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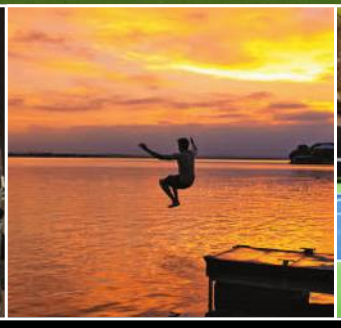
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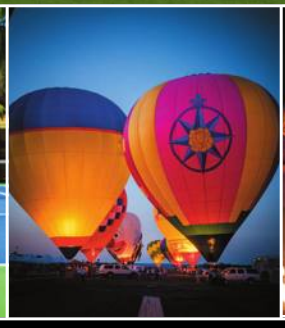
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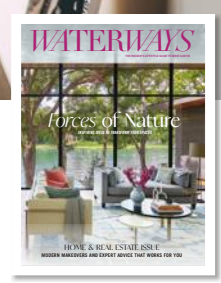
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ON THE COVER: Same four walls got you down lately? Come with us as we tempt you and teach you how to change your space in a meaningful way. Laura Britt, founding principal of the Britt Design Group, kicks off our Inspiring Design section with a spectacular lakeside home. Beginning on page 17 look for more inspiration to kickstart your transformation. Cover photography by Dror Baldinger.

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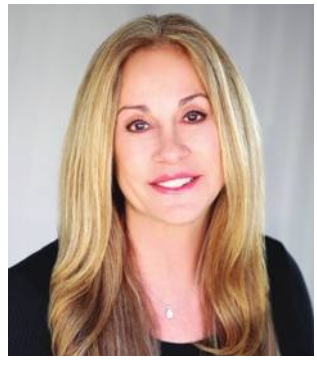
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Bring on the New and *Improved* Normal

I'm a glass-half-full, silver-linings type of person. I find that it's food for my soul to search out the good in any situation. What's the value in focusing on what *isn't* going great? I believe that every day is a good day to have a good day. Sure, some days are better than others, but life is an adventure!

Am I tired of thinking, hearing and talking about the pandemic? *Absolutely*! But, the year we spent in lockdown was chock-full of silver linings. As we reentered the New Normal, which now looks closer to the Old Normal with a few tweaks, I decided I wanted a reset. I wanted it to be my New Year's Eve, so I made some resolutions. I knew that making changes wouldn't be easy, but I started by beginning every day with intention—intention to live my life in what I like to call the "New and Improved Normal."

I'm now waking up earlier each day—before anyone else in my house—to get a jumpstart on things. By the time my husband awakens, I feel a sense of accomplishment, even if all I've done is start the laundry. If the rest of my day spins out of control like a washing machine on steroids, I can still feel good knowing I got one thing done. Also, I'm drinking more! No, I mean water. The other kind of drinking I'll save for the real New Year's Eve.

The lockdown reminded me that taking just a few minutes to recharge my batteries is not selfish. Pushing the pause button, even if it's only to watch my golden retrievers scamper after a ball in my yard, makes me a better everything to everyone.

As with any "New Year's" resolution, I have already found myself challenged to make time for me. But, I know from experience that if I want something bad enough, I'll find a way. It's been a challenge to find a few more hours in my day for my resolutions, but I've enjoyed putting my strategic hat on to search for ways to stay on track. I love my "New and Improved Normal," and I hope you do too!



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Lemon Leaf Luxury Weddings

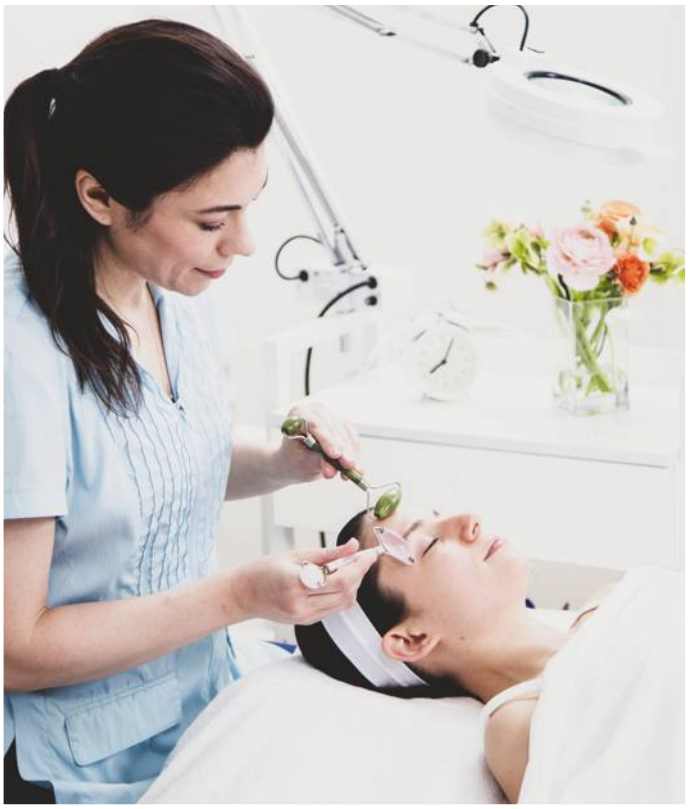
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Face Value *Love the Skin You're In*

It's summer in Texas! You're out and about, living your best life. Mask-less, bare-faced and feeling free! But what should you do to prepare your face "to meet the faces that you meet?" We asked a professional how to keep your skin in tip-top condition. Jaime Carson of Carson Skin is a licensed aesthetician whose 15 years of experience in New York City included a stint as a makeup artist for the Broadway Musical "Rent" before she opened Carson Skin—first in Manhattan and now in Rollingwood.

Getting a facial is a relaxing experience, but what does it do for your skin?
The main goal of a facial treatment is to nourish and improve the overall health and appearance of the skin. A good facial can provide improved circulation, exfoliation and smoothing of the skin's surface, brightening the skin's tone, detoxifying the skin and improving hydration of the skin.

How often should you get a facial?
I recommend a facial every six to eight weeks for people in their twenties, every four to six weeks if you're in your thirties or once a month if you're in your forties or older. Cell turnover slows as we age, but receiving regular professional facials with exfoliation will allow you to see a big difference in the quality and health of your skin regardless of your age.

What "homework" do you give your clients between facials?
I show them how to exfoliate about once a week, though the frequency depends on their skin type. I also teach them how to do a facial massage at home, which is best performed at least three times a week.

What should you look for in an aesthetician who does facials?
Always read an aesthetician's online reviews before booking to be sure you are choosing a reputable business whose employees care about the safety and wellness of their clients. Look for aestheticians who customize facials for your skin's individual needs. Steer clear of one-size-fits-all treatments. Your skin is as unique as your fingerprints, so work with an aesthetician who can handle a variety of skin conditions.

What are some of your favorite at-home products and why?
I'm a devotee of Environ Skin Care's Vitamin A serums and >>

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creams. They are meticulously formulated with the purest high-quality active ingredients available, and they make different formulas for almost any skin type. I also love the NuFACE Mini and Trinity for microcurrent treatments, Lanshin's Gua Sha stones for at-home facial massages and the Foreo Luna Fofo to boost my evening deep cleanse.

