

57°

THIS IS NAPA VALLEY







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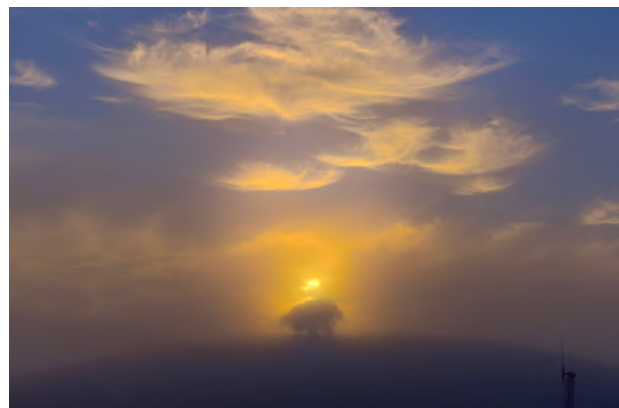
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

By Rich Medel

As excitement builds for this year's AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, we reflect on the incredible legacy of nearly 80 years of world-class golf and community impact. With last year's strongest-ever field, this iconic event continues to showcase excellence while giving back to causes that matter. Alongside the Pro-Am, First Tee - Monterey County is shaping young lives through golf and life skills, reaching 10,000 youth annually. Here, club choice and chip shots meet lessons in handshakes and confidence—a reminder of how sports can build character.



On the Monterey Peninsula, community thrives in many ways. Carmel Cares, a grassroots initiative, has evolved into an educational force, teaching local students the value of community support and environmental sustainability. In a feature, Mayor-Elect Dale Byrne shares his vision for the future of Carmel, emphasizing the town's heritage and forward-thinking spirit. Meanwhile, Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County president Ron Johnson reflects on over three decades of empowering youth—a mission that has touched countless lives. And for those seeking luxury and privacy, Casa Palmero's Spanish-colonial charm provides a serene retreat just steps from Pebble Beach.

Over in Napa, stories of artistry and innovation shine. Photographer MJ Schaer captures the timeless beauty of Napa Valley landscapes, while Blake Barrios transforms glass wine bottles into striking works of art supporting nonprofits. Quilt & Co.'s new three-story tasting room celebrates fifth-generation winemaker Joseph Wagner's craft, while Hill Family Estate and Whitehall Lane Winery continue to lead with sustainability and tradition. Festival Napa Valley enchants year-round with programs that make the arts accessible to all. And for ultimate relaxation, Hotel Yountville blends vineyard-inspired charm with unmatched hospitality.

Whether on the Monterey coast or amid Napa's vineyards, this issue celebrates the people and places making a difference. Enjoy!

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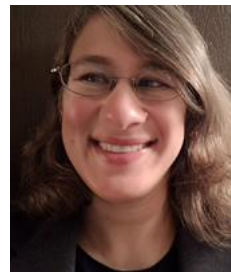
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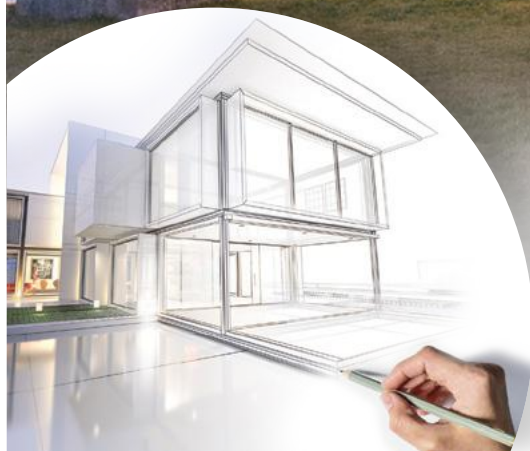


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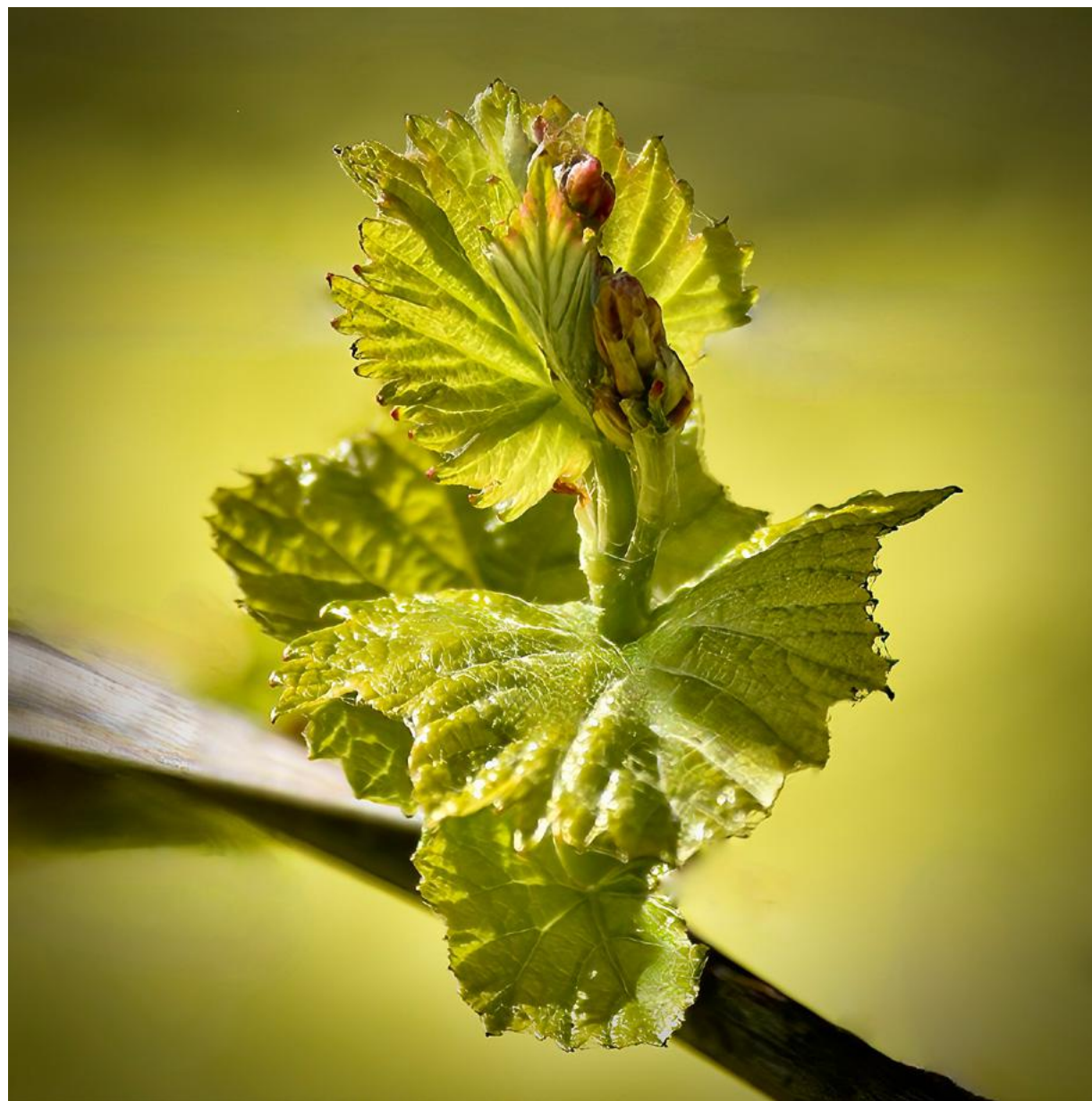
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Doors of Opportunity

By Rebekah Moan | Photos by MJ Schaer

Photographer MJ Schaer views his career through the lens of one door of opportunity leading to another, and then another. His career goal in college was to become an architect, but that took a very different path in 1966, when his draft notice arrived. To fulfill his military obligation, he enlisted in the Navy, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam. For his second tour, Schaer served on the same aircraft carrier that his naval aviator father's squadron was attached to. His duty assignment was in the carrier's photo lab as the squadron's photographer.

"That's how I was introduced to photography," he says. "I hadn't planned on becoming a pro photographer." Upon returning to the United States, his career began when a family friend, a horse show photographer, offered him a part-time job as an assistant. It ultimately led to a freelance position with NFL Films and a pro/college sports and commercial





photography business for over two decades. During that time, he crafted his artistic statement: “How I see . . . what I see . . . is . . . ‘THE ART OF FREEZE’©,” which is a reference to the cinematography term freeze-frame, capturing inspirational, motionless images that convey a powerful moment.

He also owned art galleries in La Jolla, Yountville, and Napa but retired from that in 2008, now focusing on photographing landscapes. “The most important element of the camera lens is the eye behind it,” he says.

Schaer captures landscapes in Napa Valley and beyond, always holding that sense of the freeze-frame. “My eye is always vigilant for that exceptional moment,” he says. “Today, that ingrained alert thought pattern continues to move me to react in that moment of time before the light, wind, or subject will change forever. I continually search for that image that nobody else would ever visualize.”

For more information, visit mjschaerphotographer.com.



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Up on the Roof

By Jessica Zimmer | Photos Courtesy of Quilt & Co.

In September 2024, Rutherford-based Quilt & Co. opened its three-story tasting room with a rooftop patio in the historic Thomas Building. It showcases the wines of fifth-generation winemaker Joseph Wagner, which include Belle Glos, Napa Valley Quilt, Böen, Elouan, and Key To Building 1. The first floor is an excellent spot to enjoy a favorite wine by the glass or customize a tasting. The second floor provides a more intimate setting for private gatherings.

