



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023



FALL KICKED OFF IN A GRAND FASHION – Two events, Hallowine and BooFest, kicked off the fall season for adults and kids at Lakewood Main Street. For more pictures see pages 12-13. Photo by Ernie Soller

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COMES TO LWR**

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Sarasota Ballet
director · IAIN WEBB



Program 2 | Sarasota Opera House
**CONFLICTED —
— BEAUTY**

Edwaard Liang's *The Art of War*
Sir Frederick Ashton's *Dante Sonata*
Paul Taylor's *Company B*

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NOV 18
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Jennifer Hackbarth and Ricardo Rhodes in Edwaard Liang's *The Art of War* | Photography by Frank Atura

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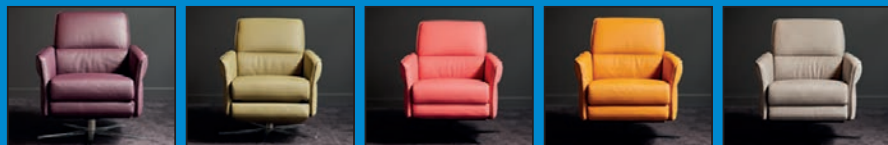
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- Brian Higgins, Owner, with son Kyle



High-End Mexican Comes to Lakewood Ranch

Fuego Comida and Tequila Lounge is Now Open

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Not that this is something over which great minds would deliberate, but what comes to your mind if the subject of décor in Mexican restaurants comes up? Pictures of bullfighters painted on velvet? Colorful cerveza ads strung together and hung from the ceiling? Silver-embroidered sombreros?

Here's the thing ... if you venture to spend some time at Fuego Comida and Tequila Lounge, you will find none of the stereotypical items listed above. No beer ads. No bullfighters. No tiled floors.

And that, friends and neighbors, is one of the things that make Fuego a totally unique experience for Lakewood Ranchers.

That's because Fuego is to the "typical Mexican restaurant" what some of Mexico City's modern buildings are to the old colonial structures. It has a modern, no frills, classy vibe, different from many things elsewhere in Lakewood Ranch. I might call it "subdued elegance."

My wife and I went there for dinner one evening recently. Upon our arrival, we confirmed with the hostess at her outdoor reception desk that we did, indeed, have a reservation.

We were led into the restaurant, at first observing the large bar area, which features tables with "fire pit" centers, and a small sit-down bar at the far end of the space. This area has obviously been designed for groups of people, to enable them to gather with their friends and/or family, relax and have a few drinks and food in an elegant space.

We chose to eat indoors, as it was still pretty warm outside, and there was a relatively strong wind blowing. We were offered our choice of seating, and chose to eat at a four-top table in the center of the dining area, our choice being partially determined by the fact that the chairs around those tables looked the most comfortable. The dining area features two-top tables along one wall, four-top tables in the center, and large booths along another wall. The booths feature "floor to ceiling" privacy, decorative sconce lighting, and would fit up to six comfortably.

As a tip of the sombrero to the past, the concrete floor is dyed in the coloring of those old-time Mexican tiles. On the wall opposite the booths, there are little white cup-like pieces, which look like eggshells with gold centers, strewn across the length of the wall.

Anyway ... to the drinks and food! Fuego has a selection of several specialty margaritas, including one made with watermelon juice, and another called "Day of the Dead," which includes Camarena Reposado tequila, blood orange liqueur, lime, hibiscus syrup, activated charcoal agave, and a smoke bubble. Sounds positively, well, cryptic.

If you've ever been to a Mexican restaurant that serves extra-large margaritas, prepare to have that experience one-upped. Fuego has what they refer to as "cocktail towers" These are self-dispensing towers containing a full three quarts of your



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

favorite cocktail!

We hadn't multiplied ourselves sufficiently to go for a cocktail tower, so my wife had a cup of tea while I decided on a glass of Pachanga beer – a light beer which made a good pairing with my food.

Our waiter, Eric, answered some of our questions about menu items, noting that Fuego likes to get fresh food – not frozen – for its dishes, and we made our choices. My wife decided to go with what she thought would be a typical quesadilla. However, instead of being served as a large tortilla with bits of chicken and veggies on top, this came out as small tortillas with a very hot pan of large chicken pieces, onion slices and several full-sized sweet peppers, with a side dish of guacamole sour cream, etc. I, being a fan of such peppers, relieved my wife of the chore of eating a large dose of them by adding a couple of these tasty delights to my plate.

As for my choice, I went for something I'd never had before – lobster enchiladas. It proved to be a quality choice, as I dined on enchiladas filled with large chunks of lobster. The enchiladas were topped with a green chile sauce with a crema drip and sev-



eral slices of avocado, along with thinly sliced red onions and bits of radish.

Delightful. We were both quite happy with our selections.

Fuego has a dessert menu with some interesting creations but, as we both like chocolate mousse, we decided to share a serving of the Fuego Mousse. The dark chocolate was excellent.

One interesting thing about Fuego – I took notice of the dishes that were used and in turning one over to see where it was made, I was nicely surprised to see that that particular set of dishes had been made in England. The cups and saucers used to serve the coffee were interesting also – a dark, non-glossy black design ... and made in Germany.

Since Fuego Comida and Tequila has just recently opened, the word has probably not gotten around to everyone in Lakewood Ranch quite yet, but now you know.

Fuego is something special in Mexican food, and is located at 11615 State Road 70 East, in The Green shopping center, which is located on the northeast corner of State Road 70 and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard. Hours are as follows: "Before menu" (lounge and patio only) 4 – 6 p.m. Sunday through Saturday; "After menu" (lounge and patio only) 10 – 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 11 p.m. – 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday; and dinner service, 4-11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Sunday brunch and lunch will be offered soon. For more information visit fuegotequilalounge.com; or call (941)751-5252.

To paraphrase a certain old beer commercial ... Stay hungry, my friend.

