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# 65° DEPARTMENTS

## COLUMNS

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## PERSONA

John Wineglass, Musicologist  
by **PETER HEMMING**

Pennies From Heaven  
by **ANDREA STUART**

From the Congo to Carmel  
by **TONY SETON**

The Life Of Ted Balestreri  
by **KIMBERLY HORG-WEBB**

## SPECIAL

The Personal Letters of Bing Crosby

AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am

The Photography of Winston Swift Boyer

## SCENE

Make-A-Wish Monterey Bay Gala

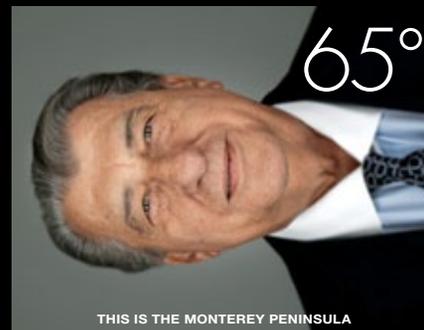
Big Sur Food & Wine Opening Night Reception

## STAY

Bernardus Lodge  
by **ALAN SHIPNUCK**

## COVER

Photo of Ted Balestreri by **BILL JANES**

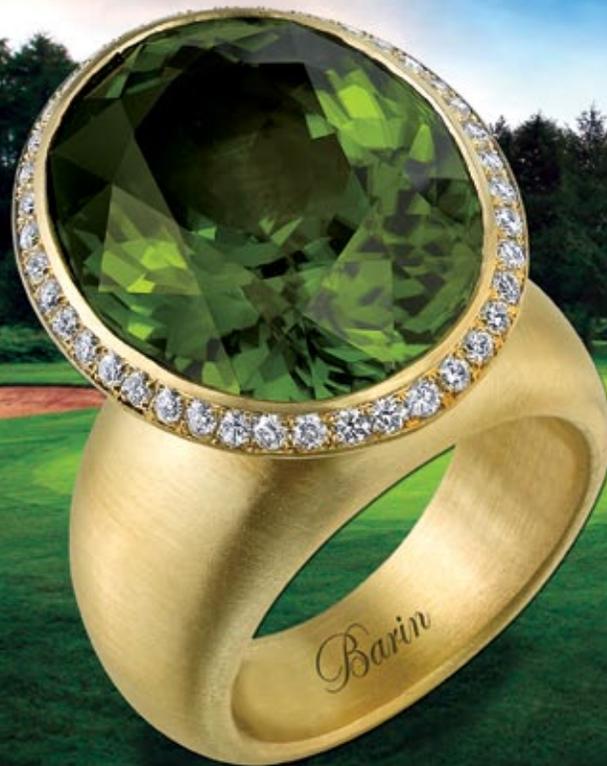


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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

by Richard Medel

Having just rolled into 2012, we can take deep breaths and enjoy the opportunities that lay ahead. For the most part, we can dismiss hardships from the previous year and build new, bite-sized goals that will turn this year into one worth celebrating.

If you are a local, especially if you own a business on the Monterey Peninsula, you may recognize the man on the cover of 65° this issue. If you've visited the shops and restaurants lined up along Cannery Row, you know him indirectly. He is Ted Balestreri, proprietor of Cannery Row. What you may not know is that inside the savoir-faire business man lays the roots of a New York native Catholic school boy who enjoys the holidays as much now as he did when he was 10. It's no surprise that we had such a fun time in the Highlands Inn kitchen during his photo shoot.

Infected by the music bug from a young age, John Wineglass embodies what it means to be a musician. Though his is not as familiar of a household name, his music—appearing on daytime soap operas—is the result of this classically trained musicologist's genius. Just being in his presence creates warmth that stays with you as you part ways with him.

Moving a bit closer to the heart, *Pennies from Heaven* is a story about two people very dear to me who, after a loss, found the strength to grow into happiness once again. The Doepkes were generous to share their story with us, helping to shed light on a certain birth anomaly. The beach shots for this article demonstrate the sheer joy they have found once again. 65° also features Michael Bowry, a golfer-turned-heavy equipment procurer-turned-marketing specialist.

On the 57° side, the cover seems to say it all. Harry Denton, San Francisco's leading party man, has taken the reins of this issue



and stamped it with his character. A man with a predilection for fashion and fun (and music, too!), he epitomizes San Francisco's candid spirit.

As you flip through the pages, you'll admire the photography of Patrick Stull and you'll find his story equally eye-opening. Plus, Athena Palombi, an accomplished chef, is bringing Mediterranean spirit to the Bay. Athena's ability to cook while dressed to the nines was passed down from her Greek grandmother and she has infused that flair into all of her endeavors. Finally, you'll read about Allegra Spinoso, an over-achieving, sweet young lady who, while only in high school, makes no bones about what she wants to be someday: a big time CEO.

We hope the New Year brings you good fortune. We'll be right here beside you, helping to make the ride a little more fun.

# 65°

## THIS IS THE MONTEREY PENINSULA

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# CONTRIBUTORS

## WRITERS



### MICHAEL CERVIN

"A retreat within the confines of paradise, staying at L'Ermitage in Beverly Hills is that respite from a frenetic world."

~ [michaeltcervin.com](http://michaeltcervin.com)



### LISA GUNTHER

"Chef Athena Palombi is an absolute delight, and living proof that you can overcome all odds if you just believe in yourself."

~ [lisamgunther.com](http://lisamgunther.com)



### PETER HEMMING

"Instead of the typical long haired rocker, I met a highly educated and skilled musician who's stories had me in stitches!"

~ [peterhemming.com](http://peterhemming.com)



### KIMBERLY HORG-WEBB

"After our conversation I could easily see how Ted Balestreri achieved his goals. He is the perfect example of how hard work pays off."

~ [kimberlyhorg-webb.com](http://kimberlyhorg-webb.com)



### TONY SETON

"The most interesting interviews are with people who took control of their lives at a young age, often out of necessity."

~ [setonpublishing.com](http://setonpublishing.com)



### ALAN SHIPNUCK

"I've had some cushy assignments but it's tough to beat an all-you-can-eat-and-drink spoiling at Bernardus."

## PHOTOGRAPHERS



### ALESSANDRO DESOGOS

"The eye has no limits in front of an immense space."

~ [desogos.com](http://desogos.com)



### GREG HARRIS

"Stepping into Patrick Stull's studio, and working with an artist as amazing as he, would be any photographers fantasy. Luckily, it was my reality."

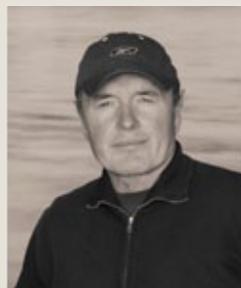
~ [harris-images.com](http://harris-images.com)



### CHRIS IATESTA

"I'm not a particularly verbose person. I think that's why I like taking pictures... they speak for themselves."

~ [iatesta.com](http://iatesta.com)



### BILL JANES

"65° has established itself as a creative venue for photographers on the Monterey Peninsula."

~ [billjanes.com](http://billjanes.com)



### KEVIN THOMAS

Kevin first picked up a camera at age 14 and has been captivated by the frozen image ever since.

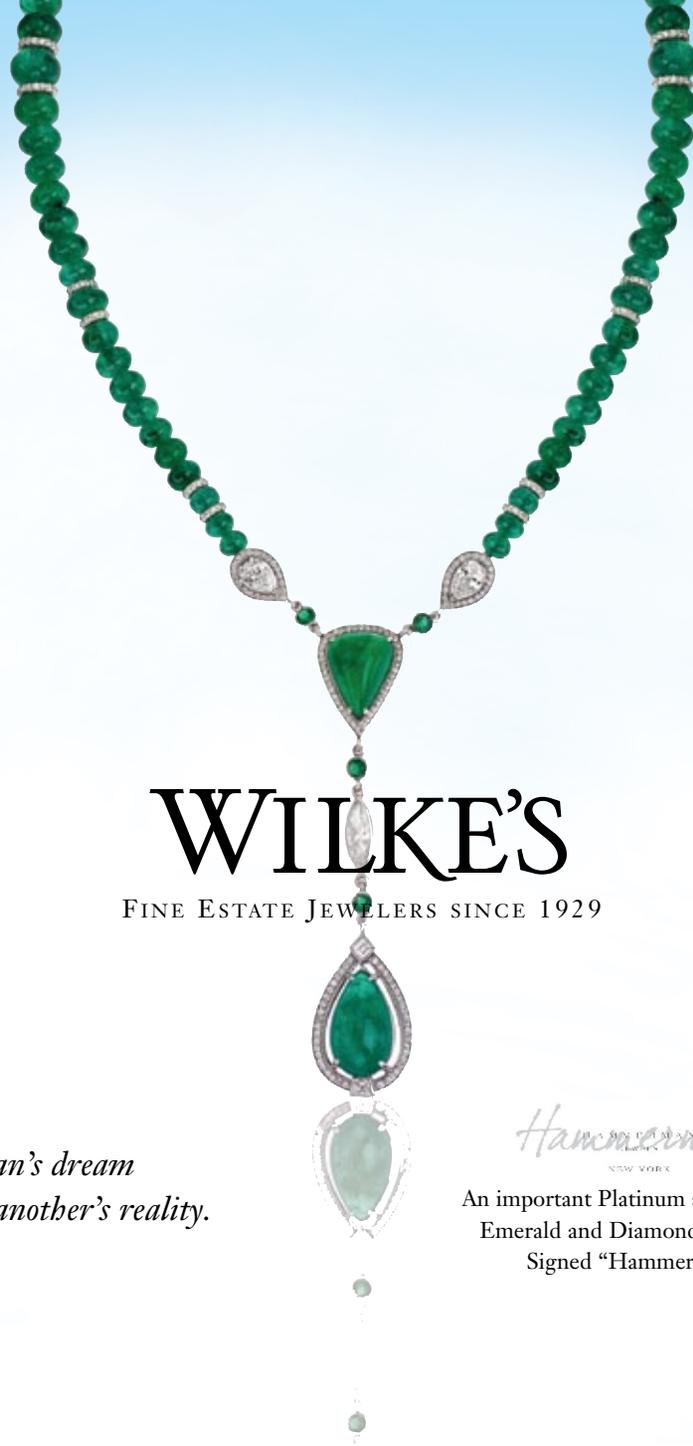
~ [kevinthomasphotography.com](http://kevinthomasphotography.com)



### D.M. TROUTMAN

"Another incredible year working for 65°: from the AT&T Pro-AM, to Burning Man to Big Sur Food and Wine. Awesome fun!"

