

NAPLES

ILLUSTRATED®

+

CHROMATICA
Colorful fashion pops

GOLF'S
BIG UPSWING
A sport's comeback story

FRESH FACES

*5 bright, young
leaders with heart*

MICHAEL WALKER, the Naples High
Eagle, now a Jacksonville Jaguar

FROM THE EDITOR

Hi There

It's nice to meet you. I am so happy to be in Naples, but I have to admit when I first visited five years ago, I never imagined I'd be living and working here. It was my kids' spring break, and we were checking out the area for fun, and a little bit of work for me. I had a meeting set with Kathy McKeon, a friend of a friend, whom I'd been helping pull together a book proposal for her memoir. Kathy and her husband, Seamus, live half the year in Marco Island, and they welcomed the five of us (my husband, Michael, my older daughter, Piper, and my boy/girl twins, Thomas and Remy) into their home with bright smiles and beautiful Irish brogues. I could have stayed and listened to Kathy's stories about her time working for Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for hours, but the Gulf was calling, and we had plans. Less than two years later, Kathy published *Jackie's Girl* and landed on *The New York Times* best-seller list. (You can read more about her and other local authors on pages 122 and 123.) So, for me, writing this editor's letter feels like a full-circle moment.

Now that I'm settling into Naples, which isn't too hard of an adjustment after already living in Florida for seven years, I'm having fun teaming up with publisher Kaleigh Grover and our awesome sales crew starring Kathy Beuttel and Meegan Wyatt. They have given me the warmest welcome, as has everybody in Palm Beach Media Group. As the new girl, one thing I learned quickly was that the *Naples Illustrated* bunch genuinely cares about this community. And I can see why. The more time I spend here, the more wonderful people I connect with. I have even met some in person—from a safe distance—a thrill in this wacky COVID-19 era. One standout is Mary Brandt, owner of Hotel Escalante in Naples, who graciously let us shoot our cover story, "Leading with Heart," on her amazing property. Five of my favorite new faces are featured in this article, beginning on page 52. When so much is uncertain, getting to know these young Neapolitans is uplifting and reassuring. I believe our world is in good hands with Millennials and Generation Z coming down the pike. Need more convincing? Check out our Insider profile on page 21 with Leif Johnson from the Conservancy of Southwest Florida or Favorite Things on page 128 with Ashley Dewji, the newest (and perhaps most enthusiastic) member of the Gulfshore Playhouse board.

In late June, Michael, our three Gen Z'ers, and I, plus our rescue mutt, Tilley, committed to getting to know Naples from a local's perspective. We ate our way through town, munching at Lake Park Diner, Kareem's, Barbatella, Celebration Park, and Black Sheep Pizza. We burned some of it off by walking and swimming at Vanderbilt Beach and Clam Pass Beach and wave running in the Gulf. I can't wait to have more family fun in town, and I can't wait to learn more about Naples and all of you.

Christina Cush

Christina Cush
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KAREN TYRRELL



KAREN TYRRELL

THOMAS AND MICHAEL SAID TIBURÓN WAS ONE OF THE NICEST COURSES THEY'VE PLAYED.

PIPER AND REMY TAGGED ALONG ON MY FIRST VISIT TO THE NAPLES BOTANICAL GARDEN.



INSIDER

By Christina Cush

Q & A

THE GO-TO GUY

The past five years in Naples have marked some of the biggest and best moments in Leif Johnson's life: He launched his career as a biologist at the **Conservancy of Southwest Florida**, he met his fiancé, Katie Ferron, and he was "astounded by the beauty of Clam Bay, again and again, while studying the mangroves in the area." This handy outdoorsman grew up on a farm and graduated from UMass Amherst with a bachelor's in natural resource conservation. He's made himself indispensable to his colleagues in the Conservancy's science department by repairing ATVs and getting involved in several ongoing projects, such as the Picayune Strand restoration project. He notes that if you look at a map of Collier County, "70 to 80 percent of it is conservation land, and it's a water world." On the next page, we chat with Johnson about turtles, microbrews, and more.

