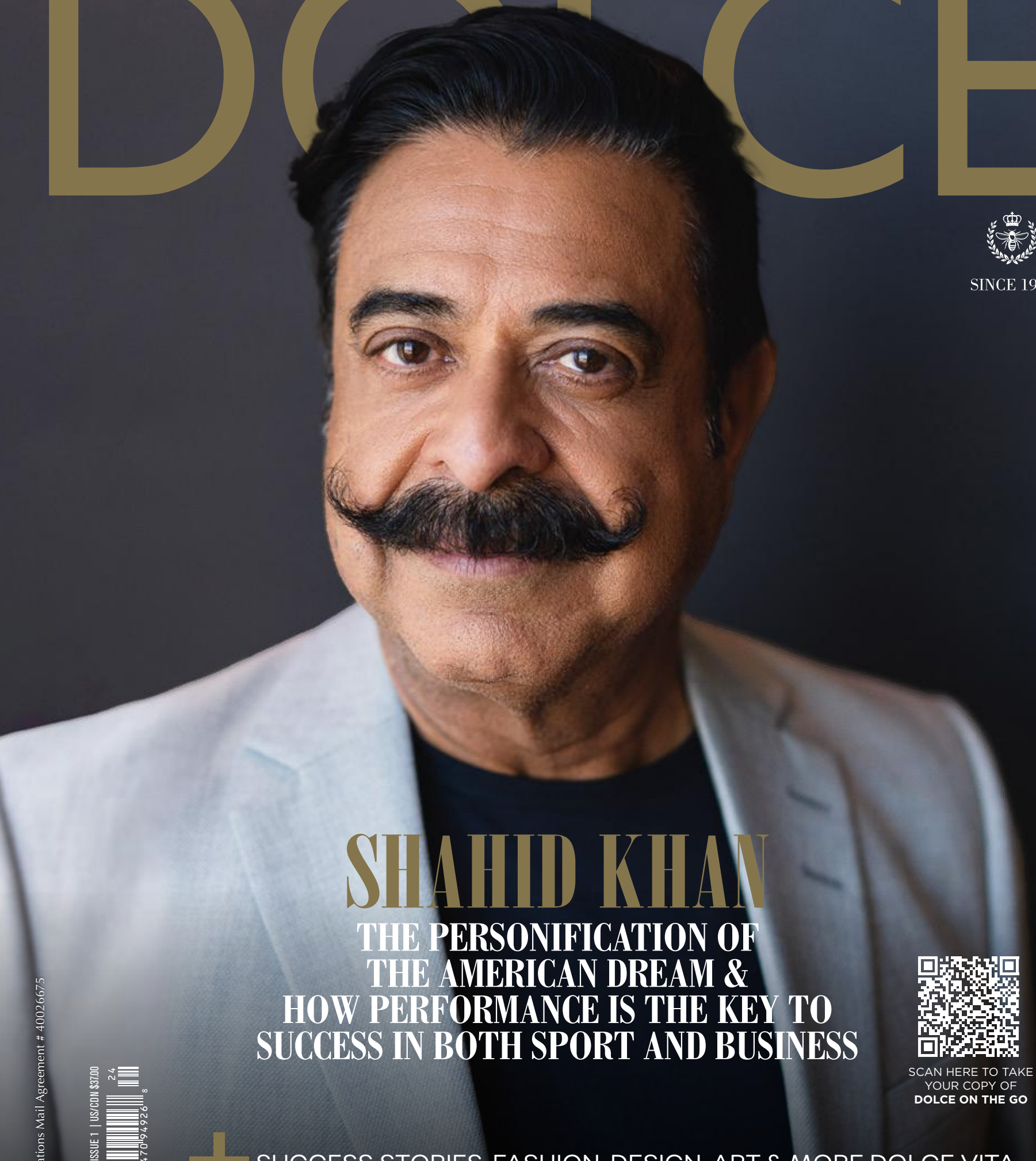


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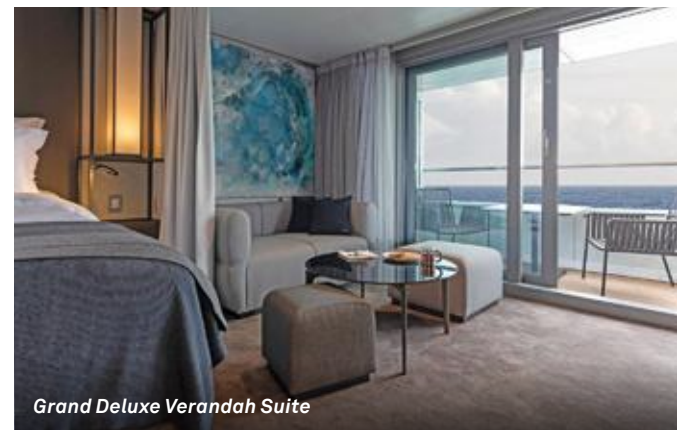




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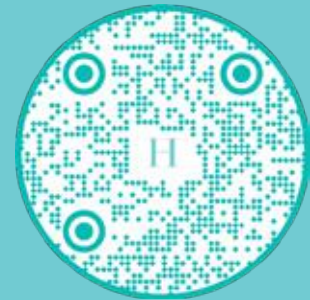
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## Living Life by the Golden Rule

**W**hat is the Golden Rule? You may be aware that the Golden Rule is the principle of treating others as you'd want to be treated. Various expressions of this rule can be found in the tenets of most religions and creeds throughout the ages. It can be regarded as an ethic of reciprocity, and different religions approach the concept in various ways. But did you know that philanthropist David C. Lincoln founded an entire university on this one principle?

Claremont Lincoln University was founded in 2011 and envisioned as a graduate educational system that would reflect the power and potential of the Golden Rule. Lincoln, who died in 2018, believed that this approach to education, which develops in its students the key skills of mindfulness, dialogue, collaboration, and change, would better prepare them to find solutions for global problems and to repair the world.

Treating others as you would like to be treated, though, as simple as this idea is, can be very difficult to put into practice for some people. As Dr. Eileen Aranda, the president of Claremont Lincoln University, said in an early interview, "When we

move away from the ability to interact with each other, we've engaged in rigid individualism, which really says, 'My point of view is the only point of view — and if you disagree with me, you are wrong ...'"

This university's graduates have developed skills that will allow them to create positive social change. Much like these graduates, the employees of the Four Seasons live by the Golden Rule, a rule instilled by Isadore Sharp, the founder and chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. That just might be the not-so-secret reason that the Four Seasons is the world's leading luxury hospitality company. The Golden Rule is the bedrock of the culture of the company and, quite possibly, the secret to the brand's enduring success.

This issue's cover men, Isadore Sharp and Shahid Khan, the owner of the Four Seasons Hotel Toronto since 2016, get along so well in business and in life because they share the same values. They are both innovators and visionaries, and both had parents who instilled in them a strong ethic of hard work, honesty and sense of self. Both have devoted countless hours and millions of dollars to their philanthropic efforts.

By now, you know how we love to bring you all-American/Canadian success stories. So, reading about the journeys that led to Sharp and Khan's successes can inspire each one of us to believe in ourselves, and to understand that we can all do better if we use the fruits of our labour to help others. Despite his success, Khan says he maintains the same perspective he did at 16 when he arrived in Illinois from Pakistan with \$500 dollars in his pocket. "I absolutely do, because money should not change your values," he says.

We hope you enjoy the Spring edition of *Dolce* and are mindful of the Golden Rule as you go about your life.

Until next time, be happy and continue to stay golden!

Michelle Zerillo-Sosa  
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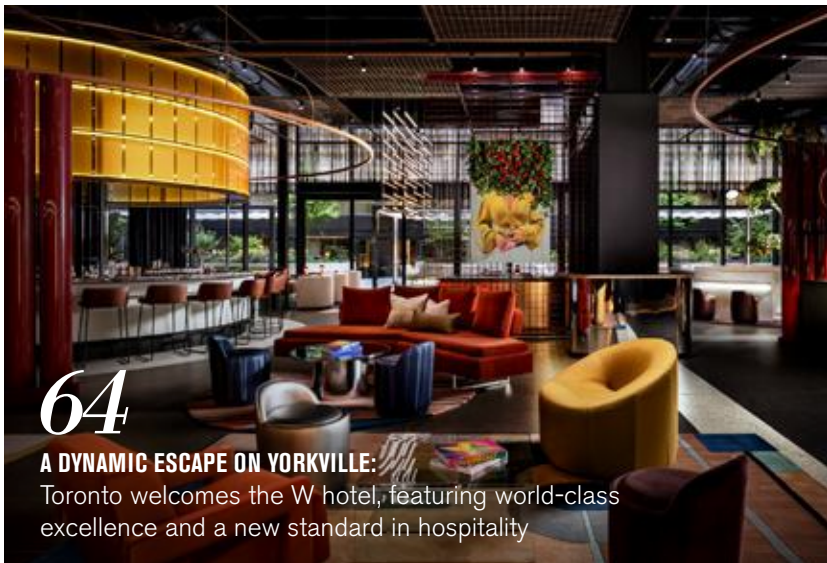
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# SIP AND SAVOUR

Corby's premium whisky Lot No. 40 Dark Oak wins Premium Whisky of the Year

WRITTEN BY RICK MULLER



The venerable J.P. Wiser's Deluxe was a worthy award-winner and duly recognized at the recent 2023 Canadian Whisky Awards

Lot No. 40 Dark Oak was also awarded a gold medal, while Lot No. 40 100 per cent Pot Still Rye Whisky was awarded a silver medal alongside the J.P. Wiser's brand Deluxe, 10-year-old, 15-year-old and 18-year-old offerings.

"We are incredibly honoured to have been recognized by this year's awards for our work, and we remain committed to expanding Canadian whisky to the world," says Dr. Don Livermore, master blender at the Hiram Walker and Sons Distillery in Windsor, Ontario. "For over 160 years, we have dedicated ourselves to becoming synonymous with premium award-winning Canadian whiskies. These results are a true reflection that the future is brighter than it's ever been for Canadian whiskies, and this is what happens when you take the time to listen to your consumers, customers and colleagues."

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Exceptionally fine premium whisky is characterized by taste, smoothness, tradition and quality, the very definition of Corby Spirit and Wine's Lot No. 40 Dark Oak. Hopefully, we all have an occasion that is suitable for its consumption — as it is the perfect complement.

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You don't have to be a whisky drinker to enjoy the libation because sometimes, given the occasion, circumstance or surroundings, nothing is better than a glass of smooth, fine, premium whisky. If you enjoy this special treat, you might consider selecting Corby Spirit and Wine's premium whisky Lot No. 40 Dark Oak. Recently named a Premium Whisky of the Year and given an Award of Excellence, Line Extension at the 2023 Canadian Whisky Awards. For connoisseurs, Lot 40 Dark Oak is a bigger, bolder version of Lot

40 rye whisky. Maintaining the core essence of Lot 40 — 100 per cent rye, distilled in a pot still, aged in new American oak barrels — Dark Oak is finished in a second new oak barrel, this time heavily charred. This finishing in a new-char No. 4 barrel adds even more notes and colour from the barrel, resulting in a bolder and more intense rye whisky.

For those who are not connoisseurs — it is simply delicious and the epitome of a smooth, good-tasting whisky. This is your go-to choice for whisky.



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# A VIBRANT STATEMENT

For the British royals, jewelry is no mere adornment.  
From the stones to the settings, everything has significance

WRITTEN BY MONICA MARANO



Kim Kardashian is the new owner of a diamond cross pendant that was worn by Diana, Princess of Wales

One of Princess Diana's favoured jewelry pieces is now in the hands of American socialite and businesswoman Kim Kardashian. The reality-TV star purchased Princess Diana's Attallah Cross pendant for nearly CAD \$266,500 during Sotheby's London Royal and Noble sale. The sale includes heirlooms, many hidden from view across centuries, which tell the story of noble households and beyond.

Created in the 1920s by luxury jewelry designer Garrard and owned by the former group chief executive of Asprey & Garrard, the cross-shaped pendant is a bold and colourful piece that features flowery design details that are further accentuated by square-cut amethysts and approximately 5.25 carats of round-cut diamonds.

The cross was first bought from Garrard by

businessman Naim Attallah in the 1980s, who, as a token of his friendship with Diana, loaned it to her several times over many years. It was his estate that put the item up for auction.

The late Princess Diana famously wore the bejewelled cross in October 1987, with a Catherine Walker dress, to a charity gala in support of Birthright, a charity working to protect human rights during pregnancy and childbirth.

Princess Diana's confidence grew during the 1980s as she became known for increasingly bold fashion choices, moving away from the more romantic and subdued style she had favoured. The fact that she wore what is now known as the Attallah Cross on several occasions — mostly to private events — confirms this evolution.

Princess Diana had a long-standing relationship with Garrard, having selected her engagement

ring from them in 1981. Over the years she would collaborate with Garrard and she wore pieces from the illustrious jewelry house on many occasions, including after her divorce. In her last public appearance, she wore what has come to be known as the Swan Lake necklace, a diamond and South Sea pearl necklace, which Garrard made in collaboration with her.

The auction house understands that Diana was the only one to have ever worn the cross, and this was the first time it had appeared in public since her death. While this is a piece of British royal history, it is delightful to know that the Attallah Cross has found a new lease on life and is in the hands of another famous name.

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# MARY BETH SHIMMON'S INSPIRED INTERIOR

Fashionista Mary Beth Shimmon unveils a five-storey home saturated with colours in San Francisco's Russian Hill neighbourhood

WRITTEN BY CEZAR GREIF



The living room's art pieces were sourced using many channels, including galleries, auctions, exhibitions and shows, studios, museums, memoirs and articles



San Francisco is a city of many hills, some say up to 44, but only seven can claim to be the original hills of San Francisco. Among them is Russian Hill, named after the many Russian naval and merchant ships that frequently visited the city throughout the 19th century. The steep slopes of this neighbourhood were made world-famous by movies like *Bullit* and *48 Hours*. The trendy neighbourhood is home to fashionista Mary Beth Shimmon and her husband David.

Although she has made a career for herself in the financial side of the technology industry, Shimmon is very attuned to the City by the Bay's sense of style — *Haute Living* magazine has described her as one "of San Francisco's most fashionable females about town."

"Love' is the word that encapsulates my own style," she explains. "I buy only things that I love and I usually plan to keep them forever — because, after all, I bought them because I love them. Sometimes I think that I should focus on a particular direction of style, but I never do, because the things I love cover the spectrum, from classic to avant-garde and across every decade. For me, fashion is about being innovative and making it your own. I like to mix everything together to express my own personality." San Francisco isn't always thought of as a fashion mecca, but Mary Beth Shimmon feels very strongly about the city's sense of style. "Although I don't think there is a 'San Francisco look' like I think there is in New York or L.A., my opinion is that San Franciscans care very much about style," she explains. "That doesn't necessarily mean that everyone follows the latest fashion trends, but they are concerned with expressing themselves through their style."

In a city obsessed with the latest technology, a passion for fashion and design can almost function as an antidote to the stress of day-to-day life. "I don't know if it is despite or because of my work being very left-brained that I am so interested in the right-brained world of design," Shimmon reflects. "One of my favourite things to do is spend time with my collection of fashion, interiors and art magazines and books. Immersing myself in these creative areas allows me to dream and escape and brings balance and calm. I believe that art has the power to do this in everyone. Each of my friends has a unique style, none of us the same, and we always appreciate an opportunity to show it."

This passion for style also extends to Shimmon's home, which she has recently renovated. "We had purchased the home and completed a needed renovation, but I was not yet ready to furnish it because I wasn't sure in which direction I wanted to go," she explains. "I felt like I needed to have a clear idea of the look and style that I wanted before we hired a designer. So I was stuck and doing nothing."



Owner Mary Beth Shimmon and her husband, David

Mary Beth Shimmon quickly set her sights on San Francisco-based interior designer Jonathan Rachman. Rachman has an interesting life story. Born in Indonesia, he studied in Switzerland and then moved to America. He started making flower arrangements for celebrities like Madonna and Marc Jacobs and then transitioned to interior design. His first-ever coffee table book, *Currently Classic*, was published at the end of last year by Flammarion, and features his work for Mary Beth Shimmon.

“Jonathan and I were friends when I attended a book-signing event that he hosted at his San Francisco studio for Dean Rhys Morgan and his book on the talented interiors illustrator Jeremiah Goodman, titled *Jeremiah: Inspired Interiors*,” Shimmon explains. “I’m obsessed with the way Jeremiah Goodman used his unique style of painting to convey the essence and personality of a room rather than merely detail its contents. You

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**SINCE THE IDEA OF A COCKTAIL IN THE LIVING ROOM WAS INTEGRAL TO OUR VISION, ONE OF THE FIRST PIECES THAT WE ACQUIRED WAS LAUREN BACALL AND HUMPHREY BOGART’S BAR FROM THEIR NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT, WHICH DESIGNER JONATHAN RACHMAN HAD PURCHASED AT THE AUCTION OF HER ESTATE**  
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imagine how you would feel in the space. Dean had brought several of Jeremiah’s original pieces with him to San Francisco and I was immediately drawn to the illustration of Carolina Herrera’s New York drawing room. It was saturated with red, cranberry and magenta, and although it was sumptuous, it

didn’t feel stuffy. I felt that being enveloped in that room would call for a cocktail. On that evening, Jonathan helped me realize that the essence of a room rather than specific details is what we needed to get started on the décor for our house. He began by creating a custom de Gournay chinoiserie

This photo was used for the cover of interior designer Jonathan Rachman's first monograph, *Currently Classic*, published by Flammarion in 2022

wallpaper in Schiaparelli pink, the first to have an ombré background, and perfect for a lover of fashion.”

This shared esthetic vision became the bedrock of Rachman's work on the Shimmon residence, a five-storey single dwelling. “Jeremiah Goodman's illustration of the Herrera's drawing room became the vision for our living room — the colours and the mood,” says Shimmon. “After designing the wallpaper Jonathan developed a floor plan, and we then began to look for pieces that we liked. A lot came via Chairish, and we also used things that we already owned that we still liked. The less waste the better. Although the pieces are a variety of periods and styles, Jonathan was able to masterfully and magically pull them together to create a room that is beautiful and functional. It turns out that Jonathan's method of interior design is similar to mine for fashion — to buy what you love and put it together in a unique way that expresses your personality. Oh, and of course Jeremiah Goodman's Herrera drawing-room piece ended up in the room as well.”

The living room is definitely the pièce de résistance of the Shimmon home. Its vast floor plan seems made to entertain guests. Mary Beth Shimmon agrees. “Since the idea of a cocktail in the room was integral to the vision, one of the first pieces that we acquired was Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart's bar from their New York City apartment, which Jonathan had acquired at the auction of her estate,” she explains. “Having a lot of seating is important for entertaining, so we have several occasional chairs around the room that can be pulled in. We love last-minute get-togethers and we recently had an impromptu whiskey tasting — we had all of the whiskeys and the vintage barware options right there in that bar.”

Key to the living room's character are the multiple art pieces on the wall. “Art is a passion to us, and my husband David is constantly looking and learning about artists and their work,” says Shimmon. “There are so many channels to discover art, which include galleries, auctions, exhibitions and shows, studios, museums, memoirs and articles — and we source pieces through all of them. Pieces pictured in Jonathan's book represent such a wide range. Some are directly from relationships with artists and studios such as statement-making James Goldcrown, Wes Lang, and the graffiti artist RETNA. Others come from galleries, such as Pat Steir's waterfall, Richard Prince's photographs and Santiago Parra's black and white abstract painting. The pieces from early 20th-century artists Albert Marquet and Édouard Vuillard caught our eye



as being representative of the history and feeling of the era and came from auction, as did the Ellsworth Kelly drawing, which David got for me as a birthday gift, as Kelly is one of my favourites. Each piece is something that we love on its own and we appreciate the work and journey of each artist. We are fortunate that Jonathan has the talent to weave everything together.”

Mary Beth Shimmon's passion for style and design was recognized by one of the leading authorities in the field: her moment of glory was attending a 2019 *Vogue* breakfast hosted by Anna Wintour. She was hand-picked to represent the Bay Area at the breakfast, sitting next to Wintour. Wearing Dior, Shimmon chatted with Wintour about the arts, particularly museum fashion

exhibits. The conversation also touched upon LGBTQ equality, global warming, art, plays and politics — no topic was overlooked. “The breakfast that I attended in Anna Wintour's office reflected that *Vogue* magazine has become a broader-based publication that focuses on current social and political topics in addition to fashion, and they are interested in talking to their readers about a variety of areas,” Shimmon remembers. “Anna's first question to me was ‘What issues are you interested in?’ Having said that, of course everyone that attended loved fashion.”

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# I HATE JOKES

If you think you've got a hilarious "Two men walk into a bar" joke for Howie Mandel, one of the world's funniest entertainers, he would prefer you keep it to yourself

WRITTEN BY RICK MULLER | INTERVIEW BY ESTELLE ZENTIL

**Y**ou wouldn't expect one of the world's funniest comedians to state that he hates jokes, but Howie Mandel hates jokes. In fact, this man, one of the most successful and busy funny men in show business, is probably as far away from classic Catskills stand-up as you can possibly get.

"I hate jokes," Mandel loudly proclaims in a recent interview with *Dolce* from Niagara Falls, Ontario, where he is shooting Season Two as a returning judge on *Canada's Got Talent*. "My inspiration for comedy is when I was a kid I watched a hidden-camera show called *Candid Camera* with Allen Funt, because it's real and relatable, and you don't have to get the joke. When somebody tells me "Two guys walk into a bar ..." it doesn't even make me laugh — because they didn't. You're just making up an outrageous story. I like very real and relatable comedy, so I really don't like jokes."

Mandel's fondness for observational comedy about everyday life has been his foundation ever since the fateful evening of Apr. 19, 1977, when he accepted the dare from his friends to go up on stage during the open-mic segment at Yuk Yuk's comedy club in his hometown of Toronto. By September 1978, he had a week-long booking there as a featured performer and, buoyed by his success, he took a trip to Los Angeles, was spotted doing a set at The Comedy Store and was hired as a regular performer, which led to opening for David Letterman during the summer of 1979. He was off and running, leading to a six-year run on the Emmy Award-winning show *St. Elsewhere*.

