded
- 2 whole nutmegs
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons ground turmeric

FOR THE PIE CRUSTS:

- 1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 1/3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup whole milk powder
- 2 teaspoons *bzar*

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 2 1/4 teaspoons instant, fast-acting yeast granules (1 packet)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon warm water
- 3 1/2 tablespoons melted butter or ghee (clarified butter), cooled to room temperature
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large egg, room temperature

FOR THE LAMB FILLING:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large onion finely chopped to make 1 cup
- 2 pounds ground lamb OR beef
- 2 teaspoons fresh cracked black pepper
- 1 fresh leek, washed, stem and dark green parts discarded, white and yellow portion thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons tahini (note: stir tahini in its jar, or pour into a bowl and pulse with an immersion blender to mix oil with solids before using)
- 1 tablespoon black vinegar OR aged balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 small bunch cilantro, stems discarded, leaves finely chopped to make 1/4 cup

FOR THE EGGSWASH AND SESAME TOPPING:

- 1 large egg mixed with 1 teaspoon water
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

FOR EXTRA TAHINI SAUCE TO SERVE AT TABLE:

- 3 tablespoons tahini (note: stir tahini well in its jar (or remove into a bowl and pulse with an immersion blender to mix oil with solids before using)
- 1 tablespoon black vinegar OR aged balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 small bunch cilantro, stems discarded, leaves finely chopped to make 1/4 cup

METHOD

MAKE THE PIE CRUST: In a large bowl, mix all-purpose and whole wheat flours with milk powder, *bzar*, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl, bloom the yeast with the sugar in 1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon of water. Make a well in the flour/dried milk mixture and pour in the bloomed yeast/sugar water, melted butter, and egg. Mix until you have a rough dough. Scoop dough onto a clean, lightly floured work surface and knead until smooth. Shape dough into a ball, place into a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a clean cloth, and allow to rest for 15 minutes while you grind the spices.

MAKE THE BZAR SPICE BLEND: Working one spice at a time, grind each of the first seven spices into a fine powder in a spice grinder and combine in a bowl. Grind the nutmeg by hand with a microplane. Add ground ginger and turmeric last. Stir all to combine and scoop all into an airtight glass jar (it will keep for up to a year, stored in a dark place).



FINISH MAKING CRUST: After resting the dough for 15 minutes, knead again for 3 to 5 minutes. Shape the dough into a ball and replace in the lightly oiled bowl. Cover with a clean cloth or plastic wrap and let rise in a warm, draft-free place for 1 1/2 hours.

MAKE LAMB FILLING: During the last 20 minutes of rising time for the crust, make the lamb filling. In a large skillet over medium heat, add oil and onions and cook, stirring often until onions are soft and golden brown—about 10 minutes. Add ground lamb and cook, breaking up the meat and stirring until the meat is browned and excess liquid has cooked off. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Scoop the meat into a bowl to cool. Stir in chopped leeks. In a separate bowl, stir tahini, vinegar, and 1 tablespoon water until smooth. Stir mixture into the lamb; add cilantro. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.

ASSEMBLE PIES: Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Grease eight mini pie pans (5” wide x 1” deep) with shortening or vegetable oil spray. Divide the risen dough into 8 pieces. Shape each into a ball. Cover all with lightly dampened kitchen towels and allow to rest for 15 more minutes. Place a dough ball on a clean work surface and roll out into a 7-inch circle. Tuck dough into pie dish. Repeat with remaining dough balls and pie dishes. Divide lamb filling into the eight dishes. Brush all with egg wash. Sprinkle the top of each pie with sesame seeds. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes until crusts are golden brown. Eat hot, or at room temperature. Serve the pies with a big green salad and some extra cilantro and tahini sauce for the table.

A VINTNER'S DREAM



The main estate at SB Winemaker's House & Spa Suites in Argentina

Argentina's first female winemaker, Susana Balbo, has opened a new adults-only hotel located in the famed wine region of Mendoza. SB Winemaker's House & Spa Suites offers an exquisite destination for gastronomes, oenophiles, and adventure seekers.

WORDS BY **DUSTIN O'REGAN**

I have always loved Argentina for its cultural combination of European customs and Latin American traditions, its diverse landscapes that include forests, deserts, mountains, and thousands of miles of ocean shoreline, and its similar time zone making jet lag a nonissue. This, however, was my first trip to the heart of Argentina's wine country, Mendoza; a visit that made me fall in love with this South American gem all over again.

My hostess, Susana Balbo, is the owner of one of the country's most successful wineries and the recipient of numerous international awards. She has dedicated four decades to the wine industry overcoming numerous obstacles in the male-dominated business to achieve her distinguished position as the country's first female winemaker. The winery is family-run by Susana and her children, José and Ana.

During the pandemic, Balbo and her daughter, Ana Lovaglio Balbo, decided to create a luxury boutique hotel on the site of Ana's former home. The frequent and globe-trotting travelers hoped to combine the best features of their favorite hotels with the intimacy of a stay with a dear friend. Although the mother-daughter duo works in the family winemaking business together, opening SB Winemaker's House & Spa Suites in the spring of 2022 marked their first foray into hospitality.