(conservancy.org)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LEIF JOHNSON WITH A GATOR SKULL AT FLORIDA PANTHER WILDLIFE REFUGE IN IMMOKALEE; JOHNSON AND HIS FIANCÉ CAMPING AT BIG CYPRESS; STARRY SKY AT BIG CYPRESS.



INSIDER



THE GO-TO GUY CONT.

NI: What's up with the turtle project on Keewaydin Island?

Johnson: I'm out there three nights a week looking for nesting sea turtles to measure and tag. This data collection is incredible, going on for 40 years. We see loggerheads and occasionally green sea turtles. Turtles lay around 100 eggs, and the survival rate is astronomically low, so it's important that we protect them from predators like coyotes, wild hogs, and racoons, and get hatchlings out to sea.

Do any assignments put you in the water?

Yes, the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles project. I'll go on a boat to Ten Thousand Islands and Rookery Bay and try to catch them in a mullet skiff with an outboard engine. We throw the net out back, and it's the most ridiculous game of hide-and-seek. We wait for a turtle head to pop up for a breath. When we get one, my co-worker, who's been doing it for 30 years, puts satellite tags on them to track their movements. Also, we try to get a poop sample to study their diet. A most surprising find is that they are considered crab eaters, but they switch to eating sponges and tunicates, which are invertebrates on the sea floor.

Where do you hang out when you're not on turtle duty?

I prefer to be on a boat, but my fiancé and I will go to Park Shore Beach because it's the closest to my house. We also love going down south of the pier to Bad Ass Coffee, and then to a hole-in-the-wall restaurant, Third Street Café, which serves massive breakfast sandwiches. We grab all that and go to the beach in the morning. I also like microbreweries, and Beach Brewery and Ankrolab are good. Felipe's is a reoccurring theme in my life, and so is the margarita on the rocks and the burrito bowl.

Do you have a favorite local outdoor adventure place?

There's so much research on how nature is good for your mental and physical health. Check out the Greenway here in Naples; it's an incredible resource. Everywhere needs to have more greenways—easy access to a natural area that's big enough to get away from roads and traffic. I love going camping with my fiancé, to get away from the noise of the city and disconnect for a bit. Camping is funny, though. It makes you appreciate everything you have at home when you get back, like a shower.



IF YOU GET LUCKY WHEN OUT THRIFTING IN NAPLES, YOU MIGHT UNEARTH A FENDI BAG WITH A GEOMETRIC THEME OR AN HERMÈS STAINLESS STEEL PENDANT.

NEW & NOW

THRIFTING THRILLS

One upside of the COVID-19 shut-in was finally having time at home to tick projects off your to-do list. For some glamorous Naples women, that translated into cleaning out their closets and bringing glorious castoffs to local consignment vendors. This means there's a plethora of covet-worthy, high-end, designer goods in excellent condition at local consignment stores. Buying clothing and accessories on consignment is a fun way to enhance your fall wardrobe and support sustainable fashion. Check out a quick sampling of what's been available lately in these stylish shops.



AUDREY'S OF NAPLES

Owned and operated by a family of fashionistas, this chic space was recently loaded with treats such as sunglasses from famous runway brands, a jewel-encrusted Fendi bag, and candy-colored Hermès cuffs. (audreysofnaples.com)



DESIGNER DIVAS RESALE BOUTIQUE

In this new Vanderbilt location customers can score treasures such as Jimmy Choo gladiator sandals, a Salvatore Ferragamo shoulder bag, and Tory Burch totes and leather crossbody bags in nature-inspired hues. (naplesdesignerdivas.com)

TWICE AS NICE CONSIGNMENTS

Both Naples locations are bursting with technicolor Lilly Pulitzer pieces and other finds, like a leopard print Prada bag and a limited-edition Louis Vuitton tote with pink embroidery. (twiceasniceconsignnaples.com)