Not bad for a kid who was fired from almost every job he had and was expelled from three high schools. Despite this, he never lost the encouragement of his parents. "I got my confidence from my parents, who have always been incredibly supportive, regardless what was happening in my life — they were always my biggest fans," recalls Mandel. "Because, ultimately, there was a story that came along with each failure. Everything I

was ever in trouble for, got expelled for, got fired for — seems to be what I can get paid for today."

As a performer, stand-up, actor and executive producer, an argument could be made that Howie Mandel is the busiest man in entertainment. In addition to his work on *Canada's Got Talent*,

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**I LIKE VERY REAL  
AND RELATABLE  
COMEDY**

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he has also served as a judge for 13 seasons on NBC's *America's Got Talent* and also hosts the Netflix series *Bullsh\*t the Game Show*. Other recent projects include his documentary *Howie Mandel: But Enough About Me*, currently streaming on Peacock, his annual CW special, *Howie Mandel & Friends: Don't Sneeze on Me*, now streaming on FuboTV, NBC's *America's Got Talent: The Champions*, and in 2019, he released his first solo special in 20 years, *Howie Mandel Presents: Howie Mandel at the Howie Mandel Comedy Club*.

He and his wife of 43 years, Terry, have three children. He co-hosts a podcast, *Howie Mandel Does Stuff*, with daughter Jackelyn Shultz and co-hosts National Geographic Wild's *Animals Doing Things* with his son, Alex. His third child, daughter Riley, is a personal trainer who keeps him in shape for his many appearances, which include more than 200 stand-up shows a year across Canada and the United States, never straying far from his first love.

"As soon as I found stand-up comedy, it was the first time I was accepted, and I just needed to do that," recalls Mandel. "Regardless of everything

else I may do, I just need that because stand-up comedy is my home base. That's the primal scream at the end of the day for everything else I do."

A seminal moment of Mandel's career came in 2005 when, at the urging of his wife after turning down the offer three times, he accepted the host role on NBC's *Deal or No Deal*, which ran for seven seasons. Mandel's genuine empathy for the contestants and the decisions they had to make — financial decisions that could change their lives — made the show an immediate smash hit.

"The day after the first airing," he told Alex Trebek several years ago in Trebek's documentary *Game Changers*, "I was walking through the airport, and people were literally running up to me and screaming 'DEAL OR NO DEAL!' and I thought to myself, 'My God, I've got a catchphrase!'"

Mandel became an author in 2009 with his memoir, *Here's the Deal: Don't Touch Me*, in which he is very open about his mental health issues — he has suffered from depression, anxiety and deals with OCD and ADHD. That focus remains a big part of his life today as he serves as an ambassador for Bell Media's Let's Talk, an initiative to raise funds for mental health research and to reduce the stigma of the illness. He has some sage first-hand advice for the younger generation who may be struggling with life's complexities.

"You must reach out, talk about it, talk to a caregiver and look for help," says Mandel. "And don't give up until you find the answer to whatever your coping skill is. Whatever that is, just keep reaching out. If you don't reach out, it's kind of like drowning — if you don't surface for a moment and yell help, nobody is going to throw you a life-preserver. You need to keep yelling help."

That concern is a window into the man. No pun intended, but he is the real deal. Howie Mandel is friendly, affable, authentic, brilliant, empathetic and genuine. Just don't try to tell him a joke.

@@howiemandel

Never a fan of "schtick," Mandel's observational takes on everyday life have made him one of the world's most popular stand-up comedians





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Options depend on the cruises you select, too. For example, the line’s newest ship, *Seven Seas Grandeur*, due to set sail in November, will include a multimillion-dollar art collection that features the first Fabergé Objet d’Art to permanently reside at sea. This ship also features the Regent Suite, a space spanning almost 4,500 feet overlooking the

bow of the ship with two bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, a living room with a personalized bar setup, a dining room and a private in-suite spa with unlimited complimentary treatments.

“Regent Seven Seas Cruises guests are discerning and enjoy the finer things in life,” DeMarco continues. “They are well-travelled but always seeking for more discoveries and new, personalized experiences.”

Looking ahead to the rest of this year and next, the luxury cruise line’s attention to detail is set to continue with a roster of new stops and immersive cultural experiences in destinations across the



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THROUGHOUT  
OUR 30-PLUS-  
YEAR HISTORY,  
WE'VE BEEN AT THE  
FOREFRONT OF  
INCLUDING AS MUCH  
AS POSSIBLE INTO  
THE CRUISE FARE

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globe. These include a 78-night arctic adventure, a 62-night journey from Stockholm to Athens and a 59-night trip from Sydney, Australia, to Tokyo, Japan.

“A truly luxurious, all-inclusive travel experience is about having all the little details taken care of for you” DeMarco says. “Onboard, our outstanding attendants and butlers will maintain your suite just the way you like it, ensuring a fresh, warm and comfortable home is awaiting your return each day. The direction of the maître d’, the expertise of the chef, the guidance of the sommelier and the attentiveness of the wait staff will make each dining experience feel like a symphony of refined flavours and impeccable service.”

Thanks to the selection of fine wines and spirits, not to mention dishes that have been authentically crafted from places like France, Italy and Asia, dining aboard the ships is a true luxury. Plus, with the introduction of more than 200 plant-based dishes, you can rest assured there’s something for all flavour profiles and preferences.

To further mention the on-board team, they too personify what it means to travel in style. As DeMarco says, “It’s our extended family of guests, crew and shoreside team members around the globe that bring to life the unrivaled Regent experience and bear witness to the broad history and deep roots that connect us all. We discover



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that travel has the power to unify. Fuelling those connections and building relationships as we pursue the horizon and explore the world in luxury — this is at the heart of what we do.”

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nights you will sail elevates you to the next level,” DeMarco shares.

Thanks to the destinations it offers, its approach to luxury and the level of personalized service, Regent Seven Seas Cruises is a true wonder on water. As DeMarco concludes, “Cruising with us is the best way to travel.”

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Five Trail is the result of a collaboration between whiskey experts, distillers and brewers



# A SENSORIAL DRINKING EXPERIENCE

Thanks to a taste that’s been carefully crafted and perfected, Five Trail whiskey is a blended American whiskey ideal for connoisseurs and newcomers alike

WRITTEN BY JOSH WALKER

The desire to create whiskey came to David Coors, vice president at Next Generation Beverages for Molson Coors, 20 years ago. He’d been home from university for the holidays when he asked his father, Pete Coors, why they didn’t make whiskey. When his father replied that they were already good at one thing, and that was making beer, the conversation, and idea, was shelved.

That is, however, until 2019, when Molson Coors launched its Next Generation Beverages

division and started exploring other categories to participate in. “It was finally the right time to revisit that 20-year-old conversation and launch a whiskey,” says Coors. “There’s a prominent connection between whiskey and beer. The processes before distillation are very similar, and ingredients, such as malt and water, are key in both.”

Five Trail whiskey is the result of that conversation. Described as “an intentionally blended American whiskey,” Coors describes its

aroma as “fruity, sweet, clean and crisp with notes of baking spices and fresh herbs.” Its taste notes balance oak with golden apple, honey, roasted nuts, caramel, ginger and chocolate malt, and the drink manages to finish with a “warm, powerful coating that mixes sweetness and spice.”

The taste of the whiskey is so complex and has been so meticulously crafted that Coors goes as far as to call it an experience. “Five Trail will take your palate on a journey,” Coors continues. “You can really identify each of the components: the

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FIVE TRAIL

sweetness from the wheated bourbon up front, the body and complexity of the four-grain bourbon through the mid-palate, and the slight ginger spice on the finish from the single malt.” He adds that it’s best enjoyed neat, on a large rock, or in a whiskey-forward cocktail like its Five Trail Old Fashioned.

The process of making it relies on collaboration, not just with distillers but with experts who know their craft, and all of the whiskeys are aged for a minimum of four years. “We married that with what we know best: our malt and the pristine Colorado Rocky Mountain water from our home state of Colorado,” Coors says. “Put together, we’ve delivered a truly unique and incredibly well-crafted product from a team of experts in their respective yet connected fields.”

Thanks to this process, and the flavour notes that come together, it does well when it comes to pairings. “If you want Five Trail to shine, we recommend pairing it with simple snacks to avoid overpowering the flavours,” Coors continues. “Some good options include salted crackers or chips, dried fruits and nuts, dark chocolate and milk cheeses. In terms of a meal, it can stand up to the best steak, pork, lamb and smoked salmon.”

There’s also an element of history that goes into its creation. Coors’s great-great-grandfather immigrated to America over 150 years ago, and he describes how Five Trail is founded on “that unbroken spirit; trials, tribulations and a frontier

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**FIVE TRAIL WILL  
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PALATE ON A  
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COMPONENTS**

”

spirit that lives in us as strongly today as it did in him.” He continues to say how he’s inspired by previous generations, and taps into other established experts and their own histories to achieve a quality product.

Five Trail whiskey’s entry into the market comes at a time when whiskey has become a go-to for many. In fact, in a report on what Ontarians were drinking in 2022 by the LCBO, whiskeys from the Americas have been trending upwards.

David Coors, vice president at Next Generation Beverages for Molson Coors



With Five Trail satisfying those tastes but also creating something new, there’s no doubt its future looks bright.

“Life is full of sweet moments and it’s important to cherish each one of them, and even better when you can celebrate those moments with family, friends and, of course, a glass of Five Trail!”

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Roberto Marotta and  
Jacqueline Nicosia, met  
in Sicily and now own two  
Toronto restaurants featuring  
the finest Sicilian cuisine

**On Roberto:**

Jacket - Isaia  
Shirt - Sannino  
Pants - Brunello Cucinelli

**On Jacqueline:**

Dress - ZIMMERMANN  
Earrings & ring - Kate Spade

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EXCLUSIVE FOOTAGE OF OUR INTERVIEW  
WITH ROBERTO AND JACQUELINE



# FROM SICILY, WITH LOVE

With restaurants Ardo and Dova, Chef Roberto Marotta and business partner, Jacqueline Nicosia, have brought authentic Sicilian cuisine to Toronto

WRITTEN BY RICK MULLER | INTERVIEW BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO

**W**hile traditional Italian cooking has become a staple and favourite of North American diners, with some aficionados even being able to discern between Northern and Southern Italian cuisine, Sicilian cuisine is slightly different, even mysterious, especially fine, top-quality tastes from Sicily as practised and mastered by Chef Roberto Marotta at his Dova restaurant in the heart of Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood.

Sicily is one of those magical places on Earth. An island floating in the middle of the deep blue Mediterranean, its cuisine and method of cooking reflects the many countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Lucky for us, Chef Roberto soaked up those influences and is a product of his roots, having been born in the port village of Milazzo and raised in a home where cooking was the centre of family life, memories which have stayed with him and shaped him.

"I grew up in a family in Sicily where food was a very important component of everyday life," says Marotta in a recent interview with *Dolce*. "It's not just about feeding ourselves, it's about the culture and what is in season. A beautiful memory that I have of my childhood in the summertime is going with my grandfather to the fish market and seeing what was fresh and what was caught that day. That's something that resonates and has stuck with me until this day."

Seeing his mother prepare food — fresh from

the sea and from the land — eventually inspired Roberto and his brother Alessandro to open a restaurant on the water in Milazzo called Mood.

Chef Roberto owns Dova along with Jacqueline. Dova comes on the heels of their first restaurant, Aldo, a staple of Toronto's Corktown neighbourhood, so named because their young son had a particularly difficult time pronouncing

had been teaching in Japan and was on her way home to Canada when she decided on a layover in Sicily, where her parents come from and still have an apartment. The Sicilian cuisine enticed her tastebuds and a handsome young chef doing the cooking captured her heart.

Four months after Jacqueline returned home, Roberto arrived to join her and begin a new life

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**SICILIAN COOKING IS MORE LIGHT,  
MORE SIMPLE AND EXPRESSED IN A  
WAY WHERE THE TIME OF COOKING  
THE FOOD IS VERY MINIMAL**  
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his full name, Leonardo. When their daughter Vivienne was born, they formed Vivi Imports to bring the finest ingredients from Sicily's shores to Canada; now their hospitality group has further evolved with Dova, where Jacqueline is the creative director. She manages its extensive event -design services, handling large parties, corporate events and weddings.

Roberto and Jacqueline's relationship makes an endearing Italian love story. Jacqueline Nicosia

in Canada. That included an intensive study of the fresh produce, meats and seafood available here, while at the same time he maintained and expanded the relationships he had developed with the finest Sicilian producers. It was important for Roberto to then develop those same types of relationships in Ontario.

"We are very lucky to be in Ontario, as over the last 13 years I was able to connect with a lot of farmers, even if the season here is a little bit short,"



Chef Roberto's passion for Sicilian cooking comes from growing up in a family where cooking was the centre of family life, in Milazzo, Sicily

says Marotta. "Working with them and sourcing what is fresh and in season at the time gives us the opportunity to showcase something that is very special."

While North American palates may be used to traditional Italian cuisine such as pastas, sauces or pizza, Sicilian cuisine is a different, more refined and lighter style of food which, Chef Roberto explains, is all about the cooking.

"The difference is in the style of cooking," says Marotta. "Sicilian cooking is more light, more simple, and expressed in a way where the time of cooking the food is very minimal. Olive oil is an important component. While it may be a simple ingredient, along with the herbs and spices, it is very important."

Marotta's port village of Milazzo happens to be home to a 300-year-old tuna processing facility, and with his extensive knowledge of tuna, it has become one of Chef Roberto's many signature dishes, for which he only uses extra-virgin olive oil.

"The idea is not to just use the oil on the tuna," says Marotta in explaining the difference in selecting only the best and freshest olive oil, like Famiglia Zerillo olive oil used in the Tonno Scottato recipe. "We also slow-cook the olive oil with some cherry tomatoes and a sweet garlic sauce, so the oil is not just complementary to the dish but very present in the dish. Extra-virgin Famiglia Zerillo olive oil comes from Southern Italy and I find it to be a little bit more pungent, with high acidity compared to other olive oils. It gives a perfect balance to the dish because of its colour, its fragrance, and it is very fresh at the same time."

Jacqueline is equally as proud of her husband's cooking as she is about the feeling their restaurants give their guests. "It's really important for people coming into Ardo or Dova to feel welcome, like they are really special. From the service when you walk in the door to all the dishes that come out, it all plays together in how people experience our restaurants," she says.

It has been said about Sicilian cooking that everything should simply be about allowing the flavours to come through and the land to talk. Chef Roberto Marotta and Jacqueline Nicosia, have mastered both the flavours and the land in creating authentic Sicilian cuisine in Toronto.

[www.dovarestaurant.com](http://www.dovarestaurant.com)

@dova.restaurant

# Tonno Scottato (per due)

## INGREDIENTS

260 g (130 g per steak) fresh bluefin (or yellowfin) tuna steak  
50 ml of Famiglia Zerrilo olive oil  
4 cloves of fresh garlic  
50 ml homo milk  
1/4 Romanesco cauliflower  
8 red cherry tomatoes  
3 sprigs of fresh lemon thyme  
Salt (to taste)  
Black pepper (to taste)

1 small pot  
1 medium pot  
1 container with immersion blender  
1 small non-stick pan  
1 large non-stick pan

2 servings



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## DIRECTIONS

1. Dry tuna with a paper towel and keep off to the side.
2. In a medium pot with boiling water and salt, blanch Romanesco for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside. Once cooled, break off segments for plating.
3. In a small pot, bring the milk to a soft boil, turn off and add in garlic (crushed, but still in one piece). Let steep for 5 minutes.
4. Take out the garlic and place in another container. Add half of the milk along with a tablespoon of olive

- oil and a pinch of salt. Blend together using an immersion blender till smooth. Use remaining milk to make sauce thinner if desired. Set aside.
5. In a small non-stick pan, put in 40 ml of olive oil over medium heat and bring to 150 F (65 C). Add whole cherry tomatoes and half of the lemon thyme. Turn off the heat and let sit for 12 minutes.
6. Brush tuna with a spoonful of olive oil. Season both side of tuna with medium coarse salt and black pepper. Bring a non-stick pan to medium

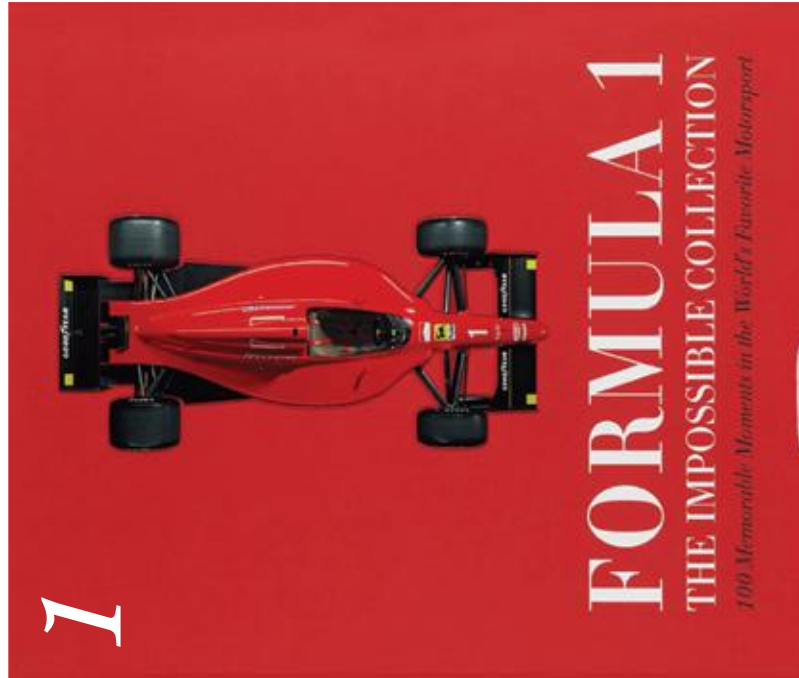
heat, sear the tuna for 2 minutes per side, leaving the centre translucent (medium rare).

7. Plating: on a dinner plate, add 2-3 spoonfuls of the garlic sauce. Using a spoon, add a few tomatoes and Romanesco on the side of the plate. Slice each tuna steak into 3 pieces, then place on top of your garlic sauce. Sprinkle remaining lemon thyme and as a finishing touch, drizzle olive oil over tuna and vegetables.

— Recipe by Chef Roberto Marotta

# OBJECTS of

We have all been desiring warmer weather, and now that spring has sprung, *Dolce's* Objects of Desire picks will get you ready for this exciting new season. From new floral fragrances to refreshing home décor, this spring will be the most stylish one yet. PRODUCED BY MICHELLE ZERILLO-SOSA | TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



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- 1. Assouline Formula 1: The Impossible Collection  
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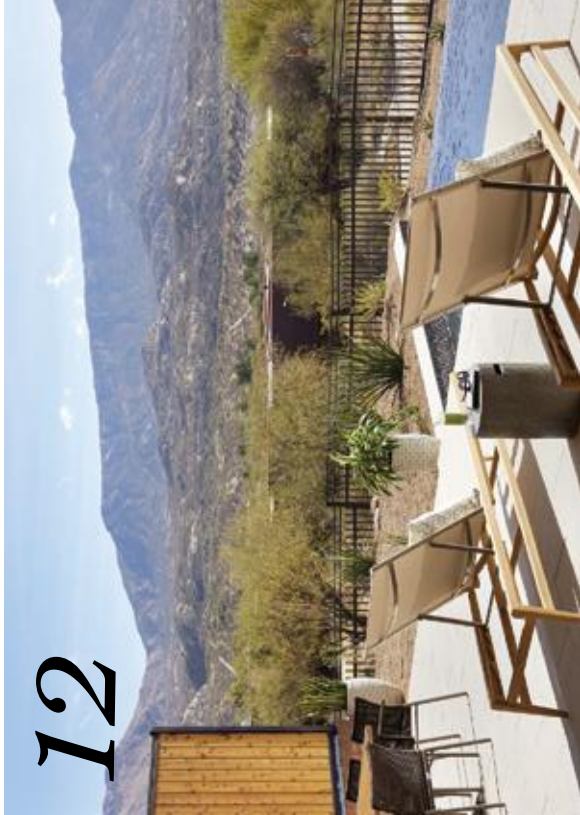
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14



# DESIRE

# THE EXTRAORDINARY WATER SOMMELIER

Meet the man crazy about water, on a mission to shine a light on water conservation

WRITTEN BY ESTELLE ZENTIL

Prior to its closure, Michelin-starred First Floor at Hotel Palace Berlin was renowned for its refined European cuisine and world-class wine list, which featured over 1,500 carefully selected bottles from around the world. The wine list, in particular, represented the culmination of an extensive process of careful selection and testing, and deservedly won the praise and attention of patrons. Although it wasn't until one guest complained that the restaurant had only one option for bottled water that general manager Martin Riese had his eureka moment — he needed a water menu to rival his wine list.

As Riese explains, the lack of water choices at First Floor was akin to a sports bar with only one beer on tap. “What is wrong with this sports bar? That’s happening to water in pretty much every restaurant around the world. They just have one brand, whatever they decide on. Mostly they decide on convenience, not even on taste or quality, and water companies pay you money for the water on the water menu.”

As Riese began his research into water, he soon learned that water demanded to be taken seriously. Among other things, he learned that water can have an impact on wine and that wine tastes different with different sources or types of water. This discovery represented the perfect opportunity for him to launch First Floor’s water menu, which, at its peak, had 40 different kinds of water, from Canadian glacier water to Tasmanian rain water. From a complaining customer, Riese managed to turn wine into water.

Riese’s recent appearance in Zac Efron’s Netflix show *Down To Earth* for an extended water-

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**IT’S UNBELIEVABLE  
HOW POWERFUL,  
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THINK ABOUT  
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CANYON’S CREATED  
BY WATER AND  
RIVERS**  
”

tasting session has brought renewed attention to the importance of the water we choose to drink. The *Dolce* team wanted to taste the difference for themselves and invited Riese to lead the team through its own private tasting session with the original Water Sommelier himself.

To set the table, Riese provided the *Dolce* team an amuse-bouche of six pretasting samples to try prior to the formal tasting, but the prep work did not end there. To truly appreciate the beauty of natural water, it’s crucial to understand its context. Riese asks us: how much water do we have on this planet? How much water do you need on a daily basis in direct water, like in your home? How many gallons of water have been used for one cheeseburger?

