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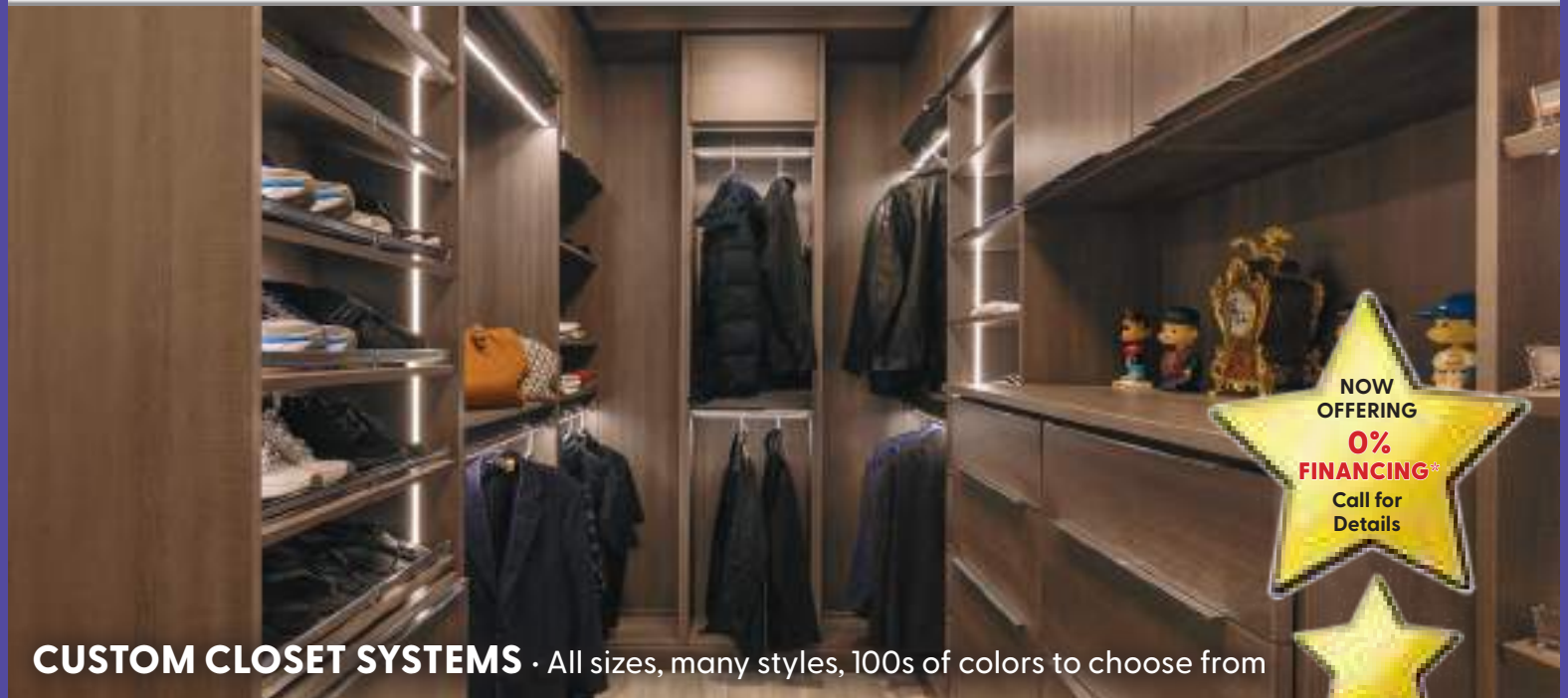


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Have a very merry off-season



Lori Sax

Libby's Krabby Patty is one under \$20 dish worth trying this summer.



It's the most wonderful time of the year. Nope, not Christmas or the holiday season. Not even the season of "season," as we refer to that jam-packed time when all of our friends from higher latitudes are down here soaking up the sunshine while it's still frigid up north.

No, we are entering my favorite season in Florida: the off-season.

It's the time of year when traffic eases ever so slightly. When you can possibly get into your favorite restaurant without a reservation, and yes, it's hot, but that means whenever you're brave enough to face the heat at least you're not in a crowd.

And no one ever talks about visiting June through September. It's four months of visitor-free bliss.

A couple decades ago, the change

in season was stark. After Easter, there was a whole lot of nothing going on. But as the area has grown, so too has our population of year-round residents, which contributes to a more robust sense of community.

But I'm thankful it's still a little sleepy during the summer because let's face it — it is hot.

Of course, there's still a lot going on and a lot to do in the coming months, some of which we've packed up for your reading pleasure in this issue.

In our feature on Page 64, enjoy everyone's favorite pastime as humans: eating. What better way to enjoy a steamy day than to step into an icy cold air-conditioned restaurant and enjoy a plate of great food? The only thing better is to enjoy a favorably priced plate of great food, which is what we have for you — several options from local restaurants, most under \$20.

On Page 72, read about some animals that don't give a hoot about the heat: the residents of the Myakka Elephant Ranch. These elephants, which you can see up close and personal (and even help bathe), are majestic creatures just a short drive away. Kind of hard not to enjoy.

And lastly, one thing this summer brings is idle time for kids who are off on break until August. In our arts column, on page 102, learn about several camps that will keep the kids off the couch and get their little brains humming with creativity. How's that for a win?

No matter how you choose to spend the days ahead, remember: Everyone needs a break, and Florida, summer is the time for ours. So take it easy. 'Tis the season.

Kat Wingert
Executive Editor



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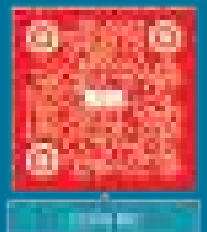
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BUZZ

NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE

The new owners of Scout & Molly's
passion for fashion runs deep.

PAGE 34

Sea Changes

In 2020, Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium broke ground for its new Mote Science Education Aquarium (Mote SEA) adjacent to Nathan Benderson Park. As the infrastructure is being completed, the aquatic creatures who will live there are being prepared to be transported to their new home.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR

Adam Dolman, the director of animal operations for Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium in Sarasota, was attempting to describe giant isopods, which will be featured in a deep sea environment exhibit when the Science Education Aquarium (Mote SEA) is expected to open late in 2024 adjacent to Nathan Benderson Park.

"Well, it's a ... bug," Dolman says with a smile.

A big one that grows up to 14 inches long.

Dolman, who is in charge of stocking the new \$132 million aquarium, noted that many aquariums rely on the "wow" effect when they design their exhibits. He stressed that the three-story, 110,000-square-foot Science Education Aquarium is duly named because it, indeed, stresses science and education.

So, if kids look at giant isopods that resemble an elongated helmet with a bunch of tiny legs underneath it and let out a collective "ewwww," that's OK. Mote SEA wants to provide a look at a deep sea environment they likely will never see or even know exists.

It's one of the many choices Dolman must make about 18 months from the opening. Dolman said a deep sea environment is important because most people don't realize that garbage, such as plastics, collects there. Mote does not want such information out of sight — or mind.

While it's not exactly a time crunch until visitors begin lining up in front of Mote SEA's doors, it's full speed ahead for Mote to get the exhibit habitats just right and the wildlife in place. Many of the exhibits need to be in place months before the doors open.

Considering that every animal brought into Florida for the aquarium must go through a 30- to 90-day quarantine to check for diseases and parasites, and then a month or two at Mote's Aquaculture Research Park on Fruitville Road, there is not a lot of time before opening day.

Even transporting animals from City Island to the new aquarium will take considerable effort.

Currently, Dolman said Mote is in the process of buying a new transport truck that will be specifically fitted with chillers and an air supply to transport the wildlife and the water it needs for the trip.

The current facility has 50,000 gallons of water space for quarantine, and Mote is in the process of building to double that amount.

But first, for the animals that are being brought into the country, comes a lot of paperwork.

Take, for instance, Humboldt penguins from the west coast of South America. Unlike the current aquarium, Mote SEA will have cold water environments to go along with the warm water tanks.

Animals from around the world are

being shipped to Sarasota.

"There are strict regulations and permitting," Dolman said. "You have the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Species Survival Plan programs."

Many animals in the aquarium will come by way of Australia, which has strict regulations for shipping animals.

There are also state regulations as Florida is strict about invasive species, along with the Department of Agriculture and any port regulations. Shipping animals must meet the standards set by the Convention on Inter-

Continued on Page 32



Photo courtesy of Mote Marine

Above: Schnitzel, a zebra shark, was brought to Sarasota from an aquarium in Minnesota to be featured at the Science Education Aquarium.

Below: A green sea turtle swims past Mote Director of Animal Operations Adam Dolman at the City Island facility. Photo by Jay Heater

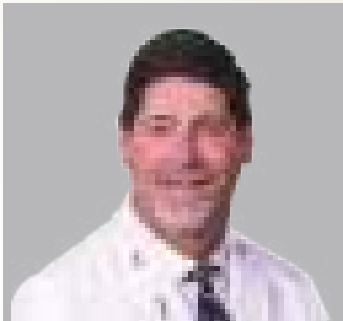


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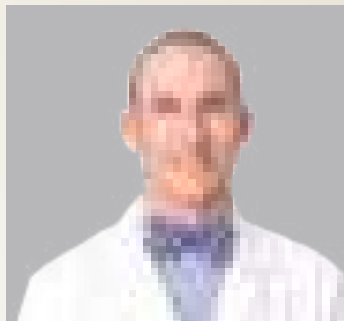
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national Trade in Endangered Species, an agreement signed by 184 countries in 1973 to ensure international trade in animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

And, as noted by Dolman, meeting the regulations for shipping animals is much the same whether it's "elephants or seahorses."

PLANNING THE 'WOW'

The entire process began over three years ago. Of course, most of the exhibits for the Gulf of Mexico are at the aquarium on City Island and just need to be transported across town.

"It has been fun and busy," says Dolman, who has enjoyed having input on not only stocking the exhibits but designing the aquarium itself. "This has evolved. It's like playing Tetris, how everything is going to fit. It changes over time. And this aquarium is going to be state of the art and so much more immersive."

Dolman, who started at Mote in 2008 as an aquarium biologist, grew up in the state of Washington and is happy the Science Education Aquarium, unlike the current aquarium, is going to have a cold water environment that will include some Pacific coast animals, such as rockfish and large sea stars.

Certainly, Mote SEA will have the wow factor as well.

There will be a giant Pacific octopus from the northern Pacific Ocean. On average, the species grows to more than 50 pounds and lives three to five years.

Another feature will be a Napoleon wrasse, which can grow to more than 400 pounds.

Dolman says a zebra shark named Schnitzel will also be a feature. The species is native to Indonesia, but Schnitzel was brought to Sarasota from an aquarium in Minnesota where he was born. He came to Mote via the AZA's Species Survival Plan, which coordinates the sustainable breeding and transfer of endangered animals between AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

"It's an exciting new species we haven't had," Dolman said.

A white tip reef shark will be one of Dolman's favorites at the new aquarium. He used to care for one when he worked at the Denver aquarium.



Photo by Jay Heater

FUN FACTS

■ The Indo-Pacific exhibit will harbor juvenile zebra sharks that are dark brown with zebra-like stripes, but adults are tan with brown leopard-like spots. This is why a zebra shark is sometimes known as a leopard shark.

■ Each animal that arrives at the Science Education Aquarium will have received a series of medical procedures, from pre-departure exams to quarantine exams when they arrive. An example of a pre-departure exam is a visual assessment and bloodwork.

■ Quarantines can last between 30 and 90 days depending on the species, during which time qualified aquarium biologists and veterinarians monitor behavior, diet and health before the animal is put into its habitat with other animals.

■ The Gulf of Mexico exhibit, the largest exhibit at Mote SEA, will include sand tiger, blacknose, sandbar, bonnethead and nurse sharks. Did you know, the only bones in a shark's body are the ones it has eaten?

■ Guests of Mote SEA will be able to get up close to a giant Pacific octopus. This species of octopus can weigh up to 150 pounds and is the largest known octopus species.

■ The colony of Humboldt penguins at Mote SEA will be made up of individuals from up to four other facilities that are actively breeding them as part of their species survival plan.

■ Before concrete was poured for Mote SEA's Gulf of Mexico habitat, a 1922 silver dollar was placed at the bottom as a nod to Mote's Founding Director Eugenie Clark, who was born in 1922.