INSIDER

FLIGHT MAP

Personal PLANE

Neapolitans may still have the want or need to fly, even though the coronavirus pandemic has devastated the commercial air travel industry. While the July Fourth weekend saw a bump in domestic and international flights from the spring, summer travel was significantly down compared to 2019. So, if you've got the travel bug but are not yet ready to fly commercial, what about flying private? To navigate this decision, *NI* caught up with Stephen Myers, vice president at **Elite Jets**. Myers, who also captains one of the Naples-based aviation company's Phenom 300 planes, says he and his colleagues have seen "a lot of first-time private travelers." Here, he shares insight into what passengers can expect from this exclusive method of air travel. (*elitejets.com*)



CLOCKWISE FROM INSET: AN ELITE JETS LEGACY 500 PLANE IS RUNWAY READY; INSIDE ONE OF ELITE JETS' PHENOM 300 PLANES; STEPHEN MYERS, A PHENOM 300 PILOT.



- Leave when you want without having to show up at an airport two hours ahead of time.
- Enter the first-class private terminal and gate through a company access and enjoy a lobby that allows for social distancing. Or, if you want more privacy, drive out on the ramp.
- Load your own luggage on the plane if you don't want anyone touching your belongings.

- Meet and greet the pilot, co-pilot, and crewmembers with their masks on. However, pilots are not allowed to wear masks when flying in case they need oxygen.
- Relax knowing that fresh air comes in to the plane from the front and gets sucked out the back, so new air is in constant circulation. The cabin is cleaned with an antiseptic fogging after every flight, and the aircraft is wiped down with sanitizers.
- Bring your cat or dog, provided you give Elite Jets the appropriate heads up.
- Pay depending on which of the three types of Elite Jet aircrafts you choose, how far you are going, if the flight is nonstop, and if there's a return trip. Costs are not per ticket but per aircraft and vary from roughly \$8,000 to \$80,000. It doesn't matter if it's one passenger or eight passengers.
- BYO water, wine, snacks, and newspapers. You get to shape the experience.



FROM LEFT: VERA JAYE OF JAYE DESIGN AND MAYOR TERESA HEITMANN AT THE NESTING IN NAPLES PODCAST LAUNCH.

PODCASTS FROM PARADISE

This part of the Gulf Coast has inspired several creative types to record and publish their own podcast series on everything from true crime in Florida to living the ultimate golf lifestyle. Below, we highlight two newbies to tune in to.

1 **Nesting in Naples** with host Vera Jaye of Jaye Design in Naples is an homage to the coastal area she adores. While she officially premiered the podcast in July, Jaye is in the process of building up enough quality episodes to launch on Spotify in October. For now, you can listen to her chat with local guests including father-and-son craftsmen Dave and Thomas Staber of Dave Staber Woodworking and entrepreneur Karl Gibbons of Third Eye Management on her website. (*jayedesign.com*)

2 **Shellcast**, the podcast of The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel, debuted in June and is hosted by Jackie Parker. This show sets the scene with natural sounds of waves crashing and winds blowing, all peppered with stories from notable inhabitants who share historical tidbits and their take on life on the water. Of particular interest is a sandy stroll with Dorrie Hipschman, executive director of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. Download that episode and more on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and iHeartRadio. (*fortmyers-sanibel.com*)

ESCAPE

TRAVEL JOURNAL

The Optimistic JET-SETTER

Though she pays her bills from her apartment in Long Island City, New York, Christina Galbato, a 2015 Villanova University graduate with a bachelor's in communications and public relations, loves spending big blocks of weeks in Naples each year. You'll find her strolling Fifth Avenue, dining at Campiello or Bha Bha, and sipping cocktails at The Continental. This year, she extended her stay and made the most of her time getting to know the area better and hanging out with her parents, who are full-time residents. The luxury travel blogger appreciates everything that Naples offers. "Naples is the epitome of Floridian charm and easy living," Galbato says. "It's a welcome break from the bustle of New York City and travel in general, especially during winter." This professional suitcase-packer works with tourism boards and hotels around the world, promoting them to her blog audience at christinagalbato.com. Since many aspects of the travel industry are in flux, she reminisced on where she's been and reflected on where she plans to go. —Christina Cush



FROM ABOVE:
SPA SUITE AT
THE PENINSULA
IN BANGKOK;
ISKENDER, ONE
OF GALBATO'S
FAVORITE TURK-
ISH DELICACIES;
THE MANDARIN
ORIENTAL IN BO-
DRUM, TURKEY.