“You may be surprised to learn that we have 325 million trillion gallons [1230 million trillion litres],

but only one per cent is what humans have access to when it comes to drinking water. Ninety-seven per cent of the water is trapped in the oceans, three per cent of water on this planet is freshwater, but two-thirds of the three per cent is trapped in icebergs and glaciers, so we don’t have access to it. Therefore we only have one per cent of water that we actually have access to,” says Riese.

The average American household uses 100 gallons of water per day, which is considered direct water use, but Riese explains there’s also indirect water use, which includes things like when you eat an apple, the apple had to be grown, so the tree needed water to grow the apple.

There’s about 660 gallons behind the making of a cheeseburger. Riese highlights these numbers in order to make us aware of water, to rethink our use of water, so that we may be personally making some adjustments, or even calling out big companies and asking them, “Hey, what is your water use?” “When you think 80 million people on this planet don’t even have access to clean, safe drinking water, we need to somehow figure that out. And for me, water is a human right. And I’m fighting for this on a daily basis. I’m supporting non-profit organizations like Viva con Agua, for example. We build wells in countries that don’t have access to clean, safe drinking water,” says Riese.

Fundamental to all water on earth is the water cycle. “All water comes from the same source. It’s the water cycle. Let’s start with the ocean, then the sun evaporates the water, clouds are created, and then rain comes down. The moment the rain hits the ground, it starts to dissolve minerals, because all the different stones, all the different soils and sand have different minerals dissolved all



Riese is on a mission to raise awareness of water inequity and find ways we can better serve humanity

around the planet. And they're all different. So, it pulls through the different soils, these waters, and picks up minerals. And water is a universal solvent. There is no other liquid with a higher dissolving rate than water. It's unbelievable how powerful, actually, water is, when you think about how the Grand Canyon was created by water and rivers."

Indeed, it is this process that gives different sources and types of water different tastes. You can actually pick up, however subtly, where your water has originated from. As Riese explains, "When it comes to wine, you're always looking at the terroir, which makes a German Riesling taste clearly different than a Riesling from California. But what actually is in contact with the terroir? Water is really terroir-driven. And for me, that's the fascinating part, that water tastes different depending where it's coming from. You can measure the overall mineral composition of bottled water by using TDS measurements, which stands for "total dissolved solids." The more minerals are dissolved, the stronger the water will taste. "It's kind of like cooking a soup. When you have a soup with no salt, it's tasteless; when you add a little salt, all other flavours will appear; when you have too much salt, you don't like the soup anymore," says Riese.

After officially receiving certification as a Mineral Water Sommelier from the German Mineral Water Trade Association in 2010, Riese began to share his knowledge in Germany, and he felt he had achieved everything he could within his native country. It was a 2020 vacation with his wife in Los Angeles that sparked the idea to move to America. "When you really want to make it, you have to go to America," said Riese. As fate would have it, his immigration lawyer helped Riese obtain a working visa under the "Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement" category. Riese thought to himself, "I looked at this visa and I said I'm not a Grammy-Award-winning music star. I'm not a scientist who wins the Nobel Prize. I'm just a guy who drinks water." It turned out that six months later, Riese received his visa. "I will never forget the interview at the embassy in Berlin, because they looked at me like I'm a crazy guy. I walked in there and everybody knew, from security officers to the person that you meet, all of them. They thought what I was doing was hilarious."

In 2018, Riese, along with his business partner, Michael Mascha, founded the Fine Water Academy, where those interested in becoming water sommeliers are able to obtain a certification. "We have people from China, Japan and South Africa. We have them from everywhere now. And it's crazy. It's a great community. And they are employed now. They have their own WhatsApp group and they communicate with each other to discuss different waters. It's so cool."

[www.martin-riese.com](http://www.martin-riese.com)

@martinriese



Riese offers virtual water tastings via his website for those interested in experiencing some of the world's most interesting waters



## NOTES ON THE WATER-TASTING:

From a regulation standpoint, for a water to be called a mineral water, it has to have at least 250 TDS.

You cannot really tell if companies are adding CO<sub>2</sub> artificially or if it is of natural origin. The only thing I can see with the natural carbonated waters is that the carbonation lasts a little longer in the glass. It's kind of like the same with a cheap Prosecco versus a nice champagne.

- **Waiakea:** TDS of 82. Source: Hawaii. Very smooth because there are not so many salts dissolved. The salts are very subtle in this water, so it's easy to drink.
- **Antipodes:** TDS of 140. Source: New Zealand. New Zealand is known for very, very good water qualities. It's a very unique water. It feels colder than Waiakea. There are slightly more minerals dissolved.
- **Socosani:** The TDS is 1,390. Source: Peru. This water is naturally carbonated, with very tiny bubbles that are natural. They've not been added. It has a slightly

salty aftertaste. It's an effervescent water. There's a hint of bubbles dissolved in the water from nature.

- **Aur'a Natural Gold:** The TDS is 490. Source: Romania. It's from Transylvania. It has a medium bubble. It's not fully carbonated. It's not super-salty but there's enough power to this water to really engage you.
- **Proud Source:** 154 TDS. Source: Florida. Artificially carbonated. Naturally alkaline spring water is rich with minerals and electrolytes.
- **Vichy Catalan:** 3,052 TDS, tons of dissolved minerals. Source: Spain. This is natural carbonated water. Overall the taste is really heavy, very salty. An intense water.

### What does *la dolce vita*, the sweet life, mean to you?

The sweet life means for you, but I can help more and more people to get access to clean, safe drinking water. It's not about me, it's about helping others.

# LA DOLCE VITA

## TORONTO

Toronto is a unique and eclectic city that is constantly evolving and growing. Today, Canada's largest city offers visitors and natives 6 municipalities, which make up "the 6"

TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



Discover  
*la dolce vita* by  
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- 1. Persons Of Interest Fragrances' Two Wolves Eau De Parfum** Toronto-based brand Persons Of Interest creates small-batch handcrafted unisex fragrances that add the perfect finishing touch no matter where you are. [www.personsofinterest.ca](http://www.personsofinterest.ca) @personsofinterestfragrances
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# REIGNING THE FIELD

American polo player Agustin Arellano shares his recent success at the World Polo Championship in The Palm Beaches and his dedication to conservation work

WRITTEN BY ESTELLE ZENTIL

Imagine growing up following the movements of the sun. For Agustin Arellano, this was his reality as a boy who was raised in a polo-playing family. His father, Julio Arellano, led Team USA and ranked as a top-rated polo player for decades. Travelling with the seasons, in the summer Arellano and his family would spend time in Sheridan, Wyoming and then, in the winters, in Palm Beach. And then during the off-seasons his family would either be in Argentina or South Carolina. But, despite the constant movement, Arellano always found himself at home on the polo field.

Perhaps for this reason, at 14 Arellano became professionally involved in the sport, following in his father's footsteps. And at just 15, he represented the U.S. team in the under-16 tournament held in Tianjin, China. Despite how naturally polo came to Arellano, a career in the sport was never an expectation or source of pressure. "I was on a horse before I could walk. The nice thing about my family, though, is they never pushed horses on me. They weren't like, 'You have to like horses,'"

"Horses are such soulful animals that are incredible, and so I couldn't imagine myself not having that in my life."

If polo was Arellano's first passion, philanthropy is his lifelong love. Working closely with the conservation organization Fauna & Flora International, his mother played a large part in instilling conservation work at an early age. "My upbringing was pretty unique, between [my dad] and my mom. She also played [polo], but she was such an animal person, so I feel like between the two of them, my mom is into saving animals. It made me who I am today, because I'm so passionate about horses and conservation."

As the first openly gay player in the World Cup,

Arellano is breaking barriers both professionally and personally. "I'm really proud to be the only professional polo player in the United States that's out. And to be able to do that, especially because growing up I didn't feel like there was that sort of representation."

Not only is Arellano an athlete, he is also a model (which comes as no surprise given his striking looks and 6-foot-3 stature). "One of the

There are so many cool facts about horses, like they can hear your heartbeat from five feet away. It's just incredible to me that we get to have this big partnership like that with a 1,000-pound animal. They're just these huge, amazing, soulful animals, and they totally create that connection and are able to do the amazing things that they allow us to do. To me, it's phenomenal. There's no other word for it.

“  
I REALLY WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE  
WHERE I'M LEAVING WHEREVER  
I TOUCHED A LITTLE BIT BETTER  
THAN I FOUND IT  
”

biggest things for me was that I wanted a voice to be able to talk about things that I care about, and I think modelling is really giving me that."

We spoke with the polo-player-turned-model to see what it's like reigning the field.

**Q: What does the connection with the horse mean to you?**

**A:** I think that's probably the most important thing to me when it comes to polo. If I wasn't playing polo, I'd be doing something else with horses.

**Q: How do you mentally prepare yourself, knowing that everything can't be calculated?**

**A:** It's actually become a really big part of my life now, the mental capacity. I think any sportsman will tell you the same, but I've worked a lot with a coach on it because I was actually getting to a point in my career where I was getting really nervous before games and it kind of crept up on me. My whole career, I was never nervous for games, I was just excited to be out there because that's where my mentality is just happy to be. But

Arellano is an active member of the philanthropic community, currently partnered with Fauna & Flora International, an organization dedicated to making a lasting impact on global biodiversity



Arellano has played polo in countries all over the world, including Argentina, Brazil, England and China

PHOTO BY KAILIE ROOS

I was getting really nervous before games until the very second that I got on the horse, and it was really getting to my head. I started with a coach and she suggested meditation. And I said, okay, but I can't meditate on the field. And she's like, yeah, but you can visualize how the whole game goes beforehand, get your breathing in between plays, get your breathing right. We've really worked on breathing. I just recently finished the World Cup, where we got the silver medal, which is really exciting. It was a lot of pressure, but it came down to the breathing. If you can be really present, it makes you think so much clearer. And it makes it safer and everything because your mind is so clear. You can make better decisions.

**Q: What would you say are the biggest life lessons that you've taken from the sport?**

**A:** I think more than anything, I learn from horses. You know, you can't really have a bad day when you have to ride a horse, because they're reading so much of your energy. The other one is discipline. I think a lot of life comes down to discipline, and you're not truly free unless you have control over yourself. I think horses have really taught me that. Their peaceful nature has also taught me so much about how we can create this partnership, and that bred a whole new sort of love for nature

and animals because it's just this sort of tranquil knowing and peace. Horses have brought me a lot of peace as well.

**Q: Can you share why it's important to give back philanthropically to the organizations that are closest to your heart?**

**A:** Yeah, I'm a big philanthropist. My mom, specifically, did her own stuff, really saving the animals, and I took that and went into philanthropic work. One that I work with a lot right now is Fauna and Flora. They are a big conservation organization that works to conserve habitats, wildlife and animals all around the world. I've done a lot of work with them and it's an organization that's really close to my heart.

**Q: What would you say have been your biggest personal and professional accomplishments so far?**

**A:** I've got quite a few that I'm really proud of. One that would definitely be my number one: getting the silver medal in the World Cup. It was incredible, specifically because my dad, when he played, was the only time the U.S. won the gold medal ever. Then I played with my sister, and we were the first brother-sister combo to ever play, and my dad was coach, so that was just an incredible experience. And then besides that, I've

won over 25 tournaments. I'm really happy with myself for that, being someone that's 25 years old. And then my favourite, besides the World Cup tournament, is that I won a tournament with my dad, my brother, my sister and me all together and I ended up getting most valuable player of the tournament. So that was really, really fun to win.

**Q: What are some of your personal accomplishments that you're proud of?**

**A:** I'm really proud to be the first openly gay player in the World Cup. And to be able to do that, especially because growing up, I didn't feel like there was that sort of representation. And obviously, now there's Gus Kenworthy. My family really was amazing. I credit them everything for my upbringing and for not making me feel like I'm any different from anybody else. They allowed me to show that to the world, as well, like having had that background. So that's been really a big personal accomplishment of mine. And yeah, I'm dedicating a lot of my life to conservation. I want to and I think everybody should be like this. I really want to live my life where I'm leaving wherever I touched a little bit better than I found it.

**Q: What qualities do you believe make up a great athlete?**



Arellano is a third-generation American polo player who focuses on both modelling and activism when he's not on the field

**A:** I think that hard work, obviously, is probably the number one — focus, discipline. I think the biggest thing for me in my life, and the people that I've seen, is that people who, like, don't take no for an answer, right?

I think our minds are so strong, and especially, in so many ways, mindset is so important when doing anything. I think that when you focus on your mindset and growing it and trusting yourself, it's unstoppable for your goals.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in the next five years?**

**A:** I'd love to continue to grow my voice and be a force for good. I think that would be my number one thing in my life, that I'd love to be a force for good, for conservation of animals, and beauty.

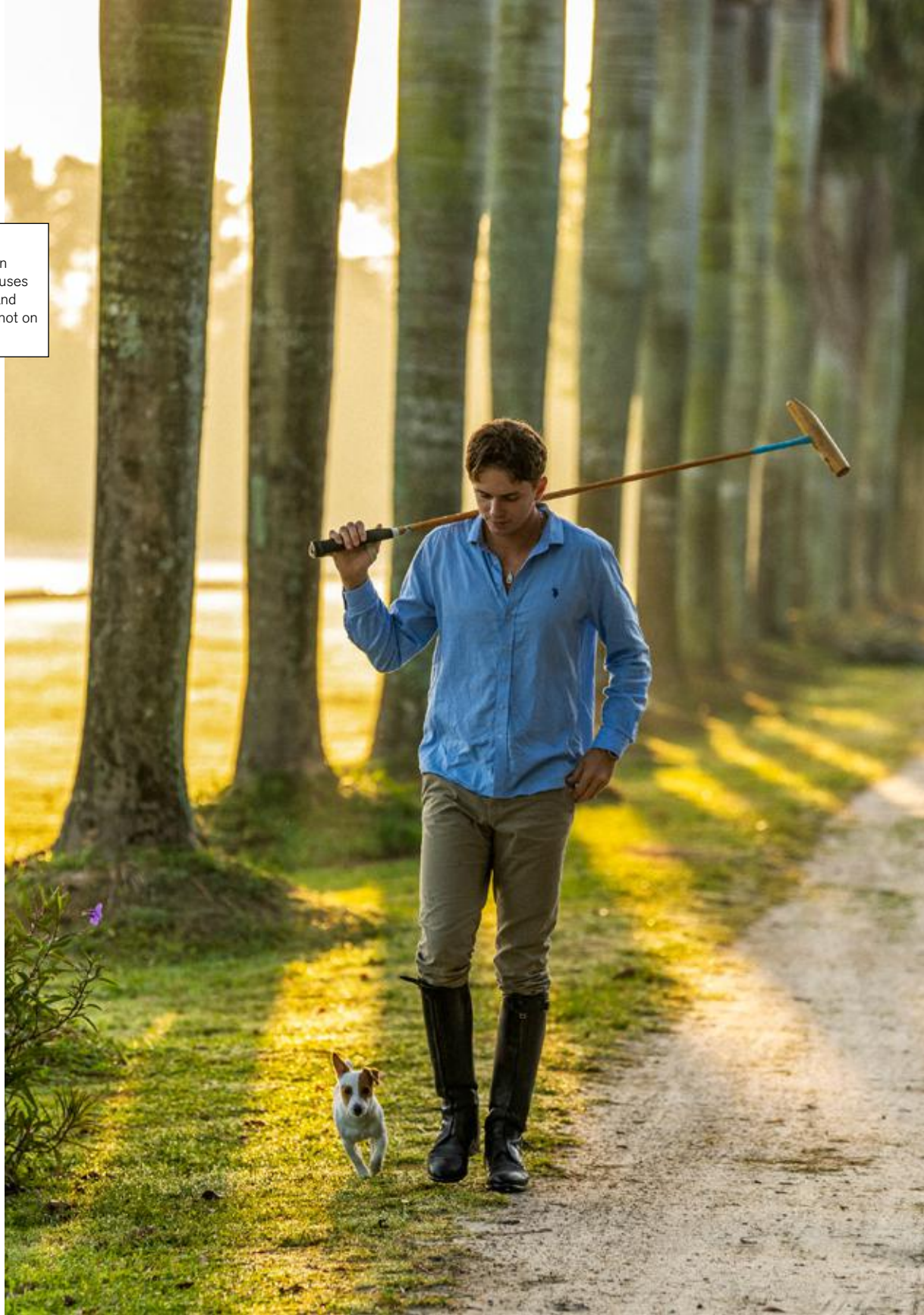
I'd love to be the face of a couple of campaigns. A really big dream of mine has always been to start a polo-horse breeding operation and train them with natural horsemanship, which is basically like the granola, organic version of horse training. And none of it is fear-based, it's teaching horses through partnership and kind of becoming the alpha of the herd. So, it's teaching these horses by being a leader to the horses. So, I think that'd be really cool to introduce that into polo and start an operation like that.

**Q: How would you describe your style?**

**A:** I think it would be a mix between Diane Keaton coastal grandma, for sure — like all-white linen shirts — and preppy all mixed together.

**Q: What health practices do you do to stay fit to play polo?**

**A:** The horse does a lot of the work and people see that. But it's staying on a horse that is going fast with people bumping into you. That's not easy. So, a lot of core strength, and a lot of leg strength, obviously. And then hitting the ball comes with the arm. I tried to do a lot of weight training to really get my body strong. And then I do yoga to prevent injuries. And I think nutrition plays a big part in all of our lives. But I think it plays a big part with athletes. As an athlete, you want your body to work at full function for as long as possible, right? And so that's where nutrition and fitness really come in.



**Q: If you could live anywhere, based on what you've seen, where would you live?**

**A:** I love Palm Beach, Florida. I like where it's like my home. This summer I went to the south of Spain to Sotogrande, right next to Marbella. They have this amazing polo community. Basically, there's a community on the beach of fitness lovers. And there's polo right on the water like that. It's the most amazing weather. You can see Morocco from the beach and I got there and I was, like, I don't know why anybody would live anywhere

else. I was only there for 10 days and I was, like, Mom, I'm not leaving.

**Q: What does *la dolce vita*, the sweet life, mean to you?**

**A:** I think my dream moment is being in the sun, at my barn, drinking maté [national beverage of Argentina], and I've got a sweet pair of shades on.

[www.oldedwardshospitality.com](http://www.oldedwardshospitality.com)

@oldedwardsinn

Elise Kalles is legendary in the Toronto luxury real estate market as a multimillion-dollar producer for more than 40 years

**W**e all know optimists and we all know pessimists — those with opinions on issues or situations coming from both ends of a scale. But, true balance can usually be found in the trusted ground of the middle — a middle shaped by experience, and based on logic and strong business acumen. It is true when they say you really can't place a price on experience — it is invaluable.

This is especially accurate when it comes to real estate in these days of “the sky is falling” media headlines and gloomy economic forecasts. To get a true barometer of a major real estate market such as the one in the Greater Toronto Area (North America's fourth largest), there is no more trusted source than Elise Kalles of Harvey Kalles Real Estate. Mrs. Kalles has been a multimillion-dollar producer for more than 40 years, and has seen her share of market volatility.

“I'm feeling positive about the Toronto real estate market, as the interest is certainly there,” says Elise. “Over the past few months, we've had more than 670,000 viewings of Harvey Kalles listings through [www.realtor.ca](http://www.realtor.ca) alone. Showings on our company's listings have quintupled since late last year, returning to the same levels we'd seen prior to the pandemic from 2017 through 2019.”

“We've even seen several examples of multiple buyers competing for available listings. Two of our homes had been on the market for a period of time, but the moment an offer was registered, other buyers came off the sidelines and added upward pressure to the selling price. Another recent sale in Toronto's upscale Forest Hill neighbourhood was listed for more than \$16 million and sold in less than two weeks,” states Elise.

Positivity amid an attitude of negativity can help to present rare opportunities for savvy real estate participants in a marketplace such as Toronto, which is known for continued growth and resiliency. Elise feels that perhaps some sellers are currently holding back to get a better read on the market, but notes the Toronto luxury market remains strong.

The Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Home Price Index, which tracks changes in property

# WORD FROM THE WISE

There is a lot of noise in the real estate market today, which makes it the perfect time to listen to the calm and wise perspective of veteran broker Elise Kalles of Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHO'S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE



PHOTO BY RYAN EMBERLEY

Kalles enjoys many longtime clients, including prominent citizens such as Isadore Sharp, founder, chairman and former CEO of Four Seasons Hotels

values, shows that the City of Toronto-416 area-code market has outperformed the full Greater Toronto Area region over the past 12 months. Further research shows the central district of the city, which includes the Bridle Path and St. Andrews neighbourhoods, has outperformed the City of Toronto overall.

“None of this should come as a surprise, as there is so much immigration to Toronto, yet our housing infrastructure hasn’t kept up,” says Elise. “Harvey Kalles sales agents took a tour of Concord Adex’s Park Place community recently, which is the second-largest master-planned community in Toronto, with 20 towers and \$100 million in infrastructure sitting on 45 acres. It will take over a decade to complete, and once finished, will house approximately 10,000 people. This project is helping to address the supply-side challenges our region is facing.”

Integrity and trust are two attributes you must have to be successful. A testament to this are the number of returning and referral clients that Elise Kalles has developed over her several decades working at the very top of her industry, including some of Toronto’s most prominent citizens.

“Working with Elise gives one great confidence whether buying or selling a home,” says Isadore Sharp, founder, chairman and former CEO, Four

“

**I’M FEELING  
POSITIVE ABOUT  
THE TORONTO REAL  
ESTATE MARKET, AS  
THE INTEREST IS  
CERTAINLY THERE**

”

Seasons Hotels. “Elise deals with both sides of a transaction in a manner that builds trust. She has earned an enviable reputation in her profession, and it is comforting to be able to rely upon her integrity and recommendations.”

“It is a pleasure to work with people who are as professional and courteous as Harvey, Elise and the rest of the crew at Harvey Kalles Real Estate,” says George Eaton. “They have been unfailing in putting this client’s interests first in all of their

advice and by all of their actions, which is very much appreciated.”

Elise’s decades of experience have endured many cycles in real estate, but her wisdom and perception of marketplaces such as Toronto’s has her remaining quite bullish as 2023 evolves.

“As we head into spring and summer, I expect to see an increase in listings, which is typical for this time of year. With the ongoing housing supply challenge, I believe demand will remain strong,” observes Elise. “With some more selection available and no anticipated rate hikes in the near term, we should see an increase in activity and more buyers engaging in the market.”

