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PROFILE

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She received her Doctorate of Dental Surgery from New York University College of Dentistry. With extensive training in complex restorative dentistry, implantology, endodontics, microsurgery, and cosmetic treatments, Dr. Ghesmati takes a comprehensive approach—blending function and aesthetics.

Her background in engineering has provided her a distinct advantage in employing digital dentistry in every aspect of her practice. She leverages the latest technologies including dental microscopes, 3D printing, and a fully digital in-house lab.

Beyond dentistry, she's an avid watercolor artist and passionate home baker—currently working toward becoming a pastry chef in her own kitchen. Her dog, Merlot, is always close by.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CONTENTS

Volume 61 • Number 7



42

The Prayer Stop, a devotional roadside shed, is the humblest house of worship along the "Highway to Heaven," an expanse of New Hampshire Avenue in suburban Maryland lined with churches, temples, mandirs, and mosques.

FEATURES

42
Highway to Heaven
By Ike Allen

A remarkable stretch of road in Maryland is home to a tapestry of houses of worship—reflecting the religious diversity that breathes color and community into our region.

52
Mr. Didn't Fix It
By Paul Farhi

Two years ago, Jeff Bezos brought in controversial media executive Will Lewis to lift the *Washington Post* out of a post-Trump slump. His tenure ended in failure—and left the newspaper in an even deeper hole.

58
Making the Sale
By Janelle Harris Dixon, Patrick Hruby, and Michele Lerner

A $100,000 mansion makeover, marketing a "homicide house," AI versus physical staging, selling a condo right now, and tips and tales about closing the deal in a buyer's market.

This page
Photograph by Lance Lokas

On the cover
Photograph by Stacy Zarin Goldberg; architecture by Sam Stusek Creative; interior design by Erin Paige Pitts Interiors

CONTENTS

Volume 61 • Number 7



81

Timberline Glamping Co., one of eight varied camping choices.

147

Bethesda Bagels' rainbow bagel, part of our roundup of surprising renditions around town.



177

A masterpiece by Renoir at the Phillips Collection in Dupont Circle.



DEPARTMENTS

CAPITAL COMMENT

11 Four long-term DC projects nearing the finish line . . . . . An Army veteran's online show about cooking and mental health . . . . . Why are UMD scientists studying farts? . . . Grindr's man on Capitol Hill

22 BIG PICTURE
Can't get enough cherry trees? More just arrived.

THINGS TO DO

28 Our ten picks for the month in culture.

IQ

33 REALITY CHECK
In his new novel, former *Survivor* contestant Stephen Fishbach gives an insider look at how TV competitions actually work.

39 THRIVING AFTER TRAUMA
Psychiatrist Suzan Song put herself in danger to help some of the world's most wounded people. In a new book, she explains how she and her patients have healed.

LIFE, TRAVEL & STYLE

81 PITCH PERFECT
There's a camping site for everyone, from beach tents to luxe glamping domes.

84 SUIT YOURSELF
Menswear gets a dramatic update, with fuller pants, broader shoulders, wider lapels—and brooches.

86 BEST DENTISTS
The top orthodontists, periodontists, general dentists, and other practitioners who can treat your teeth.

TASTE

144 ROLL PLAY
Our critic checks out two hot new Japanese spots.

146 HIDDEN EATS
A hearty—and vegetarian—Indian restaurant in Sterling.

147 BAGELS GONE WILD
Six varieties–from sweet to savory to eye-catching—that will drive purists crazy.

148 SWEET HOME
Four pros who craft everything from cupcakes to breads from their own kitchens.

150 IS YOUR BARTENDER A SPY?
A look at espionage in DC restaurants.

HOME

153 ECO-EFFICIENT LIVING
How one architect designed a net-zero home for a family of six in Del Ray.

157 TOP MORTGAGE PROFESSIONALS
Buying a home or refinancing? You'll need a loan officer. Here are the area's leading ones.

177 NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFING: DUPONT AND LOGAN CIRCLES
Great places to eat, drink, shop, and play in these historic neighborhoods.

188 OFF THE MARKET
Some of the region's recent high-end residential transactions.

IN EVERY ISSUE

8 FEEDBACK

192 FIRST PERSON
Lawyer Debra Katz on two keepsakes that inspire her.

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"Love it. Even food that I cook tastes pretty good outdoors."

"I hate camping—I was a Boy Scout and got caught in a hurricane. Never again."

"I hate camping! I've seen *The Blair Witch Project* too many times."

"Hate it! I prefer a good night's sleep without the worry of bugs crawling into my bed. Also, *The Parent Trap* lizard scene has me scarred for life."

"I love camping. Disconnecting from the outside world and connecting with nature feels so refreshing. Also, how could you forget about the s'mores?"

"Love it. Some of my best childhood memories are camping with my family."



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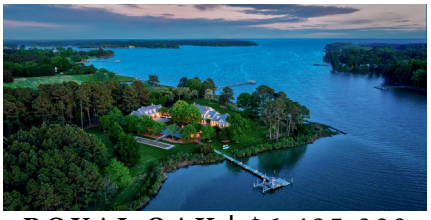

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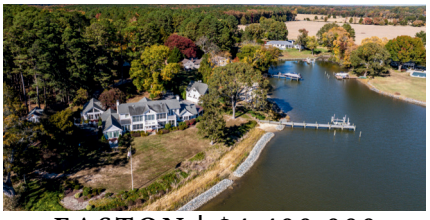

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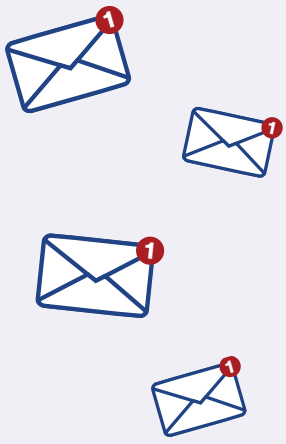

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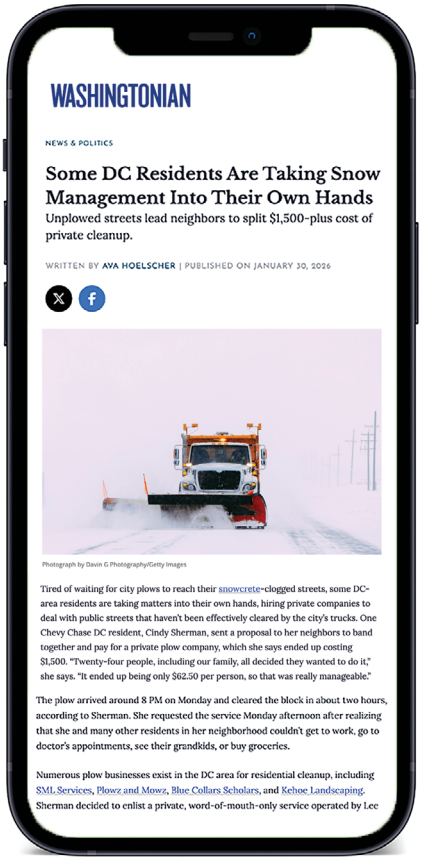

Plowed Under

JANUARY'S SNOWSTORM HIT DC LIKE A ton of, well, snowcrete, encasing roads and alleys in a rock-hard layer of icy precipitation. In some parts of town, the city's response was slow and incomplete enough that neighbors pooled their resources and hired private plow companies to clear their streets. One of them, Chevy Chase DC resident Cindy Sherman, sent a proposal to two dozen neighbors to band together for such an effort, which came to $1,500, or about $62 a person. Instagram commenters on our web post agreed that sounded like a pretty good deal—but shouldn't have been necessary.

"$62 to get going with a collective effort of a neighborhood is totally outstanding! Good on them." –**@dinwinddie9**

"Love it and not a bad price. . . ." –**@curriechicken202**

"Their tax dollars paid for the service for the government to take care of this community. [Sherman] shouldn't have had to do that." –**@msdeedee_2u**

"Sometimes you have to take matters into your own hands. We can't waste time waiting for public services sometimes." –**@renatalynettebeauty**

"This happened in Foxhall too. Neighbors!" –**@bavacuda**

"Highlight the website and/or number of the service, so the larger community has it for the next time the city screws up.....this should also be [a] tax credit." –**@nkshahphotos**

"Such a shame! DC collects so much money from traffic tickets. . . and yet this city can't handle a snowstorm that happens once every ten years. Or maybe the mayor doesn't care because she is not focused on being re-elected?" –**@martinvdr1**

"Millions in traffic tickets and they still have yet to clean these streets. Where is that money going?" –**@les.s.more**

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TAKING FLIGHT

The National Air and Space Museum will open new galleries this summer. For more, turn the page.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK AVINO/NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

The End Is in Sight!

Four long-term projects finally near the finish line

SEVERAL DC MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS have been undergoing much-anticipated renovations that are now heading to completion. Here's a preview.

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

The museum will debut the last phase of its major renovation this year, with five of the seven remaining exhibit halls reopening in conjunction with the America 250 celebration—and the museum's 50th birthday—in July. You'll be able to explore the mechanics of space flight, check out a P-51D Mustang and other WWII-era airplanes, and, in the RTX Living in the Space Age Hall, learn about how spaceflight technology has affected life on Earth. When the last two exhibits arrive later in the year, this long-term overhaul of the beloved museum will at last be complete.



A rendering of the sculpture garden

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF EXPLORATION

As part of a broader renovation of National Geographic's headquarters, the museum is being significantly expanded and rethought. You can check out the new space this summer when it opens with exhibits about exploration and conservation. The museum will also feature a 400-seat theater, a nighttime courtyard, and a new explorer's eatery offering cuisines from across the globe. Visitors will enter through a tall, yellow rectangle that will be instantly recognizable to fans of *National Geographic* magazine.

HIRSHHORN SCULPTURE GARDEN

If you've spotted a bronze-toned toe sticking up behind the construction scaffolding, that's just a peek into the museum's upcoming sculpture area, which has been undergoing an extensive revamp since 2023. The revitalization is slated to be completed in late fall and will include things like increased seating, a cistern for improved drainage, additional trees for shade, and a total of five entrances to the garden, up from three. Stacked-stone walls will be built throughout the garden's East, Central and West galleries, and there will be space for performances and rotating exhibitions.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNDERCROFT

Since 2023, the memorial's undercroft—the foundation that was built to bear the weight of the structure—has been getting a major transformation. The project will create 15,000 square feet of exhibit space that's dedicated to the 16th President. Additional planned renovations include an immersive theater equipped with historic images; a new elevator and restrooms; and a larger gift shop. The new space is likely to open by July 4.

—JENAE BARNES

RENDERING COURTESY OF NMRL/DARCSTUDIO; PHOTOGRAPH OF SHERALD BY KELVIN BULLUCK

A BOON TO BALTIMORE

The Trump administration's interference with DC-area arts institutions is working out pretty well for Baltimore. Here are three big cultural events that have relocated to our neighboring metropolis.



Painter Amy Sherald

AMY SHERALD

The Baltimore Museum of Art landed her highly anticipated exhibition, "Amy Sherald: American Sublime," after the painter pulled her show from the National Portrait Gallery due to concerns over censorship. It's a big loss for the Smithsonian. The exhibit—which features her **Michelle Obama** portrait and 37 other works—has been a significant hit at the BMA: It was completely sold out by late February. (The exhibit closes in April.)

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

The WNO ended 15 years of affiliation with the beleaguered Kennedy Center this past January amid declining donations and attendance. The opera's new production of *West Side Story* will now move to the Lyric in Baltimore (as well as Strathmore in North Bethesda). It will be the first WNO performance at the Lyric since 2009.

PHILIP GLASS

In the wake of Trump's Kennedy Center meddling, the minimalist composer—who was born in Baltimore—nixed the big-deal premiere of his Symphony No. 15, "Lincoln," and instead will debut it with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in July. Local fans will have to wait: The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra will perform the work in June 2027.

—DARA T. MATHIS

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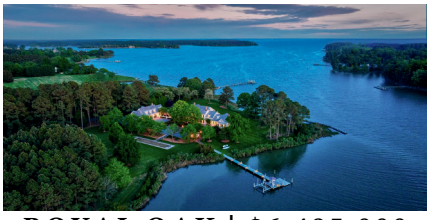

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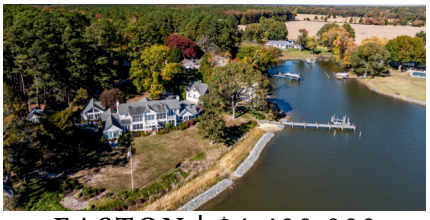

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Cory Brown, cohost of *Eat Your Feelings*

Recipe for Hope

An Army veteran's online show focuses on food and mental health

IT WAS A POINT OF PRIDE FOR CORY Brown's unit: Despite their dangerous mission providing convoy security along the highways of northern Iraq, all of the nearly 200 soldiers survived the war. Then they got home.

Since 2008, when his cavalry regiment returned to the US, more than 20 of the soldiers have died, most apparently by suicide. That includes Brown's closest Army friend, **Kevin Zachary,** who lost his life to suicide in 2019. "When you look back and start piecing things together, he had a lot of medical bills, he was having trouble with the bank and housing, his job and the relationships that he had," Brown says. "All these things had hit him, and he wasn't talking to us about them, or at least he wasn't telling anybody all of it."

Zachary's death was devastating for Brown, who had been hit by an IED in Iraq, suffered a traumatic brain injury, and struggled with his own reentry. He got divorced, had trouble finding the motivation to work, and dealt with suicidal thoughts himself. "I thought I would be more adjusted, but life has a way of showing you that you don't know what you're talking about," says Brown, who grew up in Alabama and today lives in Nokesville, Virginia.

Before shipping off, Brown had attended graduate school in political management at George Washington University, and when he got back, after a rough period in Alabama, he moved to the Washington area and worked as a campaign consultant and pollster. But after his friend's death, he searched for opportunities to help struggling veterans talk more openly about–and seek help for–their mental health.

That's why last year Brown debuted *Eat Your Feelings,* an online cooking show that incorporates honest discussions about grief, loneliness, and stress. Brown hosts the show with **Sam Nathews,** a beverage lobbyist who grew up in the next town over from Brown's in Alabama–though the two never met until they were on a panel together in DC a decade ago.

Cooking, it turned out, was the perfect way for the two friends to talk about intense subjects while keeping the conversation lively. "We'll be laughing one minute, we'll be crying the next minute, and then setting off the fire alarm the next minute," Nathews says. Both have been into cooking for years. Brown's fondest childhood memories are of big country breakfasts his grandmother made, and Nathews's father owned a barbecue trailer that served a famous jambalaya, which the pair try to recreate in one episode while also talking about the loss of parents and friends.

Though it deals with heavy subject matter, *Eat Your Feelings*–nine more episodes are coming to YouTube soon–is casual and unscripted. Nathews joshes with Brown and makes off-color jokes, filling up the show's virtual "swear jar."

But both have also cried on camera. "The cooking can be fun and the comedy can be funny," Brown says, "but at the end of the day, it's got to be about that stuff that nobody wants to talk about."

–IKE ALLEN



$1,198,000

That's the asking price for a fascinating cottage on 28th Street, Northwest, that dates back to the 18th century, making it one of DC's oldest homes. The Georgetown house–which is 1,015 square feet and has just one bedroom–is said to have been built by a British sea captain.

PHOTOGRAPH OF BROWN BY MELANIE BLAKELY; HOUSE BY APK/WIKIMEDIA

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HELPING HAND

When retired journalist **Dorothy Butler Gilliam** heard about the February 4 layoff of nearly 400 reporters at the *Washington Post,* the news came as a shock. The *Post* hired Gilliam (below) in 1961 as its first Black woman reporter, and she still feels close to the newspaper where she was a prominent columnist, editor, and reporter for decades. "It made me very sad, even upset," she says. "Many people depend on the *Post*."

Gilliam, who is 89 and still lives in DC, felt compelled to act, sending a donation of $10,000 to a GoFundMe created for laid-off Washington Post Guild members. Her gift is tied with two others of $10,000 each that make up the fundraising campaign's top donations—one from journalist **Kara Swisher** and the other anonymous. So far, the effort has raised more than $595,000. Gilliam says she sent the gift to *Post* reporters because "I was inspired by the people who work at the paper who continue to make a significant difference in the city."

Gilliam, who retired in 2003, is still working to diversify American newsrooms, and her 2019 book about her career, *Trailblazer,* helped introduce a new generation of journalists to her work. Her goal to "make the media look more like America" has been set back by the recent layoffs, which the Washington Post Guild says disproportionately affected journalists of color. Gilliam calls that recent shift in newsroom demographics "very, very disappointing. It's important for the readers of the *Post* to read diverse opinions." —DARA T. MATHIS



Not a Pretty Picture

Hemphill Artworks, one of DC's key galleries, closes its doors



The now-shuttered Hemphill space

HEMPHILL ARTWORKS, ONE OF DC'S most important art galleries, has closed its location in Mount Vernon Square, a sign of the challenges facing art dealers across the country. Founder **George Hemphill,** who declined to comment for this story, recently sent out an email announcing he would still represent artists and sell work, but there will no longer be a public-facing space and the gallery won't host regular exhibitions.

The loss for the District is enormous: Hemphill is one of the few DC galleries that show new work by mid-career and established artists, including **Renée Stout** and **Robin Rose,** along with younger rising stars like **Melvin L. Nesbitt Jr.** and **Rush Baker IV.** It also represents the estates and late works of several local luminaries, including Color Field painter **Leon Berkowitz,** Southern Gothic photographer **William Christenberry,** and pastel realist **Kevin MacDonald.**

There have been signs of trouble leading up to the closure. Painters **Linling Lu** and **Hedieh Javanshir Ilchi** have left the gallery in recent years. (The artists did not return requests for comment.) Hemphill is also a defendant in an ongoing lawsuit over the sale of a painting by **Alma Thomas.** A woman named **Gwendolyn Clark** claims that a painting by Thomas that she bought with her husband in 1976—which went missing in 1981—was subsequently purchased and resold by Hemphill after she told the gallery she was searching for it. (**L. Eden Burgess,** an attorney for Hemphill Artworks, says George Hemphill denies Clark's allegations.)

George Hemphill opened Hemphill Fine Arts in Georgetown in 1993, then moved to 14th Street, Northwest, in 2004, helping spur that corridor's revival. The gallery relocated to 434 K Street, Northwest, in 2019 and rebranded as Hemphill Artworks.

One of the gallery's triumphs was its discovery of the DC artist known as **Mingering Mike.** After a record collector found a cache of richly illustrated vinyl records made from cardboard at a flea market in 2004—an archive of a vibrant and completely imaginary career in soul music—Hemphill was the first to show them. The gallery helped place the collection at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The loss of Hemphill's physical gallery leaves the city without a space to see some of the region's best contemporary artists. But in Hemphill's email, he pledged that the gallery will find other ways to make shows happen. "We are not abandoning our ambition to curate and mount exhibitions," he wrote, "but we will be looking for circumstances more favorable to the changing environment."

—KRISTON CAPPS

PHOTOGRAPH AT BOTTOM COURTESY OF DOROTHY BUTLER GILLIAM; TOP BY EVY MAGES

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SEEING DOUBLE

It's common to spot famous people around DC, but lately there have also been a ton of people who just *look* familiar. Celeb doppelgängers recently flocked to these events.

HEATED RIVALRY



The Anthem hosted a contest for people who resemble this hit show's closeted hockey players.

JOHN F. KENNEDY JR.



A JFK Jr. clone competition was held at Barrel House, which jumped on the excitement around *Love Story,* the TV series about him and his wife, **Carolyn Bessette Kennedy.** This isn't the first time a Kennedy scion has inspired such a competition in DC: In 2024, a **Jack Schlossberg** event brought a slew of clean-cut brunettes to Meridian Hill Park.

BAD BUNNY



The night before the singer performed at the Super Bowl, the Cuban restaurant Casta's at Bodega held a look-alike contest.

THE LORAX



A rotund orange politico with a lot to say? We're talking about the Lorax, of course. Mustachioed locals spoke for the trees at a University of Maryland basketball game in March. The timing was somewhat puzzling: The Terps were playing Illinois, who claim orange as a school color. —DANIELLA BYCK



Emissions Inspection

Why are University of Maryland scientists studying farts?

HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE FART? THAT pressing question is currently being studied by scientists at the University of Maryland. Microbiologist **Brantley Hall** and his colleagues are attempting to map something scientists have largely ignored: the patterns and frequency of everyday human gas. "What's really fascinating," says Hall, "is that we don't know how often people are farting." The few studies that have tried to measure that relied on invasive techniques like rectal tubes, and most were conducted decades ago. "One in five people report excess intestinal gas," he says. "But if we don't know what normal is, we don't know what excess is."

That's why Hall is working on something called the Human Flatus Atlas, an attempt to create the first large-scale data set of everyday human gas. The project involves a "smart underwear" device that Hall has been developing since 2020. A first-of-its-kind contraption designed to reveal what your farts say about your gut health, the device is a small sensor that the user places in their underwear to record whatever passes through it. The resulting data goes to an accompanying iPhone app and then is uploaded to servers so that users—and researchers—can track gaseous trends. Apparently, people are quite curious about their gut health: More than 7,300 have signed up to participate so far.

The demand has surprised even Hall, who initially expected only dozens of volunteers. The wave of responses has prompted the team to greatly expand production of the smart-underwear devices. The goal is to capture a broad cross-section of participants across age, diet, and lifestyle. Participants are asked to wear the device—which the team describes as "comfortable"—for at least three days. Hall has been using one himself for more than a month.

Beyond the team's 2025 study, researchers are planning collaborations with universities across the country to expand the data and refine the technology. Hall says there's plenty more to study, such as the ways that some foods and diets are connected to flatulence. "Right now, a major impediment for switching from a low-fiber diet to a high-fiber diet is the crazy gas symptoms you get," he explains. "We're trying to find a way to make that switch easier. Imagine a future where you could eat healthy without experiencing excess intestinal gas."

Eventually, Hall hopes the device could move beyond the lab and into the wellness market. "Hundreds of people have emailed asking to be part of the study, so there's definitely some demand in the reduction-of-gas space," he says. "We would love for it to be a mass-produced product." —TRISTAN ESPINOZA

PHOTOGRAPH OF *HEATED RIVALRY* ACTORS BY JULIAN HAMILTON/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT) AND HAROLD FENG/GETTY IMAGES; KENNEDY BY MITCHELL GERBER/GETTY IMAGES; BAD BUNNY BY ETIENNE LAURENT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; UNDERWEAR COURTESY OF BRANTLEY HALL

BANNER YEAR

The Trump administration seems unnervingly fond of hanging authoritarian-style banners with his glowering face on federal buildings. Here's a closer look.



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Recently, a gray-blue banner of the President appeared on the side of DOJ headquarters. A slogan on the bottom of the sign reads "Make America Safe Again." The department—which is supposed to function independent of presidential influence—said the sign was somehow meant to commemorate America's 250th birthday.



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
A full-color banner of a frowning Trump adorned the front of the building last August, branded with the "America 250" logo. The image was hung with one of **Teddy Roosevelt,** along with the phrase "American Workers First."



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Two banners appeared on the USDA headquarters last May: one with a portrait of Trump, the other with an image of **Abraham Lincoln.** A message on the signs nodded to Lincoln's role in establishing the agency: "Growing America Since 1862." The banners, which cost more than $16,000, were taken down a few months later.

—DARA T. MATHIS

Grindr Gets Political

Why the LGBTQ+ dating app launched a DC policy operation

GRINDR, THE WORLD'S LARGEST LGBTQ+ dating and hookup app, has been popular in DC for more than a decade. But last year, the company did something unexpected: It launched a Washington policy operation, naming **Joe Hack** as its first head of global government affairs. So why does a hookup app need a policy wing?

Hack, a former congressional aide and executive at the Daschle Group, has been advocating on behalf of the app's 15 million users, making the rounds on Capitol Hill. Part of his job is reframing what Grindr actually is. Beyond quick encounters and shirtless grid photos, he argues, the company operates at the intersection of technology, identity, and wellness. "Grindr is not just a tech company or the largest gay company on the planet," he says. "It's also a public-health company."

As anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric has put increasing pressure on access to healthcare, Grindr has expanded its role as a discreet place for users to access things like medications and free HIV self-testing kits. In 2025, it launched the telehealth service Woodwork, allowing users to request prescriptions for medications such as erectile-dysfunction treatments directly through the app.

Hack says the company continues to receive bipartisan federal support as one of the CDC's top partners in HIV prevention, a situation that hasn't changed under the Trump administration.

Grindr is also pressing lawmakers on issues like digital safety and privacy. Over the past year, Hack has lobbied in support of the App Store Accountability Act, which would require app stores—not individual apps—to verify user ages before downloads. The goal, he says, is to prevent minors from accessing adult platforms without forcing them to submit facial scans or upload government-issued IDs, methods that critics argue are invasive and prone to error.


Grindr's Joe Hack

Hack says the company is still figuring out where it can have the greatest impact. Grindr remains, in his words, a "sexy brand"—and much of his time on Capitol Hill is spent explaining the realities of LGBTQ+ life to lawmakers who may be unfamiliar. He's also having conversations with legislators to advocate for continued global HIV-prevention funding, framing it as a human-rights issue.

Next on the agenda: expanding access to legal aid, supporting LGBTQ+ family-formation rights—including tax equity for same-sex couples and surrogacy protections—and finding ways to carefully integrate AI into the Grindr app. For the first time this year, the company will also host a party for the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

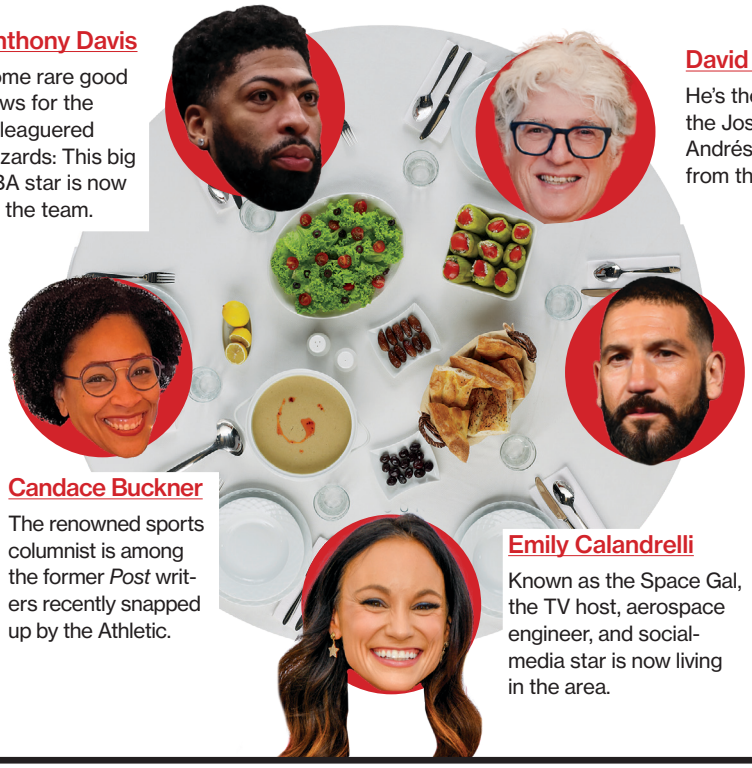
At the moment, Grindr's DC operation is just Hack, who works from home. But the plan is to open a physical office and also expand the team, signaling that Grindr's policy presence is more than an experiment. "Managing 190 countries, 50 states, and a federal government as one human is not the easiest," Hack says. "I'm excited to have help."

—TRISTAN ESPINOZA

PHOTOGRAPHS AT TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT, BY EVY MAGES, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, AND ANNABELLE GORDON/SIPA USA; HACK COURTESY OF GRINDR

Guest List

A monthly roundup of people we'd like to have over for drinks, food, and conversation



Anthony Davis

Some rare good news for the beleaguered Wizards: This big NBA star is now on the team.

David Strasser

He's the next CEO of the José Andrés Group. Andrés stepped down from the job in 2024.

Jon Bernthal

The actor, who grew up in Maryland, recently bought a house in Chevy Chase DC.

Candace Buckner

The renowned sports columnist is among the former *Post* writers recently snapped up by the Athletic.

Emily Calandrelli

Known as the Space Gal, the TV host, aerospace engineer, and social-media star is now living in the area.

DISINVITED!

Curtis Lear

The DC motorist was sentenced to 18 months for dangerously driving all over the National Mall in his SUV.

Lowering the Bar

What does it mean to open a "pop-up dive"?

EXACTLY WHAT MAKES A DIVE bar is a matter of great debate. But regardless of whether there's graffiti in the bathroom stalls or a jukebox in a dimly lit corner, one universal quality is that its character comes from age. So it might raise eyebrows that a "pop-up dive bar" is operating in Alexandria from late March through the summer.

Del Ray Dive is the latest from Del Ray's Pop Up Bar, an ever-changing venue that has previously been devoted to **Taylor Swift,** tiki, and ski-lodge themes. "How can you have a dive bar that's been there for generations but it's really only been there for, like, three weeks?" says owner **Bill Blackburn.** "That's a fair question. I guess it'll be a fair critique. But we'll do our best."

Blackburn's original idea was to create a throwback to the old Del Ray, when it was a more blue-collar neighborhood full of "drown-your-sorrows-with-a-shot-and-a-beer-type bars," he says. "But that's not very fun, right? Nobody wants to go to a dive bar that's depressing." Instead, he wants to channel college dive bars or the kind of places you might go to in your twenties, "because everybody has fond memories of that time in their life, whether you went to college or you didn't."

Blackburn says you can expect an old jukebox and darts, along with sports and college memorabilia and neon signs. Part of Del Ray Dive pays homage to real dive bars of Alexandria, such as Mac's Place, the Snuggery, and the Cole Bin. "Everything's on the cheaper side, which is kind of a change in formula from what we've done in the past with this pop-up," says Blackburn, who hopes to keep drinks under $10 and offer happy-hour deals. "We can't have a dive bar and then sell old-fashioneds for $18."



He has also bought a soda machine he plans to rebrand as the "beer-o-matic" and stock with PBR, Natty Light, and other cheap cans. "For four bucks, the bartender just presses a button and you get whatever comes out."

One aspect is decidedly inauthentic, however. The bar shares its restrooms with the adjoining Pork Barrel BBQ, so Blackburn says the stalls will be "cleaner than a dive bar should have."

–JESSICA SIDMAN

PHOTOGRAPH OF DAVIS BY SCOTT TAETSCH/GETTY IMAGES; CALANDRELLI BY JASON DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR BENTON/ILLE FILM FESTIVAL; BERNTHAL BY ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR CINEMACON; DRINKS BY GETTY IMAGES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Branching Out

ON AN OVERCAST DAY IN MID-FEBRUARY, a crew of contractors offloaded rows of cherry trees and various saplings to a staging area near the Tidal Basin. Most of the cherry trees, seen here in a row on the left, were waiting to be transported to the south side of the reservoir. The other trees were intended to fill in gaps around the National Mall. With their root balls wrapped to keep them moist, the saplings stayed in the staging area for up to ten days. Contractors began transplanting them with the help of the National Park Service soon after.

In 2024, the Park Service removed about 150 cherry trees as part of an ongoing program to rehabilitate the seawall around the flood-prone Tidal Basin. The Japanese government pledged a gift of 250 trees last year to replace them. Some of those are native Japanese cherry trees, currently under a two-year quarantine. But most were grown in American commercial nurseries, and some are now being moved to their permanent homes. You'll be able to see them this year along with those famous pink blossoms on the remaining mature trees.

—DARA T. MATHIS

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WASHINGTONIAN
2025 TOP DOCTORS Reception

On February 10, physicians from *Washingtonian's* 2025 Top Doctors list gathered with colleagues and friends to celebrate their recognition. The annual roster recognizes more than 2,000 of the area's top physicians, as selected by their peers.

The cocktail reception at **Barbouzard** featured French Mediterranean bites, cocktails, and a DJ from **Mixing Maryland,** who kept the energy high. A highlight for many guests was having their photo taken at the popular Top Doctors cover station.

Washingtonian president and CEO Catherine Merrill shared remarks thanking the doctors for their continued commitment to the region. She also acknowledged the event's support from **Doctors Without Borders,** a global humanitarian organization that delivers medical care to people in crisis based solely on need.

Thank you to our venue partner, **Barbouzard,** for hosting.

And thanks to our wonderful vendors: **CSI Printing & Graphics, Lee's Flower and Card Shop, Mixing Maryland,** and **Washington Talent Agency.**

Photographs by Stacey Salter Moore/IC Image Works and Evy Mages

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Washingtonian president and CEO Catherine Merrill toasted the honorees.



Guests posed for custom Top Doctors covers at Washington Talent Agency's photo station



Top Doctors Alison Kitay and Edwin Numsuwan



Barbouzard served delicious bites including oysters displayed on ice.



Top Doctors Chris Good and Cassie Root



Top Doctors Lynne Lightfoot and Kelly Bolden



Top Doctor Lynt Johnson



Top Doctors Niteesh Bharara, Colin Haines, and Ehsan Jazini



Dan About Town

Party photographer Dan Swartz's monthly roundup of bashes, balls, and benefits

▾ Opening of "Horizon of Khufu" VR Experience at Fever Hub Washington DC

February 5



Fever's Emma Shaffer, Embassy of Egypt deputy chief of mission Chahinda Emadeldin, Fever's Tyler Oberle, and Egyptian cultural and educational-bureau attaché and director Nermine A. Sabry

▾ Elegancia Opening Party at La Cosecha

February 7



Theresa Graff of MDVIP, Austin Graff of Curiosity & Connection, and Elizabeth Harnik of Edens



Jovana Urriola, Wilmer Valderrama, and Daniella Senior of Elegancia



Senator Alex Padilla, Angela Padilla, and Voto Latino's María Teresa Kumar

▾ 2026 Make-A-Wish Mid-Atlantic Wish Ball at the Washington Hilton

February 20



Jason León of Executives & Boards with NBC4's Erika Gonzalez



Former Washington Capitals player Karl Alzner, Bask Plant-Based Kitchen's Mandy Alzner, Wish alum Nitin Ramachandran, Brandi Holtby, and former Caps player Braden Holtby



Lerner Enterprises' Michael Cohen, Jones Street Travel's Tali Cohen, the Washington Commanders Foundation's Valerie Biberaj, and Ken Biberaj of Savills North America and "Coffee With Ken"

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL SWARTZ

▼ Invariant 20th-Year Kick-Off Party at Anderson House
February 25


Invariant's Jonny Montano, content creator Sheron Torho Roberts, Invariant's Kenny Roberts, and Greenberg Traurig's Tim Bass


Lindley Kratovil Sherer, Mary Beth Stanton, and Carolyn Coda of Invariant


Invariant's Maia Hunt Estes, Kate Bennett, Anne MacMillan, and Heather Podesta

▼ Andreessen Horowitz "American Dynamism" Summit at Mellon Auditorium
March 3


Rob Stephens of Spider Management Company, Andreessen Horowitz's Jen Kha, Grant Gregory of Cantos, and Andreessen Horowitz's Collin McCune


Sarah Ghermay, chief of staff to Representative Yassamin Ansari, and Ben Burnett, chief of staff to Representative Eric Swalwell, with Andreessen Horowitz's Morgan Gress and Michael Reed


Northwood Space's Bridgit Mendler, Andreessen Horowitz's Erin Price-Wright and David Ulevitch, and Castelion's Bryon Hargis

▼ STARZ and Sony Pictures Special Screening of *Outlander* at NCTA–The Internet & Television Association
March 5



NCTA's Nilda Gumbs; Mark Boyce, acting minister-counsellor for the Scottish Government in the USA; and Sony Pictures Entertainment's Andrew Reinsdorf

▼ Capitano VIP Preview at Canopy by Hilton at the Wharf
March 5


Canopy by Hilton's Dagim Mekonnen; Concord Hospitality's Michael Anderson and Angela Carrick; and Capitano and Whiskey Charlie's Sean Lewis-Velazquez

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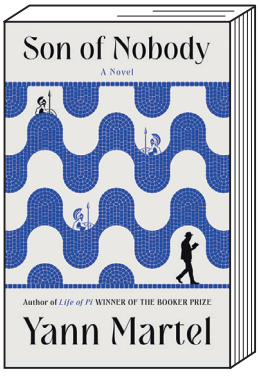
THINGS TO DO

Our 10 picks for the month in culture

By Pat Padua



BOOKS

YANN MARTEL

POLITICS AND PROSE (CONNECTICUT AVENUE)

April 11

The *Life of Pi* author's latest novel, *Son of Nobody,* retells the Trojan War through the story of a Greek warrior whose ancient tale is rediscovered by an Oxford scholar, forging a personal connection across millennia.

MUSIC

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

STRATHMORE

April 23

The prolific French pianist, known for his sensitive technique and flashy visual style (with concert wear designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood), performs Claude Debussy's complete Preludes.





MUSEUMS

"OF THE HILLS: PAHARI PAINTINGS FROM INDIA'S HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS"

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ASIAN ART

April 18–July 26

Rare works made for Hindu kings in India's Pahari region between the 17th and 19th centuries are featured in this exhibit, including a vivid watercolor that depicts a family viewing a solar eclipse.



DANCE

"AN ASIAN AMERICAN DANCE JOURNEY"

WOOLLY MAMMOTH

April 24

DC's Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company, led by the Smithsonian's first choreographer-in-residence, presents a program exploring the Asian American experience, including a new work honoring Japanese American artist Ruth Asawa.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THIBAUDET BY ANDREW ECCLES; PAINTING FROM "OF THE HILLS" COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ASIAN ART; "ASIAN AMERICAN DANCE JOURNEY" BY STEFAN JENNINGS BATISTA

MUSIC

DANISH STRING QUARTET AND DANISH NATIONAL GIRLS' CHOIR



CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

April 18

Fifty voices join in otherworldly harmony for a program featuring works by Caroline Shaw and Franz Schubert, traditional Nordic songs, and a newly commissioned piece by Bang on a Can founder David Lang.



MUSEUMS

"DEAR AMERICA"

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

April 11–September 20

Spanning 250 years of the American experience, this exhibit features works inspired by the nation's landscapes and people, with artists including Dorothea Lange, Roy Lichtenstein, and Fritz Scholder (above).

MUSIC

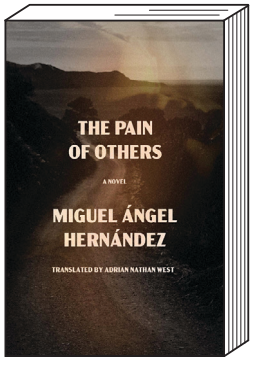
LILY ALLEN

WARNER THEATRE

April 19

The English singer-songwriter performs tunes from her acclaimed latest album, *West End Girl*, a sophisticated soul-pop cycle charting her tempestuous relationship with *Stranger Things* actor David Harbour.





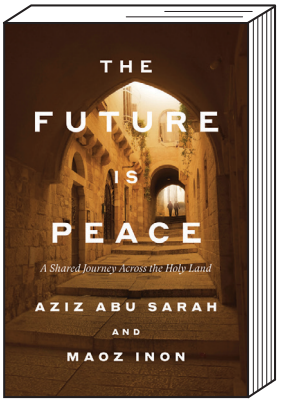
BOOKS

MIGUEL ÁNGEL HERNÁNDEZ

POLITICS AND PROSE (CONNECTICUT AVENUE)

April 26

In his true-crime ghost story, *The Pain of Others,* the Spanish novelist revisits the 1995 Christmas Eve tragedy in which his best friend murdered his own sister before taking his life.



BOOKS

AZIZ ABU SARAH AND MAOZ INON

SIXTH & I

April 16

Sarah, who lost his brother to Israeli forces, and Inon, who lost both parents to Hamas militants, forged an unlikely alliance and now run a nonprofit dedicated to resolving conflict in the Middle East. In their new book, *The Future Is Peace,* they propose a path forward.

COMEDY

ROBBY HOFFMAN



9:30 CLUB

April 25

The provocative comic, once dubbed a "lesbian Andrew Dice Clay," is having a breakout year, with a recent Netflix special and an HBO series in the works.

PHOTOGRAPH OF DANISH STRING QUARTET BY CAROLINE BITTENCOURT; "BICENTENNIAL INDIAN" COURTESY OF NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, CORCORAN COLLECTION; ALLEN BY NICKY J. SIMS/GETTY IMAGES; HOFFMAN COURTESY OF 9:30 CLUB.



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Headlining Entertainment
Vanessa Bayer





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IQ

IDEAS. ARGUMENTS. REPORTING.

Reality Check

In an intriguing new novel, former *Survivor* contestant Stephen Fishbach gives an insider look at how TV competitions actually work

By Tristan Espinoza



PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURA METZLER

IN HIS DEBUT NOVEL, *ESCAPE!,* DC author Stephen Fishbach draws on his experience both behind the scenes as a former television executive and as a two-time contestant on the CBS reality show *Survivor*. The book tells the fictional story of eight contestants trying to get off an isolated island in order to win a million-dollar prize. *Escape!* is about reality-TV redemption—and who really holds the power once the cameras stop rolling.

Since moving to DC from Los Angeles during the pandemic to be closer to his wife's family, the Pushcart Prize–winning writer has focused on being known less as a reality-show contestant and more as an author and podcast host. We caught up with him amid his current book tour to talk about writing, the world of *Escape!,* and life after *Survivor*.



CHUTE FOR THE STARS: Fishbach competing on *Survivor: Tocantins*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MONTY BRINTON/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES

How did *Survivor* shape your personal and professional life?

Survivor did two incredible things for me. The first was it opened up my own resilience and capacity as a human being. I lived a very comfortable life working in New York, and *Survivor* really tested, pushed, and showed me that I could excel beyond what I perceived my own limits to be. That's how I became a writer—trusting that I could push myself past what I thought I was capable of.

I had this incredible experience on *Survivor: Cambodia*. There were torrential downpours for days. Everyone was having the worst experience of their lives; everyone was huddled in the shelter, weeping, clinging to each other for warmth, and I got violently ill. I had to strip off my clothes and leave them in the shelter to keep them somewhat dry, go out into the storm, and be violently sick. I had this true epiphany moment of, if I'm willing to do this for *Survivor,* how can I not do this for the thing I truly care about, which is writing?

I had a similar moment on *Survivor: Tocantins,* where I made fire for the first time. I didn't think I was going to be able to. I was on Exile Island all by myself, it was starting to rain, and I knew I was going to be in for the longest night of my life if I couldn't make fire. I was striking at this flint for hours—literally hours—and then, just as dark was descending, I got a spark. It felt so incredibly empowering that I did it.