“The crown jewel of our new location is undoubtedly the rooftop patio, the only of its kind in Napa Valley. Reserved for those wanting to taste through our wines in a standard guided tasting,” says Wagner, who is also owner and winemaker at Copper Cane Wines & Spirits. “It provides stunning views of downtown Napa and the surrounding vineyards, creating a beautiful backdrop for enjoying our wines.”

The tasting room’s décor mixes vintage and modern styles in warm earth tones that evoke the natural beauty of Napa Valley. Architectural Resources Group, a firm specializing in historic preservation, honored the original architecture by preserving the facade’s four cast-iron columns.

New releases for fall 2024 and early 2025 included barrel-aged chardonnay from the Key to Building 1 extended and the first vintage of grenache from the Glasir Holt vineyard. Guests can enjoy small bites that include cheese and charcuterie, crudités, and beef cracklings from Chef Austen Orell.

One unique opportunity at Quilt & Co. is the VIP waxing experience, in which guests dip their own bottles of Belle Glos wine into a signature red wax and a variety of additional colors.

The opening of the tasting room marks a significant milestone for the business. “Ultimately, I hope to foster a sense of community here,” says Wagner, “making it a place where people can gather, share experiences, and truly appreciate the amazing gastronomy this region offers.”

For more information, visit quiltandco.com.





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Setting the Stage for Excellence and Access for All

By Betsy Reynard | Photos Courtesy of Festival Napa Valley

Music captivates, inspires, and nourishes the heart and soul. For nearly two decades, Festival Napa Valley has transformed the lives of audiences and musicians alike, continuing to enchant with year-round programming dedicated to making the arts accessible to all. A star-studded fundraising gala at Nickel & Nickel winery and performances in Wine Country, San Francisco, and venues across the Bay Area and beyond delight attendees from around the globe. Festival-produced arts education programs provide youth, families, and seniors access to best-in-class live music and offer unique learning opportunities for talented young musicians. Support from the festival's generous donors makes these programs possible.

Each July, the festival's hallmark summer season features three weeks of concerts, films, and food and wine events, showcasing the best of Napa Valley and world-class performances by emerging talents as well as luminaries such as Lionel Richie, Carrie Underwood, and Joshua Bell. With a diverse lineup that spans classical, jazz, contemporary, Broadway, opera, and dance, the summer season sets the stage for artistic excellence and celebration.





In line with its commitment to making the arts accessible, every summer the Frost School at Festival Napa Valley's Blackburn Music Academy offers a tuition-free academy for aspiring preprofessional instrumentalists. Guided by an esteemed faculty of musicians, participants engage in a near monthlong program, studying and performing alongside accomplished artists. This initiative provides scholarships, housing, meals, and transportation, supporting the success of future talent.

"How I See Music," a flagship festival Arts for All initiative, offers free, immersive workshops at schools, community centers, and senior facilities, blending auditory exploration with hands-on learning. Participants from ages 5 to 95 embark on a journey into the world of symphonic music, honing listening skills and learning visual art concepts. Serving over 800 students and seniors each year, this program is a vital pillar of the organization's mission.

The festival's "Novack Concerts for Kids" series invites Napa County students, teachers, and families to enjoy admission-free performances throughout the year, playing a crucial role in fostering lifelong appreciation for music, theater, and dance. Transportation is provided to participating public schools and nonprofit partners, ensuring accessibility. The series reaches over 4,000 young people and their families annually.

Thanks to the generous support of patrons and sponsors, Festival Napa Valley has cultivated a vibrant array of programs that uplift young artists, enhance arts education, and showcase live performances. Its steadfast commitment to celebrating the arts has transformed Napa Valley into a thriving cultural destination.

For more information, visit festivalnapavalley.org.





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Beyond the Vines

By Betsy Reynard

As a new year dawns and cool, misty mornings awaken the Valley, the Napa Lighted Art Festival casts a radiant glow over downtown Napa. It features 12 stunning light sculptures and mesmerizing projection art that dances across city buildings. Embrace the magic of art after dark with this innovative, uplifting, and imaginative five-week celebration of illumination and technology. While out exploring, don't miss the chance to savor Napa Valley Restaurant Month™, when, over 28 delectable days, culinary delights await. This is the opportunity to indulge in the Valley's bounty with inventive prix-fixe menus available at various eateries throughout the area.

From January through March, the vibrant, yellow wild mustard blossoms blanket the Valley floor, igniting the creativity of artists, chefs, winemakers, visitors, and locals alike. The Napa Valley Mustard Celebration pays tribute to this vivid cover crop with a tapestry of art, wine, and a jubilant celebration of the season between seasons!

February, the month of love, invites you to discover your heart in Yountville, where handcrafted, signed, numbered glass hearts are hidden along the enchanting Yountville Art Walk every weekend. Wander the Art Walk to uncover and keep your Yountville heart.

After a heartwarming stroll, head north to St. Helena for an indulgence at Roman Holiday Gelato. Savor the house-made honey waffle cone brimming with one (or two!) scoops of one of the daily seasonal flavors. Owner Elisha Smiley's shop is a true labor of affection, born from her passion for Italy, gelato, and the timeless film that inspired the gelateria's name.

Just up the street, explore the women's fashion boutique Veronica Beard. A daughter of Napa vintner Clarke Swanson, Beard advocates for "VB Gives Back," supporting organizations dedicated to uplifting women, children, and families, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Helena and Calistoga. This is the season to partake in meaningful activities throughout Napa Valley.







Quiet Luxury

By Sarah Gillihan | Photos Courtesy of Hotel Yountville

In Yountville, fine dining, luxury accommodations, and Wine Country laid-back style meet. Accommodations in this hamlet provide an ideal base for exploring the charming town of Yountville and the greater Napa Valley. Spread out across five rambling acres at the south end of town is Hotel Yountville Resort & Spa, a vineyard estate-inspired boutique resort focused on providing comfort, privacy, and relaxation for its guests. The resort amenities range from a private spa and pool, exclusive dining options, and a state-of-the-art gym with a quintessential Wine Country view of vineyards and natural spaces.

From the moment guests arrive, they are wrapped in a sense of calm. The hotel's architecture harmonizes with the surrounding landscape and features a blend of rustic elements and contemporary design. Lush gardens anchored by stately native oaks and olive trees, whimsical water features, and well-appointed courtyards create a relaxing setting that feels both inviting and exclusive. With only 80 guest rooms and suites, Hotel Yountville excels at providing personalized experiences.

Each Hotel Yountville guest room is a sanctuary, designed to reflect the natural beauty of the Napa Valley region. With vaulted ceilings, large windows, fieldstone fireplaces, and warm, inviting color palettes, the rooms exude a sense of comfort and sophistication. Many rooms feature private patios or balconies, offering views of the hotel's manicured gardens or the picturesque vineyards beyond. The premium suites are the most requested. Offering between 650 and 800 square feet of space, the suite's layout includes either a garden patio or balcony ideal for enjoying in-room dining. Luxurious amenities, including Bellora® Italian linens, four-poster king-sized beds, spacious bathrooms with soaking tubs, and modern technology further elevate the experience.





The hotel's commitment to privacy is paramount. The resort's restaurant, spa, and gym are reserved for resort guests, who can enjoy the peaceful atmosphere without the distractions often found in larger resorts. This exclusive environment is perfect for couples seeking a romantic getaway, friends reuniting for a relaxing retreat, or solo travelers looking to recharge in a serene setting. The attentive staff provide personalized recommendations and services tailored to each guest's preferences.

Dining at Hotel Yountville complements the luxurious experience. Heritage Oak, the hotel's on-site restaurant, boasts a menu that emphasizes organic, fresh, seasonal ingredients. The restaurant's sophisticated yet relaxed atmosphere makes it the perfect spot for leisurely breakfasts. It also offers an after-hours menu, starting at 9:30 p.m., catering to the whims of vacationing guests.

For those seeking rejuvenation, the hotel offers a full-service spa, where treatments are designed to promote relaxation and wellness. From soothing massages to revitalizing facials, the spa provides a tranquil escape—guests can unwind and restore balance. Additionally, the outdoor pool space, surrounded by lush landscaping, offers a serene oasis for sunbathing or leisurely swimming, ensuring that every guest can find their own slice of paradise.

Hotel Yountville's location further enhances its allure. Connecting to Yountville by a private footpath, guests can explore local boutiques, art galleries, and fine dining, including The French Laundry and its sister restaurants, without getting into a car. Day trips to vineyards and wine tastings allow guests to fully immerse themselves in the Napa Valley experience.

In a world where hustle and bustle often reign, Hotel Yountville stands out as a sanctuary of quiet luxury and privacy. It offers a unique opportunity for guests to escape the ordinary and indulge in an experience marked by best-in-class hospitality, luxurious accommodations, and the natural beauty of Napa Valley.

For more information, visit hotelyountville.com.

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High Contrast, High Impact

By Jessica Zimmer | Photos by Bob McClenahan

Napa Valley artist Blake Barrios paints clean, detailed portraits, animals, and scenes on glass wine bottles to create pieces that support a wide range of nonprofits such as the American Heart Association and the Make Yourself Foundation. His works become collector's items, encouraging fundraising auctions and inspiring his students throughout Napa Valley.

Since 2013, Barrios has volunteered as an art teacher to children in the San Francisco Bay Area. He started with DrawBridge, a nonprofit based in San Rafael, and currently holds regular and holiday-related workshops at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley and Catholic Charities' Rainbow House, a Napa center for transitional housing for women and children.

