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August 2022

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Bess Freedman

Brown Harris Stevens' CEO: the leader we all need

By Ty Wenzel

Photos courtesy Brown Harris Stevens



CEO is someone who represents an entire corporation in terms of tenor and vision. There is no passing the buck because there's nary a more concrete emblem of a company than the CEO. That is why when controversy happens, we listen to what they have to say, because it is representative of what the company stands for - full stop. Bess Freedman is the guardian of the Brown Harris Stevens core mission.

the health and safety of women in this country. My company, Brown Harris Stevens, joined dozens of other companies people were literally just trying to stay alive. Brown Harris Stevens quickly went remote and conducted business virtually

scratch the surface of what's happening on the ground. The market in Palm Beach is not the market in Hoboken, NJ. There are

years, are there any initiatives or activations that you're working towards?

When the Supreme Court of the United State overturned a woman's right to choose, we saw CEOs of several brokerages come out in protest. Bess Freedman, CEO of Brown Harris Stevens, was one of the first who declared that it is an "egregious reversal of justice" and vowed financial assistance to employees seeking abortions in states that restrict access to the procedure.

She was also just honored by the Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation for her tireless work in women's healthcare. But before joining the real estate sector, Freedman was an Assistant State's Attorney in Montgomery County, Maryland, and worked at Legal Aid as an attorney fighting for the rights of underserved youth in New York City. We caught up with the mother of two on how she has managed her extraordinary life — and we believe she's only just getting started.

Bess, you were just honored by the Waxman Foundation. How have you been involved in women's healthcare and how does it feel to be honored by one of our favorite foundations?

I think the notion of healthcare for women is relatively new and it's important for women to advocate for each other. Women have a host of medical ailments and issues specific to them - reproductive healthcare included. The reversal of Roe V. Wade after 50 years really upset me because I feel it is a direct threat to

around the country offering travel reimbursements for firm members who can no longer access safe and legal comprehensive reproductive healthcare in certain regions. Access to the best possible healthcare is important to me, and that's why this recognition from the Samuel Waxman Foundation is so meaningful. The way to eradicate terrible diseases like cancer is through collaborative research and advocacy.

You are such an inspirational leader in real estate! Your background was in law. Can you explain the pivot from law to real estate?

I was a lawyer for Legal Aid in the juvenile division — and that included a lot of advocacy work. I viewed my position as one of service, and the same can be said for real estate. I originally came into real estate after the birth of my children and realized I needed to find a career with more flexibility — and I quickly found that real estate was a great match. It required a lot of hustle and grit — but you get out of it what you put in. I have worked with people from all walks of life throughout my career journey, and it has served me well when dealing with real estate clients and negotiating, dissecting details and research. There are a lot of parallels between law and brokerage.

You became the CEO in 2018. In a few short years, you had to pivot 50+ offices and 2300+ agents during a global pandemic. It must have been so difficult in the beginning. How did you get through this - what was your methodology for pivoting such an enormous amount of people?

The beginning of the pandemic was tough because of the uncertainty and through countless Zooms and Facetimes with clients.

In June of 2020, Brown Harris Stevens' parent company Terra Holdings restructured and Halstead became part of Brown Harris Stevens. This allowed us to double down on resources and invest in technologies and marketing initiatives we never could before. We more than doubled our agent count and became one of the largest privately held real estate companies in the country. In fact, a third party data firm recently named BHS the fastest growing brokerage in the country — and we achieved this during the pandemic. I realize how fortunate we are because many companies had to close up or sell out. We grew.

How did Brown Harris Stevens do through all of that, numbers-wise?

2020 was tough on everyone in New York City. But our offices in the Hamptons, Palm Beach, and Connecticut did very well. Once people started getting vaccinated, the market roared and 2021 was a complete explosion that exceeded expectations. No one anticipated the pace and prices we would achieve in all of our markets. 2021 was the best year in the nearly 150-year history of Brown Harris Stevens.

How do you see the postpandemic real estate world going now? Is it very region specific? Are you optimistic despite all the doom and gloom of recession talk?

There is already a market slowdown because the frenzy of 2021 was unsustainable. We are coming back to a more normal place, but there are challenges such as higher interest rates and low inventory. Real estate is always region-specific. All of these national indicators don't really

differences in supply type, price, lifestyle, inventory — the list goes on. That's why it's important to work with a knowledgeable broker with local connections. I am optimistic that we will get through this time because we have weathered down cvcles before.

You named Juneteenth a company-wide holiday long before the federal government did. You also made election day a paid day off. You have also fought for LGBTQ+ rights. Where do you get your fighting spirit from?

I have fought for social justice my entire life. My Legal Aid career was eye-opening. There are so many people who fall victim to a system that wasn't designed to protect them in the first place. I will always be vocal when it comes to common sense gun laws and children, reproductive rights, and social justice. We all deserve to feel valued and heard.

What is the difference between a public and privately held massive company in terms of leadership?

