Compliments of Heritage Investors | "As seen in... Forbes, December 29, 2014"

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 82

OLD-WORLD CHARM

PAGE 24 Soak up the history of centuries-old Saint Augustine

ISSUE 82
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American Lifestyle
magazine

HERITAGE
INVESTORS

Dear Bill and Judy,

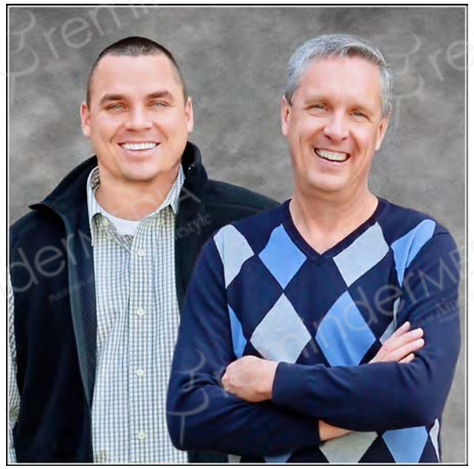
This issue of American Lifestyle magazine takes a leap into adventure. Renowned skydiver and GoPro Bomb Squad member Neil Amonson gives an inside look into his childhood and the path he traveled from the US Air Force to extreme sports. Ironically afraid of heights without a parachute on, this adventurer has made a career out of jumping out of planes and off of cliffs. His passion has expanded into a nonprofit called Jump For Joy, through which he skydives into schools to encourage kids to believe in their own strengths.

Artist Sharon Lee knows a thing or two about strength--hers comes in the form of artistic aptitude. Lee creates stunning wallpaper that incorporates the Korean folk art of her heritage. She credits her family, which includes a grandfather and mother who are artists, for encouraging her creative abilities. Lee opened her studio, Krane Home, in Los Angeles, California, where she designs both privately commissioned and personal artwork and contributes to an exciting wallpaper renaissance.

The word renaissance alludes to a revival or renewal. And in 1888, Saint Augustine, Florida, began to experience such a rebirth thanks to businessman Henry Flagler, who saw the potential of the city. The majestic hotels he built back then are now a museum and a college campus. The oldest city in the country is the place to come both for a sunny vacation and a history lesson.

Adventure, art, and history make for great reading. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Justin, Jim and Julie



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Front of Tear Out Card 1

biscuits

American Lifestyle
magazine

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Keep all ingredients cold and dry while you work.

- 3¼ c. pastry flour
- 2 c. bleached all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. turbinado sugar
- 6 oz. cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 2½ c. soured milk (to sour, add 2½ tbsp. apple cider vinegar to 2⅜ cups milk)

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biscuits

Recipes excerpted from *Breakfast: Recipes to Wake Up For* by George Weld and Evan Hanczor (Rizzoli, 2015).

1. Preheat oven to 500°F.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flours, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Blend well.
3. Toss the butter pieces into the flour, and blend well with your fingers—you'll squeeze and pinch the butter into the flour until it's well mixed and no piece of butter is larger than the fingernail on your smallest finger. The flour should resemble cornmeal. You want to do this step as quickly as possible so the butter does not begin to melt, but be thorough: getting the butter right is your best hedge against tough biscuits.
4. Add 2¼ cups of the soured milk to the flour and butter. Working quickly, mix the milk in with a rubber spatula, mixing only until the dough begins to hold together. If the mix seems dry, add the last ¼ cup of milk.
5. Dump the dough onto a floured work surface. Gather it together, and pat briefly to flatten. Fold the dough over on itself three or four times; then pat into a rough rectangle about 1½ inches thick. Use a bench scraper to ensure the dough isn't sticking to the table.
6. Dip a 2½-inch biscuit cutter in a little flour before pressing it into the dough. Lift the cut biscuit out without twisting the cutter, and place on a well-buttered baking sheet. Biscuits should be almost touching. Brush tops lightly with soured milk. Repeat until you've used all of the dough.
7. Bake for 15–20 minutes, until the biscuits are golden, well risen, and light. If they feel wet or heavy, bake them longer.

MAKES 14–18 BISCUITS

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IN THIS issue

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FALLING FOR neil amonson

text neil amonson
photography as noted

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Some people push the limits to get the most out of life, and Neil Amonson is one of them. A US Air Force veteran, Amonson continues his love of flying as part of a four-person, Utah-based team called the GoPro Bomb Squad. With this crew, he travels the globe participating in and recording his air sport adventures such as paragliding, skydiving, and BASE jumping.

Were you a daredevil as a child?

I have memories of climbing trees and jumping out of them, building jumps for our bicycles, and generally causing mischief, but I think that's pretty normal for most kids. My brother, Christian, reminded me of a ski trip when we lived in Stewartsville, New Jersey. I was in seventh or eighth grade. We had all gathered at the lodge, rented our skis, and headed outside. By the time everyone had latched themselves in, I had snuck off to the mountain. They found me already a quarter of the way down the mountain wrapped around a tree with two medics tending to my broken wrist.

Were your parents always watching you, or did you have a lot of freedom?

I definitely had a lot of freedom. When we got too rowdy, my mother would lock us outside. We were never allowed to have video games. I think I developed much of my independence from having a lot of freedom as a kid and not being coddled.


© Hartman Rector

Where did you grow up? Did you feel a sense of belonging?

When people ask where I'm from, I usually just say the East Coast. Technically, I was born in New Jersey, but I hardly count that. We moved around every three to four years as I was growing up, so it was hard to call anywhere home. I went to high school in two different states—the last three years of which were in Virginia. My parents still live in Philomont, Virginia, so I call that home.

Why did you decide to join the military?

As a senior in high school, I went to an orientation at Virginia Tech to learn about their programs. As I sat in the back of the auditorium, I fell asleep while they were talking about the college experience. It didn't seem like a good idea to spend another four years in school studying something I wasn't excited about, so I joined the military.

How did being in the Air Force Special Forces change you and prepare you for life?

Going into the military was life changing, for sure. I learned discipline and focus—two things I never learned in school. I also gained a tremendous amount of confidence, both physically and mentally. I learned that I can do anything I put my mind to, and that the only thing that often prevents people from accomplishing their goals is giving up or simply not trying hard enough. For me, that included how to study and do well on tests. I don't love academics, but I can hold my own now.

Did you have a postmilitary plan for your life?

My plan was to get a dog and a truck and move to Utah. So I did.

What is the timeline of your interest in extreme sports?

When I was in ninth grade, I started working at a bike shop in Easton, Maryland. I started downhill mountain biking. It was a progression after that. However, I've definitely taken a few steps back over the years. I enjoy being in the air, and I would like to continue to do so for many years. But I've lost too many friends along the way to fall into the illusion of thinking it can't happen to me. It can, and if I don't take precautions, it probably will.

What does BASE stand for? Where did your love of BASE jumping originate?

BASE stands for the four objects you can jump from: buildings, antennas, spans (bridges), and earth (cliffs). I wouldn't say I love BASE jumping; I'm not sure I even like it. It just happens to be one of the most powerful human experiences I've had, and there are things I learn from it.

What are the mechanics of wing suits? What do they enable you to do?

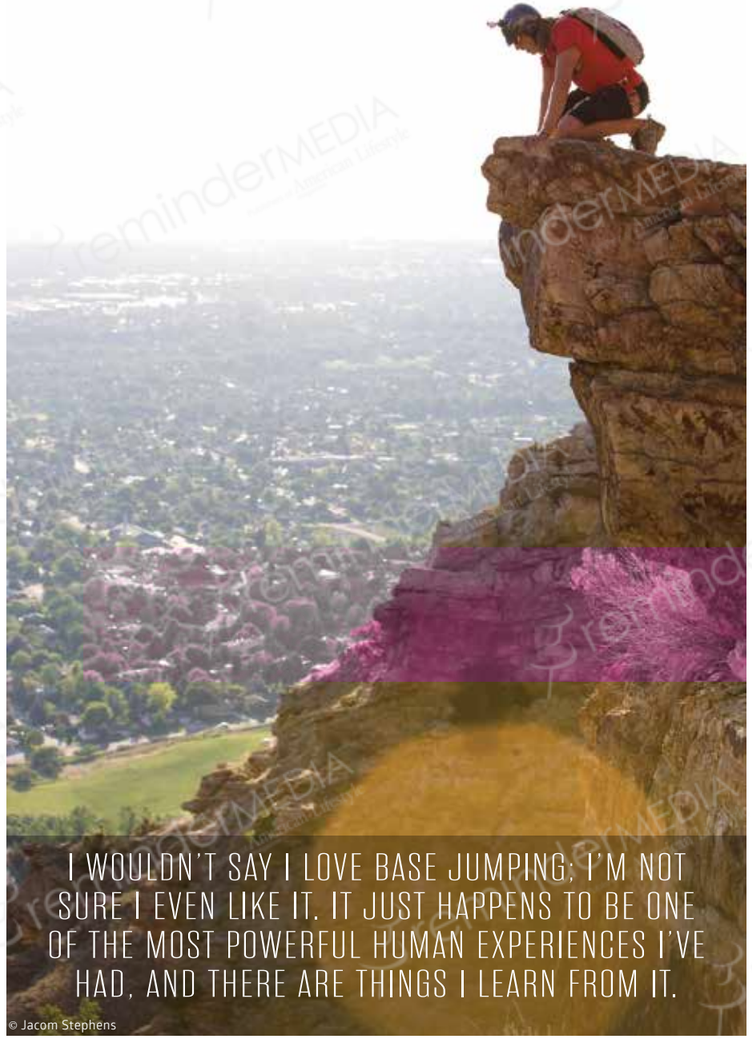
Wing suits are rad. They actually fill up with air from the inside and turn your body into a flying wing. Because they pressurize so well now, the suits are getting very impressive performance and actually allow you to climb for a short period of time before gliding down again. It's going to be cool to see what happens in the next ten years. In a normal skydive, you free-fall for about sixty seconds, going straight down at 120 miles an hour. With a wing suit, you can glide for over three minutes and cover miles before opening your parachute. It's amazing.