~ [dmtimaging.com](http://dmtimaging.com)



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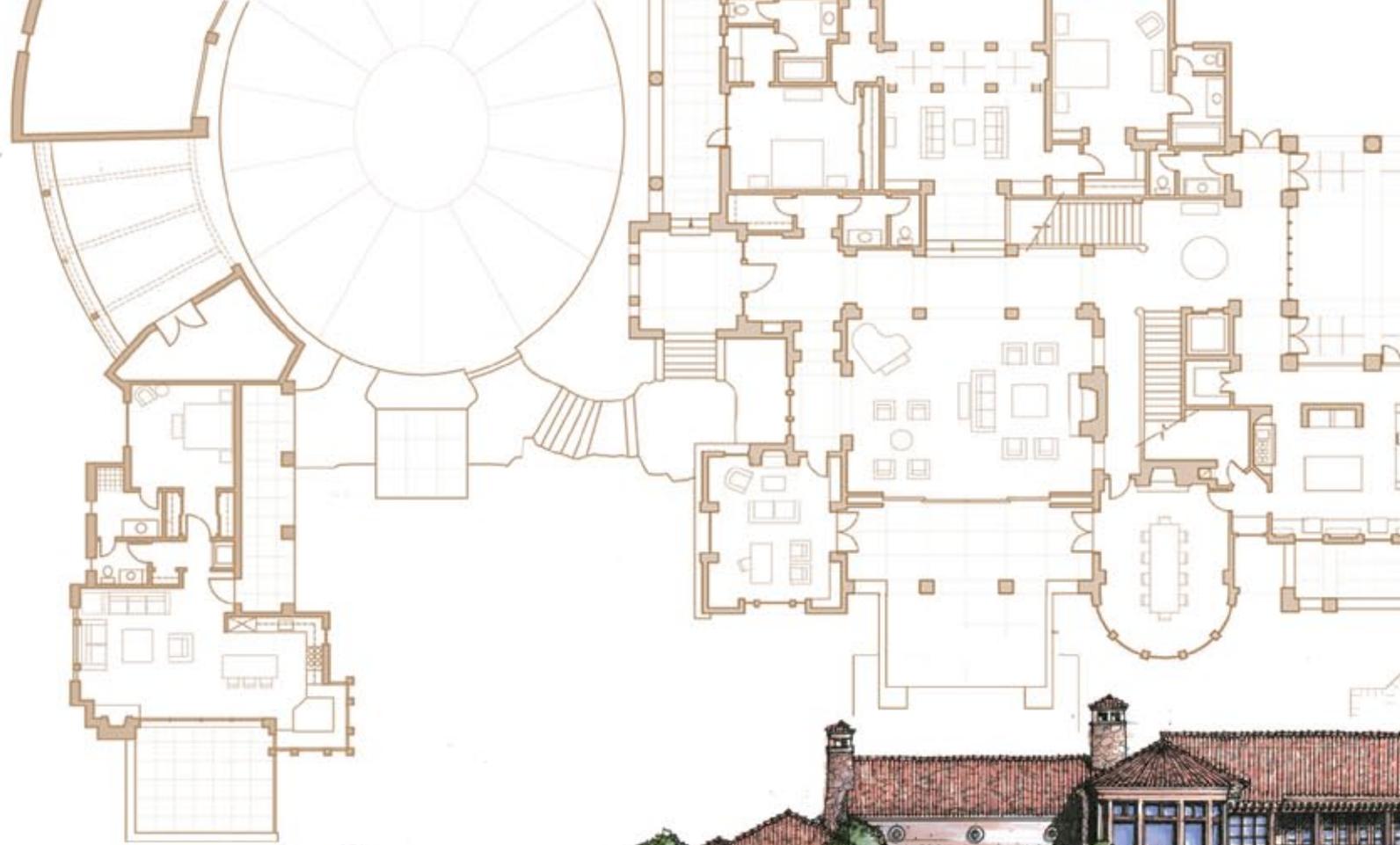
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Sterling-Huddleson Architecture has created a complete design package detailing the possibilities of Homesite #44. The opportunity to personalize the design and the availability of Homesite #44 can be obtained by contacting Jeff Davi of the Monterey Peninsula Home Team 831.594.3290



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John







## John Wineglass, Composer

by Peter Hemming / photography by Chris latesta

If you have passion for day-time dramas such as *All My Children* or *Day's of our Lives* and can get past the syrupy dialogue and dramatic dénouement, you may hear an unusually engaging musical score accenting a certain emotional point or plot twist. Few people are aware that this music was written by a classically trained musician named John Wineglass.

A native of Washington D.C., John began his musical career at the age of seven. Inspired by Yo-Yo Ma, John began learning the viola. Four years later, after joining the D.C. Youth Orchestra, John gave his first concerto. Always supportive, John's parents Ezekiel and Juanita afforded John a chance to travel as the orchestra performed in several countries. One such visit included the old Soviet Union bringing Gerwins's "An American in Paris" as well as classic music to eager proloteriats, including then Chancellor Mikhail Gorbachev himself. A workhorse for anything musical at Banneker High School, John played in the school's orchestra and string quartet.

Earning a Bachelor's of Music in Music Composition at American University and later a Master's at NYU led to an offer to intern at ABC Television as a musical

score editor for the show, *All my Children*. The job was fulfilling but something was missing. "I was making great a great living, working only four days week, but what I really wanted to do was write," said John. That chance came a year later when John composed the music for the episode when star Kelly Ripa married co-star Mark Consuelos in 1996.

After that, John's compositions were heard regularly on AMC and later, *As the World Turns*. "Every week I would compose a ton of music." Called "spotting," John would add some melody to evoke an emotional scene or dramatic entrance or exit. Every 15 minutes of screen time requires four hours of writing, producing, and mixing.

Where does such inspiration begin? "In my mind, images evoke colors and I see music in those colors. Yellow is the key of E. Purple is G minor. That's kind of how it works for me."

Between network assignments, John has written music for over a dozen commercials including the US Army, Texaco, JoeCola, Mercedes-Benz, and Pizza Hut. After marrying his wife Denise, the two moved to the Monterey Peninsula for a "balanced life."

In 2002, John received his first of seven Daytime Emmy nominations for his music compositions. When his name was called during the awards show, a very pregnant and excited Denise went into labor. After grabbing his award and offering a few words of thanks they quickly raced to the hospital where their daughter Abby was born. Two more Emmy statuettes have since been placed on John's mantle.

A Peninsula resident since 2005, John still maintains studio space in LA. "I'm there every other week," John remarks, but he admits the beauty and lifestyle of the central coast does offer a better quality of life.

Returning to his roots over the years, John admits to have played every venue in Washington D.C. "I've performed for each President from Ronald Reagan to (then Senator) Barack Obama." The most memorable was an invitation to play at a fundraiser one night at Senator Jay Rockefeller's home that led to a jam session with President Bill Clinton on the saxophone.

Drawn to academia, John has been an adjunct professor at California State University at Monterey Bay and is being scouted by several universities as an Artist in Residence. But music will always be John Wineglass' first love. "My heart is where the music is, and I'll follow that dream to the end."

# Tresors

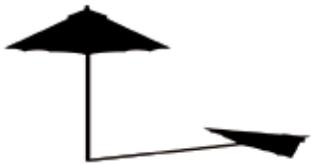


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THE PERSONAL LETTERS  
OF  
BING CROSBY  
AND  
BEN HOGAN



Bing Crosby  
Hollywood

February 24, 1955

Mr. Ben Hogan  
2912 West Pafford Street  
Fort Worth 10, Texas

Dear Ben:

Thank you so much for your solicitous note about my operation and my general health. I'm beginning to feel better every day now and it shouldn't be long before I'll be up and about and in good shape again. The operation was one I just couldn't duck, Ben, and I'm glad it's over with now and I hope I don't have a recurrence of the trouble which would occasion another cutting - that would be really a blow.

No golf now till summer - can't swing at least for a month or two and I've got to start a picture in the middle of March so I won't have much time anyhow for golf, so I think I'll just rack up the sticks until June or July.

We had a great tournament up at Pebble Beach again this year. The weather wasn't too bad except it rained one day. I'm sure hopeful we can get good weather there sometime during the tournament. Right up until two days before the tournament this year it was absolutely glorious weather - I was playing golf in just a light short-sleeved shirt, but she blew in a little on us after the bell rang.

Jimmy played damn good golf. I followed him a little on the last day at Pebble Beach and he was certainly hitting that thing beautifully but wasn't holing too many putts.

Ed Lowery and Byron Nelson won the Amateur-Pro, as you know. I wish you could have seen the way that Lowery scrambled at Pebble Beach. Byron was way off - in fact he picked up on a couple of holes, and Lowery you know is a short knocker and the course was slow and wet and he could hardly hit a single green but he came out of bunkers, out of the woods, off the beach, holed 15 and 20 footers time after time. Remarkable display of the great short game which you know this guy has.

Ben, give my best to Valerie. Hope to see you before too long.

All the best to you -

Your friend,



Bing Crosby

BC:lm



Bing Crosby  
Hollywood

June 27, 1960

Mr. Ben Hogan  
2912 West Pafford Street  
Fort Worth 10, Texas

Dear Ben:

I received the other two golf clubs which you sent. I haven't had a chance to try them yet, as I went fishing for ten days down near Cape San Lucas in Mexico, and just got back, and have quite a bit of work to do before I can get out on the links again. I'll let you know what develops.

I was, of course, out of touch with the sports world while in Mexico. Never did learn the winner of the Open until I got back to Nogales, to discover that Palmer took the title. I was sure pulling for you, and it must have been discouraging after the wonderful golf you played to have those two water holes come up and grab you at the finish.

Someone told me the shot you hit into the 17th hole, on the final round - that is, your third shot - was a perfectly played shot and you'd have been going for a birdie if it had rolled just a little bit the other way.

The same information also disclosed that you hit 34 greens - which under those conditions is certainly a tremendous performance. Well if you regain your old putting touch, you're certainly going to win this thing, but I know how difficult it is to recapture a stroke once it has left you.

I've got a bit of work to do, and then I'm going up to Calgary for the Stampede, along with Harris. We're to be joint Grand Marshals of the Parade, and then we'll do some fishing, I guess. Plan to go to Rome for the Olympics at the end of August.

