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In Rod We Trust

Whether or not his songs are on your iPod, you can appreciate Rod Stewart and what he has contributed to our culture. (His song "Forever Young" was on MTV's constant rotation when I was growing up.) Women love him, men want to be him—even now, decades into his storied career—and he promises, as you'll see in our feature on p. 24, that he still has "plenty of gas left in the tank."

Also in this issue, we introduce our 2013 class of Awesome Attorneys (p. 40), speak with one of the region's most prolific playwrights in Tony Braithwaite (p. 10), and share stories from our Men of the Year (p. 29)—the educators, business owners and others whose efforts are helping (or at least trying very hard) to make the Philadelphia area a better place to live, work and play. For my part, I took great joy in interviewing a pair of these gentlemen—entrepreneur Logan Stout and, in particular, Ed Snider, the man who brought ice hockey to South Philadelphia.

I wasn't much of a "sports kid" growing up. Sure, I played baseball, basketball and probably a few others in grade school and high school, never rising above average status. (I wrestled and threw the shot put, discus and javelin, too, but you don't "play" those sports.) When I was in seventh grade, my family absconded from Philadelphia to Bucks County—"the country," as my mother called it—and it was there that I discovered hockey. I've been in love with the game ever since, which is partly why I was so excited to speak with the man they call "Mr. Snider."

In addition to founding the team that brought two Stanley Cups to the city—nearly 50 years ago, not that Mr. Snider or anyone else needs reminding—he has created a foundation whose mission it is to improve the lives of underserved children, using ice hockey as "the hook," as he calls it. Hockey teaches toughness, fitness and the importance of teamwork ... and also that, sometimes, life requires having to endure some pain. The kids enrolled in the Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation are learning these lessons, among others. Many of these kids had never before



been exposed to ice hockey, and now it is helping to reshape their future.

With December's arrival, the year has reached its inevitable end, meaning we will soon have the gift of another blank slate with which to work. Next month, with our "Best of Fitness" feature, we will kick off 2014 by exploring the city's best places to shape your body—mind and soul, too—into the best possible version of itself. For balance, we'll also take a look at the best taverns our city has to offer.

Have any big plans to say goodbye to 2013 or say hello 2014? "Like" us on Facebook and let us know.

BILL DONAHUE
EDITOR
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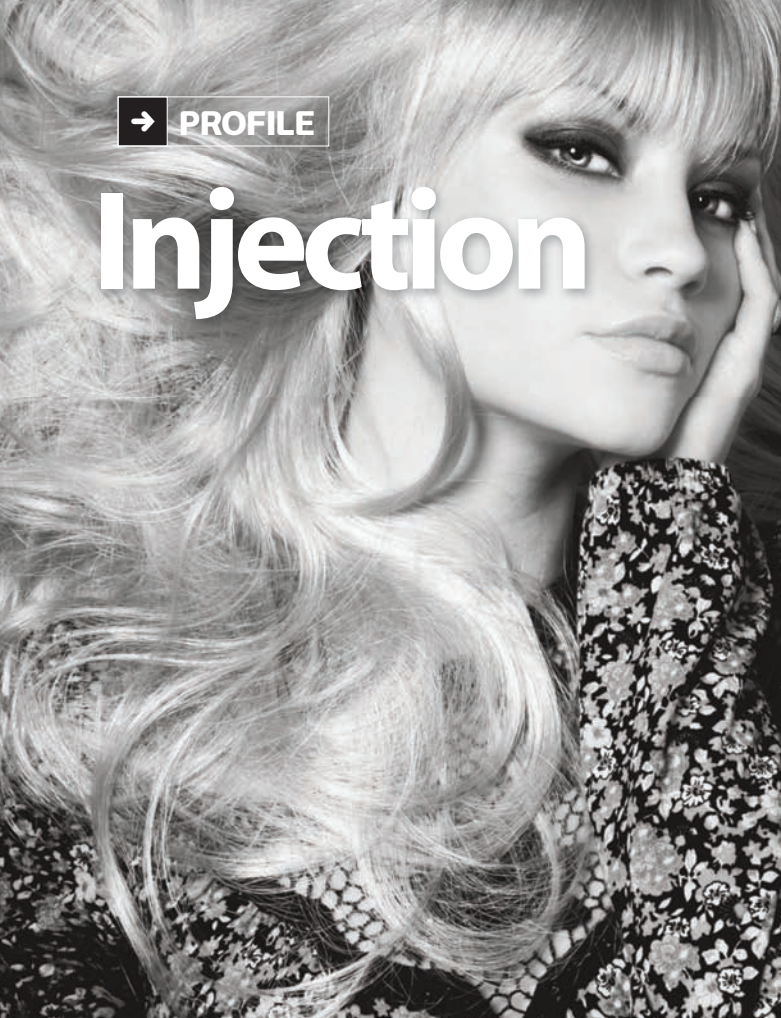
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Through the
art of erasing
facial wrinkles,
Dr. Robert Skalicky
turns back the
clock

by MICHELLE GARLING



Dr. Skalicky is president and founder of Bucks County Plastic Surgery Center and The Rinklefree Center. He is board certified in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and has received multiple awards for his work including Best Plastic Surgeon in Bucks County, 2013. Consultations with Dr. Skalicky are complimentary. His office is located at 104 Pheasant Run, Suite 123, in Newtown. For more information, call 215-702-8600 or visit buckscountyplasticsurgery.com.

WHILE LOOKING younger has always been a priority in society, new advances in cosmetic surgery techniques have made wrinkle-removal procedures even more desirable for both women and men. At present, there are a multitude of injectable substances on the market that are all geared at rejuvenating facial appearance and disguising the signs of aging.

The main injectables being used in plastic surgery today include Botox, Juvéderm, Dysport, Restylane and Sculptra. While each of these injectables can help restore a youthful facial appearance, it is important to realize that the technique used by the plastic surgeon is as important as the substance being injected. According to board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Robert Skalicky, "The use of injectables in plastic surgery such as Botox or Juvéderm can turn back the clock on the aging process and help put off the need for larger, more invasive procedures, but the way that the injection is performed is critical to achieving a natural result as opposed to an artificial, overdone look."

Many patients want to regain their youthful appearance from years gone by but fear the unnatural look that can occur if either too much filler is injected or it is not accurately placed. Dr. Skalicky further explains this point. "The more is better philosophy is not always the best approach when injecting facial lines and wrinkles. If too much is put in, the normal facial contours can be violated and give a very unnatural look. On the contrary, if the procedure is done properly, a beautiful, youthful appearance can easily be obtained."

So how does a patient assure that their injection will be performed the right way and result in a natural look? Dr. Skalicky emphasizes the need for each patient to have an initial consultation with a plastic surgeon to outline their specific goals

and desires. This part of the process is extremely important to both discuss the pros and cons of each procedure being considered and also to make sure that the procedure will meet your specific expectations. At times, the requested procedure may not be able to give a patient the result that they want and, subsequently, may result in patient dissatisfaction. According to Dr. Skalicky, "I think that honesty from your surgeon is the most important quality to have when discussing treatment options to avoid unhappy outcomes resulting from false promises. I'd rather steer a patient toward another procedure that better addresses their concerns than have them spend money on a procedure or technique that falls short of their desired result."

Many times other "minimally invasive" procedures may be discussed in a consultation that can also help rejuvenate facial appearance. These procedures include smaller, office-based surgeries such as mini-facelifts, eyelid lifts, fat injections, Fraxel laser resurfacing or Thermage skin tightening. These procedures can be performed in conjunction with injectable procedures or in lieu of them if they are more focused on correction of the aging problem.

"It is important for each patient to fully understand their options regarding facial rejuvenation so they can make the right choice for themselves," Dr. Skalicky adds. "I like to educate the patient not only on the specifics of a particular procedure but also on how successful that procedure will be for their specific anatomy."

While the effects of gravity and aging are inevitable over time, there are many tools in the plastic surgeon's toolbox to help fix the problem and restore a beautiful youthful facial appearance. What's important is making sure the right tool is selected for the job. ■



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With the winter holidays now upon us, it's time for exchanging gifts with family and friends, maybe sharing a few cocktails with co-workers or simply giving thanks for the important things in life. But don't forget to take time for yourself this hectic time of year. Stop into one of the city's fine art galleries to make a new addition to your collection, or take in a showing of, say, "Jersey Boys" at the Forrest Theatre. That said, they don't call this "the most wonderful time of the year" for no reason, so be sure to take in everything the city has to offer. Enjoy bratwurst and mulled wine while perusing the gift selections at the Christmas Village, or catch the Macy's Holiday Light Show in the historic Wanamaker Building. Check out the following pages for even more ideas to make the most of Philly's wintertime attractions.

various works of 17th to 21st century American and European paintings, watercolors, drawings and works of sculpture. Through Jan. 4: Boris Lurie Exhibit. Hours: Mon. to Fri., 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (in season). **260 S. 18th Street, daviddavidgallery.com, 215-735-2922.**

CALDERWOOD GALLERY

Launched in 1982 by Janet and Gary Calderwood, the Calderwood Gallery has amassed an international following as a world-class resource for original French Art Deco furniture by the most illustrious designers. The gallery has a vast inventory that includes works by Ruhlmann, Arbus, Leleu, Dominique, Jallot, Dufrene, Foliot, Subes and their contemporaries from this pivotal era of fine design. Through Dec 31: Maurice Dufrene, "When Art Deco Paris Dazzled the World." Hours: Mon. to Fri., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. **631 N. Broad Street, calderwoodgallery.com, 215-546-5357.**

MUSE GALLERY Philadelphia's oldest member-run gallery, this Old City cooperative art space honors and celebrates the work of its participating and varying artists. Through Dec. 29: Source of Inspiration Old. Jan. 1 to Feb. 2: Sue McKee. Hours: Wed. to Sun., 12 noon to 5 p.m. **52 N. 2nd Street, musegalleryphiladelphia.com, 215-627-5310.**

RODGER LAPELLE GALLERIES

This gallery, established in 1980, showcases gifted gallery artists such as Martin Poole and Jeanine Leclair. Through the end of December: "A Little of This and a Lot of That" Hours: Wed. to Sun., 12 noon to 6 p.m. **122 N. 3rd Street, rodgerlapellegalleries.com, 215-592-0232.**



ART GALLERIES

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY One of the region's preeminent contemporary galleries, Bridgette Mayer Gallery celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2011. Under the leadership of director Bridgette Mayer, the gallery has earned a national reputation for finding and cultivating American abstract artists. Through Jan. 11: Dana Hargrove, "Aspect Forming." Hours: Tues. to Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. **709 Walnut Street, bridgettemayergallery.com, 215-413-8893.**

THE CLAY STUDIO A nonprofit ceramic artist organization, The Clay Studio provides classes, workshops, artist programs, exhibitions, special events and the Clay Mobile for interested artists and guests. Through Dec. 30: "Gifted." Through Jan. 1: A Juried Show of Ornaments. Jan. 3 to Jan. 26: "Hold Me - Cups Made by Us." Hours: Tues. to Sat., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sun., 12 noon to 6 p.m. **137 N. 2nd Street, theclaystudio.org, 215-925-3453.**

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1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., ansp.org, 215-299-1000.

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

The NCC is America's first and only nonpartisan, nonprofit institution devoted to the U.S. Constitution, bringing its ideals to life through live performances, multimedia exhibits, public programs and educational resources. Through Dec. 31: "Capture the Moment - The Pulitzer Prize Photographs," Continuous: "Freedom Rising," "Signers' Hall" and "The Story of We the People." Admission: adults \$14.50; students and seniors \$13; children (ages 4 to 12) \$8. Hours: Mon. to Fri., 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat., 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sun., 12 noon to 5 p.m. 525 Arch Street, constitutioncenter.org, 215-409-6600.

SIMEONE FOUNDATION AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM

This museum, the

product of renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Frederick Simeone's 50 years of collecting, pays homage to the history of sports car racing in the United States and around the world. The collection contains more than 60 of the rarest and most significant sports racing cars ever built, displayed in dioramas that represent the famous venues at which the cars once competed. Admission: adults \$12, seniors \$10, students \$8. Hours: Tues. to Fri., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat. and Sun., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 6825 Norwitch Drive, simeonemuseum.org, 215-365-7233.



ENTERTAINMENT

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HELIUM COMEDY CLUB Helium Comedy Club introduces exceptional comedic talent from some of the funniest men and women on the standup circuit today. In the intimate environment of a small theater, each show includes an opener, a feature and a headliner of national prominence. Dec.

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Play it Again

by Meg Lappe

The winter holidays mark a return of sorts for Barrymore-winning playwright and stage actor Tony Braithwaite

From one-man shows to complex theater productions, Tony Braithwaite has made a career out of his ability to tell a good yarn. The Bala Cynwyd native traveled from the Main Line to Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., and then returned to Rosemont to continue his career as one of the Philadelphia area's top playwrights and stage actors. Currently he is directing and acting in five separate performances, three of which are for the Act II Playhouse (act2.org) in Ambler.

18 to 21: Greg Warren. Dec. 26 to 28: Jim Breuer, "SNL" alum and star of "Half Baked." Dec. 31: New Year's with Tom Rhodes. Jan. 12: Miranda Sings. **2031 Sansom Street, heliumcomedyclub.com, 215-496-9001.**

TIN ANGEL The second-floor Tin Angel provides guests with an eclectic mix of live entertainment. Before the show enjoy international cuisine in the historic Serrano restaurant, right beneath the concert venue. Dec. 19: Pierce Turner. Dec. 31: WXPX Presents Mutlu New Year's Eve Show. Jan. 9: Wesley Stace and Joe Pernice. Jan. 11: Christine Ohlman. **20 S. 2nd Street, tinangel.com, 215-928-0770.**

UNION TRANSFER As Philadelphia's newest concert hall, the list of performers and attractions at the

Transfer continues to expand at a rapid pace. Dec. 19: Street Dogs and The Workhorse III. Dec. 20: World/Inferno Friendship Society. Dec. 28: The Infamous String-dusters. **1026 Spring Garden Street, utphilly.com, 215-232-2100.**

WORLD CAFÉ LIVE Separated into an upstairs café, which hosts intimate music evenings, and a downstairs music hall complete with a full bar and restaurant, World Café Live hosts some of the top names in music today. Dec. 20: York Street Hustle Third Annual Holiday Spectacular and Huggy Low Down's Holiday Comedy Show-down featuring Chris Paul. Dec. 22: The Jewbadours. Dec. 27: Winter Beer Festival 2013. Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Party with Dukes of Destiny and Philly Bloco. Jan. 7: Bettye Lavette. Jan. 11: Rust - Neil Young Tribute. **3025 Walnut**



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FINE ARTS

BARNES FOUNDATION The Barnes'

sprawling Philadelphia campus supports the foundation's mission of "the promotion of the advancement of education and the appreciation of the fine arts," as well as horticultural science. Hours: Wed. to Mon., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: adults \$22; seniors \$20; students/youth \$10; free for children under 5. **2025 Benjamin**

The holiday season is among the busiest times of year for Braithwaite. For starters, the character Murray the Elf returns to the stage, beginning December 21. After last year's success with "Murray the Elf and the Case of the Missing Mistletoe," Murray now has to solve the case of the "Terrifying Tinsel" for a show that is "specifically for kids," Braithwaite says. Last year, the venue started its first-ever children's theater and sold out every performance. The whole team—Bill D'Agostino, Will Dennis and Andy Shaw, as well as Braithwaite—was brought back, as were the original characters, for the new Murray iteration.

"Like a murder mystery, Murray is on the case," Braithwaite says of the crowd-interactive performances. "Often plays are inaccessible for kids that young, and we want to get them to be lifelong theater fans. We put the professionals on board, not the JV team. I learned the lesson from Terry Nolen at the Arden Theatre. ... Do it up nice [with] the idea being kids can enjoy theater, too."

