

the register

FIRST ON THE FIRST COAST

at Home

FEATURING
LIVING THE AMERICAN
DREAM ONE STONE AT A TIME



WINE & DINE ON
THE FIRST COAST

IN THE ARTS

FACES OF THE FIRST COAST

AND MUCH MORE!

OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER 2023

staff

Hugh Osteen
COO/VP

Susan Griffin
Publisher

Amber Anderson
Page/Graphic Designer

Lisa Murphy
Ad Designer

Shaun Ryan
Editor

Anthony Richards
Staff Writer

April Snyder
Sales Assistant

Kristin Flanagan
Account Executive

Adele McGraw
Account Executive

Chris Ratliff
Multimedia Specialist

Joe Wilhelm
Circulation Manager

Contributors:
Leigh Cort
Clare Berry

about the cover



The cover features a fireplace adorned with fall-themed decor.

[table of contents]

- 4** ONE OF US: Pete Duprey
- 6** Botanical garden opens in St. Johns County
- 7** Plenty of fall fairs and festivals to choose from
- 8** Beaches Museum hosts the Beach Legends Gala, honoring three longtime Beaches residents
- 9** Gator Bowl set to continue New Year tradition as tickets go sale
- 15** From 'The Voice' to EverBank Stadium
- 16** Deck The Chairs creates magic thanks to volunteers



River Stonework offers full commitment to a customer's design. - Page 17

At Home

17 Living the American dream one stone at a time

18 Vendors galore at Home and Patio Show

19 Estate in Ponte Vedra Beach is one of a kind

Wine & Dine

22 TABLE TALK
Mrs. Bentley's Desserts:
Where dreams come true

23 Culinary world converges for Amelia Island Cookout Epicurean Weekend

24 Delicious food, fun times for a good cause

26 Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife returns Nov. 2-5

28 Wine + Food Experience offers panorama of local tastes



photo by LEIGH CORT

These marshmallows are works of art. - Page 22



photo by JASON PRATT OF PRATTIFY

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's 2023 Arts Awards was a joyous event for winners and attendees alike. - Page 30

In the Arts

30 Cultural Contributions
Awards celebrate support for arts and culture in Jacksonville

32 Funny Lady: Comedian delivers humor from the home front

34 Happy Hauntings!

36 Cars and coffee lovers unite

37 Preparations under way for the Amelia Island Book Festival

38 Hospitality, foodie talent sprawls from St. Augustine to Savannah

ADVERTISING (904) 285-8831 | DISTRIBUTION (904) 285-8831

PUBLISHED BY OSTEEN MEDIA GROUP INC - LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED
PONTE VEDRA RECORDER, 1102 A1A North, Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
www.pontevedrarecorder.com

The Register is published bimonthly.



HUDGINS + ALEXANDER

YOUR FIRST COAST WATERFRONT SPECIALISTS



5147 Dixie Landing Drive



2459 S. Ponte Vedra Blvd



2419 S. Ponte Vedra Blvd



6222/6232 San Jose Blvd



13936 Mandarin Road



1083 Ponte Vedra Blvd



329 Ponte Vedra Blvd



**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HOMESERVICES

FLORIDA NETWORK
REALTY



HUDGINS + ALEXANDER
from cottages to castles

Elizabeth Hudgins Sarah Alexander
904.553.2032 904.334.3104

beacheshomes.com



ONE OF US

Pete Duprey

as told to **SHAUN RYAN**
photo courtesy of **PETE DUPREY**

First Coast Lighting and Fans owner Pete Duprey is one of those people who literally brightens up a room. His business at 10130 Philips Highway in Jacksonville carries not just lights and fans, but also thousands of other items that homeowners will want to check out.

Tell me a little about First Coast Lighting and Fans, what it offers and if it specializes in anything or offers any kind of installation. How long has it been in business?

First Coast Lighting has been in business for a little over five years. We started in a smaller store in the Mandarin area of town in 2018, and then we moved to our much larger location we are at now last December. When we started, we catered mostly to new construction in Northeast Florida as that was my biggest strength, and we have evolved a lot since then.

I feel we have the largest selection of lighting and fans for hundreds of miles in any direction you can go. We also offer installation and an in-home warranty for all products purchased in our store. Our No. 1 goal is to make sure every customer that purchases from our store is completely satisfied with every purchase they make with us.

You sell more than lights and fans. Tell me a little about what other products customers can find at First Coast Lighting and Fans.

We have thousands of items in our store. We have a large selection of mirrors (especially very large mirrors that are hard to find), artwork, table and floor lamps, occasional furniture and smaller nick-nack items for the home.



What kinds of things should customers think about before shopping for new fans or lights?

I think the biggest thing is not to be overwhelmed with the whole process. Lighting is an accent that helps out the rest of the room. It is usually not the dominant feature. Many feel it is the jewelry of the home, and we need to treat it that way, as an accent.

What is your position with the company? How did you get into this line of work?

I am the owner of First Coast Lighting. I got into this industry over 20 years ago while I was in college at UNF. I started as a part-time employee at another lighting showroom in Jacksonville, and I would put up the displays in the store until I graduated and then I went into sales for the company. After a short time, I was managing one of their stores and it just grew from there until I went on my own to open my own company.

What do you like best about what you do?

I like the interaction with people all day. A lot of that is with my staff. I have a group of 17 employees that are my

second family. We are together more than we are with our own families, so it is important to make work a fun place to be. Many days, we laugh a lot and I feel we all know so much about each other that we are like a big family. We all look out for each other and that is very important to me.

What do you like best about living here on the First Coast?

I am a Florida boy, born and raised, and I do not see myself living anywhere else than Northeast Florida with my family. There are so many activities for people around here. Who wouldn't love living here? We live in an area where millions of people come to for vacation and we get to live here every day. It doesn't get any better than that.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to spend time with my family any way I can. Owning a business typically means you are always on the clock. Family time has become so important in my life over the years. My wife Cori and I have two boys that are very involved in baseball. I was drafted out of high school by the Seattle Mariners to play baseball in 1997. I spent five years doing that before coming to Jacksonville to go to UNF. Baseball is one of my true loves in life, and I feel my family has taken that same feeling as we have grown together over the years. We spend a lot of time on many baseball fields all over the Southeast with our sons. It is how we have spent a lot of our time together over the years, and I loved every minute of it. We also love to be in and on the water. We love to go the beach and go out on the boat and Jet Skis as much as possible. Really, I love to do anything as long as my wife and kids are involved.



Offered at
\$394,999



NEW CONSTRUCTION

13216 Yellowbluff Rd.
Jax, FL 32226

3 BED / 2 BATH / 1650 SQFT

- Approx. 1/2 acre property
- Open floor plan
- Stainless steel GE kitchen appliances
- LVP flooring
- Owner's double vanity and walk-in shower
- Cementitious Hardie lap siding
- Covered rear porch
- 30 year architectural shingles
- Water: Public
- Sewer: New septic system
- No HOA

BEACHSIDE LIVING

128 9th Ave. N.
Jax Bch, FL 32250

3 BED / 2 BATH / 1160 SQFT

- ONE block from the ocean
- Hardwood flooring throughout
- Renovated owner's bathroom
- Screened front porch



Offered at
\$899,900



Offered at
\$394,999



NEW CONSTRUCTION

13204 Yellowbluff Rd.
Jax, FL 32226

3 BED / 2 BATH / 1650 SQFT

- Approx. 1/2 acre property
- Open floor plan
- Stainless steel GE kitchen appliances
- LVP flooring
- Owner's double vanity and walk-in shower
- Cementitious Hardie lap siding
- Covered rear porch
- 30 year architectural shingles
- Water: Public
- Sewer: New septic system
- No HOA



Haley Baker • 904-699-6567
haley@pillarfl.com

Shawn Griffith • 904-545-4993
shawn@pillarfl.com



This incredible palm comes from the South Pacific.



The St. Johns Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve has a tropical vibe.

BOTANICAL GARDEN OPENS IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY

story and photos by **SHAUN RYAN**

Over the course of 17 years, Dr. John Rossi collected and planted palms from all over the world on his 17-acre property near Hastings. Impressed visitors repeatedly told him that he should convert his collection into a park for the public to enjoy.

He finally agreed, formed a 501(c)(3) and, aided by several volunteers, devoted the next three years to creating the St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve. It was no small project. The property needed signs, pathways, picnic areas, parking, public restrooms and a building to house the ticket booth and gift shop.

The gardens held a well-attended grand opening on Oct. 1.

Visitors will appreciate the tropical vibe. Nearly 400 different types of palm tree are represented among the thousands on the site. It's the largest collection of its kind north of the Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando, according to Rossi.

"We're doing research to determine what kinds of plants will survive here," Rossi said. "A lot of the plants that you see are not fertilized, and they're not watered. The reason we're doing it like that is to try to see what plants do well here."

Rossi credits the oaks' canopy for helping some of the species. A little bit like a greenhouse, the canopy keeps the



Dr. John Rossi is the founder and botanist for St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve.

temperature slightly elevated.

The park is divided into areas representing species from different geographic regions. Visitors will find palms from Australia, Africa, Asia, South America and a variety of islands in their own designated areas. There are Cuban palms and Mexican desert palms.

"We've got the largest collection of the genus *Brahea*," Rossi said, adding that the park is experimenting with cactuses, too. Visitors will find an Argentinian

saguaro, for instance.

The park is also planting flowers, including some unusual varieties such as the Chinese hat plant and cat's whiskers. There are pagoda plants, coleus, hibiscus, frangipanis, caladiums, tricolor ginger, bird of paradise and more, though blooming seasons may vary.

Some of the palms are quite rare. There's the *Pritchardia vuylstekeana*, which comes from an island chain about 3,000 miles south of Hawaii, and the *Pritchardia munroi*, of which there are only two known specimens in the wild and 31 in botanical gardens, including the St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve.

Also onsite Oct. 1 was Sallie O'Hara, Hastings Main Street program manager, who told a steady stream of visitors about upcoming events in the small town in Southwest St. Johns County, and invasive plant species volunteer Ely Brooks, who educated visitors about the difference between native, nonnative, exotic and invasive plants.

The St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve is located at 8310 County Road 13, east of Hastings. Because of an inaccuracy at Google Maps, enter the name of the park when searching for it, rather than the street address.

For information about hours of operation, admission fees, memberships and more, go to stjohnsbotanicalgarden.org.

PLENTY OF FALL FAIRS AND FESTIVALS TO CHOOSE FROM

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

Fall is officially here, and it's even starting to feel like it in Florida as the weeks go by, and with fall means an influx of various festivals from St. Johns County up to Fernandina Beach for the whole family to take part in.

Hastings Main Street is the heart of activity and will be the center of heritage for the small Florida town in the coming months.

Visitors and locals will have the opportunity to take part in the inaugural Hastings Main Street Fall Festival of Art on November 25, thanks to a partnership with the St. Augustine Art Association.

The one-day festival features a juried art show, a cottage artisans' market, live music, food trucks and more. Demonstrations by two of the original Florida Highwaymen artists, R.L. Lewis and Curtis Arnett, and presentations by Dr. Seth H. Bramson, America's top Florida history author, will be part of the festival.