Hope Valerie is well, and that things at the factory are proceeding according to plan. All the best to you, Ben, and thanks for the clubs -

As ever,

  
Bing Crosby

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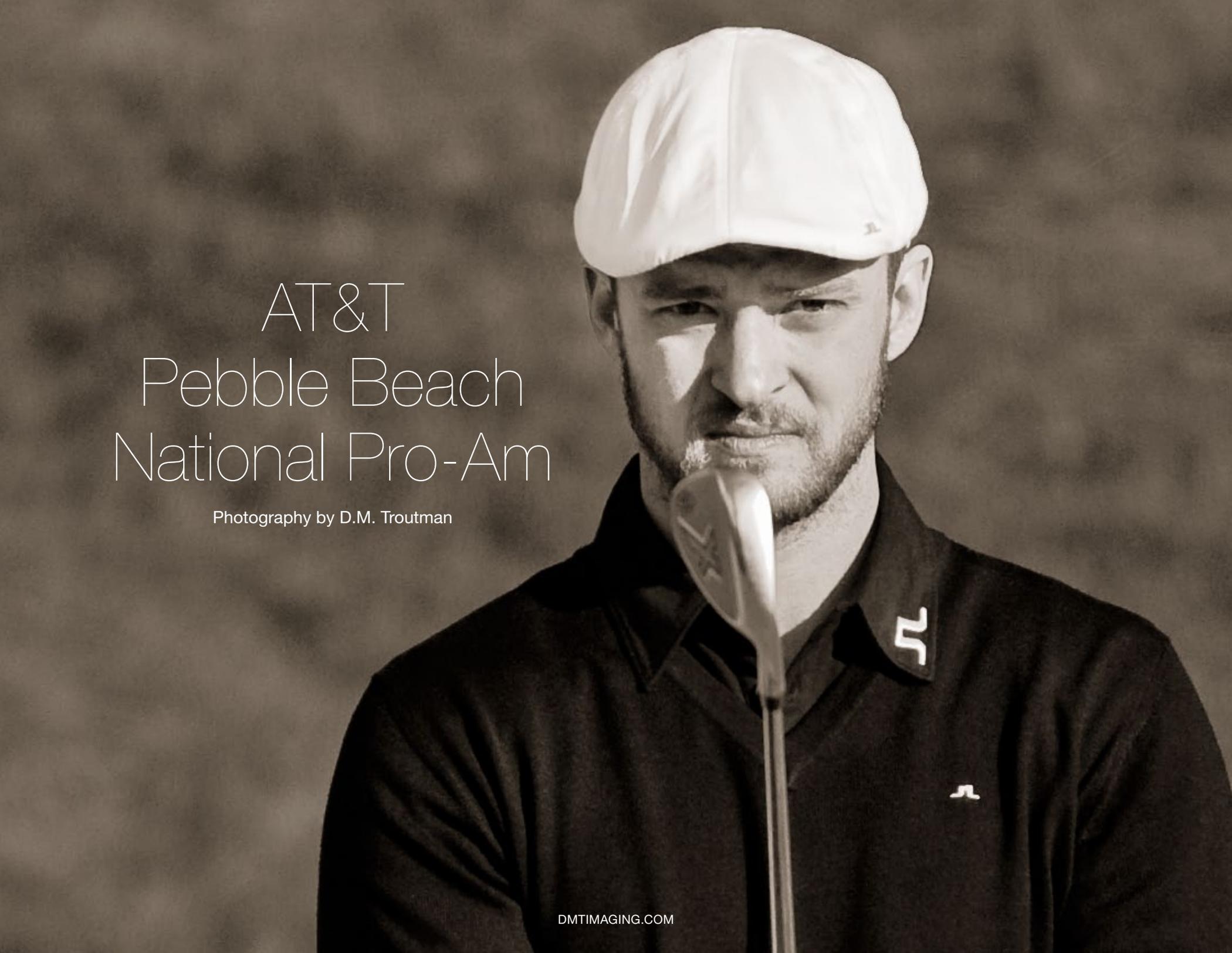
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## GIN

### Orange Blossom

9

**Beefeaters Gin, sweet vermouth, fresh orange juice. Served with jelly beans.** Simple and tasty! From Ronnie Reagan to Snoop Dogg, the "gin n' juice" concept is an all-around pleaser.

### Ramos Fizz

10

**Bombay Gin, fresh lemon juice, heavy cream, sugar, orange flower water, egg white, topped with selzer.** Want to see your bartender shake fast and furious? That's what it takes to achieve the foamy perfection of this smooth, creamy delight.

### French 75

12

**Plymouth Gin, fresh lemon, simple syrup, topped with champagne.** Another brainchild of Harry's Bar in Paris, this tasty champagne cocktail packs such a kick, it was named for the French 75mm howitzer artillery piece!

## RUM

### Zombie

12

**Bacardi Superior Rum, Bacardi gold rum, Myers Dark Rum, apricot brandy, passion fruit nectar, pineapple juice, simple syrup, Bacardi float of 151-proof rum.** Don the Beachcomber coined this drink after a request for something small to help a customer get through a particularly difficult business meeting. He later reported that it was so strong, it turned him into a zombie!

### Hemingway Daiquiri

9

**Bacardi Superior Rum, maraschino liqueur, fresh lime juice, grapefruit juice, simple syrup.** "Daiquiri" was also the name of both a beach and an iron mine near the town of Santiago, Cuba, where this classic was invented by a group of American mining engineers working there around the year 1900. Earnest Hemingway clocked a lot of time in Cuban bars, and preferred his drinks a little less sweet.

### Mary Pickford

11

**Leblon, Bacardi Superior Rum, pineapple juice, maraschino liqueur, grenadine** Created during the 1920's, for screen actress Mary Pickford and invented by Fred Kauffman at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba. Mary was filming alongside her husband Douglas Fairbanks and the legendary silent movie actor Charlie Chaplin.



If the martini is the king of cocktails, then gin is the crown it wears upon its head. The classic gin martini was a favorite of many Hollywood legends, such as Humphrey Bogart, Mae West, and Dean Martin, who famously said, "If you drink, don't drive. Don't even putt." Ronald Reagan, who starred alongside Doris Day in 1952's "The Winning Team", favored the Orange Blossom, which he liked to drink with a side of jelly beans.

"You should get out of those wet clothes and into a **dry martini.**"

-Mae West, 1937's "Every Day's a Holiday"

Whiskey was James Cagney's favorite drink. Long before starring with Doris Day in "Love Me or Leave Me", he tended bar in New York's lower east side. He liked any Irish whiskey, and lots of it!

"Lots of people drink to get drunk  
- I drink to celebrate,  
and I like to celebrate all day  
and into the night.  
If I can make  
it that far."

-James Cagney



## WHISKEY

### Plenty O'Toole 12

**Bushmills Irish Whiskey, Baileys Irish Cream, Frangelico over ice.** Named after the iconic James Bond character in "Diamonds Are Forever".

### Perfect Manhattan 12

**Maker's Mark 46 Bourbon, sweet and dry vermouth and a dash of bitters.** Named after New York's Manhattan Club, this cocktail took over the lead role previously held by gin martinis.

### Marlene Dietrich Cocktail 11

**Canadian Club Whisky, Grand Marnier, fresh orange juice over ice with orange and lemon peel garnish.** Invented in a Hollywood nightclub in the 1930's. Legend has it that Marlene Dietrich used to suck on lemons during film making to keep her mouth muscles taut for the camera.

## BRANDY

### Stinger 9

**Christian Brothers Brandy, white crème de menthe.** This classic was born during the prohibition out of the need to disguise the taste of homemade hooch!

### Sidecar 12

**Courvoisier, Cointreau, fresh lemon juice.** The famed "Harry's Bar" of Paris is generally credited with inventing the Sidecar in the 1920's for a patron who often rode in one. While many variations can be found, this is the original, and it screams "suavité"

### Between the Sheets 12

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*Susie Harrison, Michelle Bassett and Patrick Robinson (not pictured) of Galerie Rue Toulouse and Galerie Rue Royale of Carmel discuss the original painting by Artist Jean Jollifé-Conin donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Monterey Peninsula. Also pictured is Make-A-Wish's board members Ksenija Halamendaris and Cynthia House.*

Carmel's Galerie Rue Toulouse and its sister Galerie Rue Royale's board of directors have generously donated six works of original fine art from an internationally acclaimed artist appraised at over \$100,000 dollars.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation will auction the paintings during their annual charity fundraiser this fall at Monterey's Tehama Country Club. These donations will help generate funds for the incredible work that Make-A-Wish does to enrich the lives of children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Make-A-Wish board member Ksenija Halamendaris stated that Galerie Toulouse and Galerie Royale have "Raised the bar and set a new standard"

of charitable giving for the Monterey Peninsula. Halamendaris said she was inspired by Director of Corporate Sales and Public Relations Susie Harrison's spirit for creating innovative ways to reach important charities through the world of art.

The Galerie Toulouse and Galerie Royale Team Michelle Bassett, Patrick Robinson and Susie Harrison invite readers to view the exclusive art at both Carmel galleries.

*Galerie Rue Toulouse and Galerie Rue Royale are part of the French Art Network. For more information, please visit [frenchart.net](http://frenchart.net).*



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▲ Jennifer Gutteridge ~ Jamel Ehnisz ~ Sheri Berger ▼

Showgirls ▼







Kim



## Pennies from Heaven

by Andrea Stuart / photography by D.M. Troutman

Some people believe that angels come in many forms to guide and protect. Some say they give people the strength to bear the insufferable and provide foresight to recognize the beauty in life. Kim Doepke and her husband J.P. are two individuals who have felt the wind from angel's wings as they softened the cruel edges of sorrow after losing their first child.

From the day Kim and J.P. found out Kim was pregnant with Lola, their world blossomed into a garden of hopes, dreams, and expectations for their child-to-be. The anticipation of meeting Lola was so great that Kim and J.P. were giddy—carefree and excited. They read every pregnancy and baby book they could find and practically took up residence at Babies R Us and Pottery Barn Kids. Before J.P. was transferred from Texas to Carmel for his job, the doctors gave the green light of health, allowing them to finally arrive on the Peninsula safe and sound, ready for the future.

The future came in a flash. On August 16, Kim was admitted for an emergency cesarean due to abnormal bleeding. Within minutes of arriving at the hospital, Kim was wheeled into the operating room and prepped for surgery, prepared to meet her baby girl. Sadly, when Lola came into this world, her spirit had already journeyed Home. The doctors call the condition velamentous cord insertion. Normally, blood vessels run from the placenta via the umbilical cord to the baby. However, velamentous insertion means that these veins travel across the amniotic membranes before they come together into the umbilical cord, leaving the veins vulnerable to breakage.

"I knew something wasn't right but I never thought she wouldn't make it. Everything was a fog," recalls Kim. "The worst moment of my life was holding Lola for the last time before we meet again in Heaven." Having gone home with empty arm syndrome, Kim and J.P. were shrouded in clouds of grief, contemplating whether the darkness would give way to light again. The nursery sat silent, eagerly calling for the pitter-patter of babies feet. The condition that took little Lola's life is rare, affecting about one percent of normal pregnancies. Its effect is profound, often occurring suddenly and having few symptoms to alert doctors or mother. However, a transvaginal ultrasound and color Doppler can be done in the second trimester to detect this condition, allowing the doctors to orchestrate alternative care to ensure safe delivery of the baby. "I feel like expecting mothers should be offered it because it saves a baby's life," suggests Kim. During the initial healing process, Kim began a Facebook group called Angel Moms, which created an outlet for other grieving mothers.

Shadows finally dissolved into prisms when Kim and J.P. welcomed a son, Milo, in November of 2010. The nursery now sings with laughter and has regained its purpose. It also serves as a vigil for his sister Lola. Kim and J.P., having climbed many mountains together and grown closer despite everything, have learned to live life again through Milo, and also they believe it is important to keep Lola's memory alive. Milo's name, which means "peaceful," pays homage to Lola. "I feel it's important to share Lola with Milo. He has a big sister in Heaven," says Kim. "We will continue to celebrate her birthday each year by writing her a letter on her birthday and placing it in her baby book."

