



first coast
Register

February - March 2018

*Ponte Vedra • Nocatee
Jacksonville
The Beaches • St. Augustine
& Amelia Island*

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Bridal
PREVIEW

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Situated in the middle of the most desired oceanfront location in NE Florida. This first floor unit was totally renovated with the finest finishes and craftsmanship, 2br, 2ba plus powder room, plus office have saturnia floors mahogany doors and built in custom cabinetry. **\$1,800,000**



Open and Spacious Floorplan!

This home, situated on a very private lot that backs up to the woods, is not only energy efficient but has wonderful features throughout. The recently renovated patio area provides the best in outdoor living perfect to host gatherings or simply enjoy intimate meals with loved ones. **\$750,000**



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Sophisticated Coastal Living at its Best!

This 5-bedroom, 4+ bath, home is the epitome of southern charm with over 8,400 sq. ft. that showcase spectacular ocean views. The open living areas, including large formal dining room with grand fireplace, lend themselves to entertaining everything from large celebrations or simply enjoying intimate moments near a roaring fireplace. **\$6,375,000**



Exemplary Oceanfront Living on Ponte Vedra Blvd.

This oceanfront estate is built like a fortress with 2-story masonry construction. Set on 1.45 acres this home is designed with to capture expansive ocean views from almost every room. This is an exceptional opportunity for your most discerning buyer. **\$6,300,000**



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about this magazine

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on the cover

The cover of this First Coast Register features a 2017 wedding at the Oldest House in St. Augustine. Photo by Rob Futrell (www.robfutrell.com).



A FEW UPCOMING FIRST COAST EVENTS

WORLD OF NATIONS

March 2-4

Metropolitan Park

Experience the cuisine, artistry and customs from lands near and far at World of Nations. The City of Jacksonville and local multicultural friends will bring the world to you with this cultural destination that showcases the unique diversity of our planet, and puts the wonderful sights, sounds, and tastes of different nations within your reach. Admission is \$5 per person. Visit www.JaxWorldofNations.com for more information.

LIGHTHOUSE 5K RUN/WALK & FUN RUN

March 3

St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum

Racers participating in the Junior Service League of St. Augustine's Annual Lighthouse 5K & Fun Run take their marks at 4:30 p.m. and will enjoy a flat, 3.1-mile USATF certified course that will take them through Historic Lighthouse Park and the Davis Shores subdivision. Online registration for the race will close at noon on March 2, but walk-up registration will be open from 2-4 p.m. on race day. Fees will vary depending on date registered. The top overall male and female runners will each be awarded \$100. Night Fest opens to the public at 4 p.m. on race day and will feature live music, activities for kids, concessions, the chance to climb the tower and tour the Lighthouse grounds. All proceeds from the day benefit the Junior Service League of St. Augustine and its charities. To register for the race, or for more information, visit www.lighthouse5krun.com.

GASTROFEST

March 24

Riverwalk Southbank and Jacksonville's Museum of Science & History (MOSH)

This all-day celebration of the culinary world of Northeast Florida includes educational talks, tasting events, a marketplace and more. Each vendor is required to have sample sizes available for \$1 to \$3 each. The event is presented by GastroJax Inc., a non-profit organization created to foster and preserve local cuisine by educating the public about local food and beverage sources, local restaurants and North Florida dishes. Visit gastrojax.org/ for more information.

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One of Us!

CHEF TOM GRAY

by JON BLAUVELT
photos by JON BLAUVELT

Chef Tom Gray (@cheftomgray on Instagram) is the owner of Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails in St. Johns Town Center and Town Hall in San Marco.

Can you please tell us about your background?

Born in Virginia and raised in Orange Park, Florida, I graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, and spent the following seven years honing my craft in professional kitchens in New York City, Los Angeles and Napa Valley. I returned to Jacksonville in 1999, where I was the founding partner and executive chef /operating partner of Bistro Aix for 13 years. In December 2012, the drive to grow and expand my creative vision as a chef and as a businessperson prompted me and my wife/business partner, Sarah Marie Johnston, to begin planning and development of Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails. Moxie opened in the fall of 2013, and our newest venture, Town Hall in historic San Marco, opened in the spring of 2017.

What is your culinary style?

Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails and Town Hall showcase my take on contemporary, regional American cuisine, influenced from my southern upbringing, extensive travels and passion for sourcing locally-grown ingredients.

For Town Hall, we brought a decidedly West Coast vibe to the small restaurant to pair with a focused menu influenced by our time together living and traveling in the West. Drawing inspiration from seasonal, layered flavors and using ingredients from local farms and artisan purveyors for its menus (as is done at Moxie), Town Hall also offers a selection of wines from around the world (also available for retail sale), creative wine cocktails and Jacksonville's finest local craft beers.

For sourcing at both restaurants, we use as many local, organic, natural and sustainable ingredients as possible, and make decisions every day to bring in the best of available items from herbs and vegetables, to meats, fishes and cheeses, as just a few examples. Our "Direct Connections" philosophy means we try to source as much locally, sustainably and organically as possible, working directly with the farmers, artisans and craft producers who grow, cultivate or make the ingredients we serve. We source and serve these ingredients every day ... not just for special events or special menus.



The dining area at
Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails



Town Hall's Duck Breast with crispy Brussels sprouts, roasted root vegetable purée, huckleberry gastrique and paprika oil
Photo by KATHLEEN CATHERALL

What distinguishes Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails and Town Hall from other restaurants in the First Coast area?

Each restaurant has its own personal story. Moxie Kitchen +Cocktails has maps that represents our personal and professional journeys from Florida to New York, California (both Northern California and Southern California) and back to Jacksonville again. Town Hall has a modern California/West Coast vibe that is something we are familiar with having lived there for many years and liking the relaxed yet professional feel of many locations there.

Beyond the décor, however, each is a unique expression of types of cuisine I'm personally drawn to: Southern-influenced at Moxie and West Coast-influenced at Town Hall. Both represent my creative interest in exploring ingredients, flavor combinations and cooking techniques combined with my interpretations of classics and new dishes. Nuance of flavors, sourcing of ingredients and presentation are all important factors in making a dish a standout on our menus and ones we know our guests will enjoy.

How would you describe the First Coast food scene?

Our food scene is growing and evolving at a rapid pace. There are a lot of creative chefs and independent restaurants carving a niche and doing their thing. Jacksonville has grown to be a good city for that, much more than when I grew up here, when it was mostly only chains and very few independent restaurants. It's a tight-knit culinary community with a lot of collaboration and support of each other.

What excites you most about the future of the Greater Jacksonville area?

I really love that each neighborhood has a cool vibe. We are a quickly-growing food community and emerging as a food hub for our region. People want to move here ... there's plenty of room to grow and put down roots. It's attractive for a lot of reasons: the climate, the people, the neighborhoods, the water (both ocean and river), outdoor activities, arts and culture. While I'd say it's still relatively an unknown destination for many, mostly everyone who visits Jacksonville "gets it" and really loves it!



The dining area at Town Hall
Photo by MONICA LEA IMAGERY



Chef Tom Gray and Sarah Marie Johnston
Photo by AMY ROBB

What do you enjoy most about living on the First Coast?

There's so much to do here, and it's so easy to do it! Jacksonville is affordable, easy to navigate, has a great climate and has lots to do. The people are friendly and while many are from Jacksonville or Florida, I meet people every day who have relocated here from across the country and world. Everyone is attracted to the same great features of our city and want to contribute their efforts to make it even better in their own way.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Not a lot of that right now, but when I do have free time, I enjoy going on walks and bike rides, or relaxing at home with friends and my family. Vacations are few and far between, but travel always includes exploring great food cities like Seattle, San Francisco and Charleston.

Town Hall Restaurant

2012 San Marco Boulevard
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904-398-0726
www.TownHallJax.com
@townhalljax (FB, IG and Twitter)



Town Hall's Duck Fat Cornbread with spicy slaw and candied peanuts
Photo by AMY ROBB

Moxie Kitchen + Cocktails

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A First Coast love

by JON BLAUVELT

*F*or John and Jennie Veal, marriage is a significant commitment not to be taken lightly. Both lifelong residents of the First Coast who now live in Ponte Vedra Beach's Vicar's Landing retirement community, the Veals would know: They've been married for going on 60 years.

The couple met in about 1951 when John was in the 10th grade and Jennie in the 9th. Jennie's family had just moved from Jacksonville's Southside to Ponte Vedra Boulevard, where John and his family also resided. The Veals' first interaction most likely took place, they say, at a First Coast staple: the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's Surf Club.

