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APRIL 2021

Sip a Limca with this butter chicken pie from Pizza 360 in Ashburn.



66 Hidden Foodie Gems

Eat around the world without leaving Northern Virginia. This spring, let your palate play by trying a meal that's new to you.

BY ALICE LEVITT

42 Best Plastic Surgeons

If the age of Zoom has taught us anything, it's that being camera-ready isn't only for celebrities anymore. Luckily, there are many talented local doctors who can help you look and feel your best in this year's list of Top Plastic Surgeons.

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This guitarist has a laundry list of famous musicians he's performed with, but the most successful musician in NoVA history may also be the least known.

BY BUZZ MCCLAIN

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The towns of NoVA have turned out some pretty sophisticated celebrities. From Dave Grohl to Sandra Bullock, these 12 actors, rockers and sitcom stars could have been your neighbors if you grew up here.

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114 Virginia's Own Tiger King?

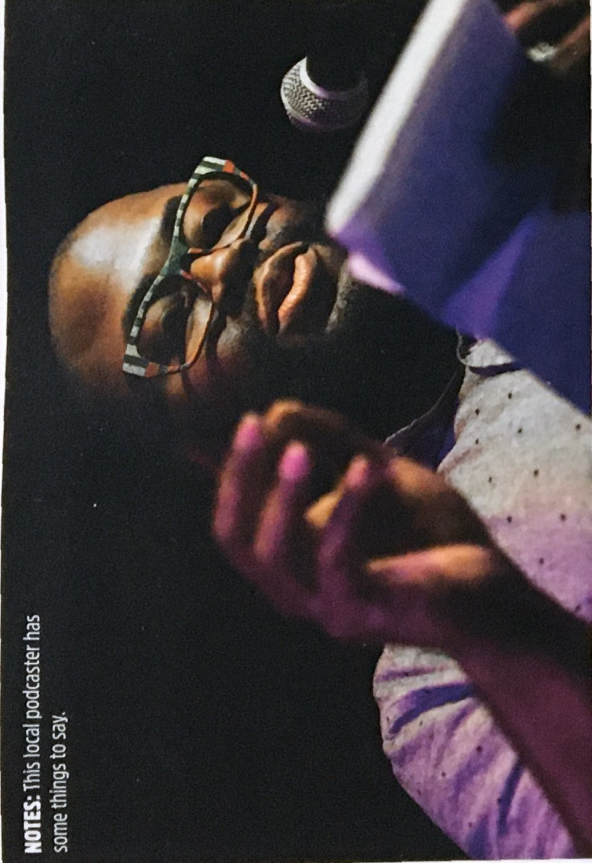
Keith Wilson's Winchester zoo was raided in August 2019, long before Joe Exotic became the country's latest reality show obsession. This summer, Wilson will face a Virginia jury. This is his story.

BY DAVID HODES

On the Cover

Shake-O-Saurus milkshake from The Battlefield Country Store in Fredericksburg. Photo by Rey Lopez; Illustration by Vivian Uang

NOTES: This local podcaster has some things to say.



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Home & Design

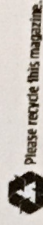
Get ready for spring gardening with these fun finds; After struggling with wallpaper at their Fairfax City home, this couple launched their own home decor company; See how an interior designer merged this couple's divergent styles to create a luxe home.

HOME & DESIGN: See who designed this eco-friendly wallpaper.



160 SuperNOVA

A look at the people and places that make Northern Virginia shine



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Ronald Young Jr.

Ronald Young Jr. has always been fascinated with audio production. As a kid, he and his sister would record morning announcements on their tape recorder, and he earned his radio chops during an internship at Hot 99.5. A longtime fan of NPR's *This American Life*, Young eventually became interested in podcasts. He launched a laid-back chitchatty web show in 2016 called *10 Minutes with Ronald*; when the format organically grew in length and depth, it evolved into his first podcast, the aptly dubbed *Time Well Spent*, followed by a second focusing on his film reviews. His most recent project, out now, was producing *Seizing Freedom* with Virginia Public Media, a 16-episode podcast using archival firsthand accounts and experts in African American history to create reenactments of Black Americans navigating their new lives after the Emancipation Proclamation. Here, the Alexandria resident shares why podcasts are an important storytelling device and what's next.

WHY ARE THE STORIES IN SEIZING FREEDOM SO IMPORTANT?

People assume that the day after Emancipation Proclamation, the slaves were free and that was that. That's not the case. *Seizing Freedom* presents history from the perspective of folks who were there and were living it: what they went through to get to a place where they could make a living, how they reclaimed their families, how they started school and worship—all the things we don't think about. It's important to remember so we can reflect that on Jan. 6, 2021, there was a Confederate flag at the Capitol and recognize the significance of the palpable anger of whites who don't want to see things change or feel things have changed enough. This pushes back on that.

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING AND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT MAKING PODCASTS?

I love finishing an episode, knowing that it exists and that whether or not people loved it or hated it, they listened to it and have an opinion. What can be challenging are people who don't understand the medium or what I do, or who can't see this as a serious profession or one that's profitable or sustainable.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I want to continue making great episodes and grow my listenership, and by the end of 2021, I hope to be hosting a national show—I have some irons in the fire but am waiting for something definite. In five years, I really want to be the Ryan Seacrest of podcasts, with my hands in multiple pots, hosting, producing my own stuff and partnering with others, being a high-level tastemaker of audio and podcasts. I'm an optimist, and I'm persistent, and today I definitely see a path to getting there. Oh, and I would love the opportunity to have The Rock, Denzel Washington and Barack Obama (in that order) tell their incredible stories as a guest on one of my shows. —KELLY MAGYARICS



A STYLISH LIFE

Insider's Guide

NOVA notables share their fashion-forward advice on how to lead a stylish life.

Shine

On

"My 18-karat gold and diamond solitaire necklace is a timeless and classic piece. It elevates my look and my mood and inspires me to sparkle a little brighter."

Date Night

"Angelika Film Center at Mosaic District is always a fun time. I adore the indie vibe and the tasty bites its cafe has to offer."

Bon

Appétit!

"The intimate setting and traditional French cuisine of L'Auberge Chez François in Great Falls always hits the right note for me."

Style Philosophy

"Simple is sexy. To keep it understated makes it less about the brand or the garment, and more about the magnetic woman who is wearing it."



About Face

"I use my Exfoliase The Crystals Sapphire Scrub for daily exfoliation. It's amazing how this crystal polish in the palm of your hands just gives you this ability to glow instantly!"

Forever Young

"I can't live without my encapsulated retinol serum. Resurfacing is the key to healthy skin and timeless beauty."



Best Dressed

"This red Baker dress is a favorite in my closet because of its versatility. I can easily wear it in a professional setting or dress it up with accessories for a night out. The French are all about simplicity!"



Blue Period

"I love shopping local, and Periwinkle in Alexandria has such unique finds. The owner curates pieces from both emerging and well-known designers."

Siren Call

"I was always in search of a true red that didn't have an orange or a pink undertone. NYX's Perfect Red is just perfect and goes on like butter. Hard to believe it was a drugstore find!"



City Break

"The Salamander Resort, for a luxurious countryside escape, is just about an hour outside of the city. You can't beat the tranquility."



Style Superstar

Yene Damtew is the woman behind many of Michelle Obama's most famous good hair days, including her buzzed-about look on Inauguration Day 2021 (opposite page).



BEAUTY BUZZ

Lock Star

Arlington-based Yene Damtew is the woman behind some of Michelle Obama's most famous hair moments—and she's also an increasingly influential voice in the beauty industry.

BY KATIE BIANCO

WHEN FORMER FIRST LADY MICHELLE Obama walked down the stairs of the Capitol to take her seat at Joe Biden's inauguration ceremony on Jan. 20, her hair set Twitter abuzz. The side-swooped bangs and bouncy curls launched a thousand fire emojis and had everyone asking: Who did her hair?

The answer? Yene Damtew, an Arlington-based hairstylist and owner of Aesthetics Salon. And while Mrs. Obama has been a client since 2009, Damtew is quickly emerging as an influential voice in the beauty industry, known for more than styling the locks of one of the most famous women in the world.

Damtew first arrived in Northern Virginia back

in 2009. She relocated from her hometown in Orange County, California, when her then-mentor and former Obama hairstylist, Johnny Wright, moved here to work with the first family. (Damtew notes she had visited family in NoVA as child, so moving here—not DC—was a decision that made her feel “at home.”) Since her arrival on the East Coast, Damtew has been behind some of Mrs. Obama’s most well-known looks, including the cover of her *Becoming* autobiography, the 2018 covers of both *Elle* and *Essence* magazines and, of course, her most recent inauguration appearance.

As a woman of color who grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood in Orange County, Damtew says her passion for hair started at a very young age.

“My aunt recently sent me a video of me—I couldn’t have been more than 2 or 3 years old—playing with a doll’s hair. I’ve always had a fixation with hair,” she recalls. She remembers watching her mother put hot rollers in her hair on Sundays before church, putting a shower cap over them and then emerging from the shower with “beautiful, bouncy curls.”

“I remember thinking, ‘What is going on here?’” of how her mother got her hair to transform like that.

By sixth grade, Damtew was experimenting with her own hair—and realizing there were differences in her hair compared to her white friends. “I was the only Black girl on the cheer squad, and I remember when we were talking about how we would all wear our hair, noticing my hair couldn’t do that,” she says of some of the suggested styles.

She enrolled in cosmetology school at 16, later met Wright through a connection with her brother and opened her first salon in Arlington in 2017. She opened a larger salon on the same street in November 2020 amid the ongoing pandemic.

“I opened Aesthetics because I wanted to change the narrative of the typical salon experience, especially for women of color. My goal is to change the relationship that the beauty industry has with itself and the divisiveness that takes place ... my hope is to create an inclusive community where [beauty professionals] learn everything about hair.”

Damtew notes that her salon serves and employs women of all races, which is an important part of bringing unity to the salon experience. “As a woman of color, [I’ve had] people doubt if I’m able to do white hair. But I

know hair, and hair is texture. Texture isn’t race.”

Another way she has worked to change the narrative around race in the beauty industry was by launching the Brown Beauty Summit in May 2020. Damtew organized a half-day virtual seminar to bring together more than 2,000 beauty professionals to discuss the future of the beauty indus-



try. Panelists included beauty powerhouses like Sir John, who is Beyoncé’s makeup artist; Nakia Collins, Beyoncé’s hairstylist; and celebrity stylist Felicia Leatherwood, whose clients include Lenny Kravitz. As of press time, the second iteration of the Brown Beauty Summit was tentatively scheduled for this May.

Damtew is certainly becoming an influential voice in the beauty industry—and she’s doing it while also traveling the world with Mrs. Obama. Pre-pandemic, she traveled for six months with the former first lady to over 20 destinations on her international book tour. And that living example of success is perhaps her best advice for other would-be entrepreneurs.