"All of my pieces go out of the societal norm. They push limits and have a sense of daring about them," says Barrios. In one set of his pieces, an

elk, a moose, an oryx, and a stag stare down the audience. In another piece, a black-and-white version of musician Carlos Santana closes his eyes, his uplifted arms and hands filled with vibrant colors.

In a partnership of creativity and exclusivity with winemaker Jon Keyes, Barrios paints on bottles of Rebellium Cabernet Sauvignon. He has also painted Disney characters for Frank Family Vineyards' wines, and he serves as a consulting artist with Strala Vineyards, a boutique winery in St. Helena. Future projects include painting wine bottles of a rare red blend in collaboration with winemaker Julien Fayard.

Barrios grew up in the Napa Valley and taught himself to paint. After graduating from Vintage High School, he worked in Napa Valley wine retail stores. He learned about business through local entrepreneur Luis Nieves.



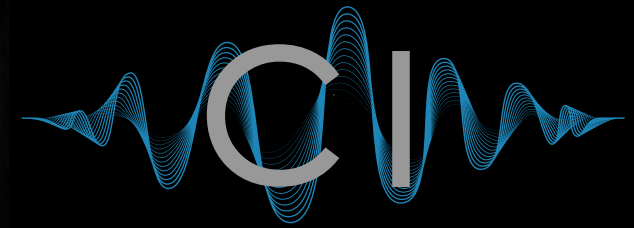
In 2015, Barrios and Keyes founded Rebellium Wines to create and donate pieces that would draw attention at charity events as a way to help their community. The wines sell for between \$1,500 and \$6,500 a bottle, and they provide opportunities for buyers to be creative artists. "Any custom design can be done," says Barrios. "The only limit is a client's imagination."

Barrios works only with DecoColor® oil-based paint markers to create his art. Marvy® Uchida, an art supply company that has sponsored Barrios for 10 years, donates art supplies to the nonprofits for which Barrios volunteers.

His creative process starts with developing a digital version of the design. He then reviews the concept with the client, sizes it to fit onto a wine bottle, and paints the design. "I love the high contrast of the deep, dark glass against the paint," says Barrios. "I tend to come up with designs that make a subject stand out. That way, the subject is almost three-dimensional."

Barrios also creates works by outlining subjects on canvas and inviting students to add colors and details. He used this technique last October to design a 4' x 4' canvas painting of a male lion for Soka University of America, a private liberal arts university in Aliso Viejo. Proceeds from selling the piece will go to a scholarship fund to support foreign students who want to study in the United States. "This piece encourages students to have hearts as loud as lions," says Barrios.

He is always learning from his students. They often share ideas about subjects to portray and how to depict them. "My students are true visionaries that guide and help me grow," he says. "I appreciate the opportunity to teach them artistic skills while explaining how to keep a sense of wonder. Most importantly, I let them know they are seen and their voices will be heard."



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Wander, Sip, Return

By Betsy Reynard | Photos by Bob McClenahan

From the bustling streets of Chicago to the serene vineyards of Napa Valley, Julie Secviar has fashioned a career fueled by a passion for exploration, service, and empathy. She grew up in a lively household—her adventurous mother took her and her five siblings on trips across the United States, Canada, and Mexico while her father stayed home to run his candy business. On one of those trips, they visited Napa Valley. It was a simpler time, when wine tastings were held in winemakers' garages, tasting fees didn't exist, and the Valley had a different kind of charm. At an early age, Secviar felt a connection to Napa, vowing to return to the place she now calls home.

Her journey to California has been anything but linear. Newly married and on hiatus from her studies, Secviar accepted a position as a receptionist in the human resources department at a local Chicago hospital. She flourished there, taking on more responsibilities, later advancing to an executive position overseeing human resources, sales, marketing, and strategic planning. There, her inclination to serve began to shine, leading the way to a service industry career.

While her career was thriving, Secviar suffered a devastating loss when her mother passed after a long battle with colon cancer. When her youngest stepson, a chef at The French Laundry in Yountville, shared that owner Thomas Keller was seeking someone to spearhead his human resources division, Secviar seized the opportunity. This allowed her to return to Napa, a place that lingered in her memory from childhood, "When I first visited Napa Valley, I remember fondly saying, "When I get older, I am definitely coming back here." Six weeks and a few decades later, she was back.

Secviar played a pivotal role in Keller's group, launching restaurants and establishing a premier human resources function. Thirteen years later, she was recruited by Far Niente Wine Estates, where she now serves as vice president of human resources.





Health and wellness are paramount to Secviar, driving her to create policies and practices that prioritize these values. Under her leadership, the Far Niente worksite has achieved Blue Zones approval. She recently launched the Emerging Leaders program, which identifies 12 high-potential employees and crafts a comprehensive curriculum, preparing them for future leadership roles within the company. This 13-month initiative encompasses classes across all facets of the business along with hands-on project work. Secviar takes immense pride in the program. “We have built a solid culture, based upon individuality and mutuality of respect,” she says. “And our team knows we genuinely care!”

Outside of professional endeavors, Secviar is involved with the community, serving as vice-chair of the Yountville Chamber of Commerce Board and is a member of the steering committee for Blue Zones. An animal lover, she volunteers at Jameson Humane. She also enjoys gardening, dancing, and practicing Pilates to relieve stress and enhance mobility.

Secviar attributes her resilience to her Midwestern upbringing, which instilled in her the values of perseverance and community. While she has faced profound personal loss, she views these experiences as transformative, deepening her empathy and allowing her to connect with others on a more meaningful level. She values networking and encourages patience. “It takes time to build wisdom,” she says, “and you do so through small experiences, not just a textbook.”

Secviar cherishes the smell of grape crush each fall, the sight of hot air balloons during her daily commute, and the welcoming nature of the community whose agricultural efforts bring the Valley to life. “I absolutely treasure our little hamlet called Napa,” she says. “What a blessing it is to live in such a beautiful place.”

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A photograph of the Whitehall Lane Winery building at dusk. The building is a modern, two-story structure with a light-colored upper section and a darker lower section. The words "WHITEHALL LANE" are illuminated in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the light-colored wall. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple. In the foreground, there are some low-lying plants and a concrete walkway.

Spontaneity Meets 30 Years of Patience

By Sarah Gillihan | Photos Courtesy of Whitehall Lane Winery

Winemaking in Napa Valley requires a long view. There are no overnight successes, despite how it may seem from the outside. Napa Valley wineries are built season by season, vineyard by vineyard, over years, with vision, investment, and intention. At Whitehall Lane Winery, in Rutherford, the Leonardini family has, for three decades, been quietly building a multigenerational, sustainable business for which success isn't just seen, it's tasted.

While the wine business takes patience, some decisions are just easy to make. A keen businessman and lifelong wine lover, Tom Leonardini learned about a small winery property for sale in Napa Valley's renowned Rutherford appellation on a Monday in 1993. By the following Friday, the winery was his. Over the next 30 years, he and his family established a wine business at Whitehall Lane Winery that is anchored in estate vineyards and driven by sustainable farming, winemaking, and business practices.

Today, the second and third generations are at the helm. Tom Leonardini Jr. joined his father almost immediately, in 1994, leading sales and distribution for the business. With a background in financial services, Leonardini Jr.'s sister, Katie, Leonardini has led the winery's operations since 2012. Tom Leonardini III is Whitehall Lane's cellar master, and his cousin William Melancon worked several harvests before getting additional experience with other leading wine companies. Now in his early 80s, Leonardini Sr. comes to the winery nearly daily, sharing his business acumen and love of wine with the newest generation.

Together, the Leonardini siblings have continued to invest in the business, growing their vineyard holding to 200 acres, with 145 acres planted across eight vineyard sites. With the 2023 vintage, the wines are 100% estate grown, a fact that adds to both quality and transparency of the wines, says Katie.

Transparency is a belief that the Leonardinis continually return to—traceability in vineyard sourcing, and in winery and business practices. Core to this philosophy is the understanding that consumers want to know what goes into what they buy, where it's grown, and how it impacts the environment and the people around it. Together with Director of Winemaking and Viticulture Jason Moulton, the family is committed to employing sustainable practices throughout the operation.

Not simply paying lip service to sustainability, the winery is certified Napa Green, a third-party certification that demands continuous improvement in six areas of sustainability: water use, energy efficiency, waste reduction, soil health, social justice and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), and climate action and regenerative agriculture. "Napa Green is really important to all of us," say Katie. "Our family lives here [in the Napa Valley.]"

Whitehall Lane's red wines are bottled both unfined and unfiltered, which preserves the full character and structure of the vintage, according to Moulton. He is also crafting gluten-free and vegan wines with clear labeling for consumers.

The commitment to transparency, Moulton believes, results in wines that reflect the true flavor of each variety and the character of the vineyard. The winery's cabernet sauvignons are elegant yet full-bodied and have garnered acclaim from the industry's most respected critics. With fine tannins, the cabernets are aged gracefully over 15 years or longer. The Whitehall Lane sauvignon blanc sports a refreshing complexity rarely found in the varietal. With the addition of vineyard purchases in Sonoma County, Whitehall Lane also boasts a rich chardonnay and has recently added a traditional vintage blanc de noirs sparkling wine and a rosé of pinot noir.

Whitehall Lane welcomes visitors daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for indoor and outdoor tasting experiences. Reservations are recommended.

For more information, visit whitehalllane.com.











STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS





Keeping It in the Family

By Rebekah Moan | Photoby Bob McClenahan

As its name suggests, Hill Family Estate is a family-run vineyard. Ryan Hill, vice president and director of sales, jokes that his three children represent the fifth generation of farmers. “They just don’t know it yet,” he says.

Ryan’s parents, Doug and Darci Hill, moved to Yountville in 1981 and started leasing small properties and planting vineyards—they couldn’t afford to buy the land at the time but could lease it. This allowed Doug, a third-generation farmer, to grow grapes, which he sold to 40 local wineries such as Caymus Vineyards, Silver Oak, Duckhorn Vineyards, and Quintessa.

Over the years, the Hills were able to purchase some of the vineyards. Doug was content to grow grapes, but Ryan wanted to expand the business. He credits his first job at Bouchon Bistro for sparking his desire for winemaking. “Guests were enamored with the fact that I was born and raised in Yountville and came from a grape-growing family,” says Ryan. “But when I told them we were only farmers and not winemakers, they would challenge me to take the family business to the next level and make wine.”

Eventually, in 2001 they did that, creating a merlot and red blend called Origin. Production ranges between 9,000 to 12,000 cases annually, and the family draws from a repertoire of 12 different vineyards. Hill Family Estate’s top three wines are Albariño, Like a Hawk, and Red Door. The vineyard also hosts wine cruises and events at the estate.

“When you strive to make every guest feel like family, regardless of whether they pay a tasting fee or purchase multiple cases, you create a lasting connection,” says Ryan. “I am beyond grateful for the individuals I get to surround myself with and credit their continued hard work and dedication to the success we’ve experienced as a small family business.”

For more information, visit hillfamilyestate.com.





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Kismet

Whether it's fate, fortune, or destiny, the launch of the 122-meter (400-foot) M/Y KISMET from the esteemed Lürssen shipyard marks the third custom build for Jacksonville Jaguars owner Shahid Khan. It is a remarkable blend of luxury amenities and advanced technology.

Dubbed "Louis XIV meets Interstellar" by its interior designer, Reymond Langton, the six-deck, 5,500 GT megayacht, with exterior design by Nuvolari Lenard, moves the innovation needle. Its state-of-the-art hybrid propulsion system allows for silent cruising for up to 15 minutes—perfect for navigating fragile marine habits. Indeed, the engine room itself is a must-see feature, visible through a dramatically lit, glass-lined corridor, dubbed the "TRON experience."

Boasting a sophisticated aesthetic throughout, Kismet's list of features is impressive: a mosaic-lined pool with 40-tonne capacity (and a dump tank to keep the water warm until refill time), four bioethanol fireplaces inside and two firepits outside, an Art Deco Nemo underwater cinema/lounge (with six-inch-thick layered glass that underwent rigorous testing), a Versailles-style hall of mirrors, a hand-painted de Gournay ceiling in the main saloon, a Bogányi grand piano, and a jewel-box elevator with clear sides from which to admire the ride, to name but a few. The lower-deck, Balinese-inspired spa includes a hammam, sauna, plunge pool, gym, massage room, yoga studio, and juice bar as well as cryotherapy and opening sea terraces.

Each of the eight guest cabins is themed after a different famous couture house, with floor-to-ceiling windows and gorgeous en suite bathrooms. The owner's full beam, two-deck apartment would give most Park Avenue penthouse owners a run for their money. Dripping in gold, it includes a vast primary suite with a circular skylight, two separate marble bathrooms and dressing rooms, and a private hot tub. All guest areas feature underfloor heating. Overhead are incredibly detailed ceilings throughout, formed from solid aluminum, hand-painted and textured, with integrated lighting and speakers.

Outdoor spaces are designed for leisure and entertainment, including a pool lounge with interactive disco floor, a large sundeck spa pool with waterfall and swim-up bar, an outdoor cinema, a helipad that doubles as a basketball/pickleball court, and walkaround promenade decks that are reminiscent of classic liners. Of course, all this relaxing can make owners and guests hungry, so Kismet's culinary options include a teppanyaki cooking station, outdoor pizza oven, BBQ on the pool deck, plus, of course, a vast galley, and multiple indoor/outdoor, formal/relaxed dining areas from which to choose.

With a blend of classic elegance and futuristic design, Kismet is more than just a yacht; it's an unparalleled luxury travel experience. And while every detail has been carefully chosen by its hands-on owners who use the vessel both personally and for business, the yacht is one of the hottest (and most expensive) currently available to charter.

M/Y KISMET

LOA:
122 m/400 ft

Beam:
17 m/55.7 ft

Draught:
4.4 m/14.4 ft

Gross Tonnage:
4,918 GT

Range at 12 knots:
6,000 nm

Speed max/cruise:
18/12 knots

Engines:
2 x 3,200 kW MTU 20V 4000 M73L

Construction:
Steel hull; aluminum superstructure

Total Guests: 12 charter/16 with owner aboard

Crew:
37

Charter Price:
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Striking a Pose

By Nora Heston Tarte | Photos Courtesy of Napa Humane

“Lights. Camera. Action!” Last fall, the pets of Napa County took center stage in Napa Humane’s annual Pet Photo Contest, then the winners prepared for their close-ups.

Pet owners submitted photos of their pets, along with a \$40 entry fee. The community then voted for their favorite photos—the votes, which cost \$1 each, help raise money for Napa Humane programs.

“Our team eagerly watched the leaderboard shift rapidly in the final 12 hours of the contest,” says Laticia Sahs, Napa Humane’s director of marketing and communications. “I set an alarm for 11:50 p.m. to wake up and witness the last 10 minutes—it was truly exciting!”

The overall contest winners were a trio of canines, Pete, Esther and Nina, whose photos feature on the cover of Napa Humane’s 2025 calendar. Top dog went to Ralphy, top cat was blue-eyed Jaxon, and Ronnie hopped into first place in the rabbit category. Five dogs, five cats, and two rabbits were recognized as Pets of the Month.



All contestants are celebrated in the calendar. “We create a beautiful collage of all entries to honor their participation,” says Sahs.

Napa Humane runs completely on donations, so the calendar program is important. “We do not receive funding from national animal welfare groups such as the Humane Society of the United States or the ASPCA,” explains Sahs. Funds support the organization’s programs, including the spay/neuter clinic, vaccine and microchip services, a behavioral dog training program, shelter medicine support, humane education initiatives in local elementary schools, and pet assistance for vulnerable community members. The next calendar’s competition kicks off September 1, 2025.

“The Pet Photo Contest is a natural extension of our mission to promote the welfare of companion animals and strengthen the bond between pets and people,” says Sahs. “Not only does the contest generate vital funds for our programs, but it also actively engages the local community, allowing them to celebrate their beloved pets while championing for a more compassionate community.”

For more information, visit napahumane.org.





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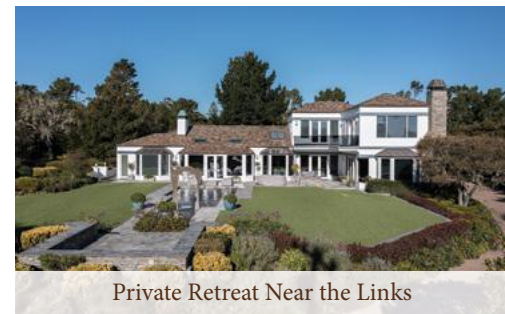
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Secluded Yet Convenient

By Rebekah Moan | Photos Courtesy Carmel Realty Company

For people seeking a luxurious sanctuary with the convenience of a 15-minute walk to restaurants and shops, Carmel Realty Company's "Pacific Vistas" is the ideal vacation property. The privately gated, remodeled home has ocean views from Point Lobos to Stillwater Cove from all three of its levels.

The 6,200-square-foot house has five bedrooms with king-sized beds and four bathrooms. The penthouse suite encompasses the entire top floor and offers ocean and golf course views from the bedroom to the bathroom. A private deck with a tiled terrace provides lounge seating for six—perfect for catching a sunset over the Pacific Ocean. More than a sleeping space, the penthouse suite has a separate sitting area with a desk.

The open-concept layout on the main floor creates a seamless flow from one space to another. Guests can migrate from room to room, still viewing the ocean in two of the rooms. The third room has a welcoming fireplace and a sectional couch, making it a perfect place to cozy up during chilly winter nights. One of the living areas has a wet bar, so there is no need to meander to the gourmet kitchen when craving a cocktail. But when it's time to





cook, guests can use top-of-the-line appliances and dine in the adjoining dining room, which seats 12. When it's warm enough, guests can step outside to the patio and soak in unobstructed ocean views or relax by the stone firepit and roast marshmallows.

There's a guest bedroom on the main floor with a walk-in closet, perfect for housing winter clothes and stashing away holiday presents during holiday getaways. Those who want to be further away from all the action can descend to the lower level, which has three additional bedrooms—each designed with comfort in mind, all with king-sized beds. Two rooms offer peek-a-boo ocean views and open onto covered, tiled terraces. A shared sitting and TV room provides a more private space to mingle.

While Carmel Realty Company's Pacific Vistas property has a two-car garage and space for additional vehicles, guests may not need to use them because the property is within walking distance of The Lodge at Pebble Beach and all its amenities, including the Pebble Beach Golf Links. For guests who wish to venture further afield, Pacific Vistas is a short drive to the Inn at Spanish Bay and downtown Carmel-by-the-Sea.

For more information, visit carmelrealtycompany.com/vacation-pacific-vistas-2854.htm.