Public companies answer to investors with diverse interests. Private companies answer to their immediate stakeholders and in the case of Brown Harris Stevens this means our agents. BHS is not under the pressure to grow for the sake of showing scale. Everything we do is with purpose and when we make mistakes - which we do - we own them and pivot. BHS is not a pit stop for agents; we are a company that fosters long term growth and the best executive management team in the business. We are a real estate company and we do it better than anyone else.

What do you hope for BHS to accomplish in the coming

We just launched our Mastery of the Craft campaign which is Brown Harris Stevens's first major advertising and branding initiative in quite some time. BHS has a longstanding reputation as being this old school firm but that could not be further from the truth. We are incredibly forward-thinking in terms of our culture and our values and we wanted to communicate that in our marketing. We recently opened a new office space in Rhinebeck and we launched a TikTok channel in May which has seen incredible growth. We even borrowed some tips from Duke University and USC and are now offering TikTok workshops for our agents. It's a lot of fun — but also crucial to any agent's personal branding.

What does a powerhouse like yourself do for fun when they're not working?

I play mahjong with my girlfriends — we call ourselves the Mahjong Mavens. In fact, we are going to Vegas in October for a tournament.

I also always make time to be with my family. To me, that is the heart of life... family. I go to Rhinebeck as much as possible and hang out with my Mom... the Queen of my life and my brothers. And I am becoming much better at being in the moment and enjoying the absolute simplest things in life. I also travel to southern Spain in the summer and visit my huge extended family. We eat, sing, and act looney. It is freedom from everything. I would describe bliss as being at the Chiniguito (little beach bar/restaurant) with everyone, drinking cold Cruz Campo (best beer in the world) and eating fresh fish. It is a recharge like no other.

To learn more about Bess Freedman, visit bhsusa.com/about-bess-freedman.



Mary Slattery

A presence in local real estate and a dedication to the Hamptons community

By Ty Wenzel

they are ready to sell. Especially with the pandemic where we saw a lot of flash and cash in the Hamptons. A friend of mine says I actually talk people OUT of selling their homes. And that is true. It is really challenging to buy in this market with such low inventory. Many sellers will never replicate what they already have. When sellers are ready, I am all in.

What about buyers?

Buyers need to breathe, practice patience, and be totally ready to move if they find something they love. Buyers need to be REALLY ready to move. We are experiencing so many multiple bidding situations and unless a buyer has all their ducks in a row, they lose out. Buyer fatigue is real. Broker fatigue is real. In some cases, I have

tional Film Festival. I support as many arts organizations as I can. I love the Southampton Arts Center and the Peter Marino Foundation as well as the Sag Harbor Cinema. There is so much to see and do. I also adore the farmlands. I grew up in the Midwest and nothing makes my heart sing more than driving through the Sagaponack farm fields or driving south on Deerfield Road and seeing the horses grazing. Oddly, I am not as much of a beach person as I am a farm person. And I count the minutes until all of our local farm stands open up. I shop local as much as I can fruits, vegetables, flowers. As a matter of fact, I have a lot of what I call "secret spots" to buy flowers. Secret because I do not want everyone to know about them.

Why did you choose Corco-

ary Slattery, a veteran broker at The Corcoran Group, looks so familiar. Was it _ from a television program, an open house ... perhaps a gala fundraiser? The answer is probably all three. Slattery is a name in Hamptons real estate that has come up as a person to go to for integrity and hard work. She is involved in a lot of philanthropies but in her daily work, she is a partner to her clients and customers. The kind of attention she requires for her work takes a lot of dedication and authentic care. We wanted to learn more about her methodology as an associate broker and how she went from actress in New York City to power broker in the Hamptons.

Mary, in Hamptons real estate your name comes up regularly as someone who is very hard-working and that knows the region deeply. What would you say is your super-power as a broker?

Wow! That is really gratifying to hear. I would say that my super powers are tenacity and patience. I totally get that the Hamptons is primarily a second and third home market so the urgency to buy or sell is just not always there. Of course, the pandemic changed that for a couple of years which was an absolute frenzy. One of my strengths is in understanding the process that goes into home buying or selling. It takes "stick-to-itiveness" and time - more time than we really expect. I stay focused on the process. Nothing gives me greater joy than matching the home to the people. I have buyer and seller relationships that I have honed over years well before a purchase or sale ever happens.

You recently sold the Terry Cottage, the iconic restored cottage that is part of the The Village Latch Southampton development plan

for \$6.45M. Can you explain result of getting through it? what the The Latch is for our readers?

The Terry Cottage was originally the 19th century Irving Hotel and was adjacent to The Village Latch Inn. The Terry Cottage and the original main building of The Village Latch Inn (the two prominent white buildings on the site) are reputed to have been designed by famed architect Stanford White who was the architect of the neighboring Whitefields. Beechwood Homes acquired the entire Village Latch property in 2016 and worked closely with the Village of Southampton to bring new life to The Village Latch compound. Both the Terry Cottage and the main Village Latch building are historic so the process for the developers was detailed and painstaking. The end result is a stunning preservation and reimaging of two prominent Southampton Village buildings as well as the addition of new condo townhomes that Beechwood Homes is known for developing. I love historic buildings and have listed others in Southampton Village.

