

# HER LIFE

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MARCH 2024

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CHALLENGE

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CAPRESE  
CHICKEN

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A BEAUTIFUL  
RAIN GARDEN

HOME AND  
GARDEN  
ISSUE



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# 24

**INSPIRATIONS**

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# FINDING BALANCE

Photography by Amber J Deery



**T**he struggle is real! On a daily basis, I find myself in a constant battle by trying to find balance between keeping everything picked up and spending quality time with my family. The reality is, spending quality time with my family, especially our two boys, means making messes. I like my house to be well kept, everything in its place and the dishes done.

I recently came across an article that I shared on Facebook from community.today.com titled “Moms, just do the dishes: Your kids will be fine.” The article spoke directly to me. I do get mom guilt from telling the boys “In just a minute” because I am cleaning up from their after-school snack or putting away laundry. The truth is, my mind is not totally focused on them if I have a mess next to me or disarray in the next room.

I had a feeling of relief to hear from so many moms, and even dads, who feel the same way I do. It is comforting to know that I am not the only one who feels like a better mom, or dad, when my house is picked up and clean. Not everyone works this way, but I was glad

that I am not alone. It definitely decreased my mom guilt a little.

I take pride in my house. After all, it is a constant work in progress. There is always a room in which I want to change the décor, furniture I think could be rearranged, or something to be updated. That is why our March Home issue is such a passion of mine. It gives me ideas, inspiration and things to dream about doing one day in our own home.

This month’s cover story on Reba Hamilton gives me inspiration, ideas and things to daydream about.

The first thing I am going to do around my house is to buy a plant, an actual living one! I can’t tell you the last time I had a real plant. I have plenty, they are just of the fake variety. I am going to give my green thumb another chance.

If you are one who struggles daily with balancing everything in your home, know that you are not alone! I hope that this issue sparks motivation and ideas as it has for me, as we head into the season of spring cleaning. The struggle is real, but enjoy it along the way.

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*Tammy*  
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# LOOKING FOR CHANGE? TRY A 30-DAY CHALLENGE

BY LISA BUTLER

*Maggie considers herself pretty healthy. She exercises several times a week with Pilates, strength training and long walks with her dog. She sticks to a mostly low-carb, high-protein diet. Recently though, she's experienced a plateau, not seeing results, gaining a few pounds from the holidays and lower energy levels.*



**M**aggie's trainer suggested she start a 30-day Butts and Guts challenge to add more motivation and fun to her regular workout. After just one month, Maggie saw progress both in her body and mind. She started another challenge a few weeks later.

## WHAT IS A 30-DAY CHALLENGE?

Thirty-day challenges aren't just about fitness and can come in all forms of health and well-being. It's working on an area we want to improve and the challenge encourages us to work on it daily for approximately one month. Whether it's trying something new, different, healthy, fun or even a little outrageous, a challenge can start a habit that can be beneficial for a lifetime. The idea is that consistent small actions performed daily can build behaviors and habits that stick.

## DO THEY WORK?

The success of a 30-day challenge depends on many factors such as adherence, motivation, attainability and the desire of the person performing it. The challenge itself may not produce the promised results (a set of six-pack abs or a lifted backside), but the act of practicing a new behavior daily can help almost anyone develop better habits. The benefits can come in various forms. The good news is that we may see some

definite improvements in our overall well-being after participating in a 30-day challenge.

## SCIENCE BEHIND CHALLENGES?

Believe it or not, there's growing scientific evidence suggesting that time-bound challenges can be effective for behavior modification. Many experts agree that 30-day challenges are effective at rais-

ing mind and body awareness as well as offering a helpful strategy to obtaining a goal. Research shows success and completion actually depend upon our relationship to changing something in our life, and what stage we are in that mental process. Challenges, when properly timed with an individual's psychological state, can act as a key incentive for lasting behavior change.

### RECIPE FOR SUCCESS?

Several strategies can help us succeed in making lasting changes to our lifestyle; setting attainable goals, tracking progress, celebrating small victories and surrounding ourselves with social support are a few important ones. Doing our challenge with a trainer, a trusted friend with similar goals or a family member can be very beneficial. The motivation is built in and the competition may help elevate the results.

In general, a 30-day challenge is safe, often effective and healthy. However, the time frame for achieving various goals can vary. It might take several months of hard work to build up visible muscle, for example. But guess what? The benefits of a 30-day challenge of any sort can be fast and bountiful. Even one workout can impact the body and mind almost immediately through improved cognition, reduced stress and risk of depression, lower post-exercise blood pressure and help with sleeping.

### SOME 30-DAY DOOZIES

Perhaps we're thinking about something we've always wanted to add to our life and try it for 30 days. Challenging our body and mind can come in many forms and the options are endless. Here are a few ways to create healthy habits that can be sustainable long term.

**Planning Challenges:** Take lunch to work every day, keep a food journal, meal prep and plan shopping trips.

**Push Ups, Planks and Burpees:** and any other fitness challenge that piques interest such as walking, using stairs and not elevators, biking to work, whatever suits your lifestyle.

**Cold Plunges:** This trending "cold dipping" is said to offer several benefits including improved circulation, more energy, better sleep and workout recovery. It's a good idea to consult with a doctor before starting.

**Brain Trains:** Try brain exercises, learn a new language or call a friend or family member each day. Another great 30-day idea—brainstorm! Every day for 30 days, write down 10, 20 or more ideas for anything!

**Easy Stuff:** It may sound simple, but doing basic tasks such as flossing, drinking enough water, brushing our teeth three times a day, taking vitamins daily and eating breakfast each morning are great moves toward better health.

Starting and completing a 30-day challenge can be mind-opening. It can definitely be a way to kickstart a wellness goal or bolster our motivation to see what works. After the 30 days are up, we might be a little healthier, wiser or more self-confident, and we just might have the courage to try something a little bigger next time. Of course, doing a 30-day challenge is not a long-term solution for achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. To see lasting results, sticking to those new habits could take us from 30 days to 30 years! ♦

**SOURCES:** [acefitness.org](http://acefitness.org), [verywellmind.com](http://verywellmind.com) and [hackerella.com](http://hackerella.com).



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# JENKINS DENTISTRY FOR KIDS



## Designed to Provide an Exceptional Pediatric Dental Experience

BY CHRIS WESTWATER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY

*Your child's smile is precious, and caring for their teeth is an essential part of their overall health. If you're looking for a pediatric dentist, Dr. Jill Jenkins welcomes you to visit Jenkins Dentistry for Kids to see how she and her team of experienced, board-certified pediatric dentists make oral healthcare joyful.*

**"M**y fellow pediatric dentists and I cultivate an abundance of joy for both our team and our patients, and we foster an environment where we cultivate authentic connections," said Dr. Jenkins. She has streamlined her processes

over her 20-year career as a pediatric dentist in the Kansas City area. "Still, I continue to look for opportunities to learn and grow, and better serve our patients and their families," she affirmed. Your child and family will be in experienced, knowledgeable hands with Jenkins Dentistry for Kids.