For transit, I chose Copa Airlines because of its modernity and 90+ percent on-time performance rate. After a short 30-minute drive from the Mendoza airport, we approached a dramatic black gate on a quiet residential street. The gate slowly opened to reveal a tree-lined brick lane leading toward the Winemaker's House, a stately mansion surrounded by seven spa suites.



The main estate's living room showing Sebastião Ribeiro Salgado Júnior's *Mujer Rural* and the petrified wood flanking the fireplace.



Spa Suite with in-room sauna



Bar in SB Winemaker's House

As we entered the estate through a courtyard, we were greeted by Sergio Roggerone's *Tree of Life*. This enormous work of art is rich in symbolism as the vibrant flowers symbolize strength and femininity, entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment while the birds represent family—two perfect symbols for this mother-daughter endeavor. As Balbo explained how the artwork reflected her life, it became evident that spirituality, love, and consciousness would permeate every aspect of the property's design.

Another work paying homage to Balbo's extraordinary career hangs in the modern living room. *Mujer Rural*, a black-and-white photograph by Brazilian artist Sebastião Ribeiro Salgado Júnior, was a gift to Balbo for her work presiding over the W20 Summit as a congresswoman for Argentina. The room was also home to several pieces crafted from the property's fallen trees including two mammoth pieces of petrified wood that flanked the fireplace.

Beyond the living room, I found a dining room, a wine cellar

with top Argentine and global wines, a separate room for the Chef's Table experience, a cozy bar, and a tasting room. Outside, a heated pool and expansive kitchen/outdoor dining area sprawled across the property.

As we left the main house, undulating pathways led to the seven glass-walled suites tucked behind volcanic rock walls. Each suite is aligned with one of the seven chakras. My suite—number 2—represented the second chakra, "courage." The expansive quarters boasted a warm, neutral color palette except for the couch and artwork, which bore the golden hues associated with the suite's chakra. In alignment with Balbo's goal of women empowerment, much of the property's furniture, furnishings, and accessories are produced by female entrepreneurs. My suite's décor incorporated local leather and natural materials, a highlight being the traditional blankets of dyed llama wool made by rural Argentinian women.

I was over the moon to discover that the suite contained a sauna, a steam room (that doubled as an experience shower), a massage table, and an enormous egg-shaped bathtub surrounded by glass walls. The bathtub overlooked a private garden with a café table, two heated tile-embossed recliners, and a fire pit.

Once settled, a masseuse arrived for the 15-minute "welcome massage." Unlike the cursory welcome neck massages offered at many luxury hotels, this was a full body massage including my head and feet—a dream greeting for the weary traveler.

“The creation of my wines is my biggest achievement as a winemaker, a product of all the effort I put in these many years of hard work. I could say that the winery is like my third child, a dream come true for me.”

-SUSANA BALBO



Susana Balbo and
Ana Lovaglio Balbo

Susana Balbo Vineyard



Susana Balbo Vineyard

ADVENTURES

The property offers a myriad of activities from cooking classes to spa treatments to in-suite workouts to lazy poolside afternoons and is a short stroll from the charming town of Chacras. With the help of the Experience Curator, we also discovered a bevy of off-site adventures.

Our first outing was to Susana Balbo Wines in the heart of Luján de Cuyo followed by a picnic on the winery's picturesque grounds. While admiring the views of the vineyard and its backdrop of snow-capped mountains, we enjoyed traditional Argentinian dishes that were paired with a selection of the finest wines in Balbo's portfolio, which includes four outstanding labels—Crios, Signature, Nosotros, and BenMarco. A surprising array of exotic birds joined the party; their animated chirps provided a chorus to our leisurely picnicking.

For our second adventure, we explored Argentina on the hotel's private seaplane courtesy of VisionAir VIP a company Balbo founded with Patrick Schmidlin, a Swiss visionary, entrepreneur, and pilot. VisionAir VIP's 8-seat Cessna Grand Caravan-Ex Amphibian C208B, the only one of its kind in Latin America, allows guests to reach the most remote treasures of nature in the lap of luxury—taking adventure to new heights.

While VisionAir VIP offers multi-day adventures to Patagonia to the south and Cafayate to the north, we opted for the one-day tour.

After take-off, we flew over Mendoza's vineyards and headed deep into the Andes for breathtaking vistas. Our flight continued toward San Rafael flying over crystalline salt flats and bodies of water. We landed on a lake near a deserted island as a flock of pink flamingos took to the skies. With two darling wicker picnic baskets in tow, we deplaned for an island hike and toasted our arrival with champagne and a gorgeous spread of fruit and cheese.

On the next leg of our journey, we flew low over Argentina's sand dunes and mirror lakes and deep inside one of Argentina's largest canyons before landing at La Riveria. La Riveria is a residential development spearheaded by Schmidlin, who dares one to "experience the uniqueness of paradise." I have my eye on a La Riveria homestead surrounded by vineyards in the shadow of the Andes.