Milo has strengthened the tapestry of love between Kim and J.P., teaching them "not to sweat the small stuff," and to appreciate the idiosyncrasies in everyday life. From watching him bop to music on the radio to being in the same room with his smile, Kim and J.P. have learned how to move forward without forgetting the past. The Doepke family even rejoices in the act of collecting pennies, believing that each time they find one, it's a sign that Lola is smiling down.



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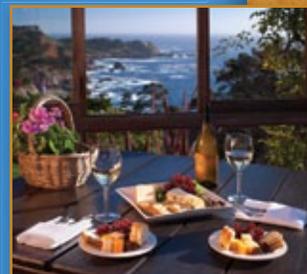
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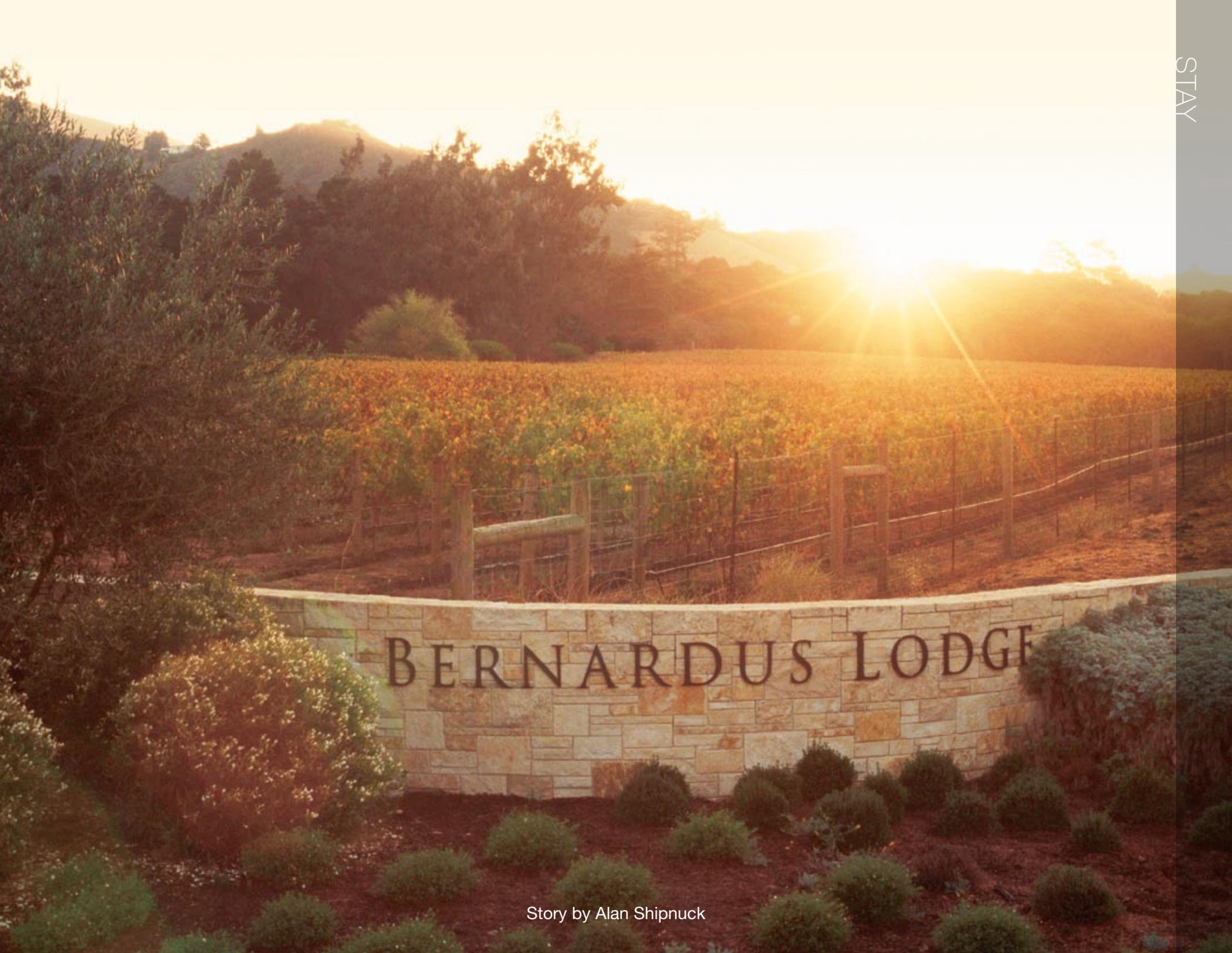
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Story by Alan Shipnuck



Most great resorts make a strong first impression. Stepping into the lobby of The Breakers, in Palm Beach, there is the overpowering urge to whisper as if in a museum, so formal and sober is the setting. Arriving at the Lodge at Pebble Beach is like being transported into a more elegant age, as the setting is timeless in its grace. Bernardus Lodge, the boutique resort in Carmel Valley, is every bit the same kind of world-class destination, but its charms are more subtle.

There are no imposing edifices here, just a cozy, rustic lobby. Inside, a roaring fire beckons as does a glass of wine—arriving guests are always handed a sample from the celebrated Bernardus vineyards, ten acres of which are out the front door of the lodge. There are only 57 rooms at Bernardus, and intimacy is the key to the experience. The staff is not only quick to learn your name but they love to banter. Whereas other plush resorts want to dazzle their guests, or maybe intimidate them, Bernardus strives to make visitors feel at home (if that home is very tasteful and well-appointed). The spacious guest rooms are done in the Monterey Territorial style, with beamed ceilings, ceramic tiles and rich woods. Each room comes with a fireplace and a deep-soaking tub so big you can swim laps in it, but what makes the strongest impression are the free goodies that await, including two bottles of wine, outrageously rich chocolate chip cookies and other edibles. Every little detail at Bernardus comes back to one simple goal: “More than anything, we just want our guests to relax and enjoy the setting,” says Mike Oprish, who has been the resort’s general manager since its inception in 1999.

Twelve miles west of Bernardus is one of the world’s most beautiful coastlines, dotted with brand-name destinations. Bernardus offers an entirely different experience. “What do we have that nobody else in the area does?” asks Oprish. “A unique micro-climate that offers 300 days of sunshine a year. And an emphasis on what might be termed ‘adult indulgences’: food, wine, the spa.”

Bernardus enjoys the reputation of a mecca for oenophiles



and epicurean; in October 2011, the influential trade publication *Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report* named Bernardus number one in a reader survey of the world's best "food & wine resorts." The homegrown wines are a point of particular pride but options abound, as Bernardus's wine cellar boasts some 21,000 bottles. The resorts encourages an immersive wine experience; the sommeliers at the flagship restaurant Marinus are exceedingly chatty and helpful, but it is possible to go even deeper, as guests are encouraged to

take guided tours of the vineyards and shadow the vintners.

There are two dining options at Bernardus: Wickets is a casual local's favorite, with the feel of a European bistro. Marinus is a temple of fine dining, the most celebrated restaurant in an area noted for its excellent food. Because Marinus does not traffic in heavy volume, its menu changes day to day and is typically not finalized until 4:30 p.m. "We have to wait to see what's available that day," says

Oprish. "Purveyors often show up at the back door unannounced. Or we get a call from the prawn guy, or the truffle guy, or the abalone farm."

It is possible to order a la carte (entrees run \$36-\$54) but the quintessential Marinus experience is chef Cal Stamenov's five-course tasting menu (\$115) with wine pairing (an additional \$95). On a recent evening, the menu looked like this:

1) Nantucket Bay Scallops, with ceviche,



Mendocino sea urchin, cilantro, piment d'espelette, avocado puree

2) Mediterranean John Dory, with brussel sprouts, heirloom apple, arugula, mangalitsa vinaigrette

3) Squab breast, with foie gras, sweetbreads, onion soubise, porcini mushroom, sauce Perigord

4) American wagyu beef, with matsutake, baby squash, pickled shallots, béarnaise, red wine jus

5) Bosc pear, with crispy farina, cheesecake puree, quince, dried plum, pear sorbet

And, yes, it was as decadent and delicious as it sounds.

Marinus has long had the stately vibe of an Old World wine country estate, but that is changing. In January 2012, the restaurant's décor will be redone to "liven up the place," says Oprish. "Make it more fun, more approachable. You should never

feel like you have to wear a sports jacket to dinner. This is Carmel Valley—come as you are."

This looser ethos can be seen at the recently created "chef's table" tucked into a corner of the spotless kitchen. Guests are encouraged to autograph the walls, and among the more recognizable names are Julia Child, Clint Eastwood, Leonardo DiCaprio, Barbra Streisand, and the members of the rap group Three 6 Mafia.



As successful as Bernardus has been in carving out its niche, the resort continues to evolve. Entitlements have already been secured to develop 3.5 acres on the eastern edge of the property, and work should soon begin on 16 new units, what Oprish calls “true suites” of around 1,000 square feet. Each will have a vineyard view and a private outdoor space with a shower and fireplace. As part of the expansion, two community hot tubs will be added, a nice compliment to the secluded swimming pool.

With room rates beginning at \$425, a getaway to Bernardus is certainly an indulgence, but that’s entirely the point. Upon arriving at the resort, my wife and I took our glasses of Chardonnay and explored the lobby. We were cozied up by the fire when a bellman found us. He was supposed to walk us to our room but, seeing how comfortable we were, he insisted that we not move. “You’ve got all the time in the world,” he said. “And we’ve got all the wine in the world. “Would you like another glass?”

