

GOLD COAST

Residents of Hunts / Yarrow Point / Le Hill

Living



***Meet the Rumba King -
Johnny Bacolas***

POWERED BY



Photo by Parks Creative Photography

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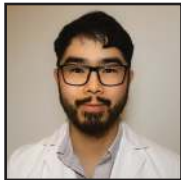
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Take Advantage of Your Neighborhood Magazine!

Gold Coast Living, serving the Exclusive Communities of Hunts Point, Yarrow Point, Medina and Clyde Hill is all about bringing people together and fostering a closer-knit community! Check out the many ways that you can contribute to and take advantage of your monthly neighborhood magazine:

Resident Features: Get to know your neighbors and community one resident at a time. We enjoy featuring residents from all walks of life. Make the magazine your own by submitting nominations of families or individuals who you would like to see highlighted – could be the newest or longest-living residents on the block, your friends next-door, the hobbyist, entrepreneur, etc. Help us honor those people who make this community a great place to live, work and raise a family. Or use this feature as a way to share your own story with neighbors. See page 4 for one example of a resident feature.

Social Scene: What’s happening in the neighborhood? If you’re part of a book club, social group or charity organization promoting fun or service in the community, share your experiences and photos, and invite others to join you!

Association Updates: If your neighborhood has a homeowners association, we offer an open invitation to post information to your neighbors through this publication for free. Saving association money and putting it towards ways to improve your subdivision is important, so we create customized HOA sections, saving you time and money.

Youth Classifieds: Budding entrepreneurs can submit free classifieds advertising their services to the community. With

parental permission, youth can grow their babysitting, lawn care, pet care and other small business services by submitting a free ad.

School and Extracurricular Activities: Showcase budding athletes, artists and actors among us by submitting photos and details on your kids’ accomplishments, as well as information on school events and fundraisers your family is involved in.

Share Your Photos! Do you have pictures from your latest vacation? Have you captured a nature scene or a touching moment that begs to be shared? Let us help preserve your memories!

Pet Page: Share your love for your precious pet by introducing him/her to the community! Whether your friend is of the feline, canine, amphibian, avian or other species, we recognize the uniqueness of your pet and are happy to share his/her quirks, habits, favorite activities and more.

Bulletin Board: Celebrate life’s milestones and events! Post announcements such as engagements, weddings or anniversaries, hats off to graduates, military recognition, new baby announcements, retiree congrats, neighborhood garage sales and more.

If you have a submission or feature idea, simply email Dawn Hunter at DawnHunter@bestversionmedia.com with your name and submission info. Please note the Content Submission Deadline found on page 3. We look forward to hearing your ideas.

GOLD COAST Living

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Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to: DawnHunter@bestversionmedia.com.

Neighborhood Association Submission Information

Are you on the association board for your subdivision? Contact us for information on how you can submit articles, updates, reminders, events and more to the residents. We create customized homeowners association sections at no cost to the HOA or the residents.

For Feedback, Ideas & Submissions

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Content Submission Deadlines

Content Due:	Edition Date:
December 10	January
January 10	February
February 10	March
March 10	April
April 10	May
May 10	June
June 10	July
July 10	August
August 10	September
September 10	October
October 10	November
November 10	December

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Dear Gold Coast Residents,

Romance is in the air.

We focused this month on the senses to reconnect you with some of the best parts of life - Love, Music and Wine.

Our cover with Johnny Bacolas shares his journey as a local music artist from the 1990's scene into his current music adventures, as Johnny says "The Dream of His Life" bringing his native Greek influence fused with his exotic mix of Mediterranean elite musicians, singers and performers. I highly recommend a night out with them to feast the senses and stir up romance in life - *The Rumba Kings*.

We also want to introduce David LaClaire from *Seattle Uncorked* as our in-house Sommelier and launch his regular Q&A about new adventures in Wine and Champagnes. We encourage you to submit your questions!

Happy Valentines month! We wish you love, happiness and to enjoy life.

Dawn Hunter DC ME Publisher



Transport Yourself to the Shores of the Mediterranean - Where Music and Passion Collide! A Conversation with Professional Musician Johnny Bacolas

By Matthew Kyle

Photography by Parks Creative Photography and Johnny Bacolas

The Eastside is the place to be for Rumba. Lifelong musician, Johnny Bacolas, is a co-founder of the musical group, *The Rumba Kings* and has performed extensively on the eastside (Bellevue and Kirkland), while getting established. The eastside is where our roots are; we developed, cultivated, and evolved our stage show on these stages. We performed at Kirkland Performance Center three times just prior to the pandemic, and plan on returning soon. So, we've entertained the eastside for about the past 7 years.