Along with educating children about the wonderful theater, Braithwaite will act in the performance for his upcoming "Let's Pretend We're Famous"—which he also wrote—also starring Jen Childs. ("We speak the same comedic language," he says.) Again, like Murray the Elf, "both of these shows are sequels, of sorts." Its predecessor, "Let's Pretend We're Married," explored the comedy surrounding

marriage. "Now we explore the various trappings of fame," says Braithwaite. This performance also includes audience involvement to provide "volunteer" actors with their own 15 minutes of fame. In those 15 minutes, everything happens to the volunteers—"obscurity, rising, awards, hosting 'SNL,' scandal, drug addiction, fall from grace and, lastly, the turnaround." This show has already had success at the Montgomery Theater in Souderton and 1812 Productions in Philadelphia. With the improvisational nature of the work, each night is like a world premiere.

There are challenges that come with being on both sides of the action. "If things go wrong, you can't blame the author," he says. "You are much more responsible for the success of the performance, holistically, than if just acting or just writing. You are putting a lot more of yourself out there." This can be rewarding or frightening, depending on the outcome of the performance—but, as Braithwaite says, "Anything with Jen Childs is a success."

One of his favorite performances at the Act II Playhouse is also one of his most recent, "Didn't Your Father Ever Have This Talk with You?" Based on moments Braithwaite recalled from his days as a religion and sex-education teacher for freshman at his alma mater, St. Joseph's Preparatory School, the show left audience members in stitches. The risk Braithwaite took to perform the one-man show paid off

handsomely; it became the fifth-best-selling show in Act II's history.

Along with "Murray the Elf" and "Let's Pretend We're Famous," Braithwaite also directs and/or performs in two other upcoming performances: "The Twelve Dates of Christmas," which runs December 10 through 29 at the Act II Playhouse, starring Maggie Lakis in a one-woman show that follows Mary as she goes on a year's worth of bad dates after watching her fiancée kiss another woman on Thanksgiving; and "The Big Time: A New Vaudeville for the Holidays," which unfolds on the 1812 Productions stage through December 31, commemorating a specific era of comedic history.

In the little time that Braithwaite has to spare, he still finds time to give back to his alma mater by teaching at St. Joe's. Braithwaite's fifth performance at St. Joe's, "The Laramie Project," premiered last month.

A 13-time nominee for the Barrymore Awards and a three-time winner, two of which are for performances at Act II Playhouse, Braithwaite offers this advice to those wishing to be in his shoes one day: "Find [a survival job] that is interesting and flexible and brings you joy." His teaching job was for his survival, but "teaching is, in a sense, theater." Here, Braithwaite paraphrases Henry Higgins from "My Fair Lady": "Happy the man whose profession is also his hobby."

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INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Through a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania, the institute is home to contemporary artworks from artists such as Andy Warhol, Laurie Anderson and Robert Mapplethorpe. Through Dec. 29: "Jason Rhoades, Four Roads." Hours: Wed., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat. and Sun., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. **118 S. 36th Street, icaphila.org, 215-898-7108.**

PAINTED BRIDE ART CENTER

This artist-centered space is committed to exploring and enhancing the artistic process, diversity and the artist's role in the community. Here guests can explore various ways to create and experience all types of art. Jan. 3: "Salsa Caliente!" Box office

hours: Tues. to Sat., 12 noon to 6 p.m. **230 Vine Street, paintedbride.org, 215-925-9914.**

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS

Opened since 1805, this is the oldest art museum and school in the United States and features exclusive exhibitions of international art in addition to exhibits of the academy's collections. Ongoing: "Beyond the Paint - Philadelphia's Mural Arts." Through Jan. 5: "Hidden Treasures Unveiled - Watercolors," "KAWS @PAFA." Admission: adults \$15; students/seniors \$12; youth \$8. Hours: Tues. to Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. **118 N. Broad Street, pafa.org, 215-972-7600.**

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

With collections of more than 227,000 objects that include "world-class holdings of European and American paintings,

prints, drawings and decorative arts," the Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the largest art museums in the United States. Ongoing: "Sol LeWitt - Lines in Four Directions in Flowers." Through Dec. 18: "All Dressed Up - Fashions for Children and Their Families." Through Dec. 29: "The Enchanted World of German Romantic Prints." Through Jan. 5: "Leger - Modern Art and the Metropolis." Admission: adults \$20; seniors \$18; students/youth \$14. Hours: Tues. to Sun., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wed. and Fri., open until 8:45 p.m. **2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., philamuseum.org, 215-763-8100.**

RODIN MUSEUM The Rodin Museum boasts the largest collection of sculptor Auguste Rodin's works outside Paris, including "The Thinker" and a bronze cast of "The Gates of Hell." Last year the museum reopened with a fully renovated

interior, complemented by a redesigned outdoor sculpture garden. Daily: "Rediscovering Rodin." Admission (suggested): adults \$8; seniors \$7; students/youth \$6. Hours: Wed. to Mon., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. **2151 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., rodinmuseum.org, 215-763-8100.**



PERFORMING ARTS

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MARLTON/SANCTUARY Beautiful 4 BR, 4.5 bath home w/ 3 car garage on cul de sac. 2 story foyer w/hw floors & split staircase. LR & DR w/HW, crown molding & chair rail. Kitchen w/custom cabs, granite, & comm grade appls. 1st fl Study, Sunroom & Laundry Room. Master suite w/sitting area, walk in closet and upgraded bath. Newer carpeting t/o. Fin, walk out bsmt with large entertainment areas, separate room & full bath. Trek deck off of the kitchen. Private, wooded back yard.**Realistically priced at \$649,000**



AUDUBON/VILLAGE COURT 2 BR, 2.5 bath townhome w/walk out fin bsmt. Newer carpet t/o this immaculate home. Nice foyer entrance, Great Room with LR & DR areas. Bright eat-in kitchen w/newer appliances. Both bedrooms w/en-suite baths and 2nd floor laundry. Full, finished, walk-out basement with high ceilings, has slider to private backyard. This home is great for just starting out or downsizing. Within minutes to all major highways, shopping and Philadelphia.**Realistically priced at \$164,900**



CHERRY HILL/DOWNS FARM Beautiful 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath home with 1 car garage and fenced rear yard. This home has been lovingly maintained and updated. Large living room with updated flooring is open to the dining room with door to deck and rear yard. Kitchen is updated and has newer appliances. Lower level has large family room, laundry room, half bath and door to rear yard. 3 nice size bedrooms and full bath complete this great home.**Realistically priced at \$239,900**



CHERRY HILL/COUNTRY WALK 3 BR, 2.5 bath, 2 car garage home in a private gated community. Spacious FR w/wood burning FP. Newer updated kitchen w/custom cabinetry & Silestone counters. Master BR w/opening to 2 story foyer, lg. walk-in closet & Master Bath w/2 person sunken tub, shower w/tile surround & glass enclosure & skylight. Newer heat/AC & hot water heater. Newer carpeting, windows & sliding glass doors.**Realistically priced at \$339,900**



CHERRY HILL/SIENA 3 BR, 2.5 bath contemporary w/1st floor Master Suite, full bsmt & pool. Cathedral Ceilings, HW Floors, Recessed Lighting, & 1st floor Study. Living Room w/2 story ceilings & gas FP. Gourmet Kitchen w/newer appls, Corian counters & breakfast bar is open to the large FR. LR, FR & Master all have sliders to the deck, back yard & pool. 2nd story has 2 BR, a jack-n-jill bath. Newer Heating, AC and Water Heater.**Realistically priced at \$525,000**



MOORESTOWN Magnificent estate on 7 acres w/it's own private pond. 6BR, 6 full bath custom home w/ 3 FP. Gourmet Kitchen. Master Suite w/ private balcony & spiral staircase to Main floor Atrium, indoor pool/spa & 10 person Jacuzzi. Li-brary w/ built-ins & FP. Great Room/LR w/pass-thru FP & custom built-ins. Main fl. Gym/Exercise room. Blue stone & brick patio, 3 car heated garage & barn w/ kitchenette & 1/2 bath. Brand new Cedar Shake roof, new AC.**Realistically priced at \$2,200,000**

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ARDEN THEATRE CO. Arden Theatre Co. is a full-service professional regional theater, offering the highest-quality theatrical and educational productions and programs to the artists, audiences and students of the Philadelphia region. Through Dec. 22: "Stick Fly." Through Feb. 15: "Sideways Stories from Wayside School." **40 N. 2nd Street, ardentheatre.org, 215-922-1122.**

FORREST THEATRE The Forrest is a quintessential "road house," stripped to the bare walls and used primarily by touring theater and dance companies. It is owned by the Shubert Organization, a company that was started by three brothers from Syracuse, N.Y., approximately 100 years ago. Dec. 11 to January 5: "Jersey Boys." **1114 Walnut Street, forrest-theatre.com, 800-447-7400.**

KIMMEL CENTER Located on the Avenue of the Arts Section of Broad Street, the Kimmel Center is one of Philadelphia's most well-known performing arts centers. It is home to the Philadelphia Orchestra with additional venues including Verizon Hall, the Perelman Theater, the Merriam Theater as well as the Academy of Music. Through Dec. 21: The Philly Pops Holiday Pops! Dec. 26 to 29: I Love Lucy Live on Stage. Through Dec. 29: Pennsylvania Ballet George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker." Jan. 11: Brian Regan Live Comedy Tour. **300 S. Broad Street, kimmelcenter.org, 215-790-5800.**

SOCIETY HILL PLAYHOUSE This century-old building, with its Victorian pressed-tin walls and ceilings, presents a mix of entertaining shows—nothing highbrow, highfalutin or "artsy



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stuff" here. Through Dec. 29: "Sister Robert Anne's Cabaret Class." **507 S. 8th Street, societyhillplayhouse.org, 215-923-0210.**

WALNUT STREET THEATRE The oldest continuously operating theater in the English-speaking world and the oldest in the

United States, the Walnut Street Theatre is perhaps Philadelphia's most popular theater company. Through Dec. 22: "Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol." Through Dec. 29: "Sophie Tucker: The Last of the Red Hot Mamas." Through Jan. 5: "Elf." **825 Walnut Street, walnutstreettheatre.org, 215-574-3550.**

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Winter Wonderland

These holiday hot spots provide wintertime fun for the whole family

This holiday season, the city's streets will be filled with cheer. From South Philly to Center City, brighten your spirits and take the whole family outside to see the city all dolled up for the holidays. Enjoy indoor activities as well, especially as the temperatures drop, but be sure to take an extra pair of gloves, a cup of hot chocolate and a sense of adventure. —Meg Lappe

↑All Skate

Enjoy outdoor skating at Penn's Landing between Market Street and Columbus Boulevard at the Blue Cross RiverRink (Market Street and Columbus Blvd., delawareriverwaterfront.com/places/blue-cross-riverrink). The Olympic-sized rink overlooks the Delaware River and the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, and includes a heated area for those who prefer to stay firmly on their feet while their loved ones take a skate. There's also the newly opened outdoor rink at the Piazza (skateatthepiazza.com) on 2nd Street in Northern Liberties.

Swim with Santa

This year Adventure Aquarium (1 Riverside Drive, Camden, adventureaquarium.com) will once again host the Christmas Celebration, featuring Scuba Santa. Complete with decorations underwater as well as above, the twinkling lights and snowflakes

will guide aquarium goers through the structure as they view more than 8,500 aquatic animals. Take photos with Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster, and catch Scuba Santa plying the waters of the 760,000-gallon Ocean Realm exhibit.

A Light Experience

The Comcast Holiday Spectacular is now in its fifth year. Watch on the Comcast Experience video wall (Comcast Center, 1701 Arch Street, visitphilly.com), one of the world's highest resolution LED displays, as holiday images and crisp wintertime sounds consume your senses. With scenes from the Nutcracker, the Pennsylvania

countryside and Center City, this show is sure to delight all viewers during the 15-minute performance at the top of every hour. The spectacular runs until New Year's Day.

↕Electrical Spectacle: A Holiday Light Show

Until December 31, Franklin Square (200 N. 6th Street, historicphiladelphia.org/franklin-square) flashes more than 50,000 lights this season during the twice-a-day holiday shows set to a soundtrack by The Philly Pops. All of Franklin Square will be celebrating with horse-drawn carriage rides through December 22 and Santa visits every Saturday up to the 21. Take a ride on





the Lightning Bolt Holiday Express and listen to music and radio personalities from B101. Between rounds of mini golf or taking rides on the Parx Liberty Carousel, guests can enjoy food trucks onsite from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

↑Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and "The Big Time: New Vaudeville for the Holidays"

Through December 22, the classic holiday tale of Charles Dickens' famously grumpy character, Ebenezer Scrooge, plays at the Walnut Street Theatre (825 Walnut Street, walnutstreettheatre.org). See if Scrooge can change his ways, from "Bah, Humbug" to "Merry Christmas," before it's too late. This hour-long performance is perfect for kids of any age, especially with the original and traditional songs chosen to work with the story. Also, now through December 31, enjoy this special holiday show, "The Big Time - New Vaudeville for the Holidays," brought back from 1812's first-ever holiday show. Starring Jen Childs, Dave Jadico, Scott Greer and a lineup of vaudeville headliners, the show is sure to delight audiences of all ages.

Macy's Holiday Light Show and Dickens Village

Visit Macy's in the Wanamaker Building (1300 Market Street, macys.com) to complete your holiday shopping and enjoy a light show, which plays on the hour. With more than 100,000 LED lights narrating a Christmas story, kids and adults alike will be enthralled. Take a break from shopping and experience a life-size recreation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" in Dickens Village, complete with interactive scenery and costumed characters.

↓The Christmas Village

Visit Love Park (15th Street and JFK Blvd., philachristmas.com) during the month of December to shop for holiday gifts, ornaments, jewelry and crafts, and choose from more than 60 vendors in wooden booths and tents. The traditional German Christmas Market will take up the west side of City Hall, complete with European food, desserts and drinks. Enjoy the light decorations and big holiday tree, and also enjoy the waffles, gingerbread, bratwurst and mulled wine.

Eagles rookie Earl Wolff | WRTI's Dave Conant

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"Christmas Carol" photograph by Mark Garvin;
Electrical Spectacle photograph by Jeff Fusco

[1]

Follow Suit

Fit, fabric and timeless accessories make all the difference for today's best-dressed men

by JACQUELINE MCCARTHY

Discerning men should look their best for every occasion and every time of year (maybe even more so during the holidays), and they're doing so with help from some of the city's best designers. Looking one's best when going from the office to the nightclub can be difficult to master, sartorially speaking, but it can be accomplished with the right clothes and the proper guidance—and, of course, the perfect fit from masters such as Charles F. Morrotta Jr. at Distanté on Sansom Street and Craig Arthur von Schroeder's team at Commonwealth Proper on Chestnut Street.

Now that we have officially entered the holiday season, von Schroeder offers this advice: "Don't be the guy who shows up in the crazy sweater or the bright pants. ... Rather, dress with the idea that you'll be leaving the party at some point to hit up an after-hours lounge or another hip party. This means keep the holiday spirit representation in your dress tame; keep your pants dark, your shirt white and your coat/jacket dark as well. Layer your collared shirt with a cashmere V-neck sweater. Don't dress for the party; dress for the after-party."

When worn and fitted properly, the articles featured here ensure that you do just that every time.

Commonwealth Proper promotes a timeless and sophisticated style: a perfect-fitting shirt and suit with the right proportion of jacket lapels, shirt collar and tie widths, all based on a man's stature. At the company's new 2,000-square-foot showroom near Rittenhouse Square, guests find made-to-measure and ready-to-wear clothing, hand sewn by the country's best tailors.

