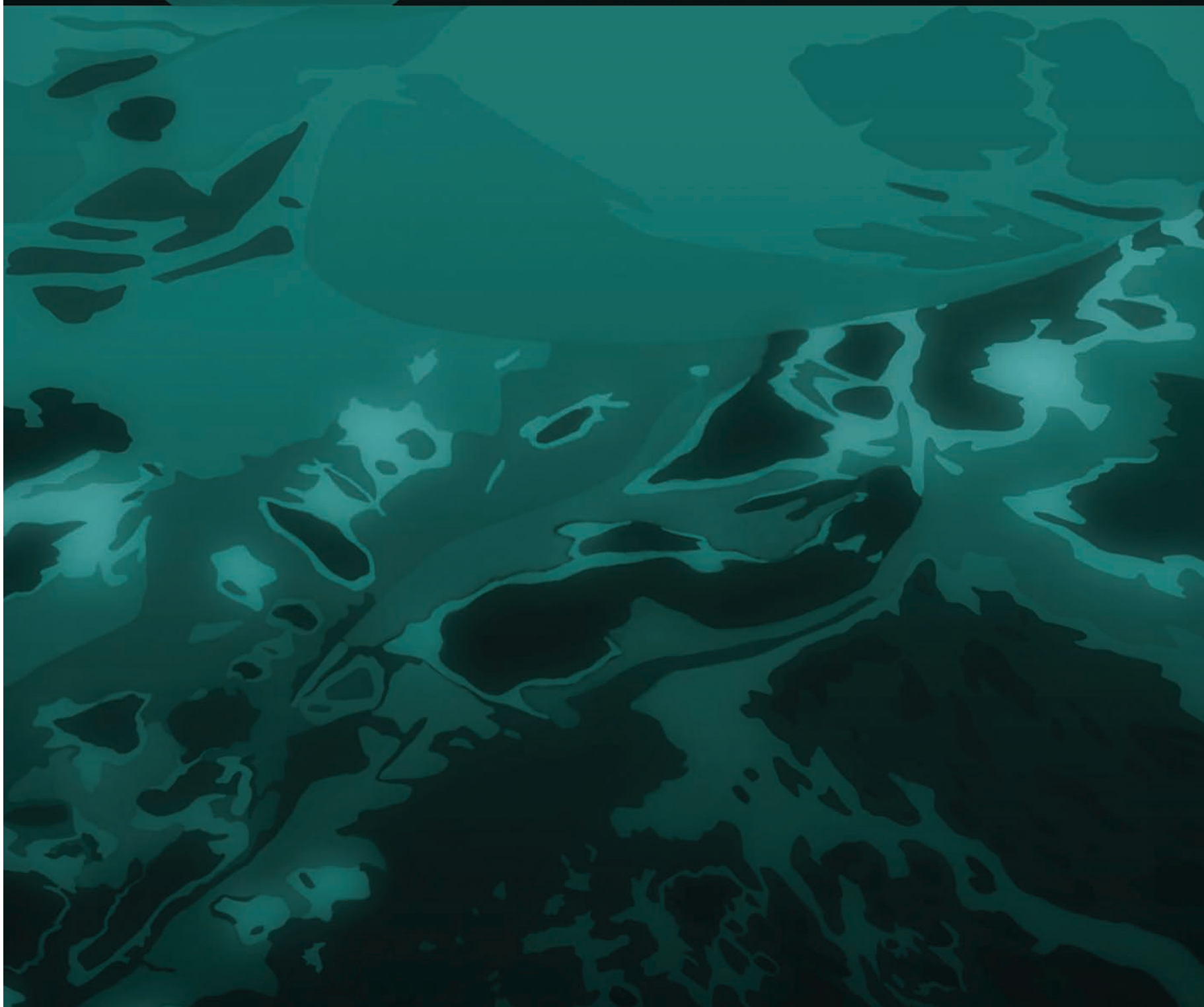


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There's an old saying that advises you not to defecate where you eat. Another variation of that same aphorism suggests you not soil your own bed. As a species we have done that and so much more. Not only have we fouled where we sleep and eat, we have poisoned the air we breathe. This, too: we have even polluted the water we drink, and seem hell bent on irrevocably contaminating and destroying once for all the great nurturer of all life—the sea.

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COVER IMAGE:

Illustration by Catherine McGuigan

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THEATER REVIEW

HAMILTON and Rumors of War Bending the Arc

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

HAMILTON, THE musical, which played at Altria Theatre through December 8, was the perfect entrée to serve up with the impeachment hearings. It was, after all, Alexander Hamilton who forged, in the fiery furnace of his brain, the tools to remove a wannabe autocrat from office.

Like many Americans, I knew next to nothing about Hamilton before reading Ron Chernow's exhaustive biography about this frequently forgotten Founding Father. Unlike many of the other founders, Hamilton was born without the oral benefit of a silver spoon. He was a commoner, an outsider, an immigrant who lived a hard-scrabble life in the Sugar Islands, and witnessed the brutality and injustice meted out on enslaved Africans. So, it's no surprise that Alexander became an abolitionist, and those founders, who were of the manor born, resented him for this—he wasn't a member of the club—and tried to diminish all he had done for the fledgling Republic. Chief among them were men like the Sage of Monticello, who was forever preening his peacock plumage and feathering his nest in history books.

