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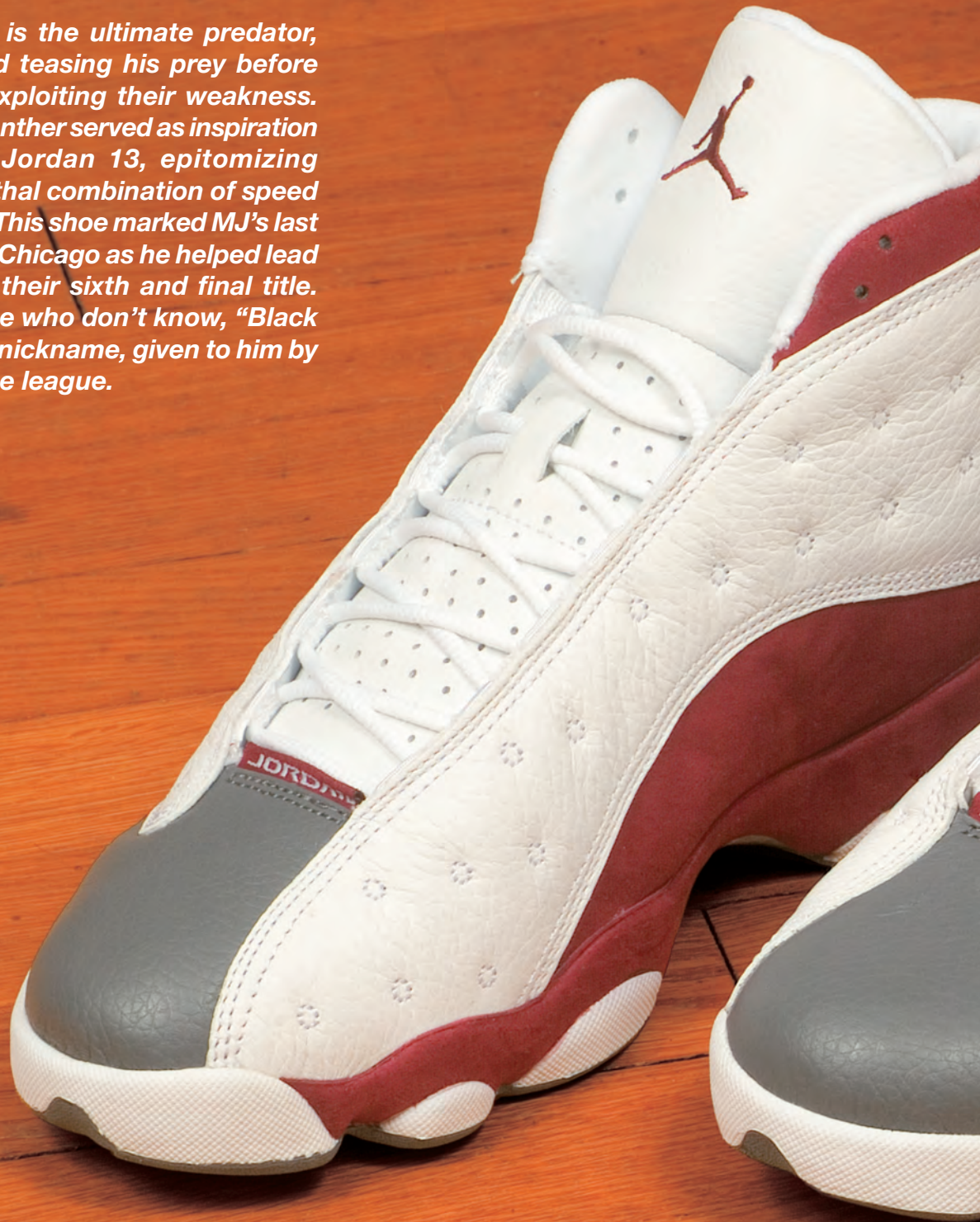
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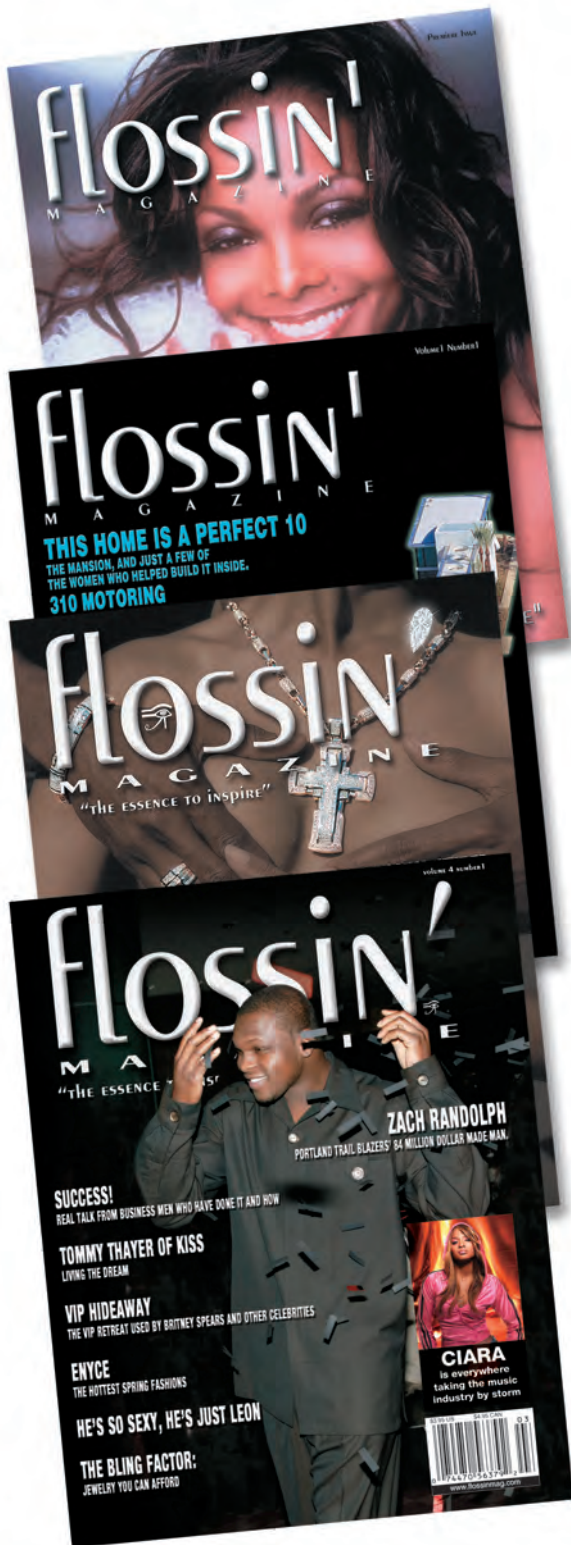
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LETTER FROM THE Editor