1. Go from executive meeting to after-hours lounge with this custom-made solid navy suit, solid white shirt and solid burgundy tie. This custom-made suit includes personalized touches such as hand-selected linings and buttons, with a pocket square thrown in for good measure. Commonwealth Proper recommends wrinkle-resistant navy wool as a fabric staple, ideal for travel or heavy wear. Navy suit, starting at \$1,850

2. Versatile and classic, a pocket square provides the finishing touch on a well-dressed man. Every man should have squares to pair with a navy blazer (for business lunches), a tuxedo (for formal events) and a date blazer (for casual wear). For an eye-catching result every time, fold the pocket square in half, then in half again and then a third time. It should fit neatly in the breast pocket, showing a half-inch of the square above the pocket. All silk or wool pocket squares, \$55

3. Solid colors anchor a man's wardrobe, so keep it simple—because simple is classic. For three-season pants, try tropical-weight wool or cotton. Heavier wool or cashmere is ideal for pants that will be worn primarily in the winter. Dark pants, starting at \$475 (depending on fabrics); dark blazer/sport coat, starting at \$1,495 (depending on fabrics); and custom collared shirt, starting at \$195.

Available at **Commonwealth Proper**, 1839 Chestnut Street (entrance on 19th Street), 267-319-1741, commonwealthproper.com

Tung To, formerly of Boyds, recently branched out on his own with ToBox—an unconventional shop for the well-dressed gentleman. Stocked with hard-to-find shoe brands from around the world, ToBox welcomes guests to stop in for a quick shine and, if the mood strikes, enjoy a tumbler of whiskey while seeing what the buzz is all about.

4. These updated wingtips demand a second look, ideal for work or play—meaning they are perfect for wearing in the courtroom or boardroom, as well as in the city's hottest lounges. Handmade chisel-toe wingtip, with antiquing by Di Bianco, \$895. Available at **ToBox**, 25 S. 19th Street, 215-644-9435



[2]



[3]



[4]

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More than simply purvey precious keepsakes that sparkle and astound, the region's top jewelers help create memories to last a lifetime

December may very well be the most wonderful time of year, especially for jewelers. Reason is, the year's 12th month is the most popular to purchase engagement rings, according to data from *National Jeweler* magazine. It is also among the most popular times of year to give watches, necklaces and other bejeweled items designed to make an indelible impression on a loved one.

Even so, giving jewelry to mark an occasion is almost never a bad idea. Although a beautiful pair of earrings or a set of custom cufflinks is ideal for hallmark holidays such as Christmas, Valentine's Day and birthdays, finding the perfect item for the right person—spouse, friend, relative, co-worker—will generate a smile any time of year, when given appropriately. With the economy having recovered from its downturn and sustained improvement on the horizon, jewelry sales in the United States will only continue to rise. Sales of jewelry and watches for the month of July, for example, rose nearly 10 percent to \$5.21

billion, according to estimates from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

With the winter holidays now within reach, thousands of lovers will look to “pop the question” to their spouses-to-be and seek out a symbol worthy of their commitment. Although the rule of thumb is that one should spend two months' salary on an engagement ring, Harvey Rovinsky, the driving force behind Bernie Robbins Jewelers, has a different perspective: “The answer is you pay the most money you can reasonably afford to spend on the person you expect to share the rest of your life with.”

No matter the occasion or the amount in one's bank account, the region's leading jewelers—including those mentioned on the following pages—can provide multiple options for that previous something sure to create memories that will last a lifetime.

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215-322-0100 | bandejewelers.com

Bailey, Banks & Biddle
King of Prussia Mall Plaza, King of Prussia
610-265-6152 | baileybanksandbiddle.com

Barry Jay Jewelers
160 Saxer Ave., Springfield
610-338-0885 | barryjayjewelers.com

Barsky Diamonds
724 Sansom Street, Philadelphia
215-925-8639 | barskydiamonds.com

Benari Jewelers
Visit benarijewelers.com for details on locations in Exton and Newtown Square.

Bernie Robbins Jewelers
Visit bernierobbins.com for details on locations in Newtown and St. Davids.

BIG Diamond Importers
15 W. Gay Street, West Chester
610-692-7707 | bigsdiamonds.com

Billig Jewelers
330 Route 73 South, Marlton, N.J.
856-983-2300 | billigjewelers.com

Brian Smaul Ltd. Jewellery
503 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne
610-687-1266 | brianmsmaul.com

Buckingham Jewelers
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215-794-7673 | buckinghamgreen.com

Caleb Meyer
520 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia
215-248-9250 | calebmeyer.com

Carroll's Jewelers
470 N. Main Street, Doylestown
215-345-6277 | thefriendlyjeweler.com

Concrete Polish
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267-324-5201 | concretepolishjewels.com

Cowgirl Chile Co. Jewelry
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52 E. State Street, Doylestown
215-348-4646 | cowgirlchile.com

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Newtown
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David Jay Jewelers
Visit davidjayjewelers.com for details on
locations in Dresher and Warrington.

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215-887-1115 | fredhstraub.com

Giannini Jewelers Inc.
15 E. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore
610-642-6860 | gianninijewelers.com

Golden Nugget Jewelers
800 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia
215-925-2777 | goldennuggetjewelry.com

Govberg Jewelers
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locations in Ardmore and Philadelphia.

Hearts on Fire
The Plaza at King of Prussia Mall,
King of Prussia
484-685-0432 | heartsonfire.com

Infinity Jewelers
3528 Cottman Ave., Philadelphia
215-708-1700 | infinityjewelers.net

Jay Roberts Jewelers
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856-596-8600 | jayrobertsjewelers.com

Jeff Kellmer Private Jeweler
510 W. Lancaster Ave., Haverford
484-380-2155 | jkellmer.com

Jem Jewelers
1409 Easton Road, Warrington
215-343-3385

John S. Cryan Jewelers
673 Second Street Pike, Southampton
215-357-8850 | johnscryanjewelers.com

John S. Price Jeweler Inc.
490 Lancaster Ave., Suite 5, Frazer
610-647-6168 | johnspricejeweler.com

Koehler's Jewelers & Diamond Merchants
11 N. Broad Street, Lansdale
215-855-3627 | koehlersjewelers.com

Lester Martin Jewelers
1650 Limekiln Pike, Dresher
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800-892-8243 | nationalwatch.com

The Newtown Jewelers
21 S. State Street, Newtown
215-968-4778 | newtownjewelers.net

Precision Watches & Jewelry
1528 Main Street, Warrington
215-343-4433 | precisionwatches.com

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Safian & Rudolph Jewelers
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2960 Skippack Pike, Center Point Village,
Worcester
610-584-8283 | williamsandco.net ■



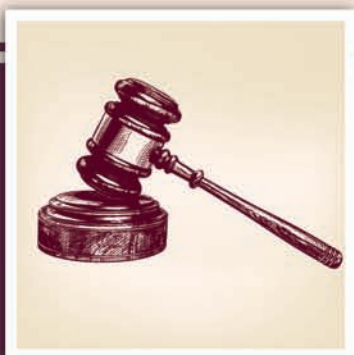
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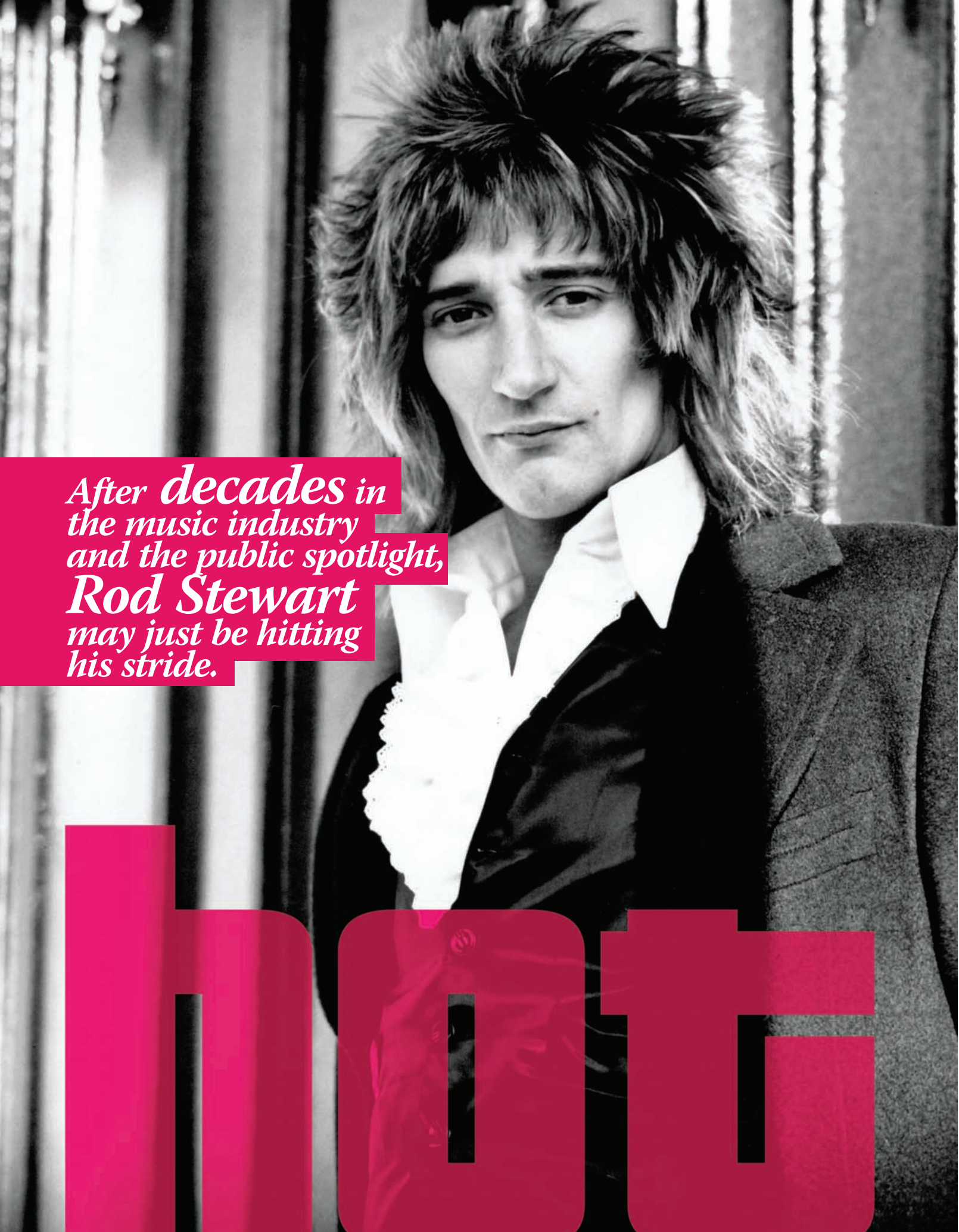
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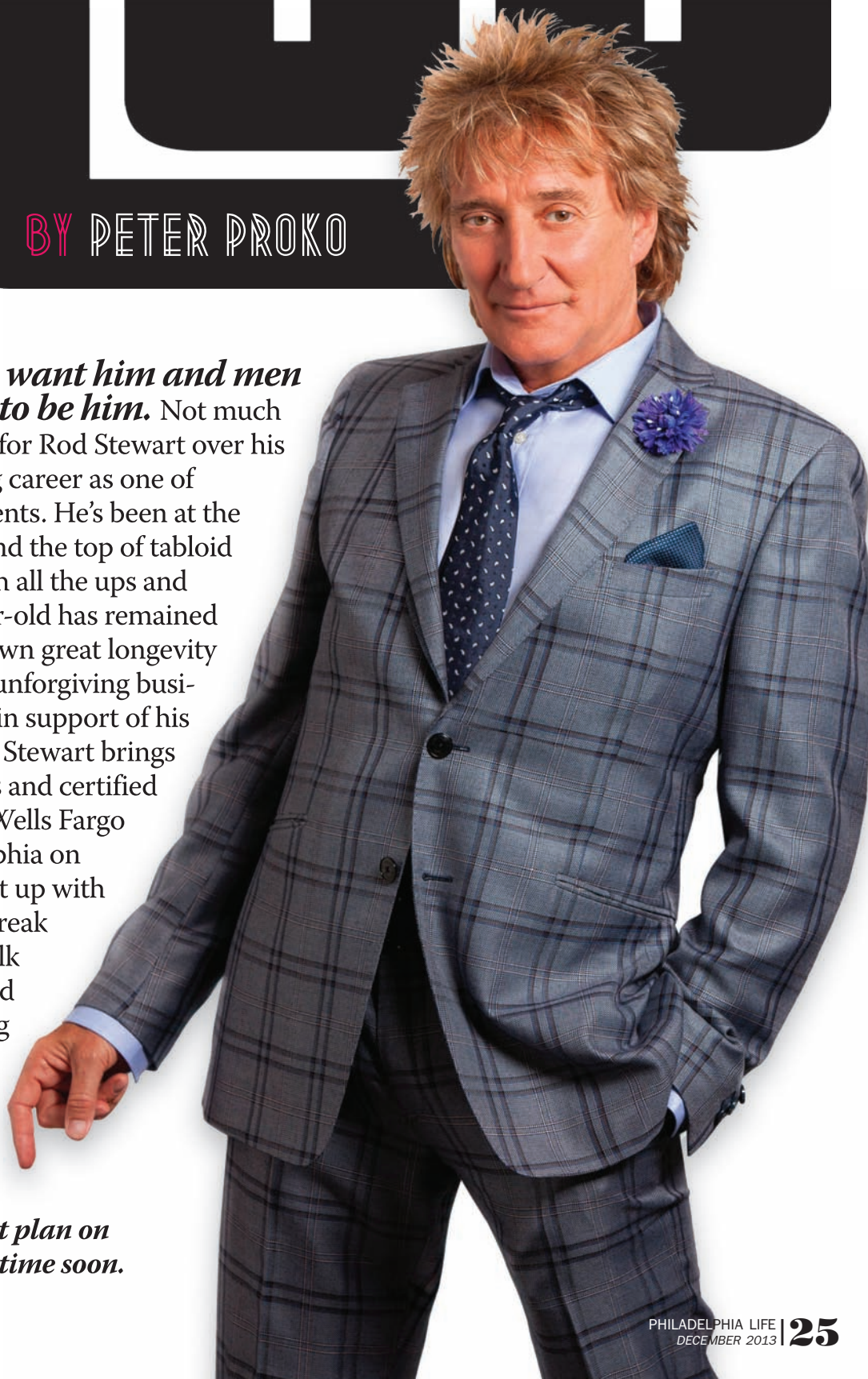
*After decades in
the music industry
and the public spotlight,
Rod Stewart
may just be hitting
his stride.*

Photo

ROD

BY PETER PROKO

Women still want him and men still want to be him. Not much has changed for Rod Stewart over his decades-long career as one of music's biggest talents. He's been at the top of the charts and the top of tabloid fodder, but through all the ups and downs, the 68-year-old has remained consistent and shown great longevity in what can be an unforgiving business. This month, in support of his latest album *Time*, Stewart brings a mix of new tunes and certified classic hits to the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia on Dec. 11. We caught up with Stewart during a break from the tour to talk about what inspired him to start writing songs again, his willingness to share private aspects of his life with the public, and why *he doesn't plan on slowing down anytime soon.*



PHILADELPHIA LIFE MAGAZINE: What can you tell me about the new tour, and how exciting has it been to be back on the road?

ROD STEWART: I'm really excited about the new stage and the production we're delivering. It's quite an eyeful. And I've got 13 musicians and singers on stage with me. Also, I'm doing songs I haven't done in quite a while. And it's a tremendous pleasure to have my old friend, Steve Winwood, opening the show.

PL: The show will be in Philadelphia and that can be a great crowd; any memorable moments from past performances there, at the Spectrum or elsewhere?

RS: Philadelphia has always delivered a great audience. The energy is terrific and we'll go all out to give it right back to them.

PL: You've been doing this a long time, do you still get a jolt out of performing or has it become second nature to you?

RS: Absolutely never second nature. I love what I do and I think the audience can feel that. There's nothing better than when the curtains open to the roar of the crowd. Well, sex with my wife is better!

PL: The music business has changed so much since you started. What do you like about it now and what do you wish was different?

