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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

EUROPE THROUGH HER EYES

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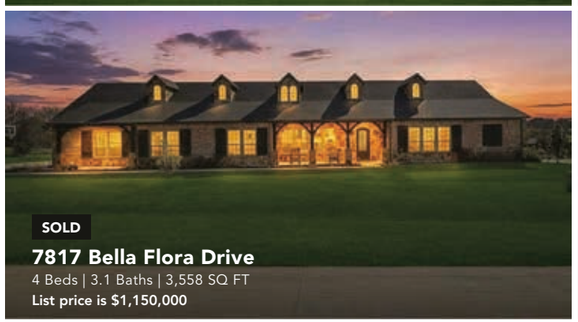

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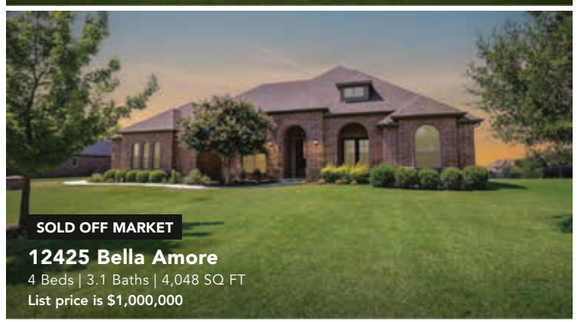

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CONTRIBUTORS AT LARGE - The residents of Bella Crossing, Bella Flora, Bella Ranch We are always looking for residents to follow up on leads, find great stories and send us ideas. Let's celebrate the great things happening in our community! No contribution is too small. Please email with your pictures, suggestions, or requests. Or if there's any important numbers we've missed, email Christi.flaherty@strollmag.com.







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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

My first trip abroad was to Paris and I fell in love as most do who go to the City of Lights. But it wasn't just Paris, it was travel in general.

The saying It's the Journey not the Destination applies to many Bellas residents who spent the summer close to home taking road trips. Whether it's to families' homes, sports tournaments or a road trip for road trips' sake, the playlist, loads of snacks (Buc-ees!) and random stops truly make the journey memorable.

That saying certainly doesn't apply to air travel these days with the always-present possibility of missed flights and delays. However, travel trials are forgotten when finally arriving at the destination with new sights, smells, foods, and many times, language. We all love being home, there's just something magical about the adventure of foreign lands.

As I began to hear from Bellas residents about their summer plans, I knew we were destined to have our first travel-focused issue. And our residents didn't disappoint:

- The Hooston's share details from their trip to Europe
- The Albert's open their Cabo vacation home
- Learn the history behind The Nutt House Hotel and your next staycation hotel
- Dr. Catherine Oseni shares her best Healthy Travel tips

Until next month,

Christi

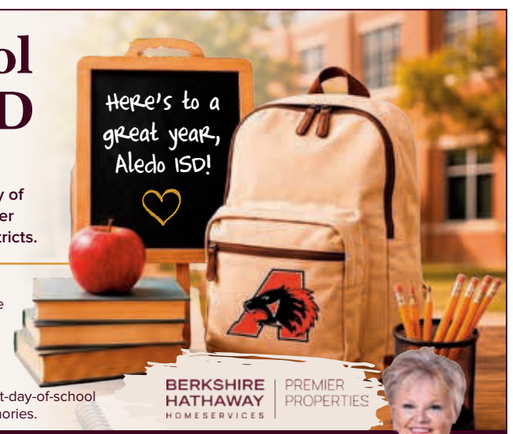


Flora Farms at San Jose Del Cabo

We would love to tell your story. Scan the code to feature your family, pet, latest travel adventures, a hobby, charity and more.

The Bellas COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Back to School in Aledo ISD



A FRESH START FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

As summer winds down, excitement is building across Aledo ISD. The first day of school marks the beginning of new friendships, new opportunities, and another year of academic excellence in one of Texas' most highly regarded school districts.

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH START

PLAN AHEAD
Plan your morning routine before the first day to make the transition smoother.

ALLOW EXTRA TIME
Allow extra travel time during the first few weeks as school traffic increases around campuses.