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Finding Reconnection

By Keira Silver | Photos Courtesy of The Bridge Napa

Restoring lives through the power of Jesus Christ—that's what the nonprofit The Bridge Napa considers to be one of its main messages. Through job training, family reconnection, and faith-based guidance, the organization works to assist men in retransforming their lives after struggling with addiction.

The Bridge Napa was established in October 2019. Participants accepted to the program are given safety and supervision in a residential setting. In return, they can reconnect with God, their families, and their local community. The organization is the affiliate model program to the 2006-founded Monterey Bay program, located in Pacific Grove. Aaron Mosley, CEO of The Bridge Napa, recognizes that both programs are similar in both structure and guidelines for participants. "We are our own nonprofit and operate autonomously from the PG [Pacific Grove] Bridge," says Mosley. "However, we do work very closely with The Bridge PG and receive a great deal of support from their entire team."





The program is supported through The Bridge Napa's job training program and donations received from the community. It trains six to eight men at a time in the five areas of faith, job training, family restoration, health and wellness, and a holistic approach. They receive guidance on future employment, exercise, and healthy relationships. The job training program helps participants in gaining future employment, and a majority of its graduates are currently employed. At present, the organization has a contract with an area landscaping company, which collaborates with The Bridge Napa on work projects. "We currently have a contract with the City of Napa to provide litter clean-up services, and [with] the County of Napa for landscape work," says Mosley.

In the future, The Bridge Napa would like to expand its program to include women participants and board members.

For more information, visit thebridgenapa.org.







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Richard MacDonald's *Duality* speaks to the core of human experience—the delicate balance between opposing forces. Light and dark, day and night, male and female—these timeless contrasts are not separate, but interwoven, each defining and enhancing the other. In this striking sculpture, MacDonald captures the profound harmony between masculine and feminine energies, blending strength with grace to create a composition that is both powerful and serene.

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(left) RICHARD MACDONALD working with
models on 'Duality' in Las Vegas Studio.





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From China To Carmel

By Jessica Zimmer | Photos Courtesy of Jian Wang

Contemporary Chinese painter Jian Wang is fond of sketching and drawing Carmel's beaches. Exploring the coast and hills takes him back to his days as a child on the shores of Dalian, a port city in northeast China.

His oil, charcoal, pencil and pen-and-ink pieces can be found at Dawson Cole Fine Art in Carmel. Wang has shown work there for nearly two decades. "I've been driving to Carmel to take photographs and do plein air painting since I was a college student at the University of California, Davis. I like the harmony of 17-Mile Drive. My other favorite themes are white sand beaches with dark blue waves and large cypress and oak trees against the dry hills," says Wang.

Wang often uses brushstrokes to recall the "lively, dancing" nature of Chinese calligraphy, which he studied for years. He employs thick strokes to make pieces representational and abstract. "I recommend [stepping] back to see my paintings as a whole. Then, come up close to see the texture of the brushstrokes against one another," says Wang.

Wang usually works with six to eight primary colors. He creates new combinations every time he paints. "This ensures my pieces are distinct and reflect my mood at the time. I come up with unique contrasts in every work," says Wang.

His mentors include American painters Wayne Thiebaud and Oliver Lee Jackson. Both men were his professors when he earned a master of fine arts at California State University, Sacramento. Wang now teaches at the campus as an adjunct faculty member.

He is currently working on a new series of coastal California landscapes for a summer show at Dawson Cole. "When I paint the ocean, every brushstroke feels alive," says Wang.

For more information, visit carmel.dawsoncofineart.com/artists/25-jian-wang/.



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A Secret Worth Sharing

By Atissa Manshour | Photos Courtesy of Pebble Beach Resorts

It's the holy grail for discerning travelers, a place so special that they hesitate to share its existence for fear of spoiling its mystery. "Shhhh . . ." they say, putting a finger to their lips, "I'm only telling you because I know you will love it as much as I do." Such is the feeling of discovery for guests of Casa Palmero, a stunning estate situated on the first fairway of the Pebble Beach Golf Links. A smaller and more intimate property than its siblings, The Lodge at Pebble Beach and The Inn at Spanish Bay, Casa Palmero is the best-kept secret of an already legendary destination.

Built in a Spanish-colonial style as a private home in 1927, the estate remained in private ownership until the mid-1990s. "When the house went on the market in 1994, Pebble Beach recognized the potential to create something truly special," says Lara Davidson, general manager of Casa Palmero and The Spa at Pebble Beach. It opened in 1999.

Bathed in warm Mediterranean colors and California sunshine, Casa Palmero hides discreetly behind a vine-covered wall on Cypress Drive. The 24-room property offers travelers a bespoke experience that evokes the luxury of a private estate along with all the amenities of Pebble Beach Resorts. These include the renowned The Spa at Pebble Beach, adjacent to Casa Palmero, as well as three on-property championship golf courses, and The Hay, a short course designed by Tiger Woods. Guests are also invited to indulge in the resort's eight dining venues, shop at the nearby Retail Arcade, and enjoy access to The Beach & Tennis Club, with its extensive fitness center, oceanfront deck, and swimming pool.

Even with so many amenities and activities to keep visitors entertained, Casa Palmero's greatest asset may also be its least conspicuous. "The level of service we provide is unmatched," says Davidson. "Each stay includes personal valets to handle everything, from breakfast delivery to dining reservations and spa





arrangements.” A recently completed renovation by the design team at Hirsch Bedner Associates underscores this commitment to service. While highlighting the estate’s extraordinary architectural and natural elements, the project also incorporated luxurious comforts in the rooms, such as deep-soaking tubs, gas fireplaces, and private terraces.

According to Davidson, Casa Palmero welcomes a diverse range of visitors, making it ideal for couples seeking a romantic escape in a serene setting, with easy access to Pebble Beach Resort amenities. It’s also a perfect choice for groups of friends, such as girlfriend or guy getaways, especially for those who enjoy golf alongside a relaxing retreat. With contemporary group facilities and state-of-the-art technology, Casa Palmero offers an exclusive setting for small gatherings, intimate meetings, and special events.

A home-away-from-home feeling awaits visitors who cross the resort’s terracotta-tiled threshold. “Our evenings offer a wonderful blend of social engagement and relaxation,” says Davidson. “We host a complimentary cocktail reception, providing a great opportunity for guests to connect, followed by a delightful cordials and dessert service to cap off the day.” While bartenders get to know their guests’ favorite libations during their visits, resort guests get to know each other and trade stories from the golf course and life.

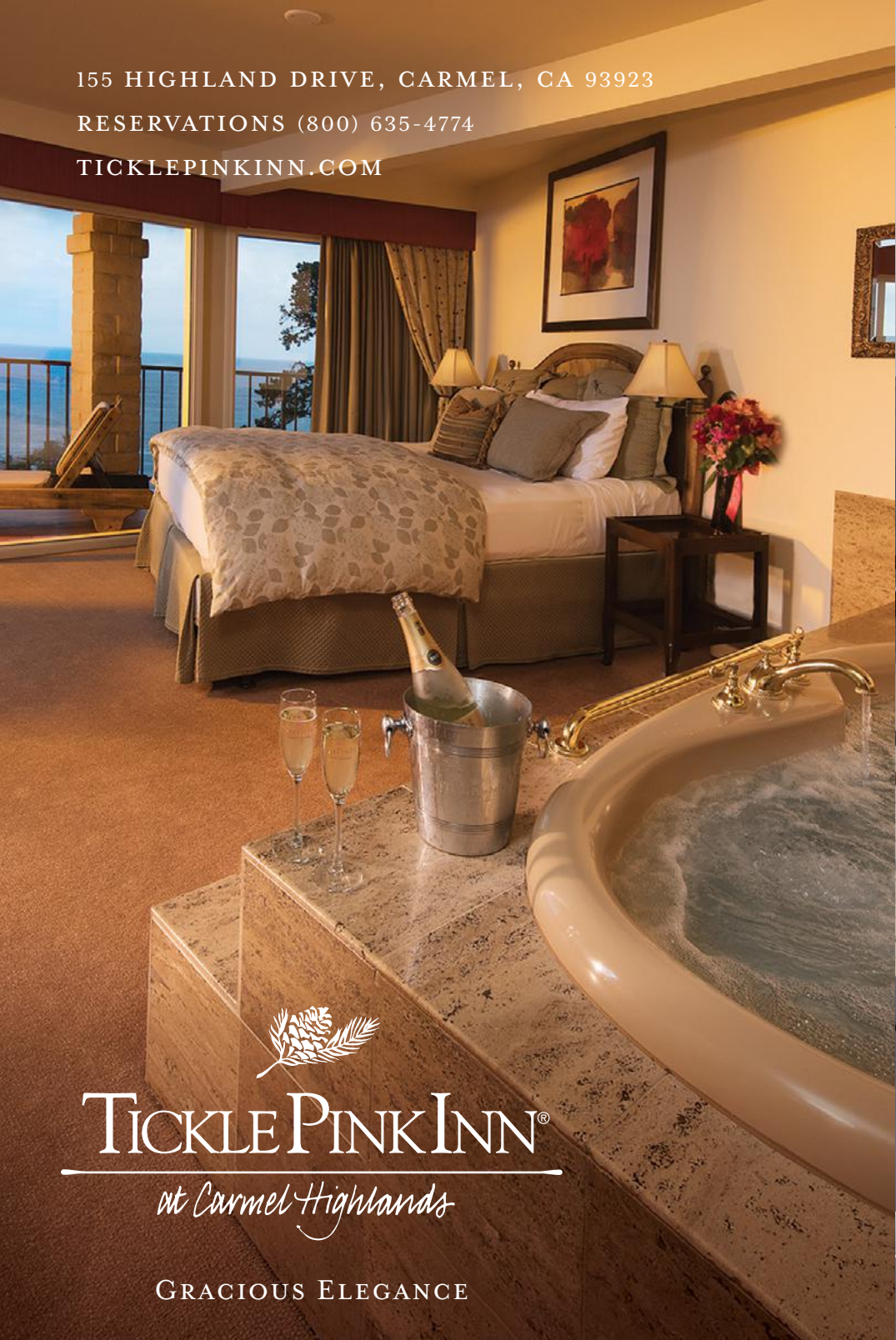
For Davidson, all 22,000 square feet of The Spa at Pebble Beach, which harnesses the healing properties of plants, herbs, and minerals native to California’s Monterey Peninsula, embodies a standout experience not to be missed. “We’re proud to have earned the prestigious Forbes Five-Star Award, reflecting our commitment to ultimate relaxation and rejuvenation,” she says. Indeed, the only difficult decision guests of Casa Palmero need to make is whether to share the secret with their friends.