NI: What are your hopes for the travel industry?

Galbato: My main hope is that travel picks up again. Domestically, Delta has done a great job at blocking off middle seats in economy and enforcing social distancing during the boarding process. Abroad, Qatar Airways stepped up with the cabin crew wearing full-body protective gear.

Where have you been that you'd love to revisit?

Turkey has delicious food, diverse and beautiful landscapes, and the kindest people. And I have memories of Jordan that I'll cherish forever: Seeing the ancient city of Petra and visiting Wadi Rum, a region that looks like Mars.

When's your next big international trip?

My first trip abroad that I have planned is in September to Mexico. Then in October, I have a trip planned to Tahiti and Bora Bora.

What kind of domestic travel looks interesting?

Out West. I'd love to rent a camper van and explore Utah and Arizona.

What's the best hotel you've stayed at?

The Mandarin Oriental in Bodrum, Turkey. It's an absolutely stunning resort on the Aegean Sea.

What's the best meal you've had on a trip?

It's a Turkish dish called Iskender. It's thinly sliced lamb and pita bread topped with tomato sauce, butter, and yogurt. I cried tears of joy from how delicious it was.

What's the best spa treatment you've had on a big trip?

A Thai massage at The Peninsula in Bangkok. The idea of closing my eyes while someone contorted and stretched my body freaked me out, but it turned out to be my favorite spa treatment. Plus, you get a private spa suite with a jacuzzi overlooking the city.

What are your go-to travel resources?

The Points Guy is my go-to website for all things travel hacking.

What are a few things you can't travel without?

Monos Luggage, Tatcha Dewy Skin Moisturizer, Langiege Lip Mask, compression socks, and the Google Translate app.

What's still on your bucket list?

I love the Middle East, so I want to spend more time there and visit the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Lebanon. Then places in Africa like Tanzania, South Africa, and Namibia.





THESE YOUNG SUPERSTARS WERE PHOTOGRAPHED ON LOCATION AT THE HOTEL ESCALANTE IN NAPLES. IT'S A GORGEOUS OLD-WORLD BACKDROP TO HIGHLIGHT SOME FRESH FACES.

Leading with **HEART**

MEET OUR 5 UNDER 35 WHO ARE MAKING
A DIFFERENCE WITH HARD WORK AND NAPLES LOVE

BY CHRISTINA CUSH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL CARONCHI

Michael Walker

At just 23 years old, Michael Walker already bears the hallmarks of a professional athlete: The second-year wide receiver and return specialist for the Jacksonville Jaguars always shows up early and ready for anything. With six older brothers and an older sister, Walker is the youngest of the brood and a lifelong Naples resident who graduated from Naples High as a celebrated football captain before going on to play at Boston College. “I was the only one of my siblings to go to college outside of Florida, and it was a huge step,” he says. “I learned a lot about myself and who I am.”

Although he grew up in a bustling household—nicknamed Hotel Walker for the steady stream of kids pouring in and out—Walker admits that he was shy in middle school. As he came into his own and developed confidence through playing sports and being part of a team, this social anxiety gave way to a genuine ease and friendliness that is apparent to anyone who meets him. He attributes his most defining qualities and his generous heart to his close relationship with his ever-growing family, including parents Michael and Bonnie, who “should have the highest-level membership at Costco.”

He jokes that his older brothers “roughed me up and picked on me,” but credits their tough love for helping him transition from playing high school football to Division 1 football, then to the pros. “I’m always working hard to prove myself to my siblings and earn their respect,” he says. This attitude has helped Walker navigate the NFL. “It’s more independent. You train on your own and hold yourself accountable for your team, so you can play for your brothers and prove each week that you are prepared for Sunday.”

During COVID-19, Walker trained at Total Ath-

letic Performance and Coach Tumbarello Performance in Naples and kept his physique in check at PhysioRight. He left Naples in mid-July to report to Jags pre-season training and was looking forward to playing a pre-season game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. “It’s going to be surreal to be on the same field as Gronk and Tom Brady,” he says.