Hastings' Main Street is also the venue for the annual Hastings Hometown

Christmas Parade and the Pop-Up Market, both taking place on December 9.

The nearby community of Elkton also plays host to numerous cultural and community events. Perhaps most well-loved by the local community is the annual Sykes Family Farms Crop Maze.

From October 7-29, children and adults are invited to flock to Sykes Farm to participate in their uniquely themed maze. This year's maze design features famous country music artist Reba McEntire.

The 64th Annual Cracker Day will be on October 21 in Elkton at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds and will showcase the history of Florida's cracker cattle and cowboys.

The Northeast Florida Fair will be held in Callahan Oct. 12-22, and the 10-day long festival has been welcoming fall to the First Coast since it was established in 1947.

The fair atmosphere will be in full effect with livestock exhibits and judging, as well as the traditional fair games and food and the extremely popular "Barnyard Olympics."

The 2023 Greater Jacksonville

Agricultural Fair is scheduled for Nov. 2-12 at the Jacksonville Fairgrounds downtown, and will also feature agriculture, animals, various concerts and family entertainment.

Robinson's Racing Pigs and Sea Lion Splash will be just a couple of the exhibits available to visit with a ticket to the event.

Dalton Dover, Kevin PM and Rambler Kane are some of the musical acts that will be performing throughout the 10 days.

With Halloween right around the corner, there are plenty of events that are in place to help feed into the fun holiday spirit, including the Second Annual Halloween Lantern Festival Oct. 27 and 28 at the Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens.

The evening will be packed with Halloween-themed entertainment as the lake loop at the Gardens will be transformed into a Halloween showcase with lanterns illuminating the area.

On top of the lantern parade, there will also be delicious food trucks for visitors to choose from and a silent auction.

A Portrait of Potential

The Episcopal experience means learning extends far beyond the classroom. Our graduates *Seek Understanding* as lifelong learners; *Develop a Sense of Self* earned through challenge; *Live with Honor and Purpose*, choosing to lead, do good, and serve others; and *Pursue a Life of Faith*, in a way meaningful to them while respecting the dignity of every human being. Across our Four Pillars — Academics, Athletics, Fine Arts, and Spiritual Life — Episcopal students find their passions while shaping who, not what, they will become.

Visit [ESJ.org](https://www.esj.org) To *Explore Your Future*



EPISCOPAL
SCHOOL of JACKSONVILLE

MUNNERLYN

GRADES 6 – 12
4455 ATLANTIC BLVD.
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32207
904.396.7104

ST. MARK'S

AGE 1 – GRADE 5
4114 OXFORD AVE.
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32210
904.388.2632

BEACHES

PRE-K 3 – GRADE 5
450 11th AVE. NORTH
JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL 32250
904.246.2466



This year's Beaches Museum Beach Legends are, from left, George Paugh, Clare Berry and Joe Mitrick.

BEACHES MUSEUM HOSTS THE BEACH LEGENDS GALA, HONORING THREE LONGTIME BEACHES RESIDENTS

photos by **DUNLOP PHOTOGRAPHY**

Beaches Museum held its 10th Annual Beach Legends Gala on Friday, Sept. 15, at TPC Sawgrass, where museum supporters came to honor three extraordinary individuals. Recognizing that tomorrow's history is being made today, the packed house gathered to show their appreciation for the community contributions of longtime Beaches residents Clare Berry, Joe Mitrick and George Paugh.

Berry was raised in Jacksonville, moving to Jacksonville Beach with her husband Vance after he graduated from law school. She enjoyed a media career before becoming a Realtor decades ago in Ponte Vedra Beach. Her life's work has seemingly been to make people feel welcome in the community.

From being one of the area's top Realtors to her decades of service to THE PLAYERS Championship, Berry helps everyone, from newly arrived homeowners to internationally known golfers, feel right at home.

She gives her time, talent and treasure to many organizations, including BEAM, Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach, Audubon and Episcopal School of Jacksonville.

Joe Mitrick has spent his career focused



Honoree Clare Berry with her family at the gala.

on the health of the community. He and his wife, Laura, moved to Northeast Florida when he was recruited by Baptist Health. He has made his most notable mark on the area as the CEO of Baptist Medical Center-Beaches, formerly known as Beaches Hospital, for the last 20 years.

Mitrick recently retired from Baptist after a 40-plus year career in health care. He led tremendous expansion of the Medical Center at the Beaches, including both the physical plant and the onsite services.

Over the years, he has been active in the Jacksonville Chamber – Beaches Division, Mission House, the Exchange Club and others.

Coach George Paugh is a true waterman. Countless children across the beaches communities learned how to swim from him at the Beaches Aquatic Club, with hundreds more learning to be junior lifeguards under his leadership and commitment to the Volunteer Lifesaving Corps since 1964.

During his tenure at Fletcher High School, Paugh was an integral part of the swimming and wrestling programs at the school. His students appreciate him to this day for the life lessons he imparted. He grew up in Jacksonville, graduating from Englewood High School and Florida State University. Paugh and his wife, Carolyn, have loved being involved beaches residents for years.

Co-chairs Leslee Burch and Heather McConville led a tireless team of volunteers to ensure that the evening was memorable and fun.

"Honoring these history-makers is right in line with our mission, and we are proud of the success of this event," Burch said. In 2024, the 11th annual Beaches Museum Beach Legends Gala will honor other notable community servants who will join the 45 past Legends.

GATOR BOWL SET TO CONTINUE NEW YEAR TRADITION AS TICKETS GO ON SALE

story and photo by
ANTHONY RICHARDS

Tickets for this year's TaxSlayer Gator Bowl are now on sale to the public. This year will mark the 79th annual edition of the game, which during that time has become a Jacksonville tradition for many.

The 2023 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl will take place on Friday, December 29, at noon on Bill Gay Grounds at EverBank Stadium and will be televised nationally on ESPN.

Part of the tradition is that for years the game has been associated with the start of the New Year by either being on New Year's Day or in the days leading up to it.

Maintaining that was of major importance to both the Gator Bowl, its fans and the City of Jacksonville.

"I can't think of a better way for fans to ring in 2024 than spending New Year's Eve weekend in Jacksonville, Florida. Downtown Jacksonville and the sports complex will be electric with the 79th



The Gator Bowl is fun for the whole family.

annual TaxSlayer Gator Bowl game on Friday, Jacksonville Jaguars on Sunday and fireworks to celebrate the New Year," said TaxSlayer Gator Bowl Chairman Alan Worley. "The TaxSlayer Gator Bowl staff and green jacket committee are working closely with the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Jaguars and ASM Global to plan a full slate of activities in support of the weekend's events and festivities."

This year's contest will be the fourth in a six-year deal that will feature a team from the Southeastern Conference that will serve as the anchor team against an opponent from the Atlantic Coast

Conference.

"The TaxSlayer Gator Bowl is an exciting showcase of two exceptional teams and a unique opportunity to share the TaxSlayer brand with millions of football fans nationwide," said Jamie Saxe, CEO of TaxSlayer. "This marks another year in a long-standing partnership between our organizations, and we couldn't be prouder to carry on the tradition."

The official team selection will take place on Sunday, December 3.

Tickets are available for purchase in the general bowl beginning at \$50 per ticket via Ticketmaster.com or by using the Ticketmaster mobile app.

Purchasing through a TaxSlayer Gator Bowl green jacket member will allow for a \$5 per-ticket discount through December 1, 2023.

To purchase tickets or learn more about premium seating options, go to www.taxslayergatorbowl.com or call 904-798-1700 to talk with a representative.

Dedicated to Excellent Results – Just Listed, Under Contract!



Step inside 1034 Santa Cruz Street in Sevilla and experience a coastal Mediterranean pool home near the World Golf Village in St. Augustine. This open concept three-bedroom three bath home has over 2400 square feet with bamboo flooring, completely renovated master bathroom and more! Downstairs spacious master suite with large master bath. Smart home with camera system, electric fireplace, fountain, vaulted ceilings, large decorative tile, tons of storage plus loft area upstairs. Enjoy drinks in the pool or at the Tiki bar in the large two story covered lanai overlooking the pool deck. Convenient to Costco, gas stations local restaurants, hospitals, beaches and 95 to downtown Jacksonville or historic St Augustine! Sevilla clubhouse, pool, & waterpark Enjoy all that Florida living offers! Offered for \$538,000



Janet Westling,
REALTOR®
GRI, CIPs, Luxury Collection Specialist

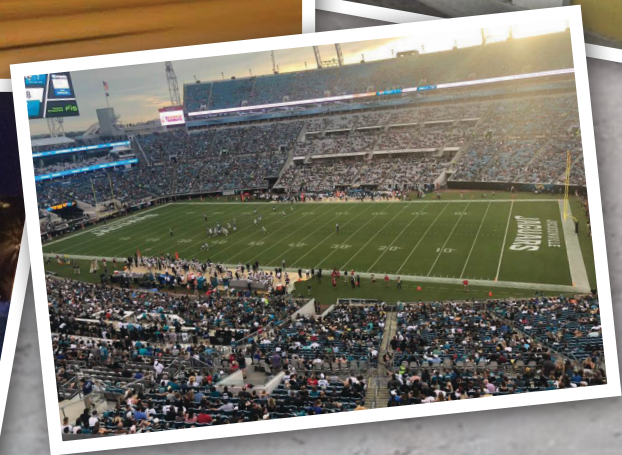
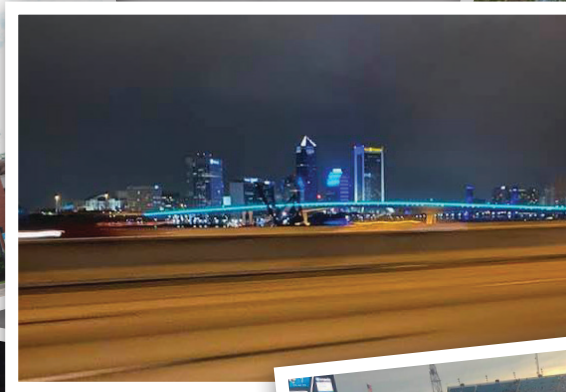


904.813.1913 Cell
www.janetwestling.com
Janet.Westling@bhhsnfr.com



© 2023 BHH Affiliates, LLC. An independently operated subsidiary of HomeServices of America, Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate, and a franchisee of BHH Affiliates, LLC, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices symbol are registered service marks of HomeServices of America, Inc.® Equal Housing Opportunity. Information not verified or guaranteed. If your home is currently listed with a Broker, this is not intended as a solicitation

FACES OF *The First Coast*



Faces Of The First Coast is an exclusive feature for First Coast Register readers to get to know prominent business leaders in Northeast Florida's coastal communities.

If you would like to be featured in Faces of the First Coast, please contact us at (904) 285-8831.

