

Compliments of Reverend Jacques Weston

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 104



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PASSING TIME WITH TAYLOR & TAYLOR

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Bill and Judy,

The American Dream has shifted into a desire to lead a meaningful life, contribute to one's community, and make the world a more beautiful place. This issue of American Lifestyle magazine shines a light on the magic that's been created by those guided by this mission.

The Santa Fe Opera was born out of musician and conductor John Crosby's passion for music and the landscape of New Mexico. Nestled between the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, this stunning opera house blurs the line between outdoor and indoor space, and welcomes over 80,000 people each summer.

Kathy Carroll, founder of the Lanai Cat Sanctuary, wanted to protect the many feral cats on Lanai, the smallest inhabited Hawaiian island. The shelter's executive director, Keoni Vaughn, has helped make the sanctuary a must-see destination. His love for furry felines fueled the expansion of the sanctuary to the 1,100-cat capacity it has today.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Mason Archie knew he wanted to be an artist from a young age. Acceptance into a prestigious high school and natural talent provided the springboard for his future accomplishments as an art director, business owner, and artist. Archie eventually left the advertising business to pursue painting full time and is now an award-winning artist in Indianapolis.

Discover what has meaning for you, and don't lose sight of it. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Reverend Jacques Weston



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TAKING PERFECTION

Front of Tear Out Card 1



LIME CHICKEN with cherry tomatoes and potatoes

4 medium, peeled, waxy potatoes,
very thinly sliced
Flaky sea salt
Coarsely ground pepper
4 whole chicken legs
Olive oil
16 small cherry tomatoes, cut in half
2 limes, each cut into 8 wedges
½ c. dry white wine



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SERVES 2-4

Recipe excerpted from *365: A Year of Everyday Cooking & Baking* by Meike Peters. Copyright 2019. Published by Prestel.



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*A PLACE FOR
EVERYONE*

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Cystic fibrosis,
the most common fatal genetic
disease in the nation, causes
progressive lung disease. Despite
new therapies, the median life
expectancy remains
only 30 years.

There is still no cure.



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and psychosocial support
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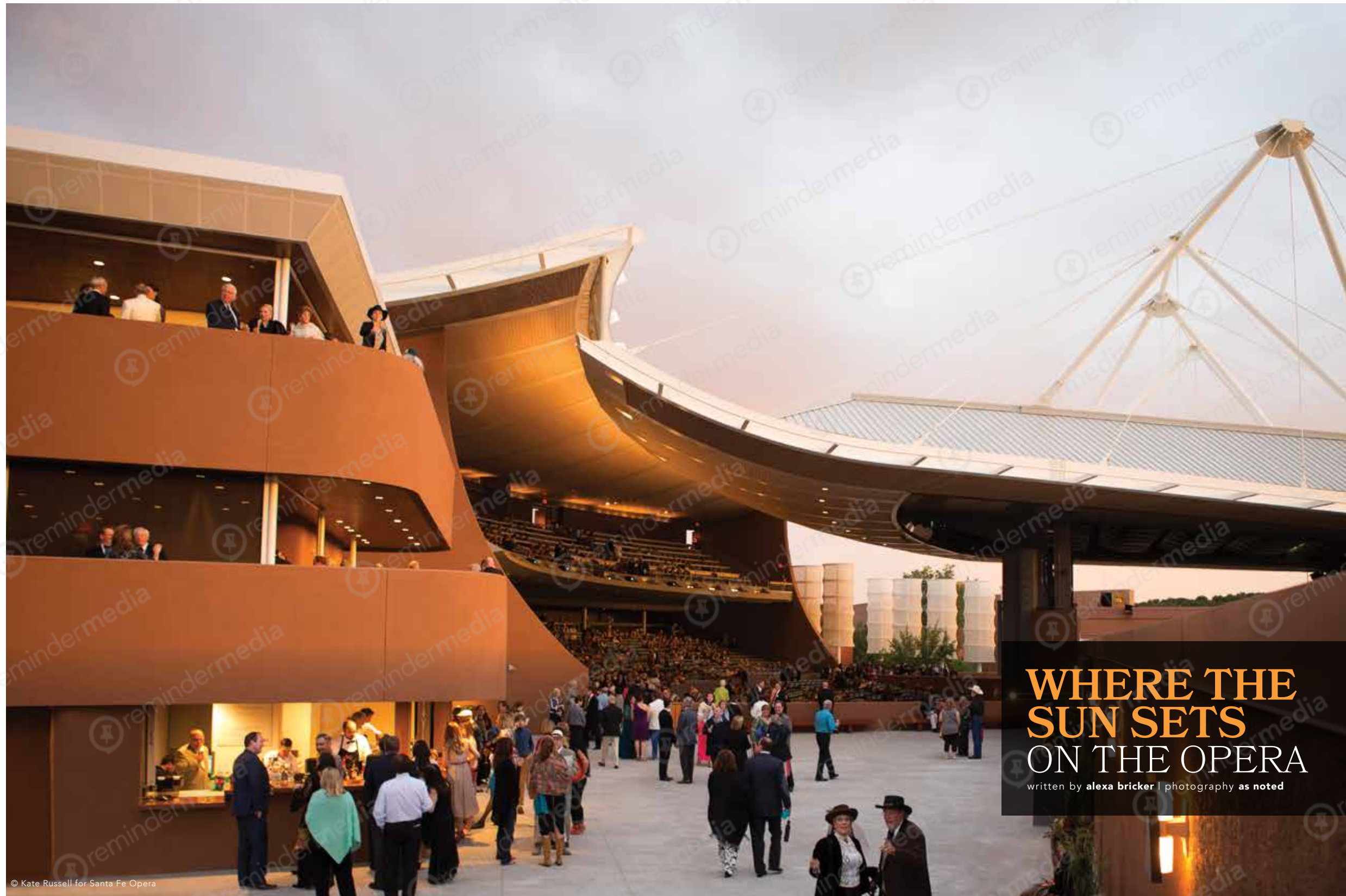
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WHERE THE SUN SETS ON THE OPERA

written by alexa bricker | photography as noted

THERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU MIGHT expect to see and hear while traveling through the New Mexico desert—the crunch of the dry dirt under your feet, mesas rising up from the ground like stone skyscrapers, and the cry of a coyote, to name a few. The sounds of dramatic opera compositions by the likes of Mozart, Wagner, and Stravinsky? Probably not.

But if you travel approximately seven miles north of the city of Santa Fe—nestled right in between the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains—you'll encounter an unlikely sight that might even be mistaken for a mirage in the dry heat. Here the Santa Fe Opera plays host to one of the most prolific summer opera festivals in the world.

"A PERFECT MARRIAGE"

In the twentieth century, much of the land around Santa Fe was underdeveloped. Farms and cattle, but not much else, dotted the landscape—that was, until New York-born musician and conductor John Crosby had a vision. He had spent a portion of his childhood studying at the Los Alamos Ranch School outside of Santa Fe, and he fell in love with the vastness and beauty of the landscape. When he returned to the area later in life, he envisioned a place that would bring together the natural vistas and the magnificence of live music—and the Santa Fe Opera was born. Construction began on the opera's original 480-seat theater in 1956, and by 1957 the first summer festival kicked off.

The original theater was much smaller than its modern counterpart, but it would play host to some of its most important performances. "One of the things that put the Santa Fe Opera



© Ken Howard for Santa Fe Opera

During its busy season, the staff increases from seventy people to about seven hundred—including performers, orchestra members, and stage directors.

on the map was that Crosby was able to bring world-renowned composer Igor Stravinsky to the opera for several summers,” says Santa Fe Opera general director Robert K. Meya. “To have someone of that caliber involved really raised the artistic profile of the company right off the bat.” Santa Fe hosted performances of some of Stravinsky’s most famous operas for more than six years, including the first North American performance of *Persephone* in 1961.