What is a good face-care regimen and why?
I am big on a deep evening cleanse as a part of any skin-care routine. If you wear sunscreen (I hope you do!) and/or makeup during the day, be sure you remove those particles from the skin so they don't clog your pores. Using the double-cleanse method every evening, start with an emulsifying pre-cleanse oil followed by a facial cleanser chosen for your skin type. That might be a light foaming gel or a creamy cleanser. I always teach my clients to count to 30 while massaging the facial cleanser over their skin, including their neck, to be sure it stays on the skin long enough to properly cleanse their pores.

My next "must" would be a hydrating or medicated toner to assist with the penetration of your facial serum, oil or cream. I use a night cream that contains Vitamin A, Vitamin C, peptides and antioxidants. These products don't oxidize on the skin with light exposure, so they work best at night. During the day, it's all about hydration and protection. Skip cleanser in the morning; simply splash the skin with warm water. Over-cleansing can lead to a stripped surface barrier. Next, I suggest a hydrating toner followed by a product containing antioxidants to protect your skin from environmental damage. Then top it off with a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 25 but no higher than 50 to avoid unnecessary chemicals.

Summer gets really busy, so what steps should you never skip and why?
Never skip the evening double-cleanse. Sweat, sunscreen and makeup can easily build up in the pores, leading to breakouts, a rough surface and reduced circulation. Keeping your skin clean will reduce the stress you place on it.



The two other most important steps are to use a product containing antioxidants for skin protection and a morning application of high-quality sunscreen. Your future skin will thank you!

What skincare products should pregnant women avoid?
I recommend avoiding products with salicylic acid, retinol, retinoic acid, glycolic acid or benzoyl peroxide as well as microcurrent devices and home LED masks and tools while pregnant. But there are a variety of beautiful exfoliating masques on the market that contain enzymes or lactic acid, which are safe to use while pregnant or nursing, that boost your skin's glow.

If you feel like you look old, should you use Botox?
I have nothing against using Botox on certain areas of the face in moderation, but it is not an anti-aging cure-all, and it won't necessarily make you look "younger." When a client comes to me complaining of deep horizontal forehead lines or deep vertical lines between their eyebrows, using a little Botox in those spots makes sense as it will relax those deep lines. While Botox has its place, it is not a replacement for learning how to care for your skin through a daily skincare regimen, which leads to healthy, glowing, radiant skin.

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Resort Wear to Everyday Wardrobe



How to bring your vacation style home *By Edith Henry, Stylist and Image Consultant*

One of the many advantages of living in Texas is that some wardrobe pieces that might seem limited to wearing in a specific season or destination in other parts of the country (or world) can be adapted to become part of your day-to-day wardrobe at home. Resort/cruise wear is a prime example. For some people, these pieces might only be worn on vacation trips, but we Texans (and others in the Sun Belt) can get more bang for our buck because we can wear the pieces longer with appropriate styling and without getting chilly.

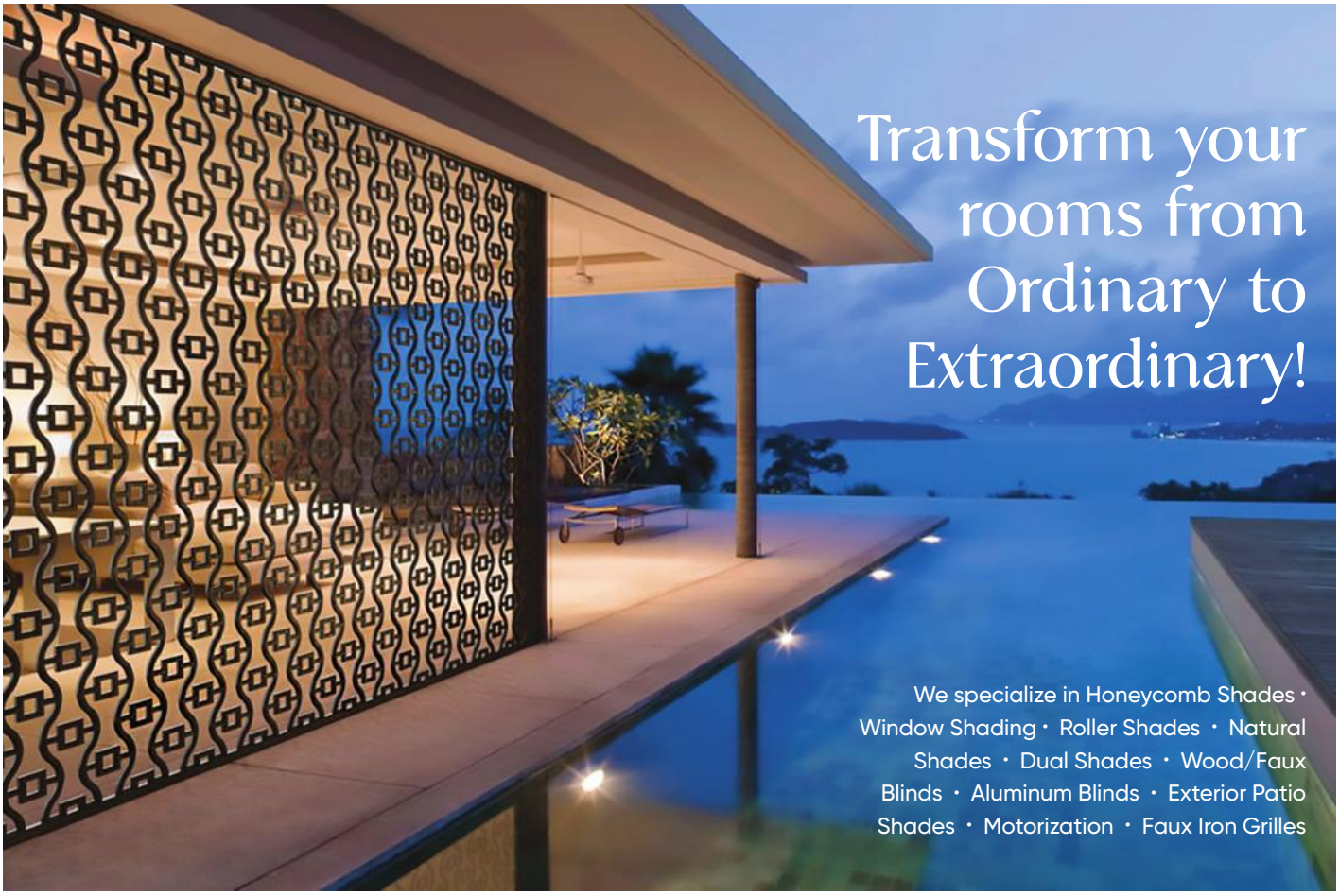
Before we address what is trending this season, let's define resort wear. What is it exactly? Is it only clothes that can be worn at a resort or on a cruise? Why is it even a thing?

Simply put, "resort" or "cruise" are just interchangeable fashion terms that describe the same "pre-collection" items that appear after fall/winter clothes have gone on sale but before spring/summer apparel reach store shelves. Just to confuse matters even more, some designers and brands produce pre-fall and pre-spring collections, but they are typically not easily located, ready-to-wear designs.

Originally, resort or cruise collections were meant to be worn only for those settings. Designers produced special collections packed full of easy, breezy fabrics, statement bathing suits, sundresses, coordinates and huge sunhats. These collections were summer staples, intended for those on vacation who lived in colder climates where such clothes weren't otherwise available. In today's world and markets, however, it doesn't make commercial sense to restrict resort wear anymore. It has become an incredibly important season for vendors because, unlike spring/summer and fall/winter collections, resort wear remains on sales floors the longest *without ever going on sale*. It has almost become season-less.