SB Winemaker's Experience Curator also arranged our third and fourth adventures—visits to two ranches owned by the Palma family. Located in the foothills of the Andes, Estancia El Totoral is a 90-minute drive from the SB Winemaker's House. Ricardo and Analicia Palma have six gorgeous children—we had the great pleasure of meeting three, Agustina, Paula, and Clara, who each exuded warmth and hospitality. Our evening began with appetizers at the wine bar set high upon a hill overlooking the eight-bedroom ranch and surrounding vineyards. We then moved to the family's dining room for a dinner punctuated by laughter and toasts.

The family's second ranch, Rancho é Cuero, is located high in the Andes. An exhilarating, hour-long drive took us pummeling through streams, over bumpy terrain, and around switch-back roads. Upon arrival, we encountered scenery so beautiful it seemed like a movie set. Quaint ranch houses stand on the edge of a rock-bottom stream beloved by



Living room of Estancia El Totoral

Horseback riding at
Rancho é Cuero in the
Andes Mountains





VisionAir VIP seaplane

fly fishermen. Golden grass peppers the rocky floor and billows in the wind, framing snow-covered, mist-shrouded peaks wearing a beard of shrubbery. Atop my Criollo, the native horse of the Pampas known for its long-distance endurance, I followed a gaucho through rivers, around a huge body of water, and up and up into the mountains. The gaucho explained that if we continued our trek, we would end up in Chile as the Palma property extends to the Chilean border and even contains a glacier! Donning wool ponchos, we re-joined our hosts for post-ride fireside appetizers followed by a feast of wine, salads, and barbecued Argentinian meats at the outdoor pavilion while serenaded by the rushing river.

SPA

After days of exploring Argentina's incredibly diverse terrain, it was time for my "Frutos de la Vid," a 3-hour SB Wellness Deluxe Ritual. The masseuse arrived at my suite and instructed me to begin the ritual with a steam bath and sauna to calm my mind and prepare my skin for the full-body grape seed exfoliation treatment. After a special restorative shower washed away the exfoliant, I enjoyed a luxuriant body hydration wrap. This extraordinary experience culminated with a divine 50-minute massage all while Nora Jones' sultry voice softly filled my room. It was so lovely to have this entire experience in the privacy of my suite.

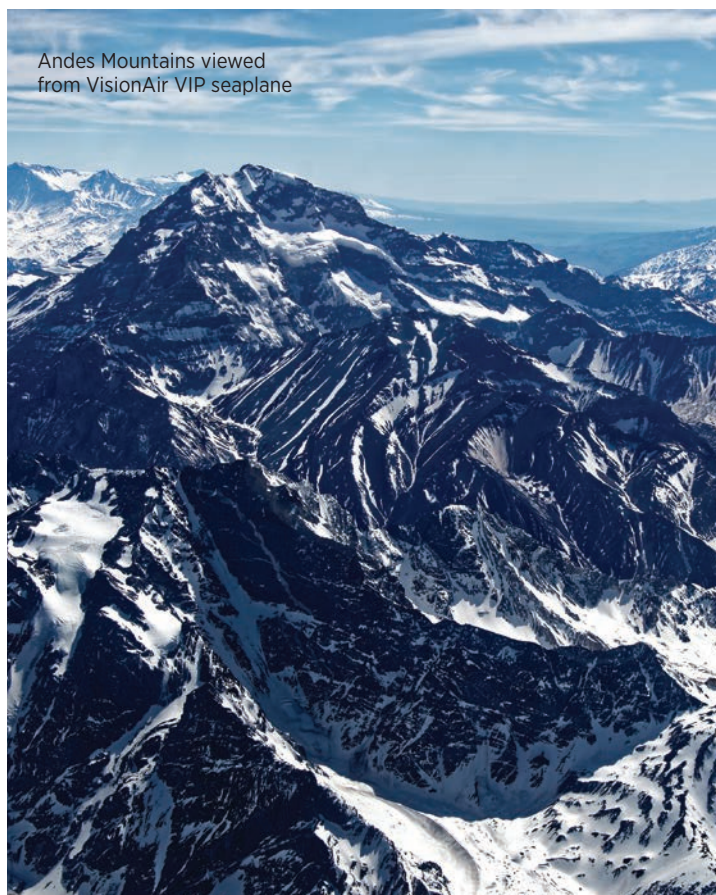
Another wonderful "spa touch" was arriving home from a day's adventure, to find an aromatherapy bubble bath waiting for me—an exquisite end to a spectacular day.

CUISINE

The hotel's culinary crown is La VidA, a restaurant developed by Ana and helmed by Chef Flavia Amad. Its Argentinian cuisine exudes bold flavors with high-quality, locally sourced, and organic ingredients.

A highlight was a gastronomic journey inspired by the hotel's signature art piece, *Tree of Life*. The 14-course dining experience was influenced by the artwork's seven main motifs, including roots, stems, flowers, birds, branches, fruits, and insects. Each course was a work of art paired with an outstanding wine. The pièce de résistance was Flavia appearing tableside to share her culinary interpretation of each element—it gave new meaning to a Chef's Table experience.

Our Experience Curator also suggested two local, off-site restaurants, evidence of Balbo's sincere support of community businesses.



Andes Mountains viewed from VisionAir VIP seaplane

Zappa is a farm-to-table eatery with Mendozaan cuisine in Chacras, and Soberana is a culinary haven featuring Argentinian classics and global favorites in Mendoza. I highly recommend both!