This musical, which is based on Chernow's book, is lively, irreverent (when it needs to be), and peppered liberally with references to the flaws and pitfalls of Hamilton and his life. Some of the lines seemed downright prescient. In one of the songs, QUID PRO QUO is used twice, and the audience response was immediate with cheers, laughter, a wink of knowledge, and thunderous applause.

The scores and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda blend hip-hop, jazz, blues, rap and R&B in an apparent homage to music that is distinctly American, grown on our fertile soil from the seeds sewn by our unpedigreed immigrants who came, willingly or unwillingly, to lay down their roots. The songs, with barbs of truth and satire and good-spirited humor, inspire like no anthem ever could, and each of the players voice them with unparalleled



expertise. It's easy to understand why HAMILTON won the 2016 Grammy for Best Musical Theatre Album.

From the astounding choreography of Andy Blankenbuehler, to the musical supervision and orchestrations by Alex Lacamoire, to the scenic design by David Korins, the stunning and colorful costume design by Paul Tazewell, this musical is as singular in each of these efforts as the man it is about.

Which brings me back to Hamilton, the man, and an eerily clairvoyant essay he penned way back in 1792. "When a man unprincipled in private life," he wrote. "Desperate in his fortune, bold in his temper . . . despotic in his ordinary demeanour — known to have scoffed in private at the principles of liberty — when such a man

is seen to mount the hobby horse of popularity — to join in the cry of danger to liberty — to take every opportunity of embarrassing the General Government and bringing it under suspicion — to flatter and fall in with all the nonsense of the zealots of the day — It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may 'ride the storm and direct the whirlwind.'"

It's seems particularly fitting that HAMILTON, a celebration of the truth of our founding, ran almost till the day they unveiled Kehinde Wiley's Rumors of War, a celebration of the truth of our Civil War. Rumors of War stands proudly on Arthur Ashe Boulevard adjacent the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, as the arc of the moral universe, once again, bends toward justice. **NJ**

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Kambourian Jewelers: The Cutting Edge

by CHARLES MCGUIGAN

THE KAMBOURIANS are to jewelry, as the James River is to Richmond. They define it. Their signature artistry is unparalleled, and you can spot one of their creations wherever you go, whether it dangles from a neck, encircles a wrist, or hugs a ring finger. It's like spotting an Edward Hopper in among paintings by lesser artists. You might expect this of a family that springs from seven generations of jewelers. And like all great artists, the Kambourians are always on the cutting edge. Now, they've redefined the jewelry store, and there's no other experience like it in Richmond, or anywhere else in the entire country.

Haig Kambourian sits behind an enormous desk in a space as opulent as it gets in Richmond. His offices are housed on the second floor of what many consider the city's most desirable address—the Branch Museum of Architecture and Design at the corner of Robinson and Monument, a home built a hundred years ago, and designed by John Russell Pope, a prominent architect of that era.

I'm sitting in an anteroom that faces Haig's desk. At the jeweler's bench, in this small room, Haig's nephew, Nathan, works on a white gold ring clustered with diamonds. From my vantage point, I watch Haig, framed by the arched doorway, interact with a customer who is selling a diamond ring. This is not your typical diamond ring, either. The stone's the size of a throat lozenge and has a lemony cast to it. It's a whopper, weighing in at a full eight carats.

The woman hands Haig a GIA (Gemologist Institute of America) report which describes in detail the pedigree of this large yellow diamond. Haig, in Sherlockian fashion, scours every facet of the stone, as he peers through a loupe held millimeters away from the diamond. His eyes are constantly moving from the gemstone to the GIA report, and back again. He nods to himself, his brow crinkles. Ten minutes later, Haig sits back in his chair. He offers the woman a princely sum for the diamond, and the woman seems genuinely amazed. She explains she had recently tried to sell the same stone to a corporate jewelry store.



Left: Joey Kambourian in the showroom at the Grove Avenue location.



Right: Haig Kambourian at his desk, Nathan Kambourian at his jeweler's bench in the Branch Museum on Monument Avenue.

They'd offered her \$20,000 less than what Haig intends to pay her. "I am so glad I came in here," the woman says.

At their location on Monument Avenue, Haig buys precious metals and gemstones, and Nathan, in his workshop, repairs jewelry and handcrafts Kambourian originals. "I will buy large diamonds and coin collections, bullion, gold, silver, platinum," says Haig. Then, Nathan says, "We do the repair work here. This is a bench jeweler, and full custom shop. We make pieces, and finish them, right here."

A couple days later I meet with Joey Kambourian, Nathan's brother, who runs the other half of Kambourian Jewelers, an intimate showroom on Grove Avenue near Libbie. When I tell Joey about the woman and the giant stone, he smiles and cocks his head. He's soft-spoken and precise in his enunciation. "We know all the diamond merchants, and all the color gemstone merchants everywhere," he says. "They don't even use websites. You have to know them, and you just call them from wherever they may be in the world at the time. That's why we can get customers the best price for the gemstones they're selling, and why we can get any gemstone for our custom work."

This intimate showroom we're standing in is the first jewelry store of its kind in Richmond. Shop hours are by appointment only, though walk-ins are always welcome. Appointments are typically made between ten and six on weekdays, but Joey will meet customers as early as eight in the morning, or as late as seven in the evening.