To chill out while in Naples, he hangs with his best friends, plays the piano, or takes a fishing pole to his “top-secret spots in the backwaters, where the mangroves are.” Before leaving for Jacksonville, he hit up his favorite eateries. “Andre’s Steak House for steak, potatoes, and asparagus, and the bacon appetizer. For something quick with my friends, I’ll grab the Western barbecue burger at Jimmy P’s, and I’m obsessed with the Korean beef tacos at Lake Park Diner.”

Even though he’s laser-focused on his football journey, Walker’s glad to have his bachelor’s in leadership management from Boston College. He’s considering earning a master’s degree so he can coach at the D1 level—or maybe joining all his brothers at Walker Contracting Group, his dad’s construction business. In the meantime, he’ll keep giving back to the community and working with individuals with special needs through Tim Tebow’s Night to Shine events and nonprofits such as STARability. “My parents raised us to serve others,” he says. “I carried this spirit with me to the Boston community, and now that I have this platform as an NFL player, I will build upon it.”

No matter what, Walker plans on returning to the Paradise Coast when the time comes to have his own Hotel Walker. “I realized how lucky I was to live in Naples when I went to college. Now I love coming home and want to raise my kids here.”







..... Maria Plata

Chatty and curious, 27-year-old Maria Plata is planning a January 2021 wedding, and like most brides, she is doing a delicate dance with her mother. “My mom wants to incorporate as much of our Mexican heritage as possible and have as many family members there as possible,” Plata says. While she notes that her own taste is simpler and more intimate, her thirst for adventure and trying new things is vast.

Plata, an avid reader who used to escape in Harry Potter books, grew up in Immokalee, where her parents were migrant farm workers. She traveled with them up the coast and back, following the seasonal crops, until ninth grade, when she stayed behind with her mom to focus on school. She scored Immokalee Foundation and Guadalupe Center scholarships to attend Florida Gulf Coast University and graduated in 2015 with a bachelor’s in communications and public relations. In college, she studied in the United Arab Emirates for six weeks, an experience that led her to embrace international travel and made her realize that she was capable of doing anything.

She cut her next adventure, teaching in Thailand as a post-grad, a few months short so she could come home and help with family issues. Plata is the second oldest of six siblings, and her mother has taught her

the value of “what hard work will do for you.” After serving as a community health educator in Immokalee through Doctors Without Borders, she accepted a similar position at a different health care organization and is now focused on COVID-19. A graduate of the Leadership Collier Foundation program, she co-founded Roots of Immokalee with two friends and has since distributed almost 1,500 bandanas to farm workers and fed 50 families through a community food drive. This heartfelt project has a unifying social media platform that highlights stories of people in the community, reminding us all of our common threads.

“There are a lot of new young professionals here who want to make a change,” Plata says. “We may not have deep pockets like some of the older philanthropists do—and they do great things with their money—but we have new ideas and are very resourceful.”

When she unwinds with her fiancé, Yeison Orozco, they go to the beach or stroll downtown. “I love the botanical garden,” she says. “We do outdoorsy stuff together and try new dishes from mom-and-pop restaurants. Currently, I am into Thai food and curry.”

Though she may have to settle for a road-trip type of honeymoon in early 2021, she will never settle for a life without passion and purpose.

..... Peter Jean-Marie

If there's a slick car parked close by and he's wearing a cool outfit, 24-year-old fashion designer Peter Jean-Marie is quick to turn the opportunity into an impromptu photo shoot. Beyond his own Instagram, which is rapidly accumulating followers, the self-proclaimed "Millennial Mogul" is a staple across local print and television outlets. But beneath all the flash and his on-screen persona are real-deal traits such as grit and patience.

Much like one of his business icons, Ralph Lauren, Jean-Marie launched his brand with neck ties. He is skilled at pattern making and sewing, but when he needs to, he outsources the construction to two people he has trained. Jean-Marie has spent the last 21 years in Naples, not including his time at Miami International University of Art & Design, where he earned an associate's degree in fashion design.