After a fire struck the opera in 1967, it was rebuilt into a 1,889-seat theater just a year later and rebuilt again in 1998 into a 2,126-seat theater (with 106 standing-room spots). The most recent

project even included the addition of LCD touchscreens on each seat and in standing-room areas, and each screen displays translations of the performances in Spanish and English. Despite this increase in size and accommodations, there is a common thread between the three theaters—an open-air back and sides, which helps maintain its connection to the environment and provides a naturally dramatic backdrop. “Because of the open-air concept and how the productions are conceived, each performance is a perfect marriage of music and nature,” says Meya. “The nights are often warm, the air flows through the theater, and you can see the stars so clearly—it really is one of the most incredibly romantic places you can



© Kate Russell for Santa Fe Opera

imagine, which adds to the experience of the productions.”

COME ONE, COME ALL

In addition to its awesome location, the Santa Fe Opera is exceptional in that it doesn’t just cater to longtime opera lovers. In an effort to preserve its art form, the organization works to make the opera feel accessible to all. During its busy season, the staff increases from seventy people to about seven hundred—including performers, orchestra members, and stage directors. Each season includes five new productions: the first two are selected to be attractive to a general audience, the third and fourth are typically more rarely performed operas but are still accommodating for both new and experienced patrons, and the final opera is often an American or world premiere. The 2020 season includes performances of Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, Dvořák’s *Rusalka*, and a world premiere of *M. Butterfly*, which the opera commissioned from Chinese



© Insight Foto for Santa Fe Opera

American composer Huang Ruo and librettist David Henry Hwang.

The performances run from the first week of July to the last week of August. Near the end of the festival, all five operas are performed within the same week, giving visitors an opportunity to come back every night if they so choose. The festival attracts some 85,000 people each year, but, as it turns out, people aren’t just coming for the performances. Meya notes that one of the most exciting traditions in Santa Fe—and one of the things that sets it apart—is the opportunity for guests to tailgate before every show. “Tailgating has been a long-standing tradition for as long as the opera has been here,” he says. “The sunsets are unlike anything else in the world, and the opera, of course, is a call for celebration. People like to dress up and set up the most incredible spreads. It helps break down the barrier to entry, too, because it’s such a fun social event.”

The opera sometimes has a reputation for being hoity-toity, but the Santa Fe

Opera is anything but. In addition to putting on a diverse array of shows, the organization offers special programs and events for families and children, including discounted tickets on the opera’s Family Nights and Youth Nights throughout the summer, which bring young people behind the scenes for final dress rehearsals.

World-class performances are a driving force behind the success of any great opera house, but Meya says the importance of education and preservation can’t be discounted for the future success of opera as an art form. “Opera encompasses multiple art forms—a live orchestra, natural amplification of the human voice, costume design, and set design, among others,” he says. “We have to think about how to preserve these great components of art and succeed in having live experiences that take you outside of the digital realm. The value of live performance experiences is greater than ever before.”

For more info, visit santafeopera.org

EVERYDAY COOKING

recipes by **meike peters**
photography by **meike peters**



Recipes excerpted from *365: A Year of Everyday Cooking & Baking* by Meike Peters. Copyright 2019. Published by Prestel.



Parsnip and citrus may sound like an unusual combination, but they complement each other beautifully in both taste and texture.

SERVES 2

ROASTED PARSNIPS WITH CLEMENTINE, BLOOD ORANGE, AND THYME

INGREDIENTS:

10 ounces peeled parsnips
2 large clementines (or tangerines)
1 large blood orange
2 medium sprigs fresh thyme
¼ cup olive oil, plus more for serving
Flaky sea salt
Coarsely ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cut the parsnips lengthwise into thin wedges. Peel the clementines and orange, removing the skin and white pith, and cut into thick slices.
- 2** In a medium baking dish, drizzle the parsnips and thyme with the olive oil, toss to combine, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Roast, flipping the parsnips twice, for about 35 minutes or until golden brown and tender.
- 3** Spread the clementine and blood orange slices on a large platter. Arrange the parsnips and thyme on top, drizzle with a little olive oil, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve warm or as a cold salad.



Sweetening spaghetti with maple syrup may challenge the traditional pasta lover, but it makes sense if you fold in tender squash, orange juice, and crispy sage leaves.

SERVES 2

SQUASH PASTA WITH ORANGE, MAPLE, AND SAGE

INGREDIENTS:

6 ounces dried spaghetti
Olive oil
20 large fresh sage leaves
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound peeled and seeded squash,
preferably butternut or Hokkaido,
cut into small cubes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
2 tablespoons maple syrup
Fine sea salt
Finely ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the spaghetti according to the package instructions, until al dente. Drain the pasta and return it to the pot.
- 2** In a small saucepan, heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of olive oil over high heat. Add the sage leaves and cook, stirring gently, for 10 to 20 seconds or until golden, green, and crispy—mind that the leaves don't burn. Transfer the sage leaves to a plate, reserving the sage oil.
- 3** In a large, heavy pan, heat a generous splash of olive oil over medium-high heat and cook the squash, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until tender. Add the orange juice and maple syrup, stir, and season to taste with salt and pepper.
- 4** Cook for 3 minutes then fold in the spaghetti and sage oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide among plates, sprinkle with the sage leaves, and serve immediately.



Chicken and lemon is a safe combo, but if you replace the yellow fruit with green lime, you'll find flowery tones woven into the citrusy aroma.

SERVES 2-4

LIME CHICKEN WITH CHERRY TOMATOES AND POTATOES

INGREDIENTS:

4 medium, peeled, waxy potatoes,
very thinly sliced
Flaky sea salt
Coarsely ground pepper
4 whole chicken legs
Olive oil
16 small cherry tomatoes, cut in half
2 limes, each cut into 8 wedges
½ cup dry white wine

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Preheat the oven to 425°F.
- 2** Bring a small pot of salted water to a boil and blanch the potatoes for about 5 minutes or until al dente. Drain the potatoes then spread them in a baking dish, just large enough to fit the chicken legs in, and season to taste with salt and pepper.
- 3** Cut off and discard any large chunks of fat from the chicken legs. Rub the chicken with a little olive oil, season to taste with salt and pepper, and place on top of the potatoes. Arrange the tomatoes and limes in between the chicken legs.
- 4** Whisk together the white wine and 3 tablespoons of olive oil and pour over the chicken. Roast, spooning the juices from the pan over the chicken every 10 minutes or so, for 25 to 30 minutes or until the juices run clear when you prick the thickest part of a thigh with a skewer.
- 5** Turn on the broiler for 1 to 2 minutes or until the chicken skin is golden brown and starts sizzling; serve immediately.



Grapes grow abundantly in my Maltese mother's garden. When I open the bedroom window, I can almost grab the plump fruits dangling from the vines, their skin stretched and ready to burst. Spoiled with lots of sun, they ripen quickly on the archipelago, and as September nears, it's time to snip them off their branches and turn them into a fruity tart. I use store-bought puff pastry for this recipe; it's a convenient solution if you're looking for a quick yet impressive picnic treat.

SERVES 4-6

GRAPE AND ROSEMARY TART

INGREDIENTS:

- 11 ounces high-quality frozen puff pastry, defrosted
- 18 ounces seedless red grapes
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary needles

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1 Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- 2 Line an 11-inch tart pan with the puff pastry, pushing it into the pan, especially along the edges, and freeze for 5 minutes.
- 3 In a large bowl, toss the grapes with the sugar and lemon juice then spread on top of the chilled pastry. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the edges of the pastry are crisp—depending on the pastry, it may take more or less time. Sprinkle the tart with the rosemary and let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Serve warm or cold.

KINGDOM OF THE CATS

written by **matthew brady** | photography by **lanai cat sanctuary**



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, PEOPLE HAVE been crazy about cats. The ancient Egyptians worshipped them. Famed American writers Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway both had many cats, and the latter's home/museum still has approximately fifty of his pets' descendants on the premises. Queen's Freddie Mercury wrote a song about one of his cats. Today, millions of Americans have them in their homes.

All these friends of felines would be happy to discover that there's a cat paradise in ... well, paradise.