“You have to believe in yourself,” she says when asked to share her best entrepreneurial advice. “When I started on my journey, no one really thought that being a hairstylist could take you anywhere and everywhere in the world. I hope that my life is a testament that you can do whatever you want, you can go wherever you want, as long as you are persistent and you continue to push through.” // *Aesthetics Salon: 2444 26th Road S., Arlington; yenedamtew.com*



MAKER'S MOMENT

Body Electric

Abrams Wearable brings sculptural jewelry to the human form.

BY KRISTEN SCHOTT

NATALIE ABRAMS' WEARABLE SCULPTURES EXIST in a state of contradiction. The abstract pieces are fierce to the eye but pliable to the touch. They float above your neck or wrist, creating a suspension between soft skin and twisting filaments. And they move with you, like outward perceptions of internal power.

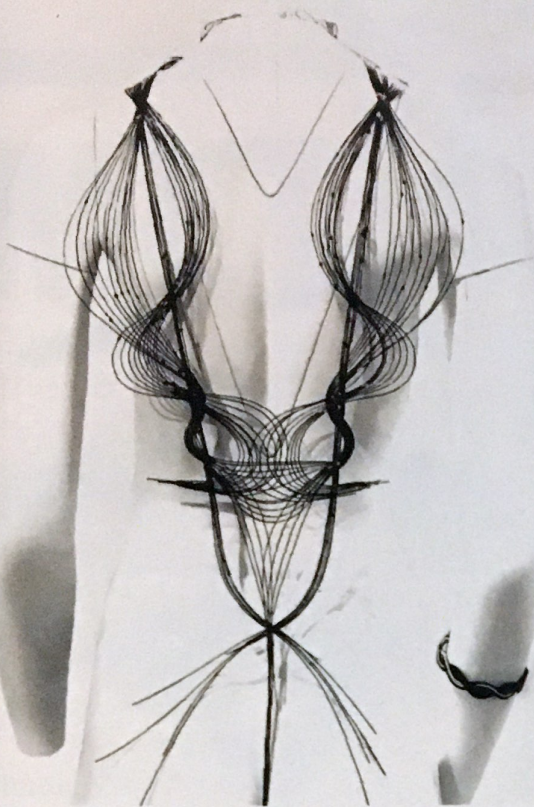
"I like the immediacy of impact that it has on the person wearing the pieces," says the Herndon-based sculptor and jewelry designer, who co-founded Abrams Wearable in 2017 with life partner Bryan Hammock. Hammock previously worked in the art auction industry. "With fine art, the viewer is separated. It's subjective. With jewelry, you have this direct connection," she says.

Case in point: Abrams, who works out of a studio at

the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria, would wear the ropy strands she used in her sculptures to art receptions. Women were fascinated by them. "We got the idea to use them as jewelry," she says. Since its debut, the high-drama collection has garnered attention from here to the Netherlands and has been spotted on red carpets and at DC runway shows—and the duo is on the edge of new developments for 2021, pandemic or not.

"We're chomping at the bit," says Abrams.

That urge to create developed at a young age. At about age 9 or 10, she recalls, the Hyde Park, Illinois, native sat in on painting classes at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; the professor was a friend of her mother's (a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago). But



Wearable Art

Abrams' jewelry as art includes custom pieces like the Back Drop Iconic Panel (left) and Iconic Blossoms (right), both made with acrylic, resin, sterling silver and sterling silver-plated micro-cable; Earrings (opposite page on model) include the Winter Blossoms.



Abrams didn't truly pursue art until her 30s. She studied interior design and pre-architecture at Colorado State University, where fiber art and embroidery courses were among her degree requirements, and then worked as a project manager at architectural firms and a variety of corporations, as well as ran her own consulting business, in NYC for more than a decade.

A visit to a museum exhibit near where she lived in New Jersey reincarnated her passion. That show? *Waxing Poetic*. "It was this life-altering exhibit. The work was so diverse, sophisticated, and all done out of the same encaustic medium." Abrams called the museum and took a three-day workshop. And she began painting or drawing every night into the wee hours before hopping on the train to her real gig all day. "It was kind of an obsession," she says. Abrams later shifted entirely to art, creating environmentally driven, textural sculptures that evoke plants and florals and exhibiting her thought-provoking pieces around the country.

Abrams Wearable is an extension of that—in a more tangible way. "It's an interpretation of the artwork that becomes something you can put on," she says. "Part of what I like so much about this process is trying to figure out how it's worn. With artwork, you're thinking about how it matches the wall. With jewelry, it's more complex. How does it feel against the skin? Is it comfortable? And there's no place to hide the ugly bits. You have a 360-degree view."


But you can't look away. The signature IO is a couture dripping-acrylic necklace; Abrams and Hammock had to create special tools to produce it. "It captures a fro-

zen, kinetic moment in time," says Abrams. The pieces, including bracelets and earrings, are largely crafted at their Torpedo Factory studio with various complex materials and processes—custom formulas of acrylic paint, metals, resin casting, molds, laser cutters, 3D printing.

As a result of the pandemic, Abrams has spent the past year focused on sculptures and apparel, creating an AWARE line of clothing to support small businesses. A sellout: the Notorious Hero T-shirt, with a hand-painted iteration of RBG's collar.

It's an evolution over time. Up next, the pair is mostly working on sculpture, plus updated clothing and a small jewelry line. There's a potential public art project and a collaboration with the Washington Spirit (Ashley Hatch and Crystal Thomas have modeled their pieces).

So, ask Abrams if the NoVA region inspires her work, and she'll say yes: "I'm a visual sponge." Even being able to bounce ideas off other artists at Torpedo helps her push the boundaries—and transform her body of work.

// abramswearable.com 

Medical Profiles

From the Publishers of Northern Virginia Magazine



Medical Profiles

From the Publishers of *Northern Virginia Magazine*





Sleep & TMJ Therapy

JEFFREY L. BROWN, DDS, FELLOW AACFP

TMJ & SLEEP APNEA TREATMENT

Dr. Brown's practice focuses on TMD, sleep apnea and orthodontics. This allows Dr. Brown and his team to provide individualized, focused care for patients dealing with these specific issues. Every day, Sleep & TMJ helps patients of all ages with facial development, sleep issues, chronic headaches, migraines, neck pain, movement disorders, and much more. His training also includes multiple disciplines involving the cranial bones in the skull, and the discs in the jaw joints. Through treatment, Dr. Brown is able to reduce these symptoms, align cranial bones, avoid extractions, and greatly reduce the need for traditional braces. His expertise allows him to identify issues early on which promotes proper facial development using dental appliances. If there is an internal imbalance, whether an adult or child, the body does not develop or function properly. When the cranial bones are lined up correctly, patients are able to function, sleep and generally live better. With that in mind, the team at Sleep & TMJ Therapy takes a whole-body approach

when treatment planning. They work hand in hand with physical therapists and osteopathic doctors for a better success rate. Dr. Brown is devoted to helping patients of all ages live a symptom free life. He earned his degree from Georgetown Dental School and completed residencies with Emory University Hospital for Dental Sleep Medicine and the ALF Appliance Therapy Institute. When not seeing patients, Dr. Brown is a sought-after speaker. He has lectured all over the world, including D.C., Dubai, Seoul, London, Norway and Toronto. He has also been featured on Channel 9's *Good Morning Washington*, several podcasts, numerous magazines and journals. He is a member of the American Academy of Craniofacial Pain, American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine, American Academy of Gnathological Orthopedics, Academy of Integrative Pain Management and the American Dental Association.

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Jae Kim, MD

PLASTIC SURGERY

As a fellowship-trained, facial plastic surgeon and board-certified head and neck surgeon, Dr. Kim offers a comprehensive array of nonsurgical and surgical procedures exclusively focused on the head and neck at his Fairfax practice. After earning a degree in chemistry at Harvard University, Dr. Kim studied at the University of Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine before doing his residency in head and neck surgery at Buffalo, where he trained with some of the world's best facial plastic surgeons. He is trained specifically in the field of facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, a privilege given to fewer than 50 surgeons per year.

At his practice in Fairfax, Dr. Kim and his team practice compassionate care. They listen to every patient's concerns and do not push unnecessary treatments. As a Korean American, Dr. Kim also prides himself on being culturally sensitive and understanding beauty as it pertains to different cultures. He knows that every doctor-patient relationship is unique and valuable, regardless of background. In his free time, he has been playing the violin for more than 30 years. This hobby influences his plastic surgery practice as he appreciates the value of many hours of practice and blending technique with artistry. He also understands the value of giving back to the community with his pro bono work with Face to Face, a nonprofit program that provides care for victims of domestic abuse, injured veterans, and international missions.

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Dr. Rostami is a graduate of Howard University School of Medicine and completed her training for ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery at the University of Maryland. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees with the American Board of Facial Cosmetic Surgery and American Board of Cosmetic Surgery and is the President of the Medical Society of Northern Virginia. In addition to her work at the practice, Dr. Rostami also performs clinical research for leading technology companies in the cosmetics field and presents her work around the world.

She is passionate about creating individualized plans of action for her patients that produce dramatic but natural results. The medical director achieves this through procedures like laser hair removal, CoolSculpting for stubborn fat, DiamondGlow facials for vibrant skin, vampire facials with radio frequency to stimulate collagen production. The practice also performs minimally invasive procedures to improve the neck and lower face to get you ready for the summer season and those open neck tops.

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Margaret B. Kopelman, MD, FAAD

CITY DERMATOLOGY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, LLC

DERMATOLOGY

Dr. Margaret Kopelman is a board-certified dermatologist who has been practicing in Northern Virginia for more than 10 years. She graduated *cum laude* from the University of Michigan Medical School and completed her internship in Internal Medicine and residency in Dermatology at the University of Michigan as well.

Dr. Kopelman specializes in disorders of the skin, hair, and nails, including acne, rashes, and skin cancer evaluation and treatment. She sees both adult and pediatric patients in her Falls Church office and also offers Telemedicine appointments for established patients.

Dr. Kopelman has been recognized by her peers as a Top Doctor in Northern Virginia Magazine every year since 2015.