The second thing *Survivor* did was expose me to people who were dramatically different from me. Everybody lives in bubbles these days, and I certainly did. Most people I knew were like me—not in terms of their ethnicities or backgrounds but in terms of their goals and mindsets, what they wanted out of their lives, how they envisioned a good life for themselves. *Survivor* is people who are just wildly different, whose expectations from life were hugely different. It broadened my perspective, and that enriched me as a human and therefore enriched me as a writer. Now I have this huge font of characters to draw from.

You mention finding your authenticity and humanity within these very, as you write in the book, manufactured structures. Can you talk more about that?

That's the core of the novel and the core of what I'm most fascinated by in reality television. Especially for these jungle shows, people really do go out there seeking their deepest, most authentic self and some confrontation with the wild world around them that you don't really get in our comfortable, safe, urban lives. I absolutely felt that I was finding some deeper part of myself while the cameras were in my face and it was going to be edited to air on CBS prime time.

People think of reality TV as this sort of trashy, disposable thing. There is human depth to the experiences of people on these shows that is so at odds with the cultural imagination of what reality television is. It's really fascinating.

How has living in DC changed how you think about power, strategy, and competition after *Survivor*?

Certainly, one of the themes of this book is the way that people use power to manipulate others and impose their will on others. That's a huge part of our culture now; we see it all around us, the

way people flagrantly use power without considering the impact on the human lives around them. That's the core of the book, and that's hopefully one way it's relevant to people outside of the reality-TV fan base—ultimately, this is a book about power and how the more powerful people get to construct the narrative of what's happening. That's what we're facing in our country now.

How often do you get recognized in DC?
More than other places, which is interesting to me. Maybe once a month someone will come up to me, and they're all wonderful interactions. People say, "Are you Stephen from *Survivor*?" I say yes, and then we shake hands and occasionally take a picture. It's always lovely, and I always welcome it. I'm not "real" famous, so I'm not put off by it. I get to feel cool in front of my wife and any friends who happen to be around, so it's always a real thrill when it happens.

How did you come to write your book?
I've always wanted to be a writer, and it was that experience on *Survivor: Cambodia* that motivated me. When I came back, I said, "I'm going to write a novel." I was committed to it. Initially, I was writing about a twentysomething in New York, and it just felt like stale terrain that I'd seen before.

I realized I have access to this world—as a former contestant, as someone who worked on the network side, and as someone who worked with reality-TV producers as part of a trade group. I've seen the whole scope of this world in a way that I'd never seen depicted in fiction in an authentic way before. I wanted to capture the real human texture of what that's like.

The book focuses on a contestant named Kent, and also a producer of the show named Beck. Why tell the story through two points of view?
You can't tell the full reality-TV story without getting both the producer's and the contestant's perspective. The contestants are the ones who are experiencing it, and I wanted to add that depth and humanity to them. But, of course, we all know that the producers are putting their thumbs on the scales.

What is so fascinating about the pro-





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Mary Herbert, Mother of 4
Megan Wilcoxon
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CRMA

The Association Media, Scott McDonald, Ph.D. Nomos Research, October 2015

"It was incredible how being on TV changed the way people treated me. Then it goes away. Even more intense than the feeling of celebrity is the low when you lose it."

ducers is the way they are trying to structure the contestants' lives into a three-act story—how they take these chaotic, messy lives, in the most extreme conditions of the wilderness, and structure them into a narrative. Fundamentally, this is a book about storytelling and narratives and who gets to control the story. The contestants are trying to control their own stories, and producers are trying to control the story of the contestants. I loved that tension. It was really hard to plot. I really wanted to create this tension between these two different worlds.

Why do you have Kent return to reality TV after a very public scandal?

It's something I've seen from former reality contestants who want to escape their real lives and get back to this vision of themselves that they had. Reality shows are filmed for a month; they air for six months. But for a lot of people, they come to define their identities, and then their real life can never measure up to that.

They—we—go to events and kind of perform these cartoonish versions of ourselves, hoping to recapture that feeling for a moment. There is something very sad, but also very contemporary, about that desire to turn yourself into a two-dimensional cartoon and achieve some kind of cultural lift-off. We're all seeking some fame within our little bubbles, some kind of notoriety, and reality TV feels like a real distilling of this.

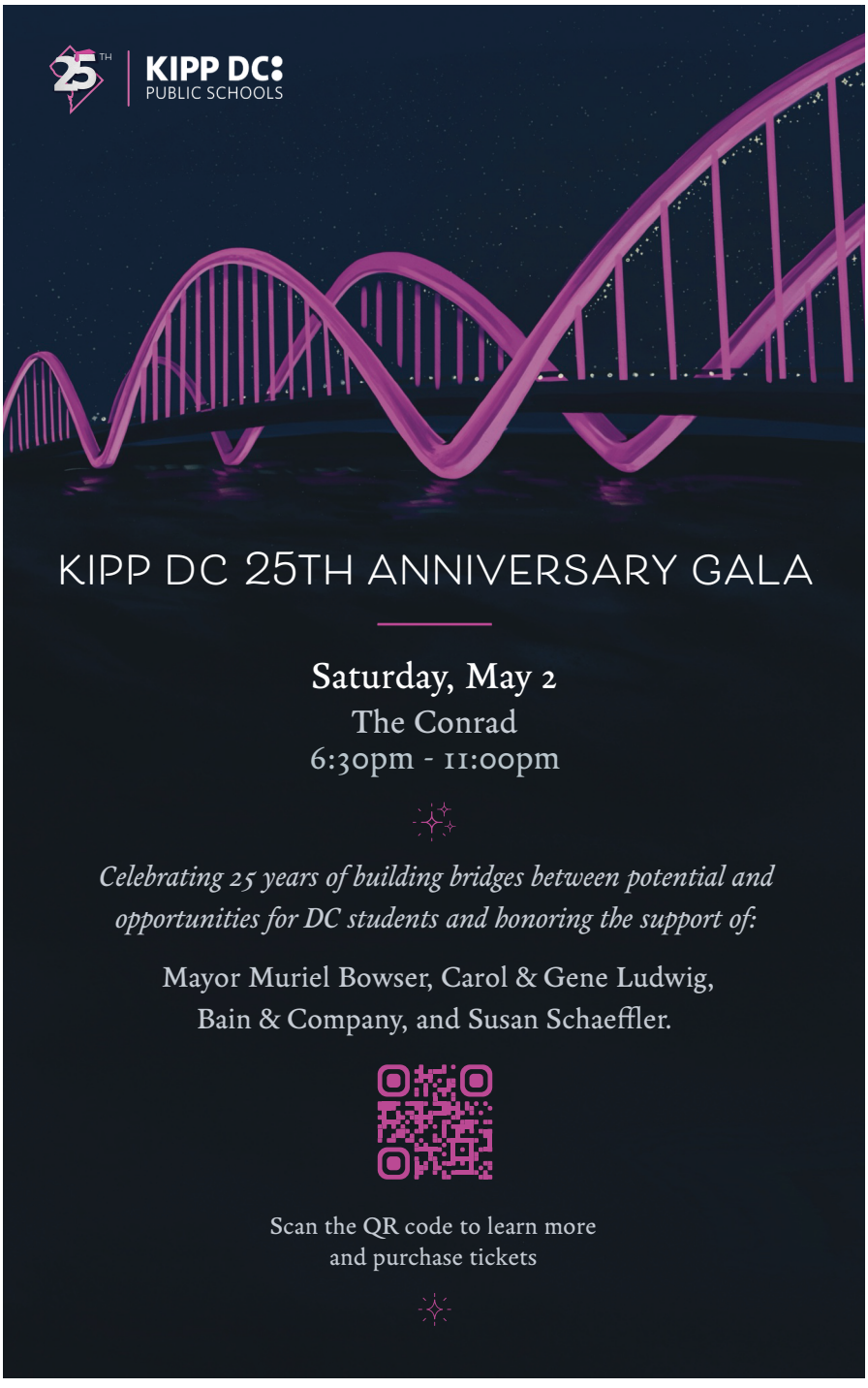
And on the other hand, there's Beck, who needs to redefine herself after a career tragedy. How common are these behind-the-scenes motivations that audiences aren't clued in on?
That was the thing that was most interesting to me about the producers. The contestants have this view of the producers as these sort of gods. As a contestant, you are putting yourself entirely into the hands of these people. You're going to a location, you're doing these challenges, you're allowing them to lead you blindfolded with this big, holy push—putting your faith in them, that the production edifice is going to take care of you.

But ultimately, they're just messy, flawed humans who are working through their own tragedies, their own chaotic pasts. That was what I wanted to capture: The person that you want to believe is in control is totally out of control.

In *Escape!,* you also write about this thing where reality stars have trouble letting go of the spotlight and get pulled back into other reality shows in order to keep it going. Why does that interest you?
It's such a compelling feeling. Before I went on *Survivor,* I was not interested in being on TV at all. I thought it was a really cool game, and I wanted an adventure. Then when I got back and it started to air, I noticed people treated me differently. This was literally just the fact of being on television. It wasn't like I was on *Top Chef,* where I was demonstrating what an amazing cook I was, or *Project Runway*. It was incredible how being on TV changed how people treated me. It felt great. Then suddenly it goes away. The show stops airing, and a month later you're not getting those invitations anymore. Even more intense than the feeling of momentary celebrity is the low when you lose it. You're constantly scrambling to get it back.

Lastly, would you rather compete in a season of *Survivor* again or *Escape!*?
Definitely *Survivor*. I could not survive in the conditions of *Escape!* I'd do very badly. W

Editorial fellow Tristan Espinoza is at tespinoza@washingtonian.com. This interview has been edited and condensed.





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PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN LEBOWITZ PHOTOGRAPHY

How Do We Thrive After Trauma?

Psychiatrist Suzan Song put herself in danger to help some of the world's most wounded people. In a new book, she explains how she and her patients have healed.

By Sylvie McNamara

WHEN SUZAN SONG WAS GROWING UP IN Ellicott City, her father owned a liquor store that was periodically robbed. In 1993, one of those robberies went sideways. Her father was stabbed multiple times and kidnapped, then saved himself by jumping from a speeding van. He spent months in the hospital. About a year later, he died.

Song was in high school then, and for a long time she believed she was fine—that the violence and grief hadn't affected her. She went from college to medical school to residency, then to Harvard for a master's in public health. As she built a career in psychiatry, she was drawn to humanitarian work, seeing patients who had survived torture, sex trafficking, and genocide. She did asylum evaluations for children in US immigration detention and treated the worst-off kids in foster care. Song was obsessed—for no reason that she could discern—with how people handle suffering, and whether they can eventually heal.

Then in 2013, Song was in Burundi researching former child soldiers, studying how trauma reverberates through their adult lives. After an interview, one of her subjects turned on her. He began making threats. Song wasn't sure what was happening, but her interpreter thought the danger was real. He whisked her to a friend's apartment and urged her to return to the States.

Hiding in that apartment, Song began asking difficult questions: *How did I get here? Why am I doing this?* She'd recently been in touch with police about going undercover in the sex-trafficking world, and it struck her that she'd spent an awful lot of her career putting herself in danger. "I was like, wait, why? I'm from suburban Maryland, I don't need to be doing this," she told me.

That night, while she was struggling to sleep, Song noticed a large hole in the mosquito netting above her bed and thought of her family's liquor store—how after one robbery, her dad had installed bulletproof glass in the entryway. The glass hadn't saved him in the end, and the ripped mosquito netting struck her as the exact same kind of false protection. That was the moment when she connected the dots: All of this was about her dad.

A psychiatric professional like Song might call this a moment of narrative insight, when a person sees that a story they've been telling about their life isn't actually true. In this case, Song suddenly

understood that she'd essentially been numb since her dad died. She was locked in a bad pattern of seeking out danger and hardship as a roundabout way of confronting her grief. Her entire professional life—her whole fixation on suffering—was an attempt to answer an urgent personal question: After experiencing trauma, how does one return to feeling alive?

MORE THAN A DECADE LATER, THAT question is at the heart of Song's first book, *Why We Suffer and How We Heal*. Published in February, it's a blend of memoir, patient case studies, and psychological self-help that lays out a framework for surviving suffering. Song and I spoke about it recently at her home in Bethesda, where she maintains a private psychiatric practice, seeing patients from a variety of backgrounds: resettled refugees, tech CEOs, survivors of torture, members of high-profile political families. On her wall were woven injera baskets from Ethiopia. She sat in an armchair drinking herbal tea.

Song began writing her book during the pandemic, she told me, when she was a professor at George Washington University and treating her patients on Zoom. She'd noticed that some were crumbling while others thrived, and the thrivers weren't necessarily who she expected: They weren't the best resourced, least traumatized, or most therapized patients, but "they carried themselves with a sense of calm and confidence and mastery," Song said. "They weren't avoiding what was going on." She wondered what they had in common—whether they were born that way or their resilience was an acquired skill.

What they shared, Song concluded, was "the ability to embrace instability." They understood that life is a cascade of destabilizing events, and they had tools for staying grounded amid strife. She thought a lot about what those tools might be, sifting through her experiences with patients across the globe, and landed on the notion that people thrive by rewriting narratives, performing rituals, and embracing a greater purpose. These became the three sections of her book.

The narrative aspect, Song told me, is very Western. "Americans are so obsessed with our thoughts," she said, explaining that in the United States, healing is often understood to begin and end with learning to tell different stories about ourselves.



FAMILY TIME: Song and her dad, who died after being stabbed in a robbery.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SUZAN SONG

She finds that important, but she writes that "insight alone doesn't always change behavior." Self-examination "can trap you in an insular world of unproductive ruminations, like tumbling through a dryer cycle that never stops."

That's where ritual and purpose come in. In cultures with no therapists or psychiatrists, Song explained, people "don't sit around talking to a stranger about their deepest, darkest thoughts." They may not ever discuss their trauma with anyone at all. In those contexts, Song realized, healing tends not to involve connecting a person more deeply to themselves; it's about connecting a traumatized person with community and making them feel like they belong.

Rituals, like funerals or baptisms, are often collective affairs, embedding people in their communities during times of transition or pain. And finding purpose is the cornerstone of a meaningful life; Song writes that "when purpose is missing, success feels empty and struggle feels like you're just getting by." A person with purpose believes that they matter in the world, and Song thinks that people mostly feel that way when helping others.

For a long time, Song's humanitarian work seemed like purpose; ostensibly, she was helping people heal. But throughout her early career, she mostly felt numb and robotic. Her work shut down her interior life. "Especially working with torture survivors," she told me, "I could put all of my energy into them, so I didn't have to think about myself." Now she understands that making herself a witness to trauma prevented her from seeing herself as a victim of it. And as long as she was alienated from herself, she couldn't heal.

AFTER SONG'S TRANSFORMATIVE MO- ment in Burundi, when she realized that her whole career had been a reaction to her dad, she returned to the United States and stopped working abroad. She thought

she was done with it forever. Being in conflict settings had required her to dissociate in order to function, to repress her emotions and fears. She'd been in that mode for decades. To recover, she began trying to reconnect with herself—probing her false narratives, making "micro-changes" in her life to see what felt good. In figuring out who she was and what she wanted, she had to restore the sense of safety and joy that she'd lost after her father's death.

When Song allowed herself to stop numbing, a surprising feeling arose: She missed being with people at their most vulnerable moments. In doing humanitarian work, she would have "these little doses of intimacy" with people. It made her feel more human. While she no longer felt blindly compelled to encounter suffering, she realized that she actually still wanted to—not to untangle her own trauma, but to do good in the world. In 2014, when she heard a radio story about chemical warfare in Syria, she reached out to a friend at UNICEF. Two weeks later, she was in a refugee camp on the Syrian border, consulting on how to help migrant teens.

Song had returned to humanitarian work, but it felt different this time around. For one, her interactions with people felt more present and human. "Until then, I had been so disconnected from myself that I was somewhat disconnected from the people I was working with," she explained. And she was also thinking less like a clinician, whose job is to help individual people heal, and focusing more on systems. She wanted to help whole populations of people by changing the environments and policies that cause suffering in the first place.

These days, Song frequently consults on global humanitarian issues. She has recently built school-based mental-health programs in Ethiopia and assembled teams to help kids in Ukraine. She has advised the United Nations, the International Medical Corps, the State Department, and the US Office for Victims of Crime. In a way, writing *Why We Suffer and How We Heal* is a hybrid of her clinical and consulting work, taking the insights that she provides to her individual patients and dispensing them at scale.

When I asked what the primary takeaway from her book should be, Song said that "people aren't meant to do life alone." She herself is a member of four different book clubs (it's purely social; she doesn't read the books), and sometimes, for fun, she and her kids bake cookies and drop them off in the neighborhood door to door. This winter, she hosted a Lunar New Year party for her older neighbors because she was worried about them being cooped up with all the ice.

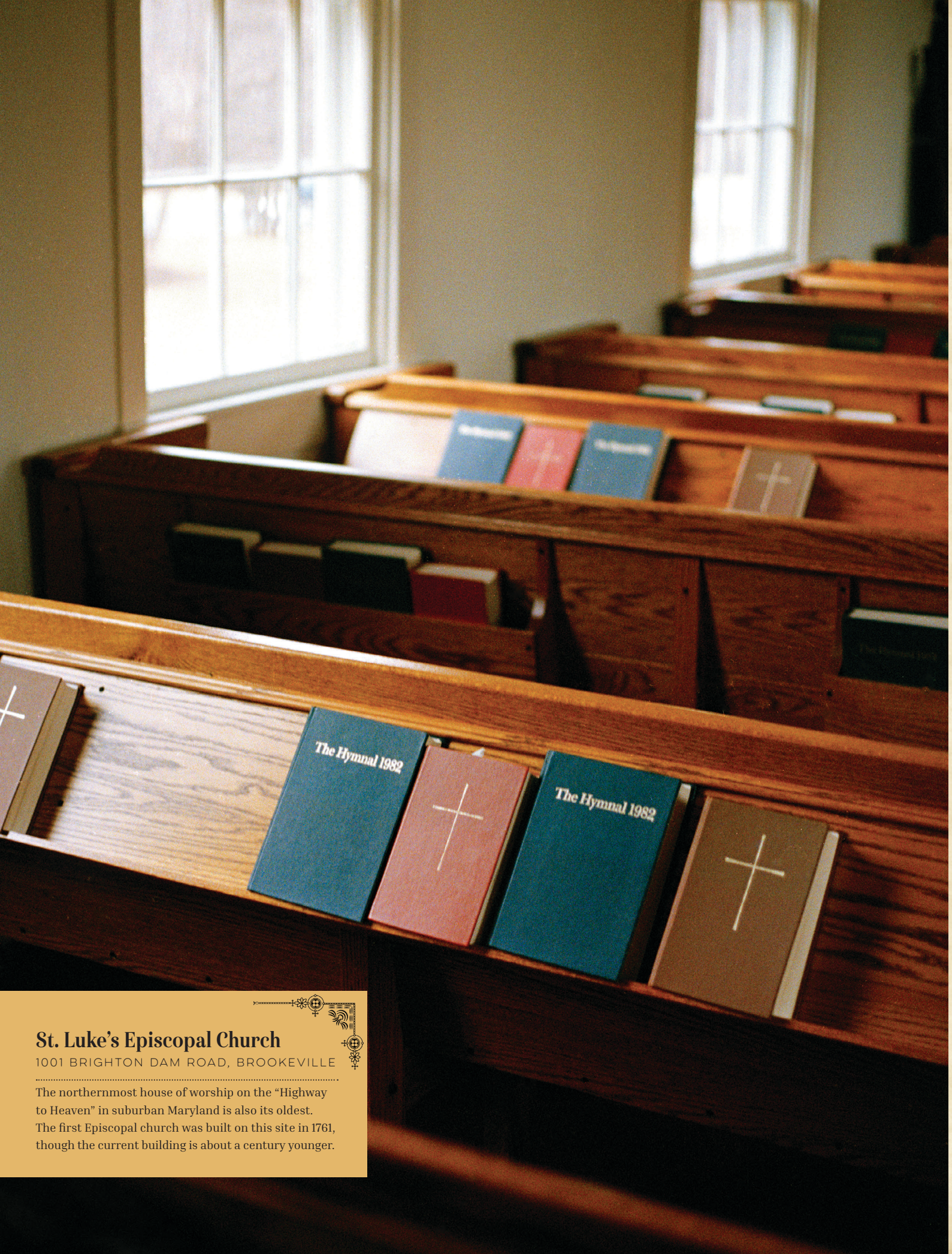
Americans assume that we need to figure things out by ourselves. "But we're supposed to be in this together," Song says.

Working in other countries, Song told me, "you can feel the fabric in the air that stitches people together, but every time I fly back to the US, I feel the isolation. You land, and then you realize, 'Oh, I'm all alone.' " To Song, so much suffering occurs simply because Americans assume that we need to figure things out by ourselves. "But we're supposed to be dependent on each other," she said. "We're supposed to be messy, and we're supposed to be in this together."

In a way, Song's whole job is to make suffering less lonely: to be a moral witness to pain, to sit with the aftershocks of some of the worst human-rights abuses on the planet. I asked how she makes sense of it. "I am not Pollyanna-ish, like, 'There is a silver lining to everything,' because there is not," she told me. "Sometimes it's just unfair." But she believes that many of her patients simply need someone to hear their suffering and tell them that what happened to them was wrong. She brought up the child psychoanalyst Selma Fraiberg, who once observed that a mother can't hear her child's cries until someone has heard her own. "I think that's actually applicable to all of us," Song said. "We are all just a bunch of wounded people bumping into each other, and our goal is to not hurt each other as best as we can." W

Staff writer Sylvie McNamara is at smcnamara@washingtonian.com.





St. Luke's Episcopal Church

1001 BRIGHTON DAM ROAD, BROOKEVILLE

The northernmost house of worship on the "Highway to Heaven" in suburban Maryland is also its oldest. The first Episcopal church was built on this site in 1761, though the current building is about a century younger.

BY IKE ALLEN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANCE LOKAS

HIGHWAY *to* HEAVEN

A remarkable stretch of road in suburban Maryland is home to a kaleidoscopic tapestry of churches, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship—reflecting the religious diversity that breathes color and community into our region

RECENTLY, I VISITED THE GROUNDS OF THE CAMBODIAN BUDDHIST SOCIETY IN SILVER SPRING. The golden wedding cake of a shrine and towering relic-filled stupa were incongruously capped with snow. At first, the place seemed deserted—but in the squat brick monks' quarters out back, I found a hive of activity.

Dozens of workers and volunteers, some speaking Khmer and others Spanish, were preparing a meal for the temple's seven resident monks, who don't cook for themselves. The society is the oldest Cambodian Buddhist temple in the United States, founded by a group of adherents who fled Cambodia in the 1970s during a genocide that included the mass execution of monks and an effort by Pol Pot's regime to eliminate the religion from Cambodian society.

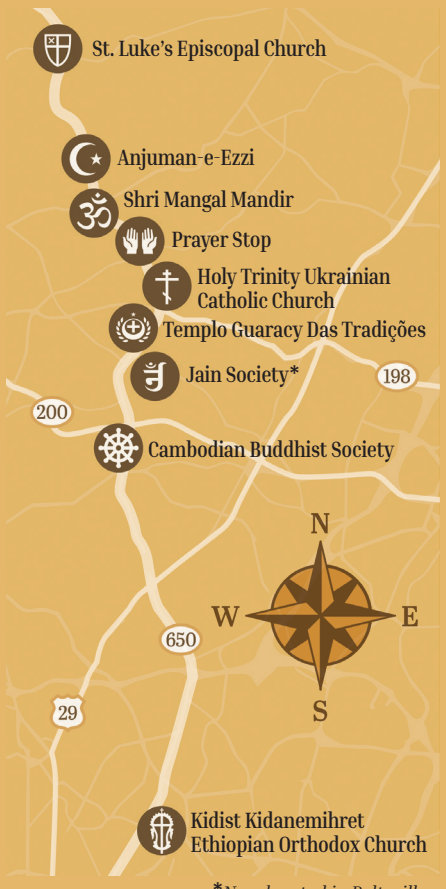
The group was one of the first Buddhist communities in the Washington area. Today, it has company: Across the street is a Vietnamese Buddhist temple, while Burmese and Thai temples can be found just a few miles down the road.

And those temples have company, too. Locals call this stretch of New Hampshire Avenue the "Highway to Heaven." Rife with houses of worship, it's also known as the "Embassy Row of Religions" and the "Road to Damascus," the latter nickname referring to the Apostle Paul's journey of Christian conversion. (Follow the road far enough and you will indeed reach Damascus—in Maryland.) Once, the strip was mainly known for its various protestant congregations, but now there are Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic churches; Islamic centers of multiple sects; Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist temples; an Ethiopian Orthodox church; a Vietnamese Roman Catholic church; and various other Christian denominations preaching in dozens of languages.

As the Trump administration pursues an aggressive agenda of mass deportation and otherwise making America less diverse, houses of worship remain both refuges and reminders of the nation's cultural richness. According to a recent study, Montgomery County is the most religiously diverse county in the US. When you drive around Silver Spring and Rockville—past onion domes, minarets, stupas, Stars of David, and all sorts of crosses—you feel it.

Within that landscape, the Highway to Heaven is a particularly striking microcosm. Since 2024, photographer Lance Lokas has been visiting and documenting its religious institutions. He's sat in on salat al-jummah prayer, watched as umbandistas communicate through spirit mediums, and stayed up all night for a Hindu festival.

Lokas's images capture the vast variety of people and faiths sharing the same stretch of suburban road. Taken together, they encompass the kaleidoscopic tapestry of culture—particularly, culture brought by immigrants—that breathes color and community into our region and beyond.



*Now located in Beltsville

MAP BY ALINA SPATZ











Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington

1021 BRIGGS CHANEY ROAD, SILVER SPRING

Ahimsa, or nonviolence, is a core pillar of Jainism. In the ritual seen here, adherents wear veils over their mouths to embody that principle—it prevents the wearer from inhaling and thus harming any airborne organisms, while also symbolizing disciplined speech. *(Since these photos were taken, the society has moved to Beltsville.)*







Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church

16631 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, SILVER SPRING

When blanketed in snow, this towering structure looks just like the traditional Carpathian wooden churches it was built to emulate. Inside, Sunday Mass has been held since the 1980s under the watchful eyes of Eastern Catholic icons. Outside, a banner asks drivers to "pray for Ukraine," and the church has collected donations for humanitarian aid since the Russian invasion in 2022.



Cambodian Buddhist Society

13800 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, SILVER SPRING

The nation's first Cambodian Buddhist temple, founded by a group who fled the Khmer Rouge's genocide in the late 1970s, is a strikingly beautiful place. It holds major celebrations for Khmer holidays and is home to seven resident monks, including Chhun Sophal (below).









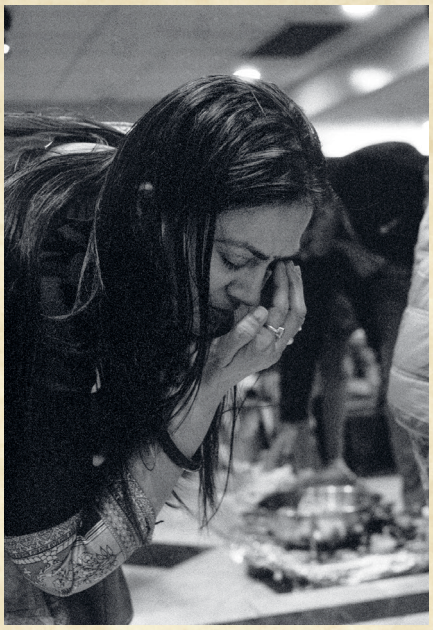
Anjuman-e-Ezzi

18728 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, ASHTON

In the northernmost stretch of the Highway to Heaven is this masjid and Islamic center for the Dawoodi Bohra community, a sect of Ismaili Shia muslims primarily from India. These photos were taken during the holy month of Ramadan and capture the separate women's and men's sections of the mosque.











Shri Mangal Mandir

17110 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, ASHTON

Photographer Lance Lokas stayed at this small 30-year-old Hindu temple from 9 PM to 6 AM on Maha Shivaratri, a nocturnal festival commemorating the marriage of the gods Shiva and Parvati. Worshippers stay up all night, praying and performing the ritual abhishekam—bathing deities in milk (top left).







Templo Guaracy Das Tradições

15811 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, SILVER SPRING

Umbandistas—adherents of a Brazilian religion that blends Afro-Brazilian and Catholic practices—gather at what looks like a house every week for giras, dances to celebrate and communicate with powerful spirits called orixás. Pictured are an Umbanda medium and a community member outside the temple.









Kidist Kidanemihret Ethiopian Orthodox Church

6509 RIGGS ROAD, HYATTSVILLE

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church was founded in the fourth century. In Ethiopia, Christians pray in 800-year-old rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of Addis Ababa, which holds the sarcophagus of Emperor Haile Selassie. This drop-ceilinged strip-mall church, just off the Highway to Heaven, is more humble—and also a way of maintaining tradition for the area's large Ethiopian community. W



Mr. Didn't Fix It

By PAUL FARHI

Two years ago, Jeff Bezos brought in controversial media executive Will Lewis to lift the *Washington Post* out of a post-Trump slump. His calamitous tenure ended in failure—and has left the storied newspaper in an even deeper hole.

When the bad news broke, Will Lewis wasn't around for it. As hundreds of *Washington Post* employees gathered in front of phones and laptops for a Zoom meeting in early February to learn their fates, the *Post's* chief executive and publisher didn't appear on their screens. Instead, the announcement that more than 350 journalists would lose their jobs was left to executive editor Matt Murray. Afterward, Lewis made no statements and granted no interviews. Murray said later that Lewis "had a lot of things to tend to today."

The mass layoff—amounting to nearly half of the *Post's* vaunted newsroom—translated into a broad disfiguring of the publication. The paper vaporized its sports and book sections, halved its network of foreign bureaus, and reduced its Metro section—where its history-making Watergate coverage had begun—to a skeleton. Every staff photographer was laid off. Among the casualties was Martin Weil, a beloved Metro reporter who'd worked at the paper since Lyndon Johnson was President. Weil was notified in a form letter delivered via email.

Past and present *Post* employees trained their anger and disappointment on the paper's owner, Jeff Bezos, Amazon's multibillionaire founder. Former executive editor Martin Baron blasted the world's fifth-richest man for neglect, abandonment, and worse. Some of Bezos's decisions, Baron wrote, were "gutless" and reflected "moral infirmity." The paper had been losing money for several years, yes, but critics argued that Bezos could afford to lose money—literally for centuries—to maintain the paper's newsgathering. He was now worth around $250 billion, ten times as much as he was when he bought the *Post* in 2013. Back then, he promised to provide "runway" (read: hard cash) for growth and experimentation. The new cuts would instead make the paper's newsroom smaller than when Bezos first stepped in—smaller even than Politico, cofounded in 2007 by two former *Post* reporters.

Lewis received his share of the rage and blame, too. Hired by Bezos in early 2024 to reverse declining readership and revenues, the 56-year-old newsman turned media executive had plainly failed. The *Post* lost a reported $100 million in 2024, Lewis's first year, and even more in 2025. Lewis was unable to stanch the bleeding, despite previous buyouts and layoffs. Dozens more star journalists had left on their own, disappointed and disgusted by what they saw as his fecklessness.

Only a few months into his tenure, Lewis had retreated into a kind of sullen isolation. When *Post* reporters landed important scoops—such as the revelation in late November 2025 of the Pentagon's "double tap" strike on a suspected drug-smuggling boat—he couldn't muster up an *attaboy* or use it as a peg for collective encouragement, a tradition for the paper's publishers. For a brief period, Lewis had even stopped talking to Murray, whom he'd handpicked to lead the news operation. "As far as the newsroom is concerned, he's a nonentity," a veteran reporter said in early January. "We haven't seen him in months. He's a ghost."

Lewis, who hasn't given an on-the-record interview in more than two years, didn't respond to multiple requests for comment on this article. Nor did Murray or three of Lewis's top business deputies. A *Post* spokesperson offered limited information in response to submitted questions.

The day after the *Post's* bloodletting, Lewis was photographed—by a former *Post* sportswriter—walking the red carpet at a pre-Super Bowl event in San Francisco. More outrage ensued. Two days later, he was gone for good, announcing his departure in a terse email. Few mourned. "I'm glad Will Lewis has been fired," *Post* reporter Katie Mettler told the *New York Times*. "I wish it had happened before he fired all my friends."

When Lewis first arrived at the *Post* in late 2023, he promised to "never buckle" when defending journalists and to "always get the story done"—and also to turn around the paper's flagging business fortunes.



PHOTOGRAPH ON OPENING PAGE BY ELLIOTT O'DONOVAN FOR *WASHINGTON POST* VIA GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE BY MARVIN JOSEPH/*WASHINGTON POST* VIA GETTY IMAGES

Before Lewis left, newsroom morale had fallen so low that journalists had adopted a kind of rallying cry on an internal Slack channel: "Outlast the fuckery!" In the wake of his calamitous tenure, however, something one reporter had told *Washingtonian* in late January now sounded prophetic: "Looks like the fuckery is going to win after all."

Broken Trust

Lewis arrived at the *Post* on a small wave of optimism and expectation. During his first meeting with staffers, in November 2023, he laid out his credentials, noting that he'd been a reporter and editor for 20 years before moving to the business side. He encouraged attendees to ask him hard questions and promised to "never buckle" when defending journalists. "We will always get the story done," he declared. As a badge of his independence and integrity, he mentioned he'd been publisher of the *Wall Street Journal* in 2015 during its investigation of Theranos, a fraudulent medical startup that had received $125 million of investment from *Journal* principal owner Rupert Murdoch.

Lewis struck many as affable, witty, and energetic, as one might have expected of a man who'd captained his British university's soccer team. The newsletter Semafor, in an early assessment, described him as "a relentlessly charming Brit whose uniform is sleek sweaters and expensive-looking sneakers." Bezos paid his transatlantic hand handsomely: $3 million a year, according to records uncovered by former *Post* columnist Gene Weingarten.

Lewis was a dramatic change from his genteel predecessor, Fred Ryan, a former top staffer for President Reagan and Politico's first president and CEO. Hired by Bezos in 2014, Ryan had overseen a period of increased readership and profitability during President Trump's relentlessly newsmaking first term. But as that "Trump bump" turned into a broader media slump in 2021, Ryan seemed frozen, unable to adapt to a changing landscape of burned-out audiences and relative calm in the White House. Monthly visitors to the *Post's* website plummeted from a pandemic-driven peak of 139 million in March 2020 to 58 million in December 2022. Digital subscriptions, which had grown to nearly 3 million by 2020, fell by nearly 500,000 as a sense of national crisis abated. When Ryan announced pending layoffs during a late-2022 town-hall meeting—and then walked away without taking questions—staffers were apoplectic. The next summer, he left the *Post*. The paper reportedly lost a total of $177 million in 2022 and 2023.



As employees gathered for the 2025 Pulitzer Prize announcements—the paper was a finalist in five categories and won two—Lewis was a no-show for the second straight year, leaving some in the newsroom to roll their eyes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAHI CHIKWENDIU/*WASHINGTON POST* VIA GETTY IMAGES

Bezos thought Lewis had the chops to turn things around. Born into a family of overachievers—his father and older brother had both received royal honors—Lewis began his career as a business reporter at the *Mail on Sunday* tabloid in 1991, advancing quickly to the more prestigious *Financial Times*, which sent him to New York in 1998 to cover Wall Street. A colleague from this period remembers Lewis as a driven reporter who developed an extensive network of sources, often courting them after hours: "He was out every night drinking with bankers. He was a charismatic force in the newsroom, very funny, fearless, and bold. He'd come in in the morning, shirttails out, pulling bar napkins with notes on them out of his pockets, and announce, 'I've got a cracker here!' "

One of those crackers was a landmark scoop: news of a merger between Exxon and Mobil, then the largest industrial deal in history. Lewis soon began what a profile once described as a "vertiginous" rise through British media. After a stint as an editor at London's Sunday *Times*, he joined the *Daily Telegraph* in 2005 as city editor. Just over a year later, he was promoted to editor in chief, at 37 the youngest in the newspaper's 151-year history.

In early 2009, Lewis took a daring step, urging the *Telegraph's* owners to pay an anonymous government whistleblower for an explosive piece of information—a secret database of files detailing lavish personal spending by members of Parliament and the prime minister's cabinet, all at taxpayer expense. Paying for scoops isn't uncommon for British tabloids, but it's rare for more prestigious publications like the *Telegraph*. The paper ultimately spent about $165,000 on the files. Led by Lewis and a top reporter, Robert Winnett, the *Telegraph* mined the data for a series of bombshells. The reporting triggered national outrage and led to the resignations of dozens of officials. Seven more went to prison. Lewis was the toast of the British media, named "journalist of the year" at the 2010 British Press Awards.

"Will embodies the tenacity, energy and vision needed for this role," Bezos wrote in an email to *Post* staff in late 2023 announcing Lewis's hiring.

Lewis also attempted to push the *Telegraph* further into digital-news delivery by starting something called the Euston Project, a $15 million, 50-person effort to develop new online revenues. During his run as publisher of the *Wall Street Journal* from 2014 to 2020, the paper added some 700,000 new subscribers, expanding to more than 2 million in total. Bezos was impressed. "Will embodies the tenacity, energy and vision needed for this role," he

wrote in an email to *Post* staff in late 2023 announcing his hiring. "He believes that together we will build the right future for the Post. I agree."

Arriving in Washington, Lewis settled into a $7 million house in Georgetown and began a "listening tour." He initially was a gregarious presence in the *Post's* newsroom, roaming among the cubicles and booming out praise ("Great story!"). He was visible outside the paper, too. Lewis traveled Washington's social circuit guided by Sally Quinn, the longtime *Post* writer and widow of legendary editor Ben Bradlee. At one party, Quinn introduced him to Chuck Schumer, the Senate minority leader. "Just don't forget," Schumer told Lewis with a smile, "I'm a big fucking deal around here!"

The *Post's* own investigative reporting on Lewis's past role in cleaning up a sprawling hacking scandal "raised serious questions about Will's judgment and ethics."

Within months, however, a bitter chill set in at the *Post,* rooted in a murky chapter of Lewis's career. In 2010, Lewis left the *Telegraph* for a management job at News International, the British newspaper company controlled by Murdoch. The company soon became engulfed in a sprawling scandal in which its journalists were suspected of prying into the voicemails and emails of celebrities, politicians, and others in search of news. Assigned to clean up the mess, Lewis acted as a liaison between the company and criminal investigators.

Hacking victims—including Prince Harry and former prime minister Gordon Brown—later accused Lewis of covering up potentially incriminating evidence, specifically by overseeing the deletion of millions of company emails. Lewis has long denied wrongdoing and has never been charged with a crime, but the allegations remain under active investigation by Scotland Yard.

It's unclear how the *Post's* recruiters characterized all of this when they recommended Lewis as a candidate to replace Ryan. But it's impossible to argue they were unaware. After his triumph on the expenses scandal, Lewis became a pariah among many British journalists for his "cleanup" work: Many suspected he'd steered investigators toward reporters and low-ranking editors, protecting Murdoch and his top executives. The even more damning claim—that Lewis had actively engaged in hiding evidence—formally surfaced in a lawsuit filed by more than 50 hacking victims in 2020 and was raised anew in lawsuits by Prince Harry and actor Hugh Grant in 2023. (Both later settled.)

Just before Lewis joined the *Post,* NPR reporter David Folkenflik approached Lewis for an interview. Lewis offered him an exclusive, on the condition that he not mention the hacking scandal. Folkenflik declined, wrote about the allegations, and later revealed Lewis's offer. In response, Lewis called him an "activist, not a journalist." When then-*Post* executive editor Sally Buzbee told Lewis in early 2024 that the paper intended to dig into the hacking story, the new publisher twice discouraged her. She launched the inquiry anyway, placing a senior editor, Matea Gold, in charge of a team that grew to eight reporters and other editors. They produced a series of stories that the *Post* boldly displayed on its front page. One of them revealed that Lewis and Winnett, his protégé at the *Telegraph,* had published articles years earlier based on information obtained through unsavory and possibly illegal means. The reporting, says a journalist who was involved in the *Post's* investigation, "raised serious questions about Will's judgment and ethics." His attempts to suppress the story "violated a fundamental principle that news organizations must guard against conflicts of interest."

Bezos stood by Lewis. But whatever trust the *Post* newsroom still had in the publisher vanished when Lewis sought to demote Buzbee as part of a proposed reorganization in mid-2024. She chose to resign instead, and Lewis tapped Winnett to replace her. The situation came to a head at a contentious staff meeting the day after Lewis announced Buzbee's departure in a Sunday-night email. Peppered with skeptical questions, Lewis grew defensive, then churlish. When reporter Carol Leonnig, a multiple Pulitzer Prize winner, asked him about his "vision" for the paper, Lewis snapped at her: "We are going to turn this around, but let's not sugarcoat it. It needs turning around," adding, "People are not reading your stuff."

The meeting was brief, and ended by Lewis. Winnett didn't last long, either: The *Post's* reporting prompted him to withdraw as top editor before he started the job.

Building Vaporware

Early in his tenure, Lewis summed up his strategy for reviving the Post with a mantra worthy of a Silicon Valley pitch deck: "Fix it, build it, scale it." The motto had an appealing simplicity—and if Lewis had made good on any of those fronts, he might have mended his fractured relationship with the newsroom.

Only that's not what happened. Lewis first promised to find more readers and subscribers via acquisitions, mimicking the *New York Times's* successful strategy of buying Wordle, Wirecutter, and the Athletic. But outside of a brief, tire-kicking session with the owners of the Punchbowl political newsletter in 2024, the *Post* and Lewis never made any deals.

At the same time Lewis announced Buzbee's departure, he proposed creating





The day after the *Post* laid off nearly half its newsroom in February, its union held a rally outside the building. Many of the signs blamed billionaire owner Jeff Bezos for the mass layoffs, which vaporized the sports and book sections and gutted the foreign and Metro desks.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVY MAGES





a "third newsroom"–a new entity on par with the paper's news and opinion sections but centered on youth-centric news videos, lifestyle articles, and social-media-friendly posts. The idea echoed not one but two of Lewis's old ideas: the Euston Project of 2009 and the News Movement, a British company he founded in 2020. Like the Euston Project, the *Post's* "third newsroom"–renamed WP Ventures–was supposed to be, among other things, a laboratory for experimentation and innovation. A respected newsroom veteran, managing editor Krissah Thompson, and an experienced manager, Samantha Henig, were named to run it. The *Post's* social-media, video, audio, newsletter, and health-reporting staffs were nominally assigned to the project, though people on those teams were expected to continue their daily responsibilities. Top management also decreed that the project would have to make do with existing resources–no new hires were anticipated.