STAY CONNECTED
Stay connected by following your child's school and Aledo ISD for important announcements, events, and schedules.

MAKE MEMORIES
Take time to enjoy this exciting milestone by snapping those first-day-of-school photos and creating lasting memories.

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THE BEST SOUVENIR



FROM THE MARKETS OF EUROPE TO THEIR BELLA RANCH KITCHEN, THE HOOSTONS HAVE FOUND THAT THE BEST SOUVENIRS ARE THE ONES YOU CAN SHARE.

FOR JASON AND MICHELLE HOOSTON, home is more than an address. It's the place they return to after every adventure.

Three years ago, they and their daughter Allesandra "Allie", traded the constant growth and noise of Mansfield for the peaceful hills of Bella Ranch, drawn by open space, quiet, and the opportunity to create a home where friends and family naturally gather.

That love of gathering extends far beyond their own backyard. Whether welcoming guests from all over the world for Thanksgiving, celebrating Christmas on a Caribbean cruise, or exploring the ancient streets of Europe, the Hoostons have intentionally built a life around experiences.

A World to Explore

Owning primarily remote businesses offer Michelle and Jason the luxury of time to travel. Their technology company specializes in business intelligence, data analytics, and artificial intelligence for manufacturing, while Michelle also owns *The Roaming Raffe Travel Company*.

Michelle jokes that she inherited her wanderlust honestly. Her mother was born in Germany, and childhood stories from both her mother and grandmother sparked a lifelong curiosity about the world. That curiosity only grew after joining the Air Force at 19. Nearly three decades of military service—she continues to serve our country as a contingency and wartime planner in the Reserves—have taken her to more than 40 countries—including three trips to Antarctica and even the South Pole.

Traveling Through Their Daughter's Eyes

At only nine years old, Allie has adopted that wanderlust, having visited 23 countries and 19 states, collecting memories that most adults only dream about.

Whether she's enjoying gelato in Florence or lemon granita along the Amalfi Coast, watching Europe drift by from a cruise ship balcony or trying to catch fish with her bare hands in Villefranche, Michelle and Jason love watching their daughter experience the world with wide-eyed curiosity.

This summer, the family returned to many of the same places Jason and Michelle visited on their honeymoon in 2014, sailing from Venice through Italy, Montenegro, Croatia, France, and Spain. In addition, after her mom's passing over a decade ago, Michelle also invited her mom's best friend to join them. The slow cruise through Europe allowed them time to laugh, cry and reminisce.

Roads Less Traveled

For Michelle—a self-described history nerd and foodie—Italy never disappoints. "Walking through Rome is like walking through a history book," she says. "There's a new discovery around every corner."

Yet some of their favorite moments happen away from famous landmarks. They linger over Catalonian tapas in Barcelona, share meals in family-owned restaurants tucked into Rome's historic Jewish Ghetto, and seek out hidden gems like the tiny Republic of San Marino, where staying overnight after the crowds leave became one of the trip's greatest surprises.

The Best Place to Return To

Back in Bella Ranch, has a much quicker pace. Allie stays busy with ballet, jazz, competitive cheer, basketball, volleyball, and theater at All Saints' Episcopal School, while Glinda—the family's English Cream miniature dachshund—enthusiastically patrols the neighborhood with what Michelle describes as "a dog and a half worth of personality."

The Hoostons remain active at First United Methodist Church of Arlington, and Michelle serves as President-Elect of the PTO at All Saints', investing in the school community that has become such an important part of their lives.

Bella Ranch home is both their home base for travel and a quiet respite from busy daily life. "We love the peace and the space to appreciate our backyard and host friends," Michelle says.

CONTINUED ▶









WE LOVED SEEING PLACES WE HAD GONE ON OUR HONEYMOON THROUGH ALLIE'S EYES.

While they have endless travel stories, ask them about Bellas memories and no doubt July Fourth will come up. Shortly after they moved in, their friends gathered around the pool, fireworks filled the Texas sky, and the neighborhood came alive in a way they never expected. Three years later, it remains one of their favorite traditions.