The Lanai Cat Sanctuary was founded in 2004 by cat lover Kathy Carroll, who sought to shelter the many free-

roaming cats on Lanai—the smallest inhabited Hawaiian island, with about 3,000 residents. As years went by and the island became more and more overpopulated with cats, larger facilities were needed. The sanctuary moved to its current location in 2009, and today it has over six hundred cats and recently expanded to have an 1,100-cat capacity.

“The feral cat overpopulation is a really hot topic, especially in Hawaii,” says Keoni Vaughn, the sanctuary's executive director, who grew up in Oahu. “Cats reproduce at a very alarming rate. Also, the weather here's great year round—so it's a perfect storm for feral cats to breed. And we don't have predators that, in most places, keep cat overpopulation



to a minimum. Mostly, though, this is a human issue. Back in the day, people would let their cats out, which weren't spayed or neutered, and they multiplied. And this is all recent: pets weren't even allowed on Lanai until the mid-nineties."

LIFE ON LANAI

Vaughn has led the charge to make Lanai Cat Sanctuary a must-see destination by capitalizing on the island's—and the sanctuary's—distinctiveness. "Lanai's a unique environment," he shares. "We don't have any traffic lights. We have one gas station and a couple small grocery stores. But that makes it a close-knit place. People come to Lanai to totally get away. I think they're really happy when they get here because it is so relaxed and so secluded."

But such seclusion can cause significant logistical challenges for a small nonprofit that relies heavily on donations. To get to the sanctuary, you can take a ferry from Maui and then a half-hour shuttle or cab ride, or you can fly in from Oahu and then commute to the sanctuary. And good luck finding driving directions. "There's no physical address for the cat sanctuary," Vaughn admits. "If you google us, you'll get 1 Kaupili Road; that's something that I made up. We're on agricultural land in the middle of nowhere." He's not kidding: the sanctuary has running water but no electricity or internet (although it's planning to add them).

Nonetheless, people are flocking here: Vaughn says that when he started in 2014, around eight hundred people visited the sanctuary per year—but in 2019, it welcomed upwards of 14,000 visitors to see the well-cared-for cats.



SAVING CATS—AND BIRDS

When you visit the Lanai Cat Sanctuary (which is open 365 days a year), you'll find happy cats lounging virtually everywhere. In the main area, which has 30,000 square feet, you'll find over five hundred felines. Another recently built area includes senior centers for older cats to live out their sunset years.

For the cats to be this happy and healthy, magic has to happen behind the scenes—and caring for this many cats certainly requires a great deal of planning. "We go through about eighty-five pounds of cat food a day, which costs roughly \$48,000 a year,"



Vaughn says. "We barge it in, as well as all our medical supplies. We have eight people on staff, but we don't have a vet on the island. So I fly in Dr. Eric Ako, a veterinarian in Oahu, and his two assistants twice a month, and he provides medical care to the cat sanctuary. He may see anywhere between thirty-five and forty-five cats in a seven- or eight-hour period." In all, Vaughn estimates that the sanctuary spends about \$750 per year per cat, which is still under the national average of around \$1,100 a year.

The Lanai Cat Sanctuary also takes what Vaughn calls a "herd health" approach. When cats arrive, they are spayed or neutered, named, and microchipped, and bloodwork is done, all to ensure they're all healthy and fixed before they return to the main population. There are also eight treatment centers, which allow workers to remove ill cats from the

population, treat them, and reintroduce them once they're healthy.

The sanctuary's mission is to provide a safe, healthy haven for cats—but it's also invaluable to another species on the island. Lanai is home to native and endangered ground-nesting birds, such as the 'Ua'u Kani and 'Alae Ke'oke'o, which feral cats hunt. By relocating the overpopulated cats to this permanent, safe home, rather than euthanizing them, Vaughn says it's a win-win for both.

FROM FERAL TO FRIENDLY

As much as the facility itself has been transformed, many of its inhabitants change even more—much to Vaughn's surprise and delight. "I've been in the animal welfare industry about eighteen years. I always thought, 'Once a feral cat, always a feral cat.' Boy, was I wrong. These cats are truly feral—they

In the main area, which has 30,000 square feet, you'll find over five hundred felines. Another recently built area includes senior centers for older cats to live out their sunset years.



were born in the wild and haven't seen humans or had human interaction until our intervention. Ninety-five percent of the cats here are like this. Amazingly, because of the staff interaction and our visitors, around 40 percent of them become socialized. I always jokingly call our sanctuary the Fur Seasons because these cats aren't dying to get out." In fact, Vaughn adds, like clockwork, every morning there's a welcoming committee of about forty to fifty cats that surround the gate where guests arrive.

The Lanai cats are available for adoption and about fifty get adopted each year; however, since interested people are usually on vacation, arrangements must be made. Once a cat is chosen for adoption, its health is checked and a counseling session takes place so the adopter understands the cat and the commitment needed. The sanctuary's manager then makes the long journey to get the cat to the airport the following day.

There's no adoption fee, either; the sanctuary asks that the adopting party cover the expenses to get their cat back home and that they keep their cat indoors. (However, don't expect to easily return your cat if the adoption doesn't work out; since Hawaii is one of the few places in the world without rabies, you'll be charged around \$1,500 and the process can take months.) Want to sponsor instead? For thirty dollars a month, you can be the remote "owner" of a cat at the sanctuary and get monthly updates about your pet.

Vaughn says that all this effort is worth it because of how happy it makes visitors and residents. "The two biggest compliments we get here are 'It doesn't feel like six hundred cats' and 'It doesn't