**Paid advertisement*



Clareberryrealestate.com

Lucky me! I have been a Realtor in my home, Northeast Florida, for nearly 40 years. I grew up in Jacksonville and moved to the beach in my 20s. I studied architecture and interior design in college, feeding my love of homes and style. After graduation, I worked in media, where I learned the art of listening and asking questions, marketing and advertising.

In 1985, I transitioned from media to real estate, joining Watson Realty's Ponte Vedra office. It was meant to be! Serving customers by customizing promotions for their homes and researching housing options for buyers is exciting. The reward of finding a seller or a buyer the perfect home is what keeps me charged up about real estate. In 1990, I moved to the original Marsh Landing Realty, where I learned about lots and builders and the development process.

In 1993, I opened my own brokerage, Berry & Co. Real Estate. Our first listing was The Ponte Vedra Carlyle, 48 new condominiums on Ponte Vedra Boulevard. That was an exciting time – new residences in a premier location, with Lodge membership included for every purchaser!

Berry & Co. Real Estate continues to be a robust general brokerage. We have helped hundreds of buyers and sellers with their residential real estate needs. We take pride in our market knowledge – it is the foundation for the extra level of service we provide our customers.

My customers describe me as “one of our most trusted advisors”... “responsive, kind and honest”... “always felt we were in good hands”...”stands out from the rest regarding professionalism, true customer satisfaction and a real passion to do things the right way.” I help make buying and selling real estate efficient, enjoyable and rewarding by applying my knowledge and insights for the benefit of my customers.

While homebase for our office is Ponte Vedra Beach, we also are active in neighboring Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Nocatee as well as greater Jacksonville. Our real estate market is ever-changing and always intriguing. I'm grateful for the challenges and opportunities each new day brings.



FACES OF THE
FIRST COAST

THE FACE OF
**LUXURY REAL
ESTATE**

Clare Berry

**BERRY & CO.
REAL ESTATE**

(904) 382-5875

clare@clareberry.realtor

330 A1A North, Suite 305

Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082





FACES OF THE FIRST COAST

THE FACES OF FINANCE

PONTE VEDRA WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP

OF WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

.....
Jamie Seim, Melissa Scott, Evonne Heykens and Stephen Foody
.....

(904) 273-7934
(904) 273-7920
818 Hwy A1A, Ste 200
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

OUR MISSION

“Our mission is to provide objective and timely financial advice and guidance - with the highest level of professional service - in building and preserving wealth for our clients.”

CORE VALUES

“Integrity, Responsibility, Honesty, Commitment”

OUR TEAM

Jamie Seim has over 12 years of investment experience as a Financial Advisor. He attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University Arkansas at Little Rock on golf scholarships, graduating cum laude. He later graduated with an MBA in Accounting & Finance from Jacksonville University. Over the years, Jamie has devoted much of his time to local organizations and charities.

Stephen T. Foody has 38 years of Capital Markets experience. He

holds a BA in Economics and History from Fordham University. He was chairman of the board of trustees for the Guardian Catholic School, and a founding member of Ponte Vedra High School PTO.

Evonne T. Heykens, Senior Registered Client Associate, has 40 years of financial services industry experience. She started within the financial industry in 1982, and most of her career has been in Jacksonville or Ponte Vedra.

Melissa Scott, Client Associate, has almost 20 years of financial services experience. Born and raised in Indiana, she joined the United States Air Force out of high school and spent 10 years living in many states around the country and some abroad.

Ponte Vedra
WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP
of Wells Fargo Advisors

Investment and Insurance Products: Not FDIC Insured / No Bank Guarantee / May Lose Value

Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and non-bank affiliate of Wells Fargo & Company. CAR 0123-01632



FACES OF THE
FIRST COAST

THE FACE OF
**PLASTIC
SURGERY**

**PONTE VEDRA
PLASTIC
SURGERY**

.....

(904) 273-6200
209 Ponte Vedra Park Drive
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
www.pvps.com

Established in 1993, Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery has been providing our community with life-changing aesthetic procedures for three decades. In that time, we have grown, progressed, and evolved into five locations, six plastic surgeons, eight advanced practice providers, and eight skin health specialists covering Northeast Florida.

At PVPS we offer a broad range of facial and body surgeries, non-invasive laser treatments, as well as an extensive variety of injectables and skin rejuvenation services. We are proud to participate in an endorsed aesthetic fellowship program and are committed to excellence in the care we give to our patients, staff, and community.





Convenient, Comprehensive Cardiology Care. Close to Home.

First Coast Heart & Vascular Center's top-rated cardiologists offer a full range of cardiac services – from preventive care and routine screenings to advanced diagnostics and interventions.

Better yet, we offer it all right here in Ponte Vedra.

- ▶ General cardiology
- ▶ Structural heart disease management
- ▶ Peripheral vascular/vein disease services
- ▶ Complex heart rhythm management
- ▶ Heart failure management
- ▶ Comprehensive cardiovascular screenings
- ▶ Stress tests, echocardiograms
- ▶ Pacemaker/defibrillator checkups



Neil Sanghvi,
MD, FACC, FHRS



Vincent Caracciolo,
MD, FACC



Ameeth Vedre,
MD, FACC, FACP,
FASE, FASNC

FACES OF THE
FIRST COAST

THE FACES OF
CARDIOLOGY

**FIRST COAST
HEART &
VASCULAR
CENTER**

Dr. Neil Sanghvi

Dr. Vincent Caracciolo

Dr. Ameeth Vedre

(904) 342-8300

351 Town Plaza Ave., Ste. 203

Ponte Vedra, FL 32081

firstcoastheart.com

First Coast Heart & Vascular Center is pleased to serve St. Johns, Duval, Clay and Flagler counties with nine cardiology office locations. We have these other offices in Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Fleming Island and Palm Coast.

Duval County - Jacksonville - University Blvd
3901 University Blvd., Ste. 221, Jacksonville, FL 32216
Phone: (904) 423-0010

Duval County - Jacksonville - Cath Lab Only
14810 Old St Augustine Rd., Ste. 210, Jacksonville, FL 32258
Phone: (904) 312-9810

St. Johns County - St. Augustine
Electrophysiology & Interventional
100 Whetstone Place, Ste. 310, St. Augustine, FL 32086
Phone: (904) 342-8300

Clay County - Fleming Island
4565 Hwy. 17, Ste. 106, Fleming Island, FL 32003
Phone: (904) 375-8100

Duval County - Jacksonville - Arlington
6500 Ft. Caroline Rd., Ste. 4, Jacksonville, FL 32277
Phone: (904) 423-0010

St. Johns County - St. Augustine
100 Whetstone Place, Ste. 102, St. Augustine, FL 32086
Phone: (904) 342-8300

St. Johns County - St. Augustine Murabella - World Golf Village
70 Turin Terrace, Ste. 210, St. Augustine, FL 32092
Phone: (904) 342-8300

Flagler County - Palm Coast
14 Office Park Drive, Ste. 1, Palm Coast, FL 32137
Phone: (386) 446-9966



PHOTO BY JAMES GILBERT



PHOTO BY MARTIN TORRES



PHOTO BY JAMES GILBERT

Ponte Vedra Beach native Madison Hughes sang the National Anthem prior to the Jacksonville Jaguars home opener against the Kansas City Chiefs on Sept. 10.

Her passion for music took off after she learned to play guitar in fifth grade.

Singing the National Anthem was the next step in her musical journey after being a contestant in season 22 of NBC's "The Voice," in 2022.

FROM 'THE VOICE' TO EVERBANK STADIUM

Hughes continues to grow as performer on biggest stages

story by ANTHONY RICHARDS

Singing the National Anthem at an NFL game is a bucket list item for many artists but doing it in front of the hometown crowd is even more special.

That is the opportunity Madison Hughes received when the Ponte Vedra Beach native stepped onto the field and sang the tune prior to the Jacksonville Jaguars home opener against the Kansas City Chiefs on Sept. 10.

Hughes grew up in Ponte Vedra Beach and attended Bolles Elementary School before going to Episcopal School of Jacksonville, which is where she first learned to play the guitar in fifth grade.

She even remembers putting on a concert at the St. Johns Town Center in sixth grade as a member of Episcopal School's choir.

When looking back, she cannot believe at times the ride she has been on to this point that helped get her from the Town Center to singing in front of nearly 70,000 people at EverBank Stadium.

A major part of her journey has been taking part as a contestant on season 22 of NBC's "The Voice."

"I like to create my own opportunities in everything that I do, and 'The Voice' really allowed for that," Hughes said. "It kind of brought me out and made me realize the type of artist I want to be. 'The Voice' served as the catalyst and was validation I had been searching for."

What made her experience on "The Voice," even more unique is that although she loved to sing, performing in front of others was not something she sought out.

"Even trying out for 'The Voice' was not something I would have done prior," Hughes said. "It was such a good experience for me, and I knew I had to try it even if it was a little uncomfortable at first. I knew deep down that everything leads to the next step in our journey, and that was a big step I had to take."

She describes her music style as an assortment, and she often finds herself harkening back to what she listened to growing up.

"We grew up listening to all the classics, from Bob Dylan, Neil Young, the Eagles and Allman Brothers to Bruce Springsteen," Hughes said.

So what is it like to walk out onto a football field with what can feel like the entirety of the First Coast waiting to hear you sing?

"I was super nervous, but I kept telling myself that I had sung at a UNF basketball and (Jacksonville) Shrimp

game before, even though I knew it was pretty different," Hughes chuckled. "My stomach actually didn't drop until they announced my name, but it always happens like that for me right before a show."

Knowing she had so many of those who had been there supporting and remained by her side along the way provided a sense of calm and allowed her to truly soak up the moment.

"There are so many people from the Beaches communities that are so supportive to me," Hughes said. "It also made it interesting that my mom's side is from Kansas City and my dad's side is from Jacksonville, so it made the matchup itself even more special as well. All the messages I got leading up to it and after were all amazing."

As she stood there in her Jaguars attire and heard the roar and applause as she wrapped up the final notes of the National Anthem, she knew it would be a memory she would have engrained forever.

"It was a lot of work that went into it, but it was all so worth it," Hughes said.

Hughes continues to journey on her path as a musician and a list of upcoming shows can be found by going to madisonhughes.com.

She can also be found by searching "Madison Hughes" in the various social media platforms.



Deck the Chairs has become a holiday tradition over the years.



The event being such a success is made possible by the hard work behind the scenes by many volunteers.



Deck the Chairs presents a festive atmosphere while also supporting local arts education.

Deck The Chairs creates magic

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS

story and photos by
ANTHONY RICHARDS

Deck The Chairs has become synonymous with the celebration of the holidays locally for years now, but there is a lot that goes into it behind the scenes to make sure the beautiful displays and lights become a reality.

That is where volunteers come in and Deck The Chairs is currently looking for anyone who would like to lend a helping hand to make this year's event as memorable as previous years.

Deck The Chairs is a nonprofit initiative focusing on promoting children's arts and arts education while also instilling some holiday joy for anyone who walks through it.

It will once again be held at its traditional location at Lathan Plaza and Seawalk Pavilion at Jacksonville Beach.

Community support is vital not only in making sure the artwork is visible for display through a public/private collaboration, but it is also important when it comes to volunteering, which is one of the best ways a resident can show their support.