Loaded Cannon Distilled Spirits Wins Best of Florida Award

Loaded Cannon Distilled Spirits, headquartered in Lakewood Ranch, has earned a distinguished accolade – the Best of Florida Award, presented annually by Guideto-Florida.com. This award, granted via the calculation of customer votes, recognizes “the dedication to quality and the adventurous ethos that Loaded Cannon embodies.”

Founded in 2017, Loaded Cannon Distilled Spirits embarked on a “spirited journey” to not only produce unique, quality spirits but also to “revive and celebrate the vibrant piracy heritage of the Sun Coast of Florida.” The distillery has crafted a diverse array of spirits, each telling a tale of the region’s history and the brand’s commitment to uniqueness.

“Our priority isn’t to make money; we’re here to have fun and make our customers happy,” Loaded Cannon officials said. Some of the distillery’s bold and innovative offerings include the fiery jalapeno vodka; the smooth, Copper Kissed Bourbon, and a myriad of uniquely flavored other vodkas.

This award highlights Loaded Cannon’s commitment to being “innovators, not duplicators,” and serves as a testament to their successful venture into uncharted territories of spirit-making, officials said. The Best of Florida Awards celebrates entities that encapsulate the vibrant and diverse ethos of Florida, making this win a significant milestone for Loaded Cannon in their ongoing journey.

In addition to their award-winning spirits, Loaded Cannon



invites enthusiasts and the curious alike to experience the art of distilling through their tours, offering an immersive experience into the world of handcrafted spirits. Each tour is a step into a story, an adventure, and a celebration of the pirate spirit that Loaded Cannon cherishes.

With this esteemed recognition, Loaded Cannon Distilled Spirits is not merely a name on the map but a navigator steering through the waters of the spirit-making world, with a treasure trove of exceptional spirits and a growing community of satisfied customers.

For more information visit loadedcannondistillery.com.



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Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Stephanie Maleno, Lakewood Ranch resident and business owner; she is a woman of many careers and accomplishments, including mother of three children and business owner many times over.

Stephanie grew up in a small Pennsylvania grape-farming town, where she completed her primary and secondary school years. After high school, Stephanie attended cosmetology school and earned her license. With license in hand, Stephanie opened her first business, a hair salon. Her career evolved within the beauty and fashion industry over 11 years. She found tremendous success with a multi-level marketing company, prior to her subsequent success in the real estate industry. Through her real estate career, she met her husband, Jarrod. While she was grateful for the ability to stay home for many years while her daughters were attending elementary school, she missed her career experiences, specifically with beauty and fashion.

Stephanie and her husband are a dynamic duo – partnered well as a couple, parents, project developers, and business owners. Jarrod is the owner of a business he founded in Erie, Penn. Together they built and designed their first two custom homes, as well as opened Stephanie's first Izzy & Gab Boutique in 2019 at the West Erie Plaza in Erie County, Penn. She was pleasantly overwhelmed by record sales the first year her boutique opened. Despite the impact of COVID nationally and around the world, Stephanie experienced ongoing success with her boutique.

In the summer of 2022, an Izzy & Gab Boutique customer told Stephanie about the Lakewood Ranch community and an available retail space on Lakewood Main Street. Through a video call with the Main Street leasing director, Stephanie decided the opportunity would be perfect for her second Izzy & Gab Boutique. The business opportunity aligned well with the Maleno family's plans to move to a warmer climate. In February of 2023, the Maleno family moved to Lakewood Ranch, and in Stephanie's words, "I pick out the magic and my husband Jarrod makes the magic happen." The design and remodel of the 1,000-sq. ft. retail space was completed and they were open for business one month later. Izzy & Gab Boutique celebrated its grand opening in March of 2023.

Stephanie said "timing" is the reason she and her family made the move to Lakewood Ranch. Both business and home awaited them. For her



business mind, Lakewood Ranch was perfect, given the ongoing growth throughout The Ranch. Due to the quick turn of events, Stephanie and Jarrod chose to rent a home in Polo Run to allow time to select their forever home in Lakewood Ranch. They love their home – the backyard pool, the community amenities, and the family-friendly atmosphere.

Working in the fashion industry is a creative outlet for Stephanie. "Curating glamorous, colorful, and cozy aesthetics makes me feel happy and makes the world a more beautiful place," Stephanie said. "I love to be able to help other women feel better about themselves." Izzy & Gab Boutique is an upscale women's contemporary apparel store, providing pretty things. It is also named after Stephanie's daughters, Isabella, and Gabriella – two teenagers attending

local middle and high schools. Isabella's passion is animation arts and she has her eye on The Ringling College of Art and Design after graduating high school. Gabriella is a budding young actor who enjoys performing arts, singing, and learning from her Los Angeles acting coach. Naming her boutique after her daughters reflects how special Stephanie thinks Isabella and Gabriella are; the girls feel incredibly special to have their mom's boutique named after them. Stephanie's son Seth has a successful career in Atlanta, Ga., where he lives with his wife Casey and daughter Layla Mae – Stephanie's first grandchild.

Her oldest daughter is actively recovering from chronic Lyme disease and has been thriving since her recent medical treatment, which she learned about from an Izzy & Gab

customer. Soon after Izzy & Gab opened, Stephanie and Isabella flew to Germany for Isabella's medical care, staying for five weeks in a hospital specifically treating patients with rare tick-borne diseases. Stephanie credits the the Out-of-Door Academy high school seniors who managed Izzy & Gab in Stephanie's absence. "Being so new to the community, there was no way I could have done it without these amazing young ladies from the Out-of-Door Academy, my husband, and youngest daughter stepping in and carrying on," Stephanie said. "I am so grateful."

Stephanie is currently authoring a book about Isabella's journey toward recovery. Chronic, late-stage Lyme disease and rare tick disease is extremely hard to diagnose. It took 17 years of searching from hospital to hospital, never giving up, to finally find the cure Isabella needed – all because of Izzy & Gab Boutique. Stephanie looks forward to the publication of Isabella's incredible, tragic, and remarkable story, "I want to help other parents become aware," Stephanie said. "It is known as the great mimicker disease, as it can mimic so many other illnesses and diseases."