A bit less local, but an absolute gem is Hornero—the main restaurant for La Morada Lodge, a small boutique hotel in the heart of the Uco Valley. Tucked in the foothills of the Andes, this meal was enjoyed mountainside with an extraordinary view and a six-course tasting menu, paired of course with spectacular regional wines.

Calling all well-heeled wine lovers and adventure seekers—SB Winemaker's House & Spa Suites is No. 1 on my list. I am in great company as the hotel was highlighted on *Condé Nast Traveler's* 2023 Hot List of Best New Hotels and *Travel + Leisure's* 2023 It List of Best New Hotels.

Salud!



La VidA restaurant at SB Winemaker's House

For more information, visit www.sanabalbobohotels.com, [visionair.vip](http://www.visionair.vip), [lariveria.com](http://www.lariveria.com), [estanciaeltotal.com](http://www.estanciaeltotal.com), [lanranchoecucero.com](http://www.lanranchoecucero.com), [lamoradalodge.com](http://www.lamoradalodge.com), and [copaair.com](http://www.copaair.com).



MO MARIENTHAL

(847) 791-2903

mo@jamesonsir.com

KATE FANSELOW

(773) 621-4597

kate@jamesonsir.com

katefanselowgroup.com

ANNE MANNELLY

(847) 340-8816

amannelly@jamesonsir.com

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Patterson Flynn

Patterson Flynn debuts Levels Ombre. Graphic and full of movement, Levels cleverly references digital sound output and turns it into a beautifully undulating geometric pattern that evokes shifting audio landscapes. Created with a hand-knotted Tibetan wool and silk construction, it features rhythmic lines and subtly ombréd blocks of color. pattersonflynn.com



Patterson
Flynn's Levels
Ombre



The fireplace room is the original structure's living room. A fireplace, built-in shelves, and vertical nickel gap paneling were added. This is a game room, wine tasting area, and a quiet seating area in front of the new fireplace. Lime washed red brick and a wood mantle around the firebox, cane chairs, and a brass light fixture make the room feel timeless.



Before the renovation, the laundry was housed in the garage. The garage was where the cut ice was stored before being taken to Chicago or Milwaukee to cool peoples' ice boxes. This room now has storage for out-of-season gear, lockers for guests who just arrived to hang their bags, a broom closet, and a sink for gardening and fishing gear.



From an Ice House to a Warm Family Retreat

A Barrington family reimagines their 100-year-old Wisconsin country home to reflect modern sensibilities while retaining its vintage charm.

WORDS BY **ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ZACH PONTZ/NYLON CONSULTING**

It all started as just an idea from the husband—expanding their longtime country home to accommodate more family and friends. And, while the wife was initially reluctant, the results have engendered no regrets.

“I kind of had to be convinced to do this,” Sue Pajakowski says of the renovation of the Twin Lakes, Wisconsin cottage she has owned with her husband, Jim, since 2005. Pajakowski’s cottage was originally a boarding house for the Lawler-Knobe Ice House, which was part of a major winter industry in 19th-century Wisconsin—harvesting ice to preserve perishable food. When the Ice House closed after the advent of electric refrigeration, the boarding house was divided into three separate homes—one of them now belonging to the Pajakowski family.

“When we bought this property, we did

some basic things. We tore off some paneling, opened up a couple of doorways—our goal was just to make it a good weekend place. But because of the history of this house, it had some quirks—lots of little rooms,” Pajakowski says. “We were starting to spend more time here, and our family enjoyed visiting, so we decided it was time to make it nice. It was my husband who said, ‘Let’s shoot this house out to the lake’ and that really was the starting point for this big renovation.”

Knowing an extensive project was ahead of her, Pajakowski understood assembling a strong team was important. After interviewing several candidates, she hired Keith Wisniewski from TriStone Development as her general contractor, Mike Malloy from Live by Design Architects as the exterior architect, and Craig Regnier of Hansen Custom Cabinets as the cabinet maker.

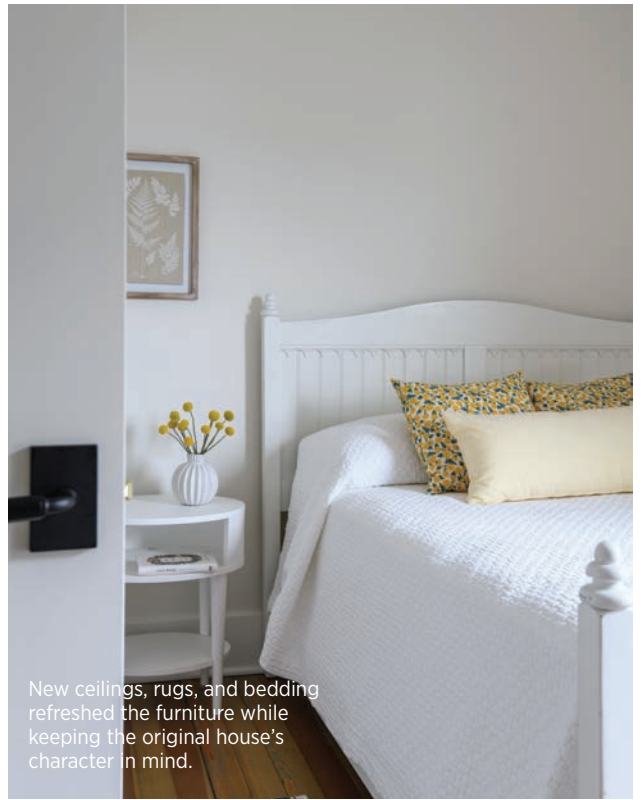
“Keith, our general contractor, did some-

The large windows look out to the lake on the right. The colors were chosen to help bring the outside in and feel good during all four seasons.