Would you say that you're a Southampton specialist?

Every broker has an area or areas in which they feel particularly comfortable. Mine would be Southampton Village, Southampton, and Water Mill, where I have been a resident at various points over the 25 years I have lived in the Hamptons. Truthfully, I have listed and sold from Westhampton to Amagansett, as I have had buyers and sellers for those areas. But Southampton Village is my home and I feel that I know it the most intimately. I also love Quogue Village ... it is a step back in time.

We imagine it was pretty chaotic during the pandemic ... what did you learn through that chaos and how do you think you grew as a

What a great question. The pandemic was beyond chaotic to say the least. The frenzy at which all agents were working was unlike anything I have seen since being licensed in 2006. The shutdown from end of March 2020 to end of June 2020 was a gift for several reasons. I walked 5 to 6 miles per day and fell in love with the Hamptons all over again. I knew that the shutdown was not going to last forever so I took full advantage of the down time which I had not had for years. I caught up on reading and really upped my mediation practice. I definitely benefitted from the time off and was fully prepared for the onslaught of buyers and sellers that came after that. I also found myself really talking to people. Not texting. Talking. I have carried the practice of reaching out to people by phone into my post-pandemic life. Even for just a hello or a quick check-in. The pandemic was so isolating. It reminded me of the power of direct communication.

Is there a property you are particularly proud of selling for your client?

I think the Terry Cottage at The Latch ranks right up there as well as 104 Post Crossing in Southampton Village which I sold twice. 104 Post Crossing is one of the first homes I listed as a new agent. It found its way to me three times as listing agent. Twice for one owner and once for the owner who renovated the Queen Anne Victorian. Each home has a personality and I really do develop a relationship not only with the seller but with the home. My business has always been built on relationships. It just occurred to me that the relationship extends to the home. A new insight.

What advice would you give sellers right now?

I encourage sellers to be very, very sure that

encouraged buyers to wait a bit to let more inventory come on the market.

How do you think the market will play out for the remainder of 2022 with the rising interest rates? Does that kind of news affect our markets and how?

Even though I meditate, I do not have a crystal ball. There does seem to be a slowdown in the market. But we also have way less inventory. Interest rates will definitely affect certain segments of our market but not all. Sellers are hard pressed to accept financing contingencies so the risk is all on the buyers. I am hopeful that we are in what I like to call a "leveling out" rather than a down market. Just as the pandemic leveled us all out so too can a very challenging market.

You worked as an actress in New York and then as a producer in television. How did you find yourself on the East End as a broker?

That is a very long story (laughs). But in 1997 after renting here in the summers for a few seasons, we bought our first beach shack, which I called The Dump. In 2000, we decided to make the Hamptons our primary home. I had lived in Manhattan at that point for 22 years. I never ever thought I would adjust to the laid back lifestyle here. But much to my chagrin, I did and now I cannot imagine calling any other place else my home. The Hamptons embraced me and I feel really blessed to be here.

What is it about the East End that you love so much? You must love all the arts and entertainment here.

I do love the arts and entertainment here. I always attend the Hamptons Interna-

ran as your brokerage?

I started my career in real estate in spring 2006 at Allan M. Schneider & Associates which was purchased by The Corcoran Group in August of 2006. Corcoran is a very strong partner for me in my business. Over the years, I have developed terrific relationships with my Corcoran colleagues and my management teams both in the Hamptons and in New York City. I have had a few really challenging life events since 2006 and the support I have received at Corcoran is extraordinary. I think I am perceived as a "company" person. If that means that my firm and I value each other, then it fits. Corcoran is very responsive to my needs and I feel valued. I also love that my firm was founded by a woman (Barbara Corcoran) and has not only a woman CEO (Pamela Liebman) but many, many women in management positions. Too many to name actually.

You're involved in several philanthropic endeavors. Can you tell us about some of the ones that you've relationships with?

I am very active in several East End organizations. Southampton Arts Center, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton History Museum, Have a Heart Community Trust, The Ellen Hermanson Breast Center and Foundation, Gimme Shelter Animal Rescue, and most importantly, I am East End Co-Chair of Corcoran Cares which raises funds through employees and agents of Corcoran to support small local charities. I believe strongly in giving back to my community. It was how I was raised so in honor of my parents I give back as much as I can.

What do you do in your leisure time?

Ha! What is leisure time? When I figure that out, I will let you know.



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East Bay Builders

A legacy persisted by **Jim Naples**

smaller projects.

Do you work with specific architects or do you design the home in-house?

I work with various architects. It's best when I have the opportunity to input my ideas and advice at the very onset of the project for pricing, etc. I strongly recommend that.

Is green technology a part of the build or reno?