When Stephanie and her family have free time, they enjoy bike rides throughout Lakewood Ranch, swimming in their Polo Run pool, visiting Lido Key Beach, and stopping for dinner at a restaurant on St. Armand's Circle. Music on Main is a monthly routine for the family, as Izzy & Gab Boutique stays open for the duration of that event.

Stephanie is extremely excited about the prospect of opening another local Izzy & Gab location. Meanwhile, Stephanie and Jarrod continue to explore home options for their future, forever home in Lakewood Ranch. Stephanie loves the Waterside neighborhoods and town center ... A village with golf would be a good fit too ... actually, anywhere in Lakewood Ranch will be perfect!

To connect with Stephanie email info@izzyandgab.com.

We would like to share Your LWR Story!

Include who you are, why you chose

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Ranch life now, and what excites you

about your Lakewood Ranch future.

Send Your LWR Story and photos to

yourlwrstory@lakewoodranch.com.

REX JENSEN HONORED

With The 2023 Legends Award By BUILDER

Zonda recently announced Rex Jensen as the 2023 recipient of its Legends Award, presented by BUILDER, at the Future Place event in Tampa in October.

“The Legends Award honors those who have made outstanding contributions to the planned-community sector,” said Jeff Meyers, chief executive officer of Zonda. “Rex Jensen’s career is an inspiration for everyone in the industry, let alone the tens of thousands of people who have built their lives in his communities.”

Jensen is the president and chief executive officer of Schroeder-Manatee Ranch (SMR), a company he joined in 1990 as vice president of planning. SMR is the developer of Lakewood Ranch, a 27,000-home master plan comprising more than two dozen unique villages.

“It’s been gratifying to look back at the results,” Jensen told BUILDER in a feature interview. “Sometimes when you’re in the heat of it, when you’re wondering if you are going to be allowed to continue developing or when you hit a large economic downturn as we did in 2007 – which was an economic quagmire or ‘great extinction’ where 90% of our industry died – those were not particularly enjoyable experiences. But, you know, we have come through them, and overall, it’s been a tremendous ride.”

Jensen was honored at the conference and featured on the cover of the October edition of Builder Magazine with the “Ground for Growth”

feature story by Leah Draffen. Previous winners of the Legends Award include Fred Balda of Hillwood Communities, Larry Johnson of Johnson Development, and Emile Haddad of FivePoint Holdings.

“Rex has played a crucial role in ensuring Lakewood Ranch stays innovative and up to date with the latest design, development, styles, trends, and business models – reflecting his dedication to delivering high-quality, modern, and desirable communities,” said John Cannon, president of John Cannon Homes, which has been building custom homes in Lakewood Ranch since its inception. “Besides his forward-thinking, he is in tune with enhancing the human experience by understanding the importance of intertwining green spaces, various recreational areas, and modern conveniences within the community. By including these elements in the planning and development of Lakewood Ranch, he has made it the successful master-planned community it is today.”



“Rex has played a crucial role in ensuring Lakewood Ranch stays innovative and up to date with the latest design, development, styles, trends, and business models – reflecting his dedication to delivering high-quality, modern, and desirable communities.”

– John Cannon,
president of John Cannon Homes



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LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Building a true sense of community, through memorable events and social clubs.



By Danielle Bugel

BooFest was a smashing success! The community came together for an unforgettable night of fun, spooky activities, and entertainment. It all wouldn't have been possible without the support of our amazing sponsors!

Our next upcoming signature event, The Mindful Triathlon, is just days away! If you haven't gotten your tickets yet, run – before they sell out! You won't want to miss this unique triathlon experience that combines the benefits of three activities: running, yoga, and meditation. The Mindful Triathlon is going to be an incredible experience! Not only is it a chance to improve physical fitness, but also to practice self-care and mindfulness. It's the perfect opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and to establish a deeper sense of community.

The Triathlon will begin at 8 a.m. with a 5K run (or walk) around beautiful Waterside Place. At 9:30 a.m., participants will make their way to an invigorating yoga class hosted by The Yoga Shack, which is designed to stretch and relax the body. The final activity is a guided meditation that begins at 10:15 a.m. Also hosted by The Yoga Shack, meditation will complement the other two activities to create a peaceful and calm state of mind. Once all three parts of the triathlon have



concluded, hang out with us and enjoy a live DJ and vendor village exploration!

Whether you're an experienced runner, a devoted yogi, or just interested in getting out to enjoy the day and make new friends, The Mindful Triathlon is truly for everyone! Get your tickets today at LWRMindfulTri.com and we'll see you on Nov. 18!

Did you think the fun stops there? As we approach the end of an amazing year, we are excited to host our signature New Year's Eve event at Waterside Place! This event promises to be an epic experience, with a live DJ, delicious food, beer, and drinks, and incredible surprises in store! Our New Year's Eve event is the perfect way to bring in the new year with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and positivity. More information to come, so stay tuned!

In addition to our signature events, our community calendar is filled with daily Parks & Rec activities! We also have a diverse range of over 60 groups and clubs that cater to the needs and interests of our community members. From



sports and fitness programs to hobbies, crafts, games, music, language, culture, and so much more, there's a variety of opportunities to form lasting friendships and get involved in the community! We've recently introduced a new dance class series, fitness programs, and various options of programs for kids and adults!

The Ranch is a vibrant community. Whether you have just moved here or have been a part of the community for years, you will never find a shortage of things to do and see! If you're looking for a fun social event to attend or seeking to broaden your horizons with a cultural experience, The Ranch has it ALL! With countless opportunities to socialize, learn, and explore, Lakewood Ranch is the perfect community to call home, and we at Lakewood Ranch Community Activities can't wait to see you out there!

Interested in sponsoring Mindful, New Year's Eve, or any other event? Email Joanna@lwrca.org for details! Have questions about events, groups, clubs, or looking to volunteer? Email us at info@lwrca.org for more information!

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AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

Halloween on Main Street ... For the Kids, AND the Young at Heart!

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

THE HALLOWINE WALK – A FUN EVENT ON A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT

The Wednesday evening in October was a lovely one – the temperature wasn't too hot or too cold, the sun set gradually over a calm sky, and a lot of folks had a VERY good time at the 2023 edition of the Halloween Walk.