“WE HERE AT FLOSSIN’ ARE ON A MISSION TO BRING TO LIGHT AN EXISTING FORMULA FOR GOOD LIVING. AN AWAKENING, SPIRITUAL IN NATURE, ITS ESSENCE IS TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE OUR READERS, THROUGH HIGHLIGHTING THE DIVERSIFIED LIFESTYLES OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE.”



by John “Bubba” Washington

Welcome! In its most humble meaning, I am so excited to be your host on this adventure into the world of Flossin’. In the ’70s flossin’ meant some bad-ass kicks (shoes), or a suit with a matching hat, or perhaps a yellow Cadillac. Now those were the days of flossin’. I’ve seen much change since then, and we all know that things must evolve or die. We bring Flossin’ to you in its evolved state.

Flossin’: A reflection of your inner self demonstrated in your outer world....flossin’...derived from the urban culture in the late ’70s to define “living large.” Evolving from its humble beginnings and its surface expression, flossin’ has now come to encompass spiritual essence with charitable acts, advanced ways of thinking, trend setting and elegance. Albeit in the realm of good taste, big homes, big cars, and big bling all still qualify.

We want our readers to be filled with the excitement of the journey. The feeling you get the moment you know it’s real and not just hype. We want to share the insight that gives you wisdom and the tools to make right choices about what is valuable in life.

We here at Flossin’ are on a mission to bring to light an existing formula for good living. An awakening, spiritual in nature, whose essence is to educate and inspire our readers through highlighting the diverse lifestyles of successful people. People who are winners in the “life game.” In sharing their stories and showcasing their lifestyles we hope to leave you with some clarity and a formula for success.

I’d like to thank some of our readers who took the time to get back to us about some of the topics in the third issue. Mama said there would be days like this—yes, we here at Flossin’ know what it means to struggle with the complexity of finding and defining who we are. We all struggle on some level in any business. The stakes are high and the consequences can be lethal if issues are not addressed and corrected. Armed with my pad and pen, no manual, a few tutors, and a bus-load of critics or comics, you go down the road looking for completeness, hoping to get it right. The year 2004 will go down in my book as a violent year. War in the East, people in Africa dying by the hundreds of thousands from hunger and disease. It just wouldn’t stop, right up to the last days’ natural disaster, when big waves of water just ate people up. I can truly relate to their pain and suffering. Tragedy touched me personally in 2004 with the passing of my mother. She will be missed. I often ask myself, is there any rhythm or rhyme to this song, this melody the universe is playing? Ah! And the band plays on!

Looking ahead, I begin to wonder—could any one single person or event change the course of history? And the voice says, rightly so. So 2005, here we come, flossin’ at you. We here at Flossin’ are optimistic about all the new opportunity that surrounds us. I would like to give our readers some heads-up about what is coming to you in this issue and the issues to come. This issue will feature Zach Randolph of the Portland Trail Blazers. Some candid talk from the 84 million dollar man. Also, words from the barber’s chair, a candid look at barber shops and the conversations that men have across the country in them. An up-close look at fashion, some new, some never seen before: 310, Jordan brand, Enyce, etc. We are also going to feature some CEOs. And a few “bad cribs.” In some of our future issues we are going to take a long hard look at the urban family and the urban lifestyle. We are going to focus on some issues concerning men and their relationships with women, children, and each other.