Progress was halting. Ideas came and went–mostly the latter, according to people who were involved. Among the proposals that never made it off the drawing board: "expanded" horoscope listings, with in-depth details for every sign. Nothing out of WP Ventures produced meaningful new revenue. In July 2025–eight months after Murray formally announced the initiative and after thousands of man-hours of development–Thompson took a buyout. By the time Henig left the paper in October, WP Ventures had effectively collapsed. Lewis's big idea was, in Silicon Valley-speak, vaporware. It mirrored the Euston Project, which closed less than a year after Lewis started it. "No one was ever sure what the third newsroom was going to be," says a veteran reporter and editor who left during Lewis's tenure. "It turned out to be nothing."

Lewis's would-be innovation efforts were doctored by a succession of British consultants, whom some in the newsroom referred to as "Will's shadow team of Brits," or simply "the blokes." He also favored outsiders for senior positions: Of the 21 names on the *Post's* masthead–its top business and news managers–at the start of this year, eight were British natives and/or people Lewis had previously worked with at Dow Jones and the *Journal*. "We heard a lot of British accents," says a former editor and reporter, "and we wondered, 'Who are these people? What do they know about the *Post* or Washington or even America?' "

Bezos, meanwhile, remained a remote figure who hadn't visited the *Post* since early 2023. He did encourage the paper to think bigger and target people who had never considered subscribing. In response, management produced a PowerPoint presentation in early 2025 that included a "Big Hairy Audacious Goal" of reaching at least 200 million paying users–roughly 80 times its then-subscriber base–including "firefighters in Cleveland." One person who saw the presentation tells *Washingtonian* it helped convince them to leave the *Post:* "My thought was that Lewis and Bezos didn't know anything about firefighters in Cleveland or anywhere else."

Vanishing Act

For all of Lewis's misfires, it was Bezos who made arguably the two most injurious decisions during his tenure. The first came in October 2024, 11 days before the election, when Bezos decreed that the paper would end its practice of endorsing presidential candidates. Readers interpreted the move as a sop to Trump–the Post had planned to endorse Kamala Harris–and made their disappointment and anger known. Within ten days, some 250,000 people had canceled their subscriptions.

Lewis was initially the face of the fiasco, writing in a *Post* editorial that the decision was "a statement of support of our readers' ability to make up their own minds." But Bezos acknowledged a few days later that he'd made the call, writing that endorsements merely added to the public's perception of media bias.

A few months later, Bezos announced that the *Post* would no longer offer a variety of opinions on its editorial page and instead would write only in defense of "personal liberties and free markets." The decision, which struck many as another move to the right, led to the section editor's resignation and a second cancellation frenzy that sheered another 100,000 subscribers off the books.

If ever there was a time for Lewis to stand up for his staff–to make good on his early promise to "never buckle"–this was it. There's no indication he did. Instead, he receded further into ghost mode. In 2024, when the *Post* won three Pulitzer Prizes, Lewis didn't show up to lead the newsroom celebration, the publisher's traditional role. He was also missing last March when Warren Buffett hosted a screening of a documentary about legendary *Post* publisher Katharine Graham at the Kennedy Center. When he failed to show for another Pulitzer celebration again in 2025, Murray wanly explained that Lewis was traveling and would congratulate the winners on his return. *Post* journalists rolled their eyes–some likened it to a child being told that his perpetually absentee father would surely visit on their next birthday.

One of the events Lewis did preside over was a lavish brunch reception at the exclusive Ned's Club following the White House Correspondents' Dinner last spring. The party, which featured generous displays of caviar and a guest list of Washington insiders, cost $1 million, according to the *New York Times*. Reporters were livid. One noted that the sum represented

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 190**











MAKING THE SALE

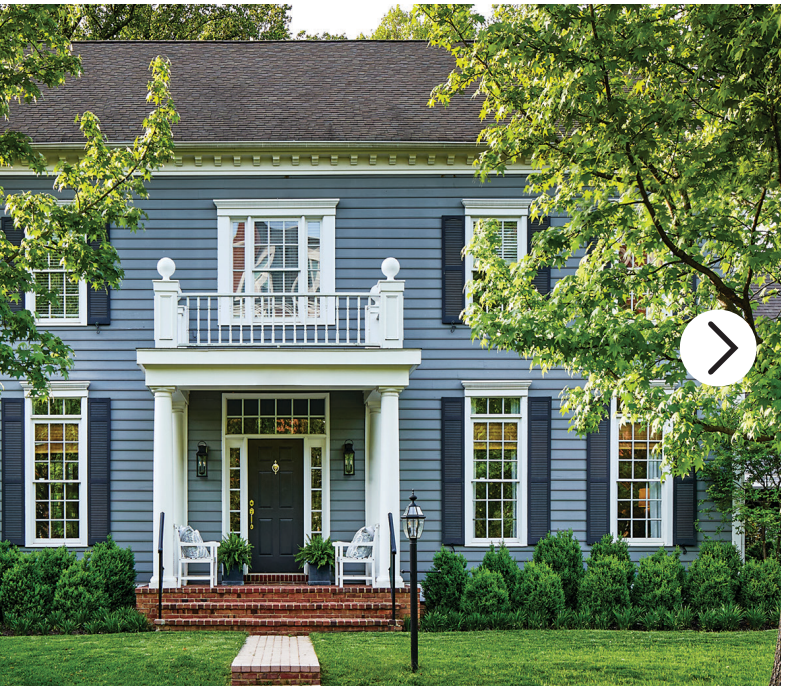
By Janelle Harris Dixon, Patrick Hruby, and Michele Lerner

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG; DESIGN CREDITS: TOP ROW BY CONVENE ARCHITECTURE AND MARKS WOODS BUILDERS; THOMSON COOKE ARCHITECTS; ZUCKERMAN BUILDERS; KATY ANDERSON INTERIORS; CATHY NEWMAN INTERIORS; BOTTOM ROW BY NICHOLAS STANOS ARCHITECTURE; THORSEN CONSTRUCTION, COURTNEY COX INTERIORS; ALI FRYE INTERIORS; ERICA BURNS INTERIORS; GTM ARCHITECTS; JOSEPH RICHARDSON LANDSCAPE











For more than a decade, the Washington area's residential real-estate market has favored sellers, sometimes dramatically. But that's changing.

Last year's federal layoffs and extended government shutdown dampened buyer confidence. In the beginning of this year, home sales were down, active listings were up, and there were more available properties than interested buyers. Though the median home price in the region continued to climb, some properties were sitting longer—leaving sellers to come down in price or pull them off the market altogether.

Meanwhile, some federal workers and contractors who lost their jobs but have been trying to stay in the area may finally need to sell, potentially softening the market further.

As buyers enjoy newfound leverage, agents and sellers are having to find creative ways to promote their properties and stand out from the competition. And that's true in every corner of the market. It can mean losing the silver paint and mirrored ceilings in the opulent ballroom of a multimillion-dollar McLean mansion; emphasizing the pet-friendliness of a particular condominium building; using artificial intelligence to virtually stage a vacant property a half dozen different ways; or changing the address of a home saddled with a heinous history.

Of course, there's no one simple trick to making a property move. Sometimes, it's enough to add some plants and repaint the front door—other times, it helps to serve margaritas while synchronized swimmers perform in the pool at your open house. Ultimately, though, the goal remains the same: closing the deal, regardless of the bigger picture. Here's how some locals are getting it done.

THE $100,000 MAKEOVER

When an $18.5 million mansion in McLean wasn't moving, the seller reimagined it—and covered up the gold paint



Stately homes designed in 18th-century French architectural style—the kinds of places where the Earl of Grantham or Mrs. Astor might be comfortable—are not unusual in the Langley Farms section of McLean. But when a palatial 22,000-square-foot house on Georgetown Pike, built on nearly four acres in 2023, lingered on the market, the Building Group brought in Will Thomas for consultation.

"They have a great track record of building and selling really large homes in McLean, and they built this one, which they called Chateau du Soleil, with a specific buyer profile in mind," says Thomas, an agent with TTR Sotheby's International Realty.

That potential buyer, it seems, would love to entertain. "This house had a beautiful, enormous ballroom with a mirrored ceiling, three big chandeliers, and silver-painted embellishments on the walls," Thomas says. "The front gate and front door had been embellished with gold, and the name of the property had been carved into the entrance columns."

The location and amount of land, Thomas realized, were great, but the house was too opulent and formal. It needed to be tweaked to appeal to a broader buyer pool—although with ten bedrooms, 16 bathrooms, and an $18.5 million price, that pool would never be Olympic-size.

Thomas spent about $100,000 to stage the home with art and furniture that made the space look expensive but livable. He took away the mirrored ceilings and silver paint in the ballroom and staged it to become a living room with three seating areas. He removed the Chateau du Soleil logo from the columns. He covered up the gold paint on a 30-foot-high dome above the foyer to reveal the classic French architecture. On the lower level, he removed several full-wall mosaics, including one of pink swans and another of butterflies.

"They were beautiful but very taste-specific," Thomas says. "We brought in pieces to showcase the space for family reunions and philanthropic events and staged the dining room to show how it could work for seated dinners for heads of state or top business leaders."

Early in the staging process, one buyer made a low bid, which was turned down. In August 2025, six months after Thomas took on the project, it was purchased for $18.5 million. Once the first bidders saw the final staging, they were frustrated by "the one that got away" and offered $22 million for the house in October 2025.

"As far as I know," Thomas says, "that's the biggest flip in history in this area."





Removing mirrored ceilings (above right) and adding furniture were among the restaging moves that retained the mansion's luxury—but made it feel more livable.

"BEFORE" PHOTOGRAPHS BY TTR SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY; "AFTER" BY ADAM ALBRIGHT











Many of the "beautiful but very taste-specific" touches were replaced by pieces chosen to "showcase the space for family reunions and philanthropic events."

The Hardest Sell

What happens when properties tied to murders, suicides, and violent crimes go on the market?

In the aftermath of the unthinkable, the brick rowhouse on Sixth Street, Southeast, became something more than an address. Banita Jacks, a 33-year-old single mother, had killed her four young daughters inside the small, two-story home in the summer of 2007. When their bodies were discovered early the next year, it shocked the city and made national news—all while casting a pall over the property.

People walked by quietly. Some crossed the street, wanting distance from the eerie energy and the makeshift memorial of flowers and dolls that mourners had affixed to its chain-link fence. For a time, the property felt untouchable. It sat empty.

But even shrines to grief and despair eventually return to the market. When the 1,260-square-foot house sold in June 2009, it went for just $40,000—roughly 80 percent less than its assessed value of $220,610, and also well below the $189,000 it had sold for in 2005. Neighbors warned prospective buyers about what happened there and watched open-house visitors hesitate on the sidewalk as they weighed its deeply discounted price against its traumatic past.

In a high-demand region where bidding wars routinely engulf even modest properties, stigma is one of the few forces powerful enough to stall sales momentum. Homes tied to murders, suicides, and violent crimes—what real-estate agents call "stigmatized properties"—can leave buyers conflicted, creating a unique challenge for sellers.

"In some homes, when there's a non-natural death, many carry a stigma," says Paul Carrillo, deputy chair and professor of economics at George Washington University. "We know from [economic research] that those perceptions get capitalized into prices, at least in the short term. People don't want to buy that house."

What happens to properties with heinous histories? And how do they go from emergency sirens to staging to sale? While there are no hard and fast rules for rehabilitating their value, turnarounds take place across two dimensions: physical and psychological.

CONTROLLING CONDITIONS

Melanie Gamble, a real-estate broker in Upper Marlboro, remembers her first time dealing with a stigmatized property. In 2016, she was managing a client's rental unit in Northeast DC when two tenants were shot and killed inside it.

Shaken, the owner chose to sell rather than continue leasing. Gamble handled the transaction. "Properties don't sell for three reasons," she says. "Number one is location. Number two is price. And number three is condition. You're not going to move the house, so you can only control price and condition. So what can you do?"

Biohazard remediation is a typical first step. Once investigators clear a crime scene, professionals are called in to erase any trace of blood or other biological materials that may be on walls, floors, or ceilings. Likewise, porous surfaces including carpeting, drywall, and subflooring might be removed and replaced. Everything is disinfected using hospital-grade cleaning agents designed to eliminate pathogens that can linger long after a crime.

Governed by federal and local health





After three people were killed in two separate crimes at the same Silver Spring home (right), the so-called "homicide house" eventually ended up back on the market with a new street number.

TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY EVY MAGES; BOTTOM LEFT BY SARAH L. VOISIN/*WASHINGTON POST* VIA GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT BY BRIGHT MLS







In the wake of the notorious 2015 "mansion murders," the traditional brick Kalorama home at left was torn down and replaced by a modern house with a different street number.

regulations, this unglamorous process can take several days to a few weeks, depending on a property's size and the extent of contamination. Once it's finished, homes are considered safe for future owners and occupants.

Of course, safe isn't always the same as sellable. In some cases, stigmatized properties are renovated into anonymity. In others, they're razed and rebuilt. Following the 2015 "mansion murders"—three family members and their housekeeper were tortured and killed in their Kalorama house, which was then set on fire—the lot was demolished and later reintroduced to the market with a new structure and frontage address.

While address changes are rare, they do happen, severing an immediate, Google-able connection between a property and its sordid history. For instance, a Silver Spring home on Columbia Boulevard that was linked to three killings in two separate crimes became so notorious—acquiring the nickname the "homicide house"—that it now has a new street number. Laws in the District, Maryland, and Virginia don't require sellers or agents to volunteer that a violent crime occurred inside a home, which means that prospective buyers may have to do their own research via news articles or DiedInHouse.com, a website that sells reports on the history of deaths at particular properties.

PRICE AND PERCEPTION

Buyers can usually tolerate a cracked walkway or an aging HVAC system, or make more serious structural problems part of price negotiations. But a dark past can be much harder to ignore—or quantify.

Expectations matter. If an incident occurs at a property in a neighborhood where violent crime is already common, Carrillo says, the fallout may not dramatically depress its selling price. By contrast, he says, "in a place where crime is rare, a single highly publicized event can feel seismic."

According to Gamble, however, a sur-

rounding neighborhood's desirability can often matter much more than a home's history. In tougher markets like Washington Highlands—where the rowhouse on Sixth Street, Southeast, sat in limbo—traumatic histories may act as one more price anchor. But in affluent neighborhoods where demand far outpaces supply, yesterday can carry less weight. In 2011, 91-year-old author and socialite Viola Drath was murdered in an upstairs bathroom of her Georgetown townhouse. Less than two weeks after it went on sale in 2013, multiple offers pushed the $995,000 list price to $1.2 million.

Over time, Carrillo says, even the most stigmatized properties become easier to sell. Headlines recede. Memories fade. "Markets tend to 'forget,' though sometimes slowly," he says. Eventually, a tragic backstory becomes one more thing a buyer can live with—especially if the price is right. "If somebody had an incredible deal in a house they wanted, in a location they wanted, and then you came along and said, 'Well, you know, they got shot in there the other night,' I'd be like, okay," Gamble says. Half-joking, she adds, "As long as the murderer doesn't convey with the house."



The site of an infamous—and still unsolved—murder in 2006, this Victorian rowhouse in Northwest DC sold for nearly $1.5 million in 2011—and again for $2.16 million in 2019.

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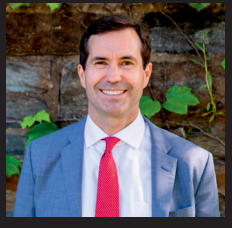

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IS IT REAL OR AI?

Digital staging tools are increasingly popular—but not without drawbacks

Suppose you're in the market for a new home and see a listing with what looks to be the kitchen of your dreams. Is it real? Increasingly, the answer may be no.

In an age when smartphones can doctor selfies, the same is happening in some real-estate listings: AI and virtual staging tools allow agents to insert furniture and features that don't exist—sometimes even changing a home's exterior. The idea is to help buyers visualize possibilities without a seller paying to physically stage or refresh the property.

Not everyone is a fan. "I think of it like dating—if the photos look great and then you show up and it's not what you expected, people walk away," says Daryl Judy, an agent with Washington Fine Properties in DC.

Some listing databases mandate that agents disclose instances when AI is used in photos. Even when it's not required, agents say, transparency is best. "It's imperative that buyers know what they're looking at [with AI images] and that they know that when they to go to the house, it will be empty," says Laura Sacher, a senior vice president with Compass in Alexandria. "I've had buyers think they've walked into the wrong property when they didn't realize it was virtually staged."

Digital and physical staging each have distinct advantages. Here's how to choose what's right for you.

WHY DIGITAL?

Lower cost. AI staging can cost as much as $50 a photo—though some can be done with free programs. Physical staging costs about ten times as much, says Joe Himali, an agent with the Best Address Group with RLAH @properties in Chevy Chase.

Quicker turnaround. Virtual staging is much faster because it can be done immediately, says Kris Paolini, a principal agent with Redfin in Rockville.

More design options. Virtual staging offers endless options for furnishings





Virtual staging offers endless options for furniture and artwork—and can be changed with a click.

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OPPOSITE PAGE, PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF KRIS PAOLINI; THIS PAGE, COURTESY OF KIMBERLY CASEY TEAM

While AI can help buyers envision possibilities, altered images can also foster confusion.

and artwork, Paolini says, with possibilities for instantaneous changes.

Filling a void. Some agents say virtual staging works especially well for vacant properties, to provide a sense of scale and layout.

WHY PHYSICAL?

Better showings. If virtual staging is used because a house is empty, buyers may be disillusioned when they visit. "Using AI is a bait-and-switch," says Elizabeth Lucchesi, an agent with Long & Foster in Alexandria. "My experience with AI-staged photos and a real tour has been [that the reality is] disappointing for buyers."

Envisioning the space. Real staging can be crucial for small or awkward spaces, or very large ones where it's hard to envision how someone would use the room. "When furniture is physically there, people understand the space immediately," Judy says.

Emotional impact. People expect an in-person experience similar to what they see online, says Sammy Dweck, an agent with TTR Sotheby's International Realty in DC: "I want people to like the property more in person than online."

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5 Common Staging Mistakes…

Entice buyers by avoiding these missteps—and by standing out

GOING TOO MINIMAL

Bland, cookie-cutter staging is a miss, says Kimberly Casey, an agent with TTR Sotheby's International Realty in DC: "We work with stagers to build a layered look tailored to the buyer profile."



STAYING SENTIMENTAL

"That cherished heirloom piece or bulky favorite table that seats 20 people—remove it," says Kris Paolini, a principal agent with Redfin in Rockville. "Items that are of significance to you are not important to potential buyers."

OVER-STAGING

"There's a sweet spot between staging too much and staging too little," says Laura Sacher, a senior vice president with Compass in Alexandria. "You do want to stage the main rooms—don't do the living room and then no other room. But you don't have to stage the whole house unless it's very spacious with many rooms and you run the risk of buyers wondering what to do with a room."

FORGETTING CURB APPEAL

Your front entry sets the tone for the whole house, says Brian Block, managing broker for RE/MAX Allegiance in Alexandria. Consider painting the front door, replacing dated lighting, and adding plants for a quick fix.

BEING STINGY

Sellers often don't want to spend money on staging or do the bare minimum, says Daryl Judy, an agent with Washington Fine Properties in DC. But staging can increase the eventual sales price by as much as 10 percent, according to the National Association of Realtors.

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...and One Stroke of Genius



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GETTING IN SYNC

For a launch event in Cleveland Park, TTR Sotheby's International Realty had synchronized swimmers perform in the home's pool. "Keep in mind this was October and not exactly pool weather, which made the experience even more unforgettable," Casey says. "We didn't just want people to drop in. We wanted them to stay, to imagine entertaining there." That meant curated music, food, and Casey's "margarita recipe." "The property came alive," she says. "There were 150 people—there would have been more except the street got too crowded." And in the end? "We got a full-price, all-cash offer at $5.995 million in three days."



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HOW TO MARKET A CONDO

Facing strong headwinds, here's what sellers can still control

The semi-good news for condo sellers? Prices in the Washington area this past January dipped just 1.3 percent compared with January 2025, according to the multiple-listing service Bright MLS. The bad news? Just about everything else. Over the same time period, sales were down 22 percent. Listings now sit an average of 43 days, up from 32 last year.

Affordability is an issue. "For first-time buyers who want to make a low down payment, it's not always cheaper to own than rent, especially with elevated interest rates and higher insurance costs," says Morgan Knull, an associate broker with RE/MAX Gateway in DC. In some buildings, spiking monthly condo fees are exacerbating the squeeze felt by potential buyers. "They've increased a good bit in recent years due to the cost of everything from staff to management contracts to insurance going up," says Sammy Dweck, an agent with TTR Sotheby's International Realty in DC.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATHAN STEWART







Also contributing to sluggish sales: Supply outpaces demand in some neighborhoods, especially where there's a glut of new buildings—such as DC's Trinidad and H Street corridor, Knull says. Add it all up, Dweck says, and condo sales are "especially tough right now."

Facing these headwinds, some owners are holding back their units from the market. But if you're still looking to sell, here are three ways to improve your offering.

PRICE WINS

In the current market, Dweck says, pricing is more important than ever: "Buyers have more choices and no strong sense of urgency. Sellers are listing at prices based on comps from a different market climate. Sellers who succeed are the ones who have agents who help them understand the reality of the new market and who price significantly enough below the old comps to be the best value in a sea of listings."

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VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE

According to Knull, the condo market is experiencing a "flight to quality"—so if your condo has special and in-demand features, flaunt them. "Condos that have a differentiator such as private outdoor space, a nice view, desirable amenities, and high-quality finishes and craftsmanship are easier to sell," Knull says. "In-unit laundry and pet-friendly buildings are a big thing with buyers, along with how package delivery will be handled securely."

SELL YOUR STRENGTHS

Sellers can't control what amenities a building provides, but the right marketing can help a listing stand out. Highlight the amount of light a unit receives. Talk about what residents can walk to nearby. Provide a simple summary of the condo fees and what they cover. And mention recent building improvements, says Brian Block, managing broker of RE/MAX Allegiance in Alexandria, "to reassure buyers of the value." W

While sellers can't control building amenities, staging can emphasize a condo's strengths—making it feel more welcoming and valuable.

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Index of Advertising Partners

Compass . . . . . .Inside Front Cover
Long & Foster 5
Meredith Fine Properties 7
Sarah Hake Residential 9
Chuck Mangold, Jr | Benson & Mangold Real Estate 13
United Nations Federal Credit Union. 15
Mr. C Residences 17
Janice Pouch 64
Erich Cabe Team 65
Federal Title & Escrow Company 66
Dave and Joanne Adams. 67
Marin Hagen & Sylvia Bergstrom. 68
Dana Rice Group 69
Polaris Square by Tri Pointe Homes 70
The Preston of Rockville, a Kisco Lifestyle Community. . 71
John Mentis 72
Carolyn Homes. 73
CityHouse Old Town. 74
Lilian Jorgenson 76
The Lee Ann Wilkinson Group 76
Babs Beckwith 77
Amanda Jones Team 78
Bryce Lingo and Shaun Tull Team 78
Susan Skare 78
Vellie Dietrich-Hall 78
Washington Fine Properties. 79
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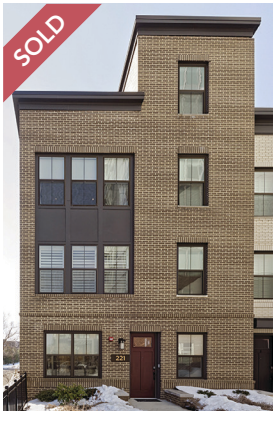

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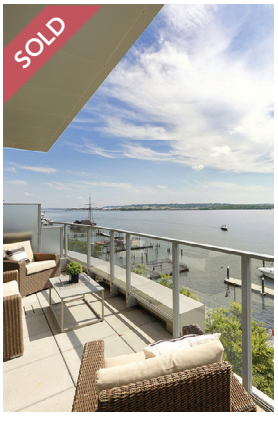

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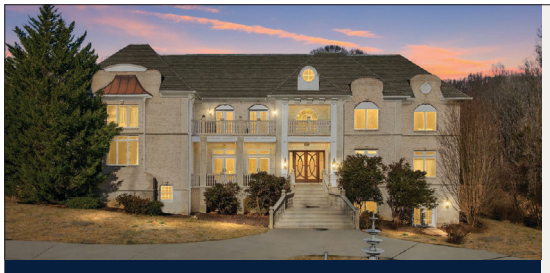

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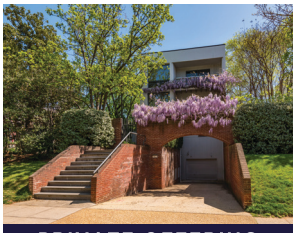

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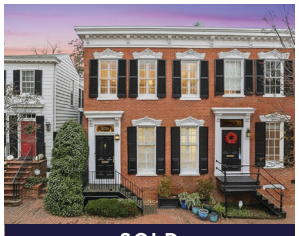

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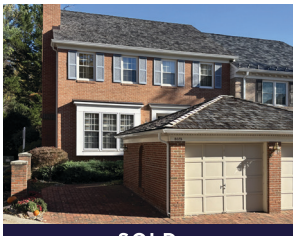

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LIFE, TRAVEL & STYLE



PHOTOGRAPH BY KAT LANGFORD PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY OF FARAWAY

HAPPY CAMPERS
Turn the page for camping destinations, such as these geodomes at Faraway in Luray.

Pitch Perfect

There's a camping site for everyone, from tents on the beach to luxe glamping domes

By Nevin Martell

START

Who's in your camping crew?

Little ones.

My child has a magical imagination.

We're craving some backwoods R&R.

Just adults.

The kiddos need to burn lots of energy.

I insist on the lap of luxury.

Tent camping with some amenities, please.

I really want to commune with nature.

I like leafy landscapes.

I'm seeking sandy shores.



FARAWAY
Luray, Va.

Outfitted with a king bed, kitchenette, and bathroom, the temperature-controlled geo-domes somehow feel both futuristic and rustic. Sit on the porch in front of your blazing fire pit, where you can take in breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and night skies unpolluted by city lights.
Distance from DC: An hour and 40 minutes

CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK
Thurmont, Md.

Pitch your tent at the William Houck Campground (open April to October) or the year-round Manor Area Campground. Then visit the aviary to get up close and personal with raptors and reptiles. Starting Memorial Day weekend, pop over to Hunting Creek Lake for a cooling dip or fishing session. Hiking options include a trek to the namesake waterfall.
Distance from DC: An hour and 15 minutes

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FARAWAY

FAIRY STONE STATE PARK
Stuart, Va.

Just off the Blue Ridge Parkway outside of Roanoke, this enchanting getaway is dotted with well-equipped cabins, yurts, and campsites. Take imaginative kids on a treasure hunt for cross-shaped fairy stones (staurolite crystals), then hit the 168-acre lake for fishing, boating, and swimming, or hike one of 11 trails crisscrossing the property.
Distance from DC: Four and a half hours





LITTLE BENNETT CAMPGROUND
Clarksburg, Md.

The charming woodland campsites exude tranquility. Leisurely activities include strolling or biking 30 miles of trails dotted with historical sites—including a sumac mill, whiskey distillery, and chapel cemetery—or participating in themed weekend programming, such as superhero training camp and a Bigfoot celebration.
Distance from DC: 40 minutes

Let's do it rustic style.

LUMS POND STATE PARK
Bear, Del.

On the shores of Delaware's largest freshwater pond, find paddleboarding, canoeing, and kayaking opportunities galore (rentals are available), as well as fantastic fishing. On terra firma, hike loop trails, play disc golf, and whiz through the trees at the Go Ape Zipline & Adventure Park.
Distance from DC: An hour and 50 minutes

Let's treat ourselves.

OAK RIDGE CAMPGROUND
Triangle, Va.

No-frills forested campsites are equipped with a grill, picnic table, and fire pit (BYO wood). Make sure to book a site in the B loop for the best access to showers. The area is pet-friendly, and when it's time to walk the dog, you can take advantage of several well-maintained trails through surrounding Prince William Forest Park.
Distance from DC: One hour



TIMBERLINE GLAMPING CO.
Williamsburg, Va.

These deluxe safari tents, on the banks of the Chickahominy River, come outfitted with a king bed and two sets of bunk beds for kids. Add outdoor entertainment options such as giant Jenga, cornhole, inflatable kayaks, and bicycles so everyone can stay (relatively) screen-free.
Distance from DC: Two and a half hours

ASSATEAGUE ISLAND
Berlin, Md.

Pitch your tent in the dunes at one of the oceanside sites, where you can enjoy radiant sunrises and unfettered views of the universe at night. Just be prepared for harsh sun, whipping winds, and insistent mosquitoes—all worth enduring to savor the majesty of this rugged island and its legendary wild horses.
Distance from DC: Two hours and 45 minutes



PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, COURTESY OF VIRGINIA DEPT. OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION; COURTESY OF M-NCPPC, MONTGOMERY PARKS; BY KALI ANN LISK/COURTESY OF TIMBERLINE GLAMPING CO.; COURTESY OF NPS PHOTO

Suit Yourself

Menswear is getting a dramatic update, says style influencer Barnette Holston (@DCFashionFool), with fuller pants, broader shoulders, or wider lapels. Here, he wears his favorite suit in this style, by Enzo Custom, paired with a Swarovski brooch. On the opposite page: more ways to get the look.

By Amy Moeller



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHI-CHI ARI



"Asos Design" wrap suit jacket ($149) and **wide-leg tuxedo pants** ($60), in dark green, at Asos.com



Taupe **tailored-fit "Milano" suit,** $929 at Suitsupply



"Heritage Line" double-breasted suit in gray chevron virgin wool and cashmere, $5,500 at Giorgio Armani



Italian gabardine "Wythe" suit, $1,196 at Todd Snyder



Irish-linen "Carmine" suit in tobacco, $945 at Proper Cloth

PIN DROP

Holston suggests pairing this style suit with a brooch. Here are a few favorites.



1. **Small peony brooch** in mint, $228 at MindyLam-Couture.com



2. **Ivory leather camellia with pearls,** $325 at FleurdPins.com



3. **"Matrix" brooch,** $199 at Swarovski



4. **Men's black-and-gray small peony lapel pin,** $248 at MindyLam-Couture.com



5. **"Modernist 925" sterling-and-brass brooch** by Laton, $88 at Rare Form



6. **"Millenia" brooch,** $269 at Swarovski

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BRANDS



Best Dentists

The top orthodontists, periodontists, general dentists, and other practitioners who can treat your teeth. Did yours make the list?

IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS BRACES OR you've cracked a molar or developed a toothache, you want a dentist you can trust. What follows are about 800 of them.

To come up with this list of the area's top dental pros, we asked thousands of local dentists which of their peers they most recommend. After all, dentists routinely see one another's work.

We partnered with a firm called topDentists, which mailed a ballot to every area practitioner listed online with the American Dental Association, as well as those listed online with local and national dental societies—giving virtually every dentist in this region a chance to vote. Participants were presented with lists of dentists in their immediate area and invited to rate them on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "excellent." They were asked to vote only on peers whose work they personally know and to put aside personal bias. They were asked to take into consideration years of experience, continuing education, manner with patients, use of new techniques and technologies, and of course physical results.

The scores were compiled and averaged; the average required for inclusion varied by specialty and geographic area. Previous awards and status in dental academies were also sometimes a consideration. Once we had a list of finalists, the names were checked against state dental boards for disciplinary actions and to make sure each practitioner has an active license and is in good standing. For more information on the process, you can call 706-364-0853; write PO Box 970, Augusta, GA 30903; email *help@usatopdentists.com;* or visit *usatopdentists.com.*

Because inclusion here is based on the subjective judgment of peers, many good dentists may be missing. The topDentists firm remains confident that its methodology largely corrects for biases and produces the most reliable, useful list of top-rated dentists.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA WILTSE/GETTY IMAGES

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Sandra Hsieh
North Bethesda
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John S. K. Hsu
Fairfax
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Richard Hunsinger Jr.
Bethesda
301-652-3997

Bruce R. Hutchison
Centreville
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Damien A. Huynh
Alexandria
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Laudan Izadi
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Bethesda
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Joshua Lomke
Olney
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Mitchell A. Lomke
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THE 4 MOST OVERLOOKED FACTS ABOUT SLEEP APNEA AND WHY THEY MATTER

By Dr. Pamela Marzban

Sleep apnea is far more common and far more misunderstood than most people realize. Many patients live for years assuming their fatigue, brain fog, snoring, or declining health are simply part of getting older or living a busy life. The reality is that sleep-disordered breathing often hides behind subtle symptoms. Here are four things many people still don't know.

1. You Don't Always Need a Sleep Lab to Get Tested

Most people assume they need to spend a night in a sleep lab to find out if they have sleep apnea. Sometimes that's true, especially in complex medical situations. But for many people, testing at home gives more useful information because it shows how they actually sleep.

In a lab, you're wired up, in a strange bed, and often sleeping differently than you do at home. At home, you sleep in your normal position, your normal schedule, and with your usual habits… including the weekend glass of wine or late night that often makes breathing problems worse.

One night of testing also isn't always enough. Sleep changes night to night. Ideally, testing should capture at least two nights, including one that reflects your real lifestyle. We need to see how you actually breathe when no one is watching; not just your best-behaved night of sleep.

2. Sleep Apnea Isn't Just a Weight Problem

Sleep apnea is widely labeled as a weight problem. It isn't. It's an anatomy problem. Excess weight can absolutely make airway collapse worse, but weight alone is rarely the root cause.

Most people with sleep apnea simply don't have enough room in their airway to begin with. The jaws may be underdeveloped, the palate narrow, the tongue crowded, or the nasal passages restricted. When muscles relax at night, the airway collapses even more easily.

That's why we see sleep-disordered breathing in children, teenagers, fit adults, athletes, and women who don't fit the typical stereotype. The issue isn't just body weight… it's the size and shape of the airway itself.

3. Sleep Apnea Is a Major Contributor to Erectile Dysfunction

This surprises many men, but erectile dysfunction is often linked to poor breathing during sleep.

An erection depends on healthy blood flow and adequate oxygen delivery. In sleep apnea, oxygen levels repeatedly drop as the airway collapses. Over time, this stresses blood vessels, disrupts nitric oxide production, and interferes with normal vascular function.

Sleep apnea also disrupts deep sleep cycles where testosterone regulation and nervous system recovery occur. Add chronic stress on the autonomic nervous system, and the body stays in a constant stress response instead of repair mode. Many men seek treatment for ED without realizing their sleep and breathing may be the underlying issue.

4. CPAP Isn't the Only Solution- Anatomy Matters

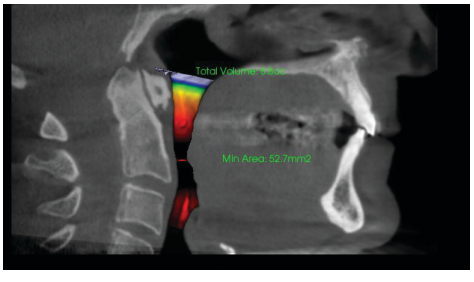
CPAP is often called the gold standard, but it doesn't fix the problem. It manages it by forcing air into the airway while you sleep. When you stop using it, the problem is still there.

Sleep apnea happens because the airway collapses. The real question should always be why. Modern imaging such as CBCT scans allows us to see where restriction occurs: whether in the nose, jaw position, tongue space, or soft tissues.

Treatment may involve nasal airway surgery, oral appliances that reposition the jaw, soft palate therapies, or orthodontic and jaw development approaches that create more airway space. CPAP is sometimes necessary, but most patients would better benefit from solutions that address the anatomy itself.

Sleep apnea is often missed because people normalize poor sleep, fatigue, and snoring. The key is understanding why breathing is compromised in the first place. That requires looking at anatomy, airway space, and function and not just managing symptoms.

This is the focus of our practice. We evaluate airway, jaw development, and sleep-related breathing issues daily and work with physicians and specialists to help patients find solutions that are realistic and sustainable. Many people are surprised to learn how much better they can feel once they finally breathe well at night.





Dr. Pamela Marzban is a dentist at the Center for Beauty, Balance, Breath in Fairfax County. If you have any questions you can call her at **703-323-8200** or visit her at **ww w.marzbandds.com**.
Author of Amazon E-Book: Craniofacial Development: from infancy to adult
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2026

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ENDODONTICS

Capitol Endodontics 131
DC Endodontics Specialists . . 135
Endodontic Excellence of Reston 131
Binait Kabir, DDS. 131
Steven Kim, DDS. 131
Nagmeh Latifi, DDS. 135
Alan Lee, DDS 131

GENERAL DENTISTRY

Erika Adachi, DDS. 120
Cristian Alcantara, DDS. 125
Harold Aniya, DDS. 120
Artisan Dental 116
Avant Dentistry 108
Alexander Back, DDS 116
Taylor Cole Ball, DDS 118
Ballston Dental Care 115
Christopher Banks, DDS 106
Bethesda Chevy Chase Smiles. 124
Burke Dental Center 130
Cheryl Callahan, DDS 138
Callahan Dental 138
Emilio Canal Jr 116
Capital Esthetics and Family Denistry 135
Caring Dentists 125
I. Giuliana Centty, DDS 114
Woo Young Chang, DDS 117
CK Dental & Associates 117
Peter K. Cocolis, Jr, DMD 125
Jason A. Cohen, DDS 126
Chaz Collins, DDS. 116
Mauricio Colomo, DDS 116
Complete Health Dentistry . . . 134
Shane Costa, DDS 122
Costa Dentistry 122
Jeanette Coutin-Gentry, DDS . . 125
Zohra Darwish, DDS 139
Mitra Davaninejad, DDS 130
Dental Aesthetic Arts. 139
Dental Group at Reston Station 116
Navneet Dhaliwal, DDS 133
Luz Lopez Driscoll, DDS 117
Drs. Love & Miller, PC 124
Dupont Dental 106
Dupont Smiles Family and Cosmetic Dentistry. 131
EJL Dental 132
Atiyeh Emam, DDS 126
Shailja Ensor, DDS. 132
Ashley Fagan, DDS 133
Fallsgrove Center for Dentistry . . 136
Family Smile Dental Center . . . 120
Lizz M. Gentry, DDS 125
Philip A. Gentry, DDS 125
Lauren Gibberman, DDS 127
Gibberman Dental 127
Priya Grewal, DDS. 106
Shawna Hawk, DDS 128
Shawna L. Hawk, DDS, PC . . . 128
Ann N. Hebda, DDS 134
Hillandale Smiles 114
Laudan Izadi, DDS. 131
Timothy Johnson, DDS 132
Nabeel Khan DDS 130
Inna Kost, DDS 107
Stacia Krantz, DDS 136
Jenny Kye, DDS 117
Saba Lakhani, DDS 124
La Luxe Dental 133
Lansdowne Dental. 126
Greg L. LaVecchia, DMD 129
Greg L. LaVecchia, DMD, PC . . 129
Kristy Lee, DDS 110
Lauren Lewis, DDS 132
Melanie R. Love, DDS 124
Shivani Maharaja, DDS 126
Despina Markogiannakis, DDS 100-101
David Matney, DDS 115
Merrifield Dental Associates . . 130
Michael Messina, DDS 116
Mark A. Miller, DDS 124
Anthony Moawad, DDS. 116
Modern Haus Dental 110
Kathleen Mullaney, DDS 117
Nik Family & Cosmetic Dentistry 120
Kamran Nikseresht. DDS. 120
Olivia Oriani, DDS 113
Oriani Cosmetic Dental 113
Yetunde Patrick, DDS 137
Peter K. Cocolis, Jr, DMD & Associates 125
Diane Pham, DMD. 135
Cecile Poupard-Toner, DDS. . . 114
Pristine Smiles. 133
Nima Raoufinia, DDS. 130
Peter Rinaldi, DDS. 116
Sheila M. Samaddar, DDS. . . . 134
John Savukinas, DDS 132
Andrew Schwartz, DDS. 136
Senior Smile 123
Smile Design Studio of Bethesda 121
Smiles Bethesda 107
Smiles of Chevy Chase . . 100-101
Michelle Snyder, DDS 136
South Capitol Smile Center . . . 134
Springfield Dentistry 125
Spring Valley Dental 106
Namita Thapar-Dua 123
Will Thornton, DDS 127
Thornton Dental Associates . . 127
U Street Family Dentistry. 137
Nathan Van der Linden, DDS . . 127
Vienna Cosmetic & Family Dentistry 126
Todd Wasserman, DDS 136
Treva Willis, DDS 121
Alan Wolcott, DDS. 114
Maria Wright, DDS. 121
Michael Wright, DDS 121
Wyngate Dental of Bethesda . . 118
Annie Yu, DDS. 108

ORAL AND MAXILLIOFACIAL SURGERY

Hadi Ansari, DMD 130
Capital Center® for Surgery . . 111
Robert W. Emery, DDS 111
Maryland Oral Surgery Associates (MOSA). 109
Amir Naimi, DDS. 130
Northern Virginia Oral, Maxillofacial & Implant Surgery. 130
Armando Retana, DDS 111
Amro Shihabi, DDS 130
Christopher W. Shim, DDS . . . 111
Pedram Yaghmai, DDS 130

ORTHODONTICS

Elvi Barcoma, DDS 112
Bird Smiles Orthodontics 136
Jeffrey L. Brown, DDS. 105
Jill Bruno, DMD 104
Zach Casagrande, DDS. 112
Champion Smiles 124
Christine A. Chen, DMD 112
Katie Clark, DDS 136
Lisa DeMarco, DDS. 115
Dr. Jill J. Bruno Orthodontics . . 104
Drs. DeMarco, Tilkin & Powers Orthodontics. 115
Brent Frey, DDS. 124
Friendship Heights Orthodontics. 129
Jean Hong, DDS 104
Jessica Itani, DDS 112
Tri Le, DDS 138
Lara Minahan, DDS 132
Minihan Orthodontics 132
Samaneh Mojarrad, DDS. 112
Chelsea Murphy, DMD 129
North Potomac Orthodontics . . 112
Northern Virginia Orthodontics (NVO) 112
Michael Powers, DDS 115
David Rad, DDS 138
Rad Orthodontics 138
Danielle Robb, DDS. 112
Debra Shin, DDS 119
Richard Shin, DDS. 119
Shin Orthodontics 119
Sleep & TMJ Therapy 105
Sonia Talley, DDS 136
The Silver Spring Orthodontist 104
Nancy Tilkin, DDS 115
Robert Yu, DDS 128
Yu Orthodontics 128

PEDIATRICS

Alexandria Children's Dentistry 119
Arlington Pediatric Dentistry . . 137
Eric Armakan, DDS 135
Angela Austin, DMD 119
BCC Pediatric Dentistry 138
Karen Benitez, DDS. 134
Chevy Chase Pediatric Dentistry 134
Charlie Coulter, DDS 129
Katie Davis, DDS 127
Dentistry for Children. 135
Madeline Goodman, DDS 114
Harmony Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics 114
Arpi Khare, DDS 137
Little Dental Studio 119
Metropolitan Pediatric Dentistry 127
Christine M. Reardon, DDS . . . 133
Elizabeth Shin, DDS 138
Heather Sholander, DDS 114

PERIODONTICS

Waleed Alkakhan, DDS 122
Chris Barth, DDS 110
Duane Bennett, DDS 123
Lillian C. Carpio, DDS 122
Lourdes A. Christopher, DDS . . 128
Falls Church Periodontics & Dental Implant Surgery 128
Mehrdad Favagehi, DDS 128
ImplantsDC 110
Implant Logyca 137
Karen Jo, DDS. 123
Alfonso Patron, DDS 137
Prestige Periodontics 123
Eugenia Prokopets, DDS. 118
Israel Puterman, DDS 110
Arjun Saggu, DMD. 123
Karl A. Smith, DDS 136
Marc P. Stanard, DDS 122
Marc P. Stanard, DDS, PC. . . . 122
The Periodontal-Implant Institute. 122

PROSTHODONTICS

Elite Prosthetic Dentistry 113
Gerald M. Marlin, DMD 113
Jamie Progebin, DDS 108
Keith Progebin, DDS 108
Progebin Prosthodontics. 108
Samantha Siranli, DMD . . 102-103
Siranli Dental 102-103
The Dentourage. 121
Michael Wright, DDS 121

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Despina M. Markogiannakis, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

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Dr. Samantha Siranli is renowned for crafting stunning yet natural looking smiles for Washington, DC's elite. As a Diplomate of both the American Board of Prosthodontics and American Board of Oral Implantology, she holds the highest distinctions in the field.