The Halloween Walk is the brain-child of Scott Shortt, proprietor of Fine Wines and Tastings on Main, which has become a valued part of the Lakewood Ranch Main Street milieu. It offers a mix of wine tastings, a small wine bar where friends can meet and have a glass of their favorite, and perhaps even order a charcuterie board, spending some quality time in a low-key, friendly atmosphere.

Shortt and his crew set a numerical limit of 200 tickets so that the participants didn't get overwhelmed in an overly-large crowd. The tickets this year cost \$50 per person for an entire evening of strolling around Lakewood Main Street, sipping wine at numerous locations, and having a terrific time with old friends – or meeting new ones.

Several of the Lakewood Main Street merchants chose to participate in the Halloween Walk by allowing for a wine tasting table to be set up in their establishment; each of the merchants hosting tastings had a selection of wine from certain regions.

The wines for the Walk had prices that ranged from \$12.99/bottle for an Australian chardonnay to a high of \$79.99/bottle



for a Napa Valley cabernet. Each Halloween taster was given a flyer showing which wines were available to taste at the various locations, along with a list of prices. Halloween walkers got a 10% discount on the listed wines at Fine Wines and Tastings.

Not all the merchants wore costumes, but the ladies at Fantasy Flowers greeted their guests looking like a pair of blossoming flowers – one of which included the pot! Rather appropriate! There were also a lot of very attractive witches – some of whom came bearing their brooms, and some with an entourage of girlfriends. Indeed, the Halloween Walk apparently had become the go-to event for a girls' night out – at least on this particular evening.

There was one more perk for those who did the Halloween Walk: discounts and goodies from various Lakewood Main Street restaurants. These perks ranged from \$6 burgers at Ed's Tavern and free appetizers at Inkawasi and McGrath's Irish Ale House, to a free dessert with entrée purchase at Pincher's. Several other restaurants offered discounts as well.

The Halloween Walk was great adult fun for all who attended. I'm looking forward to next year's addition. Who says Halloween is just for kids?

AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE KIDS!

The annual BooFest was held Oct. 27 on Lakewood Main Street. Thousands attended the event, which included trick-or-treating, entertainment, food and drink, and more. There was even a children's costume parade!



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Delicious Sparkling Wines For Your Thanksgiving Feast

So, it's the holiday season again, in the most beautiful place to spend it – Florida. As our temperatures dip from tropical to pleasant, it's time to turn our heads and hearts to our first holiday event of the upcoming season, Thanksgiving. With our menu prepared and our guest list completed, our next challenge is to make the meal even more special. Solution: some lovely sparkling wine to turn a good Thanksgiving into a great Thanksgiving.

I'm Vigo, The Unassuming Wine Bro (UWB) – a regular guy who loves everything about wine, including writing about it. I aim to explore the nuances of wine, share my adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

Sparkling wine can be a delightful addition to your Thanksgiving celebration. Here are some reasons that make it a great choice:

1. Festive elegance: Sparkling wine adds an element of elegance and celebration to your Thanksgiving dinner. The effervescence and sound of popping corks set the tone for a special occasion.

2. Versatile pairing: Sparkling wines, like Champagne, prosecco, and cava, are versatile for food pairings. They can complement a wide range of Thanksgiving dishes, from turkey and stuffing to appetizers and desserts.

3. Cleansing the palate: The acidity and bubbles in sparkling wine can help cleanse the palate between bites, making it easier to enjoy the variety of flavors in a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

4. Toast to gratitude: Thanksgiving is all about expressing gratitude, and a toast with sparkling wine is a beautiful way to do so. It's a moment to reflect on what you're thankful for with your loved ones.

5. Sparkling cocktails: Get creative with your sparkling wine by crafting Thanksgiving-themed cocktails. Try a cranberry mimosa or a sparkling apple cider spritzer for a seasonal twist.

6. Aperitif or digestif: Sparkling wine can be enjoyed as an aperitif before the meal to stimulate the appetite or as a digestif after dinner to aid in digestion. It's a versatile choice throughout the day.

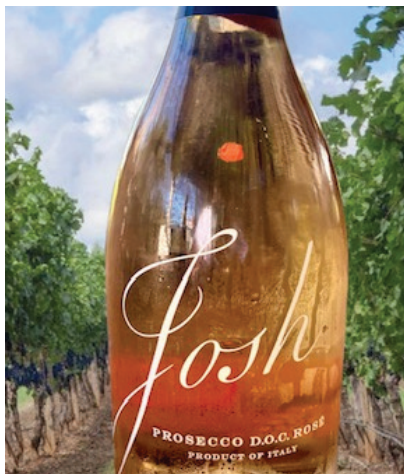
Whether you opt for a bottle of Champagne from France, a prosecco from Italy, or a local sparkling wine, including it in your Thanksgiving festivities can elevate the experience and make the day even more special. So, let's get to some unassuming selections I've made to make your Thanksgiving fun and festive.

Rating system:  Ratings are given on a 1-5 scale, with five being the highest.

GREETING YOUR GUESTS BEFORE THE MEAL: PROSECCO ROSÉ

2022 Josh Prosecco D.O.C. Rosé, Region-Italy, \$13 U.S., 11.5% ABV

One of my guilty pleasures (and I have many) is drinking Josh Prosecco D.O.C. Rosé. Its price is super reasonable and dang it, it tastes great. Josh Prosecco D.O.C. Rosé is a delightful sparkling wine that combines prosecco's effervescence with a rosé's charm. In the glass, it captivates with its alluring pale pink color. Its delicate and elegant hue is visually enticing and hints at the lively experience. On the nose, its bouquet is vibrant and fragrant, offering a burst of red berries and citrus notes. Strawberries and raspberries take center stage, accompanied by hints of orange zest and subtle floral undertones. The aroma is



2022 Josh Prosecco D.O.C. Rosé

inviting and fresh, setting a cheerful tone. On the palate, upon the first sip, Josh Prosecco Rosé greets the palate with a harmonious blend of flavors. The bright acidity complements the fruitiness beautifully, delivering a refreshing burst of red berries, including strawberries and red currants. There's a subtle touch of sweetness that adds to the wine's charm without being overly sugary. The Jose Prosecco D.O.C. Rosé is a delightful and accessible sparkling wine that effortlessly blends the best of prosecco and rosé. It's a wine that embodies celebration and good times and will be perfect for welcoming family and friends before Thanksgiving.