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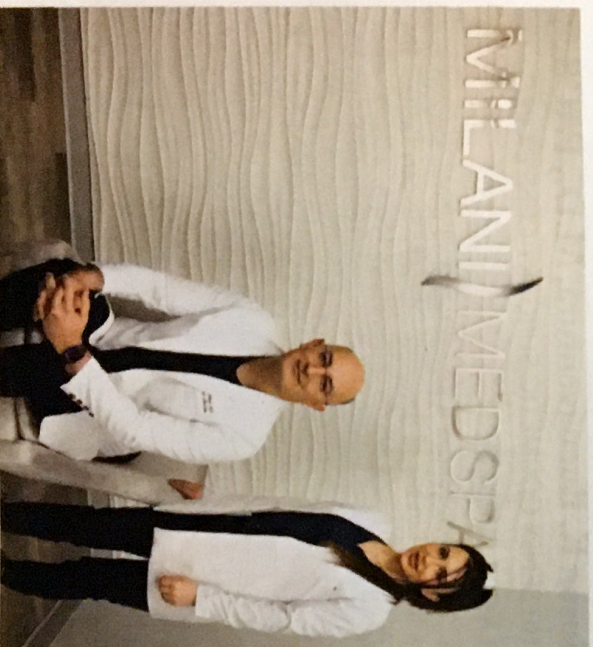


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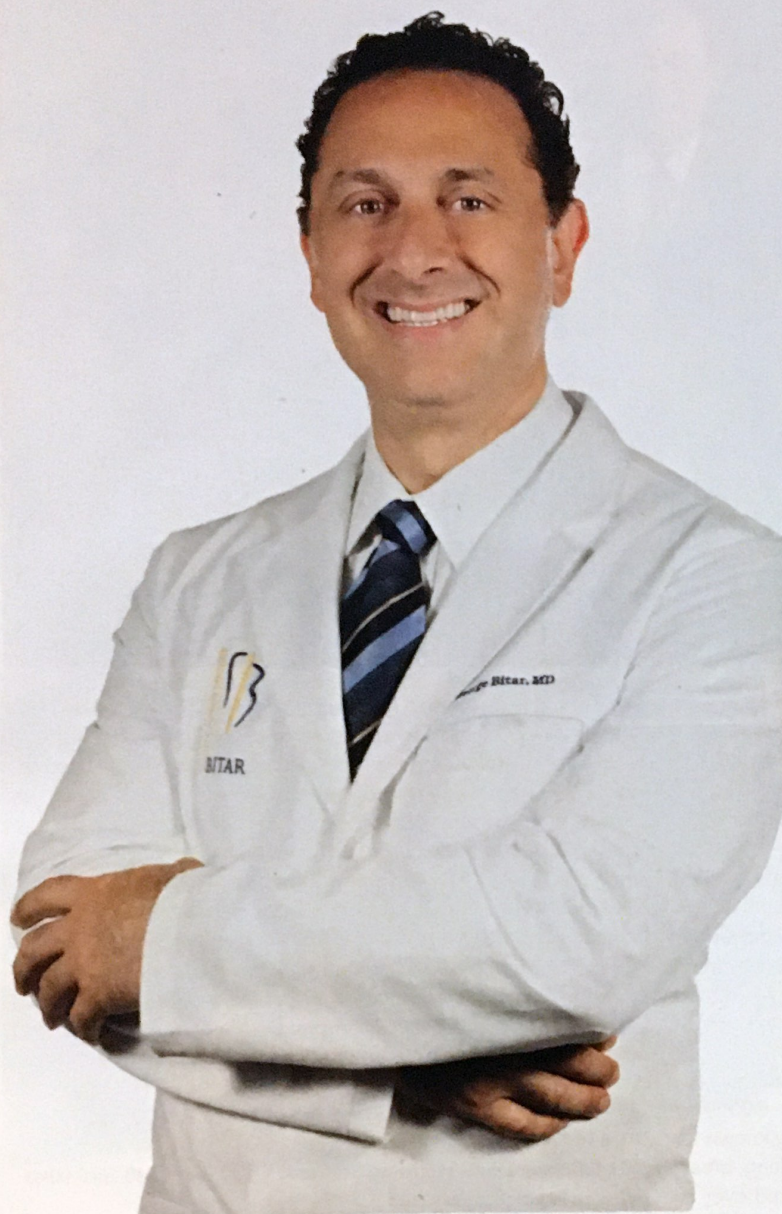
MEDICAL SPA

Milani MedSpa provides cosmetic medicine to enhance individual wellness and natural beauty. We are a full service medspa and offer the latest in laser treatments and injectables. Milani MedSpa is at the forefront of technology and medicine and has been nominated as a Cynosure Center of Excellence. We seek to restore and improve our clients' health and well-being with minimal intervention. Dr. Milani is recognized as one of the region's top physicians since 2001 and supervises a state-of-the-art weight management clinic. Dr. Milani is a national leader in fat reduction laser technology and is a SculpSure Luminary.



2070 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 150, Vienna, VA 22182

703-517-6600 • www.milanimedspa.com



Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute

PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER
AND MEDSPA

PLASTIC SURGERY

George Bitar, MD, FACS is an award-winning, fellowship-trained board-certified plastic surgeon who has performed over 15,000 cosmetic facial and body procedures. He is the founder and medical director of the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute & Medspa. The institute is the only private practice in the Washington DC area endorsed by the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery to run a fellowship training program for upcoming plastic surgeons. The institute offers all aesthetic services from skin care, lasers, non-surgical body contouring and injectables to cosmetic surgery and has a state-of-the-art surgery center. Dr. Bitar is assistant clinical professor at the George Washington School University of Medicine and Health Sciences and is also a frequent lecturer at Georgetown University and the University of Virginia's Plastic Surgery Departments. He has been featured in the book "The 100: Meet 100 Influential Lebanese Figures around the Globe" & was voted as the Top Plastic Surgeon on the East Coast at the Aesthetic Everything Awards in Beverly Hills in 2019. Dr. Bitar is one of a handful of plastic surgeons to have operated on all six continents throughout the course of his training.

SPECIALTIES: Surgical and non-surgical rhinoplasties, revision rhinoplasties, eyelid lifts, ethnic rhinoplasties, body contouring procedures, transaxillary breast augmentations, neck lifts, face lifts, the Model Lift™, high-definition liposuction, skin care treatments, laser treatments, Ultherapy®, Coolsculpting®, injectables, PRP Hair Restoration, EMSculpt® & Exilis

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Victoria Plastic Surgery Center

VICTORIA YONGSOOK SUH, M.D.

PLASTIC SURGERY

Yongsook Victoria Suh, M.D., is a native Northern Virginian with a deep passion for enhancing the individualized features of patients through plastic surgery, bringing natural beauty to life. As the founder of Victoria Plastic Surgery Center, Dr. Suh has been recognized as one of the top plastic surgeons in the DMV by *Northern Virginia Magazine*, *Washingtonian* and *Super Doctors*. With her advanced training and dedication, Dr. Suh specializes in all aspects of facial rejuvenation and body contouring, while utilizing state-of-the-art, advanced cosmetic surgical techniques. Dr. Suh and her staff enjoy providing a personalized environment for patients, ultimately leaving them comfortable and ready to receive the best care possible.

8503 Arlington Blvd., Suite 130, Fairfax, VA 22031
703-846-0097 • victoriacosmeticsurgery.com



Belmont Plastic Surgery

JULES A. FELEDY JR., M.D., BALVANT ARORA, M.D.,
ERIC MAIORINO, M.D.

PLASTIC SURGERY

At Belmont Plastic Surgery, it is understood that every patient requires a personalized cosmetic procedure to give them the dream look they desire. With two offices, Stafford, Virginia and Chevy Chase, Maryland—spearheaded by award-winning, board-certified doctors Jules A. Feledy Jr., M.D. and Balvant Arora, M.D., and recently Eric Maiorino, M.D.—patients of the DMV receive the best care possible in plastic surgery.

While Dr. Feledy is an expert in reconstructive plastic surgery, including microvascular reconstructive services like the DIEP flap procedure for breast cancer reconstruction, he is nationally known for his work in aesthetic services, including liposuction, fat grafting, breast augmentation and abdominoplasty. Dr. Feledy has authored over 20

professional publications, has been named a Top Doctor by U.S. News & World Report and accumulated several other accolades.

Dr. Arora, who has developed expert surgical skills through over 27 years of experience, serves patients of the region in surgical procedures, including body contouring, relating to the face, breasts and abdomen. Additionally, Dr. Arora has expertise in the area of hair loss and treats it medically and surgically with NeoGraft, an advanced, automated hair transplant system that facilitates the harvesting of hair follicles during transplant.

Recently, Dr. Maiorino joined the practice and is rapidly establishing himself as a leader in breast and body services. With the help of Dr. Feledy, Dr. Arora, Dr. Maiorino and the entire Belmont Plastic Surgery team, you can feel comfortable in your skin for the rest of your life.

5530 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 818, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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MAGAZINE

Haven J. Barlow Jr., MD

CHESAPEAKE PLASTIC SURGERY

PLASTIC SURGERY

For nearly three decades, Dr. Barlow has been a highly respected Board Certified Plastic Surgeon in the greater Northern Virginia-DC area, consistently being recognized as one of the region's best. He is renowned for consistently producing aesthetically natural results, while advancing the most recent proven surgical techniques, resulting in a shorter and more comfortable recovery.

- Specializing in facelift and facial rejuvenation procedures including eyelids and rhinoplasty
- Distinguished for "Mommy Makeover" and body contouring procedures

What our patients are saying:

"Dr. Barlow is an incredible gentleman and he makes you feel respected all the time. He finds your beauty and does not encourage excess. He is soft spoken but confident."

"Everyone was so nice and made me feel at ease. There was no judgement about my concerns. Dr. Barlow was not intimidating, making me feel that he was right on the same page with what I wanted to improve. His office staff made me feel welcomed and I didn't feel uncomfortable being in an office discussing plastic surgery."

"The procedure was easy. Dr. Barlow and Ashley were very professional. I felt confident in their care. Was an overall great experience. It was so easy. Nothing painful."

8100 Boone Boulevard, Suite 730, Vienna, VA 22182
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802 Bestgate Road, Suite A, Annapolis, MD 21401
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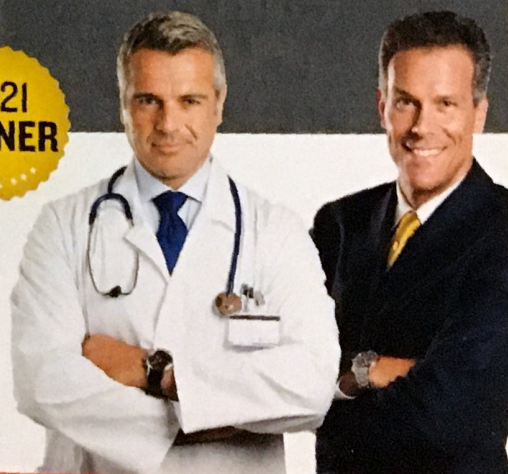
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The Eagle Next Door


The most successful musician in NoVA history may also be the least known.

BY BUZZ MCCLAIN

With the Band

Steuart Smith performs with the Eagles during SiriusXM presents the Eagles in their first-ever concert at the Grand Ole Opry House on Oct. 29, 2017, in Nashville, Tennessee.



the Band 
M presents
Opdy House
Tennessee.



**HEN STEUART
SMITH FINDS**

himself out
in the public,
which is rare

because he is intensely private, and someone asks what he does for a living, "I tell them I'm a freelance musician," he says.

The former Arlington and Falls Church resident is not being misleading because he is indeed one of the country's most-called-on studio guitarists—known in the entertainment business as a "session" musician. He's appeared on albums and on stages with countless popular musicians, most of them country, ranging from Dolly Parton and Wynonna Judd to Trisha Yearwood and Rosanne Cash.

But since 2001, Smith, 68, has been a studio and tour guitarist for a band that even the least-aware pop culture observer has heard of and knows its music by heart. Who among us is not familiar with "Life in the Fast Lane," "Take It Easy," "Peaceful Easy Feeling," "Desperado," "Take It to the Limit," "Best of My Love," "Lyn' Eyes" and "Heartache Tonight"?