■ If you see rockfish at the Mote SEA, you children and your children's children might be seeing the same fish. Rockfish live to be more than 100 years old.

■ Mote SEA will have a deep sea exhibit that will include giant isopods, scavengers that mainly are found from 500 feet to more than 7,000 feet below the surface at low temperatures and pitch darkness.

Melanie Gardner, an aquarium biologist for Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, feeds Hang Tough, a green sea turtle that will be headed to the Mote Science Education Aquarium adjacent to Nathan Benderson Park when it opens late in 2024.

Another shark will be the sand tiger shark, which Dolman says looks vicious because you can always see their teeth. (It is also known as a ragged-tooth shark.)

Visitors will also be impressed by the honeycomb whipray, which is found in coastal waters from India to the Malay Archipelago. The whipray grows to more than four feet across.

As Dolman and his staff bring everything together, they have to make sure the species are compatible, and often that is only the case if they are well fed.

He will rely on his staff's experience to get everything right for opening day. For example, red drum fish are "food motivated" and aggressive and often will steal food from sharks. Dolman said his staff members will teach them to go to their own feeding stations.

The sharks are fed three times a week and therefore aren't interested in feasting on other species in the tank.

"They are not chasing fish," he said. "People ask me, 'What if I fell in there?' I say, 'You would get wet, and you would scare the fish away.'"

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Nikki Pelier Simon, John Simon and their daughter Ashley Sanchez are carrying on the legacy of this popular boutique.

Photo by Lori Sax

A Family Affair with Fashion

When Scout & Molly's former owner died last year, John Simon, Nikki Pelier Simon and their daughter Ashley Sanchez decided to carry on the legacy of this popular boutique.

BY EMILY LEINFUSS | CONTRIBUTOR

If you had told John Simon and Nikki Pelier Simon at the start of April 2022 that a few months later they'd be the proud owners of Scout & Molly's in University Town Center, they probably would have thought it was an April Fools' prank.

But there wasn't anything funny about the reason the store suddenly became available. Sadly, the store's former owner, Lindsey Elizabeth Smith, died on April 26, 2022. She was 43 years old.

"One day I was working from home when my husband received a phone call about Lindsey," says Nikki. "After he hung up, I said, 'Oh my gosh, that is so terrible. What will you do?'"

Since one of John's many responsibilities as executive vice president and CFO for the corporate Scout & Molly's is overseeing all franchise operations, it fell to him to manage the situation. And the couple knew Smith and the store personally.

Continued on Page 36

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"I told John, 'You can't close that store. Lindsey worked her butt off to keep the doors open through the pandemic. If (her family) doesn't want to keep the franchise, can I make an offer?'" says Nikki. She did, and the family accepted. "I wanted to continue Lindsey's legacy and do what Scout & Molly's is here to do."

As Nikki describes it, Scout & Molly's mission to make every woman feel beautiful and special by providing products and services they can't find anywhere else, including stylists who provide fashion and fitting expertise in an ambiance of non-judgmental, no-pressure shopping.

The UTC shop (there are more than 15 shops around the country) is very much a family-run business. The Simons' daughter Ashley Sanchez is the assistant manager. And John, while still busy with his corporate role, is "the silent, sometimes not so silent, partner in my wife's ownership of the store. I do the financial analysis, marketing and all the back office stuff," he explains.

In addition to running the store, and commuting most days from Cape Coral where they live, Nikki and John are parenting the children of Nikki's daughter Sonceri. "Raising children is a gift of love," says John. "Obviously, at our age, we weren't planning on raising three young children. It's challenging, but their energy level has also made us feel younger." The key "is to give them the self-esteem they need to believe in themselves, and the basic skill sets to get along in life."

That plan is especially challenging when it comes to 16-year-old Nathaniel, who is legally disabled, having been diagnosed with autism early in his life. The Simons have worked tirelessly to create a supportive environment for him and to advocate for his needs.

A core philosophy of Scout & Molly's is giving back to the community. The Simons not only regularly donate proceeds to area causes; they also carry local brands that give back. This includes a line of jean jackets from Style Power Designs, which donates its proceeds to the David Posnack Jewish Community Center's Camp Giborim for campers with autism and other special needs, in Davie, Florida.

"Fashion is not just about clothing and makeup; for us it is also about



making a change in the world," says Nikki. "After Hurricane Ian, we partnered with the Red Cross and had a red tent sale and donated 100% of that day's proceeds. Just the other day, we donated store gift certificates for a charity auction to benefit the local Salvation Army."

CARRYING ON A FAMILY LEGACY

Nikki admits it is maybe not a coincidence that she is now in the clothing business, given that her mother worked in New York's garment district most of her life. "My mom did pattern making for a large company, and she also made wedding dresses (by hand)," says Nikki. Then her mom purchased a factory in New Jersey so she could manufacture her own women's clothing designs. "From the age of 9 I was working in the factory, helping out in any way I could," Nikki recalls.

And yet she didn't choose that career as a young adult. Instead, she became an interior designer specializing in kitchens and bathrooms. But sometimes the past catches up with the present, and even moves into the future. That's why Nikki hopes that



Photos by Lori Sax

Scout & Molly's becomes a legacy she can pass on to her family.

"The mystery is that my mom used to sketch out dresses, and then create the pattern and make the garment. And now my 10-year-old granddaughter Sighya likes to draw clothing. She sketches dresses and is always asking me, 'Grandma, when can I learn how to put them together?' That's not something she's ever seen me or anyone else do."

Top: Nikki Pelier Simon has been working in the fashion industry since she was 9, helping her mother create and manufacture original designs.

Above: Two of the Simons' granddaughters, Sighya and Freya, enjoy helping out at the store.



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Builders Giving Back

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund's Builders Give Back program raises valuable funds and awareness.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

When Adrienne Bookhamer came on as the first executive director of the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund in May 2022, two of her top priorities were raising awareness among residents about the community's 23-year charitable arm and re-engaging with Lakewood Ranch's 17-plus accredited homebuilders.

Bookhamer and her board of directors came up with a way to tackle both of those goals at once — and pull in some money as well. Working in partnership with master developer Schroeder-Manatee Ranch (SMR), the LWR Community Fund rolled out the Builders Give Back program on April 1.

It works like this: For each home closing, participating builders commit a \$100 donation to the fund, which is matched by Lakewood Ranch Communities. Some weeks later, once the new residents have settled in, they'll receive a packet that includes information about the charity and how they can get involved. Additionally, the homeowner will get a certificate noting that their homebuilder and LWR Communities have made a \$200 donation to the LWR Community Fund in their name.

While Bookhamer is happy to have the \$200 gifts, she recognizes that they don't exactly move the fundraising needle. "It isn't necessarily about how much the donation is, but about letting new homeowners know who we are and the good we're doing," Bookhamer says. "It's more about raising aware-



Photo by Lori Sax

Since starting her position as executive director a year ago, Adrienne Bookhamer has added new fundraising events.

Continued on Page 40

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ness of the Community Fund with new residents. Since I've been here, I would say that most of the [residents] I've met don't know who we are. But, at the same time, there are people who've been around here for a long time who do know who we are and have been very active in supporting us."

Keeping up the organization's profile was easier when Lakewood Ranch was a fledgling community with 2,000 of its projected 40,000 homes occupied. Now that Lakewood Ranch has 26,000 households and a population of more than 63,000, it's understandable how a small nonprofit like the Community Fund could get pushed into the background.

When the Builders Give Back idea was hatched last fall, LWR Communities quickly signed on. "We feel that the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund is one of the organizations that has contributed to the continuing legacy of Lakewood Ranch," says Sandy Shahinian, VP of sales and marketing for Lakewood Ranch Communities. "The new program is a great way to thank new residents for moving here and introduce them to the philanthropic side of the community."

Thus far, seven of the 17-plus builders have joined the program, but the other 10 aren't all holdouts. "Some of our builders have corporate rules or limitations that prevent them from participating," Shahinian says. "They may have their own modes of giving."

Lakewood Ranch's philanthropic culture dates to its earliest days. In 2000, John Clarke, then SMR's CEO, felt that the newly minted community needed a charitable component, so he helped form the LWR Community Fund. Over the years, the organization has built an endowment that is currently valued at just over \$1 million and has granted \$1.4 million to local nonprofits.

The Community Fund spent its first two decades under the umbrella of the larger Manatee Community Foundation. In 2021, it established its own 501(c)(3) status. An all-volunteer board



Photo by Lori Sax

Nicole Ryskamp

is an attorney and real estate agent with Michaels Saunders & Co. in Lakewood Ranch, where she's lived since 1999. Ryskamp serves as the chair of the Community Fund's board of directors and says that the companies participating in the Builders Give Back program "are committed to the health of our community and understand the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund's commitment to philanthropy."

Lakewood Ranch Community Fund's board chair, Nicole Ryskamp, and executive director, Adrienne Bookhamer, say that the Builders Give Back program has raised valuable awareness of their organization.

ran the nonprofit until Bookhamer became its first paid employee. "They needed someone to execute," says the director, who moved here from Denver three years ago and has been working in the nonprofit sector for more than 20 years. "Most of the board members had regular jobs, and the organization didn't have the manpower to put it all together for the ideas they had."

Bookhamer's one-year tenure has seen the addition of two new events. Last October, Wine and Giving drew 260 people to the Esplanade Golf and Country Club. In February, 300 people signed up for the first Mardi Gras 5K Run, after which came a big, family-friendly party at Waterside Place. Bookhamer and the board plan to make both of these annual events.

Last year, the organization granted \$60,000 to 22 local charities, including the Friends of Lakewood Ranch Library, the Humane Society of Lakewood Ranch and Safe Children Coalition. The gifts ranged from \$1,500 to \$5,000. In addition, the Community Fund partnered with SMR and Lakewood Ranch Community Activities to raise an additional \$10,000, which was awarded to four nonprofits directly affected by Hurricane Ian.

"I'd love to double what we gave out last year," Bookhamer says of 2022. Builders Give Back will assist in achieving that goal. But more than the money it adds to the coffers, the program will promote an invigorated synergy between the LWR Community Fund, new residents and homebuilders.

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Avian club celebrates the area's winged creatures — both wild and at home. **PAGE 44**



class act For the Birds

Cindy Gordon, the founder and president of the Lakewood Ranch Avian Club, is devoted to all feathered creatures.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

For 13 years, bird enthusiast Cindy Gordon and her husband, Kerry, have shared their Country Club home with a parrot named Chewy. Their feathered family member has the run of the place — sometimes at a cost to the homeowners. “Chewy loves to chew,” Cindy Gordon says. “One time, we left a drawer open because she loves to explore in crevices. Believe it or not, we went to retrieve some cash that was in there and she had made a green nest.”

Gordon reckons that Chewy had depleted the couple’s cash stash by about a hundred bucks. Then there were the times, when Gordon was still working, that she’d be leading a conference call with about 20 people and Chewy would fly over to the phone and hang it up with her foot. “It would drop everyone from the call,” Gordon says. “If I’m not paying attention to her, she’ll do something to get it.”

Gordon — the founder and president of the Lakewood Ranch Avian Club — tells these stories with matter-of-fact amusement. Avian hijinks are simply part of having a 14-inch blue-crowned conure as a housemate. She has another pet, Sophie, a large blue-and-gold macaw that lives in an aviary that Gordon and a friend built behind



Photo by Nancy Guth

Continued on Page 46

When Cindy Gordon started the Lakewood Ranch Avian Club, its initial focus was on pet parrots.

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During times of uncertainty, inflation, and questions surrounding the ability of the U.S. Dollar to retain its place as the world currency of choice, more and more people are turning to **Gold, Silver, and Platinum** to better balance their portfolio. The biggest questions are, "Where do I go?" and "Who do I trust?" Unfortunately, many immediately turn to the companies they hear advertising on the radio and cable networks assuming they are legitimate and reputable because they are on air and often have paid celebrities - even the show hosts themselves - attesting to their practices.

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his Bradenton home.

The Maryland transplant started the Avian Club in 2013. “I saw a bridge club, a mahjong club, an art club, a photography club — why not a bird club?” Gordon recalls. She was already volunteering with a parrot sanctuary and was a board member of the Florida West Coast Avian Society, a nonprofit that saves, rehabs and finds homes for unwanted, abused or abandoned parrots.