It is still referred to as resort wear, though, and like its seasonal siblings, certain trends have emerged. What >>

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are these trends in 2021? While it's always possible to incorporate trends from the runways into our daily wardrobes, an important factor to keep in mind is that trends are just that. They will continuously change with each new season. Also, not every trend works for every body or every life style.

According to Tagwalk, here are the top 10 trends from resort-wear runways.

MINIMALISM: Minimal fashion is easy for *anyone* to wear. It's all about keeping it simple and chic. Construction and fit are of the utmost importance in minimal designs.

BELT OVER: The name says it all. You wear belts over jackets or waist cutouts (yes, directly on the skin) or over blouses *above* the waistline. It's a daring and fashion-forward trend.

COLOR BLOCKING: Color blocking is taking colors that are opposites on the color wheel and pairing them. Fun fact: This trend is said to have originated with the artwork of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian.



For some people, these pieces might only be worn on vacation trips, but we Texans (and others in the Sun Belt) can get more bang for our buck because we can wear the pieces longer with appropriate styling and without getting chilly.

FLARED PANTS: These are making a huge comeback. They offer a bit more coolness in the hotter months than fitted pants, and they are balancing for most frames. Plus, they can give the illusion of legs for days! And yes, petite women can wear flares; it's proper proportions that matter most.

PINK: Even though the 2021 Pantone Colors of the Year are "Illuminating" (yellow) and "Ultimate Gray," plenty of pink prevailed on resort runways from pants and dresses to suits, coats and blouses. If you are a pink lover, this is the resort-wear color for you!

PATTERN ALL OVER: This is a trend that can be difficult for some to pull off as it typically requires donning a plethora of different patterns and even colors in one ensemble. It is definitely for those who want to stand out.

LINGERIE: The lingerie style borrows silhouettes from lingerie. These garments are typically constructed of flowy, wispy and even sheer fabrics and are reminiscent of slips and nightgowns. These designs can be perfect for a garden party on a hot summer day or a getaway to the beach.

SUIT: Some resort-collection designers this year are sticking to classic pieces, the suit being one. Suits can be found in relaxed and skinny-body silhouettes.

VOLUME: More is better! Big puffy sleeves and ruffles galore deliver drama to dresses, skirts and tops. Consider where (and if) you wear them based on your frame.

CUTOUTS: For those who are not afraid to bare a little skin, cutouts have taken it one step further than a "cold shoulder" and will have you looking like you're fresh off the catwalk! The placement of the cutout is the main element to consider: the back, the hips, a shoulder or a peephole at the décolleté (low neckline)?

Even if you don't follow one of these 10 fashion trends, you can play with other resort-wear combinations. Maybe you'll start a trend on your own!

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Redesign TIME

TIPS ON WORKING WITH AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

By Cindy Brzostowski

If you're considering a home remodeling project, it won't be long before you discover the sheer number of decisions that need to be made—and those can easily become overwhelming. Cue interior designers to the rescue!


Liz MacPhail


Laura Britt


Brittney Williams

With an experienced and knowledgeable interior designer on your side, you can save yourself lots of time and stress. But as they work to transform your space, it's worthwhile to ask yourself what you can do as a client to make it all go more smoothly.

To answer this question, we sought expert advice from three local interior designers: **Liz MacPhail**, founder and principal designer of Liz MacPhail Interiors; **Laura Britt**, founding principal of the Britt Design Group; and **Brittney Williams**, interior designer and co-founder of the BRWN Collective Studio. >>

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DROR BALDINGER



Living Room by Britt Design Group





UNDERSTAND THE DESIGNER'S ROLE

Let's cover the basics first: Interior designers do far more than just make things look "pretty." Understanding exactly what it is they bring to the table (whether it's a coffee table or a 12-seat dining room table) is the first step in developing a fruitful partnership.

When you're engaging with an interior designer, Williams says it's important to remember that you're hiring them (or considering it) not just for their design eye but because they're a professional who has devoted a lot of time perfecting their craft. "It's easy to forget that people go to school for this and spend years working on this craft—learning color theory, space planning, materiality and codes."

In Britt's eyes, a good interior designer serves as your guide, advocate and consultant. "Clients should understand that designers are experienced in design, constructability, detailing, drawings and engaging with consultants," she says. "They are there as that hub that brings everyone together who's working on a project and to advocate for the client when inevitably things come up that are less than ideal."

MacPhail sees interior designers as problem-solvers and people-pleasers by nature. "We want to find the solutions that will justify the financial commitment as well as solve the design issue or opportunity and balance those commingling, sometimes competing objectives," she explains. "It is this balance that can set a successful project apart."

KNOW THYSELF

So that your interior designer can guide you in the right direction, it's important to have clear ideas about your limits, not just in your budget but also in scheduling. "Think realistically about what you are willing to spend and tolerate," MacPhail says. "Construction is long, noisy and messy. Decorating can disrupt your normal household activities and requires a dedicated financial commitment."

Britt agrees that expectations around quality, timing and



"The more clarity that we can create together about quality and the time it takes to implement that level of quality and the level of investment they're comfortable making, the more successful we can be."

budget are essential. And these will vary widely, for example, between one client who is hosting a wedding in their brand-new home in a year and a half that changes the dynamic versus another client who is building their sixth home and is not going to be there for a couple of years.

"I think the client sometimes doesn't understand that we work with people in all different phases of life with all different expectations of what home means to them," Britt notes. "The more clarity that we can create together about quality and the time it takes to implement that level of quality and the level of investment they're comfortable making, the more successful we can be."

Aside from knowing how much you want to spend and what timeline you are willing to accept, Williams says there's also value in the designer knowing how you work best. For example, if you get overwhelmed when you look at Pinterest, you may feel overwhelmed if your interior designer sends you a bunch of pictures to choose from. In that case, Williams >>



From top left; deck, outdoor patio, and bathroom by Britt Design Group

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DROR BALDINGER







recommends telling your interior designer to narrow down what they send so you can more easily and effectively make the necessary decisions.

ESTABLISH AND MEET EXPECTATIONS

So, setting expectations with your interior designer can only benefit both of you. But what else should be acknowledged ahead of time?

Britt says it's worthwhile to know upfront the structure of the team you're hiring and what level of involvement you can expect from each team member, whether it's the principal, the project manager or an assistant. Otherwise, assumptions over roles may cause trouble down the road.

Because communications and payment processes vary among interior designers, clarify those things with your designer before the project begins. "If you've worked with an interior designer before," Williams notes, "don't assume that if you engage another one on a different project that the experience is going to be the same."

As you establish expectations with your interior designer, remember to do your part by upholding the expectations placed on you as a client. That means staying organized and on top of your deadlines. Williams says, "If a designer presents something to you and they've asked that you turn your notes around in a week, do it within a week because the designer is also juggling other projects and they've set that time for you so that it rolls into the larger scheme of their business."

REMEMBER TO TRUST

One final element that's crucial to a productive working relationship with an interior designer is trust. "It is a futile exercise to hire an experienced designer, only to call the shots and second-guess," says MacPhail. "A good designer should listen and respect your needs, wishes and budget, but also bring to the table ideas and solutions based on their experience and expertise that you hadn't considered."