Trusted sources of information based on decades of experience are very valuable in business transactions, especially regarding something as significant as real estate sales. In the Toronto real estate market, Elise Kalles and Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd. are the calm, reassuring voices of knowledge and guidance during these volatile times.

**Elise Kalles | Broker**  
**Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd., Brokerage**  
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**www.elisekalles.com**  
**@@elise.kalles**

## DALLAS

Everything is bigger in Texas, and Dallas is the vibrant city offering authentic Southern flair

TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



2

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3



4



5

**1. Bishop Arts District** Find the best of Dallas's art scene in the unique Bishop Arts District. Spend the day exploring local boutiques, coffee shops, bars, restaurants and art galleries.

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**2. Miron Crosby Cowboy Boots** Add a little glamour to a Texan staple with a stunning pair of Miron Crosby cowboy boots.

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Aged Cognac can stand up to the rich, bold, fatty flavours of duck, in particular Peking duck, which shares a similar complex flavour profile that includes umami

# FROM THE NECTAR OF THE GODS TO THE NECTAR OF THE SPIRITS: WHAT TO EAT WHEN YOU DRINK COGNAC

While it's more common to think about pairing food with wine, recent interest in pairing food with spirits has brought Cognac into the limelight

WRITTEN BY RUBA RAHIM

**T**he idea of combining food with wine to enhance the dining experience is not a new concept. We know that the ancient Greeks dipped their bread in wine, and that the ancient Romans drank wine with every meal. But there is no evidence to suggest that the reasons were anything other than practical. Dipping hard bread in wine made it softer and tastier, and wine was cleaner and safer to drink than water. Over time, as viticulture spread with Roman expansion, the roots of wine pairing were

planted. Wine was the most common drink in the ancient Mediterranean because the cultivation of grapes was well-suited to the climate. The climate dictated the varieties of fruits and vegetables that could be grown, the livestock that could be raised, and, in turn, the types of cheese that could be made. Although there is no known exact date of origin for wine pairing as we know it today, the practice likely developed from the merging of the type of wine produced and the food available in each region. “What grows together, goes

together,” as it is said. The red wines of Bordeaux are a classic match for lamb, a meat that was part of local cuisine. The Pinot noirs of Burgundy have long been paired with game that is hunted in the same region. In the early 19th century, the rise of restaurants in France that offered a choice of dishes from a menu laid the foundations for more deliberate food and wine pairings — red wine with meat, white wine with fish. These traditions were codified over generations, mainly through European perspectives. By the middle

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL TENAGLIA

of the 20th century, wine pairing as an art emerged in Europe, and later in America, due to advancements in technology and increased trade and communication. As people gained access to products and information, their tastes and interests evolved, and they became more aware of the different ways that the flavours of foods and wines combine.

Over the past decade, many of the traditional rules of wine pairing have been debunked by wine experts and are no longer considered gospel. Experts tell us that food pairing, which encompasses other types of beverages as well, should be based on intensity and weight, not on colour. And, we are told, there is no one perfect pairing for any given food or dish. Culinary experts also cite aromatic matching as an important principle in food pairing, an idea that was first presented in 2002 by chef Heston Blumenthal, proprietor of several Michelin-starred restaurants in the U.K. Knowing that salt helps to bring out the flavour of many desserts, Blumenthal was experimenting with finding a replacement for salt on white chocolate. To his surprise, he found that salty caviar and white chocolate work very well together. Determined to find out why, he contacted a scientist from Firmenich, a flavourings and perfumes company based in Geneva, who analyzed the flavour profiles of both foods and concluded that both chocolate and caviar contain high levels of the same flavour compounds. Inspired, Blumenthal created a hypothesis: the more aromatic compounds two foods have in common, the better they taste together. By analyzing the flavour compounds in hundreds of different foods and combinations of foods, he believed that he proved his theory right, and so the Food Pairing Theory was born.

The Food Pairing Theory is based on the fact that 80 per cent of our flavour experience is determined by our sense of smell; so, in fact, when we say that something tastes good, what we are really saying is that it smells good. The remaining 20 per cent is determined by taste — the ability of our taste receptors to perceive sweet, sour, bitter, salty and umami — and mouthfeel — buttery, crunchy, chewy, etc. Tastes also play an important role in pairings. They are mirrored or contrasted to add depth and dimension. Simply put, a successful pairing uses similar aromas for a more harmonious flavour experience, similar weight and intensity so that neither element dominates the other, and similar or contrasting tastes to add depth and dimension. It's important to note, however, that these strategies are not written in stone and that the most important guiding principle when it comes to what we eat and drink is personal preference. French chef Éric Ripert, of the three-Michelin-starred New York restaurant Le Bernardin, famously said that he could drink red Bordeaux with every meal because even if it doesn't make a perfect pairing with the food, it makes him happy.

When we think about pairing food and drink,

we immediately think of wine. But in recent years there has been a growing interest in pairing food with spirits, and mixologists are becoming more innovative, pairing food with cocktails. Many spirits are too aggressive to pair with foods and are better suited for enjoying alone or after a meal. But that is not the case with Cognac, a spirit that is often misunderstood. Should it be sipped neat or enjoyed on the rocks? Is it an apéritif or an after-dinner drink? Can it be enjoyed with a meal? Is it a cocktail ingredient? The answer is “all of the above.”

Cognac is a type of brandy, but to qualify as a Cognac, the brandy must be made according to specific guidelines and from specific white wine

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grape varieties, mainly Ugni Blanc, grown in the Cognac Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée in southwestern France. The grapes are turned into wine, then double-distilled in copper pot stills and aged at least two years in French oak barrels. Cognac designations — VS (Very Special), VSOP (Very Superior Old Pale) and XO (Extra Old) — are a guarantee of how long a Cognac has been aged — at least two years, at least four years, and at least six years respectively. Cognac's lengthy aging creates a flavour profile that is extremely rich and complex, with a myriad of aromas and tastes, and this is precisely what gives it an inherent ability to be paired with food. Every Cognac has a unique personality that expresses itself on the nose and on the palate. There are 63 aromas found in Cognac; the older the Cognac, the more its aromas develop and become more intense and refined, a characteristic known as “Rancio Charentais.” Fruity aromas change from fresh peach and plum to more

intense ones of dried apricot and fig. Oak develops into more complex notes of sandalwood and cedar. Light floral aromas mature into those of jasmine and hyacinth. And in Cognacs that have been aged for over 15 years, aromas include licorice, toffee, vanilla, spices, nuts and tobacco. These olfactory notes are revealed when the glass is first raised to the nose. Then, as the Cognac comes into contact with the tongue, its many flavours stimulate the taste buds, revealing even more of its character. Cognac houses have begun to take an interest in food pairing. Rémy Martin, one of the oldest and most respected Cognac houses in France, collaborates with a new generation of chefs and sommeliers. Understanding that the appetite for Cognac has been evolving, and aiming to quash the stereotype that the spirit is an after-dinner drink that is only sipped by wealthy middle-aged men, they created a series of innovative pairings that highlight the versatility of their Cognacs. Their pairings are widely varied and aimed at a younger and more experimental customer, promising an elevated culinary experience.

And while Cognac has a reputation as a spirit that is sipped neat, few are aware that it has been the foundation of countless cocktails since the beginning of the 19th century. Pioneering mixologist Jerry Thomas's 1862 *Bartenders Guide*, a resource that defined the American school of drinking for 150 years, included French brandy in a third of the recipes. By the early 1900s, Cognac-based cocktails were the preferred after-dinner drinks in major cities across America, including New York and New Orleans. In the 1920s, Prohibition sent top American bartenders to Europe, where they practised their trade in grand hotels. The most iconic Cognac cocktail, the sidecar, was invented at the Ritz Paris by head bartender Frank Meier in 1923. It is named for one of his best customers, who always arrived at the hotel in a motorcycle sidecar. Smooth, fresh and gently sweet, Cognac is a perfect cocktail ingredient. And because Cognac is typically a blend of different vintages across different vineyards and crus, mixers, citrus fruits and fresh herbs will highlight its flavours. Many Cognac brands have even started producing lines specifically intended, and priced, for mixing in cocktails.

Cognac boasts all the complexity needed to elevate the flavour experience when paired with food. These are just a few of the many possibilities for what to eat when you drink Cognac ...

#### **CHEESE**

Younger, fruit-forward Cognacs pair well with creamy, bloomy rind cheeses like Brie and Camembert, balancing out their earthy richness; their smooth textures also work beautifully together. Older Cognacs, with more complex aromas of nuts, spices and dried fruits, pair well with Parmigiano-Reggiano, which develops similar spicy, full-bodied aromas as it ages. Aged Parmigiano-Reggiano is



The acidity and carbonation in a French 75 cocktail, made with VSOP Cognac, fresh lemon juice and Champagne, help cut the richness of fatty fish like salmon. Caviar's subtle ocean notes allow every aromatic expression of Cognac to shine without being outshone

naturally high in glutamate, the amino acid that produces the umami taste, giving it an ability to reveal the earthy, robust, umami flavours that only the finest of aged Cognacs can achieve. A fine XO Cognac with highly developed flavours of smoke, spice and wood pairs well with a pungent blue cheese like Roquefort, which has the aromatic strength — rich and earthy — to match. Notes of honey, vanilla and sweet spices in an XO Cognac balance out the saltiness in the cheese.

#### CHARCUTERIE

Cognac and air-cured hams, such as Bayonne and prosciutto, provide for a truly umami sensation. As ham ages, it develops an intensely savoury aroma with hazelnut notes that are matched in Cognac, coming from French oak barrels that impart a similar aroma. Cognac has a natural affinity with proteins and fats. Cognac has tannin, which comes from the grapes, as well as from the oak barrels that it is aged in. Tannins produce a bitter and drying sensation in the mouth, but when fat is introduced, their astringency is reduced, and the dryness is offset. Cognac also has acidity, which softens on the palate as it ages in oak barrels. VSOP Cognac has enough acidity to work well with pâtés and cured meats, as it is able to cut through their rich fattiness, rounding out the flavours of both.

#### WILD MUSHROOMS

Aged Cognacs, nutty and rich in umami, bring out the earthy, meaty umami notes of wild mushrooms. Think mushroom bruschetta, mushroom risotto or mushroom wild rice. For an explosion of flavour on the palate, pair aged Cognac with grilled shiitake mushrooms; grilling further enhances the meaty, umami taste already abundant in the mushrooms.

#### DUCK

Aged Cognac can stand up to the rich, bold, fatty flavours of duck. Particularly excellent with Cognac are Asian dishes like Peking duck, whose complex sweet-and-sour flavour profile complements the similarly highly developed and complex flavour profile of aged Cognac. Umami and tannin also contribute to the success of this pairing.

#### SEAFOOD

Cognac doesn't overpower the delicate notes of fresh seafood. Caviar's subtle ocean notes allow every aromatic expression of Cognac to shine without being outshone. Cognac is unquestionably influenced by the ocean, with part of the Cognac growing region sitting along the Atlantic and including two islands. Cognacs with mineral depth pair well with scallops and high-salinity oysters, while floral and fruity notes in Cognac

can offset their brininess. In cocktail pairings, it's all about balance. A French 75 cocktail has all the ingredients — VSOP Cognac, fresh lemon juice and champagne — to make it a perfect match for sushi. The acidity and carbonation help cut the richness of fatty fish like salmon, and the smooth texture of Cognac and buttery texture of raw fish add depth to the pairing.

#### DESSERT

Pairing Cognac with desserts that incorporate vanilla, almonds, apricots, apples, red berries or oranges, aromas commonly found in Cognacs — creates a delicious harmony of flavours. Try Cognac with raspberry or apple tart, almond cake, crêpes Suzette or crème caramel. Cognac with more acidic or sweet notes can help cut the richness of desserts made with butter or cream. Chocolate desserts are always a safe bet with Cognac. The older the Cognac, the darker the chocolate should be, because the highly developed and complex notes of an aged Cognac counterbalance the bitter intensity of the dark chocolate.

@cognacpassion  
 @rubas\_dish  
 @michaeltphotography1  
 @matthewwaxcatering

# ART IN STONE

Greg Kolodziejczyk and the artisans at Prospect Construction provide luxury custom stone masonry to high-end architects and custom homebuilders across the Greater Toronto Area

Artists work in many media and with many different materials, such as paint and canvas, clay and sculpture, woods and cabinetry, or perhaps the most challenging: the artistry of stone masonry. While you may return to a painting to add colour or make subtle changes to a sculpture or add accents when woodworking, stone masonry is final and masons have to get it right the first time. “Put it in stone” is not just an expression, it’s a reality.

Greg Kolodziejczyk and his team at Prospect Construction are just that reality to custom builders of luxury homes across the Greater Toronto Area, artisans of stone masonry of the highest order, taking pride in an honourable craft passed down to Kolodziejczyk by his father.

In his teenage years Kolodziejczyk worked summers for his father’s Prospect Homes company, a builder based out of Hamilton, eventually joining him full-time and learning everything about the meticulous nature of stone masonry. In his twenties he left to follow his music passion as a guitarist in a Toronto rock band, while working in the mortgage

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WE BRING  
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OUR BUILDERS  
AND CLIENTS  
”

business to pay the bills. But he soon realized office life was not for him.

“The natural calling just woke up inside of me and I knew I needed to be outside working with my hands,” recalls Kolodziejczyk. “What you are born into will come back to you at a certain age.”

He returned to work with his father, furthering his education and skills until he began his own company, forming Prospect Construction in 2016, now one of the most respected custom luxury stone masonry companies in Ontario, sought-out by the finest architects and builders of luxury custom homes.

Testament to the reputation Prospect Construction has earned is a recent 25,000-square-foot home by acclaimed architect Richard Wengle, which features all-limestone exteriors by Prospect in a job that took 18 months to complete due to the care and craftsmanship Prospect brings to its work.

“It’s a very meticulous type of work and not everyone can do it,” says Kolodziejczyk. “It’s really an art that takes years to learn. We bring exceptional customer service and communications and we’re extremely detail-oriented in working

Prospect shares a past client project: a full limestone exterior for a 25,000-square-foot home by famed architect Richard Wengle, a project that took just over a year to complete

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PROSPECT CONSTRUCTION





Kolodziejczyk is an artisan of the highest order, taking pride in an honourable craft passed down by his father

PHOTO BY LISMERY LOYOLA | DOLCE MEDIA GROUP ON LOCATION AT CHÂTEAU LE JARDIN

Prospect's main services of luxury custom limestone installation and custom pre-cast installation — on-time and on-budget — make it a sought-after contractor by leading developers across the GTA

with our builders and other clients. Prospect is different because we stand out and our skill level is a class above our competitors.”

Prospect Construction also stands out online through [www.prospectconstruction.ca](http://www.prospectconstruction.ca) and on social media, with an extensive presence on Instagram, including slickly produced and creative short videos Kolodziejczyk produces that show first-hand to prospective clients the quality, craftsmanship and passion they bring to every project. He is also quick to tag every other trade involved in his projects, saying, “Why not include everyone on the team? It’s a win-win for everybody.”

Prospect works primarily with high-end architects and custom homebuilders in providing its main services of luxury custom limestone

“

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DO IT

”

installation and custom pre-cast installation — on-time and on-budget. It will also work with individual homeowners wishing to improve the exterior of their homes by recommending certain limestone manufacturers, then completing the installation with Prospect’s exacting skill. As Kolodziejczyk points out, “Every stone piece is so different and so detailed, and where we really excel is that we’re on-site all the time to ensure deadlines are being met.”

Kolodziejczyk’s success in building Prospect Construction allows him to give back to his community through projects that are near and dear to his heart. One of his daughters has autism, and Prospect is currently exploring a partnership with Waves of Change, which addresses autism in our society.

Kolodziejczyk’s definition of success is not monetary, but a deeper, inner feeling that speaks to his upbringing and the passion and pride he has in his craft forged by his father



and grandfather and the lessons they provided him in continuing the family profession. “My definition of success is the level of satisfaction I receive from an excellent completed project,” he says.

Luxury stone provides the most dramatic first impression for any residence. It denotes quality and elevates elegance, making the perfect lifestyle

statement through design. There is art in many materials and forms, and as Greg Kolodziejczyk and Prospect Construction have so clearly demonstrated, in luxury stone masonry, art is forever.

[www.prospectconstruction.ca](http://www.prospectconstruction.ca)

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Perrie specializes in Muskoka and Niagara-on-the-Lake, two of the most popular and hottest real estate markets in Canada

# WINE COUNTRY OR COTTAGE COUNTRY?

Andrew Perrie's real estate acumen steers clients to the lifestyle and community choice that is perfect for them

PHOTOS BY EMAD MOHAMMADI

Virtual and hybrid work, accelerated by the pandemic, have completely changed the dynamic of real estate, and a few smart visionaries are taking advantage on behalf of their clients. Markets that may have been seen as too far removed from major metropolitan centres are now increasingly popular, as the “we can live anywhere” and “the office is now everywhere” mentality has taken root and stuck.

Visionaries like Andrew Perrie have seized upon this new reality in real estate, and by operating two separate brokerage offices, in the wine country of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the cottage country of Muskoka, he has become one of the leading experts on these two small, charming areas that are now two of the most desired destinations in Ontario — if not North America. Despite the relatively small populations of these locations, Perrie’s team of 20 professionals completed 100 deals in 2022 worth approximately \$100 million and picked up 50 client referrals, this bellwether statistic being a testament to the trust and integrity he and his team bring to the business.

“It comes down to lifestyle and community,” says Perrie about how to steer clients to either the wine country or cottage country. “Do you want to have more of a wine lifestyle with community events in the small-town atmosphere of Niagara-on-the-Lake or do you want to be more secluded and enjoy a different kind of active lifestyle with more difficult winters but be surrounded by the natural beauty of Muskoka? It’s all about dissecting the client’s wants and needs and whether they’re looking for a second home, recreational property or retirement home.”

This kind of insight and real estate acumen has won Perrie many awards — he has been a multi-year winner of *Realtors Choice* Best Realtor award, and he has sold more than \$150 million in his just-six-year career. This kind of staggering career success is even more impressive when you consider the rather unconventional manner by which he found real estate sales as a career.

After wandering through a rather nomadic lifestyle as a musician in his 20s, his first sales position was with LA Fitness, an experience that has shaped his management philosophy and style to this day.

“This was a fully structured organization with a general manager and director of operations — that’s exactly how I implement my own business now,” recalls Perrie. “So, my sales role there was crucial to me, not only for developing my sales skills, my lead skills and service skills, but also to how I became that leader/CEO that I always knew I could be but didn’t know how to get there.”

In addition to running two offices for Revel Realty Inc. Brokerage in Muskoka and Niagara-on-the-Lake, he also serves as director of



Andrew and his team are currently in the Top 0.8% for Total Sales Volume in 2022, according to Niagara Association of REALTORS®

“  
**REALTORS WILL  
 NOW NEED TO  
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recruitment and head coach at Revel, one of the fastest-growing independent brokerages in Ontario. Here, his fulfilment is fueled by his people and the mentorships he provides to his team.

“I feel like I’m more fulfilled by starting a team and I get to see people start out with literally nothing and change their lives by making six-figure incomes,” says Perrie. “I was in a very confusing space in my 20s and when I found the ability to create something for myself and be able to make as much money as I could by working harder, I felt it was my mission to help others discover that, as well.”

An early adopter of cutting-edge sales methodologies, Perrie has been active on social media, building his brand by founding The Fine Estates Team, made up of award-winning

local realtors, with an elite “white-glove” care program, “That Fine Life Method,” which is promoted by his regular podcast, while he also hosts another podcast, *Be REVELutionary*, for Revel.

While the pandemic certainly gave purchasers reasons to consider more remote areas than they previously would have, with sales exploding as a result, Perrie certainly sees some changes in the industry on the horizon.

“In 2020, 2021 and 2022, real estate was market-driven, meaning anyone, and I mean anyone with very little experience, could take a buyer and a seller and the deal would go through, most likely for hundreds of thousands over asking,” says Perrie. “Real estate in 2023 is what we’re calling a “Skills-Based Market.” Realtors will now need to know absolutely everything a normal professional should know, and to work on my team, the learning never stops.”

Perrie’s success in a relatively short period of time is a reflection of his personal philosophy on just what success means. “Success is defined by working hard and having the willingness to create relationships and not being afraid to create new relationships,” he says. “You must always have that burning desire to want to learn and grow. Success is the journey — not the destination.”

Perrie’s journey may also include national and international expansion. The list of the Next Big Things in Real Estate in Canada would be a very short one — but Andrew Perrie definitely deserves to be on it.

[www.thefineestatesteam.com](http://www.thefineestatesteam.com)  
 @theandrewperrie



# MIRAVAL BERKSHIRES: A SEASONAL APPROACH TO PARADISE

Three decades ago, Miraval Resorts opened in Tucson, Arizona, with one philosophy: to help people. Now, it's continued that vision with Miraval Berkshires, a slice of paradise that draws on the magic of mind, body and soul

**W**hen asked how he would describe the experience at Miraval Resorts, Gilbert Santana, general manager at Miraval Berkshires, says it's a "true holistic well-being experience." As a place that's peaceful yet invigorating, with a wide array of activities to get lost in, it aims to ensure every guest leaves feeling satisfied, physically and mentally.

At its Miraval Berkshires location in Lenox, Massachusetts, that's particularly true. Intrinsicly linked to the four seasons, it's a resort that's deeply connected to the natural world and

thrives on having a live-in-the-moment ethos. With the stately 1894 Wyndhurst Mansion as its centerpiece, surrounded by lush landscapes that span 380 acres, it's brimming with character, culture and respect.

"Some days, the place is blanketed with snow and people are seeking the warmth of the fire or the adventure of snowshoeing," Santana says. "Others, it's surrounded by foliage that blazes as the sun sets, providing a backdrop that supports our outdoor adventure programming and spiritual well-being."

Thanks to its location both in Massachusetts

and the heart of the Berkshires, it's surrounded by culture and natural beauty. Hiking trails wind through the area, and other mansions, cultural venues and museums all make their mark in the surrounding region.

Before guests arrive at Miraval Berkshires, they're encouraged to set their intention. By taking a moment to think about what they want to do at the resort — whether that's relax, connect, explore, exercise or something else — they'll get the most out of their stay.