### CARING FOR THE CHILD

"I think the concept of 'treating the child, not just their teeth' is something that we do well," Dr. Jenkins said. "We take our time to meet your child where they are. We acknowledge any of their fears or anxieties, talk to them on their level, and show them



— W —

*“We take our time to meet your child where they are. We acknowledge any of their fears or anxieties, talk to them on their level, and show them how joyful and positive having a healthy mouth can be.”*



how joyful and positive having a healthy mouth can be.” The entire team, from the pediatric dentists to the hygienists and office staff, cultivate a welcoming environment that sets kids at ease while also encouraging them and their parents “to put the effort in for good home care to motivate kids to come back for good reports.” Dr. Jenkins added, “We make sure that we’re creating a joyful experience in the treatment chair and that the entire patient journey feels joyful and abundant with a lot of points for authentic connection.”

## EXCELLENT EXPERIENCES

From the moment you walk in the door of Jenkins Dentistry for Kids, you’ll see that it was designed with children and their guardians in mind. “Our front office environment is bright, cheery and fun. In addition to technology and video games, we encourage coloring and other play activities while parents are preoccupied with administrative tasks.” Thoughtful processes and kid-appropriate language are used throughout the visit to set your child at ease. As a case in point, “I once had a patient who needed several teeth removed. He was naturally nervous, but the appointment went really well, and apparently that night at dinner, he explained that he was pain free because, ‘She uses a magic wand with this magic potion that makes your teeth and gums and lips different, so your teeth just start to wiggle. I didn’t even know they fell out!’” Dr. Jenkins laughed and said, “So, the dad called me the next morning to ask if I used something different than the numbing stuff that he was used to. We had a good laugh over his son’s description, but the most important part is how comfortable that child was with his dental experience.”

Jenkins Dentistry for Kids has four board-certified pediatric dentists, which means in addition to the traditional doctoral dental education, they also have a two-year postdoctoral residency focused solely on pediatric patients. All four women graduated from the UMKC School of Dentistry and their residencies were conducted at a variety

of universities and hospitals across the Midwest. “As a team, we are constantly getting together and collaborating to make sure that we’re on the same page as far as patient care,” said Dr. Jenkins. “Joy, abundance and authentic connections are our three driving values and every operating procedure and patient relationship goal cycles back to one of those three.”

## GIVING BACK: LUCY’S KIDS FOR PEACE

Jenkins Dentistry for Kids is an active partner for the local chapter of Lucy’s Kids for Peace. This organization seeks to create peace through youth leadership, community service, global friendships and thoughtful acts of kindness. Recently, Jenkins Dentistry for Kids participated in the annual Bedtime Project. “Our entire team met an hour before our workday, broke up into groups and shopped for six or seven kids that we sponsored,” Dr. Jenkins shared. “It was a fun team building activity but also a great way to support a good community activity in the Shawnee area.” In addition, earlier in the year they “provided all of the oral health hygiene items to approximately 100 Lucy’s Kids for Peace Shawnee Chapter child participants.” Dr. Jenkins and her team are honored to support the legacy of Lucy and this great local charity.

Dr Jenkins and her team want Jenkins Dentistry for Kids to be the dental home for your child, building an ongoing relationship that includes all aspects of oral healthcare, from regular bi-annual appointments to additional dental needs including referrals to specialists, per the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommendations. Jenkins Dentistry for Kids has offices conveniently located in Shawnee near K-7 and Shawnee Mission Parkway and in Lenexa near I-435 and 87th Street. ♦

*Visit [jenkinsdentistryforkids.com](http://jenkinsdentistryforkids.com) or call 913-745-2500 to schedule your child’s next dental appointment.*





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# BREAST AUGMENTATION PROCEDURES AND RESULTS

BY DR. LEVI YOUNG



Q

**What are the major differences between silicone and saline breast implants when they rupture?**

A

Breast implants are a man-made product; this means that over many years, and with gradual wear and tear, a hole will develop in the shell of the implant. This is called an implant failure or rupture.

The newest generation of silicone breast implants are filled with a self-cohesive silicone gel during manufacturing. This means that if they rupture, they are not a gooey mess; rather, the silicone sticks to itself. This is where the term “gummy bear implant” came from.

If a saline implant ruptures, it will deflate, you will notice a flatness to that breast, and your body will absorb and urinate out the saline. Implant rupture is not a health concern, but it will be recommended by your surgeon that you either replace the implants or remove them all together.

Q

**Should my implant go in front of or behind my pectoral muscle?**

A

At your surgical consultation, we will discuss your breast augmentation outcome goals. Implant safety, size, shape, such as natural versus round, incision placement and implant placement are the main focal points.

An implant placed behind your muscle (subpectoral) will give a more natural slope and fullness to the breast. More of your natural breast tissue as well as the muscle will be covering the implant. While this implant placement is a little more uncomfortable, it is still very tolerable for our patients with prescribed medications. It does take about six months to reach your final shape and softness with this approach.

An implant placed above your muscle (subglandular) will provide a very round and obvious look to the breast. This is because there is less tissue covering the implant. This implant placement offers a final result in approximately six weeks, with less discomfort immediately after surgery. ♦



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# LA BIKINI

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*If you are one of many Kansas Citians planning to remove unwanted body hair, check out LA Bikini in Overland Park. Elizabeth and Jay Mitra, co-owners and spouses, are KC born and raised, and are excited to bring this established brand to the metro. “Our mission statement is to bring sugaring to Kansas City and increase its visibility,” Jay said. “My wife is so passionate about sugaring because she sees the benefits sugaring brings to her clients, and we think this is something Kansas City needs.” Elizabeth added, “I looked into a lot of different franchises when I was on the hunt for a sugaring business, and I was drawn to LA Bikini for their exclusivity to sugaring. I wanted to focus on one thing and do it well.”*

### SUGARING: ANCIENT METHOD, GROWING TREND

“The ancient Egyptians used sugaring for hair removal,” Jay said. Sugaring is the process by which sugar, lemon and water are mixed into a paste. The paste is warmed to body temperature and applied to the desired area against the direction of the hair growth. The paste is then removed in short flicking motions in the opposite direction. “People are starting to come to the realization that this ancient sugar technique, which is all natural, is more effective and safer for the skin than other modern methods,” he continued.

“With sugaring, we get down into the hair follicle and remove it from the root,” Elizabeth said. “We recommend you come in every two to three weeks and have your hair length no longer than a grain of rice. With that schedule, you’ll see permanent hair loss more quickly. You’re going to see less hair growing back and that it’s lighter in color over time.” Additionally, clients love how their skin feels. Elizabeth agreed. “Sugaring is an amazing treatment for the skin. It exfoliates, leaving you feeling unbelievably smooth because the paste, which is water soluble, only sticks to the hair and dead skin cells and cannot stick to the living skin cells. So, the skin is left refreshed.”

### WHY LA BIKINI?

LA Bikini is the brand name of the business, and “what we call a Brazilian,” Elizabeth explained. A Brazilian, or in this case an LA Bikini, includes removing all of a woman’s pubic hair in addition to any hair on her upper thighs and derriere. But that’s not all they do. “We go head to toe. You can do pretty much any body part, we just don’t do anything under men’s underwear,” she said.

“We are a brick and mortar that exclusively does sugaring using Alexandria Professional® sugar,” Jay added. Elizabeth continued, “I am a certified sugarist in addition to being an aesthetician. I have specialized training in Alexandria Professional products and their proprietary sugaring techniques.”

“I think what’s important about LA Bikini’s mission statement is that they focus on female confidence and empowerment,” said Jay. “I know my wife liked the idea of being a female business owner with a franchise that’s focused on female empowerment. We do offer services to men, but we’re definitely geared toward women.”





