

# life in natural florida

# CURRENTS

magazine

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 5 • JULY - AUGUST, 2017  
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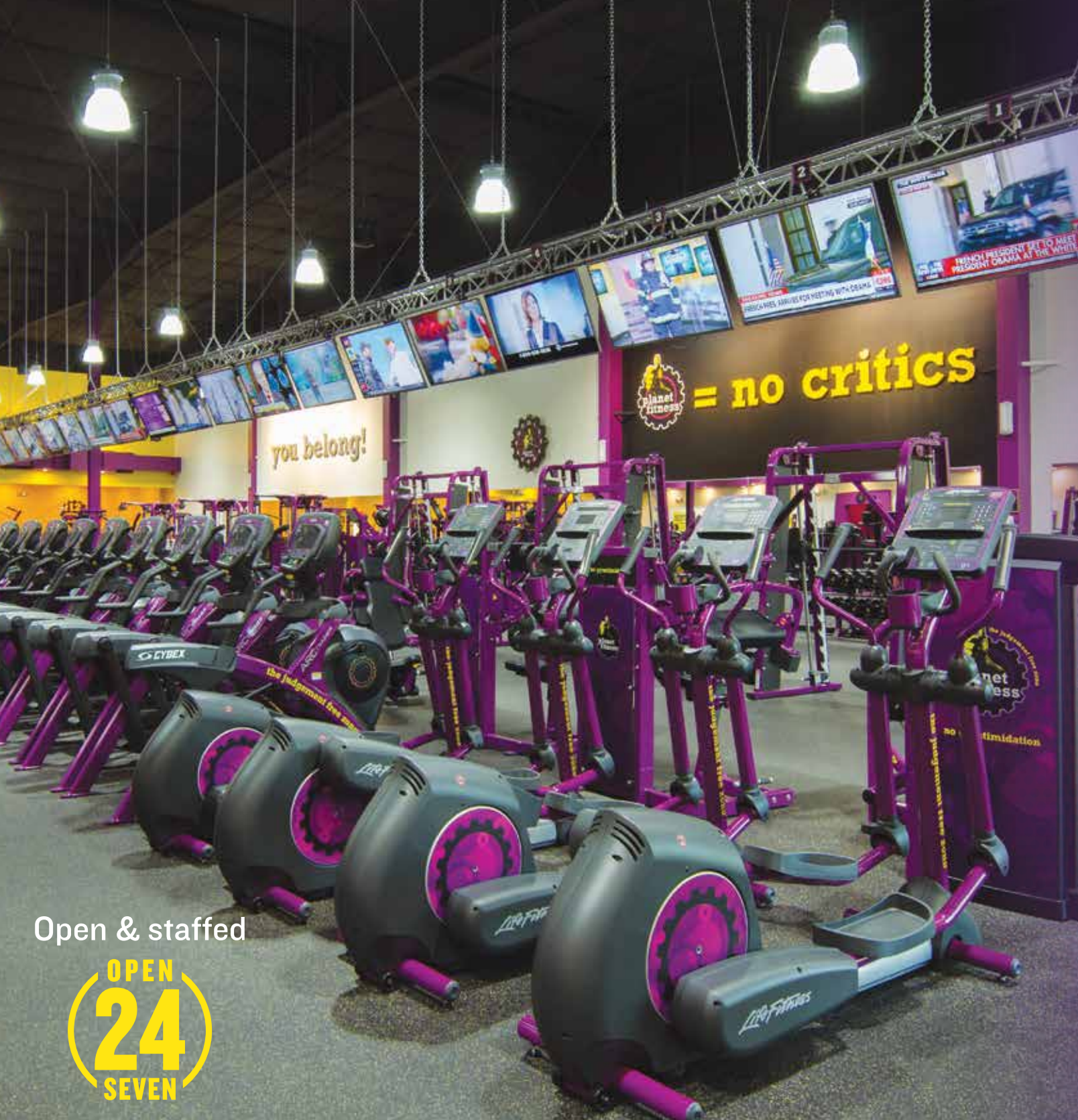
Artist Janet Moses  
turns everyday items  
into unique creations



### INSIDE:

- Anniston Baluyot is right on target
- Billy Aldrich's Honda dreams come true
- Chasteen's Downtown: A Final Serving





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## Letter from the Publisher



These unique stories fascinate, excite all of us.

Human ingenuity always fascinates us. The way people see the world, interpret it and use their talents to make it better always are stories of intrigue.

In this issue of Currents, as you've seen on the cover, artist Janet Moses and her story of upcycled art is one that caught our eye and was a story we had to share. How Janet takes ordinary, discarded

ed items that are common to see in all areas of our daily lives, works her artistic magic and turns the items into treasures on display is remarkable.

To see the process through her eyes is fascinating and a story we hope everyone agrees is inspiring.

Anniston Baluyot also offers an inspiring story of how a young girl found a love for firearms and target shooting and practiced until she became a national sensation. She is focused, determined and on target with her goals of being the best. Anniston also inspires us in this issue and shows us just about any recreational sport out there can become championship caliber for anyone willing to put in the time and effort toward it.

Billy Aldrich is no stranger to the pages of this magazine. He's a fascinating guy. A retired commercial pilot, most recently, he and his band were featured for the amazing way they entertain local crowds in the area.

Billy has another cool story we discovered during our previous talks with him: he loves restoring and riding Honda motorcycles. And his passion for the vintage bikes goes all the way back to his military days stationed in Japan. His latest story is worth the read.

There are recipes, fun trip possibilities from throughout North Florida, and other ideas for how to spend some leisure time.

As always, we're most appreciative of the leisure time you've elected to spend with us, turning our pages, investing time with our advertisers and the variety of local content we provide.

Thanks for your support of Currents, Lake City's original magazine, and for your support as readers as we enjoy our 11th year in your hands. We appreciate all of you!

Todd Wilson

Todd Wilson | PUBLISHER

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magazine

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## ON THE COVER



PHOTO BY BRENT KUYKENDALL

Artist Janet Moses sits with some of her pieces of artwork at Blue Goose Studio, the art studio and retail space that she owns in downtown Lake City. Moses uses everyday items to create her unique works of art.

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# GOODBYE CHASTEEN'S

**The Chasteen family reflects on their 40 years in the Lake City restaurant business.** | By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

**W**

alking up to the counter at Chasteen's Downtown, you could always expect to find Robert Chasteen faithfully stationed at the cash register while his wife, Emmie, worked behind the counter taking phone orders and packing up to-go boxes.

The line to order, which usually reached the back of the restaurant, was filled with familiar faces. Old friends, acquaintances and family members all milled together, saying hello and trying to decide if they should try a slice of one of Emmie's delicious cakes or whether they should order squash casserole or macaroni and cheese.

A Lake City staple, Chasteen's served customers and friends for 18 years. On July 14, they closed their doors for the last time, marking the end of a food dynasty in the community.

Robert, 71, and Emmie, 69, decided it was time to retire. From their early days at their first restaurant, Robert's Dock, to the loyal customers flooding the Chasteen's Downtown dining room during the lunch rush, they have been in the restaurant business for nearly 40 years. They're ready to take some time for themselves, and they have certainly earned it.

"We're ready and it's time," Emmie said.



Robert Chasteen takes orders at the register during the lunch rush while Emmie Chasteen takes a phone order behind him. The couple works as a team to run their popular neighborhood restaurant.





Robert and Emmie Chasteen are pictured with their three daughters, Abbie Chasteen (from left), Mary Anne Pearson and Lisa Odom. The entire family was present for Chasteen's final day of operation, with all three daughters working alongside their parents for the last time. (Photo Courtesy of Abbie Chasteen)

## Ready For Retirement

Chasteen's Downtown has become an iconic restaurant in the downtown area since it opened in 1999. After 18 years of making some of the finest food in Lake City, the Chasteens are ready to settle into the slower pace of retirement living.

"We've never really had a whole lot of time at home," Emmie said. "We've had our weekends since we've been here but we're the kind of people where we enjoy home. We do, we love home. We love our family. We like to cook for them. We enjoy being outside and things like that and we have all kinds of things that we like to do."

They don't have any set plans for how they'll fill up all their newfound free time, and they're just fine with that.

"We'll find us something to do, we just don't know what yet," Robert said.

One thing they do know is they're still going to remain active and maintain a presence in the community they love.

"We definitely want to stay busy because I still feel like I can contribute," Emmie said. "As long as I'm healthy and able I'm not going to just sit. We're not those kinds of people. I feel like we're happiest when we have a project going on."

"I feel like I need to say, 'Today I've done something,'" Robert added.

The Chasteens don't plan on doing any catering or selling their Take-And-Bake dishes during their retirement years, just cooking in their own kitchen.

"We had really thought we were going to do the Take-And-Bake when we retired but it's just too much," Robert said.

Robert and Emmie's three daughters, Abbie, Mary Ann and Lisa, have all worked alongside their parents at one point in their lives. Growing up they all worked at Robert's Dock, and on Chasteen's Downtown's final day of operation, all three daughters worked behind the counter for the last time.

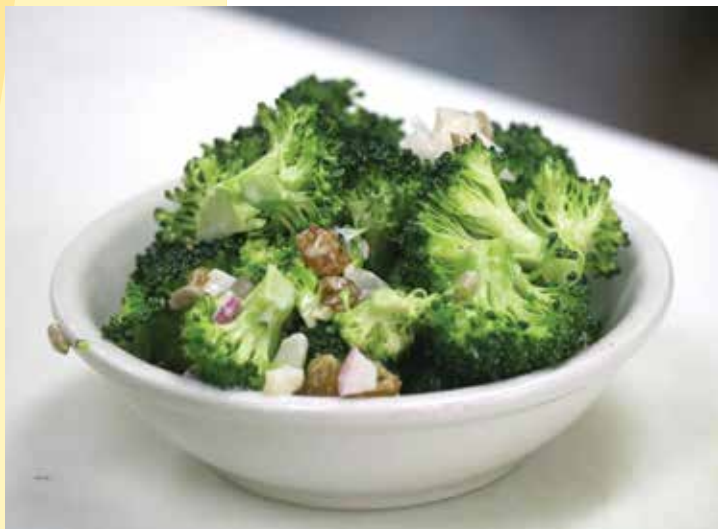
"The restaurant business has always been a huge part of our lives," Mary Ann said.

For them, their parents' retirement is bittersweet. While they're sad to see such a huge part of their lives go away, they're even happier for their parents that they will finally get some time to themselves.

"I think once they don't have this responsibility, things will change for them," Abbie said. "When they don't have to wake up at the crack of dawn. They'll be able to relax a little more and do things at their own pace."

**"The restaurant business has always been a huge part of our lives." — Mary Ann Pearson**





## Taking A Look Back

The Chasteens opened Robert's Dock in February 1978 out on the east end of U.S. Highway 90. Located on the outskirts of Lake City, it's where they got their start in the local restaurant business, but they wanted to move closer to the heart of the city.

"We always really wanted to come to the downtown area," Robert said. "But we did good business out there for a long time."

They were able to move into their current location and open Chasteen's in 1999, but there was a year gap in-between closing Robert's Dock and opening their new restaurant. So, in the meantime they opened Chasteen's Sandwiches and Such in Gateway Plaza on U.S. Highway 90. While Chasteen's Downtown was getting ready to be opened, Robert and Emmie sold sandwiches and salads in their small, temporary space.

"I often said if we had been in a different time of our lives where we didn't have children in college and all we could've kept right on staying there," Emmie said. "But people wouldn't let the Buffalo Bites rest."

Buffalo Bites are by far the most popular item on Chasteen's menu. Lightly fried boneless chicken coated in the secret buffalo sauce recipe, the Buffalo Bites make up a large portion of orders at the restaurant. Although they were on the menu at Robert's Dock, they didn't become as popular until they started being served at Chasteen's Downtown.

"Our buffalo sauce is not like anybody else's," Emmie said.

**"...people wouldn't let the buffalo bites rest."**

— Emmie Chasteen

Although Buffalo Bites aren't what the Chasteen family craves, that's what the people want. When it comes to what's on their own dinner table, they prefer grilled chicken and salmon, mashed potatoes and fresh vegetables.

"We try to eat a little bit healthy," Emmie said.

"We're not your Buffalo Bites and macaroni and cheese eaters," Abbie added.

While people have asked for the sacred, secret recipe, the Chasteens aren't planning on giving it up anytime soon.

"You can give it to somebody but they can't make it because they can't buy the stuff to make it with in the store," Robert said.

"But buffalo bites might not be gone forever," Abbie said with a smile.

## A Bittersweet Goodbye

In late June after Chasteen's announced that its doors would be closing on July 14, hundreds of people reached out on Facebook and in person to tell the Chasteens how much they would miss them and their cooking, but that they were happy that Robert and Emmie could finally relax.

Emmie and Robert were overwhelmed by the love and support they received from the Lake City community.

"We can't even begin to express our feelings," Emmie said. "We are just thrilled that we have been part of this com-

**FROM TOP:** Chasteen's most popular menu items include the Buffalo Bites, their mac and cheese, and their broccoli salad.





munity and we have been able to feed so many people and make so many friends.”

According to Robert, running a restaurant is one of the hardest things to do. But in spite of all the difficulties he’s had to face over the years, he’s grateful for the people he’s met during his years of owning a business.

“There’s been ups and downs,” Robert said. “There’s hard times, there’s good time, but the best times I think have been the people that we’ve met.”

It’s these people whom they’ve met and fed a countless number of times that the Chasteens will miss most.

“I can’t begin to tell you all the nice people and friends we’ve made,” Emmie said. “I will really miss all the people.”

Like her parents, Abbie is also going to miss the customers that she has gotten to know throughout the years. Since before she

could even see over the tables at Robert’s Dock, Abbie has been walking around her parents’ restaurants and talking to customers. But, she knows the Chasteen family dinners will continue on.

“Fortunately mom and dad built a really big kitchen in their house,” Abbie said. “I have a feeling there will be a lot of Chasteen family meals with friends at their home.”

For the Chasteens, the closing of their restaurant is bittersweet. While Robert and Emmie enjoy their retirement years, they know that this isn’t the end, but just the beginning of something new.

“I have to think of it as starting something new,” Emmie said. “I can’t think of it as ending. I can’t think of it as my life is ending or something. I’ve got to think that it’s the beginning of a new chapter.”

## Chasteen’s Famous Macaroni & Cheese

### Ingredients:

- 6 c. cooked macaroni noodles
- 3 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
- 1 ½ c. whole milk
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 ½ c. cheddar cheese sauce



### Directions:

1. Mix together the cooked macaroni and 1 ½ c. shredded cheddar cheese. Pour into a greased 9 x 13 pan.
2. In a saucepan, heat evaporated milk and whole milk until warm.
3. Add 3 eggs (slightly beaten) and blend well with wire whip.
4. Add cheese sauce to the mixture and blend well.
5. Pour this mixture over the macaroni and top with remaining shredded cheddar cheese.
6. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for approximately 45 minutes. Remove foil and brown for approximately 10 minutes.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Emmie Chasteen whips up some cake batter before the restaurant opens. Emmie is known for her homemade desserts and cakes. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Robert Chasteen and his daughter Lisa prepare Robert’s mother’s Fresh Corn Relish recipe.