An avid outdoorsman, John jokes that he first became attracted to his future wife when he saw her stick a fish hook into a nightcrawler.

"I thought that was pretty neat," he chuckles. "Then, her mother cleaned my ducks, and I was sold."

The Veals started dating "steady" when John was in the 11th grade and Jennie in the 10th. Both attended Fletcher High School, where John played on the football team and Jennie was a cheerleader.

"It was a great place to grow up," says Jennie.

Upon graduating from Fletcher, John attended the University of Florida, and Jennie attended Florida State.

They were married after college in June 1958 at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach. Rev. Alexander "Sandy" Juhan presided over the wedding. About 100 people attended the ceremony, and then several more celebrated the beginning of the Veals' commitment to each other at a reception that followed at the Surf Club.



The Veals walk down the aisle together as a married couple for the first time.

story unlike any other



John and Jennie Veal were married by Rev. Alexander "Sandy" Juhan at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach in June 1958.



Jennie Veal's bridesmaids admire her dress.



Jennie and John Veal and their dog Lucy live in Vicar's Landing retirement community today.



Photos courtesy of JOHN & JENNIE VEAL

John then served active duty in the Navy for four years, which brought the couple to New England for a short period of time. The Veals ultimately returned to Jacksonville to carry on their lives, with John working as a civilian engineer at NAS Cecil Field, NAS Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport, and serving in the Naval Reserve for about 23 years. Jennie worked as a teacher at PVPV-Rawlings Elementary School in Ponte Vedra Beach. They enjoyed their lives on the First Coast, raising two children along the way.

The Veals attribute their longstanding marriage to their mutual interests. Jennie doesn't hunt, but she cooks John's ducks, jokes John.

In all seriousness, they're both interest-

ed in fitness, often playing tennis and skiing together throughout their lives. They're both active in the community, with John serving as an active member of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach and Jennie continuing to volunteer at places like PVPV-Rawlings. In addition, Jennie believes it's important for couples to get to know each other before they dive into a marriage, noting that she and John dated for about six years before tying the knot.

The couple will celebrate its 60th wedding anniversary with 15 family members at a house in Big Sky, Montana, in July, a celebration of a First Coast love story unlike any other.

"We love it here," says Jennie with a smile on her face. "We feel very blessed."

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BLESSED BRIDES

A guide to local churches for your First Coast wedding

Are you looking to get married in a church in Northeast Florida? The Register has compiled the following locations for couples seeking a dream First Coast wedding to make that special day even more memorable.

Compiled by BENJAMIN NAIM

AMORE WEDDING CHAPEL

The Amore Wedding Chapel located within the Lightner Museum building in St. Augustine features an elegant light pink interior, white pews and orange stained glass. Access to the chapel is part of a package offered by The Wedding Authority that



Photos courtesy of THE WEDDING AUTHORITY

includes a ceremony director, greenery, candelabras and traditional wedding music. Additionally, couples can choose from a list of ministers or notaries to choose from to preside over the wedding. For more information on pricing, contact (904) 826-0166, email Calltwa@gmail.com or visit www.theweddingauthority.com. The Wedding Authority is located at 75 King St. in St. Augustine.

St. Francis In-The-Field Episcopal Church

St. Francis is an Episcopal parish on Palm Valley Road near the Nocatee community. The church is situated amongst greenery, picnic benches and trees. Led by the Rev. Michael Ellis and Deacon Linda Rosengren, St. Francis' Hope Pavilion is a barn-style venue for weddings within an "Old Florida" nature spot. The Pavilion offers couples a peaceful, natural and elegant setting for a wedding ceremony with garden trails, a lazy porch and fire pit. St. Francis is located at 895 Palm Valley Road in Ponte Vedra; for more information - visit www.stfrancisinthefield.net or call (904) 615-2130.

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St John Paul II Catholic Church

Located in Ponte Vedra near The Palms at Nocatee, St. John Paul II Catholic Church could be the place to go to say, "I do." The church, which is located on a spacious campus with nature surrounding it, only services Catholic weddings. Call (904) 330-0153, email office@stjp2.net or visit www.stjp2.net for more information.

Christwalk Church

Christwalk Church, located at 2920 Bailey Road in Fernandina Beach, is pastored by Dr. Jim Chamberlain. The nondenominational church is located behind large oak trees on a field of grass; the interior is spacious and modern. For more information on wedding opportunities, visit www.thechristwalk.com, call (904) 261-7120 or email hello@thechristwalk.com.

Ocean Park Baptist Church

Established in 1955, Ocean Park Baptist Church is located just a few miles away from the beach on a small plot of land near Huguenot Park, which means couples can get married at the church and hold a reception on the beach. Those interested in a wedding ceremony can contact the church at (904) 249-5457 or visit www.oceanparkbaptist.com. Ocean Park Baptist Church is located at 402 16th Ave. S. in Jacksonville Beach.



Crosswater Community Church

Pastored by Jack Millwood, Crosswater is a nondenominational church positioned in front of Ponte Vedra High School and Davis Park on a large plot of land. For information on wedding ceremonies, contact (904) 824-9800 or visit www.crosswaterchurch.net. Crosswater Community Church is located at 211 David Park Road in Ponte Vedra.

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First Baptist Church Ponte Vedra Beach

First Baptist Church Ponte Vedra Beach meets in the historic Palm Valley Community Center, located at 148 Canal Blvd. The church, pastored by Bob Loy, is situated amongst a natural setting with palm trees included. For more information on wedding opportunities and more, visit www.fbcpontevdrabeach.org or call (904) 285-7344.



First United Methodist Church of St. Augustine

First United Methodist Church, located at 118 King St. in St. Augustine, is pastored by Dr. Pat Turner-Sharpton. The church is situated amongst palm trees on the corner of King and Riberia streets. The interior of the building features wood floors and painted glass windows – an alluring setting for couples seeking to tie the knot. Contact the church at (904) 829-3459 or email fumc@aug.com for more information.

Trinity Parish

Established in 1821, Trinity Parish is the oldest Protestant church in Florida. Its first service was held June 30, 1831. The church features 28 stained glass windows that each form a mosaic of color designed to accentuate a serene atmosphere. Trinity Parish is located at 215 St. George St. in St. Augustine. For more information, call (904) 824-2876 or visit www.trinityepiscopalparish.org.



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Christ Episcopal Church

Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach started 60 years ago as a neighborhood church and has since grown from a small mission station to one of the largest worship centers in the area. The church is located at 400 San Juan Drive. Couples seeking a marriage ceremony should call (904) 285-6127 for more information.



Chandler Oaks

Chandler Oaks Barn is Saint Augustine's newest barn venue. Boasting southern charm and rustic elegance, it's sure to make any couple feel right at home. This authentic post and beam barn features AC, private bridal and groom suites, ample onsite parking, mature oak trees, a quaint, fishing pond, white ship lap walls, mesmerizing chandeliers and farm tables from the Joanna Gaines Magnolia Home line.

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Bachelorettes & Bridal Showers

Themes to complement a First Coast wedding

by SAMANTHA LOGUE

In the months leading up to her wedding, a bride can easily become overwhelmed by all the planning and coordination involved in making her special day memorable. But, with a little help from her friends – and a party she doesn't have to plan – that stress can be alleviated and replaced with joy.

From its natural beauty to its rich history, the First Coast boasts countless ways to rejuvenate and rejoice. Choose any of the following bachelorette and bridal shower themes to remind all how fun weddings can be.



The Spa at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club
Photo courtesy of PONTE VEDRA INN & CLUB

Pampered bliss

Planning a wedding can be stressful. Treat the bride to a wellness weekend of rest and relaxation at one of the First Coast's many luxurious spas before her big day arrives.

In Atlantic Beach, guests can unwind by the sea at The Spa at One Ocean (www.oneoceanresort.com). In Ponte Vedra Beach, soothe away aches and pains at the Spa at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's new cryotherapy center (www.pvspa.com), or indulge in a massage before hitting the fairway at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa (www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/jaxsw-sawgrass-marriott-golf-resort-and-spa/). Whichever location you choose, the bride will be sure to thank you.