Do you have a fear of heights?

I am afraid of heights, though not so much with a parachute on. Things like ladders and balconies mostly freak me out. Even when I'm jumping, I don't hang out too much around the edge. It makes me more nervous.

What goes through your mind the moment you are about to jump? How do you feel when you're in the air?

Right before I jump, I have complete focus. For me, that's one of the best parts of jumping—it filters out the static of day-to-day life better than anything else. I feel nervous every time. In the air, I feel a connection to everything. It's like my spatial awareness shifts, and I am completely present in the space I'm in while at the same time watching the whole event from afar. It's pretty rad.



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What drives you to keep doing this sport?

No matter what I'm doing, if I'm in the air it makes me feel good. It gives me joy. Water sports are a close second, and I'm planning on spending more time near the ocean in the future.

Do you think people who do extreme sports have a reputation for being reckless? Do you feel like you are taking a huge risk each time you jump?

People who do extreme sports are generally more comfortable with risk than people

who do other sports. What's hard to say is how much risk each person is actually taking in his or her sport. Many factors are involved, which makes the whole scenario pretty complex. I've gotten tired of looking at it practically and have summed up my risk management by asking myself, "Is there a safer way to do what I'm doing, besides not doing it at all?" And if there is a safer way, I strongly consider doing that. People often get caught up in the newest and most daring way of doing things. It's a slippery slope that can have devastating consequences. I'm still pushing things in my own way, but I'm doing so differently than when I was younger.

How did your career with GoPro begin? Did you ever dream you'd get paid to do what you love? Has your interest in photography increased since working with them?

I'm a sponsored athlete for GoPro. There isn't an official job description, but it involves filming my adventures with a GoPro and sharing the content with them for promotional and marketing purposes, as well as on social media. It doesn't feel like a job. It's more like a hobby, but either way I can't complain. Getting paid to do what I love is a great way to feel spoiled. At the end of the day, I like to work and contribute in a meaningful way to the companies I have relationships with, and that is more important to me than looking cool.
I've been interested in photography since I was little, and the GoPro connection was simply an extension of that. Moving forward, I see myself getting back into traditional photography. I miss composing shots instead of just pointing a camera toward the action, taking a bunch of photos, and picking my favorite, although that technique works pretty well. [*laughs*]

What is your favorite extreme sport?

I don't have a favorite. I'm currently flying airplanes during the week, skydiving on the weekends, and paragliding every now and then. I only BASE jump a few times a year.

Are extreme sports enthusiasts your preferred friend group?

I'm a lone wolf. Most of my friends are simply people who share similar hobbies. As the seasons change, so do the people I spend my time with. I've recognized I enjoy being very independent, so I've held off from having kids and getting married, and I rarely even date because I don't want to have to juggle my priorities. Things are pretty simple, and it's hard to want to change that. I'm sure things will shift as I get older, but for now I enjoy my freedom.

How do you give back to the community?

I started a nonprofit called Jump For Joy. We skydive into schools and do motivational speaking for kids. It's important to me that young people realize they can make their own path through life and that all the skills they need are inside themselves. We have a mantra called "dream, plan, do," which helps teach kids how to take their ideas and goals and make them real. A lot of people don't know these basic steps of how to manifest things, so I figure the earlier we can share this with kids, the more likely they will be able to find and share their natural talents. We also emphasize balance, specifically in the realm of thinking versus feeling and creativity versus structure. Each of us has things we are naturally good at, and, in turn, some things we are bad at. It's important to know your strengths and weaknesses and when to ask for help.

For more info, visit jump-4-joy.org


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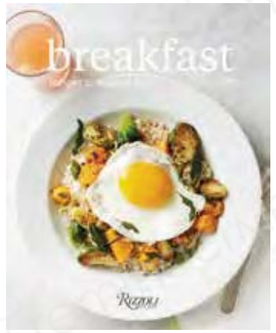
WE SKYDIVE INTO SCHOOLS AND DO MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKING FOR KIDS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOUNG PEOPLE REALIZE THEY CAN MAKE THEIR OWN PATH THROUGH LIFE AND THAT ALL THE SKILLS THEY NEED ARE INSIDE THEMSELVES.

altv To watch Neil at a Jump For Joy event, visit americanlifestylemag.com/altv

text george weld and evan hanczor
photography bryan gardner

ode to breakfast



Lemon Cornmeal Cake

If you like your cornbread sweet, fine. But then call it what it is—a cake. This makes an excellent light breakfast with coffee or juice.

¾ cup finely ground cornmeal
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon kosher salt
2 large eggs
½ cup white sugar
Zest of 1 lemon
⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons milk
1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
3½ tablespoons melted unsalted butter
1 tablespoon turbinado sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. Sift together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together eggs, sugar, and zest. Set over a small pot of hot water, double-boiler style, and whisk until warm to touch, about 2 minutes. Transfer the bowl to the mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Beat on medium speed until the mixture thickens and lightens in color, and forms ribbons when the whisk is lifted, about 5–6 minutes.

4. In another bowl, combine oil, milk, and lemon juice. Return mixer to medium speed, and drizzle this into egg mixture. Reduce to low speed, and add the combined cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt. Finally, drizzle in melted butter, and combine.

5. Line an 8-inch metal loaf pan with parchment paper. Pour batter into pan, and bake for 40–45 minutes, rotating once. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick or the tip of a sharp knife into the center of the cake—it should come out clean, and the cake should spring back when gently touched.

6. Remove cake from the oven, and immediately sprinkle the sugar on top. Place pan on a rack to cool for 10 minutes. Carefully lift cake out of the pan, and return it to the rack to finish cooling.

SERVES 6–8

Biscuits

Here's a dirty little secret: biscuits are almost the easiest thing you'll ever bake. But that's a significant "almost," because, while the recipe for biscuits is as simple as tying your shoe, executing it is another story. Your goal is to hit the perfect midpoint between extreme delicacy on the one hand and structure and strength on the other. You need to work quickly, with a light hand, to keep your biscuits light and delicate, but not so delicate that your biscuits crumble in your hands when you pick them up. Keep all ingredients cold and dry while you work.

3¼ cups pastry flour
2 cups bleached all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons baking powder
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon turbinado sugar
6 ounces cold butter, cut into small pieces
2½ cups soured milk
(to sour, add 2½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar to 2⅜ cups milk)

1. Preheat oven to 500°F.

2. In a large bowl, combine the flours, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Blend well.

3. Toss the butter pieces into the flour, and blend well with your fingers—you'll squeeze and pinch the butter into the flour until it's well mixed and no piece of butter is larger than the fingernail on your smallest finger. The flour should resemble cornmeal. You want to do this step as quickly as possible so the butter does not begin to melt, but be thorough: getting the butter right is your best hedge against tough biscuits.

4. Add 2¼ cups of the soured milk to the flour and butter. Working quickly, mix the milk in with a rubber spatula, mixing only until the dough begins to hold together. If the mix seems dry, add the last ¼ cup of milk.

5. Dump the dough onto a floured work surface. Gather it together, and pat briefly to flatten. Fold the dough over on itself three or four times; then pat into a rough rectangle about 1½ inches thick. Use a bench scraper to ensure the dough isn't sticking to the table.

6. Dip a 2½-inch biscuit cutter in a little flour before pressing it into the dough. Lift the cut biscuit out without twisting the cutter, and place on a well-buttered baking sheet. Biscuits should be almost touching. Brush tops lightly with soured milk. Repeat until you've used all of the dough.

7. Bake for 15–20 minutes, until the biscuits are golden, well risen, and light. If they feel wet or heavy, bake them longer.

MAKES 14–18 BISCUITS

Savory Oatmeal

We've gotten accustomed to oatmeal as a sweet dish, but there's no reason not to make a savory version—it's just another grain, like rice or grits, and it takes to savory applications well. This is a simple recipe that uses oats as a background for seasonal vegetables, but you could also use these oats as the foundation for braised rabbit or duck or a hearty stew.