“LA Bikini really focuses on the customer experience, making sure it’s great from the second you walk in the door to the time that you leave,” Elizabeth said.



“LA Bikini really focuses on the customer experience, making sure it’s great from the second you walk in the door to the time that you leave,” Elizabeth said. “I love that about the business as well.”

### FREE TREATMENT FOR FIRST-TIME CLIENTS

If you’d like to try sugaring, first-time clients are offered one of four free treatments at LA Bikini in Overland Park. “For all first-time clients, we offer a bikini line, underarm, lip or brow service for free for first-time clients,” said Jay. “We’re more than willing to let you try it for free, ask all the questions you want, and experience the difference.” “We know once you experience it, you’ll love it,” added Elizabeth.

“We have a client who drives to Overland Park from Topeka. She lived somewhere previously that had an LA Bikini and when we opened, she found us on the internet and was like, ‘I’m willing to drive every month to you guys. That’s how much I love sugar,’” Jay relayed. “That stood out to me immediately because of the impression it made on her.”

### SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY

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# REBA HAMILTON

"SHAKE OFF THE DIRT AND  
LOOSEN YOUR ROOTS!"





*Feeling a bit sluggish? Brain foggy? Perhaps you're tense and anxious. Healthcare professionals suggest enjoying a nice walk in nature, taking in some fresh air and absorbing a bit of healthy vitamin D.*

---

**BY CINDY MCDERMOTT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY  
SHOT ON LOCATION AT VIRGIL'S PLANT SHOP**

---

**B**ut most of us spend about 90 percent of our day indoors, which makes that daily outdoors jaunt difficult to achieve. That's why the next best thing is to relish the positivity of indoor plants at home or work to improve mood, ease stress, recharge ambition, enhance creativity and even get a few extra z's in bed. Cultivating the game plan to bring indoor plants to the rescue is Reba Hamilton, owner of Virgil's Plant Shop, 2763 Cherry Street, Kansas City, Missouri. She knows exactly what the doctor orders when it comes to greening up an indoor space.

"There have been studies that show people can be more productive with greenery around them. Of course, that's not everyone but certainly everyone I meet," she

noted. "There is something to be said about having greenery around you because caring for your plants is hands-on. You have to engage with them and touch them. It's like you have a point of contact. And it's so rewarding when you are doing it well because they give you something back by growing larger. You can share cuttings or your knowledge with friends and family. I've found that people who love plants love to talk about their plants."

If you don't know a *Philodendron brandtianum* (silver leaf philodendron) from *Nephrolepis exaltata* (Boston fern), then Virgil's Plant Shop is for you. Reba welcomes agricultural neophytes to those who have cultivated multiple green thumbs. "I envisioned Virgil's Plant Shop as an extremely

welcoming space for others to come in and ask questions, where we can talk and answer their questions, judgment free," Reba shared. "While we offer a range of plants in price and type for the first-time plant parent, I also have tried to curate a space where collectors that are really into plants, who are used to spending hundreds of dollars on a small plant, can come in here and find something that they've never seen before. It's about creating a vibe for all, a nice little neighborhood plant shop that's ever-growing yet dependable."

### **GROWING HER ROOTS**

Reba grew up in Stilwell, Kansas, and then left for college in Portland, Oregon, at the age of 19, eventually picking up a degree



in English literature. She came back to her hometown for a short stop and then decided to try the East Coast and all that New York City has to offer. It was then that she fell in love with houseplants.

“When I was living in New York City, I used to regularly go upstate, often visiting this little plant shop called Flora in Beacon, New York, and the woman who owned it was there every time that I went in. It was a tiny little shop and while I never left without buying something, my favorite part was just sitting and chatting with her and enjoying her openness,” she revealed. “She was never in a hurry, never tried to get a purchase out of you and move on to someone or something else. She was just always really attentive, really present and excited to talk about plants. I gained a lot of inspiration from her and I want people to feel that way when they come into my space. I want to be there, be present with them and answer any and all plant questions.”

After crossing off living on the West and East coasts and all of the glamour that major metropolitan areas offer, Reba heeded the call to return to the Midwest in early 2018, which was heightened by the birth of her niece. When she arrived, she was filled with new ideas and set her sights on starting her own

plant boutique. Her initial plan was to open a brick-and-mortar shop and café in 2019, but she decided to scale this back to one that favored a small start and to be a mobile plant shop, a first for the Kansas City community. She opened the mobile shop in July 2019, and the timing could not have been more favorable for her being on the move. Shortly after she signed a lease for a storefront on 27th and Troost, the COVID shutdown hit and the community went into lockdown to avoid spreading the infectious disease.

“I was pretty stressed about it, but fortunately it turned out that everybody fell in love with houseplants during that time. So it ended up being an ideal time to be in the business of houseplants because many found they made quarantine so much more pleasurable,” she recalled. “I would get in a shipment of plants to the storefront, and then I would post on Instagram what plants I got in, how many I had, what they cost, and people would reach out. I would get in 200 plants and sell out within the week. Then I would deliver them all over the city. I would ring the doorbell and run back to my car.”

Although she wouldn’t visibly interact with her customers, they could talk with her on the phone for full instructions to get their greenery started and to keep them healthy.

She continues this practice today by encouraging her customers to reach out if things go awry. “We’re a smaller boutique plant shop with a focus on sharing our knowledge and educating our customers to ensure they keep their plants alive,” Reba noted. “For each purchase, we always include a care card with instructions. We also encourage them to contact us on the shop’s iPhone with texts or photos, and we’ll troubleshoot back and forth. There’s never a charge for that and, most important, no judgment.”

## FAMILY TIES

Many business owners struggle with settling on the perfect name for their company. Some adopt labels that are so far out that no one understands the objective of their business or what they are selling. Reba knew that her store would have Plant Shop in the title but she realized she wanted something more with an emphasis on her family.

“Virgil is actually my dog, a border collie-boxer mix and he’s about to turn 12. I had a couple of different ideas for shop names, but I really wanted to name it after my dog. He’s our little mascot. People will often come in and ask, ‘What’s Virgil? Are you Virgil?’ But he’s been with me for so much I chose to name the shop after him.” Reba notes that every year he gets a birthday party at the shop, “A Very Good Boy” event, that is open to all. On March 16, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the celebration will be held with vendors, drinks, discounts on plants and more. Most importantly, Virgil’s Plant Shop sponsors the adoption of four senior dogs in honor of Virgil.

Long before Virgil’s Plant Shop was a reality, Reba spent hours developing strategy and studying the marketplace for her shop. For guidance, she also turned to her parents, LaVon and Adam Hamilton, founders of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, one of the fastest-growing, most highly visible churches in the country. Pastor Hamilton steered this organization, which began with 20 members meeting in a funeral home, to six locations in the Kansas City metro, representing tens of thousands of worshippers. When it came to knowing how to “maintain the faith,” Pastor Adam had sage counsel to offer.

“One piece of advice that he shared with



me that's been really helpful is that it's such a roller coaster, even in the church," she stated. "One Sunday there might be half of the attendance that's normal and you think that's going to be it forever. Then you have another Sunday that's gangbusters and filled with people, and you think that's what it's going to be like forever. It's really a roller coaster. You're always hoping that it stays that way or doesn't stay that way. But he said that it will always change and you'll have your ups and downs but keep plugging along. Don't try to do it all and don't get too big. Do what makes sense and at a pace that makes sense." Reba also shared a critical observation about the impact of the Super Bowl-winning Kansas City Chiefs on her business. "It's wild how much the Chiefs' game affects my business. I look at the schedule, and if I see a game, I know I won't need an extra employee that day. No one will be out shopping."

### SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

After almost five years in business, Reba takes great pride in her accomplishments, especially Virgil's Plant Shop. She shares these tips with others who might be contemplating opening a new business or growing the one they are now operating. "I see it a lot across the nation but it's really big in K.C. The small business community throws small events or popups to help people get started. All one needs is a table to display your products and have a way to accept money. It's an awesome way to see if people like what you're doing," she advised. "So start small and don't take on more than you can. Also, conduct as much market research in the area of your business as you can. I always suggest to others to bring something a little different to the table to stand out. And don't hesitate to ask questions, that's my biggest thing. When I was getting started I would send out many emails to business owners with questions. People love talking about their business, so often they respond."

Not only does Reba sell greenery but she also offers selections of locally produced products and other merchandise. A phrase printed on some of those items is "Loosen Your Roots," this green thumber's nod to the fun she enjoys through her work and passion.

"When it comes to repotting your plants, you want to gently massage the roots and loosen them up so that when you transplant them into something a bit larger, they can expand and grow to their full potential," she remarked. "This relates pretty well to my life, but I think most people would agree that by moving into something different, by shaking off what you might be used to instead of staying in a tight circle and not expanding outward, you don't really get to grow to one's own full potential. So take yourself out of what you've been used to, kind of cramping yourself into that same little lifestyle, and hopefully you'll break out a little bit at a time. You kind of shake off the old and grow more fully in another way. I love that." ♦

# EASY ONE-PAN CAPRESE CHICKEN

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 large chicken breasts or 6 thighs
- 2 tablespoons of Italian seasoning or a combination of dried basil and oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (Cervasi recommended)
- 2-3 cups fresh cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 slices fresh mozzarella cheese
- Optional: torn basil and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano for garnish

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Sprinkle chicken on both sides with Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Heat a large cast-iron skillet or heavy-bottomed skillet and add olive oil. When the pan is hot, add chicken and let sear for a few minutes on each side. Don't touch or move the chicken around so that you let it develop the nice browned chicken bits. Once one side is brown, turn the chicken over and add tomatoes, garlic and balsamic around the chicken. Place in oven and bake for 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of the chicken. You can use a meat thermometer to check doneness. After chicken is cooked through, add a piece of mozzarella cheese to each chicken breast. Set oven to broil and place the skillet on the top rack. Broil for a few minutes, or until cheese is melted and a little bit browned. Watch it; it can go from browned to burned in a hurry. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with fresh basil, parmesan and a drizzle of olive oil if desired. ♦

## TIPS

**1:** This dish is excellent served on a bed of arugula drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and salt and pepper. It's also fantastic over a pile of pasta drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and salt and pepper.

**2:** A meat thermometer is your best friend in the kitchen and the only way to be sure your meat is cooked perfectly every time. For chicken, white meat is at its juiciest at around 150°F, and dark meat at 165°F+.



After 25 years in creative design and management with Hallmark Cards, Lauren Lane quit to pursue her lifelong passion for food and entertaining. Lauren has reinvented herself at 50 and now pursues her dream of teaching others how to cook easily and entertain effortlessly. Follow her on Instagram, Facebook and her blog so you don't miss any of her recipes and cooking tips and tricks.

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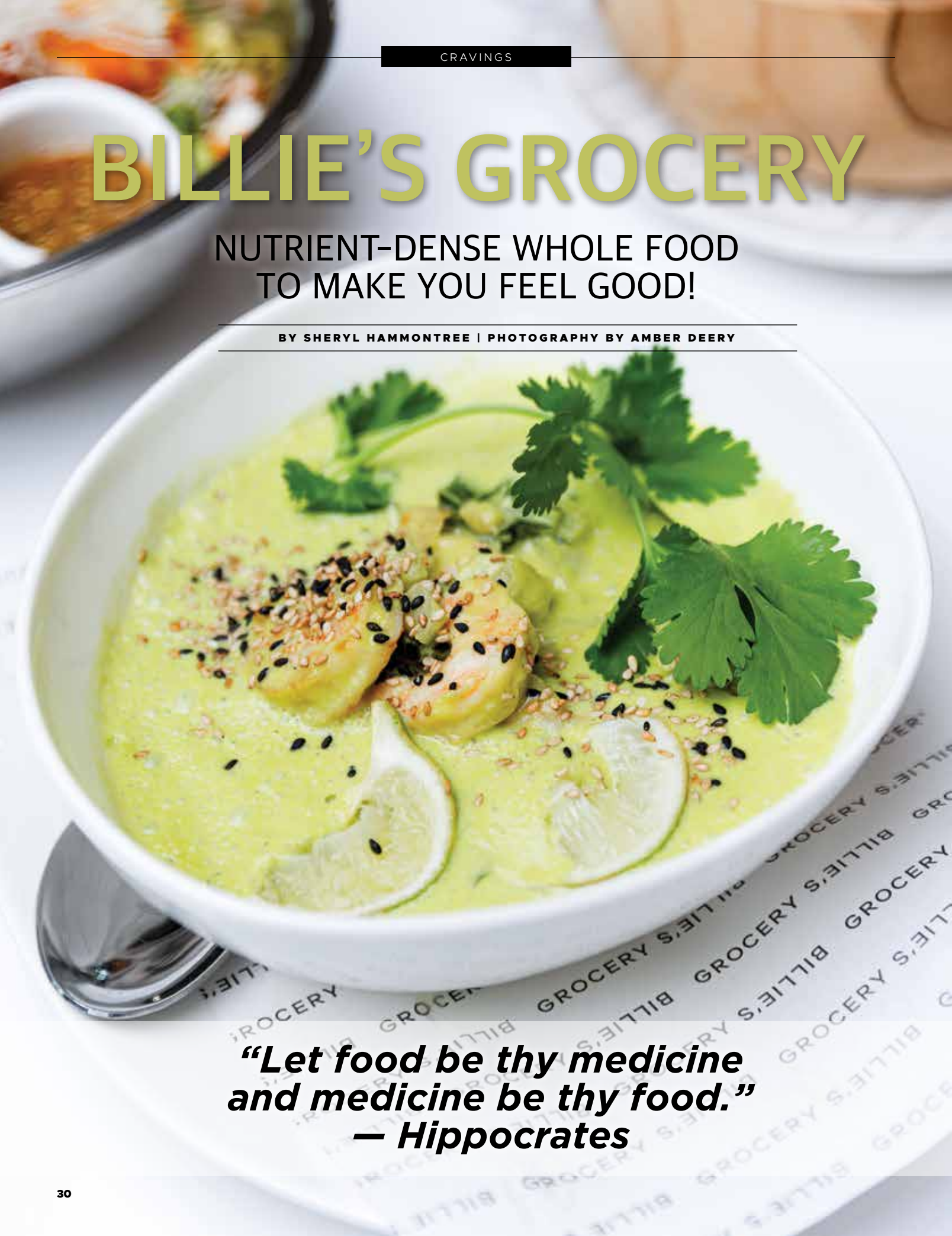
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# BILLIE'S GROCERY

NUTRIENT-DENSE WHOLE FOOD  
TO MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD!