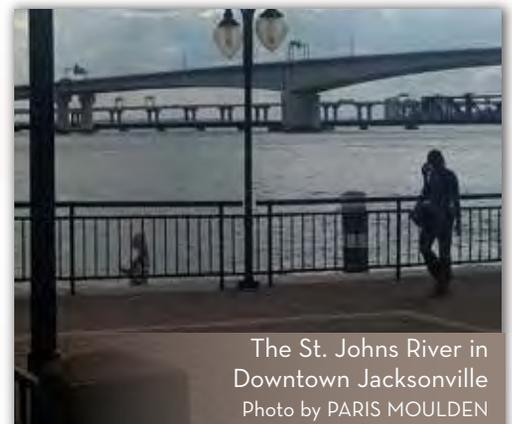


The Spa at One Ocean Resort
Photos courtesy of ONE OCEAN RESORT & SPA



Knot-ical excursion

From the St. Johns River to the Atlantic Ocean, the First Coast provides the perfect backdrop for a party cruise. Gather the crew and some brews to send the bride off with a splash. In Jacksonville, Now and Zen Sailing Charters offers sunset, half and full-day charters, and groups can choose to sail either on the ocean or along the First Coast's waterways. For booking and additional information, visit www.nowandzensailingcharters.com or call (904) 803-8843.



The St. Johns River in
Downtown Jacksonville
Photo by PARIS MOULDEN

San Sebastian Winery
in St. Augustine
Photo courtesy of
SAN SEBASTIAN WINERY

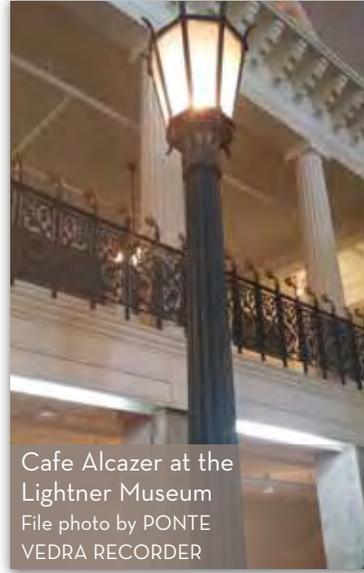


Wine tasting

Seize the opportunity to shower the bride with the only present she truly wants: wine. Take a complimentary tour of the San Sebastian Winery in St. Augustine for a behind-the-scenes look at how wine is produced, followed by a premium wine tasting (also free). Finish off the trip with some live music and appetizers at the winery's The Cellar Upstairs Wine, Jazz & Blues Bar. To learn more, visit www.sansebastianwinery.com or call (904) 826-1594.

Gatsby glamour

If anyone ever knew how to party, it was Jay Gatsby. Perfect for a more formal "Jack and Jill" shower, a "Roaring 20s" theme will be a hit with those who love to dress up. Set up your own speakeasy or rent out a space, and then require guests to use a secret password



Cafe Alcazer at the
Lightner Museum
File photo by PONTE
VEDRA RECORDER

for entry. Boasting all the glitz and glamour of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Lightner Museum in St. Augustine could provide the perfect backdrop for such an affair. Guests can foxtrot and Charleston in the historic Alcazar Hotel pool, or they can watch from above as they sip cocktails on the mezzanine. For

more information about the Lightner Museum and its event spaces, visit www.lightnermuseum.org.

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Mon-Thu 10am-8pm | Fri-Sat 10am-9pm | Sun 11am-6pm

First Coast jeweler offers custom rings for weddings and engagements

by BENJAMIN NAIM

Couples on the brink of saying, "I do," can create their own custom-made engagement or wedding rings at Village Jeweler in Ponte Vedra Beach, where store owner Richard Felder will work with customers directly to craft a perfect fit.

"We deal with the customers to find out what kind of stone they're looking for, what shape, what size they're looking for and to see how that would fit their personality," Felder said in an interview with the First Coast Register. "From there we go to building the ring."

According to the store owner, most men want more traditional bands with either white, yellow or contemporary metal.



Store owner Richard Felder poses for a photo behind the counter at Village Jeweler.

Photos by BENJAMIN NAIM

The Ocean and You ...



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LEFT: Female wedding/engagement rings on display at Village Jeweler.



Village Jeweler is located at 260 Front St. Suite 610 in Ponte Vedra Beach.

“We do study the people when they come in; I look at their hands to see what kind of fingers they have,” he said. “If they have long fingers or short, heavier fingers, that has a lot to do with the width of the bands for them to fit and be comfortable.”

Felder mostly sells “comfort fit” rings, meaning the rings feature a rounded or curved inside that will fit comfortably on the finger. Felder said the custom fit option is particularly useful for men dealing with uncomfortable bands that they frequently remove.

Among the wedding-oriented jewelry sold at Village Jeweler is a combined engagement and wedding ring for women. Felder said the band is unique and “not easy to describe.”

“That is an engagement ring that somebody can wear,” he said. “The shoulder work on it is so unique we had to make a custom band to fit it because a traditional band would not fit up against it.”

A bride or groom-to-be who shops at Village Jeweler will notice that the store owner enjoys working one-on-one with his customers to gauge their wants and needs. Felder will start on the basics – the shape and size of the stone a couple is looking for – before working on a budget with his customers.

For more information on Village Jeweler, visit www.villagejewelerofpontevedra.com or call (904) 285-4812.



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Planning for the big day

*Hiring a pro can help alleviate stress
.. and deliver a dream ceremony*

by PARIS MOULDEN

Planning for a wedding can be a time-consuming and stressful experience, but wedding planners, or event coordinators, are equipped to handle those concerns.

The wedding coordinator can organize things like the venue, photography, catering, the cake, and just about anything else the bride and groom can dream up.

Morgan Munson, owner of Diamonds and Pearls Events, said a wedding planner, or event manager, can help couples realize their wants and needs, and what they can afford to spend on it.

"As a planner, if the couple doesn't already have a budget, I help them set one, and help them look at what is most important to them," Munson said. "It's really feeling them out, finding out what they want, what they need, and doing the best possible thing for them to take the stress of off them."

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Photo courtesy of MORGAN MUNSON/
Diamonds and Pearls Events, diamondsandpearlsevents.com

Munson said she's heard from couples who have tried to take on the task of planning their own wedding, but end up calling her as the date closes in because they are overwhelmed.

"I want the bride, the groom, the family to feel like they're guests at their own wedding, not running around trying to figure out who needs what," Munson said.

Wedding coordinators are also knowledgeable about how far a couple's budget will go, and what they can really get. And keeping them on budget is a key factor, said Lisa Burnett, owner of Elegant Weddings by Lisa.

"They say, 'I want to spend X amount of dollars, and I want all these wonderful things, but I want to keep it in my budget,'" Burnett said. "So I try to educate them and keep them on track and get them as close to want they want for the amount they want to spend."

Continued on page 22

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Burnett, who has been planning weddings since 1993, said she thinks the role of a wedding planner is important for a successful wedding.

“We’re responsible for not only the bride and groom and all the guests, but every vendor, waiters, everyone involved in the process,” Burnett said. “It’s not enough to plan a wedding, but you actually have to make sure everything is executed properly.”

Burnett said she has seen a rise in destination weddings, and a lot of her business now involves couples wanting to travel for their dream ceremony.

“It’s more relaxing,” Burnett said. “And it kind of cuts down the guest list, because the people who mean most to you will travel to a destination wedding.”

As for weddings taking place on the First Coast, Munson said St. Augustine is currently a popular location, but that the wedding market is growing in other areas as well.

“In Jacksonville, we’re getting new venues all the time, which is wonderful,” Munson said. “Right now, we’re in wedding season so a lot of the venues book up pretty quickly.”

Munson used to work for Disney World, and was familiar with planning big events on a grand scale, but after taking time off to go to law school and have a family, she was ready to get back to helping others plan their dream weddings.

“It’s fun, it’s rewarding and it’s really an honor to be a part of these moments,” she said.



Photo by DAN HARRIS PHOTOART for Elegant Weddings by Lisa/elegantsweddingsbylisa.com



Photo courtesy of MORGAN MUNSON/ Diamonds and Pearls Events



Photo by DAN HARRIS PHOTOART for Elegant Weddings by Lisa

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Fashion **FIRST COAST** forecast

Three big trends for spring 2018

by SAMANTHA LOGUE

As spring approaches, local fashionistas are preparing to upgrade their wardrobes with spring's must-have pieces. To stay in-the-know, check out the list below of three of the biggest trends that closets everywhere will soon be stocked with.

FREE-FLOWING FRINGE

This spring, fringe is no longer a fringe detail. From hemlines to shoes and accessories, this decorative accent is definitely having a moment. Although easily paired with western-inspired elements like cowboy boots and ponchos, this trendy trim will add a free-spirited flair to any item in your wardrobe.



Fringed poncho in mint
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ROMANTIC FLORALS

As one of this spring's biggest fashion trends, floral prints have already begun popping up everywhere. When paired with romantic ruffles and an off-the-shoulder neckline, this pattern offers just the right touch of feminine charm.