2 cups steel-cut oats
7 cups water
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon turbinado sugar
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Black pepper
2 cups prepared seasonal vegetables
¼ cup grated hard cheese (optional)

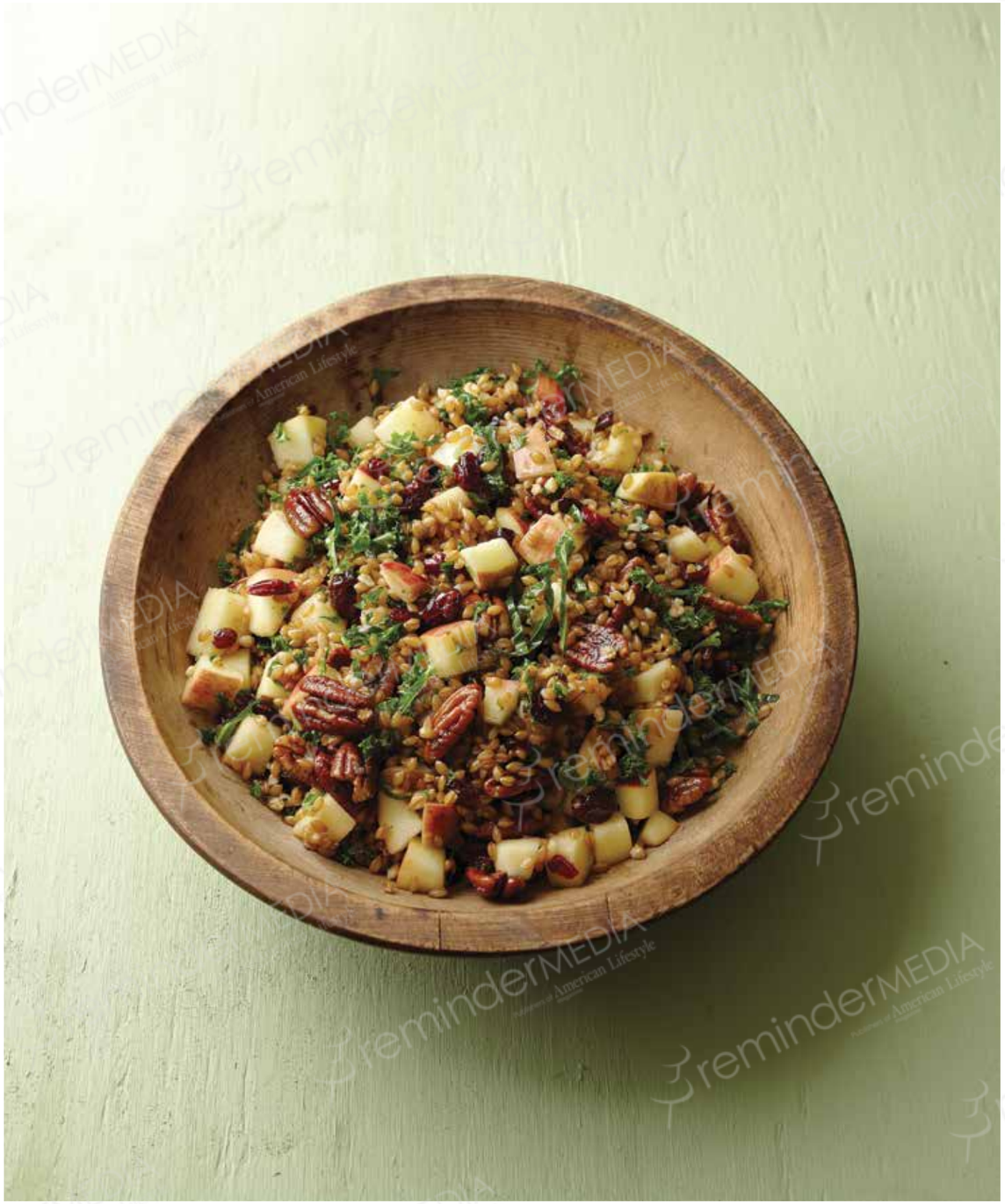
1. Combine oats, water, salt, and sugar in a medium-sized (3-quart) pot. Bring to a boil, and then turn down to a gentle boil. Cook for about 30–40 minutes, stirring occasionally until most of the water has been absorbed and the oats are just tender. Add more salt to taste, stir in butter, and crack in a bit of black pepper.

2. Spoon the oats into four shallow bowls, and add vegetables evenly among the bowls. Add grated cheese, if desired. You can really send this dish over the top by adding a sunny-side up or poached egg.

Recommended Seasonal Vegetables:
SPRING: sautéed snap peas, fresh spinach leaves, radish slices (braised or raw), broccoli rabe.

SUMMER: roasted cherry tomatoes, corn (roasted or raw), blanched green beans, sautéed mushrooms, braised small onions.

SERVES 4–6



Farro Salad

Because we usually eat wheat only when it's been milled into flour, it's easy to forget that it's a grain like oats or corn. **But recently, farmers have been bringing back ancient varieties of wheat, like farro. If you can't find farro, conventional wheat berries will do just fine for this dish—both are delicious.**

1 cup farro or wheat berries
2 cups water
Kosher salt
1 lemon
¼ cup vegetable oil
Black pepper
1–2 crisp apples (Gala or Fuji are good options)
1 bunch kale
½ cup dried cranberries
1 cup spiced pecans

1. Wash the farro or wheat berries in a sieve before adding to a 4–6-quart pot with 2 cups of water and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, stir, and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook covered until water is absorbed and the farro is swollen and tender, 45–50 minutes. Remove from heat, and spread onto a sheet pan to cool.

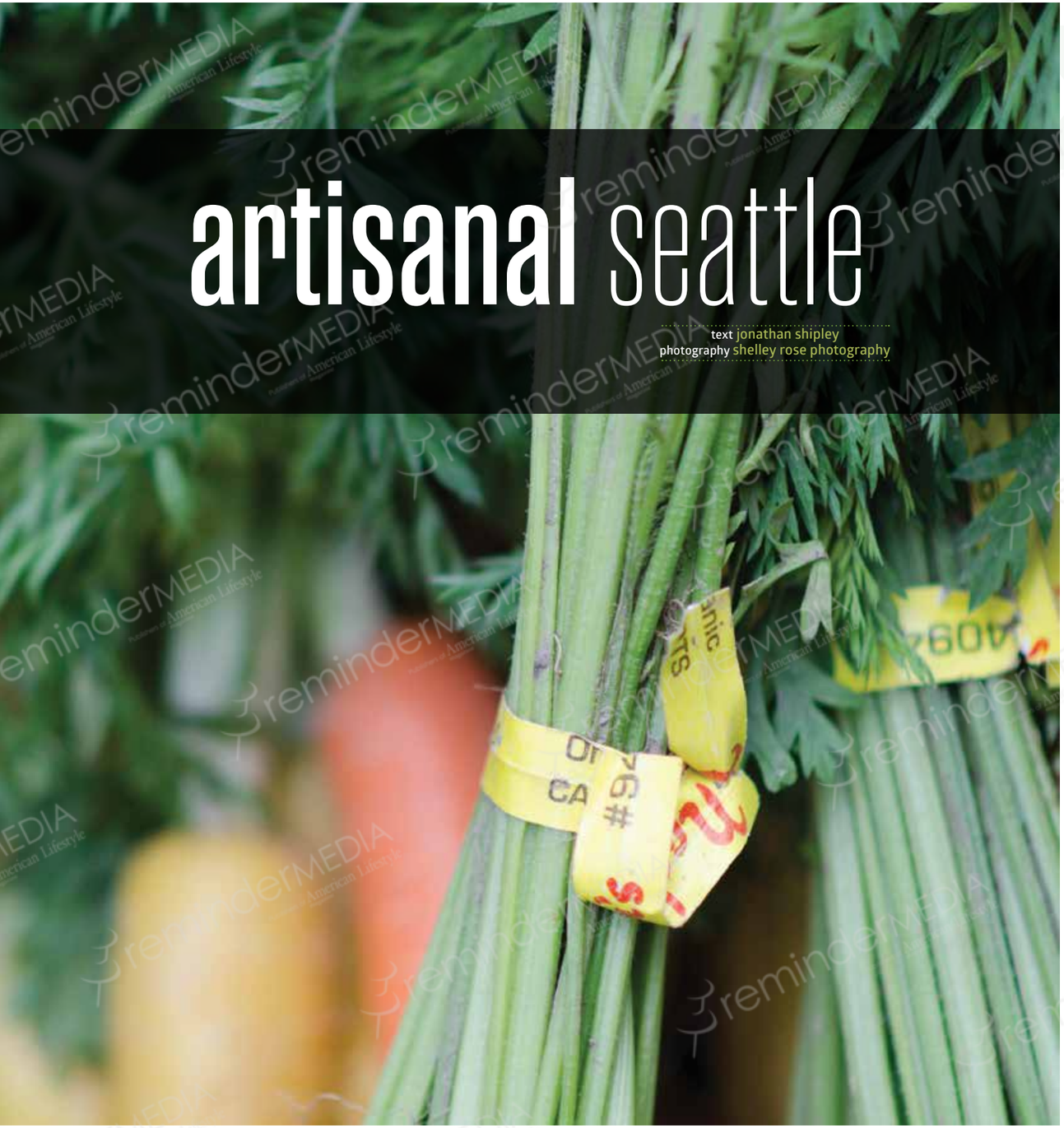
2. Cut the lemon, and squeeze the lemon juice into a small bowl, removing any seeds. Slowly whisk in the vegetable oil until you've got a viscous and balanced dressing. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Wash and dice the apples.