Anniston Baluyot is pictured with her dad, Rondre Baluyot, at a shooting competition. Above, Anniston shoots her pistol, a 9mm STI DVC 3-Gun, at her practice target range in Gainesville. Anniston is a competitive shooter, and at just 17 years old she is one of the best marksman in the state.



# shooting STAR

**At 17 years old, Anniston Baluyot is making her mark in the competitive shooting world.**

Story and photos by TAYLOR GAINES

**A**nniston Baluyot stood in front of her eighth-grade class. She was supposed to do a science presentation. But as all eyes turned toward her, she got very uncomfortable.

"I was so nervous," she said. "I was shaking." Crippled by her fear, she started crying.

"I couldn't do it," she said.

Anniston used to struggle badly with her self-confidence.

But nowadays, you'll find Anniston at Shoot GTR, her local Gainesville target range, with a gun in hand, calm, cool and collected. She's in complete control as she trains for her shooting competitions.

"It's definitely my little escape from whatever's going on," she said.

Anniston says she wouldn't be the person she is today without competitive shooting. She travels around the country to compete in matches and has even traveled to Washington, D.C. to talk with members of Congress about gun rights.

She said it's crazy to think about how far she's come since her early teenage days.

"I struggled a lot making that jump from middle school to high school. I went to a high school where not a lot of my friends from middle school went, so I was kind of alone and didn't really have many friends," she said. "I

was always very insecure, so I went through a lot of eating disorders and very bad anxiety and depression. Shooting was my outlet. It was my own special thing."

## Finding Her Passion

Before she got into shooting during the summer of 2014, Anniston was a dancer for 11 years. At 13, her interest was fading, and her dad said it was just making her issues worse.

"I think when you get into dance that's one of the possible negatives is that girls become more self-conscious because they're out there in dance attire and comparing themselves to other girls," Rondre Baluyot said. "There's that self-esteem issue there."

Rondre struggled to find a way to make Anniston feel better.

"I felt like there was nothing I could do as a dad at that point because I couldn't really help her," he said.

Then, he thought of one thing he could try. He had been trying to get his family involved in shooting without much success. Anniston's older brother, Elijah, and younger sister, Megan, had each tried it and checked out.

"My brother didn't really like it, so then he tried it with my little sister, and she was like, 'No, it's too loud,'" Anniston said. "So then





“ It’s definitely my little escape from whatever’s going on.

The competitions Anniston participates in consist of her running through a course and shooting as many targets as she can as quickly and accurately as possible to get the highest score. She shoots a pistol (9mm STI DVC 3-Gun), a rifle (.223 Armalite 13.5”) and a shotgun (12-gauge Benelli M2).



he tried with me, and he was like, 'Don't fail me.'"

"She was the last hope before I started throwing away the equipment," Rondre said.

Not only was Anniston a natural, she was passionate about it.

"She was always trying to get as much advice as she could," Rondre said. "After her first match, we saw how quickly she was picking things up and how willing she was to practice. I said, 'Ooh ... She could go far.'"

## A Natural Competitor

At 17, Anniston is not old enough to legally carry a firearm. There are safety rules to follow when she is at the range and in competition. But she's been competing for nearly four years now.

The competitions Anniston participates in consist of her running through a course and shooting as many targets as she can as quickly and accurately as possible to get the highest score. She shoots a pistol (9mm STI DVC 3-Gun), a rifle (.223 ArmaLite 13.5") and a shotgun (12-gauge Benelli M2).

She competes in the U.S. Practical Shooting Association and 3-Gun Nation and she recently won High Lady and High Junior at the USPSA Florida state competition.

She's at the point in her development now, her dad said, where she only meets with her coach a couple times a year for fine-tuning.

"She's definitely a contender for

nationals," said her coach, Steven Bottcher. "She's confident enough to be self-sufficient and practice on her own and know what she needs to work on. It's been a pretty big transformation."

Anniston said she is consistently amazed by all that competitive shooting has given her.

She's traveled around the country to compete, including to Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Texas. She wants to go to Texas A&M University next fall to join their marksmanship unit, which frequently competes with the nation's top service academies.



She is markedly more comfortable talking to people and performing in front of people — with deadly weapons! — than she was just a few years ago.

Most importantly, it has helped her relationship with her parents. She even wants to join the military to follow in her father's footsteps. Rondre is in the Air Force Reserve and works as a dentist at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga.


"Part of it is I wanna be like my dad because I look up to him," she

said. "But in my personal opinion, there's nothing better you can do than serve your country."

Regardless of where things wind up going, Anniston loves competing, and she definitely knows one thing for sure.

"Shooting has given me so much, and the least I could do would be to give back and get more people shooting," she said. "Shooting really did a huge 180 in my life, and giving back is something small I could do."


"I'm very proud of her growth and transformation," her dad said. "I think she's really encouraged about trying to get more junior females into the sport."



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Pines promises to be the largest country music festival in North Florida. The two-day event will take place at the Bienville Plantation in White Springs, and country showstoppers, including Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert and Jake Owen, are set to take the stage.

The inaugural Party In The Pines will be held on October 20-21. The Bienville Plantation will host several

country superstars for the festival and offer various camping accommodations.

Arguably one of country music's biggest female superstars,

Miranda Lambert will be one of the headlining acts at the inaugural Party In The

Pines. The singer/songwriter is the reigning ACM Female Vocalist of the Year and has won two Grammy Awards, 12 CMA Awards and 28 ACM Awards. Known for hit songs like "The House That Built Me," "Kerosene" and "Platinum," Lambert released her most recent album, *The Weight of These Wings*, in November 2016, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Country Albums chart.

Country music legend Keith Urban will also be a headlining act at Party In The Pines. A premier singer/songwriter/musician, Urban has collaborated with everyone from The Rolling Stones to Alicia Keys to John Mayer. The four-time Grammy winner and Grand Ole Opry member has produced four No. 1 songs including "Wasted Time," "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16," and "Break On Me." His most recent album, *RIPCORD*, released in 2016, was certified platinum and produced is 22nd No. 1 song, "Blue Ain't Your Color."

Also performing at Party In The Pines in Jake Owen, a Vero Beach, Fla. native known for his high-energy performances and laid-back style. Owen is known for several, chart-topping country hits, including "Barefoot Blue Jean Night," "Anywhere With You" and "American Country Love Song." Easton Corbin is also set to perform. His traditional country style and authentic lyrics have left an



impression on country music. Some of his more popular songs include “Lovin’ You Is Fun” and “All Over The Road.”

Singer/songwriter Maren Morris, most popularly known for her fan-favorite single, “80s Mercedes,” and Brothers Osborn, John and TJ, known for their No. 1 smash hit “Stay A Little Longer” will also play at Party In The Pines. Additional artists will be announced as the event gets closer.

Party In The Pines is offering a VIP experience, which promises “never before experienced ambiance, decor and activities.” VIP guests will receive special parking, entry privileges, reserved seating, access to exclusive VIP vendors, meals and three complimentary bears each day and access to a cash bar inside the VIP tent.

The two-day VIP package costs \$650 and includes all the perks listed above. The two-day reserved seating package, which includes a two-day parking pass, costs \$420 and the two-day general admission package, which includes a two-day parking pass, costs \$160 in advance through Oct. 16.

The military discount two-day general admission price is \$122 and the student discount two-day general admission price is also \$122. Proper identification must be presented at the gate, and the tickets include a two-day parking pass. The two-day child’s general admission package, which is for children ages 6-12, is \$61 and children ages five and under are free.

Guests can enjoy the full Party In The Pines experience with camping. Primitive camping for tents and RVs will be offered at the Bienville Plantation during the festival. For a complete list of prices, visit [www.partyinthepines.com](http://www.partyinthepines.com).

The star-studded lineup kicks off at 3 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20 and continues Saturday, Oct. 21. Gates for the festival open at noon.

The Bienville Plantation is located at 16673 SE 81st Drive in White Springs. For more information or to purchase tickets visit [www.partyinthepines.com](http://www.partyinthepines.com).

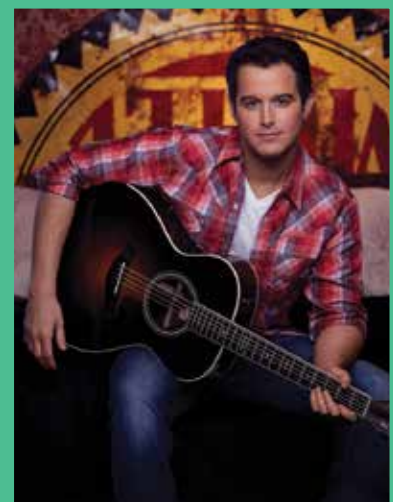


**ABOVE LEFT:**  
Miranda Lambert

**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Keith Urban



**LEFT:**  
Jake Owen



**ABOVE LEFT:**  
Maren Morris

**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Easton Corbin

**RIGHT:**  
Brothers Osborne





# Helping You Make the Transition

**CARETENDERS OF LAKE CITY HAS A VARIETY OF SERVICES THAT AID SENIORS IN MAKING A LIFESTYLE CHANGE.**

The life changes that come with age can be at once mystifying and frightening. Whether it's something as minor as new glasses or as major as a move to assisted living, Seniors are often concerned that lifestyle adjustments can lead to lack of independence. Thankfully, Mederi Caretenders of Gainesville has a variety of programs aimed at answering questions and easing the transitions that Seniors face.

"As with anyone, when a senior is faced with one or more major life changes - such as a move to an assisted living community where they're changing their lifestyle to accommodate some limitation, or they lose a loved one - this can be very scary and overwhelming and can possibly lead to decline in physical and/or mental health," said Susan Swirbul, a patient care liaison at Caretenders.

Caretenders has a variety of services specifically designed for clients undergoing a stressful period of change. These Seniors might be experiencing new limitations on mobility, cognitive deficits, effects of medication or other challenges that necessitate a change in lifestyle. When combined with declining overall health and other factors, clients can easily become depressed and feel as if they are losing control of their lives.

One such service, the Transitional Care Program, assists in a Senior's transition to an assisted living facility. A physician's order is placed for a comprehensive geriatric needs assessment, which is conducted by a nurse who

is thoroughly trained to identify the imminent needs of the patient.

Once the client is settled in, the program professionals help manage medical needs and communicate with families, assisted living staff and other people involved with the client's care. The program includes a team of psychiatric and medical nurses, therapists and social workers, all of whom have extensive experience and training in working with Seniors in transition.

For patients dealing with loss of mobility or cognitive abilities, Caretenders provides occupational therapists to help them re-learn and perform everyday tasks. They can also ensure that Seniors are using medical equipment correctly - for example, they can demonstrate proper positioning in a wheelchair.

All of these changes can take their toll on a Senior's morale. Psychiatric nurses provide emotional support and teach clients how to deal with their feelings of frustration and helplessness. They also partner with other Caretenders professionals to provide education and moral support to caregivers, as they play a crucial role in a Senior's outlook on life.

"Having an expert team of Caretenders clinicians that specialize in working with senior adults needing transitional support can help seniors sustain good health by incorporating proven techniques, like thorough mental/physical assessments, support counseling and engagement in meaningful activity," said Swirbul.



*"I wondered if my family could manage all the care I needed after leaving the hospital."*



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# turning trash into treasures

## Janet Moses creates works of recycled art

Story and photos by KATRINA POGGIO

Long before Janet Moses owned Blue Goose Studio, she was just a young girl brushing acrylic paint on shingles, scrap wood, pots and pans — anything she could get her hands on.

She discovered her life-long art career. Moses, 59, still creates recycled art by giving old papers, fabric and materials a new life with added color.

“It’s all Sanford and Son,” she said, letting out a burst of laughter as she sat perched on a wooden barstool near the counter in her shop.

Behind the tan-painted brick counter is her studio space, there’s a collection of old newspapers, fabrics torn from wedding dresses, bottles of paints and scraps. These materials inspire her creations.

Her artwork fills the storefront and studio space in downtown Lake City. Rustic chandeliers, antique table lamps, decorative bird cages, bookcases lined with jars of local honey, baskets filled with handmade soaps and refurbished furniture create a hodgepodge of artistry in the historic building.

“It’s kind of a keep it handmade, recycled kind of look,” Moses said. She even has the original diamond-patterned tile flooring and decorative ceiling tiles in the store. That recycled look pairs well with her artwork she has displayed throughout the store. Using found materials, she creates stunning pieces of art that are full of character and life.

“My canvas is my window or my recycled piece because it had a life before,” Moses said. “I’m taking something that somebody would throw away and I’m making it into something beautiful.”

### Waste Not, Want Not

Moses doesn’t let anything go to waste. She takes these materials and upcycles them, turning them into something completely different and beautiful. Some scrap metal or scratched furniture that one person may consider trash can serve another purpose in her studio.

One of her favorite mediums to work with is windows from old buildings.









Janet Moses paints purple petunias on an old window, her favorite surface for artwork.

She started turning windows into artwork in the 1980s, and has been working with the material ever since.

“That was just perfect for me because it was an art that was already framed and it was an antique,” Moses said. “I love antiques.”

She also incorporates a medley of aged pieces into her art. They preserve history in a new way.

Pointing to a creme-colored chalk painted window frame piece, Moses shows all the newspaper, recipe book and grocery list snippets collaged onto the glass. On top is a painted chicken.

“And all these papers here relate to the subject matter,” Moses said before reading off, “eggs, chicken recipe, Thanksgiving.” Chickens, pigs, cows and all things farm life were typical themes in her earlier work.

Since then she has moved away from farm scenes and switched to images of coastal living and natural landscapes, with the occasional work of art depicting a bicycle.

Her landscapes, usually featuring the Suwannee and Santa Fe rivers or local lakes, take much longer than a simple crab, she said. As she paints, she compares her work to photos and adds in small details, highlights and shadows to create a realistic look.

“It’s almost like a study,” Moses said. “You have to think about the colors and getting it right.”







“My canvas is my window or my recycled piece because it had a life before. I’m taking something that somebody would throw away and I’m making it into something beautiful.”





## Opening up shop

The Blue Goose Studio opened its doors to Lake City in 1992. In fall of 2015, Moses moved the shop to her current storefront on Marion Avenue in downtown.

The store is a collection of thrifted finds and locally made goods. All the artwork on display are Moses' originals. They are sparks of inspiration she turned into creations.

Customers can also shop for used dressers, end tables, bookcases and stools in the store. Moses said it seems like furniture is always making it's way in and out the door, but she does not go searching for it.

"It finds me," she said, half jokingly.

Her friends throughout the area are always searching for potential pieces to send to the studio. Sometimes they become an art project.

## Sharing Her Gift

On the weekends Moses travels along the Florida coast selling her window art featuring mermaids, crabs, shrimp boats and octopuses.

"It's a happy art," she said.

She notices a lot of people buy her window paintings to decorate their vacation homes in Fernandina Beach, Horseshoe Beach and Steinhatchee.