"Sometimes our guests arrive with a fully laid-out intention for themselves and a roster

The resort seeks to offer a true holistic experience by focusing on mind, body and soul

of activities and spa services scheduled based on those intentions,” Santana continues. “Others aren’t sure. They know they want to be here, and their intention-setting for their journey happens shortly after they check in. Our specialists and colleagues help guide that journey. There’s just enough challenge and uniqueness in our offerings and landscape that pave the way for new experiences, which will organically foster growth.”

For those staying at the resort, there are a number of ways to spend your time. The Life in Balance Spa, which draws inspiration from its woodsy, elemental New England surroundings, offers an outdoor seating area with a firepit, an indoor-outdoor lap pool, lounge, steam room and saunas.

It also draws on tradition, ancient practices and a “luxury-without-being-lavish” approach to offer exclusive treatments like the Vasudhara, Obsidian and Sage Detoxifying Ritual, or Essence of Miraval Facial, and it collaborates with local businesses to harness regionally grown botanicals.

“Our offerings are designed to celebrate the present moment and to facilitate an awareness of the body and how its connection to both mind and spirit can balance emotions and stress,” Santana explains.

This idea of wellness continues past the spa to integrate itself into the rooms. Envisioned by Clodagh Design, they seek to inspire wellness through minimal but gracious, thoughtfully curated design accents. By balancing country-house glamour with New England comfort, they manage to capture the spirit of the location through both colour and texture.

Even those who work there live with Miraval’s ethos in mind. “You don’t necessarily wake up and decide you want to apply to work at a place that offers a ropes course and has donkeys,” Santana says. “That means something to the team. Miraval attracts mindful colleagues who truly connect with our guests in the biggest and smallest ways. We know how powerful this experience is to them, and we know we are inherently part of that journey.”

The activities on offer continue that journey, and the resort encourages guests to enroll for multiple so they can experience them side by side and enjoy the full benefits. Where one day could see you taking part in an equine experience, another could see you taking a class on making bone broth and understanding nourishment.



At Meadowview Acres Farm, you can meet the beekeepers and taste the honey

This season alone, the space offers art-studio tours and meet-and-greets with resident artists, sabre sword-technique classes, archery and mounted yoga. As Santana notes, “The alignment and, I dare say in some cases, the awakening of the elements of mind, body and soul, represent the full Miraval experience.”

Meadowview Acres Farm is also worth exploring. As a patch of fertile land beneath the Miraval Berkshires property, it’s where much of the food you’ll eat on-site starts. By visiting the farm you’ll see the hens who lay the eggs, bees and beekeepers making the honey, and other animals, like horses and raptors.

“Miraval Berkshires evokes a nostalgia of the familiar,” Santana says. “One that conjures up real or imagined memories of idyllic fireside comfort, the smell of brisk pine-scented mountain air during a fall hike or the tactile touch of a cashmere sweater, while adding unpredictable experiences and art to fire the imagination and calm the spirit.”

While the resort is ideal for solo travellers and couples, Miraval Berkshires is also perfect for groups, and has hosted weddings, corporate

leadership retreats, friends’ reunions and family getaways. “We have such a unique property in that even the most functional spaces — say, for break-out sessions — are absolutely stunning, and when you step outside, the scenery is stunning, too,” Santana says. “This is an event-space dream, and you can add the programming, spa, and it’s honestly surreal. This place is magical in its own right.”

Since the opening of its first location in Tucson, Arizona, Miraval Resorts has stayed true to its purpose in promoting calm and well-being and has become a leader in luxury wellness experiences as a result. Its Berkshires location is no different.

“Our innovative only-at-Miraval activities and spa treatments empower guests to consciously explore the connection between body, mind and spirit,” Santana says. “We meet guests where they are, encouraging them to embrace the moment they’re in — and to make wellness a way of life, day in and day out.”

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# A DYNAMIC ESCAPE IN YORKVILLE

A new standard in cultural excellence paired with the highest level of hospitality — Toronto welcomes the W hotel

WRITTEN BY MASSIMO SOSA





“

**OUR TEAM RELIED ON A SEAMLESS CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INTERIOR AND THE EXTERIOR TO TURN THE HOTEL INTO A CONNECTIVITY HUB**

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Jean Pelland,  
Architect,  
Sid Lee Architecture,  
Partner



Martin Leblanc,  
Architect,  
Sid Lee Architecture,  
Partner

**T**he Montreal team of architects extraordinaires, Sid Lee Architecture, are the creatives behind Toronto’s latest upscale hotel, the W Toronto. Located at the doorstep of the city’s lavish neighbourhood, the Yorkville hotel channels heritage while paving the way for modern class and cultural excellence.

With location in mind, the team thoughtfully designed a façade that adds value and dimension to the pre-existing structure with conscious efforts to highlight its historic roots, embellishing them with a dynamic flair.

The vibrant space welcomes guests into an urban oasis that reflects the city it calls home. Inspired by the French term “mise en scène,” Sid Lee re-imagined this idea, creating a multitude of them, which he incorporated into design features that allow for conversational flow and interaction between people — a sort of utopian experience facilitated within the structure’s own walls.

The project designers had one goal in mind when it came to the remodel: they wanted to ensure the hotel seamlessly integrated its architecture into the surrounding community and environment. The Senior Partner at Sid Lee, architect Martin Leblanc, expressed his vision for the W: “Connection to the community being an important part of W’s DNA, it was vital to connect the hotel to its context, but the original closed-off layout of the building represented an integration challenge.” Creating a space that was both fluid and welcoming was vital in bringing the W to life. Luckily, with the addition of a street-access elevator that idea was able to be realized: “Our team relied on a seamless connection between the interior and the exterior to turn the hotel into a connectivity hub.” Not only has the W become a hub for culture and hospitality, it welcomes patrons into a social atmosphere with its café-by-day, cocktail-bar-by night space, PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Fitting with the neighbourhood’s DNA, the W hotel’s interior design choices reflect the

surrounding esthetic from Bloor Street designer shops, ultimately creating an immersive experience for guests to enjoy a chic yet welcoming stay while in town. With the use of a vibrant colour palette, the hotel welcomes guests into a space thoughtfully designed and decorated with modern art, featuring murals and exhibition pieces by local artists like Alan Ganey.

Embracing the structure’s brutalist qualities paved an opportunity for designers at Sid Lee to incorporate biophilic design throughout the hotel. Elements like these transport guests into unique spaces, adding vibrancy to the scenography and character to the W Toronto. Guests exploring the hotel will enjoy the seamless connection between its natural features and its urban setting, experiencing a transformative stay in an atmosphere that pays homage to the rich and varied city that is its home.

The designers at Sid Lee have set the tone for what a cinematic entrance on the Toronto scene means; they have brought to life a hotel experience that is rich in culture and reflects Canada’s largest and most diverse example of what defines a metropolis. With an array of rooms and common spaces to discover, a stay at the W is sure to highlight the beauty and diverse culture that is rooted in the soil of Toronto.

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# WHEN GRANDEUR MEETS SPEED



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Opulence and splendour take centre stage at Germany's Nordkirchen Castle with high-performance automobiles, striking timepieces and couture garments

TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



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NORDKIRCHEN CASTLE,  
IN NORDKIRCHEN,  
GERMANY, IS OFTEN  
COMPARED TO  
FRANCE'S OVER-  
THE-TOP PALACE OF  
VERSAILLES DUE TO ITS  
EXPANSIVE DIMENSIONS,  
INCREDIBLE  
LANDSCAPING AND  
BAROQUE-STYLE LAYOUT

Gown: Celia Kritharioti  
Earrings: Magic Squares  
Shoes: Aquazzura



From left to right:  
Full outfit: Wilvorst  
Gown: Celia Kritharioti  
Full outfit: Eduard Dressler  
White tuxedo jacket: Wilvorst  
Turtleneck sweater: Prada  
Trousers: Lanvin  
Shoes: Baldessarini  
Full outfit: Wilvorst

HAUTE COUTURE  
PIECES ARE THE  
CENTREPIECE OF  
THE ROOM, WITH  
STRIKING CUTS,  
DESIGNS AND  
COLOURS





Dinner jacket: Giorgio Armani (by Apropos)  
Turtleneck sweater: Roberto Collina (by Apropos)  
Trousers: Giorgio Armani (by Apropos)  
Shoes: Baldessarini  
Car: Mercedes AMG SL 63 4MATIC+



THE AMG MERCEDES  
IS THE EPITOME OF  
LUXURY. ITS SLEEK AND  
SPORTY DESIGN WILL  
GET YOU WHERE YOU  
NEED TO GO IN STYLE



Gown: Celia Kritharioti  
Bag: Marina Raphael

PHOTOGRAPHY: CLAUDIUS HOLZMANN  
VIDEO: FELIX POOTH @CREAM DIGITAL PICTURES  
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: JOHANNA BREITHAUPT @CREAM DIGITAL PICTURES  
VIDEO ASSISTANT: THUSIYANTH GANESHANATHAN @CREAM DIGITAL PICTURES  
SET RUNNER: JULIA HOHEISEL @CREAM DIGITAL PICTURES  
FASHION STYLING: ANNA-JILL GIERHARDS @21AGENCY  
MAKEUP: MIRIAM SCHWARZ @MAISON MUSITOWSKI  
HAIR STYLING: SUSANNE WITT @MAISON MUSITOWSKI  
MALE MODELS: KAI, FINLEY, JUDE AND MALTE @DOPAMIN  
FEMALE MODEL: LAURA CELINE @PMA  
CREATIVE DIRECTION, PRODUCTION & CASTING: CARSTEN DROCHNER @DOPAMIN  
CARS: MERCEDES-AMG BY MERCEDES JÜRGENS GMBH WWW.AUTOHAUS-JUERGENS.DE @MERCEDESJUERGENS  
LOCATION: NORDKIRCHEN CASTLE, GERMANY



Confident, commanding, artistic and playful, Morris now stands atop her profession of high-end interior design

# ARTIST DESIGNER

Lori Morris and the team at House of LMD have become among the world's most sought-after high-end interior designers through their creativity, originality and "no-rules" approach

WRITTEN BY RICK MULLER | INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE ZERILLO-SOSA

**L**ori Morris dreams in colour. It's something that provides only a glimpse into the soul and spirit of this fascinating artist extraordinaire, one of the hottest and most acclaimed high-end luxury interior designers in the world.

Visionary, innovator, maestra, dreamer and thinker, Lori Morris is all those things — and much more. She sees interior space as a blank canvas upon which she can create her magnificent brilliance without boundaries, a tableau for her distinctive style of storytelling by design.

If there is one rule Morris has followed during her 36 years in the design business, it is that there are no rules for this exceptionally free spirit. "If anyone asks me what my design philosophy is, it's 'No rules,'" says Morris. "I mean that from the perspective of not thinking about it. I don't carry a tape measure, I don't carry pen and paper — I just use whatever is in my head. I can just envision it — and if I like it, I just make it work. Proportion is absolutely key, the infrastructure of a design is key, but in terms of the finished product, if I love it and think it's going to be fabulous, then that shows. I don't care if there is a rule book that says this or that because I've got my own rule book — and in *my* rule book, there are no rules."

Morris spoke to *Dolce* in her stunning and natural-light-infused home office on the outskirts of Toronto, the epitome of her no-rules design philosophy. The space in what she calls her "jewel box" is an eclectic and layered collection

of colours, shapes, woods, mirrors, cabinetry, finishings and comfortable fabrics — a showcase and perfect representation of this artist-designer.

Lori Morris Design (LMD) and the House of Lori Morris Design (House of LMD) were established in 1987. Today the award-winning Toronto-based House of LMD has a team of 25 artists and craftsmen and is internationally recognized by *Architectural Digest* and the *Andrew Martin: Interior Design Review* as one of the "World's Top 100 Designers." House of LMD has always remained true to itself, carving out its own niche and its own original space on the design spectrum. It's what attracts clients, and when they see the designs, it is what keeps them coming back.

"Anyone who understands and sees our designs, they really embrace the originality and creativity, the beautification of putting layers and layers together to create so much sumptuousness and sex appeal because you have so many things to look at," says Morris. "But at the same time the space is completely elegant, flows well together, is completely timeless and it hugs you and it gives you a fabulous feeling. The space is just so full of personality and colour that you are addicted to it because it's unbelievably stunning."

"Stunning" has to take into account the practicalities of the space you are designing, however, which brings up the age-old question: is design an art, or is it a science? In Morris's opinion, art and science in design must work in tandem.

"It is art if you're an artist," she says with

PHOTOS BY JESSE MILNS



Morris is the centre of every room she enters, whether she designed it or not.

“

## I HAPPEN TO BE AN ARTISTIC DESIGNER AND MY APPROACH IS ALWAYS FROM A POINT OF ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY

”

confidence. “But it’s a combination of art and science, for sure, because the science of design dominates everything we do. Math is involved, engineering is involved and all kinds of details have to be done from a scientific perspective. No design works without the appropriate engineering or the math and putting everything together from the perspective of proportion, but from an artistic perspective there are many different types of designers. I happen to be an artistic designer and my approach always begins from a point of originality and creativity, and as an artist being able to explore one’s own creativity in putting together different pieces in whatever style they may be in. There are other designers who work differently and may not be as exploratory as I am.”

The orbit around Lori Morris has a very strong gravitational pull — to her confident, energetic, effervescent, infectious and happy personality. While she can certainly look stunning dressed for the ball in a free-flowing gown, this girl from a small town is more at home in torn jeans and bare feet, engaging with nature. It might be this contrast that allows Morris to skilfully, artfully and playfully execute any style a client has in mind.

There are as many layers to Lori Morris as there are to her signature layering design style, and she has never been afraid to cross traditional lines with her innovative thinking and approaches to design, which she brings to clients around the world and across her global portfolio.

“The advantage I have as an artist and a designer is that I can do any style that anyone wants — no style is off-limits for me,” says Morris. “What LMD brings to the table is that whether you want very clean or modern or zen, or over-the-top Versailles, or classic traditional, or even our own signature style, which I call “sexy French,” we bring a certain level of elegance and sex appeal and personality to whatever design we’re doing. So, we’ll make an all-white house exciting, or an all-beige or all-grey house exciting, because we have that skill of bringing an overall feeling of elegance and timelessness, and that gives us a



Always comfortable  
in her skin and in her  
surroundings, Morris  
exudes confidence and  
happiness in any setting

Morris's home office on the outskirts of Toronto is a sumptuous sanctuary of colours, natural light and comfortable fabrics



Morris, photographed at home in her preferred look of casual jeans and bare feet, creates sumptuous settings filled with light, colour and texture

very large bandwidth to work with in terms of whatever design anybody really wants.”

This versatility and an almost chameleon-like approach, in being able to adapt to any creative assignment and the brilliance of the end result, has House of LMD a frequently recognized award-winner in the world of international design. In 2022, the company was honoured as the gold winner of the International Design Awards Europe for a 14,000-square-foot five-bedroom Toronto mansion it designed as a luxury hotel. It was also the 2022–2023 winner of the Canadian Property Awards Interior Design for Best Residential Interior of a Private Residence.

Morris feels a key to her success is that she is an artist and that she feels, sees and experiences everything through that essential creative lens, finding and drawing upon everything around her as inspiration.

“If you are a true artist to the core, it’s in you, that’s it, end of story,” she observes. “You cannot describe that, teach that or explain that to anybody — it’s just a part of me. But inspiration as an artist, it’s from nature, it’s from architecture, it’s from music or from fashion — it really is from everywhere. It might just be a shape that you see or how a tree forms or perhaps a shadow on the sidewalk that inspires you to do the design of a new carpet — which actually just happened to me. If you see life through the lens of an artist or a completely creative person, you look at life with a much different perspective than someone who may not see life that way. Which means that everything in front of you is an opportunity for inspiration.”

Despite all the recognition built up over her career, Morris does not measure her success through money or the many honours and awards she has achieved or the accolades she has received. For Lori Morris, success isn’t material or tangible — it comes from a much deeper and human place.

“Artists can be insecure and very humble. We like to hear we’ve done a great job,” says Morris. “My job is to make my clients happy. Happiness is the key to life — when you can figure out how



to make yourself happy and live a happy life, that’s everything. It’s not about the money, it’s not about things, it’s not about any *thing* — it’s about happiness. So when you feel that you can possibly be a vehicle to create happiness for someone else, that’s very cool.”

Artistry can be expressed in many different forms, through words, music, painting, fashion, architecture, sculpture or design. But through whatever medium an artist uses, what is fundamental is the artist’s essential gift — an ability to connect with their audience because of

their confidence and bravery in showcasing their feelings and talents.

Lori Morris and House of LMD have an innate ability to connect with their clients and delight all their senses with designs that are sexy, colourful, playful, thoughtful, flowing and immersive in all dimensions. There is no mistaking a Lori Morris design — artistry, originality and creativity that feed both the spirit and the soul.

[www.lorimorris.com](http://www.lorimorris.com)

@houseoflmd

# DOUBLE VISION

Growing up in completely different environments thousands of kilometres apart didn't prevent Isadore Sharp and Shahid Khan from coming together with a shared vision for business success

WRITTEN BY RICK MULLER | INTERVIEWS BY ESTELLE ZENTIL

**O**n the surface, given their upbringings, it's hard to imagine these two men ever meeting, let alone entering into business together. But one of the joys of life is doing a little sleuthing and digging deeper for the story behind the story, uncovering that inexplicable serendipity that makes things happen and brings people from the far corners of the world together.

Isadore Sharp grew up in Toronto, Canada, and is the founder and chairman of the luxury Four Seasons Hotels brand. He has become a legend in the hospitality business, where his name is globally revered. Shahid Khan grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, immigrated to America as a teenager with \$500 in his pocket and today owns one of the world's largest original equipment manufacturers in the automotive industry, two

professional sports franchises as well as All Elite Wrestling as well as the flagship Four Seasons property in Toronto, the company's headquarters city.

When *Dolce* recently interviewed both gentlemen, what struck us most was what they have in common in terms of their personalities and experiences despite their vastly different origins and upbringings.

Both are innovators and visionary businessmen, able to see things that others before them have not. Both had parents who instilled in them a strong ethic of hard work, honesty and sense of self. Both took chances early in their business careers, and because of their insights and acumen and by seeing challenges as opportunities, those chances they took made them leaders in their fields. And both have the enduring support of strong and loving wives and the unshakable foundation of family.

And though the business fates did not bring them together until 2016, when Khan purchased the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto's Yorkville, they immediately found themselves members of a mutual admiration society, full of respect for each other not only as successful businessmen but also as human beings.

"Shahid is a remarkable individual, so humble, and in terms of our ability to work together on a scale of one to ten, he's an 11," says Sharp. "He is always so supportive and knows how to do the right thing and understand the important people who work for him. For the hotel's 10th anniversary, he created a magnificent evening and celebration of their successful hotel. As an owner, he is on top of the list. He came to this country with absolutely nothing as a young teenager and went on to build this empire, yet he has never lost a sense of what it's like when you're trying to build a company, so it's been one of those rare





Twin dynamos Shahid Khan (left) and Isadore Sharp (right) together form one of the world's most successful and extraordinary business partnerships

experiences to share with somebody.”

“I went through the purchasing process for the Four Seasons Yorkville and then I got to meet Issy, and I’m just absolutely a huge fan,” says Khan. “And, you know, he’s an architect and has a great eye for great design. I was blown away by all of the amenities here. I mean, have you seen the cafeterias and the amenities for the employees here? It’s mind-blowing and better, I have to say, than most of the guest spaces in the rest of Toronto’s hotels. Issy had his fingers on every little detail of this place, so how he’s done that is unbelievably remarkable. He’s a big sports fan, too — he’d watched the last couple of Jaguars games and his insights were spot-on. I’m saying, ‘Issy, why didn’t you tell me this five years ago?’ I mean, it took me five years to figure this thing out, what’s important to athletes and how you talk to them as human beings. Issy is just so super-perceptive. He’s an icon not only for the Four Seasons, but just as a human being.”

As testament to their characters as superlative human beings, both men have used their business success through their generous philanthropic efforts to give back to the communities, worthwhile causes and charities that are important to them.

Sharp founded the now-global Terry Fox Run after meeting Fox during his famous 1980 run to raise funds for cancer research, and he is still a director of the Terry Fox Foundation. He and his wife, Rosalie, also support Toronto’s Mount Sinai Hospital and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and are the main benefactors raising funds to build a Jewish Museum of Canada in Toronto. “There is a Jewish word, ‘tzedakah,’ which means ‘giving back,’ and I’m proud that my good fortune [lets me] give back not only to the Jewish community, but also to those who need help,” says Sharp.

Khan and his wife, Ann, have been philanthropists in their community for decades, particularly for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where both graduated. The couple just last year made a gift of US\$15 million that will transform the integrated oncology program at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital. “One of the great joys of my life is making money. What makes it even better is to use it to make a difference,” says Khan.

A dedicated commitment to helping others, a shared vision of how to build, maintain and grow world-respected international businesses and an appreciation for the love of family and friends — it turns out that Toronto and Lahore aren’t so different after all.

## NO COMPLAINTS

**From his humble beginnings to founding and growing one of the world’s most iconic luxury hotel brands, Isadore Sharp, who has never had time for complaints, set out to ensure that**

## complaints would never be a part of a guest’s experience at Four Seasons Hotels

**D**ecades ago, traditional department stores had a tiny open-window wicket tucked off in a corner with a sign above it that read “Complaints.” It was where a customer could register a complaint with a store representative about a product, a return, a price or even a salesperson and was a one-on-one experience, a personal, private and quiet conversation.

Today, social media can sometimes seem to have become a global complaint wicket about too many things to mention. Complaining has become a loud international pastime where anyone with a smartphone can climb onto the mountaintop, click and scream to everyone about anything or anyone.

It’s a far cry from the youthful experiences of Isadore (Issy) Sharp, founder and chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. In his world, “Do your job” and “get on with it” were the hard-work philosophies his Polish Jewish immigrant parents instilled in him and his three sisters growing up in Toronto. There was no complaining.

“My parents were very hard-working, very principled and so appreciative of the opportunities ahead of them,” Sharp tells *Dolce* in a recent interview. “They never complained. We were so thankful to have a job whatever poor conditions there were. There was never a complaint at any time. When you grow up in that type of atmosphere it develops who you are. You learn by experience, so we were fortunate. My sisters and I were given freedom and we were never told what to do. We had to be home for dinner and in time for bed,” that was all.