Dr. Siranli believes that smile design starts with the face. Her unique approach begins by studying the patient's distinct facial structures, including cheekbones, lip support, smile line and teeth display. Dr. Siranli considers resting and full smiles and carefully listens to understand the patient's goals. Only then can she deliver the amazing results that built Siranli Dental's reputation.

Siranli Dental's in-house, state-of-the-art laboratory is also unique. Technicians craft veneers and crowns onsite, collaborating directly with doctors and patients to ensure the best aesthetic and functional results. When technicians see a patient's transformation firsthand it adds an extra level of passion and dedication.

What sets Dr. Siranli apart is a blend of precise technique, exceptional artistry and meticulous attention to detail. In addition, Siranli Dental uses advanced technology such as computer-guided surgery, photogrammetry, and digital workflows to deliver extraordinary results.

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Dr. Siranli is extremely proud of her award-winning dental team. Most recently, Drs. Erika Anderson, Samuel Cappiello, Liza Minovi and Stephanie Simmonett were selected by peer doctors to be 2026 *Washingtonian* Top Dentists. In addition, Dr. Siranli has been selected consecutively from 2017 to 2026.

SPECIALIZATION

Porcelain Veneers, Dental Implants, Prosthodontics, Smile Design, General Dentistry, Invisalign®

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

- Mark of Excellence; Medical College of Georgia, Center of Esthetic and Implant Dentistry
- Exceptional Service, Dedication, and Contribution; Medical College of Georgia, Center of Esthetic and Implant Dentistry
- *Washingtonian* Top Dentists
- Diplomate, American Board of Prosthodontics
- Fellow, American College of Prosthodontists
- Diplomate, American Board of Oral Implantology

2112 F Street, #605, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202.466.4530

1234 19th Street, #704, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202.296.3330

1920 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201
703.528.0800

6707 Old Dominion Dr., #200
McLean, VA 22101
703.734.0100

2550 S. Clark Street, #100A
Arlington, VA 22202
703.415.0505

siranlidental.com




siranli
siranli
dental



Dr. Jill Bruno, DMD, MSEd

Top Dentist 2026

DR. JILL J. BRUNO ORTHODONTICS

Please join us in celebrating Dr. Jill on the incredible achievement of transforming over 3,000 smiles with Invisalign®!

Q: What does your designation as a Blue Diamond Top 1% Invisalign® Provider mean for your patients or people looking to improve their smile?

A: This designation means that I am one of the top Invisalign® providers in the country, with expertise in treatment planning and correcting complex orthodontic issues, as well as minor tooth movement.

Q: Are children and teens candidates for Invisalign® orthodontic treatment?

A: Yes. Our children and teen patients are very compliant with their aligners. Children as young as 8 or 9 years old can benefit from early Invisalign® treatment, especially for severe crowding or spacing issues.

Q: Can you tell us more about Smile Express?

A: Smile Express is a great option for adults that want to correct mild to moderate alignment issues. Twenty Invisalign® aligners, no attachments and remote care allow me to provide a great treatment option for adults who are busy or just want to improve their smiles.

SPECIALIZATION

Orthodontics for children, teenagers & adults, Remote care specialist, thoughtful early treatment plans for children including those with sensory, dietary or speech issues, Blue Diamond Top 1% Invisalign® Provider

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian and *Bethesda Magazine* Top Dentist, Director of Butterflies for Change Nonprofit, DC Dental Society, Fellow of the American College of Dentists

5454 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1260
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.656.3310
brunosmiles.com



Dr. Jean Hong

Top Dentist 2026

THE SILVER SPRING ORTHODONTIST

We would like to welcome you to The Silver Spring Orthodontist, the office of Dr. Jean Hong. Dr. Hong has been providing orthodontic care in the area for the past 15 years and has helped create many thousands of beautiful smiles. At our office, we pride ourselves in using the latest technology to deliver excellent treatment results, as efficiently as possible. Dr. Hong and her highly skilled and caring staff continually update their skills to bring you the best in orthodontic care. We offer and educate you about various treatment techniques, including braces, Sure Smile, and clear aligners to help you choose the best treatment for you. Call today for your complimentary consultation at either one of our two locations in Silver Spring and Olney. We look forward to meeting you and your family, and giving you the smile of a lifetime!

SPECIALIZATION

Clear Aligners; Metal and Clear Braces; SureSmile; Invisalign®; Jaw Surgery; Children, Adult and Special Needs Orthodontics

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist; American Association of Orthodontists; Maryland State Society of Orthodontists; American Dental Association; Maryland State Dental Association; Southern Maryland Dental Society

Silver Spring, MD | 301.236.0600
Olney, MD | 301.774.5040
thesilverspringorthodontist.com

Jeffrey L. Brown, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

SLEEP & TMJ THERAPY

What makes Sleep & TMJ Therapy so unique? They focus solely on TMJ/TMD, sleep apnea and finishing orthodontics. This allows Dr. Brown and his team to provide individualized care for patients dealing with these specific issues. Every day, the team helps patients of all ages with facial development, sleep issues, chronic headaches, migraines, neck pain, movement disorders, and much more. His training also includes multiple disciplines involving the cranial bones (skull), and the discs in the jaw joints. Through treatment, Dr. Brown can reduce these symptoms, align cranial bones, avoid extractions, and greatly reduce the need for traditional braces. His expertise allows him to identify issues early on which promotes proper facial development using dental appliances. If there is an internal imbalance, whether an adult or child, the body does not develop or function properly. When the cranial bones are lined up correctly, patients can function, sleep, and generally live better. There is a strong correlation when it comes to TMJ Dysfunction, Sleep Apnea, and sleep habits. That is why they try and identify the root of the problem instead of recommending medicine, night guards or irreversible procedures. With that in mind, the team at Sleep & TMJ Therapy uses a whole-body multidisciplinary approach when treatment planning. When needed they work with a team of doctors to identify problems outside the normal boundaries which provides solutions for complex cases.

Dr. Brown is a sought-after speaker outside of business hours. Since TMD is not really taught in dental school, his goal is to spread the word about treatment options so doctors worldwide can learn to help those in need. It is his goal is to catch underlying issues and guide growth to avoid problems later on. For more information, check out our website and Dr. Brown's blog!



SPECIALIZATION

Conservative TMJ/TMD Therapy, Sleep Apnea Treatment, ALF Appliance Therapy, Migraine/Headache Treatment, Reducing Symptoms Associated with Movement Disorders, Extraction-Free Three-Dimensional Orthodontics, Cold Laser Massage Therapy, In-House TMD Massage Therapist, and Early Childhood Prevention

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND AWARDS

Dr. Brown graduated from Georgetown Dental School and completed residencies in Dental Sleep Medicine and ALF Appliance Therapy. He has been featured on Channel 9's *Good Morning Washington*, several podcasts, numerous magazines and journals. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Craniofacial Pain, Legacy Probider of the ALF Interface Academy, a member of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and Academy of Integrative Pain Management, as well as many more organizations.

2841 Hartland Road, Suite 301, Falls Church, VA 22043
703.821.1103 | **sleepandtmjtherapy.com**

Christopher Banks, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

DUPONT DENTAL



As the son of a dentist, Dr. Christopher Banks developed a deep appreciation for dentistry at a young age. That early mentorship shaped his commitment to dental excellence and his belief that dentistry is as much an art form as it is a science. At Dupont Dental, dentistry represents the seamless fusion of science and artistry — where precision, innovation, and aesthetic vision come together to enhance both health and confidence.

Dr. Banks began his career alongside his father in West Virginia before relocating to Washington, DC in 2016 to establish his first practice, Capital Cosmetic Dentistry of Chevy Chase. In 2021, he expanded his vision with the purchase and transformation of Dupont Dental, creating a state-of-the-art practice designed to deliver elevated, patient-centered care in a modern, sophisticated setting.

In 2026, Dr. Banks further advanced the practice by incorporating cutting edge facial aesthetic laser technologies. By integrating comprehensive dental treatment with advanced skin rejuvenation procedures, Dupont Dental now offers a refined approach to full facial aesthetic care, seamlessly blending smile design, facial harmony, and innovative technology under one roof.

Dr. Banks and his team take pride in delivering exceptional results while treating every patient like family.

Dupont Dental
1234 19th St NW, Suite 604
Washington, DC 20036
202.296.7714
dupontdental.com

SPECIALIZATION
General Dentistry, Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®, Veneers, TMD, Sleep Apnea

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry; American Dental Association; DC Dental Society; International Academy of Facial Esthetics; American Academy of Clear Aligners



Dr. Priya Grewal, Spring Valley Dental

Top Dentist 2026

PERSONALIZED CARE FOR YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS AND COSMETIC DESIRES

At Spring Valley Dental, our mission for over 50 years has been to prioritize your health and value your time. Dr. Priya Grewal and Dr. Steven Philips along with their amazing team customize a path that will lead you to strong oral health, happiness, and a bright smile for your entire family! Dr. Grewal's passion, experience and continuing education with digital technology has allowed her to be a leader in cosmetic dentistry. Collaborating with patients is important so they get the results they desire and can see blueprints of each smile before starting treatment, resulting in conservative care and predictable results.

AFFILIATIONS
American Dental Association; American Academy of Cosmetic Dentists; Diplomate, American Dental Sleep Medicine; DC Dental Society; Greater Washington Association of Women Dentists; Fellow, American Academy of General Dentistry; DC Top Dentist; DC Top Invisalign® Provider; Special Olympics; Mission of Mercy

4900 Massachusetts Ave, NW, #200
Washington, DC 20016 | 202.244.5900
springvalleydentaldc.com

Dr. Inna Kost

Top Dentist 2026

SMILES BETHESDA

At Dr. Inna Kost's dental practice, we believe exceptional dentistry begins with trust. Our patient-centered philosophy focuses on education, prevention, and conservative treatment options designed to protect your natural smile. We take the time to listen, explain, and personalize every visit — because your comfort and long-term oral health matter most.

From your child's first dental appointment to advanced restorative care, we are proud to serve families with integrity, precision, and genuine compassion. Our modern office combines advanced technology with a warm, welcoming atmosphere to ensure every patient feels at ease.

We prioritize preserving healthy tooth structure and recommending treatment only when truly necessary. Whether you are seeking a brighter smile, replacing missing teeth, or maintaining lifelong oral health, our goal is predictable, natural-looking results that enhance both function and confidence.

Dr. Kost is a graduate of Temple University School of Dentistry and maintains active membership in the American Dental Association (ADA), Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA), Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), and the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (ICOI).

Recognized as a Top Dentist by *Bethesda Magazine,* Dr. Kost pursues continuing education in advanced cosmetic and implant dentistry to provide the highest standard of care. Experience dentistry where your needs come first and conservative excellence guides every decision.



SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive family dentistry, preventive care, cosmetic smile design, porcelain veneers, teeth whitening, Invisalign®, dental implants, implant-supported restorations, crowns and bridges, minimally invasive restorations, and full-mouth rehabilitation delivered with precision and a conservative philosophy.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND AWARDS

ADA, MSDA, AGD, ICOI, Top Dentist; *Bethesda Magazine, Washingtonian* magazine; Top Dentist

Wildwood Medical Center
10401 Old Georgetown Road, Suite #103
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.530.6195
bethesdadentistdmd.com

Progebin Prosthodontics

Top Dentists 2026

PROSTHODONTICS

Dr. Keith Progebin earned his dental degree from the University of Maryland School of Dentistry and completed advanced specialty training in prosthodontics at New York University College of Dentistry. A respected leader in his field, he lectures nationally and internationally on advanced implant techniques and has published on patient-centered care-bringing academic excellence to the highest level of private practice.

Dr. Keith Progebin and his son, Dr. Jamie Progebin, represent a rare father-and-son partnership grounded in precision, trust, and continuity of care. Dr. Jamie Progebin graduated cum laude from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry and completed his prosthodontic residency at New York University College of Dentistry, where he was selected to serve as Chief Resident.

Together, the Progebins offer a refined, team based approach to care, thoughtfully tailored to each patient. Known for their meticulous attention to detail and understated sophistication, Team Progebin blends the art and science of prosthodontics to deliver elegant solutions from single tooth restorations to full mouth reconstructions and advanced implant rehabilitations. Their practice reflects a lasting commitment to excellence, personalization, and results that endure.



SPECIALIZATION
Restorative and cosmetic dentistry; Implant, Facial, and Comprehensive Rehabilitation

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
Fellow: American College of Dentists, ICD, Greater NY Academy of Prosthodontists. Member: ADA, American College of Prosthodontists, Academy of Osseointegration

1145 19th Street, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036
202.296.8126
team@progebinprosthodontics.com
www.progebinprosthodontics.com



Annie Yu, DDS, MAGD

Top Dentist 2026

COSMETIC, RESTORATIVE, IMPLANT & SLEEP DENTISTRY

Highly credentialed and respected by her community and colleagues as a Cosmetic and General dentist, Dr. Yu distinguishes herself by making personalized care and going the extra mile the standard. Dr. Yu's meticulous and thorough nature is something about which her patients rave repeatedly in their reviews. That combined with her warm yet fun Midwestern personality, Dr. Yu puts her patients at ease, whether it be for a regular hygiene maintenance, implants, sleep apnea appliances, veneers, or cosmetic smile make-over. "Creating beautiful smiles is my passion, but equally important is fostering lasting relationships with my patients—only by working together may we achieve healthy smiles for a lifetime!"

SPECIALIZATION
General, Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry, Invisalign®, Veneers, Airway & Sleep Dentistry, Advanced Technology

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
Washingtonian Top Dentist; American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry; Master, Academy of General Dentistry; American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine

5454 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1035
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
240.743.4421
avantdentistry.com



From L-R: Dr. Ziad Batrouni, Dr. Zachary Jones, Dr. Lisa Cohen, Dr. Amir Itani, Dr. Sarah Naghibi, Dr. Brian Robinson, Dr. Steven Kishter, Dr. Malini Iyer, Dr. Mary Carter Robinson, Dr. Mitchell Stark, Dr. Mark Hoffrichter, Dr. Glenn Nathan Not Pictured: Dr. Scott Kim, Dr. Marvin Thomas, and Dr. Anthony Contratto

Maryland Oral Surgery Associates

Top Dentist 2026

MOSA ORAL SURGEONS

Maryland Oral Surgery Associates (MOSA), the state's oldest and largest Oral and Maxillofacial Facial Surgery practice, was established in 1969 in Greenbelt, MD. Since 1985, MOSA expanded from two full-time surgeons to 15 surgeons. In MOSA's eight locations—covering six Maryland counties—they have successfully performed nearly 1 million procedures over the past 59 years.

MOSA's most up-to-date surgical technology includes CT scanning to create computer-generated implant placements and "Teeth-in-a-Day" procedures. MOSA utilizes full anesthesia monitoring in their offices, which matches that used in hospital operating rooms for all their IV Sedation/General anesthesia procedures.

Each MOSA location has extensively trained their staff to ensure a safe and comfortable experience and maintains the highest standards of infection control for their patients' protection. Drs. Nathan, Stark, B. Robinson, Batrouni, Cohen, Iyer, Carter Robinson, Hoffrichter & Associates use their collective experiences to ensure the best and most current treatment and care for their patients.

Maryland Oral Surgery Associates has been here for 55+ years and with its expanding team of highly trained surgeons will continue to provide first-rate care long into the future.

SPECIALIZATION

Implants, Extractions, Wisdom Teeth, Bone Grafting, Pathology, Elective Jaw Reconstruction, Trauma, Sedation, General Anesthesia, Cosmetics

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentists
What's Up Annapolis/West County Top Docs
Bethesda Magazine Top Docs
Frederick Magazine's Best of Frederick
Northern Virginia Magazine Top Docs

Congratulations to our 2026 *Washingtonian* Top Dentists Dr. Amir Itani, Dr. Brian Robinson, Dr. Lisa Cohen, Dr. Malini Iyer, Dr. Mary Carter Robinson, Dr. Mitchell Stark, Dr. Scott Kim

Annapolis | Bethesda | College Park | Crofton
Frederick | Laurel | Rockville | Silver Spring

1.844.459.MOSA (6672)
mosa4os.com

Kristy Lee, D.D.S.

Top Dentist 2026

MODERN HAUS DENTAL



At Modern Haus Dental, Dr. Kristy Lee and her team deliver exceptional dental care in a welcoming environment. Combining advanced education with cutting-edge technology, Dr. Lee is committed to providing patients with optimal care. Our practice features the latest innovations, including the iTero Lumina™ scanner for comfortable and precise bite assessments. We also utilize NIRI infrared technology for cavity detection and leverage AI to enhance diagnostic accuracy. From implant restorations to Botox for teeth grinding or clenching, we offer comprehensive services to meet your dental needs. For added comfort, nitrous sedation is available. Patients consistently describe Dr. Lee as compassionate, calming, and thorough and often share that their dental fears diminish with each visit. Her approachable and friendly demeanor helps patients feel cared for and understood. Dr. Lee's passion for dentistry extends beyond technical expertise. She takes ongoing education to stay at the forefront of advancements. The most fulfilling part of her work is building meaningful relationships with patients and making a lasting impact on their lives. Whether restoring confidence with a brighter smile or relieving pain to improve function, her goal is to help patients feel their best. Modern Haus Dental is proud to care for families across generations.

5530 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 710
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.986.4814
hello@modernhausdental.com
ModernHausDental.com

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive general dentistry, including porcelain crowns and veneers, Implant dentistry, Invisalign®, in-office teeth whitening and air polishing, a revolutionary Swiss technology that can remove stubborn staining.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Top Dentist, *Washingtonian* magazine 2025. Top Dentist, *Bethesda Magazine* 2024. American Academy of Clear Aligners. Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency.



ImplantsDC, Dental Implants & Periodontics

Top Dentist 2026

DR. ISRAEL PUTERMAN AND DR. CHRIS BARTH

When you need specialized care, you deserve doctors with the highest level of expertise. Our mission statement is to provide the highest level of care in the most caring and relaxing atmosphere. We place extreme emphasis on cutting edge technology to maximize accuracy and minimize recovery, with 3D microscopes, LANAP laser, X-Nav guided implant surgery, digital impressions, and IV sedation. However, Drs. Puterman and Barth have learned through their decades of experience that it's our team's unparalleled focus on personalized care that truly sets us apart. As *Washingtonian* Top Doctors, we are driven to delivering the best, starting right from your initial call. Read our rave reviews and see what our patients say!

SPECIALIZATION

Dental Implants and Bone / Gum Grafting using 3D microscopy; IV sedation

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Dual 3-year residencies in Periodontics and in Implant Dentistry, Licensed in IV sedation, Published authors in peer-reviewed journals, *Washingtonian* Top Dentist for a combined 30 years

5454 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1550
Chevy Chase, MD, 20815
301.652.0939
info@implantsdc.com



Capital Center® for Surgery

Top Dentist 2026

ROBERT W. EMERY, DDS; ARMANDO RETANA, MD, DDS; CHRISTOPHER W. SHIM, DDS, MD; RONA TRINIDAD, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

For 30 consecutive years, Dr. Emery has been recognized by *Washingtonian* magazine as Best Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery. We are proud that every surgeon here at the Capital Center has been honored as well. This recognition however belongs to our entire team — our nurses, our dental assistants, and our patient care coordinators — who show up every day with compassion and professionalism. Our team aims to deliver the highest level of personalized care, and lead in interdisciplinary surgical and aesthetic solutions that improve both health and self-confidence for every patient they serve. This is not about one surgeon. This is about One Team. One Standard. Founded in 2008 in Washington, D.C., Capital Center® for Surgery began as a premier destination for oral and maxillofacial surgery under Dr. Robert Emery, one of the creators of X-Guide, the most advanced surgical tracking system in the world. With the addition of Dr. Armando Retana in 2017, Capital Center® has further expanded its surgical services by incorporating advanced cosmetic surgery procedures for the body, breast, and face that reinforce artistic contouring and natural-looking results. Nurse Rona joined the team in 2018, bringing her extensive aesthetic skills to provide natural results through treatments such as neuromodulators, dermal fillers, Morpheus 8 Face & Body, SkinPen microneedling, and chemical peels. Dr. Christopher Shim joins the Capital Center® team to further strengthen its multidisciplinary presence with his training in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

SPECIALIZATION

Oral & maxillofacial surgery, full body Cosmetic Surgery, and Medspa services.

Over the years, Capital Center® has served tens of thousands of patients, consistently expanding both scope and quality of services offered. Dr. Emery, Dr. Retana, Dr. Shim and Nurse Rona have been recognized for excellence in surgical precision, compassionate care, and innovative treatment protocols, helping countless individuals restore function and confidence through dental reconstruction, corrective jaw surgery, body contouring, and aesthetic enhancements.

Instagram:
@capitalcenterdc, @rw_emery, @lovethatbodydc, @brainsbeauty_aesthetics, @cshimddsmd

2311 M St, NW, Ste 200, Washington, DC 20037
202.386.7100 | **ccomfs.com**

Northern Virginia Orthodontics (NVO)

Top Dentist 2026

THE NATION'S #1 INVISALIGN® PROVIDER IN MORE LOCATIONS THAN EVER BEFORE

Dr. Zach Casagrande, Dr. Elvi Barcoma, Dr. Danielle Robb, Dr. Jessica Itani and Dr. Samaneh Mojarrad have successfully treated the most Invisalign® cases in the entire country, and NVO is ranked as the #1 Invisalign® provider in North America.

From mild to complex malocclusions, NVO can treat ANY case with Invisalign® , and we offer a variety of treatment options to fit every patient's needs. NVO now has six locations throughout the DMV to serve patients. NVO's Arlington, Brambleton, Reston, McLean, One Loudoun and Gainesville locations treat both pediatric and adult patients with braces and Invisalign® aligners.

We are also proud to give back to the Northern Virginia community through our very own nonprofit- the NVO Foundation, which has donated over $1.6 million to local cancer causes since it's inception in 2017.

35,000 smile transformations and counting, come discover why NVO is the best choice for your smile.

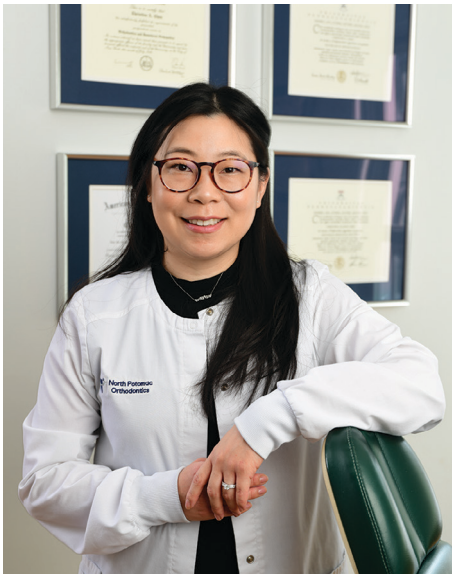
Scan here to schedule!

703.327.1718 | **nvorthodontics.com**



SPECIALIZATION
Digital, clear orthodontics for children, teens and adults; Invisalign®; Invisalign® First; Dental Monitoring Remote Care©, GLO Whitening®

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
#1 Invisalign® Provider Nationwide; #1 GLO® Whitening provider in the DMV; American Association of Orthodontists; Invisalign® Master Faculty; American Board of Orthodontics; *Washingtonian* Top Orthodontists, *Virginia Living Magazine's* Best Orthodontic Practice



Dr. Christine Chen

Top Dentist 2026

NORTH POTOMAC ORTHODONTICS

Christine A. Chen, DMD, MBS, is a board-certified orthodontist in Maryland. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and New York University, she has over a decade of experience treating kids, teens, and adults. Her expertise ranges from minor touch-ups to complex transformations using braces and Invisalign®. With a unique background in bioengineering and cosmetic research, Dr. Chen follows a "minimal treatment for maximum benefit" philosophy. Her office is a calming, light-filled space surrounded by greenery, designed to help you relax while achieving your healthiest, happiest smile.

SPECIALIZATION
Invisalign®, Invisalign Teen®, Invisalign First®, Palatal Expanders, Airway, Clear Braces, Metal Braces, Damon Braces, Jaw Surgery, Children and Adults

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
Diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics, Middle Atlantic Society of Orthodontists, American Association of Orthodontists

11904 Darnestown Road, Suite C
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
frontdesk@bracesbyCH.com
301.977.1441 | **bracesbyCH.com**



Elite Prosthetic Dentistry

Top Dentist 2026

GERALD M. MARLIN, DMD, MSD

Elite Prosthetic Dentistry is the Washington metro area's **destination practice** for adults who need a true solution, not another patch. Led by Gerald M. Marlin, D.M.D., M.S.D., with **3,900+ implants placed and restored** and a ***Washingtonian* Top Dentist for 22 years** designation, we are the **go-to source** for **salvaging dentitions**, correcting **failed dental work**, and **cosmetic dentistry**.

We deliver **end-to-end care in one office**, from extractions and bone grafting to implant placement and the final prosthesis, whether it be a single implant crown or a full-arch rehabilitation. Our **in-house laboratory** blends **digital precision with hand-crafted artistry** for cosmetic veneers, crowns, and implant restorations, with many crowns lasting **35 years and beyond**. For comfort, **oral and IV sedation** are available for longer visits and multi-appointment plans. If you have worn teeth, a failing bite, loose crowns, or implant complications, schedule a consultation to see what **predictable, specialist-led dentistry can achieve**.

SPECIALIZATION

Prosthodontist specializing in cosmetic, implant, and reconstructive dentistry, including crowns, veneers, and dentures.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Invented/Patented an Implant Restoration System, Academy of Osseointegration, American College of Prosthodontics, American Academy of Periodontology

4400 Jenifer Street, NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20015 | 202.244.2101
Concierge@eliteprostheticdentistry.com
EliteProstheticDentistry.com



Dr. Olivia Oriani, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

ORIANI COSMETIC DENTAL

Meet Oriani Cosmetic Dental! One of DC's newest cosmetic and general dentistry offices located in the heart of the city. At OC Dental, we provide top-notch care in a boutique, relaxed environment. Dr. Oriani started her practice 3 years ago, but she has been practicing in DC for over 10 years and considers the nation's capital her home. She was trained at Maryland School of Dentistry, graduating in the top 5% of her class. She then went on to complete a GPR residency program at the Baltimore VA hospital to further her skills. Dr. O is a talented general dentist, and she is known for her experience with veneers, cosmetic dentistry, and her patient-first mentality. The OC Dental team is looking forward to helping you achieve your dream smile!

SPECIALIZATION

General and Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign® Provider, Porcelain Veneers, Composite Bonding.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist 2023 and 2025, Frank C. Jerbi award for excellence in Prosthodontics, Member of AAFE and AACA, *DC Magazine* Best of the City Winner 2024

1712 I Street, NW, #702
Washington, DC 20006
202.393.3209
info@ocdentaldc.com

Hillandale Smiles

Top Dentists 2026

DR. ALAN WOLCOTT
DR. I. GIULIANA CENTTY
DR. CECILE POUPARD-TONER



Welcome to Hillandale Smiles!

At Hillandale Smiles, we are all about making dental care easy, comfortable, and convenient. Our expert team of doctors and hygienists brings you the latest in modern dentistry all in one location.

From adult and children's routine cleanings to implants, tooth whitening, tooth-colored fillings, all-ceramic crowns, veneers, Invisalign® and traditional braces, we offer everything you need to achieve the healthy, beautiful smile you've always wanted.

Thanks to our cutting-edge technology—including lasers, digital radiographs, in-office CT scans, and 3D imaging—we're also able to offer Same-Day Implants for faster, more efficient care.

At Hillandale Smiles, we believe in keeping things simple and clear. We'll walk you through all your treatment options in easy-to-understand terms, making sure you feel comfortable and confident every step of the way. Together, we'll create a treatment plan that fits both your needs and your budget.

Hillandale Smiles is your trusted neighborhood choice for high-quality dental care. Visit our website to learn more and schedule your appointment today!

SPECIALIZATION
General Dentistry, Cosmetics, Cleanings, Crowns, Veneers, Root Canals, Invisalign®, Full Mouth rehabilitation on teeth and Dental Implants

AFFILIATIONS
No Insurance No Problem! Save with our 'In Office Membership'.
We accept most major dental insurances.

1734 Elton Rd, Suite 231, Silver Spring MD 20903
301.439.7878 | **HillandaleSmiles.com**



Harmony Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics

Top Dentist 2026

HEATHER SHOLANDER & MADELEINE GOODMAN

Dr. Heather Sholander, pediatric dentist, and Dr. Madeleine Goodman, orthodontist, have created a practice that focuses on collaborative care which involves looking at dental health as it relates to the whole body. This can include family education such as discussing lifestyle and behavioral habits, or recommending early orthodontic treatment to redirect growth. Harmony is an inclusive practice that tailors treatment to meet the needs and expectations of each family and creates a fun experience that has kids asking to come back! The practice offers comprehensive dental care for kids as well as orthodontics for both children and adults.

SPECIALIZATION
Board-certified Orthodontist
Board-certified Pediatric Dentist

DESIGNATIONS & AWARDS
Bethesda Magazine Best of Bethesda 2025 (winner), 2024 (finalist), 2023 (finalist); *Washington Parent Magazine* Top Pick (finalist); *Washingtonian* Top Dentist

4818 Del Ray Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.664.4220
www.harmonybethesda.com

David Matney, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

BALLSTON DENTAL CARE

Discover the Smile You Deserve at Ballston Dental Care
Featuring Dr. David Matney, DDS – Gold Plus Invisalign® Provider. At Ballston Dental Care in Arlington, VA, Dr. David Matney combines expertise, compassion, and personalized care to help you feel at ease. With over 25 years of experience, Dr. Matney delivers high-quality dentistry in a calm, welcoming environment for patients of all ages—from children to adults. As a Gold Plus Invisalign® provider, he offers discreet, state-of-the-art clear aligners to achieve beautifully straight smiles. Dr. Matney also provides advanced cosmetic dentistry, Laser-Assisted Periodontal Therapy (LAPT), and sleep apnea care, all tailored to your individual needs. Dr. Matney graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry and completed a residency and fellowship at the University of Connecticut. He remains committed to dental innovation, completing hundreds of hours of continuing education. His career includes serving as a dentist for Emirates Airline, where he cared for patients from around the world—an experience that deepened his ability to connect with people from diverse backgrounds. In 2018, Dr. Matney took the helm of one of Arlington's longest-standing practices, now Ballston Dental Care, continuing its 50-plus years of trusted, community-centered dentistry. Whether you need a routine checkup or want to transform your smile, Dr. Matney and his friendly team are ready to help you smile with confidence!

801 N Quincy St, Suite 230
Arlington, VA 22203
703.243.9365
info@ballstondentalcare.com



SPECIALIZATION
General Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
American Dental Association-Member; Virginia Dental Association-Member; Northern Virginia Dental Society-Member; American Aligners Association-Member; Academy of General Dentistry-Member; Invisalign® Gold Provider, 2021-2025; *Washingtonian* magazine Top Dentist: 2022-2025; *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Dentist: 2021-2025; *Virginia Living Magazine* Top Dentist: 2022-2025



Drs. DeMarco, Tilkin & Powers Orthodontics

Top Dentists 2026

DRS. LISA DEMARCO, NANCY TILKIN & MICHAEL POWERS

When it comes to orthodontics, dentists choose Drs. DeMarco, Tilkin and Powers to care for their family, friends and patients. Top graduates of the University of Maryland, these doctors specialize in facial esthetics to customize orthodontic treatment for children, teens and adults. They use the latest techniques including Invisalign®, esthetic brackets, Surgical orthodontics and Myobrace. For over 35 years, Drs. DeMarco and Tilkin have been consistently recognized as the finest orthodontists by *Washingtonian* and local consumer magazines. The orthodontic team is excited to welcome their new partner, Dr. Michael Powers. With their dedication to excellence and experienced caring staff, you will enjoy the ultimate orthodontic experience and "The Smile of a Lifetime."

SPECIALIZATION
Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Invisalign® Gold Plus Providers, Invisalign® Teen, Clear Braces, Jaw Surgery, Accelerated Orthodontics, Myofunctional Therapy, Children & Adults

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS
Washingtonian's Top Dentist Hall of Fame: *Washingtonian* Top Dentists over 30 years, *Consumers' Checkbook* - Top Orthodontists, *Bethesda Magazine* - Best Orthodontists

11120 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20904 | 301.593.6363
demarcotilkinortho.com



Dental Group at Reston Station

Top Dentist 2026

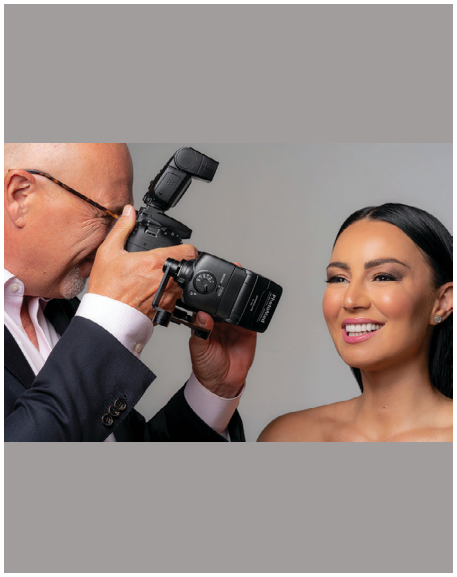
DRS. MICHAEL MESSINA, EMILIO CANAL JR., ANTHONY MOAWAD, MAURICIO COLOMO, ALEXANDER BACK, CHAZ COLLINS

For a quarter of a century our cutting-edge dental office has been at the forefront of innovation, revolutionizing oral care in our community. From digital diagnostics, laser treatments, to full smile design utilizing 3D technology, we've consistently embraced the advancements of modern dentistry. Our commitment extends beyond treatments; we prioritize patient education, with an emphasis on promoting preventive care through our fantastic dental hygiene team. With a warm, inviting atmosphere, our skilled team ensures comfort and confidence. Since 2002, we've been the trusted smile architects, shaping healthier, happier communities throughout the Northern Virginia area.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Team Dentists for: U.S Soccer Federation Teams, D.C United, Washington Spirit, D.C Old Glory Rugby. Fellows: Academy for Sports Dentistry and Academy of General Dentistry; named Top Dentists in *Washingtonian, Northern Virginia, CheckBook* and *Virginia Living* magazines; America's Best Dentists.

1886 Metro Center Drive, Suite 600
Reston, VA 20190 | 703.318.8200
Restondentist.com



Dr. Peter Rinaldi

Top Dentist 2026

ARTISAN DENTAL

Discover the art of a confident smile with Dr. Rinaldi, a premier smile expert in Chevy Chase, MD, trusted by patients from all walks of life. Recognized as a pioneer in the field, he specializes in porcelain veneers and is celebrated for his signature, customized "smile makeovers" that create naturally beautiful, radiant results. At Artisan Dental, patients receive comprehensive, personalized dental care designed to enhance both appearance and long-term oral health. Blending advanced, state-of-the-art technology with a welcoming, stress-free environment, Dr. Rinaldi and his team are dedicated to delivering outstanding results, helping every patient achieve exceptional care and life-changing confidence.

SPECIALIZATION

Dr. Rinaldi advised dental companies, wrote articles on cosmetic techniques and lectured dentists worldwide.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

American Dental Association, Accredited Member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, Fellow International Academy of Dental-facial Esthetics, Maryland State Dental Society

5530 Wisconsin Ave. Suite 712
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.652.1100
artisandentist.com

Kathleen Mullaney, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

DR. KATHLEEN MULLANEY, DDS, FAGD

Kathleen Mullaney, DDS is known for her thoughtful, comprehensive approach to dentistry and her commitment to long-term oral health. Based in Old Town Alexandria for over 25 years, Dr. Mullaney leads a patient-focused practice that emphasizes personalized care, advanced clinical techniques, and a calm, supportive environment.

With a focus on restorative and cosmetic dentistry, Dr. Mullaney helps patients achieve healthy, functional, and natural-looking smiles through services such as crowns, Invisalign®, and comprehensive treatment planning. She is especially respected for her ability to address complex dental needs while clearly educating patients and empowering them to make informed decisions about their care.

A Navy veteran, Dr. Mullaney brings discipline, integrity, and attention to detail to every aspect of her practice. She is committed to continuing education and staying current with evolving dental technologies to ensure the highest standard of care.

Supported by a highly trained and compassionate clinical team, Dr. Mullaney's practice delivers consistent, attentive care, ensuring patients feel heard, supported, and confident throughout every stage of their dental treatment.

Dr. Mullaney's practice has built a loyal patient following through trust, transparency, and an unwavering focus on quality—values that continue to set her apart in the Alexandria dental community.

700 N Fairfax, Suite 230, Alexandria, VA 22314
703.650.9322 | **kathleenmullaneydds.com**



SPECIALIZATION

Cosmetic Dentistry, Regular checkups, exams and gentle cleanings, Invisalign®, Tooth colored fillings Crowns, Veneers, Implants, Bridges and Dentures, Teeth Whitening, Night guards, Sedation Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Dr. Mullaney has her Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry and is a member of The American Academy of General Dentistry, American Association of Cosmetic Dentists, Virginia Dental Association and the Seattle Study Club.



CK Dental & Associates

Top Dentist 2026

DR. WOO YOUNG CHANG, DR. JENNY KYE AND DR. LUZ LOPEZ DRISCOLL

At CK Dental & Associates, our team is dedicated to providing patient-centered care in a warm and welcoming environment. Prosthodontist Dr. Woo Young Chang, along with general dentists Dr. Jenny Kye and Dr. Luz Lopez Driscoll, bring decades of combined experience in preventive, restorative, cosmetic, and complex rehabilitative dentistry. Using advanced digital technology, we offer comprehensive services including full mouth rehabilitation, implant restoration, Invisalign®, crowns, bridges, veneers, and routine cleanings and exams. We take time to listen to your concerns and our multilingual team speaks Spanish, Korean, and Finnish also. Please visit our website to see how we can help you.

SPECIALIZATION

General dentistry, Invisalign®-certified care, full-mouth rehabilitation, laser surgery, cosmetic and preventive dentistry.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Invisalign® Gold Provider, American College of Prosthodontics, International Congress of Oral Implantologists, American Dental Associations, American General Dentistry, DC Dental Society

919 18th Street NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20006
crkdental.com

Taylor Cole Ball, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

WYNGATE DENTAL OF BETHESDA

Honored as a *Washingtonian* Top Dentist, Dr. Taylor Cole Ball has established a standard of excellence at Wyngate Dental of Bethesda where clinical rigor meets a deeply personal touch. A Maryland native and Sidwell Friends alumna, she earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Maryland and completed a General Practice Residency at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, shaping a foundation rooted in scientific precision and refined clinical judgment.

Dr. Cole Ball believes that exceptional dentistry begins with active listening. This dialogue informs a comprehensive philosophy that integrates precise diagnosis and advanced technology with collaborative treatment planning. Whether providing preventive care, cosmetic enhancements, or complex restorative treatment, her goal remains steadfast: long-term health, optimal function, and results that look naturally beautiful.

The experience at Wyngate Dental is intentionally unique: appointments are thorough and unhurried, incorporating modern imaging and meaningful conversation. Patients are empowered to understand their oral health and make confident, informed decisions without pressure. As a business owner, wife, and mother of two, Dr. Cole Ball values efficiency without compromise, believing that dentistry should never feel transactional. Here, every patient is known by name, heard with care, and treated with the highest standard of excellence.