BY SHERYL HAMMONTREE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY

A white ceramic bowl filled with a vibrant yellow soup. The soup is garnished with two pieces of cooked shrimp, several fresh green cilantro leaves, and a generous sprinkling of black and white sesame seeds. Two thin slices of lime are also visible on the surface of the soup. The bowl is set on a white surface with a repeating pattern of the text 'BILLIE'S GROCERY' in a light grey font.

***“Let food be thy medicine  
and medicine be thy food.”  
— Hippocrates***



Few things have as profound an effect on our health as what and how we choose to nourish our bodies. About five years ago, Robin Krause made this her north star.

For 20 years, Robin has helped Kansas City wake up and power through their day with coffee and delicious bites as the owner of Coffee Girls, the Filling Station coffee shops, Soho Bakery, Unbakery and Juicery. This level of success is available only to those who have goals and who hustle till they achieve them. Robin was feeling the effects of this grind at about the same time her dad, Billy, suffered a heart attack and passed. Robin pressed pause, took a breath and was motivated and inspired to begin her wellness journey.

Robin wanted to learn about the many ways food can heal and the powerful connection of mind and body. Through curiosity and education, Robin became a certified herbalist, holistic health coach and a nutrition therapist practitioner. She chose to close all but two of her businesses and combine everything she learned with everything she knew about cooking to create a new culinary experience.

And now, Robin has opened her second location of Billie's Grocery in Leawood, Kansas, at 3614 West 95th Street, at Ranchmart North. It's white, bright, cheery and filled with green plants. The staff is friendly and ready to answer questions or make suggestions because, just like Robin, they want you to leave feeling like you took a mini vacation to nourish your body and restore your soul, even if it was for only an hour or two.

Robin had the very best ingredients on hand when creating Billie's Grocery. Those are countless hours in the kitchen; clearly a head for business; a crystal-clear understanding of what customers like, want and need plus a deep desire to introduce mindful eating to her community.



Mindful eating sounds simple, but it eludes many of us. Life moves fast and, sadly, we don't take time to enjoy meals. We eat in our car, at our desk or at the kitchen counter and often, we eat alone. Mindful eating means you eat slowly, chew thoroughly, enjoy friendly conversation and avoid distractions. This will not only improve digestion; it guarantees you'll recognize the hormonal messaging from your gut telling you that you are, in fact, full.

Be mindful about what you're eating, slow down and notice the sweet that turns to heat or the satisfying crunch hidden in a gooey bite. Welcome to Billie's Grocery—a food experience.

Robin wants all of us to eat our veggies and discover that you can get all your veggies without living on salad! Much of her menu is inspired by her time in California and travels to New Zealand. It's super-clean plant-based eating. You won't find processed oil, flavored powders or iodized salt in her kitchen. The full bakery is gluten free, with some items—dairy and nut free. She uses non-GMO oils, sea

salt, coconut oil, fresh herbs and preserved lemon to prepare every dressing and sauce in-house.

While Billie's menu is mostly plant based, those who like animal proteins will find slow-roasted pork carnitas, grass-fed steak and even gluten-free fried chicken! And of course, Robin sources most of her high-quality meats from Salt Creek Farms and Buttonwood Farms.

If you've read past reviews, you know I love eggs cooked any and every way. The Turkish Eggs + Grilled Halloumi may be the very best egg dish I've tasted, ever. Halloumi is a high-quality, savory, grilled cheese and is plated as the base for this dish. A dollop of house-made labneh cradles two perfectly poached eggs that are topped with micro greens, chili oil and tomato confit. I will order this again.

The Spring Roll Bowl contains marinated rice noodles, jalapeño pickled mushrooms, organic carrots, Asian pickled cucumber, purple cabbage, sautéed shrimp, zesty lime peanut sauce, coriander, crispy rice noodles and sesame seeds. It's a feast for the eyes and the senses! On the handheld side of the menu, the Miso Wild Caught Salmon Burger is filled with brown rice miso salmon burger, organic wild greens, tomato, pickled onion, tangy herb "mayo," all on a brioche bun. Tangy and satisfying!

Unknowingly, I may have saved the best for last. The aroma reminded me of sunshine and summer. Bok choy, Japanese eggplant, yellow onion, brown rice, quinoa, green on-

ion, cilantro, sesame seeds, organic white miso and of course shrimp, come together creating a Miso Lime Shrimp bowl that is light, bright and making me wish I had more for leftovers.

Every dish I tasted felt really good going down and when I was full, I wasn't that heavy and uncomfortable kind of full. This was a soul satisfying meal and I knew my body loved it.

The original Billie's Grocery is in Midtown at 3216 Gillham Plaza; if you haven't been there, do yourself a favor and check it out. Both have bright, energetic interiors with a coastal vibe, an open kitchen and jaw-dropping pastry cases. The Midtown location offers classes, workshops and private parties in a gorgeous kitchen built adjacent to the restaurant space. For details, check their website under the Cooking School and Events tab.

If you're hanging out with friends and need to bring something to the party, Billie's grab-and-go will be a hit! Hey, maybe you just don't want to cook tonight; take advantage of the grab-and-go options, with pick-up at Gillham and coming soon to Leawood. Whatever the reason, or for no reason at all, do yourself a favor and visit Billie's Grocery. ♦

For menu previews, events and ordering, visit [billiesgrocery.com](http://billiesgrocery.com) or call 913-415-2222.



Art director, illustrator and entrepreneur Sheryl Hammontree is happiest when creating. As a freelancer, she creates visual styling and targeted messaging to strategically solve challenges for clients. As the owner of Thoughtful Threads, she creates expressive apparel to empower people and build a community of kindness. Sheryl heads outside to find energy, inspiration and calm, whether in the garden or on a trail, her soul is fed by creating memories with her husband, Joel, family and friends.



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# BUDS IN THE VINEYARD!

BY MELISSA HAINES LAVIN

*April showers bring May flowers, or so we've all learned over time. In a couple of months, it will be a most interesting time for agricultural products such as honey, tomatoes and wine.*



**T**he fates of wine country and farm country intertwine when so much of the weather and soil conditions have an immense impact on both. We have all heard of “good years” and “bad years” referenced in wine ratings and conversations. Whether it’s drought conditions, record-breaking rainstorms or recurring snow and ice storms, the flowers of May will be the topic of conversation at nearly every aisle in the grocery store.

This year especially, many of America’s wine regions have experienced quite a bit of water. Others have experienced either unseason-

able warm or unseasonably cold temperatures. Whether it was steady rainfall, snow, freezing rain or flood waters, we will see some interesting results in the new vintages.

Bud break is the signal to many of us that all is well in our wine-farms. Wine grape viticulture and enology rely upon constant measurement of vineyard soils, water, fruit acidity, cluster density and vine health, among many other vital observations. We eagerly watch the grapevines grow, winding their way along the leads before bearing fruit. I’ll pass through the rows of the vineyards daily, just enjoying the peaceful nature of the envi-

ronment, only to discover that, lo and behold, a tiny little vine shoot has emerged from the bud and is reaching for sunlight, making it available for all the local bees and other elements that create amazing wine grapes.

Bud break, then, signals the end of dormancy after the winter. The wine grape's annual cycle is determined by the age and health of the vine as well as the climate in which the grape is grown. As the temperature rises and the amount of sunlight reaching the vine increases, usually in March or April in the northern hemisphere, the vine is teased out of its natural sleep cycle. Hormones activate, water, organic acids and minerals rise up the stems and sap begins to flow. But the new buds could still face some difficulty, such as a late frost, and so the growers continuously monitor weather conditions and prepare themselves to respond.