Hopefully we can add a little inspiration to the lives of our readers. Share faces of hope, smiles of encouragement, and some insight into some positive world movements. I encourage our readers, as always, to share their thoughts on where they are with life, death, love, and wisdom, writing to us with their views, feelings, and perceptions on some of these and upcoming issues. As always, much respect to all who read and enjoy.

PEACE

Big Bubba

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Named for God of the Wines Bacchus Restaurant has carved a delicious niche in the Pacific Northwest Scenery.

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Lunch meeting or dinner date, the ambiance of businessman and visionary Sean Combs, Justin's Restaurant in Atlanta Georgia.

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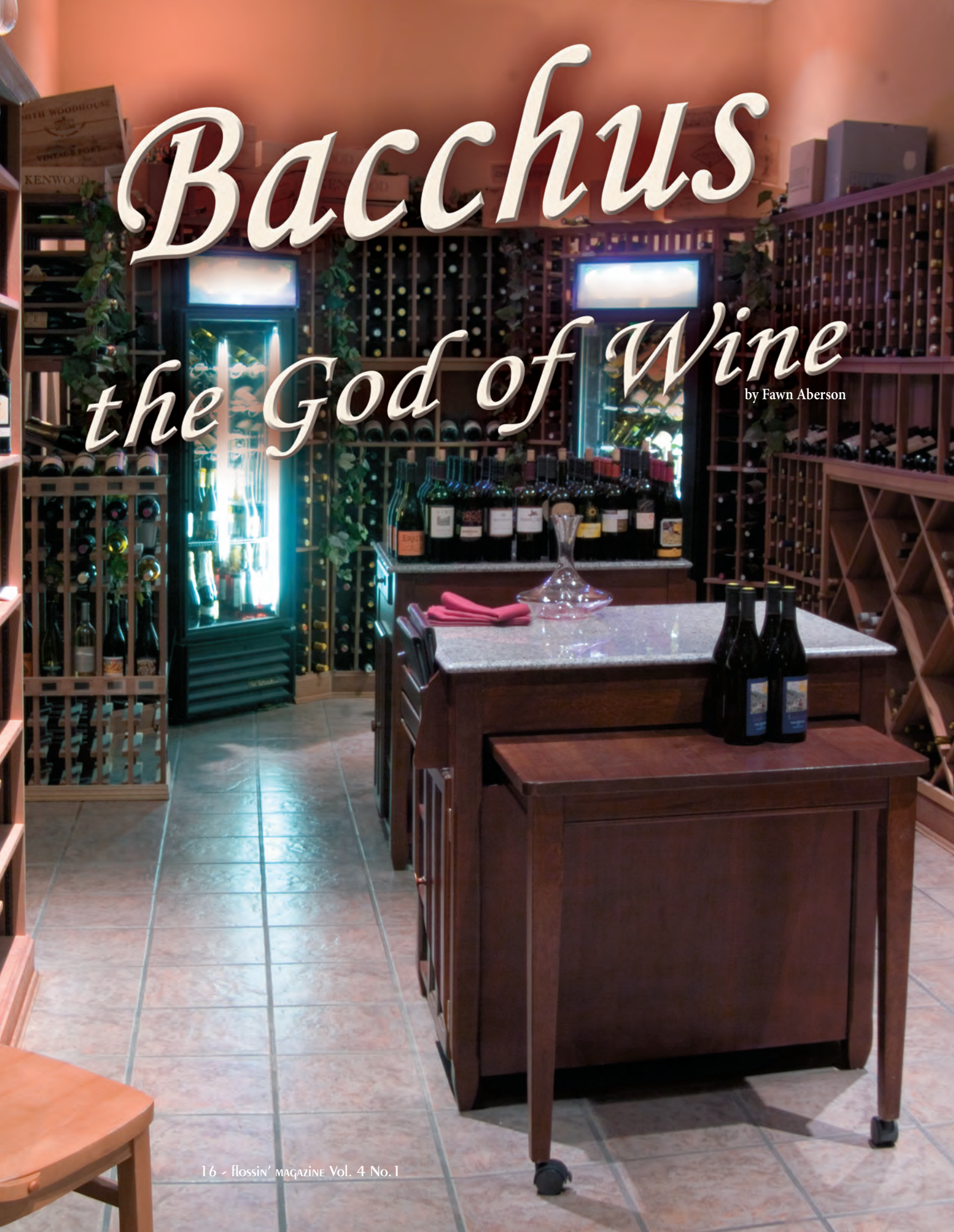
Shop Talk. Ladies what does your man really do at the barbershop? Real talk from the barber chair.



ON THE COVER

Zach Randolph at an event at the Rose Garden where he was being honored by the NBA as the Most Improved Player.

Photo Sam Forencich.