5648 Shields Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817
301.530.8008
wyngatedental.com
admin@wyngatedental.com



SPECIALIZATION

General, Restorative and Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®, Crown and Bridge, Porcelain Veneers, Implant Restoration

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist, *Bethesda Magazine* Top Dentist, American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry



Eugenia Prokopets, DDS, MSD

Top Dentist 2026

ESTHETIC PERIODONTAL & IMPLANT MICROSURGERY

Dr. Prokopets is a board certified periodontist with a boutique, patient-centered practice in Chevy Chase. She is the only Periodontist in the DMV area who performs microsurgery. The aim of microsurgery is to achieve a precise, minimally invasive and esthetic outcome. Microsurgical techniques promote the patient's comfort and long-term health. With a highly regarded concierge practice, Dr. Prokopets prides herself on individualized and patient-centered care. Whether the patient requires bone grafting, gum grafting, dental implants or a deep cleaning, microsurgery provides a more comfortable and non-invasive experience. Her commitment to advanced techniques and compassionate care ensures patients receive exceptional results with the highest level of comfort. Connect with Dr. Prokopets on Instagram: @prokopetsperio

SPECIALIZATION

Esthetic Periodontal and Implant Microsurgery; Microsurgical Gum Grafting; Microsurgical Dental Implants

AFFILIATIONS

American Board of Periodontology; American Academy of Periodontology; American Dental Association; DC Dental Society; Greater Washington Academy of Women Dentists

5550 Friendship Boulevard, Suite 330
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.941.0525
prokopetsperio.com

Angela Austin, DMD

Top Dentist 2026

ALEXANDRIA CHILDREN'S DENTISTRY AND LITTLE DENTAL STUDIO

Dr. Angela Austin has been named a *Washingtonian* Top Pediatric Dentist and is the owner of Alexandria Children's Dentistry and Little Dental Studio. She believes pediatric dentistry is a unique opportunity to shape a child's relationship with healthcare from a young age. As a mother of three, Dr. Angela understands the trust parents place in their child's provider and approaches every patient with the same care she gives her own children. She earned her dental degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and completed her pediatric residency at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC, where she served as Chief Resident. A Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, she is committed to continuing education and excellence in care. With the opening of Little Dental Studio, her third location, she created a space dedicated to infants, toddlers, young children, and patients with dental anxiety or complex feeding and airway concerns. Her approach emphasizes early intervention, education, and a calm, gentle first dental experience. She has a special interest in airway development, oral function, and tethered oral tissues, incorporating airway screening, frenectomy evaluation, and myofunctional awareness when appropriate. She believes oral health is closely connected to overall wellness and takes a comprehensive, whole-child approach to treatment focused on prevention, respect, and confidence-building experiences for every child.

Little Dental Studio: 703.495.3565
Alexandria Children's Dentistry
Del Ray | 703.341.4418
Landmark | 703.942.8404
littledentalstudio.com | lovekidsteeth.com



SPECIALIZATION
Board-Certified Pediatric Dentist, Orofacial Myologist, Laser Dentistry Provider, Airway and Frenectomy Specialist

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
Medium Business of the Year 2025: Alexandria Chamber of Commerce; *Washingtonian* Top Dentist; *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Dentist; *Virginia Living Magazine* Top Dentist; Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry



Shin Orthodontics

Top Dentists 2026

DEBRA AND RICHARD SHIN

At **Shin Orthodontics**, Drs. Debra and Richard Shin combine expertise with genuine care to create an orthodontic experience that families truly appreciate. Orthodontics focuses on aligning teeth, guiding jaws for harmonious facial growth, and creating healthy and confident, lasting smiles. We have created a warm and welcoming practice where children, teens, and adults feel comfortable. Whether guiding a child through Phase 1 treatment, helping a teen with braces, or providing adults with clear aligners, we design personalized plans for every stage. Located in the heart of Potomac at the Cabin John Village, we are honored to serve our Bethesda/Potomac community.

SPECIALIZATION
Invisalign®, Braces, Retainers

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
Debra Shin, DDS (UCLA), Cert MS (Colorado) ABO-Board Certified; Member of the American Association of Orthodontists

Richard Shin, DDS (Maryland), Cert (Vanderbilt) MS (Maryland), ABO-Board Certified, FRCD(C); Member of the American Association of Orthodontists

11325 Seven Locks Rd, Ste 256
Potomac, MD 20854 | 301.770.7770
shinorthodontics.com

Dr. Kamran Nikseresht

Top Dentist 2026

NIK FAMILY AND COSMETIC DENTISTRY



For nearly three decades, Dr. Kamran Nikseresht (Dr. Nik) has been recognized for delivering sophisticated, patient-centered dental care that blends clinical precision, advanced technology, and a highly experienced team. His professional distinctions include the Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry (FAGD) and the forthcoming Mastership in the Academy of General Dentistry (MAGD)—a prestigious designation earned by fewer than 2% of dentists nationwide. Through these accomplishments, along with his professional affiliations and continued dedication to the field, Dr. Nik has been consistently recognized and honored by his peers as a top doctor.

By integrating leading-edge technology with careful treatment planning, Dr. Nik provides precise, efficient, and long-lasting results tailored to each patient. His practice is supported by experienced dentists and surgical specialists, allowing patients to receive comprehensive care, from preventive and cosmetic dentistry to advanced restorative and surgical treatments, all under one roof.

Notably, some members of his caring and professional team have worked alongside Dr. Nik for more than 20 years, helping create a welcoming and trusted environment for patients. As a result, patients travel from across the country to see him, often continuing their care with the practice even after relocating. His reputation for excellence has also led many dentists and physicians to choose him as their own dental provider.

3901 Centerview Dr., Suite Q
Chantilly, VA 20151
703.961.0707
nikdentistry.com

SPECIALIZATION
Comprehensive care, CEREC® same-day crowns, laser treatments, dental implant services, smile makeovers, orthodontic care and complex full-mouth rehabilitations

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
ADA, NVDS, AGD, USDI, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine, Top Dentist by peers for *Washingtonian* and *Virginia Living* and *Northern Virginia Magazine's*, Best Dentist in Chantilly, Most Honored Dentist



Family Smile Dental Center

Top Dentists 2026

HAROLD ANIYA, DDS AND ERIKA ADACHI, DDS, MS

Doctors Harold Aniya and Erika Adachi have more than 25 years of experience providing comprehensive dental treatment. They completed the two-year Advanced Education in General Dentistry Postgraduate Program at the University of Maryland, where Dr. Adachi taught for 10 years and conducted dental material research. In their office, they offer personalized and conservative treatment in a friendly and caring environment. Both doctors are fluent in Spanish.

"We are always welcoming new patients and would love to have you as part of our dental family."

SPECIALIZATION
All areas of General Dentistry including Preventive, Restorative, Cosmetic Dentistry and Dental Implants

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
American Dental Association
Maryland State Dental Association
Southern Maryland Dental Association
Washingtonian Top Dentist 2019-2023

20501 Seneca Meadows Pkwy, #350
Germantown, MD 20876
301.515.9600
FamilySmileDentalCenter.com

Smile Design Studio of Bethesda

Top Dentists 2026

DR. TREVA WILLIS, DR. MARIA WRIGHT AND DR. MICHAEL WRIGHT

At Smile Design Studio of Bethesda, we redefine the dental experience by blending advanced technology, artistry, and truly personalized care. Our expert team—trained in General Dentistry and Prosthodontics at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry—brings decades of experience in cosmetic, restorative, and implant dentistry. We are committed to delivering precision, comfort, and results that look as natural as they feel. Our state-of-the-art practice is equipped with leading-edge digital dentistry, including 3D intraoral scanning, low-radiation digital X-rays, eco-friendly CBCT imaging, laser therapy, in-house 3D printing, and fully guided implant surgery. This technology allows us to diagnose with accuracy, plan with confidence, and provide efficient, minimally invasive treatments with exceptional outcomes.

Whether you need preventive care, smile makeovers, veneers, crowns, full-mouth reconstruction, or dental implants, we design customized solutions tailored to your goals and lifestyle. Your comfort is at the heart of everything we do. From our welcoming atmosphere to clear communication and gentle techniques, we prioritize a stress-free, supportive experience—especially for those with dental anxiety. At Smile Design Studio of Bethesda, you're not just a patient—you're a partner in achieving lifelong oral health, renewed confidence, and a smile that truly reflects your best self.

8201 Wisconsin Ave, Bethesda, MD | 301.907.8201
19620A Clubhouse Dr. Gaithersburg, MD | 301.926.1900
smiledesignstudioofbethesda.com



SPECIALIZATION

General Dentistry, Prosthodontics, Implant Dentistry, Full Mouth Rehabilitation, same-day smile make-over, TMJ, Botox, facial pain therapy, sleep apnea, and Top Invisalign® Provider

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Bethesda Magazine Top Doctor 2024, *Washingtonian* magazine Top Dentist 2023-2026, American Dental Association, American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics, American College of Prosthodontics, 2 United States patents, Speaker, USA Top Dentist



Dr. Michael Wright

Top Dentist 2026

THE DENTOURAGE

Dr. Wright, a Prosthodontist with over 20 years of experience and co-founder of Smile Design Studio of Bethesda, co-founded Dentourage in 2024. Dentourage is an innovative dental education and philanthropy platform built on educating, empowering, and inspiring through giving back. Through community support and partnerships with global leaders such as Nobel Biocare and Infinia Dental Lab, the organization provides complex, life-changing dental treatment to individuals who otherwise could not afford care. Dentourage also equips clinicians with the latest advancements in digital technology, implant dentistry, and comprehensive rehabilitation, elevating standards of care locally and nationally. Its mission extends beyond dentistry into service leadership.

SPECIALIZATION

Prosthodontics, All Digital Work-flow

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Governor Citation Award, Mayor Certification Award, PACE accreditation, USA Top Dentist: *Bethesda Magazine*, National Science Foundation Grant Awardee

8201 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.907.8201
Thedentourage.com



The Periodontal-Implant Institute

Top Dentist 2026

LILLIAN C. CARPIO, DDS, MS, PHD & WALEED ALKAKHAN, DDS, MSD, MA

Dr. Carpio and Dr. Alkakhan are Board-Certified Periodontists serving McLean, Virginia and the surrounding communities. Dr. Carpio is thrilled to introduce Dr. Alkakhan to the practice, who brings unique talents and expertise in the field of dental implants and cosmetic periodontal surgery. Dr. Carpio and Dr. Alkakhan share a passion for providing excellence in all aspects of periodontal and dental implant therapy to their patients, their strongest qualities are integrity, attention to detail, and compassion. Dr. Carpio is a former Faculty at Harvard School of Dental Medicine and has been in practice for over 36 years. She was voted Top Periodontist in *Washingtonian*, the *Northern Virginia* and *Arlington* magazines for several years.

SPECIALIZATION

Dental Implants, Peri-Implantitis, Gingival Recession, Periodontal Disease, Bone Grafting, Gummy Smiles, Cosmetic Regenerative Surgery, Laser Surgery

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

American Academy of Periodontology, American Board of Periodontology, Academy of Osseointegration, Virginia Society of Periodontists

1355 Beverly Road, Suite 210
McLean, VA 22101
703.288.3570
lilliancarpiodds.com



Marc P. Stanard, DDS, PC

Top Dentist 2026

PERIODONTICS AND DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY

I'm a periodontist. PERIO= Around the tooth, DONTIST= A person who deals with teeth; therefore, I'm a dentist who deals with the supporting apparatus or foundation of the tooth, that is, the bone and gum. Through proper examination, diagnosis, and treatment planning with a patient's needs in mind, I work to provide the most appropriate treatment to improve the health of your teeth, replace teeth if necessary, educate you regarding gum disease (bone loss) because it is chronic, and attempt to maintain your dentition and smile in a healthy state as long as possible. As I always say to patients, "I don't cure periodontal disease. My goal is to establish health and make your mouth boring. A boring mouth is a happy mouth!"

SPECIALIZATION

Diagnosis, Oral Hygiene Instruction, Deep Cleanings, Bite Adjustments, Bone Surgery, Bone Grafts, GTR, Gum Grafts, Frenectomies, Lip Repositioning, Splinting, Cosmetics, Implants, Crown Lengthenings, Biopsies, GBR, Ridge Augmentation, Sinus Lifts, Extractions, Peri-implantitis, Oral Sedation

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Top DDS, *Washingtonian*; Highly Rated Google/Yelp; AAP, AAID, AAO, AGD, ADA, DCDS, MSDA, SMDS, WSP

1350 Connecticut Avenue, NW
#305, Washington, DC 20036
202.887.5441 | **WDCPerioimplant.com**



Shane Costa, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

COSTA DENTISTRY

Costa Dentistry is an innovative, luxury and high-tech dental practice featuring specialty amenities and comfort menus for patients. Dr. Shane Costa has been serving the Northern Virginia region since 2007, now with two office locations in Ashburn and Great Falls. Our experienced team puts the well-being and care of the patient first. With access to Netflix, essential oils, neck pillows, fleece blankets and more, you will feel right at home during your visit. Both locations are newly renovated with a modern design and offer comprehensive care with iTero® digital scanning, GLO™ teeth whitening, Invisalign® and smile design. Trust Costa Dentistry to help you achieve your happiest, healthiest smile!

SPECIALIZATION

Family & Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®, Smile Design, Implant Restoration, Sleep Apnea, Oral Cancer, Bioclear

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Voted "Top Dentist" in *Washingtonian, Virginia Living,* and *Northern Virginia* magazines. Voted "Best Dentist" in *Posh Seven Magazine.*

10135 Colvin Run Road, Suite 101
Great Falls, VA | 703.757.0833
42395 Ryan Road, Suite 104
Ashburn, VA | 703.542.7000
costasmiles.com



Prestige Periodontics

Top Dentist 2026

KAREN JO, DDS, MS; DUANE BENNETT DDS, MSD; ARJUN SAGGU, DMD, MMSC

Why choose Prestige Periodontics?
Our board-certified, award-winning doctors offer ethical and minimally invasive treatment. We strive to be transparent with our expectations, while driving for the highest-level outcomes. Regardless of financial or insurance status, we strive to collaborate with our patients' dental teams to drive for success.

Educational Background:
Dr. Karen Jo – University of Maryland-College Park (Undergraduate), University of Maryland Baltimore School of Dentistry (DDS), University of Alabama-Birmingham (Periodontics & Implant Dentistry - MS)
Dr. Duane Bennett – University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (Undergraduate), University of Michigan School of Dentistry (DDS), Indiana University (Periodontics and Implant Dentistry - MSD)
Dr. Arjun Saggu – University of California-Los Angeles (Undergraduate), University of Pennsylvania (DMD), Harvard University (Periodontics and Implant Dentistry – MMSC)

SPECIALIZATION

What makes Prestige Periodontics different?
We strive to treat our patients like they are our own family members. This allows us to specialize in personalized patient care for each patient that enters our practice. Lastly, we value communication and seek for each patient to have a comprehensive understanding of their treatment plan including the scope of work and scope of financial investment.

ROCKVILLE OFFICE: 301.881.5040
SILVER SPRING OFFICE: 301.681.4812
BOWIE OFFICE: 240.245.3174



Dr. Namita Thapar-Dua

Top Dentist 2026

SENIOR SMILE

Dr. Namita Thapar-Dua is the Founder and CEO of SENIOR SMILE, a concierge mobile dental practice serving seniors throughout Maryland and Northern Virginia. Committed to preserving dignity, improving oral health access, and supporting families navigating complex medical needs, Dr. Thapar-Dua delivers dental services directly to patients in private homes, assisted living, and memory care communities. By removing transportation barriers and providing compassionate, high-quality care at the chair-side, she and her team enhance comfort and quality of life. Let Dr. Thapar-Dua and her staff come to you and continue her goal of 'Creating MILES OF SMILES' by taking care of your loved ones!

SPECIALIZATION

Mobile dentistry, geriatric care, memory care dentistry, preventive restorative and prosthodontic treatment

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist; Memory Care Certified; member ADA and MSDA; serving Maryland and Northern Virginia seniors.

20528 Boland Farm Road, Ste. 215
Germantown, MD 20876
301.875.7477
srsmile.com



Dr. Brent Frey

Top Dentist 2026

CHAMPION SMILES

Dr. Brent Frey and the Champion Smiles team are honored to be recognized by our colleagues as a 2026 *Washingtonian* Top Orthodontist! Dr. Frey is committed to consistently providing the highest level of care for children and adults. Regardless of age, severity, or complexity, orthodontic treatment should always be precise, detailed, and yield maximal functional and esthetic results without compromising oral health. Our modern and comfortable offices in Fort Washington, Upper Marlboro, and Hyattsville feature state of the art equipment and technology. The Champion Smiles mission is to provide patients with an orthodontic treatment experience that prioritizes professionalism and value.

SPECIALIZATION
Orthodontics during childhood development, traditional braces and clear aligners, interdisciplinary treatment including preparation for dental implants

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS
American Association of Orthodontists, National Dental Association, NDA top 40 under 40, *Washingtonian* Top Dentist

Hyattsville
Fort Washington
Upper Marlboro
smilechamps.com



Dr. Saba Lakhani, DDS, FAGD

Top Dentist 2026

BETHESDA CHEVY CHASE SMILES

Dr. Saba Lakhani provides comprehensive, patient-centered dental care in Bethesda, Maryland, blending clinical excellence with a calm, thoughtful approach. A graduate of Howard University College of Dentistry, she has proudly served the Bethesda Chevy Chase community since 2009. Dr. Lakhani earned her Fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry (FAGD) in 2022 and is committed to continuing education and modern techniques. She values long-term relationships with patients and strives to create a welcoming environment where individuals feel comfortable, heard, and confident in their smiles.

SPECIALIZATION
Comprehensive family care, restorative dentistry, Invisalign® treatment, Botox, Guided Biofilm Therapy, preventive care.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
American Dental Association (ADA); Academy of General Dentistry (AGD); Greater Washington Academy of Women Dentists (GWAWD); Capitol Academy of Clinical Dentistry (CACD)

Bethesda Chevy Chase Smiles
Bethesda, Maryland
301.652.5445
bccsmiles.com



Drs. Love & Miller, PC

Top Dentist 2026

FAMILY AND COSMETIC DENTISTRY

Drs. Love and Miller provide a family practice with special emphasis on healthy and beautiful smiles for adults and children. Both doctors graduated from the Medical College of Virginia and have been practicing together in Falls Church for over 25 years. We take time to listen to our patients so that we truly understand their needs. With emphasis on overall health, we offer services including composite restorations, metal-free crowns, implant restorations, veneers and other cosmetic procedures. Our oral hygiene program excels at understanding the vital relationship between oral health and other systems in the body. Drs. Love and Miller, along with our amazing team, greatly appreciate the community's trust and support.

SPECIALIZATION
ADA, Virginia Dental Association, Northern Virginia Dental Association (Dr. Love is Past President), AACD

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
Washingtonian Best Dentists; Best Dentist of Falls Church 2013–2024; *Virginia Living Magazine* Top Dentists and *Northern Virginia Magazine* Best Dentist, 2016–2024; Best of Falls Church 2023; *Washingtonian* Hall of Fame; *Virginia Living* and *Northern Virginia,* 2024

450 W. Broad Street, Suite 440
Falls Church, VA 22046
703.241.2911 | **loveandmiller.com**



Cristian Alcantara, DDS, FAGD

Top Dentist 2026

SPRINGFIELD DENTISTRY

At Springfield Dentistry, our caring and compassionate team is dedicated to providing a welcoming, friendly atmosphere for their patients. For the past 12 years, Dr. Cristian Alcantara, has been providing quality care and treatment for patients in the DMV area. His extensive training and experience along with the latest technology in his office help his passion for providing each patient with the best, most gentle dental experience possible. Dr. Alcantara is a Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry.

SPECIALIZATION

- General/Family Dentistry
- Veneers & Smile Makeover
- Dental Implants
- Sleep Apnea
- Invisalign® & Braces
- Full Mouth Reconstruction

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Academy of General Dentistry; American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry; American Orthodontic Society

6201 Old Keene Mill Ct, Springfield, VA
703.569.6644
springfieldvadental.com



Peter K. Cocolis, Jr, DMD

Top Dentist 2026

PETER K. COCOLIS, JR, DMD & ASSOCIATES

With 30 years of experience, Dr. Peter K. Cocolis, Jr. delivers comprehensive dental care in a warm and compassionate setting. His practice specializes in general, restorative, and cosmetic dentistry, with particular expertise in implant and sedation dentistry. Dr. Cocolis is committed to offering exceptional care, treating every patient with respect, courtesy, and compassion. A proud Springfield native, Dr. Cocolis is a Master of the Academy of General Dentistry, a Fellow of the Misch Implant Institute, and a Diplomate of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists. He is also dedicated to staying at the forefront of dental innovation through ongoing education.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Education: Bachelor of Science, Chemistry: The College of William and Mary 1990;

Doctor of Dental Medicine: University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine 1994;

General Practice Residency: University of Virginia 1994-1996

5803 Rolling Road, Suite 211
Springfield, VA 22152
703.912.3800
smiles4va.com



Philip A. Gentry, DDS, FAGD; Jeanette Coutin-Gentry, DDS; Lizz M. Gentry, DDS

Caring Dentists

Top Dentists 2026

WASHINGTONIAN TOP DENTIST HALL OF FAME

Celebrating 37 years of creating beautiful healthy smiles. Experience, attention to detail, and teaching future generations of dentists are what Caring Dentists takes great pride in. Dr. Gentry is a Fellow of The Academy of General Dentistry and teaches in the Department of Comprehensive Dentistry at The University of Maryland Dental School. Dr. Coutin and Dr. Lizz are Invisalign® Preferred Providers and provide amazing restorative and cosmetic dental care and Botox for treatment of clenching, grinding and TMD jaw pain. As a patient, you can trust you will be receiving excellent care from experienced, well-respected, and skilled dentists. We are a true local family owned and run dental practice providing experienced, honest, quality care.

SPECIALIZATION

General Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Fellow, Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Assoc, Virginia Dental Assoc, Northern Virginia Dental Society, Maryland Dental Assoc, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, American Academy of Facial Esthetics; Top Dentist: *Washingtonian*, *Arlington, Northern Virginia, Virginia Living* magazines; *Washingtonian* Top Dentist Hall of Fame Award

1831 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201
703.522.7733 | **caringdentists.com**



Atiyeh Emam, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

COSMETIC AND FAMILY DENTISTRY

Washingtonian Top Dentist, Dr. Emam, provides her patients the highest quality comprehensive dental care. The dentistry that Dr. Emam practices is the art of designing, enhancing and protecting a healthy smile by utilizing the state-of-the-art technology, techniques and materials available today. Patients come from hundreds of miles away to receive the top tier care from Dr. Emam. Your beautiful smiles are the best reward for our dedication to the work we love. Dr. Emam and her team focus on exceptional and personable care with excellent results so you can have your happiest, picture-perfect smile for the moments that you'll treasure for the rest of your life.

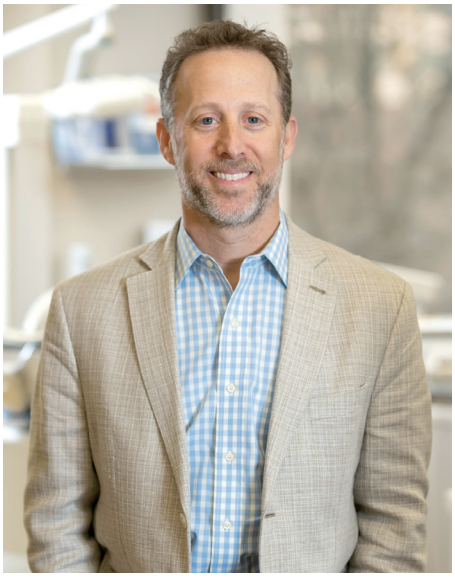
SPECIALIZATION

Cosmetic and Restorative Dentistry, Implants, Full Mouth Restorations, Restoring Congenitally Missing and Misshapen teeth, and Dentures

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Top Dentist, *Washingtonian*
Top Dentist, *Virginia Living*
American Dental Association
Virginia Dental Association
Greater Loudoun Study Club

44135 Woodridge Parkway, Suite 280
Lansdowne, VA 20176
703.858.9200
lansdownedental.com



Jason A. Cohen, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

GENERAL, COSMETIC & IMPLANT DENTISTRY

What sets Dr. Jason A. Cohen's Dental Practice apart from others is that at his office they are committed to ***Treating Your Family Like Family.*** "We are very careful to treat your family like we would treat our own. We make sure everyone feels comfortable in our office." In addition to a comprehensive dental hygiene program and oral cancer screenings, Dr. Cohen also provides General Dentistry, Complex Prosthetics, including porcelain crowns and veneers, dental implant restorations and Invisalign®. "I have always been detail-oriented and maintained technical excellence within my practice. We are constantly taking courses to stay current on all the latest materials and techniques."

SPECIALIZATION

General, Restorative, Implant & Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association, MD State Dental Association, DC Dental Society and Southern MD Dental Society

5530 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 560
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.656.1201
cosmeticdds.com



Shivani Maharaja, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

VIENNA COSMETIC & FAMILY DENTISTRY

A systematic approach combined with artistry and personal connection is the recipe which defines Dr. Maharaja's work. Each aesthetic detail is taken into consideration when creating the perfect, healthy smile. The patient's needs must not only be met, but expectations and experience exceeded. The technology her office utilizes, and her continuing education, allows her to perform seamless treatment of very complex cases. Dr. Maharaja leads a team of professionals to provide full service care catered to an individual's specific needs. Her office specializes in cosmetic smile makeovers, full mouth rehabilitation, pinhole gum grafting, single tooth implants, and computer-guided full arch implant surgeries and prosthetics.

SPECIALIZATION

Gum Recession, Veneers, Invisalign®, Dental Implants, Sleep Apnea, Full-Mouth Reconstruction

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist, 2019–2026. *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Dentist, 2017–2025, *DC Modern Luxury* and *Virginia Living Magazine* Top Dentist, 2020–2025.

2563 Chain Bridge Road
Vienna, VA 22181 | 703.281.0902
viennacfd.com



Dr. Thornton & Dr. Van der Linden

Top Dentists 2026

THORNTON DENTAL ASSOCIATES

Our office combines advanced digital technology with personalized care to deliver precise diagnoses and exceptional results. From routine exams to complex implant restorations, we provide comprehensive treatment with a strong focus on cosmetic excellence, including Invisalign®, esthetic bonding, and veneers. Using 3D digital scanning, patients can preview their new smile chairside before committing to treatment. Our experienced team creates a welcoming, comfortable environment, and as preferred providers with multiple insurance plans, we help patients maximize their benefits with ease.

SPECIALIZATION

Preventative, restorative and cosmetic dentistry. Invisalign® provider.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentists, *Consumers' Checkbook*, Members of ADA, DC Dental Society, Renaissance Study Club, Invisalign® Gold Plus Provider, American Academy of Clear Aligners

818 18th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
202.293.5805
818dcdental.com



Gibberman Dental

Top Dentist 2026

COSMETIC, IMPLANT, AND COMPREHENSIVE DENTISTRY

For more than 40 years, Gibberman Dental has cared for multiple generations of families, with a reputation for excellence in cosmetic, implant, and comprehensive dentistry. Led by Dr. Lauren Gibberman, the practice builds on the strong foundation established by her father Dr. Paul Gibberman, while advancing modern clinical techniques. Patients value their thoughtful, individualized approach and commitment to lasting oral health. The doctors have been recognized as Top Dentists in *Washingtonian, Virginia Living*, and other respected publications. Together with their accomplished associates Drs. Salumbides, Shahkarami and Young, Gibberman Dental continues its proud tradition of trusted, relationship-based care for future generations of patients.

SPECIALIZATION

Smile design, Invisalign®, General and Family Dentistry, Implant Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Top Dentists: *Washingtonian* 2021, 2023, 2025, *Virginia Living* 2019-2025, *Arlington Magazine* 2025, *Northern Virginia Magazine* 2025, Fellow of the Pierre Fauchard Academy, Member of the Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission

6303 Little River Turnpike, Suite 205
Alexandria, VA 22312 | 703.823.6616
gibbermandental.com



Katie Davis, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

BOARD CERTIFIED PEDIATRIC DENTIST

Dr. Katie's passion for pediatric dentistry stems from her own experiences as a patient and appreciation for a compassionate dental team. Her journey in dentistry began with a BS in Biochemistry from Loyola Marymount University, followed by her DDS from UCLA School of Dentistry. Dr. Katie continued her training at UCLA completing her residency program in pediatric dentistry, where she honed her skills in caring for young patients. She loves building strong relationships with both patients and families and offering a safe, welcoming experience at Metropolitan Pediatric Dentistry. Dr. Katie and her team are committed to providing families with the highest standard of pediatric dental care.

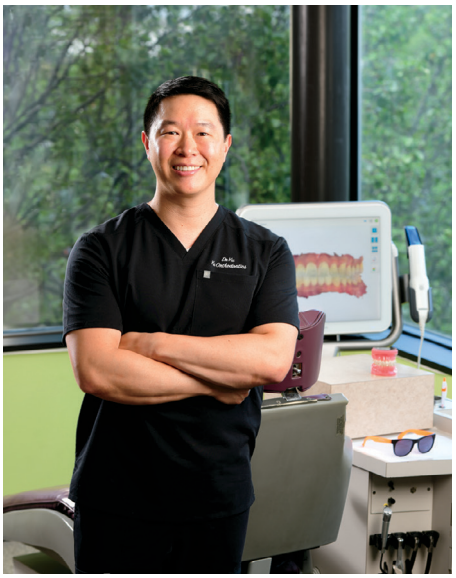
SPECIALIZATION

Dr. Katie and her team specialize in creating positive experiences for kids and parents.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American Dental Association

5530 Wisconsin Ave #1230
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.945.8131
MetroPediatricDentistry.com



Robert Yu, DDS, MS

Top Dentist 2026

YU ORTHODONTICS

Be the Best Version of You!

Located in the North Potomac/Gaithersburg area, Yu Orthodontics combines cutting-edge technology with personalized care to transform smiles for kids, teens, and adults. Led by board-certified orthodontist Dr. Robert Yu, an artist as well as a clinician, the practice offers advanced treatment options like Invisalign®, Spark™ clear aligners, and self-ligating braces. Patients praise the warm, professional team and the comfortable, modern environment. Whether you are seeking a subtle enhancement or a full transformation, Yu Orthodontics delivers affordable expert care with an artistic touch. Book your free consultation today and discover why *Washingtonian* readers trust their smiles to Dr. Yu.

SPECIALIZATION

Invisalign®, Spark™ Aligners, Self-ligating Braces, Bite correction, Cosmetic tissue shaping, Child and Adolescent Growth and Development, Adult Orthodontics, Accelerated treatment times

AFFILIATIONS

American Dental Association; Maryland State Dental Association; American Association of Orthodontics; Diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics; University of Maryland Alumni

814 W. Diamond Ave, Suite 300
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301.948.7660 | **dryuorthodontics.com**



Drs. Christopher & Favagehi

Drs. Christopher & Favagehi

Top Dentists 2026

FALLS CHURCH PERIODONTICS & DENTAL IMPLANT SURGERY

We're honored to be included in the *Washingtonian* Top Dentist Hall of Fame. About 30 Washington DC area periodontists were voted as TOP DENTIST in the independent survey conducted by the *Washingtonian*. Only a handful made it, however, to the Hall of Fame category which is reserved for those who have been consistently voted as TOP DENTIST in the past 15 years. We thank our colleagues for this recognition.

SPECIALIZATION

Periodontics and Dental Implant Surgery

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

- Diplomate- American Board of Periodontology
- Fellow- Academy of Osseointegration (implants)

313 Park Avenue, Suite 103
Falls Church, VA 22046
703.237.3700
Drperio.com



Shawna Hawk, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

COSMETIC, FAMILY AND RESTORATIVE DENTISTRY

Dr. Hawk has been caring for patients in the Washington Metropolitan area for over 30 years. A graduate of Georgetown School of Dentistry, she brings experience and compassion to every patient she treats. Dr. Hawk is very passionate about Dentistry and is committed to lifelong learning. She continually pursues advanced education to stay current with the latest techniques, products and procedures. This dedication allows her to provide thoughtful, comprehensive care tailored to each individual's needs and goals. She values the confidence her patients place in her and she is devoted to creating a comfortable, environment where patients feel heard, cared for and confident in their smiles.

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive, Restorative, Cosmetic, and Family Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

American Dental Association
DC Dental Society
Spear Education
Checkbook Magazine

4910 Massachusetts Ave. NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20016
202.362.7726
shawnalhawkdds.com



Chelsea Murphy, DMD

Top Dentist 2026

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS ORTHODONTICS

When it comes to creating healthy, beautiful smiles for people of all ages, Dr. Chelsea Murphy and her team at Friendship Heights Orthodontics are the experts. Dr. Murphy's approach is warm, collaborative, and creative. She works with her patients to individualize treatment so that it meets their specific goals and fits their busy lives. She and her team are ready to help, whether it's a minor tweak, or full smile transformation. The office uses the latest technology to enhance every patient's experience - digital scans and 3D printers mean more precise records with no messy impressions. Dr. Murphy offers complimentary consultations and works with all major insurance providers, for a seamless start to anyone's smile journey.

SPECIALIZATION

Orthodontic treatment for children and adults, Invisalign®, Braces, Orthognathic Surgery

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Invisalign® Top 1% providers worldwide, American Association of Orthodontists

5301 Wisconsin Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20015
202.686.5100
FriendshipHeightsOrtho.com



Greg L. LaVecchia, DMD, PC

Top Dentist 2026

GENERAL, COSMETIC, AND IMPLANT DENTISTRY

The LaVecchia family has a long legacy of dentistry in Arlington. Dr. Greg L. LaVecchia was born and raised in the Northern Virginia area. He completed his undergraduate degree at Georgetown University before graduating from Temple University School of Dentistry. Dr. LaVecchia joined his father's practice in 2002 and then purchased the practice which originally opened in Arlington over 50 years ago. The practice mission is centered around the belief that exceptional and comprehensive dental care happens when oldfashioned service meets modern technology. Dr. LaVecchia and his team are dedicated to providing the best comprehensive dental care. They are committed to continuing education and advanced training in their field.

SPECIALIZATION

Cosmetic Dentistry, General Dentistry, Dental Implants, TMJ, Invisalign®

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

American Dental Association; Top Dentist in *Washingtonian, Northern Virginia Magazine, Arlington Magazine* and *Virginia Living Magazine*; Angie's List Super Service Award

1515 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 103
Arlington, VA 22209
703.528.3336
rosslyndentist.com



Charlie Coulter, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Dr. Charlie, a native Washingtonian, began practicing dentistry in 2005. A specialist in his field, Dr. Charlie offers comprehensive understanding of pediatric dentistry as well as the compassion needed to put his patients at ease. He received his bachelor's degree in neurophysiology and biology from the University of Maryland, College Park and completed his pediatric residency at the University of Maryland Baltimore College of Dentistry. Dr. Charlie co-founded D4C Dental Brands, the largest pediatric dental support organization in the country and served as Chief Dental Officer from 2009–2019. He stepped away as CDO to focus on what is most important to him—time with his family and his practice.

SPECIALIZATION

Dr. Charlie and his team specialize in high quality care, helping children and parents feel at ease.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Baltimore Humanitarian Award recipient, D4C Dental Brands Co-founder, D4C Cares Charitable Foundation Board Member, DC Dental Society Board Member

5225 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, #604
Washington, DC 20015
202.966.0045
PediatricDentalDC.com



Dr. Nima Raoufinia & Dr. Mitra Davaninejad

Top Dentists 2026

Husband and wife team with a gentle touch to make you comfortable and relaxed. Drs. Raoufinia & Davaninejad combine art, science and technology to provide their patients with the highest-quality care. Through patient education and dialogue their goal is to build a relationship with you, to help you achieve your best smile.

Dr. Raoufinia completed his undergraduate studies at George Mason University and studied Dentistry at Howard University.

Dr. Davaninejad completed her undergraduate studies at University of Maryland, Master's at John Hopkins and studied Dentistry at University of Maryland.

SPECIALIZATION

Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®, Same Day Crowns, Bruxism & Sleep Appliances, Zoom Whitening

AFFILIATIONS

ADA

Lumen Dental of Tyson's Corner
703.219.8575
8300 Greensboro Drive, 160 A
Tysons, VA 22102
LumenDentalTysonsCorner.com

Merrifield Dental Associates
703.208.2244
3025 Hamaker Court, Suite 420
Fairfax, VA 22031
MerrifieldDentalAssociates.com



Dr. Nabeel Khan

Top Dentist 2026

BURKE DENTAL CENTER

Dr. Nabeel Khan is an award-winning dentist at Burke Dental Center in Burke, VA where he is recognized for clinical excellence and patient-centered care. Along with his experienced team, he focuses on what matters most to patients: feeling heard, building trust, receiving exceptional treatment, and staying comfortable. Dr. Khan has been an established part of the Northern Virginia community for over 20 years and has regularly volunteered to help underserved individuals at the Northern Virginia Dental Clinic. Guided by a hospitality-driven philosophy, he emphasizes personal connection, value-driven treatment, and state-of-the-art technology. Welcome to your new dental home, where you'll become a patient for life!

SPECIALIZATION

DDS-Medical College of VA, 2004; same-day crowns/bridges/veneers, Invisalign, cosmetic dentistry, full mouth reconstruction

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Top Dentist-*Washingtonian*, *NoVA Magazine*, Yelp, *VA Living Magazine*, Nextdoor, Guide to America; Ellen Flanagan Volunteer Service Award

6505 Sydenstricker Rd, Suite A
Burke, VA 22015
703.440.5075
Burkedentalcenter.com



Drs. Naimi, Yaghmai, Shihabi, Ansari

Top Dentists 2026

NORTHERN VIRGINIA ORAL, MAXILLOFACIAL & IMPLANT SURGERY

Drs. Naimi, Yaghmai, Shihabi, and Ansari are all board-certified oral and maxillofacial surgeons. They are highly trained in various aspects of the specialty and routinely perform procedures in both office and hospital settings to manage all types of oral and facial disorders. Using the latest technology and cutting-edge techniques has always been part of the practice's DNA. A special emphasis of the practice is dental implants and the immediate replacement of missing teeth under the comfort of general anesthesia. The practice has been serving the Northern Virginia community for the past thirty years.

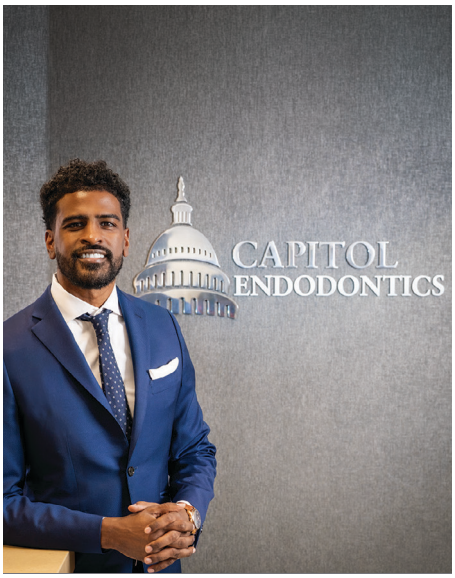
SPECIALIZATION

Dental implants & bone grafting, wisdom teeth extractions, general anesthesia, facial trauma and cosmetic procedures.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery diplomats and members of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons.

5206 Lyngate Court, Burke, VA 22015
2807 Duke St, Alexandria, VA 22314
11490 Commerce Park Drive
Suite 100, Reston, VA 20191
703.425.5010 | **novaoms.com**



Dr. Binait Kabir

Top Dentist 2026

CAPITOL ENDODONTICS

Dr. Binait Kabir is a distinguished endodontist in Washington, DC, recognized by both patients and referring dentists for clinical precision, sound judgment, and exceptional outcomes. Raised in the DMV, Dr. Kabir is proud to serve the community that shaped him. He specializes in advanced root canal therapy and microsurgical endodontics, utilizing state-of-the-art technology to manage complex cases with confidence. After completing his dental degree and specialty training in endodontics at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, Dr. Kabir has built a reputation as a trusted partner and care provider. His approach to preserving natural teeth is rooted in preventing the health effects that cascade far beyond the mouth.

SPECIALIZATION

Specialist in saving natural teeth through precise root canal therapy, microsurgery, and state of the art technology.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Active member of the American Association of Endodontists, College of Diplomates of the American Board of Endodontics, ADA, DC Dental Society.

1234 19th Street, NW Suite 502
Washington, DC 20036
202.822.0732 | **capendo.com**



Laudan Izadi, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

DUPONT SMILES FAMILY AND COSMETIC DENTISTRY

Dr. Laudan Izadi was born and raised in Silver Spring and has proudly served the Washington metropolitan area for over 18 years. A University of Maryland Dental School graduate, Dr. Izadi is dedicated to providing exceptional dental care that is both highly personalized and thoughtfully delivered with a gentle, compassionate approach. Dr. Izadi believes that outstanding dentistry begins with truly understanding each patient. She takes the time to build meaningful relationships, offering tailored treatment in a warm, welcoming environment designed to foster comfort and trust. By combining the latest advancements in dental technology with a conservative, patient-centered philosophy, she ensures care that is precise, effective, and mindful of long-term oral health.

SPECIALIZATION

Family, Cosmetic Dentistry, Invisalign®

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist 2026, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, District of Columbia Dental Society

1325 18th St NW #102
Washington, DC 20036
202.659.9494
dupontsmilesdentistry.com



Endodontic Excellence

Top Dentists 2026

DR. ALAN LEE AND DR. STEVEN KIM

At Endodontic Excellence, our mission is clear: deliver the best possible patient experience with the highest quality of care. Led by Dr. Alan Lee and Dr. Steven Kim, board-certified endodontists with advanced training from Columbia University and Marquette University, we specialize in comfortable, technology-driven endodontic treatment. Our expertise includes GentleWave, laser-enhanced root canal therapy, and CGF-supported microsurgery, each designed to optimize precision, safety, and long-term outcomes. With a strong focus on compassion, innovation, and patient comfort, our doctors and staff work together as one team to provide seamless care. Proudly serving Northern Virginia from Reston to Annandale, our team is ready to provide advanced, patient-centered endodontic care when it matters most.

SPECIALIZATION

Apicoectomy, retreatment, and root canal therapy using GentleWave®, Laser, CBCT, and microscope.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Diplomates of the American Board of Endodontics, Top Dentists by *Washingtonian* and *Virginia Living*

11800 Sunrise Valley Dr, Suite 250
Reston, VA 20191 | 703.429.9926
info@endoreston.com
7010 Little River Turnpike, Suite 450
Annandale, VA 22003 | 703.650.5700
info@endoannandale.com
EndodonticExcellence.com



Lara Minahan, DDS, MS

Top Dentist 2026

MINAHAN ORTHODONTICS

This practice is truly grateful for this honor and all collaborations with esteemed peers and dear clients throughout the years.

Wishing for PEACE ACROSS THIS NATION and AROUND THE WORLD.