Keeping the wine grape crop safe each year requires some planning way before the seasonal weather patterns occur. Farmed fruit such as strawberries, tomatoes and lettuce grow right in the ground, while recently planted young wine grape vines have been planted with the future in mind. Supporting the growing vines in a way that enables more sunlight to reach more grape clusters increases the overall harvest, which increases the quantity of wine-making fruit. Utilizing modernized harvest and pruning techniques also helps the vines learn and evolve over four to six years to reach their fullest potential naturally, as the wine grape grower directs each row's growth. As the vines mature, they make their way along the wires of the trellises to their destiny of providing beautiful clusters of sauvignon blanc, zinfandel, pinot noir and others.

Trellises have been used for farming climbing vegetables for hundreds of years. This method maximizes acreage, hydration and nutrition to benefit the entire crop, also making it easier for harvesting. With wine grapes, some farmers strive to encourage the young vines toward upward growth using wires, rather than downward growth, where gravity may pull down the vines, limiting sunlight.

It's also interesting that the agricultural sciences apply to wine and beer alike. Hops, used to make beer, is also an agricultural crop producing new-found excitement in craft beers. A twining perennial vine grown on farms using specialized trellis support, hops is subject to the same adverse conditions as wine grapes.

Although we may dream of wine as being the largest use of grapes, the truth is that this agricultural crop is served, sold and eaten across the world in the form of raisins, juice and jellies in addition to that fresh bowl of chilled crisp grapes on your family table. Even my peanut butter and jelly sandwich, which, by the way, pairs well with zinfandel, wouldn't be anything without the constant evolution of our farm sciences, adapting to changing weather and growing conditions.

When we finally see the flowers on the vines, they are beautifully off-white, pale light green, translucent yellow, blushed and many more combinations. We joyfully celebrate bud break, perhaps as an assurance that we all made it through Mother Nature's mood swings of winter and spring.

**SOURCES:** [grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu](http://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu), [vinebalance.com](http://vinebalance.com) and [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org).

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A photograph of seven diverse children of various ages running happily on a green lawn in a park-like setting.



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# CREATING A BEAUTIFUL RAIN GARDEN

BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

*Spring is here, the time to put into action the plans you made during dreary winter months to beautify your garden and improve your landscape. Designing and creating a beautiful rain garden will accomplish both goals—and begin your spring fitness program to boot!*



In today's urban and suburban neighborhoods, rainwater gushes off roofs, through downspouts, across sidewalks and pavement, frequently carrying with it fertilizers and pesticides from lawns. This water may be diverted into storm drains and into our streams, rivers or bays. A rain garden can create a natural filter that will protect the environment from storm water runoff, provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and insects, and potentially help your landscape survive the next drought. Let's get your project started.

## LOCATION

Experts advise placing the garden at least ten feet away from your home to divert water from the foundation. Don't situate it over a septic field. Avoid areas where water already pools, as this indicates a

lack of natural filtration; the goal is to encourage infiltration. A sunny, flat spot away from tree roots will make digging much easier. It's also crucial to call 811, the national hotline for location of underground utilities, to verify that your selected site can be safely excavated.

## DRAINAGE AREA AND SOIL TYPE

Measure the area that will drain water into your garden. This includes roof area, pavement or other areas of the yard that will drain into the rain garden. Multiply this

area by the guideline percentages for the type of soil that you have. For example, if you have sandy soil that will collect water from 200 square feet, use a 20 percent factor; your rain garden should be about 40 square feet. For an area with loamy soil, use 30 to 35 percent as the factor, and for clay use 45 to 50 percent. If you are unsure of what type soil you have, a soil test done through your state's Cooperative Ex-

tension Office can confirm this. If the test reveals sandy soil, you may need to amend the soil with water-absorbing compost and topsoil.

### LAY THE GARDEN OUT

The garden should be approximately half as wide as it is long, with the long side perpendicular to the slope of the drainage area, facing upslope. Determine the depth of the garden, which depends on the slope of the ground. Optimal depth is between four and eight inches. Define the area with a string or paint; remember that curved, slightly irregular shapes are visually pleasing. To ensure that the base remains as level as possible, put stakes every five feet on the uphill side and corresponding stakes on the downhill side. Tie level strings between each one to act as guides to maintain correct depth through the area. Measure from the string to the ground to maintain a level base.

### DIG AND FILL

Sharpen your shovel and get to work! If the garden is on a steep incline, you'll need to dig out more at the upper level of the garden. Working in sections, use the soil you remove to build a berm around three sides of the area, leaving open the side into which the water will flow. Continue digging and filling, using a tiller if needed to make the work easier. Add compost and other amendments as needed. The berm itself should be rounded on both sides and compacted well to prevent erosion.

### DESIGN YOUR GARDEN

Here's the fun part! Plant selections should lean toward na-

tive species, perennials and include drought-tolerant plants. In general, the garden should contain three zones in concentric rings that correspond to the plants' tolerance for standing water. The center section should contain plants that like wet feet, as the water will linger longer here. In the next ring, place the plants that can tolerate occasional standing water. The outermost ring is best for the species that prefer drier climates. Plant in drifts and multiples of three for impact. Small evergreen shrubs have good root systems for soaking up water and will provide longer seasonal interest, especially blooming shrubs. It's better to use established plants rather than planting from seed and worrying about the seeds washing away. Your local garden shop or Extension Office experts can advise about the best selections for your USDA zone and soil conditions.

### POLISH IT

Encourage grass growth at the upper portion of the rain garden to slow water entering the garden. Plant grass or ground cover on the berm to help keep it in place, and then apply a layer of protective mulch to keep weeds down. Heavier mulches such as pine straw or wood chips will also stay in place in the event of heavier rainfall before plant roots become established.

Now you can pour a cold beverage, relax and enjoy the results of your efforts! ♦

**SOURCES:** *bhg.com, raingardennetwork.com and thisoldhouse.com.*



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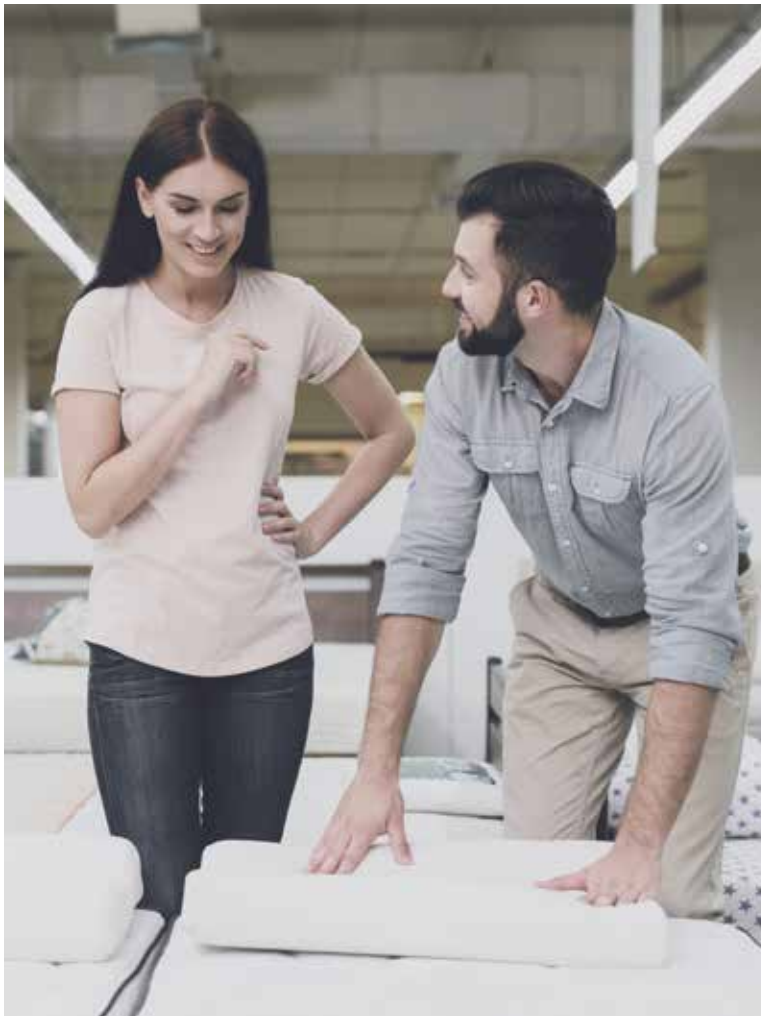
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# SLUMBER IN LUXURY: IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