The tile pattern was installed in alternating penny round colors, two white and one blue to look like polka dots. Hooks inside and outside the shower are used for towels and wet bathing suits.



New ceilings, rugs, and bedding refreshed the furniture while keeping the original house's character in mind.



The intention for this kitchen was to create a fresh, sunny feel with white cabinets, textured white and elongated black backsplash, white quartz counters and a mix of natural fibers for light fixtures and counter stools. Open shelves display items and cookbooks.



This charming lake house was originally a dormitory for ice cutters on Twin Lakes.

to the original structure of the cottage. The new addition created an open room with large sliding doors and windows that look onto the lake. The Pajakowskis wanted to be able to see the view from their front entryway but also wanted some separation between the original structure and the new addition.

“We designed a floating bar with open shelves and cabinets that can be opened from both sides—and on two different levels—to define the transition between the old and new, while still providing clear views of the lake,” Glynn says.

The cornerstone of this reimagined cottage—the kitchen—opens into a dining area that provides extra seating for dining, work, or play. “The inspiration for this kitchen was to create a fresh, sunny feel with white cabinets, textured white and elongated brick backsplash, and quartz counters with a mix of natural fibers for the light fixtures and counter stools,” Glynn explains. “We put in a few open shelves to display items and cookbooks but put everything else—including the pantry—behind doors to keep things tidy.”

In the seating area adjacent to the kitchen, colors were chosen to bring the outside in. “We upholstered the sofas in a soft blue performance fabric, the two swivel chairs in a fun nautical stripe, and finished the space with an upholstered faux leather ottoman to provide a comfortable landing for drinks or feet,” notes Glynn.

One of Pajakowski’s favorite spots is what she calls the fireplace room. “Even though the fireplace room is one of the smallest rooms in the house, it has multiple functions,” Glynn explains. “It is a game room—so puzzles and board games don’t need to be cleared for meals, a wine tasting area, and a quiet area. Since this fireplace room was part of the original structure, we wanted it to feel timeless. We used limewashed red brick and a wood mantle around the firebox, with caned chairs and a brass light fixture completing the look.”

The first floor is now also home to a serene primary suite. It features a peaked ceiling and a view of the lake. KED Interiors designed a full wall of built-ins instead of large dressers or a walk-in closet.

“I have a little writing desk in my room, and I love to sit there and write notes,” Pajakowski says. The grass cloth on the front of the desk panels pairs perfectly with the caned chair Pajakowski already had. Glynn reupholstered the cushion and added a lumbar pillow for the back to give the chair new life.

Upstairs, one of the most significant changes was removing the drop ceilings in every bedroom. “People are so struck by this change when they visit,” Pajakowski recounts. “Every bedroom got at least eight more inches floor to ceiling. In one bedroom, we got another foot!”

Thanks to the renovation, the Pajakowskis can now comfortably host 35 guests for an overnight stay.

“Do I wish we had done this renovation sooner?” laughs Pajakowski, repeating the question asked of her. “Of course, I do. It’s now everything I could want it to be.”

To learn more about KED Interiors, visit kedinteriors.com. To learn more about the contracting, exterior design, and cabinet team, visit tristonedev.com, livebydesignarchitects.com, and hansencustomcabinets.com.

thing so smart at the beginning of the project,” Pajakowski says. “He wanted to meet with everybody upfront and that’s what really facilitated the great relationship we had working together. He knew how to get everyone on the same page. When everyone is happy working together, you end up with a better project.”

The final piece to Pajakowski’s project team was bringing on Kathleen Glynn, AIA, from KED Interiors in Barrington. She and Glynn had an almost immediate connection.

“Sue already had the plans ready to go when she hired me, and I thought the plans were great,” says Glynn, an experienced architect and interior designer known for the nurturing design approach she uses to recognize a client’s vision. “I started my career as a junior architect with a historic preservation firm, so when I learned of Sue’s vision of wanting to blend the old with the new in this renovation, it sounded like a lot of fun.”

Construction began in the spring of 2021 and very little of the original home was left untouched—literally doubling the size of the property and taking the home from one bathroom to three and a half baths.

“Even though we were changing a lot, it was important to me to keep some of the pieces that were original to the home,” Pajakowski recalls. “I wanted to keep some of the vintage parts—the wide baseboards, the window frames, an original corner cabinet in the kitchen.”