Almost everyone is concerned about energy and conservation.



rom a Brooklyn childhood to helping out his beloved dad in the 50s to catching the builderbug, Jim Naples began East Bay Builders as a small remodeling company that grew exponentially throughout the years. With craftsmanship a priority and reliability the standard, he has earned the trust of his clients and tradesman alike. We caught up with Naples to learn more about how he came to be one of the most recognizable builders and contractors in Long Island for over four decades.

Jim, you're a legend in these parts — you've been building homes on Long Island for 42 years!

My family has been in the commercial construction industry since after WW2 when my dad returned he started work as a carpenter at Todd's yard in Brooklyn. I worked summers during school in the commercial trades, mostly store fixtures and supermarkets. That was a great training ground for me. After school, I joined the carpenters union, got married, and started raising a family! My fatherin-law was a contractor in the Hamptons in the '50s and '60s and early '70s. I worked with him on some great homes and caught the fever. I left the union, got my contractors license. I started out small, myself and a carpenter friend, worked hard, learned a lot.

How would you define the homes you build in terms of their style?

I've seen styles change over the years from

the contemporary '70s-'80s to the very traditional shingle style to the present modern trends. Where modern seems to have a special interest, traditional is still very desired and I think it always will be.

What projects are you working on currently?

We are currently working on renovations in Sag Harbor, Southold, and Riverhead. The Southold project is composed of additions to the current residence with very interesting and challenging components; pool house, pergola, screen room, with

outdoor kitchens with pizza oven included and great architectural details to accommodate them. The Sag Harbor residence is an older home with a total gut and redo with new designed roof and interior layout with a finished basement. The Riverhead project we removed the entire roof, added a complete second story with a suite, two additional bedrooms and bathroom, office, and laundry. The new roof design added great lines and design elements to tie in perfectly with the existing lower level. We added an elevator to this home for three levels since there is a finished basement.

Do you ever spec build or is it completely design/build?

Mostly design/build.

What services do you offer?

Most of our work lately is renovations, some pretty large. We do custom design builds when the opportunity arrives. We also do maintenance when called upon. I have learned never to shy away from

We saw a lot of new requirements of builders during the pandemic. What are some specifications people require?

Outdoor living: decks, patios, pools, screen rooms have definitely been popular. With people working from home, offices are very popular including necessary wifi devices and network needs. Home theaters are and have been on wish lists.

In what ways are you evolving as a Hamptons builder?

The way we do business has changed. Material supply chain is a strong concern. Windows and doors have extremely long lead times. Availability of bathroom fixtures and some appliances also are not the same. We have had to change the way we order materials to accommodate these lead times which have a huge effect on job scheduling and at the same time be in tight communications with our suppliers with the need to confirm every order and dates placed. We have revised the way we offer construction contracts to our clients. Allowing the client to see actual material, labor, and subcontractor costs.

When you're not building luxury homes, what do you do for fun?

My wife of 47 years and I are blessed with a large family, five adult children, and eleven grandchildren! We live in a beautiful waterfront home which is paradise to us. We both love boating and fishing and our gardens and spending time together is what we call fun.

To learn more about East Bay Builders, visit www.eastbaybuildersinc.com.





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Mastery of the Craft



Studio 189

Rosario Dawson & Abrima Erwiah join Bloomingdale's at The Surf Lodge



n July 3, Studio 189 cofounders Rosario Dawson and Abrima Erwiah joined Bloomingdale's at The Surf Lodge to celebrate "AKUA", a new limited-edition collection developed in partnership with AQUA, the leading retailer's best-selling exclusive brand, and Studio 189, the artisan-produced fashion luxury lifestyle brand.

The invite-only celebration was attended by friends of Bloomingdale's, Studio 189, and The Surf Lodge, who enjoyed the first look at the new womenswear collection over a festive cocktail reception, intimate private dinner, and special musical performance by AMÉMÉ.

Said Abrima Erwiah, Studio 189 cofounder, "By partnering with AQUA on this collection, we're able to celebrate the work of our artisans on a whole new level. The special hand-batiked prints that were created exclusively for this collaboration resulted in Studio 189's largest single fabric order to date, which grants us the opportunity to present the craftsmanship of our artisans to a broader audience. It's an accessible collection that embraces joy with vibrant and tropical designs fitting for the summer season."

The event honored the new collaboration between AQUA and Studio 189, which debuted as the featured summer capsule collection at The Surf Lodge boutique for the 4th of July holiday weekend and which is now available for purchase nationwide at Bloomingdale's stores and at Bloomingdales.com.







cocktail party at Onda Beauty

n July 15, at Onda Beauty from Francisco Costa. in Sag Harbor, Francisco Costa, Zane Phillips, Andrew Baraghani, Nick Barrotta, Bobbi Brown, and more attended Mostly Men, a celebration of Costa Brazil, the clean beauty line

Costa Brazil and Onda Beauty have been at the forefront of the clean beauty trend with products made with social responsibility, natural ingredients, and inclusive from the jump — it seemed only "natural" to join forces and celebrate.