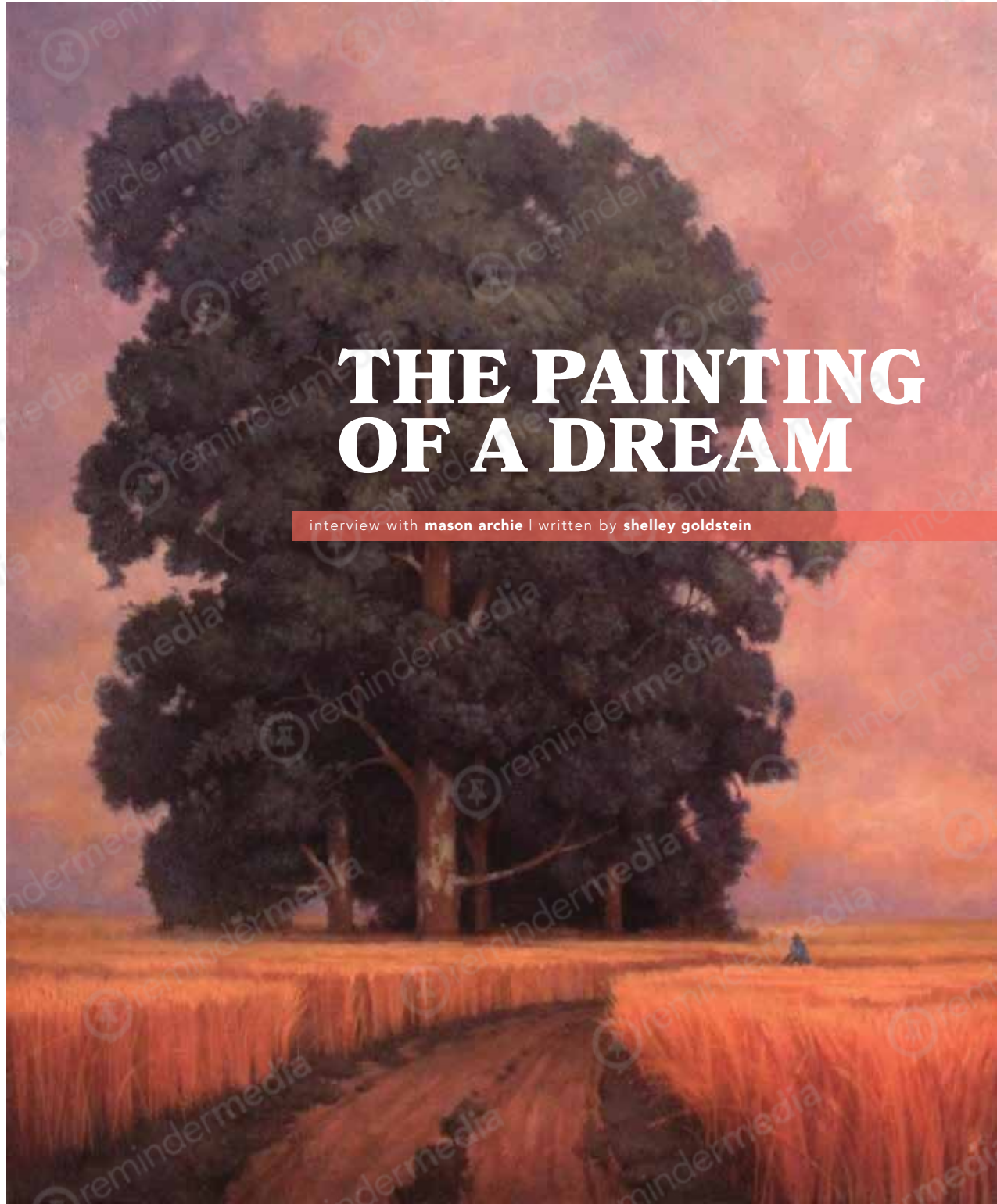


smell like six hundred cats,' " he shares, with a laugh. "We take pride in the care of our cats, our sanctuary's cleanliness, and the amount of space we provide. It's not easy maintaining it, especially off the grid. But it's really about creating that peaceful home experience for the cats and guest experience for visitors. Folks are meeting the cats, adopting the cats, and donating to keep us going. So we really appreciate every single person who walks through our doors."

For more info, visit lanaicatsanctuary.org



Lanai Cat Sanctuary executive director Keoni Vaughn.



THE PAINTING OF A DREAM

interview with **mason archie** | written by **shelley goldstein**



Mason Archie's identity has been inextricably linked to art since he was a child. Acceptance into a prestigious high school changed the course of Archie's life, catapulting him into success in pictorial art and outdoor advertising. He eventually made his way back to his roots in fine art, quickly becoming an in-demand, award-winning oil painter.



Were you interested in art as a child?

Art was the primary interest of mine when I was younger. In elementary school, I was sought out by my teachers for special projects, like painting backdrops for school plays or creating illustrations or diagrams for lessons.

I was good at sports, but I enjoyed art so much more. In the seventh or eighth grade, I played basketball for the Boys and Girls Club of Dayton in the summer. There was an art class also held there, and, at some point, I walked into the class and started drawing. When the teacher saw my art, she had me work with her class. She would pick me up from my house and bring me to the Boys and Girls Club. I grew up very poor and my parents never owned a car, so this was a great opportunity that art opened up for me.

What role did high school play in your pursuit of an art career?

Patterson Co-Op was very unique. It was a public school, but you had to apply to go there, and you needed good grades and a good attendance record. The school was located in downtown Dayton, Ohio. In sophomore year, I



I was wearing a suit for the interview, and after they saw my artwork, they handed me a pair of overalls to wear and put me to work that minute painting billboards that were fourteen feet by forty-eight feet long.

spent mornings at the school in regular classes, but I spent afternoons studying in the fields I was most interested in, like art and design. At the end of that year, literally every student, because of the reputation of the school, wound up getting a job. Students worked forty hours a week, but we would alternate between two weeks working and two weeks back at school. There was also never a summer break once you got to sophomore year. At that point, I was making more money than my parents.

With the help of my high school, I was able to work for Lamar Advertising Company at the age of sixteen. Immediately after school, I worked full time for Lamar and eventually became the art director at a young age. I also started a small commercial sign company and specialized in graphic design.

Will you talk about your career as art director and pictorial artist for Lamar Advertising? How did that come about?

I remember interviewing at Lamar and showing them my portfolio. I was wearing a suit for the interview, and after they saw my artwork, they handed me a pair of overalls to wear and put me to work that minute painting billboards that were fourteen feet by forty-eight feet long. They were made to look like replicas of photographs, and I would paint on twenty interlocking steel panels that would then be reassembled on-site by the construction crew.

At around nineteen, I was promoted to art director. I was the only African American there, and I was also the youngest in the department. I faced a lot of animosity from my peers because of the opportunities allotted to me. It was



seen as an irregularity for me to be both an African American and highly skilled in my profession. I was a natural fit at Lamar, however. As one of their best pictorial artists and art directors, I often worked at sites across the country where help was needed.

What spurred you to transition to full-time fine artist?

My wife, Carlene, and I owned a successful day care, which she ran in

Indianapolis. And Lamar was in Dayton. One evening, I was doing a painting of my eighteen-month-old daughter, and it was the first time my wife had seen me do fine art. She commented, "How could you not be doing this?" She bought me art supplies and said I should paint. I didn't get around to it for three years, though. Around that time, there was an incident with my daughter where she almost drowned while I was in Dayton. At that point, I dropped

everything to come home and live in Indianapolis; I also set up a studio to paint in.

Did you have a mentor of fine art during this time?

I contacted Simmie Knox, the first African American artist to be commissioned for a presidential portrait. He had a billboard background as well. He took me on and mentored me over the phone. "Don't worry about showing



your art. Just work on getting good at it,” he told me. I decided to start with landscapes. I studied paintings from the Hudson River School (a collective of landscape artists in the mid-nineteenth century). Knox told me, “Until your work can hang in the same room as theirs, don’t show it.” I practiced for a year and a half and then started researching galleries.

What did your first gallery experience look like?

I went to a gallery in Louisville and showed them my art, and they bought all of my paintings. They started selling them at \$5,000. They sold faster than

I could paint them. It got to the point where people were buying ideas of paintings in advance. We raised prices twice a year by 10-15 percent for six years straight. In less than two years, the gallery was selling my work across the country. And I started getting calls from people like Spike Lee and Alonzo Mourning.

Do you experience artist’s block?

I never experience artist’s block. There are so many ideas running through my head that I know it may be impossible to get them all out. This may be due to a late start with my fine art career.

Will you talk about the youth organization you founded?

After I moved to Indianapolis, I created Kindred Spirits in the office complex across the street from our day care. I set up a studio, a gallery space, a picture-framing workshop, and commercial sign equipment. This was all free for the kids. They could learn computer graphics, Adobe software, fine art, etc. My wife has a finance background, so she was doing financial literacy with the kids. Before we knew it, we had sixty students. Eli Lilly as well as the Fifth Third Bank also began supporting the organization.

Art has been such a positive influence in my life. Through Kindred Spirits, I am able to share my experiences with young people. Art education and exposure is not as available or intentional in the public-school system as it was when I was an adolescent.

What projects have excited you the most over your career?

Indiana is home to some of the country’s oldest art competitions. Competing in them has been rewarding. The Arts Council of Indianapolis and the Lilly Endowment granted me a Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship that allowed me to work on specific paintings tailored

toward my interests. My first exhibit was with Simmie Knox, which was a great honor for me.

In 2014, I was chosen to contribute a piece of art to the Eskenazi Health facilities as part of a collection with seventeen other artists, designed to support the environment of health and healing.

Currently, I am traveling the country painting the Underground Railroad historic sites. I am also working with master printmakers Curlee Raven Holton and Jase Clark to produce etchings and serigraphs. The ongoing

project started at the Experimental Printmaking Institute on the Lafayette College campus in Easton, Pennsylvania.

What do you want to leave as your legacy?

I want to be a major influence in assisting art education and opportunity, and I hope to be considered one of the best painters of my time.

For more info, visit masonarchie.com



FAIRY DOORS AND BOOKSTORES

written by **shelley goldstein** | photography by **shelley rose photography**

FOOTBALL WEEKENDS AT THE

University of Michigan are known for being the scene of larger-than-life school spirit and pride, as the campus erupts in a sea of maize and blue. The stadium is affectionately known as the Big House, and attendance at games is off the charts.