4. Wash and trim the kale, cutting out the thick parts of the spine. Stack the leaves on top of one another, and cut into thin ribbons. (You'll be eating them raw, so you want to cut them into pieces you'd be happy eating).

5. In a large bowl, combine the cooled farro, the kale, the diced apples, and the cranberries. Stir well to combine, and add dressing so that it's well distributed throughout the salad. Finally, add the pecans, and stir to mix in well. Taste for seasoning, adjust if necessary, and serve.

SERVES 6



artisanal seattle

text jonathan shipley
photography shelley rose photography

It is spring, and it is a Saturday in Seattle. Seattleites are up and enjoying it. In the Ballard neighborhood, at the farmers market, there's fresh honey, homemade pickles in fine jars, and a butcher selling raw milk as well as bacon from the pigs he raised on a nearby rustic and green island.

Meanwhile, across town at a city park, a man is holding a field trip and telling people how to urban forage. Are there greens one can eat? Berries in the empty lot across the way that can be made into a pie? The group wanders the park and eats what they thought were merely weeds. They learn what can be harvested from a shoreline, a forest, and even an ill-used parking lot.

In Fremont, at Le Petit Cochon, someone is sitting down to a meal. On the menu: escargots. They come from a snail farm on the Olympic Peninsula, owned by a man who used to work in the marketing department of Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo until the call for snail farming was too strong for him.

Honey. Pickles. Ferns. Snails. People in northwestern Washington State are literally eating it all up. The locavore movement is alive and well in places like the Emerald City and its outskirts. Turning away from corporate food and big box retailers, more locals are finding ways to enjoy food in a new way—their own way.

So how did this sustenance success story begin? The locavore movement was born eight hundred miles south, when, in 2005, a group of four women in the Bay Area, inspired by the idea of eating all locally sourced foods, challenged themselves to eat only local foods (defined as within one hundred miles) for a month. Since they were chronicling their journey, they needed a name for it; blending two Latin roots together, they dubbed themselves

The locavore movement is alive and well in places like the Emerald City and its outskirts.

locavores. In 2007, Oxford University Press named locavore its Word of the Year, and the word—and the movement—caught steam in the years that followed, compelling people to a new way of eating.

Then again, perhaps it's not new at all. "Embracing the locavore ideal is really about returning to what was the only way to eat," remarks Ric Brewer, owner of Little Gray Farms, a snail farm in rural Quilcene. "It's more of a homecoming than anything else." Instead of searching elsewhere for quality foods, northwesterners are looking into their own neighborhoods. They're discovering their neighbors are doing things they're passionate about and doing it well.

Chris Curtis, executive director of Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Markets, echoes that sentiment. "Shoppers are interested in buying local, quality farm foods directly from local farmers," she notes. "They want diversity, freshness, quality, sustainable growing methods, transparency, and a chance to meet the people who actually grow and produce their food."

The proof is in the numbers. Sales at Seattle's farmers markets were up 3 percent from where they were in 2015, and the year before that, sales were up 12 percent, a banner year. "In 2015," Curtis says, "all of Seattle's farmers markets provided approximately $15 million in sales to farms and artisan food vendors."

Artisans and food vendors aren't necessarily in it for the money. They're in it for their singular passions, whatever those may be. Take, for instance, Britt Eustis's passion. During business trips in Japan, he became fascinated with the process of creating and consuming fermented foods. He went home and tried his hand at it, fermenting cucumbers, garlic, and spices. In 2012, with cofounder Deborah Noonan, he opened Britt's Pickles, a retail outlet in

Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market. It was the market's first pickle purveyor since 1929. They've grown a lot since. They offer five flavors of pickles, two of sauerkraut, and two of kimchi. Their products can now be found at Whole Foods, and at area grocery stores PCC Natural Markets, Town and Country Markets, and Haggen. Robert Hunt, director of sales for Britt's Pickles, credits their customers for their success: "Consumers of natural and organic foods are known for their strong support for locally grown and handcrafted food products."

All true, but it doesn't even have to be handcrafted. The food can just be mint growing in a neighbor's yard or something growing at the park that people had no idea they could eat. That is, until Langdon Cook came along. Cook is a writer, instructor, and lecturer on wild foods. His first book, *Fat of the Land: Adventures of a 21st Century Forager*, put him firmly at the forefront of the foraging movement, which is full of foods people often overlook—such as ferns, mushrooms, and even stinging nettles.

One day, eager northwestern food enthusiasts tromp through Tiger Mountain State Forest with Cook looking for things to eat. On another day, others go to a city park with him, and within a couple of hours, they have a bounty for their kitchens. Other days Cook is at Hood Canal, a short drive away, doing some shellfish foraging. (Geoduck, anyone?) No matter where he is, however, he is connecting with the landscape through its often overlooked bounty.

The area's landscape is as rich and varied as the people within it. Jeff Steichen is the owner of Batch 206 Distillery. Opened in 2012, it's now one of the top three selling distilleries in the state, though Steichen insists that working with the community is just as rewarding. "One of my favorite aspects of working here is the people we work with in the Northwest," he says. "We have that sense of 'we are all in this together,' and we care deeply about the environment and how we engage with it."

Another type of business involving fermentation is thriving: a yogurt shop also found in Pike Place Market. Not a frozen yogurt shop, mind you: *yogurt*. Greek yogurt, to be exact. Ellenos Real Greek Yogurt is a family-run outfit devoted to producing authentic Greek yogurt and prides itself on only using locally sourced milk and combining it with the family's unique blend of cultures and flavors. The result? A wildly popular product that verifies the quality and taste of using local products.

It's Saturday evening now in Seattle, and the sun is starting to set, dipping behind the Olympic Mountains and, beyond them, the sea. Bees are returning to their hives (as there are a myriad of professional apiarists calling Seattle home and growing numbers of residents owning beehives). Folks tending to their P-Patch plots are hanging up their trowels (as Seattle abounds with these local public community gardens, and people often wait for years on a waiting list to get their own plot). The brewers and distillers are locking up, and the curious who went to Langdon Cook's class are brewing stinging nettle tea while tending to their aching muscles after a long day of foraging. (Fortunately, they've also learned that nettles help for that sort of thing.)

On Sunday, they'll all wake up, eager to start it all over again. Luckily, a farmers market will once again open for business. What a joy it is to have likeminded folks making their own treats—pickles and pies, bourbons and cheeses, candies and cucumbers, ice cream and kale, yogurt and eggs, honey and pasta, asparagus and jerky. All of it a bounty to be had in the Pacific Northwest's green, burgeoning oasis.

For more info, visit seattlefarmersmarkets.org

> *Artisans and food vendors aren't necessarily in it for the money. They're in it for their singular passions, whatever those may be.*

AT THE CORNER OF history and vacation

text shelley rose
photography shelley rose photography

Amid more popular Florida tourist destinations lies a gem on the east coast of the state. Saint Augustine, known as the oldest city in the country, is a charming getaway with centuries-old landmarks, delicious food, and a relaxing, welcoming vibe—the perfect travel destination for young and old alike.

Voluminous yellow pots host happy plants and flank a standalone shack of sorts at the corner of Cuna and Charlotte Streets in Saint Augustine, Florida. This rustic hut is home to Crucial Coffee Cafe, where bright red benches and lovingly frayed tablecloths of the same hue invite summer tourists to sit down and indulge in a cool treat or a morning cup of joe. A chalkboard menu suspended from the ceiling announces the daily offerings and flavors of ice cream and Italian ice. "A scoop of watermelon ice, please," I request to the woman at the counter, and she bends down and around to reach the freezer in the tiny kitchen space. Perched on a metal chair with a pillow cushion, I savor spoonfuls of chilled sweetness as the breeze floats in through

the windows and a set of double French doors painted fire engine red. With its cobblestoned streets, Spanish Renaissance Revival-style architecture, and outdoor dining everywhere you turn, sun-soaked Saint Augustine is the picture of Floridian bliss—with a rich history to boot.

Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León discovered Florida in 1513, naming it in honor of the Easter season and the Spanish festival of flowers. More than fifty years later, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived with ten ships and 800 soldiers and their families to settle Saint Augustine. In the Siege of Saint Augustine in 1702, the British were unable to conquer Castillo de San Marcos, the fortress, but they burned the rest of the (mostly wooden) city to the ground. The fort was protected by coquina, a limestone consisting almost entirely of shelly fossils. This material was quite porous and ideal for withstanding cannon shots, which absorbed into the walls of the fort instead of shattering them. This coquina fort was preceded by a series of wooden forts that didn't fare well against the French and British, who wanted Florida for themselves. Today, Castillo de San Marcos is a popular destination for visitors to Saint Augustine. It's also the oldest European fort built of stone blocks in the United States. Construction began on October 2, 1672, and was completed two decades later in 1695. The self-guided tour has plenty to read, but the outdoor lecture explaining the different artillery is a must. Visitors learn about six kinds of shot with various uses, like glass shot, canister shot, and spike shot.