Bacchus

the God of Wine

by Fawn Aberson



You know those people who always throw a good party? The ones who always have the look good, the taste good, and the feel good? They cover every little detail from the food to the entertainment to the array of beverages and the ambiance. Then they throw in just the right eclectic mix of personalities. For weeks, even years, after their parties people still speak highly of the events. I like those people and I like those parties. There are those of us who like to entertain and there are those of us who like to be entertained. Which one are you?

Lloyd Taylor, the owner of Bacchus Restaurant in Vancouver, Washington is the former and I am the latter. So it was one evening I was looking for a place to kick into flossin' mode but not in the mood for the latest cosmopolitan shi shi. Then, like an island, just off Washington Highway 15, I saw a small cluster of lights and headed in their direction. As I got out of the car the sky was clear and bright with stars. It was hard to miss because there were no towering skyscrapers in the way. It was the kind of night where you can't help but take a big whiff of clean crisp air, sending a gratifying release of stress through your veins.

Bacchus Restaurant is lit up in white lights and it is as if the Roman God of Wine himself, for whom the restaurant was named, was drawing me like Oedipus to his island. Once inside, it's evident that Bacchus's ambiance has been carefully crafted; it shows in beautiful layers of brick that run throughout the restaurant, from the bar and dining area to the classically lit dance floor and stage. My host is the owner and he notes the way I am taking in the place, and breaks down to me that everything I am looking at was well planned and decisively placed. "I have traveled a lot and have had the chance to eat at some of the finest places on earth," remarks Lloyd. "One thing that I always appreciated was when you could find everything you needed in one spot. That is why the dance floor can be viewed from everywhere in the restaurant. I wanted there to be an open feeling of everything being tied in together. Entertainment is so often an afterthought. It is the last thing that most places put in, so usually it is a little stage tucked in the corner of the bar with a light hanging overhead." Not the case in Bacchus. Even now, well before the show, the stage holds a beautiful grand piano, a bass, and a drum set. It is an inviting picture even as it stands without performers. The anticipation to hear the instruments put to song is strong. "I want people who come to Bacchus to sit and become silly off of bottles of Merlot and Bordeaux. I want them to experience really great food and enjoy really great entertainment without having to go somewhere else for the entertainment." Really great entertainment consists of classic torchlight singers and high caliber tributes to the likes of Frank Sinatra and the Beatles on a monthly basis, as well as some of the best jazz in the U.S., for which the Pacific Northwest has become famous. The ambiance is here, so that covers the look, now what of the food? Will one focus be the demise of the other?

continued page 18



“We are blessed with some seriously talented artists and it is just this attention to detail that I insist on and would appreciate

I want to eat already. But not yet; there are a few more details to cover. Lloyd takes me to the wine cellar. What is a restaurant named for the god of wine without an expansive selection from the finest vineyards in the world? “We sold the ‘78 Rothschild last night but I think amid the 225 different choices at least one will pair well with your evening’s meal.” Lloyd’s eyes soften and it is hard to miss the pride in what he and his wife Lisa obviously put together with thoughtful anticipation. A good sign of the fare to come, I think to myself. Just off the wine cellar is a formal meeting room with a tapestry-size portrait of a vineyard on the wall. How lovely, I thought, and I must have said it out loud because Lloyd began in on the art that wound throughout the entire establishment. “The artist is Frankie Haddadin and as you can see art is very important for us here.” Other artwork consisted of bronze figurine body pieces by artist Keoni John Sauaer. His work decorated the bar walls. To create these he uses a technique called life casting, or life cast, which is sculpture based on human form in all its beauty and glory. It is an ancient art form practiced by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Keoni follows this classic tradition and creates original sculptures using the human form to explore life, myths, desires, the muse, and introspection.

as a patron.”

So the feel is right, let’s see if the taste is. I sit down and the menu looks so good I can’t decide, so as I often do I say to the chef. “This is your house, feed me.” Now I realize that when I say this I may end up eating things that I normally may not try, but life is short and my mind is wide open. I begin with an appetizer of diver scallops wrapped in pepper bacon. Wow, these scallops



Buffalo Ossa Buco.

photo Bacchus

“I want people who come to Bacchus to sit and become silly off of bottles of Merlot and Bordeaux. I want them to experience really great food and enjoy really great entertainment without having to go somewhere else for the entertainment.”



are so thick and meaty, a great starter. OK, let me see what you've got on the entrée level. The chef looks at me



Chocolate Lava Cake.

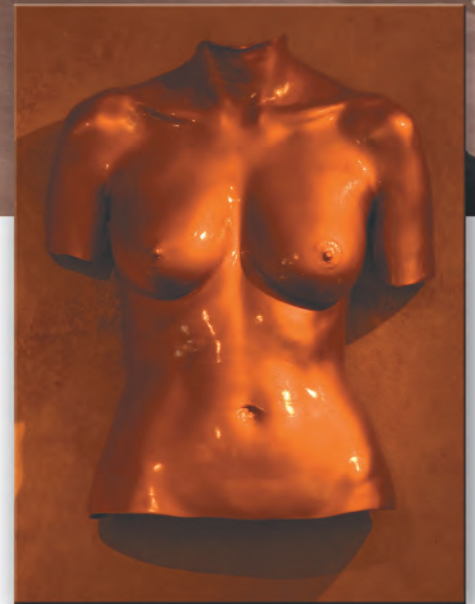
photo Bacchus

as if he cannot believe his luck. You see, he has tailored his creative skills a bit to fit in with the standards and favorites because, well let's face it, there are things that work and why fight it? One such item is the filet, as thick and as tender as you could want it to be while still carrying a modest price tag. When asked about the reasonable price, Chef explains, "When people come to Bacchus we want them to enjoy all facets of it, like the lounge, the entertainment, and the dining. So for that reason we are able to keep our prices reasonable so that people will feel comfortable enough to stay and enjoy all aspects."