Before graduating with a degree in architectural technology from Ryerson Institute of Technology (now Toronto Metropolitan University), Sharp worked as a construction labourer during the summers with his father, who was in the home-renovation business and often renovated and then resold homes as a real estate investor. That experience taught Sharp important life and work lessons.

“Whether it’s cold during the winter or hot in the summer, you gain an understanding of what your obligations are when you’re working,” recalls Sharp. “You have to toughen up and do your job. I think that work experience as a young man set me up for dealing with people.”

One of those people was his friend Jack Gould, who asked Sharp to build him a motel on the outskirts of Toronto that Gould and his wife would run. Following his graduation from Ryerson, Sharp had gone to work full-time as an architect and real estate developer for his father’s company, building apartment buildings and houses. But it was something about his friend’s request to build a 22-unit motel that gave Sharp the kernel of an idea.

“I wasn’t thinking of going into the hospitality business, but I was surprised by his success, and I thought that if it worked there in the middle of nowhere, with no access to a highway, that idea would work better downtown,” he says. “So that gave me the spark of an idea which led me on a five-year journey of convincing other people that it might work.”

To say that Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, which now operates more than 125 properties in 47 countries and 50 residences, had a modest start is a bit of an understatement. After five years of persistence against much skepticism, Sharp founded the company and opened his first property, the Four Seasons Motor Hotel, on Jarvis Street on the east side of downtown Toronto. The neighbourhood was not glamorous — in fact, it was notorious as an area where the only people walking the streets at night were those engaged in the world’s oldest profession.

Somehow Sharp made it work, bringing a level of style and sophistication to a city desperately seeking it. Toronto in the early 1960s was a rather drab provincial backwater of 600,000, not the major cosmopolitan centre of six million-plus people that the Greater Toronto Area is today. On a Sunday 60 years ago in Toronto you couldn’t purchase liquor, nor were any sports events permitted. To put it in perspective, the most exciting thing about living in Toronto in 1961 was that you were only a two-hour drive from the glitz and glamour of Buffalo.

Sharp brought something different to Toronto’s hospitality business, a dedication and commitment to customer service. “The first principle of opening the first hotel, as I told our general manager, is that we want to treat the people that come into the hotel just like we’d treat guests coming to our house for dinner,” he says. “We’re the host, they’re our guests — let’s make sure that they feel welcome.”

Sharp discovered he had a knack for the hospitality business, later opening the \$4 million Inn on the Park hotel in suburban Toronto — which, it should be pointed out, contained Canada’s first discotheque and was *exceptionally* groovy.

Every business needs a USP — a unique selling proposition, something that sets it apart from all the other businesses also making widgets. Influenced perhaps by his upbringing, work ethic or his own kind and caring nature, Sharp quickly determined what would set the Four Seasons apart when he realized hospitality was going to be his career.

“I decided early on that we were going to make the quality of our service our distinguishing feature,” he recalls. “If we were going to compete, we had to have something that was sustainable and that we could always rely on. Because service is an intangible, we set out to make it better than



Issy Sharp is a legend in world hospitality, a towering figure with an unsurpassed knowledge of quality, design, luxury and customer service



“  
**IT'S THE GOLDEN RULE — THE SIMPLE IDEA THAT IF YOU TREAT PEOPLE WELL, THE WAY YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED, THEY WILL DO THE SAME**  
”

— Isadore Sharp



Together with the rock of his life, wife Rosalie, and the support of his family, Issey Sharp took the modest beginnings of a solo motor hotel in a rather suspect area of Toronto and grew Four Seasons into an iconic global brand denoting luxury, service, location and amenities with more than 125 properties in 47 countries — and counting

other companies, and in order to do that we were going to have a workforce who were going to deliver on that product.”

In addition to a Four Seasons hotel or resort’s unparalleled luxury, quality, finishings, amenities, locations and beauty, its people really do make the difference. Staff are welcoming, helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and extremely professional. These are people who have made hospitality their career, are happy in their work and are proud to have climbed to the top of their profession by being employed by Four Seasons.

“You can go anywhere in the world and stay at a Four Seasons,” says Sharp, expressing pride in his employees. “We can take people from that community, who have the same work ethic and principles that we believe are important, and they rise to the occasion. Do you know anybody who wants to work and wants to fail? It’s innate, we all want to do our best. The thing we can do is to create a work environment that lets people rise to their best selves. We’ve all got our own talent and not everybody is going to become a leader, but everybody can reach their best levels. Then you get a very good team — and over 60 years, it’s never failed.”

The employees also subscribe to the company’s philosophy of service, which Sharp states prominently on the company’s website: “The reason for our success is no secret. It comes down to one single principle that transcends time and geography, religion and culture. It’s the Golden Rule — the simple idea that if you treat people well, the way you would like to be treated, they will do the same.”

“We had to give our employees the tools they needed for their job and that’s where the Golden Rule came into being,” explains Sharp. “To treat other people in a manner we expect them to treat

guests. All these things built onto the idea and that has become the bedrock of the culture of the company.”

Large hotels can often be cold, impersonal places, with huge front desks, banks and banks of elevators and a minimal amount of lobby furniture to discourage loitering. Not so at a Four Seasons, where you are greeted by stunning floral displays and deep plush upholstery. Whether it’s a commanding presence in the centre of a major world city or a lobby open to ocean breezes, there is a palpable sense of calm, serenity, style and sophistication in the welcoming oases that call themselves Four Seasons properties. You simply have no complaints when you stay at a Four Seasons. It’s that distinctive difference that Sharp has brought to the industry as one of its most respected and recognized hoteliers and as one of its foremost innovators.

“We were the first company to put shampoo in the bathroom,” Sharp says proudly. “Because I grew up with three sisters, I knew that girls never wash their hair with soap. And then there were the larger shower heads, the large cotton towels, the large bars of soap, the two telephones — one in the bathroom and one beside the bed. It was always about touch and feel because I figured that whatever a customer was going to use, if you could make an impression by what that product was, that would be noticeable. One of the things we did very early on was to use very, very good toilet paper. So it was just that concept of giving people something that might be useful and memorable. That innovation has gone on from day one to this day. We’re continuing to think about the customer and what their needs are.”

While the Golden Rule may be the bedrock of his company, the bedrock of his life has been his wife of almost 70 years, Rosalie, his high school

sweetheart. They met at a wedding and after a few dances and conversations were instantly smitten with each other. Together they had four sons. Sadly, their third son, Christopher, died of melanoma in 1978, at 18.

Chris's passing at least partly inspired Sharp to support the legendary Terry Fox on his famous run across Canada in 1980 to raise funds for cancer research. Sharp first met Fox when the latter was passing through Toronto on his run in June of 1980. Sharp invited Fox to stay at one of the city's Four Seasons Hotels on his run. He also helped pay for Fox's cancer treatment and later pledged to contribute money on his behalf for research, and helped start the now-international Terry Fox Run, which has raised \$850 million towards cancer research, and he still serves on its board of directors.

Issy and Rosalie Sharp are two of Canada's most prominent and generous philanthropists, supporting not just the Terry Fox Foundation but also the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the Ontario College of Art and Design, Mount Sinai Hospital and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The Sharps are also spearheading a proposal to build a Jewish Museum of Canada in Toronto, pledging \$20 million towards its fundraising goal of \$150 million.

"Our tradition is to share our good fortune and to give back to the community," says Sharp, explaining his and Rosalie's philanthropic endeavours. "I'm fortunate to have been successful enough to share our good fortune and it's a privilege. It's been a part of our lives and a lot of times it's not about the money — it's about the time you give in helping people."

Isadore Sharp has done a lot of giving back over the years both personally and professionally by donating his own money and time to help others and by building one of the truly great global luxury hospitality brands. "It's nice to be able to say that we have a global brand name that is ahead of the industry, in terms of quality of the hotel and continuing to preserve that mission, and the brand now has a life of its own. I believe in the year 2060 Four Seasons will celebrate its 100th anniversary as the undisputed leader in luxury hospitality," says Sharp.

In the meantime, we should all enjoy the experience. So put down your phone, look up, and revel in the luxurious environment Isadore Sharp and Four Seasons has created for you. Then wrap yourself in a large towel, flop onto a heavenly bed, enjoy unparalleled guest services, amenities and food. You've got nothing to complain about — not if Isadore Sharp and his personal and professional life experiences have anything to say about it.

## BUILDING ON LEGACY

**Shahid Khan, one of the world's most successful self-made businessmen, fully appreciates the legacy when he bought**

## Toronto's flagship Four Seasons Hotel

Shahid Khan's class of accommodations has, shall we say, evolved over the years. On his first night in the U.S., where he'd come to study at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, his introduction to the country came during a historic blizzard that shut down the campus, redirecting him to a \$2-a-night room at the YMCA. He had left his native Lahore, Pakistan, with the \$500 his father had given him. So that left him with \$498, though he helped make ends meet the next day by accepting a dishwashing job that paid \$1.20 per hour.

In 2011, Khan purchased the National Football League Jacksonville Jaguars for a reported US\$770 million. In 2013 he bought the London soccer club Fulham F.C. of the English Premier League for a reported £200 million and in 2016 the flagship Four Seasons Hotel and Residences in Toronto's Yorkville neighbourhood for \$225 million.

There have been many "self-made-man" stories over the decades but perhaps none as inspiring as that of Shahid Khan, the very personification of the American Dream. That's what *Forbes* magazine called him when he graced its front cover in 2012 as "The New Face of the American Dream," and was recognized by the same magazine several years later as one of the world's greatest living business minds.

I think we can all agree he did a very nice job with that initial \$500.

Khan succeeded because of the hard-work ethic demonstrated by his father and mother in an environment, the Pakistan of those years, that did not welcome change, innovation or new ways of thinking.

"I could spend hours talking about the impediments and the closed-mindedness to new ideas, the status quo being maintained so the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer," says Khan in a recent interview with *Dolce*. "A lot of the values we have here in Canada and the United States, they don't exist [in Pakistan], so there isn't equal opportunity — in fact, it's quite the opposite. Canada is an immigrant country, so is America. You come here to achieve your potential and there are no barriers to it other than yourself. In other parts of the world there is every barrier you can imagine — cultural, social and political."

In those early days at his American university, he decided to join the school's Beta Theta Pi fraternity, and it turned out to be one of the key decisions of his life.

"That's one of the greatest things that happened to be because being from Pakistan, in order for me to have success, I needed to assimilate," recalls Khan. "Becoming a part of Beta was one of the greatest fundamental and foundational things that has happened to me to this day. It gave me self-confidence and recognition because at a university

you're basically known by what fraternity you're in, and networking, which is an absolutely critical part. And then, obviously, the social aspect of meeting girls at sororities and meeting girls going to bars. That's the ultimate cold-calling — if you can learn to sell yourself in that environment, selling auto parts becomes pretty easy."

Khan mentions auto parts because of the time he spent working at the automotive manufacturing company Flex-N-Gate Corporation while attending university. When he graduated with his B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering in 1971, he was hired by the company as its engineering director. Ever the entrepreneur, he used \$16,000 of his own savings and a \$50,000 loan from the U.S.'s Small Business Administration in 1978 to form Bumper Works, which made car bumpers for customized pickup trucks and body-shop repairs.

In 1980 Khan bought Flex-N-Gate and brought Bumper Works into the fold. He rapidly grew the company, and soon it was supplying bumpers for the Big Three automakers. Since then, the company's sales have grown from \$17 million to an estimated \$8.9 billion in 2020. *Automotive News* currently ranks Flex-N-Gate as the seventh largest original equipment supplier in North America, the 45th largest supplier in Europe and the 31st largest supplier globally. Flex-N-Gate employs nearly 26,000 people at 74 manufacturing facilities and five advanced product-development centres throughout the United States, Canada, China, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, France and Spain.

Despite his success, Khan says he maintains the same perspective he did when arriving in Illinois with \$500 in his pocket. "I think I absolutely do because money should not change your values, in a good way or a bad way. Hard work, openness, perseverance and authenticity prevail and that applies today just as much as it did 50 years ago," he observes.

The foundation of Khan's life is his wife, Ann, whom he met in a bar at the University of Illinois and dated for 10 years before they married in 1977. To use Khan's own analogy, a very successful cold-calling exercise, indeed!

"I never ever thought it would amount to anything other than, you know, a fling," laughs Khan. "But it worked, it worked out great — and, as she'll tell you, it worked out great for me! Even all these years later, people will ask her what if she had never met me and she has a pet answer, 'Well, then I'd meet someone else richer!'"

Shahid and Ann's pride and joy are their son, Tony, and their daughter, Shanna. Khan knows the importance of instilling in them both the self-confidence they'll need to find their own way in their respective fields of interest.

"You know, there is something about parenting — we want our kids to appreciate where we came from, but then if we hold them to the standards we grew up with, we're setting them up for



The very definition of a self-made man, Shahid Khan is estimated to be worth more than \$9 billion and is the wealthiest person of Pakistani origin

“

# YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND DO IT IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

”

— Shahid Khan

failure,” says Khan. “I think they need a sense of self-worth. They need a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. After college, I think that’s the important thing, to set them up for success in life,” says Khan, the company’s lead investor. “He observed and identified that this business was ready for disruption. Now, after only three years, it’s the number one show on cable on Wednesday nights. I’m really proud of him for developing a highly successful business.”

The last decade has seen the dapper Khan, known for his distinctive moustache, emerge as one of the world’s leading sports tycoons, purchasing both the National Football League’s Jacksonville Jaguars and the English Premier League’s Fulham soccer club. With these ownerships comes a new kind of spotlight because you can’t hide in professional sports, especially with its passionate fan bases — all of whom have their opinions (and all of which are correct, mind you).

“The most surprising thing about having an NFL team and an EPL team is the notoriety,” says Khan. “One thing you’ll learn about sports is that it is very humbling, because everyone is going to know more about it than you do. In sports, everyone’s got an opinion and they’re smarter than you are. And that’s the fun part of sport, but any anonymity is gone.”

Given his background, upbringing and vast international experience, Khan is a keen observer of life, and he observes some similarities between the world of big business and the world of professional sports. In Khan’s eye, it comes down to that magic measuring stick: performance.

“Sports is really about performance on the pitch or the gridiron, depending on the type of football,” he says. “So, whether you are big or small or tall, fast or slow, your performance — what you do —

really defines you. It’s not the colour of your skin. I mean, it’s a great equalizer.”

Admittedly, the Jacksonville Jaguars are not the NFL’s most prominent franchise, lacking both the history and winning pedigree of, say, the Green Bay Packers or Dallas Cowboys. They have made two championship-game appearances since entering the league in 1995 but are only one of four teams to never have played in a Super Bowl. (For those scoring at home, the others are the Detroit Lions, Cleveland Browns and Houston Texans.)

But things are changing for the better. The team now has that “holy trinity” it takes to win in the NFL: Khan’s solid ownership, a proven head coach in the Super-Bowl-winning Doug Pederson, and one of the games’ most exciting young quarterbacks, Trevor Lawrence. So, keep your eye on the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Khan had an intimate knowledge of Toronto before purchasing the Four Seasons Hotel and Residences, the flagship hotel of the international luxury hospitality brand in the middle of its headquarters city. As a Commonwealth country, Canada had many Pakistani families immigrate here instead of to the United States, and Khan’s family often visited relatives who lived in Toronto.

His knowledge of the city only grew through his many business trips to his auto-parts manufacturing facilities located in outlying areas of the city, including Mississauga, Oshawa and Scarborough. For his overnights, however, Khan preferred to stay in Yorkville, the midtown neighbourhood of trendy cafés, restaurants, bistros and fine hotels, including the original Four Seasons Hotel on Avenue Road just north of Bloor Street, the city’s main shopping thoroughfare.

However, due to the popularity of the Four



1



2



3



4



5

1. Khan’s entrepreneurial spirit began when he formed Bumper Works in 1978. 2. & 3. Khan grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, and came to the United States to attend university when he was just 16 years old. 4. In 2013, Khan purchased the London soccer club Fulham F.C. of the English Premier League. 5. In 2011, Khan purchased the National Football League’s Jacksonville Jaguars for a reported US\$770 million.

Seasons and of Yorkville itself, then home to many Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) events, the hotel was often booked solid, forcing Khan to seek other neighbourhood accommodations. Sometimes, you can have all the money in the world (or at least, a great deal of it) but you simply can't get a room.

Then Khan read that the new Four Seasons Hotel and Residences, just blocks away from the original, was for sale. "I said, 'Oh geez, if I could just get that, I'm not going to have to worry about getting a room,'" says Khan, smiling. "Whenever I'm coming in, they can't tell me, 'There's a big conference,' or 'TIFF is in town,' or whatever. It's like, 'Well then, just kick someone out!'"

Khan well understood the importance of what he was purchasing, given the landmark status of the flagship Four Seasons Hotel and the legacy Isadore and Rosalie Sharp had created with their hotels. "Meeting Issy and Rosalie has been a real joy because he is one of the most interesting people you're going to meet, and this is like sacred ground in a way," says Khan, referring to the 55-storey tower at Bay Street and Yorkville Avenue. "They were asking me 'You've never owned a hotel or anything?' and I told them the founder lives 10 minutes from here and the corporate offices are another few minutes from here and there's no way I can screw it up because this is their legacy. They're not going to let us screw it up."

Khan's phenomenal business success has allowed him and Ann to devote millions of dollars to their philanthropic efforts, helping many worthwhile causes and charities. For both of them, making a difference is just the right thing to do.

"You want to make a difference and do it in a meaningful way," says Khan. "I don't think money is the be-all and end-all — yes, you're comfortable, and having more is a great way of measuring it — but unless it's put to work, money sitting in a bank account doesn't do any good at all."

Shahid Khan has come a long way from that \$2-per-night YMCA room, to building one of his industry's most successful companies, to spending more than \$1 billion on two professional sports franchises, to purchasing the flagship hotel of one of the world's most iconic luxury brands, to donating millions to worthwhile charities and causes.

It's amazing to think how far \$500 can take a person.

Toronto, Canada, and Lahore, Pakistan, are separated by 11,233 kilometres, and that's just the geographic distance. The cities might as well be worlds apart when you consider the vast differences in culture, traditions, religions, attitudes, beliefs, family values, social mores, day-to-day and approaches to conducting business.

Yet, somehow, Isadore Sharp and Shahid Khan

both emerged from these two very different environments with the same values and ethics, commitment to hard work, sense of purpose and deep respect for people.

Therein lies the incredible magic of the shared human experience. Whatever fate has given you, you are its master, as these two men have clearly demonstrated. Is your point of arrival determined by your point of departure? No. There are always going to be challenges that must be met, but within those challenges lie opportunities.

Sharp and Khan may have taken vastly different paths in their separate yet ultimately connected journeys, but they have both shown us that striving for more can be both satisfying and rewarding. Is where you want to go defined by where you are now? Is what got you here going to get you there?

Isadore Sharp and Shahid Khan grew up worlds apart from each other, but both had big dreams, and through their circumstances, hard work, successes and the alignment of the stars, their lives came together. If it was meant to be, then it was also meant to be for the betterment of both men.

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KEN SHAW LEXUS





# LA DOLCE VITA

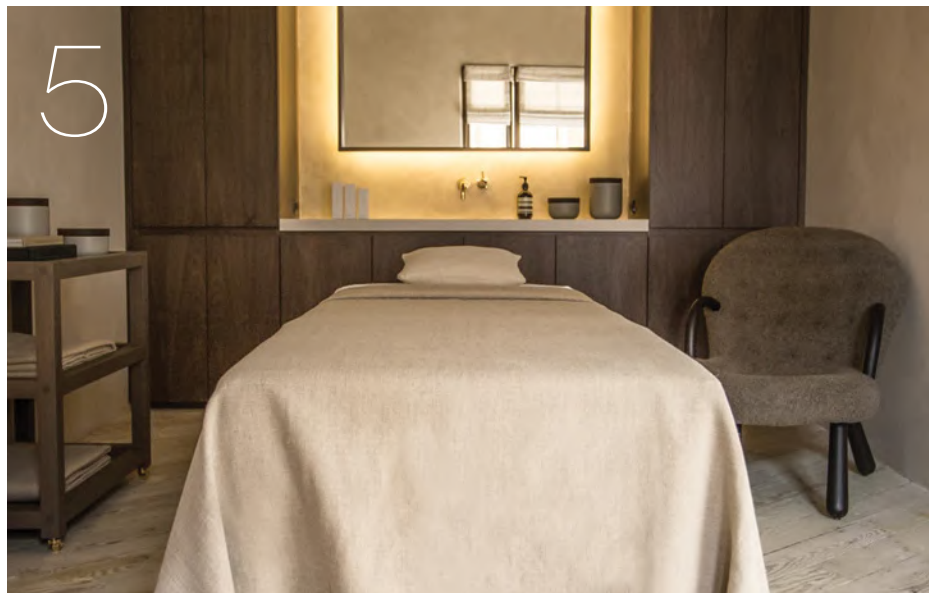
L.A.

Los Angeles, “The City of Angels,” is known for its incredible weather, fascinating history, and love of health and beauty

TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



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**1. Celine Triomphe Bag** Function is key. Whether you are walking through the farmers market or jetting off to a Pilates class, this cross-body bag will look chic and hold all your essentials. [www.celine.com](http://www.celine.com) @celine

**2. Louis Vuitton City Of Stars Fragrance** The magic of the City of Stars, L.A., is captured in this dynamic fragrance. [www.louisvuitton.com](http://www.louisvuitton.com) @louisvuitton

**3. Erewhon Market** Shop like a local at L.A.'s most famous luxury grocery store which features picture-perfect produce, a delicious hot bar, and celebrity smoothies. [www.erewhonmarket.com](http://www.erewhonmarket.com) @erewhonmarket

**4. Polo Lounge** The Polo Lounge is one of L.A.'s most historic sites. Icons such as Charlie Chaplin and Marlene Dietrich frequented this spot many decades ago, and you can still spot some of your favourite celebrities dining here. [www.dorchestercollection.com](http://www.dorchestercollection.com) @bevhillshotel

**5. Shani Darden Facial Studio** Celebrity facialist Shani Darden has made a name for herself in the skin-care industry creating custom facials and even her own line of tools and products. Visit her L.A. location for your dream skin. [www.shanidarden.com](http://www.shanidarden.com) @shanidarden

AUTO



The exhibition is split into three sections: design, technology and performance

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUSEO ENZO FERRARI



# THROUGH THE LENS OF INNOVATION

Until February of next year, Museo Enzo Ferrari is showcasing Ferrari's spirit of future-facing innovation

WRITTEN BY JOSH WALKER



The technology section focuses on the innovations that have won Ferrari races around the globe





As well as looking to the past, the exhibition looks to the future; in this case with its Ferrari Purosangue, the brand's first SUV

**I**n 1947, the Prancing Horse debuted its very first car. Called the 125 S, it came with an original design, a 1,500-c.c. V-12 engine and marked the beginning of what would be a string of defining, game-changing cars that would shape the automotive world.