Saint Augustine as a tourist destination began when wealthy oil entrepreneur Henry Flagler came to visit the city with his second wife. He thought the city was charming but lacked proper accommodations and an upgraded railroad system. Believing Florida had the potential to attract tourists, he gave up day-to-day involvement in the

left
The Ponce de León Hotel, which was financed by Henry Flagler, is now part of Flagler College.

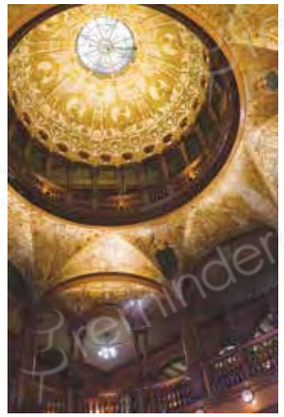
Standard Oil Company so he could focus his attention on creating a luxury destination. His Florida East Coast Railway began with the purchase of the Jacksonville, Saint Augustine, and Halifax River Railway. The tracks were modernized, and he extended the railroad from Jacksonville to Key West.

Next on Flagler's list was the Ponce de León Hotel, which held his vision for luxury accommodations in Saint Augustine. He brought in two New York architects, John Carrère and Thomas Hastings, to manifest this dream into reality. Built in the style of the Spanish Renaissance Revival, the 540-room hotel opened on January 10, 1888. It was constructed from poured concrete and featured two towers on each side of the building filled with water—8,000 gallons of hot water and 8,000 gallons of cold water. The Ponce de León was also one of America's first electrically powered buildings. Thomas Edison and Flagler were friends, and Edison Light Company was employed to keep the hotel's more than 4,000 lightbulbs lit up. Flagler had to hire additional staff to operate the light switches in the rooms because guests were unfamiliar with electricity and feared being shocked.

Guests of the hotel were required to pay for the season from November to May, regardless of how long they actually stayed. Six months or one night, everyone paid $4000 to stay. For a couple, that would equate to a quarter of a million dollars in the present day!

A highlight of the hotel is surely the beautiful rotunda, which features a floor of hand-laid African tile. Flagler believed

The dining room features seventy-nine Tiffany stained-glass windows, reputed to be the largest private collection of Louis Comfort Tiffany glass in its original location in the world.



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The interior of Flagler College features ornate furniture, floors, and ceilings.

perfection should only be reserved for God and instructed the tile setters to make a mistake in one of the mosaics on the floor. If you look closely, you'll see each black triangle has a corner of white except for one, which is all black. Flagler also hired artist George W. Maynard to create the murals in the rotunda and dining room, which took him eighteen months without help. The spirit of Old Spain is represented in the panels, which reference the four elements: water, fire, earth, and air; as well as the four figures of exploration: adventure, discovery, conquest, and civilization.

The dining room features seventy-nine Tiffany stained-glass windows, reputed to be the largest private collection of Louis Comfort Tiffany glass in its original location in the world. In 1968, the hotel became a part of Flagler College, and now college students enjoy their meals in opulent surroundings. Some of the dining chairs are even originals. Flagler College was added to the US National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Flagler also commissioned the Alcazar Hotel, designed by the same New York architects who were responsible for the Ponce de León Hotel. The hotel was home to a steam room, sulfur baths, a three-story ballroom, and the world's largest indoor swimming pool. The hotel shuttered in 1932 and was purchased by Otto C. Lightner in 1947 to house his collection of Victorian-era pieces. The Chicago publisher turned it over to the city of Saint Augustine, which turned it into the Lightner Museum. The museum occupies the rear section, and the pool area is now home to shops and the Cafe Alcazar, with a sloping floor that would have been the shallow end to the deep end. The second floor is full of cut glass and work by Louis Comfort Tiffany, while the third floor features paintings, sculptures, furniture, and expanses of open space and wood floors. Peer out over the railing for a view of what was the indoor pool. If you let your imagination run wild, you can almost hear the splash of a diver jumping from the third floor.

While there, don't miss the music demonstration performed twice daily, with instruments from the 1870s to the 1920s displayed and played. The German orchestrion plays the sound of six instruments from a giant cardboard sheet.

After the Lightner Museum, hop onto the Old Town Trolley tour, a convenient way to see the whole city, with twenty-three stops, more than one hundred sights to see, and continuous commentary to get visitors acquainted with the city and its history. Leave some time to go through the Saint Augustine History Museum and read the timeline of early settlers in Florida. British colonists in the eighteenth century grew cotton, rice, and indigo. They also raised cattle and were called Florida Crackers because of the sound their bullwhips made. Ever wonder how much groceries cost in 1909? The history museum is full of interesting facts about the past, including the cost of a jar of peanut butter.

Hop off near Saint George Street for a long stretch of shopping, from chocolates to art glass to vintage clothing. Turn onto Hypolita Street for more shops and eateries. Catch some live music and barbecue at Scarlett O'Hara's, or hang out on the porch and sip a Rosemary's Lemonade. After lunch, walk back down Hypolita Street and hang a left onto Charlotte Street, where you'll find the famous Hyppo Gourmet Ice Pops shop, which offers cool flavors like pineapple cilantro, blood orange cheesecake, and plum mint. This has become a Saint Augustine tradition. Walk a bit farther, and turn left on Cuna Street, where you'll find the Gourmet Hut, a beautiful outdoor restaurant that shares space with neighboring Crucial Coffee Cafe. When the sun goes down, this alfresco dining spot turns into a fairy tale, with strings of rope lights overhead and a keyboard player near the sidewalk. Its offerings change every day, and staff will bring the chalkboard menu to you so you can order tableside. Another delicious spot for dining is The Floridian, a laid-back eatery on Spanish Street that boasts an outdoor front porch

clockwise from the top
The third floor of the Lightner Museum showcases art and sculpture.

Cafe Alcazar, an elegant eatery, now occupies the space originally designated for the large indoor swimming pool of the Alcazar Hotel. The restaurant is located in the deep end.

A museum docent speaks to tourists about historical instruments.

right
A piano player serenades diners alfresco in the beautiful garden of the Gourmet Hut.

below
A walk along Avenida Menendez is a perfect opportunity to soak up some sun and admire the Matanzas River.

A STROLL ALONG THE WATER IS A WELCOME RESPITE FROM THE MORE CROWDED STREETS IN TOWN. GO PAST PONCE DE LEÓN CIRCLE ONTO AVENIDA MENENDEZ TO WALK ALONG THE MATANZAS RIVER.

and a larger indoor space. The food is definitely southern-inspired, with options like fried green tomatoes and pork belly caprese.

A stroll along the water is a welcome respite from the more crowded streets in town. Go past Ponce de León Circle onto Avenida Menendez to walk along the Matanzas River. You can also venture into the municipal marina where El Galeón—a five-deck replica of a Spanish galleon from the colonial period—is periodically docked. Ships like this would have sailed Florida's waters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but El Galeón travels up and down the East Coast. El Galeón is maintained by a crew of twenty-eight who operate the seven sails on three masts. Along the pier, you can nod hello to the locals hanging out in their boats, smile at the clever boat names, and feel the camaraderie of the boating community.

For sunset chasers, hop in the car and drive to a restaurant called Saltwater Cowboys. The food is reportedly delicious, though I only made it as far as the parking lot that overlooked marshland and the horizon, where the Florida sun dipped lower and lower, lighting up the sky in cotton candy pink and clementine orange.

There are quite a few winners for accommodations in Saint Augustine, and the Inn on Charlotte is one such gem. Built in 1918 for a local attorney, this brick home ushered in the Roaring Twenties, an era of modern technology and a more carefree lifestyle. It was restored in 2003 and furnished with quality antiques and reproductions. The porch is ideal for lazy days in the shade with a book and a glass of lemonade from the refrigerator. Breakfast is a two-course affair, with a chilled soup or fruit as the appetizer. The main courses vary from citrus French toast to eggs Benedict casserole to Swiss cheese quiche.

The best thing about Saint Augustine is the way it beckons you to wander the quaint streets, sneak into an outdoor patio for a caprese salad and some acoustic guitar, and manage the drips of an ice cream cone on a sunny day. The Spanish architecture flavors the town with a romantic spice, and you might wish you had a hand to hold as you catch the riffs of blues music floating out on wisps of cigar smoke from Stogies Jazz Club. History and relaxation meet and stand together for a moment in the streets of Saint Augustine, reminding you to breathe.