Free People Free Spirit Printed Top in Sweet Cream \$108

Available at Rochelle's, St. Augustine

BRAND LOYALTY

A recent movement among designers to return to the days of front-and-center branding also seems to be picking up steam. Clothing and accessories sporting oversized designer logos and brand names are making a comeback, effectively turning consumers into walking billboards for all their favorite brands. With this trend affecting handbags, jewelry, clothing and more, expect spring 2018 to be characterized by brazen branding.



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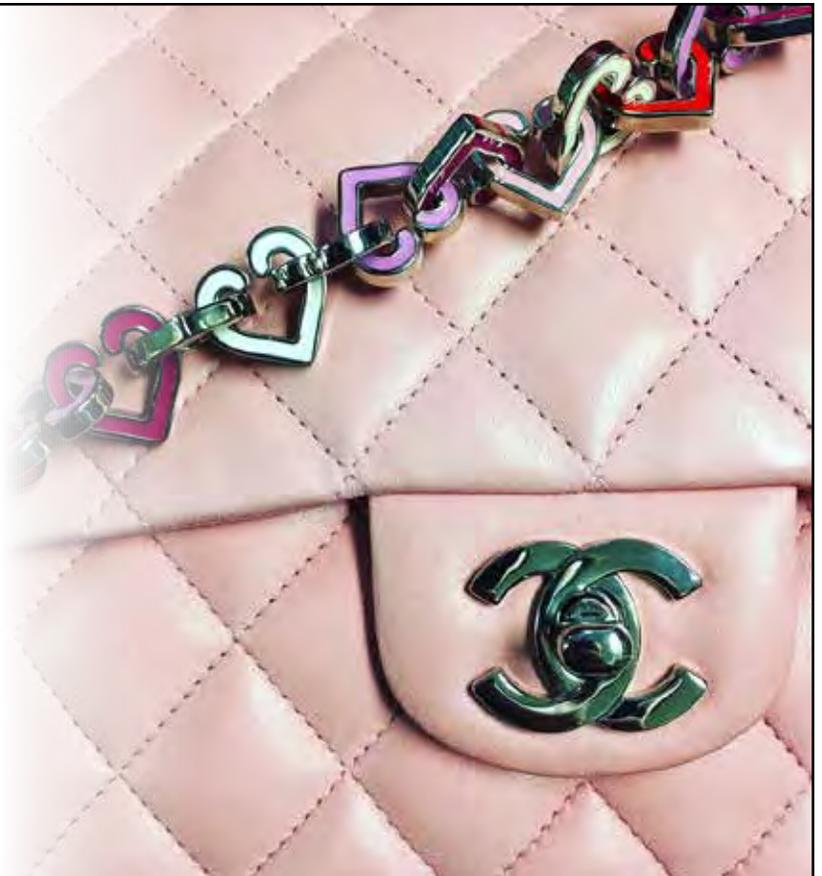
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Christé Blue: Fashion or a fraction, from around the world

by JON BLAUVELT

At very few retail stores will you find gowns from Paris displayed next to muumuus from Honolulu and designer bags from New York City, all the while marked down at a fraction of the market price. That is, unless, you're strolling through Christé Blue.

Based in St. Augustine on Anastasia Boulevard, the First Coast couture boutique has just about one or two of everything, but very few multiples of anything. With items

ranging in price from \$5 to \$5,000, Christé Blue offers a full line of designer, upscale resale and vintage apparel, as well as new, estate and costume jewelry, original artwork and sculpture, hardwood furniture, Italian leather seating, eclectic gifts and everything in between.

"People come, it's a cool experience and that's why they come back," said Matt Cafiso, who opened Christé Blue with his wife Susan in 2004. "They want to come, they want to enjoy, and they want to see everything."



Christé Blue owners Susan and Matt Cafiso
Photos by JON BLAUVELT



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With previous backgrounds in Corporate America, the Cafisos now travel the country and globe to source that “everything” found within their store, with the ultimate goal of serving clients of all ages, classes and styles at an affordable price.

“If there’s a go-to-market strategy, ours is to make anybody comfortable no matter what their needs are,” added Matt, who noted that Susan designs and creates some of the items seen on the floor.

The store’s inventory is not just limited to women. The couple has traveled West to bring back boots and Hawaiian shirts for men, among other items.

And the store’s mission, said Matt, is beyond selling clothing. Christé Blue strives to be an active member of the community, currently serving as a sponsor of INK! (Investing in Kids), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that provides the tools and resources necessary to help children in St. Johns County reach their full potential.

INK!’s current Take Stock in Children Scholarship and Mentoring Program provides middle school students in need of support with mentors and academic support through their high school education and beyond. Monetary donations to the nonprofit can be made at Christé Blue. Or patrons can pay the ticketed price of any sale item in the store, and the business will donate a minimum of 20 percent of that sale price back to the nonprofit. Then, every \$1 raised will be matched 100 percent by the nonprofit, with those proceeds going back to the local kids in need.

“What are we going to give back?” questioned Matt. “At the end of the day, that’s very important to us.”

Christé Blue is located at 1035 Anastasia Blvd. in St. Augustine. Visit www.shopchristebblue.com or call (904) 808-1235 for more information.

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EXPERIENCE AT THE

Savannah DeSoto

by JON BLAUVELT

Nestled within the historic district of Savannah — which is just two hours north of Jacksonville — is The DeSoto. An elegant hotel that reflects the southern tradition of its city while also infusing features of modernity, The DeSoto by Sotherly provides a uniquely special experience that leaves guests reluctant to return to reality come check-out time.

Located at 15 East Liberty St., the hotel has a storied history of over 125 years, with chandeliers from the original building shining in the lobby. The DeSoto offers several room options, allowing guests to choose between skyline views of Savannah or direct access to the hotel's rooftop pool. Interested in a suite? There are several, including the King One Bedroom State Suite that features four private balconies with skyline views, a decorated living room, a dining table for six, wet bar, pantry, microwave, refrigerator and more.

Regardless of the room, the hotel's accommodations consistently feature neutral colors mixed with pops of maritime blue, as well as marble and glass bathrooms with walk-in showers and more.



Savannah is known for its delicious cuisine, and guests of The DeSoto only have to take a few steps from their room to find it. Housed within the hotel are three dining options: 1540 Room, Edgar's Proof & Provision and Buffalo Bayou.

The 1540 Room dining experience is nothing short of spectacular, thanks to the fantastic culinary work of Chef Kyle Jacovino and his team. The restaurant is sleek with a hint of Southern charm, featuring white walls adorned with art from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), which is seen throughout the hotel. Dim lights reflect

the sophisticated nature of the restaurant that delivers a locally-sourced, farm/sea-to-table culinary experience to its patrons. The kitchen is immersed within the restaurant, which seats a maximum of 82 people.

Guests can start their dining room experience at the 1540 Room with the perfectly cooked Cast Iron Octopus, featuring sofrito, Anson Mills Charleston Gold rice, preserved lemon, harissa, chorizo and sauce escabeche, for \$18. Or try the one-of-a-kind Ossawbaw Pork Belly, with turnip puree, caviar, Korean barbecue glaze, cilantro and crisp bread, for \$12. Pair that appetizer with a glass of Italian wine, a locally brewed beer or cocktail.

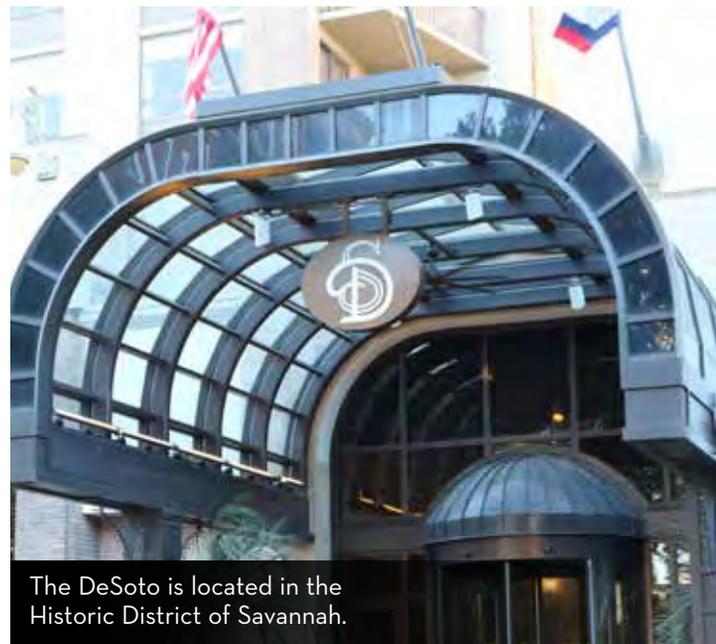
Continue this dream-like meal with the Tagliatelle Bolognese for \$22, or the Honey & Pecan Crusted Pork Ribs with Anson Mills rice grits, red kale and turnips, for \$27. 1540 Room also offers a selection of desserts, including Arroz Con Leche for \$7 and Torta De Santiago, which is an almond cake with honey cream and almond tuile, also for \$7.