The Lakewood Ranch Avian Club’s initial focus was on pet parrots. Such an emphasis quickly proved too narrow, though, and Gordon suspended the organization after about a year. That changed in 2021 when she met Fran Meyerson, an ardent lover of wild birds. Both were caring for abandoned lovebirds, and after connecting through a mutual friend, the two decided to pair them in Meyerson’s Edgewater home for what they call “a match made in heaven.”

The women made a terrific match, too. “Cindy and I adored each other from the start,” Meyerson effuses. “What she does with parrots is phenomenal.”

Gordon, who wanted to learn more about wild birds, found the perfect resource in her new friend. The twosome decided to combine their interests and reactivate the Lakewood Ranch Avian Club, which, Gordon estimates, has about 35 members. “I would say that 20 or 25 of them are interested in [outdoor] birding and 10 to 15 own parrots, and are interested in parrots,” she adds.

The Avian Club holds birding excursions — usually one a month — that Meyerson plans and leads. As many as 20 people lace up their hiking shoes, grab their binoculars and venture out to local havens like Celery Fields, Summerfield Park and Pinecraft Park. With some luck, they’ll spot hard-to-find painted buntings or swallow-tailed kites or roseate spoonbills or scarlet tanagers.

“Fran is an expert birder,” Gordon says. “Some birders like to keep things very secretive, but she is very willing to share and teach.”

Additionally, Avian Club members bring “spokes-parrots” to assisted living facilities for residents to enjoy. They head out to the Lakewood Ranch



Photo by Nancy Guth

Farmers’ Market and hold the colorful birds on their arms. “We’ll go pretty much anywhere we’re invited,” Gordon says. “We’d stand in front of a Publix if they’d let us.”

People flock to the charismatic creatures. “A lot of them have never seen an exotic bird up close before,” Gordon says.

The club is holding a paint-your-pet event at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall on June 10. Residents of all ages can bring along a photo, and an artist will help them paint a picture of their bird. (Check the club’s website for more details.)

One thing the Avian Club does not do, Gordon stresses, is rescue wild birds.

She continues her own rescue work with the Florida West Coast Avian Society, for which she serves as president.

Gordon’s empathy for birds dates to her childhood outside Baltimore, where her mother took in unwanted parakeets. “Back in the ’60s and ’70s, people bought them at a five-and-dime for 50 cents apiece, and when they lost interest, they’d throw them out the door,” Gordon recalls, a hint of anger in her voice. “The bird would only survive for a day, when in reality they could live for 15 or 20 years.”

Gordon joined her mother’s bird-

saving enterprise at age 5 or 6 and stayed active until leaving to attend University of Maryland. Mother and daughter worked hard to find homes for the rescued parakeets, but usually had four — and as many as 10 — living in their home.

“I was just amazed at how intelligent they were,” Gordon recalls. “They were such lively creatures. It bothered me that they were considered throw-away pets.”

Several decades later, Cindy Gordon’s devotion to all things avian has not waned in the slightest. Along with her up-close relationships with birds, she also has larger environmental concerns. “As the area grows more, I want people to be aware that there are less and less habitats for both year-round resident birds and migratory birds,” she says. “There was a lake — and now it’s a housing development. Truth is, we’re not good stewards of our wild bird population.”

And that includes helping Chewy expand her vocabulary. “If you ask her who she is,” Gordon says, “she’ll say, ‘I am a pretty girl.’”

For more information about the Lakewood Ranch Avian Club, visit MyLwr.com/307/Avian-Club or call 941-536-0502 or email Shorebird@tampabay.rr.com.

Cindy Gordon (right) says that Fran Meyerson is an expert birder. “Some birders like to keep things very secretive, but she is very willing to share and teach.”

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Trevor Kelliher no longer feels alone in his struggle with cerebral palsy.

Photo by Jay Heater

With a Little Help from His Friends

Trevor Kelliher started All Friends Network to connect people with cerebral palsy, autism and other developmental disabilities.

BY JAY HEATER | CONTRIBUTOR

For much of his life Trevor Kelliher has felt alone in his struggle with cerebral palsy.

Topping his problems was the fact he had a hard time making friends. Those people his own age — Kelliher is now 23 — had different priorities in their lives.

He was lonely.

So, after moving in 2019 to Lakewood Ranch with his dad, Greg, he wondered how he could change things. He brainstormed with his dad about

possible solutions.

In spring 2020, All Friends Network was born.

The Kelliher family decided to start an online network that would allow those with cerebral palsy, autism and other developmental disabilities to connect and develop relationships.

As Trevor says, “Everyone deserves a best friend.”

Off to a slow start due to the pandemic,

Continued on Page 50

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ic, All Friends Network is finally rolling in 2023. For months after its launch, All Friends Network had eight members. Now it has 135.

Best of all, Trevor no longer feels alone.

"I definitely have a positive outlook on life," he said in April in the All Friends Network office in the Lakewood Ranch Corporate Park. "All Friends Network definitely has done a lot for me. Going through something alone is tough."

As he began meeting the members, at both online and in live events sponsored by All Friends Network, Trevor learned many of them were facing more difficult challenges than the ones he faces.

"I am relieved I am not the only one," he says. "I kind of thought I was. That is what happens when you don't interact with people."

While he talks about being alone, Trevor makes sure it is known that his dad and his dad's best friend, Paul Amato, are exceptions. The three of them — Trevor says Amato is like his uncle — started All Friends Network together and serve as the nonprofit's officers.

Greg Kelliher is proud of what All Friends Network has done for its many members, but even more so for what it has meant to his son. "He eats and breathes this. This has given him a purpose in life. He has matured with his confidence level."

At times, it is obvious Greg has to hold back from trying to protect his son. As All Friends Network was getting started, he often would finish his son's sentences. Cerebral palsy makes speech a chore and those not willing to be patient while Trevor talks are likely to miss the message. With Trevor now the face of the organization, his father has to take a step back.

That can be hard to do. Greg talks about his son's job at a grocery store after they moved to Lakewood Ranch and how annoyed he was that customers would ask his son if he had been drinking because of his speech and mobility issues.

However, the father and son often have conversations about the fact that people, in general, aren't trying to be mean, but simply don't understand.

Trevor is often frustrated by his limitations.

"With CP, it's weird," he says. "I can play pickleball, but I can't pour a full gallon of milk. I can't drive down the road, but I can do an airport by myself."

Those are frustrations that members

of All Friends Network face as well, so they go through it all together.

Mote Ranch's Mary Lou and Bob Fenton said their daughter, Emily, has enjoyed being a part of All Friends Network.

"It has been very helpful, and it's good to give folks social opportunities," Bob Fenton says. "And Trevor has been very creative. He is a young man who is not letting his limitations limit him."

In March, All Friends Network visited Refuge Retreat in Arcadia. The members enjoyed cornhole, swamp buggy rides and a cookout. In April, the members attended a Tampa Bay Lightning game. A Tampa Bay Rays game is planned for July. The group has taken a boat ride down the Manatee River and met for game nights.

The Refuge Retreat "safari" event drew 75 members, but 30 minutes before it was to begin, few had arrived.

"He was nervous," Greg says of his son. "But once he saw the turnout, it was serenity."

Trevor was a bit nervous because the owners of Refuge Retreat donated the space to All Friends Network and he wanted to make sure it was well-attended. It ended up being one of All Friends Network's best events.

"The safari ... no one left until the final bell," Trevor says.

The two Kelliheres and Amato would like to expand the opportunities for live events in the future, but they have been running — and paying — for every-

thing. They understand the organization needs to evolve as more people join.

To this point, Greg says they have focused on building trust because parents and caregivers are protective. He said gaining support from Easter Seals was of great help.

Financially, the three are developing strategies in seeking grants and hosting fundraisers.

"We paid out of pocket for the hockey game," Greg says. "That was \$68 a ticket for 28 tickets. People think that someone else is paying for everything."

Eventually, adding funds will be important if All Friends Network hopes to expand. Although about 70% of All Friends Network members live in Florida, the group has members in 30 states now.

Trevor and Greg have traveled within Florida and to other states to meet members who can't participate in live events. With the membership expanding, Trevor meets the new members and often puts members together so they can communicate independently and develop a relationship.

"It is so great to see them come out of their shells," says Greg.

"This has all been very fun," says Trevor. "More fun than I would have thought. The change in society that we wanted to make is that everyone should have friends, and that you can communicate with people in many ways."

"All I wanted to do in life is to make a difference."



Photo by Jay Heater

Trevor Kelliher founded All Friends Network with support from Paul Amato (left) and Greg Kelliher (right), his father.

AT A GLANCE

What: All Friends Network

Mission: To help young adults with disabilities find friendship and enhance their quality of life

Cost: Free

Events: Besides monthly live events, All Friends Network hosts an online weekly games event on Thursdays at 6 p.m., along with various online social events.

Website: AllFriendsNetwork.org



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calendar summer 2023

JUNE

JUNE 2

MUSIC ON MAIN

This monthly event is on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Tampa Bay-based Modern Measure Band will perform, and the event benefits Selah Freedom. Continues July 7 and Aug. 4.

■ Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

JUNE 4

YOGA IN THE PARK

Join a free yoga session at 9 a.m. at Waterside Park, 7301 Island Cove Terrace, Sarasota. Bring your own mat and water bottle. Mats must be placed 6 feet apart. Event continues every Sunday.

■ Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

THE MARKET

Far from the typical farmers market, The Market at Lakewood Ranch is a curated gathering of the best flavors in the region. Visitors can purchase produce, meat, poultry, seafood, breads, pasta and other prepared foods from more than 100 vendors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Waterside Place, 1561 Lakefront Drive, Lakewood Ranch. Event runs every Sunday.

■ Visit TheMarketLWR.com.

JUNE 7

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Enjoy classic cars from 5-8 p.m. on Lakewood Main Street. Anyone with a classic car, truck or anything with wheels is welcome. Enjoy food, music and prizes. Admission is free; participation is \$10 per vehicle. Continues July 5 and Aug. 2.

■ Visit LakewoodRanch.com.

JUNE 8

LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION

New to the area or just want to get more involved? Join this resident orientation virtually at 6:30 p.m. at [Facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities](https://www.facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities). It's a great chance to learn about the community. Continues July 13 and Aug. 10.

■ Email info@LWRCA.org to register.



File photos

Sophia Stock (right) and her Women's Youth Second Varsity 8+ teammates row back to the dock after finishing fourth (7:04.09) in the B Final at the 2022 USRowing Youth National Championships.

JUNE 8-11

USROWING YOUTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

USRowing will host its Youth National Championship regatta from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Nathan Benderson

Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, where spectators can watch a top-level rowing competition.

■ Visit NathanBendersonPark.org.

Continued on Page 54



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ringling.org



Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues. This exhibition is supported, in part, by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation; The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Endowment; the Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation Endowment; and the Bob and Diane Roskamp Endowment. Sponsored, in part, by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture; the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and the National Endowment for the Arts. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for supporting the Curatorial Research Fellowship.

Elisa Harkins (Cherokee/Muscogee [Creek], b. 1978), *Mekusape Fullana* [video still], 2021. Digital video with sound, 12:45 minutes. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Ian Byers-Gamber.

The Ringling THE JOHN & MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART
 STATE ART MUSEUM OF FLORIDA | FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Continued from Page 52

JUNE 10

CARS & COFFEE

Join automotive enthusiasts from 8-10 a.m. in the West District at UTC, by Ford's Garage, 295 N. Cattlemen Road, Sarasota, for a show of exotic, sports and classic cars. All makes and models are welcome. Admission is free; a suggested donation is \$10 per car. Continues July 8 and Aug. 12.

■ Visit SarasotaCarsAndCoffee.com.

JUNE 14

MOVIES FOR HEROES

Sarasota Film Society hosts a monthly movie event for the military. Active, nonactive and retired personnel, as well as their families, are invited to Lakewood Ranch Cinema, 10715 Rodeo Drive, Lakewood Ranch, for a free movie starting at 11 a.m. June's screening is of "The Outsiders." The event continues July 11 with "Private Benjamin" and Aug. 8 with "Every Which Way But Loose."

■ Visit FilmSociety.org.

JUNE 15

NIGHT MARKET

Shop more than 40 local vendors offering produce, handcrafted goods, cocktails and more from 5-9 p.m. on The Green in the West District at UTC. Continues July 20 and Aug. 17.

■ Visit MallAtUTC.com.

JUNE 17

DAD'S DAY BLOCK PARTY

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. visit the Grand Court at the Mall at UTC, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, to treat your dad. Enjoy burgers, beer, vendors and giveaways while meeting athletes.