"We're still a full-service jewelry shop, and we still have all our inventory," says Joey. "It's just now we have a much more open showroom, and with that set up we keep a lot less of our inventory out at any given moment. The flipside of that is that we get to tailor the showroom to exactly what each customer wants to see."

For instance, if someone's looking for an engagement ring, once they set up an appointment, Joey busies himself creating a personalized showroom for that particular customer. "We'll set up a sixty to forty mix of modern and vintage pieces," he says. "We'll also have some of our handmade pieces mixed in."

Although the client can purchase a ring then and there, Joey sees this initial showing as an opportunity to help the client create a custom design.

"It's often just a jumping off point for custom work," he says. "I'd say custom design is about eighty percent of what we do now."

Even though these pieces are custom-made, the prices are reasonable, and there's a reason for that. "We don't have massive amounts of overhead," Joey explains. "It's me, my brother and my uncle, and we have these cozy little tucked away offices where we can make these wonderful things, so we don't have to charge ten times the mark up. And that makes everyone happy."

The Kambourians gracefully merge new school with old school methods in creating one-of-a-kind jewelry.

"We do CAD design," says Joey. "But we do a lot of hand-drawn traditional stuff, as well."

After the design is finalized, Joey's brother, Nathan, goes to work on handcrafting the piece. "The finishing of it is all done by Nathan in our little shop above the Branch Museum," Joey says. "And that's just a wonderful, inspiring place for our jeweler to sit down at his bench and focus on his art."

With their cumulative years of experience, this team of jewelers can pro-

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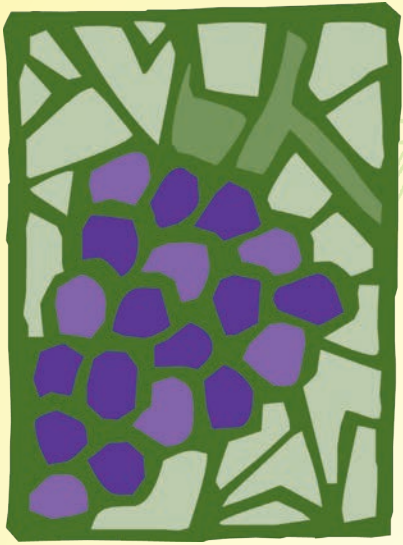
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duce virtually anything from start to finish. Joey tells me about a diamond ring they made a few years back. The stone—a five-carat round—was larger than average, but the client wanted the ring to have a delicate look. “And that’s just something we’ve gotten really good at over the years,” says Joey. “We can make something that looks very dainty, but we make sure it’s stable enough and strong enough to hold a five-carat stone.” He remembers that particular ring. “It looked like something a princess would wear,” he says. “It was just amazing.”

For several years now, Joey has been thinking about creating this type of personalized jewelry boutique. He came up with the idea after years of watching customers looking through the showcases at their former shop in Carytown.

“The problem with having a big show room with a thousand rings is that people would come in five or six times and not see it all,” Joey says. “There’s not enough time in the world to go through all of our inventory in one setting. So my idea was to be able to tailor it to each person.”

This personalized showroom approach seemed like a good alternative to the conventional jewelry store. “Ours is the first store in Richmond that I’ve seen where there’s this level of attention to detail, and focus on the individual’s experience,” says Joey. “I had been reading about some smaller European showrooms that have a similar feel, but I really do think that we may be the first to do it on a person-by-person basis.”

And the Kambourians new shops benefit both the customer and the jeweler.

“I’ve been wanting to switch over to this setup for a long time now,” Joey Kambourian says. “I really do believe it’s better for everybody involved. The jeweler and the designer, like me and Nathan, don’t have to be in here forty to sixty hours a week. We come in when there’s something to do. It allows us to have that unmatched personalization that you could not have in a normal store. In that setting, you’d always be worried that somebody else would walk in off the street and start taking attention away from the customer you were working with. And we never want anyone to feel even remotely rushed. We want people to be able to take their time.” 

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PART 2: THE SEA

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING that advises you not to defecate where you eat. Another variation of that same aphorism suggests you not soil your own bed.

As a species we have done that and so much more. Not only have we fouled where we sleep and eat, we have poisoned the air we breathe. This, too: we have even polluted the water we drink, and seem hell-bent on irrevocably contaminating and destroying the great nurturer of all life—the sea.

“For all at last returns to the sea—to Oceanus, the ocean river, like the everflowing stream of time, the beginning and the end.” So wrote Rachel Carson, mother of the modern environmental movement, almost seventy years ago. Trained as a marine biologist, Rachel Carson, who was called the scientist-poet of the sea, would later write “*Silent Spring*”, which proved conclusively that chemical corporations were poisoning the world we live in, and lying about it. With the publication of that book back in 1962, the environmental movement was launched. The power of her words would lead, one year later, to the Clean Air Act, and the following year to the Wilderness Act. But the book’s impact continued to grow. Rachel’s words lived on, even after her death, propelling lawmakers to pass the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and ultimately, to establish, in 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency.