BY LINDA R PRICE

*Sleep experts recommend from seven to nine hours sleep on a regular basis for good health in adults. Restful sleep is essential to improve health, cognitive functioning, mood, productivity, well-being, quality of life, athletic performance and safety. Since we spend around a third of our lives in bed, it makes sense to invest in quality equipment.*



One of the best ways to achieve a good night's sleep is with a mattress that provides for your individual sleep needs. Luxury mattresses can help you achieve your sleep goals, whether you need extra lumbar support, enjoy a cuddly feel from the mattress, need a mattress that promotes coolness or find that your partner's sleep needs are completely different from your own.

Luxury mattresses promise a good night's sleep, but do they live up to the hype? Many consumers and sleep experts believe they do. Are they worth the high price tag? In a word, yes. If you are looking for a mattress that will last a long time, luxury mattresses with their high-quality materials are a good bet. They may also be important to partners who have different sleep patterns and prefer different

comfort levels. However, expensive mattresses probably aren't worth the money for young children and teens.

When looking for a new mattress, where do you start? Today's mattresses come in many different types. The traditional innerspring mattress is still available, but hybrid mattresses are more popular now. Other popular mattresses for consum-

ers are latex foam, memory foam and mattresses for side-, back- or stomach-sleepers.

The following luxury mattresses are among the most popular brands on the market and are mentioned in no particular order. Mattress prices quoted are approximate, for queen-size beds and depend on the specific model ordered.

Hybrid mattresses are mattresses made with innersprings and

layers of luxury materials that add a more durable construction than pure foam mattresses. The sturdy coils or springs allow air to circulate within the mattress, keeping the surface area cooler.

The Stearns & Foster Estate Mattress (from \$2,399) is a popular choice in this category. Its sheer luxury and quality are hard to beat. The mattress is made with the highest-quality materials, including proprietary coils and memory foam developed by Tempur-Pedic. It is available in many firmness options and isolates motion well, meaning that couples probably won't notice their partner's moving around during the night.

The Saatva Classic Mattress (around \$1,095) is another highly recommended hybrid mattress. It has two layers of coils for extra support. The lavish three-inch pillow top adds to the luxurious feeling of this mattress. It's available in different firmness options for each side of the bed.

Memory foam mattresses use the body's heat and pressure to mold the foam around the body. Some are infused with gel to lessen heat. They are excellent for aligning the spine and relieving pressure points.

Tempur-Pedic leads the field in this option. The LUXE breeze (about \$5,599) is up to ten degrees cooler than the traditional models, which often trap body heat and are uncomfortable for those who sleep hot. The soft model is best for side sleepers who need pressure relief and cushioning for their joints. Tempur-Pedic mattresses isolate motion well, which is great for couples, but it can cause difficulty when changing sleeping positions.

Organic Mattresses are made from eco-friendly sustainable materials such as latex, alpaca, wool, silk, hemp and cotton.

Avocado Organic Luxury Plush Mattress (around \$3,899) is dominant in this category. The mattress has up to 17 layers of certified organic and recyclable materials. The layers include three areas of latex and five zones of coils for maximum support and comfort. The edges have extra support as well. The mattress is available in medium firmness, favored by couples, side- and back-sleepers. It comes with a 25-year warranty.

As you explore different mattresses, investigate other perks while shopping. Ask how long the trial period is for the mattress you are considering. Mattresses feel different after hundreds of hours sleeping on them and in different climate conditions. Companies are aware of this. Trial periods should be at least 30 days and some manufacturers offer up to a year.

Another factor to consider is the warranty. Warranties will give you an idea of the expected lifespan of the mattress. They should protect you against manufacturing defects and unreasonable wear and tear.

Ask if complimentary white-glove delivery is included. Many mattresses are heavy or need special installation. White glove means the delivery includes these extras and many companies will haul away your old mattress for free with this service.

The premium quality materials that make luxury mattresses are expensive but longer lasting than mattresses made with less expensive materials. After all, a good night's sleep is worth the investment, isn't it? ♦

**SOURCES:** [jcsn.aasm.org](http://jcsn.aasm.org), [forbes.com](http://forbes.com), [goodhousekeeping.com](http://goodhousekeeping.com), [esquire.com](http://esquire.com), [tomsguide.com](http://tomsguide.com), [nyt.com/wirecutter](http://nyt.com/wirecutter) and [mattressclarity.com](http://mattressclarity.com).

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# Jenn + Dylan Quinn

WRITTEN BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

Jenn Parker, 29, graduated from KU and then moved to Kansas City. She and Dylan have been together for five years, and both love all things Western, thus they wanted to incorporate western and romantic details in their wedding with really personal touches for both of their families.

Dylan Quinn, 32, was born and raised in Kansas City. His parents also grew up in Kansas City. He graduated from Kansas State, where he was a cheerleader. He's the vice president of Quinn Real Estate Company, a family company that he runs with his dad and brother.

Jenn and Dylan live in Prairie Village with their dog Beckham.

Jenn and Dylan had known about each other through mutual friends and social media, but officially met at a friend's wedding in 2018. "A week after we started dating, Dylan went with me to a wedding in Vail, Colorado. Since then, we've made a yearly tradition of going to Vail in the fall," Jenn recalls. "He proposed in Vail, at Oktoberfest, with an emerald ring that belonged to my mom, who passed away when I was 12. I had never seen the stone in person until Dylan proposed with it."



- October 7, 2024 -



**PHOTOGRAPHY**

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The blissful couple tied the knot on October 7, 2023. Attending Jenn as Maid of Honor was Haley Goren; Kyrie Quinn served as Matron of Honor; bridesmaids were Hayley Lewis, Tigist Quinn and Mahlet Quinn. Harrison Quinn served as Best Man; groomsmen were Jacob Quinn, Johnny Quinn, Mark Harris and Chris Martin.

“For our wedding day, we wanted everything to be intimate and have personal touches to make it unique. My bridesmaids wore white, which was very different, but

I loved it. Our venue has such beautiful landscaping and fall trees, and the white looked so beautiful in photos, classic and unique” Jenn shares. “My mom passed away when I was 12, so I wanted to incorporate little touches of her and make it feel like she was there. I did this in the flowers, incorporating yellows and purples. I also had a sprig of rosemary at each place setting. Rosemary symbolizes remembrance and honoring someone who wasn’t there.