But this level of pride is not restricted to just the university. After only a few days in Ann Arbor, it's evident that this college town is comprised of people and businesses who are excited to be contributing their energy to the community. With a dynamic arts and music scene, diverse and delicious cuisine, a scenic downtown for strolling, and shops and bookstores aplenty, it's no surprise this town frequently finds itself on lists of the best places to live.

DAY ONE

The Michigan Flyer, an affordable transportation option to get from the Detroit Airport to downtown Ann Arbor, drops riders off at the Blake Transit Center. The transit center's central location also makes it an easy reference point for visitors like me to navigate the town.

Given that it was not a football weekend, accommodation options were more plentiful, and I chose Burnt Toast Inn, a bed-and-breakfast in a large house, because of its proximity to downtown and its homey feel. A friendly black lab named Gus greeted me and my backpack full of snacks, while Sarah, the owner, pointed out her extensive collection of copper Bundt cake molds on the walls of the spacious kitchen.

As I strolled the five minutes to downtown to meet up with my friend Stella, I heard guitar licks emanating

from the bar down the street into the crisp twilight. A few blocks farther, a guitar player busked outside. Coffeehouses and shops along Main and Liberty Streets looked like dollhouses, closed but all lit up and waiting for the morning to welcome their people.

As we neared State Street, the stunning marquee of the State Theatre rose like a glorious amusement park at the end of the T-intersection. We followed the sound of a cello into Nickels Arcade, a 261-foot-long corridor with ground-floor shops, a greenhouse glass ceiling overhead, and rows of globe pendant lights that shed a romantic glow across the tiled floor. The arcade is home to a variety of stores and specialty shops.

Our last stop of the night was on Liberty Street at a cozy and modern ice cream shop called Blank Slate Creamery. It was still hopping at 9:30 p.m., with dessert-seekers eager to sample inventive flavors like Goat Cheese and Cherry ice cream and Pear Anise sorbet. Chalkboard tables lent themselves to colored chalk doodles in between licks. Under the overhang outside, people socialized while trying their hand at an addictive ring-hook game nailed to one of the posts.

DAY TWO

Downtown Ann Arbor is ideal for morning strolls, so I took a walk to Tasty Bakery on Huron Street for a banana muffin. Taking it to go, I headed to Liberty Street in search of caffeine. RoosRoast Coffee makes one of the best autumn harvest lattes around, and a leather-covered stool at the concrete bar is an ideal perch for solo coffee drinkers to feel a part of things. It was there that I learned owner John Roos is a self-taught artist whose whimsical sketches adorn the bags of blended coffee.



We followed the sound of a cello into Nickels Arcade, a 261-foot-long corridor with ground-floor shops, a greenhouse glass ceiling overhead, and rows of globe pendant lights that shed a romantic glow across the tiled floor.



Once properly caffeinated, I met up with Stella and her friend Ziyong outside of Sam's, several doors down on Liberty Street. This retail shop has been around since 1946 and is known for long-standing brands like Lee and Levi's. Vintage Levi's posters and colorful vintage college pendants adorn the walls.

We turned the corner onto Fourth Street and found Dear Golden, a vintage shop that feels like a fancy boutique thanks to its painted white wooden floors and brick walls. Expertly curated by owner Lauren Naimola, the shop carries everything from gauzy dresses to





looks like typewriter keys, designed by Oliver Uberti. He also envisioned the out-of-the-box mural that now graces one of the exterior walls. Owners Hilary and Michael Gustafson selected fifteen favorite phrases written by customers on the basement typewriter (open to the public), and Uberti painted them onto the building in typewriter font. Phrases range from the humorous (“I like turtles”) to the profound (“Typewriters remind us that words are sound. What have we lost now that words are silent?”).

We did a little loop and ended up on Fifth Street to grab a bite at Earthen Jar, a casual pay-by-weight vegetarian Indian restaurant with many vegan options as well. The yellow dal was my favorite, with the curried potatoes a close runner-up. Though the restaurant is sparse on decor, it's big on flavor and kindness. The owner is a huge Bob Marley fan, and some scattered photo memorabilia can be found on the walls.

With our bellies full, the final stop of the night was The Ark, where we took in a concert featuring blues guitarist Matt Andersen. This intimate venue is considered to be one of the premier music clubs in the country. It's a testament to Ann Arbor's commitment to the arts that places like The Ark attract so many top performers.

DAY THREE

After walking past the charming Argus Farm Stop countless times on my way downtown, I made a point to visit and look around. Referred to as an everyday year-round farmer's market, Argus Farm Stop arose from a realization that customers wanted a regular place to buy food from local farms. Opened in 2014, the business has paid over \$5 million

to local farms and food producers. The shop on Liberty Street consists of a cute coffee bar up front and a small grocery to the left, with produce labeled with the name of the farm and locally made goods like jams and pickles. Around the corner is a greenhouse area with a long community table as well as benches and smaller tables scattered throughout the space for sipping lattes or studying.

Another item on my Ann Arbor checklist had been to scout out a fairy door, a tiny door that reveals a view of a miniature world behind it. The concept of fairy doors is the brainchild of Jonathan B. Wright, a graphic design teacher at a local college. The tradition started when his children began “discovering” fairy doors in the family home. The fairies expanded, with the first public fairy door popping up outside Sweetwaters Coffee and Tea on April 7, 2005. The fairy doors have become so popular, Wright's website, urban-fairies.com, offers fairy-door seekers a downloadable map to guide their quest. Officially, Wright does not build the fairy doors; the fairies do.

On Stella's suggestion, I took a walk through the historic district of Kerrytown, located on the north side of downtown. I was especially interested in learning about the history of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on North Fourth Avenue, which was completed in 1896 and served as a hub for the black community until 1971, when they built a bigger church on John A. Woods Drive. As the wall display (courtesy of the Downtown Ann Arbor Historical Street Exhibit program) explains, the black community was mainly located in Kerrytown due to segregated housing practices at the time. The Ann Arbor African American



Referred to as an everyday year-round farmer's market, Argus Farm Stop arose from a realization that customers wanted a regular place to buy food from local farms. Opened in 2014, the business has paid over \$5 million to local farms and food producers.

intricate jewelry. Stella modeled (and bought) a fabulous navy trench coat made of velvet corduroy, which made her look like a movie star.

We crossed the street and continued up Washington Street, and we were quickly in front of Literati Bookstore, easily recognizable by the sign that



Downtown Festival was organized to help remember the contributions of black business leaders.

Kerrytown is also the home of an Ann Arbor institution called Zingerman's Deli, renowned for its Reuben sandwich piled high with corned beef and sauerkraut on rye bread. The tall brick building that is Zingerman's Deli is a delight for the eyes, and it beckoned me to step inside as well. I was greeted by columns of freshly baked bagels stacked on wooden dowels like doughy horseshoes. The shop was founded in 1982 and has grown to encompass other businesses, including a bakehouse, a restaurant, a coffee bar, and even a creamery.

No visit to Ann Arbor would be complete without a stroll through the University of Michigan campus. The heart of the central campus is populated with leafy trees and is known as the Diag, named for the plentiful sidewalks that crisscross through it or near it in a diagonal fashion. But most impressive is the Law Library, which looks like a



scene out of a Harry Potter movie with its ornate, sky-high ceilings and two-tiered chandeliers, dangling like teatime cake platters studded with candles. The sound of my camera shutter echoed in the deathly quiet, and I snuck out as swiftly as I entered. The college also hosts a number of literary events open to the public, like the Zell Visiting Writers Series, which featured a poetry reading by CM Burroughs at the time of my visit.

After a solo sushi dinner at Totoro on State Street near the State Theatre, I met up with Stella and Ziyong at a hip

speakeasy called The Last Word. The bar's swanky and dimly lit atmosphere lent itself to intimate chats about life and relationships. The Last Word was named after a cocktail of the same name and is known for its green hue thanks to the Green Chartreuse liquor and lime juice. Some talented Django-style jazz musicians added authenticity and ambience to the Prohibition vibe.