Vigo's rating:    

A PERFECT PAIRING FOR TURKEY, HAM, MASHED POTATOES, AND GRAVY: BRUT FRENCH CHAMPAGNE

2020 Veuve Clicquot Brut Champagne, Reims France, California, \$40 U.S., 12% ABV

What better way to counter the richness of a Thanksgiving meal than with truly classic French champagne that is up to the task, Veuve Clicquot Brut Champagne. In the glass, the Veuve Clicquot Brut has a striking golden-yellow hue that is vibrant and inviting, hinting at its quality and complexity. The Veuve Clicquot Brut bouquet is fresh and rich on the nose. There are pronounced notes of green apple, pear, and citrus intermingled with a subtle hint of toasty brioche. It's a delightful and balanced aromatic profile that immediately captivates the senses. On the palate, the Veuve Clicquot Brut, on its first sip, reveals a harmonious blend of flavors. Crisp apple and citrus are lively and refreshing, while the palate is graced with a delicate creaminess and hints of almond and toasted bread. The balance of acidity and fruitiness is simply superb.

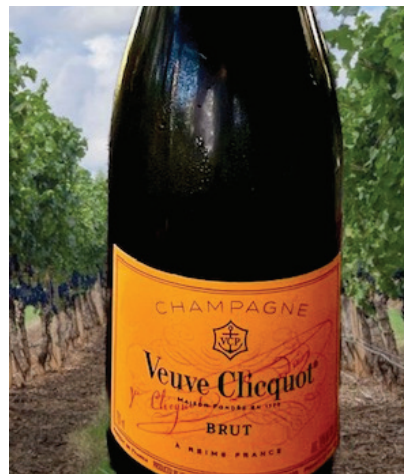
The Veuve Clicquot Brut will elevate your Thanksgiving meal from good to master class.

Vigo's rating:     

SOMETHING TO CLEANS THE PALATE AFTER A RICH DECADENT THANKSGIVING MEAL: SPANISH SPARKLING CAVA

2021 Freixenet Cordon Negro Gran Seleccion Brut Cava, Catalonia, Spain, \$13 U.S., 12% ABV

Regarding plate cleansing, nothing is better than a brut cava



2020 Veuve Clicquot Brut Champagne



2021 Freixenet Cordon Negro Gran Seleccion Brut Cava

from Spain to do the trick, and the Freixenet Cordon Negro Gran Seleccion Brut Cava is sparkling for the job. Freixenet Cava, hailing from the renowned Penedès region in Catalonia, Spain, is a popular and accessible sparkling wine choice based on its taste and reasonable price point. In the glass, the Freixenet Cava presents itself with a pale straw-yellow color and an abundance of tiny, persistent bubbles that form an effervescent mousse when poured. The vibrant appearance immediately sets the stage for an enjoyable experience. The Freixenet Cava bouquet is fresh and inviting on the nose, with fruity and floral notes. Hints of green apple, citrus, and white flowers make it a pleasant and approachable aroma. A lively and crisp profile on the palate marks the Freixenet Cava. It offers a burst of green apple and lemon zest, creating a zesty and refreshing taste. The wine balances fruitiness and acidity, perfect for those seeking a more vibrant and casual sparkling wine experience. The Freixenet Cava is a perfect and light finish to a beautiful Thanksgiving meal experience.

Vigo's rating:    

Vigo's overall impressions: Serving sparkling wine for Thanksgiving is one of festive and delightful elegance. It brings an air of celebration to the holiday table and offers a versatile beverage option that complements the diverse flavors of a traditional Thanksgiving feast. Sparkling wine's effervescence adds a touch of glamour and acts as a palate cleanser between bites, enhancing the dining experience. It's a beautiful choice for toasting to gratitude, and its ability to pair with a range of dishes, from turkey to dessert, makes it a versatile and accommodating beverage for the Thanksgiving celebration. Sparkling wine symbolizes joy and festivity, making it an excellent choice to elevate the Thanksgiving gathering and create lasting, sparkling memories.

Happy Thanksgiving, Ranchers, from the UWB!

ATTENTION FANS AND READERS:

Like our Facebook page "The Unassuming Wine Bros," follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email me at vigoloveswine@gmail.com. Let me know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.

Paving Projects Will Impact Roads and Town Hall Parking

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

Although some paving projects have been put on hold because of cost concerns, there are some that will impact Lakewood Ranch residents – especially in the Country Club area and at the Town Hall. The schedules below were given to supervisors during the Community Development District board meetings in October:

- The Town Hall parking lot is expected to be paved between Nov. 27 and Dec. 25. During the paving and striping work at the Town Hall, the entire Town Hall parking lot will be closed to vehicles. Residents who need to visit Town Hall during this time frame are being asked to park their cars in the closest area of the Main Street parking lot.
- The Masters Avenue East paving project is expected to take place between Oct. 23 and Nov. 22.
- The Keswick paving project in District 5 is expected to be done between Oct. 23 and Oct. 27.

NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT LAKEWOOD RANCH BLVD. AND CLUBHOUSE DRIVE

Manatee County has begun work on the new traffic signal to be installed at Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and Clubhouse Drive. The poles for the signal lights are already installed, and the entire job is expected to be completed in early 2024.