There are many ways a volunteer can offer their time and help throughout the various stages of the process, including with setup and decoration, concessions,

as an event ambassador and with break down of the displays at the event's end in January.

For the setting up of the decorations and displays, volunteers are needed to help with this period the week before Thanksgiving beginning Wednesday Nov. 15.

The day is broken up into shifts depending on what works best with a person's schedule, and if available, they can also offer up the entire day to volunteer.

Setup is broken down into volunteer skill levels, which include very-skilled volunteer, medium-skilled volunteer and general volunteer.

Among the very-skilled volunteers, at least two people that are strong and can climb to the top of the giant Christmas tree to help string the lights are needed.

Medium-skilled workers are considered those who know what to do with a screwdriver or hammer but are not ready to try operating a skill saw.

And finally, many general volunteers are needed who help with light work and general chair support on a daily basis. That includes helping build the chairs and stringing the lights at each station.

General volunteers can be any adult or high school and middle school students.

The concessions tent on the event

grounds at the Pavilion will be open Thursdays through Sundays each week while Deck The Chairs is going on, which means that volunteers are needed for each of those nights. Food items, such as hot chocolate, coffee and cookies will be served at the tent along with event merchandise.

The concession and merchandise operation will consist of two shifts nightly with the first one being from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and the second one from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The shifts allow for people to choose what date and time works best with their schedule before signing up.

Another way to volunteer with Deck The Chairs is by being an event ambassador, which will be needed on weekends, which are the busiest times for the event.

Ambassadors are tasked with staffing the information booth and walking around to help guests with any assistance needed and to make sure the sponsored chairs are not being climbed on and remain in good shape.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the 2023 Deck The Chairs can go to deckthechairs.org/get-involved/volunteer for more details and to get signed up.



Phillip Raposo started River Stonework & Design in 2007.



He created the business to promote an outdoor lifestyle through the projects he completes for his customers.

LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM ONE STONE AT A TIME

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

photos courtesy of **RIVER STONEWORK & DESIGN**

River Stonework offers full commitment to a customer's design

River Stonework & Design can help create a path where a person's creative ideas are realized, literally, as they are a full-service company providing professional stonework and pavers for their clients.

Phillip Raposo started the business, which is located at 8570 Philips Highway in Jacksonville, in 2007.

"We wanted to promote an outdoor living lifestyle by enjoying the contact with nature, neighbors and family," Raposo said.

Raposo immigrated from Brazil and learned to speak English and is now living the "American dream" and thriving as a business owner in his new home of the United States.

"Our journey wasn't easy, but it fueled our passion for excellence," Raposo said. "We handpick team members who share our drive. No outsourcing here, we have our own skilled crew, trusted and proven."

According to Raposo, from the very beginning the mission of the business was to promote the wellbeing of our customers.

"We are committed to valuing our

employees, listening to our clients, and operating under the ideals of moral integrity, quality and accountability," Raposo said. "This commitment leads our paving contractors to provide the highest quality service and promote unforgettable moments for our clients."

And he believes that nothing creates wellbeing much better than being outside and enjoying the fresh air, especially in a place like Florida.

That belief is still as strong today as it ever has been, and it remains the primary reason why he enjoys doing what he does for a living.

He felt like the best way to get people to enjoy and spend time outside is to help them accomplish a much more comfortable environment in which to spend their outdoor time in.

This is something that has spread to the nearly 40 employees and subcontractors that take part in certain projects.

"We take care of everything from the design and construction, down to the flowerpots," Raposo said. "No detail is overlooked, which gives our paving contractors a leading edge over the competition."

River Stonework & Design has a variety of outdoor living specialties, including patios, outdoor kitchens, pool decks, pergolas, gazebos, screen enclosures, driveways, walkways, seating walls,

benches and retaining walls.

According to Raposo, the array of design options they offer is not the only thing that sets the company apart, as they also strive for there to be quality and accountability associated with each project.

"Accountability is a key to success in the construction business," Raposo said. "Every customer should feel special, understood, valued, and above all, they should feel like they're your only customer. It's more likely that your customer will be a repeat one if you treat each and every one this way."

River Stonework was voted a 2022 "Neighborhood Favorite" by Nextdoor.com. Other awards include winning the 2018 Super Service Award by Angi.com (formerly Angie's List), a 2022 Best of Florida nominee to go with them being "top-rated" on Google and Facebook.

Their commitment to making sure their customers have the best experience possible also includes offering a five-year warranty, budget-friendly options and helping a customer discover what the best project is for their needs and budget.

"We strive to help you to achieve the outdoors of your dreams," Raposo said. "We provide all assistance to regular loans and private payment plans domestically. We strongly believe it is possible to do business based on trust and goodwill."



VENDORS GALORE AT FALL *Home and Patio Show*

photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

The fall Jacksonville Home and Patio Show was held Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in downtown Jacksonville. The showcase had a bevy of various vendors and products for attendees to sample and find out more information about from food to home décor and recreational opportunities, such as boats and ATVs.





THE ST. JOHNS REALTY GROUP
"We're The Difference"

23 Comares Ave.
St Augustine, FL 32080
(904) 669-3081



CALL NOW...They're Going Fast!
St. Augustine's Newest Luxury Condominiums
FREE 40 FT. BOAT SLIP WITH EACH UNIT!
65' AND WIDER SLIPS AVAILABLE

- Private Two Car Garage
- Private Elevator
- Private Waterview Roof Deck
- Townhouse Style Condominiums

Walk, Bike or Boat to All. A Waterfront Lifestyle Opportunity!

23 Comares Ave. • St. Augustine, FL 32080
cortezonthewater.com





ESTATE IN PONTE VEDRA BEACH IS ONE OF A KIND

Contributed by **CLARE BERRY**

Nature lovers will be excited about this offering on more than 2.5 acres on the GTM Reserve at 1260 Ponte Vedra Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach, across from the beach.

The structures integrate into the landscape with natural finishes and colors, while incorporating cool architectural details and style. The main home has three bedrooms, office and media room and was built in 2001 with high ceilings throughout.

A large unfinished space on the second floor could be a studio or more bedrooms and is customizable to the owners' needs and vision. A separate structure, built in 1997, houses a four-car garage, and a 1,100-square-foot guest house above with its own beautiful views of the Old Florida landscape.

The private dock opens to the Guana River and Reserve, a perfect spot for greeting the morning and ending (or spending!) the day. The buyer may access the oceanfront pool and clubhouse across the street at Sea Hammock with payment of dues.

The double lot (200 feet wide) includes a secret meandering trail around its perimeter. This property combines nature with great design. It is available for viewing by appointment only with Clare Berry, listing broker, Berry & Co. Real Estate. Call 904-382-5875.

Asking price is \$2.5 million.





"Professional Quality at the Best Price"

**Financing
Available**



Call Today For A Free Reroof or Repair Estimate!

904-223-6068

•Insurance Claims	•Roof Maintenance	•Chimney Cap Replacement
•Roofing	•Painting	•Leak Detection Specialist
•Roof Repairs	•Chimney Repairs	•FREE Reroof/Repair estimate

74 6th Street South, Suite 104 • Jacksonville Beach

904.223.6068

KandDRoofing.com






CCC1325852 | CBC1258249

CHECK OUT OUR
REVIEWS
ON GOOGLE!

Enjoy Nature WITH A NEW OUTDOOR KITCHEN



At River Stonework & Design we implement our best ideas, aesthetic sensibility, and deep construction knowledge to work with you in a budget-conscious design procedure.



RIVER STONEWORK

Licensed and Insured

8570 PHILLIPS HWY, UNIT # 101
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32256

FOR ALL YOUR STONEWORK AND PAVING DREAMS

PATIOS

DRIVEWAYS

WALKWAYS

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

3D DESIGN

FIREPITS

FIREPLACES

SCREEN ENCLOSURES

PERGOLAS

PLANTERS

& FLOWER BEDS

FINANCING AVAILABLE & PRICE MATCH

We always do our best to offer you the best price, but if you find a lower offer we'll be happy to match it!



904.733.7077

RIVERSTONEWORK.COM



• LICENSED • INSURED • BONDED • LIC RR#282812174

TABLE TALK

Mrs. Bentley's Desserts

WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE

story and photos by LEIGH CORT



Leigh Cort

Kayshla Bentley opened Mrs. Bentley's Desserts less than a month ago inside the most unique location — nestled in a cute food cart steps from the Avenues Mall food court. She had

a dream that took nearly a decade to develop after years of being a binge watcher of "The Cake Boss" as one of his millions of fans.

In a city that has been blessed with heavenly bread smells wafting through various culinary neighborhoods and trendy bakeries that address every dietary requirement, Mrs. Bentley's Desserts offers small beauties that customers admit: "They are so beautiful, I don't want to eat them!"

We often imagine a dessert stop in the same breath as coffee, a window into thriving bakeries, doughnut shops,



Kayshla Bentley recently opened Mrs. Bentley's Desserts just steps from the Avenues Mall food court.



Purple strawberries are a feast for both the eyes and the sweet tooth.

cupcake specialists — all common denominators when we imagine sweet desserts. However, Kayshla's concept and imagination took her creative hands into a totally different direction. And her original foray into baking was a hobby that brought her true joy when she could create a simple chocolate covered jumbo marshmallow, strawberry or pretzel stick for one of her friends or close family. She had no thought that she could wave goodbye to her prior career in a law firm and embark on opening her own petite place as everyone practically begged her to take the chance!

Kayshla enjoys every day as if it's the first day with passion and excitement to create and sell her delicious chocolate-covered individual desserts but to also make each piece into edible art. She personally prepares everything sold in her cart fresh to order the day before she opens each morning. And if she's creating desserts for a private event, she's meticulous about guaranteeing



A box of assorted treats from Mrs. Bentley's Desserts.

freshness and beauty every day.

On her grand opening date, Sept. 16, all the lovely treats were sold out, something that still surprises Kayshla. Her formula for creating a custom-designed dessert means uncomplicated — no silverware, no plates, only napkins and many on sticks. Featuring very affordable prices, her growing clientele recognizes that their orders — even the smallest order of a half dozen chocolate-dipped Oreos or Rice Krispies treats — can't be found at a regular market.

Born and raised in New York City, she lived in many locations throughout the Northeast before meeting and marrying Nathaniel Bentley — they now have been married for 13 years and have two small daughters. Of her husband, she proudly admits, "He is the one who puts the Bentley in Mrs. Bentley's Desserts!"

He's very much an important part of their partnership. She handles all the creative baking and decorating, and he is the accountant/bookkeeper. But it's Kayshla's love for chocolate and creating pretty edibles that was her niche when they agreed to go "all in" to make Mrs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ■

DESSERTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Bentley's Desserts an official business.

Without hesitation, her tiny cakes and cake pops are like what one would see on a professionally designed wedding dessert table, baby shower, sweet 16 party or special holiday. Her No. 1 best sellers are the beautifully decorated and 100% totally edible cake doughnuts. Baked not fried, they have a soft spongy texture covered in a thin veil of candy-coated chocolate wafer that melts in your mouth. Kayshla uses vanilla-flavored chocolate, classic milk and dark chocolate depending on the color-scheme of the holiday or special



Cake pops on sticks.

events.