I have already noted the team-work atmosphere, as the table captain, food runner, and bus server have diligently pruned my table, heedful not to interrupt my dining experience, but rather to enhance it. But back to my dinner. I said I was up for anything and Chef admits that he has a few ego dishes on the menu, the scallops being one of them, and the not-so-everyday item of buffalo being another. So guess what I will be eating? That's right, a healthy ego plate of "Buffalo Ossa Buco." My first bite was hesitant, but in no time at all I was eagerly putting real work in on it, and was delighted to find that this off-color item was also something that I could really sink my teeth into. The final test came with the dessert. As it arrives I see that the creative artistry is not merely confined to the decor but it reaches into the kitchen to the pastries as well. We go with the Chocolate Lava Cake. It is gone in minutes.

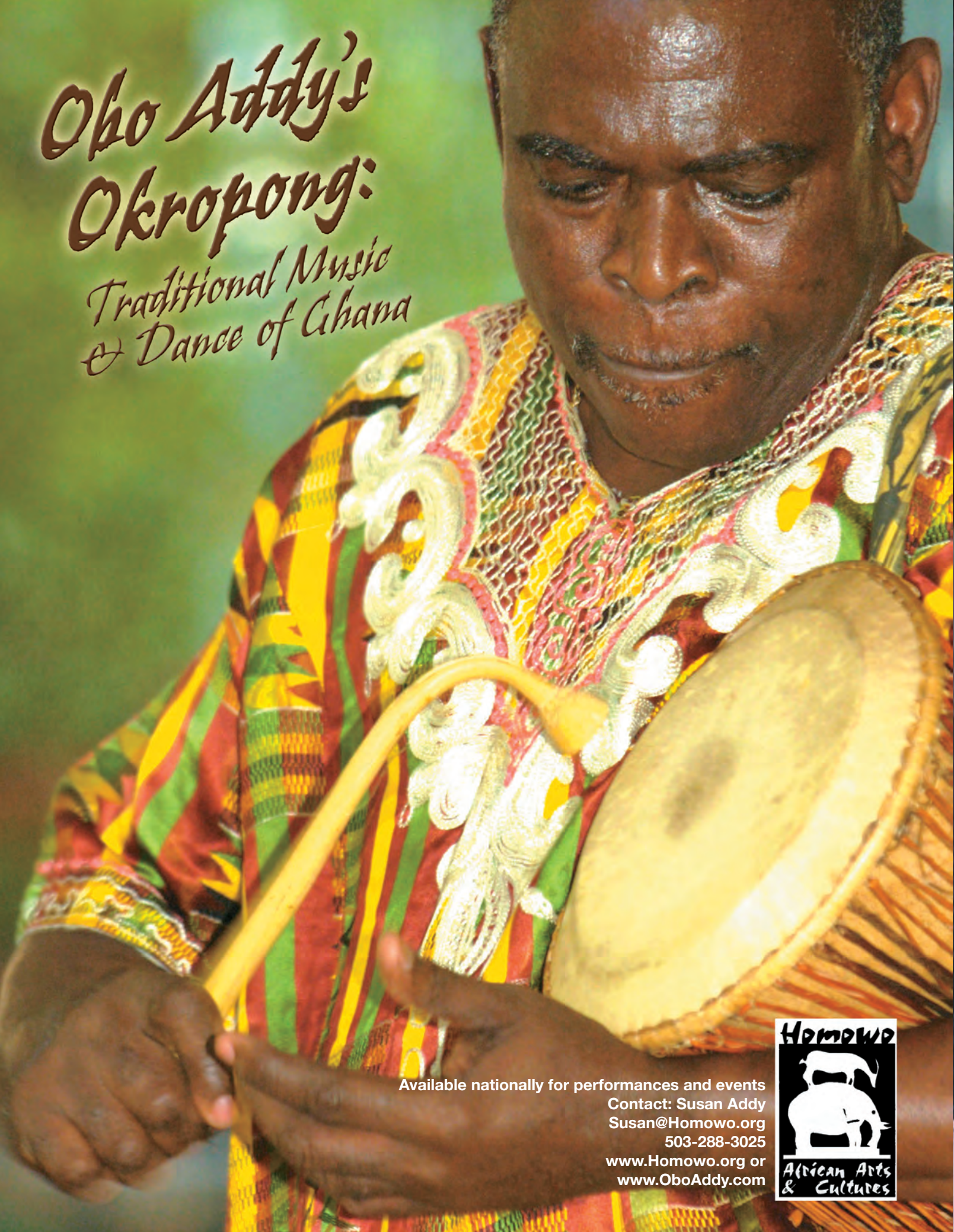
Bacchus, The God of Wine, has been good to me, and as I sit back to sip my café I drift with the sounds coming from the young torchsinger and kick my flossin' mode into autopilot. I love a good party. Lloyd. Lisa. Cheers.