■ Visit MallAtUTC.com.

LIGER LUAU FUNDRAISER

Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary, 7101 Palmer Blvd., Sarasota, hosts its second annual Liger Luau from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Enjoy animal guests, a silent auction, live music, raffles and games, a Hawaiian-inspired buffet, and more. Tickets are \$75 or \$50 for children ages 3-12.

■ Visit BigCatHabitat.org.

Continued on Page 56



Lakewood Ranch's Joao Deuner tries on gear from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to show off to his 11-month-old son Ben Deuner at the 2022 Dad's Day Block Party.



Fireworks are the highlight of Fireworks on the Lake at Nathan Benderson Park for July Fourth celebrations.

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Continued from Page 54

JUNE 23

SIGHTS + SOUNDS AT WATERSIDE PLACE: SONGS FROM THE SAND — A HERMITAGE CABARET

From 7 to 8 p.m. at Waterside Place. This evening of song will feature original songs and words created by artists at the Hermitage Artist Retreat. Registration is required. Use code "LWR" to waive the registration fee. ■ Visit MyLWR.com

JULY

JULY 1-3

FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

From 2-7 p.m. Saturday, noon to 6 p.m. Sunday and 3-9 p.m. Monday in the parking lot of The Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Drive, Sarasota, celebrate Independence Day at the Suncoast's largest food truck festival. More than 70 food trucks will be on site, along with a kids zone. Admission and parking are free. Sunday night will end in fireworks. ■ Visit MallAtUTC.com.

JULY 3

FIREWORKS 4-MILER

The Fireworks 4-Miler race begins at 7 p.m., after the kids' dash begins at 6:30 p.m. Race day registration and packet pick-up open at 5 p.m. The race will provide a race shirt, a medal and glow gear for all participants, and the top 100 male and female finishers will receive a commemorative prize. Stay for a race after party with food and drinks. Fireworks explode over the lake beginning at 9 p.m. Details to come. ■ Visit RaceRoster.com.

FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE

Take part in this fireworks show with festivities beginning at 4 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park. The fireworks will begin over the lake when the sun goes down, around 9 p.m. Details to come. ■ Visit NathanBendersonPark.org.

JULY 22

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Florida Penguin Productions hosts a business expo with family services on tutoring, education and after-school programs beginning at 10 a.m. at Ellenton Premium Outlets, 5461 Factory Shops Blvd., Ellenton. Enjoy school



Lee County's Terry Johnson participates in a preliminary round of the Special Olympics Stand-up Paddleboard Championship.



The 2022 Fireworks 4-Miler begins at Nathan Benderson Park.

supply giveaways, and pre-register for a free backpack.

■ Visit FloridaPenguinProductions.com.

AUGUST

AUG. 18-19

STATE STAND UP PADDLE COMPETITION

The 2023 Special Olympics Florida Stand-up Paddle Competition will see more than 100 athletes compete in a variety of SUP races for medals — and for the fun of it — at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson

Circle, Sarasota. The event is free for spectators. Details to come.

■ Visit SpecialOlympicsFlorida.org.

AUG. 26

BEAT THE HEAT

Camp Gladiator's Island Challenge Series presents the Beat the Heat race at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The chip-timed fitness race begins at 8 a.m. Participants will receive a race T-shirt and medal upon completing the race. Registration is \$69.

■ Visit RaceRoster.com.



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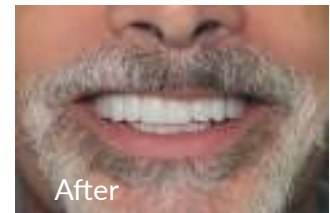
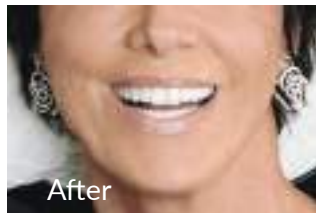
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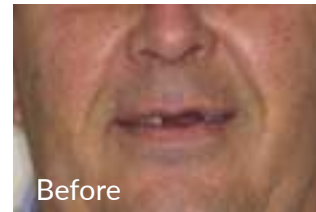
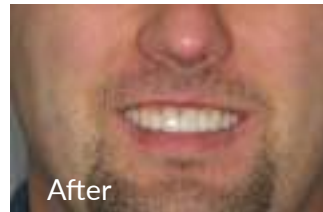
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- Post Doctoral Instructor of Full Mouth Reconstruction
- Member International Academy of Oral Biological Dentistry and Toxicology
- Practicing dentistry for 33 years

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Cameron Johnson, DMD

- Member of North American Association of Facial Orthotropics
- Member of the American Orthodontic Society
- Member of the International Association of Orthodontics
- Member of American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine
- International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology

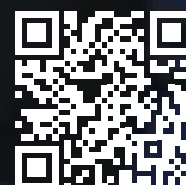


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Pretty in Pink

From the palest pastels to soft salmons and in-your-face fuchsias, pink in all its variations is the hit of summer.

BY KELLY FORES | CONTRIBUTOR

Monkee's of Lakewood Ranch

1561 Lakefront Drive, Suite 104,
Lakewood Ranch, (941) 358-8868
MonkeesOfLakewoodRanch.com

Monkee's radiates rich, cheerful colors and happy patterns. A brilliant selection of dresses and separates fills this charming store along with unique beaded bags and adorable shoes and jewelry. The quality of the fabrics is swoon-worthy, whether it's cotton or cashmere. Simply stepping into Monkee's will bring a smile to your face.



Beyond by
Vera Alice
dress \$300



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Manuela sandals
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[Instagram.com/FloridaProvisions](https://www.instagram.com/FloridaProvisions)

Real men DO wear pink! Florida Provisions' "curated collection of the things that make our Florida lives better" includes graphic tees, and we're particularly fond of the Blue Crabber. How about a featherweight performance polo in a fun print of bikini-clad sunbathers? Bonus: you can enjoy a beer while you shop.

Salty Crew Blue
Crabber tee \$29.50



Johnnie-O Sun
Bathin' polo \$110



Gigi Moda jogger
\$89



Scout & Molly's Boutique

5275 University Parkway #132, Bradenton
(941) 210-4686, ScoutAndMollys.com

This little boutique serves up big attitude through the lines it carries. Add a punch of magenta to your summer wardrobe with this embossed crossbody bag; remove the chain and you have a clutch. Pink is the perfect background for the tropical flower print of these crinkle cotton-blend jogger pants.

Continued on Page 62



Germán Fuentes
crossbody bag
\$139

Continued from Page 61



Pink and white
diamond ring
\$3,995

Michael & Co. Jewelers

8736 State Road 70 E.,
Lakewood Ranch, (941) 216-3097
MichaelAndCoJewelers.com

Owner Mike Morton has been in the jewelry industry since 1988, going from apprentice to custom designer of fine jewelry. Check out these beauties: a pink and white diamond ring in platinum with a rose gold setting, and a smashing morganite and diamond cocktail ring in rose gold.



Morganite ring
\$2,295



Hemant and Nandita
Nara Schiffli dress \$549

Influence Style

8141 Lakewood Main St. N-102,
Lakewood Ranch, (941) 351-9218
InfluenceStyle.com

Sister-owned Influence Style has been in the area since 2010, first on St. Armands Circle and then opening in Lakewood Ranch in 2016. It's no surprise they have a loyal following; here you'll find everything for your wardrobe, from comfy casuals and denim to showstopping dresses. Rose-colored sunglasses? Yes, please.



DIFF Carson
sunglasses \$119

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Affordable? Yes. Cheap? Never!

Hungry for a tasty meal in Lakewood Ranch for less than \$20? Coming right up!

BY SU BYRON AND MARTY FUGATE

Lakewood Ranch offers abundant options for foodies who enjoy a good deal without sacrificing the quality of the meal. Being thrifty doesn't mean scrimping on taste or ambience — or resorting to fast food joints. Here are a few suggestions for great meals at great places that are under (or a wee bit over) \$20. You might break your diet. But you won't break the bank.



Craft Growlers To Go and Tasting Room

Craft Growlers To Go is more than a popular destination for live music, friendly cheer and great beer. Owner Jeanne Dooley and her team keep guests well fed at affordable prices. Their menu's filled with flatbreads, pizzas and tasty pub-grub stuff like hot queso dip, devilled eggs and bacon-flavored beer nuts. But if you want a beefier backup for your Hidden Springs Peanut Butter Deja Moo (from Tampa) or the Burial Surf Wax (from Asheville, N.C.), you can't go wrong with one of three **Argentine-style empanadas** (Mediterranean beef, spicy chicken and spicy beef). And you can affordably fill up on all three — they're \$5 each. Even better? Dooley sources the empanadas from the Empanada Girl (Stefania Fochi), who sells her folded delights at the Sarasota Farmers Market. Or go with the deliciously decadent **bacon and guacamole grilled cheese sandwich**. It's only \$10 so you know what that means. Have two and hit the gym tomorrow.





\$10

GRILLED CHEESE

Courtesy photos

Above: Bet you can't just eat one of Craft Growlers To Go's bacon and guacamole grilled cheese sandwiches.

Left: Craft Growlers To Go's empanadas are from The Empanada Girl, who sells her spicy fare at Sarasota's downtown farmers market.

IF YOU GO

8141 Lakewood Main St. Unit N103;
(941) 822-8131; CraftGrowlersToGo.com



\$10

TWO EMPANADAS

Remy's on Main Street

At Remy's you can eat a great meal every night for a week for under \$20. Here's a few to start with: The **Bibimbap Bowl** is a bowl chock-full of veggies and protein, including pickled carrot, fresh spinach, cucumbers, kimchi, fried egg, and bulgogi (slices of marinated beef; 17). If seafood is more your style, try **The Wharf**, a plate of jumbo shrimp, scallops and Icelandic cod filets served with a potato anyway you like it (\$18). Speaking of fish, you can also enjoy **ahi seared tuna** (\$17), **mahi-mahi** (\$19) and **salmon** (\$19) and each comes with two sides. If you bring the kids, they can dig into happy meals at prices you'll never match at home, including **fried or grilled chicken** (\$7), **fish and fries** (\$7), and **spaghetti** (\$7). How easy is that?

IF YOU GO

8138 Lakewood Main St., Lakewood Ranch; (941) 355-9391.

Below: The Bibimbap Bowl at Remy's is chock full of greens and protein.



\$17

BIBIMBAP BOWL

Continued on Page 66

Continued from Page 65

Inkawasi Peruvian Restaurant

When Peruvian native Jimmy Arias opened Inkawasi Peruvian Restaurant in 2019, he knew it would stand out. Sure, Main Street in Lakewood Ranch has its share of outstanding eateries — but none served Peruvian fare. Arias filled in the gap — and Inkawasi has become a foodie favorite ever since. With a menu boasting Peruvian perennials like *lomo saltado* (seared beef stir-fried with veggies and served over rice), ceviche, *chupe de camarones* (shrimp chowder), empanadas and fried yucca, it's the closest you can get to Peru without a plane ticket. Peruvian fare is a tapestry of global cuisines, blending indigenous ingredients with Chinese, Japanese, Italian and Spanish influences. Here, you'll find fried rice, noodle and pasta dishes and plenty of fresh fish. We suggest the **Parihuela Inkawasi**, a Peruvian-style bouillabaisse, filled with cod, shrimp, calamari rings, mussels and clams. "The parihuela is considered a main dish, with energizing and toning properties," says Arias. "Due to its simplicity and succulence, it is a popular soup." Succulent, indeed! What sets it apart from its French cousin is the addition of *aji panca*, a Peruvian chili pepper with an almost fruity taste. This taste feast will set you back \$21.95 — but we think the extra \$.95 is money well spent.

IF YOU GO

10667 Boardwalk Loop; (941) 360-1110; InkaWasiRestaurant.com

Top: Inkawasi's Parihuela Inkawasi is a Peruvian-style bouillabaisse, filled with cod, shrimp, calamari rings, mussels and clams.

Bottom: Kleyver Zamora, the son of owner Jimmy Arias, is happy to educate guests about Peruvian food and wines.