When I was a boy, our family, all seven of us, packed into a station wagon as big as a boat, barreled north up the interstate, and visited, for the first time, coastal Maine, and Canada’s maritime provinces. My brother Marty and I spent hours in the tidal pools on low tide, examining the abundant life cradled and trapped in these small hollows carved out of solid granite. We would lift curtains of bladderwrack and rockweed, great strands of amber seaweed which grew from the sides of granite monoliths, and unveil rock crabs and colonies of clinging limpets, and below the dense crust of barnacles, we would settle into the water itself and find sea urchins and starfish moving slowly among banana-like clusters of mussels as dark blue-black as moonless midnight. Small fish lived in these pools, and tiny grass shrimp, and thousands of periwinkles, and the occasional hermit crab who had taken the vacant home of a deceased periwinkle and made it its own. Since that time, I have always sought out those tidal pools along that rocky coast, something my children now do every time we head to the far north.

Years after that first introduction to Maine’s tidal pools, I would read Rachel Carson’s books, and find that she was inspired to investigate our delicately balanced biosphere by these very same tidal pools of Maine. In fact, she built a house on a rock overlooking a tidal pool, where she would study the shoreline world, mainly at night, armed only with a flashlight.



Shoreline of one of Virginia’s Barrier Islands.

About the same time I was reading “*The Sea Around Us*”, I came across a word that captured my imagination, and still holds it hostage today. The word was *microcosm*, and when I fully understood its meaning, I immediately considered the tidal pools, for they had always reminded me of miniature manifestations of the oceans at large.

There is a very large microcosm of the ocean right here in Virginia, but it is not ringed in rock. Instead, it is surrounded by thick strands of sand on the east, and low lying mud flats on the west, and it runs north to south more than seventy miles. It is one of the most studied ecosystems on the planet, and had it not been for the efforts of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) over the past fifty years, it would have been destroyed beyond reclamation by greedy developers and other money-obsessed enemies of the Earth. Today, it is a working laboratory of environmental science that

shares its knowledge with the entire world. And it is a success story of what can happen when an entire community, led by a team of committed scientists, join together to combat environmental degradation.

This system of barrier islands and seaside bays and riparian lands are on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. This past October, just before Halloween, my daughter Catherine, an environmental scientist and artist, traveled with me to experience this unique ecosystem first hand. We were guests of TNC’s Virginia Coast Reserve, and its executive director, Jill Bieri.

The day is overcast and cool, and a mist falls faintly, as we pass through the village of Nassawadox and make our way out Brownsville Road to the headquarters of the Virginia Coast Reserve. Jill Bieri greets us and invites us into a large conference room. Like all the other Nature Conservancy employees and volun-

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN
PHOTOS BY CATHERINE MCGUIGAN



The village of Oyster is home to a number of environmental projects.

teers we will encounter here over the next two days, Jill is a wealth of documented scientific fact, and exudes energy and enthusiasm and love for this place she and her fellow scientists call home.

Jill tells us that TNC is the single largest landowner on the entire Eastern Shore of Virginia. Other portions

of this singular peninsula and its barrier islands are owned and protected by other conservation groups.

“On this seventy-five mile long peninsula, one hundred and thirty-three thousand acres are protected,” she says. “That includes state holdings, federal holdings, The Nature Conservancy’s lands that we own outright,

and those that are owned by private landowners and are held in conservation easements either by The Nature Conservancy or the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust, or other entities like Ducks Unlimited.”

Though the conservancy owns the bulk of the delicate chain of barrier islands just off the peninsula, they have partners who are equally committed to protecting this rare environment.

“Out of the eighteen marsh and barrier islands that exist on the Virginia coast, we own all, or parts of fourteen of them,” says Jill. “Fisherman’s Island, Assaateague and Wallops are federally owned. Assawoman, Wreck and Mockhorn are owned by the state. But we all manage the islands together as a partnership.”

Jill refers to the Virginia Coast Reserve as one of TNC’s flagships. “The programs that we have here really do sort of encompass all that The Nature Conservancy is,” she says. “Long-term land conservation, protecting that land, managing that land in a responsible way, connecting people with nature, doing restoration in this area. So we really are a flagship, a shining star for The Nature Conservancy.”

We begin our tour with the Brownsville Preserve which encompasses about twelve hundred and fifty acres of maritime forests, fresh water impoundment areas and coastal salt marshes, which support a va-

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riety of habitats for a host of denizens that crawl, slither, swim, and fly. Half a dozen of us board what amounts to screened-in porch on wheels that is pulled along at a snail's pace over a rutted road by a white pickup truck. Jenny Miller, who manages the preserve, acts as our tour guide.

"What you're seeing off in the distance there is a coastal salt marsh," she says. Jenny gestures to a vast expanse of grasses of different hues, from black needle rush in the higher marsh area down to spartina, which thrives in a salt water environment. This marsh is bordered on each side by large stands of loblolly pine, and ends on an arm of Hog Island Bay.

In another salt marsh there are a number of dead cedars, white as bone. "That is most likely due to salt water intrusion," says Jenny. "When the salt-water comes up and floods in these high marsh areas and gets up on the edges of these maritime forests, these trees, like the red cedars and the loblolly pines, are not adapted to dealing with that long period of standing water and also salt, and so they can't deal with it and it stresses them out, and then eventually they'll die off."

This is just one example of the undeniable sea level rise we will see over the next two days. And that rise in sea level is due to human activity, and the resulting global climate change.