The early years

At 12 years old I began playing guitar and stopped playing sports. I dove deep into my new passion (the guitar and music). I attended Shorewood High in North Seattle. I started my first group here, which was an early incarnation of the group Alice in Chains (spelled Alice 'N Chains at that time). I'm listed on Shorewood High's Wikipedia page as a "Notable Alumni" because of the musical groups I'm connected to and my involvement in music in High School. Later, in my early 20's myself and the drummer of Alice 'N Chains formed the heavy-rock post-grunge group, Second Coming, which signed to Capitol Records in May of 1998. See related articles here: <https://therumbakings.net/press-johnny-bacolas>

Also, my official bio regarding my career is here: <https://therumbakings.net/johnny-bacolas>

Can you describe how you found your passion for music?

My parents were Greek Immigrants. They met at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Seattle. My brother, Timmy Bacolas, and I are our family's first generation born in America. My father, George Bacolas, was a restauranter. One of my favorite stories is what inspired me to be a musician. When I was young, (around age 4-5) he owned a tavern in Seattle



called "Kings Tucks." He would bring home the 45's from the juke box that ran their course in the top 40, when they were rotated out. Every couple of months he would bring home a box of 45 records, which I immediately gravitated to, and would obsessively play them on our family stereo in our living room. This is where my deep love for music was sparked. The melodies and string arrangements in those 70's songs by Elton John, Barry Manilow, various Motown songs, and others, really hit me hard, to the point of inspiring me to be a musician. I credit these early influences for my writing-style, playing, and production to this day.

Where do you credit your artistic talent?

My mother, she is an amazing artist! She paints, primarily nature paintings, abstracts, and Greek island paintings. Her home is in Kirkland and looks like an art gallery. Her paintings line every wall in her home. My home is full of her art as well. She has a website featuring her work at www.patriciabacolas.com

Tell us about your travel and passions as a musician

I have traveled extensively throughout the US while touring in my group Second Coming, which was signed to Capitol Records. I've performed in almost every state in the US and have been to 49 states. Annually, I like to go to Greece. Greece is one of my other passions. I've filmed about 9 music videos on the Greek Islands and around the mainland. I also work with several musicians in Greece, who record on our Rumba Kings' recordings.

While I'm there I'll spend a great deal of time in recording studios, filming music vids (The most recent being for the single, "Love from Mykonos") and just enjoying life in this beautiful country. I love visiting the Greek islands, one of my other passions. I also love visiting a small mountain village called "Mili" where my mom spent her summers as a little girl, and subsequently, brought my brother and I there when we were children to spend parts of our summers there. It's



like travelling back in time being in Mili. Not a lot has changed since we were kids. I love the smell in the air of the wood burning stoves and even the smell of the livestock nearby. I love the simplicity and the quiet of the mountain villages in Greece.

Would you give us a behind-the-scenes look into the life of a musician?

I don't have a lot of hobbies. I work around the clock being self-employed. Since I wear so many hats in my organization (The Rumba Kings), I neither have time for outside hobbies, nor the mental energy. Music is my hobby, my work, my passion. It's what I love doing more than anything else. It would be my hobby even if I wasn't doing it professionally. With that said, I would love to someday soon, not wear so many hats (i.e. musician, music producer, music video producer and director, editor, recording engineer, all business affairs, hiring/finding/training musicians, musical director of live performances, scheduling, budgeting & forecasting, etc.

I do have a soft spot for cats and have a beautiful 13 1/2 year old Tabby named "Cheetah" that I've had since she was 6 weeks old. I love all animals, but really love cats!

I've lived on the Eastside for 30 years because I love the area primarily because I love being so close to the water. In the summer, the area sometimes reminds me of a small Southern California beach town. I love the nature I'm surrounded by here and being by the lake. I feel this is one of the most beautiful areas in the state.

A world-wide journey and realization of a dream

My musical career has taken me on an



amazing journey. I've met some of the most fascinating people in the world, performed around the world, and at 54, I have the same passion and love for what I do as when I was 16 years old. I feel that everything I've gone through in life has prepared me for the next chapter, and that's to take the show I've built with my biz partner, George Stevens, all over the world. I feel we've created the most beautiful show on earth! This group and the show we've produced has been my dream since I was 21, when I saw Yanni perform for

the first time with a large orchestra. I was fortunate to meet Yanni that night and it was like a ton of bricks hitting me! I dreamed of creating a show even more beautiful, with a Mediterranean-inspired theme, and with Spanish guitar being the focal point, instead of piano. With a full orchestra behind us like he did and producing & performing music that was emotionally impacting and delivered in a spectacular show, with the best musicians, dancers, and guests vocalists on earth. Not a concert, but an experience, a show with passion!

I love living and performing on the Eastside (when the opportunity arises). I've performed at private parties with my group, The Rumba Kings, for some very extraordinary people this past year, in the Medina/Hunts Point area. We're also performing a special event at Bellevue Athletic Club this summer.