A piece of Janet Moses' folk art collection featuring Aunt Aggie's Bone Yard, a historic old garden and tourist attraction of Lake City in the early 1900s.

One woman put a Santa Fe River painting between two large windows so it seemed like you were looking out onto the river.

"There's so many ways you can do it," Moses said.

She thinks people are drawn to her window art because it is unique and versatile.

Some decorate their porches with her pieces while others add a scenery near the kitchen table.

"They use them just like any piece of art. Anywhere," she said.

Moses also teaches chalk-painting classes some Saturdays when she is not at art festivals. People bring in furniture from their homes, such as a TV tray, quilt rack, end table, mirror or piano bench. One lady even brought a cabinet door off her kitchen cabinets.

"You can't imagine what they bring in," she said.

Looking around her shop, she points to several larger furniture pieces she has chalk painted.



"I really want to get my hands on that one, though," she said pointing to a wooden dresser engraved with floral designs.

She still makes time to create works of art sparked from new inspiration, like an Alice in Wonderland collage and painting combination plastered on thin wood.

Her art, in all forms, is just a part of her.

"I eat, sleep, drink painting and making things," she said. "I love making it and I love working with people."

She especially loves showing people how anything, even items that are heading to the trash, can become art.



# Riding in **STYLE**

**Billy Aldrich turned his love for vintage Honda motorcycles into a lifelong passion.**

Story and Photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY





**B**illy Aldrich got his first motorcycle when he was 20 years old while stationed in Japan and serving in the United States Air Force. To others, it was just a three-year-old used motorcycle, a 1958 Honda Dream. But to him, it was everything.

He rode it all over Japan and Okinawa. He took it up Mount Fuji, a 12,388-foot active volcano near Tokyo, not once, but twice. He learned to ride while climbing the sacred mountain, and when it came time to go back to the states two years later, he couldn't bear to part with the motorcycle.

The Air Force brought it back to the states for him, and 56 years later, the Honda Dream sits on a pedestal in the center of Aldrich's airplane hangar in Lake City, gleaming factory restored.

Aldrich's prized possession didn't always look so perfect. After leaving it in the care of his father, he came back 15 years later to find hardly anything left of the Honda Dream. It took him 10 years to get the bike returned to pristine condition and running like new.

"I'm kind of a frustrated, uneducated engineer,"

Aldrich said. "I do a lot of engineering and design work and figuring out how to make things work. I love to build engines and I just love to build motorcycles. Anything on a motorcycle I can build."

Fifteen motorcycles later, Aldrich has gone from self-taught mechanic to motorcycle restoration expert. He turned his early love for motorcycles into a lifelong hobby, one that resulted in one of the largest motorcycle events in the country.

## Why Hondas?

Of the 15 motorcycles that Aldrich, 76, has modified and restored, 13 of them are Hondas. In the 1950s, Aldrich was fascinated by Hondas after reading about them in *Popular Mechanics*, but he was never allowed to have one growing up. So, when a man offered to sell him his three-year-old Honda while he was stationed in Japan, he was ecstatic.

The memories that he made while riding his 1958 Honda Dream are what solidified his love for Honda motorcycles.

"Whatever you're exposed to as a kid, that's generally the one that's going to stay in your heart, unless it was just junk or you got hurt on it," Aldrich said. "But if you had good times on it like I did on this? I rode it all over Japan and Okinawa. I rode it up Mount Fuji twice. Not once, but twice. I had some spectacular crashes on it. It's just part of me."



Billy Aldrich and his wife, Jackie Aldrich, pose next to Billy's 1958 Honda Dream, the first motorcycle Billy ever owned. When Jackie was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997, Billy decided to organize a bike show to raise money for breast cancer research. Since then Riding Into History has raised nearly \$500,000 for various charities.

The 1958 Honda Dream was the first of its type. Created just a year before Honda distribution began in the United States, only 1,143 of these domestic models were made in Japan. Designs began to change on the Honda bikes in 1959, and according to Aldrich, the 1958 Honda Dream is exceedingly rare.

"Of course I didn't know any of this at the time," Aldrich added. "When I bought it it was just a three-year-old used motorcycle."

After he restored his first motorcycle, Aldrich was hooked and has been working on bikes continuously ever since.

"That was the initial spark," Aldrich said. "After I recovered the bike from my father and started looking for ways to rebuild it and restore it, that's when all the other stuff started coming at me. All the other Hondas and learning more about the factory and the racing program, which really fascinated me. And one thing leads to another and the next thing you know you've built a dozen recreations of these early, high-performance motorcycles."

Aldrich can repair nearly anything on a motorcycle. Welding, painting, building engines, electrical work, he does it all in his shop. A self-taught mechanic, he has learned how to restore vintage bikes after years and years of practice.

"It's like teaching yourself how to swim," Aldrich said. "You start in shallow water. You make mistakes and you break things. You screw up a project and you start all over. It's a learning curve. There's no school to go to or anything like that. But it got to eventually where I do everything here."

"Here" is Aldrich's airplane hangar attached to his Lake City home. It's a grown man's clubhouse, filled with motorcycles, tools, awards, guitars and even his airplane. There, he spends his time tinkering with scraps and pieces of metal, which he uses to create his restorations.

It's nearly impossible to rebuild a vintage motorcycle from scratch and have all the original parts. So, Aldrich works with what he's got, and like putting together a puzzle he takes parts from other bikes and modifies them to make them work for his Hondas.



“Basically what I do is I take a bunch of junk and I cobble it together to make a motorcycle that the factory would have made in say 1961,” Aldrich said. “If I had been in charge this is how they would’ve built it. So it’s always custom-built my way, but I keep everything period-correct so it looks like it was built 50 years ago. It doesn’t have a bunch of chrome or modern junk all over it. It looks like it came out of the factory 50 years ago but it’s better, it’s faster, it’s safer, it’s more reliable so you can take it out and ride it today.”



The World Golf Village is where Riding Into History is held every year. Billy founded Riding Into history 18 years ago as an effort to raise money for breast cancer research after his wife was diagnosed. The event has turned into the top-rated concourse d’elegance for motorcycles in the nation.

## Riding Into History

With a deep fascination and love for vintage motorcycles, Aldrich started the Atlantic Beach Vintage Motorcycle Club in 1996. During that time, he had been fighting throat cancer for five years and was winning that fight. The next year, in 1997, his wife Jackie was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“As it progressed, I decided we had to do something,” Aldrich said.

What he decided to do was put together a big bike show and use the proceeds to fund an organization dedicated to fighting breast cancer. Thus Riding Into History was born. What started out as a way to help the fight against cancer turned into the top-rated Concours d’Elegance for motorcycles in the nation. Aldrich had no idea that a simple bike show would turn into such a major production.

“We had high hopes, but you’re so busy with it from year to year that the feeling is, ‘If I just get through this event then we’ll worry about later on, but we’ve just got to get through this one,’” Aldrich said. “Even after 18 years every one is a major undertaking.”

Since the inaugural Riding Into History event 18 years ago, the Concours d’Elegance, which means elegant display, has raised money for charities including the Susan G. Komen Foundation, Buddy Check 12, Wounded Warriors and currently K9s For Warriors, a Jacksonville-based charity that provides service canines for veterans.

During the most recent Riding Into History event in May, the organization was able to donate \$35,000 to K9s For Warriors. Since Aldrich started the event, it has contributed almost \$500,000 to charities.

“There wouldn’t be a Riding Into History if it weren’t for Billy,” said former Riding Into History chairman

Marina Alley. “We really treasure what he started and we will continue to do it justice.”

Riding Into History is held annually at the World Golf Village near St. Augustine. The bike show and competition attracts more than 300 antique and vintage motorcycles each year, with collectors from all over America bringing their motorcycles to the show. The entire event is put on by volunteers, including Aldrich, who after founding the event and serving as the Chairman of Riding Into History for three years, sits on the advisory board along with some of the biggest

names in the motorcycle business, including Dave Despain, Peter Egan and Dennis Gage to name a few.

“It is the best motorcycle concours in the United States,” Alley said.

## Best In Show

While Aldrich does showcase his Honda collection at Riding Into History, he doesn’t enter his bikes into competitions anymore. His motorcycles have won countless awards after he was repeatedly invited to show his bikes in showcases.

“That can become very habit-forming,” Aldrich said. “You go and the judges think your bike is really cool and they give you an award and they take your picture. It’s like drugs.”

After he would showcase a bike and win, Aldrich would go back to work creating another restoration, ready to enter that one in the next show. Although he doesn’t compete for prizes anymore, he still travels to about a half dozen shows a year to showcase his collection.

“I don’t have them judged anymore,” Aldrich said. “It makes it easier for the judges and gives somebody else a chance.”

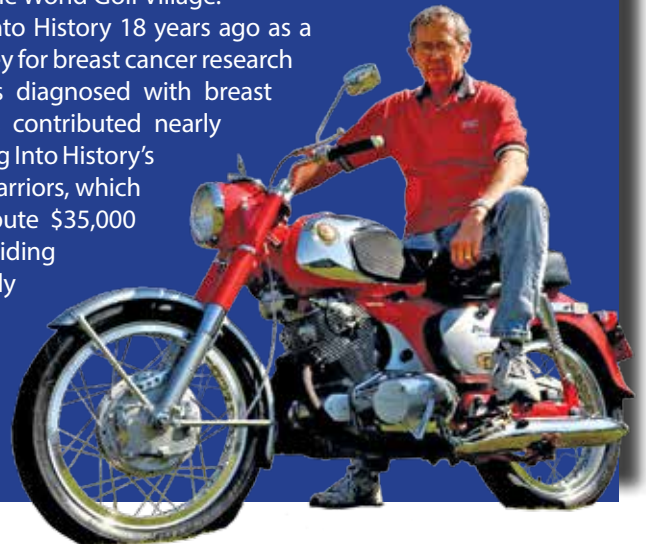
Aldrich’s “resto-mods,” or restora-

## *Riding Into History*

Riding Into History is a world-class vintage motorcycle concours d’elegance. Since its inception 18 years ago, Riding Into History has been held at the World Golf Village near St. Augustine, Fla. The three-day event consists of several main events, including the Grand Marshal’s Dinner, a charity ride and of course the concours d’elegance. The competition attracts over 300 antique and vintage motorcycles each year. Collectors from all over America bring their motorcycles to the show, and they are displayed around the lake which forms the centerpiece of the World Golf Village.

Aldrich started Riding Into History 18 years ago as a charity event to raise money for breast cancer research after his wife, Jackie, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Since then, it has contributed nearly \$500,000 to charities. Riding Into History’s current charity is K9s for Warriors, which they were able to contribute \$35,000 to after the 2017 event. Riding Into History is run entirely by volunteers.

For more information on Riding Into History, visit [www.ridinginto-history.org](http://www.ridinginto-history.org).







One of Billy's greatest restoration projects is this replica of a Honda RC 162, the first Honda to win in the World Grand Prix.

tion modifications, have better breaks and electrics, less oil leaks and are more reliable than their original versions. His bikes aren't trailer queens that move from one show to the next without oil in the engines or gas in the tanks. Everything he builds he can ride.

That includes one of his biggest achievements, his replica of a 1961 Honda RC162, the first Honda to win in the World Grand Prix. Although his replica looks exactly like the original, Aldrich says there isn't an original RC162 part on it, except maybe the front fender, which he found at an online junk sale at 4 a.m. 20 years ago. But even that likeliness is only 10 percent.

"It's basically junk parts that I pulled together or hammered out of metal," Aldrich said. "It's all fake. There's nothing real about it. And yet, it starts up, it rides, it goes like hell and it makes a lot of noise."

The process to get motorcycle scraps and turn them into a fully-working vintage motorcycle is not

an easy one. In building them from scratch, Aldrich deals with everything from total success to utter failure.

"This runs the gamut from working on a bike is like being in a tub or warm water, you know nice and cozy, to the other extreme," Aldrich said. "Total frustration. You try something for the third time and you can't get the parts to fit or something breaks and you can't find what you're looking for. It goes from hot to cold. It can be very frustrating."

Even though Aldrich has maintenance manuals for nearly every Honda motorcycle going back to 1958, as well as some Yamaha and Suzuki manuals, factors like modifications and translation still makes the process difficult.

"There is information out there as far as the factory design, the way they built it originally, but nothing for later down the road," Aldrich said. "Any changes you might make, you're on your own."

"There's information out there you just have to be bold, dig down deep, find the information



**TOP:** Billy is pictured after winning first place in the Japanese motorcycle category at the 11th Annual Dania Beach Antique Motorcycle Show in January 2017. **BOTTOM:** Billy has won awards for his restored motorcycles at events all over the country, including many first place awards and best in show awards.





and work off of that, then be creative and apply good mechanical sense," he added.

Restoring, modifying and replicating vintage motorcycles is strictly a hobby for Aldrich, and he doesn't sell the bikes unless someone really wants it or he needs funds for another bike he's working on.

"Occasionally someone will want one of these bikes real bad and I'll sell it to them but that's not why I built it," Aldrich said. "I usually sell something because I ran out of space and I've got another project going and I need funds for that project. I can always build another one. If you want it real bad then write me a check. If it's something rare or special it's not going anywhere."

To him, all the bikes are special, and when inspiration for a new modification or an idea for how to fix a problem strikes, he rushes out to his workshop, no matter what time it is.

"I wake up at three in the morning sometimes," Aldrich said. "Bang! I jump out of bed. If you have a dream about something you never think, 'I'll remember that in the morning,' because you never do. So I'll grab a cup of coffee and come out here, turn all the lights on, running around in my underwear trying to take notes and checking if I have the right stuff to do what I need to do."

Hondas have his heart, and Aldrich plans to continue finding them, fixing them up and restoring them to their former glory for as long as he can.

"There's always stuff that I want to build," Aldrich said. "The toughest part is priorities. Which one do I want to do first?"

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# Bob's Butts

THIS WELLBORN RESTAURANT IS SERVING UP THE BEST BBQ IN TOWN.

Story and Photos by TAYLOR GAINES

Bob's Butts BBQ is literally the only restaurant in town.

But Kathy Noble, who co-owns the Wellborn restaurant with her husband, Robert, does not take that for granted.

"This is an extremely small place dead in the middle between Lake City and Live Oak," she said. "We're the only restaurant out here, but we take a lot of pride in a fresh product."

The Nobles also take pride in the laid-back, family atmosphere at Bob's Butts. In a world that seems to move faster and faster all the time, they hope people can come in, spend some time together,

unplug and simply enjoy a great meal.

"People come in, they order their food, they're bantering back and forth, talking to so-and-so across the restaurant, but then, here comes the food," Kathy said. "That's it. The world stops. Everybody holds hands, they bless their food and then they eat."

Kathy gets visibly emotional when she talks about the atmosphere they've created at Bob's Butts.

"You don't see that at many places," she said. "And it's wonderful."





## Welcome to Wellborn

The Nobles are originally from Tampa. They've been married 34 years and living in Wellborn about 15 years. They moved here after they found some nice property to retire on. It didn't quite work out that way.