For more information, visit www.casapalmero.com.

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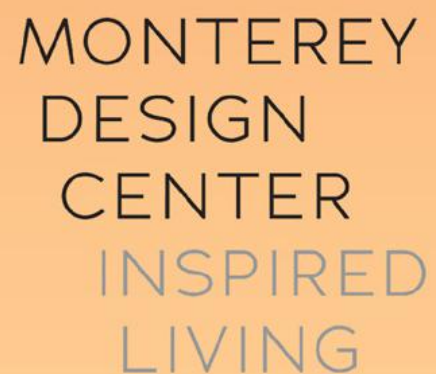
A photograph of a hotel room. In the foreground, a hot tub is filled with water, and a bottle of champagne is chilling in an ice bucket next to two glasses. In the background, a large bed is neatly made with a patterned duvet and several pillows. A nightstand with a lamp and a vase of flowers is next to the bed. Large windows offer a view of the ocean and a balcony with a lounge chair.


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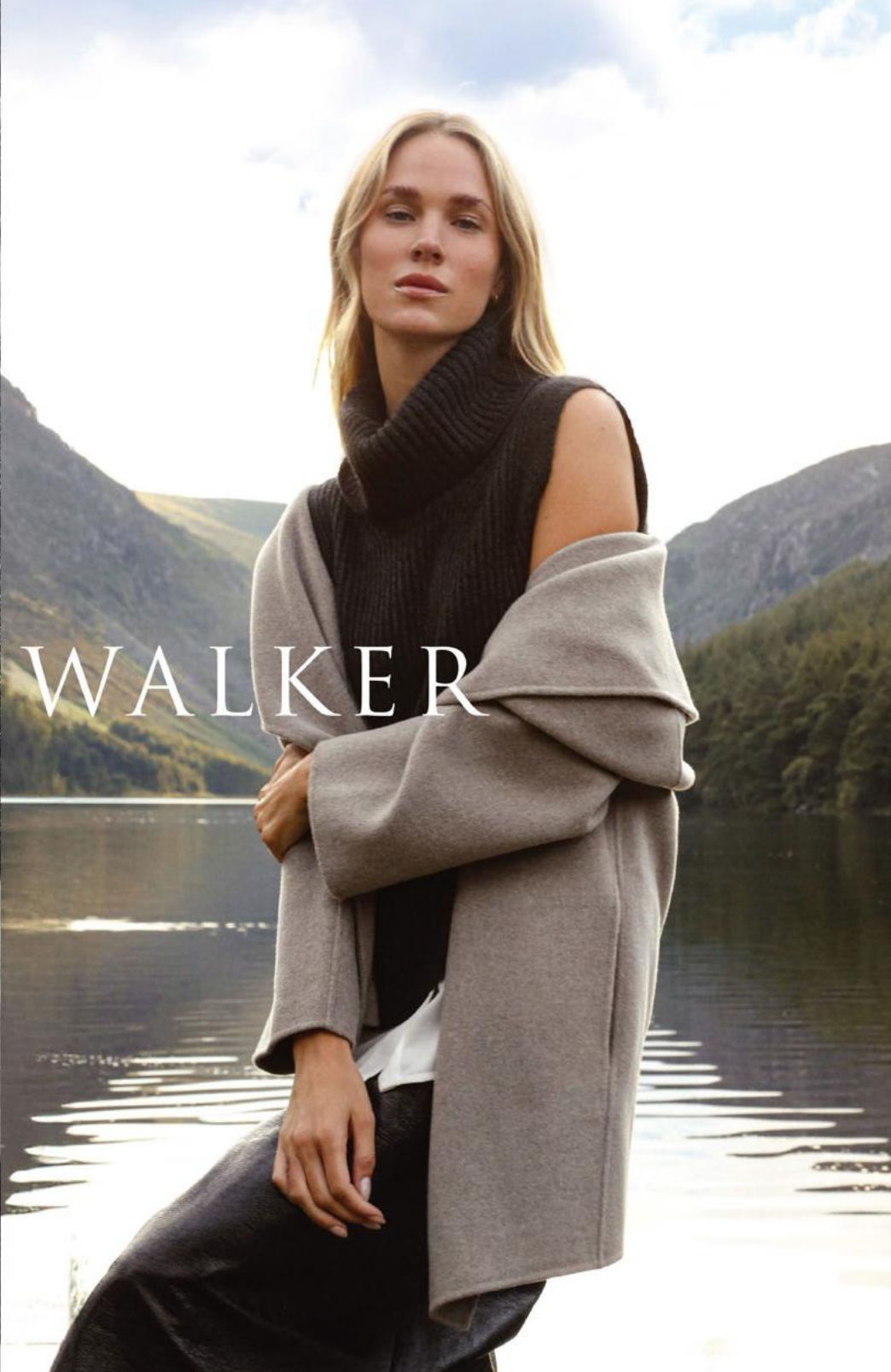
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For more information please visit www.FirstTeeMontereyCounty.org



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Masa Koike

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A Game-Changing Approach

By Caitlin Fillmore | Photos Courtesy of First Tee - Monterey County

As Nicole Iniakov practiced at the Pebble Beach Golf Links last September, a group of children caught her eye. They were fellow athletes from First Tee - Monterey County who were cheering her on at the 2024 PURE Insurance Championship. After she won, it was time for autographs. “[The children] ran up to me and asked me to sign their hats, balls, and even a pair of socks,” she says. “It was wonderful to see the support system I have around me, and I will forever be grateful for them.”

Iniakov joined First Tee - Monterey County when she was six years old. Nick Nelson, First Tee’s CEO for 22 years, recalls Iniakov’s poise since her earliest days with the program. “Nikki is a great role model, and this championship is an incredible opportunity for her,” says Nelson. First Tee - Monterey County, teaching golf basics, reaches 10,000 youth annually. But club choice and chip shots are only the beginning. “First Tee is here to improve the lives of kids, and we do it through the game of golf,” says Nelson. “We use golf as the conduit to teach children core values, life skills, and game-changing behaviors.”



When the nonprofit launched its program in 2004, it assumed operations for Twin Creeks Golf Course in East Salinas. Programming at the King City Golf Course followed. In 2017, First Tee created the Taylor Farms Center for Learning, which offers after-school enrichment.

On the links, students practice hand-eye coordination and golf technique, combined with a life skills curriculum, including learning how to shake hands. “Golf is unique, as there are no referees calling penalties. We must call penalties on ourselves,” says Nelson. “Values and life skills are evident in every sport, but golf has adhered to it a little more.”

This winning combination means big goals for First Tee, including possible construction of a Monterey Peninsula facility and a collaboration based in Pajaro Valley. These expansions would help the organization reach 25,000 youth annually within the next five years.

“As we continue to grow, we believe we can change the fabric of our community in a very positive way,” says Dan Lynch, First Tee – Monterey County’s chairman. “I’m hopeful that we can continue to gather support and have more people donate their time, money, and resources to provide these children an opportunity for a brighter future.”

For more information, visit firstteemontereycounty.org.





A modern house with a large patio and a fire pit, overlooking the ocean at sunset. The house features a large, flat roof and a concrete patio area. A fire pit is visible in the foreground, and the ocean is visible in the background under a clear sky.

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Photos by Manny Espinoza







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It Starts with Youth

By Keira Silver | Photos Courtesy of Carmel Cares

Carmel Cares began as a local initiative to keep the streets of Carmel-by-the-Sea beautiful and clean. It has done so through community service and now it collaborates with local schools to educate students of all ages about the importance of community support and environmental sustainability.

Stevenson Carmel Campus, which serves the school's Lower and Middle Divisions, has become a key collaborator. The school recently received a federal Ocean Guardian School grant, which will enable the school to adopt Forest Hill Park with the goal of maintaining it as a zero litter area while working in partnership with Carmel-by-the-Sea's City Forester to plant trees and plants.

Stevenson students will also serve as Carmel Cares Pick Up Posse volunteers for the city's downtown area and Carmel Beach. Additionally, students are spearheading projects to promote environmental sustainability through innovative initiatives. "They plan on designing and manufacturing branded, reusable to-go containers for the community, and





creating advertisements for The [Carmel] Pine Cone on topics, such as recycling and keeping Carmel Zero Litter,” says Carmel Cares Cofounder Dale Byrne. The school will partner with a local restaurant to launch the reusable to-go container project.