"Time and time again, our best projects are those in which the client is engaged, informed and opinionated," she says, "but ultimately open and trusting of the experts—architect, builder and designer alike—who have chosen to team up on the project."



From top left; Living room, den, breakfast room, and family room vignette by Liz MacPhail Interiors

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Rugs *Rule!*

HOW TO DECORATE YOUR HOME WITH RUGS

By Cindy Brzostowski



When you think of decorating your home, your mind might go to items like art, lamps, plants… But there's another piece you shouldn't forget about in your design arsenal: rugs.

Rugs serve functional purposes, like preventing furniture from scratching wood floors and reducing the chance of falls. They can also be used to transform a room's aesthetics and mood.

Betina Martins Mogo, the owner of Embellish My Home in Lakeway, sees rugs as a great way to define spaces and complete the scene. Through her full-service interior design furniture store, she has helped many clients choose the right rugs for their homes and is happy to share some of her rug wisdom with anyone.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF LOLOI RUGS





Rugs 101

"Naturally, a new rug will add comfort and warmth," says Martins Mogo. "With so many materials, designs and construction styles, there is surely one for every taste and budget." So, with all those options, where do you start?

Martins Mogo says there are two important questions you must answer before purchasing a rug: "Where are you putting it?" and "What use is it going to receive—low or high transit?" A rug for the kitchen in your family vacation rental should be different than a rug for your bedroom.

Once you have some ideas, she recommends taking home samples, the same as you would with paint colors, because a rug's colors can look completely different in your home's lighting conditions than it looks in the store. And before buying, don't forget to check the right size for the rug by measuring the space where it will be set and the furniture it will complement.

Let's Talk Materials

So, you know where your rug is going and whether that place gets a lot or a little traffic. Next, Martins Mogo wants you to consider some of the main options in materials and how they're best suited for different places in the home:

Synthetic (such as polyester and nylon) — "Well-priced, easy to clean, durable and usually shed-resistant. In this category, you will find rugs for outdoors, too."

Wool — "A natural material made to last. Easy to clean and soft, wool rugs tend to shed for the first three to six months, but this is nothing you cannot solve with a little patience and regular vacuuming. The durability and 'cleanability' make synthetic and wool rugs the best choice for family rooms and entries."

Viscose — "A manufactured fiber that comes from wood pulp, it is usually mixed with wool and adds sheen and softness to the piece. The drawback is that it makes the rug more delicate, so it is recommended for low-transit rooms like bedrooms."

Natural fiber (such as jute, sisal or seagrass) — "Usually in earthy tones, these rugs have a very casual look. They are not recommended if there are pets in the house as stains are hard to remove from them. Place them outdoors only if they will not get wet."

Construction Considerations

Another important factor besides the rug's material in differentiating rugs is how they're constructed, which ultimately affects their price.

Hand-knotted rugs are the most expensive. "One rug can have hundreds of knots and can take months to complete," Martins Mogo says. "Sometimes considered an investment, they can last decades if they are properly cared for." >>



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For an alternative, consider hand-tufted rugs. With these, there's a pre-made backing with the pattern, and a worker uses a tufting gun to create the pile. Martins Mogo says, "Since their construction takes less time and requires less-skilled workers than hand-knotted rugs, they're more affordable."

Flatweave rugs are handmade, too, but don't have a pile, and they're typically reversible and economical.

Finally, there are machine-made or machine-loom rugs. "Using computer-controlled looms, machine-made rugs feature a wide variety of designs and patterns at a lower cost," says Martins Mogo.

Rug TLC

Once you've welcomed home your chosen rug, don't forget about the upkeep. Martins Mogo says that the best way to keep your rug looking its best is to vacuum it regularly at a low power setting and without a beater bar (that rotating brush attached to the bottom of the vacuum).

If you accidentally spill something on your rug, she says to blot the stain with a clean, un-dyed cloth to absorb as much of the spill as possible and avoid staining. Martins Mogo also recommends making the additional investment in a rug pad for extra comfort, durability and safety. She explains, "The proper rug pad will keep your rug safe and prevent premature aging."

Shopping for a rug? You can find Embellish My Home at 2422 Ranch Road 620 South, Suite A-140, Lakeway, or online at www.embellishmyhome.com.

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Cooking Up A Kitchen Design



What to Save, Where to Splurge

by CINDY BRZOSTOWSKI



They say the kitchen is the heart of the home, so when it comes to designing such an important room in the house, it can be hard to reconcile your vision—your dream—with your real-life budget. Killy Scheer, the founder of Austin-based Scheer & Co. Interior Design, is quite familiar with these kinds of decisions.

Having honed her skills under tastemakers such as Jonathan Adler and in commercial architecture firms, Scheer founded her luxury residential and boutique commercial design firm in 2013. In her work, she's dedicated to delivering client-driven, research-based design solutions, so we turned to her for expert advice on what to save and where to splurge with your kitchen design.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF SCHEER & CO.

More Bang for Your Buck

When it comes to decking out a kitchen, cabinets can be one of the biggest expenses on the budget. To save, Scheer suggests open shelving as one solution. "Open shelves will cut down on the cost of doors, drawers, hardware, materials and labor," she explains. "You can purchase inexpensive boxes and splurge on custom or semi-custom doors and drawer fronts. Companies like Semihandmade work with Ikea cabinets, but local carpenters can also make anything you want."

Speaking of hardware, that's another great way to economize. "If you have a ton of cabinets, the cost adds up fast," she says. "Even though it's considered the jewelry of the home, there are so many great options at affordable prices."

You can also save some bucks when choosing your backsplash, Scheer says. "A less expensive tile can go a long way if it has a classic look or is installed in an unexpected pattern."

Worth the Splurge

Deciding where to splurge on your kitchen design ultimately boils down to your priorities and budget. Scheer explains that busy families might be focused on storage solutions to keep things clutter-free, while avid gourmet cooks might go all-out for top-quality appliances they deem essential. Then there are homeowners who plan to resell within a few years, and for them, it could be worth getting cosmetic upgrades rather than a full-blown renovation.

Say you decide your countertop is where you want to spend more lavishly. Having a counter that not only looks good but functions well is crucial in any kitchen, but there are still ways to be smart about it, Scheer says. "If you fall in love with a unique stone for your counters but it's a budget-buster, consider using it only on the island, and choose a less costly option for perimeter cabinets."

Another piece of wisdom for anyone on the verge of a splurge: Test out your selection beforehand. Take the countertop example. Says Scheer: "Get a sample of the countertop you're thinking of buying and spill wine and ketchup on it, cut lemons, and place a hot pan on it. Know what you're getting into!"

Sharing a Full Plate

If it's your first time renovating your kitchen, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the options out there and bogged down by all the logistics involved, especially if you're going at it alone. Scheer recommends that newbies hire a professional team—a designer, architect and contractor—who can make everything a whole lot easier. If it doesn't work financially to hire all three, she says a great contractor is still needed.

"I strongly recommend against trying to be your own general contractor unless that's what you do for a living," she explains. "Scheduling and rescheduling trades and subs, purchasing materials and coordinating deliveries is >>











not for the faint of heart and truly is best when it's orchestrated by professionals."

When working with a contractor, Scheer suggests making all of your final selections early. "That way, your contractor can price out exactly what you've chosen and provide you with a hard bid, meaning that almost all expenses are accounted for upfront."