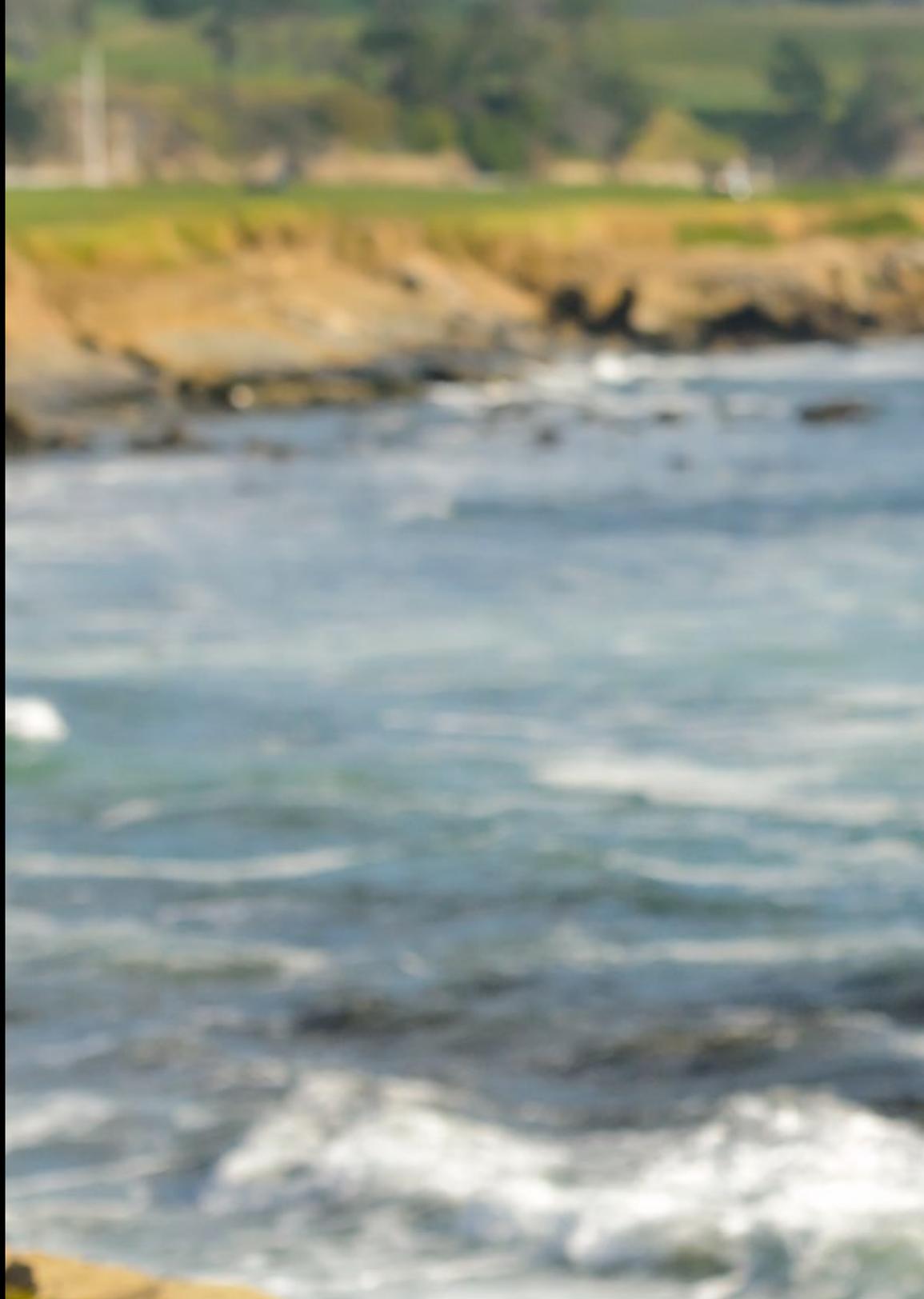
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Michael





# From the Congo to Carmel

by Tony Seton / photography by D.M. Troutman

The road to “The Land of 65°” can be circuitous. Michael Bowery arrived here with a bride of three days in 1987, and he’s here to stay. Born in Havre, Montana, not far from the Canadian border, Michael’s early years were spent in Lewiston, Idaho. As an only child, he did well in school, and he never got into trouble. He says, “I somehow overcame the odds.” The “somehow” was probably golf.

Lewiston is in a deep valley where the Snake and Clearwater Rivers come together and the weather is good year-round. Michael learned how to play golf when he was only eight years old. Golf is a solitary game, not a team sport; you know exactly how well you hit a shot. There’s no fooling yourself. Golf was



to become integral in Michael’s life. His next step was to leave Idaho and go to college in Arizona, where he made life-long friends and improved his golf game to a near-pro level. After college he had offers to work for I. Magnin—his father was in retail—or to sell Campbell’s Soup. Neither appealed to him. Some friends suggested that he take a job with Morrison-Knudsen, one of the world’s largest contractors, and go to Africa to build the world’s longest transmission line across Zaire, now the Congo. He would get paid a lot of money, they told him, and he’d be able to bank most of it tax-free—this, for a young man who’d never been east of Chicago. It wasn’t a risk-free venture. Michael spent most of his time in the Katanga area where rebels had killed hundreds of white hostages earlier that year. It turned out to be a great opportunity for Michael, and after Zaire, he stayed with M-K, becoming a procurer for heavy equipment parts digging a huge coal mine in Colombia.

For a while, it meant commuting every two weeks from Burlingame, where the company was headquartered. That’s where he met Maria, his future wife. In the mid-1980s, he was offered a job marketing a golf resort in Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida. He’d been there 18 months when a call came from college chums Bill Finn and David Cohen, CPAs in Monterey, telling him of a position in Monterey. Michael moved back to California to run a small company that made software to operate hotel communications systems. Five years later, when cell phones made calling on hotel phones too costly, Michael had met most of the hoteliers on the Peninsula and he decided to go into hotel/motel brokerage. It was a cutthroat business, he quickly saw, almost unethical. Plus he couldn’t support his wife and new daughter with one or two inn deals a year, so he expanded into commercial real estate. Much of his attention was focused on his pride and joy, his daughter Cristina. He made her meals, took her to school, and later taught her golf. They practiced together every day.

Now Cristina is at Drake University in Iowa on a golf scholarship. Michael is single again, taking life one day at a time. “It’s all I can do and it’s working for me. I’m happy.” He adds, “I’m very fortunate to be here, and to have done what I’ve done, and to have a lot of friends.” In fact, his father George, now 86, who also lives in Carmel, is in awe of how many good friends Michael has made. How does Michael explain it? “I’m just a kid from northern Montana and if I tell you something, it’s the truth.” Is there something he’d like to do that he hasn’t? Michael laughs, “I think being a roadie for the Rolling Stones would be a blast, an absolute kick. To travel around making great music in front of 50,000 people, three days a week, and make a fortune...”



# Whidbey Island Historic Home

Story by Tammy Neal



In a beautiful setting North of Seattle you will find Whidbey Island. Host to one of the finest waterfront properties in the Pacific Northwest, the Island is a coastal paradise busting with the feel of Big Sur topography areas, the charm of Carmel without the hustle and bustle of all the crowds. This exquisitely crafted and restored 1859 timber home is surrounded by 1.25 acres of a park-like garden, orchards with an array of fruit trees including apple, plum and fig, serving as a sanctuary for the fruit lover. With a touch similar to Carmel's, famous Cypress trees, fish ponds and

a large stone terrace perfect for entertaining and viewing the spectacular sunsets of Penn Cove as Bald Eagles soar above while you watch the many gray whales and Orcas migrate through the islands' waters.

The 1,977 square-foot home boasts three bedrooms, three baths and features unique amenities such as the French stove by La Cornue, legendary for their unrivaled craftsmanship and innovation of its kitchen ranges; a Sub Zero double drawer refrigerator freezer hidden in the

cabinetry, and multitudes of historical touches. You'll be taken back in time as you sit by a fireplace originally built by one of the local Indian tribe Chiefs. This exquisite estate also features stunning original flooring made of old maple bird's eye and tiger wood, as well as a wine cellar and tobacco barn that was imported from Virginia.

You will be captivated as you stroll along the home's 200 feet of waterfront as you continue down a path that leads you to its pristine beaches. Whidbey Island is also known for the Penn Cove mussels



lodged along the coastal shore. Take in the white-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains to the West and the majestic backdrop of the Cascade Range to the east. Within walking distance to downtown Coupeville, Whidbey Island is also known for its sleepy shopping village housed in the town's original buildings, fabulous restaurants, charming bed and breakfast inns, Victorian homes and its perennial breathtaking views.

This home is literally a piece of history. In the mid-1800s, the business district caught the attention of

Sea Captains from New England, some of whom eventually sailed into the pristine waters of Penn Cove and settled into their new homes. Captain Swift, being one of the original owners of this superb home, later gave it to his daughter. What's more intriguing about this property is that every year the Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain from the original schooners sail into the cove and stage an 18th century-style cannon ball battle.

Deception Pass Bridge, a scenic wonder of the Pacific Northwest, connects the north end

of Whidbey to the mainland and serves as a fantastical scenic drive. Should you feel like taking another course, ferry service is available throughout the Island, connecting you to all the state routes. What could be better than living in your own little slice of Heaven?

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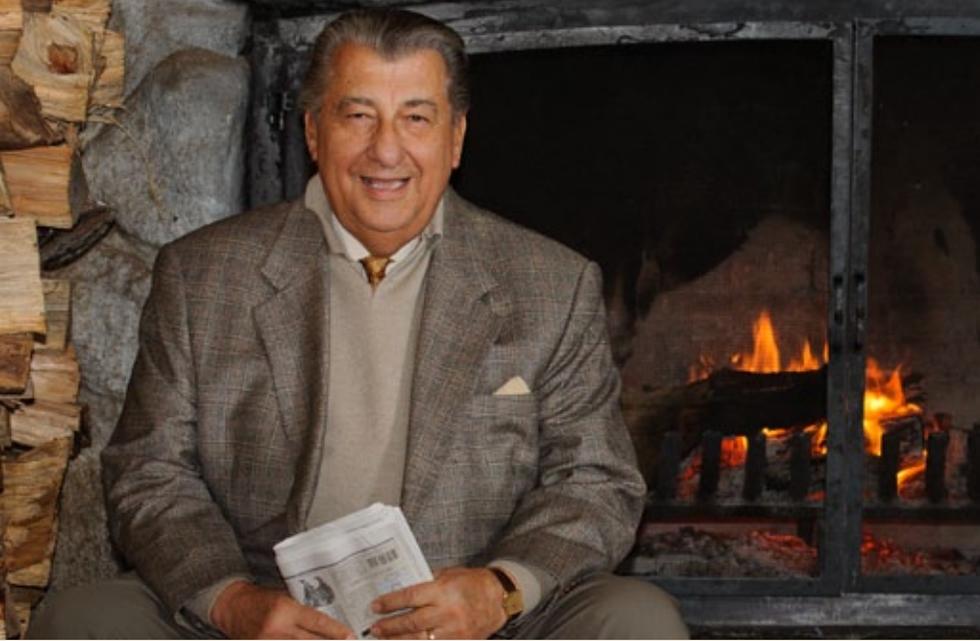
For more Information, contact owner Gabriella Santos at **(360) 630-0009**

PERSONA





Ted



# The Life of Ted Balestreri

by Kimberly Horg-Webb / photography by D.M. Troutman

One of Ted Balestreri's earliest memories is playing stickball in his busy Brooklyn neighborhood with friends. The nuns at his Catholic school also left an impression on young Ted. Always surrounded by friends and family, he recalls the Christmas holidays when all the family would gather and his dad would dress up as Santa Claus. The holiday also meant an abundance of good food, and growing up in an Italian family, a second serving was always a requirement.

Like a lot of young boys, he looked up to his dad, Vincent, who was an educated man, only the second generation in his family to live in America. Unfortunately he died during Balestreri's teen years. It was then up to his mother, Viola, to raise him. She became his biggest role model, teaching him to work hard and always look for the good in people. "It wasn't easy growing up in New York," he says. "I didn't have the time to get into trouble because I was always working."

His first job was when he was 12 years old delivering newspapers. Even back then he was an overachiever, winning contests by soliciting subscriptions. "I learned at a young age that you have to work hard to succeed," Balestreri says.

In 1956, Balestreri moved to California with his mother and younger sister, Loraine, partially because his aunt and uncle resided in the area. He remembers

Carmel as a quiet little village, much different than the loud streets of Brooklyn that he was accustomed to. "I thought I was being punished," he recalls.

Shortly after settling into his new surroundings, he met friends who spent their free time hanging out at the movie theater. He always worked, sometimes as many as three jobs. His first job on the Peninsula was working at the Highlands Inn.