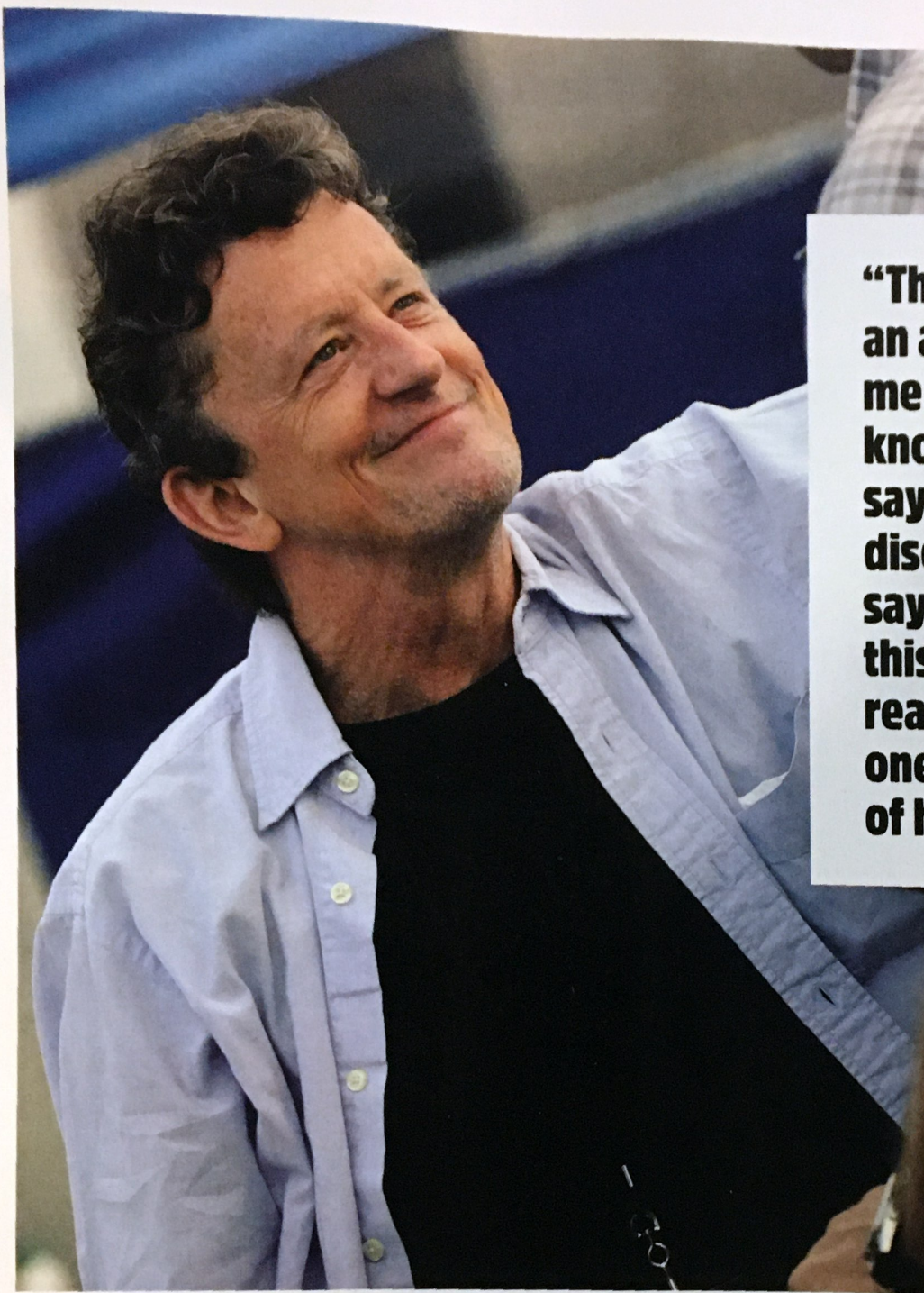
No clue? OK, how about "Hotel California"? Everybody now: "On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair ..."

For 20 years, Smith has been the guitar player standing on the stage with the Eagles, onstage but just out of the spotlight. You can see why he's hesitant to name-drop his longtime





All-Star Lineup
Timothy B. Schmit, Vince Gill, Don Henley (standing at drums), Deacon Frey, Joe Walsh and Stuart Smith perform at the Grand Ole Opry House on Oct. 29, 2017.



“There’s been an advantage for me [being less known]. I like to say I keep getting discovered. People say, ‘Oh, I found this guy, and he’s really good, and no one has ever heard of him.’”

Smooth Smith
Stuart Smith, pictured here backstage during the 2012 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, has strong ties to Northern Virginia.

employer. “The problem with being with such a well-known group is that it’s not going to be a brief conversation, you know?” he says.

Smith was born and raised in Baltimore—his father was a systems analyst; his mother was a registered nurse—and lived in Falls Church and Arlington before being discovered—the first time—by a music executive who introduced him to the big time.

Despite two decades of exposure with one of the top-selling bands in history—in fact *the* best-selling band, as we will see—as well as performing on and producing gold and platinum records for others, Smith remains pleasantly neutral in his relatively under-the-radar status. He couldn’t have a better, more generic last name for hiding in plain sight.

And he’s OK with that.

"I've always had a certain level of under-the-radar anonymity. I'm not a big fan of doing interviews—but I'm totally happy to do this," he says in a phone call from his home in Salem, Massachusetts. "There's been an advantage for me [being less known]. I like to say I keep getting discovered. People say, 'Oh, I found this guy, and he's really good, and no one has ever heard of him.'"

By keeping his affiliation loose, he has been able to continue to play and create with other musicians, which is important to him. Regardless, he says, the decision to accept Glenn Frey and Don Henley's offer to join the ensemble was not immediate. Anyone else might have jumped at the career-making opportunity. In fact, it took *two weeks* for him to make up his mind.

Henley said to Smith at the time, "I'm talking about serious employment here," Henley recalled in a 2017 interview. Serious employment, indeed, even if you are joining a band that's already 30 years old. Let's put that into perspective with a bit of astonishing rock and roll history:

Fifty years ago, Frey, Henley, Bernie Leadon and Randy Meisner decided to leave rising star Linda Ronstadt and start their own band. In 1972, they struck platinum with the release of their debut album, *Eagles*. Their clean harmonies, sincere story-songs and precise, guitar-based instrumentation struck a chord in the national zeitgeist. It still does.

Disappointed in the move away from a more countrified sound, Leadon left the band and was replaced by Joe Walsh, a successful solo artist who added more rock energy to the easy-going, laid-back folk-

rock Eagles—in fact, "Best of My Love" was No. 1 in the Easy Listening category that year. The fans liked the switch up and remained devoted.

That devotion has resulted in staggering statistics. The Eagles' *Their Greatest Hits* (1971-1975) is the top-selling album of all time, surpassing the likes of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Madonna and others you might have likely put down as a losing answer in a trivia contest. *Their Greatest Hits*, a 10-song collection, has sold 38 million copies and counting, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.

Remarkably, the No. 3 best-selling album of all time—do we really need a drumroll?—is the Eagles' *Hotel California*, with 33 million copies sold. If not for a little ditty by Michael Jackson called "Thriller," the Eagles would have both the No. 1 and No. 2 best-selling records of all time.

The 2001 firing of guitarist Don Felder, who came aboard in 1974, over a money dispute (Smith says it was more complicated, but he's not clear and has never asked for the details) might have shattered lesser bands. But the Eagles' founders Frey and Henley, along with by-now-long-time mainstays Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit, who joined in 1977—were in for the long run (yes, a song title pun).

They needed a ready-made replacement. They needed someone creative in their own right who could play delicate, melodic and intensely well-known rock guitar parts in front of rapt audiences of a gazillion-thousand fans in monstrous arenas around the world. They needed a guitarist who wouldn't try to steal the

Brushes with Greatness

Steuart Smith has met, played and recorded with countless famous artists while remaining, by his own choice, in the shadows. Working with popular performers is part of the job, and you have to keep your cool if you want to get called back. We asked Smith if there were any celebrities with whom he never imagined working—but did.

Shawn Colvin's bassist and producer Larry Klein was married to folk music icon Joni Mitchell. While working on projects with Klein in his Los Angeles home in the 1990s, Smith got to know Mitchell. "She was incredibly easy-going and not in the least intimidating," Smith says.

One day, Mitchell "turned to me and said, 'I'm working on a bunch of new tunes. Would you like to hear them?' Of course I said, 'of course.' She picked up the guitar and started playing, and immediately you could hear that it could be no one but her.

"And then she started singing, and I snapped completely out of my complacency and realized, 'Holy s---, it's Joni Mitchell!' I'd gotten so used to hanging out, I sort of forgot who she was."

Still, he kept his cool, even in the presence of greatness. Mitchell invited Smith to record some of the songs with her. You can hear them on the 1994 album *Turbulent Indigo*. It won the Grammy for Pop Album of the Year.



Guitar Hero
Stuart Smith performing live onstage at the Olympiahalle in Germany on May 25, 2006.

bands thunder by creating his own lightning. They needed Stuart Smith.

Although he spent more of his youth in Maryland and has lived in Salem for years, Smith's ties to Northern Virginia remain tight. His daughter Sarah, 32, a Yorktown High and University of Mary Washington graduate now working as an editor for a financial information company, lives in Alexandria. In non-pandemic times, he visits the area as often as his schedule allows. (He lives in Salem with his longtime girlfriend, who has family in New England.)

"Whether in the recording studio or onstage, Stuart's legendary talent as a guitarist and producer have brought him acclaim around the world," the singer-song-

writer Mary Chapin Carpenter wrote to us in an email. "It's not surprising in the least that [Northern Virginia] claims him as a musical son. I am proud to call him a friend and an inspiration." (Carpenter should know: That's Smith on guitar on her Grammy-winning *Stones in the Road* LP from 1995.)

Smith relocated from Maryland in the early 1980s, living at first in Falls Church near Tysons Corner. He later moved to North 25th Street in Arlington's Yorktown section. In 2005 or 2006, he says, he moved back to Falls Church, "walking distance from Action Music and Cue Studios, and I could check in with them from time to time." (The very serious guitar store and the professional recording studio are still in business.)

While living in the area, Smith played in regional bands that scraped at national recognition, most notably the outfit known as the Sex Change Band, headed by Washington's legendary novelty blues rocker Root Boy Slim (best known, such as it is, for "Boogie 'Til You Puke"). When the Washington power pop ensemble Switchblade needed a replacement for founding guitarist Eddie Angel—who started the Nashville-based, Mexican-wrestling-mask-wearing surf instru-

"He's a practicing maniac, always has been. I mean, he would go to his hotel room and practice after the gig if he wasn't pleased with his performance. He always sounded amazing to me, but he is a perfectionist. Obviously, it pays off."

mental band Los Straitjackets (look them up)—Smith answered the call from Switchblade bassist Johnny Castle.

"I have to say, of all the people I've ever played with—and there is quite a prodigious list, and quite a few were famous—Steuart is probably the most complete musician I've ever played with," says Castle, who recently retired from a long stint with the fabled national/regional band the Night-hawks and played for more than a decade with Grammy-nominated Americana guitarist Bill Kirchen. "He could take anything and make it sound better."