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Tim & Bob

by fawn aberson

Barnum and Bailey, Montana and Rice, Gayle and Ryan, Optimums Prime and Bumble Bee, everywhere you look two is better than one and producing is no exception. Just ask Tim and Bob.

“We both play something like seven instruments. Bob plays drums, guitars, bass, and keyboard, and I play all the brass instruments and the piano.” Tim goes on, “We like using choirs, orchestras, strings—we love creating at that level.”

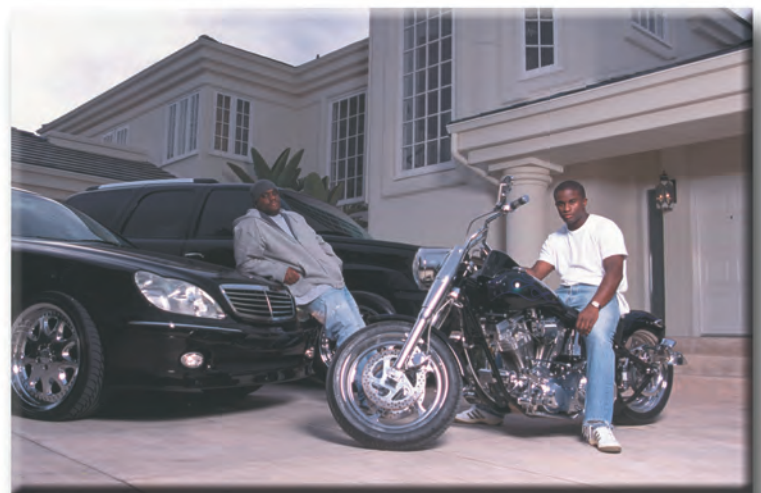
Some of the most thriving pursuits in history have come from duos. There were Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, Abbott and Costello, Batman and Robin, Dolce and Gabbana, and I am now adding songwriters and producers Tim Kelly and Bob Robinson to that list. You may not know them by name unless you are in the music industry, and then you would be very aware of who they are. It may help you if I list some of their successes. Tim and Bob produced six songs on Boyz II Men’s best-selling first album, *Cooleyhighharmony*, and it has sold 14 million copies. The pair wrote various songs for TLC’s *CrazySexyCool*, another best seller at 13 million copies sold. They cowrote and produced “Thong Song” with the artist Sisqo, and it was number one in nearly fifty countries at the same time, an unprecedented event in music. The album has sold 4 million copies. Tim and Bob have written and produced music for Will Smith, 112, Case, Babyface, Jon B, Joe, Damage, Eternal, Monica, Tamia... the list of talent goes on and on. They have hits on the movie soundtracks of *Nutty Professor II*, *The Players Club*, *Osmosis Jones*, and *Poetic Justice*. Needless to say, they are good at what they do. Their rewards and pocket books are hefty these days but such was not always the case. Tim explains, “We started off in Peoria, Illinois. Bob played the organ and I played the piano in the same church. We were about fifteen and sixteen. We have always been real close, just like brothers. We get the comparison to Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis [well known producers for Janet and Michael Jackson] a lot and it’s cool because those are the guys that really inspired us to believe that we could do this on a large scale.” Big dreams often have humble beginnings and for Tim and Bob humble meant moving first to Detroit and sleeping at the recording studio for two years, and then Atlanta, where they camped on the floor for another two months. They laugh at the memory now and Bob remarks, “It is hard to imagine it all being that hard when you look at us now.” He gestures his arms up and around him, in front of the house he purchased for the bargain price of \$1.5 million. “Now we both have big beautiful homes on about thirteen acres of land, and

pretty much anything that we need we can get.” They both recently relocated from Beverly Hills to the more rural Chatsworth, California. It is very quiet and beautiful in Chatsworth. There are soft hills in the distance and miles of open terrain. Here Bob enjoys riding his new Harley-Davidson, \$20,000 worth of pure adrenalin purchased from Performance Specialties. He is also proud of his collection of vintage guitars. “I have always been into guitars, their history and craftsmanship. I own some from as far back as 1907 and 1913. I have a mandolin made in 1903. It is like fine art; it appreciates in value.” One of Tim’s favorite toys also deals with music. “I have this beat machine that is pretty rare. I had it painted and polished to perfection.” These two talents both play by ear, with no real formal instruction. Tim explains how their song making starts: “We love music so unless we are doing some heavy rap beat we usually start with either the keyboard or the guitar. We both play something like seven instruments. Bob plays drums, guitars, bass, and keyboard, and I play all the brass instruments and the piano.” Tim goes on, “We like using choirs, orchestras, strings—we love creating at that level.” We asked the duo what they recalled about getting their first big check. Tim answered with wide eyes, as if he could still feel the tingle. “We went in to Dallas Austin’s office, who started Rowdy Records, and who we had been signed with at the time. He handed us a check and we were blown away! It was for \$1.5 million dollars for the songs that we had done for Boyz II Men. We knew we were going to get paid, we just never imagined that it would be in so many ways, because after that check more checks would come. Three weeks later we got another one for \$800,000, then a couple weeks later one for \$400,000 and then for the next year and a half or so they kept coming for around \$200,000.” Bob adds, “It was just so wonderful and it just showed us that people really appreciate what we do musically because we try to make sure that the music is positive. Music has the power to bring people together. That is what Bob and I are into—bringing love, and people having fun and dancing and clubbing—not shooting anybody down and downgrading women or knocking