Ann Arbor, as it turns out, is not only for college kids, though I did feel like a younger version of myself, traipsing around a verdant campus and ducking into poetry readings, trying

on clothing with friends, and grabbing a late-night cocktail on a Thursday. Wearing my camera around town was seen as an invitation for conversation, and I happily obliged in the spirit of community. Ann Arbor has all the trappings of a big city—but in an easy and walkable package. The city makes room for old traditions and modern ideas to coexist, giving this academic hot spot wings to grow and roots to stay grounded.

For more info, visit annarbor.org



THE HEART OF THE CENTRAL CAMPUS IS POPULATED WITH LEAFY TREES AND IS KNOWN AS THE DIAG, NAMED FOR THE PLENTIFUL SIDEWALKS THAT CRISSCROSS THROUGH IT OR NEAR IT IN A DIAGONAL FASHION.



PASSING TIME WITH TAYLOR & TAYLOR

interview with **phyllis taylor**
written by **rebecca poole**
photography by **deborah whitlaw llewellyn**



Husband-and-wife duo Phyllis and William Taylor lead the Florida-based interior design firm Taylor & Taylor. With their expertise in coastal living, they have taken their business beyond Florida's borders to design exquisite homes in other sunny places. Here Phyllis Taylor talks about a recent South Carolina project and an exciting new development.

How did you get started in this business? What do you love the most about designing homes?

I went to architecture school and met William, my husband and partner, there. He complimented me on my project and admitted two years later he didn't understand it. *[Laughs]* Our relationship held, and we've been creating ever since. Having a really strong background in architecture helps with interior design, and, although I never got my master's, William did, and it has created an understanding between us. We value each other's opinions and observations, and having that architectural knowledge has been very effective.

If people didn't pay me to design homes, I would still do it. At first, I thought it was too frivolous of a thing, and that aspect bothered me until we started working with Habitat for Humanity. That's when the realization hit that the environment you wake up in every day is extremely important to your well-being. We've done personality tests in our office of what motivates us to be



We feel there's a responsibility to design something that wears well. In this type of environment, you have to think about elements like the cold, heat, humidity, sand, salt, a potential hurricane—you name it.



designers. William enjoys doing it to make things beautiful, and mine was more altruistic-based. I just want to make clients happy.

Taylor & Taylor is based in Florida, but your firm also designs spaces elsewhere. How did this expansion come about?

A lot of work we do is with clients we've

had for years who decide to purchase a second home in places like the British Virgin Islands. Maybe they initially wanted to have a vacation home in Key West, but that didn't pan out, so they go for these more exotic locations. It's a challenge because many of these places are very remote and difficult to get to, but we love it. Designing elsewhere isn't necessarily a focus; it just happens

naturally. We make it a priority to design a vacation home with as much care as a primary residence.

What do you enjoy about working on projects in coastal settings?

We feel there's a responsibility to design something that wears well. In this type of environment, you have to think about elements like the cold, heat, humidity,

sand, salt, a potential hurricane—you name it. Specific types of finishes for hardwood floors and covers for furniture all have to be kept in mind. Maintaining an interior space in a coastal environment can be overwhelming for families, especially if they're not living in the house year-round. When you're there, you just want to enjoy the space. We definitely like the challenge of being inspired by the family we're working with and the natural surrounding beauty.

You recently designed this South Carolina home, which the clients named Passing Time. Why this name?

It's a vacation home for a football player, so he gave it a name that embodied this place of leisure for him and his family. It's also a play on words that references making a pass in football.

Why did the clients choose South Carolina for their vacation home?

They had always wanted to be on the water, but it was something that never really worked out where they reside year-round in South Florida. They wanted a vacation home where they could take a mini road trip with their dogs. However, they still wanted to be close to a big city. Kiawah Island ended up being the perfect solution—remote, but only an hour or so away from the hustle and bustle of Charleston. The husband also enjoys the golf course options!



The main living area has a very open floor plan. What inspired this?

They entertain quite a lot. It was designed with the intention for hosting very laid-back get-togethers, versus the kind of formal, charity-oriented hosting they would do in Miami. There are TVs in multiple rooms so people can watch sports games in more than one place, while also keeping the party-hosting vibe a priority.

What about Kiawah Island inspired the design?

We really wanted there to be a strong sense of place. Since we've worked with our clients before, we knew their likes and dislikes and what felt appropriate for their lifestyle. Their only request regarding color palette was for the interior to have shades of blue. They felt really strongly about this suggestion. The shingles on the outside of the home are brown, so we liked bringing browns inside a bit, too. Nature is a constant source of inspiration for us.

We also wanted to embrace Kiawah Island and what the environment has to offer. We took a lot of cues from the colonial aspect of Charleston. It's a sea town, so blues and whites are prominent shades, as well as greens because of the wetlands. The kitchen counter is made with oyster shells, so it's not just decorative material but also something of use. Designing this home was about celebrating all these different aspects of South Carolina nature.

Was the outdoor area designed to be used a lot by the family?

Homes directly on the ocean are always special, and this home is no exception. Designing the open outdoor space was about expanding the outdoor experience. It was small before, so we



Designing the open outdoor space was about expanding the outdoor experience. It was small before, so we really opened it up. We designed the pool area to include ample lounging space and enough shade for everyone.



really opened it up. We designed the pool area to include ample lounging space and enough shade for everyone. Umbrellas create a canopy of shade while the brown-and-white-striped cushion fabric makes a connection with the brown shingles on the home's facade. The family celebrates that area now—it's essentially what made it a home for them.



Would you expand on Taylor & Taylor's recent project, T3 Homes?

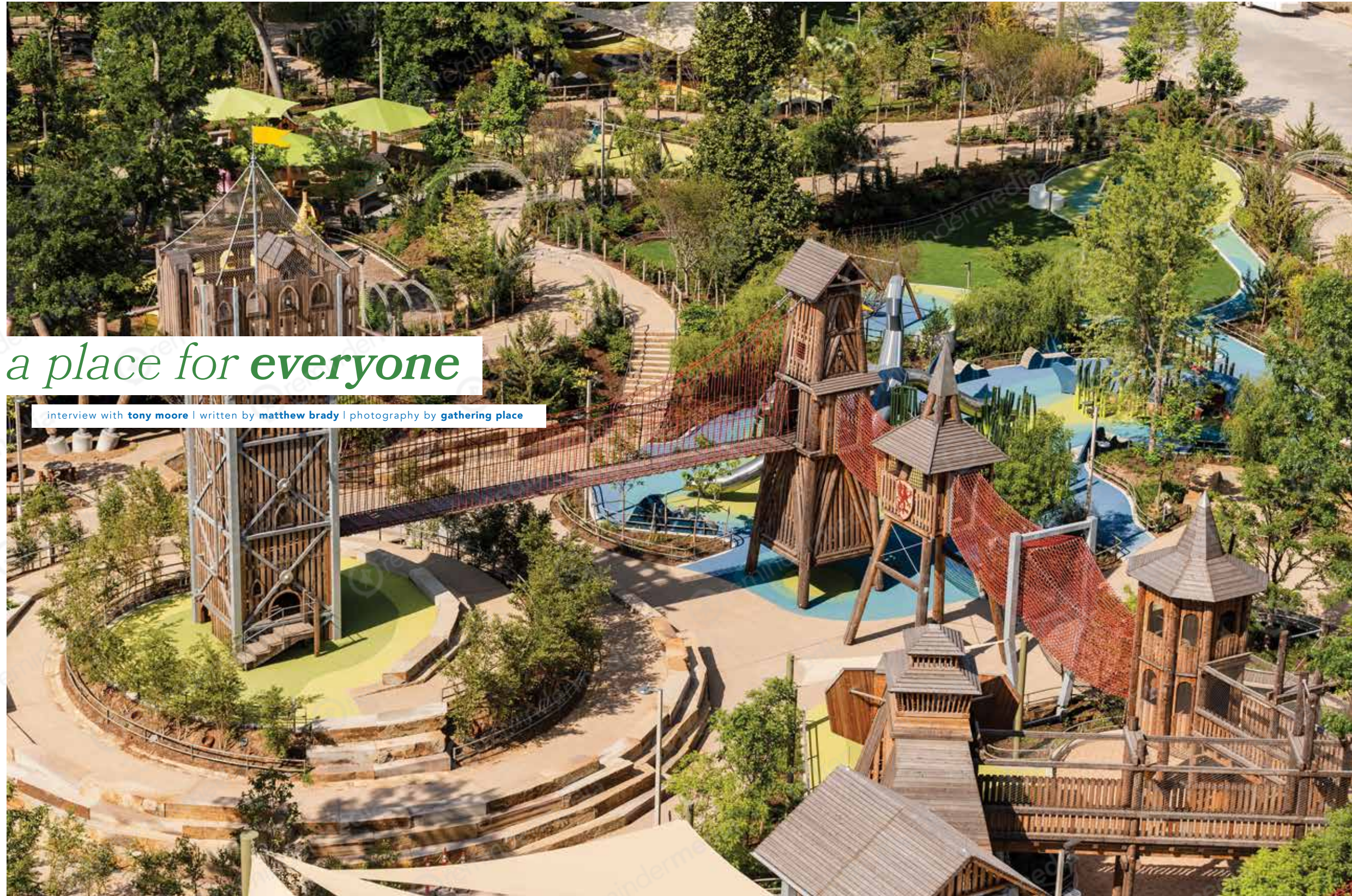
This is a development project that demonstrates how to make a Florida home livable and beautiful on a more modest scale. Our son, Jeremy, has joined us in our efforts with this project. We're building homes that are ready for any type of weather. They are not necessarily waterfront properties, but they still have that higher-quality design. We love having long-standing clients and doing repeat work for them, but it's nice to have Jeremy with us on this exciting multigenerational development.