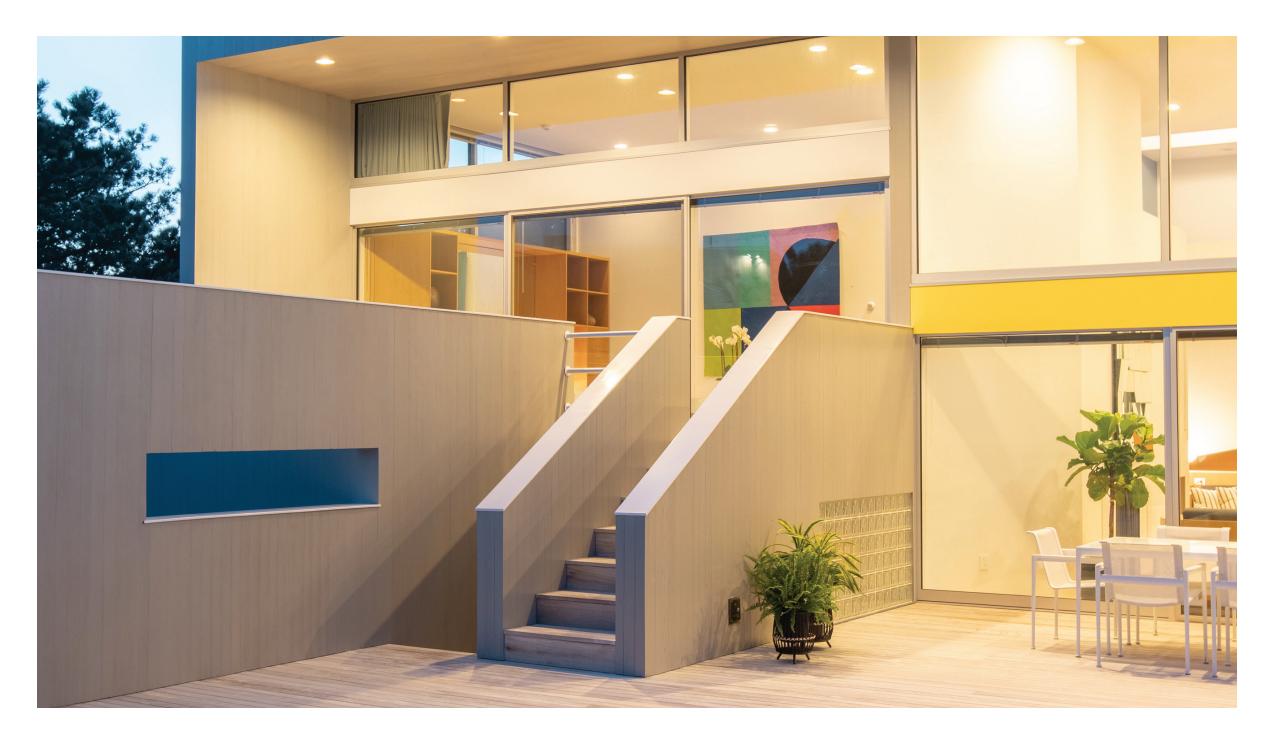












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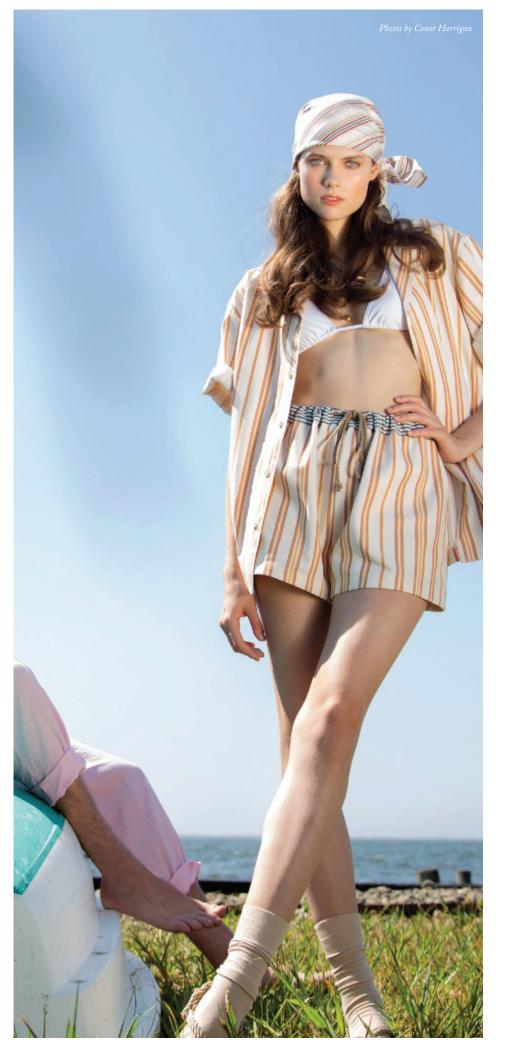
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thesalting

LUMBER+Salt hosts brand for summer residency



new retail experience has launched on the North Fork. LUMBER+Salt is hosting thesalting for a summer residency through Labor Day.