Mark your calendars, The Rumba Kings will be performing at the Triple Door, Seattle's most intimate live event venue, on March 22nd and 23rd, performing two shows each evening at 6:00PM and 9:00PM. Tickets are on-sale now at www.RumbaKings.com



Three Relaxing Romantic Getaways

By Nathaniel Hollywood



The most romantic getaways are less than a ninety minute drive away. Here are three favorite locations:

Coastal Bliss on Camano Island: Nestled between Whidbey Island and the mainland, Camano offers a peaceful escape with stunning views of the Salish Sea. Stay at the Camano Island Inn for rustic charm or the Inn at Cama Beach for luxurious indulgence. Explore the island's trails, indulge in a couples massage at Island Getaway Spa, or enjoy a scenic ferry ride to Coupeville.

Forest Rejuvenation on Lake Crescent: Nestled in the Olympic Mountains, Lake Crescent offers a fairytale-like setting with its crystal-clear lake and lush greenery. Stay at the historic Lake Crescent Lodge for a classic ambience or camp alongside the lake for a truly immersive experience. Rent a canoe or kayak to explore the lake, hike through the surrounding forests, or simply relax by the water and soak in the tranquility.

Wellness from The Willows on Bainbridge Island: This luxury wellness retreat offers a holistic approach to relaxation with yoga classes, meditation sessions, organic cuisine, and personalized wellness programs. Enjoy detoxifying treatments at the spa, take a dip in the saltwater pool, or simply unwind in the peaceful gardens.

Further Tips:

- **Disconnect to reconnect:** Leave your phones behind and focus on quality time together.
- **Set the mood:** Pack aromatherapy candles, relaxing music, and cozy blankets to create a tranquil atmosphere.
- **Savor the moments:** Relax, recharge, and enjoy each other's company in the midst of nature's beauty.

5436 Night Heron Drive in Semiahmoo \$2,099,000

The Taylor Team offers services throughout the Puget Sound corridor. Specifically from Bellevue/Seattle-Anacortes-Bellingham/Semiahmoo/Birch Bay. Our goal is to help you realize the lifestyle of your dreams. If your desire is to acquire a vacation home on the water, golf course or near a mountain—we can help you find that special place! Or if you are considering making a move locally, we got you covered! Our local experts within these communities provide a curated real estate experience to you as a Seller or a Buyer. Let's get started today!



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THE TAYLOR TEAM



Take a Literary Tour of Seattle

By Nathaniel Hollywood

Seattle is book-famous. Many prominent authors wordsmith Seattle as the backdrop to their story, mentioning Seattle points along the way, or even as prominent story points. This means you can go to the same spots described in celebrated works of fiction by local authors.

Classics and Contemporary Gems:

• **Pike Place Market:** Dive into the vibrant chaos of Pike Place Market, where both Jim Lynch's "The Art of Racing in the Rain" and Tom Robbins' "Another Roadside Attraction" unfold. Grab a coffee at Starbucks' original store, marvel at the flying fish, and soak in the bustling atmosphere.

• **Capitol Hill and Beyond:** Explore the quirky neighborhoods that inspired Jonathan Raban's "Waxwings" and Garth Stein's "The Art of Racing in the Rain." Wander through bookstores like Elliott Bay Book Company and Third Place Books, where author readings and events abound. Stop for a bite at Dick's Drive-In, featured in both books.

• **Gas Works Park:** Climb the iconic spiral staircase, offering panoramic views of the city skyline and harbor, just like the characters in Jamie Ford's "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet." Explore the park's abandoned gas tanks and lush greenery, a setting for several local novels.

Mystery and Historical Intrigue:

• **Chinatown-International District:** Unravel the secrets of Jamie Ford's "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet" by exploring the historic alleys and landmarks of Chinatown. Visit the Wing Luke Museum to learn about the district's rich history and explore the Panama Hotel, the novel's central setting.

• **Victoria Ferry and Bainbridge Island:** Take a ferry ride across the Puget Sound, mirroring the journeys in David Guterson's "Snow Falling on Cedars" and Jennifer Egan's "Visit from the Goon Squad." Explore the charming town of Winslow on

Bainbridge Island, a setting for both novels, and indulge in local oysters and artwork.

• **Underground Seattle:** Descend into the city's hidden underworld, featured in J.A. Jance's Seattle-based mysteries. Discover ghost stories, Victorian storefronts, and historical remnants hidden beneath the bustling streets, adding a touch of intrigue to your literary tour.

Bonus Points:

• Research author events, book readings, or literary-themed walking tours for an extra immersive experience.

• Plan your visit around Seattle's annual Bumbershoot Music & Arts Festival (Aug 31 - September 1st) for a vibrant literary and musical feast.