The Do's and Don'ts of DIY

Still determined to do it all yourself? Scheer stresses how important it is to have a plan. "Either hire a drafter or get some sort of layout on paper. If you can have elevations [architectural drawings] done, even better, but a cabinet company can help with those thorough shop drawings," she says. "Leaving choices up to assumptions may result in some unwanted and potentially expensive surprises, so having a clear plan to follow will cut down on confusion and last-minute decision-making."

Even having a plan may not save you from facing the inevitable curveball that will likely be tossed your way during construction, says Scheer. "Remodeling is complicated because it's impossible to know what might be inside walls until they're opened up. So, be prepared to roll with the punches, and problem-solve on the fly."

www.scheer.co

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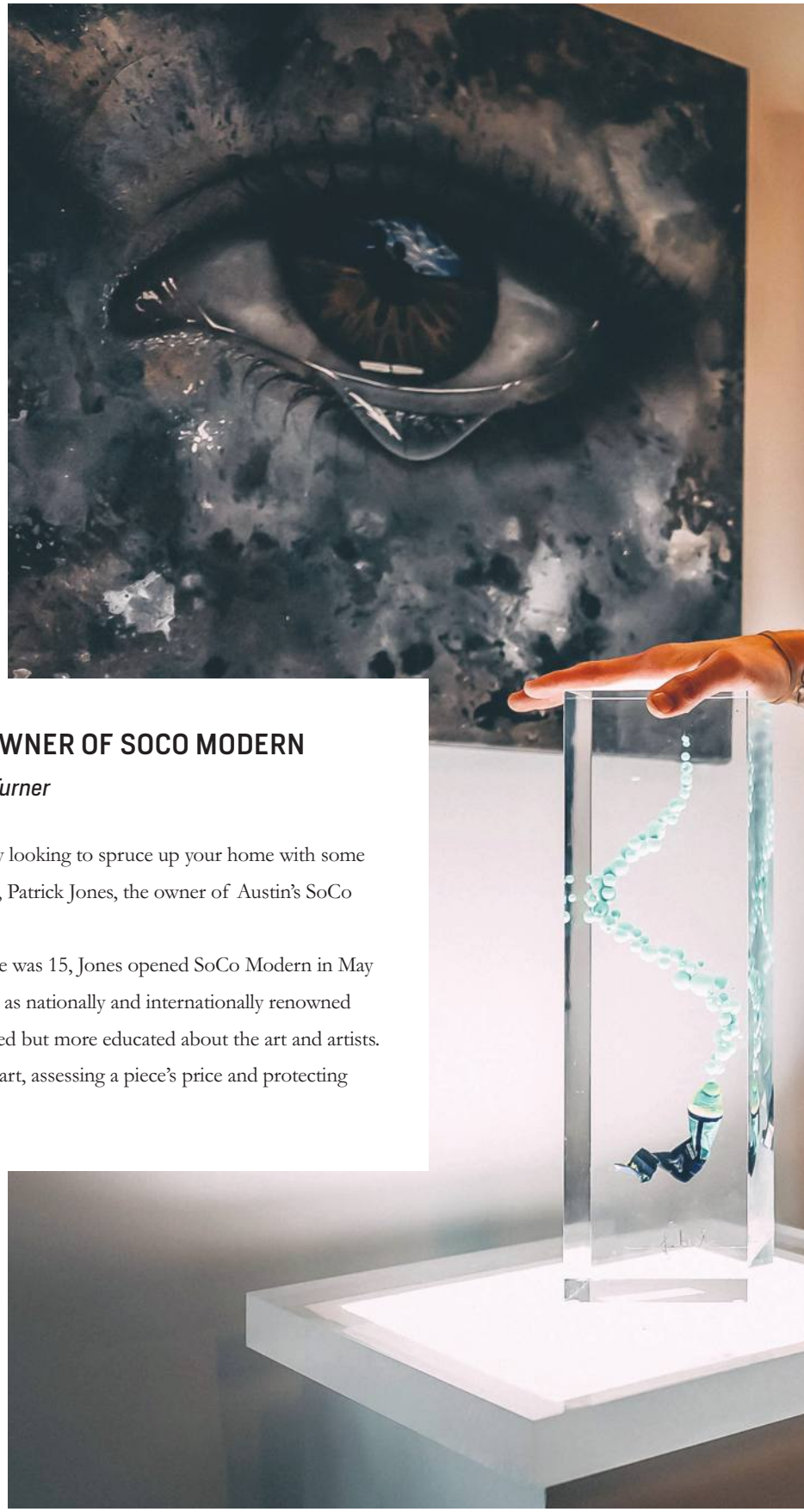
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SMART **ABOUT** ART



ART COLLECTING TIPS FROM THE OWNER OF SOCO MODERN

By Cindy Brzostowski Photography by Brad Turner

Are you interested in collecting art? Or are you simply looking to spruce up your home with some nice works but don't know where to start? Either way, Patrick Jones, the owner of Austin's SoCo Modern gallery, is happy to share his expert advice.

A collector and dealer of art and antiques since he was 15, Jones opened SoCo Modern in May 2021. The gallery rotates the artworks of local as well as nationally and internationally renowned artists and seeks to leave buyers feeling not only excited but more educated about the art and artists.

We spoke to Jones to learn more about choosing art, assessing a piece's price and protecting your investment.

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

First things first: What to buy? Luckily, the biggest question when it comes to collecting art has the simplest answer: Buy what you like. Jones encourages people to listen to their gut. "If you love it, it's money well-spent," he says. "Art is about passion and enjoyment, so if a piece makes you feel some kind of way when you view it, then mission accomplished."

To determine what kind of art strikes your fancy, Jones recommends researching different styles. "It helps to spend time viewing >>