The shop features a raw and refined mix of quiet luxury, featuring unisex clothing, that's made in America. The shop also of-

fers a selection of art and antiques, handcrafted jewelry, local ceramists, pantry goods, and items for home and garden.

"thesalting was conceived out of a shared bonding experience. We were craving newness, both as customers and creatives," reads the website statement from founders Michael Ward and Michael Smaldone.

Named after a salting, a coastal piece of land that gets flooded with sea water, the collection is created by Ward and Smaldone, New York fashion industry veterans.

The shop is located at the barn at 1291 main road in Jamesport.

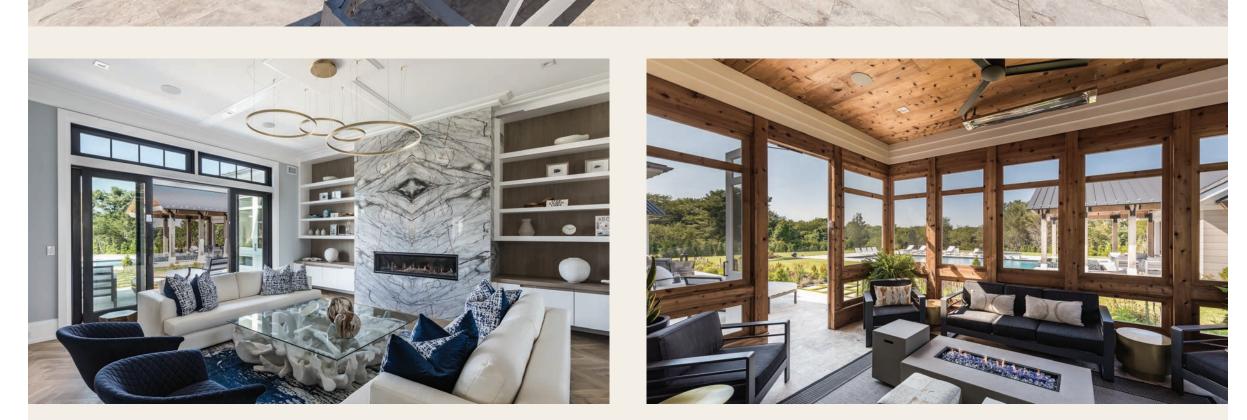


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The Parrish Art Museum Midsummer Dance and Dinner was held at the museum. Above, Oscar Nñ of Papi Juice. Photo by Madison McGaw/BFA.com



House in Bridgehampton to help raise funds for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF) and the Ellen



A preview cocktail party for the Centennial edition of the East Hampton Antiques & Design Show was held at Mulford Farm. Above, Jonathan Adler and Simon Doonan. Photo by Rossa Cole



Torch'd with celebrity trainer Isaac Boots was held at the Southampton Arts Center in collaboration with Milk. Photo by Barbara Lassen, Barbara Lynne Photograph



An intimate dinner party celebrating the launch of designer Alexandre Birman for Luxury Stores at Amazon was held at LongHouse Reserve in East Hampton. Photo by Madison McGaw/BFA.com



The Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation's 18th Annual Hamptons Happening was held at the Bridgehampton estate of Kenneth and Maria Fishel. Above, Cristian Notari, Mark Melchiorre, Bess Freedman, Dr. Samuel Waxman, Julian Medina, and Bill Sullivan. Photo by Jared Siskin/PMC



a hosted an intimate camp-themed evening at Gurney's Montauk. Photo by Sophie Sahara 818 Ta



HamptonsFilm SummerDocs screening of "Navalny" was held in East Hampton. Photo by Jessica Dalene





The Southampton Animal Shelter Foundation's 13th Annual Unconditional Love Gala was held in Southampton. Above, Jean Shafiroff, Bill Bratton, Rikki Klieman, Johnathan McCann. Photo by Rob Rich/societyallure.com



A summer lunch hosted by Anjali Patel Mehta and Joey Wölffer to celebrate Verandah's High Summer 2022 Collection was held at The Wine Stand at Wölffer Estate Vineyard. Photo by David Benthal/ BFA



Amy Schumer took the stage at The Clubhouse in East Hampton. The event benefitted The Retreat. Photo by Rob Rich/societyallure.com

"Cocktails for a Cause," the Hampton Social: Thomas Ashbourne Event with FreshDirect was held at Southampton Social Club with special guest Vanessa Hudgens. Photo by Eugene Gologursky/Getty Images for FreshDirect



The Hetrick-Martin Institute held its annual School's Out benefit cocktail party and dinner at the Arc House in East Hampton. Above, Timo Weiland. Photo by Jill Carson









The Lanby and Sollis Health hosted a summer wellness cocktail event at a private home in Water Mill. Photo by Jackie Lee/BFA



The official ribbon cutting ceremony and opening of The Pridwin Hotel on Shelter Island was held. Photo by Eleanore P. Labrozzi