• Pack your favorite Seattle-themed novels to enjoy while soaking in the atmosphere at cafes, parks, or ferry rides.

By combining literary landmarks with the city's charm, you can create a unique and unforgettable experience celebrating the power of stories in Seattle.

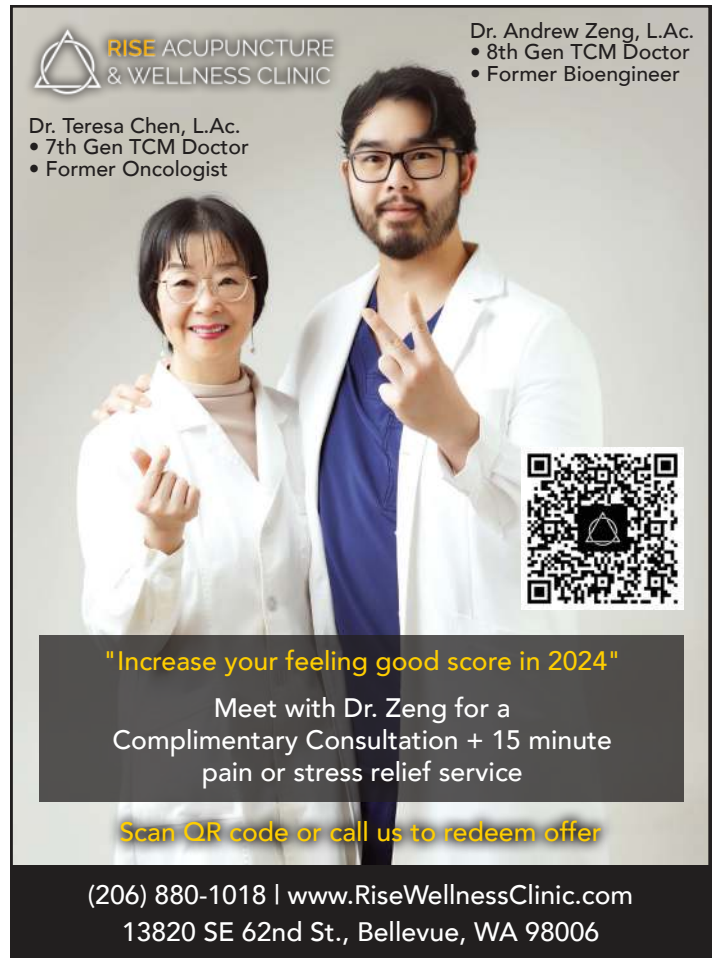



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February

February 10th

FOR THE LOVE OF FLOWERS

@Pepper Bridge, Woodinville

For flower enthusiasts of all levels, create a floral extravaganza bursting with colors. Learn the skills behind a balanced arrangement that captures the eye.

Cost: \$85

<http://www.eventbrite.com>

February 17-18th

THE FLY FISHING SHOW

The Fly Fishing Show is a must-attend event for any angler looking to up their game. With hundreds of booths showcasing the latest gear, expert seminars, and casting demonstrations, it's the perfect place to learn new techniques, meet other enthusiasts, and get stoked for your next fishing adventure.

@Meydenbauer Center

Cost: \$20

<https://flyfishingshow.com/>

February 18th

COFFEE BREWERS LAB

Discover different methods to brew your beans. Bring out the full notes and flavors of your coffees, to enjoy the taste on a deeper and richer level.

Cost: \$30

@400 Urban Plaza, Kirkland

<http://www.eventbrite.com>

February 22nd

THE FIXIES

In the bustling world of appliances, tiny repair crews called Fixies keep things running smoothly! Join Simka, Nolik, and their Fixie friends as they navigate the intricate inner workings of TVs, toasters, and beyond, all while staying hidden from human eyes.

Cost: \$20

@Meydenbauer Center

March 1-10th

PETER AND THE STAR CATCHER

@Kirkland Performance Center

This is a new take on the century old tale of Peter Pan. Enjoy a modern twist on an old classic exploring the dream of never growing up.

Cost: \$40

<https://www.kpcenter.org/>

March 1-24th

SOMETHING'S AFOOT

@5th Avenue Theater

"Something's Afoot" is a hilarious musical whodunit that sends up classic Agatha Christie mysteries. As bodies pile up and suspicions mount, you'll race alongside the quirky characters to unmask the murderer before it's too late. Get ready for witty dialogue, catchy tunes, and a side of slapstick as you follow the clues to a side-splitting reveal!

Cost: \$59

<https://www.5thavenue.org/>

Every Saturday

YOGA IN THE PARK

You already know the benefits of yoga – strength, flexibility, and serenity. Increase your health and meet new friends as you gently move your body forward

@Community Lounge in Old Bellevue

Cost: \$5/class

<https://www.bellevuedowntown.com>

March 5th

BRASS BAND NORTHWEST

@Bellevue Presbyterian Church

A winter serenade concert lead by principal tubist, Ryan Schultz. Close out the winter season with melodies of the season.