Continued on Page 68



Photos by Lori Sax

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Macarena Gimenez and Maximiliano Iglesias | Photography Matthew Holler

Continued from Page 66

Speaks Clam Bar

You've probably heard of Natalia Levey, the chef, restaurateur and the author of "Cravings Boss." She's the owner of several regional restaurants, including Speaks Clam Bar in Lakewood Ranch (there's another Speaks on St. Armands Circle). The clam bar concept makes sense when you consider that Levey hails from a large Italian family from New York City's Little Italy. Since Prohibition days, clam bars served as cultural hubs where Italian families gathered, socialized, dug into authentic Italian grub and, back then, indulged in illegal hooch. Speaks provides for all these things — except the hooch is now legal. Sticking with our under \$20 theme, you could fill up on a dozen raw clams for 10 bucks and call it a night. Craving heartier fare? Prepare for pasta! The **Broccoli Rabe and Sausage Rigatoni** will please your senses and your appetite. The rigatoni is made on-site and sautéed in a lusciously sweet cream sauce, perked with an aged Parmesan and topped with sausage that's fragrant with fennel and other herbs (\$18). Or go for the **Rigatoni alla Vodka**, a mouth-watering mélange of aged Parmesan, sweet heavy cream tomato paste and fresh basil (\$16). *Buon appetito!*

IF YOU GO

8764 State Road 70 E., Lakewood Ranch; (941) 232-7646; SpeaksClam-Bar.com

Top: The Broccoli Rabe and Sausage Rigatoni at Speaks will please your senses and your appetite.

Bottom: General Manager Chris Rodman with Speaks' Rigatoni alla Vodka, a mouth-watering mélange of aged Parmesan, sweet heavy cream tomato paste and fresh basil.

Continued on Page 70



Photos by Lori Sax



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smh.com/ortho

Continued from Page 68

Libby's at Lakewood Ranch

Libby's **Impossible Burger** (\$16.50) is a delicious possibility. This meat-free “double mac burger” is loaded with American cheese and mayo and all the condiments you crave. Sure, if you're vegan, you can always settle on a salad. But let's face it. Sometimes it's burger time. We're talking a fat, juicy, old-fashioned, all-American burger with cheese and ketchup and mustard and mayo oozing out of the bun. The only key difference? This burger is decidedly new-fashioned when it comes to its sustainable, healthier, kinder, gentler meat alternative. Oh — did we mention the mayo is plant-based, along with the cheese? (Libby's wickedly tasty real-beef burger is also a possibility.) If you're not in a burger state of mind, try the **Krabby Patty sandwich** (\$19), made with blue crab and Gulf shrimp

and slapped between two pieces of toasted sesame brioche and then deliciously drenched with sriracha aioli mayo. It's definitely a mouthful — but one that will make you smile.

IF YOU GO

8445 Lorraine Road, Lakewood
Ranch; (941) 357-1570;
LibbysNeighborhoodBrasserie.com.

Right: Chef Raul Rodriguez with the Krabby Patty, made with blue crab and Gulf shrimp sandwiched between two pieces of toasted sesame brioche.

Far right: There's nothing impossible about the Impossible cheeseburger at Libby's.

KRABBY PATTY SANDWICH

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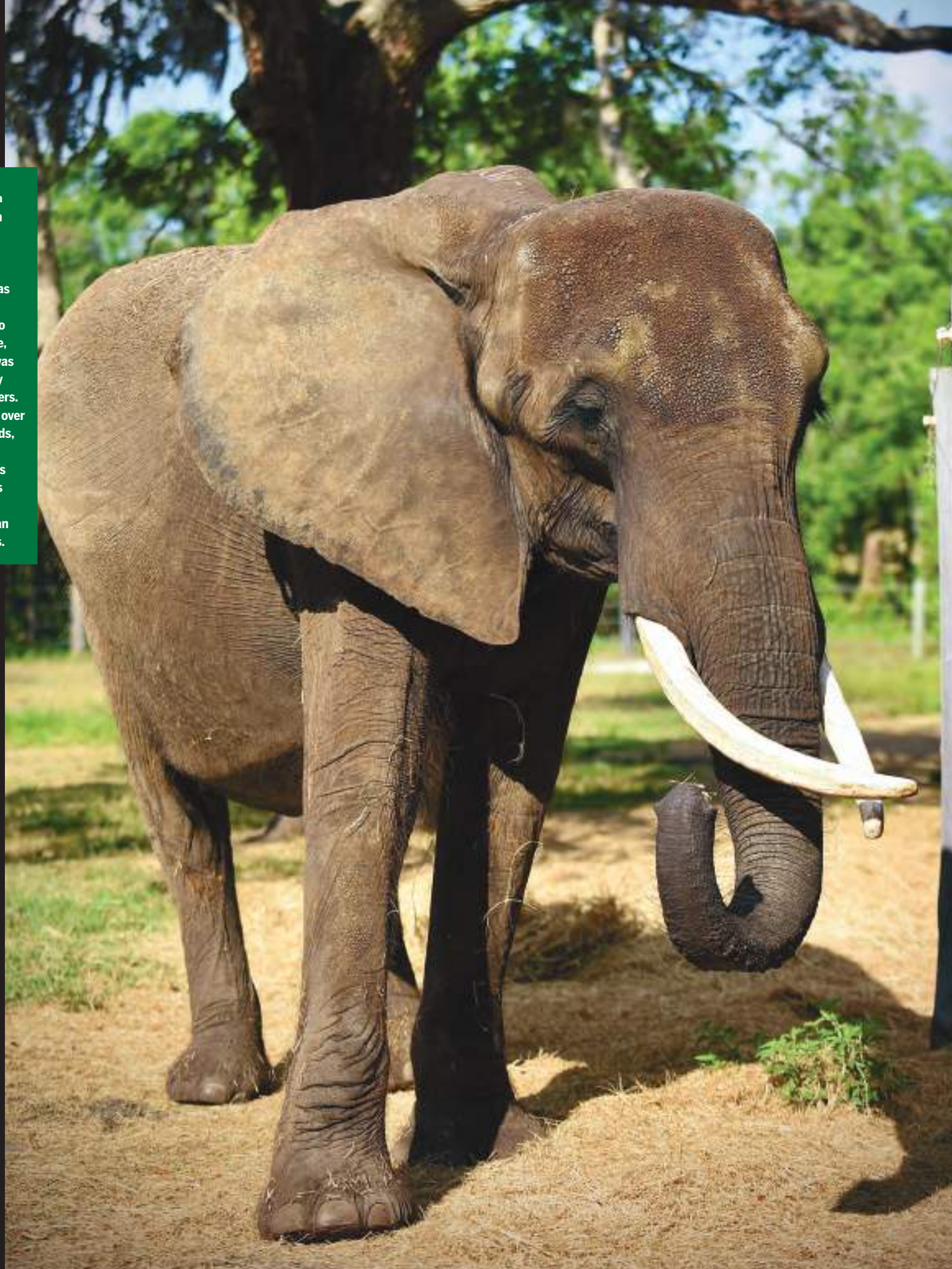


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Photos by
Heidi Kurpiela
Lou, Myakka
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only African
elephant, was
born nearly
40 years ago
in Zimbabwe,
where she was
orphaned by
ivory poachers.
Weighing in over
8,000 pounds,
the animal
overshadows
the facility's
other two,
smaller Asian
pachyderms.





CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE ELEPHANT KIND

Sanctuaries such as Myakka Elephant Ranch provide a humane way for people to mingle with the world's largest land animals. The experiences are filled with messaging about the plight of these smart, sensitive creatures.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

On a picture-perfect spring morning in Myakka City, Lou is getting her daily spa treatment. The 45-minute ritual consists of a deep scrub, a long soak, and skin care that includes aloe and coconut oil. She's also getting her toenails done. By all appearances, the 39-year-old African savanna elephant is loving it. She preens and poses, glugs water from a plastic trash can and makes a purring sound not unlike that of a house cat — if a house cat weighed over 8,000 pounds.

The purr — a low rumble that's not especially loud — signals that Lou is relaxed and comfortable, says Jorge ("George") Barreda, part of the family that runs Myakka Elephant Ranch, a 30-acre compound that three elephants call home.

Lou's spa session takes place in front of about two dozen people seated on a small set of bleachers in an open-air barn. The attendees have paid \$89 each (\$69 for those under age 9) to bathe, touch and take photos with the resident elephants — animals that most of us have only seen from a distance in zoos. And each attendee walks away with a headful of knowledge about these majestic creatures.

Audience members are encouraged to put in some work. Two by two, they come forward to spray Lou with a hose, or scrub her massive frame with a long-handled brush or clean her toenails with a smaller one. The program is emceed by Jorge and his son, Lou Barreda. In 2019, Lou, 30, founded Myakka Elephant Ranch as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and took on the role of chief executive. COO Julia Braren, Jorge's daughter and Lou's sister, sits out front at the check-in area. Father and son

Continued on Page 74

ELEPHANT FACTS

■ There are three distinct species of elephant: Asian, African forest, and African savanna (or Bush). In 2000, DNA evidence revealed that the African elephants are two distinct species.

■ African elephants live up to 70 years, longer than any mammal except humans. Asian elephants have shorter lifespans. Estimates vary, but consensus is 50 to 70 years.

■ Elephant mothers stay pregnant for 22 months, the longest gestation period of any mammal. Typically, elephants give birth to one calf at a time.

■ An elephant trunk has up to 40,000 muscles. Compare that to humans, who have 639 muscles in their entire body.

■ Elephants are either left- or right-tusked, and the dominant one is usually smaller due to wear and tear. One study showed slightly more righties than lefties.

■ Elephants have the largest brains of any land mammal, around three times bigger than the human brain.

Continued from Page 73

orchestrate the audience's pachyderm primping while serving up a stream of interesting tidbits. Example: An African elephant's trunk is capable of lifting 600 pounds — and can also pick up a dime off the ground.

With the world's elephant population dwindling, circuses dropping elephant shows and some zoos phasing out exhibits, sanctuaries such as Myakka Elephant Ranch provide a relatively humane way for people to mingle with the world's largest land animals. The experiences are filled with messaging about the plight of these smart, sensitive creatures. Preservation and education are the core tenets of the Myakka Elephant Ranch mission.

Still, there's no denying the fun. The highlight of the two-hour experience is when audience members get to come forward to pet Lou and Carol, an Asian elephant from Thailand. Patty, another Asian elephant that came to the ranch as a pair with Lou, is less comfortable around people so sits this part out.

The Asians are stockier, with shorter, heavier legs, smaller ears, no visible tusks and smoother skin. Carol and Patty, both 50, don't have Lou's charisma, and there's a reason for that. Every elephant herd, no matter how small, has a matriarch. That's Lou. She's been with the Barreda family since she was a year-and-a-half old. "Lou's definitely the boss," says Lou the human.

For this writer's photo op, I hug Lou's trunk and cup my hand around her smooth, 2-foot tusks. I hang around for a while, petting her leathery skin. Lou gently nudges me with her tusk. It was a friendly gesture, the sheer force of which moves me a couple of feet. I laugh and look upward, straight into her tiny left eye. Lou pokerfaces me back.

We had a moment — I think.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

The Myakka Elephant Ranch is a decidedly family affair. The corporate officers consist of Lou Barreda, Jorge and his wife, Lou Ann, and Julia Braren and her husband, Kellen.

Continued on Page 76



Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

Patty, an Asian elephant who grew up on a farm in Thailand, peeks around the corner of her outdoor pen following a bath. A retired show biz animal, Patty performed in circuses and at state fairs, in addition to appearing in the 1977 film "Smokey and the Bandit."



Although the family-run Myakka conservation center became a fully established nonprofit in 2019, the ranch has had elephants on its property since 1986.



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ELEPHANT FACTS (cont.)

■ Studies have shown that elephants can recognize themselves in a mirror.

■ Elephants have terrific memories. They can recall and find distant watering holes, recognize everyone in their own herd, and recognize humans that they once bonded with, even after the passage of many years.

■ The world's elephant population has been in decline for centuries. All three elephant species have been deemed endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The African forest elephant is listed as critically endangered.

■ Around 10 million elephants roamed Africa in 1900. That number declined to 1.3 million in 1979, and most recent estimates say the current population on the continent is 415,000. The drop is largely attributed to poachers killing elephants for the illegal ivory trade.

■ Botswana, in southern Africa, has the world's largest elephant population: 130,000.

Continued from Page 74

The Barreda clan's relationship with elephants goes back decades. Jorge and Lou Ann owned a business that rented elephants to, he says, "all kinds of events — birthday parties, weddings, documentaries, theme parks, state fairs, circuses, zoos."