East End Hospice held its annual "A Night Under The Stars" benefit in Quogue. Photo by Barbara Lassen, Barbara Lynne Photography



Beatnic (formerly by CHLOE.) and the Montauk Beach House celebrated the launch of their co-branded vegan menu. Photo by M. Sagliocco for Rob Rich/SocietyAllure.com



Jill Zarin's Luxury Luncheon by Ticket2Events returned to the Hamptons to benefit the Bobby Zarin Memorial Trust. Above, Ally Shapiro and Jill Zarin. Photo by Rob Rich/societyallure.com



American Humane held a "Loving Animals" salon dinner in Water Mill at Calissa. Above, Jean Shafiroff and Dr. Robin Ganzert. Photo by Annie Watt

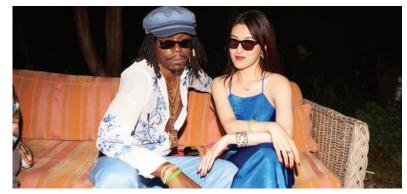
The Wainscott Heritage Project invited the community to a "Gathering in the Garden" at the Thomas Strong House on Wainscott Hollow Road. Above, Julie and Jon Stoner, Pam and Michael Mahoney, Carolyn Logan, Tom House, Bruce-Wayne Solomon, Esperanza León. Photo by Richard Lewin



Rick Friedman, Cindy Lou Wakefield, and Vincent Vallarino at the annual Hamptons Fine Art Fair at Southampton Fairgrounds. Photo by Lisa Tamburini



Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons held its 14th Annual GET WILD Benefit. Above, Jane Brickell, Chuck and Ellen Scarborough. Photo by Lisa Tamburini



 $\textit{East Hampton's LongHouse Reserve celebrated its community of artists - past, present, and future - at its$ annual Summer Benefit, titled ONWARD. Above, David "Mr. Starcity" White and Duo Lin. Photo by Patrick McMullan