Cost: By Donation

<https://brassbandnw.org/>

March 6th

BOLD FOR THE BLUE

@Bellevue Westin

Police Foundation Breakfast. It's not an easy time to be a police officer. Here's an opportunity to show appreciation for those who serve and protect our community.

Cost: \$275

<https://bellevuepolicefoundation.org>

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

Snow Leopard Trust

By Nathaniel Hollywood

The Snow Leopard Trust, like a phantom guardian in the high mountains, safeguards the elusive ghost cat – the snow leopard. Through scientific research, community partnerships, and dedicated conservation efforts, they tread softly across twelve nations, preserving the fragile ecosystems these magnificent predators call home, leaving only paw prints of hope for their future.

<https://snowleopard.org>



Attention! Homeowners Association Leaders!

By Matthew Kyle



Did you know we can create a free homeowners' association (HOA) section in this magazine – saving you from the cost and hassle of printing your own newsletters, or worse, driving around the neighborhood to deliver them? Keep your money invested in the subdivision and let us do the work! With our customizable HOA section, we'll let residents know where to find pertinent HOA- and neighborhood-related information – monthly, bi-monthly or as often as you choose.

Submission Examples:

- Board member listings and contact information
- HOA updates on by-laws, meeting dates and meeting minutes
- Latest beautification projects or upkeep

- Volunteers needed for various HOA committees or neighborhood projects
- Spring and summer yard sale notices
- Holiday greetings from the board
- Neighborhood watch or safety reminders
- Event announcements such as block parties, picnics, egg hunts, trick-or-treating, etc.
- Article and photo submissions after neighborhood gatherings

Our Content Submission Deadline can be found on page 3. Submit content at www.bestversionmedia.com or email Dawn Hunter at DawnHunter@bestversionmedia.com. We look forward to hearing your news!

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with your neighborhood go-to contractor.



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How to Have a Romantic Dinner at Home

By Nathaniel Hollywood



Creating a romantic dinner at home can be a charming and memorable experience. The focus is setting the mood and sharing a special moment with your loved one. Here are some tips to help you create a memory that lasts for months afterwards:

Setting the stage:

- **Ambiance:** Dim the lights, light some candles, and put on soft music. Choose music that's meaningful to you both, whether it's a familiar classic or a special discovery.
- **Décor:** Dress up the table with a nice tablecloth, fresh flowers, and elegant table settings. Even simple touches like using your best dishes on a non-holiday makes a difference.
- **Scents:** Create a pleasant aroma with scented candles, incense, or simmering potpourri. Choose scents that are relaxing and romantic, such as rose, lavender, or vanilla.

Food and Drinks:

- **Keep it personal:** Choose dishes that you both enjoy or have special memories attached to. If you're not the best cook, don't be afraid to order takeout or prepare a simpler meal that still feels special. The effort counts more than the results.
- **Presentation matters:** Plate your food thoughtfully, using garnishes and artistic flourishes to elevate the everyday into something special.
- **Don't forget the drinks:** Pair your meal with a bottle of wine, champagne, or a special cocktail. Make sure to have glasses ready and consider making a fun signature drink or mocktail.
- **Dessert matters:** Make a decadent chocolate cake, bake warm and gooey cookies, or surprise your partner with their favorite dessert with a personal touch.

Creating the Experience:

- **Ditch distractions:** Turn off your phones and focus on each other. No Facebook! This is a time to connect and enjoy each other's company without interruptions.
- **Conversation starters:** Prepare some conversation topics or games to keep the conversation flowing. Share stories, reminisce about your relationship, or discuss future vacations.
- **Small gestures matter:** Surprise your partner with a single rose, their favorite flower, or a small gift they've been wanting.

More than anything, your sweetie wants to be the focus of your attention and efforts. With at-home Valentine's Day, you set the mode that continues to resonate past February 14th.

Let Meg concierge your next travel adventure and try something new this year.



Hello, I am Meg. I live in Bellevue and am your guide to the world's most enchanting destinations. I'm here to offer you an escape into luxury as we bid adieu to the holidays.