In 1986, the Barredas moved their operation from Oklahoma — where it got too cold for elephants, Jorge says — to the current location. The kids grew up around the jumbo pachyderms, as many as six of them, and helped with their care.

Several years ago, Jorge and Lou Ann shut down the for-profit business and retired. Meanwhile, Lou had completed a marketing degree at Florida Gulf Coast University. "I'd always been around elephants and loved the elephants but never really saw a clear future in it," he says, standing by a stall in the barn. "But when we started making it all about conservation, education and making it a nonprofit, that's really when I wanted to get involved."

According to public records, Lou filed corporate papers for the Myakka Elephant Ranch on Oct. 14, 2019. A week later, he was off to the International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium in South Africa. (He has since become a board member of the International Elephant Foundation, which presents the seminars.) Lou subsequently did a two-week internship at a zoo in Berlin to learn more about elephant care.

The ranch began offering its live programs in November 2020. The four separate encounters run five days a week and range in price from \$29 to \$199. They're over by early afternoon, after which the gentle behemoths have the run of the property. Well, not run, actually. They're getting on in years, so moseying is more their thing. A crudely built pool, which acts as a watering hole, sits just behind the barn.

"They don't require much supervision," Lou says of his charges. "I'll check on them at about six o'clock. I just talk to them like you would talk to your pet dog. You can do baby talk; you can talk seriously to them. They understand almost everything that's going on. Sometimes I come in and don't even have to say anything."

Continued on Page 78



Michelle Suarez, a student from North Port High School, tries her hand at giving an elephant pedicure with Jorge Barreda.



Myakka Elephant Ranch founder and President Lou Barreda hoses down Patty, one of two Asian elephants on the property.



Thomas Green, a North Port High School student, finds out what happens when you dangle a carrot in front of an elephant's trunk.

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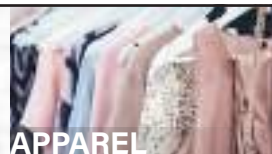
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ELEPHANT FACTS (cont.)

■ In Asia, elephant numbers have declined by at least 50% over the last three generations, with 40,000 to 50,000 remaining. The drop is largely attributed to human-elephant conflict. For example, an elephant herd may trample farmlands, which leads subsistence farmers to poison the animals to protect their crops, and erect electric fences around their property that can kill the elephants.

Continued from Page 76

A PROFITABLE NONPROFIT

Many local nonprofits get by on a shoestring and struggle to stay out of the red. By contrast, Myakka Elephant Ranch runs well in the black. The encounters, which as of early April were booked out a couple of months in advance, more than cover the roughly \$500,000 a year required to operate the facility and care for the animals, Lou says. “We keep the experiences smaller,” he adds. “We could be losing some funding by doing that, but it keeps them more intimate.”

In 2022, Myakka Elephant Ranch contributed \$54,000 to the International Elephant Foundation and two other nonprofits focused on elephant conservation and research, according to Julia Braren.

Right: An open-air barn on the property houses the organization’s lobby, gift shop and interactive elephant experiences.

Top: A gift shop on the property offers elephant knickknacks, souvenir T-shirts and other merchandise, all sold for a good cause.



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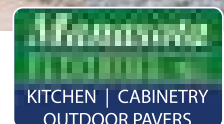


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Lou says that the ranch staff does not have time to mount a fundraising campaign, but still brought in just over \$50,000 in donations last year. That money goes to capital projects (like the watering hole), as well as expanding and improving the habitats.

The ranch sets aside 10% of its encounters to offer for free to education and nonprofit groups. They include The Haven in Sarasota, Loveland Center in Venice — both of which serve people with developmental disabilities — Wheelchairs 4 Kids and Operation Warrior Resolution, which provides holistic mental health care for veterans and their families.

Braren, who spearheads the organization's outreach program, tells the story of a veteran suffering from PTSD who attended the ranch's elephant yoga therapy class, where attendees do their downward dogs with elephants grazing in the background. "He never thought being around an elephant could change his life," she says of the veteran. "He said

Continued on Page 80



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ELEPHANT FACTS (cont.)

■ A 2016 IUCN report says that Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda showed stable or growing populations.

■ Estimates say that 300 to 400 elephants live in the United States, all of them in captivity.



Continued from Page 79

he never would have sought help, but having the experience connected him with Operation Warrior Resolution, and that in turn saved his life.”

Braren also founded and runs the ranch's Conservation Pen Pal Program and Art Exchange Program, where American and African children exchange letters and artwork about their love of elephants.

The Barredas have expansion dreams for their elephant haven. Lou hopes to bring in younger ones, including males, for breeding. He envisions as many as 30 elephants roaming 30 acres or more. That's ambitious, but regardless of when or if all that transpires, he and his family members will be caring for their beloved behemoths over the long haul.

“Elephants are such a lifelong commitment,” Braren says. “It's not even an animal, really. It's pretty much a member of your family.”

For more information, visit MyakkaElephantRanch.org.



Courtesy photo

Above: Lou Barreda is the president and founder of Myakka Elephant Ranch.

Left: The author Eric Snider and his wife, Bonnie, with Lou the elephant.



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Photos by Harry Sayer
Andrea Saputo Cox steps into
her role at Gold Coast during a
challenging time in the industry.



GOING • FOR THE • GOLD

Andrea Saputo Cox confidently
steps into a leadership role at
Gold Coast Eagle Distributing.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR



John Saputo is a third-generation beer wholesaler. Andrea Saputo Cox is continuing the tradition in the fourth generation.

Gold Coast Eagle Distributing employee Hugh Shields jokes, sort of, that when Andrea Saputo Cox left her executive role at the company for roughly a decade to raise two children, he called her constantly. “I begged her every day for 10 years to come back,” quips Shields, a 19-year Gold Coast employee who handles marketing administration.

Shields says he and others at the Lakewood Ranch-based Anheuser-Busch/InBev beer and beverage distribution business missed Saputo Cox’s even-handed, deliberate and calm leadership style. The company remained a thriving entity in her absence, as her father, John Saputo, had already built the foundations of a \$220

million company over 25 years. John Saputo has been, and remains, the public face of the business. But Saputo Cox’s departure left a gap.

“In the beverage business you have to be able to put a case on a shelf or load a pallet,” Shields says, along with doing all the other office tasks. “She’s definitely the kind of person who leads by example. She will never ask someone to do something she hasn’t done herself.”

Shields and others got their wish in spring 2020, when Saputo-Cox returned to a leadership role at Gold Coast, just as the pandemic began to take hold. More recently, Saputo Cox, 45, was named president and equity manager/owner of Gold Coast Eagle — further cementing her presence in the family-run beer business and East

“

There are times when we don’t see eye to eye, but we will often agree on what’s best for the business. I really love that he’s still here for me when I need help.”

ANDREA SAPUTO COX

BY THE NUMBERS

6,222,876

Total cases of beverages sold in 2022

5,770,226

Beer

603,751

Non-alcoholic

32,377

Liquor

10,412

Cider

6,109

Wine

Source: Gold Coast
Eagle Distributing



County community. Equity manager is a highly detailed ownership process Anheuser-Busch requires for each of the 450 owners in its network. Saputo Cox is one of seven women to currently hold the equity manager position.

“We were so proud of Andrea when she decided to come back and carry on the Saputo family beer legacy,” says Denise Saputo, John’s wife and Andrea’s mom. “She has the business mind, and our dream was always for Andrea to come back to the business.”

“Andrea can successfully run the entire company,” adds John Saputo. “There’s no doubt in my mind.”

A high-energy U.S. Marine colonel who breathes passion for Gold Coast’s flagship brand, Budweiser, Saputo, 72, isn’t retiring. But he is slowing down. He might go on longer hunting trips to Michigan, Saputo Cox says, or maybe take a full week off. He will also continue helping his son-in-law, Devyn Dugger, run Dickerson Distributing, a distributorship north of Cincinnati under the Anheuser-Busch/InBev brand Saputo acquired in 2014. Dugger is married to

Bethany, the youngest of four Saputo siblings. The oldest sisters, twins Katherine Tanner and Sarah Mackie, aren’t in the beverage business.

Saputo Cox steps into her role at Gold Coast during a challenging time in the industry, with inflation, gas prices and labor issues among the obstacles at the top of the list. One way the company has been dealing with the rise in costs is through trying to be more efficient with deliveries, particularly in working with customers to do fewer trips with more cases of products. The company, which posted \$222 million in revenue in 2021, up 7.7% from \$206 million in 2020, has also raised salaries while maintaining and enhancing benefits — to keep and retain top talent. It has some 200 sales, service and support associates.

Saputo Cox sees a large portion of her role as continuing to foster an environment where people want “to get out of bed and come to work,” adding that “if you take care of employees, they will take care of your customers.”

Continued on Page 86

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Located on 23 acres, Gold Coast Eagle's 170,000-square-foot complex includes a tasting room, rotunda, beer garden and conference room that holds up to 200 people.

Continued from Page 85

OUT EAST

Even though it's somewhat out of the way, Gold Coast Eagle's facility, in the south end of the Lakewood Ranch corporate park, is too big and well-known to a host of area nonprofits, to be considered a hidden gem. On 23 acres, the 170,000-square-foot complex includes a tasting room, rotunda, beer garden and conference room that holds up to 200 people. The company has opened the facility to dozens of nonprofits for events, and county officials have used it as a staging area during hurricanes or similar weather situations. "We have a lot of pride in giving back to the community where we live," Saputo Cox says.

The facility also holds the corpo-

rate offices and warehouse where Gold Coast prepares and provides Anheuser-Busch/InBev products to some 1,600 groceries, bars, restaurants, hotels and more in the Sarasota-Bradenton area every week. Gold Coast sold around 6.5 million cases of beer in 2022. That's up 91.17% from 3.4 million in 1996, when John Saputo acquired the distributorship from the Goodman family, which had operated Twin City Distributors. Prior to that, Saputo had managed or owned distributorships in Michigan, New York and North Carolina.

Saputo is a third-generation beer wholesaler. His grandfather, Joe Bar-raco, ran a three-truck operation outside Detroit in the years after Prohibition, where Saputo and his brothers worked and learned the business. Sa-

“
*Andrea Saputo
Cox is one of
seven women to
currently hold
Anheuser-Busch's
coveted equity
manager position.*

puto also worked with his father.

The Saputo family has expanded several times in the area since 1996, to meet the demand that came with a surge in population. The Gold Coast territory, same as others across the company, is determined by the Anheuser-Busch/InBev corporate office. So, for growth, the company will need to look east of Interstate 75, in both Sarasota and Manatee counties, where there is more land to develop.

"As more homes are built and people move in, grocery stores, restaurants, bars and convenient stores will follow," Saputo Cox says. "The expansion of the airport will also give us an increase in sales as more flights will allow easier travel to our area. This will increase our tourism numbers, which helps drive sales."

SNACK ATTACK

Saputo Cox, like her father, got started in the business at a young age. She would move around cases of beer and then dart around the warehouse in rollerblades as young as 12 or 13

years old. Later, when the family was in North Carolina, Saputo Cox would assemble packages for the Anheuser-Busch Eagle snacks delivery route. "That's where she really learned the business," Saputo says.

By the time Saputo Cox graduated from high school and the University of Florida, she had her own merchandising route. She then moved through all positions in the company, from pricing, graphics, sales, warehouse, sales management, operations and finance to human resources, community outreach and marketing. She's handled sales for small bars and big grocery stores. "She's been in every chair we have here," Saputo says. "She's done inside sales; she's done outside sales. She's handled small accounts, big accounts, all of it."

While Saputo never doubted her abilities, his belief in his daughter was cemented in 2003, when he left the company to head overseas for reserve duty for the Marines during Operation Enduring Freedom. The business didn't miss a beat under Sa-

puto Cox. "A regional Southeast vice president called me when I got back," Saputo says, "and said, 'We knew she was good, but we didn't know she could run the whole company.'"

One aspect of the business Saputo Cox also navigated, says her mom, Denise, is being able to work with, and alongside, her Type A "strong-willed" dad. "There are times when we don't see eye to eye, but we will often agree on what's best for the business," Saputo Cox says. "I really love that he's still here for me when I need help."