Kayshla feels the excitement of being at the launch and beginning of her journey. Her goal for this year is to expand Mrs. Bentley's Desserts into a larger kiosk inside the mall where she will have the opportunity of baking her cake doughnuts fresh to order. If there was one essential similarity between "The Cake Boss" and Kayshla, it was the spunk to accept any challenge.

From the cart to the kiosk — and then a dream to grow into a larger storefront — we'll be watching Mrs. Bentley's Desserts as we, too, dream of that first bite of heaven ... an irresistible jumbo sweet strawberry with a tiny chocolate edible rose.

CULINARY WORLD CONVERGES FOR AMELIA ISLAND COOKOUT EPICUREAN WEEKEND

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island looks to start a new tradition for the "foodies" in the area with its inaugural Amelia Island Cookout Epicurean Weekend scheduled for Oct. 20-22.

"Our vision is to continue it every October moving forward," said Joe Murphy, director of marketing with The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.

The weekend-long showcase will be a celebration of food and the various flavors and ways in which to cook and enjoy the culinary world.

A mix of both local and nationally renowned chefs will be featured during the event as part of several chef-inspired demonstrations where attendees will have the opportunity to hear and learn from the chefs firsthand.

According to Murphy, the interactive nature of the event brought about by the demonstrations is something that was a priority and something The Ritz-Carlton really wanted to highlight.

"We'll have different action stations, where guests can mingle with the chefs as they share tips for making their dishes," Murphy said. "We



Chef Okan Kizilbayir of Salt Restaurant.



Lee Jones of Chef's Garden.



Tank Jackson of Holy City Hogs.

believe that people now more than ever are attracted to this kind of event because it is really engaging. They truly feel a part of it."

It was also important to maintain the local vibe that Amelia Island is known for and not losing sight of that in the construction of the event was key.

"We always knew we wanted to present a quality mix for our guests, and we look to continue that model of having 'local legends,' as we like to call them," Murphy said. "We would like to see it eventually expand to where local restaurants are getting involved."

Chef Okan Kizilbayir of Salt Restaurant, which is just one of several dining options at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia

Island has helped orchestrate the cookout weekend and will be one of the featured chefs.

He brings a unique take on the cookout from his past experiences with the Grand Cayman Cookout, which is a similar culinary event hosted by The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman, and is celebrating 15 years in October.

"He is the man behind all the success," Murphy said. "His wealth of knowledge and experience is incredible."

The goal of the showcase is to have something that captures the imagination of every palate, regardless of which foods or flavors peak a person's interest.

Everything from chefs who specialize in farm-to-table, such as Lee Jones with Chef's Garden to Tank Jackson with

Holy City Hogs, who will be roasting a whole hog, and award-winning mixologists will be featured during the event.

The variety of chefs featured has brought about interest from guests both across the First Coast but also throughout the nation, especially those on the East Coast.

"We started to conceive it about a year ago, and all along we knew we wanted to capture the foodie culture that is growing everywhere, including here locally," Murphy said. "Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra and the First Coast in general has become much more of a 'foodie' scene in the last five years."

The Amelia Island Cookout is the main event during the three-day showcase and will take place on Oct. 21 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the Oceanfront Lawn at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.

Tickets for the cookout are \$150 per person and will allow guests to be front and center as some of the top chefs bring their best culinary work out of the kitchen and bring it outdoors for a unique cookout feel.

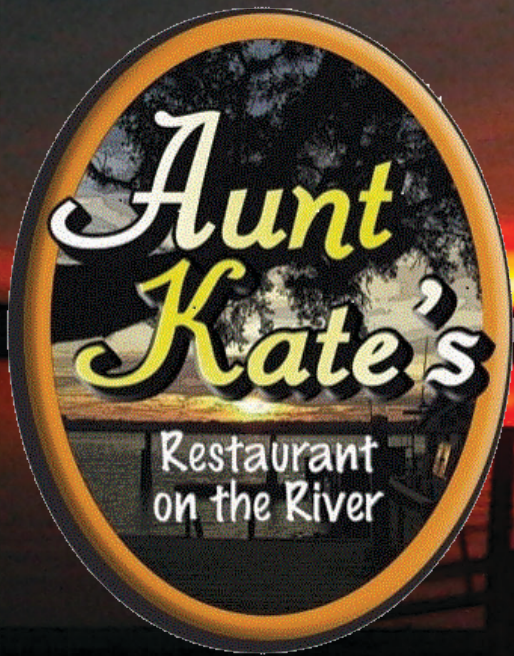


DELICIOUS FOOD, FUN TIMES FOR A GOOD CAUSE

photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS & SUSAN GRIFFIN

The 21st Annual Delicious Destinations, an Ascension St. Vincent's fundraiser, included a celebrity chef luncheon on Sept. 8 and the main event and auction on Sept. 9, with both being held at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. The money raised as part of the fundraisers will go toward the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation and its initiatives within the local community.





On A1A between St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach on the Intracoastal 2 blocks south of the castle in North Beach



FRESH LOCAL SEAFOOD



Come By Car or Boat!

(904) 829-1105

We offer outstanding family dining, whether you're looking for steamed oysters, peel 'n eat shrimp, fresh salad, great soups, a terrific steak or blackened chicken, we have something for everyone and every appetite!

**Lunch & Dinner - 7 Days a Week
Full Bar • Live Music • Beautiful Sunsets
Happy Hour 3-7 pm in the bar**

**Ask Us About Private Parties In Our
Covered Party Pavilion On The Water!**

www.aunt-kates.com • 612 Euclid Avenue

WHISKEY, WINE & WILDLIFE RETURNS NOV. 2-5

Contributed photos

Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife – W3, presented by Publix, is set for Nov. 2-5 in Vilano Beach, St. Augustine. Several new events have been announced for this year.

Thursday, November 2

NEW EVENT: Pesca by Michael's W3 Wine Dinner. Cocktails, 6-6:30 p.m.; Dinner at 7 p.m.

Location: Pesca by Michael's Inside Hyatt Place Hotel, Vilano Beach.

The perfect way to kick-off Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife with an elegant four-course, wine-paired dinner by Executive Chef Michael Lugo and dessert course by Pastry Chef Rebecca Reed.

Friday, November 3

W3 Master Classes, presented by Publix at Vilano Main Street Diner.

- "Easy Holiday Entertaining" with



Damon Burch, Sysco executive chef, and Zac Coleman showcasing Ron Barcelo Rum cocktails, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

- "Wine & Wildlife" with Foley Family Wines and the GTM Research Reserve, noon to 1 p.m.

Friday, November 3

NEW EVENT: Vilano A1A Soirée, 5:30 to 9 p.m., Vivian Browning Avenue.

An elegant and memorable sunset

al fresco street party/dinner, with six courses from six acclaimed chefs: Norberto Jaramillo, Sebastian Sikora, Michael Lugo, Ellie Schultze, Chris Eldridge and Rebecca Reed. Cocktails and live music from Zaza Flamenca kick everything off!

Saturday, November 4

Guided Tour through the GTM Research Reserve with wine and cheese paired reception, 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Location: Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) Research Reserve, 505 Guana River Road, No. 6527, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Explore the great coastal outdoors and the natural beauty of the GTM Research Reserve with a private guided tour. The tour concludes with tasting some fantastic wines, paired with specialty

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ■

St. Augustine! The Ocean! The Reef!



Enjoy ocean views from every table.

Expanded Outdoor Seating

Serving Lunch & Dinner

Live Music Friday & Saturday

Fresh Fish, Seafood, Steaks & So Much More

Voted BEST HAPPY HOUR and BEST BRUNCH in St. Augustine



The Atlantic Ocean! A constant view that never looks the same! The Reef is one of the few remaining truly oceanfront restaurants in Northeast Florida. Unrivaled views, Great food and wine. Just 20 minutes South of Ponte Vedra on A1A.

4100 Coastal Highway A1A North • (904) 824-8008

www.thereefstaugustine.com



WHISKEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

cheeses from Publix.

Saturday, November 4

W3 Grand Tasting – Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife, 2-5 p.m., block party in Vilano Beach

Location: Vivian Browning Avenue, Vilano Beach

Guests will enjoy hundreds of unlimited varieties of beverage tastings with a souvenir glass and live music. It's a full afternoon of live music, artisans

and celebrity guest chefs in the Publix cooking demonstration. Don't miss the Best Taste Awards and the silent auction, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Vilano Beach Main Street. Tickets are all-inclusive, including all food and beverage tastings.

Sunday, November 5

NEW EVENT: W3 Sunday Jazz Brunch

Location: Pesca by Michael's Inside Hyatt Place Hotel, 117 Vilano Road, Vilano Beach

The grand finale brunch at Pesca by Michael's will be a great way to end the weekend – an all-inclusive culinary and drink ticket for a fantastic brunch buffet with gourmet stations for breakfast and lunch lovers alike. The festival's only family-friendly event provides families a delicious way to end the weekend!

Satellite parking lots and Old Town Trolley stops

Parking is very limited on Vilano Beach, so Old Town Trolleys will be running every 30 minutes and will provide the best and most hassle-free way to attend Saturday's Main Event. The satellite parking shuttle service is



free of charge for festival guests, with the schedule available on the festival website in the coming weeks.

For further information, go to whiskeywineandwildlife.com.

Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife Presented by Publix is supported by St. Johns County Tourism Development Council, St. Johns Cultural Council, St. Augustine/Ponte Vedra, Florida's Historic Coast and Vilano Beach Main Street.

Please note that early bird discount tickets expire Oct. 15.

Best
Waterfront
Dining!



Best
Sweet
Tea!



Thank you so much for Voting Barbara Jeans



(904)280-7522 | BarbaraJeansOnTheWater.com

15 South Roscoe Boulevard | Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida 32082



WINE + FOOD EXPERIENCE OFFERS PANORAMA OF LOCAL TASTES

story by **SHAUN RYAN**
photos by **SUSAN GRIFFIN**

Area residents recently had an opportunity to taste foods from acclaimed

local chefs, emerging talent and culinary leaders and sip wine, beer and spirits from the top mixologists and sommeliers on The First Coast. The USA TODAY Wine

+ Food Experience, held Sept. 23 at Jacksonville's Metropolitan Park, featured fare from 22 local restaurants and food establishments and 11 wine, beer and alcohol brands.

The event was part of a nationwide tour that celebrates the best local food and drink at each venue. The first Wine + Food Experience was held in 2017 across a select group of markets, and it's been growing ever since.

Managing the participating chefs, restaurants and brands across each of the 11 events was culinary director Jared Bobkin. It's a huge job, one for which Bobkin, with his impressive background in the culinary arts, is especially qualified.

"From identifying the restaurants in the early stages of planning to mapping out the location for each at the venue, I'm with our chefs every step of the way," he said.

He said the entire event is a team effort, including local municipalities and the restaurants, "to provide the premier experience we strive for."