Robert, a field service technician for Ring Power, has always had an interest in barbecue. Pretty much their entire marriage, Kathy says, he has been toying with it. It wasn't until he went to Georgia to take a cooking class from famed barbecuer Myron Mixon that things began to change. That's when the couple started a barbecue competition team with their friends Bill and Dottie Chillcutt. And that's when the name "Bob's Butts" was born.

"We named our competition team Bob's Butts because he has no butt and because he cooks Boston Butts," Kathy said.

In 2014, the Nobles — mostly Kathy — were

WE NAMED OUR  
COMPETITION TEAM  
BOB'S BUTTS BECAUSE  
HE HAS NO BUTT AND  
BECAUSE HE COOKS  
BOSTON BUTTS.

considering opening a barbecue food truck on the weekends. Then they heard about a space opening up in Wellborn for a restaurant. The rest was history.

"We wanted to see if we could do it," Kathy said. "Robert and I are the personalities that like to problem-solve and be creative at the same time. Owning a restaurant and working in a restaurant, you better be creative, and you better be a problem solver."

Kathy was a registered nurse for 35 years. Now she spends pretty much all of her time at the restaurant.

"I thought nursing was hard. Oh my stars, no," she said.

## Low And Slow

The laid-back speed of Bob's Butts is not only important to the atmosphere. It's also a crucial part of making sure the food comes out right.

Pulled pork, smoked chicken and St. Louis-style ribs are the restaurant's signature items. It takes between two and three hours to prepare the chicken and ribs in the smoker. For the pulled pork — the eponymous "Bob's Butts" — it takes between six and eight hours.

"Low and slow," Kathy said, is the only way to go.

The Nobles come early every morning to throw the meat in the smoker for the long prep. They're vigilant about keeping meat



Robert and Kathy Noble stand in front of Bob's Butts BBQ. The couple revels in the restaurant being the kind of place where people will come sit down, spend time and enjoy a meal together. "It's just a good meeting place," Kathy said. "It's calm and laid-back for sure." A plate of Bob's Butts' signature pulled pork, St. Louis-style ribs and smoked chicken is seen on the facing page. The pork takes six to eight hours of preparation in the smoker, while the ribs and chicken each take two to three hours. "We go low and slow," Kathy said.

coming in as fast as it's going out. The restaurant is open Tuesday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"We pretty much smoke every day so I can give you the freshest meat," Kathy said. "And that way I can keep up with it."

Kathy said it has taken years of tasting and tweaking to develop their distinct style. She also credits her cooks — D.J. Hunt, Josh Starling and Joe Bryant — and wait staff — Vivienne Burke, Aline Pritchard and Doug Pritchard (mother and son) — with making sure everything consistently tastes good and runs smoothly.

"What's important is that you take what you learn from others and make your style your own," Kathy said. "That's what I believe we've done fairly well here."

"I like to think ours is just a little bit better than what the average restaurant puts out," Robert said.

Bob's Butts also serves hamburgers, rib tips (on Thursdays), seafood (on Fridays) and fresh desserts (daily). All of their ingredients, down to the lettuce in the salad, are fresh and locally sourced, Kathy said.

Myrtle Ann McElroy, a retired 44-year paralegal, lives nearby and bakes all the desserts. She has "zillions" of recipe books and





**ABOVE:** Myrtle Ann McElroy shows off one of her signature cakes, the German chocolate cake. The retired paralegal prepares desserts exclusively for the Nobles and Bob's Butts. "I don't take orders from individuals," she said. "I just bake for Kathy." **RIGHT:** Kathy Noble shows off the restaurant's pecan wood smoker that prepares all their meats. They show up early every morning to get it all started. "We pretty much smoke every day so I can give you the freshest and that way I can keep up with it," Kathy said.



is always coming up with something to make, including vanilla wafer pound cake, pineapple upside-down cake, lemon delight and much more.

"She has her own fan club," Kathy said. "She does her little thing, and it's beautiful."

Be warned, though: McElroy doesn't take requests.

"I don't take orders from individuals," she said. "I just bake for Kathy."

A large part of the restaurant's business is to-go, Kathy said. Suwannee Correctional Institution is nearby, so workers often drop in to grab a meal. They also have their fair share of regulars who come in for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Robert, who still works full-time with Ring Power but is at the restaurant pretty much whenever he's not at work, said they work hard to make sure people leave satisfied.

"When someone tells you it's some of the best ribs they've ever had, you take that to heart," he said. "We go to the extra effort to make sure everything is good and that people enjoy it. They're satisfied when they leave here."

The Nobles said the restaurant is doing well and staying busy. They hope to expand the parking lot by the fall to enable outdoor seating for football games.

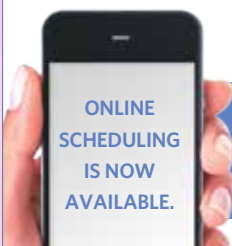
"It's a passion," Kathy said. "It takes a few minutes, but we're gonna get it done, and we hope that your meal is everything you want it to be."

"We don't want anybody to come in here and say they had a bad meal," Robert said. "We want to make it right if they do."

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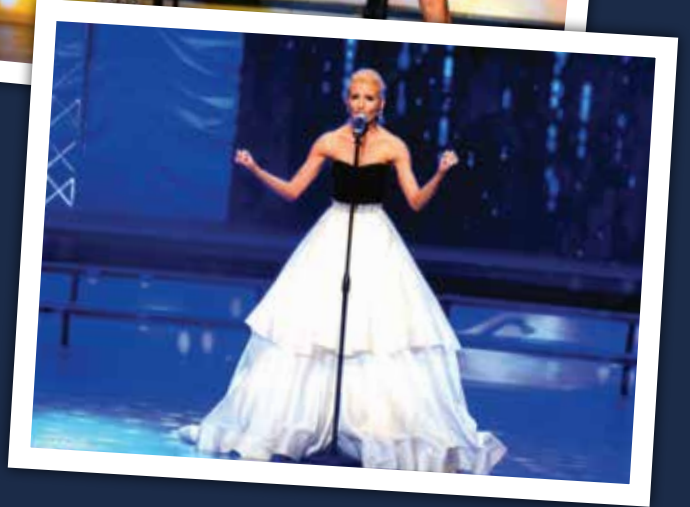
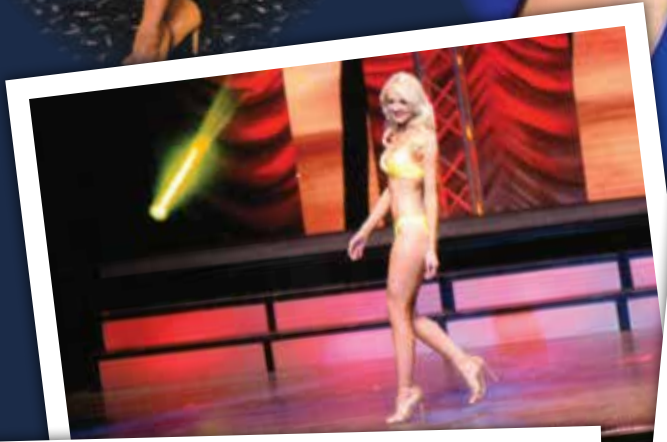
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The Talented Cookie Company owner Wendy Newman shows off one of the bakery's cupcakes of the day, a Tiramisu cupcake. Wendy opened The Talented Cookie Company in 2013 after her online custom cookie business took off and she needed a bigger space to work in.



Tucked away on a quiet street in historic High Springs sits the holy grail of coffee shops. From the outside, The Talented Cookie Company looks like an everyday small-town bakery/coffee-shop combo, complete with rustic charm and a homey feel. However, after taking one look at the menu and the endless array of sweets lining the counter, visitors will realize that this is no ordinary eatery, but a destination for caffeine and sweets fanatics.

When walking into The Talented Cookie Company, you're immediately met with the smell of freshly-ground coffee beans and cookies straight out of the oven. The wooden countertops are lined with desserts made from scratch, ranging from vegan brownies to chocolate-covered Oreos topped with sprinkles. The chalkboard menu is full of items you won't find at a Starbucks. From lavender lattes to birthday cake iced tea, the options are endless. This is your neighborhood coffee shop turned up a dozen notches.

### Unique Sweets

The Talented Cookie Company's menu can easily be described as fun and unique. Their coffee menu is made up of your staple lattes, cappuccinos and espressos, among other options. However, you can personalize your drinks with one of The Talented Cookie's 14 coffee syrups. From classic flavors like vanilla and hazelnut to the more unique lavender, red velvet and banana, you can give any drink an extra shot of flavor.

Owner Wendy Newman is known for adding an extra sprinkle of fun to all of her menu items, turning even plain milk into a party in a glass.

"I can't leave anything plain," Newman said. "Our 'Sprinkle Milk' is our version of milk. We do regular, strawberry or chocolate and we do whipped cream and sprinkles on top so it's really fun."

While living up to its name, The Talented Cookie Company offers homemade baked goods made by Wendy and her talented staff. The bakery offers muffins, cupcakes, cookies, homemade granola bars and other decadent sweets and treats, and their specials change daily.

When it comes to designing the menu, Newman decides what to whip up based on her customers' feedback. A self-taught baker, she has learned to adapt her menu and advance her skills though trying out new recipes for The Talented Cookie Company.

"I like to listen to what people want," Newman said. "This is a big community for vegan and vegetarian-type things. When I started baking I had no clue what that even



# The Talented Cookie Company

Story and Photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY



The Talented Cookie Company is located at 23519 N Main St. in High Springs. This coffee shop and bakery sells different types of coffee drinks, teas and baked goods. They also offer a variety of syrup flavors for their coffee and tea drinks, including: hazelnut, coconut, lavender, caramel, raspberry, banana, peppermint, vanilla, salty jack, butter pecan, red velvet, mocha, which chocolate and cinnamon bun. You can buy some of their syrups in jars and use them at home.



was, how to bake like that, so it's been a lot of trial and error and kind of making it work."

Now all of The Talented Cookie Company's muffins and cupcake bases are vegan. While they typically use buttercream icing on their cupcakes, they also make vegan or gluten-free vegan icing. Newman always makes sure that there are a few gluten-free items and vegan items on the menu, but there is one substitution that she refuses to make.

"Never sugar-free," Newman said with a laugh. "We just don't believe in it."

## Humble Beginning

Newman opened The Talented Cookie Company in October 2013 after her online custom cookie business began booming. A former professional hair stylist, Newman owned two salons in Lake City at different times before she retired from doing hair in order to be a stay-at-home mom. In 2011, she opened an Etsy store selling custom sugar cookies, and her cookies became so popular that her business outgrew her home kitchen.

"It just grew so fast and I was doing so many cookies from my house and shipping them out all over the United States," Newman said. "I basically needed more of a commercial kitchen to bake out of and produce that many cookies that I was doing. We decided to open the small storefront to do that mainly but then we started the small coffee and just a few bakery items on the counter and from there it just grew like crazy."

Although she had been baking for years, Newman never thought she would open her own bakery. What started out as a hobby





turned into a full-fledged business when her cookies took the online dessert world by storm.

"I finally got to a point with my online business where I was honestly probably working 70 hours a week doing nothing but cookies," Newman said. "I had so many orders going out. I said I'm either going to have to just stop or I'm going to have to open a bakery because I can't do it from home anymore."

Newman continued to sell cookies through her Etsy store until The Talented Cookie Company moved to its larger, current location in March 2015. While she still does custom cookies for local clients, she mostly sells them out of her storefront. And while she never set out to own her own bakery/coffee shop, she is happy she has started a business that allows her to play in the kitchen and have fun with her work.

"I'm glad I did it," Newman said. "It's a lot of work, a lot of hours. I'm here more than I'm at home. But as long as I can do it in fun, it's good."

## That Homestyle Feel

What sets The Talented Cookie Company apart from chain coffee shops is the authenticity of their drinks and baked goods.

"Everything's homemade and everything's fun," Newman said. "It's just something different from most places. Everything's good, wholesome ingredients. No added preservatives or anything like that. It's just butter, sugar, flour."

The Talented Cookie has an atmosphere that is as enticing as its homemade cinnamon rolls. With tables and chairs throughout the store, it's a great place to spend the day chatting over tea or working on your computer. There are hammocks in the back and a patio with covered tables, as well as lawn games like corn hole and Jenga, the kind of place that invites you to stay a while.

"We try to keep more of that homestyle feel," Newman said. "We want people to come in and feel relaxed and comfortable and know that they can chill all day if they need to."

With their business steadily increasing, The Talented Cookie Company is planning to expand their storefront. They are currently sharing the building with an antique store, where customers can browse while sipping on their coffee or tea. However, they will be taking over that part of the building and adding new seating and new retail items throughout, as well as additional space for parties and cookie-decorating classes that Newman teaches.

As The Talented Cookie Company continues to grow, things are bound to get sweeter from here.



Some of The Talented Cookie Company's most popular baked items include their Butter Pecan Blondies (left) and Coconut Chewy Bars





The Talented Cookie Company owner Wendy Newman whips up a latte at her bakery/coffee shop. The Talented Cookie serves up a variety of coffees, teas and other drinks in addition to baked goods.



Story and photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY

## STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS IS NO EASY TASK,

especially when you're already working a full time job and raising a family. However, this did not stop Lake City resident Angie DePratter from starting her own side hustle.

With a desire to do something creative combined with a deep love for coffee, Angie created SimplyJLynn, an online store where she sells her customized creations.

In just a few months, Angie was able to turn a hobby into a business that has blossomed.

"On April 1 I opened up shop for SimplyJLynn and turned the craft hobby into a second income business for me and my family," Angie said. "It's doing pretty good. It's coming along really well."

### A Jolt of Inspiration

In her online shop, Angie mainly sells customized drink and bar ware. Coffee mugs, travel cups, wine glasses and more, all adorned with handmade designs and quotes. Her hobby for designing mugs and cups stems from something that is a major part of

ANGIE DEPRATTER HAS TURNED HER CRAFT HOBBY INTO A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE BUSINESS.



her everyday life: coffee.

"I love coffee, so coffee mugs were definitely the passion behind SimplyJLynn," Angie said.

Angie, 34, sells her products on Etsy, an e-commerce website focused on handmade items. However, before she decided to make her products available to the masses, she was using oil-based Sharpie markers to color on mugs as a fun craft to do with her family. She was ready to take her crafting to the next level, but wasn't sure how well it would sell.

"I wanted to," Angie said about selling her products. "I wanted to really bad but I didn't have the confidence. I was proud of my product but not enough to sell.

After some contemplation, Angie decided to jump in with both feet. She purchased a Silhouette Cameo, an electronic cutting machine, and committed herself to making a certain number of products before she could open her Etsy store.

She plugs the cutting machine into her computer and then she designs what she wants to be printed. The machine cuts the vinyl and then she applies the design by hand. Once she began designing and making her customized products, she knew she was on the right path.