Even as Saputo Cox puts her stamp on the business, the family has one eye on the long-term future: the next generation. That would be Saputo Cox's two children. There's John, a senior at Riverview High School in Sarasota, and Meghan, a sophomore at Riverview. There are no commitments, but both teens, in addition to a handful of other Saputo grandchildren, have already worked in the business. Having one of them take over Gold Coast someday, says Denise Saputo, "would be the dream."

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SPOTLIGHTING LIFE ON THE RANCH

A Country Club East home provides a perfect live/work balance. **PAGE 92**



Photos by PIX360

Blue Notes: a guest room offers a perfectly composed vignette of pattern and color.

Home Sweet



Jeff and Katie Goldstein's home in Country Club East graciously



The all-white kitchen is enlivened with a colorful painting to add a cheerful note. A desk adds a secondary workspace.

Office

integrates their work life and home life.

BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR

One of the most vexing challenges of the past several years is the concept of working at home. In the old days it meant lying on your bed in your underclothes, with papers and books strewn about. With Zoom all that became unacceptable, and you needed to find a new system, a new place, a new set-up. I'm not quite there yet, but that's one of the reasons I'm so interested in Jeff and Katie Goldstein's home in Country Club East. It's full of lessons on how to integrate your work life and your home life into one seamless package.

At first glance you don't see it as a workspace. It's just a beautiful Lakewood Ranch home built in 2020, not all that large — 2,100 square feet — but furnished in a chic, modern style with little pops of Hollywood glamour here and there. Unless you peek in Jeff's inner sanctum, there's no hint that hard work is done here.

Jeff recently turned over the everyday running of his company Legend Productions to his son, Jonathan, but he is still heavily involved. And since the company produces events all over the world, that can be very a busy workday indeed. But thanks to careful planning and attention to all the details, the home becomes a boutique workspace, with various nooks and crannies and stress relievers.

"There's so much flexibility," Jeff says. "I can have a 5 a.m. video conference with our set designers in Asia, right from the breakfast nook with coffee and bagel at hand, then move to my desk behind closed doors for writing a script." The home's internet bandwidth is specifically distributed to allow him to work on the lanai as well. "From a physical perspective being able to change where I am positioned throughout the day is a huge benefit in alleviating neck and shoulder pain."

And how many workspaces offer a swimming pool?

Continued on Page 96

Pops of Glamour

Homeowner Katie Goldstein keeps the décor crisp and modern. In the dining room, right, an animal print rug and a dramatic chandelier. In the living room, below, a custom-built wall provides a focal point for the TV and fireplace. Lower left, a French-inspired chair and lamp in the primary suite. Lower right, flowers, both real and pictorial, brighten the primary bath.



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Continued from Page 94

“That’s where the Florida lifestyle comes into play,” Jeff says, whose corporate headquarters remain in wintry Westchester County, New York. “After sitting behind the screen for several hours on a Zoom call, I’ll take a break in the spa or pool. It’s a physical and mental recharge that enhances my concentration.” It also allows for a creative reset as he moves from one task to the next.

Jeff founded his company 35 years ago, and it has become a leader in the event-planning field. It’s a stressful, detail-oriented job. “This season we have events in London, Bali, Barcelona and New Delhi, as well as several in the region, on the West Coast, and the metro New York area.” The company specializes in awards galas and multiday conferences. They do everything, including concept development, graphic and set design, and event production using state-of-the-art tech systems. Clients have included IBM and the American Heart Association. Many celebrities have appeared at Legend-created events, including Bon Jovi, Noble Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, Jon Stewart and Dave Chappelle. Challenges are constantly being met and conquered — just try getting a set moved by barge from Amsterdam to Venice, where the famous canals are at an all-time low.

Lighting is crucial to the events Jeff produces, and his expertise in the field gives the home a dramatic ambience when the sun goes down.

Continued on Page 98

“

After sitting behind the screen for several hours on a Zoom call, I’ll take a break in the spa or pool. It’s a physical and mental recharge that enhances my concentration.” **JEFF GOLDSTEIN**

Only in Florida

The peaceful caged pool and spa do double duty. They provide the perfect break after a session of work and clear the mind for the next task at hand. The adjacent outdoor living area, bottom, is Wi-Fi-enhanced to add another workspace. There’s even a wall-mounted TV monitor.



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Continued from Page 96

You'll find warm accent lighting all around, using a combination of lamps, uplighters, and candles. "I even consider the fireplace a lighting effect," Jeff says. Attention has also been paid to the outdoor living area. "It's a flowing extension of the interior at night. We use lamps traditionally found inside, candles, and accent lights around the pool and within the planters." In the backyard there are a few uplighters on the palms. "This creates a layered effect without floods of light. Guests often tell us they feel they are at a resort."

Careful thought has also been given to Jeff's office. "Since most of my communication time is on Zoom, I designed a space where the web camera shot is the primary consideration. That's the way so many are connecting these days and in a business situation it should not be an afterthought." Don't have a window in the background, he advises; here in Florida the subject may appear dark due to the contrast. And don't be too near the kitchen. Sounds from meal prep can distract from the business at hand.

And what about the all-important background which the viewer will be staring at sometimes for hours?

"The background I chose is highly personal and I think that's a good thing if you are OK revealing yourself a little." Jeff has selected souvenirs from events he produced at World Cup finals in Japan and Germany — balls and game day tickets from the matches. The wall art is from Hong Kong and the photos from a market in Prague. Wood tones for the furnishings give the space a warm tone.

But the Goldsteins' home is about much more than work. It's a well-loved family home as well. Katie is the interior decorator. She is recently retired from a career working at elementary schools with special needs kids and for her new Florida home she has chosen crisp modern furnishings with a most-

The Office Spaces

Souvenirs from past projects — here, the World Cup soccer matches — make a distinctive background for those lengthy Zoom calls we all make these days. The office itself, below, is simple and uncluttered, with a big window for indirect natural light. Bottom, even the breakfast nook doubles as a workspace when needed — or the perfect spot for a business lunch.



Continued on Page 100

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Continued from Page 98

ly neutral palette of greys. A leopard print rug adds pattern to the living room.

From Brooklyn, the Goldsteins have been married 38 years. They have three sons: Jonathan, who is taking over the business, and Daniel and Conner. Until recently they have been energetic world travelers, but Jeff reports that these days it's been reduced to a "mere" 50 to 60 days annually. Jeff and Katie have a summer house on Candlewood Lake in Connecticut, but Lakewood Ranch is definitely home. Confessed foodies, they love the local restaurants, which Jeff calls "world-class." They have also been getting to know the local theater scene and have gone to their first polo match. Now that he's not quite so involved in the company Jeff is looking forward to his own passion projects — helping worthy organizations tell their story.

More work, certainly, but just look at the workspace.



Working from home is an informal pleasure for homeowners Jeff and Katie Goldstein. Shorts and swim suits make up the outfits of the day.



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art and about

Kids Just Wanna Make Art

These summer camps make it possible.

BY SU BYRON AND MARTY FUGATE
CONTRIBUTORS

Some people are lifelong art lovers. That love spans artistic creation, appreciation or support — and sometimes all three. Ask art mavens when the muse stole their hearts and many will reply “childhood.” If they think a little more, they’ll often narrow it down to summertime art programs. And that’s when a flood of happy childhood memories return. Transcendent violin lessons. A dance class that revealed new possibilities of movement. A figure-drawing class that opened their eyes. The lifelong love that’s born in childhood may lead to a career as a working artist or a deeper grasp of others’ artistry. Either way, it’s a more fulfilling life. The following artful summer camps will all provide these eye-opening moments, along with happy childhood memories.

SARASOTA YOUTH OPERA

Opera is magic, and this camp reveals its magic secrets. Adult creative professionals teach talented young kids and teens all they need to know to participate in Sarasota Youth Opera’s summer camp, which is available for every skill level and also provides scholarships. The sessions target two age groups: kids (8-10) and pre-teens and teens (11-18). Either way, it’s a great start for future opera stars or a great experience for kids who don’t want to make a career out of it but want to enjoy opera’s magic. 941-366-8450; Ext. 249; SarasotaOpera.org/summer-camp

FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

FST offers one-week and three-week



camp experiences open to young people between the ages of 5 to 17. They’re all winners, but here are three selections: **Little Theatre** (5 and 6) is all about creating songs and storytelling for the stage. In the end, the kids put on a show for family and friends. **Children’s Performing Arts Camp** (7-12) is a supportive boot camp for acting, voice, improvisation and dance skills. (Self-esteem is an added bonus.) **Teen Improv** (13-17) boosts creativity, self-expression and empathy. Teens also learn to create hilarious, unscripted comedy. How cool is that? 941-366-1350; FloridaStudioTheatre.org/fst-school-youth



Photo by Rod Millington
Kids and teens discover the magic of opera at Sarasota Youth Opera’s summer camp.

Courtesy photo
There are dozens of stage experiences available for kids and teens at Florida Studio Theatre this summer.



Courtesy photos

Above: Art Center Sarasota offers a wide selection of summer art experiences for children and teens.

Left: Asolo Rep's creative camps make a dramatic difference in kids' lives.

ART CENTER SARASOTA

According to Pablo Picasso, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he/she grows up." Just in time for summer, ACS offers a solution for kids and teens — three, actually. **Creative Kids** (6-10) lays a foundation for artistic expression. **Emerging Arts** (11-15) builds on that foundation. **Stop Motion Boot Camp** (11-15) proves that every child is also a motion picture artist. Budding auteurs learn the basics of filmmaking — and make their own short film in the process. 941-365-2032; ArtSarasota.org/summercamp

ASOLO REP

Asolo Rep's creative camps make a dramatic difference in kids' lives. There are many sessions to choose from. Here are three: **Artistic Adventures** (6-7) releases young artists' imagination and self-expression with performance, story-building and creative play. **Courageous Creating** (8-10) takes kids on an epic journey of role-playing, character-building, and strategy in the spirit of "Dungeons and Dragons." **Miniature Worlds** (11-14) immerses kids in theatrical design. Each camper gets to build their own fantastic realm from everyday materials. (We're not sure if fantasy author George R. R. Martin got his start that way. But we wouldn't be surprised.) 941-351-8000; AsoloRep.org/summercamp

Continued on Page 104

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CIRCUS ARTS CONSERVATORY: CIRCUS SUMMER CAMP

Thanks to Circus Arts Conservatory, local kids don't have to run away to join the circus. The Conservatory's **Circus Summer Camp** is right in our own backyard. The camp's teachers have deep roots in Sarasota's circus history and are seasoned circus professionals who know the ropes. Their lessons in circus artistry include acrobatics, clowning, juggling, silks, Hula-Hoops and multiple permutations of the flying trapeze. In the process, they fine-tune students' coordination and spatial awareness. (That stuff's boring to kids, so you might not mention it.) 941-355-9805; CircusArts.org/programs/circus-summer-camp-2

CREARTE LATINO

Whatever form it takes, the language of art empowers creative expression. (To put it another way, when Carlos Santana has a song in his heart, he knows how to play it.) CreArte Latino's bilingual art courses make sure nothing's lost in translation. Its **Bilingual Acting Workshop** (8-10) immerses young actors in the impact of two distinct cultures and languages on their characters. The young artists of its **Bilingual Paint & Fun** (6-10) join forces to create a painting together. They start with a creation dialogue in Spanish and English. Their bilingual brainstorming results in a joyful, collaborative image celebrating Independence Day. 941-732-7191; CreArteLatino.org

SARASOTA BALLET

Ballet has an intentionally designed movement vocabulary. As language learning comes easily to kids, Sarasota Ballet wants to get them on their toes early. Its **Summer Intensive** (11-22) is the place to be for young dancers who want to achieve fluency in ballet's wordless communication. Students are guided through a comprehensive curriculum, including classical and modern techniques, variations, repertoire and *pas de deux*. There are three sessions (June 26-July 29; July 10-July 29; and June 26-July 8). At the end, students show off what they've learned in performances called "In-Motion," which are open to the public. 941-225-6520; SarasotaBallet.org



Courtesy photo
Camper Kenneth Dahl learns about the dramatic arts at CreArte Latino.



Photo by Matthew Holler
Young dancers learn technique and artistry at Sarasota Ballet's Summer Intensive.

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Above: Lakewood Ranch's Susan Jenkins

Left: Lakewood Ranch's Mary Jo Hansen

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Chef William Sellner of Pascone's Ristorante

William Sellner loves taking Pascone's diners on a culinary journey. Here are a few milestones on his own path.