"Events like this give attendees the chance to discover new cuisines and restaurants right in their



Nicole Oehler, Vicki Young, and Jeffery Tate

backyard, and that's our core mission when curating each event," he said. "From demos with well-known chefs to 'hidden gem' restaurants, the Wine + Food Experience is a celebration of community through food."

Bobkin said what he likes best about what he does is building relationships with chefs and restaurateurs.

"I always leave each stop of our tour with a new regional dish I'm eager to cook and an amazing network of chefs," he said. "We all see the world through the unique lens of food, and it's great being able to follow their journey."

Bobkin said he has always had a passion for food, especially unique cuisines.

metro
—diner—

FEED YOUR WANT



PONTE VEDRA
340 FRONT ST
(904) 513-8422

JAX BEACH
1534 THIRD ST. N.
(904) 853-6817

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ■



WINE + FOOD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

“Growing up, I always chose the most unique dish on the menu when my family went out to eat,” he said.

He started culinary school at age 23, and his first real chef experience was at Edgewood Country Club. After graduation, he became a sous chef at the

Birmingham Athletic Club, eventually moving on to public restaurants.

He competed in Fox’s “Hell’s Kitchen” and finished fourth. Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey personally invited him to take part in the All-Stars season of the show.

Bobkin has spent 15 years honing his craft in kitchens across the country.

He said he loves cooking whatever makes people

happiest.

“I know the dish is a hit when someone sits down in front of a plate, takes a bite and there is just silence,” he said. “That’s how I know they are enjoying the dish. It’s one of the best sounds. As a chef, it may come as no surprise that I love all foods, but I especially enjoy seafood, including fish, shellfish and even types of seaweed.”

Bobkin said he’s looking forward to seeing the USA TODAY Wine + Food Experience grow.

“I’ve seen firsthand how food can bring people together, so I hope we can continue to add new markets to our tour each year and hopefully curate new culinary-focused events through our Ventures division.”

Don't miss our next issue!

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Publication Date: November 22nd

Advertising Deadline: November 3rd

the
register
FIRST ON THE FIRST COAST

For more information,
call us at (904) 285-8831



The winners of the 2023 Arts Awards gather for a group photo after the Sept. 21 ceremony.



Following presentation of the Art of Giving Award, Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Board Chair Ali Jolly, Baptist Health CEO Michael Mayo, Kimberly and Richard Sisisky and Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Executive Director Diana Donovan, pictured from left, gathered for a photo.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Awards celebrate support for arts and culture in Jacksonville

story by **SHAUN RYAN**
photos by **JASON PRATT OF PRATTIFY**

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's 2023 Arts Awards ceremony was festive and high-spirited, but LOL JAX Film Festival creator Adam Madrid stole the show with his energetic acceptance speech, concluding it with a hearty "Duuuval!"

The Sept. 21 event, hosted by the council in partnership with Downtown Vision Inc., honored eight individuals, businesses and artists for their contributions to the cultural community. The festivities were held at Venue 841 on the Southbank of the St. Johns River.

This was the 46th annual celebration of the arts for the regranting agency currently marking its 50th anniversary.

"A city like ours is bursting at the seams with creative talent, so support for the arts is so important to our quality of life," said Melissa Ross, director of strategic initiatives and liaison to the press for the Jacksonville Office of the Mayor.

In fact, the city has demonstrated its commitment to culture by allocating an increase in funding. City Council member Terrance Freeman told the assembly that Jacksonville will fund the Cultural Council at \$9 million during the coming fiscal year, a 50% increase over last year.

This year's winners received an award created by sculptor Aisling Millar McDonald and were honored in a poem

written and read by Taryn "LoveReigns" Wharwood.

Here's a look at the award winners:

Helen Lane Founders Award

This award goes to someone who demonstrates commitment, sets an example and advocates for inclusion of arts and culture into everyday life. The winner was Toni Smailagic, creator of Cre8jax, which highlights arts and culture in the city with an emphasis on the urban core.



Toni Smailagic received the Helen Lane Founders Award. Pictured from left are Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Board Chair Ali Jolly, PNC Bank Regional President Chris Kalin, Smailagic and Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Executive Director Diana Donovan.

Art of Giving Award

This award goes to someone who stewards their resources to fund, support and sustain arts and culture programs, among other things. The winners were Richard and Kimberly Sisisky, who in 2018 gifted an outdoor sculpture made from a solid block of red granite titled "The Circle" to Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.



Duval County public school teacher Laura Hammock, center, received the Art Educator Award.

Art Educator Award

This award goes to a teacher who, among other things, uses the arts as a vehicle to educate, incorporates the arts into teaching methods and uses the arts to develop students' other skills. The winner was Laura Hammock, who has been an educator for 25 years at Pine Forest School of the Arts.

Corporate Business of the Year Award

This award goes to a business with more than 250 employees that supports arts and cultural programs and organizations, among other things. The winner was Miller Electric, which financially supports The Cathedral Arts Project, Jacksonville Historical Society, The Florida Theatre, MOSH, Downtown Vision Alliance and more.

Small Business of the Year Award

This award goes to a business with fewer than 250 employees that supports

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 ■



The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's 2023 Arts Awards, held at Venue 841, was well attended.

CULTURAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

arts and cultural programs and organizations, among other things. The winner was Indigo Art Therapy Studio, which is dedicated to making the healing power of art safe and accessible.

Robert Arleigh White Award

This award recognizes those who build and maintain relationships with the public, business leaders and elected officials to benefit the arts and culture community and advocate on its behalf. Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, accepted the award. The fund works with local donors and the city to seed and support arts and cultural initiatives.

Art Innovator Award

This award goes to someone who creates new and innovative ideas to benefit the community and infuses them into the arts and culture sector, among other things. The winner was Madrid whose festival allows people to showcase their skills. His film company, Argyle Forest Films, used local actors, actresses, cinematographers, musicians and others in producing his first feature film, "Let Me Be Corey," which is set to be released soon.

Community Impact Award

This award goes to someone with a record of visible transformational results and measurable community impacts. Recognizing the "Reclaiming the Light: A Survivor's Journey" art installation, it went to the Molly Curry Educational Art Legacy Project, the mosaic art team RouxArt, muralist Nico and

Rethreaded, whose Delores Barr Weaver Campus of Hope serves as the location for the piece.

In addition, the 2023 Arts Awards shined its community spotlight on the North Florida School of Special Education and VyStar Credit Union. These two organizations have invested in cultural programs and infrastructure, quality of life and creative impact downtown and throughout the greater Jacksonville area.



The unique awards were created by sculptor Aisling Millar McDonald.



Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

Jacksonville's Only Performing Arts High School

WHERE ARTS AND CREATIVITY GROW



90%

OF THE GRADUATES WILL ATTEND COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND CONSERVATORIES

Top 1%

OF ARTS & ACADEMIC HIGH SCHOOLS

100%

OF ENROLLED SENIORS RECEIVE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

21 Million

IN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2023 SENIORS

SAVE THE DATE

Extravaganza: Saturday, February 24

For more information about DA and auditions visit DA-arts.org

2445 San Diego Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32207

Where Arts and Academics Meet Excellence

FUNNY LADY



Comedian delivers humor from the home front

story by **SHAUN RYAN**
Contributed photos

Standup comedian Jen Fulwiler knows where the best material lurks. It's in those messy moments that, at the time, don't seem all that funny. It's in the inconsistent attitudes and judgments of other people. It's in the places life unexpectedly takes us.

"I'm constantly surprised by my life," she admits, "every single day."

In fact, growing up as an only child in a household her mother kept "very organized" and "perfectly clean," she had her mind set on pursuing a sensible career. Motherhood wasn't part of the plan.

"But," she says, "life did not turn out that way."

She and her husband — also an only child — had six kids in eight years, and no twins. Whatever challenges that posed, it apparently wasn't enough, because she also decided to homeschool her children.

As one might imagine, Fulwiler's

"A good comedy set has about two to three laughs per minute."

- JEN FULWILER

is a life rich in source material, and her comedy routine clearly draws on that source. In fact, she describes her style as "domestic comedy with a fresh twist."

Sometimes, that means pointing out the ironies of daily life. Sometimes, it means the collision of very different worlds.

Once, a friend of Fulwiler's mother — a "really classy friend," a woman who was no doubt familiar with the orderly household her friend kept and expected her daughter to emulate — paid a visit.

"And my house was just a complete disaster," Fulwiler admitted.

The visitor seemed surprised when she saw the kids playing with Barbie dolls, probably because the dolls were, shall we say, unencumbered by clothing. The tiny outfits had gotten

lost, but that was no reason Barbie shouldn't go about her business like always.

"It's Nudist Colony Barbie," Fulwiler quipped, seeing the woman's expression. "Those are the only kinds of Barbies we can have in this house, because I cannot keep up with the clothes."

Sometimes those one-liners set up themselves and simply fall into place, but as most standup artists will tell you, effective comedy is the result of hard work.

"A good comedy set has about two to three laughs per minute," Fulwiler said. "So, you've got to just keep it coming and keep it coming and keep it coming."

And the lines have to be finely honed if people are going to find them funny.

"You have to be almost surgical with what you're saying up there," she said.

The only way to know if a joke is working is to perform it. Fortunately, Fulwiler has abundant opportunities to try out her jokes on live audiences because Austin, Texas, where she lives, has a booming comedy scene with venues aplenty.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33 ■

FUNNY LADY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

She will take her family-friendly routine to bars patronized by young singles, people who are not normally her target audience.

“If I can make them laugh with a clean set, with material that has nothing to do with the lives that they’re living, then it’s going to work really well,” she said.

Something More

W. C. Fields once called comedy serious business, and though he didn’t mean it this way, there is a bit of a serious side to comedy like Fulwiler’s. People sometimes see their daily struggles in her humor and find it helpful to know someone else has been where they are.

“My fans email me all the time, and they tell me what’s going on with them and their struggles, and that is a great motivator to me in my comedy,” Fulwiler said. “Of course, I want to make people laugh. That is the primary purpose of the show. But I do try to provide a little encouragement. You would be amazed at the stories of the people who sit in those theaters.”

She recalled hearing from the parent of two children with severe special needs and the difficulty in finding a babysitter so that mom and dad could go out for an evening. Fulwiler thinks of these people when she writes her material and takes it onstage.

She hopes to encourage parents to say, as they leave the show, “I feel a little better about my life and a little better about returning to the chaos that is my life.”

Road to Comedy

Initially, Fulwiler wanted to be a writer. She started out writing a blog, which generated enough



“I work hard to make this show one that is relatable to everyone.”

- JEN FULWILER

readership to lead to some book deals.

She wrote three books. The first was a memoir on her journey from atheism to finding faith. New York Times bestselling author Dean Koontz called “Something Other Than God” “a lovely account of a spiritual journey and a charming memoir.”

The second book was a memoir about writing her first book and launching her career as a writer while being a six-time mom.

“My husband teases me that my second book is a memoir about writing a memoir,” she said. “Who writes a memoir about writing a memoir?”

Her third book is a how-to, but also a kind of “permission slip.”