Was there ever any drama? Every band has drama, right?

"With Steuart? No, never," he says. "He never pulled a knife on anybody over a bagel." There's a pause. "That was me. I pulled a switchblade on Ratso for taking the last bagel at a New

Jersey Turnpike stop."

Ratso is guitarist Jim Silman, an Emmy-winning videographer for CBS (now retired) who tours as Texas troubadour Kinky Friedman's sidekick (and is a recurring character in the Kinkster's mystery novels). For several years, Ratso and Smith traded lead guitar duties in Switchblade, dueling each other with ever-faster Fender guitar solos on regional radio hits such as "She Makes Me Rock Too Much."

It's thanks to Ratso, in a typically bizarre Ratso way, that Smith is with the Eagles. In 1983, Switchblade's managers took a stab at arranging a showcase in New York for major record label executives. The idea was to land a contract and start making records. The showcase went well, but no contracts were proffered. "They liked the band, but they didn't like Ratso," Ratso confides.

In the audience that night was Grammy-nominated producer Rick Chertoff (Cyndi Lauper, Joan Osborne), who "apparently took a shine to me," Smith says. A few years later, Chertoff tracked Smith down and summoned him to New York to work on songs with Scandal singer Patty Smyth. That didn't work out, but in the spring of 1986, Chertoff introduced him to Rodney Crowell, a country star who was trying to stretch beyond the confines of the genre.

The chemistry worked: Smith played guitar on Crowell's 1988 sterling album *Diamonds and Dirt*, which yielded no fewer than five No. 1 singles, a remarkable accomplishment (others who have done that: Katy Perry and Michael Jackson). Smith also served for a significant period as an arranger, producer and touring guitarist with Crowell and his then-wife, Rosanne Cash, Johnny's daughter.

"I saw Steuart play with Rosanne Cash at The Bottom Line [in New York]; I think it was around 1990," says singer-songwriter Shawn Colvin. "I told him then, 'Your playing makes me smile.' It was more than that, of course. Steuart plays impeccably—and yet still exudes heart and soul. I was about to begin making my second record and needed a guitar player. I knew he was the guy."

Colvin, who was nominated in 1997 for Song of the Year and Album of the Year for the breakout hit "Sunny Came Home," first featured Smith on her 1992 album, *Fat City*. Touring on the strength of that record with Smith and bassist and producer Larry Klein was special, she says.

"Not only do I consider that configuration the best group I've ever been a part of—we just read

each other's minds—but I've never had so much fun offstage as with those guys. We are all friends for life."

The key to Smith's legendary skills with a guitar, Colvin says, is that "he's a practicing maniac, always has been. I mean, he would go to his hotel room and practice after the gig if he wasn't pleased with his performance. He always sounded amazing to me, but he is a perfectionist. Obviously, it pays off."

"He is, easily, one of the most versatile guitar players ever," says Vince Gill, who "first crossed paths [with Smith] when he was playing and working with Rodney Crowell. He played on some of my records,

for 30 years, Gill says, since seeing him perform with Rodney Crowell.

"It doesn't matter what you throw at him; you know he's going to deliver," Gill says, who brought Smith on board to play on his 1994 album, *When Love Finds You*. "He's always been that way. Stewart is the hardest worker I've ever seen; I've never seen anyone practice as hard as Stewart."

Gill is also an Eagle, an "official" one, since 2017, having replaced the late Glenn Frey, who died in 2016. (Frey's son Deacon also joined the band.) Gill realizes he and Smith are walking a tightrope every night in front of fans who know every note to every song.

"There's not a lot of improvising," he says with a chuckle. "It's all about part-playing, which is really why those Eagles records are so good; it's because guys aren't out there on the end of the stage showing off. And people know those solos; they know the fills. Nothing is taken for granted. Nothing is out of step."

Smith, Gill says, "is so intuitive, but he's a great thinker, which I think is a big part of how well he plays."

The fact that Smith and Gill had a history was key to Gill joining what he's called "the most important American band in history."

"I have to be honest with you," he says. "When I was asked to come in and take the job, I just was so grateful that I had an old ally like Stewart on the other side of the stage to have [my] back."

Smith and Gill and the rest of the Eagles hope to take the stage at London's Wembley Stadium in late August to kick off an international tour, their first live outing since the global coronavirus lockdown.

"Since the pandemic kicked in, I've been practicing a good bit," Smith says. "At my age, I have to keep practicing or atrophy will settle in. My fingers are crossed for us to start work as planned in August, but I'm a realist, too, and won't be surprised if that doesn't happen. I just hope everyone stays healthy." 🐼

"It's all about part-playing, which is really why those Eagles records are so good; it's because guys aren't out there on the end of the stage showing off."

too; he's always been one of my favorites."

Gill, a country music star in his own right, has seen some good pickers in his day, and he's not bad himself. His 1984 Country Music Top New Male Vocalist Award was just the first of five times he would win the trophy, scoring 21 Grammys along the way. He's known Smith

HIDDEN FOODIE GEMS

So you think you're a foodie. Or maybe your skin crawls at the very utterance of that word, its cutesiness unbearably raising your hackles. Semantics aside, if you've picked up this magazine, chances are you're in your greatest glory when you're dining out or experimenting with recipes of your own. This issue is for you. Our critic has uncovered some of the best and brightest flavors from around the world in this collection of international and hard-to-find meals from across Northern Virginia.

Whether you've already tried a few of these restaurants or are ready to start your edible education from scratch, read on for a few delicious reasons to get out and eat something new this spring.

BY ALICE LEVITT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY REY LOPEZ









SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND

Living in NoVA can feel like an all-day buffet if you do it right, but not every dish is easily accessible. These are some favorites from around the world that are worth seeking out.

AREPAS CAPITOL

14091 Noblewood Plaza,
Woodbridge; arepascapitolusa.com

► AREPAS

WHAT IS IT? A soft corn cake filled with the meats and cheeses of your choice. The best of the bunch is the pabellón, complex with its garlicky shredded beef, black beans, crumbly cotija cheese and sweet plantains.

WHY YOU NEED IT: Taco lovers and pupusa devotees may find that this Venezuelan snack scratches the same itch.

BALKAN GRILL

5902-A N. Kings Highway, Alexandria; mybalkangrill.com

► CEVAPI

WHAT IS IT? Fresh, buoyant lepinja bread stuffed with juicy house-made beef sausages. Tomatoes, onions and creamy, cheesy kajmak spread make this Balkan sandwich eminently satiating.

WHY YOU NEED IT: If you love burgers (and we don't trust anyone

Soup dumplings, also known as xiaolongbao, burst with broth at Dumpling Queen in Chantilly.





This takeout box does little justice to the sizzling turmeric-flavored cha ca thang long at Hai Duong in Falls Church.

who doesn't), this is a global version that will have you salivating.

DOLCE AMORE SWEETS

8641 Sudley Road, Manassas; dolceamoresweets.com

► **PAN CON CHICHARRÓN**

WHAT IS IT? Tender pork, sweet potatoes and zingy onion salsa criolla are piled onto a Portuguese roll for a sandwich that could only come from Peru.

WHY YOU NEED IT: It's time to try a new sandwich, and this is one of the globe's most compelling combos.

DUMPLING QUEEN

13492 Metrotech Drive, Chantilly; dumplingqueenva.com

► **SOUP DUMPLINGS**

WHAT IS IT? Thin-skinned Shanghai-style dumplings filled with pork and collagenous broth. Be careful when you slurp the soup within—it's hot.

WHY YOU NEED IT: This is a dish that combines all the comfort of a gingery soup with your favorite takeout dumplings. There's a reason food lovers who try it are hooked.

FETTOOSH

5100 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; fettoosh.com

► **BASTILLA**

WHAT IS IT? A crackling phyllo-enfolded pie of marinated chicken, almonds and caramelized onions artfully dusted with cinnamon and powdered sugar.

WHY YOU NEED IT: Few cuisines balance sweet and savory as well as Moroccan does. This dish is the epitome of that harmony.

HAI DUONG

6795 Wilson Blvd., Suite 7, Falls Church, haiduongeden.com

► CHA CA THANG LONG

WHAT IS IT? Vietnamese tur-

meric-yellow fish comes to the table sizzling under a blanket of dill. It's paired with slippery rice noodles, vivid green herbs, lettuce, fish sauce, shrimp paste and a crispy rice cracker.

WHY YOU NEED IT: The fun of assembling your own bowl of goodies matches the size of the fresh flavors.

TASTE OF EURASIA

428-A Hume Ave., Alexandria; tasteofeurasia.com

► KHACHAPURI ADJARULI

WHAT IS IT? This buttery, boat-shaped cheese bread from the Republic of Georgia may come out of a pizza oven, but thanks to tangy sulguni cheese and a sunny yellow egg on top, it definitely won't remind you of Italy.

WHY YOU NEED IT: Hot, soft bread filled with gooey cheese and egg—do you really need to hear more?

Be sure to dig into your Adjariuli-style khachapuri from Taste of Eurasia in Alexandria when it's still hot.







HIDDEN PLEASURES

Strip malls and industrial parks: They're a not-so-beloved feature of living in the suburbs. But there are reasons to celebrate them. Their ever-presence means that some of the best food you'll find in NoVA is cached in plain sight.

LA JAROCHITA

9612 Grant Ave., Manassas;
lajarochitarestaurant.com

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT:

Behind the food truck in the Grant Avenue Shopping Center

WHAT YOU'LL GET: A bustling taqueria and panaderia in one. Just past the counter, watch a cook carve chile-rubbed pork from the spinning trompo for some of the best tacos around. Wash it down with a Topo Chico before the sweet satisfaction of a slice of chocolate tres leches cake.

LARP LAO FUSION CUISINE

46900 Cedar Lake Plaza, Sterling; larplaofusion.com

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT:

Inside Coco's Food International Market

At Larp Lao Fusion Cuisine in Sterling, get a Hawaiian plate lunch alongside Laotian fare.

WHAT YOU'LL GET: Both Laotian and Hawaiian specialties. Dine at a table in the market or take it to go, but don't miss the nam khao, crispy rice dotted with zesty Lao sausage and a generous portion of chiles. Prefer Hawaiian? Get a plate lunch filled with marinated short ribs and macaroni salad.

PIZZA 360

21760 Beaumeade Circle, Suite 130, Ashburn; pizza360va.com

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT: In an industrial park adjacent to marble and granite shops

WHAT YOU'LL GET: The best of India and Italy, together on a chewy crust. The tiny pizzeria is strictly for takeout and delivery, so don't plan to stay, but chances are you'll be returning soon after you try your first butter chicken pie. The paneer poppers and crisp tandoori wings are worthy of repeating, too.

RANIA'S LOVE

1136 W. Broad St., Falls Church

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT: In Falls Plaza, right by a Staples


WHAT YOU'LL GET: Vegetarian and vegan Vietnamese food. The cheerful restaurant serves many of the Viet dishes that omnivores crave but without the meat. The highlight? Truly spicy bun Hue, a noodle soup hot with chile oil and jalapenos.