Bringing Europe to Bella Ranch

For the Hoostons, travel doesn't end when the suitcases are unpacked. One of their favorite traditions is bringing home ingredients from each trip so they can recreate favorite meals in their Bella Ranch kitchen. Most recently, fresh pasta and pecorino cheese from Rome became homemade Cacio e Pepe. Paired with Italian wine carefully tucked into their luggage for the journey home, this tradition keeps each adventure alive long after the passport has been put away.

While the Hoostons have learned that the world is full of extraordinary places, they've also discovered something just as meaningful...sometimes the very best souvenir is simply coming home.







MICHELLE'S PRO TIPS

If you think you are "not a cruise person", try cruising in Europe. Slower paced than other cruises, you will visit several countries while only packing/unpacking once. Our cruise went from Ravenna near Venice to Montenegro, Croatia, Italy, France, and to Spain in nine days. If you don't enjoy large crowds and loud parties, ask me to book concierge level where there are pools, lounges, restaurants, and sometimes even elevators just for the concierge rooms.

Our Favorites Off the Boat

- Nonna Betta (Rome) – A restaurant in the historic Jewish Ghetto, known for authentic Roman-Jewish cuisine and its famous fried artichokes.
- San Marino – Their surprise "sleeper" destination, a tiny republic surrounded by Italy that comes alive after the daytime crowds leave.
- Ziryab (Barcelona) – A beloved restaurant serving Catalonian and North African fusion tapas while supporting the deaf community.
- Duquesa de Cardona (Barcelona) – Their favorite hotel, offering a rooftop pool with beautiful harbor views.



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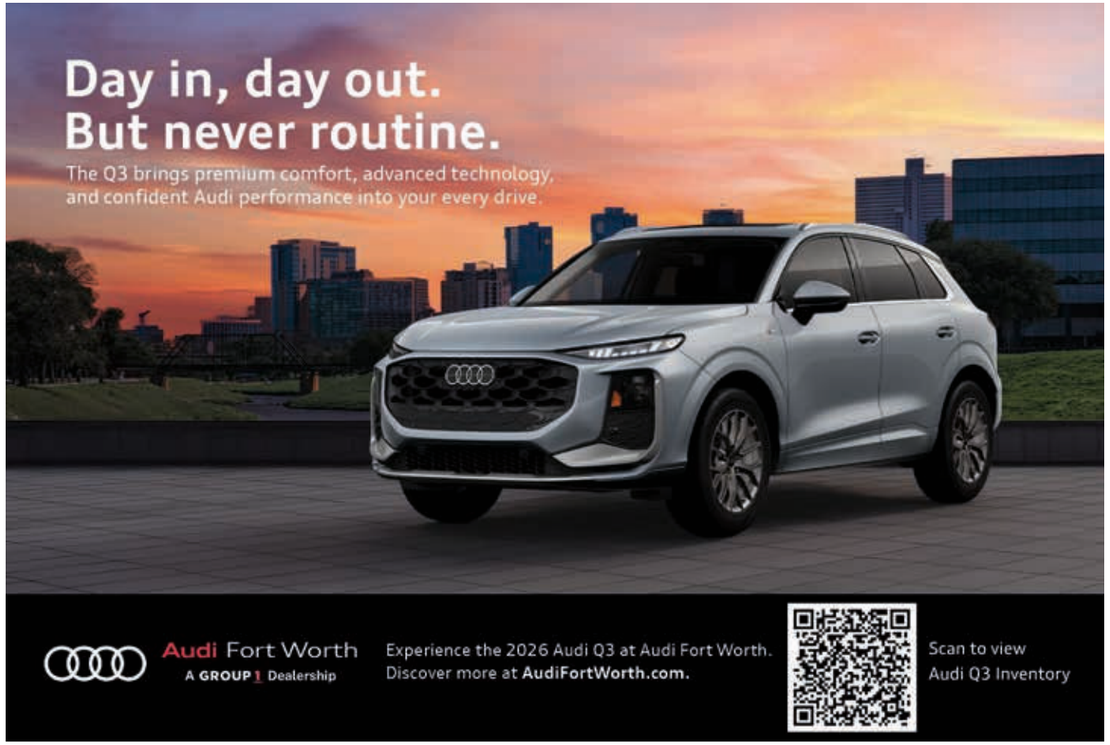
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BEYOND THE BELLAS

Though Europe was the clear winner, many Bellas residents enjoyed travels to other continents. See what inspired them along the way.