SPECIALIZATION

Orthodontics for Adults, Teens and Children

DESIGNATIONS

Delegate, American Association of Orthodontics

Past-Chairman of the Council on Orthodontic Practice, American Association of Orthodontists

Past-President, Maryland State Society of Orthodontists

3423 Olney-Laytonsville Rd, Suite 3A
Olney, MD 20832 | 301.260.2030
MinahanOrthodontics.com



John Savukinas, DDS, FAGD

Top Dentist 2026

PERSONALIZED CARE GIVING YOU YOUR BEST SMILE

John Savukinas has vast experience in both clinical and academic dentistry. He served as a faculty member at The University of Maryland School of Dentistry for 25 years. As a longtime fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry and International Congress of Oral Implantologists. Dr. Savukinas engages in humanitarian dental care in Thailand (2008-2019) Jenkins, KY (2021-23) and Antigua, Guatemela (2024-26). Named a top-rated practitioner by *Washington Consumers' Checkbook*. He also consistently earned "Top Dentist" recognition from *Washingtonian* and *Bethesda Magazines* and has almost 200 5-star patient reviews. Our iTero digital practice uses advanced intraoral scanners delivering predictable visual outcomes. Sharika our PPO insurance expert, helps patients keep cost at a minimum.

SPECIALIZATION

Restorative Dentistry, Implant Reconstruction, Cosmetic Dentistry, TMJ, Invisalign®, Comprehensive Dentistry

AFFILIATIONS

Dr. Savukinas has been participating in humanitarian work in Thailand since 2008 with Smiles on Wings and through Global Dental Relief, he has volunteered in Jenkins, Kentucky 2021-2022.

14812 Physicians Lane, Suite 262
Rockville, MD 20850 | 301.738.1155
johnddsdentist@facebook.com
johnddsdentist1@instagram.com
JohnSavukinasDDS.com



EJL Dental

Top Dentists 2026

DRS. ENSOR, JOHNSON AND LEWIS

The practice of Drs. Ensor, Johnson, and Lewis proudly provides exceptional dental and orthodontic care to families throughout the Greater Washington, DC area. Their experienced team offers personalized treatment for patients of all ages in one convenient location. Pediatric dentists Drs. Lauren Lewis, Shailja Ensor, and Charmy Patel create positive, gentle experiences focused on preventive and restorative care. Orthodontist Dr. Timothy Johnson crafts confident smiles for children and adults using braces and Invisalign. Drs. Jennifer Matelis and Katie Staub deliver comprehensive adult dental services, including crowns, veneers, whitening, and sleep apnea appliances. The EJL team is dedicated to compassionate, expert care.

SPECIALIZATION

Pediatric Dentistry, General Dentistry, Orthodontics

Services include:

- Preventative Care for Children & Adults
- Cosmetic Treatment including Teeth Whitening, Dental Crowns, and Veneers
- Orthodontic Care including Invisalign®
- Sleep Apnea Appliances

11810 Parklawn Drive, Suite 101
Rockville, MD 20852 | 301.881.6170
ejldental.com



Dr. Christine M. Reardon

Top Dentist 2026

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

For over 20 years, Dr. Christine Reardon has provided compassionate pediatric dental care in Northern Virginia. She specializes in creating a fun, calming, environment--complete with "Big Boy" the puffer fish--to ease the anxiety of young patients and parents alike. Dr. Reardon finds deep fulfillment in mentoring children from their first visit through adulthood, even welcoming second-generation families. Highly trained in special needs dentistry, she also volunteers her expertise in underserved communities. Dr. Reardon earned her B.S. from Fairfield University and her D.M.D from the University of Connecticut. She completed pediatric training at Children's National Medical Center. Outside the clinic, she enjoys life with her husband and three children.

SPECIALIZATION

Pediatric Dentist

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

- *Washingtonian* Top Dentist Since 2006
- Member ADA
- Member of AAPD
- Member of Northern VA Dental Society
- Member of Southeastern Society Pediatric Dentist

3565 Langston Blvd, Suite A,
Arlington, VA 22207
703.579.0367
drreardon.com



Dr. Navneet Dhaliwal

Top Dentist 2026

PRISTINE SMILES

Dr. Navneet Dhaliwal earned her undergraduate degree from University of California, Los Angeles and her DDS from New York University College of Dentistry in 2014, followed by an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) residency at New York Lutheran Hospital. Since purchasing her Rockville practice in 2018, she has created a modern, patient-focused office recognized for exceptional care, cleanliness, and advanced technology. Named a Top Dentist every year since 2022, Dr. Dhaliwal specializes in full-mouth rehabilitation, Invisalign®, surgical extractions, and smile design, helping patients achieve healthy, functional, and confident smiles.

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive restorative dentistry, full-mouth rehabilitation, Invisalign®, surgical extractions, aesthetic smile design.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentist - present; Top Doctor 2022–2025; Lutheran-trained AEGD; Spear trained and member, Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association, Chinese American Dental Association.

11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 1013
Rockville, MD 20852 | 301.231.9100
pristinesmilesmd.com



Ashley Fagan, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

LA LUXE DENTAL

Dr. Ashley Fagan provides a comfort-first dental experience at La Luxe Dental in Washington, DC. Known for a calm, spa-like environment and options like oral sedation and nitrous oxide, Dr. Fagan helps anxious patients feel at ease. She offers comprehensive care including dental implants, orthodontic clear aligners, crowns, fillings, and emergency dentistry. Dr. Fagan, a second-generation dentist, earned her DDS from the University of Maryland and is dedicated to helping patients feel confident in their smile and creating a positive dental experience.

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive Dentistry, General Dentistry, Invisalign®, Implant Dentistry, Anxiety-Free Dentistry, Cosmetic Dentistry

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

DC Magazine's 2025 Health & Beauty Expert, Best Dentist, American Dental Assoc., Academy of General Dentistry, DC Dental Society

1050 First Street NE, Suite 101
Washington, DC 20002
IG & FB @laluxedental | 202.918.1204
laluxedentalwashingtondc.com



Karen Benitez, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

CHEVY CHASE PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

We welcome you with palpable vibrancy because we love what we do! Our office design is inviting with serene calmness, transitioning to pops of color. The kids' nook, interactive wall-toys, costume sunglasses, toy-wall and movies bring your littles closer to comfort. "These decisions help kids gain confidence", says Dr. Karen.
Our airway practice works collaboratively in a multi-disciplinary manner to support our patients from infancy as achieving ideal skeletal and oral posture helps set a "face-forward" growth trajectory. As an Airway-Focused Pediatric Dentist, Dr. Karen provides newborn, toddler and children's functional tongue-tie releases to optimize growth of the facial skeleton.

SPECIALIZATION

Our specialty includes preventive care from infancy, cavity management, as well as growth and development.

DESIGNATIONS and AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry: Board-Certified, Maryland Pediatric Dental Society, Alpha OmegaDentistry; Alpha Omega

8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 650
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301.272.1246
chevychasekids.dentist



Sheila M. Samaddar, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

SOUTH CAPITOL SMILE CENTER

A third-generation doctor on both sides of her family, Dr. Samaddar started out in her mother's dental office at a young age. She opened the South Capitol Smile Center in 2008 and emphasizes minimally invasive, comprehensive and esthetic dentistry using advanced technology. Internationally recognized and published by Invisalign for top case results, in addition, her cosmetic dentistry can be seen on Capitol Hill and beyond. Chosen by her peers to lead in the Academy of General Dentistry, she serves as DC's President and as a National Spokesperson. She is proud to have developed a bi-annual service program in Haiti, with which she volunteers with the humanitarian special operations group, ArchAngel Airborne.

SPECIALIZATION

Top Invisalign® Provider / Speaker, Smile Design & Makeovers, Comprehensive, Cosmetic, Esthetic & Minimally Invasive Family Dentistry

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Internationally recognized by Invisalign® for Case results 2017-26; only DMV GP Doctor case published by Invisalign® and the American Academy of Clear Aligners; Academy of General Dentistry (DC President, National Spokesperson); ADA

1313 South Capitol Street, SW
Washington, DC 20003 | 202.488.1313
southcapitolsmilecenter.com



Ann N. Hebda, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

COMPLETE HEALTH DENTISTRY

Dr. Ann N. Hebda and her team at Complete Health Dentistry in Ashburn, Virginia are dedicated to providing comprehensive, patient-centered care. With a focus on the vital connection between oral health and overall health, Dr. Hebda offers a unique approach that goes beyond traditional dentistry. Her practice utilizes advanced technology and evidence-based techniques to ensure every patient achieves a healthy, beautiful smile while supporting their long-term systemic health. Whether you are seeking restorative treatments, cosmetic enhancements, or routine preventative care, Dr. Hebda provides a welcoming environment tailored to your individual needs. Experience excellence in dentistry where your complete health is always the first priority.

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive family dentistry, cosmetic veneers, restorative treatments, Invisalign®, and a focus on the oral-systemic health connection.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Named a 2026 *Washingtonian* Top Dentist and re-nominated for the "America's Best Dentists" 2026 directory. A member of the ADA, VDA, NVDS, GLSC, and the AAFE.

20600 Gordon Park Square, Suite 190
Ashburn, VA 20147 | 703.723.9788
drannhebda@gmail.com
drannhebda.com



Eric Armakan, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

BOARD CERTIFIED PEDIATRIC DENTIST

Dr. Eric is an expert at treating patients as young as a few days old through adulthood. He is a laser-certified provider specializing in the release of tethered oral tissues (tongue and lip ties). He earned his Pediatric Certificate from Albert Einstein College of Medicine & Montefiore Medical Center, his DDS from Howard University, and a BS in Biology from the University of Maryland, College Park. He is a leader in the pediatric dental industry, serving on boards and as a mentor. Dr. Eric believes in a conservative approach to care and works closely with a team of healthcare professionals to ensure the best outcomes.

SPECIALIZATION

Dr. Eric and his team specialize in compassionate and comprehensive dental care for children of all ages.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; Academy of Laser Dentistry; International Affiliation of Tongue-Tie Professionals; Ambassador of The Breathe Institute; TUFTS Pediatric Sleep Medicine Residency Graduate

9812 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD 20854
301.250.1483
Dentistry4ChildrenMD.com



Diane Pham, DMD

Top Dentist 2026

CAPITAL ESTHETICS AND FAMILY DENTISTRY

At Capital Esthetics and Family Dentistry, Dr. Diane Pham and her team create beautiful smiles in a welcoming environment for patients. Dr. Pham has taken hundreds of hours of continuing education credits to stay current in the latest procedures to ensure the best care for her patients.

At the boutique practice, which focuses on family dentistry and wellness, Dr. Pham creates customized treatments in a spa like environment designed for patient comfort and comprehensive care. Services include smile makeovers, bondings, porcelain veneers, crowns, implant restorations, adult orthodontics, fillings and annual routine visits.

SPECIALIZATION

Comprehensive, restorative dentistry Cosmetic Dentistry, Family Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Selected as top dentist in *Washingtonian* 2021, 2023, 2025, *Northern Virginia Magazine* 2022-2024, *Virginia Living Magazine* 2021, 2022, 2024 and *Arlington Magazine* 2024, member of American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, Kois Center graduate.

133 Maple Avenue E, #204
Vienna, VA 22180
703.255.0040 | **capitalesthetics.com**



DC Endodontics Specialists

Top Dentist 2026

DR. NAGHMEH (NINA) LATIFI

Dr. Latifi is a board-certified Endodontist, using the most scientifically proven advanced materials, techniques, and technology. Her aim is to provide you with the most effective treatment, pain management, and highest quality of care in a comfortable, stress-free environment. In addition to her active participation in many educational and scientific organizations, she currently maintains a private practice in DC limited to endodontics, which has provided specialty care for over 40 years. The staff are highly trained and efficient, striving to make every visit relaxing and comfortable. By offering caring assistance, they keep you calm with an abundance of empathy and compassion.

SPECIALIZATION

Advanced surgical & non-surgical root canal treatments for patients of any age, to preserve their natural teeth.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics; American Dental Assoc.; American Assoc. of Endodontists; District of Columbia Dental Society; Edward C. Penick Endodontic Club; International College of Dentists, USA

5225 Wisconsin Ave NW, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20015 | 202.364.0234
Office@dcendodontics.com
dcendodontics.com



Dr. Sonia Talley & Dr. Katie Clark

Top Dentists 2026

BIRD SMILES ORTHODONTICS I ORTHODONTICS FOR ALL AGES

At our woman-owned boutique practice, Dr. Sonia Talley & Dr. Katie Clark provide personalized orthodontic care for patients of all ages. Whether addressing jaw and teeth alignment early (the AAO recommends an orthodontic evaluation as early as age 7) or welcoming adults who have noticed crowding or shifting over time, treatment is tailored to each individual's needs. Using advanced technology and high-quality materials, we prioritize care, comfort and lasting results. At Bird Smiles Orthodontics, we believe exceptional treatment is about more than straightening teeth. It is about care that feels thoughtful and personal from start to finish. **Ready to begin your smile journey?** Schedule your complimentary consultation and take the first step toward a healthier, more confident smile.

SPECIALIZATION

Orthodontics for all ages, Invisalign®, Invisalign® Teen, Early treatment for children, Clear braces, Traditional braces, Jaw surgery

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Board Certified Orthodontist (Dr. Talley), American Association of Orthodontics, Invisalign® Platinum Plus Provider, *Washingtonian* Top Docs, ADA, DC Dental Society, Greater Washington Academy of Women Dentists

4110 River Road NW, Washington, DC 20016 | 202.686.2108
birdsmilesorthodontics.com



Fallsgrove Center for Dentistry

Top Dentists 2026

DR. TODD WASSERMAN, DR. STACIA KRANTZ, DR. MICHELLE SNYDER, AND DR. ANDREW SCHWARTZ

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SPECIALIZATION

General/Restorative, Orthodontics, Periodontics, Implants, Cosmetic, Invisalign®, Botox, Dental Sleep Medicine

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Dentists
Bethesda Magazine
Consumers' Checkbook
Spear Faculty Club, AADSM
ADA, AGD, ABO, AAP, FACD and FICD

14955 Shady Grove Road, Suite 200
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Karl A. Smith, DDS, MS

Top Dentist 2026

PERIODONTICS AND DENTAL IMPLANTS

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SPECIALIZATION

Deep cleanings, surgical gum treatments, dental implants, cosmetic periodontal treatment, laser therapy, and sedation dentistry

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Top Dentist *Washingtonian*, *Virginia Living* and *Northern Virginia Magazine*, Virginia Society of Periodontists Past President, Member of the International Team for Implantology

Alexandria, VA 22302
Waldorf, MD 20602
703.894.4867
drkarlsmith.com



Dr. Arpi Khare

Top Dentist 2026

ARLINGTON PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Dr. Arpi Khare is a board-certified pediatric dentist known for her gentle touch, compassionate care, and unwavering patience with every patient she treats. With over a decade of clinical experience and a strong commitment to constant continuing education in this dynamic field, she combines advanced expertise with a warm, personalized approach that helps patients feel comfortable and confident in their dental care. As a mom of two boys, Dr. Khare understands the importance of trust, comfort, and kindness in healthcare. She leads a dedicated, highly trained team that shares her commitment to the highest level of care and compassion for every patient.

SPECIALIZATION
Behavior guidance, Trauma Management, Advanced restorative techniques, Nitrous Oxide and General Anesthesia, Frenectomies

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS
AAPD, ADA, College of Diplomates of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, *Arlington Magazine* Top Pediatric Dentist

5500 Columbia Pike, Suite A
Arlington, VA 22204
571.458.1338
dentistry4allkids.com



Dr. Yetunde Patrick, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

U STREET FAMILY DENTISTRY

Dr. Yetunde Patrick is a general dentist from Chicago, Illinois, with a passion for community-centered care. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Spelman College and her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Maryland–Baltimore College of Dental Surgery. Dr. Patrick has provided volunteer dental care in the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Guatemala, Senegal, and Uganda, helping expand access to oral health services worldwide. After working in both community dentistry and private practice, she opened her own dental office in Washington, DC.
Outside the office, Dr. Patrick enjoys spending time with her family, dancing, practicing yoga, and exploring interior design. She looks forward to meeting you.

SPECIALIZATION
General Dentistry

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
Doctor of Dental Surgery from University of Maryland-Baltimore College of Dental Surgery

Monday: 7am–5pm
Tuesday: 8am–5pm
Wednesday: 8am–5pm
Thursday: 8am–5pm
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Saturday: open one Sat/month

1515 U Street, NW
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Alfonso Patron, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

IMPLANT LOGYCA

Dr. Patron is a Colombian born dentist. He completed his dental degree at Javeriana University in Bogota, Colombia in 1996. Dr. Patron worked as a general dentist in private practice in Colombia until 2001 before moving to the United States to pursue his training in Periodontics and Implant Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine in Philadelphia. Dr. Patron has practiced Periodontics and Dental Implant Surgery since 2006 in Northern Virginia. Dr. Patron specializes in LANAP, treating gum disease with laser. It is a less invasive procedure and helps maintain a beautiful smile line. Giving his patients something to smile about is what he cares about most!

SPECIALIZATION
Periodontics, Dental Implant Surgeon, Gum Grafts, Bone Grafts, Sinus Lifts, Ridge Augmentation, Frenecetomies, Crown Lengthenings, Biopsies

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS
The American Academy of Periodontology, *Washingtonion* Top Dentist, *Arlington Magazine* Top Doctors

1600 Wilson Blvd. Suite 960
Arlington, VA 22209
703.465.5080
drpatronperio.com



Dr. Elizabeth "Andie" Shin, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

BCC PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY — BETHESDA, MD
LEADING THE WAY IN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Children who once feared the dentist leave BCC Pediatric Dentistry smiling and confident. Dr. Elizabeth "Andie" Shin, a board-certified pediatric dentist with more than 30 years of experience, was named Best of Bethesda 2026 and is a multiple-time *Washingtonian* and *Bethesda Magazine* Top Dentist. She provides advanced pediatric and in-office IV sedation care in a safe, welcoming environment families trust. Unlike many high-end practices, we accept most major insurance plans, making exceptional pediatric dental care accessible throughout the community.

SPECIALIZATION

Pediatric Dentistry | Advanced Behavior Guidance | IV Sedation

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Best of Bethesda 2026 – Pediatric Dental Office; *Washingtonian* Top Dentist 2021, 2023, 2026; *Bethesda Magazine* Top Pediatric Dentist 2020, 2022, 2024, 2025

4825 Bethesda Ave, STE 220
301.941.7374
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Top Dentists 2026

At Rad Orthodontics, we offer a full range of advanced treatments — from Invisalign® clear aligners and retainers to Smile Express® and TMJ solutions — designed to fit every lifestyle and smile goal. Our team blends innovation and comfort to deliver confident, lasting results for patients of all ages. Our doctors combine clinical expertise with a genuine passion for creating confident, lasting smiles. Their commitment to precision, comfort, and care ensures every patient enjoys a personalized orthodontic experience from start to finish. Our patients' reviews tell the story of what makes Rad Orthodontics special. We're proud to have earned the trust of families across College Park, Potomac, Germantown, and Bethesda. Every review is a reflection of our commitment to creating confident, lasting smiles and an experience worth sharing.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

They maintain memberships with the American Dental, American Association of Orthodontists. Awards for Top Dentist of Bethesda, and Top 1% Invisalign® Providers and more.

College Park | 301.834.1802
Potomac | 301.888.8054
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North Bethesda | 301.235.1125
Germantown | 301.515.8500

radsmile.com



Cheryl F. Callahan, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

CALLAHAN DENTAL | GENERAL AND COSMETIC DENTISTRY

My team and I deliver compassionate, individualized, professional general and cosmetic dental services to patients of all ages. Our practice is devoted to providing each patient with an exceptional experience, at every visit. We concentrate on each individual's comfort and develop open lines of communication; we create personal treatment plans to help each person attain and maintain optimal oral health and a beautiful smile. Our approach emphasizes the importance of oral health on each person's overall health. We want to prevent small issues from becoming large problems. Our goal is to build lasting relationships with our clients based on mutual respect & genuine affection.

SPECIALIZATION

Cosmetic and General Dentistry, CEREC Same-Day Crowns, Invisalign®, Sleep Apnea, Implants, Periodontal Surgery and Treatment

AFFILIATIONS

American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentists, Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine, Pankey Institute Alumni

15225 Shady Grove Road, Suite 301
Rockville, MD 20850
301.948.1212
cherylcallahandds.com



Zohra Darwish, DDS

Top Dentist 2026

DENTAL AESTHETIC ARTS

Dr. Darwish understands people have fears when it comes to dentistry, and feels that building a foundation of trust by treating her patients as special individuals is vital. She knows how uneasy some patients may feel about their dental visit, and strives to make a difference in providing a positive experience. Dr. Darwish has a special interest in cosmetic dentistry and enjoys transforming "average smiles" into magnificent and healthy smiles.

"Building meaning relationships with my patients, while maintaining the highest standard of care with a gentle touch, is the foundation I lay for myself in my profession."

SPECIALIZATION
Preventative, cosmetic and restorative dentistry; and Invisalign® provider

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS
AACD-American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry; AAFE-American Academy of Facial Esthetics; AAID-American Academy of Implant Dentistry; Washington's Patient's Choice Award, '15-'18; *Washingtonian* & *Bethesda Magazine* Top Dentist; *DC Modern Lux* Health/Beauty Expert '20; AACA American Academy of Clear Aligners

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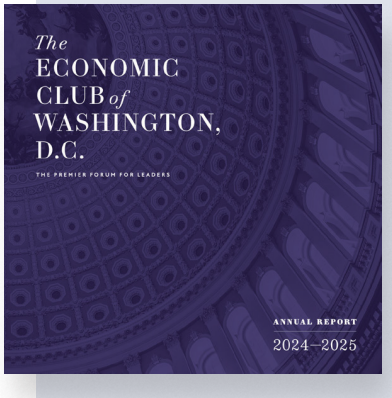



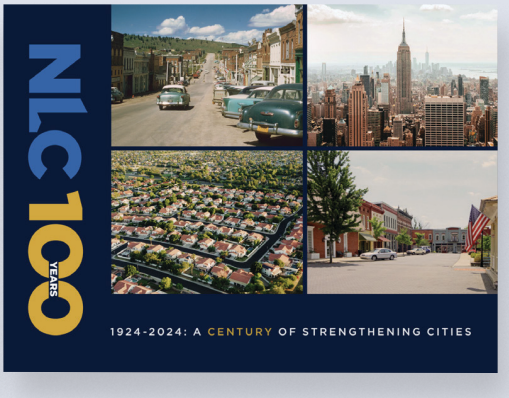



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TASTE



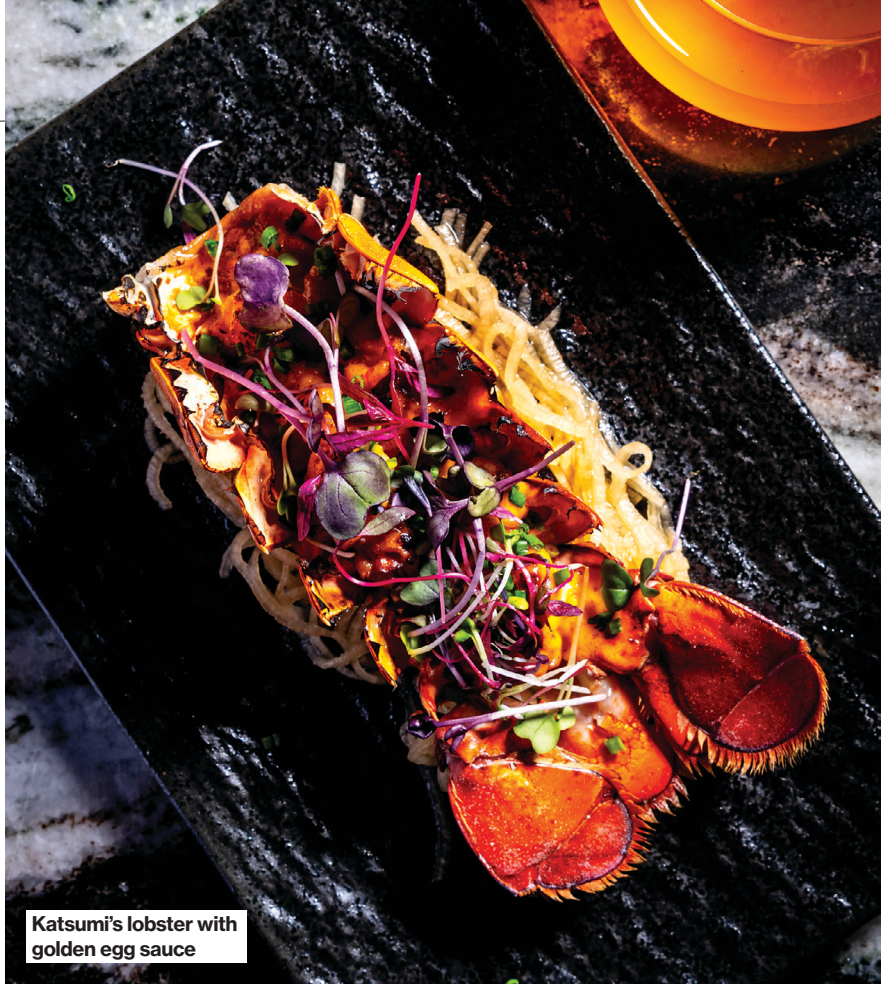
TASTE THE RAINBOW
Bagels are coming in all sorts of wacky flavors these days. Turn to page 147 for more.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN BULBIN

Roll Play

Our critic checks out two hot new Japanese spots

By Ann Limpert



Katsumi's lobster with golden egg sauce

DC'S JAPANESE FOOD SCENE HAS BEEN fast expanding with omakase bro destinations, fast-casual places, chirashi spots, and fusion steakhouses. Here's a look at two notable newcomers.

Katsumi

In Logan Circle, the French/Japanese restaurant Bar Japonais has a new look, a new name, and a new vibe. Katsumi, with its plum velvet couches, pink neon, and weekend DJs, made its entrance in mid-February.

And while the place looks like it's more of a destination for Bumble dates over strawberry-matcha cocktails (it's open till midnight on weekends), the owners have wisely held onto one important element from its past: Masaaki "Uchi" Uchino—the talented chef who once ran the omakase counter at Sushi Nakazawa.

There's no sushi counter at all at Katsumi, which has been packed on recent weeknights, and Uchino is freed up to play around. One of my favorite rolls, with caviar, black porgy, and crispy potato bits, nods to sour-cream-and-onion chips. Another winner pairs escolar and avocado with scallion tempura and scallion oil. Skip the salmon sashimi, which arrived in a befuddlingly bland sauce of passionfruit and ají amarillo, and instead go for Uchino's quail-egg-crowned take on tuna tartare, a standout rendition in a very crowded field.

On the more traditional side, there's well-crafted nigiri with the usual suspects (king salmon, hamachi, spot prawn), plus luxe ingredients like toro, uni, and A5 Wagyu. As at Nakazawa, the rice was perfectly vinegared.

Another chef, Kappo alum Jhony Bautista, oversees the menu of bar snacks, noodles, and skewers. I loved the oblong gyoza stuffed with minced beef and cabbage, the ultra-crunchy pork katsu, and the tempura-fried rock shrimp with honey-miso mayo. I didn't love the soggy heap of yuzu-scented shishitos—or the fact that a bunch of those plates showed up all at once for a round of the least fun game in the world: table Tetris.



A busy night at Katsumi

Maru San

I have good news and bad news about Maru San. The positive: The Japanese/Peruvian fine-casual spot is easily the best restaurant to open in DC so far this year. But if you have PTSD from shivering in line a decade ago for a seat at Bad Saint or Rose's Luxury (or, more recently, for a burger at Eebee's), I'm sorry to tell you that this is a sliver of a space with 25 seats and no reservations, save for a separate tasting menu that accommodates just four people a night (and is already sold out for months).

The Eastern Market spot, which opened

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT SUCHMAN

in February, drew immediate crowds thanks to its owner, the James Beard Award–winning chef Carlos Delgado, also behind the Shaw tasting room Causa. Here, the Peruvian native—along with Tiger Fork's Simon Lam—focuses on the Nikkei strain of his country's cuisine, influenced by a wave of Japanese immigrants who arrived on a boat called the *Sakura Maru* at the turn of the 20th century.

The centerpiece of the menu is a lineup of hand rolls: sheaths of shatteringly thin nori filled with warm koshihikari rice and fillings such as sweet raw scallops with a Parmesan-butter sauce, Old Bay–scented lump crab, or shrimp spooned with vibrant huacatay aïoli. You can order them à la carte, but the $37 set of six is the way to go—they arrive one at a time, and each is delicious in its own way. The lone middling roll I tried, filled with a dull mix of foie gras and miso, came from the "premium" list. It's the only one that needed a flavor boost from the housemade soy sauce, served on the side.

As memorable as the hand rolls are, some of my favorite dishes came from the short menu of share plates, where Delgado's artistry with ceviches and tiraditos is on display. (He sources Japanese fish from the same purveyor that services the far more expensive Causa.) Thin slices of flounder get a kick from tiny sea grapes and a bright, punchy leche de tigre laced with hojicha-smoked ají amarillo peppers. Don't miss nubs of octopus in a briny, creamy sauce made from blanched Peruvian olives and vegan mayo, served with a small package of saltines. Or slices of lightly seared A5 Wagyu tataki with grapefruit ponzu.

Though Delgado started working on Maru San three years ago, the place feels quite timely. It's relatively affordable. There are no servers—you check off whatever you want on a sheet of paper, and one of the handful of cooks behind the counter will give it to you. There's also no kitchen, just a lineup of rice cookers and induction plates. And yet every detail—whether the custom-made stones your hand rolls arrive on or the perfectly calibrated reggaeton and '90s hip-hop soundtrack—has been considered. Tiny octopus figurines hold your chopsticks. Look up and a full-ceiling painting of half an octopus cleverly runs alongside a mirror, giving the optical illusion of a larger space. Maybe someday.



Maru San dry-ages its Japanese fish.


Maru San's counter—the only place to sit

PHOTOGRAPHS BY REY LOPEZ

Katsumi
1520 14th St., NW
Open Tuesday through Sunday for dinner
Neighborhood: Logan Circle.
Dress: It's a casual crowd but a trend-conscious one (especially later at night).
Best dishes: Sour-cream-and-onion roll; escolar-and-scallion roll; tuna tartare; rock-shrimp tempura; gyoza; pork katsu.
Price range: Maki $11 to $19, sashimi plates $21 to $65, share plates $13 to $44.
Bottom line: A serious destination for sushi and Japanese snacks, even if it doesn't look the part.

Maru San
325 Seventh St., SE
Open Thursday through Monday for dinner
Neighborhood: Eastern Market.
Dress: It's dark and everyone is seated at a horizontal bar—nobody will care what you're wearing.
Best dishes: Crab, scallop, shrimp, and spicy-tuna hand rolls; Wagyu tataki; octopus with olive sauce; ceviche; flounder tiradito.
Price range: Hand-roll sets $22 to $37, à la carte hand rolls $7 to $35, share plates $9 to $45.
Bottom line: This tiny, no-reservations hand-roll bar is DC's best new restaurant so far this year.



Sandeep Kaur shows off one of 323 Dhaba Express's specialties: bread.

Tandoor Stop

A hearty—and vegetarian—Indian restaurant is spicing up Sterling

By Ike Allen

EXIT 323 ON INTERSTATE 81, NEAR THE Virginia/West Virginia border, looks a little desolate. There's an Amazon warehouse, a fireworks store, a Methodist church, and some mobile homes and old houses along Martinsburg Pike. One business does stand out, though: 323 Dhaba Punjabi Veg Kitchen, a low-slung truck-stop diner advertising Northern Indian regional specialties in the middle of the Piedmont farmland.

The owner is Jasdeep Singh, a longtime trucker from the Punjabi village of Chamkaur Sahib, who settled down in Virginia in 2022 to run a truck-repair business. A year later, he added a vegetarian restaurant by popular demand. Hundreds of thousands of Punjabi Sikhs work in trucking in the US—about 20 percent of the industry's workforce, by some counts—and Singh says about half his West Virginia customers are truckers.

Last November, Singh and his wife, Sandeep Kaur, opened their second location much closer to DC, near Dulles Airport. At 323 Dhaba Express, they're catering to Loudoun County's Indian community—more software and IT workers than truckers.

The menu at both locations is all vegetarian but no less hearty for it. Curries such as dal tadka (split-lentil stew) and kala chana (black chickpeas) are enriched with plenty of ghee. Punjab, sometimes called "the granary of India," is known for its roti, paratha, naan, and kulcha. Fittingly, 323 Dhaba serves some of the best Indian breads in the area, all cooked to order in the restaurant's tandoor oven. Parathas—as wide and oven-blistered as Neapolitan pizzas—can be stuffed with potatoes, cauliflower, paneer, or all the above. Lachha paratha is flaky and layered like a Malaysian roti canai. Makki di roti, a supple corn flatbread, is traditionally paired with creamy mustard greens.

The most impressive product of the tandoor is Amritsari kulcha, a stretchy flatbread stuffed with potatoes and dotted with crushed coriander seeds. A meal in itself, the kulcha arrives with a tray of condiments: salted butter, sliced onions, chickpea curry, green chilies, pickles, and raita with a confetti of fried chickpea flour.

The bread is named for the Sikh holy city of Amritsar, which is pictured on the walls of the restaurant. A message nearby offers a history lesson on India's partition, which split Punjab between that country and Pakistan in 1947. It memorializes the death and displacement of millions because of decisions made "by those who were neither Punjabi nor ever lived in Punjab."

For restaurant decor, it's unusually solemn, and it speaks to Singh and Kaur's desire to tell the full story of Punjabi culture through food.

"Here in Northern Virginia at 323 Dhaba Express," the message reads, "we bring you the authentic taste from Punjab, the land of five rivers, along with our stories of sorrow, joy, and hope."

323 Dhaba Express, 20800 Pidgeon Hill Rd., Sterling

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVY MAGES

Bagels Gone Wild

Apparently, everything isn't enough. These days, bagel makers are crafting rounds with surprising ingredients—from sweet to savory to eye-catching. Here are six that will drive purists crazy.

By Nevin Martell



Cheesy Garlic Bread
Call Your Mother

These garlicky circles, bubbly with cheese, were created as a foundation for the meatball bagelwich at this *Miami Vice*–hued bagel chain. The seasonal bagels became so popular that they're now a long-term menu item. *Multiple area locations.*

Chocolate Chip
Goldberg's New York Bagels

These NYC–inspired kosher bagel shops in Montgomery County add a deluge of dark-chocolate chips to their rings, making you feel like you're eating a cookie for breakfast. *9328 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring; 4824 Boiling Brook Pkwy., Rockville.*





Rainbow
Bethesda Bagels

Prismatic bagels, swirly with food coloring, are Instagram thirst traps. These are available only Friday through Sunday in limited numbers. *Bethesda, Cabin John, Rockville, Navy Yard, and Rosslyn.*



Old Bay–Sesame
Buffalo & Bergen

Pairing bold Chesapeake vibes with a subtler nutty undertone makes these disks popular for tuna-salad sandwiches and BEC breakfast sandos at Gina Chersevani's homage to New York's corner delis. *3501 Connecticut Ave., NW; 1309 Fifth St., NE; 240 Massachusetts Ave., NE.*

French Toast
Brooklyn Bagel Bakery

Arlington's longtime bagel pros evoke the sweet breakfast favorite by adding eggs to their dough, rolling the unbaked rounds in cinnamon and sugar, then finishing them off with powdered sugar. *2055 Wilson Blvd., Arlington.*





Cinnamon Sugar
Chewish Deli

The blue-and-white-accented corner bagelry in Old Town rolls its bagels in an aromatic spice blend that recalls just-baked snickerdoodles. *807 Pendleton St., Alexandria.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN BULBIN

Sweet Home

A bakery doesn't require a cute storefront and glass cases brimming with sweet treats. With a cottage license, any enterprising baker can run a business out of their home kitchen. Here are four pros who craft everything from flower-inspired cupcakes to artisanal breads.

By Nevin Martell

Jill Nguyen



Capitol Jill Baking

Call it carb diplomacy. When Jill Nguyen moved into her Capitol Hill rowhouse at the end of 2020, she brought homemade bread to all her new neighbors to introduce herself and her home bakery. She told them, "If you see a random person walking down the street with a brown bag, it's not drugs—it's just bread."

Two days a week, the self-taught 32-year-old and her crew of four rotating helpers work in her 300-square-foot kitchen outfitted with a conventional oven, a bread oven, and a 32-quart spiral mixer. Bread day is Tuesday or Wednesday, when she typically offers three types of sourdough, a baguette, and slices of cake, perhaps peach Melba or chocolate stout with orange. On Sundays, she focuses on an ever-changing variety of baked goods: cinnamon buns, biscuits with honey and chili crisp, and chewy pretzel bagels.

Everything is preordered, and a neighborhood kid sets up a table outside Nguyen's house, selling lemonade in the summer, apple cider in the fall, and hot chocolate in the winter. Folks in line to pick up their orders chat and admire one another's dogs. "There is a sense of community and a vibe," says Nguyen. *CapitolJillBaking.com*.



Alex Reponen

Dapper Fox Bakery

In another life, Alex Reponen was a CIA operations officer, "recruiting spies and stealing secrets," as he puts it. But on the side, he was developing a passion for baking, which he started pursuing after leaving the agency in 2015. After working for the team who went on to open Pluma by Bluebird Bakery in Union Market, Reponen launched a cookie business of his own in 2020.

The 48-year-old follows the same routine every week. Monday through Wednesday, he transforms his "too small" Alexandria home kitchen into a bakery, utilizing every square inch of horizontal space to make roughly 25 batches of dough, which he sells as ready-to-bake frozen cookies in bags of six. Generally, he offers one flavor a week, such as cookies and cream, chocolate chip, and Heath Bar crunch. Since opening, Reponen estimates he's sold a quarter million cookies. "That's a lot of butter, eggs, sugar, and scooping," he says.

Later in the week, he does cookie drop-offs throughout the area. It all feels a world away from his career in spycraft. "I get a lot more blisters and do a lot less typing," he says. *DapperFoxBakery.com*.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN BULBIN



Jamaliyyih Perez

Jam Sweet Bouquets

Since childhood, Jamaliyyih Perez has been sweet on baking. She tried to attend pastry school as a teenager in El Salvador but was too young. At 21, she emigrated to the States and started a family but kept accumulating baking gear and working on projects, such as creating the perfect tres leches cake for her young daughter and baking with the children she nannied.

During the pandemic, Perez got out her baking equipment and began watching YouTube videos about cupcake decoration, including how to create ravishing flowers out of icing. After much practice, she posted a picture of her floral cupcakes on Facebook. A friend asked if she'd make some for a birthday, and from there her business bloomed. "My abuelita taught me that when you cook, you put your heart into it," she says. "The food tastes better because your love is in there."

The 40-year-old cupcake artist offers four flavors—vanilla bean, chocolate, red velvet, and lemon with poppy seeds—each topped with vanilla buttercream elaborately shaped into hibiscuses, hydrangeas, poppies, and sunflowers. Her signature creation is a head-turning bouquet made with a dozen cupcakes. Customers order online and pick up their confections at her Arlington apartment. *@JamSweetBouquets on Instagram.*

Michael Kempner

Il Mulino Oltremare di Sargasso

Cooking for two decades at Obelisk, 2 Amys, and Etto ignited Michael Kempner's love for wood-fired baking. Then came a life-altering stint at Elmore Mountain Bread, a highly regarded rural bakery in Vermont. After building a brick oven with a gabled roof in his Chevy Chase backyard, the 45-year-old began selling breads made with stone-milled flours in 2021, and it's now his full-time job.

Every Saturday, he bakes 60 loaves, divided between a wheat-rye sourdough; toasted walnut; baguette-like filone; anadama, made with polenta and lightly sweetened with molasses; and whole grain studded with sesame, sunflower, and flax seeds. "It's a juggling act of shaping loaves, baking, cooling, and then packing and labeling," he says.

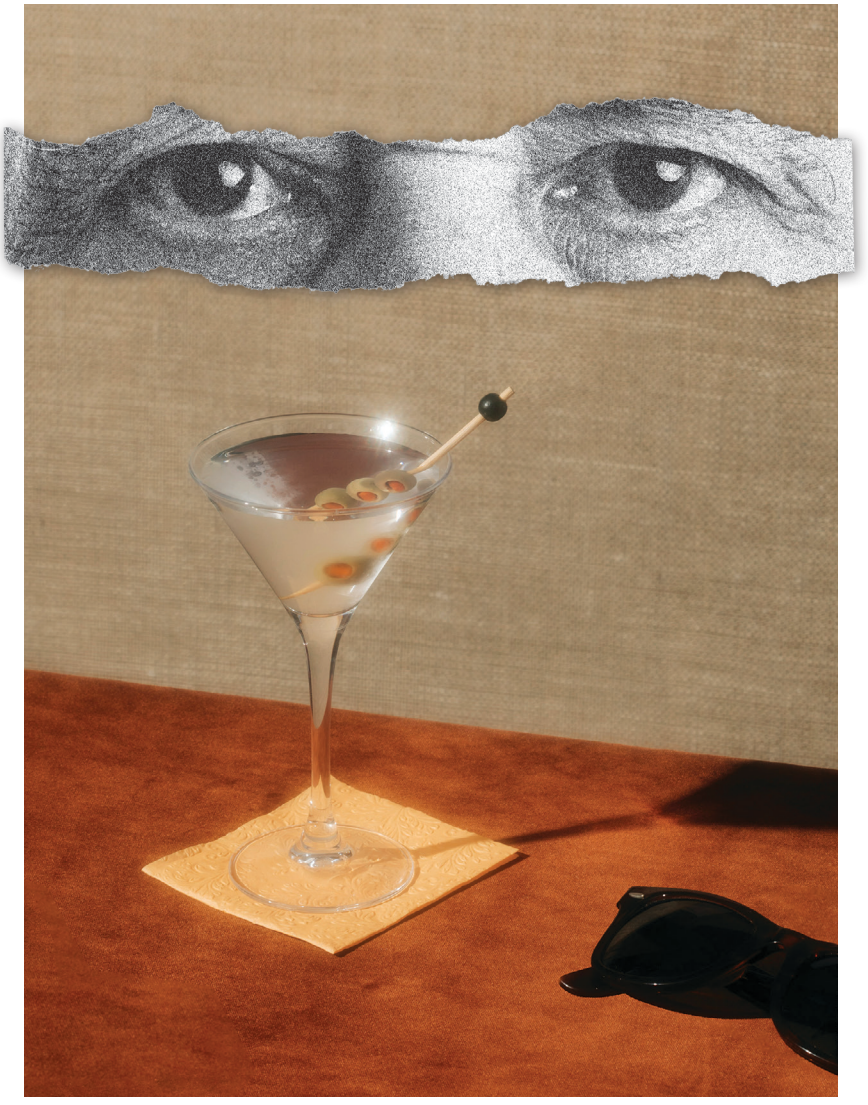
Kempner also turns out gleaming challahs, darkly caramelized canelés, bittersweet chocolate babka, and several cookies. At 3 PM, he opens his home for pickups of preorders and to sell any remaining goods: "It's like a fourth-grade lemonade stand in my front yard—I have a little market table." *SargassoBread.com.*



Is Your Bartender a Spy?