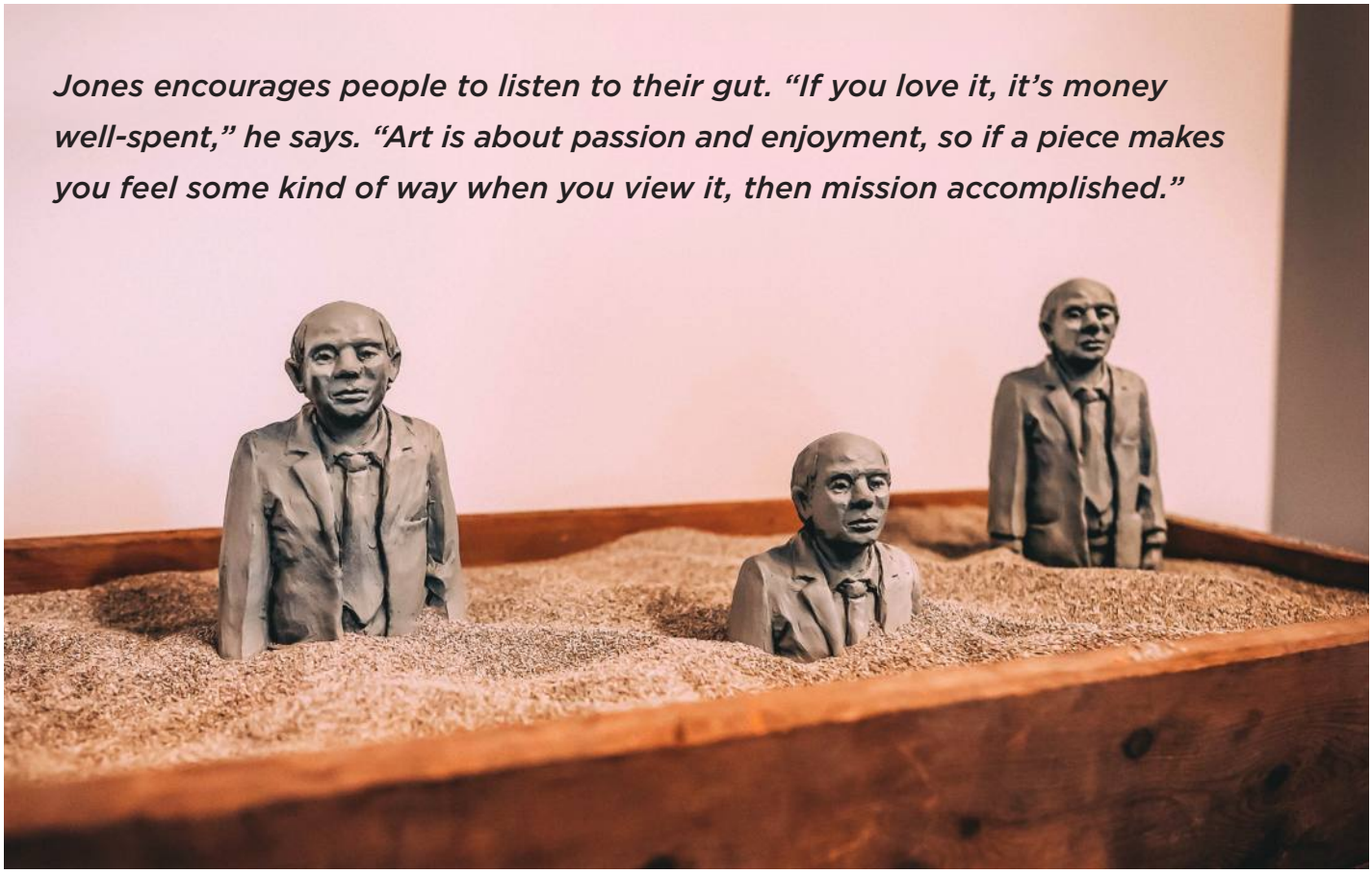
different artists to help narrow it down to a few specific names or styles—figural or abstract, colorful or monochromatic works, prints or originals," he explains.

From there, Jones recommends buying a few books or magazines on the subject, identifying a couple of artists that pique your interest and then finding a trusted resource, such as a gallery that works with those artists, to learn more.

THE BIG PICTURE

While personal enjoyment is a major factor in collecting art, there's also the financial investment component. Jones says, "I've always looked at art from the viewpoint of [being] a more fun and personally enjoyable version of more traditional investments like stocks and bonds."

He explains that if you find a piece particularly captivating



Jones encourages people to listen to their gut. "If you love it, it's money well-spent," he says. "Art is about passion and enjoyment, so if a piece makes you feel some kind of way when you view it, then mission accomplished."

then there's a good chance that others will too, creating the potential for a secondary market. That secondary market is the driving factor in increasing the value of investment-quality art.

"The works of some artists can appreciate more than the stock market, and even if you end up breaking even from a financial perspective, you've had the personal satisfaction of enjoying the art," Jones elaborates. "That's hard to do with a framed stock certificate."

THE PRICE YOU PAY

Speaking of financials, you might be wondering how to get a fair price when purchasing art. Jones says he has had more than one friend buy art while on vacation only to find out later on that they overpaid, diminishing their excitement about the piece. He warns that galleries in resort towns often mark up artwork four to ten times their value. He emphasizes how important it is to buy from a reputable source and to do your own research beforehand.

If you want to get an appraisal for a work, Jones stresses that it should always be done by an independent party of your choosing. "It is less than ethical for galleries to offer an appraisal certificate along with the piece that lists a value at or slightly above the purchase price," he explains. "Be extremely wary of this tactic, and know that is a big red flag when the person attempting to sell you the work is also the one declaring the market value."

ART FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ART

Some may think that collecting art is exclusively for the wealthy, but Jones is quick to dispel that idea, referencing the new street/urban art movement as proof.

"These artists are doing more than just painting originals, which typically price in the range of four to five figures," he says. "While that may be above the budget of most people, smaller, limited print runs priced between $100 and $1,000 make it possible to own the same image as the coveted original but at a more comfortable entry point for a new buyer."

KEEPING THINGS PICTURE-PERFECT

Once you've invested in a piece of art, you will surely want to keep that investment in good condition. In the case of 'flat' art, such as a painting that hangs on your wall, Jones says it's important to keep it protected from direct sunlight because just a few years of daily sun exposure can do harm.

Additionally, Jones recommends insuring your art with a reputable carrier. He says that most homeowners' insurance policies cap coverage at $10,000 and that if you plan to own high-value art or several artworks, you'll need a separate insurance policy.

"Be sure to ask for 'all peril' coverage, and have your agent explain the process and eligible claim amounts in the event of a loss," he notes. "Many collectors are surprised by how inexpensive coverage can be even for high-value works."

www.socomodern.com



Back to School for Kids of All Ages



By Stephanie Puente, Certified Life Coach

Remember the feeling of going back to school when you were a kid? You probably felt some mix of nervousness, anticipation and excitement as you imagined the possibilities the school year might have in store. You might have wondered what your new teachers would be like, what your friends would wear on the first day of school, if you could make the varsity team, and how amazing it would be if your crush finally noticed you.

There was a palpable energy—an aliveness—in the air that as grownups we seldom experience. Adulthood is more often associated with being responsible, practical and "reasonable." In fact, we tend to praise adults who exhibit those qualities.

But what if there is just as much value in growth, expansion and adventure as there is in restraint, responsibility and practicality?

If you feel like you've been going through the motions in your life for a long time, maybe you shouldn't keep putting all of your focus into your kids or assume that you've already lived your best years and should just be grateful for what you've already done. You could be selling yourself short.

What if your best years are still to come?

Imagine how reinvigorated and revitalized you might feel if you could harness just a little bit of the newness and wonder you once felt as a child. Becoming childlike is not just about being silly or childish in a vain effort to reclaim your lost youth.

Everything in nature seeks growth, expansion and aliveness. And because you are part of nature, too, you are no exception to that rule.

A blade of grass will push itself through cement to reach its fullest expression. A caterpillar will endure a complete metamorphosis to experience flight. And the universe itself is continually expanding outward, pushing the boundaries of its outer limits.

Because this is your essential nature, prioritizing the feeling of aliveness can elevate your life in the most incredible ways. It can...

1. Improve your wellbeing

When you do something new, like taking a cooking class, going to a new restaurant with friends or hiking with a group, you can improve your physical, mental and/or emotional health.