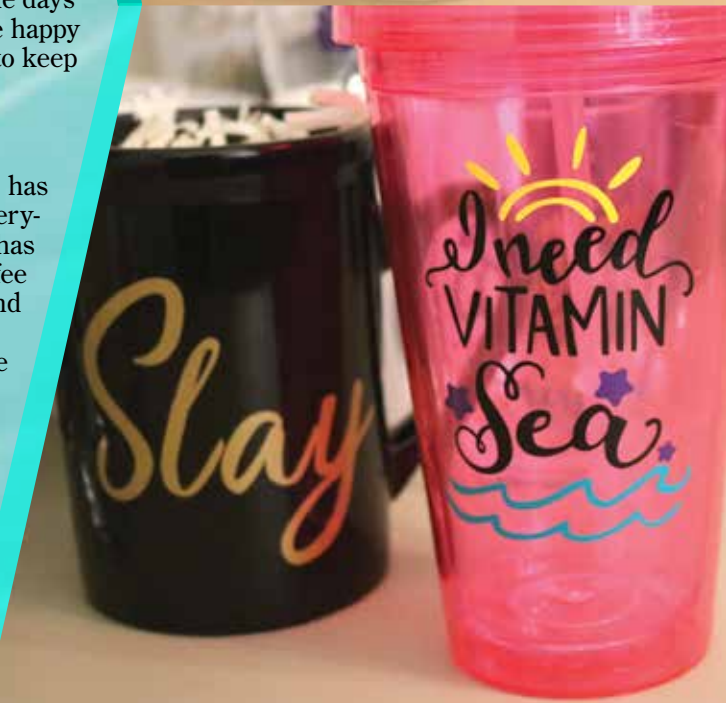
"I became proud and my confidence went up," Angie said. "As the days and weeks went on more people started noticing and they became happy with the products also. It gives you that extra boost of confidence to keep going."

## A Full-Time Hobby

Now SimplyJLynn has become a five-star rated Etsy shop that has received rave reviews from customers. Her products include everything from inspirational to funny to heartwarming messages. She has over 70 items for sale, including wine glasses, beer glasses, coffee mugs, coffee tumblers, shot glasses, decorative tiles, prints and other personalized items.

People from all over the country have ordered her products. She has shipped items to California, New York and Texas. Her daughter Taylor, 11, helps her mom wrap the items and even helps her come up with some of the designs. It was actually Taylor who helped inspire the name for the SimplyJLynn shop.

"J is the first initial of my middle name and Lynn is my daughter's middle name so we smashed it together," Angie said. "I have a sign in my office that says 'Live Simply' and all the other names I was trying to think of were taken in Etsy so I saw the 'Simply' and the 'J Lynn' and I put it together."



Angie DePratter's Etsy store, SimplyJLynn, specializes in customized drink and barware, including coffee mugs, tumblers, wine glasses and shot glasses, among other products.

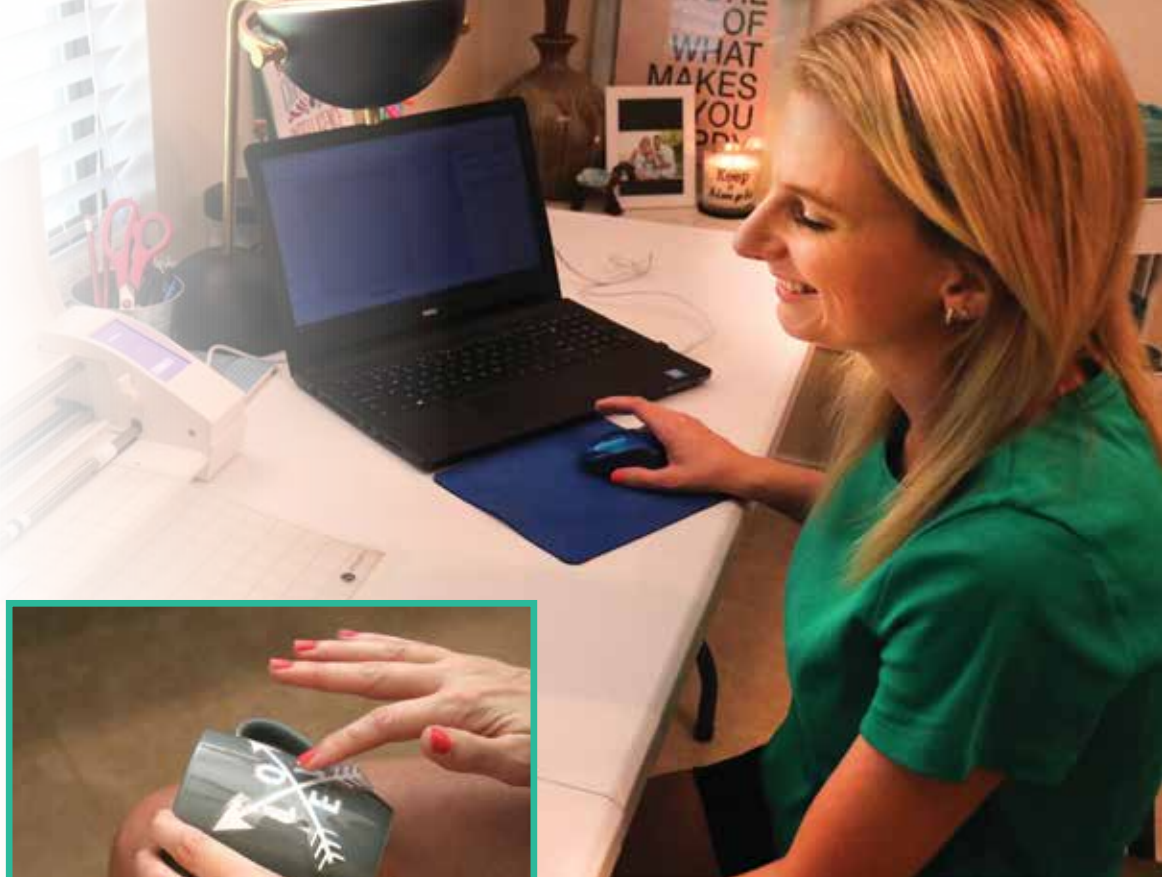


Her side business has become a full-time hobby and an escape for Angie. As a physical therapy assistant for Kindred At Home, she spends Monday through Friday in patients' homes helping them with physical therapy. Creating products for her online shop is a stress relief for Angie after working all week.

"Being in the medical field you do see a lot, so this kind of takes me away and clears my mind and it's less stressful to come home to," she said.

With her daughter, her husband, Cory, her family and friends supporting her, Angie has a huge support system that has helped her as she has built up her business. Her advice to someone who aspires to open their own side business is simple: be patient.

"It takes time," Angie said. "It will come, it will happen. Stay proud of your product, have the confidence that other people will see your product and be just as proud and have the joy when they receive it as you do making it."



To create her products, Angie makes the designs for her products on her laptop, then after hooking her computer up to her Silhouette Cameo, it cuts the design out of a piece of vinyl and then she applies it to the product by hand.



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# BOOZE & BITES

**Amelia Island Tasting Tours provide unique dining experiences for tourists and locals.**

Story and photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY

Amelia Island is full of amazing restaurants and bars serving up fresh, local cuisine. Cafes, bistros, beer gardens, pizzerias, seafood joints, brewpubs, the list goes on and on. All this and more is packed onto the 13-mile long island. So where do you start? How can you possibly experience all the best food and drinks that the island has to offer?

Amelia Island Downtown Tasting Tours takes you on a culinary journey around the island, giving you the chance to sample the best that its restaurants have to offer. Whether you're looking to experience the food, the drinks or a little bit of both, these tours make it easy for visitors to get a true taste of the island.

One of the best things about going to a new city is trying all the new restaurants and bars. However, you don't always have the time or the money to try out all the places you want to. The Tasting Tours offer a perfect solution. My Amelia Island Downtown Booze & Bites Tour gave me the chance to try a variety of different foods and drinks while also providing insight into the tight-knit island community. After my experience, I'm ready to go back for seconds.





## Kicking Off with Cuban Food

Here's how it works: the Booze & Bites Tour takes you on a two-and-a-half hour walking tour through beautiful downtown Amelia Island while sampling food prepared by local chefs and cocktails made by local bartenders. Each tour stops at two restaurants, where you can meet the chefs and learn about them and their cuisine, and it also stops at two bars, where you can taste cocktails made specially for your tour.

Our first stop was Hola! Cuban Cafe, where chef and owner Marisol Triana greeted everyone with a warm smile. Marisol organizes the tasting tours, so starting off at her restaurant was the perfect kickoff for the tour. A small Cuban cafe with just a couple tables inside and some outdoor seating, the atmosphere made you immediately feel at home. The smell of Cuban coffee and spices filled the room, and I knew we were in store for some amazing, authentic Cuban food.

On the Booze & Bites Tour, you can hear from the chefs firsthand, making the dining experience all the more personal. Marisol explained everything on the menu, and it felt like we were dining at a friend's home rather than in a restaurant.

We started off with Cuban sodas, including Iron Beer (Cuba's national beverage), Materva, which tastes like sparkling tea soda, and Jupina, a sweet pineapple soda. Then each member of the tour group got a plate filled with samples of some of Hola!'s signature dishes.

The sampling included fried yuca, a cassava root fried for Cuba's version of french fries, and tostones,

which are fried green plantains. We also had the Media Noche pressed sandwich. This was by far the best Cuban sandwich I'd ever had. With slow-roasted pork packed with spice and flavor, sweet tavern ham, swiss cheese, pickles and mustard on sweet bread, it was a traditional Cuban sandwich taken to the next level. There were also Papa Rellenas, fried mashed potatoes stuffed with beef filling and served with their signature mojo dipping sauce.

Now, all of these dishes were served as appetizer-sized portions. This allowed us to taste all the different dishes without getting full. We finished the meal off with a Cortadito, which is a Cuban coffee infused with milk, and a homemade churro filled with sweet cream cheese. It was the perfect end to a meal that provided all the signature flavors of Cuban cuisine, and the best part was, this was just the first stop.



**ABOVE:** The first stop on the Amelia Island Downtown Booze and Bites Tour was Hola! Cuban Cafe, a local restaurant that serves authentic Cuban cuisine, including their Media Noche (The Midnight) pressed sandwich, which is tavern ham, roasted pork, swiss cheese, pickles and mustard on sweet bread. Hola! Cuban Cafe also served up a variety of Cuban sodas and desserts, including this Jupina pineapple soda and these Cortaditos, which is Cuban coffee infused with milk and churros.





## Florida's Oldest Bar

Our next stop was Florida's oldest bar, Palace Saloon. Just down the street from Hola! Cuban Cafe, the Palace Saloon is a staple in Amelia Island. Constructed in 1878, the building was turned into the Palace Saloon in 1903 and has continuously operated ever since.

Walking into the bar was like taking a trip into the past. Patterned tile floors, the 40-foot long wooden bar and the display cases filled with memorabilia and history of both the bar and the island helps the Palace Saloon maintain its vintage vibe. A tourist attraction that also attracts the locals, I can't think of a better bar to visit in Amelia Island.

My favorite thing about our experience at the Palace Saloon was our bartender, Johnny Miller. A man who seemed to know everything about mixing drinks and the history of the bar, we soon found out that he was not just a bartender, but the former mayor of the city.

The excitement with which he told us about his bar and how it was his decision to paint the ceiling tiles garnet and gold in honor of the Florida State Seminoles made the experience so much more personal than if we had just walked into any old bar.

He then proceeded to make our group quite possibly the best drink I've ever had. He blended up fresh, locally-grown pineapple and mango than added in dark and light rum made at the Marlin & Barrel Distillery on Amelia Island and finished it off with some coconut milk and sliced fruit.

It was sweet, strong and tasted like something you could be sipping under an umbrella on a beach somewhere. It was the drink that brought our seven-person tour group together. A couple, two lifelong best friends, a pair of sisters and I soon transformed from nervous strangers to chatty friends. It was a great icebreaker and after finishing off our delicious drinks we headed off to our next restaurant.



The bartender at the Palace Saloon created a special drink, which was made with dark and light rum from the Marlin & Barrel Distillery on Amelia Island, fresh pineapple, fresh mango and coconut milk.



diately met with a trio of plates containing different dishes and a glass of chardonnay. Now this was my kind of place.

From the plating to the taste, these dishes were unlike any American cuisine I had ever had before. First up was a Southern staple, shrimp and grits. Served in a martini glass, the "Amelia Island Shrimp and Grits" were given a elegant flair. The local shrimp, fresh veggies and creamy stone-ground grits were served with a white vermouth tasso ham sauce, giving you all the best tastes of the south in every bite.

Then there was the pan sautéed lump crab cake. This wasn't just your regular old crab cake. It was topped with a roasted red pepper jelly and a whole grain mustard hollandaise. The crab cake was caramelized on the outside, and was sweet with a little bit of heat, making it the perfect bite. Then we had chicken and andouille wontons. One of the appetizers on the menu, these fried wontons are stuffed with roasted chicken, andouille sausage and a rich leek cream cheese then driz-



zled in their homemade BBQ sauce.

As we ate, the chef/owner Ricky Pigg spoke to us about the history of the restaurant and described not only what the dishes were, but why he used the ingredients he did. He answered questions about the food and told us interesting stories about the island. As the only diners in the restaurant at the time (it closes between lunch and dinner, but opened up just for our group), it felt like we had our own private chef. The tasting tour offers that unique experience and one-on-one connection with the restaurant chefs that you would never get if you walked in during the middle of the lunch rush.

After we practically licked our plates clean, we headed out to our final destination: the Amelia Tavern. ....

## New American Cuisine

Our tour guide, Cody, then walked us to our next destination. As we passed through the quiet streets of downtown Amelia Island, he showed us some of the local shops and other restaurants before we stopped at Joe's 2nd Street Bistro.

Serving up "new American cuisine," Joe's 2nd Street Bistro serves up American classics with a modern twist. The atmosphere was completely different from Hola's. With white linen tablecloths, cloth napkins and beautiful china, it was fancy without making you feel like you were underdressed. After sitting down we were imme-





## Ending on a Sweet Note

After the one-of-a-kind experience we had at the Palace Saloon, we walked into the Amelia Tavern and were greeted with a completely different atmosphere. A newer restaurant and brewpub, the Amelia Tavern had a unique menu filled with fun bar bites and appetizers, but we were there to sample their drinks. With modern fixtures and a young crowd, it showed that the historic island was still growing and changing.

Sitting around the bar in the middle of the restaurant, we were served a ginger beer lemonade, made with ginger beer, lemonade vodka, fresh-squeezed lemons and a splash of cranberry juice. After we got our drinks we spent the next half hour sitting together, chatting about how amazing the food was and some members of our group were even planning when they would come back for another tour. Sharing a sweet drink over this sweet moment, we all left the bar with full stomachs and smiles on our faces.

From authentic Cuban food to fine American cuisine, we were able to get a taste of what Amelia Island has to offer. The Booze and Bites tour gives visitors a chance to try a sample of some of the island's best restaurants and bars without having to spend the whole day deciding where and when to eat. It takes the decision making out of deciding which new restaurants to try, and makes you crave another taste of the island life.