From Venice's canals to Rome's ancient wonders, every moment in Italy was magical. Grateful for the adventure and memories made along the way.
—PULIDO FAMILY















Our latest adventure took us to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Greenland and Iceland, where a standout experience was an iceberg tour from the village of Qaqortoq and a cruise through the fjords of Prince Christian Sound. The long summer days allowed us to enjoy the beauty especially Iceland's sweeping lupine fields, to the fullest.
—LARRY & PAM WRIGHT











Big Sur and Monterey offer dramatic Pacific coastlines where steep cliffs meet the crashing sea and vibrant marine life. Inland, Lake Tahoe and Gardnerville provide stunning mountain landscapes featuring deep blue alpine waters and wide desert valleys.
—JENNIFER MCALISTER

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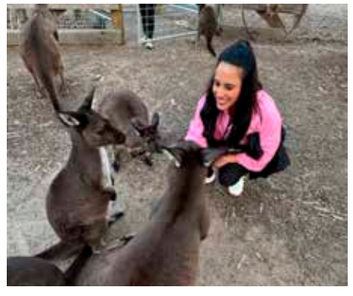



Our Australian adventure - Adelaide, Kangaroo Island and a nine day cruise - was filled with beautiful views, iconic sights, and incredible wildlife encounters. From the Great Barrier Reef to cuddling koalas and feeding kangaroos, we made memories we'll cherish forever.
—ANGIE RODGERS

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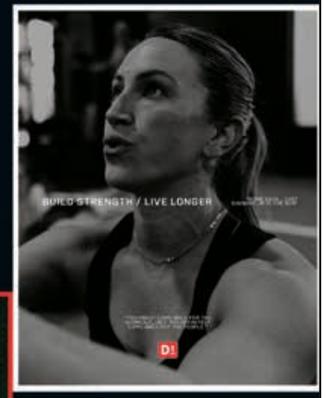

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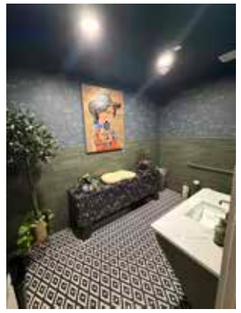
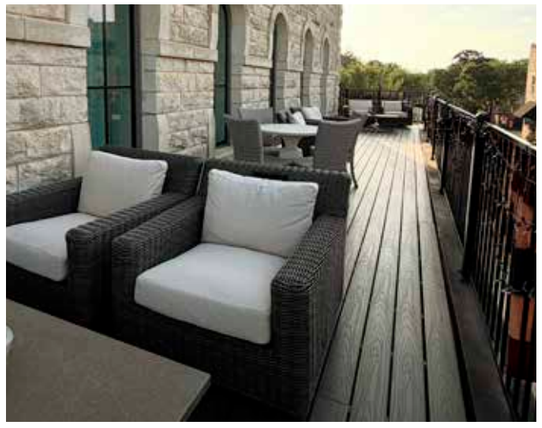
CHRISTI FLAHERTY



Not much has changed until you get inside.


The men's room with the windowed floor showing the original well.


Women's restroom with the shifty cowgirl ready for bathroom selfies.



Some buildings are simply too special to lose. For more than a century, the Nutt House Hotel has been woven into the fabric of Granbury. Generations of guests have crossed its threshold, each adding a chapter to its rich history. Few, however, have witnessed a story as remarkable as the one unfolding today.

In 2023, after an extensive renovation was nearly complete, tragedy struck. Just weeks before its anticipated grand reopening, a devastating fire engulfed the historic hotel, leaving it in ruins and raising doubts about whether one of Texas' most beloved landmarks could ever be saved.