RIVER-SEA CHOCOLATES

4520 Daly Drive, Suite 100, Chantilly; riverseachocolates.com

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT: Inside an industrial park adjacent to Ono Brewing

WHAT YOU'LL GET: Krissee and Mariano D'Aguiar make bean-to-bar chocolates in this petite factory and store. There are classes where you can learn to



Pizza 360's butter chicken pie draws diners to its Ashburn industrial park location.







make your own bars or hot chocolate bombs, but it's just as delicious to stock up on ready-made products like truffles, tasting kits and CBD-infused bars.

TIPICOS GLORIA

470 Elden St., Herndon

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT:

In Herndon Centre, the development that contains Herndon's Lotte Plaza

WHAT YOU'LL GET: Central American fare with a twist. Tacos and tortas are available filled with bulgogi and spicy Korean pork, but the best reasons to eat here are the giant pupusas. The most diminutive of these, the size of a small pizza, is \$4.49. Order a large one filled with loroco, pork and beans to feed the whole family.

ZAMAROD

10123 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls; zamarod.com

WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT: Next to a hairdresser and a gym in a small strip mall

WHAT YOU'LL GET: Fine Afghan dining. Owner Dor Niaz presides over a gem of a restaurant that's elegantly decorated and stocked with exceptional dishes. The lamb shank, for example, comes with apples and spinach, but don't forget to start with the thin-skinned mantu dumplings.

Whether it's your first time trying Afghan or you grew up with it, Zamarod in Great Falls is sure to impress.

KOREAN FUSION

According to the 2010 U.S. Census (the most recent results at press time), about 4% of Fairfax County's population identified as ethnically Korean, making it the third-largest Korean population in the United States. That number is doubtless even larger in 2021, and diners should be grateful for it. Thanks to a vibrant Korean population in our region, flavors from the homeland make it into countless American comfort food dishes. Here's a sampling.





Two Hands Seoul Fresh Corn Dogs brings the heat with its spicy, crunchy food on a stick.

CHICKING

13955 Metrotech Drive,
Chantilly; *chickingusa.
business.site*

► RIBEYE BULGOGI SUPREME SUB

This fried chicken stand inside Lotte Plaza has a take on the cheesesteak that features sweet and garlicky marinated ribeye. It's packed into a sturdy roll with sweet, tender yellow peppers and onions; fresh lettuce; and melted American cheese to hold it all together.

NOORI CHICKEN

Annandale and Fairfax;
noorichicken.com

► BULGOGI PIZZA

There's also fried chicken here, but the pizza ovens are where the fusion happens. Puffy-boned pies are thickly blanketed in mozzarella, as well as marinated beef, peppers, onions and a shower of scallions. Skipping the meat? There's a sweet potato pizza, too.

ODD BBQ

4520 Daly Drive, Suite
102, Chantilly;
oddbbq.com

► SPICY PORK BELLY RICE PLATE

Former Mokomandy sous-chef Nick Giorno uses the Korean cooking skills he learned at the now-shuttered Sterling restaurant to inform his

covetable smoked meats. His barbecue version of spicy pork belly bears more than a passing resemblance to dwaeji bulgogi. Diners can start the meal with kimchi pimiento cheese.

TACO SSAM

6013 Leesburg Pike, Bailey's Crossroads;
tacossam.com

► GALBI TACO

Don't be put off by the betting machines that line one side of this taqueria. This is the home of a meaty taco filled with galbi, or Korean barbecue short ribs. Fusion tacos also include braised pork belly, spicy pork and bulgogi, all filled to bursting with purple cabbage and fresh chiles.

TWO HANDS SEOUL FRESH CORN DOGS

13830 Lee Highway,
Centreville;
twohandsus.com

► POTATO DOG

This Korean-owned chain has a spot inside Siroo & Juk Story. They've perfected the fusion corn dog, which takes many forms, such as versions that replace hot dogs with stretchy cheese. Iterations include the Spicy Dog, Crispy Rice Dog and In-jeolmi Dog, but the crispy cubes of potato make this one the star.

CONTINUED ON PG. 147



SWEET STUFF

Looking to go beyond your usual scoop of chocolate or vanilla? These cakes and pastries are bound to satisfy your sweet tooth with flavors that are far from basic.

BALQEES

5820 Seminary Road, Unit J, Falls Church

THE LOWDOWN: This buzzy Yemeni restaurant has a young crowd that converges around the outdoor firepits.

THE STAR SWEET: Any of the milk cakes, made by Durana Wardak of Luxurious Sweets, are worthy of top billing. However, the saffron milk cake is dosed with rose petals and baptized in saffron-flavored condensed milk for a delicate version of tres leches.

COUNTRY OVEN

2501 Centreville Road, Herndon; mycountryoven.com

THE LOWDOWN: An Indian-owned bakery that always seems to be busy with a constituency of customers for its takeout biryani

THE STAR SWEET: Eggless chocolate mousse cake might seem like an impossibility, but the creamy slices are a layered treat. Each piece is enrobed in lush chocolate ganache. The pineapple cake, speckled with tiny fruit chunks, is a winner, too.



Balkees in Falls Church is home to milk cakes that range in flavor from saffron and rose to Fruity Pebbles.

DOLCE & CIABATTA

9H Catoctin Circle SW, Leesburg; dolceciabatta.com

THE LOWDOWN: The sign out atop this strip mall location simply says “bakery,” so the casual observer would never guess that it’s home to European-trained pastry chef and bread master Godfrey McKenzie’s creations.

THE STAR SWEET: Take your pick. Traditional treats like bread pudding and pain au chocolat are crafted to perfection, but it might be time to try something new, like an eye-catching green matcha torte or British banoffee pie in upscale tart form.

LA CÔTE D’OR CAFÉ

6876 Lee Highway, Arlington; lacotedorarlington.com

THE LOWDOWN: A French warhorse that may be less formal than some of its peers but has all the dishes

Francophiles crave, from cassoulet to frog legs


THE STAR SWEET: Old-school île flottante, also known as floating island, was once almost universal at French restaurants. Now it requires some searching, especially for a version of the airy meringue in vanilla sauce that’s this delightful.

SHAMSHIRY


8607 Westwood Center Drive, Vienna; shamshiry.com

THE LOWDOWN: A longtime favorite for its Persian kebabs and rice dishes with a great view of skewers grilling over flames

THE STAR SWEET: The Persian ice cream sandwich features wafers filled with a soft frozen delight. The golden ice cream within is flavored with saffron and rose. It melts and crunches with a bit of summery magic in every bite.

A large, rectangular wooden platter is filled with a variety of grilled beef cuts, including ribs and steaks, which are glistening with a dark, rich sauce. To the right of the platter, a small white bowl is filled with fluffy white rice. A hand is visible, holding a small white bowl of chimichurri sauce, which is being poured over the beef. In the background, a bottle of chimichurri sauce is visible, with the label "Estancia" and a logo featuring a stylized "E" and "C".

Argentina is famous for its beef for a reason. Taste why at La Estancia Churrasqueria in Falls Church.



AROUND THE WORLD IN A DOZEN PLATES

Ready for your taste buds to take off? Before you book a flight to a culinary destination you've always dreamed of, you can almost certainly try an example close to home. Here are 12 restaurants from global cultures that can be elusive in our region but are well worth tracking down.

ARGENTINE

LA ESTANCIA CHURRASQUERIA

7810 Lee Highway, Suite F, Falls Church; estanciagrill.com

WHAT TO TRY: The Parrillada Argentina, a sizzling platter filled with short ribs, flank steak, New York strip, pork sausage, some sweetbreads, black pudding and a nest of crispy intestines.

AZERBAIJANI

BAKU DELICIOUS

3900 Pickett Road, Fairfax

WHAT TO TRY: Whatever is in the case. Owner Sevda Tahirli varies the delicacies she serves, but if there's lamb stew with smooth chestnuts and sweet-and-sour plums, don't miss it.



Koshary, the national dish of Egypt, is a carb-tastic treat best enjoyed at Falls Church's Fava Pot.

BOLIVIAN BAKERY BREAD & GRILL

11186 Lee Highway, Fairfax;
bakerybreadandgrill.com

WHAT TO TRY: Salteñas, pies filled with a brothy stew. Beef is mild, while chicken is slightly spicy, and both are served with a fresh green hot sauce called llajua.

COLOMBIAN COLOMBIAN'S PLACE

1602 Village Market Blvd. SE,
Suite 120, Leesburg; colombiansplace.com

WHAT TO TRY: Bandeja paisa is Colombia's unofficial national dish. The meaty meal includes crispy pork belly, chorizo, ground beef, a plantain and an over-easy egg, centered around red beans and rice.

CUBAN CUBASI BISTRO

22000 Dulles Retail Plaza, Unit
100, Sterling; cubasibistro.com

WHAT TO TRY: Love Cuban sandwiches? The medianoche is the best version of the pork-filled specialty. It's made with sweet egg bread that, when pressed, fuses with the nutty Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard.

DOMINICAN MOFONGO STEAKHOUSE & GRILL

14035 Noblewood Plaza, Wood-
bridge; mofongosteakhouseva.com

WHAT TO TRY: It's in the name. This garlicky mashed plantain dish is exceptional on its own, but it's best in the form of the

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NorthernVirginia MAGAZINE





Big plate chicken at Mim's Food in Fairfax can make anyone a fan of Uyghur cuisine.

Mofongo Los 5 Golpes, which pairs it with beef, chicken, pork, shrimp and fried cheese in a piquant sauce.

EGYPTIAN
FAVA POT

7393-D Lee Highway, Falls Church; favapot.com

WHAT TO TRY: Egypt calls koshary its national dish, and it's easy to understand why natives love it. The comforting bowl contains lentils, rice and elbow macaroni topped with garlicky tomato sauce, fried onions and chickpeas.

GHANAIAN
ABURI GARDENS
INTERNATIONAL
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14830 Build America Drive, Woodbridge

WHAT TO TRY: Jollof rice is the signature dish not just in Ghana, but also in much of West Africa, including Nigeria and Liberia. Get the spicy, tomato-reddened rice covered in the meat of your choice, with plantains and salad.

MONGOLIAN
BUUZ THAI
EATERY

1926 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; buuzthai.com

WHAT TO TRY: Buuz are juicy dumplings filled with beef and onions. They're more than a bit unexpected at a restaurant that specializes in creamy Thai curries, but the flavors of these and khuushuur, a flat fried dumpling, stand on their own.



NICARAGUAN EDA'S LATIN FOOD

9071 Liberia Ave., Manassas

WHAT TO TRY: A nacatamal might look like an ordinary tamal wrapped in a banana leaf, but the unique bitter-orange-flavored masa reveals a mixture of fillings, including rice, chunky pork and potatoes.

UYGHUR MIM'S FOOD

9990 Main St., Fairfax; mims-food.com

WHAT TO TRY: Big plate chicken, identified on the menu as chicken korma. Diners will love the wide hand-pulled noodles covered in a spicy stew of chicken, potatoes and peppers, a dish beloved in the Xinjiang region of China.