Stevenson Upper Division in Pebble Beach is collaborating on projects with Carmel Cares, focusing on beautifying local areas where Carmel Cares is already engaged. This past October, 25 students assisted with a project at North Dunes and another 15 students worked on a project at the Forest Theatre. Looking ahead, Carmel River School is also hoping to collaborate with Carmel Cares on future environmental and community projects.

These efforts illustrate the growing impact of Carmel Cares as a vehicle for fostering environmental stewardship and civic responsibility among young people. The organization’s partnerships with schools help sustain the natural beauty of Carmel-by-the-Sea while cultivating a new generation of environmentally conscious community leaders.

For more information, visit carmelcares.org.



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Fabric of a Community

By Caitlin Fillmore | Photos Manny Espinoza & Tejido

The crisp Pacific Ocean breezes off the rocky coast results in temperatures that often hover below 70 degrees, so it's necessary to have a cozy sweater nearby. While this describes average conditions in Monterey Bay, the same can be said for the coast of Peru. Since 2013, the founder of Tejido Collective has shared the beauty and warmth of artisan knitwear from Peru.

Twelve years ago, Shanti Rackley, founder and chief vision officer, was living in Peru when she began working with artisan cooperatives. Those early connections still fuel Tejido Collective, says Taira Hustedt, chief curation officer. "We still partner with the same family of knitters and weavers in different regions of Peru," she says. "It feels like a large family business at times."

It's easy to imagine wrapping up in a hand-knit piece such as the Fisher coat, an oversized sweater with a shawl collar, made of alpaca wool. Tejido Collective also features cardigans, ponchos, beanies, and vests. Each piece includes a contemporary detail, perhaps

a puff sleeve or cropped silhouette, in versatile earth tones.

Tejido Collective's two stores act as showrooms for its in-house brand of Tejido's natural fibers and cozy knits. Shoppers will also find curated, small-batch ceramics, jewelry, and accessories that represent Tejido's brand pillars: artisan, sustainable, and handmade.

Tejido is Spanish for fabric, and here, it's a word that goes beyond textiles to describe the fabric of a community. Rackley and Hustedt opened the Carmel Valley location in December 2020 and the Carmel-by-the-Sea store in August 2021—a critical time for retail and tourism. “Directly after the pandemic [shutdown], it was so lovely to host gatherings and hold space for the community to gather,” says Hustedt. “Having a retail store is a labor of love, these days.”

For more information, visit shoptejido.com.



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Memories Lasting a Lifetime

By Caitlin Fillmore | Photos Courtesy of AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

This year's AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am builds on nearly 80 years of success and last year's strongest-ever field of professional golfers to continue its legacy of giving. "The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am has set the bar among PGA Tour events for generating millions of dollars, which are donated annually to nonprofit organizations throughout the greater Monterey Bay region," says Steve John, tournament director and CEO of the Monterey Peninsula Foundation.

The 2025 Pro-Am takes place from January 27 through February 2, at the iconic Pebble Beach Golf Links and the Spyglass Hill Golf Course. This tournament is the second event of the PGA TOUR and will once again be a Signature Event of the TOUR.

Last year, the Pro-Am received Signature Event designation, elevating the profile of the tournament and attracting marquee golf talent such as Scottie Scheffler and Rory McIlroy, and it concluded with a history-making win by Wyndham Clark. But for John, the increased visibility is best directed toward the tournament's philanthropic impact. "All tournament proceeds go to charity, regardless of the Signature Event designation," he says. "Our event is perennially ranked as the most charitable on the PGA TOUR, and the level of giving we can achieve makes Monterey Peninsula Foundation one of the largest funders in the region."



Contributions come from players, fans, volunteers, and donors, such as title sponsor AT&T, who has been a partner for 40 years. From 2023 to 2024, Monterey Peninsula Foundation donated \$18 million through grants to more than 200 charities in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. John describes a responsive approach to the foundation's grantmaking, allowing it to address a broad range of needs in five focus areas: arts and culture, community and environment, education, health and human services, and youth. The grants create a web of services to meet pressing basic needs, from healthcare to housing.

In 2024, Monterey Peninsula Foundation chose Youth Alliance as its featured charity, and included coverage during the tournament's national television broadcast. Youth Alliance helps create opportunities for youth and families in San Benito and Santa Clara Counties and serves 20,000 residents each year—especially those living in rural places.

Support for youth is described as an unwavering commitment for the Monterey Peninsula Foundation. John says one of the best-kept secrets of the Pro-Am is that youth under the age of 15 receive free admission. "Unlike other sports, attending a golf tournament is unique because spectators can get up close to watch their favorite golfers—and maybe even get a chance to meet them," he says. "The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am is an incredible opportunity for families to create memories that last a lifetime, at no extra cost."

The focus on golf and giving delivers one of the Monterey Peninsula's most anticipated feel-good events every year, says John. "It's tough to beat, watching the best players from the TOUR compete at two of the most iconic courses in golf, especially with the knowledge that all tournament proceeds support over 200 deserving organizations right here at home."

For more information, visit attpbgolf.com.





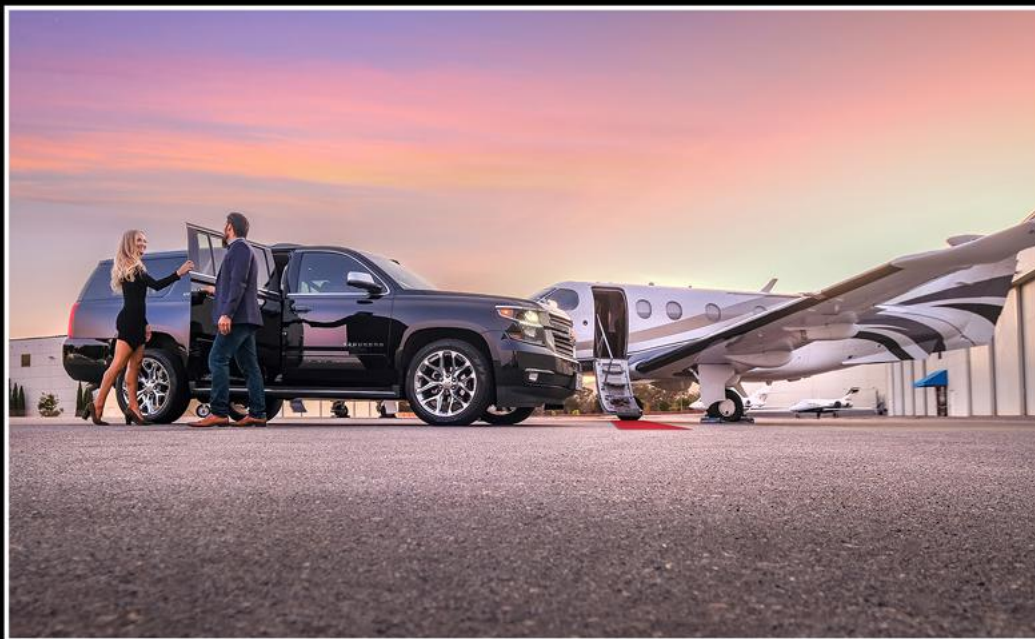


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Teamwork and a dedication to community is a way of life for Ed Bass; in his career as a real estate agent and as a baseball coach at Stevenson High School.

Ed and his entire team at Monterey Coast Realty, along with sister company Carmel Realty Company, share a dedication to serving the local community. Philanthropy has been a cornerstone of Monterey Coast Realty since its inception, investing in the local community through volunteerism, financial support, and other charitable actions.



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Community First

By Keira Silver | Photos Courtesy of BGCMC

Longtime Monterey County resident Ron Johnson has always been connected to his community. Growing up along the Monterey Peninsula, he was inspired by the adult community leaders around him and later found his calling. “I have a special passion for helping youth find their way in life,” he says. “So many adults helped me as a child. I feel compelled to pay it forward to future generations. It’s in my DNA!”

Johnson is now president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County (BGCMC). He applied for the job looking to work directly with young people and has been in this position for 32 years. “Our mission is to inspire and empower the youth of Monterey County to realize their full potential to become responsible, healthy, productive, and successful citizens,” he explains.



Beach State University, Johnson played professional football as the wide receiver for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1985 to 1989. After retiring from football, he worked for an investment firm in Carmel as a financial advisor and joined the Boys & Girls Clubs three years later,

Founded in 1968 as an after-school program, with locations in Seaside and Salinas, the Clubs provide a safe, fun environment for youth while supporting them in improving society with their talents. Elementary- and high-schoolers are bused over to the Clubs after school. After completing homework, they receive supper and participate in activities, including sports, art projects, science experiments, and career exploration counseling, and then go home at 6 p.m. During spring and summer school breaks, full day programs are offered.

About 500 youth visit the Clubs every day, and they host 6000 members annually. The program encourages youth to focus on four key areas: academic success, healthy lifestyles, good character and leadership, and life and workforce readiness.

For more information, visit www.bgcmc.org.







bernardus.com



A Star Is Born

By Caitlin Fillmore | Photos by Manny Espinoza

Kim Apusen has already won first place in a cake competition, worked as a cake decorator, graduated from business school, and successfully navigated a rebrand of her independent baking business, transitioning from Kimchi's Kakes & Desserts to Talà Baking Co. These impressive milestones make a little more sense when you learn that Apusen, who is still in the dawn of her career, began baking at two years old. "My mother always had me in the kitchen with her, cooking dinner or baking every night," says Apusen. "Now that I am working toward a bigger goal, I wanted a brand that was going to grow with me."