“So many women, whether they’re mothers

or not, feel guilty about pursuing work or hobbies or anything that they simply enjoy and really highlights their talents,” she explained. “So, I also meant for that book to be a ‘permission slip’ for women to really create a life that they’re genuinely excited about.”

Publishing those books opened the doors to Sirius XM radio, where until 2020 she had a daily program, “The Jen Fulwiler Show.”

Finally, it clicked: standup comedy was a kind of synthesis of writing and public performance, as she had practiced on the radio. She produced her first tour herself, booking theaters across the nation armed only with a Google search and her credit card. Her kids helped her out, stepping into the roles

normally filled by staff members, which she didn’t have.

Today, Fulwiler continues “The Jen Fulwiler Show” as a podcast available on all podcast apps and on her YouTube channel. While the podcast employs some humor, it does dive into serious life issues.

“Like: What do you do when it feels like your life is falling apart?” Fulwiler said. “I talk about everything, like surprise pregnancies when you’re broke. What are you going to do?”

She described the content of her podcast as things she has learned that she wishes she’d known 10 years ago.

‘Maternal Instinct’

Fulwiler will present her new show, “Maternal Instinct,” Nov. 1 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall as part of the Florida Theatre “On The Road” series. Showtime is 7 p.m.

“The ‘Maternal Instinct’ set is funny stories and hopefully relatable moments of my life and my husband’s life, just trying to keep it together as modern parents who often do not feel very equipped to be modern parents,” she said.

Though her humor is built upon her own experiences, you don’t have to be a mom — or even a woman — to enjoy her show.

“I work hard to make this show one that is relatable to everyone,” she said. “Everyone takes something away, whether or not they have a life exactly like mine. I’m a big believer that good comedy is good comedy. Period. End of sentence.”

Tickets can be purchased via credit or debit card with valid ID at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office, and at Ticketmaster.com.

For further information, go to pvconcerthall.com/events/detail/jen-fulwiler-2023.

Happy hauntings!

THERE'S ALWAYS A LOT OF HAIR-RAISING FUN WHEN HALLOWEEN ARRIVES IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Halloween's upon us and it's time to scare up a little fun. Here's a look at some of the spooky and not-so-spooky events available on The First Coast.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

18th-century house offers frightfully fun events

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, 20 Aviles St., St. Augustine, is offering several Halloween-themed events. For information, go to ximenezfatiohouse.org.

- **Mortality and Mourning — A Century of Death:** These spooky candlelight tours are offered from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays through October. Tickets are \$15 per person.

- **Para-Normal Overnight:** Immerse yourself in this real ghost investigation with professional paranormal investigators from A Night Among Ghosts. The experience takes place from 9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 13, to 9 a.m. Oct. 14. Tickets are \$213 per person.

- **Trick-or-Treat and Family Harvest Fest:** This free event runs from 1 to 4 p.m. Oct. 28. There will be games, a craft table, a candy-apple bowl bar and lots of candy.

Crop Maze & You Pick Sunflowers

It's an autumn tradition to visit Sykes Family Farms, 5995 Brough Road, Elkton, and explore the corn maze, pick sunflowers, take a hayride and more. The farm is open 6-10 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays through Oct. 29. Admission is \$19, \$17 for military with ID and senior citizens (65+), free to children age 2 and younger. For further information, go to sycofarms.com.

Creepy Crawl Haunted Pub Tour & Paranormal Investigation

Tours begin at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays at Tour St. Augustine, 4 Granada St. Duration: 2 hours. For ages 21+. Admission is \$25 per person. Advance reservations required. Go to supersaas.com/schedule/CityWalks/Creepy_Crawl_Haunted_Pub_Tour.

Moonlight Mysteries: Stargazing and Haunted History Boat Tour

Florida Water Tours, 107 Yacht Club Drive, St. Augustine, offers these immersive 90-minute guided cruises at 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays now through Nov. 17. Admission is \$29 for anyone age 13 and older. For further information, go to floridawatertour.com/cruises/moonlit-mysteries-boat-tour.

History, Mystery, Mayhem & Murder Tour

City Walks & Tour St. Augustine offers these free, hour-long walking tours at 2 p.m. each Sunday in October. These tours explore the darker side of the town's history and depart from 4 Granada St., St. Augustine. Advance reservations are required. For further information, go to StAugustineCityWalks.com.

Paranormal Investigation Tour of the Old Fort Grounds

This is an exterior tour on the grounds of the Castillo de San Marcos. Tours begin at 9:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and meet at the Old City Gates. Price is \$35. Reserve at supersaas.com/schedule/CityWalks/Paranormal_Investigation. Anyone younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Ghosts & Gravestones 'Trolley of the Doomed'

Explore the darker side of the Nation's Oldest City. Tours depart from the Old Town Trolley welcome center, 27 San Marco Ave., and run for about an hour. Times vary. Tickets are \$30.15, and advance reservations are required. To book a tour, call 904-829-1122.

'Ghost with the Most' Cocktail Tour

The Tasting Tours, 24 Cathedral Place, St. Augustine, offers these 2.5-hour, spine-chilling adventures guided by 'The Dead Guy' himself on select weekends in October. Admission is \$85 and tours visit four local venues. Tours depart at 7 p.m. For further information, go to thetastingtours.com.

Creatures of the Night

Meet eerie bugs and beasts while collecting creepy creature cards at The St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park, 999 Anastasia Blvd., St. Augustine. The event is offered 5:30 to 8 p.m. Oct. 20-22. Advance online tickets are required. Admission is \$13 for adults, \$11 for children ages 2-11. For further information, go to alligatorfarm.com.

Sheriff Hardwick's Haunted Jail

This spine-chilling experience created by the employees of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office returns Oct. 20, 21, 27 and 28. It is open each of those nights from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Admission is \$23. Limited onsite ticket purchases are available, but entry times are not guaranteed. Children age 14 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. The "Haunted Jail" is located at 4025 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine. For tickets or further information, go to eventbrite.com/e/sheriff-hardwicks-haunted-jail-tickets-718112111657?aff=ebdssbdtestsearch. See a

fun related video at floridashistoriccoast.com/events/sheriff-hardwicks-haunted-jail.

Halloween Spooktacular at Colonial Quarter

Presented by the St. Augustine Swashbucklers, this event starts at 6:30 p.m. each night, Oct. 27-29, with an adventure through the haunted grounds, past the skeleton ghost ship and up to the spider lair. The Colonial Quarter is located at 33 St. George St., St. Augustine. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children. The website is colonialquarter.com.

Boos and Brews 5K Race and Halloween Party

This chip-timed race begins at 5 p.m. Oct. 28 and includes a race shirt, finisher's medal and after-party music. Registration is \$25-\$35. The location is Ancient City Brewing, 3420 Agricultural Center Drive, St. Augustine. For information or to register, go to runsignup.com/Race/FL/SaintAugustine/AncientCityBrewing.

Headless Bangers Costume Ball

This event will be held 8-11:30 p.m. Oct. 28 in the Legends Ballroom at the Renaissance Hotel and Conference Center, 500 S. Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, in World Golf Village. There will be live music, desserts, a costume contest with cash prizes, psychics/card readers, candy, a cash bar and more. Tickets are \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door. For further information, go to bedrockband.net/Shows.

The Ghost In You

The Ancient City Poets will present St. Augustine's longest-running open mic poetry event from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Oct. 29 at The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine. Share your poems at this free event. Books by local authors will be given away as prizes for best literary costume, most creative costume and best teen costume. For further information, go to facebook.com/ancientcitypoets.

Spectral tours in the Nation's Oldest City

- The Spooky St. Augustine Family Ghost Walk: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through October. Where: St. Augustine historic district. Duration: 1.5 hours. Ages: all. Book: theoddmacabre.com/spooky-st-augustine-booking-staugustine.

- Ghost Tours of St. Augustine: 8 p.m. nightly. Where: Tour St. Augustine Inc., 4 Granada St. Book: Advance reservations and payment required, go to supersaas.com/

[calendar of events]

schedule/CityWalks/The_ORIGINAL_Ghostly_Experience

- A Ghostly Encounter Walking Tour: Meet at 12 St. George St., St. Augustine. Duration: 1.5 hours. Book: ancientcitytours.net/a-ghostly-encounter.

- Lighthouse Ghost Tour: The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum offers several spooky tours: Dark of the Moon Ghost Tour, Dark of the Moon Investigation Only, Lighthouse Ghost Tales and Private Ghost Tours. For information or to purchase tickets, go to staugustinelighthouse.com/visit/expand-your-visit.

- GhoSt Augustine offers multiple types of ghost tours, haunted pub crawls and paranormal investigations. For further information, go to ghostaugustine.com.

DUVAL COUNTY

Boos and Brews

Enjoy fall at the farm with live music, a pumpkin patch, wagon rides, a bounce house, beer, wine, cider, coffee and eats from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Oct. 21 at Congaree and Penn, 11830 Old Kings Road, Jacksonville. Farm passes may be purchased in person upon arrival. For information, go to congarieandpenn.com/boos-brews.



Halloween Lantern Festival

The Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is planning a magical evening of Halloween-themed entertainment from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 27 and 28. There will be food trucks, music, a lantern parade, a silent disco and more. To purchase tickets, go to jacksonvillearboretum.org/eventsactivities.

Spooktacular

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens will host this event from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on select dates in October. This year, the scare zones are more spine-tingling with frightening fiends and sinister sights hidden around every corner. There will also be trick-or-treating at seven candy stations and three toy stations. Admission is \$25-\$30, free to children age 2 and younger. Scaredy Cat Necklaces, that will ensure the monsters pass you by, are \$4.65. For further information and tickets, go to jacksonvillezoo.org/spooktacular.

13th Floor Haunted House

Jacksonville's legendary Halloween venue is located at 9230 Arlington Expressway. Warning: Event may be too intense for children age 12 and younger. This year's attractions include: The Deadlands, The Rot Shop, Depths of Darkness and Blackthorne Manor Book of Lost Souls. Visitors may also want to try out the mini escape games. Tickets available at 13thfloorjacksonville.com.

NASSAU COUNTY

Halloween Party

Emerald Goat, 96110 Lofton Square Court, Fernandina Beach, will have a Halloween party beginning at 7 p.m. Oct. 21.

3rd Annual Halloween Festival

This free event will feature trick or treating, carnival games, hayrides, pumpkin carving and costume contests. It will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Oct. 27 at the Yulee Sports Complex, 86142 Goodbread Road in Yulee. For information, call 904-530-6120.

Halloween Costume BYOB Cruise

This 21+ event will be 2-4 p.m. Oct. 29 at Amelia River Cruises & Charters, 1 N. Front St., Suite 3, Fernandina Beach. Cost is \$50. There will be a pet food drive at the dock prior to boarding. Donations of wet or dry food for cats and dogs will be accepted. For more information or to book, go to ameliarivercruises.com, click "cruises" and select "specialty cruises."