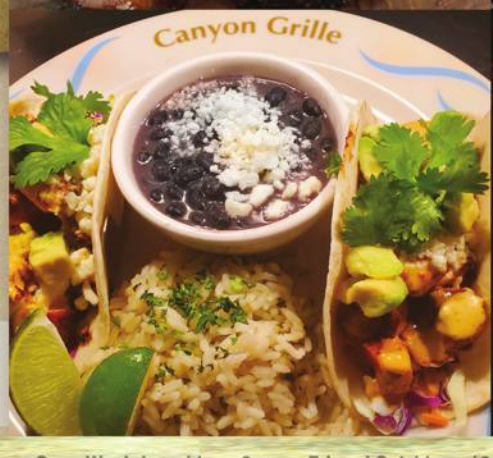
You will create new neural pathways in your brain, release feel-good hormones in your body that boost your mood and improve your overall wellness whether your activity involves exercising or simply sharing a laugh with friends. >>

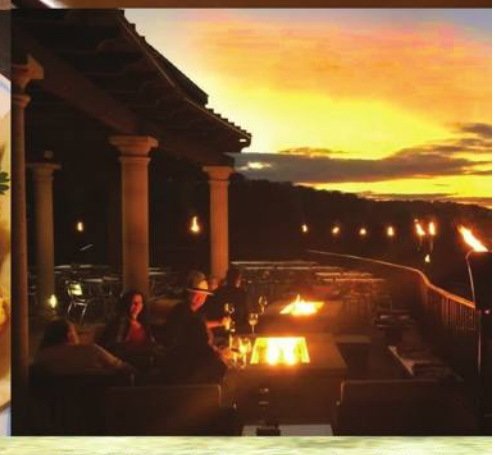
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2. Improve your self-image and self-esteem

So many of us can relate to losing our sense of identity when we become parents. We're so busy that we don't even see it happening until one day we are empty nesters and have no idea who we are or what we should be doing without our children.

Trying something new creates pride and confidence in your self-worth, whether it's a paint night with friends, organizing a walk for charity or taking a writing class at the local bookstore. Venturing outside your comfort zone shows you that you are capable, independent and truly matter.

3. Improve your relationships

When you are watching life from the sidelines or putting your needs on the back burner, you dim your light. When you engage in things that arouse your interest and passion, you are letting your light shine, and your energy is magnetic.

When you have ideas and experiences to share with others, you'll notice that people want to be around you because you bring something to the conversation. You're not depending on your kids, your partner or your job as the most interesting thing about you.

4. Improve your results

When you allow yourself to do what makes you feel good, you'll notice everything in your life improve. We're often conditioned to push down our true desires and just do what we think we "should" do. That puts us in a box of very limited possibilities.

It's like a caterpillar thinking, I don't have time to build a cocoon. It's silly to even want to do something like that. I should just keep slinking around on this branch and focus on what my kids might need. In fact, listening to the voice within you that wants to do new things and live your fullest, most heartfelt life will benefit the people around you and yourself in ways you could never imagine.

You become a better model for your kids by pursuing your dreams and desires, a better companion for your spouse or partner by valuing yourself and allowing yourself to shine, and a better friend and neighbor by being more confident, connected and happy.

The great news is that riding the wave of back-to-school energy to reinvigorate your life doesn't have to take any more time, effort or additional bullet points on your to-do list. It's meant to be fun!

How? It can be as simple as having groceries delivered so you have time for coffee with a friend once a week, hiring a babysitter so you can catch some live music with your partner, or starting a morning walking group in the neighborhood to get to know new people and enjoy some fresh air.

Of course, we are all creatures of habit with a tendency to want to keep doing the same things over and over again because of the sense of safety and security that a routine brings. When we think of doing something new, irrational fears tend to arise, giving us excuses to stay in a rut.

So, if you're thinking to yourself, I've been wanting to try that new yoga class or I would love to take a weekend getaway with friends this fall, expect that you will try to talk yourself out of it.

Then go for it anyway. I challenge you to try one new thing this week. When you do, notice how good you feel about yourself. Let that good feeling propel you forward and keep putting something that makes you feel alive on the calendar every single week.

As long as you are breathing, life is seeking to express itself through you in wonderful ways. Or in the words of Bruce Lee, "Be happy, but never satisfied."

Stephanie Puente is the President of CoreFactor Transformative Coaching and is a Certified Life Coach and Transformation Expert. Through her workshops and presentations, and one-to-one and group coaching programs, she empowers people with the mindset coaching they need to break through limitations, realize their potential, transform their results and feel truly fulfilled in every aspect of business and life.

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Pedernales Falls State Park

Destination: Johnson City

Explore the 'Crossroads' of Texas Hill Country *By Cindy Brzostowski*

Founded in 1879 by an uncle of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Johnson City is only an hour from Austin, about halfway to Fredericksburg. While the small town is famous for its connection to the former POTUS, that's not all it has going for it. Along with historical sites are nature, unique family attractions and plenty of good food and drinks. What more could you want on your next day trip? When planning your itinerary, these are some of the top spots to check out in the city nicknamed the 'Crossroads of the Texas Hill Country'.

ADVENTURE AWAITS

While on your way out to Johnson City, your first stop should be Pedernales Falls State Park. Spanning more than 5,200 acres, the park offers ample opportunities to hike, swim, mountain bike, horseback ride and fish. The falls itself is delightful, too, as the water cascades down wide, layered steps of limestone.

Exotic animals in Johnson City? It's true! At the Exotic Resort Zoo, you can take a guided tour through the expansive property, home to more than 600 animals, including camels, bison, zebras and ostriches. With just a little imagination, it can feel like a mini-safari in the middle of Texas.

LEARN & PLAY

You can't appreciate Johnson City without learning a bit more about LBJ. Head to the Boyhood Home of LBJ to see where the former president lived from the age of five until his high school graduation. Although it's actually in the nearby town of Stonewall, less than 15 minutes away, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is also a must-visit in the area. There, you can tour the ranch where LBJ was born, lived, died and laid to rest.

When you're done with history, move on to science at the Science Mill. Located in a 19th-century feed mill, this kid-friendly museum is full of fun interactive science and technology exhibits. >>



PHOTOGRAPHY CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHNSON CITY COFFEE CO.; PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK; SCIENCE MILL



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ARTS & ARTISANS

If you're looking for the right time to visit Johnson City, aim for the fourth weekend of the month so you can catch Johnson City Market Days. During these Saturdays and Sundays, various vendors and artisans congregate downtown in City Park.

Art lovers can also spend some time at Echo, a self-proclaimed 'non-gallery' art gallery that hosts the work of more than 30 artists. Anyone with an interest in photography may also want to stop at A Smith Gallery. This local spot exhibits the work of both amateur and professional photographers, and you can check what's currently on display at asmithgallery.com

GOOD FOOD, GOOD FUN

With all that sightseeing, you'll need some fuel for your body, and there are some choice options. For starters, there's Bryans on 290, an upscale casual restaurant where you can enjoy dishes such as grilled scallops and cast iron-seared salmon. For something more low-key, make a pit stop at Fat Boy Burgers for a juicy cheeseburger. Another satisfying option is El Charro Restaurant, which serves up scrumptious fajitas.

When you need a caffeine pick-me-up, the charming Johnson City Coffee Co. is the place to go. You must try Kay's honey pecan latte, a house specialty made with espresso, steamed milk, honey and pecan syrup.