Fortunately, the story didn't end there.

Builder Richard Moore, along with partners Trisha and Ike Thomas, embraced the challenge of restoring—not simply replacing—what had been lost. Their vision was to honor the hotel's history while creating an experience that rivals today's finest boutique hotels.

After spending the night during Granbury's Wine Walk weekend, we expected a beautifully restored historic hotel. What we discovered exceeded every expectation.

The Nutt House delivers the kind of boutique luxury typically found in much larger cities. Guest rooms feature plush bedding, spa-inspired bathrooms, curated artwork by Texas artists, and inviting gathering spaces that encourage guests to slow down and stay awhile. Every furnishing and finish reflects thoughtful design rather than decoration for decoration's sake.

Downstairs, Christina's American Table continues that same commitment to hospitality, serving elevated cuisine in a warm, welcoming setting that seamlessly incorporates many of the building's preserved historic elements.

Throughout the property, history has been intentionally preserved rather than hidden. Spend a few minutes with any of the restoration partners, and you'll likely hear the hotel's remarkable story—and perhaps even receive a personal tour. During our visit, Richard happened to be on-site and generously spent an hour showing us some of the building's most fascinating features.

Massive original wooden columns that survived the fire now stand proudly throughout the hotel and restaurant, serving as striking reminders of the building's resilience. Original architectural details blend effortlessly with elegant finishes, creating spaces that feel authentic rather than recreated. An enclave along the staircase displays artifacts collected by Nutt House enthusiasts over the years, including a Nutt family tree.

Even the bathrooms tell part of the story.

In the men's restroom, Richard proudly revealed a windowed section of the floor that showcases an original 1860s water well discovered during construction, offering a fascinating glimpse beneath the building into Granbury's earliest days. Across the hall, guests in the women's restroom are greeted by a captivating portrait whose watchful eyes seem to follow them around the room, adding a touch of mystery and whimsy to the experience. These unexpected details transform a stay into something memorable.

The Nutt House Hotel stands today as a testament to perseverance, thoughtful restoration, and the belief that some places are simply worth saving. Rather than erasing the past, its owners chose to celebrate it, weaving history into every preserved beam, column, and carefully considered detail.

Sometimes the finest hotels aren't defined by how new they are—they're defined by the stories they continue to tell.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The wooden column preserved.


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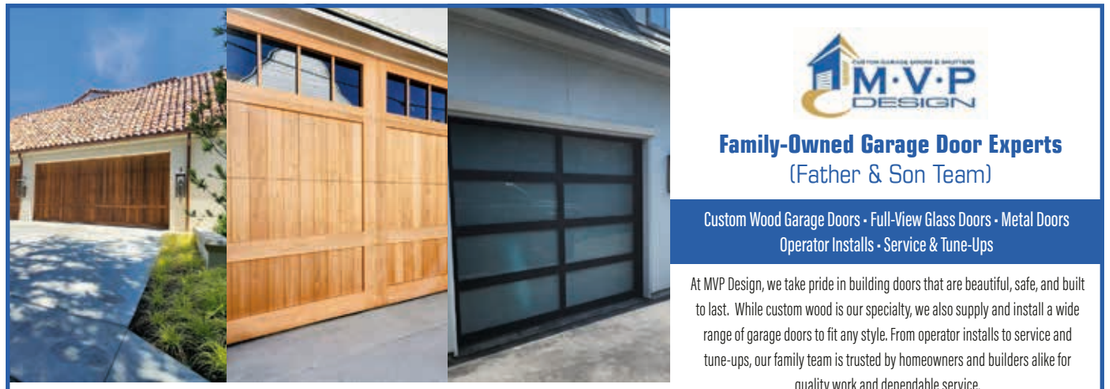

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Bella Flora residents Nathan and Sadye Albert found more than a vacation home in Cabo—they discovered a place where lifelong friendships, unforgettable views, and family traditions continue to grow.

For many families, a vacation ends when the plane lands back in Texas. For Nathan and Sadye Albert, one destination has become something much more than a getaway—it has become a second home.