"I did anything they asked but my main job there was as a bus boy," he says. "It was a wonderful experience because the people were friendly and I really liked the hospitality part of the job."

He graduated from Carmel High School and attended Monterey Peninsula College until he was drafted for the war in 1961. He spent a couple of years in the Army and then enrolled in Louis Hotel Management in Washington D.C. He worked for various restaurants during and after college, which improved his people skills. He shared his dream of one day opening his own restaurant with his dentist, Orland Caselli, who told him to let him know when that day came.

Balestreri had big dreams but small funds, so he found an abandoned sardine factory that had cheap rent. "Rent was \$200 a month. The building was condemned, we had no marketing plan and it was on the wrong side of the tracks," Balestreri says.

Balestreri, together with his college buddy Bert Curtino and dentist Caselli, took a gamble to open their own restaurant. In 1968, the Sardine Factory opened its doors for business. He remembers this as one of the happiest moments in his life. He was able to celebrate it with his mother, who always encouraged him to reach for the stars. "The struggling years were the most exciting times for me because they were exhilarating," he says.

Eventually, Balestreri and Curtino bought out Caselli and opened the Butcher Shop in Carmel with a couple of new friends (Harry Davidian and George Zarounian). In the 1970s, the entrepreneurs started buying property in the area now known as Cannery Row. "We had no idea that it would grow into what it is today," he states. "We were just having fun."

Balestreri attributes much of his success to understanding people of all backgrounds as well as being married to Velma, his wife of 41 years. The couple have two sons, Teddy II and Vincent, who work in the family business. He is now 71 but has no plans to retire because he is happiest working.



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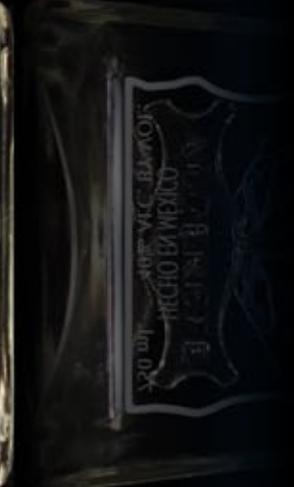
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PERSONA





Patrick



## Exposing the Beauty Within

by Carol Ziogas / photography by Greg Harris

Expressing the sensuality of his artistic subjects is something Patrick Stull does with astounding grace. Exploring the female form in film, sculpture and on canvas, Stull coaxes the inner goddess from hiding, bringing her to the fore to be exposed, examined, and ultimately celebrated.

With an Irish Catholic mother and a hard working blue collar German father, Stull's childhood was not exactly one full of emotional warmth and closeness. With his father often at work providing the income needed to support a full house, and older brothers at jobs of their own, Stull spent much of his time in the company of his mother and sister. He credits his early relationship with the women closest to him for teaching respect for the work that women do.

"Our values [today] are all screwed up; it's all about the individual. We need to think more about community and the value of women," says Stull. "It's women

who can change things. Men have had so many opportunities, but they've screwed it up, and they will continue to screw it up because they don't get it, most of them. Some do, but most do not."

When asked what prompted him to become an artist, Stull cites, "Failures early on in life" and the drive to overcome them as his inspiration. He came to art gradually, seeing it as a medium for pushing its viewers out of complacency and encouraging them to question their own accepted realities. With a an education and professional background in business and finance, he would seem almost more likely to fit the mold of bank executive, but something in his mind couldn't accept the role of women in business as he experienced it. Moving from executive to artist has allowed Stull to push a social agenda whose time, he feels, has truly come. "I'm all about exhibition work based on the lives of women. Some of it has to do with age, and how society treats women as they age," he says.

Using art as a vehicle for changing and opening peoples' minds, Stull photographs women at their strongest and most vulnerable. Ranging from young teens finding their way in the world, to women on the verge of creating new life, and sensitive portraits of women as they age, Stull strives to capture the creative power he sees inherent in women. His subjects include single mothers, same-sex couples, and women from different countries. "All these women have different things going on in their lives, they're from all over the world, and if that doesn't change someone to stop and think about all these issues, I don't know what will," he muses.

Respect for his subjects includes having a custom-installed heated floor in his studio so the women he photographs won't be cold during a shoot, clothed or not. His welcoming and professional demeanor makes it possible for his subjects to feel comfortable in front of the lens.

While visiting art museums around the world, Stull often sees art that is expected, but not what he considers relevant. While the obligatory Picasso or Warhol might draw visitors to museums, Stull feels art is best when it challenges our perceptions. "Art presents a problem to you," says Stull. To solve that problem, we need to use our imagination and critical thinking skills to solve it. In the process, we learn more about ourselves as a society.

Stull feels that instead of the arts being the first to be cut during a budget crisis, they should be the last to go. Art isn't just entertainment, but can and should be used to educate, and to heal. "I'm a big art fan," he laughs.

L'Ermitage  
BEVERLY HILLS

STAY





## L'Ermitage: Understated Elegance in Beverly Hills by Michael Cervin

Heading west down Burton Drive in Beverly Hills on the way to check in to L'Ermitage, one is not immediately struck by the obviousness of the hotel. The architectural design of the property is in harmony with its surroundings, which is part of the allure. Just out front there is a large green open space, bordered by quintessential Southern California palm trees, which run for six blocks. It is classic old-school Beverly Hills; staid refined residences, wide boulevards of a reminiscent era. And that is a good thing. There is a strong sense

at L'Ermitage of being understated.

Having operated as a hotel for over 30 years, the Viceroy Hotel Group was awarded the management contract of L'Ermitage by the new owner at the beginning of 2010 and has elevated it to their high standards. It goes without saying that the service aspect is why many people choose to stay here; the concept of customer service is fully fleshed out, from the valets to the front desk to the back of house staff. You notice the feel of reserved elegance immediately

as you enter the lobby with its low ceiling and dim auburn lights punctuating the interior which is both practical and slightly moody, without being an architect's vanity project of an overly decorated, visually confusing interior space. This is not flashy Hollywood, but bespoke Beverly Hills. For the past ten years, L'Ermitage has earned the rare dual designation of the Forbes 5 Star, and AAA Five Diamond awards, a feat not easily accomplished. There are only eight floors to the hotel and a complete sense of privacy; it's



not quite a hideaway, but it is close.

“L’Ermitage Beverly Hills offers a discrete residential feel,” notes General Manager Sal Abaunza. “We really do offer a home away from home in both style and service.” Of course, many high-end properties aim for the same thing and there are a plethora of places to stay in and around Beverly Hills. “The décor, room size, and uncomplicated comfort certainly offer a unique alternative from the older remodeled properties, trying to portray a vintage period,” Abaunza offers as a reason to forgo other lodging options. And that idea draws a large crowd from the U.S.; about three-fourths

of the guests in fact, though international guests round out those numbers. The hotel originally opened in the 1970s to huge success and was known for its expensive art collection at the time. It closed for five years and then re-opened in 1989 after a massive refurbishment and décor change, as modern contemporary Asian. “The design was very forward thinking and, after some subtle updates where needed, it has changed very little from what you see today,” says Abaunza. However, the idea of contemporary Asian can mean many things, but at L’Ermitage it means simplicity imbued with classic design set in a confident elegance.

The 117 guestrooms, each encompassing 625 square feet of solitude, and eight grand luxe suites, which max out at 1,400 square feet of living space, include in-room safes, large flat screen TVs, and marble bathrooms. The rooms are sparsely decorated, not heavy handed or clunky like so many properties. Part of the simple design scheme is to allow the guests to embody the space, unfettered by distractions. And that is the clear point of the property—to create an almost clean, blank canvas in which guests can abide for a few days, a week, or longer. There are strong wood accents, most notably doors, hiding the media bureaus which act as shoji screens



in effect. Step out balconies face west allowing views of downtown Los Angeles and Century City. And most everything you need is already here, including pool, fitness room, bar, restaurant and spa.

While at L'Ermitage, the fitness room, located on the eighth floor, will get you on a treadmill and you probably won't mind the workout as you are facing the Hollywood Hills; the Griffith Observatory and the Hollywood sign in the distance. Up one flight of stairs gets you to the rooftop pool for a

soak, the ability to lounge above L.A. in relative quiet and obscurity. The pool has private cabanas for rent as well. Also located on the eighth floor is the Spa, whose two treatment rooms are geared towards peace of mind and body including their Jet Lag Massage, which is not just for weary travelers, and incorporates hand and foot massages to aid in the circulation and help defeat fatigue. The idea of relaxation extends to the guest rooms where the beds are enormously comfortable; California King sized beds in fact.

What is unusual is that L'Ermitage also offers specialty pillows; five different pillows designed to relieve stress, like the neck pillow; and comfort, like the water-based pillow. The bath sheets, too, are plush cotton from Turkey and are worth noting. After all, a touch of softness should immediately follow every shower.

At street level they not only have their bar area, which extends to the outside with an eight foot thin waterfall flanked by palm trees and tropical-looking teak furniture, but their on-site restaurant,



Livello, now operated by Executive Chef Joseph Elevado, a culinary artist who infuses his the menu with his innovation. Being in Beverly Hills means you have easy car access to Santa Monica Beach, downtown Los Angeles, and Hollywood. Rodeo Drive is just five blocks away, a quick ten minute walk. Being in the heart of Beverly Hills with its tony shops and restaurants is one of the deciding factors of why people seek L'Ermitage. World class shopping for something different, even highly rated restaurants, are no more than a brief

drive, and you can pick up Venezuelan coffee at Coupa Café, something you can't get anywhere else in Southern California. Then hopscotch the hamlet, or saunter about the Southland.

Ultimately, any guest can choose anyplace to stay, but L'Ermitage goes against the grain and provides what you want without all the trappings of what you don't need. This is exactly what makes L'Ermitage different, proximity to everything, yet completely set apart.

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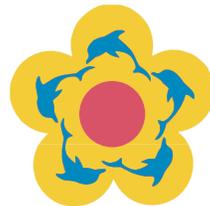
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# Ultra-Modern Healdsburg Home

by Carol Ziogas





Removed from the congestion of downtown San Francisco, tucked away in historic Healdsburg, stands a property designed to please the senses with sweeping views, a scented garden, private vineyard, and amenities at your fingertips, all situated on a quiet acre of California hillside.

Built in 2004, this three level, four bed/four bath home designed by local architect James McCalligan is a showcase of light, airy space mixed with efficiency and comfort. High ceilings (15 feet on the first floor, 12 feet in the guest rooms) and abundant windows allow plenty of natural light to illuminate the open floor plan of the main area. Flooring throughout the house includes

such eco-friendly materials as bamboo, slate, and poured concrete, with a central vacuum system for easy cleaning.

Through the front door and the welcoming foyer, the kitchen offers green granite countertops, walk-in pantry, and top-of-the-line appliances. A six-burner gas stove, double ovens, dishwasher and steamer/warmer, all by Miele, provide the home chef with endless options. A Sub-Zero refrigerator and three Blanco sinks add to the already impressive collection of gourmet-quality appliances. The pantry provides ample space for storage, as well as a second refrigerator and a microwave oven.