Along with her duties as preserve manager, Jenny also heads up the education program, which is an integral part of the Virginia Nature Reserve's mission. "I coordinate and run the fifth and seventh grade field trips for our local schools," she says. "It's fun to see the kids out exploring, and doing all sorts of things that they don't normally get to do."

When I ask, jokingly, if the kids start forest fires, Jenny shakes her head, and, not missing a beat, says, "Noooooo. There's no fire involved. But hopefully we're sparking a fire for them to become future stewards."

Education can do this. "We definitely mention that as sea levels rise we're going to see a change in our vegetation and a change in our habitats," Jenny says. "And we talk about the human impact that we have on these areas of the Eastern Shore, both positive and negative. Sometimes it's a tough topic to talk about, but we definitely mention it because we know it's an important concept for them to at least start thinking about."

Margaret Van Clief, who sits next to Jenny, is the Reserve's outreach and education coordinator. "I partner with Jenny in our education program by leading the tenth grade field trips out



Bo Lusk, a coastal scientist with TNC who heads up marine restoration projects, holds up a cluster of oysters.

to Parramore Island where we do discuss a little bit more climate change related stuff," says Margaret.

Out on Parramore, there's a mile-long path that cuts straight across island through the heart of a maritime forest. "We take the kids through several different ecosystems, and we talk a bit about changes occurring over the years," Margaret says. "When we first land there, we're in a bayside marsh, and you can see some of the die-off of cedars like the ones we just saw. When we reach the other side of the cross island trail, we're out on the beach, and we do an activity that helps the students understand longshore drift, the way sediment moves along the coast of a barrier island. And we'll talk to some extent about how climate change is affecting these things and what humans can do, but we also talk a lot about adaptation because we're definitely in a period here now where these changes are happening."

Which leads her to another important aspect of her job.

"Community engagement is absolutely a conservation goal for the Virginia Coast Reserve," says Margaret. "We do a lot of conservation and restoration work, and without community support, we would be nowhere. A lot of what we do is simply go out and listen in the community, and talk to people about what they're experiencing, and then talk to them about how we can all play a role together in adaptation."

One of the keys, too, is stressing the

economic value of a conserved landscape. Thanks to two projects TNC engaged in years ago, the local fisheries, once near collapse, have rebounded in exceptional ways. Through the eel grass restoration project (the largest one in the world, by the way), and the steady rebuilding of oyster reefs, the seaside bays of Virginia are now some of the cleanest water on the entire East Coast of America.

"The Eastern Shore is the largest exporter of clams in North America, and that is definitely due to improved water quality," Margaret says. "We've also now got a major hard shell clam fishery and oyster aquaculture. Wild oyster harvesting and clamming have made a comeback, as well as food fish, and crabs. And all of this is because of the positive water quality that we have. So part of my job is to talk about all this stuff."

So much of the Conservancy's work on the Eastern Shore is dependent on its volunteers. Two of them are with us as we make our way through the Preserve.

Barbara O'Hare has been volunteering for the past four years, working with the kids, mainly, though she has done her share of community outreach activities. "I've been out on Parramore Island to help with the renovation of the Coast Guard boathouse," she says.

Judy Illmensee, a retired school teacher from Long Island, has been living on the shore about five years, and almost soon she arrived became an Eastern Shore master naturalist. "It was only

natural that I fell into volunteering with kids here on the shore," she says. "In fact, I subbed for a little while, so I got to know the culture of the children here on the Eastern Shore. The thing that I like to get across to them as subtly as I can is how fortunate they are to have this as their home."

Later that day, we drive over to the waterfront village of Wachapreague and board a Privateer, a dependable, seaworthy craft still built down in Beaufort, North Carolina. Our captain is Marcus Killmon, whose roots grow deep in the Eastern Shore. Among the others on our vessels is Bo Lusk, another local, who is a coastal scientist specializing in marine habitat restoration.

I take a position next to Marcus in the wheelhouse. "I used to work on the charter boats when I was growing up," he tells. "You used to be able run up between Parramore and Revels Island, and all of that's closed off now."

He points to a thin line of spartina that runs parallel to the waterfront about a hundred yards from the shoreline. "That berm was a lot higher, and that would actually protect boats from a lot of the wave action," Marcus says. "If it was too bad of a storm, a lot of the captains would take their boats into the headwaters of Finney Creek." He studies the berm, which is now almost level with the water, just sprouting inches above it. "All of this used to be twice as high," he says. "When I was a kid, you could walk up and down it with no problem."

Now, with sea-level rise, Wachapreague itself is under threat. "A lot of what the town's wanting to do is to try to rebuild that to help keep some of the wave action from hitting the docks," says Marcus. "You're not going to stop the water from coming up into the roads, but you can stop the wave heights."

Jill, who is also with us, nods along. "The sea is rising," she says. "Six times a year the road at Brownsville is completely underwater. And on the south end of Brownsville, there's no farming there anymore it's gotten so low. People here have seen it happen over their lifetimes. They do know it's changing. Something's happening. Their docks are underwater, or there's a road they can't access."

One of the ways to absorb some of that wave energy is by creating oyster reefs, which is one of Bo's specialties. "I do marine habitat restoration work, and that specifically means restoring oyster reef habitats and sea grass habitats," he says.