YEMENI MARIB

6981 Hechinger Drive, Springfield; maribrestaurant.com

WHAT TO TRY: Mathloothah is a three-layered dish with rice, creamy wheat-based porridge and flatbread. It's best crowned with fried onions and tender pieces of haneeth, spice-rubbed lamb falling off the bone.

Yemeni food comes alive in Springfield with the big flavors of Marib.



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AMERICAN CLASSICS

Not every edible discovery comes from a different part of the world. These native specialties are worth a trip, too.





You won't regret a drive (or helicopter flight) to Battlefield Country Store for one of its special milkshakes.

BATTLEFIELD COUNTRY STORE

6150 Plank Road, Fredericksburg; battlefieldcountrystore.business.site

THE SPECIALTY: Over-the-top milkshakes and towering sandwiches

WHY IT'S SPECIAL: "One guy flew in his helicopter, he was so pumped about the sandwich of the week," says owner Jeff Meier. Even if you don't have a way to fly to Fredericksburg, you'll be similarly inspired by options like the oversized BLT filled with fried eggs; cheese; and Kuntzler bacon, made in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

But the shake is on our cover for a reason: It takes the whole team at Battlefield to come up with the weekly special, and since August 2019, there hasn't been a repeat. With names like Thick-alicious and So Shakin' Happy, the giant drinks are festooned with desserts, including a slice of raspberry cheesecake or pecan pie. "We're offering people something important: happiness. This is their one chance to escape all the negative," Meier says. He's spreading joy one overstuffed sandwich and shake at a time.

JOHNNY RAY'S SULTRY SOUL FOOD

101 Executive Drive, Suite A, Sterling; johnnyraysva.com

THE SPECIALTY: Chicken wings

WHY IT'S SPECIAL: Soul food isn't easy to find in NoVA, but these highly seasoned chicken parts are slap-your-mama tender and juicy

within a crisp jacket. It's well worth seeking out in its industrial-park home.

PICA DELI

11864 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston; picadeli.org

THE SPECIALTY: The Caesar Augustus, an Italian sub

WHY IT'S SPECIAL: At this deli tucked between medical offices, second-generation owner Tyler Pica gets fresh bread locally from Lyon Bakery and sources high-quality meats and then adds a generous dousing of red wine vinegar to his crave-worthy sandwich.

SANDWICH REPUBLIC

7020 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield; sandwichrepublicva.com

THE SPECIALTY: Braised short rib sandwich

WHY IT'S SPECIAL: We usually associate this particular cut of meat with hoity-toity dinners paired with wine. This short rib? It's a pressed sandwich with provolone, arugula and tomato that goes best with a watermelon soda from the case.

TAMALERO

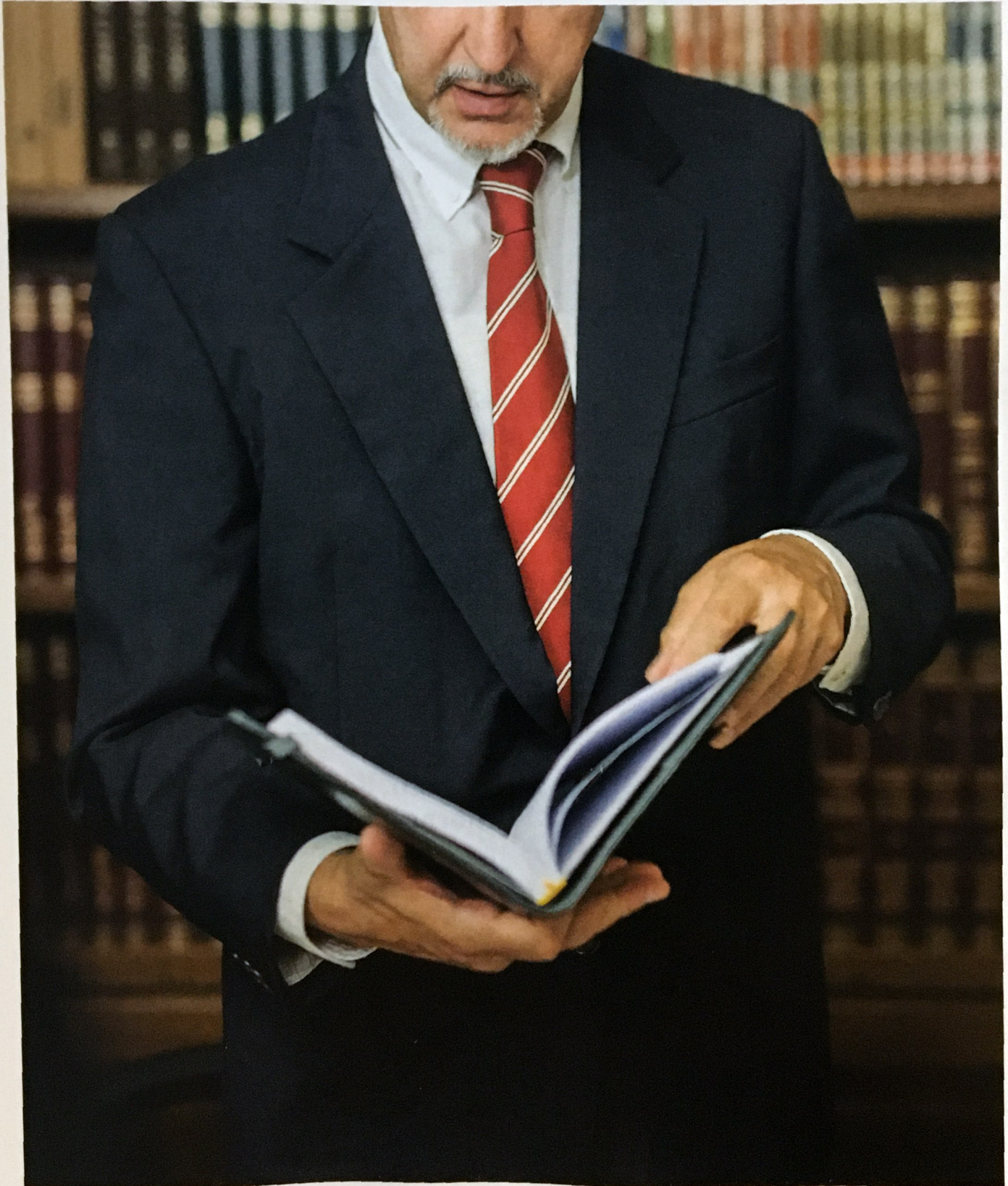
25387 Pleasant Valley Road, Suite 110, Chantilly; tamalero1.com

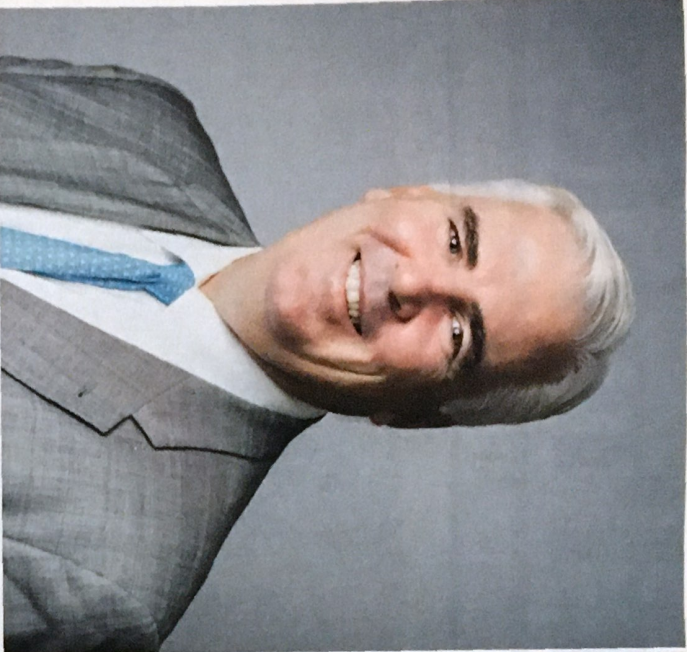
THE SPECIALTY: The Monster SQ Triple burger

WHY IT'S SPECIAL: It's hard enough to find a great burger made with halal beef, but this one has beauty, deliciousness and size in its favor. Stacked with bacon (or skip it), American cheese and fried eggs, it also benefits from a slap of heat courtesy of grilled jalapenos, Sriracha and spicy mayo. 🌮

Law Firm Profiles

From the Publishers of Northern Virginia Magazine





Carroll & Nuttall, P.C.

The lawyers at Carroll & Nuttall, P.C. serve clients in both state and federal courts on a wide range of legal issues, including personal injury, criminal defense, family law and civil litigation matters. Whatever the case, we work aggressively and compassionately on your behalf from the moment we take your case and we don't rest until justice is served. The lawyers on our team—John Carroll, Edward Nuttall, Brandon R. Shapiro and Gregory P. Perigard—are all experienced trial attorneys (and three are former Fairfax County prosecutors) who are highly familiar with the area courts and procedures.

In addition, all of our attorneys have earned an AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rating by Martindale-Hubbell®, the highest rating possible and a testament to our attorneys' legal

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our trials involve spousal support, business valuation, complex assets, or high-conflict custody disputes.

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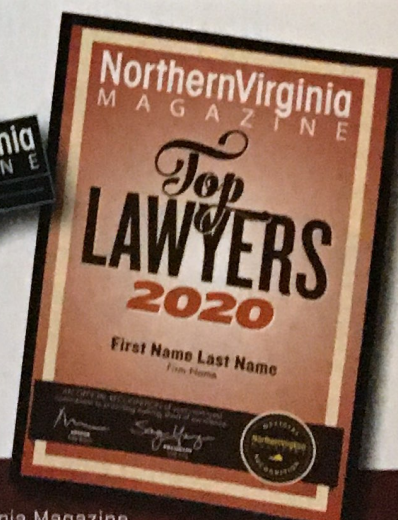
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SHOP SPOTLIGHT

Cabinet of Curios

Heather Shaw Menis' new line of ethically minded wallpaper and gifts is a little luxury when we need it most.

BY KRISTEN SCHOTT



If you have ever experienced the frustration that comes along with trying to apply wallpaper so it doesn't look like a failed childhood art project, then the goods curated by the new Fairfax City-based Curio by Fifth & Main will feel like gifts from the decor gods—or at least from co-creators Heather Shaw Menis and her husband, Dennis.

The couple, who launched the company in November, had started making their own wall coverings

after having a negative experience with the traditional paper. "We paid someone to put it up in one of our rooms, and I wasn't happy with it," says Heather, a luxury goods publicist with a longtime dream of opening a retail business. (Dennis works in the printing industry.) "It has to be done perfectly, and it was a huge waste of money."