“I really appreciated where Sue was coming from,” Glynn adds. “We didn’t want to lose the character of the house. So often, we walk into a renovation, and it looks like they parked a spaceship in the middle of the house. Our hope was to continue to have the house feel true to itself, but have it work for modern living. It’s a lot more interesting when someone wants to keep some of the old while adding the new. If you wipe the slate completely clean, it can feel sterile.”

To accommodate their family, an expansive addition was added



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WORDS BY **MEGAN WEISBERG**



BARRINGTON \$1.6 million

Old Barrington Estate, founded in 1929 and preserved across five generations, is a 5-acre property showcasing historical architecture. A grand entrance with columns and a bluestone porch leads to an interior that includes an elegant staircase, living and music rooms, and a modern kitchen

The Details: 4 Bedrooms, 4.2 Baths • 5,791 square feet, \$291 per square foot • 11-car garage, 2 paddocks, English garden, 4.87 acres **Contact:** Contact: Rob Morrison, Coldwell Banker Realty, Robbie.Morrison@cbexchange.com

with high-end finishes. The kitchen overlooks a garden and opens to a dining area with porch access. The residence offers hardwood floors, multiple suites, a luxury bathroom, and a bar in the finished basement. The expansive grounds boast a courtyard, gazebo, garages, paddocks, and a barn, suitable for various events and entertainment possibilities.



COCO DEL MAR \$1.5 million

PANAMA

The Details: 4 Bedrooms, 5.5 Baths • 5,920 square feet, \$253 per square foot • Beachfront, pool, open and covered terraces, fully air conditioned **Contact:** Ciara Caponi, Engel & Völkers Panama City, ciara.caponi@engelvoelkers.com

This luxurious, modern home has four bedrooms, each en suite. Two rooms with a shared bath provide convenience for household staff. A double-height living-dining area is an ideal layout for a family, while the study with a private

bath could double as an office. Coco del Mar, located very close to Panama City, offers proximity to nature and easy access roads.





BRASSCHAAT \$1.44 million

BELGIUM

The Details: 4 Bedrooms, 2 Baths • 3,923 square feet, \$367 per square foot • Fireplace, whirlpool spa on terrace **Contact:** Engel & Völkers Brasschaat, +32 3 658 12 00

This residence in the Belgian municipality of Brasschaat looks like something straight out of a Grimm's fairy tale. A beautifully thatched roof sits atop this unique house, which sports a black brick façade and black-framed mullion windows. Inside, the impressive

living spaces showcase an interior design that uses dark and light elements to enhance the property's original period character.





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Dream

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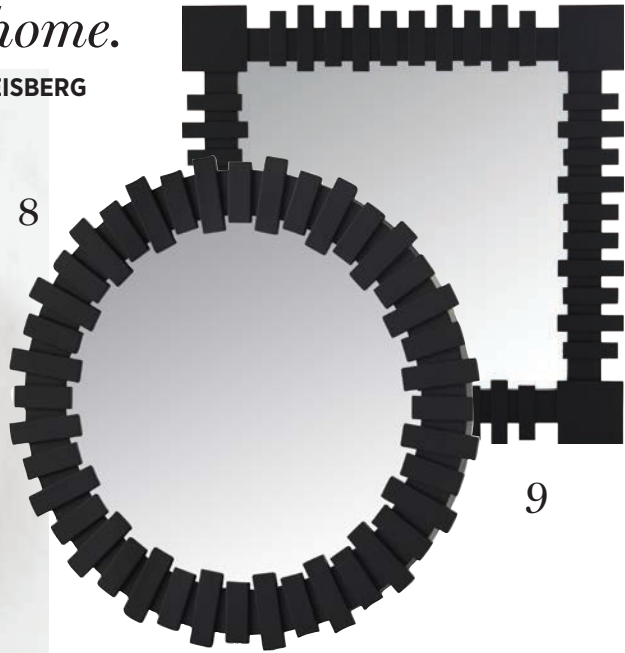
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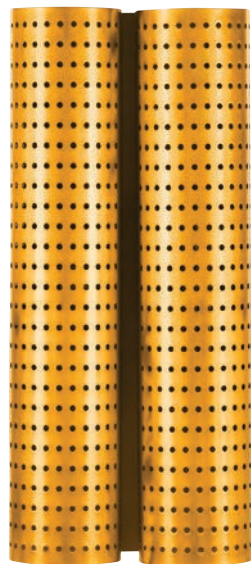
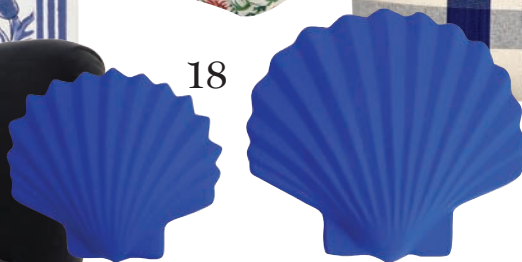
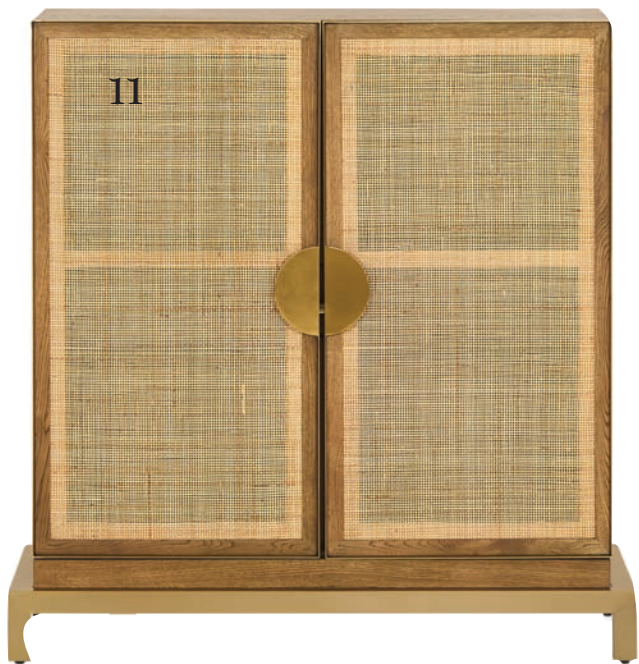