DRINK UP

Out in the Hill Country, it seems there's always a nice option nearby when you want to satisfy your thirst, and Johnson City doesn't disappoint. One block off Main Street, >>

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BRYANS ON 290; JOHNSON CITY COFFEE CO.; PECAN STREET BREWING

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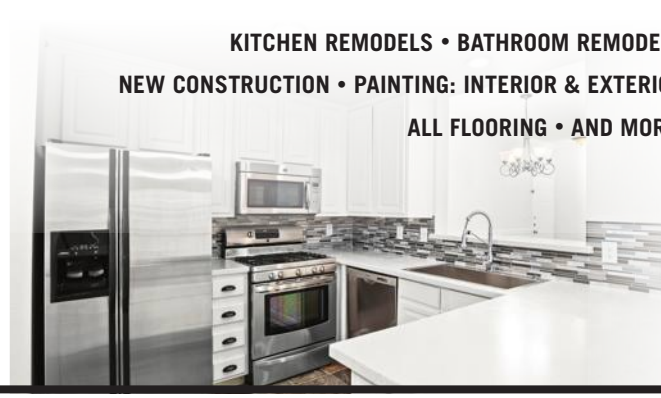
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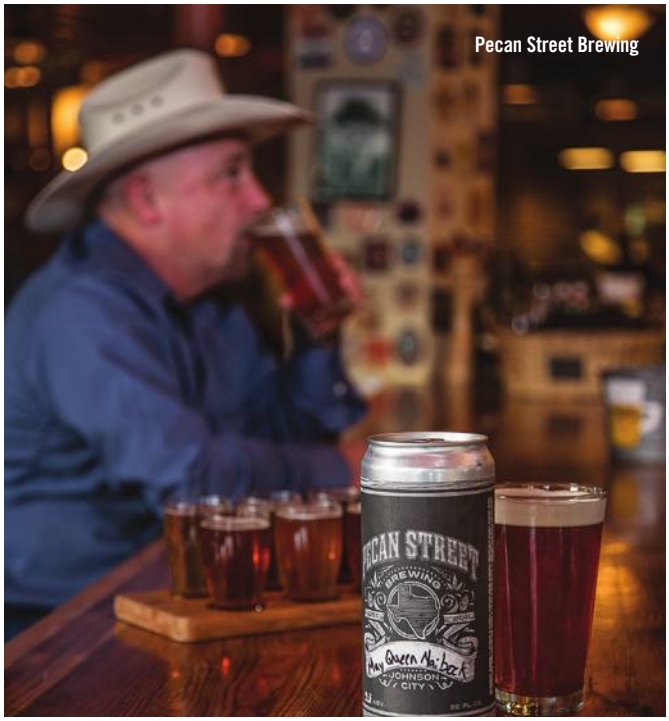




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Pecan Street Brewing


Lyndon B. Johnson boyhood home

Exotic animals in Johnson City? It's true! At the Exotic Resort Zoo, you can take a guided tour through the expansive property, home to more than 600 animals, including camels, bison, zebras and ostriches.


Exotic Resort Zoo

Pecan Street Brewing is the perfect place to unwind with a cold one. The beer is brewed on-site and quaffed in a pet-friendly beer garden. They serve pub food, too, if you're feeling peckish.

If you prefer wine, there's 290 Vinery. This family-owned establishment usually has at least 15 different wines available for tastings. A bit outside the center of town, you'll find Texas Hills Vineyard, where the tasting patio overlooks 25 acres of vineyards.

BONUS: STAY ATOP HILL COUNTRY

With all there is to see and do in Johnson City, you may feel like spending the night. Lighthouse Hill Ranch offers visitors a unique getaway. With an assortment of suites and ranch homes, this picturesque property has over 2,000 acres to explore. And yes, you can stay in the 86-foot-tall lighthouse, which itself is situated atop a 200-foot hill. Needless to say, you'll get some amazing views of the Hill Country if you stay there, in addition to access to the property's trails, lakes, pools and fishing ponds.


Exotic Resort Zoo

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF PECAN STREET BREWING; JOHNSON CITY TEXAS CHAMBER; EXOTIC RESORT ZOO



BOTHERED.

and doingsomething about it.

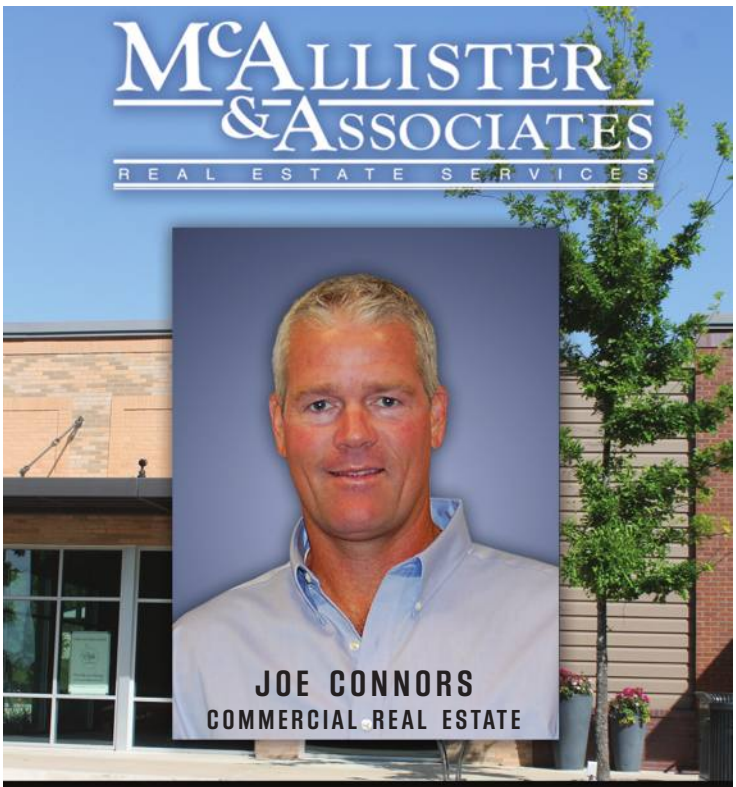
Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." I couldn't agree more. And what's at the heart of a good education? Teachers. We all have examples of teachers who got us to see something in a different way or sparked a new interest because of their enthusiasm and talent.

I want to thank all the teachers who devote their lives to inspiring and challenging students. Because their work and impact extend far beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

As kids return to school this month, join me in showing a teacher you support them by doing something special, even if it is just to say, "Thank you for teaching."

Jamie Amelio is #StayingBothered.
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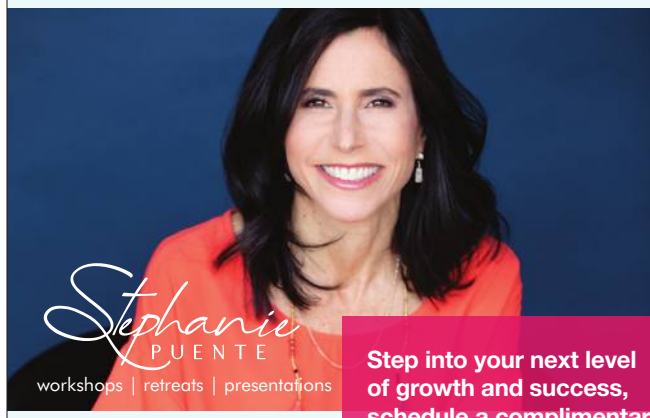
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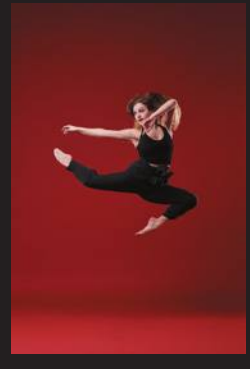
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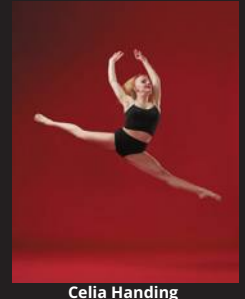
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