A look at espionage in DC restaurants

By Jessica Sidman



EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN COMPASS COF-fee declared bankruptcy, right-wing provocateur Laura Loomer alleged that Qatar's sovereign wealth fund was angling to buy the DC chain in order to use its wi-fi networks to spy on government-connected customers. No actual evidence of such a scenario existed, and Compass Coffee was ultimately bought in a bankruptcy auction by London-based Caffè Nero. But the rumor did get us thinking about spy activity in DC restaurants. Turns out there's a history of it.

During the Cold War in 1985, CIA officer turned double agent Aldrich Ames handed over US secrets to the Soviets at Chadwicks (now Mr. Smith's) in Georgetown. That same year, at nearby Au Pied de Cochon, KGB officer and Soviet defector Vitaly Yurchenko escaped his CIA handler and defected back to the Soviet Union. (The French bistro had a plaque to commemorate his last meal in the US.) More recently, FBI agents surveilled former senator Bob Menendez with Egyptian officials at the downtown Morton's steakhouse, leading to charges of bribery, extortion, and acting as a foreign agent for Egypt.

"Every week, there's foreign-intelligence officers meeting with people in restaurants in DC," says Peter Strzok, a former special agent for the FBI. "If they're interesting enough to the FBI, there's a decent chance the FBI might be trying to watch that."

Chris Costa, executive director of the International Spy Museum, says intelligence officers might also frequent certain hangouts, such as around the White House: "If you are a trained intelligence officer, you're going to the restaurant with the express purpose of developing and cultivating a source that has access to the White House. Also, in some cases, you do intensive research. What looks like somebody bumping into you at a bar could be somebody that already knows who you are and knows that you work for the White House."

Spies could potentially be making your coffee or serving you a glass of wine, too. "The idea of having cover work—something mundane and boring—but having some other special task, that is not unusual at all," Costa says.

Still, a cover requires a lot of effort, and Strzok notes that it's unlikely an intelligence officer would be spying from a restaurant position, just hoping to overhear something interesting. But, he adds, there is a "high" likelihood that some local bartenders have been recruited to provide information—though they may be misled about whom they're really working for. (A foreign operative could be disguised as, say, a journalist to gain their cooperation.) "Return-on-investment-wise, it's much better to recruit a couple of bartenders and say, 'If you hear something interesting, give me a call and I'll pay you for the information,' " Strzok says.

As for weaponizing the wi-fi network at a coffee shop? According to Strzok, a cafe near the White House or a US intelligence facility may be a tempting target for a foreign government to monitor, but weeding through the data overload—even with the aid of AI tools—might have limited success. "For every US Army Special Forces guy that sits down, there are 2,000 customers who have nothing to do with the US government," he says. "And that one person, they might be sloppy, but chances are they're not going to be plopping down and hopping on the internet and all of a sudden discussing classified or sensitive information." W

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UPWARD TREND

Turn the page to see how this Del Ray home was designed for maximum eco-efficiency while keeping livability and style in mind.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENNIFER HUGHES

Eco-Efficient Living

How one architect designed a net-zero home for a family of six in Del Ray

By Claudia Rosenbaum



Four-foot roof overhangs offer shade outside while protecting the front windows from the sun's heat.

DESIGNING AN 8,200-SQUARE-FOOT home for a family of six is ambitious enough—but making it eco-friendly and able to produce more energy than it uses? That might sound impossible.

"The size was its biggest challenge," says architect Deborah Buelow of Cedar Architecture in Alexandria. "It's a big space, and that's not easy to make a net-zero home."

The family wanted more than energy efficiency—they envisioned what's known as a net-positive, certified-passive, extreme-energy-efficient home, meaning it would power itself, store surplus energy for emergencies, and even feed electricity back to the grid. To receive its certified status from the Passive House Institute of the United States, the home required airtight insulation, a constant-ventilation system, a solar roof, and thermal heating and cooling.

"If this house had been built in a traditional manner, it would use more than three times as much energy as it does now," Buelow says.

From the start, there were obstacles. The half-acre site had an irregular shape, cobbled together from three lots. After demolishing the existing structures, Buelow began designing, taking into consideration that while her clients wanted a spacious home, they also wanted it to blend in with the character of their Del Ray neighborhood in Alexandria.

To achieve this, Buelow had the front of the house built out of brick made in North Carolina from 100-percent recycled ceramic materials. For the rest of the exterior, she used Kebony wood, a sustainable eco-treated pine that starts brown but weathers to a silvery gray. The homeowner added his own whimsical touch to the front porch by handcrafting swinging chairs from scrap wood.

"We brought the brick in as a way of kind of speaking to the Colonial style, but then wrapped the front of the house in wood to still give it a contemporary feel," Buelow says. "And the wood will last forever. This type will never have to be replaced, painted, or coated. You never have to do anything to it."

THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS, BUELOW prioritized incorporating nature into the design. While the house's south-facing orientation captures abundant sunlight, generous four-foot roof overhangs shade the front windows from the high sun and prevent overheating during summer.

Other natural touches include slate flooring, rain roof gardens with native

plants, and natural-grass wall coverings. Circadian bulbs in the Ketra intelligent lighting adjust during the day to mimic natural outdoor light. At the rear of the house, 16-foot-wide floor-to-ceiling sliding doors made by Zola draw in light and views of the back garden.

To preserve the interior climate, triple-pane windows and insulated doors were installed. The walls are 16 inches thick, including four inches of exterior insulation—creating a tight thermal envelope. The front door is secured with a bolt system in five places, keeping it tight to the frame to ensure that no air slips in or out when the door is closed.

"Any gaps in the exterior—whether through windows, doors, or wiring—pull air out and cause heat loss," Buelow says.

Inside is where the true energy efficiency is on display. After creating the sealed environment, a circulation system moves air throughout the house and continuously draws in filtered outdoor air. The kitchen operates entirely on electricity, including an induction cooktop in the island that boils water in minutes while keeping cool to the touch—a necessary safety feature for a household with four young children.

But the house has an equally impressive design. Despite its large footprint, individual rooms were configured on a more intimate scale to keep from feeling overwhelming. To create a seamless flow, Buelow established transitional zones between rooms, giving each area a distinct function. White-oak slats affixed to the front entry's ceiling and walls, along with a modern hanging light fixture, create an elevated atmosphere for welcoming visitors. A separate mudroom entrance—with built-in benches; storage for coats, shoes, and backpacks; and laundry and plant potting stations—provides a practical space for everyday comings and goings.

"We were aiming for spaces that are comfortable and not just about grandness, more about how a family actually uses the house," Buelow says. "We spent a lot of time thinking about what they need in each room."

An eye-catching central staircase, created by Treenet Collective, serves as a sculptural focal point, its "rainbow whirl" design featuring multicolor paracord typically used by rock climbers. Two slowly moving fans over the staircase circulate





Facing the backyard, 16-foot sliding doors allow natural light and garden views.

The kitchen is all electric, including an induction cooktop in the island.



Starting at the entry, transitional areas give each space a distinct function.

air, and the staircase is flanked on both sides by a three-story curtain window-wall that provides natural light deep into the home's interior.

A MECHANICAL ROOM IN THE BASE-ment serves as the hub for the house's energy efficiency. Integrated Tesla Solar roof panels feed power into smart panels in the room. A battery backup system stores the excess, up to three days' worth of electricity, meaning that the homeowners might never even pay an electric bill.

"The amount of solar supply from the panels equals just a little bit more than the amount of energy this house requires," Buelow says.

The home also has a geothermal heating-and-cooling-exchange HVAC system. It consists of three wells in the driveway that circulate water on a continuous loop via pipes that extend 300 feet underground. Because the water circulates through a constant underground temperature, it can keep the house's temperature fairly constant and cut heating and cooling costs by 20 to 50 percent, Buelow says. Maryland, Virginia, and DC offer incentives and tax credits for installing geothermal electricity-based heating systems.

With changing climates and escalating heating and cooling costs, Buelow expects more homeowners to look into eco-friendly options when updating, renovating, and building homes. Though constructing a net-zero house of this type may cost 5 percent more upfront, she says, lower utility bills over time can make the investment worthwhile.

"The demand is growing as people are learning about the benefits," Buelow explains. "Building codes are going to be requiring you to build with more energy efficiency anyway. People are going to have to understand that it's going to have to be part of their homes and that your home can be the house you want and also be energy-efficient."

Claudia Rosenbaum is a freelance culture writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times, Vulture, Eater DC, and Vanity Fair. On Instagram, she's @CJRosenbaumReports.

Four Energy-Efficient Upgrades

1. Replace Your Windows

Switching from single-pane to double-pane windows is one of the most effective ways to reduce heat loss and improve energy efficiency.



2. Seal Air Leaks

Gaps around windows, exterior doors, or electrical wiring can allow air to escape, causing significant heat loss. Insulating these areas helps maintain your home's temperature. Another way to plug leaks around an exterior door is a multi-lock system, in which one key turns multiple bolts that run the length of the door. This not only provides greater security but also pulls the door tighter to the frame, reducing heat and cold loss.

3. Install LED Bulbs

LED lights use at least 75 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent, according to the Department of Energy. In addition, LED bulbs such as Phillips Hue and Ketra can simulate the natural light patterns outside by changing throughout the day, thereby helping regulate your biological clock. "That helps keep your body in relationship to nature, which has many proven health benefits," says architect Deborah Buelow of Cedar Architecture in Alexandria.



4. Replace Your Stove

Induction cooking offers multiple advantages: Water boils faster than on either conventional electric or gas; the cooktop stays cool to the touch, eliminating burn risks; it requires less energy; and it provides healthier home air quality compared with gas. W

PHOTOGRAPH ON LEFT BY JUSTIN PAGET/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT BY BRIZMAKER/GETTY IMAGES



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIA MANCO/STOCKSY

Top Mortgage Professionals

Buying a home or refinancing? You'll need a good loan officer. These are the leading ones in the area.

By Amy Moeller

INTEREST RATES, POINTS, OPTIONS, EQUITY—there's a lot to consider when it comes to the mortgage part of buying a home, and having a savvy expert in your corner can make all the difference. A good loan officer not only can guide you through the process in a way that makes you feel secure but can help you land your dream home.

To determine the list of Best Mortgage Professionals in the area, we surveyed almost 9,000 readers, more than 1,200 real-estate agents, and 68 title companies, asking which lenders they most recommend. The 103 names here are the ones that came up again and again.

To compile our second list, Elite Producers, we asked financial institutions for the names of their top mortgage originators for 2025—the ones with at least $60 million in sales for our platinum status, $45 million for our gold level, and $30 million for our silver roster.

While these serve as handy guides, they're not exhaustive lists of excellent lenders in our area—they reflect only those names that came up in our surveys.

BEST MORTGAGE PROFESSIONALS

These individuals were recommended most by local real-estate and title-and-closing agents and by *Washingtonian* subscribers.

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First Home Mortgage

Heather Devoto
First Home Mortgage

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CrossCountry Mortgage

Jody Eichenblatt
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Caryn Elder
First Heritage Mortgage

Krista Ellis
Certainty Home Lending

Erin Finke
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Chase

Jawad Hamandi
Intercoastal Mortgage

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Prosperity Home Mortgage

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Prosperity Home Mortgage

Jordan Jackson
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Darius Jenkins
GNB Mortgage

Amit Kaim
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Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation

Christopher Kearney
Intercoastal Mortgage

Billy Kinberg
Intercoastal Mortgage

Greg Kingsbury
Vellum Mortgage

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Embrace Home Loans

Stefanie Krivonak
First Home Mortgage

Ryan Larson
Rate

Hillary Legrain
First Savings Mortgage

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United Bank

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Kasey Martin
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Truist

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CrossCountry Mortgage

Richard Moroscak
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CrossCountry Mortgage

Phil Nguyen
Rocket Mortgage

Jeffrey Novotny
First Heritage Mortgage

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Jonathan Okun
Prosperity Home Mortgage

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United Bank

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First Heritage Mortgage

Edward Perez
Prosperity Home Mortgage

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Movement Mortgage

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Rate

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Graham Setliff
First Savings Mortgage

Andrew Siddon
Certainty Home Lending

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Truist

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Vellum Mortgage/The Yi Team

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ELITE PRODUCERS

PLATINUM

Individuals with $60 million or more in mortgage volume during 2025

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Citizens Bank

Yomi Akinyemi
United Nations Federal Credit Union

Darran Anthony
Main Street Home Loans

Steve Arsenault
Fairway Home Mortgage

Shap Bashar
Wells Fargo

Lindsay Simmons Beale
CrossCountry Mortgage

Melissa Bell
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Glenn Benson
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Jerry Berry
First Heritage Mortgage

Neil Bourdelaise
Main Street Home Loans

David G. Bridges Jr.
First Heritage Mortgage

Josh Burruss
Intercoastal Mortgage

Gregg Busch
First Savings Mortgage

Pat Casey Jr.
Fulton Mortgage Company

Chris Cox
First Savings Mortgage

Malcolm Crane
Fairway Home Mortgage

Mea Danigelis
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Heather Devoto
First Home Mortgage

Francki DiFrancesco
Origin Point Mortgage

Jordan Dobbs
CrossCountry Mortgage

Alex Dykes
Guild Mortgage Company

Chris Edge
First Home Mortgage

Jody Eichenblatt
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Steve Fox
First Savings Mortgage

Brandon Frye
Rate

Alec Gagne
Intercoastal Mortgage

Pat Gannon
Rate

Robert Gaskins
CMG Home Loans

Ali Ghassemi
First National Bank

Deb Griffin
Chase

Ryan Hadley
First Heritage Mortgage

Jawad Hamandi
Intercoastal Mortgage

Kristi Hardy
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Katie Simmons Hickey
CrossCountry Mortgage

Margie Hofberg
Residential Mortgage Center

Patrick Holland
Embrace Home Loans

Tatiana Ivleva-Lopez
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Amit Kaim
First Heritage Mortgage

Neil Kantor
Rocket Mortgage

Geetesh Kapoor
Fairway Home Mortgage

CJ Kemp
Truist

Jenny Kim
First Heritage Mortgage

Greg Kingsbury
Vellum Mortgage

Carlos Larrazabal
Vellum Mortgage

David Latimer
Wells Fargo

Hillary Legrain
First Savings Mortgage

Jason Lerner
First Home Mortgage

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Greg Roberts
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John Bartolozzi
CMG Home Loans

Zachary Bodine
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Eric Boutcher
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Samantha Bowie
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Carleton Chambers
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Jolayne Craig
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Joseph Gensoli
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Amy Goldstein
BMIC Mortgage

Eric Halm
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Alanna Hantho
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Jerome Jones
First Savings Mortgage

Brian Kempf
Certainty Home Lending

Clint Kohler
First National Bank

Melissa Landon
CMG Home Loans

Ryan Larson
Rate

Sean Lee
Citizens Bank

Spencer Lin
Movement Mortgage

Kaitlyn Linane
Main Street Home Loans

Sean Mohseni
Wells Fargo

Jolene Moore
CrossCountry Mortgage

Jason Nader
First Home Mortgage

Hien Nguyen
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Carol O'Connell
American Portfolio Mortgage Corporation

Justin O'Donnell
CMG Home Loans

Eric Parsons
Capital Bank Home Loans

Todd Pede
First Heritage Mortgage

Tammi Printz
First Home Mortgage

John Pyne
Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group/ The Pyne Team

Robert Reilly
First National Bank

Trent Riggs
Main Street Home Loans

Nicholas Rocco
Origin Point Mortgage

Rob Ross
Intercoastal Mortgage

Shari Rothman
Rocket Mortgage

Doug Salzman
CMG Home Loans

Kari Sansom
Atlantic Union Bank

Stephanie Sequeira
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Troy Toureau
First Savings Mortgage

Tan Tunador
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Jon Wald
Main Street Home Loans

Kendall Wilkins
Rocket Mortgage

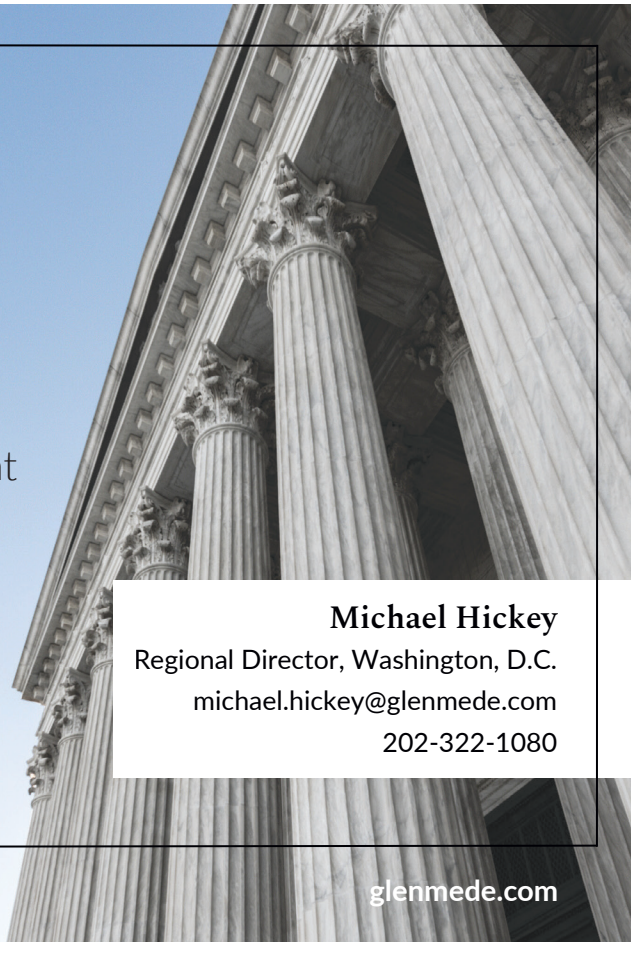
Myles Wilson
Movement Mortgage

Chong Yi
Vellum Mortgage/The Yi Team

Joe Yu
US Bank

Personalized
Wealth Strategies

Prioritizing partnership for over 70 years, we deliver tailored investment solutions and comprehensive wealth planning



Michael Hickey
Regional Director, Washington, D.C.
michael.hickey@glenmede.com
202-322-1080

GLENMEDE
TRUST COMPANY

glenmede.com

SILVER

Individuals with $30 million to $44.9 million in mortgage volume during 2025

Peter S. Accolla
American Portfolio Mortgage Corporation

Michael Ahearn
First National Bank

Gary Athey
Atlantic Union Bank

Marc Aymard
Rate

Silvia Bae
CrossCountry Mortgage

Firas Bannourah
Movement Mortgage

Shawn Barsness
Embrace Home Loans

Amy Bass
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Mike Bellotte
US Bank

Debbie Benkert
First Savings Mortgage

Laurent Berman
First National Bank

Matthew Borgerson
SWBC Mortgage

Bill Bray
First Savings Mortgage

Nathan Burch
Vellum Mortgage

Hunter Church
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Mac Church
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Brian Coleman
Main Street Home Loans

Kimberly Cox
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Josh David
Vellum Mortgage

Joseph Dawson
First Home Mortgage

Jeff Divack
Intercoastal Mortgage

John Downs
Vellum Mortgage

Courtney Ficken
First Home Mortgage

Jackie Fields
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Kelly Freeland
Chase

Ben Freshman
Rate

Lea Frye
United Bank

Ryan Fuhrman
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Nick Genovese
Certainty Home Lending

Rich Godbout
Newrez

Luiz Gonzaga
Citizens Bank

Javier Gonzalez
First Heritage Mortgage

Javier Gonzalez
Rate

Tricia Goodwin
CMG Home Loans

Caryn Grafton
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

David Green
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Jeff Hall
United Bank

Chris Hardy
Waterstone Mortgage

Alicia Harkowa
Main Street Home Loans

Derek Harman
Vellum Mortgage

Richard Hearn
Intercoastal Mortgage

Dolph Hegewisch
First Home Mortgage

Brian Hope
Prosperity Home Mortgage

Erin Johnson
First Home Mortgage

Jeremy Johnson
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

CJM WEALTH ADVISERS



Advanced enough to cut through the noise. Human enough to listen.

Standard strategies and automated models can't account for the nuances of a complex life. Your financial path requires active, integrated expertise and a human lens. We provide the sophisticated solutions necessary to turn global complexity into personal opportunity.

Explore Our Integrated Approach: 703.425.0700 | **cjmltd.com** | 3110 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 900, Falls Church, VA 22042

Jordan Kingsbury
Vellum Mortgage

John Kinzer
Intercoastal Mortgage

Bob Kirchner
First Heritage Mortgage

Ryan Kurrle
First Home Mortgage

Jocelyn Lasher
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Katie Leggett
CrossCountry Mortgage

Mark Livingstone
Cornerstone First Financial

Chad Loube
United Bank

Chris Lunn
Chase

Matthew MacDougall
First Heritage Mortgage

Scott MacIntyre
loanDepot

Harry Manley III
First Home Mortgage

Brian Martucci
Capital Bank Home Loans

Robert McElroy
CrossCountry Mortgage

Chris Miller
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Craig Miller Jr.
Guild Mortgage

Zachary Mitkoff
Rocket Mortgage

James Moran
First Home Mortgage

Richard J. Moroscak Jr.
First National Bank

Lisbeth Najarro
Embrace Home Loans

Michael Novotny
First Heritage Mortgage

Matt O'Connor
First Heritage Mortgage

Brad Pace
Citizens Bank

Nick Pakulla
United Bank

Steve Palladino
Citizens Bank

Mehdi Pirzadeh
Embrace Home Loans

Lola Pol
Capital Bank Home Loans

Kevin Retcher
First Meridian Mortgage

Ben Robles
First Heritage Mortgage

Bruce Rosenberger
Rate

Marcos Sanchez
Embrace Home Loans

Bill Saunders
Guild Mortgage

Alan Schultz
US Bank

Patrick Settle
First Heritage Mortgage

Scott Story
SWBC Mortgage

Jeffrey Stempler
First Heritage Mortgage

Rob Suling
Intercoastal Mortgage

Julie Teitel
Rate

Neal Tipton
Waterstone Mortgage

Laura Triplett
Atlantic Coast Mortgage

Chandler Vogel
First Savings Mortgage

Renee Voyta
First Savings Mortgage

Lee Williams
Rate

Melinda Zuppo
Atlantic Coast Mortgage W

The Deb Griffin Team

The Face of Home Lending

Experience and expertise matter. Markets are constantly changing and strategies for purchasing and financing a home change too. A native of Montgomery County and 2nd generation Washingtonian with over 37 years-experience in mortgage lending, Deb Griffin of Chase in Washington, DC has worked with many homebuyers to help them purchase a home. Deb and her assistant, Lisa Bennett are excited to work with past borrowers as well as their children and grandchildren. Deb and her team specialize in lending to first-time homebuyers as well as self-employed buyers for primary, secondary and investment properties.

Licensed in all 50 states, Deb Griffin can lend anywhere. She has the experience of working with first-time homebuyers, new construction buyers, condo buyers, coop buyers and self-employed buyers. Chase Bank is a full-service bank and has branches in the DC, MD and VA areas as part of it's national footprint. In her spare time Deb runs marathons, serves on the board of the Montgomery County Road Runners and chases after her kids and three crazy Labrador retrievers.



Deb Griffin & Lisa Bennett, Home Lending

CHASE

DEB GRIFFIN | NMLS ID 481255
1401 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005
202.702.3262 | **bit.ly/chasedebbie**

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

TOP MORTGAGE PROFESSIONAL WASHINGTONIAN 2025

WASHINGTONIAN FACES OF WASHINGTON 2026

All home lending products are subject to credit and property approval. Rates, program terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Not all products are available in all states or for all amounts. Other restrictions and limitations apply. Home lending products provided by JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Member FDIC ©2026 JPMorgan Chase & Co.



TOP MORTGAGE PROFESSIONALS

Working with the right mortgage lender can secure you a great interest rate and make the home purchasing process seamless. Ready to buy? The DMV area lenders on the following pages can assist you in making informed decisions to achieve your homeownership goals and to reduce financial stress.

Selected photographs by Shannon Ayres, Hilary Schwab, & Michael Ventura.



RATE, INC.

Let's get you into your dream home.

Rate is proud to recognize the mortgage professionals on our team who have been named to *Washingtonian's* 2026 list of Top Mortgage Professionals. In a market as fast-moving and competitive as the D.C. metro area, earning this distinction speaks volumes about the caliber of service these individuals deliver day in and day out.

Honored as "Elite Producers" for outstanding transaction volume or selected as "Best Mortgage Professionals" through nominations from thousands of real estate agents and consumers, each of these loan officers has earned the trust of the communities they serve. From navigating complex financing to closing on time in the tightest of timelines, they bring expertise, responsiveness, and a personal touch to every transaction.

Whether you're purchasing your first home, upgrading to your next, or exploring investment opportunities, our award-winning team is here to help you move forward with confidence.

AWARD WINNERS

Alex Barresi C: 202.330.7503 alex.barresi@rate.com
Ben Freshman C: 202.747.4980 ben.freshman@rate.com
Brandon Frye C: 843.267.1054 brandon.frye@rate.com
Josh Friedson C: 646.752.1880 josh.friedson@rate.com
Jordan Jackson C: 703.946.4376 jordan.jackson@rate.com
Julie Teitel C: 917.648.1388 julie.teitel@rate.com
Kim Earls C: 410.299.4244 kim.earls@rate.com
Lee Williams C: 571.420.3116 lee.williams@rate.com
Mike Sanchez C: 540.645.8879 mike.sanchez@rate.com
Pat Gannon C: 443.336.1248 pat.gannon@rate.com
Ryan Larson C: 703.872.9029 ryan.larson@rate.com

Alex Barresi NMLS 483886; Ben Freshman NMLS 658742; Brandon Frye NMLS 519595; Josh Friedson NMLS 626892; Jordan Jackson NMLS 1991062; Julie Teitel NMLS 148432; Kim Earls NMLS 453196; Lee Williams NMLS 266952; Mike Sanchez NMLS 860048; Pat Gannon NMLS 181267; Ryan Larson NMLS 1371688; Guaranteed Rate, Inc. DBA Rate NMLS 2611. For licensing information visit nmlsconsumeraccess.org.

www.rate.com

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER



VELLUM MORTGAGE

Our Expertise. Your Advantage.

Vellum Mortgage continues its strong momentum in 2026. Founded by a group of accomplished, high-producing loan officers, Vellum was created with a clear mission: to provide a transparent, efficient mortgage experience that supports clients, empowers loan officers, and strengthens referral relationships. Our streamlined process and commitment to communication ensure a lending experience defined by clarity, consistency, and results.

We are proud to recognize ten Vellum loan officers honored by *Washingtonian* for their exceptional service and production. Their dedication, professionalism, and client-focused approach reflect the values that shape our organization. We congratulate each of them on this achievement and look forward to another year of continued growth and excellence.

Back Row (left to right):
1. Josh David NMLS ID #885983
2. Derek Harman NMLS ID #882287
3. Carlos Larrazabal NMLS ID #476370
4. Greg Kingsbury NMLS ID #476367
5. Jordan Kingsbury NMLS ID #1095269
6. Chong Yi NMLS ID #198732

Front Row (left to right):
7. Nathan Burch, CMB NMLS ID #231804
8. John P. Downs NMLS ID #476406
9. Lisa West NMLS ID #1501911
10. John Gibbins NMLS ID #405993 (not pictured)

SPECIALIZATION

FHA, VA and Conventional financing, Home Purchase and Refinance, first time homebuyers, self-employed borrowers, condos, cash-out refinances, and jumbo loans.

ACCOLADES

Vellum Mortgage top producers are nationally recognized by Scotsman Guide, National Mortgage News, and NAHREP.

Vellum Mortgage, Inc.
12700 Fair Lakes Circle, #400
Fairfax, VA 22033
571.830.2800
VellumMortgage.com



Back row L to R: Joe Dawson, Ryan Kurrle, Rob Mercer, Matt Cox
Front L to R: Chris Edge, Heather Devoto, Alex Jaffe

FIRST HOME MORTGAGE

In recognition of their outstanding service, production excellence, and commitment to their clients, First Home Mortgage is proud to celebrate this year's Washingtonian award recipients. Those honored include Matt Cox, Joe Dawson, Heather Devoto, Alex Jaffe, Rob Mercer, Ryan Paquin, Brad Restivo, Jason Lerner, Chris Edge, Ayaz Rahemanji, Alex Jaffe, Jason Nader, Tammi Printz, James Moran, Harry Manley, Dolph Hegewisch, Ryan Kurrle, Erin Johnson, and Courtney Ficken.

Each of these loan originators exemplifies the high standards that define First Home Mortgage — combining deep industry knowledge with a personal, hands-on approach that guides clients confidently from application through closing. Known for their responsiveness, professionalism, and results-driven mindset, they work closely with dedicated support teams to provide tailored solutions, clear communication, and a seamless lending experience.

We are incredibly proud of their continued dedication and the reputation they help uphold across the communities we serve. For more about First Home Mortgage, visit www.firsthome.com.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

- 2023 Best App-to-Closed Loan Conversion Process, ICE Mortgage Technology
- 2023 Top Overall Lender, *Scotsman Guide*
- 2023, 2024, 2025 Top Originators, *Scotsman Guide*
- 2025 *Mortgage Executive Magazine* Top 50 Companies to Work for

6211 Greenleigh Ave, Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21220
410.933.3100
firsthome.com



Back row - left to right: Scott MacIntyre, Krista Ellis, Dave Venugopal. Front row - left to right: Nick Genovese, Brian Kempf.

CERTAINTY HOME LENDING

Confidence Starts Here.

Recognized Among the Best. Certainty Home Lending proudly congratulates our six team members honored in this year's Real Estate issue of the Washingtonian. In a market defined by complexity and competition, recognition at this level reflects more than production – it reflects leadership, work ethic, and trust.

At Certainty, excellence is intentional. Our platform combines expansive product depth, aggressive pricing, operational excellence, and forward-thinking leadership. This enables our professionals to perform at the highest level in every market cycle. While others scale back, we are scaling forward – investing in technology, people, and growth markets throughout the Mid-Atlantic and across the country. Certainty is built for high-performing professionals who expect more: more support, more opportunity, more upside. We are proud of the integrity, consistency, and leadership demonstrated by these individuals. Their achievements reflect the culture and standard that define Certainty Home Lending.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

President's Club; Top 100 Originators; *Washingtonian*, Top Producer; *Scotsman's Guide*, Top Originators / Top Women Originators

Dave Venugopal	Krista Ellis	Brian Kempf	Scott MacIntyre	Nick Genovese
Elite Producer Platinum	*Best Mortgage Pros*	*Elite Producers Gold*	*Elite Producers Silver*	*Elite Producers Silver*
NMLS #484239	NMLS #482295	NMLS #483525	NMLS #1379810	NMLS #2149234
703.201.7402	202.246.6020	571.309.4911	703.859.2221	703.859.1336

certaintyhomelending.com



Mehdi Pirzadeh – Senior Loan Officer/VP; Marcos Sanchez – Branch Manager; Tim Higgins - Regional Executive/SVP; Shawn Barsness – Producing Sales Manager; Lisbeth Najarro - Senior Loan Officer; Pat Holland – Area Manager/SVP; Victoria Kiser – Senior Loan Officer

EMBRACE HOME LOANS

At Home in the Nation's Capital

For over 40 years, we've been helping families across the country find a place to call home. Last year, that included 1,550 families right here in the DMV area. We guide each borrower through the process with care and expertise — making sure the homebuying process is exciting, not overwhelming.

Your mortgage is as individual as your home. So we customize the loan to fit your specific needs and goals. And this personal attention shows — with our 4.9-star ratings on Google, Zillow, and experience.com. Whether you're buying your first home in Rockville or downsizing to a condo in Alexandria, we have the expertise and products to make it happen.

We're constantly innovating to help our clients succeed. Our Property Value Certificate (PVC) certifies the value of the home so buyers can waive the appraisal contingency. And with our Close Now, Save Later program, borrowers can refinance when rates drop without any lender fees.

History may define Washington, DC, but it's the individual journeys that give the District its heart. We're honored to play a small part in those moments by helping our neighbors find a place they're proud to call home.

To learn more about Embrace Home Loans (NMLS #2184), visit www.embracehomeloans.com.

CONGRATULATIONS

Best Mortgage Pros

Victoria Kiser – vkiser@embracehomeloans.com
703.328.7238

Elite Producers Platinum

Pat Holland – pholland@embracehomeloans.com
703.505.2022

Elite Producers Silver

Shawn Barsness – sbarsness@embracehomeloans.com
703.783.2322

Lisbeth Najarro – enajarro@embracehomeloans.com
571.217.1509

Marcos Sanchez – msanchez@embracehomeloans.com
301.325.4415

Mehdi Pirzadeh – mpirzadeh@embracehomeloans.com
301.332.4260

800.333.3004
@embracehomeloans
Embracehomeloans.com



REGINALD D. MADDOX

Best Mortgage Professionals and Elite Producer Platinum

Director, Maddox Mortgage Group

From Northern Virginia to the East Coast and Beyond – Born and raised in Northern Virginia, Reginald D. Maddox has built his lending legacy in his own backyard and expanded it across the East Coast.

Reginald's passion lies in helping homebuyers and homeowners achieve dreams that once seemed out of reach. He prioritizes clear communication, timely updates, and empowering every client with every available option. He works for the best rates, lowest costs, and fastest turnarounds for you. A 20-year veteran, Reginald has helped over 10,000 families and closed more than $4 billion in home loans. His reputation speaks for itself: "This is the FIFTH house we've worked on with Reginald!" His growth-driven mindset makes him one of the most trusted names on the East Coast.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

#1 Originator in Virginia & #8 Nationally – National Mortgage News (2022) | #1 in Virginia & #2 VA Originator Nationally – *Scotsman Guide* (2019-2025) | *Washingtonian* Top Producer & Best Mortgage Pro (2021-2025) | Virginia Top Mortgage Lender - All-Stars 2024

NMLS #1072553
Licensed in VA, DC, NC, SC, FL, IN, MD, GA, AL
RMaddox@MaddoxMortgageGroup.com | 571.238.1592
MaddoxMortgageGroup.com



LINDSAY SIMMONS BEALE

Best Mortgage Professionals and Elite Producer Platinum

Senior VP of Lending, Cross Country Mortgage

Lending is more than rates and numbers; it is strategy, education, and advocacy. Lindsay Simmons Beale leads the Simmons Team with a clear philosophy that every borrower deserves a thoughtful, well-defined path forward, particularly when the financial picture is complex. With more than 50 years of combined industry experience, the Simmons Team is widely recognized for its expertise in sophisticated and non-QM alternative lending scenarios. Each transaction is approached with an underwriter's mindset from the outset, resulting in strong pre-approvals, proactive communication, and a seamless path to closing. Through close collaboration with real estate professionals, the Simmons Team anticipates challenges, structures creative solutions, and empowers buyers to compete confidently in demanding markets transforming uncertainty into clarity, confidence, and keys in hand.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

Top NON QM Alternative Financing Producer at Cross Country Mortgage; Top Producer at Cross Country Mortgage; Consistently ranked among the nation's top mortgage originators since 2010; Recognized as one of the top leading Female producers in the country each year since 2019

Personal NMLS510004
11921 Freedom Drive, Suite 550, Office 559, Reston, VA 20190
M: 703.969.0793 | lindsay.beale@ccm.com
ccm.com/lindsay-simmons-beale



CONGRATULATIONS TO **ACM'S 2026 WASHINGTONIAN TOP MORTGAGE PROS!**

ACM

ATLANTIC COAST MORTGAGE

WWW.ACMLLC.COM

ATLANTIC COAST MORTGAGE

Here to Guide You Home

Congratulations to our 2026 *Washingtonian* Top Mortgage Pros. We're proud to celebrate this incredible accomplishment and the dedication it represents. This exceptional group of mortgage professionals works every day to help more individuals and families achieve the dream of homeownership. Their commitment to their clients and the communities they serve continues to set them apart.

Our Mission and Team

Headquartered in Fairfax, VA, Atlantic Coast Mortgage (ACM) is an independent mortgage lender licensed in 41 states and Washington, D.C.

Since 2011, our mission has been simple. Help our clients achieve their homeownership goals with the experience, clarity, and care they deserve. We not only help our clients close on time, but we also go the extra mile beyond closing by offering ongoing guidance, support, and best-in-class tools that help them make smarter decisions about their home investment over time.

Congratulations again to our amazing team!

ACM 2025 AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- *USA TODAY* – Top Workplaces 2025
- *Washingtonian* – Top Workplaces 2025
- *Scotsman Guide* – Top Workplaces 2025
- *Scotsman Guide* – Top Mortgage Lenders 2025
- *Scotsman Guide* – Top Originators 2025
- *Mortgage Executive Magazine* – 50 Best Companies to Work For 2025
- *Mortgage Executive Magazine* – Top 50 Mortgage Companies in America

For more information or to connect with our team, please visit www.atlanticcoastmortgage.com or follow us on or follow us on Facebook and Instagram at @acmlending

Atlantic Coast Mortgage, LLC
4097 Monument Corner Drive, Suite 600
Fairfax, VA 22030 | T: 866.311.8627
Equal Housing Lender | NMLS 643114
AtlanticCoastMortgage.com



JOHN PYNE

Best Mortgage Professionals and Elite Producer Gold

EVP, Regional Manager
Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group®

With more than 20 years in mortgage banking and over $1 billion in loans funded, John Pyne has earned a reputation as one of the DC Metro area's most trusted mortgage professionals. A consistent national Top Producer and multi-year *Washingtonian* Top Mortgage Professional, he pairs elite production with a disciplined, client-focused approach. Through a structured, team-based process grounded in strategic guidance and proactive communication, he delivers clarity, speed, and confidence in competitive markets. From the District to Northern Virginia and beyond, John brings lifelong local insight backed by sustained excellence recognized well beyond the region.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

$1B+ Lifetime Closed Volume | Multi-Year Scotsman Guide Top Originator and Two-Time Top Emerging Star | Multi-Year National Mortgage News Top Producer | Mortgage Executive Magazine Top 200 and Top 1%

NMLS #396073
Licensed in VA, DC, MD, WV, FL, NC, PA, DE, SC, GA
pyneteam@atlanticbay.com | 703.855.5158
thepyneteam.com

JACQUE SOMMER

Best Mortgage Professionals

Revolution Mortgage

Jacque began her career in the mortgage industry over 24 years ago. From day one, she made it her mission to build meaningful relationships with both clients and partners. She provides unparalleled transparency in the loan process with an unwavering commitment to quality and integrity. Her vast understanding of guidelines, product and industry knowledge, and open communication allow Jacque to deliver results and deliver them fast. Jacque is extremely passionate about her job. She credits the fact that she grew up on a working farm as the reason she has a "ridiculously strong" work ethic. Along with her dedication to work, she also has an intense desire to help people in her community. Let's Make Moves!



Jacque Sommer – Branch Production Sales Manager - NMLS #194354 - jacque@revolutionmortgage.com T2 Financial, LLC. D.B.A. Revolution Mortgage is an Equal Housing Opportunity Lender NMLS #1686046 (Nationwide Multistate Licensing System - www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) Terms, conditions, and restrictions may apply. All information contained herein is for informational purposes only and, while every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no guarantee is expressed or implied. Not a commitment to extend credit. Branch Address: 15000 Washington Street, Second Floor, Suite 202, Haymarket, VA 20169 - Branch NMLS# 2505079

NMLS# 194354
15000 Washington Street
Second Floor, Suite 202
Haymarket, VA 20169 | 703.499.1641
jacque@revolutionmortgage.com

STEVEN PALLADINO

Elite Producer Silver

Steven has been serving mortgage clients in the DC area for nearly 20 years and providing unparalleled service has been the bedrock of his success with annual Leader's and President's Club honors as both a producer and branch manager. With a degree in Neurobiology from University of Maryland, he brings a more scientific approach to the mostly unscientific and largely illogical world of home financing. His clients appreciate the thoughtful approach and the steadfast commitment to continually improving and streamlining the process. He and his team work tirelessly to ensure that clients have a positive and stress-free home buying experience, whether it's their first, last, or somewhere in between home.



SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

Jumbo financing, construction loan specialist, Multiple time Presidents and Leaders Club awards

Steven Palladino | NMLS #457661
Sales Manager
301.351.6568
s_palladino@icloud.com
www.stevenpalladino.com



Front Row Left to Right: Stefanie Krivonak, Jake Ryon, Ryan Angier, Scott Story and Stephanie Karangelen
Back Row Left to Right: Jack Cosgrove, Shane Lee, Austin Auger, Charles Logan, Matt Borgerson, Joey Severin, Darryl Jefferson and Stefano Dohertry

SWBC MORTGAGE CORPORATION

The Happiest Way Home

In a competitive housing market, having the right lending partner makes all the difference. That's why our team of established, local loan officers, trusted throughout the region for years has joined forces with **SWBC Mortgage** a nationally recognized mortgage leader known for its strength, stability, and commitment to exceptional service.

SWBC Mortgage brings a powerful combination of national resources and deep local expertise. Our branch was built for this community: personalized guidance, fast turn times, and solutions tailored to every homebuyer, from first-timers to seasoned investors. Backed by cutting-edge technology and a full suite of loan products, we make the mortgage process clear, efficient, and confidently achievable.

What sets us apart is simple—relationship-driven service supported by a brand with nationwide reach. Our team lives here, works here, and is invested in helping our neighbors succeed. Whether you're purchasing, refinancing, or exploring your next move, we're here to guide you home with transparency, integrity, and experience you can count on.

Discover the difference of a trusted local team powered by national strength.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

Specializing in purchase and refinance loans, first-time homebuyer programs, jumbo financing, and tailored mortgage solutions. Recognized for market expertise, exceptional communication, and consistently high client satisfaction.

NMLS #9741
4500 East West Hwy, Suite 750
Bethesda, MD 20814
swbcmortgage.com/bethesda



RICH GODBOUT

Best Mortgage Professionals and Elite Producer Silver

Newrez

From the Capitol to the Coast – A longtime Washingtonian, Rich shares his trusted guidance from Rehoboth Beach.