For more info, visit www.ci.st-augustine.fl.us/

CHARLOTTE COMPOSITION

text charlotte lucas
photography chris edwards

With a North Carolina upbringing and an interior designer mother, Charlotte Lucas got an early start on the world of design. After working in Washington, DC, she returned to her roots and opened her own firm, which is known for using bold colors and vintage pieces. She discusses how she deftly combined modern and traditional, and northern and southern touches in a recent home project for a transplanted New York couple.

How did your family influence your love of design? Do you recall any stories or experiences from your youth that were precursors of your future as an interior designer?

My mother is an interior designer, so my childhood was filled with trips to flea markets, antique stores, and furniture and fabric showrooms. We are both do-it-yourselfers, and I have fond memories of the two of us rag-rolling my bedroom in the early '90s. Both of my sisters are designers as well, so it may be safe to say it's genetic at this point!

You studied design at the University of Georgia and worked in Washington, DC, but then you returned to work in North Carolina and opened your own design firm there in 2012. What led you back home?

Family brought me back to my North Carolina roots. My husband is also from Charlotte, and we both decided to move back here in 2007. Charlotte is a booming city with so much opportunity, and it's far different from when we grew up here.

What did you learn from the Charlotte-area designers with whom you worked?

I learned a lot about running a business: sacrifice, reward, dedication, time management, organization, discipline, and

delegation. I've always worked at boutique firms, where everyone wears many hats, so you must have a humble attitude and a good work ethic!

Which other designers have influenced you or inspired you?

Designers from the past inspire me. It's nice to look back on a design from seventy years ago and see something relevant and inspirational for a project today. I love vintage furniture from the '50s and '60s, and I admire the designs of Tommi Parzinger, Edward Wormley, William Haines, Billy Baldwin, and Dorothy Draper, to name a few.

What are the biggest advantages and disadvantages of running your own design firm versus working for somebody else?

When you work for yourself, the sky is the limit! With that comes tremendous risk (and stress), but with great risk there is also great reward. At the end of the day, you are the only one to blame if something isn't right.

How would you describe your style?

I make a concerted effort to let the project and the client dictate the overall aesthetic. A house should feel like it belongs to that family, and I am hired to curate the design accordingly. I love furniture with a story—whether we know the story or not. I mix lots of colors, patterns, and materials in my projects. I also sometimes joke that I was born in the wrong decade because so much of my inspiration comes from the 1950s and 1960s. I do a lot of treasure hunting for vintage furniture and use those finds in my projects. Sometimes a house calls for clean lines, and, at other times, things need to be a little fussier.

Since you work primarily in the Southeast, how do traditional southern-style architecture styles in the homes you design influence your projects and design decisions, if at all?

The South is rich in tradition, but we are modernizing the way we live here and what that means. It's important to keep memories and heirlooms alive in a southern house, whether it's your grandmother's china, an old chest, or antique linens. However, houses have evolved, and we don't necessarily lean toward the formal spaces and furniture that were typical of our great-grandparents' era.

Southern architecture plays a big role in design as well. I've worked on beautiful pre-Civil War houses in Charleston, South Carolina, that are protected by historical preservation and conservation boards to keep these historic buildings alive and well. There is so much character in these old houses. When working on a project like that, I always try to complement the history of the house with the furnishings in an updated and modernized way without disconnecting it from its roots.

How important is spacing to you? What steps do you take to ensure that a room's spacing and flow are good?

Space planning and scale are critical. I always present a hand-drawn, scaled floor plan to the client so he or she can understand the spacing and layout of a room. I also provide a hand-drawn full-room rendering, which provides a clear visual of the space and makes it easy for the client and me to make adjustments before anything is ever ordered.

One word: color. What does it mean to you as a designer?

I firmly believe that the use of bold and bright colors can help keep a room or a house fresh and exciting over the years. Color evokes emotion, and I think it's important to be excited when you walk through your house. It's a challenge for me to design a neutral room!

Are there any colors, patterns, or textures you would never use?

I'm not sure I've ever met a color, pattern, or texture I didn't like. Almost every one has a place if used in the right way for the right project. I love finding opportunities to use less common or out-of-style elements to force myself to think outside the box.

What are some key questions you ask a client to get a sense of design direction?

I have three: How does your family use your house? What are the important pieces you want to keep? And are there any colors or designs you dislike?

You seem to have fun with design (and fashion, for that matter), and you seem to genuinely enjoy what you're doing. What makes the job fun? How does that reflect in your work?

I wouldn't do what I do unless I loved it. It is truly a passion, and I am so fortunate to be able to get up every morning and go do something I love. There are tough days, for sure, but the reward of a finished house and a happy client outweighs any tough days. I'm a living embodiment of what following your passions can do for your life and your career. I think it's important to remember that we are designing, not saving lives, so we should have fun while we work!

Where is this featured project located? Who were the clients, and what were their goals for the project?

This house is in Charlotte. It was built in 1930 and is in one of the oldest and most traditional neighborhoods in Charlotte. He is from the United Kingdom, and she is from New York. We started the project with a blank slate except for a pair of Knoll egg chairs from their New York City apartment.

This living room is a wonderful mix of traditional and modern styles. Explain what details you added to make this combination work so well:

The living room is a blend of modernized, traditional Charlotte with a dash of their New York City roots. We kept the original elements of the room, like the fireplace and the chair rail molding, and blended in their Egg Chairs to help modernize the space and make the room feel a little less formal.

Some areas are mostly neutral with pops of color (like the entry), while other areas feature primarily bold colors. What dictated which would prevail in each area?

The entry is a little more subdued and sophisticated, but as you walk through the house to the more casual areas, it gets more fun and whimsical. You don't want to give away all the excitement as soon as you walk in!

The study is bursting with color. What inspired you to go with green as the primary color for this particular area?

We were set on painting the study a rich color, and blue seemed to be the obvious choice; however, we put some samples on the wall and weren't impressed. The colors were fine, but it wasn't exciting. So we went back to the paint deck and came up with the green—it felt different from the blue and looked great with the furniture they already had, so we just went with it. I'd like to say it was more thought through, but it was really just trial and error until we found what was right.

I'm not sure I've ever met a color, pattern, or texture I didn't like. Almost every one has a place if used in the right way for the right project. I love finding opportunities to use less common or out-of-style elements to force myself to think outside the box.

What inspired the summery color combination in the reading nook?

It is such a tiny space and a big kid zone, so the clients were up for something fun. We selected the wallpaper first and shortly thereafter decided to go big with the yellow paint. It's a happy spot with lots of natural light from the window. I must add that it takes very trusting clients to paint a room bright mustard yellow!

The kitchen lets in a lot of natural lighting. How did that factor into your design decisions?

It gets wonderful afternoon light, and since there is a lot of fun color around the house, we wanted this kitchen to feel a little more crisp and clean. It is usually busy with kids, and the kitchen table is always a gathering place for an arts and crafts activity, so taking that into consideration, it felt right to keep most of the kitchen white and serene.

What was your inspiration for the lighting above the island?

The poppy red lanterns are a fun addition that play off the reds in the banquette and reading nook. I didn't want the light fixtures to get washed out in the room, so the poppy red provides a grounding center point for the space.

The island color also stands out. What made you decide it was perfect for this space?

The island color was meant to ground the space (with the assistance of the poppy lanterns). In an all-white kitchen, I wanted to have a substantial color in the center of the room. Since the banquette has fun colors, too, these play off each other.

This banquette is very comfortable and welcoming. What did you add to this space to enhance it?

We made a new cushion from a sturdy vinyl fabric that could stand up to the day-to-day spills and arts and crafts projects. I wanted it to be comfortable without the upholstered back, so we added lots of throw pillows.

Explain what the juxtaposition of wood and white brings to the banquette:

Mixing materials always creates a more layered look. I loved mixing the soft fabrics of the banquette with the walnut from the table and the cane in the chairs.

If you weren't an interior designer, what would be your career choice?

A horticulturist. I have recently discovered a love for gardening since my husband and I bought our new house several years ago. I am far from having a green thumb, but I've loved learning about our yard and the changes each season brings. I have a small herb-and-vegetable garden that my daughter and I started. It has become a family affair, and the kids love helping me pick the veggies. I've also learned that they are far more likely to eat veggies they grew and picked than something we bought at the store.

From a personal perspective, what would be the most exciting item you could find at a flea market or an antique store?

I love finding vintage linens that are monogrammed with a letter of someone in our family or old silver with an "L" monogram. I also love finding great vintage fabrics or trims at flea markets.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

What spare time? [*laughs*] Any spare time I have outside of work is spent with my kids, Liles and Townes. We love going up to the North Carolina mountains on the weekends. It's one of the few places I am able to truly disconnect from the hustle of everyday life.

If you could describe how you feel about your life overall, at this moment in time, in just one word, what would it be?

Fulfilled. My life is crazy with two kids and a full-time job, but I feel so fortunate that I'm able to get so much joy and fulfillment amid the chaos.

For more info, visit www.charlottelucasdesign.com

IN SEARCH OF WILD MUSTANGS

text mark bedor
photography mark bedor

Getting away from it all and getting back to nature can be an exhilarating, rejuvenating adventure. And nothing delivers this experience quite as well as traveling to wide-open spaces to witness animals in their natural habitat, as writer Mark Bedor discovered during his quest for wild mustangs in the mountains of eastern California.