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Real Estate Statistics

Status	Address	Sq Ft	Beds	Baths	Asking Price	Sold Price	City	Listing Number
Sold	8060 NE 8th St	4,040	5	4	\$4,010,000	\$4,010,000	Medina	2181179
Sold	1026 89th Ave NE	5,485	5	5.5	\$5,998,000	\$5,998,000	Bellevue	2160853
Sold	751 97th Ave NE	6,529	6	6	\$7,015,000	\$7,015,000	Bellevue	2143623
Sold	9812 NE 31st St	6,370	6	5.5	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	Bellevue	2174315
Sold	3313 Evergreen Point Rd	4,020	3	3.5	\$5,100,000	\$5,100,000	Medina	2149399
Sold	8445 NE 12th St	3,220	4	2.75	\$2,710,000	\$2,710,000	Medina	2173251
Sold	4635 95th Ave NE	2,630	4	2.5	\$2,780,000	\$2,780,000	Bellevue	2168400
Sold	9040 Points Dr NE	4,330	4	2.5	\$2,690,000	\$2,690,000	Yarrow Point	2189128
Sold	9951 NE Lake Washington Blvd #15	892	1	1	\$700,000	\$700,000	Bellevue	2168710
Sold	781 97th Ave NE	5,978	5	5.5	\$6,115,680	\$6,115,680	Bellevue	2189013

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" We were truly touched by our experience with Matt. Matt really exceeded our expectations and made the off-market deal possible. We were grateful for what he did for us and delighted it was such a positive experience. "

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" Matt was fantastic, helped us get into a new home ,get financing and sell existing home without any hiccups in just 3 weeks! Thanks Matt for your good cheer and friendly professional service! We highly recommend him"

Kim M



Ask the Wine Expert

By David LeClaire

"Should I be worried about the sulfite warning label on wines? I've noticed probably most of the wine I buy and drink has that on the label. I know a lot of friends who say they can't drink reds because of the sulfites!"

George, Bellevue

Sulfites are a preservative that lock on the clarity and freshness of a wine, and are present in all wines. Most wines state that sulfites are present as it's a natural occurrence in making wine – even wines that say “no sulfites added” have sulfites. They just don't add additional sulfites. While there's still sulfites, those with none added are always the lowest. If you get headaches or stuffy from white wine, you most likely have sulfite allergies. If you have trouble with reds, occasionally people will react to tannin in red wines, but it's most often a problem with histamines, as reds are very high in histamines!

David LeClaire is a certified sommelier from the Court of Master Sommeliers and currently serves as Wine Ambassador for Esquin Wine & Spirits with a Wine of The Week feature he



writes and sends to over 30,000 enthusiasts. David is the founder of Seattle Uncorked and produces a wide array of wine, spirits, and beer events each year. During the Covid era David was frequently featured as a guest for many virtual meetings and conferences in formats such as "Ask The Wine Expert."

David is an instructor for North Seattle College, and serves as judge for various wine competitions including The Wine Panel, Sip Magazine's Best of the NW, and the Seattle Wine Awards. Mr. LeClaire is also a free-lance writer for the Washington Tasting Room Magazine.

He was also the founder of Wine World & Spirits, which at its' inception was the largest independent wine store in the Northwest, and was awarded the "2013 Independent Retailer of the Year" award by the Washington Wine Commission. David LeClaire previously served as wine director at Seattle's prestigious Alexis Hotel (& Painted Table Restaurant) for ten years.

If you have a wine question, please submit to DawnHunter@bestversionmedia.com

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Saints, Soldiers, and Secret Love: A Compelling Look Into the History of Valentine's Day

By Devin Dalrymple



Cupid's arrow may only strike once a year, but the origins of Valentine's Day are a surprisingly messy entanglement of pagan rituals, martyred saints, and romantic ideals. While February 14th now radiates with love songs and heart-shaped candy that's a little too sweet, its history shares tales of fertility festivals, secret letters, and even matchmaking birds. But where did it start, and how did it become popular today?

Let's rewind to ancient Rome, where Lupercalia, a loud and exciting festival, was held on February 15th. Held in dedication to the Roman God of Agriculture, Faunus, it was a grandiose event. It was seen as a time for matchmaking, where the young men and women would pair up for the rest of the celebration, sometimes leading to lifelong unions. It was around the 5th century, amidst the rise of Christianity, when Pope Gelasius I aimed to "Christianize" pagan festivities. Though the festival survived the initial rise, it was soon outlawed after being deemed "un-Christian." Gelasius went on to declare February 14th, (conveniently close to Lupercalia) St. Valentine's Day.

However, there's a twist: multiple Saint Valentines existed, and their stories vary wildly. Emperor Claudius II had discovered that young, unmarried men proved to be better soldiers, so he outlawed marriage altogether. Valentine saw the injustice and continued as a priest to secretly marrying couples against the emperor's decree. He knew that a loveless life was one of the most painful of all. When his actions were discovered, his ideals never faltered and he was sent to his death

by Claudius II. Another tells of a bishop, also martyred by Claudius II, who performed miracles for a Roman jailer's daughter, falling in love with her. It is alleged that his last letter to her was signed "from your Valentine," much like the tradition today.