Their sustainable, small-batch selections solve that problem. The textured peel-and-stick paper is easy to



Wonder Walls

Heather Shaw Menis (opposite page, with dog Winnie Pooh), launched Curio by Fifth & Main in late 2020. Her offerings include wall coverings, along with unique gifts, self-care products (like the Fat Belly Tonic cocktail kit, at right) and other accessories.



put on (and change frequently, as Heather likes to do in her own home) and is printed with HP latex ink. It contains no hazardous air pollutants, and it's the only ink that's certified safe for hospitals, nurseries and for people with asthma. There's a petite-but-growing range of patterns: The duo sources the commercial rights to the papers and, with the help of Heather's designer, Maia Gantcheva of Tam + Flo, tweaks the look till it fits their aesthetic. Heather says she's particularly proud of the playful Over the Rainbow iteration, with its stucco-like appearance. Cream-colored florals decorate a different covering, while cranes gracefully stretch their wings on another. She also works with interior designer Jill Switzer, who can advise customers on wallpaper selection.

The whimsical but sophisticated mix is mirrored throughout the rest of Curio's thoughtfully curated, ethically sourced decor, self-care products and accessories. "These everyday delights should feel luxurious," Heather says. "I am avidly against buying something off Amazon because it'll fit my needs right now but then throwing it out in a few years. I'd rather search for months until I find exactly what I want."

It's a breath of fresh air at a time when mass-delivery services have all but taken over our shopping habits. It's also an amalgamation of everything Heather loves. Born in Norfolk, the self-described Army brat and her family lived in Panama, Alabama, Virginia and all over Maryland. She attended the University of Maryland, where she studied journalism, was an environmental studies scholar and met Dennis. Gigs in environmental affairs and

luxury lifestyle PR and hospitality followed; a job as marketing director for Saks Fifth Avenue at Tysons brought the couple to NoVA, where they live with their son, Max, and dog, Winnie Pooh. She eventually went out on her own with Fifth & Main PR and has been at it since 2014—until the pandemic ground things to a near halt. Yet the slowdown allowed her to focus on her other dream.

Visit Curio's online shop and you'll find ceramic candleholders from DC-based Wilo Studio, towels from aptly named Towl (a former client) and alphabet silk scarves from Jessica Russell Flint. They're little gifts for you and your friends, though Menis says she's terrible at buying presents for people. She doesn't think she's much of a designer, either, though we'd disagree—as would her burgeoning clientele. While most of her customers have been local thus far, she's expanding her reach. Also on her wish list is doing regional, in-person pop-ups at brick-and-mortar shops, when COVID allows. Most recently, Curio was a small part of a virtual third-anniversary soiree for High Side craft beer bar—one of Heather and Dennis' favorite spots when they're not on the job.

So, what's it like working together? Fairly easy, says Heather. They don't talk much during the day—she has her headphones on, and he's upstairs in his office. "Sometimes I want something done right now, and he's got another job to worry about. But all in all, it's been pretty good." Perhaps it's because of their shared belief in what Curio offers. "We're bringing items that surprise and delight," Heather says. What could be better than that? // curiobyfifthandmain.com

HOME TOUR

Balancing Act

Interior designer Shoshanna Shapiro married the divergent styles of this Fairfax couple for a perfectly luxe home.

TEXT AND STYLING BY CHARLOTTE SARNI / PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT RADPURA FOR STYLISH PRODUCTIONS





A Bernhardt sofa and pair of armchairs with nailhead detailing sit across a Modern History cocktail table.



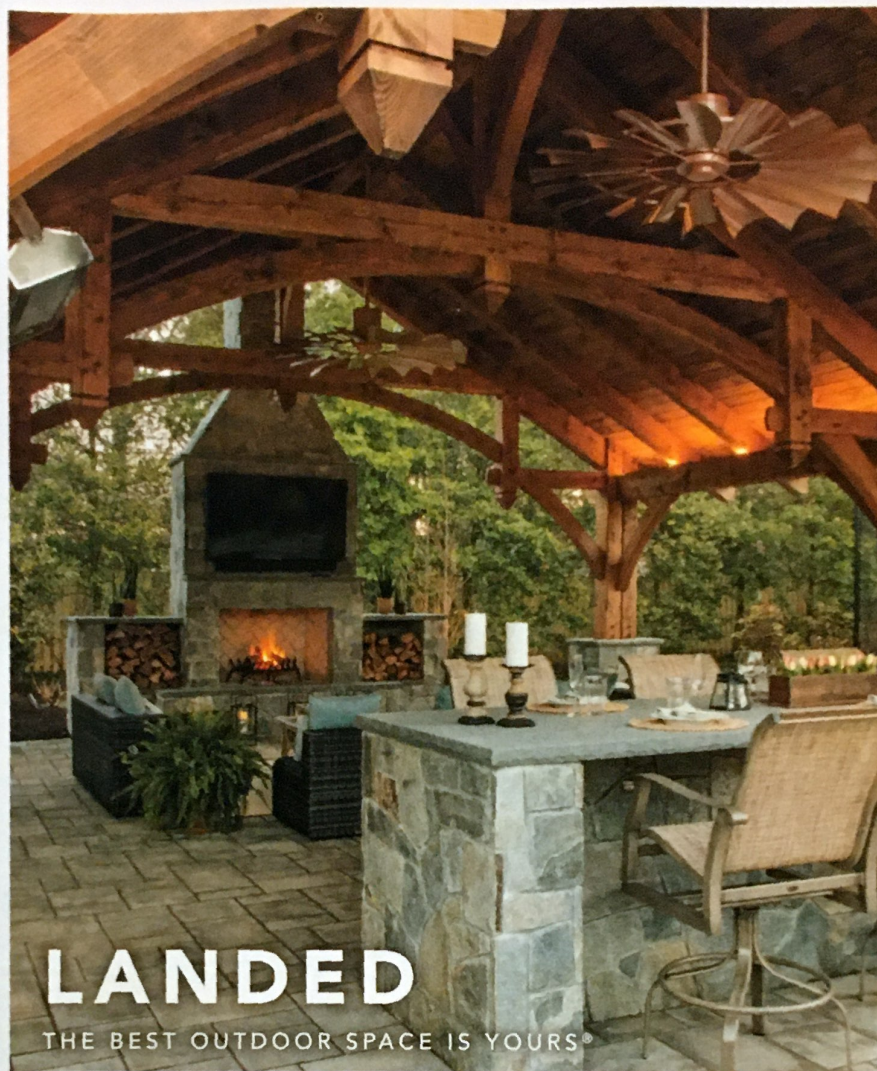
Interior designer Shoshanna Shapiro is no stranger to a Woodson Reserve home. After all, she was Evergreene Homes' sales manager for the 26-acre residential community of 22 single-family homes sandwiched between Fairfax parklands and Arlington Boulevard.

Her work on this four-bedroom, 4,629-square-foot Craftsman-style home began in 2018, when she was working part-time for the homebuilder, and continued on into 2020, after she had left to run her own interior design business, Sho & Co.

"The clients [a husband, his wife and their 8-year-old daughter] were looking to make the Craftsman details of the architecture blend with a more luxe contemporary vibe," she says of the initial consultation that eventually led her to refine and design all the nuts and bolts of the house.

The basic floor plan of the center-hall home—with the living room to the left and dining room to the right, and the kitchen and family room in the rear—remained intact, but Shapiro coordinated architectural revisions and helped make material selections.

For example, the trim and moldings were simplified to provide a cleaner, more modern feel, and the



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NorthernVirginia
MAGAZINE

1 Benjamin Moore's Hale Navy brings rich color to the custom desk and built-ins in the home office.



NSO (nonstandard option) engineered wide-plank hardwood floors were finished in a matte gray wash for a softer texture and refined palette.

"We upgraded the kitchen completely to a chef's kitchen, with Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, Shaker-style cabinets paired with modern nickel pulls in a satin finish and durable quartz countertops for a marble look," she adds.

But it was the selection of three brushed-gold island pendants that implied the house was going for something more glamorous, luxe and chic. The curved-back bar chairs, with custom upholstery and inverted pleat detailing, capped off the look.

Once the builder upgrades were done or rejected, if they were too standard or not quite what the homeowner wanted, Shapiro continued on with her special touches. As seen with the above-island fixtures, upgrading lighting is always a win in newer homes. By pairing the homeowners' existing dining room set (very modern and masculine) with a striking rectilinear crystal-drop chandelier, the journey into customization continued.

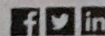
"I designed a display and storage cabinet that houses the homeowners'

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❶ Vanguard stools add chic perches in the kitchen. The above-island lighting is by Arteriors.



record player and LP collection in the living room," says Shapiro of the built-in, which features inset doors and ultimately took the place of what would've been the builder-standard bar option.

Applied wall moldings add further interest to the moody moss-green space, which is perfect for after-dinner cocktails and small-scale entertaining.

"We also ended up designing a special coffee bar/cocktail station, with open glass shelves and a hammered

"I wanted to help them celebrate the place where they felt most at home and achieve that perfect balance of warmth and luxury."

brass sink. It sits between the dining room and kitchen," she says of the space that was tailored to the homeowners' needs and wishes.

The navy-blue office off the family room also has custom built-ins, with shiplap detailing and brass library lights, as well as seating for all three family members.

"Though COVID-19 has presented an issue with



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COMPASS

Gold-framed Uttermost mirrors complement the glamorous hardware on an Ambella Home dining room sideboard.



entertaining, the homeowners intend to use their home very much so for that purpose, and planning for that was important in our design," Shapiro says.

This statement references not only the formal

"Though COVID-19 has presented an issue with entertaining, the homeowners intend to use their home very much so for that purpose, and planning for that was important in our design."

rooms, but also the family room, where an extra-large sectional wraps in an L shape around a cerused oak drum table with brass detailing. The sectional is also layered with a variety of neutral chenille, velvet and linen pillows.

Overall, the home's design aesthetic balances the masculine and feminine in spirit and form, as does the color palette, where cool grays and edgy blacks meet blush pinks and warm taupes. Furniture selections achieve the same yin and yang.

❶ Sho & Co. custom-designed this coffee bar, which features a hammered brass sink with a Moen faucet in a brushed gold finish.



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HOME

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Adding Personality to a New Build

Shapiro shares her tips for upgrading a builder-grade home.

- Replace builder-grade lighting. Unique fixtures go a long way.
- Add molding details to an accent wall to add dimension and interest.
- Paint transforms everything.
- Customize your colors and finishes where possible.
- Replace hardware with something more special.
- Consider redoing a bar backsplash with a fun tile for movement and character.
- Reserve a few standard builder options, like office shelving or a wet bar, to customize your own.
- Bring on the bling in a powder room.

"A good example of this is the master bedroom," Shapiro says. "She wanted pink and fluffy; he wanted luxe and contemporary. By muting the pink tones and adding a touch of gold decor, while grounding everything with the clean, contemporary lines of the furniture and topping it off with an elegant crystal chandelier, this room is the perfect blend of the two of them."

Throughout, the house is minimal and intentional with respect to style and layout, and it incorporates natural textures and plenty of warm tones and soft fabrics to make it welcoming.

"I wanted to help them celebrate the place where they felt most at home and achieve that perfect balance of warmth and luxury," Shapiro says. "Though the couple had differing visions coming into the project, the end result is a unique blend of styles, making this their dream home." 🏡

❶ A large sectional from Maiden Home pulls up to a Gaby Home coffee table. Throw pillows are from different vendors, including Myra Scott Textiles and Susan Connor NY.



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