Rich credits his seasoned team for his success. "They expertly guide our clients to successful closings with a concierge-level experience. This enables me to provide personalized service to tailor the ideal loan for our clients. Also, our industry-leading extensive product line ensures we can meet the unique needs of every client."

Rich is passionate about serving his community, earning him the distinction of being ranked #2 company-wide at Newrez for total volunteer hours. With a perpetual smile and his contagious laughter, you'll find Rich volunteering with his wife, Julie, at their son Brody's school, coaching, organizing events, or leading beach cleanups with his dogs, Rocky & Ozzy.

SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

Newrez – President's Club, Care Fiercely Award 200+ Volunteer Hours
Top Originators – *Scotsman, Washingtonian, Mortgage Executive Mag.*
Newrez – IMF Top Military Friendly Lender, Scotsman Top Retail Lenders

NMLS #482307 | Newrez LLC NMLS #3013
Godbout Mortgage Team
240.372.7424 (RICH)
Rich.Godbout@newrez.com | www.RichGodbout.com

BILL SAUNDERS

Elite Producer Silver

Guild Mortgage

Bill is a seasoned veteran of the mortgage banking industry with over 25 years of dedicated service to the Real Estate community throughout Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia. Bill meets with each prospective homebuyer in person and provides them with a very detailed plan based on their financial goals ensuring that they enter into their home purchase feeling both confident and comfortable. He is known for his integrity, knowledge and warm personality. He prides himself on his work ethic, responsiveness, and the customer service he provides to his customers and the Real Estate community as a whole.



SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

Scotsman Guide - Top Mortgage Originator Nationwide, *Mortgage Executive Magazine*- Top 1% Mortgage Originator Nationwide, Guild Mortgage- Circle Of Excellence

3140 West Ward Road
Dunkirk, MD 20754
301.440.9102 | NMLS 455891
bsaunders@guildmortgage.net
dmvloanofficer.com

CRAIG MILLER

Elite Producer Silver

Guild Mortgage

With over 30 years in mortgage lending, I help clients nationwide achieve homeownership. I specialize in executives, self-employed borrowers, first-time buyers, and veterans, making the process simple and stress-free. My focus is on creating customized solutions that support each client's long-term financial goals. Outside of work, I stay active, enjoy trap shooting, and follow Formula 1 racing.

I am authorized to do business in the states of the District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org/); Guild Mortgage Company; NMLS #3274; Equal Housing Opportunity; www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org.



SPECIALIZATION AND ACCOLADES

President's Club Member, Lifetime Achievement Award, Over 1+ Billion Closed.

Craig Miller, Branch Manager
NMLS# 686948
106 N Lee Street, #202 2nd floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.628.9574
craig.miller@guildmortgage.net



PROSPERITY HOME MORTGAGE

Relentless in Service

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PHOTO CONTEST



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The hotel eatery Casamara

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAULA WILSON/COURTESY OF CASAMARA

The Briefing

Dupont Circle and Logan Circle

Great places to eat, drink, shop, and play in these Northwest DC neighborhoods—including old haunts worth another visit.

By Ike Allen and Kate Corliss

BUILT AFTER THE CIVIL WAR TO FULFILL Pierre L'Enfant's grand plan for Washington, the traffic circle then called Pacific Circle—later renamed for Union general Samuel Francis Du Pont—began shaping the Dupont Circle neighborhood that we know today. Over the decades, the area expanded with an influx of embassies, shops, restaurants, and residences. Meanwhile, its neighbor to the east, Logan Circle, experienced a similar bout of development as Victorian rowhouses sprang up and nearby 14th Street cemented itself as a major retail destination.

Both areas took a hit after the 1968 riots but bounced back, thanks in part to a surge of LGBTQ+ residents. Today, they're among the city's buzziest neighborhoods, with plenty of places to eat, shop, and have fun. Here are some new spots as well as old favorites.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

Standing Room Only

Probably DC's only pasta restaurant with no chairs, **Gemini** *(1509 17th St., NW)* is one-of-a-kind in more ways than one. It's a natural-wine shop, an ice-cream parlor, and a sourdough-pizza place, but it truly shines with pastas such as Greek gnocchi, called gkogkes, in tomato butter and small plates like roasted Japanese sweet potato with feta. Gemini, which opened in 2023, has an undeniable pedigree, too: It's run by chef Johnny Monis, who was behind Komi and Little Serow, two of the most beloved and distinctive Washington restaurants of the past few decades.

Back in Action

Last year, chef Paolo Dungca announced the closure of his hip, modern Filipino restaurant on H Street. Less than two months later, **Kayu** *(1633 17th St., NW)* was

WHAT'S SELLING



The historic neighborhoods of Dupont and Logan circles—epicenters of DC life—are dotted with old condos, townhouses, and a few luxury buildings. Here's what's sold in the past few months.

$365,000

A 600-square-foot condo in Logan Circle's 1225 Lofts building with one bedroom, one bathroom, and large windows.

$675,000

A 1908 Dupont Circle condo with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a fireplace, and lots of natural light.

$900,250

A two-floor loft in the St. John's Wood building in Logan Circle with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, high ceilings, a private balcony, and two assigned parking spaces.

$1,440,000

A Dupont Circle townhouse, built in 1885, with three bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, a den, two fireplaces, a backyard, and a separate two-bedroom apartment.

$2,012,000

A late-1880s three-story townhouse in Logan Circle with 2,760 square feet of living space, including five bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, five fireplaces, and a deck.

back with a cozy new dining room in Dupont Circle. Try Dungca's decadent cassava cake topped with crab fat, jamón Ibérico, and trout roe; chorizo sliders with pickled papaya; or the grilled half chicken with spicy vinegar.

Bowls From the Balkans

For the past five years, **Zeleno** *(1605 Connecticut Ave., NW)*, a cozy health-food cafe, has been serving avocado toast and açai bowls in a space decorated with plants and a wall of cross-sectioned trees. Look closer, though, and you'll find some items that reflect the owners' Bulgarian background: The Bulgarian yogurt bowl is a perfect light breakfast.

Boutique Mystique

The luxe Sixty Hotel appeared on the Dupont scene last year, bringing with it the coastal Mediterranean eatery **Casamara** *(1337 Connecticut Ave., NW)*. Restaurateur Hanif Harji draws on numerous cuisines, serving such highlights as grilled-cabbage salad with yogurt-tahini dressing; sardine sourdough toasts; and braised pork shoulder with candied-pear mostarda. The wood-paneled Reynold's Bar around the back of the hotel is also a draw.

Viva México

Chihuahua-born chef Christian Irabién opened one of DC's best Mexican restaurants in 2023. **Amparo Fondita** *(2002 P St., NW)* feels buzzy and cool at dinner—look for ceviches or aguachiles, plus festive large plates like chile en nogada—but we also recommend the set lunch, inspired by the quick multi-course comida corrida tradition in Mexico City.

Hygge Hut

Opened in 2018 by the former executive chef for the ambassador of Finland, **Mikko Nordic Fine Food** *(1636 R St., NW)* embraces hygge, the Scandinavian term for a feeling of cozy contentment. You'll find Danish open-faced sandwiches with gravlax or shrimp on rye bread, Swedish pancakes, and hearty main courses like chicken schnitzel with caper butter. It's also a good place to stop for just a hot toddy, hot chocolate, or glögg (mulled wine).

P Street Pizza

Fine-dining chef Russell Smith aimed to perfect a New York-ish style of thin-crust pizza when he opened **Alfreda** *(2016 P St., NW)* in 2024. What he came up with is a laid-back neighborhood spot with



Dupont Underground, a cultural hub

PHOTOGRAPH OF HOUSE BY PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREK & VEE; DUPONT UNDERGROUND BY CAMILA OBSCURA

indulgent yet simple pies. The Alfreda—with crushed tomato, fresh and aged mozzarella, romano, oregano, and black pepper—is somehow more than the sum of its parts.

Tandoori Trend

When a team of Indian chefs opened **Pappe** *(1317 14th St., NW)* in 2018, it was the only Indian restaurant along 14th Street. It also helped usher in a boom in creative yet traditional South Asian restaurants that has made DC's Indian food scene even more exciting. Some of the best dishes on the menu are kissed by an open-fire grill: Tellicherry lamb chop, chicken tikka masala, and fresh naan. Pappe's particularly powerful vindaloo is another specialty.

Subterranean Street Food

Drawing inspiration from Bangkok's buzzing Chinatown, Andy and Billy Thammasathiti opened **Sura** *(2016 P St., NW)* in 2022. They describe the underground space as an "izakaya" or tavern, and serve great drinking food, such as sesame chips with peanut-curry/pork dip, spicy duck laab, and wok-fried pork-belly rice. Wash it all down with house cocktails, beer, or sake.

SC to DC

Former Vidalia chef Hamilton Johnson opened **Mallard** *(1337 14th St., NW)* in 2024 just off Logan Circle. Dishes such as pimiento cheese with Ritz crackers and chow chow; Sea Island pea dip; shrimp and grits with country ham; and blue-catfish schnitzel draw from Johnson's South Carolina roots, as does the vintage-Americana decor.

Beyond Barbecue

Named after the earthenware pots that Koreans traditionally use to ferment kimchi, **Onggi** *(2100 P St., NW)* opened last year. Delicate side dishes such as marinated perilla leaves, mountain vegetables, white-pear kimchi, and stir-fried anchovies are refined, but there are also bigger flavors, including kimchi-pork stew, grilled short ribs, and bone broth with noodles. A jeongsik set-lunch special—your choice of stew or protein such as grilled bulgogi or mackerel, accompanied by three sides and multigrain rice—is an affordable way to taste the products of Onggi's kitchen.



Yoga with puppies at Puppy Sphere

PHOTOGRAPH BY PUPPY SPHERE

SHOPPING AND THINGS TO DO

Taking a Page

In addition to a wide-ranging selection of reads, Black-owned **Solid State Books** *(1809 14th St., NW)* offers mindfulness workshops, craft circles, and monthly book clubs—themes include romance, mystery, and LGBTQ+. For $50, you can secure a yearlong membership, which grants access to discounted books and event tickets at both the Logan Circle store, which opened in late 2023, and the original location on H Street, Northeast.

Out of the Woods

Utah sporting-goods retailer **Backcountry** *(2108 14th St., NW)* chose Logan Circle as the site for its first Washington-area store in 2023. Shoppers can find apparel and equipment for skiing, cycling, camping, and more, including products from outdoor lifestyle brands like Patagonia, the North Face, and Sorel.

Eye Candy

Warby Parker *(1629 14th St., NW)* opened its sixth DC outpost in Logan Circle last November. The eyewear retailer offers a variety of accessories—prescription specs, contact lenses, sunglasses—plus eye exams. This location boasts three exclusive pieces of artwork by French illustrator Lisa Laubreaux, which are great for ogling.

Branching Out

Netflix-loving locals might remember when **Plntr** *(1825 18th St., NW)* was featured as a date spot in the 2024 DC season of *Love Is Blind*. The plant boutique, which opened in Dupont in 2020 and expanded to Crystal City last year, offers all kinds of greenery—plus accessories, gardening supplies, and repotting services. It also hosts floral arrangement and other craft classes, including card-making and even an herbal-tea-making intensive.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SALT & SUNDRY

Downward Dog

Puppy Sphere *(1638 R St., NW)*, a chain of puppy yoga studios, brought its adorable operation to Dupont Circle last spring. A $60 ticket gets you access to a 45-minute beginner-friendly yoga class followed by a half-hour snuggle session with pups from local breeders and rescue groups, plus sparkling mocktails.

Glow Up

The second DC location of the buzzy facial haven **Glowbar** *(1450 P St., NW)* arrived in Logan Circle last winter. Facials are performed by licensed aesthetic ians, who customize services to each client's skincare needs using techniques like dermaplaning, chemical peels, and LED light therapy. A $65 monthly membership fee includes one facial each month, plus exclusive merch and discounts on Glowbar's skincare line.

Get Your Ticket

40 1986-2026 CELEBRATING DCCADV

DCCADV's 40th Anniversary Party

April 29, 2026, at 6 pm

1111 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington DC

Join the **DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence** for an elegant rooftop cocktail party with heavy hors d'oeuvres for celebration, networking, and reflection as we look ahead to the next chapter of our work.

RSVP today!

Watch Yourself

Shinola *(1631 14th St., NW)* brought its selection of leather-bound timepieces to Logan Circle in 2015, marking the Detroit brand's third flagship location. In addition to its signature watches, collections include artisan bags, jewelry, and even pet accessories.

Vintage Vibes

Owned and operated by its founder, Caitrine Callison, since 1986, **Secondi** *(1702 Connecticut Ave., NW)* is widely recognized as DC's longest-standing women's consignment shop. The racks boast a staggering selection of secondhand designer finds–think Gucci bags, Christian Louboutin heels, and David Yurman jewelry–for a fraction of their original price.

District of Decor

Founder Amanda McClements expanded her do-it-all housewares shop, **Salt & Sundry** *(1625 14th St., NW)*, to Logan Circle in 2014, two years after opening her original Union Market location. Shop her selection of goodies by local and artisanal makers, including candles, jewelry, leather goods, handmade ceramics, and decor.

On the Market

The **Dupont Circle FreshFarm Market** *(1600 20th St., NW)* has been a weekend tradition since 1997. Every Sunday from 8:30 to 1:30, more than 50 farmers and artisans gather to sell the fruits of their labor. Along with produce, local businesses offer coffee beans, baked goods, condiments, and more.

Stage Right

Known for its intimate 200-person auditorium, Logan Circle's **Studio Theatre** *(1501 14th St., NW)* has been a cornerstone of DC's performing-arts scene since it opened in 1978. On the marquee this spring: *Purlie Victorious*, a Tony-nominated satirical comedy about a reverend who travels through Jim Crow-era Georgia to save his father's church.

Rocking On

In a city that's full of music venues, the **Black Cat** *(1811 14th St., NW)* still stands out more than three decades after its founding by former Gray Matter drummer Dante Ferrando. Upcoming headliners include British punk rockers Mclusky, the twee pop band Heavenly, and indie pop singer-songwriter Ritt Momney.

Picture-Perfect

Founded by art collectors Duncan and Marjorie Acker Phillips more than a century ago, the **Phillips Collection** *(1600 21st St., NW)* houses nearly 6,000 works by artists including Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edward Hopper, and Georgia O'Keeffe. Through early May, visitors can see the exhibition "There Somewhere," a video installation showcasing the work of artist Peter Campus.

House Tour

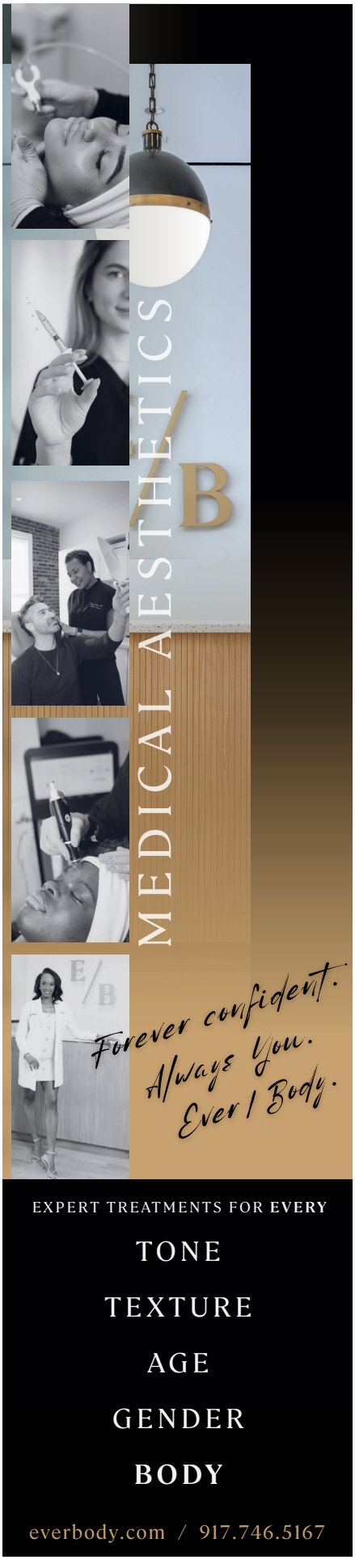
In the early 1900s, American diplomat Larz Anderson and his wife, Isabel, threw their share of soirees at what's now the historic **Anderson House** *(2118 Massachusetts Ave., NW)*. Today, the Gilded Age mansion is overseen by the Society of the Cincinnati and operates as a museum for the public to tour. Artifacts from the couple's many extravagant trips abroad remain on display, from Asian ivories to French home furnishings.

Art Down Below

Dupont Underground *(19 Dupont Cir., NW)* opened in 2016, reimagining a deserted streetcar station into a nonprofit cultural hub. The space hosts a wide variety of programming, including poetry readings and fashion shows. Coming this spring: an adaptation of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* featuring only four actors and no set or props.

History Lesson

Mary McLeod Bethune used her Logan Circle home as headquarters for the National Council of Negro Women, an organization she founded in 1935 to advocate for the interests of Black women. Today, the **Mary McLeod Bethune Council House** *(1318 Vermont Ave., NW)* is recognized as a National Historic Site. Visitors can take guided tours on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. W





GET FIT FOR *Summer*

Is aesthetic medicine the secret to igniting your internal confidence?

BY LAUREN REISIG

If you are a Gen Xer or Millennial on social media, you have likely been targeted with ads for anti-aging secrets and miracle at-home remedies. These products promise results that will lead friends to remark on how radiant you look, ask about your new workout routine, or tell you that whatever you are doing is clearly working.

The truth is that at-home treatments will never replace aesthetic medicine. Ads are designed to chase trends and sell gimmicks. That's marketing, not medicine.

Aesthetic medicine is all about you. In a consultation room or surgical suite, you're not merely the target of an advertising algorithm. You're an individual with unique bone structure and physiology and individualized wellness goals.

The best board-certified plastic surgeons in the DC region recognize that aesthetic medicine has evolved to become one aspect of total body wellness. What this looks like for every patient is different. It could mean creating a comprehensive aesthetic and wellness plan that incorporates body contouring and injectables in conjunction with glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonists. Or it could be opting for a revolutionary breast augmentation technique that minimizes downtime and disruption to your fitness regimen.

Aesthetic medicine is not about chasing beauty ideals. It's a holistic approach to achieving body positivity and confidence that will get you fit for summer and beyond.



A transformative journey begins at Washingtonian Plastic Surgery

Dr. Navin Singh—an award winning, dual board certified plastic surgeon—stands at the forefront of aesthetic innovation, blending artistry and surgical precision to enhance your natural beauty.

"We are committed to ensuring your comfort, safety, and satisfaction at every step of your transformative journey," said Dr. Singh. "We offer injectables, laser rejuvenation, and facelifts to give patients the sparkle of youth they're looking for."

Dr. Singh also specializes in Lipo 360 and liposculpture to contour and reduce unwanted fat in areas like the chest, arms, thighs, abs, and the love handles. These treatments are an efficient and effective way to get fit and feel confident.

Embrace your most confident, beautiful self

"When you feel good about yourself, this positivity fosters a newfound sense of self-assurance and connection," said Dr. Singh.

At Washingtonian Plastic Surgery, you won't just get fit for summer. You'll embark on a journey of self-discovery, the impact of which radiates far beyond the reflection in the mirror.

"I can't express how profoundly Dr. Singh has turned my life around," said a patient who wished to be identified as C.F. "When I feel good, I can genuinely feel good about my relationships."

For more information, visit WashPS.com, follow on Instagram @navinsingh.md, or call 703-345-4377 to book a consultation.

REJUVE PLASTIC SURGERY | DR. KIRIT BHATT, MD, FACS

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD, REJUVENATE IN OURS!

Dr. Kirit Bhatt, MD, FACS is recognized as one of the top board-certified plastic surgeons in DC as well as nationally, and has been inducted into the *Washingtonian* Top Doctor Hall of Fame. His education has taken him to some of the most selective and rigorous universities in the US, such as Stanford University. He is passionate about the art and science of plastic surgery, and specializes in face and mommy makeover/body contouring surgeries.

Dr. Bhatt founded Rejuve Plastic Surgery located in McLean, Virginia, and aims to provide patients with an exceptional experience from the friendly, welcoming staff to the modern facilities.





Actual Patient

Rejuve Plastic Surgery
1800 Tysons Blvd, Suite 320
McLean, VA 22102

Office: 703-447-4148 | Fax: 571-222-5066
@drkiritbhatt | Rejuveplasticsurgery.com

Intentional subtlety is the key to timeless beauty

Rejuve Plastic Surgery's philosophy is refreshingly simple: there is no template face and no template body.

"True aesthetic excellence is subtle, proportionate, and enduring," said Dr. Kirit Bhatt, Rejuve Plastic Surgery's award-winning, board-certified plastic surgeon. "We don't chase trends. We refine what already exists."

In an initial consultation with Dr. Bhatt at his McLean practice, the conversation extends beyond procedures to include nutrition, exercise, stress management, skincare, and long-term maintenance. Dr. Bhatt views aesthetic medicine as part of a broader lifestyle.

Think of his approach as surgical precision meets artistic restraint. The holistic subtleties will have you walking into this next season radiating a timeless elegance.

"The best compliment we receive is when patients tell us their friends say, 'You look amazing,' but can't quite pinpoint why," remarked Dr. Bhatt. "That subtlety is intentional."

Care plans designed for longevity

Summer may be just around the corner, but Rejuve's team will never rush the process. Through patient education, clear explanations of options, ongoing support, and direct accessibility to the team, patients feel cared for at every stage.

The breadth of surgical and non-surgical options available to Rejuve Plastic Surgery's patients reflects Dr. Bhatt's commitment to individualized aesthetics.

Mommy makeovers, facelifts, and other popular surgical options can provide structural enhancement to get you fit for summer. They are complemented by the med spa's non-surgical treatments that promote consistent habits to support each patient's enduring beauty.

Dr. Bhatt and his team hope that by the time patients leave, they see a more confident version of themselves when they look in the mirror. As one patient expressed, "You didn't change me—you restored me."

Ready to feel restored by summer? Call 703-447-4148 or visit rejuveplasticsurgery.com to book an initial consultation.
IG: @drkiritbhatt

Aesthetic care begins with a relationship, not a procedure

Aesthetic medicine is a deeply personal and vulnerable endeavor. With the wrong care team, it can feel transactional. That's why Dr. Larry Lickstein, a board-certified plastic surgeon, founded Elle Aesthetic Arts & Plastic Surgery, a practice where patient care and connections endure beyond a procedure.

At Elle Aesthetics, the relationship begins with a pre-appointment phone call. This conversation builds rapport and creates a strong foundation of comfort and trust that strengthens throughout the patient's aesthetic care journey.

After more than 25 years of practice and numerous awards, Dr. Lickstein is still humbled when patients travel from afar to visit his Northern Virginia practice or send photos from weddings, milestone birthdays, and other life events.

"They feel beautiful, confident, and happy, and it's truly meaningful that they want us to share in that moment," remarked Dr. Lickstein.

Get fit for summer with functional wellness

Elle Aesthetics balances aesthetic treatments with functional wellness to help patients look and feel their best. Their



tailored treatment plans build on a patient's existing exercise, nutrition, and stress management practices to optimize results.

"Our goal is never to change who someone is, but to help them look like the most confident and refreshed version of themselves," said Dr. Lickstein.

Dr. Lickstein has extensive experience in weight loss body contouring, advanced body contouring, secondary breast surgery, and injectables. The Elle Aesthetics team will guide you through treatment options to identify the ones that work best with your lifestyle to achieve your desired aesthetic. When used in coordination with nonsurgical options such as medical weight management with GLP-1 and skin rejuvenation treatments, patients will look as great as they feel.

"Many of our patients are already committed to healthy lifestyles," said Dr. Lickstein. "We simply help them bridge the gap between how they feel and what they see in the mirror."

To start your journey with Elle Aesthetic Arts & Plastic Surgery, contact 571-440-5005 or visit plasticsurgerynorthernvirginia.com.

ELLE
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Subtle. Sophisticated. Surgical Precision.



At Elle Aesthetic Arts & Plastic Surgery, board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Larry Lickstein helps patients achieve refined, natural results through a thoughtful combination of surgical expertise, advanced technology, and personalized care.

A Princeton graduate trained at Harvard with more than 25 years of experience—including faculty service at Cleveland Clinic Florida—Dr. Lickstein partners with patients to design individualized aesthetic strategies that complement healthy lifestyles and support long-term confidence.

LARRY LICKSTEIN, MD, FACS

- Diplomate, American Board of Plastic Surgery
- Princeton educated. Harvard surgically trained
- Former faculty, Cleveland Clinic Florida
- Recognized Top Doctor in multiple local, regional, and national publications
- Breast surgery, advanced body contouring, facial injectables, and weight optimization

Mention Washingtonian for a preferred consultation rate when scheduling

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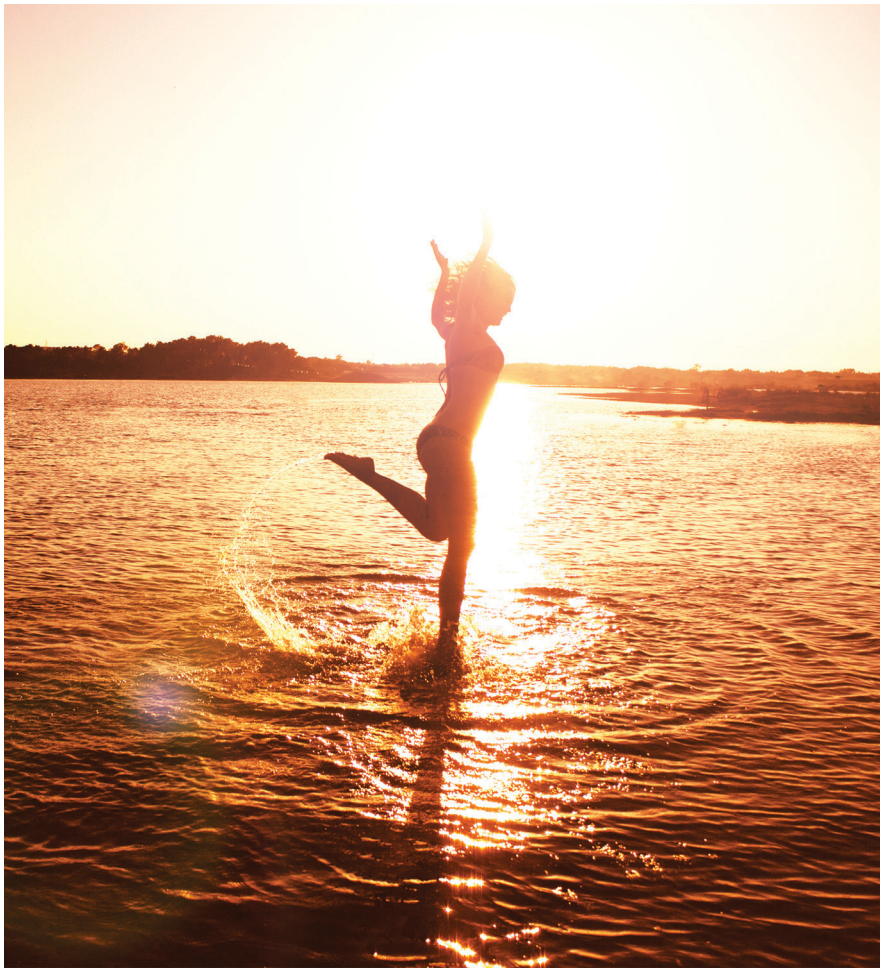

Welcome to your aesthetic home

Breast augmentation that requires no general anesthesia, 72 hours of downtime, and unmatched aesthetics sounds too good to be true. Until Preservé™, it was.

Preservé™ is a revolutionary, minimally invasive breast augmentation technique that delivers natural, subtle enhancement while allowing for an ultra-rapid recovery.

Dr. Troy Pittman, an internationally recognized expert in aesthetic breast surgery, is one of the area's most sought-after breast augmentation and revisionist surgeons. He also happens to be the first board-certified plastic surgeon in the DC region to perform Preservé™ and has performed the most cases.

The tissue-sparing procedure just launched in the US in March, but Dr. Pittman has been training in this advanced technique since last summer. He performs Preservé™ procedures in his fully accredited surgical suite at Somenek+PittmanMD's West End location, as well as in his office in New York City.

Somenek+PittmanMD's surgical suite is an aesthetic home away from home. Upon entering the office, patients are enveloped in the practice's signature scent and serene soundtrack. The suite has as many hallmarks of luxury travel as it does a state-of-the-art medical facility. The entire experience is so calming and reassuring that you'll almost wish the procedure lasted longer than the estimated 30 minutes. *Almost*.

A surgeon at the vanguard of breast augmentation

Dr. Pittman often earns the distinction of being at the forefront of groundbreaking advancements in breast augmentation.

In 2024, the Food and Drug Administration approved Motiva®, the safest breast implant ever to hit the market.

"I was thrilled to be the first surgeon in the Mid-Atlantic to use the implant," Dr. Pittman said of the device he now uses in Preservé™ augmentations.

Motiva®'s uniquity stems from its biocompatibility and low rupture rate.

But what does that actually mean in layperson's terms? How does it translate to patient care?

Biocompatibility essentially means the body is less likely to have an adverse reaction to the introduction of a foreign object, thereby decreasing the inflammatory response. The implant itself is one unit (think gumdrop rather than water balloon), which accounts for its rupture rate of less than one percent.

Combine Motiva®'s low complication rates and high patient satisfaction with the minimally invasive Preservé™ technique, and you have the safest implant with the most groundbreaking procedure in the history of breast augmentation.

Get fit for summer without the anesthesia or downtime

The beauty of Preservé™ lies in the precision of the technique, the safety of the procedure, and the ease of recovery.

The procedure can be done with mild sedation instead of general anesthesia. Typically, patients go out to dinner the same night, don't require narcotics for pain management, and return to daily activities within 72 hours.

"Because we're not cutting the tissues like we do in conventional breast augmentation, there is minimal downtime, minimal swelling, and minimal discomfort," explained Dr. Pittman.

Schedule the surgery at the beginning of May and you'll be ready for Memorial Day. Schedule for mid-June and you'll be ready for the 4th of July. There's no need to block off weeks on your calendar or concoct creative excuses to account for a prolonged absence during the recovery period.

"When you wear your bathing suit to the pool, your friends will think, 'Did she or didn't she?' 'Are those fake or are they just really great breasts?'" remarked Dr. Pittman.

His advice: "Keep them guessing!"

Welcome to your aesthetic home. To schedule a personalized consultation, visit somenekpittmanmd.com or call 202-602-1938.

Introducing

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Minimally-Invasive Breast Augmentation

No disruption of your own tissue
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Dr. Troy Pittman
Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon



Off the Market!

A peek inside some of Washington's recent high-end residential transactions

DC

1 **WHERE:** Wesley Heights.
BOUGHT BY: Alex Velinsky, a partner and finance lawyer at Morgan Lewis, and Elizabeth Velinsky.
LISTED: $3,550,000.
SOLD: $3,300,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 214.
BRAGGING POINTS: A renovated 1940 Colonial with six bedrooms, five and a half bathrooms, a dining room with cathedral ceilings, a recreation room, a flagstone patio, and a fenced backyard.







2 **WHERE:** Georgetown.
BOUGHT BY: **Madeline M. Grayson,** cofounder of Tuckernuck, and **Paul C. Grayson,** a principal at BG Ventures.
LISTED: **$5,995,000.**
SOLD: **$5,995,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 9.
BRAGGING POINTS: An 1850s brick house with seven bedrooms, seven bathrooms, two half baths, three fireplaces, a grand foyer, a double-parlor living room, a library, a flagstone terrace, a brick patio and garden, and a pool with a pool house.

WHERE: Berkley.
SOLD BY: **Jason L. Twomey,** a financial adviser at Oppenheimer & Co., and **Melissa H. Twomey,** founder and principal of VisionArt Consulting.
LISTED: **$5,999,000.**
SOLD: **$5,999,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 12.
BRAGGING POINTS: A Neoclassical-style mansion with six bedrooms, five and a half bathrooms, three fireplaces, a reception area, a library, a recreation room, a dining patio, a loggia, a pool terrace, and an English garden.

MARYLAND

3 **WHERE:** Bethesda.
SOLD BY: **Susan L. Furbay,** a hospitality-real-estate investment professional.
LISTED: **$3,599,000.**
SOLD: **$3,550,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 105.
BRAGGING POINTS: A transitional-style home with five bedrooms, five bathrooms, two half baths, two fireplaces, a library, a recreation room, a front porch, and a tree-lined backyard.

WHERE: Chevy Chase.
BOUGHT BY: **David M. Uhlmann,** former EPA assistant administrator, and **Virginia E. Murphy,** a professor at the University of Michigan.
LISTED: **$3,195,000.**
SOLD: **$3,000,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 38.
BRAGGING POINTS: A new three-story house with six bedrooms, five and a half bathrooms, two fireplaces, an elevator, a large recreation room, a covered patio, and a rear porch.

VIRGINIA

4 **WHERE:** McLean.
SOLD BY: Former Washington Caps center **Nicklas Backstrom.**
LISTED: **$11,995,000.**
SOLD: **$11,000,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 188.
BRAGGING POINTS: A 17,135-square-foot estate with seven bedrooms, seven bathrooms, five half baths, six fireplaces, dual staircases, an elevator, a catering kitchen, a sauna, a theater, a gym, a recreation room, and a resort-style pool area.

WHERE: McLean.
BOUGHT BY: **James M. Roth,** an author and former CIA officer.
LISTED: **$7,395,000.**
SOLD: **$7,200,000.**
DAYS ON MARKET: 116.
BRAGGING POINTS: A custom-built home with five bedrooms, five bathrooms, three half baths, five fireplaces, an elevator, a two-story foyer, a library, a theater, a fitness room, an outdoor kitchen, a saltwater pool, and a four-car garage. W

Sales information provided by Bright MLS.



PHOTOGRAPHS ON OPPOSITE PAGE BY HOMEVISIT/COURTESY OF VICTOR MADDUX/COMPASS; THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT BY NATHAN STEWART; TOP RIGHT BY HOME VISIONS MEDIA; BOTTOM COURTESY OF SHERIF ABDALLA/COMPASS



CONTINUED FROM **PAGE 57**

"a not-insignificant" fraction of the *Post's* losses for the year.

A few months earlier, more than 400 newsroom employees had signed an extraordinary letter to Bezos saying they were "deeply alarmed" by the *Post's* growing problems. They urged him to come to the office and meet with employees. He never did. As the outrages and disappointments piled up, dozens of *Post* journalists left for jobs elsewhere. So many landed at the *New York Times* that the joke inside the *Post* was that the *Times's* Washington bureau had become Lewis's "third newsroom."

The mood darkening, reporters began to gossip about whether Lewis's fondness for after-hours drinking had affected his leadership. The satirical British magazine *Private Eye* had once nicknamed Lewis "Thirsty," in reference to his frequent pub appearances. One former *Post* reporter told *Washingtonian* about an after-hours episode at a company-sponsored advertiser conference in Florida in 2024: Amid rounds of cocktails, Lewis made an embarrassing remark in front of clients. Several described an encounter between Lewis and the *Post's* lobby security staff in which the new publisher talked about his hangover. Four former *Post* reporters told *Washingtonian* they brought up Lewis's drinking in exit interviews with the company's human-resources managers. One expressed concern that Lewis might embarrass the *Post* in public settings; another wondered if his "disheveled and hungover" appearance had a negative impact on business dealings. "It was clear to me that this wasn't news" to the HR interviewer, one said. (The *Post* didn't respond to direct inquiries about this topic.)

Another question puzzled the newsroom: Why did Bezos, surely as savvy a businessman as any alive, stick with Lewis for so long? People who know Lewis note that his career has advanced with the trust and approval of powerful men–Bezos, Murdoch, and Boris Johnson. The former London mayor and British prime minister, Johnson was a longtime correspondent and columnist for the *Telegraph* and an old colleague and friend of Lewis's. Lewis served as one of Johnson's political consultants after leaving the *Journal* in 2020, advising him in the aftermath of "Partygate," a scandal involving social events held at 10 Downing Street while Britain was under strict pandemic lockdown orders. Johnson rewarded Lewis's loyalty by submitting his name for a knighthood in honor of "political and public service" in 2022. Glenn Kessler, who wrote the *Post's* Fact Checker column, says that Lewis–now officially Sir William–"is really good at managing up." As for Bezos's loyalty to him in the face of enduring failure, Kessler speculates: "No one wants to admit he made a mistake, especially a billionaire."

"As far as the newsroom is concerned, he's a nonentity," a *Post* reporter said of Lewis shortly before his departure. "We haven't seen him in months. He's a ghost."

It's not clear whether Bezos pushed Lewis out or if he jumped ship of his own accord. But it's apparent that the *Post* owner wasn't sentimental about his departure. In a brief memo to staff, Bezos praised the paper's continuing leadership and signaled "an exciting and thriving next chapter." He didn't mention Lewis at all.

Paying the Price

By almost every measure, Lewis left a legacy of ashes. The *Post* continues to produce important work, ranging from pieces on DOGE's decimation of the federal workforce to coverage of Trump's mauling of the Kennedy Center. But its stature and reach are in decline.

Among current and former employees, there's a somewhat surprising theory: that Bezos isn't actually displeased by the paper's travails. In the treacherous, retaliatory atmosphere of Trump's second term, a smaller, weaker, and less troublesome *Post* might pose fewer risks to the more prosperous parts of Bezos's business empire–particularly Amazon and Blue Origin, his rocket company.

During Trump's first term, the President periodically lashed out at Bezos and the *Post*, accusing the paper of being "the Amazon Washington Post." Bezos is keenly aware that Trump's hostility jeopardized Amazon's delivery deals with the US Postal Service and complicated the company's pursuit of a $10 billion Pentagon cloud-computing contract. (Amazon lost its bid for the project in 2019 but later sued, alleging Trump had applied "improper pressure" to influence the outcome. The project eventually was scrapped, and Amazon became one of four contractors on a revised contract.) Today Bezos also has to keep up with Elon Musk–owner of the spaceflight competitor SpaceX–who contributed nearly $300 million to Republican candidates, including Trump, in the 2024 election.

It's not hard to squint and see the many pieces of a puzzle falling into place: Bezos's spiking of the *Post's* Harris endorsement; Amazon's $1 million contribution to Trump's inaugural committee; Bezos's attendance at Trump's inauguration; his abrupt decision to transform the *Post's* opinion section into a more Trump-friendly environment; Amazon's purchase of reruns of Trump's *The Apprentice* reality show and its investment of $75 million in a Melania Trump-produced documentary; Amazon's contribution to Trump's White House ballroom project. Is it mere coincidence that Trump has refrained from criticizing Bezos, Amazon, and the *Post* in his second term, remaining silent even as the paper underwent its convulsive contraction in February? Possibly not.

"[Bezos's] goal for the *Post* is to lose less money and for it to be something that isn't a huge headache for his other businesses," a former editor at the paper says. "Losing 250,000 subscribers is the price you pay for not antagonizing Trump. Amazon is the source of his wealth, Blue Origin is his passion. The *Post* is neither. On some level, I don't blame him" for kowtowing to the President.

It took decades to build the *Post* into a jewel of journalism, a small but vital cog in the machinery of democracy. When Bezos bought the paper, he seemed to take that role seriously–until it became too costly, and perhaps too inconvenient. Lewis did little to change his mind. "If there's an obit of the *Post* someday, the history books will say [Lewis] was the last captain on deck when the ship hit the iceberg," says Kessler, who worked at the paper for 27 years. "But the ship was already headed toward the iceberg. Lewis just made the course worse." W

Paul Farhi covered the news media and other topics during 35 years as a Washington Post reporter. He's been a freelance reporter since 2024.

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Civil-Rights Lawyer Debra Katz on Two Keepsakes That Inspire Her

Together, her father's bongos and a Jewish shofar symbolize resilience and a call to help fix the world



Herbie Katz on his bongos in 2018. "There's something very sweet about touching the skins and knowing my dad's hands were on them," his daughter says.

IN HER OFFICE ABOVE DUPONT CIRCLE, DEBRA KATZ SHOWS me a newspaper clipping about her father, Herbie Katz: RHUMBA HEP CAT 'EL GATO' ACHIEVING LOCAL SUCCESS reads the headline on a profile of a handsome fellow who improbably had found his way into New York's Latin music scene—a job he pursued from the late 1940s until he had a second child in the '60s and joined the family box-making business instead.

Herbie's bongos are among Katz's prized possessions, a way to remember her dad, who died in 2019. But during President Trump's second term, the drums—as well as a shofar, a trumpet crafted from a ram's horn, used in Jewish rituals—have even deeper meanings for Katz, a prominent employment and civil-rights lawyer whose clients have included Brett Kavanaugh's accuser Christine Blasey Ford, former NIH official Jeanne Marrazzo, and Andrew Cuomo accuser Charlotte Bennett. Here Katz reflects on the meaning of these objects to her.

"MY DAD WAS A WORKING-class kid from an immigrant family who grew up in the tenements in Brooklyn. His Russian grandparents would tell us, in their heavy Yiddish accents, 'No Jewish children are Latin drummers!' Despite that, my dad just fell in love with Latin music. His stage name was El Gato—the Cat. He played up in the Catskills in the age of the Borscht Belt. His band sometimes played before Lenny Bruce performed, and on occasion he played with Tito Puente.

"I keep my dad's bongos in the living room, on my bookshelf. After he died, I took a few lessons—it turns out that playing the bongos is a lot harder than it seems. There's something very sweet about touching the skins and knowing my dad's hands were on them.

"His bongos help me stay strong during the dark period of history we're in. I believe that finding pleasure in the midst of all of this is crucial. Growing up, I was taught about the obligation of tikkun olam, an important concept in Judaism that means 'repairing the world.' Listening to Latin music—a constant in our home when I was growing up—is a salve for me and a reminder that it's our duty to protect our neighbors.

"I also have a shofar on my desk, given to me as an award by a social-justice group called T'ruah, after I represented Christine Blasey Ford before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The other day, T'ruah organized a loud and boisterous demonstration outside ICE headquarters in DC that I attended to protest the excesses of ICE and the killing of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Rabbis came from all over the United States, and many played their shofars. The piercing sound of the shofar is a call for justice and a call to work to make the world whole.

"Music, my dad's bongos, and this shofar—they all remind me to wake up, get out of my slumber, and do what I can. We can't all do everything, but all of us can do something. That's what I'm trying to stay focused on."

—AS TOLD TO ANDREW BEAUJON

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DEBRA KATZ

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