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1 Coco Republic, Miami Extra Large Sand Blasted Granite Outdoo Planter, cocorepublic.com 2 AERIN, Heirloom Silver Cup, williamssonoma.com 3 Cottage Basket, jaysonhome.com 4 Coco Republic, Avelline Curved Sofa, cocorepublic.com 5 Coco Republic, Dewar Coffee Table, cocorepublic.com 6 Skylar Serveboards, jaysonhome.com 7 AERIN, Alpine Rose Dinner Plate, williamssonoma.com 8 Coco Republic, Cover Round Mirror, cocorepublic.com 9 Coco Republic, Clover Square Mirror, cocorepublic.com 10 Coco Republic, Oregon Rust Velvet Modular Sofa, cocorepublic.com 11 Coco Republic, Paloma Bar Cabinet, cocorepublic.com 12 Coco Republic, Roco Table Lamp in Brass, cocorepublic.com 13 Sukie Teapot, jaysonhome.com 14 Mabel Napkin, jaysonhome.com 15 Gigi Bedcover, jaysonhome.com 16 Keaton Pillow, jaysonhome.com 17 Vintage Charcoal Faux Mohair Chair, jaysonhome.com 18 Orion, jaysonhome.com 19 Coco Republic, Oliver Wall Sconce in Brass, cocorepublic.com 20 Cire Trudon Ernesto Intermezzo, jaysonhome.com 21 Gerard Bedcover, jaysonhome.com

HELPING CLIENTS SEE **THE** **FULL** **PICTURE**

WORDS BY **BMO WEALTH MANAGEMENT**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **EMIL SINANAGIC**
HAIR & MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST**
STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

The success of a family business is not only about the numbers—it's about the personal and professional aspirations that drive it and how they are intertwined. That's why BMO takes an integrated and comprehensive approach to client relationships, combining expertise in wealth management and commercial banking to provide tailored solutions that align with both the personal and business goals. In Barrington, teams led by Ellaine Sambo-Reyther, Market Manager and Director of Private Wealth Advisor at BMO Wealth Management, and Jim Hess, Managing Director of BMO Commercial Bank, work in close collaboration to support family businesses through every stage of their journey.

"For the majority of our clients, the underlying company often represents the family's most significant asset," explains Hess. "We begin by understanding the family's vision for the future. Conversations usually involve shareholder liquidity, growth, outside capital, next generation, legacy, governance, and risk management to name just a few considerations. Understanding what success looks like is crucial as it guides us in helping them achieve their vision."

Clients often have a specific need or request but are frequently surprised that the conversation goes much broader than the details of structuring a portfolio or financing arrangement. "There becomes a greater realization as to how much their business and personal sides are truly intertwined," explains Sambo-Reyther. "Many of our clients have poured their energy into building successful enterprises. Our role often involves ensuring that their personal financial well-being receives the same level of attention as their business endeavors. We recognize where their primary focus is, but we also understand where their attention needs to be."

Much of that work happens behind the scenes. Whether a



Ellaine Sambo-Reyther, Jim Hess

client initially engages with Sambo-Reyther or Hess, the next step involves a strategic discussion between BMO's wealth and commercial teams. This process goes beyond simply delivering on the anticipated requests; it entails presenting a range of options and strategies that align across their business and personal needs.

A recent example illustrates this collaborative approach in action when a client approached Hess to discuss a business loan. When the wealth and commercial teams met, a deeper analysis revealed that behind the business stood a large, multi-generational family and a more elegant solution emerged. "After presenting the various options, we found that the most suitable solution was closely tied to the wealth management side for the corporate entity," explains Sambo-Reyther. "The solution then evolved into discussions on engaging the next generations—not only within the corporate entity but also in terms of their overall personal wealth and its composition. It was about integrating all these elements to uphold the legacy's spirit and intent for the future generations."

BMO's philosophy is that a comprehensive understanding of both business and personal aspects leads to more effective strategies. For Hess, the combination of business advisory horsepower and family wealth expertise allows BMO to provide proactive strategies and solutions to its clients. "We are there to think ahead, look around corners, and anticipate our clients' needs by leveraging our collective experience," he says.