RS: Well, touring is not all that different now. Even though shows like [American] *Idol* and *X Factor* have given us overnight music stars, it is hard for them because they have neither the experience nor the material nor the time to hone in on what they do best.

PL: I've read where you said writing your autobiography inspired you to start writing songs again. How did putting the book together inspire you to find a lost passion?

RS: Writing the book was a cracking good experience in so many ways. One of the things that was fun was talking to my brothers and sister about stories of when we were growing up. And my brother would remind us of a funny story and my sister would jump in and say, "Remember when we did this?" So much came flooding back and some of those experiences turned to music, like the story in the song *Brighton Beach*.

PL: After the *Songbook* series, was it important for you to challenge yourself and sing your own songs again?

//
I LOVE
WHAT I DO..
*It's a part of me.
I don't have
anything to prove
but there is plenty
of gas left in my
tank!* //



RS: No, it wasn't a thought process like that. I loved singing the *Songbook* songs and the timing was right for me to sing my own songs again. I didn't have anything to prove.

PL: Are you a better songwriter than you were years ago, and if so, how have you evolved?

RS: It is hard to compare. I took a long break from writing songs. Now that I am more experienced, my outlook is different, so the songs are different subjects. I will say that before, I

found writing songs like homework. Now I enjoy it much more—ideas come to me and I grab anything I can write on—napkins, newspapers. "Quick, who's got a pen?"

PL: What's the best song you've ever written and why?

RS: Probably either the *Killing of Georgie* because it was a very controversial song at the time or *Can't Stop Me Now* because it sums up a very important time in my life.

PL: What's one song you wish you had written?

RS: [laughing] *April Showers* by Al Jolson.

PL: Who are some of the newer artists you enjoy listening to?

RS: My kids introduced me to the new Arcade Fire album. That's wonderful. And I tell you who I've been listening to that is so good—Mountain Man—three girls that sing in an Appalachian style. Sort of like the Carter family with no backing.

PL: You've influenced many artists, but who were some of your influences early on in your career?

RS: Sam Cooke is an all-time favorite.

PL: You have always been very open about your life, especially in your book ... whether talking about women, drugs, etc. In this day and age, when celebrities are so guarded about their personal lives, why have you been so transparent?

RS: I guess that is my personality. My life is an open book and now it really is. The great thing about writing a book is that you can clear up all the rumors that go around once and for all.

PL: At this stage in your life and career, what drives you to still make music and remain relevant? Do you feel you still have more gas in the tank, something else to prove?

RS: I love what I do. It's a part of me. I don't have anything to prove but there is plenty of gas left in my tank!

PL: What's one thing you know now about the business that you wished someone had told you about when you started?

RS: No one could have prepared me for how much I love doing it and how I love interacting with the audience at every single show. That is something I had to learn for myself, and what a joyous lesson it has been. ■

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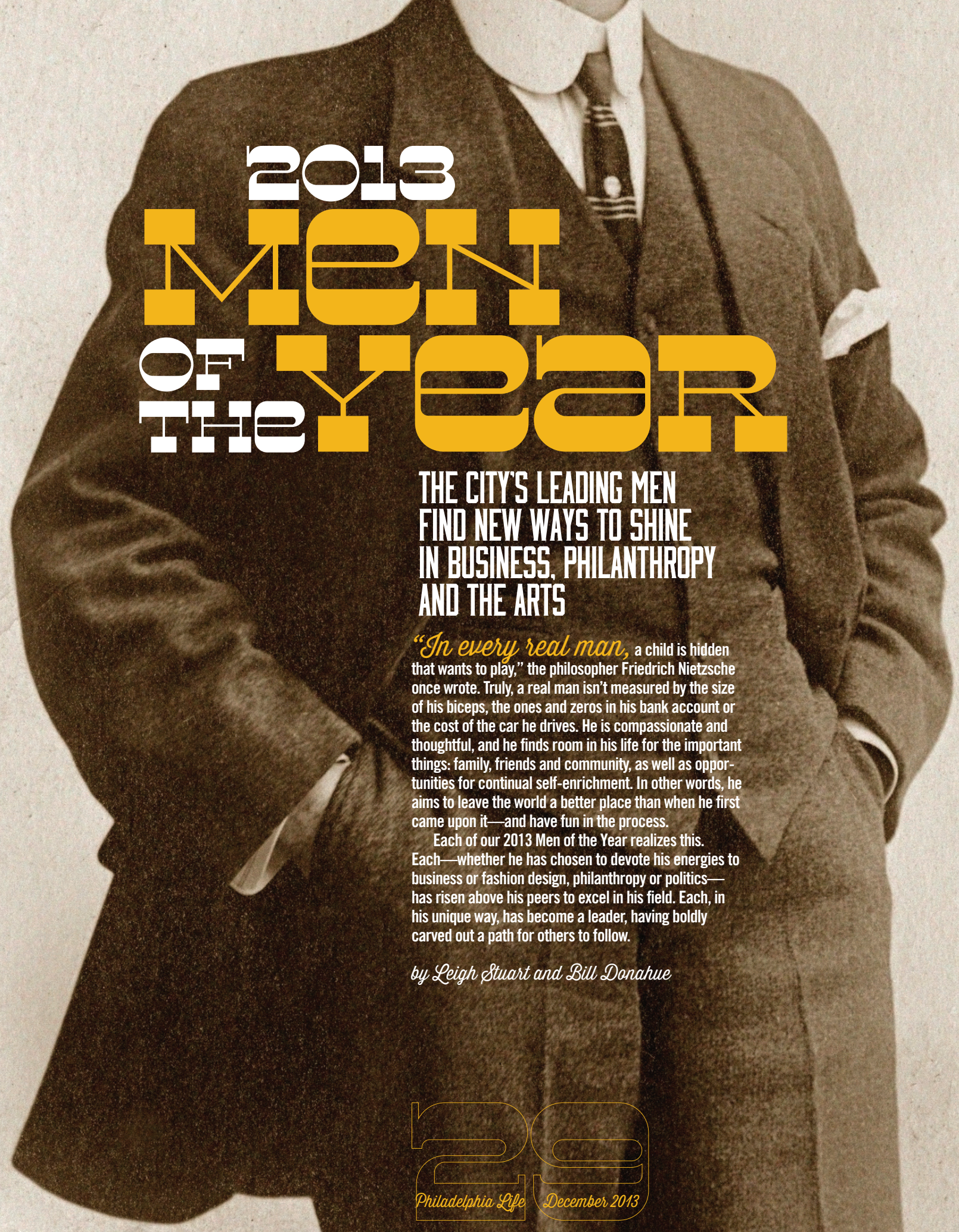
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2013 MEN OF THE YEAR

THE CITY'S LEADING MEN
FIND NEW WAYS TO SHINE
IN BUSINESS, PHILANTHROPY
AND THE ARTS

"In every real man, a child is hidden that wants to play," the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote. Truly, a real man isn't measured by the size of his biceps, the ones and zeros in his bank account or the cost of the car he drives. He is compassionate and thoughtful, and he finds room in his life for the important things: family, friends and community, as well as opportunities for continual self-enrichment. In other words, he aims to leave the world a better place than when he first came upon it—and have fun in the process.

Each of our 2013 Men of the Year realizes this. Each—whether he has chosen to devote his energies to business or fashion design, philanthropy or politics—has risen above his peers to excel in his field. Each, in his unique way, has become a leader, having boldly carved out a path for others to follow.

by Leigh Stuart and Bill Donahue

Self-taught designer

Craig Arthur von Schroeder

puts his own rebellious spin
on classic men's fashion

Most people aren't lucky enough to land one stellar career in their lives. Craig Arthur von Schroeder, founder and creative director of Commonwealth Proper, has had three.

Von Schroeder grew up in Cranbury, N.J., a small farm town near what he describes as "the bastion of preppy-ness" and "sort of a study in American sartorial history," otherwise known as Princeton. He attended Lafayette College near Allentown and earned a degree in government and law, but rather than taking a regular 9-to-5 job, he became a professional soccer goalie (awesome job no. 1) for teams in Argentina, Guatemala and London, England.

That's before he came to a realization: "I thought the world could use me in different way," at which point he chose to pursue a career in law (awesome job no. 2). He attended and graduated from law school at Rutgers-Camden and worked for a few years as a corporate lawyer. Ultimately, though, he decided to pursue a passion closer to his heart, one in which he had actually tried his hand: men's fashion.

From his early days designing polo shirts while in law school, von Schroeder quickly evolved to designing suits. Then, about five years ago, after a fruitless local search for the perfect suit, von Schroeder made a bold jump and decided to start a clothing business of his own. Thus, Commonwealth Proper was born.

As creative director of Commonwealth Proper (yes, awesome job no. 3), von Schroeder is charged with guiding the overall direction of the brand. "I'm sort of a self-taught designer," he says. "I think it's a term I'm getting near comfortable saying I am. ... I have a perspective on things and I'm better able to articulate that than ever in the clothing."

As for his personal design aesthetic, he strives to go his own way rather than be like anyone else. "The brands that I like ... inspire me in a certain way," he says. "I don't mean to sound heady or anything, but I try to create the trends based upon what I like. I try to create timeless clothing, not trendy clothing ... heirloom-quality stuff."

"Everything we do is made here in the U.S.," he continues. "It's the only way I've been able to control quality. We've been doing this for, I guess, five years and we've been touting 'American made' since the get-go."

Commonwealth Proper moved to a new space in mid-November, which has allowed the company a lot of opportunity to grow. The space, located at 19th and Chestnut in Philadelphia, provides 2,000 square feet vs. the previous location's less than 600. The space also features two consultation rooms, a fabric room and administrative offices, as well as more retail room to breathe for Commonwealth Proper's ready-to-wear line of shirts, blazers and other wardrobe staples.

The company has also explored the notion of growing the business beyond the city proper. Andrew Stein, a partner in Commonwealth Proper, views an expansion out to the suburbs—the Main Line, in particular—as a natural extension of its business in Philadelphia.

Though von Schroeder often works seven days a week and all hours of the day, when he does get free time he still enjoys soccer. He also spends time with "the love of my life"—his fiancé, Rhonda Clark Carlson, owner of Philadelphia-based RCC Design Group. —LS

THE HABERDASHER

For almost 20 years, Yards
Brewing's "El Presidente"

Tom Kehoe

has given beer aficionados
good reason to raise a glass

Tom Kehoe's "crew" bio on the Yards Brewing Co. website lists him as "The real O.G. of Yards Brewing Company." It goes on to say that he "prefers to go by the moniker of El Presidente around the brewery. It's OK. He's earned it."

Now that is one respected man.

Originally from Haddonfield, N.J., Kehoe has had ever-present ties to Philadelphia, as well as to brewing; while earning a business degree from Western Maryland College, he brewed beer in his dorm room. After college he bounced around in "small" jobs, working in construction and even doing a stint as an actor—"I did a couple of commercials just out of college," he says—but he never strayed long from his first love.

In 1994, Yards received its first delivery of kegs at the company's original three-barrel brewery in Manayunk. In the company's early days, he and his original business partner did everything, even cleaning. As the company grew, they got some help and the brand flourished. Yards' headquarters moved to Roxborough, Kensington and then, six years ago, Northern Liberties on Delaware Avenue; even so, the first brewery remains in operation as a pilot for test batches.

"It's amazing how I think Philly's really embraced us," Kehoe says. "It really took a long time to grow the brand. . . . You've got to do a good job, always have a good product, and over time that becomes respected."

Although Kehoe is "still in charge of making sure all the beer goes out," he stopped brewing full time in 2000. He now focuses on "paying the bills," deciding the direction the company should go in and being the public face of the brand. "I always call it 'kissing hands and shaking babies,'" he says with a laugh—in other words, "going out and just talking to people about beer."

Yards has grown to become not only one of Philadelphia's most beloved brewers but also a boon to philanthropic groups in Philadelphia and beyond. For example, the company is heavily involved in supporting nonprofits such as the Ronald McDonald House and the Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society. Also, earlier this year Yards produced a limited-edition tart berry ale called "Pynk," with a portion of its proceeds benefiting the Tyanna Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to help those affected by breast cancer. The company has also donated a substantial amount of resources (i.e., beer) for fundraising events around the region—more than two tractor-trailers' worth last year alone.

Kehoe credits his staff for playing an instrumental role in the company's success: "The guys on the bottling line really care that the label is on straight, the brewers really care, and I think that's really important. . . . I think it's the company, and their personalities, that really make Yards everything that it is." —LS

THE BREW MASTER





IDLife founder

Logan Stout

aims to help others
enhance their wealth
and wellness

THE LIFE COACH

Logan Stout's positive energy bubbles to the surface. Dig a little deeper and you'll get a true sense of his ambition, which seems boundless. He wants his nascent firm—Dallas-based IDLife LLC (*idlife.com*), of which he is founder and CEO—to be nothing less than the fastest-growing company in the history of business. “My goal is to beat Google,” he says, “and if we continue to track at our projections, I think we can do it.”

IDLife, where the letters “ID” are short for “individually designed,” provides a platform for wellness nutrition based on personalized health assessments that take into consideration one’s unique health history, fitness level and lifestyle habits. The company’s line of nutritional supplements—meal-replacement shakes, energy products, etc., all made from “the purest ingredients,” he assures—were specially designed to “help people unlock their potential,” Stout says.

Although it is technically still in “pre-launch phase,” IDLife appears to hold tremendous promise. In short order it has amassed a network of more than 3,000 independent sales representatives—with many, many more to follow—eager to build the brand. He has tremendous faith not only in the company’s direct-sales model, an approach with which he achieved a good deal of success in the past, but also in the product itself.

“The receptivity to this has been crazy,” he says. “The majority of people try supplements and vitamins, but they don’t know what to take and end up hopping from one thing to the next, never with a game plan. Everyone needs good supplementation; there’s no such thing as one size fits all. . . . Five years from now, I think people will be saying, ‘I cannot believe I never had a customized supplementation plan.’”

“With the combination of the product and an unbelievable business opportunity [for sales reps], the timing has never been better,” he continues. “People want to be in good shape and prevent illness; they want to look and feel better, but they don’t know what direction to go in. IDLife is there to give them direction.”

Stout first made a name for himself as an athlete. During his collegiate baseball career at the University of Dallas, Stout was a two-time All-American (pitcher and shortstop), as well as an Academic All-American. After college, he played professionally for a minor league team, the Fort Worth Cats. He retired from what he calls “an injury-plagued career” in 2004–2005 to focus on business ventures, and this is where his career truly blossomed.

Stout’s love of teaching and coaching ultimately led to his founding of the Dallas Patriots, which has grown into one of the world’s largest baseball organizations, with teams for kids ages 6 to 19. In addition, Stout founded Premier Baseball Academies, which comprise state-of-the-art indoor-training facilities for baseball and softball players of all ages and skill levels.

“I’m fortunate to have had success in sports, both in college and as a professional,” says Stout, whose life lessons are well illustrated in his recently published book, “Stout Advice: The Secrets to Building Yourself, People and Teams.” “I enjoyed [my baseball career], but the travel was a beating and you get to a certain level where the game is no longer fun and you want to do something else. . . . Everything I’ve done has led perfectly to where we are today.”

Although he lives in Texas, Stout’s roots are in the Northeast, which he calls “my bloodline home.” He has family in Nutley, N.J., and he regularly travels to the Philadelphia area to spread the gospel of IDLife. The march toward achieving Stout’s ambitious goal begins in earnest later this month, when IDLife will officially launch. The network of independent sales reps continues to swell—“unless someone has all the time and money in the world,” he says, “I would suggest they look at IDLife [as a business opportunity]”—and customers will be able to start placing product orders the first week of January.

“I believe it will be one of the greatest companies in the world because it can help people get out of surviving [mode] and into thriving mode,” he says. “People hope 2014 can be better than 2013. And through IDLife, if they are coachable, 2014 can be an amazing year.” —BD

A portrait of Marcus Allen, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania. He is a Black man with a short beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a blurred cityscape seen through a window.