Beyond the kitchen, the great room draws you in with its heady views of the valley below through large picture windows. A travertine fireplace offers warmth and a place to relax, while the ten-seat wet bar with stainless steel sink, icemaker, and wine cooler provides opportunities for entertaining. A stereo system is wired for sound throughout the house, including the patios on each of three levels.

The master suite offers more of the same level of comfort, including a fireplace, several windows to provide light and accentuate the multi-hued walls, and a slate patio overlooking the vineyard. A 10-foot by 10-foot walk-in closet with island and custom shelving offers wardrobe storage for every



season. In the master bath, an extra large jetted tub, double steam shower in travertine, Duravit toilet and bidet, custom cabinetry and Grohe faucets give the space a spa-like feel.

The second level consists of a complete office with half bath, oversized laundry room with sink, built-in hamper, Miele washer and dryer, and a pop-out ironing board. A hall closet provides ample storage space with built-in shelves, coast racks, and cubbies for guests.

On the third level, two guest bedrooms feature baths ensuite, including large shower/tubs and Porcher sinks, as well as slate floors. A kitchenette with a sink and refrigerator add convenience. An

artisan-designed, custom-made wine cellar built of walnut includes a hand made table and chairs from locally grown wood that adds a touch of comfort and style. An attached three-car garage is also on this level.

Take a walk through the garden to enjoy the vegetables, herbs and roses, along with the orchard, vineyard, and lavender field. Up on the patio, enjoy a soak in the Jacuzzi and rinse off in the outside shower.

The corrugated “gutterless” roof collects water for the cistern below, further supporting the eco-friendly design of the house. Hunter green and rust stucco color the exterior of the home, blending

elegantly with the surrounding countryside. The architectural style echoes those of prominent buildings in downtown Healdsburg just a mile away, including the Town Hall and H2 Hotel.

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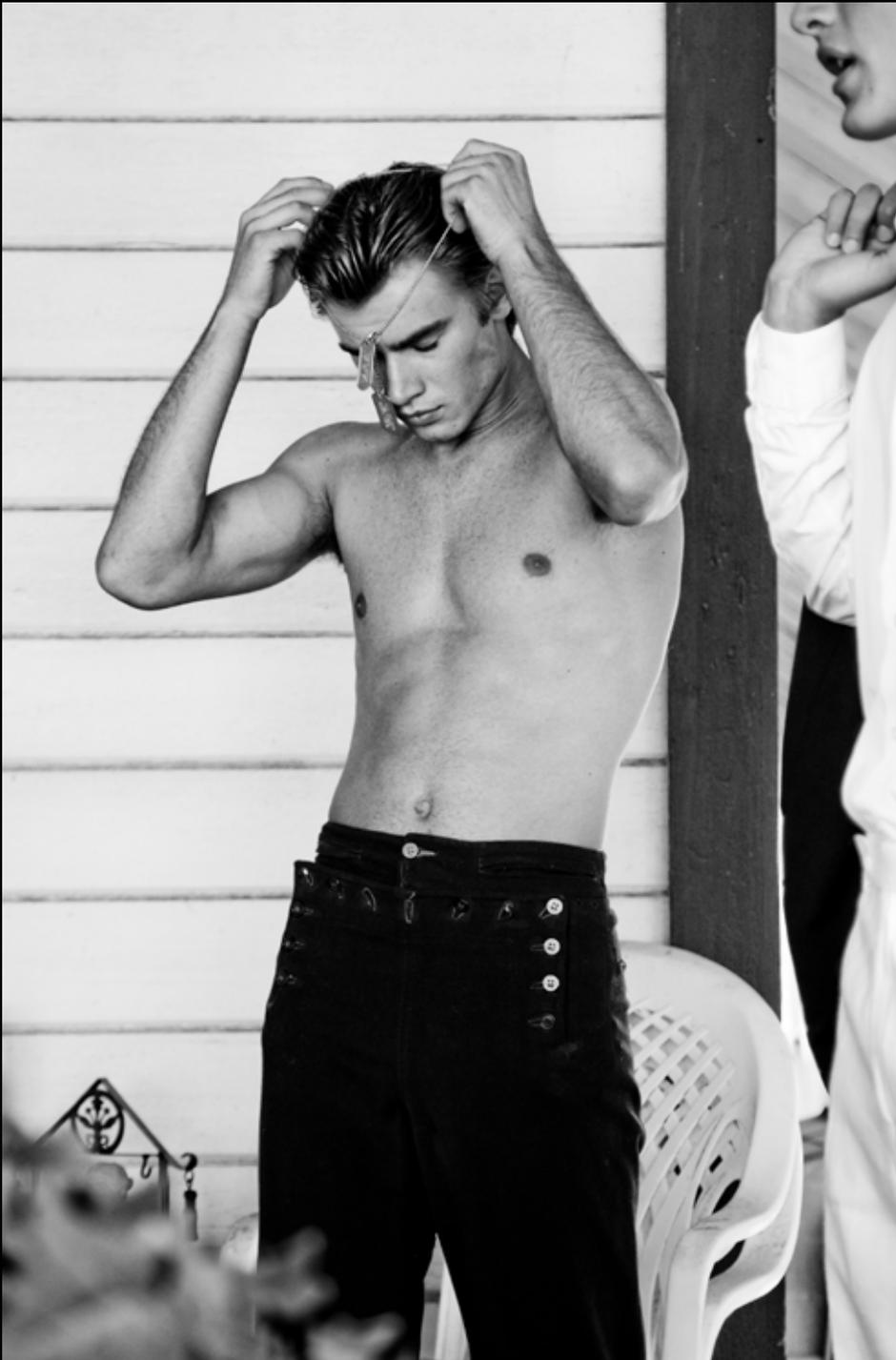


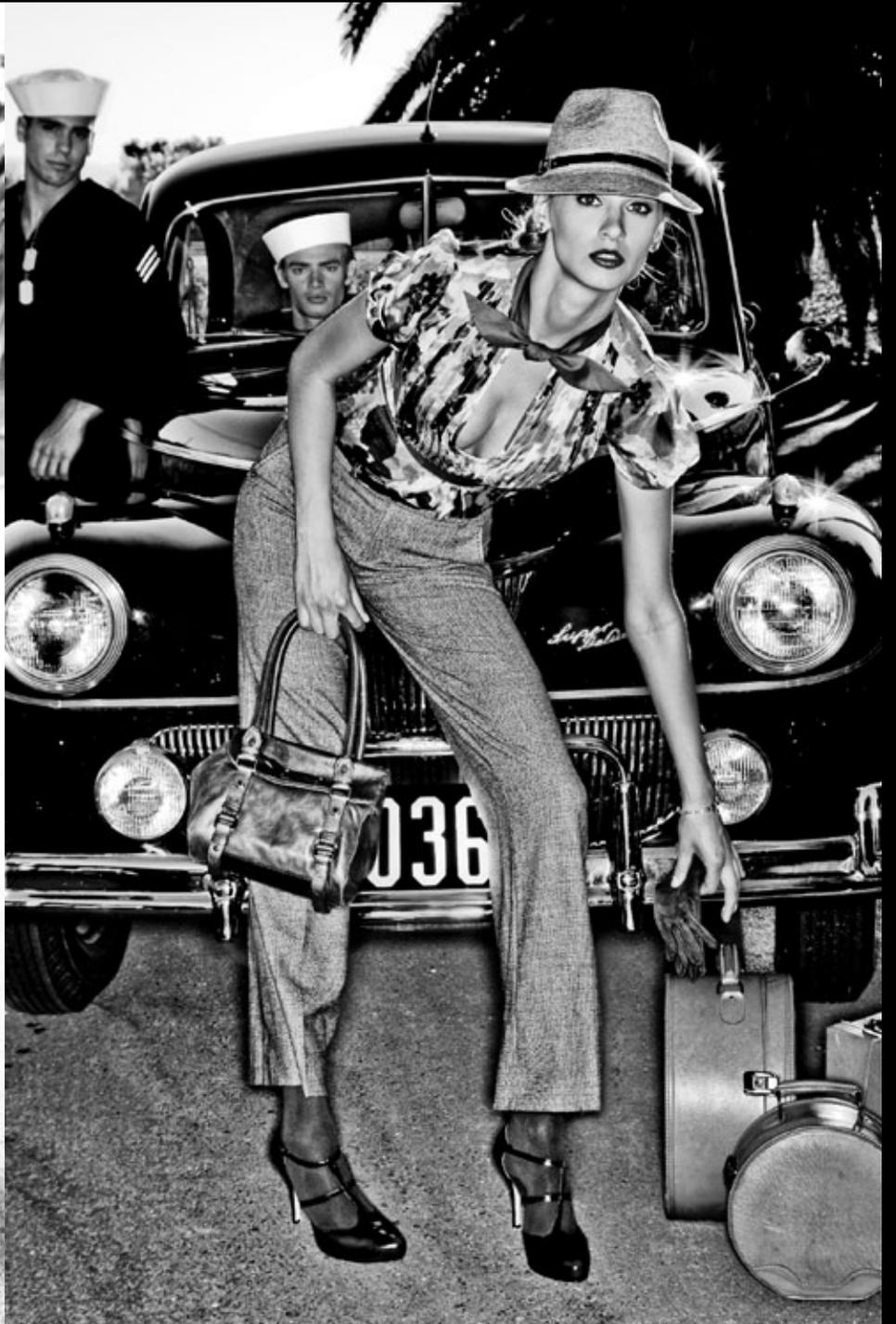
# In Times of War

In times of war, some fashions from the past come back. Like an old movie, Sylist Konrad Janus captures the sign of the times with 1940's style.

Photography by Kevin Thomas









# Celebrating Diversity Through Academic Excellence

by Tammy Neal with Andrea Stuart / photo by Brandon Lew

The Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy is an intimate alternative school in the Castro modeled after Milk's personal belief that all people should be respected. Prior to the early 1950s, the original campus housed the Douglass Elementary School. It wasn't until June 25, 1996 that Superintendent Waldemar Rojas and Principal Sandra Leigh realized that the community lacked a Harvey Milk legacy, so the San Francisco Unified School district's Board of Education voted to rename Douglass School the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy. Their mission is to empower student learning by teaching tolerance and nonviolence, celebrating diversity, achieving academic excellence, and fostering strong family-school-community connections.

The belief that all staff and parents should be involved in the decision-making process bolsters the academy's open door policy and encourages parents to actively participate in their child's educational journey. The academy is committed to developing students' literary skills in an enriched environment that includes science, math, and a social studies program in order to emphasize global awareness and student activism. The program also encompasses visual and performing arts, field trips, outdoor education, computers, and music.

Funded through grants and donations, the before and after school program Milk and Cookies offers homework support as well as a variety of clubs and activities such as art, sports, hip hop, and more. A stunning twelve-foot mural painted on the wall of

Harvey Milk's schoolyard by K-5 students during the 2000-2001 school years represents Milk and Cookies. Artist in Residence Tiffany Graham directed this project.