Since moving to Bella Flora in 2024, the Alberts have embraced everything they love about the neighborhood: peaceful surroundings, a strong sense of security, and room to slow down without sacrificing convenience. "Our favorite thing about Bella Flora is how safe and secure it feels," Sadye says. "It's calm and quiet, but you're still close to Fort Worth."

Nathan and Sadye, owners of ***Chisholm Trail Redi Mix***, stay busy balancing business ownership with raising their energetic 20-month-old son, Ridge. Having a place where they can truly unplug has become one of their greatest luxuries. Ironically, they found many of those same qualities nearly 1,100 miles away on the shores of Cabo San Lucas.

Love at First Stay

Long before they became homeowners, the Alberts were simply repeat visitors.

"We got married in Cabo then kept finding ourselves going back," Sadye says. With a direct two-hour flight from DFW—and even the convenience of JSX—Cabo became an easy escape whenever life became busy. But it wasn't just Cabo that captured their hearts. It was Hacienda Beach Club & Residences.

"There's nothing more relaxing than opening the doors all the way and listening to the sound of the ocean."

SADYE ALBERT

For three years, they vacationed at Hacienda before purchasing their own residence four years ago. "The community is what sold us," Sadye explains. "We've made lifelong friendships with people from the United States and Canada. The staff knows everyone by their first name, and they truly become family."

Located directly on Medano Beach—the only swimmable beach in Cabo—the property combines luxury resort amenities with an unbeatable location just steps from the marina, downtown shopping, and many of Cabo's most celebrated restaurants.

A Fresh Take on Hacienda Style

Although the views were perfect, Sadye knew the interior needed a brighter personality.

Most residences at Hacienda embrace traditional Spanish architecture with rich wood tones and darker finishes. While she loved the timeless character, she envisioned something lighter.

"I wanted to keep the Hacienda style while bringing in some coastal freshness," she says.

White cabinetry instantly brightened the kitchen, while a custom blue island became the home's centerpiece. Brass hardware adds warmth throughout, and a striking natural stone countertop with subtle blue veining ties the entire space together.

Many of the furnishings were sourced from local artisans in Cabo and nearby San José del Cabo, allowing the home to retain an authentic connection to its surroundings.

"I think after the remodel I became an expert at shipping furniture to Mexico," Sadye laughs. "It definitely wasn't easy." The finished home feels relaxed, welcoming, and effortlessly elegant—a place where family and friends immediately settle in.

Living with the View

While every room has its own charm, one space always draws everyone together. The open-concept living room overlooks the Sea of Cortez through an entire wall of retractable glass doors.



Having a full kitchen was important to part-time paradise living.

BOOK YOUR STAY

"We're on the fourth floor, so the panoramic views are incredible," Sadye says. "There's truly nothing more relaxing than opening the doors all the way and listening to the sound of the ocean." The adjoining balcony extends the living space outdoors, becoming the family's favorite place for slow mornings with coffee, quiet afternoons overlooking the water, and unforgettable sunsets.

Today, Ridge is already creating memories there himself. His first trip to Cabo came at just three months old, and although family life now means quarterly visits instead of monthly getaways, Cabo has become part of his story from the very beginning.

Favorite Dining

The Alberts often say the food is one of the biggest reasons they keep returning.

Favorite restaurants include Edith's, Tres Sirenas, Roasted, Chubby Noodle, JM Steakhouse, and Gardenias, where Sadye enthusiastically recommends the molcajete. Fortunately, nearly all are just a short walk from Hacienda, making evenings as effortless as the days spent on the beach.

Two Places Called Home

Whether they're welcoming neighbors in Bella Flora or welcoming friends and family to Cabo, the Alberts have discovered that home is less about geography than the people who gather there. Running *Chisholm Trail Redi Mix* keeps life busy, but stepping onto their balcony overlooking the Sea of Cortez is an instant reminder to slow down, reconnect, and enjoy the people who matter most.

For Nathan and Sadye, Cabo isn't simply a favorite destination. It's the place they return to—again and again—to make memories that last long after the vacation ends.