When that last vestige of salt marsh disappears, the waterfront of Wachapreague will be susceptible to head on attacks by the rising waters. "Once it's eroded, the working waterfront of the town of Wachapreague is

going to be exposed to a whole lot of wave energy," says Marcus. "So we're doing an oyster restoration project along that shoreline to see if we can stop that erosion." Oyster reefs have proven effective deterrents against wave energy elsewhere in the seaside bays.

"We've shown that these arrays of oyster castles are helping to attenuate waves, or dampen waves," Marcus says. "It's a good nature-based solution to protect these really vulnerable coastal communities."

After a short visit to Parramore Island, we return to Wachapreague, and Catherine and I have dinner and then turn in.

The next day, we board a much smaller boat out of Oyster, and make our way out to the southern tip of Cobb Island. Throughout the morning, we can see the evidence of all the work TNC has done to reinvigorate these ecosystems. For one thing, though it's overcast again, the water is crystal clear and the color of the gemstone, aquamarine, and you can see all the way to bottom where pale emerald blades of eel grass wave with the currents.

About five hundred acres of eel grass had been planted in the seaside bays,

and the grass quickly spread, now covering some nine thousand acres. And with the restoration of these grasses, sea scallops may soon make a comeback. We see more and more oyster reefs, like veritable hills rising from the bay. And they are only filtering the water, they are also absorbing wave energy.

After tying up at the dock back in Oyster, we join Jill Bieri back at the Virginia Coast Reserve headquarters. She tells us how TNC's operation on the Eastern of Virginia is helping folks all around the globe cope with environmental cataclysms.

"Those communities might not have the water quality conditions that we have, or have these intact natural systems that we have, but they can learn from what we are doing," she says. "And we can learn from other scientists as well. We are hosting study groups tours both within the Nature Conservancy, and with external partners from around the world who are saying, 'Hey, I need to get out there and see what's going on. I want to look at how you've been successful with the eel grass restoration project. What techniques are you using for the oyster restoration? And we need to fix our water quality so we can get to that point.'"

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For the past forty years, less than a decade after TNC started its program on the Eastern Shore, the Virginia Shore Reserve has been a part of UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Man and the Biosphere Programme.

"We were one of the first sites around the world designated as part of this UN program," she says. "The program's about protecting lands and waters, and then having those lands and waters be used sustainably to help local economies. So, it's really very analogous to the goals of The Nature Conservancy."

The current administration, known for its Neanderthal understanding of global climate change, no longer recognizes the Virginia Coast Reserve's membership in UNESCO. "But we still are part of one of seven hundred sites around the world that belong to that organization," says Jill. "We're connected to the world. It would be really easy to think, what I have done for the last thirty years of my career? Is all for naught because of what's going on right now. But I don't feel that way. This is just a blip, and I believe this is where I need to be because I think we are a global organization that can take the science and answer these questions, help to make policy changes



Roads on the Eastern Shore are often inundated even during normal high tides.

and bring the right people to the table. That's why I'm upbeat."

And you can hear it in her voice, and see it her eyes, which flash with a lim-

bic spark. "It goes along with what you said earlier about me, that I'm optimistic," says Jill. "And I am, because we're doing stuff every single day. There's a lot of doom and gloom, and you see

the data and, you know, if carbon levels get to this level at a certain point, we're at a point of no return. But we're not there yet, and so let's keep really focusing on the positive."

Jill looks past me to a fellow scientist, my daughter, Catherine, who is now twenty-three.

"I think about my children, who are twenty and twenty-one," she says. "When I went into marine science thirty years ago, there were very few women in marine science. Now, it's more of a mainstream career."

Turns out her daughters are following in the footsteps of their mother. "Both of my daughters are majoring in either marine science or environmental science, mainstream and respected professions," says Jill Bieri. "I mean, we don't give them any credit. We say they're lazy and they don't work hard enough. That's not been experience. They're going to change the world, they're the ones."

Like the teenager who just became Time magazine's Person of the Year, Greta Thunberg, whom Margaret Atwood compared to Joan of Arc. She, like so many of her peers, has the fight and the will of the Maid of Orleans. **NJ**

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BOOK REVIEW

Pain After Pain

by FRAN WITHROW

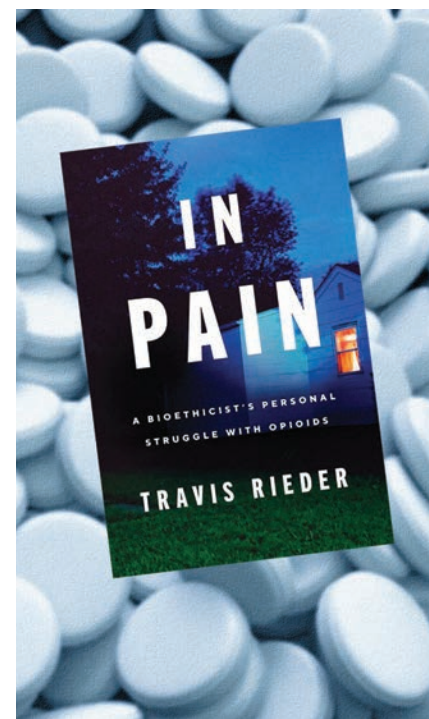
IN 2015, TRAVIS RIEDER was involved in a motorcycle accident that crushed his foot. The ensuing five surgeries in five weeks, as well as the months of recovery afterward, were horrific. His pain was massive, and every surgeon and attending physician freely prescribed generous quantities of opioids to help him deal with his agony. The opioids worked, but when he finally decided to wean himself off, the withdrawal from what had become his opioid dependency was perhaps worse than what had come before. "In Pain" is the description of Rieder's struggle with opioids and his determination to use this personal experience to change the face of pain management in America.