photos Terry Sutherland

them. We were not raised that way.” Tim and Bob are currently working on projects with Whitney Houston, Pink, and TLC. It is not always easy to try and tell grown talents what to do. As Tim explains, “When you get us you have to let us give you the full wardrobe. We do music, producing, writing, and the whole sound down to vocal arrangements. It is not always easy to tell someone that they are sharp or flat because they have worked hard on their careers all their lives. So for you to tell them how to sing can sometimes be tricky. People like TLC and Case are always fun to work with because they can take direction and are silly and funny about it, which puts us at ease.” With platinum hits, BMI awards, and Grammy nominations, this dynamite duo are an inspiration to all of those people struggling to get to the top. Tim sums it up this way: “Just keep working hard, be yourself, and find your niche and NEVER give up because the same God that shines on us can shine on you.” I like finding people who have discovered their niche. It gives me a sense of hope that we all have a true calling and when you answer it like Tim Kelly and Bob Robinson have, well then that’s what we call flossin’.



-fm

ENYCE/LADY SPRING



photos Minc PR

Los Angeles Fashion Week was hot, hot, hot this year! Designers new and established debuted their collections for Spring 2005. The Enyce & Lady Enyce sportswear powerhouses were no exception, as they upped the ante with their third season at the LA Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week. The theme this year was “Lady Enyce Air.” An airline motif—complete with stewardesses, announcers, and Caribbean music—helped to put guests in a tropical frame of mind. Even the gift bags were actual blue leather carry-on bags, complete with travel blankets and pretzels inside! But the show was the talk of the night. Bright colors, tie dye prints, flower prints, and multi-colored stripes made a statement of sporty, yet sexy attire. The spring line was a combination of different eras, mainly reflecting on pieces

DYENYCE 2005

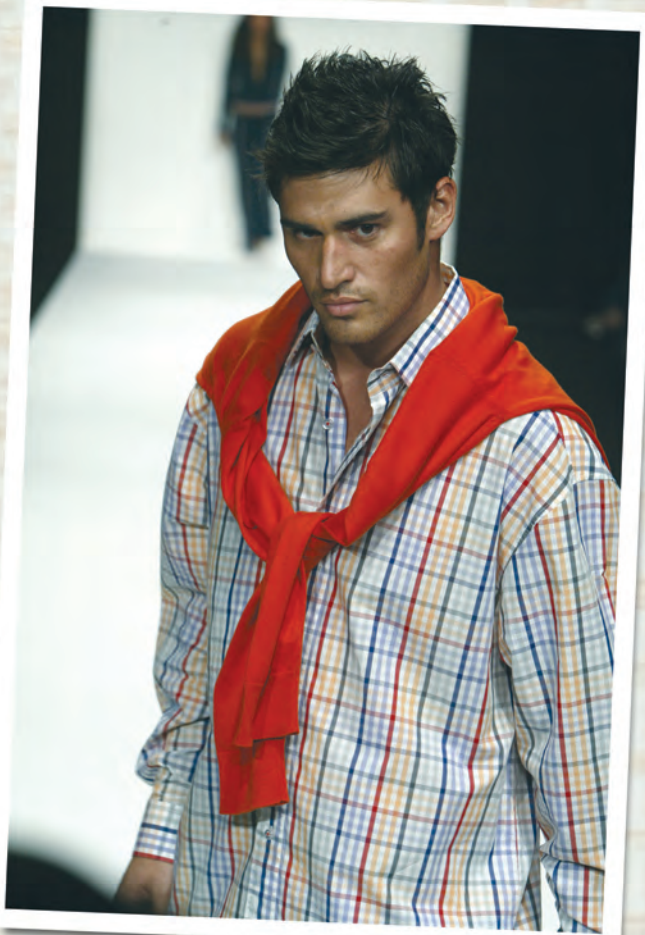


familiar from the 60s and 80s, but with a resort-chic flair. The men sported linen suits in bold hues with polo shirts, while the ladies rocked everything from cocktail wrap dresses to lace tanks with bikini bottoms. Celebs such as Tisha Campbell-Martin, Simon Rex, and a bevy of other Hollywood types were there to enjoy what Enyce had to offer. The atmosphere, clothes, and bold hues definitely let everyone in the tent know that spring is right around the corner. And it didn't stop there. The party continued with the Lady Enyce afterparty at Hollywood hot spot Prey, with model/DJ Sky Nellor behind the wheels of steel. Enyce definitely started the LA Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week with a bang. We can't wait to see those fly fashion fabrics hit the stores!

by Dana Kirk

ENYCE/LADYENYCE SPRING 2005





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TOMMY THAYER

of **KISS**

LIVING THE DREAM

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY BUKO

How many of us dreamed when we were young of becoming a rock star? You can replace rock star with basketball star, football star, actor or actress, but how many of us actually ended up living the dream? Many try, but after doing what we dream of for a while, reality hits and we realize it was never meant to be.