LEFT: Chandeliers from the original DeSoto building in 1890 shine in the lobby.

Photos by JON BLAUVELT

ABOVE: The DeSoto features a rooftop pool with fire pits, fountains and a cabana bar.



The DeSoto is located in the Historic District of Savannah.



Check out the Mercer House and other Savannah staples while enjoying a cocktail on the DeSoto's "Sip & Stroll" guided walking tour.



The DeSoto offers several room options, allowing guests to choose between skyline views of Savannah or direct access to the hotel's rooftop pool



Cast Iron Octopus at 1540 Room

After dinner at 1540 Room and a fun night on the town, guests of The DeSoto should head to Edgar's Proof & Provision for breakfast. There's no better way to start the morning off than with Coffee & Donuts, which are coffee beignets glazed with coffee and served with a shot of Savannah Coffee Roasters espresso (\$11). Move onto the next course with the DeSoto Hash (\$12), which consists of spicy local pork sausage, pan-fried potatoes, peppers and roasted corn, topped with a poached egg, Manchego cheese and green onion. Complete the morning meal with a bloody mary (\$10-16) or a mimosa (\$9).

Diners at Proof & Provision can eat inside or outside, with both options providing a comfortable, casual experience. The restaurant is known for its cocktails, offering over 130 bourbons, and also offers lunch and dinner.

For those guests who may be in a rush, Buffalo Bayou is the perfect option. The café provides breakfast sandwiches, boxed lunches, mid-day bites and coffee drinks. Buffalo Bayou also serves

beer and wine, providing guests of The DeSoto with a quick option to pick up a drink before embarking on their "Sip and Stroll."

One of the hotel's specials, the "Sip and Stroll" is a guided tour through the Historic District of Savannah, allowing guests to learn more about the city and its history while enjoying a cocktail. (City laws allow possession and consumption of alcohol on the street in the Historic District.) Take in the sights of the Oglethorpe Club, Forsyth Park, the Sorrel-Weed House and more Savannah landmarks while on the tour.

The DeSoto also features a rooftop pool with fire pits, fountains and a cabana bar. Three large hall spaces and several meeting areas are available for those interested in holding a business meeting or wedding at the hotel.

Overall, The DeSoto provides guests with impeccable service on all fronts, resulting in a complete, luxurious experience. Book a stay at one of Savannah's staple institutions and experience the historic city in all its glory. You will not be disappointed.

ALHAMBRA CELEBRATES '50 YEARS OF MEMORIES'

by SAMANTHA LOGUE

It was with a packed house that the Alhambra Theatre & Dining in Jacksonville – America’s longest continually operating dinner theater – celebrated its 50th anniversary Dec. 11, 2017, with a “50th Birthday Bash.”

Guests of the event were treated to a garden cocktail reception, hors d’oeuvres and a three-course dinner, courtesy of Chef DeJuan Roy. The evening’s entertainment was provided by none other than musical legends Dean Martin (Andy DiMino) and Elvis Presley (Rick Marino).

“Welcome to the 50th birthday of the Alhambra Theatre,” Alhambra Managing Partner Craig Smith said. “Everyone in attendance tonight is a VIP to myself and to this great theater, and you’re VIPs because you care enough about something that’s so important to so many of us to be here tonight celebrating this auspicious occasion.”

Several elected officials were in attendance, including Jacksonville City Council President Anna Lopez Brosche, who was on-hand to present a proclamation from Mayor Lenny Curry to commemorate the occasion.



A packed house cheers for Alhambra Managing Partner Craig Smith.



Alhambra Managing Partner Craig Smith (center) stands with former Alhambra owner Ted Johnson (right) and Barry Zisser.

Photos by SAMANTHA LOGUE



Alhambra staff gathers on stage to light the birthday cake’s sparkler candles.



Wayne Redding, Vicky Redding, Lavonne Waters and Barry Waters



Elvis Presley (portrayed by Rick Marino) bestows an audience member with a scarf.



Alhambra patrons sip cocktails and champagne as they celebrate the dinner theater's 50th anniversary.



Roy and Diane Lyons

"It's such a pleasure to be here tonight to celebrate the 50th birthday of the Alhambra," Brosche said.

"Congratulations to Craig and to everyone who has made Alhambra possible."

Special presentations and honorable mentions were made to recognize those who were an integral part of that process, including Smith, Director Tod Booth and Harry Frisch, the generous donor who stepped in to help save the theater when

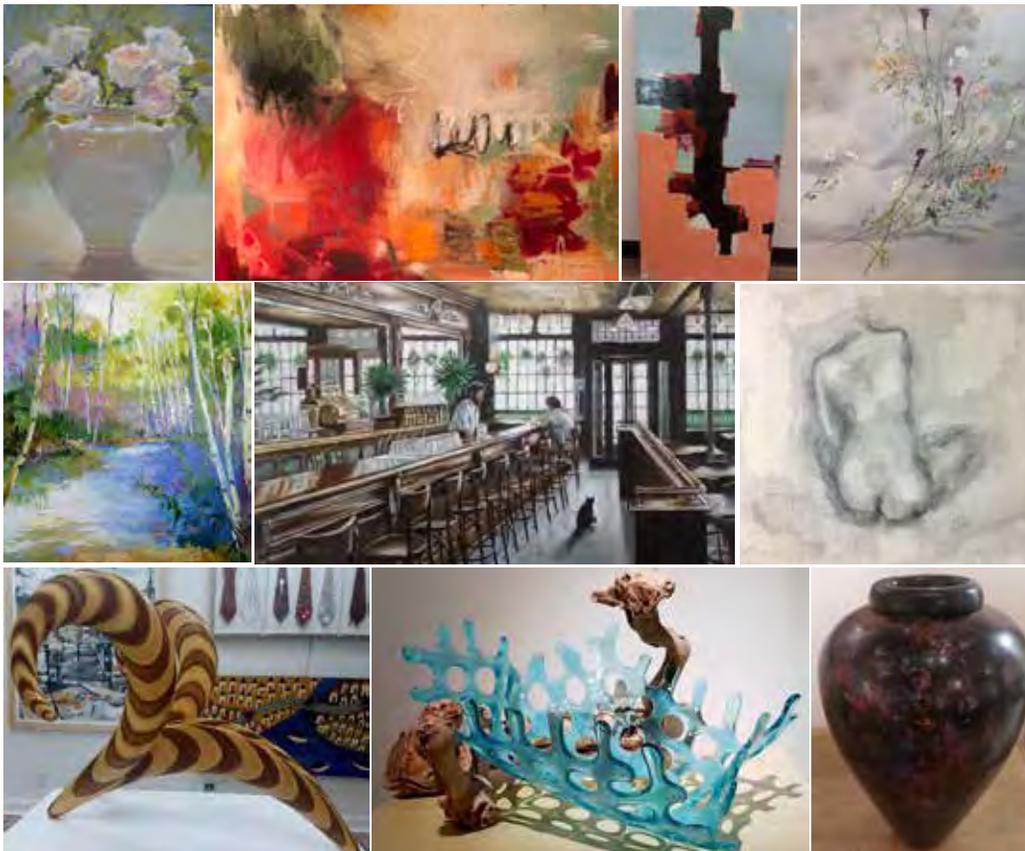
it was in danger of closing in 2009.

"Harry Frisch believed strongly in Tod, he believed strongly in the Alhambra, he believed strongly in the fact that it was needed in our city and he just so happened to believe in me and my vision for what could be," Smith said. "Without Harry Frisch, we would not be here tonight. ... He was the guy who made it happen."

In tribute to Frisch's contributions to

the theater, Smith also made a special announcement regarding the Alhambra's front garden.

"We decided to name our front garden the 'Harry Frisch Garden,'" Smith said to enthusiastic applause. "The garden is named in honor of Harry Frisch as a thank you for his dedication to the arts and theater in Jacksonville. Without him, the Alhambra would not have persevered to this day."