As I read about the truly appalling withdrawal symptoms Rieder experienced as he struggled to wean himself from opioids, I wondered how on earth anyone ever manages to be successful in casting off these addictive drugs. Rieder is a bioethicist at Johns Hopkins University. He has an extremely supportive family, especially his partner and adored daughter. These were crucial factors in his ability to finally emerge from his dependency. Even so, there were days Rieder did not think he would survive.

It took four excruciating weeks for Rieder to get off the drugs, without the aid of the medical community, each of whom passed him off to someone else or who told him to just go back on the drugs if he was having trouble getting off the opioids. Rieder discovered that though physicians learn how to prescribe these drugs, they know very little about how to safely and effectively help patients to stop using them.

Opioids are powerfully addictive drugs. They attach to the brain and affect it in two ways: they not only reduce pain but also give one a sense of euphoria. No wonder people are eager to continue them. And some people, due to their genetic makeup and their environment, are more likely to become dependent than others.

Rieder is using his story to make the case that pain management in America is in poor shape. The commonly used pain chart ("How bad is your pain on a scale of 1 to 10?") is actually not a very good indicator of pain,



because pain is subjective, meaning a doctor can't measure it or see it. This is a problem, as physicians must make a judgment call about how bad someone's pain really is. And physicians prescribe pain meds all too easily, succumbing to pressure from drug manufacturers as well as patient demand.

Rieder makes a solid case for using opioids as a last resort for pain management. He maintains that we need to adjust our thinking about pain: some pain is tolerable for short time periods, Tylenol and Ibuprofen can manage a good deal of pain well, and prescribers need to learn more about alternative pain management like yoga, acupuncture, and massage.

His discussion of the history of heroin use, the rise of opioids, and the stigma, racism and classism connected with opioid use is revealing. This book should be required reading for all medical and legal professionals. And after closing Rieder's book, I know the next time I feel a twinge, I'll think twice about whether I really need a little pill. **NB**

In Pain
By Travis Rieder
\$27.99
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MUSIC REVIEW

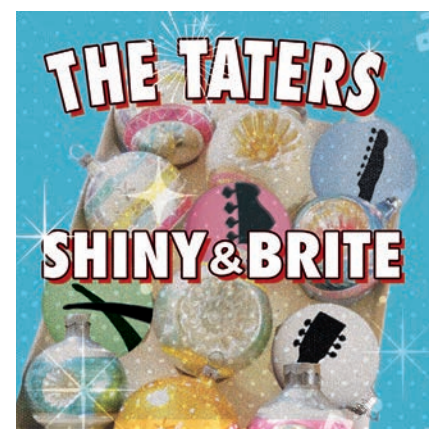
The Taters' New "Shiny & Brite" CD Captures the Spirit of the Holidays

by ANNE JONES

HOW DO YOU LIKE your holiday music? Exactly what do you want in a Christmas song, anyway? Do you want it jingly and happy, or pretty and reverent and maybe a little heart-breaking? Or maybe it's rockabilly you crave, with some old-time country. Is Elvis your reason for the season? Do you want it all bluesy and melancholy?

Well, be ye not afraid - the Taters have just released their first ever holiday CD, and it covers all of your holiday listening needs in traditional Tater-style. It's called "Shiny & Brite" and one might even call it a holiday sampler, just like the variety boxes of colorful Shiny Brite Christmas decorations. Those Taters are known for their sampler-style shows; actually, that's the beauty part about them. They'll do anything for the fun of it - from Nick Lowe to "That's Amore", and they'll do it all with absolute musical virtuosity and harmonies so pretty and in sync that they rival the Everly Brothers.

"Shiny & Brite" is as true to Tater form as can be, offering up all the moods of the season and then some, and giving every Tater a chance to shine brite. The opening track is a Craig Evans and Gary Walker original "Last Lone Noel" and manages to be lonely and hopeful and pop all at the same time, kinda like the holidays. "I Can Hear Music" - the Beach Boys classic - with drummer Chris Mendez on lead vocals, showcases the tight Tater harmonies and clever wordsmithing; they've turned it into a beautiful Christmas song that would make Carl Wilson proud. Then there's the Gene Autry hit "32 Feet and 8 Little Tails", only the Taters pep it up a little with extra galloping, it seems, and best of all - a genius Bonanza riff to top it off. Brad Tucker's clear and pure vocals on "O Come All Ye Faithful" bring us back around to the meaning of Christmas,



and when Craig and the rest join in for the harmonious rounds at the end it's a beautiful and classic Christmas moment. Greg Marrs has come up with a slow, bluesy original "It's Not Christmas" about a lost and joyless Christmas without your baby, along the lines of "Please Come Home for Christmas".