If you weren't an interior designer, what would you be doing?

I would be a very frustrated "something else." I really can't imagine doing anything else, although I hope to get the opportunity to create healthy and nurturing environments for families that do not currently have access to them. I hope to be launching a foundation in the near future which will be dedicated to this cause. I'm enlisting an army of designers, tradespeople, manufacturers, and installers to volunteer their talents, goods, and services to create a bedroom for any child in need. We are hoping

to be involved with providing dorm rooms for over four hundred students at The SEED School, a public college-preparatory school here in Miami.

For more info, visit taylormtaylor.com



a place for everyone

interview with **tony moore** | written by **matthew brady** | photography by **gathering place**

Tulsa, Oklahoma's Gathering Place is a one-of-a-kind destination: a massive, free, community-focused waterfront park. Executive director Tony Moore discusses the effort it took to build the park, its attractions, and what the park means to Tulsans.

How does Gathering Place reflect founder George Kaiser's values?

George is a native Tulsan who made his fortune in oil and banking, and he's truly a supporter of the city he lives in. Ten years ago, major corporations and talent were leaving for markets such as Dallas, Houston, and Austin; George knew this would spell disaster for the city. It was his idea to make Tulsa a more vibrant place to live, work, and play so we would retain our talent and attract young families. He thought that a park could do just that.

But not just any park. George gave the first \$200 million and asked for the rest to be a collaborative effort among stakeholders, corporations, foundations, and private donors in Tulsa, who donated the next \$200 million. The city gave the remaining \$65 million. To date, it's the largest private donation to a community park in the history of the United States.

Tell us about the effort to build it:

The park is slated to be a total of one hundred acres, around seventy of which opened in 2018. Phase One was a massive collaboration of just under 2,000 area trades, from masonry to woodworkers to construction workers. The topography where the park was built was gentle-sloping and flat, but



our landscape designers, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, elevated it as high as sixty feet in the design.

The construction took just over four years; we spent one year just moving the dirt to create the drastically different topography. We have over 1.2 million plants and shrubs, and just shy of 7,000 trees, many of which were preserved during construction. Most of the rocks displayed in the park were quarried locally and the landscape has a blend of native plants, so there's a strong Oklahoma presence in the texture of the park.

Sustainability and eco-consciousness are at our forefront. We have geothermal wells for our buildings that assist with heating and cooling, as well as a three-acre lagoon, from which we pump and filter naturally flowing water for irrigation. It's a natural and healthy environment that aligns with our ecology and our experience.

How many people visit, and where do they come from?

In our first full year of operation, we experienced about 2.9 million visitors. But our attendance is seasonally impacted. For example, during spring break, our busiest season, we average about 20,000 visitors a day, which is on par with a major theme park in Orlando. In addition to Tulsans and other Oklahomans, many come from markets like Austin, Dallas, Little Rock, and Kansas City.

Gathering Place seems like it has theme park size and variety but in an urban park setting—and with no admission price. Is this unique?

It absolutely is, and I appreciate you pointing that out. I came from the theme park industry in Florida, and the investment in Gathering Place is on par with some of those parks, but it's designed specifically with a social mission of bringing people together regardless of age, culture,

socioeconomics, race, or zip code—it's a very inclusive space for everyone to feel welcomed and comfortable.

Our objective is to treat our guests as if it's a first-class paid experience, and we spend the necessary money to make sure that programming is free. In fact, I often see visitors debating when they enter: "Where's admissions? Is this free?" They're just taken by it. This gives us a point of difference from any park.

We like to say that there are over one hundred unique experiences to be had while visiting the park, and that makes it repeatable because you can't truly experience it all in one day. So whether it's our most popular attraction—zip-lining—or spending time at Adventure Playground, jogging, biking, or walking along our dozens of miles of trails, playing sports, kayaking, canoeing, dining in one of three restaurants or just enjoying quiet, there's so much to do.



Would you elaborate on the educational focus of the park?

That was quite intentional. The park is for all demographics, but children are at the forefront of what we do here. Before we opened the park to our regular guests, we had soft openings that involved 30,000 elementary school kids. Our Adventure Playground was primarily designed for learning through play. Some attractions require kids to collaborate with each other and use teamwork. It certainly encourages a sense of exploration.

In addition to the intentional design of the park, education is a major part of our programming. We have daily, free activities curated by our education team in coordination with world-class curriculum partners. There is everything from Art Start, to STEAM activities, field trips, story time, mobile libraries, nature walks, and more, all with rotating lessons that make learning through play come to life.



Cultural integration is an intentional focus at Gathering Place. Oklahoma might not be nationally recognized for its cultural composition, but it is, in fact, quite culturally diverse. We have one of the largest Native American communities in the country, and our park is even built on Native American land. Through partnership with our local communities, we intentionally create authentic cultural programming, such as festivals and concerts, that specifically caters to these audiences. We have created cultural events that we believe to be authentic programming for all our demographics, including Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans. We're happy when we hear Tulsans say they didn't realize that there was so much diversity in the city until coming here.

How have people responded to Gathering Place?

The appreciation that the community has shown us by embracing the park as

its own is unlike anything I've ever seen. There's an emotional attachment to the park beyond the visit. When people visit Gathering Place, they don't feel like they're in Tulsa—it really feels like they're in a world-class park.

The national attention we're getting also gives Tulsans a strong sense of pride. We've received wonderful accolades: *National Geographic*, *Time* magazine, and *USA Today* are among those who named us on their "best of" lists. Admittedly, I did not quite expect it to be so well-received to this level. But we're humbled and thankful for it, and we're so appreciative for what this is doing for Tulsa.

For more info, visit gatheringplace.org

Front of Tear Out Card 2

GRAPE AND ROSEMARY TART

11 oz. high-quality frozen puff pastry, defrosted
 18 oz. seedless red grapes
 2/3 c. granulated sugar
 1 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
 1 1/2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary needles








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Back of Tear Out Card 2



SERVES 4-6

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Line an 11-inch tart pan with the puff pastry, pushing it into the pan, especially along the edges, and freeze for 5 minutes.
3. In a large bowl, toss the grapes with the sugar and lemon juice then spread on top of the chilled pastry. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the edges of the pastry are crisp—depending on the pastry, it may take more or less time. Sprinkle the tart with the rosemary and let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Serve warm or cold.