As Sambo-Reyther puts it, "If I have someone providing ideas and giving advice, it just makes my life that much easier. That's the impact we strive to have in our clients' lives."

BMO Wealth Management and BMO Commercial Bank is located at 201 S. Grove Avenue in Barrington, 847-382-5800, uswealth.bmo.com and bmo.com.

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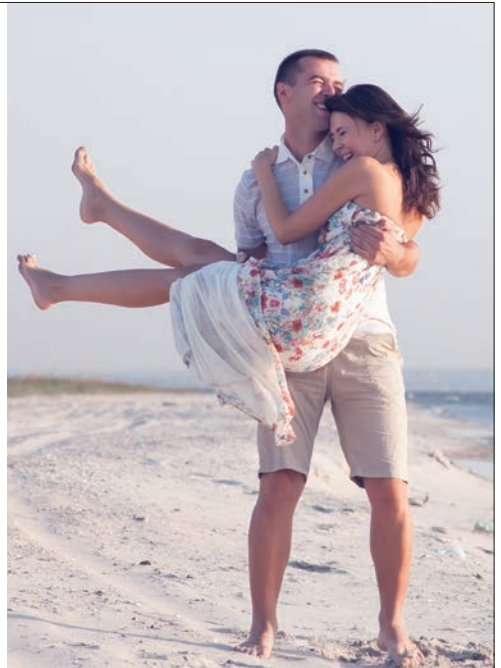
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HEALING THROUGH PILATES

The Studio 6 Difference

WORDS BY **LEAH COHEN**
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY **EMIL SINANAGIC**
 HAIR & MAKEUP BY **LEANNA ERNEST**
 STYLING BY **THERESA DEMARIA**

Chris Girard

Chris Girard found Pilates 20 years ago by chance. Falling in love with how strong and lengthened her muscles felt, Girard became a Romana's Pilates certified instructor in 2007 and then opened Pilates Studio 6 in South Barrington to share her knowledge with clients.

"Our job is to focus on alignment and symmetry," says Girard, "which is the only way to achieve stretch, strength, and control." Pilates Studio 6 also offers something that most studios can't—by limiting classes to one to two people, they can address specific issues for each client.

This approach was a game-changer for Kathie DeMunno. Coming off a bad accident that resulted in back surgery in 2006, DeMunno was looking to strengthen her back and core.

"I had taken group class, and being an occupational therapist, I knew I wasn't getting what I needed," DeMunno says. "I wasn't even sure I was doing the exercises correctly."

Each class at Pilates Studio 6 was tailored to address her personal needs.

DeMunno, has since recovered from her injury, and continues to take classes at Pilates Studio 6 weekly as she's discovered Pilates has helped every part of her body. "I went in for my back, but Pilates has kept my entire body limber and strong," she shares.

For those looking to further strengthen their muscles and tone their body or jump into a new workout in the New Year, call Pilates Studio 6, show up, and results will follow.

Pilates Studio 6 is located in South Barrington, 847-602-8001, pilatesstudio6.com.

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Barrington Native Soars to New Heights in the Marines

WORDS BY **MIRA PATEL** / ILLUSTRATION BY **ROBERT RISKO**

Known for being one of the most elite fighting forces in the world, the Marine Corps is the ground combat element of the United States Navy. Only the top candidates who meet rigorous physical, mental, and moral standards are accepted into the Marine Corps each year, making the program extremely competitive. One such exceptional candidate is Barrington native First Lieutenant Dane Meier, who is currently on active duty as a naval aviator.

Meier graduated from Barrington High School in 2015 before earning his Bachelor of Arts in marketing from the University of Illinois in 2019. Just two and a half years ago he made the life-changing decision to join the Marine Corps.

"I joined the Marines because I wanted to support a cause bigger than myself and to seek service where I could make a difference," Meier says.

The ethos of honesty and personal growth that was important to him while growing up has served him well in the Marines.

"It was important to be honest in everything that I do," explains Meier. "I learned to admit mistakes when I make them and always seek opportunities to grow and learn."

Today Meier serves as a student pilot with U.S. Navy Training Squadron SEVEN (VT-7) at Naval Air Station Meridian in Mississippi. The intensive flight program, which includes 21 stages

of training and over 160 hours of flight time, teaches new aviators everything they need to know to fly critical missions around the globe in aircraft like the F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet.

Earning the coveted "Wings of Gold" that certify naval aviators is extremely difficult. Only half of those who start flight school go on to graduate but Meier met the challenge head-on.

"Being selected to fly jets was my proudest moment in the Marines," he adds. "It was an accumulation of all the lessons built into me from my family, friends, peers, and instructors paying off."

Meier recognizes the continuous sacrifices required from a Marine Corps aviator. Yet, he considers putting others before himself while defending our nation as a privilege. And he's thankful for those who helped him reach this point.

"I'd like to thank Timothy Raynor (Barrington resident and colonel in the United States Marine Corps) for encouraging me to take the first step and always reminding me that it's not about me," Meier shares.

As Meier literally soars upward while learning to fly some of the world's most sophisticated combat aircraft, his

homegrown values of patriotism, humility, and service continue to ground him.

For more information, visit marines.mil.



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