Hold up. What's Christmas without Elvis? And who does Elvis better than crooner Craig Evans? No one, especially on "Santa Bring my Baby Back", more of the same baby-less, spiritless Christmas theme but in kick-ass rockabilly style. "Christmas Dream" is one big emotional roller coaster. It's poignant and catchy, and Craig's voice does it justice. And yet there's a slightly manic undertone, enhanced by the German chorus and by knowing that it was written by Andrew Lloyd Webber for the film "The Odessa File", about the hunt for a SS captain in post-war Germany. That the Taters end the song with a nod to Hogan's Heroes is a bit of twisted brilliance. Willie Nelson's "Pretty Paper" is just plain ole country pretty, and it's nice to hear Roger Miller's "Little Toy Trains", not on everyone's set list.

Just as in their holiday live shows, the Taters close the CD with a stunning a capella "Peace on Earth/Silent Night." There. Turn off the lights, light a candle, close your eyes, shed a silent tear, and pray for peace. It's Christmas. **NJ**



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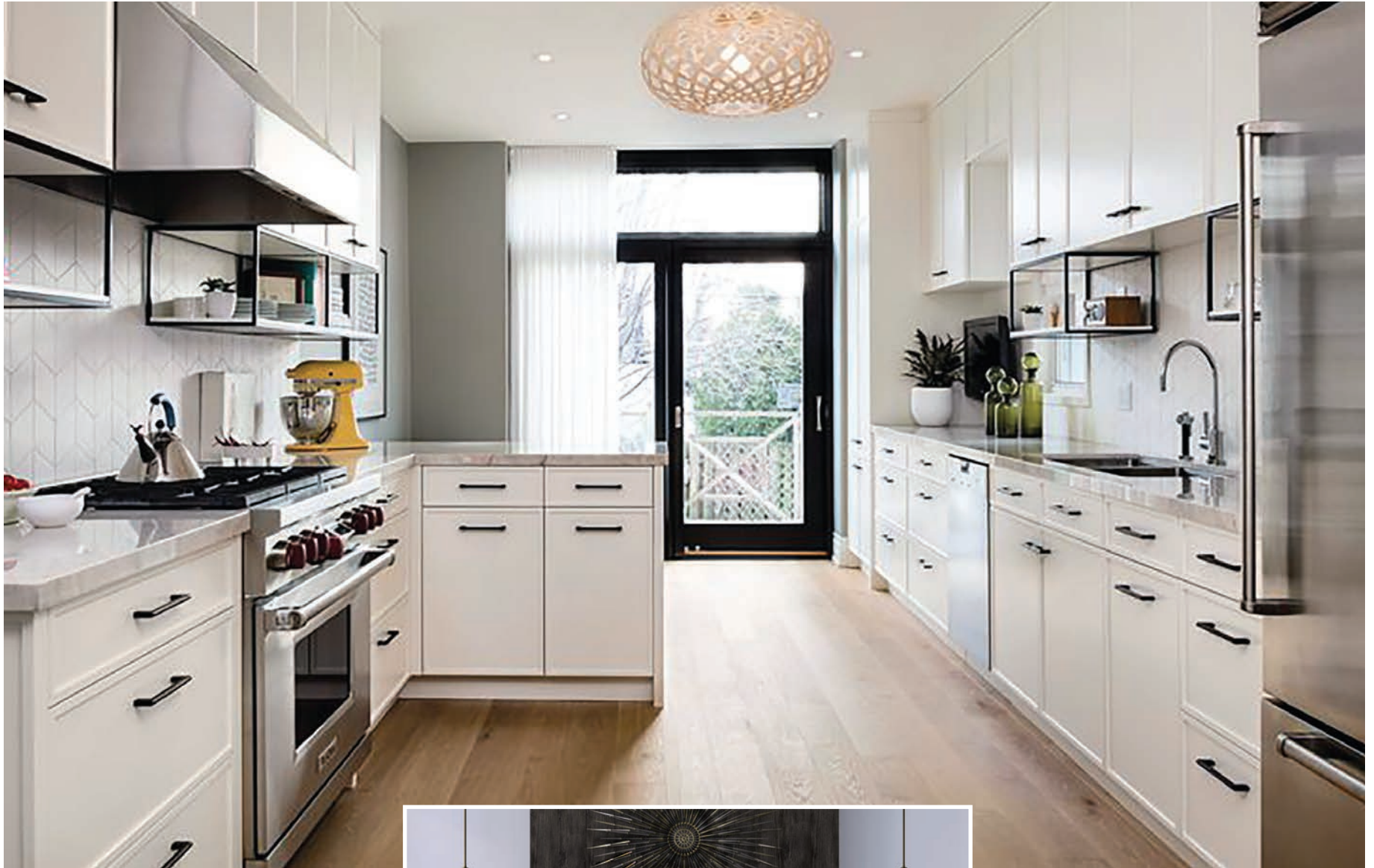
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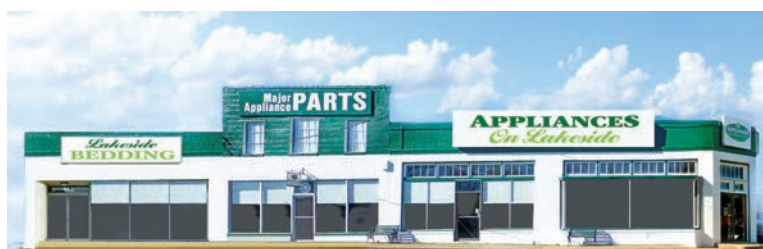


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