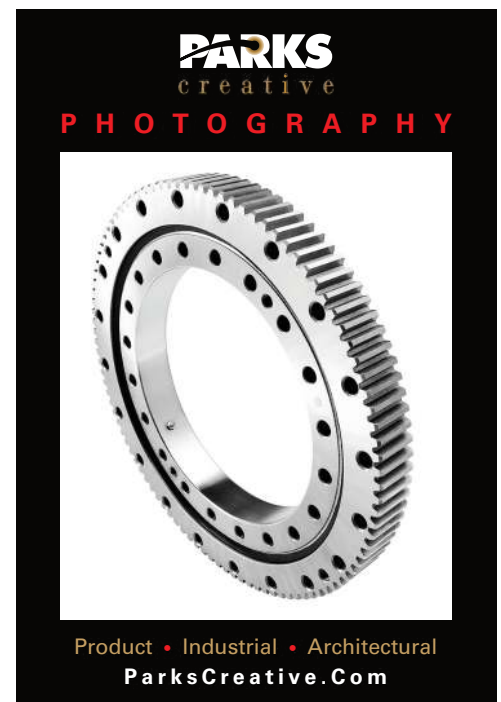
Fast forward to the Middle Ages, and whispers of courtly love began to permeate Europe. February 14th took on a new meaning, coinciding with the supposed start of birds' mating season. Geoffrey Chaucer, the Bard himself, penned the first Valentine's Day poem called Parliament of Fowles (Chaucer, 1375). Not to be confused with the first Valentine, which has a slightly more grim yet equally romantic tale. Sir Charles, Duke of Orleans had been captured after the Battle of Agincourt, and while imprisoned in the Tower of London, he wrote the first valentine to his wife.

By the 18th century, Valentine's Day truly bloomed, and Valentine's Day merchandise was not far behind. By 1900, handwritten cards gave way to mass-produced greetings, adorned with cupids, hearts, and flowery verses. Lovers of every class exchanged tokens of affection like chocolates and flowers, solidifying the holiday's connection to romantic gestures.

Today, Valentine's Day is a global phenomenon, celebrated with varying degrees of enthusiasm. For couples in Argentina, not only is it just a day of celebration, but a whole week (and celebrated in July). South Koreans celebrate it on the 14th of every month, having different

names for each event! One of the most intriguing celebrations takes place in Wales, where couples exchange unique, hand-carved wooden spoons to each other in a testament to love and creativity.

Despite its commercialization and critiques of forced romance, Valentine's Day retains a certain charm. It's a day to celebrate love in all its forms, be it romantic, platonic, or love for good company and chocolate. So, whether you're exchanging sonnets or sharing pizza with friends, remember that the tangled history of Valentine's Day is a testament to the enduring human desire for connection and affection. And who knows, maybe that matchmaking magic of Lupercalia still lingers in the air, waiting to be rekindled with a modern twist.



Pet Page

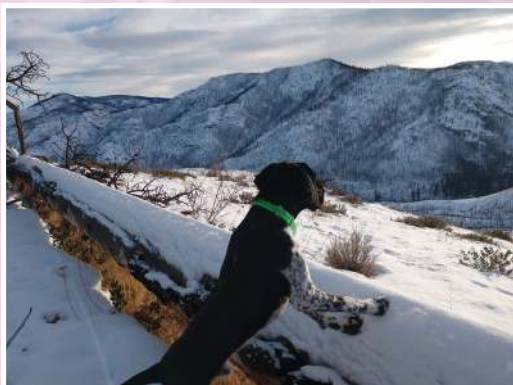
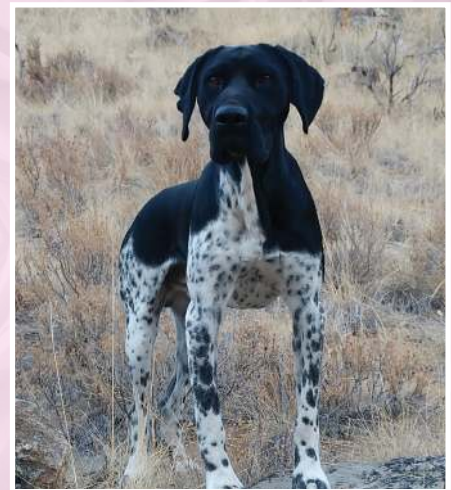
By Matthew Kyle