It is a rare and thrilling sight in the American West. After spending hours on horseback searching for the wild mustangs that live in the high desert along the California-Nevada border, we've hit the jackpot. Zooming in on the dramatic scene with cameras and binoculars, our group of six riders watches in rapt attention as two bands of wild horses do battle.

It's not really violent. But it is fascinating to watch this confrontation play out. The black stallion leading a band of five mustangs charges into a smaller group of four horses attempting to join them.

The stallion follows his charge by aggressively pawing the dirt, turning away, and then quickly pivoting back, rearing, and charging again. The four mares accompanying the stallion join in the attack, charging the small band to push it away. The back and forth goes on for some time. Finally, the rejected group apparently gets the message and gives up, and the two bands of horses drift off in opposite directions. But it's been quite a show.

"This was very unusual," says guide and wrangler Ivana Crone. "I learn something here every day. There's a lot of behavior you don't read in any books. The wild horses teach you."

Ivana could well write a book on her experiences with mustangs. The native of the former country of Czechoslovakia has been leading horseback expeditions to

view the Montgomery Pass wild horse herd for seventeen years. It's a labor of love. "I always feel this certain connection," she says of the mustangs. "It's hard to explain unless you feel it. It's something you have inside."

This outside adventure takes place in the shadow of the towering, snowcapped peaks of the White Mountains, about fifty miles north of Bishop, California. This unspoiled wilderness of sage, piñon pine, meadow, and mountain in the Inyo National Forest is as beautiful as anywhere in the West. But with its freezing winters and scorching summers, few people ever set foot where we've come, a remote area of the Inyo known as the Pizona section. And none of us would be here at all if not for Rock Creek Pack Station.

Rock Creek is among the few Eastern Sierra outfitters to offer guided horseback treks every spring to see the mustangs that roam here. The expeditions give adventurers access to this high desert before the summer heat sets in and the snow melts in the high country of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, just to the west, where the outfitters spend the summer.

But even if you never see a wild horse, this four-day trip is worth it just to be here. "Doesn't get any more wide open!" smiles Ivana, as we break for a sack lunch, pulled from a saddlebag after a long morning's ride.

The country we're riding through is spectacular, vast, unspoiled, and empty. From the ridgeline where we stand, we can see perhaps fifty miles away. Coming from crowded Los Angeles, it's wonderful to know such places still exist. A lonely windmill in an immense high country meadow and an old stagecoach trail we follow are among the few signs of humanity.

Our adventure began at a trailhead corral at the end of a dirt road, near the brown and weathered wooden remains of an old stagecoach station. There we'd met our fellow travelers, the horses or mules we'd ride in the days to come, and our expert guides. The wranglers showed us the way, handling the saddling and other heavy lifting and preparing those hot breakfasts and hearty dinners that always taste so good outdoors.

After swinging into the saddle the first day, we didn't have to wait long to see mustangs. Just after leaving the trailhead for the half-day trek to our remote base camp, we rode to a huge, soggy meadow to visit a herd of perhaps sixty mustangs—a Montgomery Pass subgroup known as the River Springs herd. It included a number of new foals. Those very young horses were a special treat to see, staying close to mom and still nursing. We also got a close-up look at the behavior of wild stallions. "See how that stallion is rounding up his mares?" Ivana asked us, as she pointed to a palomino stud. "He puts his head down, arches his neck, and threatens to bite them on the feet . . . so he rounds them up where he wants them to be."

Our guide told us the entire herd actually follows the lead of an alpha mare. But within the herd, stallions battle each other for dominance, with the prize for the winner being the chance to breed with a closely guarded harem of mares. The losers hang out together in small groups of so-called "bachelor stallions." Either way, many of the stallions bear the noticeable bite marks and other scars from their violent clashes.

This trip to wild horse country is a roughing-it adventure, including sleeping on the ground in tents. But the camp crew does its best to keep things comfortable, even rigging up a hot outdoor shower. They can't do much about the rain, which we saw plenty of, but the timing of those frequent storms was pretty close to perfect. We had downpours at night as we slept, and the rain came down hard while we ate dinner. But a big canopy kept us out of the weather, and a warm fire was always close at hand.

Outdoor cooking in this wilderness has its challenges. "Most of the time it's the weather and the sand," laughed our ace cook, Gene. "We got a lot of weather and not too much sand. But if it dries out and the wind comes up, I stay busy trying to keep the dust down." But there would be no complaining from our hardy group of guests. "I'm loving it!" smiled Andi Duncan, an adventurous sixtysomething woman. "I had a great day riding through the canyon. I'm not great on sleeping outdoors," she admitted. "But it's the price you pay for such a wonderful time." Likewise, Nathan Jagger, here with his horse-loving wife Suzanne, mused, "Understanding horses in their wild environment is very unique. How they survive, what they do . . . We've seen all that on this trip. It's a very unique experience. I like it. I would come do it again in a heartbeat."

Even on a day we didn't see wild horses, evidence of mustangs was everywhere we went. "We actually do see the horses in a different form," Ivana told us. "We see where the stallions mark their territory. And we can see where they were and what they were doing. We can just read their lives by their hoofprints."

We also saw the relics of the "mustangers" who were once free to gather whatever wild horses they could capture, before the animals were protected by a 1971 Act of Congress. Riding through a canyon, we could still see the remains of the trap fence used to corral the horses and the old gate that shut them in.

Then there are the truly mystical petroglyphs left behind by the people who

Just after leaving the trailhead for the half-day trek to our remote base camp, we rode to a huge, soggy meadow to visit a herd of perhaps sixty mustangs—a Montgomery Pass subgroup known as the River Springs herd.

lived here long ago, such as drawings of human figures, hands, and animals carved in the rock. Nearby, Ivana showed us a pair of long poles used by Paiute people to gather pinecone nuts and told us they may date back to the 1800s. Today, they were leaned up against a huge tree, as if their owners would soon be back. "How do we know this is not just a regular piece of wood?" Ivana asked rhetorically. "This is willow. And it had to be carted here at least five miles. That's why we know these are actually real tools."

Along the trail, we came across the scattered bones and sometimes the complete skeletons of the mustangs that had lived and died here. Mountain lions have largely kept the horse population in check, and this natural balance means the US Bureau of Land Management hasn't had to do any mustang roundups and removals here to prevent overgrazing. According to Ivana, this makes the Montgomery Pass herd one of the few truly wild horse herds in the country.

Mustangs have long been a romantic symbol of the beautiful, unspoiled Wild West. And this land where they still roam free probably looks much like it did when the first wild horses laid tracks here hundreds of years ago. The mustangs don't seem to mind visitors who are careful to respect their boundaries. And Rock Creek makes their fascinating world very accessible. The outfitter's well-trained horses and mules are easy even for beginners to ride, the crew takes good care of everyone, and there's always room for one more—not to mention the chance to disconnect from all that noise, stress, and aggravation back in the modern world. It might require stepping out of your comfort zone, but you'll be glad you came. As one wrangler put it, "Life is short. Knowing that, you have to come one time. You have to come and see it."

For more info, visit rockcreekpackstation.com

korean art for a new generation

KRANE HOME

text sharon lee
photography benjamin hoffman

Wallpaper has been used as a design tool for centuries, but it fell out of favor over the past few decades as more people painted their walls. Over the past several years, however, wallpaper has had a renaissance in the design world. Sharon Lee of Krane Home is leading the revival of the medium by adding the ancient beauty of Korean folk art to the iconic wall decoration.

You come from an artistic family. How did they influence your love of art and your eventual career path? How much of your artistic ability do you think was nature versus nurture?

I owe a lot to nature since my grandfather was an artist in Korea and my mother is an accredited painter in Korean folk art, and both of them are very talented. My family really encouraged my artistic abilities from a young age. I have so many memories sketching, drawing, and painting together—mostly farm animals with my grandfather and flowers with my mother.

My mother made sure I was exposed to the best art classes and teachers, both in school and outside of school. I learned to oil paint when I was in fifth grade and once had an art tutor who used to be an old-school Disney animator! When I was accepted to UCLA's art school, my parents and grandfather were so proud that I would continue the family lineage. I guess I was kind of bred to be an artist, actually, which I think is pretty rare!

You grew up in Los Angeles, went to college there, and opened your studio there. Tell us how this influenced your art:

People are not afraid of color in this town, and I love it! Bright, saturated colors look so great in our warm light. It's also just part of the culture here. The fashion, the art, the architecture—Los Angeles is historically the place where everyone is encouraged to take risks and do something new. I recall wearing the wackiest things in high school, and no one thought anything about it (or at least that's what I remember). You can definitely see its influence on my art, textiles, and wallpaper. I love taking risks. A pattern with fifteen-inch tigers all over it? We've got you covered!

You've studied both art and design. Would you consider yourself more art-centric, design-centric, or an even mix between the two?