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CUMMER MUSEUM: A FIRST COAST

ART DESTINATION

by BENJAMIN NAIM

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens houses some of Jacksonville's finest artistic collections. From sculptures and paintings to garden designs, the First Coast institution features works of art spanning multiple time periods from around the globe.

Opened in 1961, the museum houses flower gardens, an assortment of collections and over 5,000 pieces of art in its signature "Permanent Collection." According to the museum's website, Cummer seeks to "serve as the region's centerpiece of education and involvement in all of the arts." Cummer's "Permanent Collection" features art from 2100 B.C. through the 21st century, by artists like Thomas Moran, Norman Rockwell, Peter Paul Rubens and Winslow Homer. Additionally, the museum houses the "Constance I. and Ralph H. Wark Collection of Early Meissen Porcelain," one of the three finest of its type in the world, and the most significant of its kind in the United States, according to the museum.

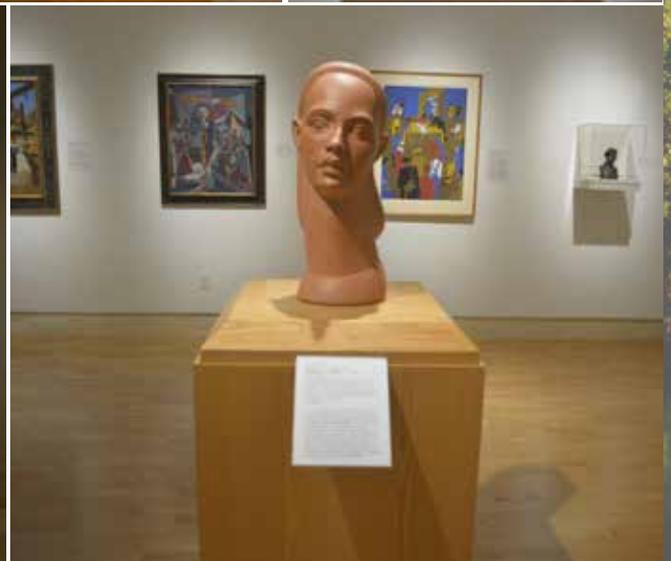




Photo courtesy of CUMMER MUSEUM OF ART & GARDENS

Cummer's website also states that the museum strongly believes in the connection between art and the natural environment, which explains why "Permanent Collection" sculptures coalesce into the natural landscape of the museum's campus. Sculptures such as Janet Scudder's "Running Boy," "Mercury" and "Diana of the Hunt" encapsulate Cummer's blend of art and nature.

Current exhibitions at the museum include "Todd McGrain: The Lost Bird Project," running through Oct. 21, 2018, and "A Collector's Eye: Celebrating Joseph Jeffers Dodge" running through Feb. 18, 2018. The museum plans to run an exhibition on the art of Japanese printmaking from Feb. 23 to Nov. 25 and French art from the Horvitz Collection May 25 to July 29.

Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is located at 829 Riverside Ave. in Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 356-6857.

IN THE GARDEN

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A NIGHT OF Wine & Roses

The CancerKare Fund held its second annual Night of Wine & Roses fundraising event on Thursday, Jan. 25 at the Nocatee Welcome Center.

Established by Ponte Vedra residents Bill and Linda Adams to support breast cancer patients with treatment costs, the charity raised approximately \$9,000 at the event, which once again benefitted The Donna Foundation. The Adamses created the CancerKare Fund following Linda's own battle with breast cancer to help other women and men affected by the disease.

For the second consecutive year, the CancerKare Fund presented two awards: the "Breasty" award, which acknowledges individuals who contribute to the fight against breast cancer, and the "Fight for Life" award for a breast cancer warrior. Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery's Dr. Brett Snyder — who performed Linda's reconstructive surgery following her mastectomy and guided her through aftercare, surgery and recovery — presented this year's "Breasty" award after winning it himself last year. The 2018 winner was Dr. Christine Routhier, a surgeon at Flagler Hospital in St. Augustine.

Alyson Kidder won the 2018 "Fight for Life" award for her courageous and ongoing fight with cancer. Diagnosed in 2016 with stage 4 breast cancer, she has undergone a mastectomy, chemotherapy, radiation and is currently on oral medications to provide an increase in her progression free survival rate. Charles Beverly — the son of 2017 award winner Zettie Beverly — accepted the award on behalf of Kidder, who was unable to attend the event.



Linda Adams stands with 2018 Breasty Award Winner, Dr. Christine Routhier, a surgeon at Flagler Hospital.
Photos by SUSAN GRIFFIN



Donna Deegan addresses event attendees at A Night of Wine & Roses, which benefitted the DONNA Foundation.



Amy Kaelin and Cindy Ortiz of Pink Up The Pace address the event attendees.



Music by Robby & Felix



Bill Schmidt delivers a speech on the death of his wife Apryle, who died in 2015 of cancer.



CancerKare founders Linda and Bill Adams



2017 Breasty Award Winner Dr. Brett Snyder of Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery introduces the 2018 award winner, Dr. Christine Routhier.



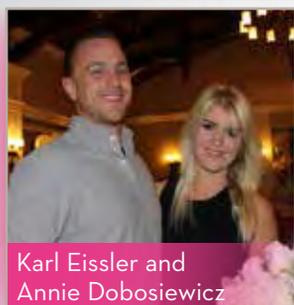
Linda Ash, Christina McIntosh and Patti Cotton

In addition to these awards, Donna Deegan addressed the event attendees, as well as Bill Schmidt, who lost his wife Apryle to cancer in 2015. Since her death, the Apryle Showers Foundation has been created to support people ages 30-55 currently undergoing treatment for cancer. Check out www.apryleshowers.org for more information. Representatives from Pink Up The Pace also addressed the audience.

Event attendees enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a lottery for a \$100,000 Jaguar F-Type British limited-edition car courtesy of Fields Auto Group, as well as an auction and silent auction that included several luxurious and exciting trips and items. Food and drink was provided by Chef Tony of Publix Aprons Cooking School, Dick's Wings and Grill, Dunkin' Donuts, Claude's Chocolate and wine from Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room. Flowers from Kuhn Flowers adorned the venue, and Robby & Felix provided entertainment for the night.

"Once again, we appreciate all of the sponsor and participant support," said Bill Adams. "We raised twice as much money this year as we did with our inaugural event last year, and we hope it continues to grow every year."

Visit cancerkarefund.org to learn more about the CancerKare Fund.



Karl Eissler and Annie Dobosiewicz



Margo and Mark Gupton



Chef Tony Charbonnet of Publix Aprons Cooking School



Charles Beverly — the son of the 2017 Fight for Life Award Winner Zettie Beverly — accepts the award on behalf of the 2018 award winner, Alyson Kidder, who could not attend the event.

INAUGURAL Bowtie Ball

by BENJAMIN NAIM

The inaugural Shircliff Society Bowtie Ball — a fundraiser established to support St. Vincent's HealthCare's mission of protecting the health of newborn babies — took place Jan. 27 at Manifest Distilling in Jacksonville, and ultimately raised \$44,800.

The event featured live entertainment, food, signature drinks, a tour of Manifest Distilling and a silent auction. Funds raised from the evening's festivities helped St. Vincent's purchase two Panda Warmers, which safely regulate the temperature of babies in the first moments after birth. St. Vincent's plans to add the equipment to its Family Birth Place.

The warmers will be used in private labor and delivery patient rooms, allowing the hospital to protect newborns, resuscitate them during a medical emergency and perform other crucial tasks all in one space.

According to Dr. Ronald Carzoli Jr. of St. Vincent's, the warmers will decrease complications in babies, increase survival and make it easier to transport them to an intensive care nursery should complications occur during a medical procedure.



President and Chief Development Officer of the St. Vincent's HealthCare Foundation Jane R. Lainer, volunteers and event organizers pose for a photo with the \$44,800 check donated by the Shircliff Society. Photos by BENJAMIN NAIM



Johnny Helms and Virginia Mascia



Assorted cheese and other small appetizers



Sun-dried tomatoes at the Bowtie Ball



Nancy Walthour, Scott Geeser and Molly Geeser



Guests enjoy the inaugural Bowtie Ball event at Manifest Distilling in Jacksonville.



Chefs work hard at the Bowtie Ball to feed the guests.



Nichele McDonald, Sarah Smith and Nina Tona

At the event, Jane R. Lainer – the president and chief development officer of the St. Vincent’s HealthCare Foundation – along with volunteers and event organizers posed for photos with the \$44,800 check from St. Vincent’s Shircliff Society, which is a young professionals group aimed at improving health through philanthropy and volunteerism.