**JOE'S 2nd STREET BISTRO:** The pan sautéed lump crab cake (far left) at Joe's 2nd Street Bistro is made with jumbo lump crab and sautéed peppers and is served with a whole grain mustard hollandaise and topped with a roasted red pepper jelly. One of the most unique appetizer options at Joe's is the chicken and andouille wontons (left, center), which are fried wontons stuffed with roasted chicken, andouille sausage and a rich leek cream cheese and then drizzled with their homemade BBQ sauce. The shrimp and grits (far right) are made with local shrimp and fresh stone-ground grits and served with a white vermouth tasso ham sauce.

**AMELIA TAVERN:** At the Amelia Tavern the bartender prepared a spiked Ginger Beer Lemonade (right), made with ginger beer, lemonade vodka, fresh-squeezed lemons and a splash of cranberry juice.

## BOOK YOUR OWN Tasting Tour!

Amelia Island Downtown Tasting Tours offers weekly tours on Thursdays and Fridays from 2:30 to 5 p.m. Each of the walking tours take you to two local restaurants and two bars.

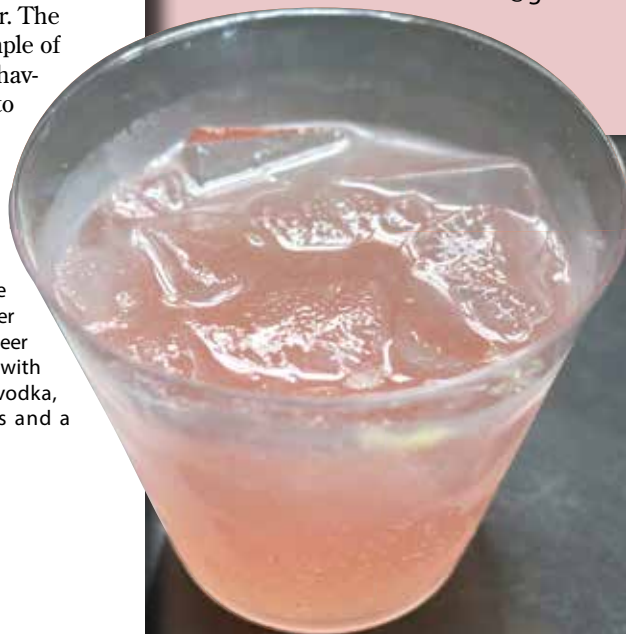
When booking the tour you do not know which restaurants and bars you will be visiting, but that's part of the fun! If you want to know where you're going in advance, you can call or email the company and ask for that information.

The tours routinely change which restaurants they will stop at, so you can go several times and not see the same thing twice.

**Cost:** The tour costs \$59 per person plus tax, but that includes your two tastings specially prepared by the chef/owners of the restaurants, cocktails created specifically for the tour, the tour itself and gratuity for each restaurant and bar. It's worth it for the amount of food and drinks you're served at each place.

**Cocktail Tour:** Amelia Island Downtown Tasting Tours also offers a Cocktail Tour. These tours are \$45 and are available on Fridays and Saturdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. These tours are like mobile cocktail parties where visitors will go to our local bars, learn about their histories, meet the bartenders and sample their drinks.

**Contact:** For more information or to book your own Amelia Island Downtown Tasting Tour, visit [www.ameliaislanddowntowntastingtours.com](http://www.ameliaislanddowntowntastingtours.com). You can also call 904-330-5746 or email [ameliatastingtours@gmail.com](mailto:ameliatastingtours@gmail.com).







# Cuban Adventure

**Former Lake City residents share their experiences while exploring Cuba.** | By Dr. Robin Hall

**W**hen I was a little girl, I read and learned about Cuba. It was described to me as a country that was not a friend to the United States. In later years, I talked to people who sacrificed much to escape Cuba in order to live in the U.S. They were willing to leave their homeland for the promise of a better life in a free country. Cuba was only 90 miles south of Florida, but it might as well been located on the other side of the world. To me, their way of life was a mystery.

Fast forward to May 2017. My husband Chuck and I were given an opportunity to participate in an eight day people-to-people program in Cuba through Legendary Journeys. There were 10 other Americans with us on this amazing trip. We lived with host families in Havana for five days and Trinidad for three days. It was a learning adventure and I'm still tingling in the afterglow of the experience.

The trip ground rules were simple: do not talk politics, do not take pictures of law enforcement, do purchase Cuban medical insurance, do provide a VISA, and do bring cash to cover expenses. The first two "do not rules" were acknowledged and the Cuban medical insurance was included in the price of our airline tickets so that was easy. However, acquiring the VISA and determining the currency exchange rate was a learning experience.

We were told VISAS can be acquired in advance of the trip or on the travel day. We chose to purchase our VISA at the same time we checked in for our flight. Our airline charged us \$100 cash (\$50 for VISA and \$50 for processing). Since we weren't able to use our credit card, this came out of our cash. Getting the required license to visit was easy and we chose educational/humanitarian.

Cuba doesn't accept American credit cards and you cannot exchange American money for Cuban currency before you leave the U.S. Therefore, our first stop in Cuba was to find a place to exchange our money. Cuba charges an addition 10 percent fee to change U.S. dollars into pesos (\$1 was exchanged for .87 CUC). We brought euros with us and received a much better exchange rate (one euro \$1.15 for 1.11 CUC). If exchanging \$1,000, using euros becomes a \$90 savings. Try to spend what you exchange, because you can't change your remaining pesos for US dollars. The best exchange rate is at the banks, the worst is at the airport. No short shorts or flip flops are allowed in the bank. People wait in a line outside and a guard lets people in one at a time. We were required to show/register our passport to do a money exchange.

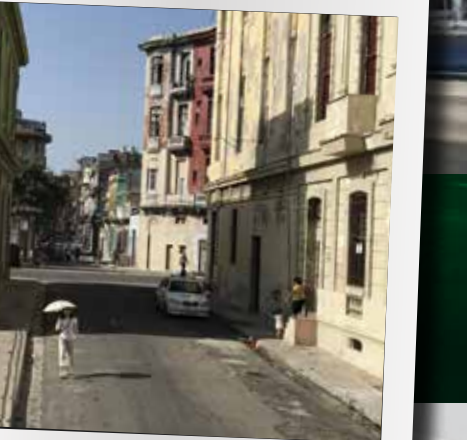
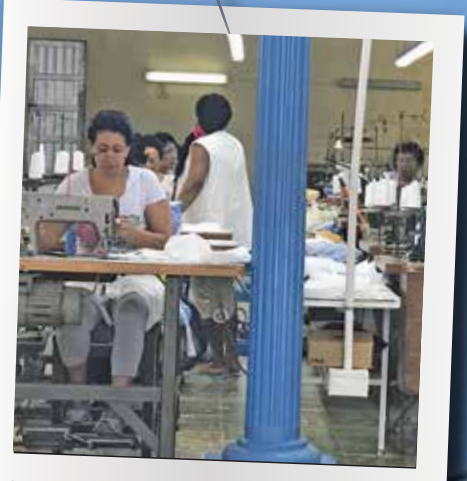
## The Cuban people

My Cuban experience was about the people and the people were warm and friendly. Hola (Hello) was the universal language and it was spoken freely from the next door neighbors, to the shop keepers to the pedestrians. Cuba welcomes tourists from throughout the world and we personally met people from Germany, Australia, England and Japan. It hasn't been until recently that Americans have been allowed to visit.

Our English-speaking hostess was a recent University of Havana graduate with a degree in teaching. She travelled with us throughout Cuba and shared her historical knowledge and customs of the country. Her education was paid for by the Cuban government and she will reciprocate by becoming a teacher. The students in the four cities we visited wore school uniforms. School is mandatory until ninth grade and is free through college.







Right, from top: Women are sewing at an old Havana sewing workshop. Payphones are seen on a Havana sidewalk. A woman walks down Havana streets carrying an umbrella for shade. Havana's Revolution Square with image of Che Guevara. Left: Havana schoolgirls are seen walking in their uniforms. Background: The city of Havana is seen at night near the American Embassy.

Due to the heat, most of the living is done outside or in the open. We didn't see abject poverty in Havana but we did see it in outlying areas and other cities. In the smaller cities, children were playing outside until after 10 p.m. We felt very safe during our stay in the country and didn't wear money belts.

Music is central to Cuban life. Street musicians were everywhere. The clubs and bars boasted the best local talent. In Trinidad, one particular local band gave us a private show and I'm now the proud owner of their CD.

On a poignant note, two of our traveling companions were of Cuban descent and this was their first trip to the country. Their father defected from Cuba in his early 20's and ultimately settled in NYC. During our trip, they were able to visit where he was born and raised. It was an honor to be part of their ancestral journey.







## POST CARD

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*Classic cars were everywhere! I felt like an extra in the American Graffiti movie looking for George Lucas, Ronnie Howard and Wolfman Jack. When trade relations were booming between the U.S. and Cuba, the car trade was thriving. Now it's a country fixed in time with brightly colored Ford, Chevrolet, Buick, Oldsmobile and Cadillac cars. The vehicles continue to be recycled from generation to generation with original parts being replaced with diesel engines. They are beautifully maintained and a joy to behold. Some owners keep them for personal transportation while others have turned them into income-producing taxis.*

### The Beauty of Cuba

The Cuban cities we visited encompassed the beauty and history of the country.

Havana is the capital and largest city with 2.1 million inhabitants. I highly recommend the city bus trolley tour around the city. It was a great value at 10 CUC's per person. Old Havana is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is the core of the city. Attractions include the revolution museum, the fortress and the Christopher Columbus Cemetery. The bounty of classic cars was icing on the cake.

A city highlight was to experience the world famous nightclub cabaret show at the Tropicana. The 75, 85 or 95 CUCs per person included a glass of champagne, half bottle of Havana Club rum per couple and a cigar. To my surprise and delight, a show girl grabbed my hand and we danced together as part of the show.

Santa Clara is the fifth-largest Cuban city. Outside the city is the Monument and Mausoleum of Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Inside the city is the Armored Train Park Museum, a national monument of the Cuban Revolution.

Trinidad is a historical UNESCO

World Heritage Site. The 500-year-old cobblestone streets aren't for the timid so make sure you bring solid walking shoes. The Plaza Mayor and Convento de San Francisco (bell tower) are worth the trip.

Cienfuegos is a beautiful artistic community and houses the famous art gallery of Santiago Hermes. It's located on the southern coast of Cuba and is dubbed the Pearl of the South.

### Exploring Cuba

If you're looking for air conditioning and all the modern conveniences, stay in a touristy hotel or visit by cruise ship. There are plenty around to accommodate. However, if you desire to live like a native, staying in a host home or Airbnb is the way to go. We did not drink the tap water and only consumed bottled water throughout the entire trip. Air conditioning was found in the bedrooms but not in the rest of the home. Due to the heat, it was very common to see shirtless men during the middle of the day. Homes were side-by-side with shared walls and doors were kept open to allow air circulation. Most homes didn't have screens so you had to watch out for flies. Pay phones were readily available in the city centers.

Grocery stores were minimalistic and were separated by function/product. Vendors walk the streets selling cakes, vegetables, bread, etc. In the non-tourist areas, restaurant prices were very low.

Primary forms of transportation were buses, cars and horses.

Government buses are without air conditioning and are standing-room only. Since we were a small group, we travelled in an air-conditioned van. It was observed that the super tourist buses had cooling and seating amenities. Horses are a viable form of transportation in the countryside and the cities.

Products that we take for granted in the U.S. have yet to become mainstream in Cuba. Items like hot curlers, hair dryers, sun visors, etc. are luxury products and almost impossible to obtain. We brought multiple goodie bags filled with hygiene products and gave them as gifts to the locals we met. Umbrellas are used daily as protection against rain and shine.

Che Cuevara's image is in every city and countryside. We did see some Fidel billboards throughout the country and that is all I'm going to say about that (see first ground rule).

The most exciting observation is Cuba isn't commercialized. It's only a matter of time before we see chain stores on every street corner but for now, it's refreshing to experience a country captured in a previous era. Again, the people of the country were very hospitable. We'd love to do a return visit.

*Dr. Robin Hall is the former Assistant Director at Saint Leo University and her husband Dr. Chuck Hall is the President Emeritus of Florida Gateway College. He served as the President of FGC for 17 years. Robin and Chuck are both retired and currently living in Flagler Beach, Fla.*





From top: Santa Clara is Cuba's fifth largest city. Tropicana nightclub's world famous cabaret show. Locals deliver bread in Trinidad. Cuban cities are bursting with classic cars. Facing page: Chuck Hall stands in front of a blue classic taxi cab.



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# gardening IN THE FLORIDA Summer



The hot and humid days of summer are upon us so there aren't many annuals we can plant now. However, there are always the heat-tolerant annual vinca or periwinkle, gaillardia, zinnias, marigold, portulaca, salvia and coleus. That said, I planted several flats of vinca and three fourths of them have succumbed to disease problems which is caused by being too wet from our everyday summer rains. If this happens be sure and pull out the wilted plants and discard in the trash. Thankfully there are new series being developed which offer increased disease resistance over the older varieties. When they

**LEFT:** The coleus is one heat-tolerant annual that will withstand the Florida humidity even in July and August. **CENTER:** Neomarica, commonly known as walking iris, is a great perennial for the hot summer if you can find it at least partial shade. **RIGHT:** The Justicia Carnea will bring some tropical feeling up to North Florida with a great splash of color all summer long in shady areas.

do survive they will flower all summer with beautiful blooms in many different colors. They would rather be kept on the dry side. This is not the year for vincas.

Perennials and bulbs are no-fuss plants, are used to the heat and work beautifully in flower beds.

Walking iris (Neomarica) is a no-problem, great evergreen plant that prefers shade to partial shade. They will become yellow and stunted if they get too much sun. They have strappy runners that plant themselves as they bend over and touch the soil near the mother plant. As soon as they have 12 leaves of their own they will show off with a day of blooms. They look like small delicate orchids of blue, yellow or white. Plant them in clumps for a focal point to be proud of even when they aren't blooming.

As with annuals it is also important to cut off the old flowers of perennials





**LEFT:** Container plantings are a great way to concentrate color. **BELOW LEFT:** The show-stopping St. Christopher lily will grow well in almost any location. **BELOW:** The marigold is another heat-tolerant annual with vibrant color.



instead of letting them go to seed. Perennials are great to have in your flower beds and they take care of themselves all year with very little care and then bloom during their season. Fill in a few spots with colorful annuals that you can tend to easily such as near the front door or patio area.

Container plantings have become a favorite way to concentrate color. Containers only require a few closely-planted assortments of plants, that have the same needs in water and sun exposure. They require a little more water than plants in the ground. Larger containers require less attention.

Pinch back poinsettias you have planted in the garden until September to encourage bushier plants. Cut back poinsettias leaving four leaves on each stem. Make sure they don't get artificial light at night, such as a street or porch light, or they won't bloom.

Lightly prune your mums from late spring through mid-August if they grow more than six inches tall. Dead-heading will encourage new blooms and keep the plants healthy.

The vegetable garden is pretty much done, so pull up the tired plants or they will attract insects and disease. It is a good idea to let the garden rest for a couple of months.