The 125 S is the car that serves as the foundation for *Game Changers*, a new exhibition open at Modena's Museo Enzo Ferrari that showcases some of the most significant cars in the brand's history.

It does so through the lens of innovation, diving into the specifics that have made the Prancing Horse emblem so renowned, earning victories at races across the globe.

The exhibition is split into sections of design,

technology and performance. Models on display in the design section include the 375 MM, the first one-off commission by Italian film director Roberto Rossellini for Ingrid Bergman, and the 166 MM, which was the first aluminum-bodied barchetta.

Move through to the technology space and you'll see the 400 Automatic. Released in 1976, it's the first 2+2 Grand Tourer fitted with an automatic gearbox, a response to market demand and international clients. It sits alongside the Ferrari F1-89, which holds another debut accolade: this time for being the first single-seater to integrate an electrohydraulic gearbox.

Finally, the performance section of the exhibition champions exactly that, featuring the Ferrari FXX,

which was the first model in a Prancing Horse special series designed for track use.

While the exhibition serves to offer a glimpse at the brand's innovation and its constant look towards the future, it also tells the story of Ferrari's past, a story that includes victories at Rome GP and 24 Hours of Le Mans, and reaching various milestones in design engineering.

And while not all of the brand's wins and vehicles are on show at the exhibition, it does serve as a reminder of how far Ferrari has come.

*Game Changers* runs at the Museo Enzo Ferrari in Modena until Feb. 17, 2024.

[www.ferrari.com](http://www.ferrari.com)

@museiferrari



"Youth Is Wasted on the Young" features a series of limited-edition pieces

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JONAS PETERSON

# ART REIMAGINED BY AI

Photographer Jonas Peterson explores new media and pushes the boundaries between fiction and reality as he works with computer technologies to create lifelike art work that will have you second-guessing what is real

INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE ZERILLO-SOSA | COPY BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



JONAS PETERSON

**W**ith over 25 years of experience in the arts, including his work as a writer, filmmaker, creative director, photographer, artist, Jonas Peterson uses new AI techniques in his latest work to create unique and moving pieces of art. AI art is generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence. Peterson uses this and other computer software to create these works. Using his direction the artificial intelligence system goes to work, and after some trial and error the AI program is able to understand the goal and Peterson begins curating to create his ultimate vision. In a process that Peterson refers to as being similar to that of a director, he works in collaboration with the real and artificial brain. His current collection, “Youth Is Wasted on the Young,” is a comment on ageism and a celebration of the old. Through this collection the photographer and storyteller shows the pride and confidence of those who have lived longer and experienced more than most of us. The collection has been an incredible success — since “Youth Is Wasted On The Young” was published online it has been shared over 10 million times.

“

I COMBINE  
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AND PUT IT TO  
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EXACTLY WHAT  
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DISSECTING  
SOMETHING  
USUALLY KILLS IT

”

**Q:** Where did the inspiration come from for using AI for this style of photography?

**A:** I have always experimented a lot with various techniques in my work. I use analogue, instant and digital cameras to produce what I do. When AI tools came along, I started using them as other image-creation tools, because, to me, that’s all they are — tools to tell a story or evoke emotion in the viewer. I find questions about gear and tools a little pointless. I try to focus on what I want to say; the only thing the gear does is get in the way of realizing what I want to create.

**Q:** Can you share a bit of the process with us?

**A:** I’m a photographer, but I have a background in writing and fine art. I combine everything I’ve learned and put it to use, but I’m not interested in lifting the veil and sharing exactly what it is I do. Dissecting something usually kills it.

**Q:** What has been the reaction to these collections?

**A:** It has been absolutely incredible. The outpouring of love has far outweighed the few people who don’t agree with the process. Since I first shared them in November, I’ve been contacted by museums, art collectors and curators from all around the world, in addition to all the people who love them with all their heart.



Each photo in the collection captures the spirit of the characters through poses, expressions and styling



**Q:** We would like to share “Youth Is Wasted on the Young.” Can you walk us through some of the process?

**A:** I can, but I won't. I want people to enjoy what they're eating — sharing what pan I used to fry the fish isn't interesting to me.

**Q:** What past experiences have influenced you as a photographer, artist and writer?

**A:** I've been working in creative and commercial arts for over 25 years as an artist, photographer, creative director, writer and filmmaker. Each experience is part of the patchwork that make up my voice and expression.

**Q:** What emotions do you hope your work will deliver to audiences?

**A:** My main goal with everything I do is to make people react and feel something. For this project, I wanted to make people feel joy and excitement, mostly. If you don't feel something, I have failed what I came here for.

**Q:** Do you have any stories about collectors of your work that surprised you?

**A:** I have been contacted by everything from world-famous actors and entrepreneurs to people with stage 4 cancer who just want to bring some joy back into their final stages of life. It has been wonderful and very humbling.

**Q:** What can you tell us about your private life that is a complement to your work?

**A:** I have taken thousands of portraits of people over the years. I've never really been interested in the standard definition of beauty, I'm interested in the mess of being human. My life has been a mess; isn't it, deep down, for everyone?

**Q:** What is your definition of youth?

**A:** Unrestricted play.

**Q:** If you could change anything about life, what would it be?

**A:** If I'd change anything about my path, I wouldn't be where I am today, so I wouldn't necessarily change a thing. I'd be kinder to myself and the people I've hurt along the way.

**Q:** What is your definition of happiness?

**A:** Being surrounded by people I love and who love me back. I've learned to never rely on anyone else for happiness, it comes from within; it's a choice you have to make and it takes work to get there.

**Q:** What is your *dolce vita* (good life)?

**A:** Eating and drinking with people I love. When I don't cook for myself, I travel around the world sampling food wherever I go. A calvados in France, some artichokes in spring in Italy, the simple things.

[www.jonaspetersoneducation.com](http://www.jonaspetersoneducation.com)

@jonaspeterson\_ai



AI art offers an expressive take on reality



Peterson's love for fashion is expressed in these photos as he illustrates characters' personalities through their fashion choices

# LETTING THE ART SPEAK FOR ITSELF

Artist Viktor Mitic is a creator in every sense of the word, producing a body of work over two decades that defies conventional description. Featuring a unique approach and social commentary, his art is showcased in galleries and outdoor spaces around the world

WRITTEN BY DONNA PARIS  
INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE ZERILLO-SOSA

Creating large breath-taking sculptural pieces is physically demanding for Viktor Mitic

CONTEMPORARY ART



PHOTO BY DANIEL TERPACES

**I**t's a good thing that Viktor Mitic's mother couldn't afford a babysitter. Because when she was studying art in former Yugoslavia (now Serbia), and Mitic was just a child, he tagged along, drawing and sketching during sessions. "Later, as a teenager, I copied masterworks from the Renaissance and some of the other masters in the United States and Europe," he says. He went on to attend various art schools for classical training in Europe. But it was only when he immigrated to Canada as a 20-year-old, attending Sheridan College and earning a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Toronto, that he was able to take his art to a whole new level. "In Europe, they teach you traditional techniques and to follow certain rules," he says. But it's not like that here, he adds. "You can throw it all away because you do the opposite of what you learned, which is amazing!"

This kind of thinking, this kind of colouring outside the lines, has made Mitic a painter and sculptor who knows no bounds. Mitic became well known when he let his art do the talking, painting portraits of iconic people like Marilyn Monroe, Jesus and John F. Kennedy, then punching them with more than a million rounds of ammunition and outlining them with various guns, to present social commentary on guns and violence and society's obsession with fame. The project was parlayed into a documentary and a book, *Art or War: Bullet Paintings by Viktor Mitic*. That's not all. Mitic's shot-out school-bus sculpture, *Incident*, which debuted at a Toronto festival, was showcased in Washington, D.C., in 2013, during the gun debates held after the Sandy Hook massacre of schoolchildren in Newtown, Conn. In another series, *Rain*, Mitic explores the link between environment and art. The series was created outdoors with oil paint, pigment and acid rain. The mixture of natural elements and paint combined into a one-of-a-kind series showcasing nature's contribution to the world of art. The completed series, titled *Rain Dance*, was exhibited in 2011, coinciding with the launch of a book and a documentary DVD of the same title.

Mitic's work has definitely evolved over the years, but he remains committed to using his art in a provocative, controversial way. His sculptures combine cut metal forms with shapes and spaces in between, creating theatrical, multi-level depths



The sculptures, as assembled shapes and spaces, create a multi-level depth effect, animating space

PHOTO COURTESY OF VIKTOR MITIC

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## MITIC'S WORK HAS EVOLVED, BUT HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO USING HIS ART IN A PROVOCATIVE WAY

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and effects. When he is working on prototypes he works with upcycled materials, but on the refined pieces he likes to use metals like bronze, stainless steel and gold, often electroplated 24-karat gold.

What's the secret to the success of an artist? For Mitic, it has to be work, constant learning and maintaining relationships. "You have to learn all the time, there's no way you can say at whatever

age that you know it all, because you don't," he says. And never underestimate the power of networking and getting into galleries and shows, either, which can attract collectors, he adds. It gives him tremendous satisfaction to see his art displayed in the community itself, and he's grateful for collectors who really get his art and are willing to invest in it — Collectors like Toronto entrepreneur Lorne Gertner, for instance, who owns several of Mitic's paintings and sculptures. And when one talks about maintaining relationships, Mitic brings up Oeno Gallery in Prince Edward County, as one that took years to develop. "Their position and reach have given me the opportunity to exhibit my work in a unique way and to expose my work to various international clients that they partner with," he says.

Recently, Mitic's sculptures have caught the eye of Rashid Moosajee, a renowned developer in Sri Lanka, whose company has built commercial and residential towers in Colombo, the country's capital and largest city. The artist's *Purple Heart* sculpture now graces the rooftop terrace of an innovative office building, Veranda Offices, which houses Sri Lanka's Norwegian embassy and stands as a temporary space for its Japanese embassy.

Currently, Mitic is simply enjoying sunny days in Florida, where he will be based for the next year and a half. He likes to start his days with a double espresso, then checks his favourite websites for world news. You need to know what is happening, he says, because that will affect you, whether you agree or disagree. His work can be emotionally demanding and physically demanding, as well. Take, for instance, a sculpture that he is working on now, *XOX*, which is more than five metres high. "It's a stainless-steel character based on Greek gods Hermes and Hephaestus and their personal characteristics that I thought *XOX* should possess," he says.

Asked what *la dolce vita* means for Mitic, he replies easily. "Every day I get out into the beautiful sunshine, the water is right across the street, and I go to the beach, which is a block away. It's amazing just to be here and soak it in," he says. "And then I get to work — so it's all beautiful for me."

[www.artorwar.com](http://www.artorwar.com)

@viktor\_mitic

**SPIRITUALITY**



Vishen is the Founder and CEO of Mindvalley, the world's most powerful life transformation platform

# CHANGING LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

Vishen Lakhiani is the entrepreneur, author, speaker, and activist looking to make a major dent in every aspect of human life

INTERVIEW BY ESTELLE ZENTIL | COPY BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISHEN LAKHIANI

Vishen Lakhiani is known by most as the founder of the award-winning education movement Mindvalley, New York Times bestselling author of *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, founder of A-Fest, Mindvalley Quests, and Mindvalley University as well as an impactful speaker and activist. Vishen believes the world is capable of extraordinary things if we unite together. He believes that the solution lies in raising human consciousness; that is why he created Mindvalley. Today, his book *The 6 Phase Meditation Method: The Proven Technique to Supercharge Your Mind, Manifest Your Goals, and Make Magic in Minutes a Day* is helping readers get focused, find peace, and manifest their goals.

**Q: What do you remember from your adolescence growing up in Malaysia?**

**A:** I was born and raised in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the schooling system did not allow for any creativity or thinking outside of the box. I recall teachers constantly shoving Brules (*Bullsh\*t Rules*) down my throat, trying to force ways of thinking and behaving onto me that were deemed “acceptable” by society — how to be successful, how to worship God, what a proper family should look like, what I should and should not eat.

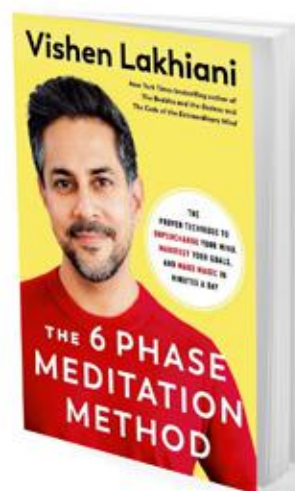
As awful as this all was, it was ultimately the first spark in my journey to evolve education. Growing up and seeing beyond the confines of what my childhood school taught me, I felt compelled to bring transformation to people’s lives and empower them to become the best versions of themselves.

**Q: What was your first encounter with your own personal spiritual development?**

**A:** Upon graduating from University of Michigan in 1999, I took an elite internship with Microsoft. Only a small percentage of those who applied were accepted into this internship — it was the Holy Grail that would set you up for a career as a computer engineer. Turns out I absolutely hated it, and within weeks I quit.

At that point, I didn’t know what to do with my life. I floated between other positions, feeling like a failure because I could barely pay my bills. Then one night, I got on Google and searched for “hope,” and discovered a class on mediation. Yes, one Google search completely changed my life.

As I became more invested in meditation, something amazing happened: I became the top performer at my job at the time, and my sales



His book *The 6 Phase Meditation Method: The Proven Technique to Supercharge Your Mind, Manifest Your Goals, and Make Magic in Minutes a Day*

“

**THE 6 PHASE MEDITATION METHOD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS HOW YOU THINK, PERFORM, GROW, HEAL AND SHAPE THE WORLD AROUND YOU**

”

figures skyrocketed. I got promoted three times in four months, eventually becoming director of sales. I was using my mind in a unique and different way.

Blown away at how meditation was changing my life, I decided to take it to the next level and become a meditation instructor. This was the decision that would ultimately change everything for me — and even led to me creating my own form of meditation, known as 6 Phase Meditation.

These decisions — to do that Google search, to become a meditation instructor — helped lay the foundation for my personal transformation journey and, ultimately, Mindvalley.

**Q: When did you first realize that your mission in life was to raise human consciousness?**

**A:** When I look back, there are many moments where I was inching my way toward my ultimate mission. For instance, when I was a kid, I enrolled in a weekly taekwondo class. What I loved so much about these classes was that there was a clear system in place that allowed students to grow to a mastery level in easily attainable stages. Working my way up from a white belt to the coveted black belt, I found that all of the belts were reachable goals to hit, and helpful in tracking my progress and keeping me motivated.

This isn’t to say that I knew my life’s purpose from this early on, but as I got older and began my adventure in human consciousness, I couldn’t help but think back to these moments. I wondered if there was a scale, similar to that of taekwondo, for the evolution of human consciousness — a system that could make it easier for all of us to level up.

**Q: Why do you believe giving back is such an important part of human development?**

**A:** Studies have found that acts of giving back are linked to increased mental health and overall wellness. Acts of altruism — no matter how small or large — activate the brain’s mesolimbic pathway and contribute to feelings of gratification and fulfillment. The brain releases happiness chemicals like dopamine throughout the body, aiding your sense of inner peace, tranquility and sense of purpose. Your cognition improves, creating brainwaves similar to the effects of meditation. Additionally, giving back has been proven to lower blood pressure, anxiety, depression, as well as lower risks of dementia and cardiovascular problems.

**Q: Of all of Mindvalley's teaching programs, which include programs on mindfulness, meditation, personal growth, fitness and health, which area do you feel most passionate about?**

**A:** Mindvalley is home to 200 of the world’s top teachers, authors and experts in personal growth and wellness, with an expansive library of highly produced master classes and programs. Some wonderful Mindvalley authors to check out would be Marisa Peer, Jim Kwik, Dr. Shefali, Paul McKenna, Lisa Nichols, Katherine Woodward Thomas, Sri Kumar Rao, Marie Diamond and so



Vishen is a successful entrepreneur, author, speaker, and activist

## Hi, I'm Vishen...

And most people know me as:

### **The founder of Mindvalley**

an award-winning education movement with millions of students worldwide and growing fast.

### **The New York Times Bestselling author**

of *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, now translated into 25+ languages.

### **The founder of A-Fest and Mindvalley University**

two major event experiences in The field of personal transformation.

### **The creator of Mindvalley Quests**

a new kind of online learning platform that produces 800% better completion rates than the industry average.

### **A speaker and activist**

working to evolve the core systems that shape our lives — including education, work culture, politics, and wellbeing (you might have seen my exposé on Nestlé, shared over 20 million times).

“

## DO YOU NEED MOTIVATION OR DO YOU NEED TO FIND A VISION THAT PULLS YOU FORWARD?

”

many more. I also recommend you to check out one of our leading programs, called The Silva Ultramind System.

**Q: How long did it take you to write *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*? How did your life change after the book reached No. 10 on the New York Times Best Seller list for Advice, How-To & Miscellaneous?**

**A:** This book is a compilation of years of research, science and countless interviews with some of the most brilliant minds I've encountered. I am very proud of this book and of how many people it has reached globally. The more people we can help to transform, the better. Now, with three bestsellers and another one in the works, I truly love using writing (and audio) as another way to reach so many people and bring the wisdom of hundreds of brilliant minds to more humans.

**Q: What does your creative process look like when you're starting to write a book?**

**A:** Transformation is the key thing. Everything I write has the end goal of giving someone a powerful transformation.

**Q: What prompted you to write *The 6 Phase Meditation Method: The Proven Technique to Supercharge Your Mind, Manifest Your Goals, and Make Magic in Minutes a Day*?**

**A:** I created *The 6 Phase Meditation Method* as a radical reinvention of meditation, an easier form of self-transformation that isn't labelled by outdated thinking and customs. I wanted to share the protocol I had created for myself so that anyone could do it, no matter what your views are on meditation or where you're at in your personal growth journey; and it can be done in less than 20 minutes every day. The 6 Phase Meditation Method significantly impacts how you think, perform, grow, heal and shape the world around you. Today more than two million people practise this, including award-winning athletes and celebrities.

**Q: How do you feel knowing that Mindvalley is one of the leading brands in human transformation?**

**A:** Seeing the evolution and success of Mindvalley

has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. With over 20 million growth-seekers worldwide, I am grateful for every member who has put their trust in me and this community. It has long been my mission to raise human consciousness and transform the major systems that run the world, and it has been so fulfilling to see Mindvalley do exactly that.

Looking to the future, Mindvalley's success excites me. Seeing how much we have achieved in our journey so far, I am eager to continue working to expand the platform even farther beyond what we already have to offer.

**Q: Who are some of the top teachers today in the fields of meditation, intuition, consciousness, meta-learning, biohacking and longevity?**

**A:** I am fortunate enough to have some of the top teachers and brightest minds sharing their wisdom at Mindvalley through various courses, master classes and quests that members can choose from. For meditation, we offer Meditation for Super Performance with Emily Fletcher, the meditation expert who's taught at Google and Harvard. For intuition, there is Sixth Sense Superpower with Sonia Choquette, the world's premier intuition teacher. For meta-learning, try one of our most popular programs, called Superbrain by Jim Kwik. For biohacking, Mindvalley will soon launch a biohacking quest led by the "Father of Biohacking," Dave Asprey. For longevity, we offer The Longevity Blueprint by Ben Greenfield.

**Q: If someone is completely new to the idea of human transformation/self-improvement, where would you tell them to start?**

**A:** The first thing to do when starting anything new is to forget everything you think you know about it. Oftentimes we go into new endeavours with preconceived notions and misconceptions that will cloud our judgment or skew our experience. The best way to begin any journey, especially one of self-improvement, is by going in with a completely open mind and heart. I would suggest downloading the Mindvalley app and creating an account so you can begin looking at our courses. We actually offer

a 7-day free trial membership at this special link.

**Q: What do you believe are the qualities of a great leader?**

**A:** Everyone at some point in their lives aspires to climb up the ladder toward a leadership role, but the definition of what a great leader is often gets clouded by all the rules we think we have to live by. Former president Dwight D. Eisenhower once said: "A leader is someone who gets people to do things he wants done because they want to do it." This quote has always stuck with me. What an amazing quote.

As I began growing my business and evolving my leadership style, I soon realized that a leader is someone who helps other people grow. So, we came up with this leadership credo: "Everyone you lead is as brilliant as you, as great as you, and as capable of the same impact. Your job is simply to remind them of this fact and help them grow." I believe that the best leaders are the best coaches.

**Q: What motivates you on a daily basis?**

**A:** I want to share an idea that I got from the brilliant Dr. Reverend Michael Beckwith. He says that you don't need motivation, and that it is actually rubbish. The people who need that are doing a job or role that aligns with their mission. If you need to be pushed, then you're probably not pursuing the right vision. I wake up every day and am pulled by my own vision, which took me years to figure out. So, the real question is, do you need motivation, or do you need to find a vision that pulls you forward?

**Q: What does *la dolce vita*, the sweet life, mean to you?**

**A:** It means a life filled with the things that bring the most happiness. This is beyond money, having the best job, fancy clothes, but rather the people you surround yourself with and the relationships you have with them. Having heart-to-heart connections with other human beings is what truly makes us feel happy, and what makes life so sweet.

[www.vishen.com](http://www.vishen.com)

@vishen

# THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RED SOLE

*Christian Louboutin*

FASHION



Christian Louboutin unveils its Women's FW23 collection in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the red sole



PHOTO BY VICTOR BOYKO

PHOTO BY VICTOR BOYKO

The French designer, whose signature red soles have catapulted his glamorous creation into the highest strata of luxury footwear

WRITTEN BY MONICA MARANO

Welcome to the House that never sleeps (creatively speaking, at least)! From new releases and must-have exclusives to store openings, exciting collaborations and more, there is never a dull moment at Christian Louboutin, and there is no more famous red soles in the world than Christian Louboutin's, that is immediately recognizable.