Jean-Marie keeps busy, which is a principle everyone in his immediate family adheres to. "My mom [Elide] and my brother [Johnny] are very work-oriented," he says. "At one point, my mom was raising three of us and working three jobs. My work routine is intense. I work overnight as a front desk agent at a hotel, I sleep a couple hours during the day, then I work on my brand. My night job taught me more discipline. It can be quiet, so I get to reflect more on my dreams and come up with ideas."

During the coronavirus shutdown, Jean-Marie was furloughed from his hotel job, so he sewed and distributed more than 1,000 masks. He also got a gig doing Instacart shopping and turned that into

a networking opportunity, sharing business cards and making tie sales during his deliveries.

With a dad in the food industry and a mom in health care, just where did Jean-Marie get his fashion sense? "Honestly, I had a good imagination when I was younger. I'd watch shows on Disney and Nickelodeon and think, 'I want to live like that,' which turned into a little bit of professional modeling." Since then, his fashion taste has become more sophisticated. He cites style role models like Sean Combs—"he has an entrepreneurial mindset"—and athlete Russell Westbrook, "who throws on whatever and looks good." Jean-Marie describes his own style as "not too dressy or casual. I'll wear sneakers with nice slacks and a button-down and bow tie, that's my everyday look."

Eventually, Jean-Marie hopes to open a storefront in Mercato. Until then, he's busy expanding his menswear line, developing looks for women, talking to large department stores about partnerships, and working on a documentary about his upbringing. Other future goals include styling someone famous like LeBron James and attending The Met Gala. Many of his friends, he says, urged him to pursue his career in a bigger, more fashion-forward city like Miami or New York, but he listened to his mom instead and stayed local in order to grow his business at a sustainable pace. "What I love about Naples is the support," he says. "I built myself up in a place where fashion isn't the main thing. But sharing my dreams here has been great."





Holly Strickland

A couple mornings each week, 35-year-old Holly Strickland, a married working mom of an energetic 2-year-old boy, Maverick, pries herself out of bed at 3:45 a.m. After sipping her coffee, she throws on some workout clothes, laces up her sneakers, and heads over to Burn Boot Camp, the boutique fitness studio she teaches at and owns.

While her intense schedule sometimes means she doesn't return home until after 7:30 p.m., she finds time during the day to connect with her son and strike a healthy work-life balance. What's more, she's eyeing a second location in Naples where a lease will permit her to have men as clients, too. This buff boss lady couldn't do it all without the help of her lieutenant firefighter husband, Justin Strickland, whom she dated briefly in middle school and then reconnected with in 2007. Also essential in caring for Maverick are her mother and mother-in-law, who take turns watching him.

Strickland has lived in Naples since she was a baby, except for the four years she spent at the University of Central Florida, where she earned a bachelor's in sports and fitness and was on a full-ride scholarship for women's golf. "I still play golf for fun," she says, noting that her favorite local rounds are at Great Oaks and Calusa Pines. "I was an assistant coach for the girls' team at Gulf Coast High School last year. So many people gave to me in my golf career and I wanted to give back."

After college, she found that she was more interested in the physical side of training for golf than in participating in tournaments. Once she decided to stop

playing competitively, she devoted herself to becoming a top-notch fitness professional, motivating her clients with her megawatt smile and cheerful disposition.

Outside of the studio, Strickland prefers to be on the boat with her husband, who is a charter captain on the side, and their son. "I'm really an outdoors girl," she says. "For date nights, the boat is my thing. We will pick up a sub for dinner and go out on the Glades or the Marco River and tarpon fish. Sometimes, we will ride four-wheelers side by side." When Maverick tags along, they ride a custom six-seater on the trails or put him on the boat—two activities he loves as much as they do.

As of late, Strickland is busy transitioning Burn Boot Camp from virtual classes and offerings to an in-person model again, with strict cleaning and social distancing protocols in place. Yet, she wonders what adding another kid into the mix would do, especially if she moves forward with opening a second location. Those decisions can wait for now, as she revels in being a business owner and caring citizen within the Naples community.