Moving forward into the New Year, the academy has several upcoming events. On January 18 they are hosting an adult-only fundraiser at the Red Devil Lounge complete with live music, beverages, and an auction. The following month, on February 10, the Harvey Milk Academy is hosting their signature event, an adult-only drag show.

Fundraisers are the key component to ensuring that the academy can continue offering its fundamental programs free of charge. The state administers an annual academic test to monitor students' skills. In preparation for the state exam, the academy administers practice tests throughout the year. Parent Liaison Shawn Maceira, who has held this position for the last six years, says: "When I first came to the academy it was considered a low performance school. But it is now a highly requested school. They are doing much better academically today than they were in the past. It is definitely different." She says that it doesn't matter where a student comes from, who they are, or what race or economic status they fall under, "the school wants to remain accessible to all kids free of charge." Her hope for the future of the academy is that it stays that way, remaining available to everyone.

*For more information about the school, or to find out how you can help, visit [harveymilk.com](http://harveymilk.com).*





Allegra





PERSONA



Allegra attends Convent of the Sacred Heart, a Catholic high school that requires 100 hours of community service in order to graduate, but she explains that most students reach that amount in their freshman year. For her, volunteering isn't just something to fulfill a requirement. "It's cliché, but it's nice to know that you're helping people," she says. "It's a more productive way to spend your time." This teenager's time is also taken up by her responsibilities on a boat; as a novice for her school's crew team, she has crew practice almost every day of the week, and this is the off season. In the spring, when rowing season truly begins, they'll have practices at 4:30 a.m. out on Lake Merced in the fog and the cold.

Currently a junior, Allegra has an exciting time coming up—those months when each day's mail brings more and more college brochures. Allegra has her heart set on the East Coast for college, including schools like NYU, Columbia, and Boston University. "My mom is convinced that I'm not gonna like the snow, so she wants me to look at some UCs. My dad jokes that he's gonna move next door to me, which is not really a funny joke," she says. "But I think they'll be fine wherever I go." She plans to study business or advertising. As for a future career, Allegra has no hesitations about what she wants. "I want to be a CEO of a big company. That's my goal," she says. "I'm not sure if it's gonna happen, but hopefully it will."

Allegra's face lights up when she talks about Italy, where her father was born. He left when he was 18 and eventually settled down in the United States. They visit Italy frequently to see family and enjoy the place that Allegra says is full of "lovingness" for everyone. "I feel like, if you didn't have anywhere to go for dinner, anyone would just be like, 'Oh come over, my mom's making food,'" she says. Family is clearly a large part of Allegra's life, and although she's busy, her parents try to continue the traditions they started when she was a child. On the weekends her parents make plentiful lunches of pastas, roasts, and fish—meals that her father grew up eating in Italy. Allegra used to help them cook every weekend, although she can't always help now because of her schedule.

"(Lunches are) sort of our thing," she says. "My dad's not home a lot in the evenings, so that's like our time." Allegra is straightforward, she says what she thinks on any subject from politics to Spanish class. The only time she hesitates is when asked to describe herself. She takes a moment, thinks it over, and answers: "I would definitely say 'determined.'"

## Born with Ambition

by Anna Belle Peterson / photography by Alessandro Desogos

At times, Allegra Spinoso sounds like your average high school student. Her iPod is full of music by Mac Miller, a local hip hop artist. Her nails are polished a shiny black, and are just starting to chip at the edges. But then Allegra pushes some strands of long brown hair behind an ear and says that she loves her most recent English class because they discussed Emerson's ideas about transcendentalism. She describes being greeted with a tribal dance when she arrived in Tanzania for a month-long trip with the Global Student Embassy this past summer. She recently canvassed door to door for Dennis Herrera's mayoral campaign. Not to mention that Allegra's father is Pino Spinoso, the owner of several successful restaurants and is the so-called "Mayor of Belden Place."

# The Photography of Patrick Stull







Athena







# Mediterranean Spirit

by Lisa Gunther / photography by Alessandro DeSogos

For Chef Athena Palombi, life's most poignant moments have always been connected with the preparation of food. She remembers from childhood her mother gathering fruits from neighboring trees to make peach cobbler; sitting on a stool in the kitchen next to her Italian father as he cooked a frittata; and helping her beloved grandmother prepare dolmas, koulourakia, and a host of other Greek delights. While most children she knew grew up in one household, Palombi, whose parents divorced when she was two years old, grew up in three—each with their own unique influences.

It seems only fitting that Palombi's first memory of cooking involves helping her

grandmother prepare Thanksgiving dinner. Hailing from Patras, Greece, her 82-year-old grandmother, or "Yiayia," as she calls her, has always been an essential role model, she taught Palombi at an early age that cooking is not only about food, but also about performance.

"Any time anybody came over she was in heels and she was cooking," Palombi says of her Yiayia. "And when I say cooking, I mean she would just cook feasts for everybody. She was the model hostess—always dressed to the nines. A lot of people say I am the same way."

Indeed, she is. Perfectly coiffed from head to toe, gracious, warm, and quick to set you at ease, it's not surprising that Palombi has reached such high levels of success as a chef. Her infectious enthusiasm for all things culinary landed

her regular features on KCRA T.V. and Fox 40 News in Sacramento, as well as a job as a star chef for Food University ([www.myfoodu.com](http://www.myfoodu.com)).

Success has been hard earned for Palombi. Living with her mother as a child, she often had to rely on food stamps and welfare to survive. As a young adult, she found herself at a crossroad after an abusive marriage and divorce left her a single mom to daughter Helena. Finally, the deaths of both of her parents within only a few years' time affirmed for Palombi that life was simply too precious and too short to be afraid. She knew she had a path laid out for her, so she found the strength to follow it.

"It's all about faith," Palombi reveals. "I see myself as being on the top of a ledge, overlooking the most beautiful view I've ever seen in my life, and all of a sudden having this ability to walk on air. And after a while I feel like, 'Oh man, I'm kind of far out here right now. I can't go back.' So I guess all I can do is just go forward."

After her divorce, Palombi moved to Napa with her daughter, and it was there that she met her friend and mentor, celebrated French Chef Thomas Keller, and later hobnobbed with celebrity chefs such as Jacques Pépin. Her time in Napa cemented her love of the culinary world and played a major role in her decision to go to culinary school. After only one class, her teacher told her that she "had something special," and that she could take any classes she wanted without a pre-requisite. Since then, her career has snowballed.

In addition to regular television appearances, Palombi founded Luluthi Dining, a boutique catering company that boasted clients such as Jeriko Estates and Trinchero Family Estates wineries. Having recently relocated to Marin County to focus her career in television and writing, Palombi says she may consider options like opening an exclusive event company or perhaps even a restaurant if the perfect partnership aligned itself. For now, her plate is full raising her eight-year old daughter, working on a book of recipes and stories about her family, and writing for her new blog at [athenacooking.com](http://athenacooking.com).

Palombi describes her own culinary style as Greek/Italian, with a dash of provincial French and Spanish. "I love the soul of the Mediterranean, or anyone who is vivacious about the culture," she says passionately. "It's almost like theater. It's a performance art for sure."



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Celebrity Chef Giada De Laurentiis ▼





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# Harry

## Living Between the Stars & Cable Cars

by Andrea Stuart / photography by Kevin Thomas

Few people plan their funerals in intricate detail while life is bathing them in good fortune. Leave it to one San Francisco luminary who has already orchestrated his celebration of life ceremony right down to the dress code that directs all women to bare generous cleavage and don red attire. This is the life, and death, according to Harry Denton.



Most notable as the owner of the eponymous Harry Denton's Starlight Room, Harry Denton is arguably a walking oxymoron. Fifteen years sober, he still considers himself "a raging alcoholic who sells liquor for a living." However, he can be more accurately described as a socially inebriated man with a penchant for fashion. Shoes and clothing literally fill his former master bedroom, now a converted walk-in closet. "I was born with all the addictions, but I have no guilt with shoes!" The gravel in Harry's voice is waxed with excitement.

Growing up, Harry was a fashion phenom whose fingers danced upon the ivories like miniature ballerinas, a skill he is refreshing so that he may play Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody Number 8 on his 69th birthday. Voted best dressed, best personality, and best dancer in high school (thanks in part to ballroom dance lessons), Denton also played the role of the obligatory middle child between two brothers. His home served as a hot spot to myriad parties hosted by his father, so Denton had seen nearly every one of his teachers sauced. "And they knew I saw them," says Denton, "so, I think I got away with a little more than most kids." Denton and his brothers learned how to manipulate their father's alcohol collection by taking Dad's vodka and replacing what they used with water. "He drank so much I don't think he knew the difference," Denton laughs.

Denton arrived in San Francisco from a small town in Idaho at the under-ripened age of 21. After dropping out of the University of Idaho's music program and having sold a cashmere sweater at a rummage sale, a

frightened Denton packed his suitcase and showed up at the airport with \$184 in-pocket. "I didn't know whether I'd go to New York or San Francisco," he says. San Francisco's closer proximity and acceptance of people with various sexual orientations was appealing. In celebration of this big moment, he ventured to Golden Gate Park where, from eight blocks away, the scent of marijuana danced in the air. "It was the Summer of Love, baby!" he says. But his biggest moment came on August 26, 1986 with the opening of his first bar, Harry's on Fillmore. Having previously worked in fashion retail, he made a career change into the bar industry after retail didn't jive with his party-hearty lifestyle. The owner of Henry Africa's (a former San Francisco social sanctuary) took Harry under his wing and helped him "grow some balls." With \$11 in his account, Denton opened his first bar. Seventy-three people waited in line that night. Denton's body shifts with ease in his chair: "Herb Caen gave me a great review the next day." Denton has since owned five businesses, and now has one, the Starlight Room at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel. Denton's friend and owner of the Sir Francis, Bill Kimpton, offered Harry the 360-degree panoramic Starlight Room above the hotel and gave Denton \$1 million to theatrically redecorate the premises.

A man of intrinsic worth, Denton credits his success to the inlaid virtues passed on by his parents. "My mother is the most inspiring person I know. She's a profound woman," he says, definitively. Having gone back to school at the age of 50 to work in hospital administration, his mother, now 96, has always been an active, deliberate woman. According to Denton, it's her tenacity that finally quelled his curiosity about his parents' perplexing relationship. "Two years ago, I asked her to tell me about her marriage," Denton recalls. "She said, 'Well Harry, I never really liked your dad but I loved him.' At that point, I asked her if that meant Dad was good in bed." Denton's hands hit the table with thunderous force as he chuckles. "She told me to shut up. You just don't ask your mother a question like that, especially if she's the choir director of the Methodist church."

These days, Denton is content living his days between the cable cars and the stars, serving up night life on the 21st floor of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, and commuting the short distance to his apartment, where his cat Scarlet awaits his return each day. A man who knew John F. Kennedy, Jr., could live on thick-sliced smoked pepper bacon, and supports several charities including the Hamilton Family Center in the Haight district, Denton is quite simply a man who treasures all things good in life. "If you learn one thing: be kind and have fun. You have one life. Be thankful."



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