Talà is a Tagalog word that means star in the sky. For Apusen, this word represents her Filipino heritage and her love for astrology. The name change also marks that the self-taught baker is taking her business to the next level, as she recently moved to a commercial space and now operates her bakery full-time.

Apusen's signature is custom cakes and cupcakes with fondant cake art, the recipes she first began perfecting. Her unique flavors include white chocolate ube and bourbon vanilla bean. She also sells cookies, cinnamon rolls, and seasonal treats at the Old Monterey Marketplace, Castle Rock Cafe & Mercantile, and Cafe Dal Mare, and on Talà's online shop. This year, Apusen plans to offer private cupcake and cake decorating classes.

Fresh off a high-profile nomination in 2024 for the county's best cupcake, Apusen has big dreams for her business. "I want to build Talà Baking Co. into a brick-and-mortar, very luxurious bakery that also offers gourmet dessert catering for special events and beautiful storefront displays with fresh desserts available every day," she says. "I want everyone to create memories with these desserts while enjoying a high-quality dessert made from scratch."

For more information, visit talabakingco.com.







Anton & Michel

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antonandmichel.com

A Conversation with Carmel's Mayor, Dale Byrne

By Keira Silver | Photo by Manny Espinoza

Why did you run for mayor?

Carmel needed a strong, visionary leader who can bring people together to solve challenges. My city project work, professional background, and track record made me confident I could guide Carmel through this next chapter.

What are some of your biggest joys, heading into your new role?

Since the election, I've seen a sense of optimism and hope for the future of Carmel. I'm excited to channel this positive energy into collaborative problem-solving to advance city initiatives with my council and city leadership partners.

What are your priority areas?

Public safety, starting with street and sidewalk improvements and making sure that several large construction projects are handled efficiently; addressing the city budget; creating a practical plan for improving the police department building; strengthening our forestry efforts; and starting a serious discussion about the long-term impacts of pension liabilities.

How do you plan to apply Carmel Cares philosophies to citywide programs?

Carmel Cares and other great city support groups encourage public-private partnerships to use volunteers and philanthropic efforts to undertake projects that are beyond the current capacity or budget of our public works department.

Do you have any sustainability initiatives for the city?

The city has made great progress in sustainability, and hopefully, those efforts will continue to grow. Carmel Cares recently announced a partnership with Stevenson Lower School on park stewardship, recycling, and food waste projects, which is a model I'd like to expand to other local schools and groups.

What would you like people to know about you?

I love to stay busy and have always enjoyed creative pursuits, like playing piano and photography. I was even also a private pilot. Over the last few years, I've partnered to create a range of VoiceMap audio tours for Carmel and Monterey County and designed and implemented mindful messaging in the bill presenters in many local restaurants. That work will continue in the background.



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Classic Styles For Cool Temperatures

By Jessica Zimmer | Photos Courtesy of Patrick James

Patrick James' West Coast stores are prepared for the Central Coast's rain, fog, and low temperatures. "Winter for us will be functional outerwear and layers. We'll see the introduction of new pieces that will work winter through spring from a weight and performance standpoint," says Patrick Mon Pere, buyer and owner of Patrick James.

Layers are the look for men across the Monterey Bay Peninsula, with colors and weights that will soften as winter transitions into spring. At the Patrick James store in Carmel, guests can find statement outerwear pieces, such as the chocolate brown reserve knit coat paired with a latte quarter-zip sweater and twine V-neck short sleeve tee shirt.

Ensembles like this can be accentuated with accessories, including the luxurious Wigen's wool baseball cap and textured two-tone Martin Dingman Manchester woven belt.





Patrick James is in a “shirt cycle that won’t go away,” shares Mon Per about the observed explosion of knitwear, including the Johnnie-O Denalis knit vest. “Knitwear is the king of layers. On the West Coast, a statement outerwear piece or knitwear can replace a sport coat. Luxury yarns like cashmere silk come into play, as well as performance fabrics,” says Mon Pere.

The Carmel store features “wear now” items for visitors, including plaited cashmere sweaters, lightweight performance outerwear, such as the Bugatchi CPO shirt jacket and premier staples for local residents. These include the Calder Carmel Tartan shirt, a soft plaid cotton twill, and the 34 Heritage Urban Courage jeans made from comfortable, premium denim.

Guests of Patrick James can expect high-level customer service and assistance with matching colors and textures. “Service is everything. Our point of view, lovely assortment of apparel, and commitment as a family business [come together to] give our clients excellence and value,” says Mon Pere.

For more information, visit <https://patrickjames.com/>.

More Local, More Carmel

By Jessica Zimmer | Photo by Manny Espinoza

Nielsen Brothers Market in Carmel-by-the-Sea has been transformed into a full-service natural grocery store with a wide array of groceries, produce, baked goods, cheeses, wines, beer, and spirits from the Monterey Bay Peninsula. The change has come courtesy of Michael and Susan Cohen, who took ownership of the business in February 2024.

“We’ve returned to the store’s roots by starting to offer [more] local, organic, and natural foods, including Captain + Stoker coffee, Ad Astra [Bread Co.] baked goods, and High Top Ranch olive oil,” says Susan. “Since the two Nielsen brothers opened the doors in 1930, the focus of the market has been the best quality products. We’ve also reconfigured the sales floor so customers can freely browse the 6,000-square-foot space.”





Over the winter, the Cohens plan to add a wine bar and a coffee bar. They will also offer more fresh seafood from Monterey Bay and an expanded selection of high-quality natural meats. “We’re continuing to upgrade deli offerings by changing recipes,” says Michael. “For example, the deli’s chicken salad now contains organic, free-range chicken, organic mayonnaise, and fresh herbs.”

The Cohens refined Nielsen Brothers Market’s alcoholic beverage selection by carefully curating inventory to focus on local and regional products.

Originally from Youngstown, Ohio, the couple came to know Monterey Bay during long weekend trips, traveling from San Francisco. Each of them has over a decade of experience in the grocery business. Michael has served as a director of operations for Andronico’s Community Markets, and Susan was a regional buyer for Whole Foods Market.

According to Susan, the feedback on the changes has been overwhelmingly positive. “We welcome you to come in and rediscover our concept of clean, delicious natural food at Nielsen Brothers Market,” says Michael.

For more information, visit <https://nielsenbros.com>

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SHAREABLES

- Chilled Oysters** 5 ea
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Pairs With: Folk Tale Sparkling Brut
- Truffle Popcorn** 9
truffle oil, parmesan, salt
Pairs With: Folk Tale Reserve Chardonnay
- Ahi Tuna Ceviche** 12
avocado, onion, cilantro, jalapeño, seeded crackers
Pairs With: Folk Tale Sauvignon Blanc
- Belgium Fries** 12
house ketchup
Pairs With: Folk Tale Pétillant Naturel
- House-Made Chips** 10
french onion dip
Pairs With: Le Mistral Chardonnay
- Salumi** 20
genoa salami, prosciutto, bresaola, sopressata
Pairs With: Folk Tale Carbonic Red Wine
- Olives & Almonds** 11
roasted maracas, cured olives with pits
Pairs With: Folk Tale Soles
- Burrata** 16
sogno toscano, country bread, olive oil, sea salt, pepper
Pairs With: Folk Tale Nouveau

The Annex Salad 16

seasonal greens, sliced pears, candied pecans, blue cheese, housemade vinaigrette
Pairs With: Folk Tale Whole-Cluster Pinot Noir

PLATES

- Annex Burger** 26
1/2 pound niman ranch beef, gruyère, roasted tomato, caramelized onion, garlic aioli, brioche, belgium fries
Pairs With: Folk Tale Cabernet Sauvignon
- Steak Frites** 39
8 oz. niman ranch prime n.y. strip, bordelaise sauce, belgium fries
Pairs With: Folk Tale The Messenger
- New Orleans 'Shrimp' & Grits** 32
4 prawns, tomato, peppers, onion, served over cheesy grits.
Pairs With: Folk Tale Albariño
- Fried Chicken and Potatoes** 28
Crispy chicken thigh, roasted fingerling potatoes, mixed greens
Pairs With: Folk Tale We Are A Flower
- Peppercorn Meatloaf** 28
dry-aged ground beef, peppercorn gravy, caramelized onions, potato puree, peas and carrots
Pairs With: Le Mistral Syrah

TREAT

- Chocolate Chip & Pretzel Cookie** 10
carmel's best giant, warm cookie baked-to-order
Pairs With: Folk Tale The Ruler Pinot Noir

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Dressed for Dreams

Excitement is building as Project Prom: The Bella Zoe Experience gears up to make magic happen again in Salinas Valley. Last year's event brought so much joy—young women glowing in stunning prom dresses, young men confidently strutting in sharp suits, and an atmosphere filled with smiles, laughter, and community spirit.

One young man found the perfect suit for a job interview, a moment that touched so many hearts. This year, they're ready to do it all again, with over 800 beautiful dresses and 200 suits ready to find new homes. But we Project Prom needs your help!

The organization's annual giveaway is happening Saturday, March 15, 2025. They're in search of more menswear items—blazers, ties, slacks, tuxedos, shoes—so every young man can feel dashing. You can also support this effort by donating through Project Prom's Amazon gift page (Bella Zoe Experience).

This special day is more than just clothes—it's about celebrating youth with personal shopping experiences, free giveaways, and by giving them an opportunity to feel truly seen and cherished. Let's come together as a community to make their dreams a reality, one outfit at a time.

For more information, visit facebook.com/projectpromsalinas.



Photos by Manny Espinoza









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