"There are so many cool things happening here," she says. "We are involved with Hook a Hero, an organization that takes soldiers, vets, and first responders out fishing. I've had an event for Hook a Hero at my gym to raise money. They send people on trips to get a change of scenery and the help they need." In addition to this involvement, the self-professed optimist says she has a personal mission to see the "the best in everybody" and help others shine a light on the wonderful qualities they possess. <<





AGENDA

By Cathy Chestnut



“READING IS A
DISCOUNT TICKET TO
EVERYWHERE.”
—MARY SCHMICH

TOP BILLING

Open BOOK

Robin Cook and Janet Evanovich are just a couple of the renowned authors who chose to make their homes on the Paradise Coast. On September 16, Christina Cush, *Naples Illustrated* editor in chief and co-author of *Twin Set: Moms of Multiples Share Survive and Thrive Secrets* (Penguin Random House, 2008), will host a webinar entitled “**Under the Covers: Neapolitan Authors Share What it Takes to Make a Book**” at 5:30 p.m. Check naplesillustrated.com for details.

Continued uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 has prevented most local arts organizations and venues from confirming the public events that we traditionally feature in this section. We will return to covering the arts scene when it blooms anew. Until then, grab your readers and set out for new perspectives delivered through the eyes—and pens—of Neapolitans. Because if reading is a “discount ticket to everywhere,” sometimes it’s the only one we’ve got.

FAVORITE THINGS



ASHLEY DEWJI

Ashley Dewji

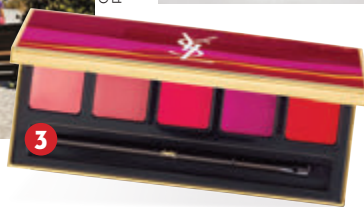
has been living in Naples for more than three years, after residing in Boston, Los Angeles, and Dallas. The bubbly private banker and financial advisor at JP Morgan has spent her entire career in different roles at the company, since graduating from York University with a bachelor's in accounting in 2012. The draw to Naples was strong, primarily motivated by a yearning to be closer to her parents, both of whom live in South Florida. She's never looked back since making the move. "So many people say they love the beaches in Naples," she says. "But I hardly get there as much as I would like to. Mostly, I love how philanthropic our community is. There are few communities across the U.S. that are as charitably inclined as Naples." Dewji jumped right in to the nonprofit support scene, starting with the Boys & Girls Club of Collier County. "I started their NextGen Philanthropy group with a close friend of mine, Emma Christman Osborne, when I first came to Naples," says Dewji. "My heart continues to be and always will be with educating and empowering our youth." She is a new board member for the Gulfshore Playhouse and will chair their Planned Giving Council and continue to serve on their finance committee. Below, her top spots to...



COLLIER COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION



OCEAN PRIME



MATTHEW SCHIPPER



NATIVE GARDENS (2020)



- 1. Bring the parents:** Ocean Prime. The restaurant makes me feel like I am back in Beverly Hills. I love the Black Orchid cocktail and sushi. I know it's a steak restaurant, but I do not eat meat.
- 2. Connect with nature:** Clam Pass Beach is the first beach I went to when I came to Naples, and it is still my favorite.
- 3. Splurge:** The YSL makeup counter at Saks. I am obsessed with quality makeup and skin care.
- 4. Grab coffee:** Angelic Desserts has the best coffee and their pastry chef is wonderful. I got my gluten-free and vegan birthday cake from there this year.
- 5. Get a culture boost:** Gulfshore Playhouse. I grew up enjoying theater as a child. My parents took me and my brother to New York City almost every Labor Day to see a show. I'm so excited about the build of our new Gulfshore Playhouse campus.
- 6. Work out:** That's a toss-up between Practice Yoga, my daily

5:30 a.m. class, and Barre Fusion, my favorite Pilates studio where I have made so many of my girlfriends.

7. Take someone who is new to Naples: Dilly's Seafood Shack at Three60 Market. They have the best

calamari. After that we usually go for a walk to the food truck park, which is unique for Naples.

8. Go on a date: I love a good bike ride on Sanibel, stopping for lunch along the way at Gramma Dot's and ending at the beach to watch the sunset.

—Christina Cush