FEMA REIMBURSEMENT STATUS

Executive Director Steve Zielinski informed the supervisors that a new FEMA official has been assigned to work with Lakewood Ranch on its claims for the expenses that the districts have paid out for cleanup and repair costs related to the damage from Hurricane Ian last year. The expenses are currently under final review at FEMA. Zielinski has requested that FEMA pay the claims from districts 1 and 4 as soon as possible, as there apparently has been a reluctance on the part of FEMA to pay expenses from the Country Club districts (2, 5, and 6) because those areas are gated, even though such expenses were paid by FEMA after Hurricane Irma, and no one is restricted from entering through the Country Club gates.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The Lakewood Ranch Inter-District Authority has been able to secure health coverage for employees for next year at a cost of 1.8% over the current amount. Employees will be compensated for any increase in their contribution. This

amount is less than last year's increase of 2.7%.

SAFETY TOWN

Supervisors at the District 1 board meeting congratulated Supervisor Laura Fox for organizing the Safety Town program held to promote safety among our youngest residents. Supervisor Bob Swiatek, noting that a lot of the cost had been paid by Fox herself, suggested that the District contribute money next year to finance the project.

RAINFALL

Operations Director Tom Merrell reported that once again, the rainfall in Lakewood Ranch in September was far below average.

In a related matter, during the District 2 board meeting, resident Christine Mazur came to the meeting and showed pictures of the pond behind her home. She noted that the pond was pretty much devoid of water, and that plants had grown over areas previously filled with water.

Operations Director Merrell explained to her that such ponds, when they are full, are full of rainwater, and that Lakewood Ranch does not make a practice of filling ponds that go dry. He noted the drought conditions that have persisted recently, and that lack of rain had contributed to the lack of water in the pond. When rainfall amounts increase, so will the water level in the ponds.

GATE SURVEY

Also during the District 2 board meeting, resident Les Prysock asked if the District had received results from a survey that was to be done relative to residents' feelings regarding gate practices. Board Chairman Pete Bokach replied that he expected that survey results would be available by the start of budget workshops, which will begin again in March of 2024 for the 2025 fiscal year.

There was also another question raised about the striped sawhorses on the sidewalks around Lakewood Ranch Boulevard. Operations Director Merrell commented that the sawhorses were there to mark trip hazard areas on the sidewalks. Those trip hazard areas will be ground down to reduce the possibility of injuries.

LAKE UIHLEIN BANK EROSION MITIGATION

The bank of the lake, which had been damaged by Hurricane Ian, will need repairs. The project will be handled by the Kimley-Horn engineering firm, and they will set the standards for the repairs, as well as handle the bid process for the work.



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PAVING FROM PAGE 15

TRAFFIC SIGNAL VS. ROUNDABOUT

The debate between backers of a traffic signal and the backers of a roundabout at the intersection of Lorraine Road and Players Drive continues. For the most part, the residents of Country Club East appear to favor a signal, while the residents who live in the eastern portion of the Country Club appear to favor a roundabout.

The matter was scheduled to be decided at a meeting of the Manatee County Board of Commissioners on Nov. 14.

"PROPER DECORUM" REQUEST

During the District 2 board meeting, Supervisor Mike Finney commented on a rather nasty conversation/confrontation between two supervisors at the previous month's District 5 meeting. Accusations against staff were made, and some very crude language was used. The supervisor who initiated the confrontation was at this month's District 5 board meeting, and admitted that he'd used poor judgement in attacking staff, and should not have used the words he had used.

Finney, on hearing of the incident, had listened to a tape of the meeting, and requested that a "proper decorum" policy be drawn up by attorney Andrew Cohen, to



Greenbrook Adventure Park pavilion
PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

be adopted by all district boards in Lakewood Ranch in order to maintain civility in government meetings. Several other supervisors voiced their agreement with Finney on this.

ADVENTURE PARK PAVILION WORK

District 4's Adventure Park Pavilion, which was severely damaged by a fire on July 4, has been demolished, with the exception of the concrete pad. As reported last month, the fire was ruled accidental, and no charges will be filed. The District is working with the architect in planning for the rebuilding of the pavilion, which is expected to happen in late 2024. The new pavilion will be constructed to be more fire-resistant.

EXCESS WATER USAGE

Operations Director Merrell reported that an irrigation pipe had sprung a leak in District 4, and that the problem had not

been found right away, as the leak happened in the area of a drain, so there was no obvious outpouring of water. The leak has been fixed, but District 4's reclaimed water bill will be higher than normal because of the leak.

UTILITY TURNS TO MANATEE COUNTY

Both District 2 and District 6 have been negotiating with Manatee County officials about turning over potable water systems to the county. One of the problems has been the fact that the people who Lakewood Ranch officials had been dealing with at the County are no longer with Manatee County, and with the influx of new officials there have been many additional requirements added by the County – items which had not been previously on the table. Lakewood Ranch officials were scheduled to meet with Manatee County personnel on Oct. 23 to see if they could arrive at a basis for agreements.

PERSONNEL VACANCIES

The only Lakewood Ranch staff position that has not been filled yet is that of the chief financial officer. Interviews were scheduled during the week of Oct. 16 for this position.

**RIBBON CUTTING**

Sarasota law firm Williams Parker recently held a ribbon cutting for its new office location at Waterside Place in Lakewood Ranch. "Our firm is proud to serve a broad range of clients from across Southwest Florida and beyond, delivering quality legal counsel with our signature focus on excellence, efficiency, and collaboration," said Michael Wilson, the firm's president. "As our client needs have grown, it has become clear to us that our current office solutions needed to expand in kind." The new office address is 7500 Island Cove Terrace, Suite 200. For more information visit williamsparker.com or call (941)366-4800.

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Celebrating Our Sandies Finalists

By Brittany Lamont,
President and CEO

Happy Fall Y'all! It's our favorite time of year, when we get to celebrate our members who give so much back to our community. Our annual Sandies Awards, which is happening on Nov. 17 at the Ballroom at Grove, is an event that recognizes members – chosen by their peers – for their remarkable talents, character, and commitment to the Alliance and the community. The Sandies' awards actively support and celebrate the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance's mission to serve, help develop, and unify area businesses through a powerful partnership with other community organizations and governmental institutions.