Marcus Allen,

CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania, embraces every opportunity to “pay it forward”

THE MENTOR

Marcus Allen knows the importance

of a role model to a child. He has had many throughout his life, the “most constant” of which was a man named Ronnie O. Spry, his basketball coach at the undergraduate institution he attended, Paine College in Augusta, Ga.

“I met Coach Spry when I was 18 years old. I didn’t like him at first,” Allen says, adding with a laugh, “He seemed to be a very mean guy.”

Spry watched Allen play what he describes as “the worst game ever,” Allen recalls, but the coach “recruited me anyway and brought me into his college.” It was the first time Allen had a positive male role model in his life who “really held my feet to the fire—and didn’t leave,” he says. “I know if it was not for people like him in my life I would not be where I am today.”

Allen played Division II basketball under Spry at Paine but left to pursue another opportunity before graduating. Although that opportunity did not pan out, Allen went on to have success playing basketball abroad. He played for the Solna Vikings in Stockholm, Sweden, from 1994 to 1997, and then went on to play for professional teams in Israel, Finland and Argentina.

While playing for these teams Allen also had the opportunity to travel extensively, visiting countries including Estonia, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom. He continued to expand his horizons once back in the United States, by completing his undergraduate studies in psychology in just about a year and then earning a degree from Temple University in 2001.

Now, as CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania (BBBS), Allen has the opportunity to “pay it forward.” His goal: to help other young people find role models to help them reach for the stars, too.

In addition to serving the community as CEO of BBBS, Allen also gives back as a member of the board of the Mayor’s Office of Community Empowerment and Oppor-

tunity, the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations and the board of directors for the Universal Cos.’ Daroff Charter School.

Allen is not new to the nonprofit world. Prior to becoming BBBS’s chief executive in April of this year, Allen served as CEO of ACHIEVEability, a group dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty for individuals, families and communities via higher education, support and affordable housing initiatives.

His first nonprofit position, interestingly, came about through the for-profit firm VisionQuest. He started in the company’s marketing department and rose to the rank of COO after earning an MBA from the University of Phoenix. During his time with VisionQuest he also launched a nonprofit subsidiary for the company.

Allen says his inspiration to help young people stems in large part from his own experience. “I grew up in the projects with a single parent,” he says. “Our family was very poor and always living under the federal poverty line. . . . I’m lucky my brothers and cousins and I didn’t get caught up in streets,” he says, adding that he knew many other young people who weren’t so lucky.

“I didn’t see myself doing this,” Allen says of his work in the nonprofit sector. “I always saw myself as an entrepreneur, a businessman, someone in some sort of corporate setting just making a living, maybe doing this on the side. . . . But it just engulfs you. Once you get a taste of helping people you think, *I can do more, I can accomplish more.*”

Indeed, he’s now brought this drive to BBBS, launching new revenue-generating initiatives such as Clothes for Kids’ Sake (donatebbbs.com) and cell phone plan sales through Good Deeds Wireless (gooddeedswireless.com). He is also gearing up for the celebration of BBBS’ 100th anniversary, which happens in 2015. —LS



James R. Roebuck Jr. leads the movement to establish equity in education

Philadelphia native James R. Roebuck Jr. has represented Philadelphia County's 188th legislative district in the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives since 1985. That's not a tenure one keeps by happenstance. "I have a passion for [helping] young people; I want to see them have every opportunity they can to do well," he says. "That's just something I've always been committed to and I remain committed to. I think there's an obligation of each generation to make sure that the generation that comes behind them does better than they did. That is a continuing commitment and is something I believe we can do—need to do—better."

Roebuck has been making news recently for his leadership in the initiative to pass House Bill 111, an updating of decades-old legislation that seeks to better prepare students for bright academic and career futures.

"The effort is to bring it back," he says, "to the point at which we really look at the way in which we're delivering higher education to students and hopefully making sure that it's relevant to them and that it's geared to the existing careers that students are accessing as of 2013; that we're really aware of the changes that are coming about, not only in terms of education and the qualifications for jobs, but also in terms of making sure that we're state-of-the-art in the delivery of services, delivery of the actual instruction."

"It benefits high school students, who would hopefully be able to find that the college they choose matches their career aspirations, but it also means that colleges actually are providing for students the courses, the opportunities, the career paths they need to go out and have successful, productive careers," he continues. "There's great inequity among the 500 school districts [in Pennsylvania]. Those that have a good, solid tax base do well, [and] those who don't, don't do well. If you look at the current crisis we're in [here] in Philadelphia, you see the chaos this has created."

Roebuck is active in a number of groups, including organizations in his community and within the legislature, and was a major supporter of former Gov. Ed Rendell and his measures to improve education for Pennsylvania students. Roebuck is a member of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's board of directors, a member of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus and democratic chairman of the House Education Committee.

Roebuck himself has an impressive record of studies, as a graduate of Central High School, Virginia Union University (B.A., with honors), and the University of Virginia (M.A., 1969; Ph.D., 1977). He also has experience working as an instructor himself. He taught at Drexel University "for more

years than I like to think about," he says with a laugh, as he has always had a passion for education—or what he calls "that solid foundation upon which to build good, productive lives." He adds that education should also strive to encourage individualism and well-roundedness in students and where schools are failing to do that, there is a distinct challenge and opportunity for positive change.

"I'm a West Philadelphia guy that's lived in West Philadelphia all my life and had the opportunity to go away, out of state, to school but I'm really happy to come home and to be rooted in this community," he says.

"We have a very diverse, open community. There's lots of different people living together in the common community, have a common purpose, and that, I think, makes it a really good place to be." —LS

THE LEGISLATOR

Ed Snider, father of the Philadelphia Flyers, helps the city's at-risk youth earn a better life

Ed Snider, the man who brought professional ice hockey to South Philadelphia, helped build a franchise notorious for doing whatever it takes to gut out a win. Even so, some of his greatest achievements have happened away from the ice ... at least away from the ice of Wells Fargo Center, where the Flyers now play, or its predecessor, the revered Philadelphia Spectrum.

Originally a native of the Washington, D.C., area, Snider came to Philadelphia in 1964 as a vice president with the Philadelphia Eagles. Since founding the Flyers franchise in 1967, his teams have brought two championships home to Philly and endeared themselves to scores of rabidly passionate fans, from the northernmost Philadelphia suburbs to the southernmost tip of the Jersey Shore. Yet Snider, 80, has done much more with his considerable resources than relentlessly pursue the hardest-earned trophy in all of professional sports. He has been earned Hall of Fame nods from several hockey-related organizations, for example, and he continues to lead one of the country's most successful sports-and-entertainment companies as chairman of Comcast-Spectacor, which owns the Flyers.

Also, eight years ago he created the Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation (esyhf.org) to improve the quality of life for underserved populations living in the Philadelphia area, including some who have never before seen a hockey game. Its purpose: to use ice hockey—a game traditionally played by kids from white, middle-class families—as a tool for teaching lessons about competition, sportsmanship and hard work to boys and girls from Philadelphia's inner-city neighborhoods.

"I was trying for years to figure out how to help kids in the inner city," he says. "The best way I knew to do that was through hockey."

The foundation provides full protective equipment, ice time and experienced coaching—all of which can be expensive even for kids from affluent families—to more than 3,000 children, at no charge to them or their families. The benefits to the boys and girls involved, however, extend far beyond the ability to stickhandle and body check. In addition to the athletic curriculum, children enrolled in the program also hone their strengths in more essential parts of their lives, specifically in matters of academics and character development.

"[Hockey] is the hook; you get the kids in and they love it," he says. "In order to participate, you have to get good grades. We help them with homework, we teach them the right skills, and the results are incredible. I think 97 to 98 percent of the kids who are involved matriculate to the next grade, compared to 50 percent of the population [elsewhere]."

Through a long-term partnership with the city of Philadelphia, the foundation has taken on responsibility for overseeing a number of rinks that were once considered for closure, and renovated them as a way to offer year-round programming.

"The hockey program has worked out beyond my wildest dreams," he adds. "Our goal is to someday have 10,000 kids in the program, and right now we have 3,000. It will require more rinks and spreading our wings further. We want to serve the entire Delaware Valley, growing in places like Chester and Camden, and we have other things ahead that will be opportunities for growth." —BD ■

THE CHAIRMAN



At its core, the law is a system of rules that govern a society. Many of us are only concerned with its function when we err—by receiving a traffic ticket, for example—or must rely on it to sort out a personal matter such as divorce or an estate. There is another segment of the law, though, that affects everyone by helping to shape society and protect its members from abuses. It is in this field that Sheller, P.C. operates.

Stephen A. Sheller is the founding partner of Sheller, P.C., a Philadelphia-based national law firm known for its participation in civil-rights cases, class-action lawsuits against tobacco and drug companies and for its role in the 2000 Bush v. Gore postelection proceedings, among many others. It is one of the leading whistleblower, pharmaceutical and medical device product liability and personal-injury law firms in the United States. The firm's whistleblower cases alone have recovered more than \$6 billion for the U.S. government.

It was while instituting litigation in Palm Beach County, Florida, involving butterfly ballots during the 2000 U.S. presidential election that Sheller learned of aggressive and unlawful marketing practices of large pharmaceutical companies. His television appearances in the election case prompted representatives for these companies to confide in him their concerns about potentially illegal company activity. Further investigation revealed "off-label" marketing and misuse of many popular drugs.

One of these is the antipsychotic drug Risperdal and its generic counterpart risperidone. This drug was being marketed to children and the elderly for purposes for which it was not intended, tested or originally FDA approved. Sheller represents hundreds of young boys who have developed gynecomastia—the development of breasts in men and boys—while taking the drug. Many have needed a mastectomy as a result. At the same time, Sheller, P.C. helped the U.S. government investigate and settle a whistleblower case against pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) for \$2.2 billion. "This settlement is especially important because in these cases our most vulnerable populations are being targeted for off-label use," Sheller says. "These companies are providing misinformation while offering kickbacks to doctors to prescribe these drugs."

In what may be a first-of-its-kind tactic, in addition to naming the pharmaceutical companies, Sheller is actively pursuing the medical research "ghostwriting" companies who wrote the medical literature that promoted the drugs, alleging that they knew or should have known of the dangerous side effects. Sheller is known for such innovative strategies to achieve justice; it was his idea to pursue a consumer fraud case against Philip Morris, which promoted its light cigarettes as safer when, in fact, they were not. This theory resulted in a \$10 billion verdict. Naming the "ghostwriting" company puts corporations on notice that they cannot obscure the risks of drugs

Stephen A. Sheller, founding partner of Sheller, P.C.



Photography by Alison Dunlap and Kelly Massa

by engaging a third party to write supposedly impartial medical articles.

This is only one in a series of large judgments by Sheller, P.C. Most recently, the firm represented clients in a \$2.5 billion settlement to compensate patients of the DePuy ASR hip implants. The firm represented several hundred plaintiffs in that litigation. Sheller also served as a lead attorney in several other recent pharmaceutical whistleblower cases, including a \$520 million settlement against AstraZeneca, a \$2.3 billion settlement against Pfizer Inc. and a \$1.4 billion settlement against Eli Lilly & Co. in 2009. These settlements include some of the largest in U.S. history.

Many of these cases were made possible thanks to the pharmaceutical employees who reached out to Sheller, P.C. with information about suspicious activity. As partner Brian J. McCormick Jr. explains, whistleblower statutes reward employees for reporting fraud against the federal or state government and contain protections for employees against retaliation. Sheller, P.C. represented one such employee against J&J to penalize them for marketing efforts by filing a case under the federal False Claims Act—a law established to help the government fight fraud. “In this case the marketing efforts by J&J created a false market for the drug,” McCormick says. “It was marketed to people who it was not intended for and

“I wanted to continue to pursue big, important and far-reaching cases, but for individuals who I can make a difference for, rather than already successful businesses.”

—Partner Brian J. McCormick Jr., on his decision to join Sheller, P.C.



for All

Philadelphia-based law firm Sheller, P.C. is known nationwide for its whistleblower and consumer protection practice that has shaped the course of history *by* SHARON A. SHAW

it was, in fact, either not working or in many instances, not safe. This was a ‘blockbuster’ drug, and because Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance was paying for the drug when they should not have been, it cost the government.”

McCormick says the risk to their careers is the reason it is important to offer whistleblower awards. “[This plaintiff] was not the only employee at J&J aware of this conduct, but she was one of only a few brave enough to come forward. Others were lining their 401(k), but it was costing the government. The fact that she and

others—less than 10—came forward is important and they should be rewarded for their courage, especially considering they will not be going back to work there or in that field.” Whistleblowers in such cases come to Sheller, P.C. directly, often through referrals from law firms across the country that recognize its expertise, or from government officials who recommend private representation.

McCormick understands the requirements of filing a government case more than others; he served as an analyst with the FBI where he was

responsible for researching, collecting and distilling information. “It really has taught me how to investigate and put a case together when working with the government,” he says. “It gives me a leg up in understanding what government investigators are looking for.

“I wanted to continue to pursue big, important and far-reaching cases,” adds McCormick, who was a partner in the Philadelphia office of a large, international law firm before joining Sheller, P.C. in 2007, “but for individuals who I can make a difference for, rather than already successful businesses.” He finds tremendous satisfaction in knowing that his victories now enable victims to receive the health care they deserve, or ensure their children’s education, despite their absence.

“Working with Steve [Sheller] is an unbelievable experience,” he says. “He is always two or three steps ahead, he can see around the corner and, while others are making a decision that will impact the case next week or next month, he is thinking about how it will affect the case in eight months or a year.”

Sheller’s long view of the law has inspired him to affect change through the creation of the Stephen and Sandra Sheller Center for Social Justice at Temple University. The center, made possible by a \$1.5 million donation from the Sheller Family Foundation, is focused on young and aspiring lawyers and social service professionals. It will provide a setting for students to work on cause-driven activities that will advance social justice through a variety of activities, from policy to litigation.

For more than 30 years, Sheller and his wife, Sandy, have been civically, educationally and philanthropically active in the Philadelphia area and beyond. They have taken on leadership roles in organizations that serve others, empowering those most in need, recognized the service of the military and more.

Their legacy of service continues in their children as well. The Shellers’ daughter Jamie is a managing partner at the firm, bringing depth and breadth to business development and coordination of litigation in addition to pursuing cases for individuals harmed in accidents and groups affected by defective drugs and medical devices.

“We need to make certain there is equality in health care, justice and other things,” Sheller says. “Our goal is to help implement these things. It is our obligation to try to do that, to help those most in need and provide an example for the future.” ■



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Fighting for RESOLUTION

Dennis M. Abrams and Anita L. Pitock of Lowenthal & Abrams P.C. help clients recover from tragedies involving medical malpractice, nursing home abuse and other injustices

by BILL DONAHUE | photography by JEFF ANDERSON

The catastrophic injury or death of a loved one can tear a family apart, especially when such a tragedy results from the negligence of a medical professional sworn to preserve and protect the victim's well-being. Dennis M. Abrams and Anita L. Pitock of the Philadelphia-based law firm Lowenthal & Abrams P.C. have felt this pain more deeply than most. In matters of medical malpractice, nursing home abuse and other areas of the law, they have fought for justice on behalf of countless clients whose lives have been irrevocably harmed.

"Whether by jury verdict, mediation or arbitration, the client is looking for remuneration, resolution and closure," says Abrams. "Our clients

can't really grieve until the case is over and they are vindicated in knowing that whatever happened never should have happened."

Lowenthal & Abrams' team includes 12 attorneys, 10 of whom are litigators, and a long-tenured support staff equipped to handle cases involving not only medical malpractice and nursing home abuse but also personal injury, product liability, Social Security disability and workers' compensation. In matters of medical malpractice—a physician's misdiagnosis or injuries resulting from a physician's negligence, such as leaving tools in the body after surgery, etc.—the firm excels at illustrating how significantly an injury has affected a client's life.