Christian Louboutin is one of the world's most well-known shoe designers and the red soles of his designs have become synonymous with luxury and celebrity, now selling over one million pairs of shoes a year. Thirty years ago, Christian Louboutin was put on the fashion map with his newly opened boutique in central Paris; his red-soled shoes, handcrafted in Italy, were soon taken up by Hollywood actresses and Paris's fashion

establishment. The designer believed that his shoes have the ability to "make a woman look sexy, beautiful, to make her legs as long as [he] can." Playful, imaginative and intrinsically Parisian, buyers soon flew from all over the world, and red flashes took over the red carpets.

When it comes to putting on a show, Louboutin remains the unparalleled showman, and, true to form, his Women's Fall/Winter 2023 collection is shaping up to be a show to remember!

Becoming the House's signature over the last three decades, Christian Louboutin celebrates 30 years of the red sole at Paris Fashion Week, with a performance choreographed by Sadeck Berrabah, featuring the Neodance Academy.

Following the success of the first and second Loubi Show, the star-studded Louboutin returns with his third Loubi Show, taking place in Paris at the Opéra Comique, one of the oldest theatrical musical institutions in France and part of the six official National Theatres.

A celebration of all the creativity, charisma and exquisite craftsmanship that Andalusia has to offer, the Maison's annual limited-edition cabas offering, developed in collaboration with the inimitable Rossy de Palma, kicks off the season with a resounding Olé!, inspired by the region's rich culture and tradition.

The choreographer, accompanied by 50 dancers, took to the stage wearing black and white Astribottas knee-high boots, exclusively made for the show, introduced a new vision of dance called 'tutting', an interpretive style involving intricate movements of the body and hands in geometric shapes, performed in synchronized harmony. The stage was entirely covered with reflective material, creating an optical illusion of infinite red soles, which is the Maison's most iconic symbol.

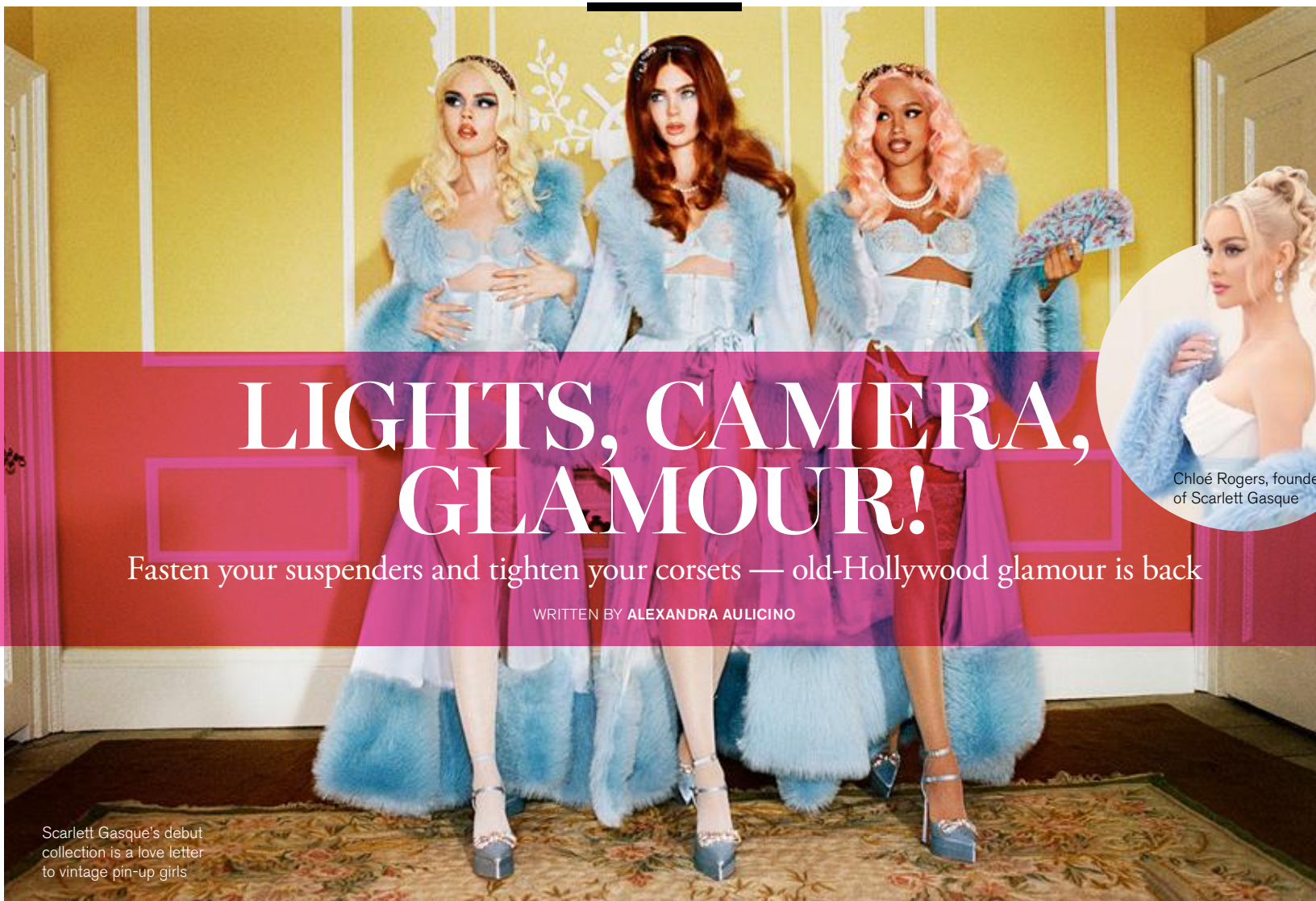
After the show, Louboutin unveiled the Fall/Winter 2023 collection within the grand historical ballroom of the Opéra Comique. The collection was displayed on two metallic red towers and two circular alcoves, which paid tribute to the design of the iconic building.

The Loubi Show III treated guests to an upbeat performance choreographed by Sadeck Berrabah and live musical acts to present the Women's Fall/Winter 2023 collection and celebrate 30 years of the red sole. The red sole embodies freedom and independence, which today is so synonymous with the designer's spirit. Louboutin's passionate curiosity has never stopped thriving, incorporating the signature red sole into all his designs.

us.christianlouboutin.com  
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PHOTOS BY ANTHONY GHANASSIA





# LIGHTS, CAMERA, GLAMOUR!

Fasten your suspenders and tighten your corsets — old-Hollywood glamour is back

WRITTEN BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO

Scarlett Gasque's debut collection is a love letter to vintage pin-up girls

The breathtaking reveal of luxury lingerie and corsetry brand Scarlett Gasque proves that undergarments aren't always made to be hidden. With an assemblage of undergarments that are too beautiful to hide, this debut collection won't be forgotten in the archives of fashion history.

Scarlett Gasque creates timeless, high-quality luxury corsetry and lingerie that will never go out of style. By bringing traditional designs back into the mainstream, the brand uses vintage elements and provocative burlesque touches and combines them with a modern vision, creating unique pieces that will be treasured for years to come. With vintage styles that feel current and covetable, Scarlett Gasque has reimaged classics for the 21st-century woman, combining function, glamour, sensuality and camp into a collection that oozes sex appeal.

Scarlett Gasque was born out of a love for the idyllic silver-screen sirens and glamour girls of the 1940s and 1950s. Founder Chloé Rogers fell in love with traditional corsetry and vintage pin-up stars during her time studying the history of fashion at Central Saint Martins at the University of the Arts London. "Scarlett Gasque, named after both of my

incredibly influential great-grandmothers, is the go-to brand for the daring, the carnal and the coy. I want to uplift our diverse customers and encourage them to continue to proudly live their authentic lives, celebrating all the delicious shapes, styles and forms we all come in," says Chloé.

Chloé took inspiration from many moments in time and equally as many incredible women. Iconic bombshells, sensual pin-ups, beautiful Hollywood actresses and erotic burlesque dancers who offered their charm and charisma across the decades have influenced the collection as lasting examples of female empowerment. Iconic 1950s and 1960s bombshell Jayne Mansfield, Hollywood's most glamorous actress, Rita Hayworth, Europe's most popular performer, Josephine Baker, world-renowned beauty Elizabeth Taylor, and modern-day burlesque superstar Dita Von Teese are just some of the women who acted as muses for the brand. Their ability to embrace their femininity and sexuality while empowering others has made them lasting icons.

The debut collection features bras, thongs, corsets, robes and suspenders in a darling candy-coated colour palette. It was designed in London,

U.K., using purposely locally sourced U.K. and European textiles, such as mesh, lace, silk, satin, tulle and faux fur, with opulent embroidery techniques and expert corsetry. Impeccable design and meticulous craftsmanship were employed to create pieces that are equally as beautiful and sensual as they are functional. Details such as lace, polka dots and fur create the unique added sparkle of 1950s glamour that wearers will want to show off. These pieces, which can be worn as underwear or outerwear, were made to embrace the natural curves of the body, creating the confidence to celebrate sexual freedom and expression. This is something Chloé admires from the icons of the past, who were known for their decadent style but should be emulated because of their ferocity and attitude towards female empowerment.

This collection brings us back to an indulgent time when femininity and elegance empowered women. The brand's versatile and ornate styles encourage women to be expressive and embrace themselves while dripping in high glamour, sex appeal, style and luxury.

scarlettgasque.com  
@scarlettgasque

PHOTO BY ELLEN VON UNWERTH



Allen has over 300 pairs of sneakers in his collection

# THE SNEAKERHEAD DESIGNING INDIVIDUALITY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHAEL ALLEN

# Michael Allen opens up on what sparked the idea to launch his Pairs brand and offers us a virtual invitation to explore his sneaker collection

WRITTEN BY JOSH WALKER

**T**he sneaker market is thriving. Not only does Statista state that the worldwide sneaker market is worth US\$86.58 billion, but it's expected to grow annually by 5.34 per cent. It's a market that transcends borders, bringing the worlds of design, innovation and music together, and has sneakerheads queuing outside stores or entering raffles in the hopes of getting their hands on the latest drops.

Michael Allen, known as mikepairs to his thousands of Instagram followers, is a U.K.-based sneaker collector and founder of Pairs, and knows the sneaker market well.

When we speak with him, he's sitting in front of a wall that's covered in shelf after shelf of sneakers co-ordinated by colour and design.

"This room is a locked room," he says. "There's nothing in here apart from sneakers. The only person who comes in here is me. My only real concern is dust. I have an air purifier that I'll turn on for four hours, and I have a new duster, which is basically a wind machine that I use to blow down the sneakers."

As someone who enjoys the thrill of chasing sneakers as much as owning them, Allen is a true sneakerhead, and his collection spans both recent and past pairs from some of the business's biggest names.

When asked what his ideal sneaker design would look like, you can sense his passion, and he often goes back and forth to his wall to showcase the shoes on-camera. "I could go down the route of Jordan 1 and Nike, because that's my favourite silhouette in the sneaker niche in terms of everyday wear," he says. "I could go down the route of New Balance because I really like their materials and how much detail they put into each of their shoes. Or, if I was to go down the high-end sneaker route, it would probably be Louis Vuitton." He also notes how he's a huge fan of the LVMH portfolio, specifically Fendi and Loewe.

But for all the pieces Allen has in his collection, he's reluctant to share which he considers the

grail. And because each comes with its own story or anecdote, they're all worthy of their place on the shelf. Where one pair was obtained via the Nike SNKRS app on his birthday after losing every raffle, another starts with a story of queuing outside a store at 5 a.m. alongside hundreds of others doing the same.

Allen also funnels his love for sneakers into his company, Pairs. Created toward the end of 2019, it was born from a frustration of having a growing collection of shoes with no perfect-fitting bottoms to match.

"I was on the train to an event, and I was looking around, and everyone had the same trousers on," he says. "I thought, 'Where's the individuality? Where's the style? We can't have the same trousers for all these different shoes. We need something different.'" So Allen decided to do something about it.

He found a pair of pants he liked, sourced a fabric and went to his local market, where he asked someone to sew the fabric into the pair of pants he wanted. From there, he took the pair,

shared images to his Instagram followers, and it wasn't long before people started asking where they were from.

Today, the brand's grown from strength to strength and stocks a range that includes patterned pairs and straight-leg pants, as well as the introduction of hoodies, shirts and accessories, all proudly made in the U.K. With plans to continue growing both his brand and his sneaker collection, Allen's momentum is growing, but when asked how he'd define the sweet life, his answer is a lot closer to home.

"Living a happy life with your family. Family is very important to me. I just want to live a stress-free life. I want a bungalow in the middle of a nice village with a community, with my family, and to be happy and peaceful. That would be a good life, whether I have sneakers or not."

[www.arethosepairs.com](http://www.arethosepairs.com)

@mikepairs

“  
**I THOUGHT,  
'WHERE'S THE  
INDIVIDUALITY?  
WHERE'S THE  
STYLE? WE CAN'T  
HAVE THE  
SAME TROUSERS  
FOR ALL THESE  
DIFFERENT SHOES.'**  
”



Allen's sneaker wall is organized by colour and style

# FAMBA: DOING EVERYTHING DIFFERENTLY

The music producer and DJ on *Star Wars*, new music and the album that inspired him to start producing music

WRITTEN BY JOSH WALKER | INTERVIEW BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO

Halifax's Ryan Pettipas is proud to call himself a sci-fi fanatic. His DJ name, Famba, is inspired by Fambaa, a creature he found at *Star Wars* wiki *Wookieepedia*. Pettipas thought the name had a good ring to it.

After entering the electronic music scene with a collection of underground house and progressive house tracks, he won crowds over with his approach to sound. Not only were his singles "Wish You Well (feat. Trove)" and "Swear to God" certified gold in terms of sales, but his single "Storm (feat. Kyra Mastro)" reached the No. 1 spot on the Mediabase Dance chart.

"My music can be described as fun, energetic and uplifting," he says. "especially the music I've been making lately. I want it to work in a club and I want it to be super-energetic."

For Famba, his passion for music started early, and he shares how he's loved it for as long as he can remember. He chose to learn to play guitar at 12 and then started to produce his own songs in high school after hearing Calvin Harris's *I Created Disco* album.

"I started off doing Famba as pop music and

▶ SCAN THE QR CODE FOR *DOLCE'S*  
EXCLUSIVE FOOTAGE OF OUR  
INTERVIEW WITH DJ FAMBA



Famba unwinds in the  
W hotel's EXTREME  
WOW private suite

BRACELETS: MESSIKA  
RING: MESSIKA  
TOP: COS  
PANTS: COS  
SHOES: HUGO





## RAPID-FIRE

**Q:** Favourite Song

**A:** "Down Under" by Men at Work

**Q:** Idol

**A:** Prince

**Q:** Favourite Timbit

**A:** Honey-glazed

**Q:** Coffee order

**A:** Black

**Q:** First job

**A:** Dishwasher

**Q:** Favourite word

**A:** F\*\*\*\*

**Q:** Guilty pleasure

**A:** Nerd behaviour

**Q:** Starstruck by

**A:** Tom Cruise

**Q:** Favourite colour

**A:** Blue

**Q:** Last vacation

**A:** Cayman islands

**Q:** Favourite movie genre

**A:** Sci-fi

**Q:** Hobby

**A:** Video games

**Q:** Favourite video game

**A:** All of them

**Q:** Fashion sense

**A:** Confused

**Q:** Favourite city

**A:** Toronto

**Q:** Nickname

**A:** Ryan (at this point)

**Q:** Made a love song

**A:** Yes, many

**Q:** Hidden talent

**A:** Whistling

**Q:** Favourite movie

**A:** *Forrest Gump*

**Q:** Favourite Food

**A:** Anything Italian

**Q:** Favourite Canadian musician(s)

**A:** The Tragically Hip

**Q:** What does *la dolce vita* mean to you?

**A:** Living your best life ... health, wealth, being elevated, being happy and good vibes overall

The rising star with the sultry gaze shares his process and passions with *Dolce*, here from behind the room's beaded curtain

T-SHIRT: TIGER OF SWEDEN  
VEST: TIGER OF SWEDEN  
NECKLACE: FAMBAS' OWN  
RING: MESSIKA  
BRACELET: MESSIKA



With his upbeat persona, Famba radiates good vibes and lights up every room he walks into

FULL LOOK: HUGO

writing pop songs,” he shares. “Now I’m still writing pop songs — it’s just the production has taken a turn into the deep end that’s more underground.” His most recent single, “Estar Conmigo,” embraces this and has already got music outlets abuzz about how the beats come together to create something memorable.

As someone who listens to all genres from indie rock to techno, Famba finds inspiration can come from anywhere. He shares how he was recently at a show at Toronto’s electronic music venue, Coda, to see Skin On Skin. “It was the sickest set I’ve ever seen,” Famba says. “The next day, with a raging hangover, I worked all day because I was so inspired by his set and ended up making something that was different than what I’d been doing.”

Despite the fact that inspiration can come from anywhere, Famba says he approaches every song as its own entity. “I do everything differently. There are different ways to approach songs,” he says. “So, a certain genre will have a different creative process. When you’re writing a pop song,

“

**MY MUSIC CAN  
BE DESCRIBED  
AS FUN,  
ENERGETIC  
AND UPLIFTING**

”

it starts with lyrics and melodies but when you’re writing a house song, it starts with production.”

Even with DJing and producing, Famba notes there are big differences. “DJing is the funnest thing in the world,” he says. “You have a crowd of people and you can play anything you can think

of, and it’s cool gauging crowd reactions and hearing people go crazy.” He describes producing as more trial and error. “You could have two days straight of the worst music you’ve ever made and then, within an hour, you’ve made the best thing you’ve ever made.”

It’s also a career that comes with unpredictability, and he’s open in describing his work as a roller-coaster. “You have big highs and lows. You might have music that’s popping and then times when you fizzle out and can’t write anything. It’s challenging to stay motivated through the lows, but that’s part of the job.”

When asked what his career highlight is, he says he doesn’t have one. Instead, he says he’s just happy to be here, and here he intends to stay. Famba has new music on the way that he describes as a mix of his old and new styles, promising “big choruses and hooks” while trying new things with production to push the boundaries.

[www.fambamusic.com](http://www.fambamusic.com)

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# LEARNING TO LOVE LEARNING

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“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” These powerful words by Winston Churchill underscore the importance of ongoing learning and achievement in our lives. For high-potential students, this means finding an environment that provides them with the opportunity to fully unlock their potential and succeed in life. Brain Power, an enrichment program with a 30-year track record of excellence, offers just that.

Research shows that high-potential students often struggle to find an environment that challenges and engages them, leading to underachievement in many cases. Brain Power's CEO, Vanessa Iarocci, notes that “60 per cent of high-potential students will actually underachieve in a non-stimulating environment. It is a tragedy to know that these young minds are languishing.” This is where Brain Power steps in, providing a challenging and stimulating environment for high-potential kids from Grade 1 through Grade 12.

With programs offered in North Toronto, Vaughan, Oakville, Ancaster and virtually, Brain Power is accessible to families throughout the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. The program is led by a team of leading academics and experts who have designed a curriculum that focuses on acceleration, engagement, complexity, feedback and academic mentorship. By providing students with the tools to fully develop their skills, Brain Power empowers them to succeed in a changing and globally minded world.

One key aspect that sets Brain Power apart from other programs is its focus on critical thinking and creativity across all subject disciplines. Rather than just emphasizing technical skills, Brain Power's language arts and public speaking classes, for example, are organized so that each class begins with a “big idea,” such as existentialism, encouraging students to think deeply and creatively about complex concepts. In mathematics and problem-solving classes the students learn about the history of math, advanced problem solving

“  
SUCCESS IS NOT  
FINAL, FAILURE IS  
NOT FATAL: IT IS  
THE COURAGE TO  
CONTINUE THAT  
COUNTS

— Winston Churchill

and logic techniques, and are encouraged to fully understand the problem before jumping to a solution. This approach not only helps students gain a deep understanding of complex topics, but also develops their critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities, allowing them to apply their knowledge in a wide range of contexts.

In addition to its innovative curriculum, Brain Power's small class sizes, cross-curricular activities, and social events foster a sense of community and belonging that is essential to an enriched learning experience. The program's academic mentorship also provides students with the discipline, academic rigour and encouragement necessary for intellectual growth and exceptional performance.

For parents looking to unleash their child's full potential and provide them with the tools to succeed, Brain Power's enrichment programs offer a well-thought-out methodology developed by leading educational experts. With a focus on developing a love of learning and providing stimulating environments, Brain Power empowers high-potential students to become the best versions of themselves.

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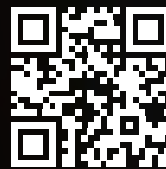


PHOTOS BY EMAD MOHAMMADI





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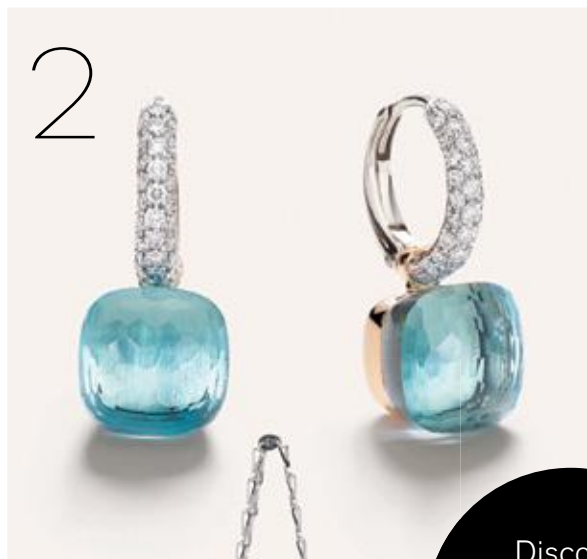


ORETTA

## MIAMI

With warm weather, beautiful beaches, incredible shopping, fantastic restaurants, and exclusive clubs with events every night, Miami is the ultimate city for an unforgettable warm-weather escape

TEXT BY ALEXANDRA AULICINO



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