The tables were all named for a horse that Dylan’s family had owned at one point. Our rehearsal dinner was denim themed, and it was at the Quinn’s barn under string lights with tables set up next to the horse stalls.”

Jenn and Dylan have yet to honeymoon. “Right after the wedding, we had two other weddings for friends. We also moved into a new house, so we’re doing our honeymoon for our one-year anniversary, in St. Lucia, to relax, enjoy a new place we’ve never been and enjoy the beaches!” ♦



## NURTURING ABILITIES, EMBRACING POSSIBILITIES FOR AMERICA'S LARGEST MINORITY



BY STEPHEN "DOC" HUNSLEY, MD

In a country where 26 percent of our population carries a diagnosis of special needs and/or disabilities, individuals and families face unique challenges that demand specialized support. SOAR Special Needs is that beacon of inclusivity and empowerment, dedicated to transforming the lives of those individuals and their families to soar in their local and faith communities. Recognizing the critical need for support, SOAR not only addresses the diverse needs but also serves as a guiding light for parents navigating the uncertainties of raising a child with special needs.

SOAR Special Needs is one of the most highly respected and effective nonprofit organizations with a lifeline for the largest minority group in the United States. Our mission is to empower families and individuals with special needs. SOAR becomes a sanctuary where differences are embraced and potentials are unlocked. In a society that struggles with embracing diversity, SOAR's commitment

to fostering inclusivity becomes particularly significant.

Our organization's approach is holistic, addressing the immediate challenges but also nurturing the immense potential within each individual. From educational support tailored to individual strengths and challenges to recreational activities that promote socialization and well-being, SOAR ensures a comprehensive system that celebrates uniqueness.

SOAR addresses the concerns every parent faces with an individual with special needs and it's why we successfully provide clarity while seeking independence and community integration. With our programs, classes, events, camps and respite resources, we can answer these questions that families need answers to.

### *Will my child ever be able to provide for himself?*

SOAR addresses this concern by offering educational support that goes beyond traditional norms. By creating an inclusive learning environment, the organization empowers individuals with the skills needed to navigate the world with confidence and independence.

### *Who will take care of my child once I'm gone?*

SOAR's commitment extends beyond the immediate to the future. Through tailored programs and support, SOAR ensures that individuals with special needs are equipped to lead fulfilling lives even when their primary caregivers are no longer present.

### *Who will take care of me as a parent/caregiver?*

Recognizing the challenges faced by parents and caregivers, SOAR not only supports individuals with special needs but also provides a network of understanding and assistance for those who play a crucial role in their lives.

SOAR serves all ages, diagnoses and severities. We have the nation's largest disability day camps every summer in Lee's Summit, Missouri, and Lenexa, Kansas, and they are growing due to high demand. SOAR is not about addressing special needs; it is about nurturing special abilities and unlocking the extraordinary potential that resides within each member of our diverse society. Our ability to grow and thrive absolutely depends on community support and partnership. If you would like to help create a brighter future for our individuals to positively impact their lives in taking the next step toward realizing their personal potential and achieving greater independence, come SOAR with us! ♦

*To learn more about SOAR Special Needs, or how to volunteer or partner financially, please go to [soarspecialneeds.org](http://soarspecialneeds.org) or [info@SOARSpecialNeeds.org](mailto:info@SOARSpecialNeeds.org).*



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### MARCH 17

#### Westport St. Patrick's Day Parade

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### MARCH 29

#### Golden Girls: The Laughs Continue

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Miami's sassiest seniors have returned for one more hurrah. The year 2024 finds Sophia out on bail after being busted by the DEA for running a drug ring for retirees. Blanche and Rose have founded CreakN, a thriving sex app for seniors. And Dorothy is trying to hold it all together, with help from her much younger, sex-crazed love interest. Relive the heartfelt hilarity of four ladies who never stopped being your friends.



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**CAPRICORN**  
(DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Your first house of self still has a full house, which means it is still time to take hold of the reins of life. Take the month and make yourself happy, because in doing so it will raise the spirits of others around you. Your happiness will be contagious.



**TAURUS**  
(APR. 20-MAY 20)

Health is going to come into play a lot this month. That being said, you will only need to be extremely careful with it until the 19th. Overworking yourself is the main risk. Just because your sign is the bull/ox is no reason to work like one. This is a period in which doing good for others will also benefit you.



**VIRGO**  
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

The need for approval from your peers will be growing ever stronger this month. After the 19th your house of Love will be most powerful. With this new power, it is important to mend any broken relationships with friends, family or loved ones. The confidence issues have been because of Mercury, but as it shifts out of alignment your state of mind will also start to shift.



**AQUARIUS**  
(JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

This month personal independence is strong, and others will notice this. Use this new-found confidence to shape yourself and your world as you see fit. Good health also visits you this month as well as social intellect. Students will learn faster with this energy this month.



**GEMINI**  
(MAY 21-JUN. 20)

The Air is still the dominant element this month and as this is your ruling sign, health and intellect will be supercharged with energy. Neptune, your career planet, moves into your house of career, making this month a super powerful career month. Avoid social frustrations and bickering as this will set you back this month. Try to maintain a level head and adapt to the situations instead of trying to steer.



**LIBRA**  
(SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

This month will give you the feeling of blissful carelessness, and many would do wise to relax and go with this feeling. Many will judge you because of this new demeanor, but fret not, because happiness leads to wealth. Social geniuses are mobile this month and you will find it easier to learn things.

# STAR JOURNEYS

BY MELODY BUSSEY

*March is the month of new possibilities. That being said, many signs should keep a level head this month and not let themselves become so wrapped up in possibilities that they let their other responsibilities go. In fact, most signs will have to work harder than usual to maintain balance in both work and home lives. All signs would do well to pay attention to health matters and do the right thing.*



**PISCES**  
(FEB. 19-MAR. 20)

Like last month, your career will be eating way at social areas of your life. Happiness will be found at the balancing of your work and family life. Overall health needs to be addressed this month. Career is still very strong this month and will try to take over your social calendar. It is important to find a balance in this time.



**CANCER**  
(JUN. 21-JUL. 23)

Watch for health risks in March. Take this time to lay off toxic foods and help your body detox from the waste that you put into it. Especially take the time to strengthen your heart, thighs and liver this month.



**SCORPIO**  
(OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

With most of the ruling planets resting below the horizon, the home and family houses remain full, and so your tie to your family will remain strong this month. Learn to pace yourself and the rewards will be endless. Jupiter will have entered retrograde in February, which for the average Scorpio means that financial obligations need to be looked over carefully.



**ARIES**  
(MAR. 21-APR. 19)

Focus heavily on your career this month, seeing as Mercury is moving forward through your house of career. Keep your head down and get lost in your work and you'll see the obstacles in life washed away. Later in the month the planets will shift to your eastern hemisphere, which grants increased independence.



**LEO**  
(JUL. 24-AUG. 22)

March will be a strong romance month as most of your planets will be in the west quadrant. Social graces will blossom this month. With business-related things, work to make compromises as they will be beneficial. Emotional harmony will be your main goal this month, but try to keep an eye on the career aspect of life also.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

As last month, it is important to live your life how you want it and shape it to your will. This month it is important to protect and grow your funds. February is also a good time to gain social support from family and loved ones for your future plans.



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