One of my favorite flowering bulbs for summer is Crinum jagus or St. Christopher lily. I look forward to their blooms all year when these beautiful, fragrant lilies become a real show stopper. Large white blooms resembling tulips, arise on tall stalks among a dark green fountain of strappy leaves. They multiply readily so I've added them to many spots throughout the garden. They will grow well in most any location but bloom better with a few hours of sun.

Justicia carnea is a tropical looking evergreen perennial that gives a great splash of color all summer long in shady areas. Some very cold years they may be frozen back to the ground but come back from the roots. They grow about 6 feet at maturity and have large pink plume-like blooms. After they bloom they will send another flush of blooms all summer long. They also come in white, yellow and a mix of pink with black edged petals. They root easily at a node.

Caladiums are always wonderful bulbs for shady areas. Many return each year but get smaller as they go through the winter. Cold and wet soil will cause the bulbs to rot. I add a few new ones each year to fill in. They don't require any care from me except to clip off an occasional bloom spathe, if you choose.

If you haven't trimmed your azaleas yet just wait until next year as their buds have already formed for spring-time blooms. If you need to trim your hydrangeas, soon after their bloom is the best time.

I hope you enjoy the summer with all it's fun times, no school, vacation time, rivers, lakes and beaches to visit, and the wonderful fresh fruit than comes into season. I have many fond memories of summers past.

*Martha Ann Ronsonet | Avid gardener and author of Gardening in the Deep South and Other Hot Pursuits*



# NATURAL PRODUCTS *for garden use*

In 1962 Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, exposed the hazards of DDT. It was the beginning of the green movement and being aware of how we treat our world and the creatures in it. There are better ways to control garden pests instead of using synthetic or chemical pesticides and exposing our surroundings as well as ourselves with products that pose a risk. None of us really want to be exposed to poisons or eat food that has been sprayed with pesticides. The alternative is organic gardening. We see organic food for sale in most grocery stores. The USDA definition: organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation.

To accomplish this we can use natural products and ways to manage our gardens. We have many choices

available. Natural products are safer for us and our environment. It is a much better choice than to indiscriminately use synthetic pesticides which kill all insects, good or bad. Tolerate a few holes in your plants and let the beneficial insects get rid of the harmful ones— how much easier is that? If you have a serious problem there are other safer products you can choose.

Most of the natural products breakdown rapidly when exposed to air, moisture and sunlight. When they break down there is less chance of exposure to beneficial insects. Timing is important and more frequent applications may be required. Always read the directions carefully and follow them exactly.

Natural products available to the public at any garden centers are listed below.

## OILS DERIVED FROM PLANTS

I. Oils derived from plants and petroleum. Oils are effective against small, soft-bodied insects and mites that are slow-moving or immobile such as scales, aphids, whiteflies and leafhopper nymphs.

- Citrus oils are effective against fleas, aphids and mites and also kill fire ant workers, some flies, paper wasps and crickets. Careful reading of the label can prevent damage to sensitive plants or testing on a few leaves first.

- Neem oil can be used as a repellent, insecticide, miticide and fungicide.

## PLANT EXTRACTS

II. Pyrethrum/Pyrethrins and are highly concentrated compounds extracted from the flower *Chrysanthemum*, has low toxicity making them one of the safest insecticides to use. Toxic to fish so be careful near water. Effective for ants, aphids, roaches, fleas, flies, and ticks.

Hot Pepper products contain capsaicin, which gives certain peppers "heat." Low doses of capsaicin are often combined with paraffin and sold as hot pepper wax insect and animal repellents. The flavor does not affect the taste of fruits and vegetables that have been treated.

## INSECTICIDAL SOAP

III. Insecticidal Soap is made from plant oils such as olive, palm, coconut and cottonseed, or animal fat (lard and fish oil). It must be applied directly to the pest and is effective against aphids, psyllids, whiteflies, mealy bugs, thrips, and spider mites, which are all soft bodied insects.





## MINERAL INSECTICIDES

### IV. Mineral Insecticides

- Diatomaceous Earth is made from silica shell. It is formulated as a dust and may be combined with pyrethrin. It cuts the soft insect's body, which causes it to dry out. It can be used against slugs, snails, and millipedes. It may pose an inhalation hazard so a dust mask is recommended.

- Sulfur is probably the oldest known pesticide in current use, dating back to the Roman era. It is used as a dust, wettable powder, paste, or a liquid. It is primarily used for disease control for powdery mildew, rust, leaf blights, fruit rots and mites, psyllids and thrips are also susceptible to sulfur. It is safe for most vegetables and fruit crops.

## MICROBIAL INSECTICIDES

V. Microbial Insecticides contain microorganisms like viruses, fungi, protozoa or nematodes or toxins they produce. Toxicity is very low and usually targets a specific insect (caterpillars).

- Bt *Bacillus thuringiensis* is effective against some caterpillars but not all. Treatment may need repeating because it becomes inactive in sunlight. Bt controls fall webworm, cabbage looper, bagworm, orangedog, tomato/tobacco hornworm, lo and oleander caterpillars. It does not control corn earworm, squash vine borer, or cutworms very well.

- Spinosad is sold as Grandevo, and controls a broad range of insects and mites by repelling them and disrupting feeding and reproduction. It is easy on beneficial insects but is highly toxic to bees when wet. Applications should be made in early morning or late evening when pollinators are not active. It works on caterpillars, flies, thrips, and beetles and has low toxicity to most beneficial insects.



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# BEAT *the* HEAT



**These summer workout tips will help you stay fit and stay safe.**

By TAYLOR GAINES (Photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY)

You're out on your first run of the summer. The sun is beating down. You're sweating through your shirt. Your legs feel like jelly. You stop for a second, gasping for breath, and look at your watch. You've run 0.1 miles. It can be miserable running and working out in Florida during the summer. The heat is unbearable and the humidity overwhelming. No one wants to work out in the summer, but it's just as important a time to work out as the rest of the year. "It's preventative medicine," said Jackie Knox, a personal trainer at Anytime Fitness in Lake City. "Exercise can cure many things." There are several ways to try to stay in shape during a Florida summer. We talked to some experts to get some ideas. Some of their advice comes courtesy of technological advancements; some of it has stood the test of time.

## GIVE TRX A TRY

There are many kinds of simple, portable workout devices that can help you get a good workout in throughout summer.

Knox and Spiker each recommended the TRX Suspension Training System, a portable, strap-based device that has a lot of versatility in the types of workouts you can do with it.

A TRX is a suspension-training system that allows you to have fast, effective workouts nearly anywhere. According to the TRX website, it can cost almost \$200, but the praise for it was strong.

"I use it for everything, from athletes all the way to 80-year-olds," Knox said. "It's very flexible as far as who can use it. I can do total body, core training, squats, lunges, yoga, you can do everything on it."

Spiker said it's great because of how easy it is to set up, too. You can just attach it to a tree or a doorway, and then you're on your way. It's also easy to travel with it, as people are wont to do during the summer.

"It's less than 2 pounds, and you can put it in your suitcase. Then you've got an automatic piece of workout equipment," Spiker said.



## 1 Change your start time

The most foolproof way to beat the heat is simple. Run earlier in the day. Beat the heat in the most literal sense. If you don't have it in you to get up before sunrise every morning, make sure you pace yourself.

"You want to definitely be careful," Knox said. "If you can't get out early before the sun comes up, you have to make sure you're decreasing your pace. And hydration is essential."

Interval workouts with lots of opportunity for rest and hydration are also good. Run quickly for a minute, then slow down for the next. Do that several times. This is just one way to get in a high-intensity workout in a short amount of time.

## Fight fire with water

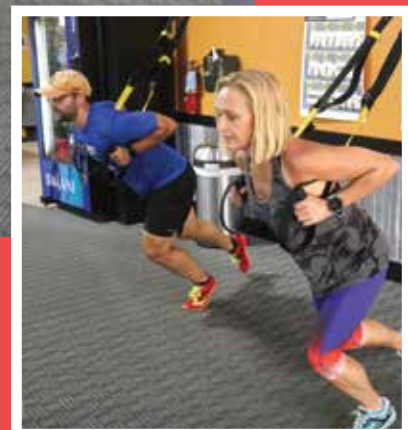
2 The pool is a popular spot during the summertime. It's easy to forget, though, that swimming can also be made into a full workout. Plus, it has a simple and effective way of keeping you cool. Most of it takes place underwater.

The other great thing about swimming is that it truly has an effect on keeping you fit.

"It works every single part of your body," said Ted Spiker, author of "Down Size: 12 Truths for Turning Pants-Splitting Frustration into Pants-Fitting Success" and health writer for Runner's World, Men's Health, Reader's Digest and AARP. "It's good for clearing your mind, and you can mix up your workouts so you're not just going all the same pace."

Try some different strokes and speeds to see how to make swimming work best for you. You'll probably feel simultaneously exhausted and refreshed when you're finished.

But remember to still drink plenty of water. Even though you're swimming, you can still get dehydrated. In between laps take a minute to rest and drink some H2O.



Kyle Lammers and Jackie Knox, personal trainers at Anytime Fitness in Lake City, do a variety of workouts using the TRX Suspension Training System. A TRX is a great portable piece of exercise equipment that helps develop strength, balance, flexibility and core stability simultaneously. The TRX leverages gravity and your body weight to enable you to perform dozens of exercises.



### 3 Pick up some old truck tires

A cheaper way to get yourself some effective workout equipment is by making a trip to your local tire shop.

Tires are another way to get yourself a full-body workout. You can flip them, do inverted pushups on them, do box jumps and all kinds of things. They certainly provide a method for a quick, tiring workout.

And often, tire shops are more than willing to give them away.

"We have to pay to dispose of them anyway," said Dale Aust, manager at Murray's Tire in Lake City. "If somebody wants one to flip, I can just give it to them. If they can find a use for 'em, I'm more than happy to let them have it."

Knox warned that with a hard workout like tire-flipping, you have to be extra vigilant in the Florida heat.

"You want to definitely be careful," she said. "If you start getting really cold and clammy, you've gotta get out of that heat immediately."

### 4 Use your phone

The key to staying consistent is staying accountable.

That's why Knox values her role as a trainer.

"If you've got an appointment set with me two or three times a week, you're accountable to me on your diet and days off," she said.

An app on your phone can function in the same way, giving you reminders for when it's time to work out and helping you schedule your workouts. Knox said she recently started using one called Aaptiv, a fitness app that provides audio workout classes that combine the guidance of a professional trainer with a motivating playlist.

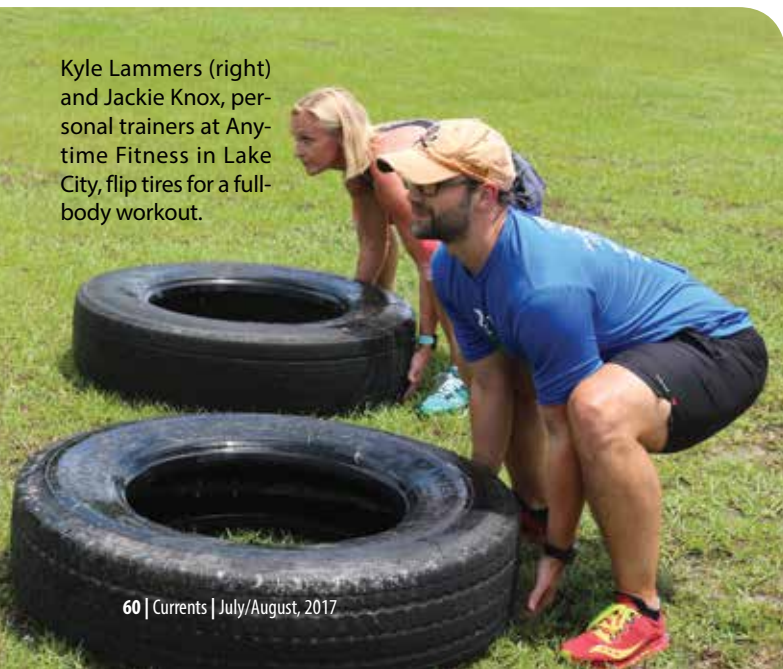
Apps sometimes help you plan workouts you can do indoors, too, to help you avoid the heat altogether.

"Hey, you don't wanna be outside all the time," Spiker said. "You can do this in your living room."

Hopefully, we've given you some ideas to stay fit this summer. Make sure you remember to stay hydrated and stay safe.

"If you're not feeling right, then quit or reduce the intensity," Knox said. "Listen to your body."

Kyle Lammers (right) and Jackie Knox, personal trainers at Anytime Fitness in Lake City, flip tires for a full-body workout.



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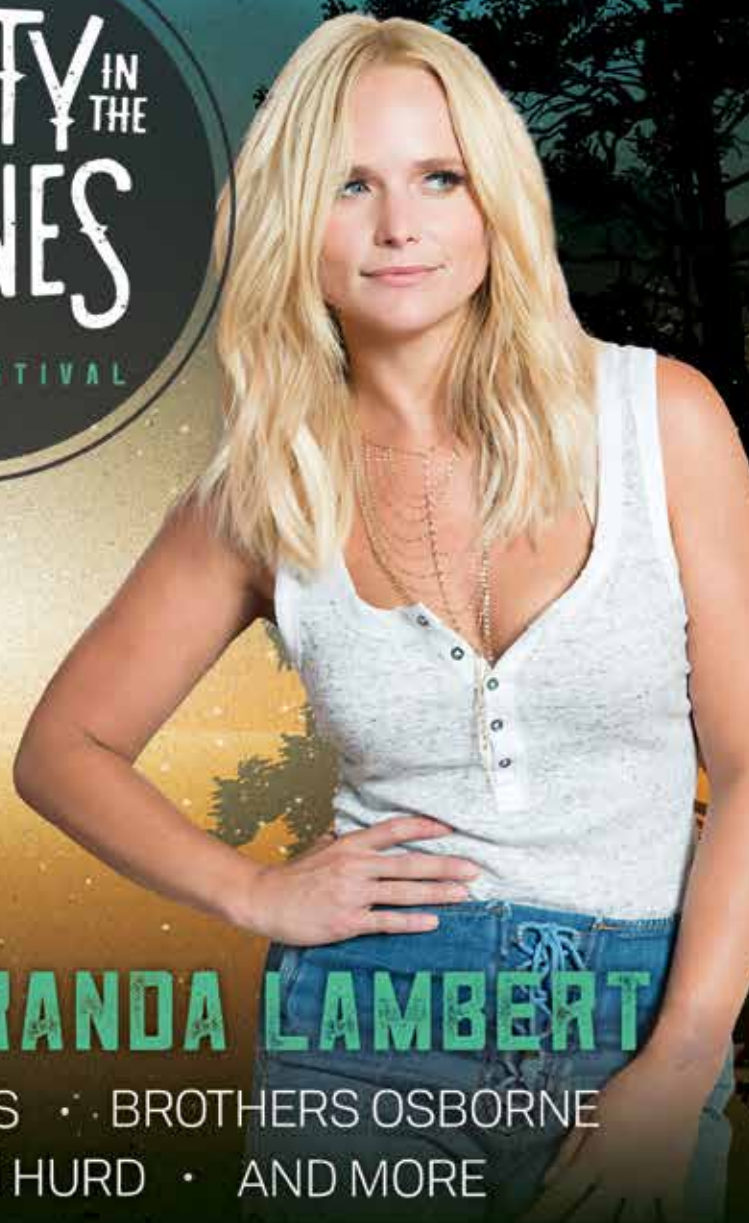


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# Fancy Camps

Looking to get in touch with nature without actually having to sleep on the ground in an un-airconditioned tent with something crawling under your sleeping bag? Say goodbye to roughing it and book a weekend with Fancy Camps, a “glamping” experience that allows you to have all the luxuries of a five-star hotel while staying in Florida’s beautiful state parks.