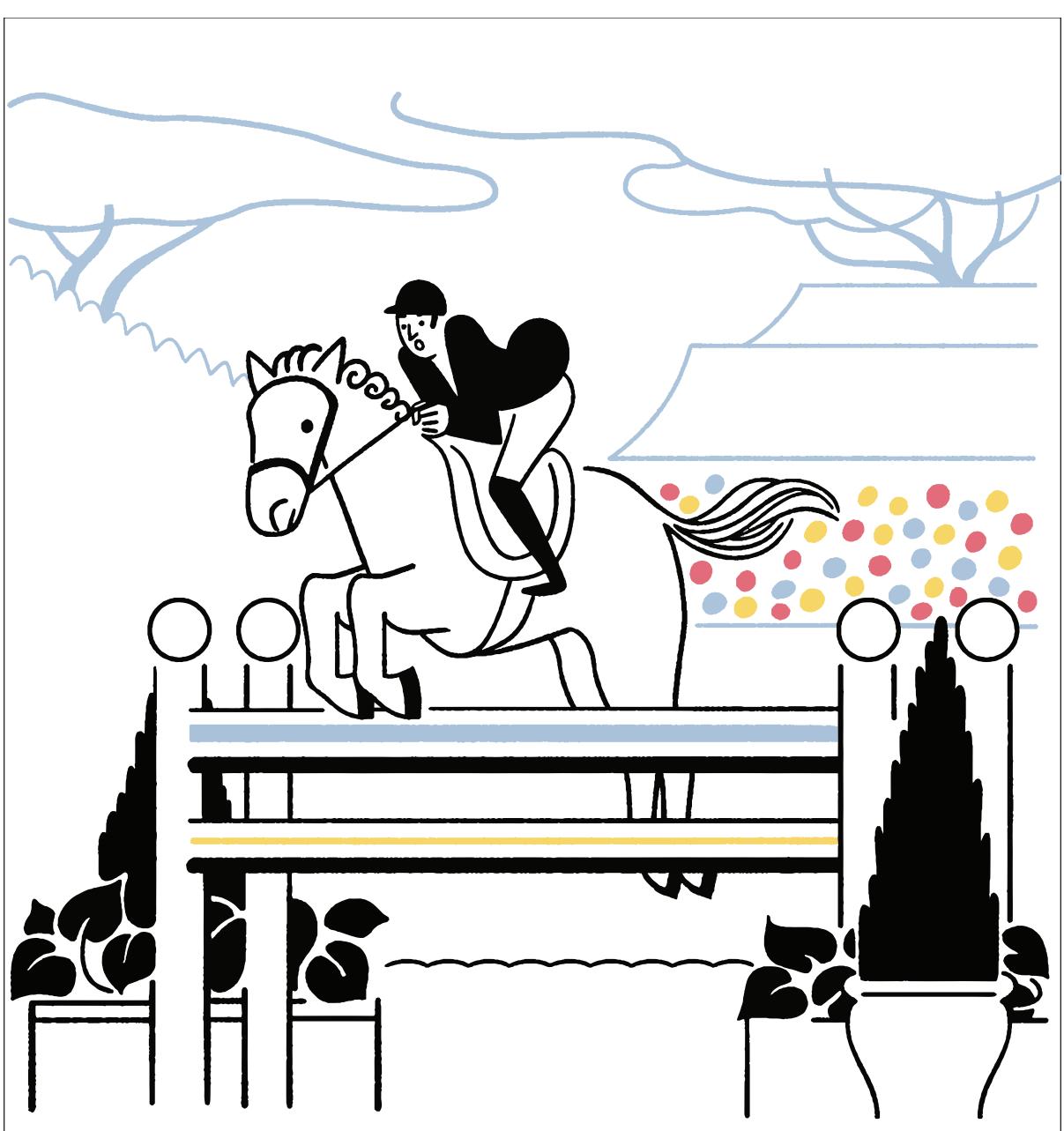


Fyli's Illuminating Your Purpose VIP Dinner in partnership with UBS was held in Southampton. Above, Jaclynn Brennan and Catherine Sypert. Photo by Lancine Janneh/BFA



The Southampton Fresh Air Home held its 35th Annual American Picnic with fireworks by Grucci. Photo by Rob Rich/societyallure.com





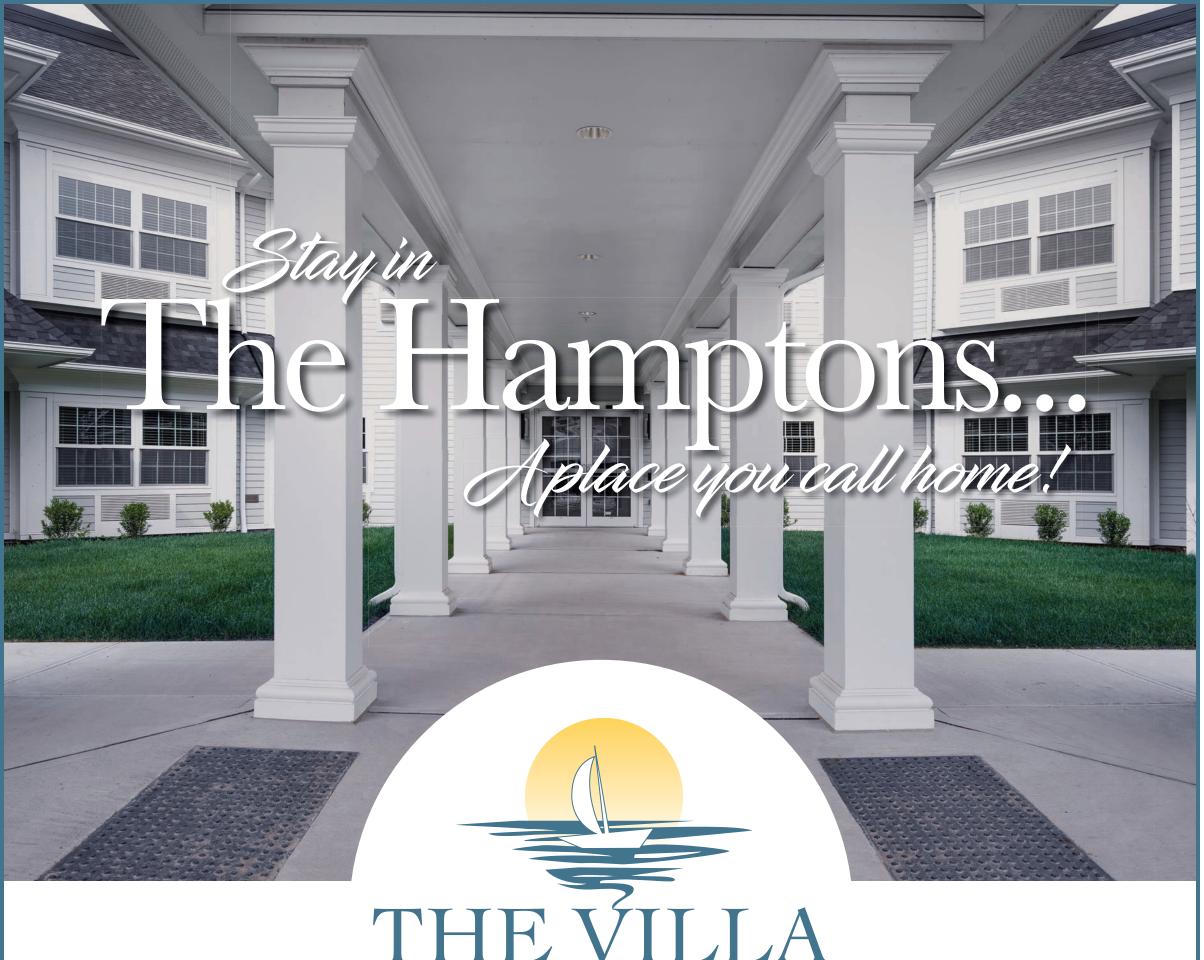


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