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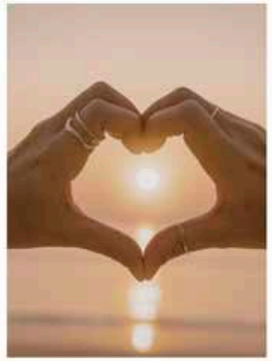

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BELLA MARGARITA COLLECTIVE



On June 23rd, Bellas women gathered for our first Bellas Margarita Collective event. There was no agenda, simply mixing and mingling while enjoying margaritas and snacks. This time around, Cynthia Campos opened her backyard replete with a pickleball court. After a little friendly chatting, Bella Crossing resident "Pickleball Ann" offered impromptu lessons. Michelle and Jan of Harvell Travel sponsored the event by generously providing $100 gift certificates to two lucky winners - Jenny K of Bella Ranch and Charlotte L of Bella Crossing.







Our lucky winners with Michelle and Jan of Harvell Travel





Pickleball Ann









Don't miss an event - follow *Stroll The Bellas* Residents Only on Facebook or click QR to email Christi your phone number for text list.



resident business guide

This is a current list of business owners and professionals from our neighborhood. It is an opportunity to network, qualify, and potentially build a business relationship with other successful individuals who also live here. To be included in the Resident Business Guide, email your name, business name, phone number, and email address to Christi.Flaherty@strollmag.com.

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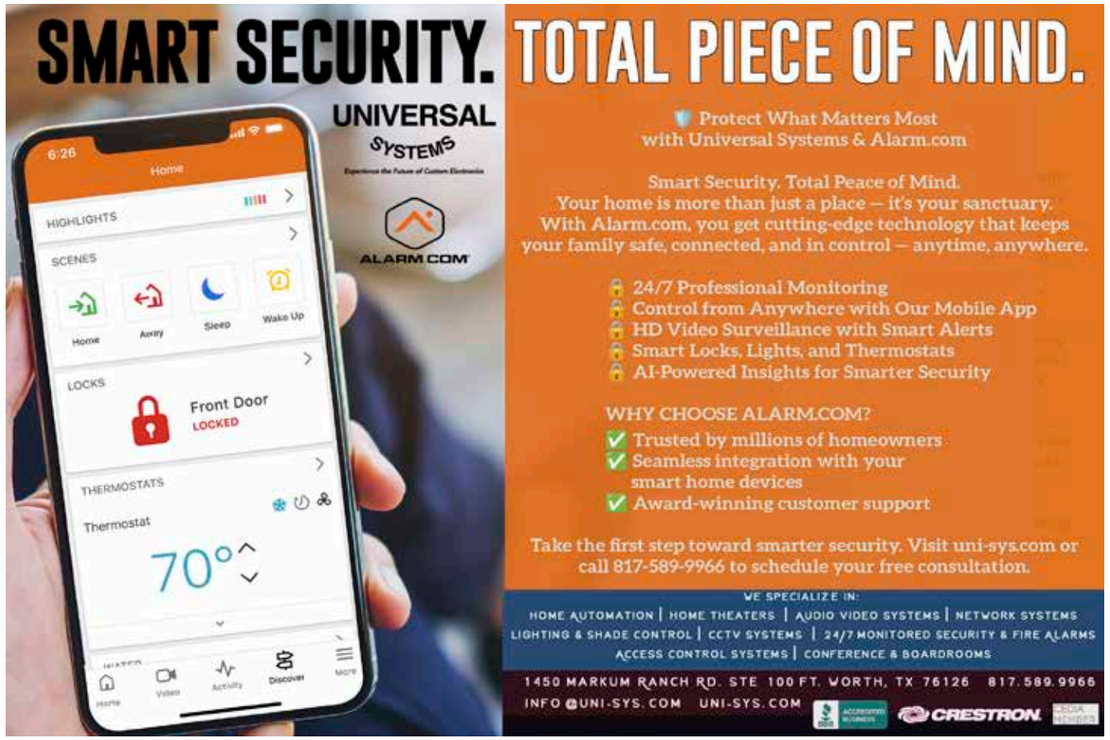



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