The Panama City Beach-based company founded by Micah and Danielle Heller creates unique and trendy camping experiences with all the comfort of home.

After a day trekking through the wilderness, swimming off Florida’s Gulf Coast and riding bikes along the beach, guests can head back to a fully furnished, air-conditioned tent at the Fancy Camps campsite. Decorated with bohemian-style pillows, lamps and floor rugs, these canvas bell tents create a peaceful escape from the sweltering hot summer. Instead of sleeping bags, guests can sprawl out on the queen-sized bed. It’s the great outdoors at its absolute finest.

Inspired by traditional camping seen in historical films, Micah and Danielle Heller founded Fancy Camps in 2015. The large canvas tent trend is popular in Europe but there are not many places for campers to experience it in Florida.

“It’s just something that wasn’t out there,” Micah said.

## Get out and stay comfortable at these luxury campsites in North Florida | By KATRINA POGGIO

(Photos courtesy of Jessica Connery Photography)

Micah grew up camping with his family so he knows the routine fairly well. Pack the car full of supplies, road trip to the wilderness and spend hours setting up camp just to tear it down a few days later.

“A lot of times it’s a good portion of the trip if you’re just going for a weekend,” he said about set up.

Fancy Camps cuts out the haste of setting up camp so people staying with them can jump straight into adventure when they arrive at the park. The service sets up the tents in state parks along the Florida Panhandle, including Grayton Beach State Park, St. Andrews State Park and Topsail Preserve State Park.

“You can show up with your cooler and your clothes and you’re good to go,” Micah said.

These parks are just a few hours away from Columbia County, and Fancy Camps will allow visitors to experience these parks in a new, exciting way.

During the day, guests can shop in beach towns along Florida Highway 30A, kayak, hike, snorkel or taste new cuisine in the area.





Then instead of returning to a run-of-the-mill hotel, they can spend the night under the stars in a luxury tent.

“There’s a ton to do around here but we like the idea that we provide something kind of unique,” Micah said.

He noticed that some people staying in Fancy Camps come to the area for the vast activities available in the panhandle, but a bulk of people actually travel just to stay in the luxury tents.

“We do get a lot of locals as well but I would say it’s mostly travelers,” he said.

Fancy Camps are also available on the east coast in the nation’s oldest city, St. Augustine. Fancy Camps hosts weekend Pop-Up Camps at Anastasia State Park year around.

The 1,600-acre beachside Florida state park offers bicycle, paddle board, kayak, sail boat and canoe rentals so visitors can explore the pristine beach and maritime hammock.

Every so often, Fancy Camps hosts yoga retreats at the Anastasia State Park. The next event, taking place the first weekend of October, will include six yoga classes during the three-day, two-night retreat.

A few weeks after that retreat, Fancy Camps will be at the Hulaween Music Festival at the Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park in Live Oak.

Campsites for special weekend events fill up fast, though. Micah suggests campers book weeks, even months, in advance to secure a spot.

Fancy Camps is available for weddings, backyard parties, corporate events, family weekend getaways and more.

“If you got an idea, if you want to do it, just go ahead and book it,” Micah said.

You won’t regret it.



## Reservations

**Reservations at a campsite in Grayton Beach State Park, St. Andrews State Park or Topsail Preserve State Park start at \$120 per night.**

## Jessica Connery Photography

A bride walks among the Fancy Camps tents at the Doe Lake Campground in Ocala. Fancy Camps is available for weddings, corporate events, backyard parties and more in addition to their regular and pop-up camp set-ups. For more photos of this Fancy Camps wedding setup visit [www.jessicaconnery.com](http://www.jessicaconnery.com).





# UNIQUE SWEET TREATS

**The Hyppo is changing the way the world eats ice pops.**

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

Avocados and coconuts. Honeydew and basil. Pears, Prosecco and mascarpone. These are not ingredients you would expect to find together, especially frozen and served on a stick. But somehow, The Hyppo has found a way to make these seemingly odd pairings and turn them into tasty, unique ice pops.

The St. Augustine-based gourmet ice pop company is known for making crazy frozen combinations of flavors. They're taking everything you thought you knew about ice pops and throwing it out the window. From peanut butter pie to blueberry-lavender lemonade, there's no telling what flavors they'll come up with next.

## **Their Story**

Born and raised in St. Augustine, Stephen DiMare had dreamed of starting his own business in his hometown. In 2010 while on a plane from Montana to St. Augustine, he pitched his idea of opening a coffee shop to the woman sitting next to him. She told him what he needed in his coffee shop were gourmet ice pops in the Mexican style.

When he returned to Montana, he went out and bought a cheap set of plastic ice pop molds and began experimenting with different flavors. In June 2010, he opened his first The Hyppo store in St. Augustine and from there his hobby has turned into a mini ice pop empire.

"My primary motivation was I wanted to start a business, do something creative and work in food," DiMare said. "This was never on the horizon. I never saw this coming."

The Hyppo now has nine shops and nearly 70 "Pop Peddlers," including Fifth Generation Farms in Lake City. They also sell their ice pops all throughout St. Augustine, Jacksonville, Gainesville and other parts of Florida.





## Their Ice Pops

With over 450 flavors and counting, The Hyppo creates one-of-a-kind ice pops full of fresh ingredients and unique flavor profiles. Their ice pop bases are pure fruit, and they're flash frozen to lock in those fresh flavors.

"We are just obsessed with authentic flavors so we constrain ourselves to only using fresh ingredients," DiMare said.

The Hyppo will have 250 flavors through the course of a year, with 35-50 flavors out in their flagship stores or retailers at any given time. These flavors aren't ones that you'll find on a shelf at a supermarket. They're each unique and most of them are unlike anything else out there.

"We think that's really fun and something you won't get at a grocery store," DiMare said about having so many different flavored ice pops. "We want to have fun and we translate that into our food and we want our guests to experience that."

When creating their flavors, The Hyppo goes off of what's in season. Living in a state that has an abundance of fresh fruit year around, the company is able to change its menu with the seasons. They recently launched a new ice pop they're calling "America's Pop." Made with coconut milk, a strawberry swirl and whole, fresh blueberries, this patriotic pop is perfect for summer.

Although the business started off with DiMare creating flavor combinations in plastic ice pop molds, The Hyppo now has a team of ice pop experts that works to come up with the best flavors. DiMare was very active in the creation of the first few hundred flavors, but now mainly consults the team on their creations.

"I love that aspect of it," DiMare said of creating the ice pops.

DiMare's personal favorite flavors are Pineapple Cilantro, made with fresh pineapple, evaporated cane juice, fresh cilantro, sea salt and water, and the Blackberry Jasmine made with a blackberry puree and jasmine tea.

No matter which ice pop you choose, whether it be a simple fruit pop like a Straight Up Strawberry or Peachy Peach, or maybe a more unique flavor like Peanut Butter Pie or Champaign Mango, you can't go wrong with a fresh, homemade ice pop on a hot summer day.

For The Hyppo locations and store hours, visit [www.thehyppo.com](http://www.thehyppo.com).





# Savor the Flavor

GREAT GRILL  
RECIPES FOR  
THE SUMMER

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

Grilling and summer go hand in hand. Whether you're turning up the gas grill for a quick weeknight meal or cooking over charcoal, low and slow, nothing beats a food fresh off the grill in the summertime. From meats to veggies to even desserts, you can cook nearly anything on the grill. The possibilities are endless, and these grilling recipes will last you all summer long.

## Grilled Hawaiian Chicken Kebobs

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup ketchup
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup canned pineapple juice
- 4 Tbsp olive oil, divided, plus more for brushing grill
- 1 ½ Tbsp rice vinegar
- 4 garlic cloves, minced (4 tsp)
- 1 Tbsp minced ginger

- ½ tsp sesame oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1¾ lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, chopped into 1 ¼-inch cubes
- 3 cups (heaping) fresh cubed pineapple (about ¾ of 3 lb pineapple)
- 1 ½ large green or red peppers, diced into 1 ¼-inch pieces
- 1 large red onion, diced into 1 ¼-inch pieces



### Instructions:

1. In a mixing bowl whisk together ketchup, brown sugar, soy sauce, pineapple juice, 2 Tbsp olive oil, rice vinegar, garlic, ginger and sesame oil. Stir in ¾ tsp pepper and season with salt if desired.
2. Place chicken in a gallon size resealable bag. Reserve ½ cup of the marinade in refrigerator then pour remaining marinade over chicken. Seal bag and refrigerate 1 - 2 hours (meanwhile soak 10 wooden skewer sticks in water for 1 hour).
3. Preheat a grill over medium heat to 400 degrees. Meanwhile, drizzle remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil over red onion, bell pepper and pineapple and toss.
4. Season red onion and bell pepper with salt and pepper, then thread red onion, bell pepper, pineapple and chicken onto skewers until all of the chicken has been used. Brush grill grates with olive oil then place skewers on grill.
5. Grill 5 minutes then brush along tops with ¼ cup of remaining marinade. Rotate to opposite side and brush remaining ¼ cup of marinade on opposite side and allow to grill about 4 minutes longer, or until chicken registers 165 degrees in center on an instant read thermometer. Serve warm.





## Grilled Strawberry Pie

### Ingredients:

- 1 pound fresh strawberries (about 2  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups), quartered
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tbs cornstarch
- 1 refrigerated pie crust, softened as directed on box
- 1/4 cup strawberry preserves
- 2 9-inch disposable foil pie pans

### Instructions:

1. Heat gas or charcoal grill to medium-high heat. Try to maintain heat around 400°F.
2. In medium bowl, mix strawberries, sugar and cornstarch; set aside.
3. Unroll pie crust. Place in ungreased pie pan. With back of spoon, spread preserves evenly on crust. Spoon strawberry mixture on top. Slightly fold crust over filling.
4. Place second pie pan upside down on grill to make elevated surface. Place pan with pie on top so it is elevated off grill. Cover grill; cook 20 to 25 minutes or until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Remove from grill; cool 10 minutes before serving.



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## Grilled Mexican Street Corn

### Ingredients:

- 4 ears corn
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1½ cups sour cream
- ¼ cup freshly chopped cilantro
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 lime, juiced
- Red chili powder, to taste
- 2 limes cut into wedges, for garnish

### Instructions:

1. Remove the husks of the corn leaving the core attached. Grill the corn turning once on a hot grill or cast iron pan until it starts to get slightly charred.
2. In a small bowl mix the mayonnaise, sour cream and cilantro. Remove the corn from the grill and slather with the mayonnaise mix. Squeeze the lime juice over the corn and heavily season with parmesan. Sprinkle with chili powder.



## Grilled 3-Cheese Pimento Sweet Pepper Poppers

### Ingredients:

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jar (4 oz) pimentos, drained
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 10 mini sweet peppers, cored, seeded and sliced in half lengthwise

### Instructions:

1. Place cheeses, garlic, pimentos, and basil in a large bowl. With an electric hand-held mixer, beat on medium speed until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Fill halved sweet peppers with filling. Grill poppers over medium-high heat on tin foil until peppers start to char and soften and the filling is warm and melted, about 5 minutes.
3. Enjoy poppers immediately while they're hot.



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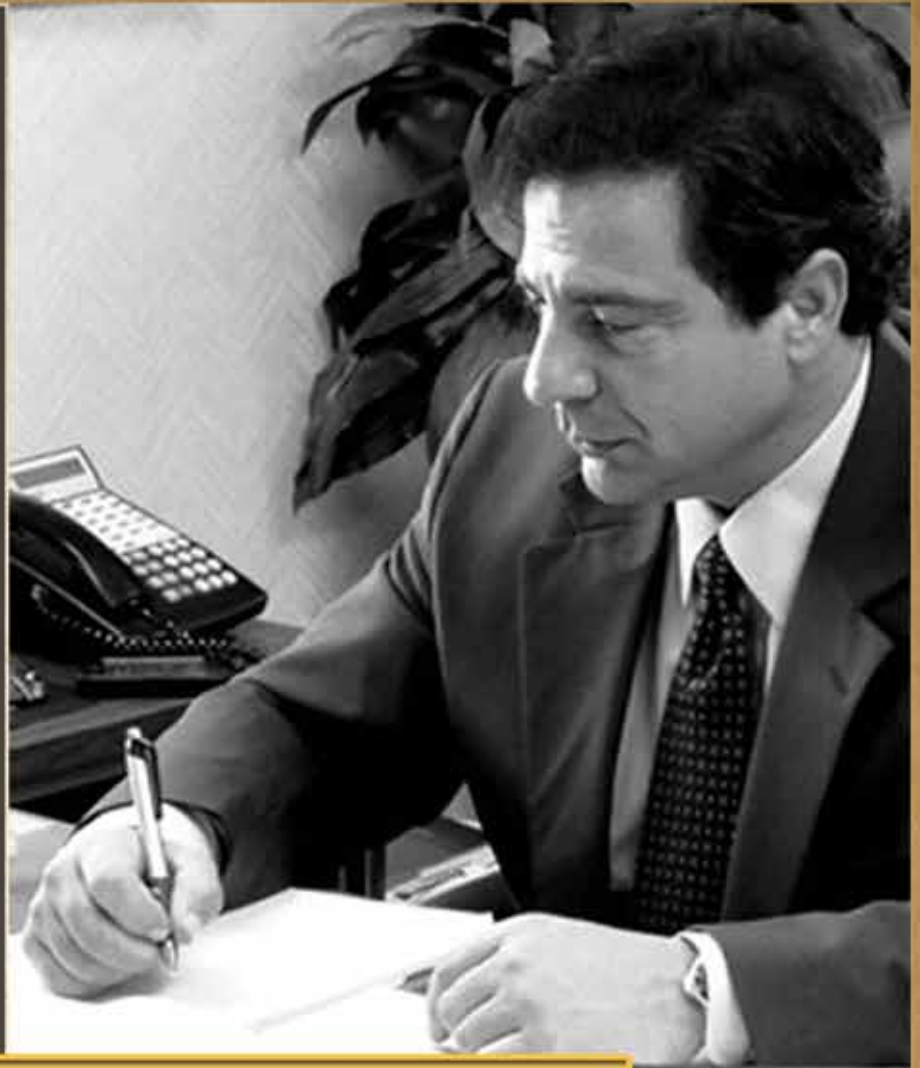
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