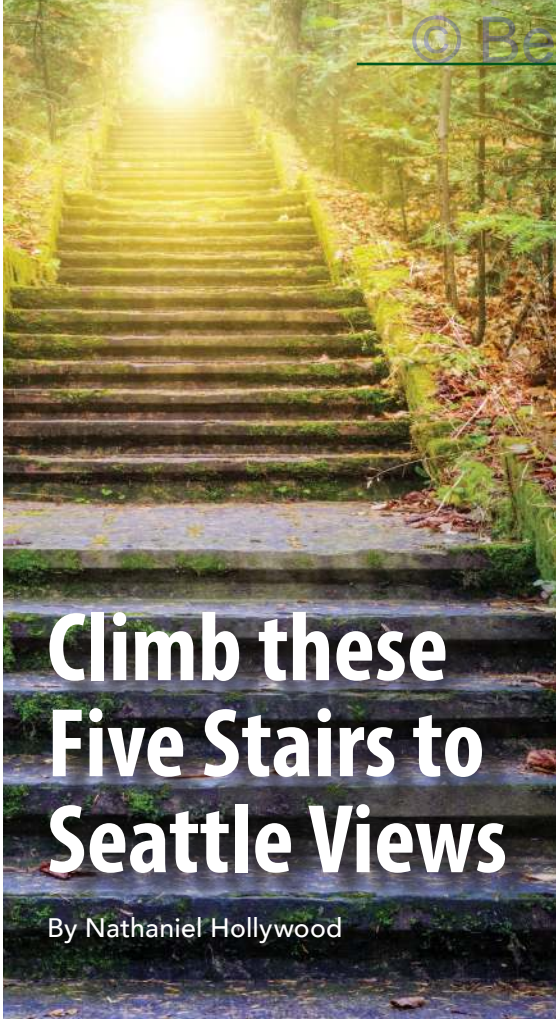
Introducing the "Legend" of the Columbia and Snake river hills. Legend is a 4 year-old German Shorthair and loves to run. Did I say Legend could run? Legend requires so much space to run, he has to be taken to places like the Columbia River hills to get a decent workout. Legend's favorite activity is to find the steepest hills and run straight up, to the very top, run down, and do it again...

Legend has a very special, unique coat that is called a "blanket" coat, since it looks like he has a blanket over his back. In the summertime, his favorite activity is to be taken to a glacial river and play retrieve in the icy cold waters from Mt. Rainier. No matter how many retrieves he does, it's never enough, no matter how cold the water.

Legend gets spoiled in the wintertime to help him stay warm. His breakfast/dinner everyday includes: Premium kibble, 1 can of cat food, 1 avocado, half a sweet potato and a tablespoon of olive oil. His owner has never received a single complaint with this menu!

So, if you're ever driving somewhere along the Columbia river on a weekend drive, look up in the hills for Legend, you might just see him flash by.





Climb these Five Stairs to Seattle Views

By Nathaniel Hollywood

Some of the best exercise is free. (How much money does it cost to do a push up?) Nestled between houses and high rises lie funky hidden passages in the city. Often tucked away, these are the five best staircases providing transport, exercise, and an escape.

Jose Rizal Park Stairs: The triple 8's, name for its eight sets of 88 stairs. These stairs are located within a gated, off-leash dog park, providing a great workout for both you and your pooch. With eight stars at each run, experienced users double step by the evens (sets 2, 4, 6, 8). Keep you body inclined to the angle of the stair, and your chest and hips in alignment.

Beacon Hill Stair Maze: This is a popular set, from its location in downtown Seattle, and the destination of the red brick veteran's hospital sitting at the top of the hill. There's a total of 15 different staircases adding up to 161 stairs. Make sure you stretch and warm-up before tackling.

Golden Garden Stairs: Those looking for solitude and contemplation during their workout will be most pleased with these stairs. There are 287 steps gaining 325 feet in elevation, or a 42% grade. At the top, you are rewarded with post card views of the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound waters. There's a number of short landings along the path, allowing you to break-up your workout.

I-5 Colonnade Stairs: For those that like a bit of urban grit with their workout, the Colonnade Park stairs are located in an open space underneath I5 between Howe Street and Lakeview Blvd. The path includes an off-leash dog park. The stairs themselves offer further connections to Eastlake and Capital Hill, as well as a mountain biking trail. There are two landing pads breaking up the entire climb, providing convenient points for three-minute breaks.

Galor Traverse: This is the grand daddy in Seattle, a whopping 967 steps. This is excellent training for those speeding up their 5K run, or practicing the Columbia Tower Stair Climb. You will climb over 500 feet in less than three-quarter of a mile. You can use the hand-rails to help propel you up the stairs.

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The advertisement features a sleek, dark Bugatti sports car shown from a rear three-quarter view. The car is positioned on a light-colored surface against a dramatic sunset sky with orange and blue hues. The Bugatti logo is visible on the rear of the car. The text on the left side of the ad is set against a dark background.

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The advertisement includes three photographs showcasing clean interior spaces. The largest photo on the left shows a modern kitchen with dark wood cabinetry, stainless steel appliances, and a light-colored countertop. The top right photo shows a bright, open living area with light-colored wood-look flooring and recessed ceiling lights. The bottom right photo shows a clean bathroom with a white vanity, a wooden bench, and a glass shower enclosure.