Terror on the Timber Farm Haunted Trails

North Florida's premier haunted attraction will be held on select dates in October at Amelia Shotgun Sports, 86300 Hot Shot Trail, Yulee. For further information or to purchase tickets, go to terroronthetimberfarm.fearticket.com

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Village Arts Framing and Gallery

155 Tourside Dr. #1520 Sawgrass Village
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
"Between Hilton Garden Inn and Chico's"
904.273.4925



Artist Sandra Hughes

www.villageartspvb.com

M - F 10 to 5
Sat 10 to 4

Over 150 Original Works
of Art on Exhibit



Thank you for voting me Ponte Vedra's Best Art Framing Company!

"Kate Moss Icon IX", 2023

Original Acrylic Painting on Canvas, 54" x 50". Price: \$3,100.
Jack Graves III is an American artist born in 1988 with hundreds of works sold worldwide.



John Perry Graves, Jr./Art Broker
Saint Augustine, Florida 32086
GRAVESINTERNATIONALART.COM
Established 1978



Danny Assi and Nicole Visaez

CARS AND COFFEE LOVERS UNITE



photos by **SUSAN GRIFFIN**

Below are photos from the Exotics & Espresso showcase event hosted by Bentley & Maserati Jacksonville on Sept. 30. The event featured exotic cars, as well as food trucks, an espresso cart and music for those who attended.



PREPARATIONS UNDER WAY FOR THE AMELIA ISLAND BOOK FESTIVAL

The Amelia Island Book Festival will be here before you know it.

The festival is a two-day event in mid-February. It begins with an award-winning Authors In Schools program where organizers put a book in the hand of every student in Nassau County and invite the author to visit the students at their school.

Authors are selected by the schools and include New York Times bestselling authors and award-winning authors of note. Each year, authors speak to more than 13,000 students at Nassau County public and private schools.

The festival continues with its Celebrity Author Gala, a chance to celebrate literacy by engaging with New York Times bestselling and award-winning authors and helping to raise funds for literacy programs.

The gala is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 23 at Ritz Carlton Amelia Island, 4750 Amelia Island Pkwy., Fernandina Beach.

Here's a look at the featured authors:

- David Baldacci, New York Times bestselling author and festival honorary chair

- John Grisham: New York Times bestselling author of 47 consecutive No. 1 books

- Melissa de la Cruz: New York Times bestselling author of award-winning novels for readers of all ages

- Terah Shelton Harris: Writer of Southern fiction with bittersweet endings

- Eileen Meyer: Writer of picture books and poetry

- Kevin Powers: National Book Award finalist, American fiction writer, poet and Iraq War veteran

- Deborah Royce: Television and film actress, author of

critically-acclaimed thrillers

- James Spooner: Graphic novelist, illustrator, filmmaker and cofounder of the Afropunk Festival

The evening will begin with an open-bar cocktail reception with the celebrity authors followed by a seated dinner and live auction. An author discussion with Q&A will be held at 8 p.m. and the celebrity author book signing will start at 8:45 p.m.

Tickets are \$235 per person and will go on sale Nov. 1 for Amelia Island Book Festival members and Nov. 15 for the public. There will be a select number of celebrity author table tickets available for \$550 per person.

Proceeds benefit the Authors in Schools Literacy Program.

Then, the 2024 Authors' Expo & Readers' Extravaganza will be held on Feb. 24 at

Fernandina Beach Middle School, 315 Citrona Drive.

Here, more than 100 exhibiting authors will have opportunities to interact with more than 1,300 readers as they showcase and sell their books.

There will be celebrity author breakout presentations led by New York Times bestselling authors, a book signing session, food trucks and more.

For children, there will be a Kids Zone.

The first Amelia Island Book Festival was held in 2001, and it has built a reputation for promoting literacy throughout the region. It conducts a short story writing contest, scholarship contest and the annual One Book, One Community event.

For further information about the Amelia Island Book Festival, go to ameliaislandbookfestival.org.



Churchill & Lacroix, Antiquaire

ESTATE JEWELRY QUALITY ANTIQUES FINE ART



OVER 400 ESTATE JEWELRY PIECES AND FINE OBJETS D'ART SUCH AS:
Rolex-Cartier-Omega-Baume Mercier-Tiffany & Co.-Tiffany Studios-Baccarat-Lalique-Herend-Loetz-Steuben-Hawkes Roycroft-Meissen-Wedgwood-Minton-Limoges-Moorcroft and more...



75 KING STREET, SUITE 121, SAINT AUGUSTINE, FL 32084

Located in the Lightner Museum Courtyard
Shop Hours: 7 Days a Week - 10:00am-5:00pm
(Except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day)
Phone: 904.827.9009

(A) www.churchill-lacroix.com (B) www.fineandestatejewelrybychurchillandlacroix.com




PONTE VEDRA AUTO SHOW

Sunday, November 12th

10:00am - 3:00pm

Nocatee Event Field

FREE TO SPECTATORS!

www.pvautoshow.com

Presented By
TOPCOAT

HOSPITALITY, FOODIE TALENT SPRAWLS FROM ST. AUGUSTINE TO SAVANNAH

story and photos by
LEIGH CORT

The Women’s Food Alliance, which was launched — and once identified only — in Northeast Florida, is practically ignoring the state borderline between Florida and Georgia and is now becoming the Women’s Food Alliance in the Southeast.

This was obvious in late September when two WFA events took place for members, one in St. Simons Island and another in Jacksonville.

It took 10 years for the Northeast Florida organization to grow into 150 hospitality members primarily established in Duval and St. Johns counties. The Coastal Georgia expansion began in June and has now grown to 25+ members from St. Marys and St. Simons to Savannah, Georgia.

What is the common denominator between these two states rich with hard-working, creative, talented and courageous women?

The members eagerly look forward to the monthly (sometimes weekly) events that are created just for them to get together over dinners, lunches, receptions and unique special events. What develops are new business partnerships, trusting relationships,



Jen Goodrich

curiosity about how to mentor and work together — but mostly remembering in their chosen careers — it’s “friendship first”!

Kicking off the fall season at Georgia Sea Grill restaurant in St. Simons Island were 18 new members, all with different businesses and career paths. Chef and cookbook author Rebekah Lingenfelter (Savannah) did a book signing just prior to the evening dinner at Donna MacPherson’s Golden Isles Culinary Center. They met through the Women’s Food Alliance in 2022 and are now on the leadership board in the coastal Georgia region.

Coming to the island dinner from hours away from the coast and comparing notes about their specialty foods, Cindy Epps (owner of Cindy’s Bits & Pieces Shortbreads) and Ruthie Garner (creator of Ruthie’s Best Butterscotch Sauce) told stories about how they market their products and how they’re handling the growth of their businesses.

The magic of four hospitality/event women meeting for the first time couldn’t have been more fun for Christina Godwin (Christina’s Dance World), Apryl Boyce (FreshJax), Shasta Fahs (Village Creek Landing) and Dale Potts (Sugar Marsh Cottage). Who knows what will be created when they reveal their careers focusing on dance events, seasoning and spice business, marsh side special event space and a confectionery of fine chocolates!

With the proximity of coastal Georgia to Northeast Florida, it wasn’t surprising that two new Women’s Food Alliance members from Florida, who recently met in August, drove to the Georgia dinner. Even though Amanda Axelrod (Happy Bake Day Show) and Erin Ward (The Copy Write Girl) are in dissimilar businesses, they are now good friends who found a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39 ■



Rebekah Lingenfelter, left, and Donna MacPherson



Erin Ward, left, and Amanda Axelrod



Erin Kelly, left, and Cindy Stavely



Clockwise: Michelle, Aine, Lynda and Mary Jane Culhane



Cindy Epps, left, and Ruthie Garner



Pictured from left: Apryl Boyce, Silvia Pulido, Kim Cornwell, Lisa Kiral and Jen Wolcott



Pictured from left: Christina Godwin, Apryl Boyce, Shasta Fahs and Dale Potts

FOODIE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

great connection over their passions for food and being creative entrepreneurs.

What better North Florida venue to launch the fall and holiday season for members, guests and the amazing 11 new members during the last six weeks?

A very popular restaurant that is conveniently located midway between the members from St. Augustine to Amelia Island: Culhane's Irish Pub on Southside. Representing the ultimate American dream, the four Culhane sisters have become nationally recognized restaurateurs and iconic members of the Women's Food Alliance.

Keeping with tradition, each month finds the Women's Food Alliance showcasing members and their businesses while enjoying a themed event. So an Ireland-inspired evening with videos and photos of the Culhane sisters' native Limerick, Irish countryside, family and a bagpipe welcome and farewell launched the dinner party!

Welcoming members and guests on this particular evening, nobody could have spread cheer better than two valued members of the North Florida



Evelyn Toro of Toro Things Photography

Advisory Board, Erin Kelly (Kelly Farms) and Cindy Stavely (Pirate Museum and Colonial Quarter). They balance their careers with leadership positions in many organizations yet always have time to inspire other women with their professional and positive personalities.

When a new member joins the Women's Food Alliance and says, "Yes, I'd love to showcase my new business," who could resist inviting Jen Goodrich to provide dessert with her irresistible "Peace Love and Little Donuts," which recently opened in St. Augustine!

Once again, the immediate connection

from one hospitality woman to another is obvious whenever there is an opportunity to get together and celebrate the joy of being in the industry everyone has chosen. Silvia Pulido (a 30-year restaurant legend who owns Havana Jax & Cuba Libre), Kim Cornwell (a national event planner owning 50 Shades of Fun), Lisa Kiral (the ReThreaded culinary director) and Jen Wolcott (a leader in the party rental industry All About Events)

Capturing priceless moments at any gathering might be considered one of the most important segments of an event. The Women's Food Alliance welcomes every food, event, entertainment and hospitality businesswoman, all coming together to create life's cherished times together.


As the months turn into years of finding friendships that could last a lifetime, the Women's Food Alliance continues to explode with talent, creativity and passion.

The knowledge, hard work, respect and fellowship that we all share leads us to keep the door open to women who might benefit from and contribute to our organization. Each member offers something unique and it's an exciting journey that we enjoy sharing.

**EARLY BIRD TICKETS
EXPIRE 10/15/23
UNLIMITED CULINARY &
BEVERAGE TASTINGS!**

Whiskey WINE & WILDLIFE

BENEFITING VILANO BEACH MAIN STREET

PRESENTED BY 



A CULINARY WEEKEND LIKE NO OTHER

NOVEMBER 2 - 5, 2023



Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife Schedule includes: Thursday, 11/2, W3 Wine Dinner at Pesca by Michael's, Friday, 11/3, Master Classes and Vilano AIA Soirée, Saturday, 11/4, GTM Research Reserve Guided Tour and Wine & Cheese Reception and the W3 Grand Tasting in downtown Vilano Beach and Sunday 11/5 finale, all-inclusive Jazz Brunch.

NEW 2023 EVENTS ON SALE NOW!

Tickets include unlimited tasting bites and wine, beer and spirits samples with a souvenir glass!

VILANO BEACH, ST. AUGUSTINE, FL | WHISKEYWINEANDWILDLIFE.COM



SPONSORED BY



BOZARD

LINCOLN

Official Automotive Sponsor

Recorder

Sysco
At the heart of food and service