Established in 1982, St. Vincent’s HealthCare Foundation is a Catholic health ministry seeking to enhance the health care needs of Jacksonville through holistic care. According to the foundation’s official website, St. Vincent’s has provided more than \$1 million in annual financial assistance to support its health care-related goals. For more information on the organization, visit www.jaxhealth.com/foundation.



An autographed item for sale at the silent auction



Ilsa Gehman poses for a photo behind drinks for Bowtie Ball guests.

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Decade of Dining

Amelia Island holds 10th Annual Restaurant Week

Amelia Island hosted its 10th annual Restaurant Week Jan. 19-28.

The 10-day showcase featured culinary events and fixed lunch and dinner menus at nearly 30 of the island's top restaurants.

"Amelia Island is home to a growing number of incredibly talented chefs and award-winning local restaurants," said Gil Langley, president and CEO of the Amelia Island Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Restaurant Week is the perfect time for hungry visitors and locals to try some of the island's new culinary hotspots and enjoy their old favorites."

The "Tribute to Coastal Treasures" event kicked off the festivities Jan 17 at the Ritz-Carlton's Coast Restaurant. The epicurean experience began with an hour-long wine reception, followed by a four-course presentation of food designed by Executive Chef Sean Woods, Coast Chef d' Cuisine Niko Anagnostou and Executive Pastry Chef Sheldon Millett.



Cuisine from 29 South Eats



Burlingame Restaurant, a participating restaurant in the culinary showcase

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A plate from Gilbert's Underground Kitchen



A kale salad from Sabbia

Le Clos was one of the restaurants participating in Amelia Island's Restaurant Week. Photos courtesy of AMELIAISLAND.COM

The menu included Mayport Shrimp Cocktail and Cold Water Oysters on the Half Shell, Confit Duck Tortellini, Roasted Cobia, Florida Shellfish Bread Pudding, Blackberry Cremeux Tart and more.

The fun continued Jan. 18 at Amelia Island's local distillery, Marlin & Barrell, which hosted a Cuban night featuring a distillery tour, rum tastings paired with Cuban cuisine from Hola Cuban Café and cigars from Waterwheel Cigars.

Amelia Island's Restaurant Week also included demonstrations and cooking classes hosted by the Amelia Island Culinary Academy. Also offered as part of the culinary showcase was a cocktail tour with Amelia Island Downtown Tasting Tours that featured stops at four local bars.

The events concluded with the "Barrel & Ashes" finale dinner Jan. 27 at the Omni Amelia Island Plantation, where Executive Chef Daven Wardynski and his culinary team highlighted the complexities behind smoked foods and coal-roasted vegetables, incorporating various barrel-aged ingredients for each of the four courses.

The Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau partnered with Barnabas, Nassau County's largest food pantry, to collect shelf-stable food items during Restaurant Week. Participating Amelia

Island restaurants had collection boxes, and diners were encouraged to drop off canned and dry food goods throughout the week to aid Barnabas's efforts. Barnabas works to combat hunger in the community, and the nonprofit organization's staff and volunteers collect donated fresh, frozen, packaged and canned food and distribute it throughout the county via food and mobile food pantries.



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THEO EPSTEIN

talks baseball, leadership and life in Florida Forum address

by BENJAMIN NAIM

Theo Epstein, the president of baseball operations for the Chicago Cubs, discussed leadership qualities, his life experiences and baseball on Jan. 16 in his Florida Forum address/discussion, which was moderated by Jacksonville University President Tim Cost.

Produced by the Women's Board of the Wolfson Children's Hospital to support the efforts of the hospital, the event drew 1,300 people to the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts. Following the discussion, guests ate, drank and posed for photographs with the Cubs president at a post-show reception across the street at the Omni.

According to Cost, no sports executive has ever been rated the No. 1 leader in the world, before Epstein. The Cubs leader, who was the youngest general manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) history when he signed with the Boston Red Sox in 2002, was ranked No. 1 on Fortune Magazine's 2017 World's Greatest Leader list and named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

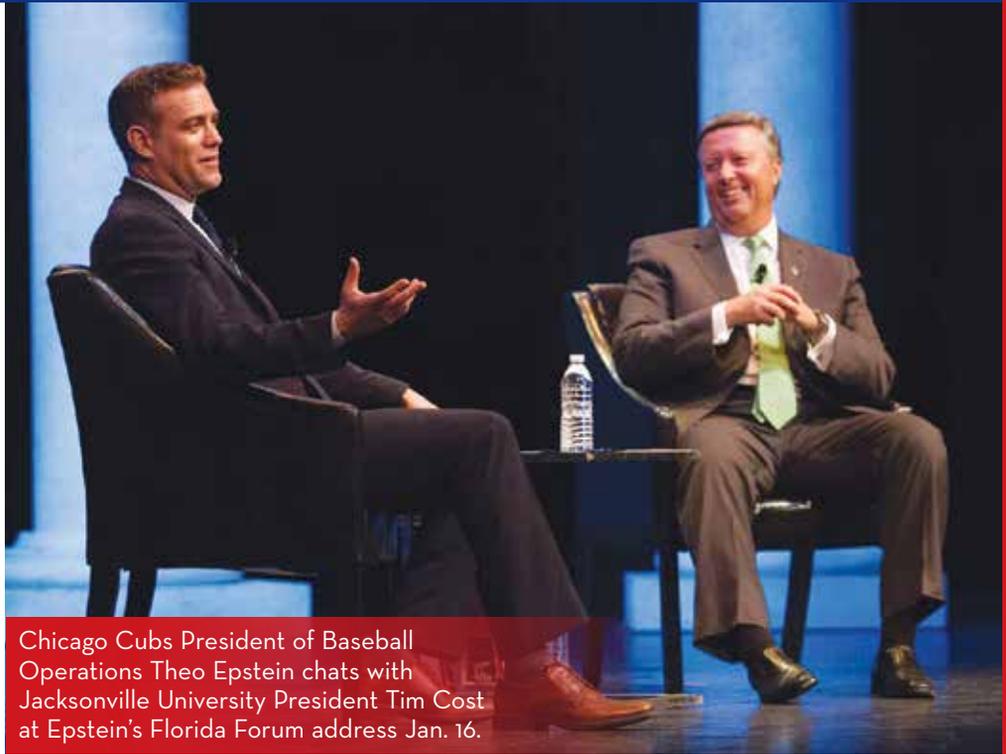
"What did you make of that when you heard what they were seeing in you?" Cost asked Epstein during their discussion.

"My wife never let me hear the end of it," Epstein joked.

The Cubs president went on to say he doesn't pay much attention to individual recognitions, because he prefers to see his team succeed and be recognized as a winning organization, rather than accolades for himself.

"When you're part of a great team and part of a great organization, and you see so many people sacrifice," Epstein said, "that's really the greatest reward there is. And then when we win, these recognitions follow. I love when the team is recognized."

As for leadership, Epstein said he prefers leaders who can empathize with oth-



Chicago Cubs President of Baseball Operations Theo Epstein chats with Jacksonville University President Tim Cost at Epstein's Florida Forum address Jan. 16.

Photo courtesy of SCOTT SMITH/MONARCH STUDIO

ers. The Cubs president highlighted the importance of connecting with people because every business, he asserted, is a "people business."

"Baseball is too," he added. "You can have all the stats in the world and get the most detailed metrics you want, but that's not going to win you baseball games. What wins you baseball games are 25 human beings out there with their own personal histories, with their own way of thinking, with their own ambitions."

Epstein concluded that the winning formula for baseball is getting the best performance out of his personnel. According to Epstein, Cubs Manager Joe Maddon is adept at maximizing talent. The Cubs president described the veteran manager as a perfect fit for his young team.

"We all want to feel valued as people and nobody does that better than Joe Maddon," he said, "who is the perfect guy for us at a moment in time when we have acquired a lot of young talented players

who are not yet established in the big leagues."

Epstein noted that player progression in baseball comes with many ups and downs, which explains why he thinks it takes a long time to rebuild. When the Cubs signed Maddon, Epstein said, the manager was able to "almost instantly" establish an environment that made young players feel like they could be themselves.

"Instead of feeling like they better not screw up and they better play not to lose," Epstein said, "[Maddon] created an environment where in order to fit in they just had to be themselves, have fun and care about winning."

The Florida Forum Speaker Series is presented by Wells Fargo, Florida Blue and Landstar, as well as many other supporters of the Women's Board. The 2017-2018 series concludes on March 5 with Ambassador Caroline Kennedy.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.womensboardwolfsonchildrenshospital.com.

2017 arts & antiques show

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital presented the 2017 Art & Antiques Show Dec. 1-3, 2017, at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in Jacksonville.