"For us to be empathetic and immersed in our clients' pain helps us convey that pain to the jury and the judge," says Abrams, who has been recognized as a Pennsylvania "Super Lawyer," and also received the honor of membership to the National Trial Lawyers: Top 100 and the American Society of Legal Advocates. "You can tell someone you're getting headaches every day [as the result of an injury], but unless I live with you and see how the headaches disable you, and that it's not just headaches, that your mind is numb, your body is numb, you can't begin to realize the extent of the injury."

Abrams appreciates the unique nature of medical-malpractice cases, due to the challenge of having to become an expert in medicine and the fact that no two cases are alike. Considering the medical background of two of the firm's attorneys—Pitock, a registered nurse with a background in coronary/intensive care, cardiology and family medicine who transitioned into law in 2001; and Esther M. Gallagher, M.D., whose areas of practice include medical malpractice, product liability and catastrophic personal injuries—the firm is especially well equipped.

"This firm's commitment to people, to doing the right thing and to making a difference made a big difference to me when I came here," says Pitock, who is particularly passionate about fighting for those who have suffered from the negligence or abuse perpetrated by employees of long-term care facilities. "There was one [medical malpractice] case that involved the death of young girl, which took a lot out of me personally. Even after the case was settled, I still kept in touch with the family. They told me that having me there was like having an angel sitting on their shoulder. Hearing that was well worth any emotional discomfort I experienced."

Abrams, meanwhile, recalls several cases involving newborn babies who were deprived of oxygen in the course of their delivery, resulting in the babies developing cerebral palsy. The verdicts he achieved here helped the babies "be the best they can be," he says. "I'll stay in touch with the family, and the baby, who now is a

teenager, and see the benefits of what we did for them. Those cases are really rewarding, because we've taken the load off the family."

In light of tort reform in Pennsylvania, taking on a new medical-malpractice case and presenting it to a jury can cost as much as \$100,000, according to Abrams. The state now requires firms to present a certificate of merit from a professional, such as a board-certified family doctor, who believes there was a deviation from the standard of care that caused the victim's injury. In the process, Lowenthal & Abrams must incur costs for expert depositions and other expenses in the course of preparing for a trial.



↑ Dennis M. Abrams



↑ Anita L. Pitock

"You can spend \$50,000 to \$100,000 very quickly," Abrams says. "In cases that involve multiple specialists, the lawsuit could include the surgeon, the anesthetist, the nurse and more, and for each [professional] named in the suit, we have to have an expert in the field reviewing their work and telling us whether or not they were negligent. If you have 60 to 70 medical malpractice cases, that's a load you have to bear. We pay those out-of-pocket costs until or unless we recover something for the client. The risk is on us, and the workload is on us."

In addition to fighting injustice on behalf of clients, the firm's attorneys are actively engaged in the community. For example, Abrams co-founded the Christian Legal Clinics of Philadelphia, which include five clinics in Philadelphia and Chester where volunteering attorneys provide free legal advice to disadvantaged community members in need of guidance regarding any legal issues they might have. Pitock, for her part, sits on the board of directors for the nonprofit

Project Helping Hands, which grants medical intervention to those in Third World countries who lack access to quality health care. During a recent "life-changing experience" in the jungles of Bolivia, South America, Pitock was part of a team that provided hands-on care—treating infections, for example—to 3,500 people over a two-week span.

Lowenthal & Abrams' commitment to such service—and, of course, to its clients—can be traced back to its founding partner Jeffrey P. Lowenthal, who started the firm in 1976. Although Lowenthal and the rest of the firm's attorneys prepare each new case as if it will go to trial, the firm also participates in arbitration

and mediation, which often resolves cases more quickly yet without sacrificing results for the client.

"We're very passionate about helping people who have had their lives disrupted and their families," says Abrams. "If the person who died or was seriously injured was the primary breadwinner, who is going to support the family now? Also, if the person who was seriously injured survived, there's the issue of the cost of future medical care, not to mention the emotional toll of having to care for

someone in that kind of situation.

"Ultimately it is the client's decision to go to trial or settle," he continues. "We don't want someone to weather a trial if they are not comfortable with it. On the other hand, if their case has merit and value, and the defense side is not recognizing that [through a settlement offer], there is no other option but to go to trial." ■

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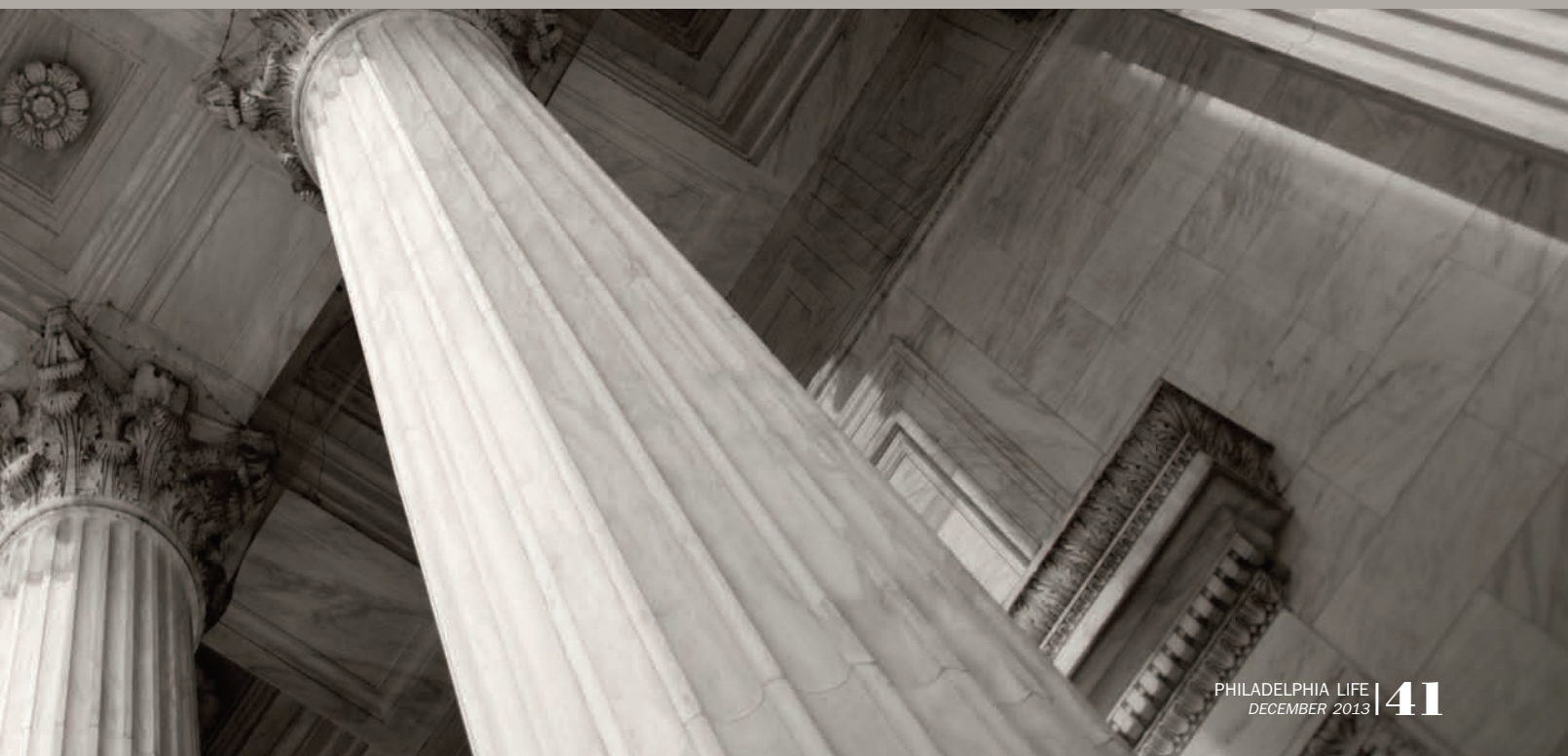


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So we're here to help. Hundreds of *Philadelphia Life* readers visited our website, *PhiladelphiaLifeMag.com*, to cast their votes for which attorneys practicing in the Philadelphia area they deem the best. On the following pages, we categorize these "legal eagles" by their particular areas of focus. So whether you're looking to facilitate an amicable divorce, administer a loved one's estate or secure your financial position in the workplace, **you'll find the best of the best here.**

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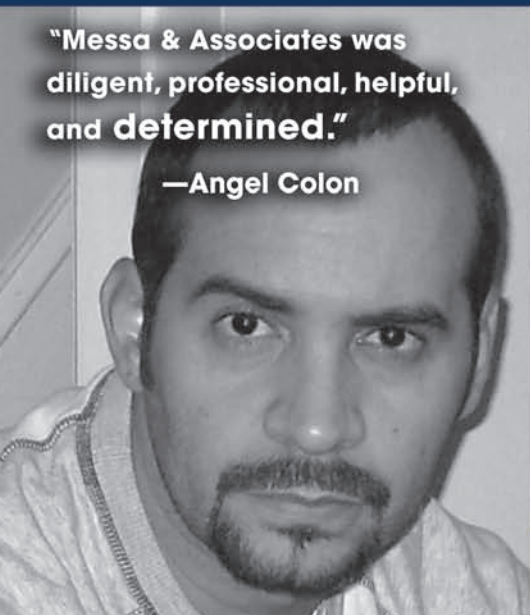


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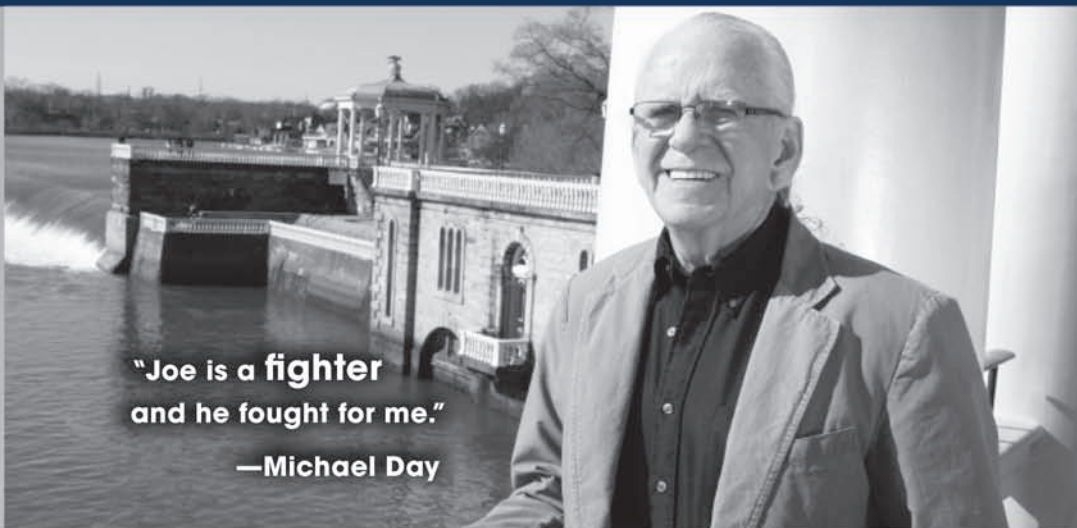
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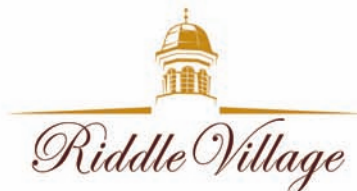


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Experience Matters

The attorneys of Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP's family-law department stand apart by providing clients with personalized attention and decades of expertise

by JENNY GRAHAM | photography by ALISON DUNLAP



The attorneys of Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP have been achieving results for clients since 1954. Shown here are the nine members of the firm's family-law department.

Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP is a firm with an impressive history and track record of success. From real estate to wills and trusts, tax law to commercial litigation, personal injury to family law, the firm has been achieving results for clients since 1954. Among notable areas of expertise honed by the firm over the years is family law, an integral part of the practice for more than 40 years.

"This practice has a distinguished history and one of the largest domestic/family-law practices in the state," says Jerry Schorr, co-chair of the firm's family-law department. "We have a group of people with a vast amount of experience. Anyone you would ask locally or regionally should know of this practice because it's been around a long time and prides itself on the results it has obtained over the years. ... I'm tempted to say there are hundreds of years of experience here."

Family law is a difficult area to master, however. Issues such as divorce, spousal and child support, custody, protection from abuse orders, division of assets, parental rights, paternity and adoption are not easy to deal with. For that reason, it is important to have a good attorney to help guide a person through such matters.

"We have different people with different strengths, different styles, but we all have the same goal: to come up with practical, creative solutions to help people get through a difficult part of their lives," Schorr says.

"We have different people with different strengths, different styles, but we all have the same goal: to come up with practical, creative solutions to help people get through a difficult part of their lives."

—Jerry Schorr, Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP

Schorr began his career at a smaller firm in 1984 but, as fate would have it, that firm merged with Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP in 1991 so, in a sense, his current firm is the only one he's ever been with. He mentions his colleagues as one of the reasons he's stayed for so long.

"One of the reasons I stayed here is the personal nature of the practice," he says. "This is a nice place to work. We're friendly, we're collegial, we don't have large egos ... [and] we always try to help each other out. If you measure by how many people come and go, you'll find we've been the same stable group of people for many years."



Clients requiring counsel in matters of divorce, custody and other family-law issues turn to (left to right) Julie A. Auerbach, Jerry Schorr and Elizabeth L. Bennett, as well as other attorneys in Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP's family-law department.

One such colleague is Julie A. Auerbach, a partner in the firm. Auerbach, a graduate of Rutgers School of Law in Camden, N.J., has been practicing law for more than 20 years, nearly all of which she spent focusing on family law. Like Schorr, she enjoys working with clients to help them through difficult times in their lives.

"Most rewarding is seeing the emotional journey," she says. "When [clients] come to you they're very distraught; they feel lost, confused, and when you take them through the divorce and help them on a path to a new life, a lot of times you can see a difference in them. You're hopeful you've had a chance to help them with that process and give them the tools to manage their new life."

She continues, "It's certainly a challenge, but it's probably the overarching reason why I like what I do. Just to distinguish ourselves among many other family practices, we pride ourselves on being sensitive to the needs of the client."

Likewise, special counsel Elizabeth L. Bennett says, "The most satisfying thing is to have someone come into the office in a state of crisis and mental chaos and to help them transition through that so they end up with a rational, functional, satisfying solution and with that solution they feel safer, more secure and they can establish the appropriate boundaries, hopefully, with their spouse and meet new people."

With 35 years of experience in law, Bennett is a top attorney in her field and has even contributed to shaping the state's health care policy. Bennett, a proponent of collaborative law and mediation, had her own firm prior to arriving at Astor Weiss Kaplan & Mandel LLP but decided she wanted to focus more on her clients and less on managerial duties. "I joined Astor Weiss so I could hand off management functions to them and continue to try to help people," she says. "I'm very happy that I've been able to do that here." For the convenience of Bennett's Main Line and Delaware County clients, the firm has provided office space in the same complex as her prior office.

She, too, speaks highly of her colleagues at the firm, noting, "I like the people here: They're honest, they're civilized, and they're experienced."

Schorr concurs, noting, "I think what sets the firm apart is experience. It has just tons of experience doing every single facet of this practice for many, many years." Auerbach says the firm is special because it is adept at balancing sensitivity and cost-consciousness.

Schorr goes on to list a number of other reasons why he thinks the firm is one of a kind. "It's not just the history and experience [the firm] brings; we really pride ourselves on fashioning practical solutions. We're always mindful that we're dealing with people's lives. We're trying to get them to the next chapter of their lives intact."

He continues, "I enjoy, after the fact, that I've moved a person through this very difficult process and helped them reach a point where they hopefully can stand on their own and can move on personally, financially, psychologically, to whatever comes next in their lives."