Recipe excerpted from *365: A Year of Everyday Cooking & Baking* by Meike Peters. Copyright 2019. Published by Prestel.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Joshua Casnave's story is one of sin, redemption, and the music that connects the two together. Joshua, better known by his stage name TheBranch, is a spiritual rapper with a rapidly rising profile and a new album full of soul searching hip hop on the way. But getting to this point wasn't easy. The mystical lyricism that currently defines The Branch was informed by a lifetime of struggle, drug abuse, prison time, and eventually, a rediscovering of God's path. Through it all, Joshua's devotion to his music kept him from submitting to the darkness. He is a testament to how much a man can accomplish when fate, faith, and inspiration combine to put a man right where he is meant to be.

Joshua was born in the small town of St. Joe, Michigan on August 14, 1983. His family soon relocated to Niles, just outside of South Bend, Indiana, where he developed the love of music and art that would come to define his later life. Joshua would eventually grow up and relocate to Goodyear, Arizona to work at the Cleveland Indians Spring Training Facility. He got married his high school sweetheart Echo (Bailey) and had three sons. For a while, Joshua embodied the American dream life. It wasn't long, however, until God began to test his faith. Over the next few years, Joshua began a downward spiral into a hell like existence, testing the very fabric of his soul.

Inexplicably dissatisfied with his life, Joshua began to turn to drugs and alcohol for relief. It started slowly, but in no time at all, these substances began to take control of Joshua's every waking moment. Although his wife tried to rescue him, she found herself unable to deal with the man he was becoming, and soon she took their children and fled back to Michigan, leaving Joshua alone. Joshua thought he couldn't get any lower, but little did he know, his trials were only beginning.

While his ex-wife was starting a new life with a new husband in Michigan, Joshua found himself spiraling out of control. When his substance abuse issues became so severe that he was unable to hold down a job, he found himself out on the streets. Joshua found himself facing the bleakest circumstances he could have faced. He began hustling to make ends meet while dealing with homelessness, spending long nights side by side with the other lost souls that populate the dark alleys most people never see. His drug dependency became worse, leading him to an endless series of nights spent in cold underpasses, damp motel rooms, and dirty alleys offering almost nothing for shelter.

Joshua may have thought he had hit rock bottom, but the Lord had prepared one more test for him to face. This test, well outside of ordinary situations, would force the young man to confront the darkest parts of his own soul, but it would also provide him with the path to redemption.

Simply put, Joshua began to hear demons speaking inside his head. Whether this was the result of years of heavy substance abuse, a message from God, or a figment of Joshua's imagination is up to the reader to decide. But for Joshua, it was all too real. They began to manifest visually as well, jumping from person to person, unseen by everyone but the one soul they were determined to torment. This unceasing spiritual torture kept up for weeks, until finally, Joshua received the sign of his impending salvation that he so desperately longed for.

One night, deep in prayer, Joshua looked up to the sky to see an unusually bright star. The star aligned perfectly with his body, following him everywhere he went. As he stared upwards with astounded eyes, he saw that star stretch and expand, eventually overtaking the sky itself. It felt as if heaven had finally opened its doors to him. While he still had sins to atone for, this supernatural event cleansed Joshua of the demonic presence raging inside him, replacing it with heavenly guidance that would eventually show him the way back home.

For the crimes he had committed during his darkest hours, Joshua was sentenced to a year and a half in prison. This time proved to be a blessing, however, as it sowed the seeds of poetry and music in Joshua. He spent his free time writing as much music as he could, channeling his new found faith into an uplifting sound that could serve as a light to people in need. Joshua gave himself the moniker of 'The Branch,' and committed every fiber of his beings to writing the songs that would later become his debut album.

Music gave Joshua a new lease on life, but he still had unfinished business. Missing his family and filled with regret for the events that had transpired, he placed a call to his ex wife. As fate would have it, she and her new husband were in the middle of a divorce. Joshua took this news as a blessing, quickly reuniting with his family as soon as he became a free man. All that was left to do, was release the album he had been working on his entire life.

Appropriately titled 'Servant Songs,' TheBranch's debut album is directly inspired by the spiritual journey that preceded it. Every verse is filled with hope and conviction, adding up to create a sound unlike anything in the modern music world.

Led by singles 'Hallelujah,' 'Show The World,' and 'God Wit Me,?' TheBranch made sure his family was included on the record, with prominent vocal spots from his wife, Echo. It is almost impossible to listen to this record without being moved by the redemptive power of TheBranch's storytelling.

"I share a lot of personal battles in this album in the attempt to reach a vast amount of people and to help inspire that hope, power, and victory spirit that is within us all," Joahua says. That spirit of sincerity and salvation pervades every track on the album, and has set him on a path that can only lead to a better life.

Like many of the hip hop greats who came before him, TheBranch has lived an incredible life full of stories that range from strange to downright inspiring. Now that the worst of it is behind him, it is easy to envision him embarking on a long and prolific career in music. For now, however, TheBranch is content to make the most of every day, telling his story one song at a time.

The Branch's album "Servant Songs" is out now and streaming on all major platforms including spotify/apple music/itunes/amazon music etc.



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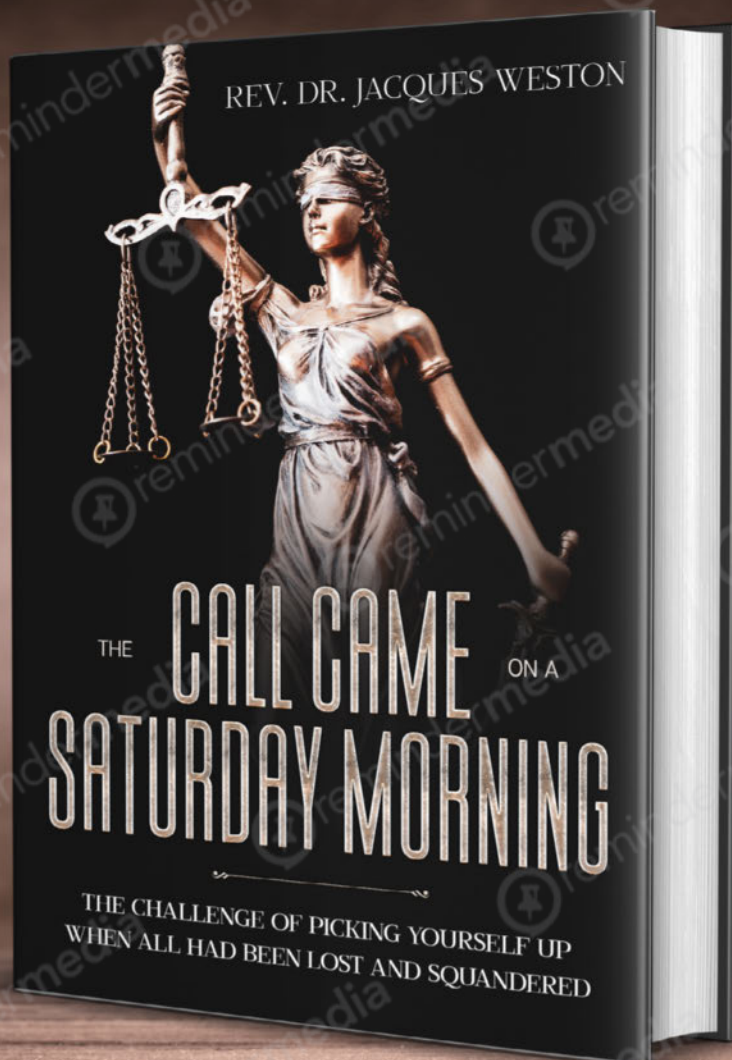





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