BY MARTY FUGATE | CONTRIBUTOR

William Sellner is Pascone's Ristorante's tireless and inventive executive chef. It's not his first rodeo. The itinerary of his culinary journey resembles Johnny Cash's "I've Been Everywhere." The stops include celebrated restaurants in Connecticut and Maine. One of those places was Michelle's Fine Dining in Bar Harbor, where he first teamed up with Judi and Bob Stanley. Together, they brought a struggling restaurant to an AAA-Four Diamond rating. From there, Sellner's travels continued as a manager and chef of several prestigious four-star restaurants and resorts — including a stint as chef de cuisine and executive sous chef at the Mar-a-Lago Club.

When Judi Stanley decided to launch Pascone's Ristorante in the area in 2018, she knew just whom to call. Sellner was eager to get back to hands-on creativity in the kitchen and immediately said "yes." The rest is culinary history. But Sellner isn't trying to replay his classic hits. He wants to make new history, and his journey goes on. Here's a look at the passion that drives him and Pascone's.

Pascone's is ...

A culinary journey that reflects the journeys of Pascone's people. You name the city or region, we've lived there — and we bring that to the table. We've all known and loved so many incredible variations of Italian cuisine across the country, and I bring my own experience growing up with New York-style and Boston-style Italian cuisine. Judi has had her own amazing culinary odyssey and that's her influence. So, America, Italy, France ... it all ties in.

Some of Pascone's recipes have been passed down from generations. What's your personal fave?

My absolute favorite all the time — and it's probably a little bit clichéd — but it's the Ossobuco alla Milanese (veal shanks).

Tell us about the Italian latkes on the menu.

It's from Judi's family and they're based on her grandmother's Jewish and her grandfather's Italian heritage. Who hasn't enjoyed fried spaghetti at some time in their lives? Well, our Italian latkes are a refinement of fried spaghetti. We fry the spaghetti, and then blend it with egg yolks, breadcrumbs, spices and vegetables. The result is a beautiful mishmash.

My favorite anecdote from Mar-a-Lago is

What they told us on orientation day: "There are two things you can achieve here — either raise your professional ability or get fired."

Top three culinary inspirations.

My top chefs are Roger Vergé, the au-



Photo by Lori Sax

thor of "Cuisine of the Sun" and Paul Bocuse. They're two early innovators of contemporary French cuisine, and they've both deeply influenced me. I also appreciate Anton Mosimann. He developed cuisine naturelle and that

Chef Sellner's culinary journey includes a stint as chef de cuisine and executive sous chef at the Mar-a-Lago Club.

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Photo by Lori Sax

The Ossobuco alla Milanese at Pascone's is Chef Sellner's personal favorite item on the menu.

Continued from Page 108

took bravery. He took a natural, less-is-more approach at a time when more-is-more was the prevailing philosophy in fine dining.

A well-equipped chef should always have ...

A sharp knife, love and passion.

Lately I've been craving ...

Fresh Maine seafood!

My all-time favorite comfort food is...

I grew up next to an Italian bakery. Every morning before I went to school, my comfort food was an Italian baguette with fresh mozzarella cheese and a little olive oil. It's still my all-time favorite.

My current culinary obsessions include ...

Artisanal bread and curing food.

While I'm cooking, I enjoy listening to ...

As crazy as it sounds, I like to listen to silence. When there's no music or other distraction, you can listen to the heartbeat of the kitchen.

When I'm not working, I enjoy ...

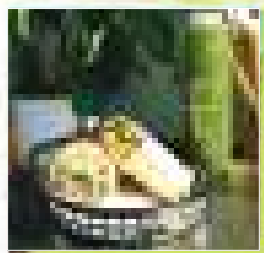
Working on my house. It's therapeutic for me. Before I broke away for this interview, I was painting the side of my house.

My latest go-to cooking book is ...

"The Soul of a Chef: The Journey Toward Perfection" by Michael Ruhlman.

3Natives
ACAI AND JUICERY

HEALTHY + EASY + FAST



3NATIVES

3Natives - Acai & Juicery takes a healthy twist on the "fast food" mindset by serving healthy and convenient food at an affordable price. This healthy lifestyle cafe is well-known for its fresh and flavorful acai bowls, smoothies, salads, wraps, cold-pressed juices, and more! With 25+ locations across Florida, the Lakewood Ranch location was the first and now the UTC location is the second on the west coast of Florida. If you are looking for a healthy, easy, and fast meal, this is the restaurant for you!

Open Daily

11577 E State Rd 70, Lakewood Ranch
309 N Cattlemen Rd Unit 6, Sarasota-UTC
941.751.1119 | www.3Natives.com

396792-1

Blue Surf
American Grill



Blue Surf American Grill

NEW LOCAL RESTAURANT -
Blue Surf American Grill

Currently offering Lunch and Dinner Tuesday - Sunday and Brunch on the weekends. Join us for a polished casual dining experience with chef-inspired cuisine, desserts, crafted cocktails, and daily food specials!

Open Tuesday - Friday at 11am
Saturday & Sunday at 8:30am

Reservations & Carry-Out accepted by phone or online 941-777-7674
www.BlueSurfAmericanGrill.com

5820 Ranch Lake Blvd Bradenton, FL 34202
"Walk-ins Welcome"

391123-1

ED'S TAVERN

A Jersey Joint in Lakewood Ranch, Ed's Tavern is the perfect blend of local neighborhood sports bar and family friendly restaurant right in the heart of Main Street (next to the movie theater). We're the only lakefront dining in Lakewood Ranch! The menu has something for everyone, from Southern favorites like pulled pork and fried pickles to our authentic New Jersey classics like open-faced sandwiches and disco fries. Our newly remodeled full-service bar now includes 26 ice cold draft selections plus over 31 flat screen TVs.

Daily Specials, Trivia every Wednesday and Thursday. Live Music every Friday & Saturday night. Mon - Thur 11am - 12am, Fri - Sat 11am - 2am, Sun 11am - 11pm.

10719 Rodeo Dr, Lakewood Ranch
941.907.0400 | facebook.com/edstavernlwr

390866-1



DINING OUT



GROVE - RESTAURANT, PATIO & BALLROOM

GROVE specializes in contemporary American offerings and onsite event planning. The menu is elevated yet approachable and locally inspired. Overlooking the charming Main Street center, at Grove there's room for everyone at the table! Gathering spaces include a casual patio, a relaxing lounge, intimate private rooms and a lively, modern bar. We serve brunch, lunch and dinner.

10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch
941.893.4321 | www.GroveLWR.com

390876-1

KELLY'S

BOSTON'S LEGENDARY ROAST BEEF & SEAFOOD
 — SINCE 1951 —



@Kellysroastbeef_FL
KellysRoastBeef.com

KELLY'S

For more than 70 years, Kelly's Roast Beef has been the staple of the North Shore of Boston, renowned for its thinly sliced "melt-in-your-mouth" roast-beef sandwiches and generous platters of New England seafood. Enjoy fried whole-bellied clams, lobster rolls, scallops, homemade clam chowder along with our traditional customer favorites. 100% of our menu can be made gluten free!

Open Every Day 11am-9pm

5407 University Pkwy, Sarasota, FL 34201
East of CVS Pharmacy

941.263.1911 | www.kellysroastbeef.com

396876-1



MCGRATH'S IRISH ALE HOUSE

Experience a taste of Ireland in Lakewood Ranch; where our community is family. Enjoy a mix of family inspired Irish offerings, as well as everyone's favorites like a Chopped Salad, a Pub style BLT, Traditional Shepherd's Pie, and Fish & Chips. Alongside dinner, enjoy a Kilkenney, Guinness, or choose from our wide range of whiskeys and cocktails that will transport you to the heart of Ireland, all from Lakewood Ranch Main Street. At McGrath's, we believe that no dish can be better than its ingredients. Nightly live music and entertainment.

Mon thru Thurs 11am to 10pm • Friday 11am to 11pm
 Sat 10am to 11pm • Sun 10am to 10pm
 Brunch served every Sat and Sun from 10 to 3

8110 Lakewood Main St, Lakewood Ranch
941.210.4398 | www.mcgrathsirish.com

390871-1



STATION 400

Station 400 is your local family owned & operated breakfast & lunch restaurant. Offering chef inspired twists on your favorite brunch items. With the best local ingredients and always above & beyond service.

Specialty Mimosas, Seasonal Menu, GF & Vegan options.

Voted 2023 Best Local Breakfast Spot

LWR Ranch
8215 Lakewood Main St.

Downtown Sarasota
400 N. Lemon Ave

www.Station400.com

402744-1



TAKOS CANTINA

Are you ready for some serious flavor?

Takos Cantina is now open and serving up the best authentic Mexican cuisine you've ever tasted! From our famous street-style tacos to our signature margaritas, we've got everything you need to satisfy your cravings. Join us for a fun and casual dining experience, and let us take you on a culinary journey to Mexico.

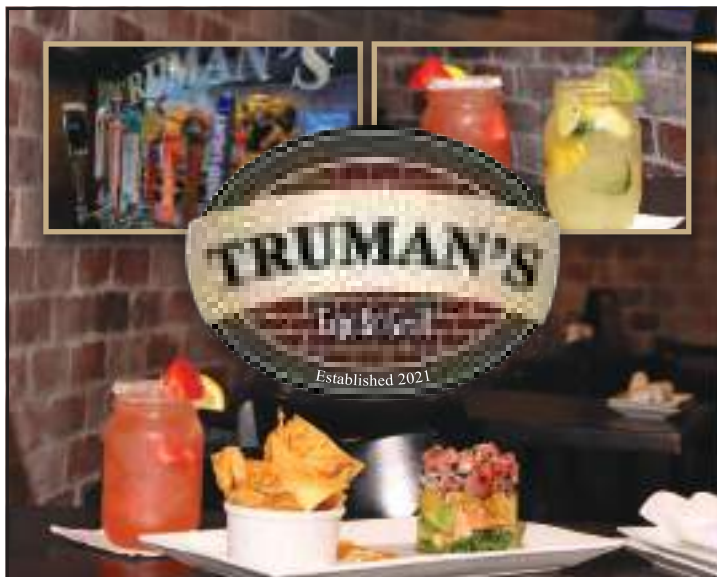
Don't miss out - see you at Takos Cantina!

Open 7 Days a Week: 11am until 10pm

5770 Ranch Lake Blvd, Unit 116, Bradenton FL 3420

(941) 201-6594
takoscantina.com

396925-1



TRUMAN'S TAP & GRILL

An evolving gastro pub offering hand crafted food and beverages with a modern twist. We have a community vibe and strive for an excellent dining experience from our happy hour appetizers to our dinner entrees.

Come and join us for one of our many events from Tuesday trivia, Thursday bingo and live music on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Join us for our Making a Difference Mondays when we give back a percent to local clubs & organizations.

Happy Hour 3pm - 7pm daily.

11161 SR70 East, Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202
941-755-1800 | www.trumanstap.com

403602-1

DINING OUT

PARTING GLANCE



Jill Metz captured this
mama black-bellied
whistling duck getting
her ducklings in a row.

INTEGRITY • *Tenacity* • EXPERIENCE

It's an honor to be ranked among the top 1.49% of all Realtors[®] nationwide, Stacy's work ethic and reputation have earned her this designation along with your support and referrals.

Specializing in luxury properties in both Sarasota and Manatee counties, Stacy's award-winning service gives you the results you require and the experience you expect.

Connect with Stacy Haas today to discuss your goals. Her professionalism and commitment remain unmatched.

- **#1 Michael Saunders Agent in Lakewood Ranch 2022**
- **Five Star "Best in Client" Award 2007-2023**
- **Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist**
- **Master Certified Negotiation Expert**
- **Million Dollar Guild Elite (GUILD) Recognition by the Institute of Luxury Home Marketing[®]**
- **Over 30 Years' Real Estate & Interior Design Experience**

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Sold Over \$575 Million

in Career Sales Volume 2007-2022

Michael Saunders & Company.
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P.S. The Key to Your Real Estate Success



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Neighbors
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**#1 REAL ESTATE TEAM
IN LAKEWOOD RANCH**

**OVER
\$650 MILLION
IN LIFETIME SALES**

**TOP 1 % OF AGENTS
IN MANATEE AND
SARASOTA COUNTIES**

**700+ HOMES
SOLD IN
LAKEWOOD RANCH**

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COLDWELL BANKER