I don't think there should be a separation between the two. I truly believe one should study fine art and then design. To be a great designer, you have to have the foundation of fine art at some point. Everything—proportion, scale, texture, and colors—relates back to the core principles. Even if you are intending to break the rules, you should know what rules you are breaking to break them well.

You studied under renowned designer Michael S. Smith. What did you learn from him?

I learned so much working at Michael Smith. Since I didn't go to school specifically for textile design, my education started as the sample librarian at the Michael Smith showroom Jasper and grew from there. I eventually became a designer working in his office, so the amount of fabrics, art, and wall coverings I was able to work with was incredible, and I fell completely in love with textiles and wallpaper. I learned what types of fabrics and wallpaper—the scale, color, and texture—are easy for a designer to incorporate into a scheme, and what kinds of statement patterns are successful as an anchor to a room. That's why I design a healthy mix of bold patterns, medium-scale patterns, small-scale patterns, and plain textures for the line. You can choose wallpaper for the whole home from one line. Designers love the ease of that.

What are some of the characteristics of traditional Korean folk art forms? Are you hoping to popularize them for a modern audience through what you do?

Throughout Korean art, most everything portrayed is a stylized representation of its true form, usually taken from nature, folktales, or events surrounding the king and his court. I love that there is always a deeper meaning behind each symbol, and that paintings were used for specific purposes: a wedding, a royal ceremony, or to bring about good fortune. Peonies were

painted on screens for weddings to bring about abundance and wealth to the couple during their marriage. My mother painted a traditional peony screen for our own Korean wedding ceremony at our house! These days, as we all search for authenticity and meaning, I know Korean art really resonates with the current generation.

What's more valuable to you: intricate detail or vivid color?

My art usually has detail and bright colors, so that is a very tough question to answer! Even if a client is requesting a neutral painting, I like to sneak in some pops of color. Contrasting loose brushstrokes and intricate detail is an effective way to draw the eye around a painting, though, so you really have to have both.

You value handcraftsmanship with what you create. What do you think it brings to your work and to your customers?

In our modern world, things are often carelessly mass-produced, so there has been a huge backlash to that and a newfound appreciation for the handmade process. When something is created by the artist's hand, when you know that each square inch of wallpaper was created from an artist's painting and locally hand-printed, you have a whole new reverence for what you buy. When there is an authentic story behind the process, there is love and positive energy you can bring home and have a piece of. The Krane customer is very savvy and loves knowing the whole process, as well as the story behind the work, and is proud to make an investment in something beautiful that is handmade to order for his or her home.

What's the process for creating your wallpaper and fabric designs? How long does it take for you to create one?

I work almost a year out from the launch of new patterns. There is so much that goes into making each pattern. First, the original paintings are created. This involves a lot of sketching and experimentation. To create the main elements, I sketch the forms with pencil onto rubber sheeting, which I carve out by hand in negative and block print onto paper. These are done to full scale—what you see in the fabric and wallpaper is exactly the size of the original blocks. My work is a combination of brush painting and the carving-and block-printing technique. There are a few departures, too. For example, Peony Forest, which was created from an eight-foot brush painting I made using a ladder in my studio, became a fabric sold as a custom-length panel.

> *When something is created by the artist's hand, when you know that each square inch of wallpaper was created from an artist's painting and locally hand-printed, you have a whole new reverence for what you buy.*

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Once the final artwork is done, the imagery is separated by color and burned onto films and silk screens, one for each color in the design. Meanwhile, the color palettes are created in the studio by mixing paint to come up with the perfect shades for the season. Each pattern will have two to four colors in the design, which will all be hand mixed one by one in the workroom for the first strike-offs (or tests). Each colorway of a particular pattern requires several tests to get the colors just right. Sometimes the design needs to be tweaked, and I go back a few phases. The final strike-offs serve as the control samples used to print the final yardage and rolls of fabric and wallpaper, all done in our LA workroom by hand, one color at a time, down forty-yard tables.

What types of tools do you use in your process?

I use lots of different tools in my process since my work is multimedia. They include paintbrushes from Korea, traditional drawing supplies, watercolor brushes, house-painting brushes, gold-leafing brushes, block-printing brayers and palettes, linocut and carving tools, X-ACTO knives, and palette knives. I have the entire art store in my studio! One of my favorite non-art-supply tools is my hair dryer.

How do you go about choosing the themes and colors you create?

My work is inspired by Korean folk art, so I am constantly observing what paintings my mother is working on, as well as using my formal training in the traditional techniques. I also love poring through all my books filled with traditional Korean art, ceramics, objects, furniture, and garb. There is an endless amount of inspiration to be found there. The colors really come from my own vision of what I want my line to be. I want it to be universally appealing, bright, and bold, but in shades that are both interior designer- and client-friendly.

Have you ever experienced self-doubt about your work, or have you always been confident in the work you're doing?

All artists know that for almost every painting or project there are phases the work goes through. Some days I am convinced it's the greatest thing I've ever painted, but as I continue working on it, there comes a point when I question myself or the direction of the piece. So I take a little break, and when I come back to the piece, it comes full circle. Because I'm someone who sees the vision of what the piece will look like before I even begin, I'm usually happy with it in the end.

The crane is in your company name, in your logo, and in some of your artwork. What does this bird symbolize for you?

The crane symbolizes longevity in Korean art. It's a highly auspicious and powerful symbol. I picked it because I wanted to build a company that would be around for generations and is not driven by trends but authentic inspiration rooted in fine art.

You've taught your art at workshops. What do you enjoy about passing on your knowledge and techniques to others?

The beauty of linocut and linoleum-block printing is that it's something even a beginner can create with a simple block. I've never seen a block, even a wonky one, that doesn't create something unique and beautiful. The best part is the print comes out differently each time, creating this gorgeous texture. It's really addicting once you get into it. So I definitely enjoy spreading the love of block printing and seeing the discovery unfold for a beginner.

Your solo work has been featured at various exhibitions. What does this mean to you personally?

My exhibition work is my most emotional and personal. While I am also very passionate about the collaborative process of private commissioned artwork I create for my clients, the work for my shows is created entirely for myself without a client in mind. The colors are usually brighter, and I like to experiment with new techniques. These works sometimes end up in my own home since I have a hard time parting with them—and so does my husband!

In the twenty-first century, some people have a negative reaction to wallpaper. What would you say to them about the beauty of wallpaper and its contemporary style?

Wallpaper has had a true renaissance in the past few years. Because wallpaper is usually more expensive than simply painting a room, it used to be relegated to higher-end homes designed by decorators. When I started my company, however, there was a low hum of wallpaper starting to create mass appeal. Now, I am amazed at how trendy it has become. Just look on Instagram!

These days, everyone wants a piece of the wallpaper craze. Even young renters are papering an accent wall here and there to recreate that designer look they saw on Pinterest. A misconception is that wallpaper devalues a property and is hard to remove. More and more high-end staged homes are using wallpaper to elevate the design and create that warm, homey feeling. Buying a home is an emotionally driven purchase. For the right buyer, designer wallpaper can enhance that overall feeling. There is nothing like wallpaper to completely change the feel of a space and make the most impact.

What does creativity mean to you? What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?

My friends who are lawyers, in marketing, or in PR are always commenting on my art and saying how creative it is. In my opinion, drafting a brilliant legal contract is just as creative as painting, just in another medium. We are all artists! My father is a doctor, and he always said I would have made a great surgeon because I've had this freakish dexterity from a young age. So, if I weren't an artist, I probably would have still been an artist but as a plastic surgeon!

What has been your most satisfying career achievement to date? What do you hope to still achieve in the future?

Surpassing our sales goals this year. As an artist, you tend to forget to celebrate the small achievements since everything builds gradually, so it's nice to look at the numbers and see how far you've come. We are also branding as Krane Home to build a full high-end home decor and lifestyle company. Maybe one day you will see Krane Home brick and mortar!

For more info, visit kranehome.com

Front of Tear Out Card 2

savory **oatmeal**

American Lifestyle magazine

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- 2 c. steel-cut oats
- 7 c. water
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. turbinado sugar
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- Black pepper
- 2 c. prepared seasonal vegetables
- ¼ c. grated hard cheese (optional)

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Back of Tear Out Card 2

savory **oatmeal**

Recipes excerpted from *Breakfast: Recipes to Wake Up For* by George Weld and Evan Hanczor (Rizzoli, 2015).

1. Combine oats, water, salt, and sugar in a medium-sized (3-quart) pot. Bring to a boil, and then turn down to a gentle boil. Cook for about 30–40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the water has been absorbed and the oats are just tender. Add more salt to taste, stir in butter, and crack in a bit of black pepper.

2. Spoon the oats into four shallow bowls, and add vegetables evenly among the bowls. Add grated cheese, if desired. You can really send this dish over the top by adding a sunny-side up or poached egg.

Recommended Seasonal Vegetables:
SPRING: sautéed snap peas, fresh spinach leaves, radish slices (braised or raw), broccoli rabe.

SUMMER: roasted cherry tomatoes, corn (roasted or raw), blanched green beans, sautéed mushrooms, braised small onions.

SERVES 4–6

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