Schorr, Auerbach and Bennett are only three of the family-law department's distinguished roster of nine family law attorneys. The others are Barbara Silver, Neil Hurowitz, David Gutin, David I. Grunfeld, Dina S. Ronsayro and Sara McGeever. Hurowitz, a member of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, was recognized for his dedication and contributions to family law by the Family Law Section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association last summer. ■



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Resolved to Help

Through their casework with clients and in service to others, the attorneys of Silver & Silver strive to make a daily difference in other people's lives

by SHARON A. SHAW

photography by JODY ROBINSON

They say if you want something done, give it to a busy person to do. It seems that those who are the most accomplished get that way by tackling every need they see. Mike and Cindy Silver can relate. Despite being heavily involved with their family, community and professional and charitable organizations, they are committed to being personally involved with each client represented by their Ardmore-based law firm, Silver & Silver. The firm handles cases involving Social Security disability, personal injury, employment law, long-term disability, workers' compensation and more.

"We treat our clients like family," says Cindy, who, when negotiating a case will ask herself, "Would I be proud to present this resolution to one of my own family members?" The firm's employees are like family, too, some of whom have been with Silver & Silver since the firm was founded—more than 30 years ago—shortly after Mike and Cindy were married.

Mike, a graduate of Rutgers Law School, began working in the field of Social Security disability several years before the firm's founding, when a co-worker asked him to take over two hearings he had scheduled. Mike



Cindy and Mike Silver

enjoyed working with the clients—elderly men suffering from serious health problems—and won both cases. After that initial success, Mike became responsible for all of the labor law firm’s disability cases.

“When I was younger, I didn’t know whether to go into medicine or law,” says Mike, who grew up with a hardworking father and a mother who suffered from illness. “Now I consider myself an economic doctor; I can help cure clients’ financial concerns.” The settlements Silver & Silver win for clients help assure that these victims have the resources to afford adequate health care and housing, and provide financial security for their families.

When Mike started the firm, Cindy, who earned her J.D. from the Villanova School of Law, was working for an insurance company, where she gained her broad experience and knowledge of insurance law. She joined the firm as an attorney six years later to represent victims in personal-injury cases.

Although the elderly, ill or those who had physical jobs they can no longer perform may be the most common disability clients, accidents can happen to anyone. “We have represented the poor and indigent but also doctors, lawyers and corporate leaders—even an architect who had been knighted by the Queen,” Mike says. In the past five years, however, the federal government’s standards for approving Social Security disability have become much stricter. In 2008, for example, 68 percent of cases nationally received approval, compared to approximately 40 percent these days. “Our success rate is more than double that,” he says. “And we have won almost every federal case this year when we appealed a decision against one of our clients.”

Larry Weinstein, a partner at Silver & Silver who previously worked for the Social Security Administration, joined the firm out of a desire to help others. Many clients find it difficult to care for their health, manage their finances and represent themselves in an application for disability. Weinstein advises that, after seeking treatment to document and treat the disabling conditions, they hire a skilled attorney. “Let your physician know not only that you were in an accident, but how it functionally affects you. Judges won’t take the word of an applicant alone; you need supportive documentation.”

Joe Schwartz, a Silver & Silver trial attorney, sees his job as helping his clients make the best of a bad situation. “The insurance companies have the funds and influence to tilt the system in their favor,” he says. “Without a skilled attorney, the average person can easily be overwhelmed.” He also represents employees who have been unfairly fired or denied unemployment or workers’ compensation benefits.

Rita Bonner has been practicing disability and veterans’ law since 2007. Before law school, she was a crisis counselor and coordinator of a victim/witness program. She is a compassionate advocate for the disabled and disadvantaged.

Silver & Silver’s experience in multiple fields offers an edge to injured clients in situations



Silver & Silver’s attorneys—(left to right) Larry Weinstein, Rita Bonner, Mike Silver, Cindy Silver and Joe Schwartz—are committed to being personally involved with each client they represent.



Silver & Silver office building

where concurrent claims may be viable. In one such case, a client was injured on a dangerous staircase in the course of employment. Because of the seriousness of the injury, the client was awarded a seven-figure verdict, but was also entitled to workers’ compensation, Social Security disability and private long-term disability. “We can coordinate all of these benefits because of our experience in all four fields,” Cindy says. “After over 30 years of establishing relationships with insurance adjusters and their counsel, they know I negotiate fairly and that we will not hesitate to litigate when necessary.”

Silver & Silver is selective in accepting their clients and meticulous in the preparation of their cases. The attorneys encourage anyone who finds himself or herself in the unfortunate position of being unable to work due to an accident or illness to contact them and discuss their options. There is no charge for the initial consultation, during which the attorneys meet with each client personally to hear the facts surrounding their case.

In addition to his caseload assisting clients, Mike has worked with professional organizations, as well as state and federal legislators, to improve the field of disability law. He served as Third Circuit Representative for the National Organization of Social Security Claimants’ Representatives, and eventually became president of the 4,300-lawyer group. He has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives’ Social Security Subcommittee, advocating for ways to make the disability system more equitable, and helped to improve the educational opportu-



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nities for other disability attorneys by founding and chairing the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Disability Law Committee. Mike was recognized as the only “Super Lawyer” in the disability field in Southeastern Pennsylvania from 2005 to 2013. He is also a past chair of the Ardmore Initiative, a business district authority responsible for physical improvements and economic development in downtown Ardmore, and has served as president of the Ardmore Rotary Club.

In addition, he serves as advocacy chair for the Arthritis Foundation of Eastern Pennsylvania and chair of its Jingle Bell Run. Mike was also elected chair of the board, where he helped secure funding for arthritis research and treatment.

Mike says that his cases make him realize how most of us take our good health for granted, and why he feels fortunate to help those who face unexpected challenges and grateful to give back. The Silvers have passed this passion on to their three boys, and the example they set has clearly paid off; all three of their sons are dedicated to helping others through their careers and personal endeavors.

Above all, Silver & Silver is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of their clients every day. “We want our clients to feel they have been made whole—emotionally and physically,” explains Weinstein. “Disability can destroy one’s self-confidence and worth. . . . If we can help them get benefits, they can get the treatment and medications they need and, as a result, uphold their financial responsibilities. Once a judge recognizes their legitimate disability, our clients feel vindicated and there is finally a positive resolution.” ■

It's an Awesome Year at Obermayer

Four attorneys with distinct personalities, styles and practices helped make 2013 a banner year for this law firm

by SHAREN NOCELLA | photography by JEFF ANDERSON



↑ David Ladov



↑ David Nasatir



↑ Nina Stryker



↑ Gary Samms

Stryker, Samms, Ladov and Nasatir—sounds like a team's starting lineup and, in a manner of speaking, it is. Much like an all-star team, each player is a success in his or her own right; however, together they are a force to be reckoned with. This team doesn't compete for individual glory; rather, they fight for the best interests of their clients at the law firm of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP.

Nina Stryker is an intelligent, quiet and reserved person. At first glance, you probably

would not realize that this diminutive woman is really a formidable force in the courtroom where she has fought on her clients' behalf for more than 25 years.

"Nina has always excelled at whatever she did. In college, she was an outstanding gymnast and scholar. She put 100 percent into every task, was always prepared and went the extra mile to help her teammates," states Jill Marsteller, senior vice president of Ursinus College and Stryker's former college sorority sister. "Today, as my outside legal counsel, she

still operates the same way, always prepared, helpful and balanced."

Whether she is in a courtroom or meeting with her client, Stryker is calm, cool and prepared. Her knack for anticipating problems before they occur and diffusing them combined with her ability to make even the most complex issues understandable have been the keys to her success.

For nearly 20 years, Stryker has been practicing trusts and estates at Obermayer where she also chairs the firm's Trusts and Estates Depart-

ment. While an unflappable opponent in Orphans' Court, she enjoys collegial relationships with her opponents and has earned their respect. Case in point, consecutively for the past decade she has been elected by her peers to several of the legal profession's "best of" lists.

Stryker has accomplished so much in her career; however, she has done so without sacrificing her family life. She believes if you are passionate about something you find the time whether it is family or work. As a result, unlike other professionals, she has enjoyed a successful and well-balanced personal life and career.

Gary Samms is one of the most sought-after professional liability defense attorneys in the country. He has tried far more than 150 cases, winning 95 percent of his trials, including 32 consecutive defense verdicts. Over the years, he has represented local and national celebrities and distinguished professionals.

Samms' adept legal acumen and masterful abilities in the courtroom have contributed greatly to his success. His ability to cross examine expert witnesses often has determined the outcomes of cases. In a recent decision the jury remarked, "The cross examination of the experts by Mr. Samms is what won the case for the defense." Furthermore, Samms believes that everyone, even those who were involved in terrible and unfortunate circumstances, has the right to an ardent defense.

For Samms, it isn't just about winning cases. He works with his clients to strategically determine the best approach to resolve cases; often times that means working toward settlements and other times it means fighting it out in court. Samms' longtime client Robert (Barry) Mulhern, Jr., general counsel for Devon International Group, affirms Samms' effective methodology, by saying, "We use Gary on all high exposure cases. He's an excellent lawyer and frankly he always gets the best results possible."

Montgomery County native David L. Ladov's steady, pragmatic and realistic approach has made him a leading divorce lawyer in the state. On any given day in Ladov's West Conshohocken office you could see a celebrity, a CEO or stay-at-home mom there to meet with him. "Regardless of the person's stature or professional accomplishment, they are going through a very difficult emotional time," he says. "Everyone deserves to be represented with compassion and care. After doing this for 35 years, I have handled practically every issue and represented practically everyone."

"His word is his bond," explains longtime friend and colleague Robert Whitelaw, manag-

ing partner at Obermayer, in describing Ladov. "He is a direct and no-nonsense lawyer. It is easy to see why his clients and other lawyers are drawn to him and, more importantly, respect him. I am glad he is now a part of Obermayer so I no longer have to oppose him."

Ladov's career accomplishments are rivaled only by his work to advance the legal profession. He is a leader both at his firm and in the legal community. He serves as co-chair of Obermayer's Family Law Practice Group and he has held a number of leadership positions for the Montgomery County and Pennsylvania Bar Associations. Notably, he is one of six attorneys in the state to serve on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Domestic Relations Rules Committee. This gives him a distinct advantage as he is developing the rules and guidelines that other attorneys have to follow.

"Hi, this is Dave Nasatir." During a typical day in this dynamic business lawyer's life, David Nasatir could easily say this two dozen times. Each time, his voice conveys his cheerful and sincere disposition which he somehow maintains throughout his very busy and long workday.

"Hey, I love what I do," he explains "I became a lawyer because I loved politics and government. Along the way, I discovered I also loved putting together deals." In addition to his legal practice, Nasatir is also very active in Montgomery County politics.

Nasatir's clients are as diverse and varied as the matters on which he works. On a typical day, he could be working out the details of a loan, assisting a CEO in negotiating a business transaction, meeting with a local political candidate trying to get his support or appearing before a zoning board to advance a large real estate development project.

When Shawn Gee, CEO of the Sports and Entertainment Financial Group, was looking for a real estate attorney, his entertainment lawyer referred him to Nasatir. "He told me I was just negotiating against this guy and he was great," Gee recalls with a laugh. "That says a lot. I thought if the guy who opposed him is recommending him, he must be good." Gee called Nasatir and eight years later he is still Gee's lawyer.

Nasatir attributes his success to his ability to anticipate problems and get around them to reach solutions. To his clients, he has proven to be a trusted advisor and valuable resource that is reliable and accessible 24/7.

These four attorneys with four distinct personalities, styles and practices helped to make it one awesome year at Obermayer. ■

The team at the law firm of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP doesn't compete for individual glory; rather, they fight for the best interests of their clients.



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Visit www.obermayer.com for more information.

On The MOVE

by MEG LAPPE

Law firms and other businesses across the country turn to EthoSource when looking to create or refurbish their office space with high-quality furniture at a low cost

EthoSource owner John Gallen Jr. founded his business in 2001 to provide high-end office furniture for businesses in the Philadelphia area and across the nation.

They are called “growing pains” for a reason. Although a business’ expansion signifies success, headaches inevitably arise between phases. This is where companies such as EthoSource come in, as Washington, D.C.-based law firm Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox can attest. When the firm needed beautifully refurbished office furniture to furnish three floors of one of the city’s premier office-space locations, EthoSource was the only source upon which it needed to rely.

Throughout the project, EthoSource worked closely with the firm and Gensler Architects to provide a customized and functional furniture solution that reflects the progressive and sophisticated tastes of the firm. Complete design, project management and installation services were provided as well. The most astonishing part of the project, however, is that the furniture cost significantly less than equivalent new furniture, enabling the firm to utilize those dollars in other ways.

Environmental Design (LEED). A LEED-certified office takes into consideration environmental benefits such as the origin of a product and the amount of recycled content it contains. If a company is moving, downsizing or renovating, EthoSource takes the office furniture, “instead of having [companies] throw furniture into landfills,” says Kauffman. “[We] ship it out to our recycling facility, facelift it and sell it out into the market. Even in the refurbishing process we apply recycled fabrics and other used accessory pieces to products as well.”

These recycled pieces can be used in the two types of spaces that law offices normally require. First, there are partner and conference rooms, which tend to require exceptional quality. “Instead of spending \$15,000, [firms] can spend \$3,000 and get an equivalent product,” Kauffman says. The second type of space includes workstations for paralegals and support staff workstations, which is EthoSource’s specialty. “We can refurbish the

them questions and investigate with them to understand the scope of the project, what their goals are and their vision,” Kauffman says. “Our website is very informative, but we pretty quickly want to have a conversation.”

The website reflects the current active inventory, where “we can buy furniture in St. Louis and within a week people can see it up on the site,” Kauffman says. The company also has two showrooms—in King of Prussia and Reading—where “the customers can engage us, and can see, touch and pick the products,” says Kauffman.

Once initial contact has been made, the next step is to figure out the exact style and design that the client desires. The design team can illustrate how a client’s employees will fit into the space, as well as provide renderings and 3-D color images showing what the finished space will look like. “Once the design has been agreed on, we make the selection of fabric, finish and paint colors, all of which can be customized,” Kauffman



Above, left: EthoSource has two showrooms in King of Prussia (shown here) and Reading, where “the customers can engage us, and can see, touch and pick the products,” says Bryon Kauffman, vice president of sales for EthoSource. Above, right: EthoSource has earned a reputation for giving clients’ office spaces, such as this one from Washington, D.C.-based law firm Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox, a much-needed facelift in an economical, environmentally friendly manner.

“We provided close to 50 partner offices and provided work spaces for about 200 employees of the support staff,” says Bryon Kauffman, vice president of sales for EthoSource. “It looks like a brand-new installation, but [the law firm] spent a third of the price they would have.”

Given EthoSource’s reputation for giving each of its clients’ office spaces a much-needed facelift in an economical, environmentally friendly manner, this story is a familiar one. EthoSource has been providing cost-effective, high-end office furniture for businesses in the Philadelphia area and across the nation since 2001, when owner John Gallen Jr.—then a liquidator for another brand—recognized a niche for pre-owned Herman Miller Ethospace brand office furniture.

Through the magic of refurbishing, EthoSource takes old office furniture and makes it new again. Using a combination of new customized upholstery and recycled/pre-owned accessory pieces, EthoSource’s design staff and project-management team creates office spaces that look luxurious but were less expensive to furnish than one might guess.

EthoSource can also help businesses work toward certification in Leadership in Energy and

[whole] cubicle system—the Herman Miller Ethospace—which is a high-end nicer cubicle system and make it look brand new again,” he says.

EthoSource also provides furniture for “swing spaces,” when companies are renovating a building and the employees need furniture to be able to work. No matter the need, EthoSource’s in-house design and project-management team members coordinate delivery and installation services as well. The team works with clients up until the moment employees return their refurbished offices.

EthoSource has worked with companies with as many as 600 people in one facility to small law offices with just one or two partners. Any office can use them to achieve the look of professionalism. “EthoSource is much more sophisticated than you normally see in used office furniture,” says Ian Gendreau, the director of marketing.