The 41st anniversary of the show featured nationally acclaimed lecturers, internationally recognized art and antiques dealers, a gala opening night party and a children's fashion show featuring current and former patients of Wolfson Children's Hospital. Guest speakers included Maria Crosby Pollard, India Hicks, Kathryn Ireland, Toma Clark Haines, Juli Catlin and William Nash IV. Proceeds from the event helped fund Wolfson Children's Hospital.

The Dec. 1 Art & Antiques Show featured "A Brilliant Melange" lecture by Maria Crosby Pollard from Crosby Designs, a reception event and more. On Dec. 2, guests enjoyed the "Live an Extraordinary Life" lecture by India Hicks from India Hicks, Inc., a book signing from Kathryn M. Ireland and more. Finally, the Dec. 3 show featured "A Grand Tour" lecture from Toma Clark Haines, a booth crawl, a children's fashion show, a reception and more.

The Wolfson Children's Hospital Women's Board founded the Art & Antiques show in 1977 to fund state-of-the-art services, programs, equipment and facilities to provide the best health care avail-



Art & Antique Show Chairs Jan Kirby, Frances Hutto and Kelley Kunz



Troy and Roxane Andrade

Photos courtesy of CLOCKWORK MARKETING



Kasey Bubbs and Joanne Lapoma

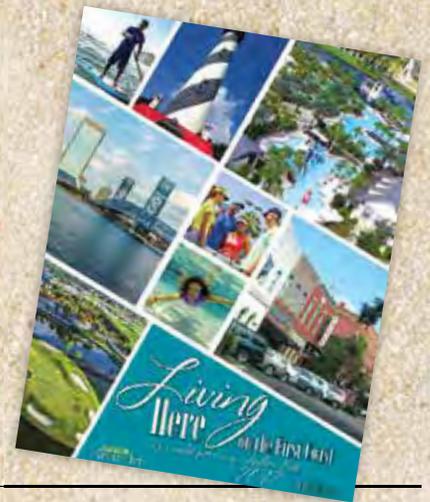
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PHOTOGRAPHY

16TH ANNUAL Delicious Destinations

Held Jan. 6 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, the 16th Annual Delicious Destinations event raised more than \$300,000 for St. Vincent's HealthCare's community outreach programs, which provide free medical care, wellness education and essential items like clothing and food for underprivileged children and adults throughout the area.

The event kicked off with the VIP Sponsor Exclusive Reception to recognize sponsors for their support, and the Premier Food & Wine Event followed. Chefs from some of the nation's top resorts, including The Greenbrier and Montage at Palmetto Bluff, showcased their culinary talents. Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits provided wines from select domestic and international vineyards, and Bacardi donated all of the liquor.

The event also featured live and silent auctions, as well as a drawing of unique items, including spa and restaurant gift certificates, catered dinners and weekend getaways.

Delicious Destinations was rescheduled from September to January due to Hurricane Irma. The chairs of the event were Sala and Ash Pradhan, M.D.; Mollie and W.E. "Billy" Sumner, III M.D.; and Amy and Steven Wacaster.

To learn more about Delicious Destinations, visit www.deliciousdestinationsjax.com.



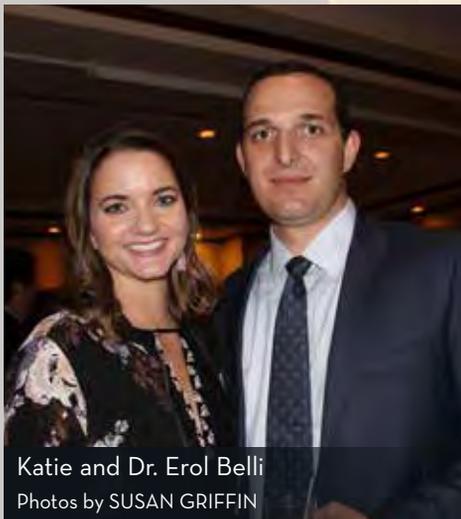
Chefs from Epping-Forest Yacht Club participate in Delicious Destinations Jan. 6 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club.



Kathy Grove and Sofie Morrissey



John and Robin Barton



Katie and Dr. Erol Belli
Photos by SUSAN GRIFFIN



Executive Chef Garrett Gooch (right) from the Ritz-Carlton in Denver participates in Delicious Destinations.



Items from the event's silent auction

BEACH

L A S T O F F

by JON BLAUVELT

Area residents and visitors from far and wide celebrated the New Year at St. Augustine's Beach Blast Off event Sunday, Dec. 31 at the St. Johns County Pier.

A fireworks show highlighted the evening, with event attendees watching from the beach and the pier parking lot. Leading up to the show, people enjoyed live music from local bands, food and drinks from several local vendors and a kids' zone, which featured inflatables and activities like face painting.

Event attendees also enjoyed carnival rides, a climbing wall, photo booth and more. Free shuttles provided transportation to and from the event.



Claude, Catherine, Romy, France, Anne-Sophie and Francois Allaire-Coiteaux Lavae visit St. Augustine from Canada and gather at St. Augustine's Beach Blast Off.



A food truck prepares cheesesteaks and other delicious foods for event attendees.



Ahila, Abigail, Augusztia and Erzsebet Tasi visit St. Augustine from Australia to celebrate the new year.



A Beach Blast Off attendee enjoys climbing up the rock wall.



Fireworks light up the sky at St. Augustine's Beach Blast Off Dec. 31.

Photos by JON BLAUVELT

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY BALL A PATRIOTIC TRADITION CONTINUES

by JON BLAUVELT

The annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball recently took place on Jacksonville's Southbank.

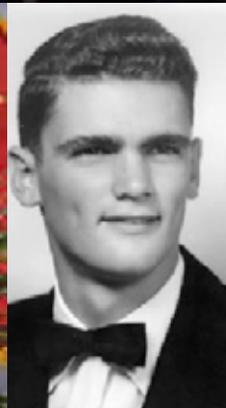
Lance Cpl. Chandler Duncan (4th Assault Amphibian Battalion of the 4th Marine Division in Jacksonville) received the Robert A. Mette Memorial Award but was unable to attend the event due to his deployment. The award has a long-standing history in the Jacksonville community that dates back to 1956, when PFC Bobby Taylor of Jacksonville Beach was the first Marine to win it. The award is presented every year to a local Marine, like Duncan, who has proven outstanding leadership, sportsmanship and initiative while attending annual field training.

In a letter recommending Duncan for the award, 1st Sgt. Marc A. Courtney said Duncan "showed himself to be a leader and set the example for his fellow Marines to follow throughout the AT period." Courtney added that "Duncan's conduct is an example to others, and he is not only an asset to his unit, but to the Marine Corps as well."

The award bestowed upon Duncan honors Bob Mette, who died of acute spinal meningitis at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Aug. 12, 1956. He attended Landon High School in Jacksonville, where he was actively involved in sports and the community, and was the first member of the school's 1956 graduating class to pass away. Mette received his Landon diploma on June 8, 1956, in Jacksonville and died just 65 days later at Camp Lejeune.

After Mette's death, John Lanahan, who was the commanding officer of his Marine unit and also a past city council president for Jacksonville, established the Robert A. Mette Award in his memory.

Over time, Richard Mette has presented the award on behalf of his brother and family to preserve his brother's memory. In 1999, Richard Mette also helped to establish a memorial scholarship to complement the award and help local Marines with their college studies and funding. The 2017 Robert A. Mette Scholarship was awarded to Sgt.



ABOVE: A group of 2017 Marine Corps Birthday Ball attendees

LEFT: Bob Mette, for whom the award and scholarship honors

FAR LEFT: Richard Mette and 2017 Robert A. Mette Scholarship Sgt. Nicholas A. Iezzi

photos courtesy of RICHARD METTE

Nicholas A. Iezzi, who is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at University of North Florida.

In a letter recommending Iezzi for the scholarship, Courtney noted that the Marine has been "integral to driving the maintenance operations of Company B, continuously main-

taining and improving the unit's vehicle readiness levels." Courtney also noted that during annual training at Camp Lejeune, Iezzi was hand-selected by Company B's maintenance officer to provide critical support at a particular camp location.

"I was most thankful even more this year to have handed out these two awards on behalf of my brother and family," Richard Mette told *The Register* via email. "I have over the past number of months been fighting cancer at the Mayo Clinic and pray that I will again be able to hand it out in 2018. I have been most thankful and most honored to be able to keep this cherished award intact, and to congratulate the many winners over the years on behalf of my brother and my family."

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