This year we have a wonderful group of finalists across eight categories:



ABOVE AND BEYOND:

Amy Goeden,
Promotions with Pizzazz
Debbie Shaffer, SERVPRO Sarasota
Kent Jimison,
Easterseals of Southwest Florida

BULL BY THE HORNS:

Anthony Baldo,
J.P. Morgan Private Bank
Darrin Rohr, HH Staffing
Wayne Parrish, Rite Technology

COMMUNITY CHAMPION:

Keith Pandeloglou, Lakewood
Ranch Community Activities
Kevin Cooper,
Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium
Michelle Graber, Mission BBQ

NETWORKING KING:

Dennis Butt, HR Elements
Henry Decoo, Entech
Samuel Pierra,
Mobility Plus Manatee

NETWORKING QUEEN:

Erin Fuller, Payday Payroll
Lauma Hendry,
OFDC Commercial Interiors
Zoe Kasper,
Bekins Moving Solutions

RAY OF SUNSHINE:

AnneMarie Graff, Bank OZK
Jennifer Barbaro,
Keiser University
Jorge Aguero, Family Legacy Care

RISING STAR:

Brad Bush, Saltwater Promotions
Eric Konovalov, The Goal Guide
Skyler Betts,
Town Square University Parkway

**YOUNG PROFESSIONAL
OF THE YEAR:**

Keiondra Marshall,
Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium
Nicole Hackel,
Lakewood Ranch Communities
Tieler Gittleman,
Northern Trust Company

**Congratulations to all the finalists and
thank you for all you do for the Alliance
and the Lakewood Ranch region!**

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT SHOW!

Every month at Lakewood Ranch, we host the best of local music,
visual and performance art the Sarasota region offers.

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Friday, November 17th @ 6PM

THE OUT-OF-DOOR ACADEMY: SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Friday, December 15th @ 6PM

*Check out all of the events
happening around The Ranch!*



LAKEWOOD RANCH .com





Our Sincere Thanks

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund, LWRCF, is excited to announce the Builders Give Back program. For every new home closing, participating builders make a donation to the LWRCF in the new homeowner’s name. The developer of Lakewood Ranch then matches each contribution.

With a ‘live here, give here’ approach, the work of the LWRCF is to support the non-profits making an impact in Lakewood Ranch, as well as Manatee and Sarasota counties. And the Builders Give Back program allows new residents to experience the giving culture of Lakewood Ranch right when they move in, while also benefiting the Fund. By introducing new homeowners to local philanthropy through this program, we hope to ensure support for LWRCF in the future.



Learn more at lwrfund.org



Builders Give Back

ANCHOR HOMES
WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE

PULTE HOMES
SAPPHIRE POINT
& AVANTI AT WATERSIDE

HOMES BY TOWNE
LAKEHOUSE COVE
AT WATERSIDE

AR HOMES
WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE

STOCK LUXURY
WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE
& THE LAKE CLUB

JOHN CANNON
WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE,
MONARCH ACRES, STAR FARMS
& KINGFISHER ESTATES
AT WATERSIDE

LEE WETHERINGTON
WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE
& STAR FARMS



THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM

It's almost Thanksgiving! A day of fall, football and food (at least in my house). It's one of my personal favorite holidays as we make it a time to relax, cook together and catch up. Of course it couldn't be a favorite day without including my fur kids. For them, this is a rare day during the middle of the week where the humans are home and should be ready to entertain. So naturally, there is a balancing act of entertaining my two-legged and four-legged guests and keeping them all from making bad decisions.

Of course, we want our fur kids to have fun too ... and who can resist those big sad eyes, but many Thanksgiving delights can cause upset stomachs. As vets, we commonly see vomiting and diarrhea from overindulgence and pancreatitis from rich, fatty foods. Please skip the bones too – those can cause impactions and obstructions. It is important to realize that food like onions, garlic and grapes can be toxic. Don't forget to watch out for those guests who just can't help but give your pets a little something. While people think they are making friends with your pooch, they could be causing more harm than good.



Foods aren't the only holiday hazard. Curiosity can get the best of our four-legged friends when it comes to decorations too. Pine cones, acorns and dried corns can all become potential obstructions. Floral centerpieces can contain toxic plants. The ASPCA has a great website dedicated to helping you know what is dangerous and what is not. Steer clear of anything with potential hazard, to keep the party fun.

Social gatherings can also be stressful for some pets. It is a good idea to have identifying tags and collars on your pets in case they slip away in all the commotion. If you are having people over, be sure that your pets have a safe place to get away from it all and relax. Remind guests that sometimes everyone needs a little space, and not to crowd your pets if they want to be left alone. Let's all have fun this Thanksgiving season and enjoy each other's company.

Dr. Erin Siems graduated from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010, and has enjoyed working in both general practice and emergency care. She has been practicing in the Lakewood Ranch/Bradenton area for the past seven years. She enjoys general practice because it gives her the ability to build relationships with her patients and their families. Dr. Siems opened her own practice, Big Paws Animal Hospital in Lakewood Ranch, in May 2020. Email pet questions to reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com.

November Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

Please note that all events will take place at the Chabad House at 5712 Lorraine Road, or at the virtual Chabad House at chabadofbradenton.com/zoom, unless otherwise noted.

Talmud Classes

Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

Explore the Talmud and its laws in its original text. No prior knowledge of the Talmud or Hebrew is necessary. Book fee: \$45.

Torah Studies

Saturday mornings, 9 - 9:30 a.m.

At the Chabad House

Participate in a fascinating class on the Torah portion of the week. Discover the mystical meanings and lessons behind ancient stories. Admission is free.

Weekly Shabbat Services

Friday nights, 7 p.m.; Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at noon

At the Chabad House

Enjoy warm, family friendly services at The Chabad House. Saturday morning services are followed by a delicious buffet Kiddush.

Ladies Torah & Tea

Tuesdays, Nov. 21 and 28, 11 a.m. to noon

At the home of Chanie Bukiet and on Zoom

Join Chanie Bukiet for a weekly dose of delicious tea and refreshments, and discussion on the 12 principles of energized living that have empowered thousands of women to activate transformational goodness in their lives. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$36.

Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts

Sunday, Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m. to noon

At the Chabad House

Give your child the experience of a lifetime at CHS featuring an outstanding curriculum, professional and warm teachers, hands-on lessons, CKids motivational system and an innovative Hebrew reading Aleph Champ program.

JLI – The World of Kabbalah

Wednesdays, Nov. 15, 22, and 29, 7:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House and Zoom

Discover the core mystical and spiritual teachings of Kabbalah and their relevance to everyday life. You'll learn to think like a Jewish mystic and gain powerful insights to fuel deeper self-understanding and personal growth. Curious why there's so much buzz around Kabbalah? Discover it for yourself by attending The World of Kabbalah. Fee: \$90 (textbook included).

RCS: Sarah: Two Views of You

Thursday, Nov. 16, at noon

At the Chabad House and on Zoom

One Wow Moment is not an overview of these ancient lives; rather, it analyzes the components of their fateful decisions and weighs the stakes involved. Each of its seven classes challenges participants to consider how they might have reacted under similar circumstances, harvests the life lessons inherent within each biblical narrative, and reframes ancient dilemmas into practical and empowering guidance for personal moments of decision in modern life. This is the first of a seven-class course and is entitled "Sarah: Two Views of You." Lunch will be served. Course fee: \$85, JWC members \$80, textbooks included, or \$20 per class.

CTeen Community Event

Sunday, Nov. 19, at 4:30 p.m.

At Homewood Suites UTC, 305 N. Cattleman Road

Join Jewish teens from all over Sarasota-Manatee for a fabulous community-wide event featuring dinner and dessert, Jewpardy, Where the Wind Blows, Minute to Win-it, Craft a Stanza, card decorating, and lots more! Free for CTeen members, non-members \$10 online or \$15 at the door.

For more information on any of the ongoing events or to reserve, call Rabbi Mendy Bukiet at (941)752-3030, email rabbib@chabadofbradenton.com, or visit the Chabad website at chabadofbradenton.com.



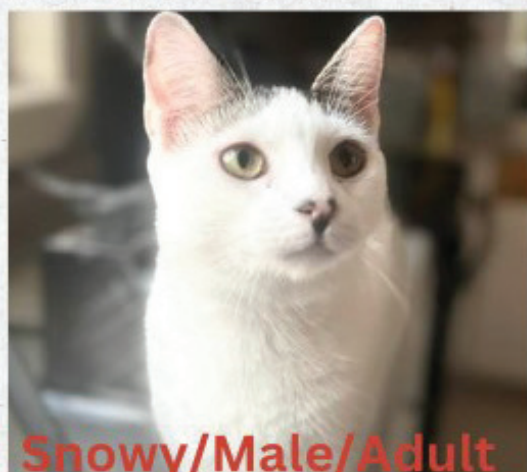
Timmy/Male/Adult



Sugar/Female/Adult



Mimi/Female/Adult



Snowy/Male/Adult



Mouse/Female/Adult

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

We have quite a few cats for adoption and we would be thankful if these cats and kittens will get their new forever home this year. Apply for adoption online at www.duetteanimalrescue.org



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LAKEWOOD RANCH

**COMMUNITY
Activities**
LAKELAND PLAYERS



November 18th

8:00am - 11:00am | Waterside Place

Run. Relax. Renew.

**For Registration and
Event Information, visit:**

LWRMINDFULTRI.COM

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

What to Know About Foot & Ankle Pain Foot & Ankle Health

With Dr. James Cottom

We spend a lot of time bearing weight on our lower extremities, so it's no surprise that foot and ankle pain becomes a common problem with age. If you're experiencing pain in your feet and ankles, James Cottom, DPM, FACFAS a foot and ankle specialist at Florida Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Center, provides helpful answers to your questions and concerns.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON ANKLE ISSUES?

Not all ankle pain is created equal. Some pain may be due to wear and tear on the tendons and joints, arthritis, or traumatic injury. The most common kinds of ankle pain that Dr. Cottom treats are ankle sprains, Achilles tendon pain and cases of arthritis. Sprain injuries are typically caused by twisting or inversion to the ankle, and often occur with a sudden fall, a misplaced step or other trauma. Chronic pain, on the other hand, can often be a sign of arthritis.

However, telling the difference between the types of foot and ankle pain can be challenging. The foot and ankle alone consist of 28 bones and 33 joints, not to mention muscles, tendons and ligaments. This makes it especially important to properly evaluate each patient. "For serious cases of pain or discomfort, an

MRI or CT scan may be necessary beyond X-rays and a physical exam," said Dr. Cottom.

HOW DO I KEEP MY FEET AND ANKLES HEALTHY AND PAIN-FREE?

We bear weight on our feet and ankles every day – whether we're at work, exercising or standing in line at the store. According to Dr. Cottom, maintaining foot and ankle health can be as simple as seeing a specialist when you're first experiencing an issue. "It is often very easy to calm most pain or injuries down if we get to treat them right away," he said. "We want to avoid chronic injuries and often, in these situations, more extensive treatment may be warranted."

In most cases, Dr. Cottom prefers to explore all available options before turning toward surgery. We like to start with conservative, in-office treatment in almost all situations," he said. "If a patient does not respond to that treatment, then we have the option of looking into something more involved."

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A SPECIALIST?

"When deciding on a foot and ankle specialist, I would encourage patients to look for a physician with fellowship experience," said Dr. Cottom. "A fellowship is unique in that the



physician completed extra training in foot and ankle treatment, including surgery. There's a low percentage of foot and ankle physicians who have actually completed a fellowship after residency training."

Dr. Cottom completed a yearlong orthopedic foot and ankle fellowship at the Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Center in Columbus, Ohio, under the mentorship of orthopedic/podiatric foot and ankle surgeons, before arriving at Florida Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Center.

Do yourself, and your lower extremities, a favor by looking out for foot and ankle pain — and if it starts, see a specialist. The rest of your body will thank you.

To find a podiatrist, visit doctors.lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com/search?unified=podiatry&sort=relevance%2Cavailability_density_best. To schedule an appointment, call 800-816-4145 or visit doctors.lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com.

Physicians are on the medical staff of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians.

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