Potential clients can visit the website and explore the vast amount of products and services available. As soon as a prospective client clicks on the “inquire” button regarding a particular piece of furniture, he or she is contacted by EthoSource within an hour to talk through what needs exist. “We want to talk to [the potential clients], ask

adds. “We can refurbish the furniture to look exactly as the customer wants with specific colors. Once the order is placed, we walk [the client] through the entire process of getting furniture delivered and placed. We are not done until they are sitting in the furniture.

“We are not exclusive,” he continues. “Steelcase, Knoll and Hayworth are some of the many manufacturers of furniture we liquidate, but Herman Miller Ethospace is what we refurbish. ... When we started the company, we knew we wanted to refurbish furniture—cubicles specifically—[and] we needed to start with a well-made system. Herman Miller is probably the best-made constructed furniture on the market. It is built like a tank and appropriate for almost any professional office, from a small telemarketer call space to an office of paralegals.” ■



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Pho Ha

Excellent Vietnamese dishes, including the soup from which it takes its name, take center stage at this diminutive South Philly noodle shop

by Brian Freedman | photography by Felicia Perretti

A well-wrought bowl of pho is one of the world's truly great restoratives, an often miraculous gathering of broth, noodles, meat and herb-bright accompaniments that almost makes you glad you got a cold, just in order to be able to bask in its healing aura.

Before my family and I moved out of our apartment not far from Chinatown this past summer, my first stop, whenever I was laid low with a sniffle or a fever, was to any of the standout pho emporiums nearby. Just a few slurps and a course of DayQuil and I was back on my feet with speed.

The key, however, is to find the good stuff. As with all the world's great soups—tom yum from Thailand, caldo verde from Portugal, chicken noodle from Jewish mothers and grandmothers around the world—the range of quality is staggering. Just as a chicken noodle soup with overcooked meat and mushy vegetables is likely to bring you back down to the depths of your illness (if for no other reasons than psychological ones), so, too, it goes with pho: The cooking times, the nature of the liquid, the quality of the add-ins—all these can and do make or break a bowl.

Pho Ha, in the nondescript New World Shopping Plaza on Washington Avenue, is, happily, home to some very good, if not quite transporting, examples. The steak and meatball pho is one of the standouts here, a generous tub with islands of smartly considered meats. The tender and comforting steak is both lovely on its own as well as scooped up with any of the other goodies you've added to the soup; it has the ability to both shine on its own, as well as frame, say, the accompanying basil or sprouts in equal measure.

For a more challenging pho experience, make sure to try the pho chin nam gau, which uses flank and brisket to more familiar and flavorful ends, and adds the less-often-seen fatty flank to the equation, alongside tender strips of tripe, all white and almost spiky along their sides. But it's the tendon in this one that will both surprise and possibly challenge you. Gelatinous textures, after all, are notoriously difficult for American eaters to handle, and this one is unabashedly jiggly. Still, it's worth a try, as the flavor, both savory and mild, is excellent, especially when dragged through a bit of chili oil.

A similar texture is evident in the deceptively simple-sounding "fresh chicken with seasonal vegetables." This, it was explained by our charming and knowledgeable server, starts out as a local chicken that's butchered specifically for Pho Ha; that freshness is immediately evident, as the meat is impossibly moist and tender, and the flavor somehow deeper than what most of us are used to. It's served simply, on the bone and beneath a pleasant crown of

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A noodle bowl, summer roll and other signature dishes from Pho Ha

skin, and the flavors—magnified as they are by what reminded me of a sort of Vietnamese gremolata—are far more memorable than a dish as simply named as this typically is.

Wonton and roast pork noodle soup found its most exciting expression in the dense, punchy dumplings throughout, as well as the aromatic slices of pink-edged pork. A vermicelli bowl, however, fell short; although the grilled pork anchoring the bun torn thit nuong was as smoky and decadent as any I've had recently, there were only a few diminutive shrimp and a surplus of noodles. It felt somehow skimpy, somehow less than I'd expected. On the opposite end of the protein-expression spectrum, however, the pork in the well-crafted summer rolls was unexpectedly bland, though the generous pink shrimp anchored it beautifully.

On balance, it's easy to understand the enduring and justified popularity of this South Philly standout. (We know of several respected chefs who count Pho Ha among their favorite places to dine when not at their own restaurants.) The portions are more than generous, the flavors true and the prices as easy to swallow as most excellent bowls of pho tend to be. I may have moved out of the neighborhood, but I wouldn't be surprised if I found my way there even more often than I have in the past. In sickness and in health, this is a restaurant worth frequenting. ■

Pho Ha

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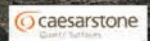
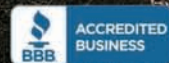
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Road Trip

Reasons to check out one (or more) of the many excellent restaurants outside city limits

Philadelphia is tough to beat in terms of culinary destinations, but that doesn't mean restaurateurs on the outskirts are afraid of trying. The holiday season, when we break out of our routines to spend time with family and friends in the suburbs, is the perfect time to find out. Towns along the Main Line, in particular, are blessed with many reasons to venture outside city limits. Following are some of our favorite hot spots at which to indulge in excellent global cuisine (and maybe a cocktail or two) in Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties.



↑ House pastrami with vegetable pickles and mustard bread at Citron + Rose in Merion Station

Avenue Kitchen
789 E. Lancaster Ave., Villanova
610-525-3950

Avenue Kitchen is the brainchild of Dana Farrell, co-owner of Harvest Seasonal Grill and Wine Bar, and chef Greg Smith (Farrell's brother), who honed his craft under the likes of Jean-Marie Lacroix, Georges Perrier and Chris Scarduzio. The sophisticated yet comfortable space has an urban/industrial feel and features an open ceiling with lots of exposed white brick, as well as tabletops made of century-old recycled wood. Although the décor and atmosphere combine to

make this a sure winner, the real star here is the menu of farm-to-table cuisine, from the casual (pizza and sandwiches) to the exquisite (entrées such as short rib and jumbo lump crab cakes).

Cerise
1011 W. Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr
610-527-4400

Chef Ben Thomas is a singular talent, with a résumé that reads like a modern chef's wish list of experiences, and the result of his unique culinary background is Cerise. This charming, clean-lined 46-seater boasts elegance to spare and the sort of casual, unselfconscious charm that complements the menu perfectly. The menu has two options: a three-course prix-fixe for \$39; or a four-course deal for \$47. The portion sizes here are spot on; even the smaller dishes possess enough richness and depth to pack a far bigger punch than their appearance might initially imply.

Citron + Rose
370 Montgomery Ave., Merion Station
610-664-4919

This kosher destination is an important restaurant, not just in the Philadelphia region but also in the greater landscape of American Jewish cuisine. The kitchen here—now under the care and leadership of chef Karen Nicolas—strikes an impeccable balance between respect for tradition and a brave willingness to challenge convention. Some truly excellent cuisine is served here in a space as cool and contemporary as any in the area. In short, Citron + Rose is a thoroughly modern, highly ambitious restaurant that happens to be kosher but is never content to allow the old ways of doing things define it.

Isabella
382 E. Elm Street, Conshohocken
484-532-7470

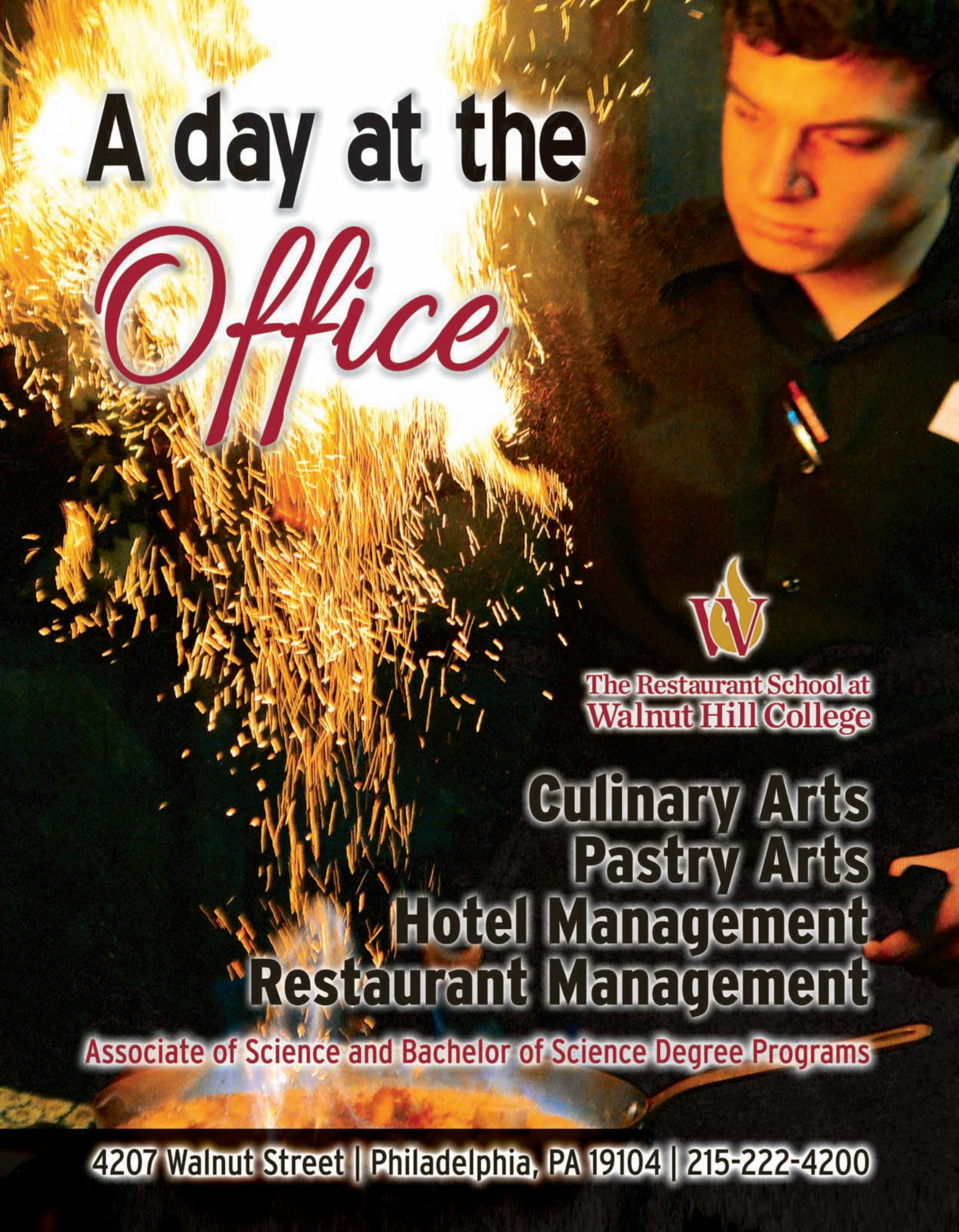
This "contemporary Mediterranean" restaurant tries to keep the ingredients true to the areas that it represents, while taking some liberty with preparation methods and pairings that may not be traditional. Spanish cooking has gained popularity in the last several years in part because of a strong emphasis on using the best ingredients and the idea that sometimes simple is better. Much of Isabella's produce and dairy come from small local farms, meaning the menu usually goes no more than weeks without some sort of change. Isabella's tapas way of eating allows for a taste of everything.

Sovana Bistro
696 Unionville Road, Kennett Square
610-444-5600

At this rustic-chic delight, wrought-iron chandeliers, elegant wooden tables and candles sparkling throughout the dining room lend an air of urbanity, and the cuisine magnifies that feeling. The wine list is well written and reasonably priced, and it includes a number of excellent local bottlings. Sovana Bistro is exactly the sort of place that solidifies how well you can eat throughout our region. It seems as if sophistication, ambition and creativity are in the air over Kennett Square, and the team behind this lovely spot is breathing deeply of it.

Tango Restaurant
39 Morris Ave., Bryn Mawr
610-526-9500

Tango is the kind of big, comfortable space in which you want to linger. Its raw walls, warm colors and exceptionally friendly service set the stage for a lunch or dinner of unselfconscious sophistication: It's the kind of place where you can bring the kids for lunch or settle into a procession of cocktails for a more grown-up dinner, all with equal levels of comfort. As for the food, it's a large selection, with American and Latin influences as well as occasional nods toward Asia. Under the watchful eyes of executive chef Sam Sheridan and managing partner Joe Baldino, it's handled with aplomb. ■



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Philly Boy

Stage star Brandon Andrus returns to Philadelphia for his final “Jersey Boys” performance, in the place where his musical theater career began *By Meg Lappe*



After spending the past two years on the road, Brandon Andrus will finally settle in back home this year, just in time for Christmas. The show in which he is starring, “Jersey Boys,” comes to the Forrest Theatre, December 11 through January 5, though his final night on stage will be December 20.

Andrus got his start in Langhorne and continued his musical theater career, almost by accident, at Ithaca College.

Thanks to a teacher who heard him sing while he was “just hanging out,” he was accepted into the musical theater program, which “made me realize I’m only as good as the other actors on stage with me,” he says. Working with the best has given Andrus (above, far right, with his “Jersey Boys” cast mates) a blooming career on two successful tours.

We caught up with Andrus to talk about his current role, his early inspiration and his return to where it all began.

Q.A

Philadelphia Life: Currently you are on tour performing “Jersey Boys” as Nick Massi. What was it like to prepare for this iconic role?

Brandon Andrus: The preparation started two years ago when we were in Philly opening the show. A show opening is a unique experience. This tour two years ago didn’t exist. We started from the ground up. We created the show through seven weeks of rehearsal, two weeks of tech and research. Truly, I’d say you don’t really find the characters until you do it for a while and after two years I started to figure out what Nick is like.

Before this you toured with “Oklahoma!” as Curly McLain. How is “Jersey Boys” different?

The audience participation. When you are doing “Oklahoma!” there is a certain audience, a little bit older and more reserved. They are not necessarily getting up and dancing in the aisles. It’s just not the way “Oklahoma!” is designed. With “Jersey Boys,” the audience is more than willing to get up and dance and sing. Also, it was

10 years ago, I was only 23, so a lot has changed since then. “Oklahoma!” was eight months before I was done [whereas] we’ve toured 30 some cities and two countries. We opened December 6, 2011 at the Forrest, so it is fitting for me to end here in Philly. It’s where I am from and I have come full circle. The other weird connection is that our director always says to us, “You never know who is in the audience or who that one person is you are making a difference for.” I was that one person when he came into town at the Forrest with “The Who’s Tommy.” I was watching it and it was the first time I ever heard anyone curse on stage. I think it was middle school, and that was when I decided I wanted to do that.

Is there anything you are excited to be able to do, now that you are back in Philly?

Well, I’m excited to be ending just before Christmas so I can spend time with my family. I plan on going to Longwood Gardens and to Macy’s downtown to see the Christmas light show in the Wanamaker Building. Up in Bucks County, [I’d like to] visit Lahaska or New Hope. My wife is from New Mexico and there is a very different atmosphere [here] when it comes to Christmas. Also, I would love to keep doing theater in Philly, because the audiences in Philly are very smart and giving. They let you know right up front if they like you or don’t.

What was it like growing up in Langhorne?

I was very lucky to have been surrounded by the right people and have exposure. Teachers encouraged me to do things that led me down the [musical] path or pulled me aside and made me sing and say, “OK, now you are in the choir.” Neshaminy middle and high schools were some of the best music schools in the state, from instrumental to vocal. I have been given such a gift from [teachers] to understand, I generally can read [music], but I am very slow at it. I’m not a musician who can play it immediately. My gift was being able to listen and then repeat it. I was lucky to have teachers who supported that to help me grow.

What does the future look like after “Jersey Boys”?

Looking for a job. You know a lot of people might think I’m nuts from walking away from a job, but I have only seen my wife every couple of months and my dogs even less, so it’s a big sacrifice to be out here on the road. I am ready to go back and look for other work. I’m not saying I wouldn’t love to [play] Nick again, but I’d like to do something else and come back to it. I can have a whole new perspective on it and bring something else to the table if I’m doing the show again. ■



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