For some, not making it just isn't an option. Tommy Thayer is one of these people. Tommy was born in Portland, Oregon on November 7, 1960. In 1973 Tommy picked up a guitar and knew what he wanted from life, to be a rock star. Tommy remembers standing in line outside the venues in Portland waiting to see his guitar heroes, including that wild rock 'n' roll act called KISS. Who would guess that one day he would join them onstage to be both adored and hated by KISS's loyal fans around the world?

continued page 32



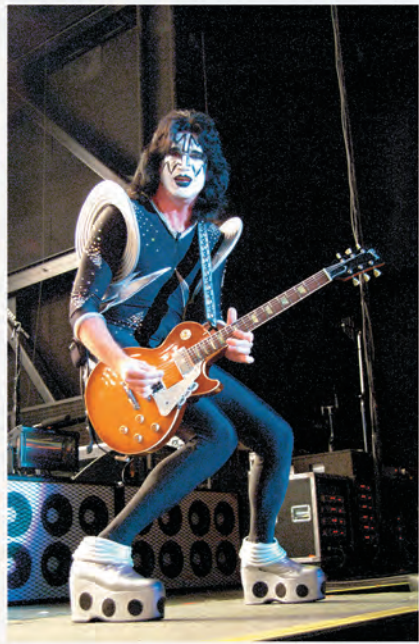
After Ace fulfilled his commitment to KISS, Tommy was the logical choice to fill his shoes and what an excellent choice it was.



All photos of KISS taken on the 2003 and 2004 world tours.

After playing in many garage bands Tommy ended up in a band called Black 'N Blue. They were quite popular in the Portland club scene, opening for the established club bands. During this period Black 'N Blue recorded a couple of demos. One of the songs, "Chains Around Heaven," ended up on Brian Slagel's Metal Massacre, a compilation of new, up-and-coming acts that also included an unknown band from San Francisco called Metallica. At the time Portland wasn't really ready for heavy metal in the club circuit so Tommy and the band packed their bags and headed for a place that would appreciate their music—Los Angeles.

Now that Tommy was in LA it was a battle to stand out and be noticed in a very big pond. Yet Tommy stayed



true to his dream. He and Black 'N Blue worked hard, made a name for themselves, and recorded a demo produced by Don Dokken. After shopping the demo they finally signed with Geffen Records. (On a side note, the first band signed by Geffen in 1982 was Portland band Quarterflash, whose song "Harden My Heart" made it to #3 on the Billboard charts.)

In late 1983 Black 'n Blue headed off to Germany to record their first album with Scorpions' producer Dieter Dierks at his studios in Strommeln, West Germany. When they came back to the States tour support for the album started. After a small tour with Whitesnake Black 'N Blue got the opening slot with Aerosmith on their 1984 Back In The Saddle Tour. After Black 'N Blue's second album

was recorded, their tour included a short stint opening for KISS's Asylum Tour. Little did Tommy know that this fateful meeting with KISS and Gene Simmons would be so important. Black 'N Blue's third and fourth albums were produced by Gene. From this and the tours, Gene had become impressed with Tommy's work ethic.

So after Black 'N Blue disbanded in 1989 Tommy began working with Simmons, as well as doing a few projects of his own. Since joining the KISS family fifteen years ago, Tommy has worked with KISS on many musical projects, even as a contributor. Tommy is credited with the production of KISSStory Volume 1. He also coordinated and managed the official 1995 Worldwide KISS Convention Tour, directed and produced the double-platinum The Second Coming DVD, and created the opening title montage featured in New Line Cinema's Detroit Rock City.

In 1991 for a bit of fun Tommy started a KISS tribute band with his old band mate Jamie St. James. They were doing the makeup thing during KISS's unmasked period. They did so well that they were invited to play Paul Stanley's 40th birthday party in 1992, which probably planted the seeds of a KISS reunion. By 1995 Tommy was working full time for KISS and doing side projects, including running his own record label, EON Records, with his brother, John Thayer.

When KISS did put the makeup back on in 1996 for the KISS Alive Worldwide Reunion Tour, Tommy was there as the road manager, and even re-taught Ace Frehley his old licks and solos. After Ace fulfilled his commitment to KISS, Tommy was the logical choice to fill his shoes and what an excellent choice it was. From the skinny kid standing in line outside the theater to performing onstage with KISS, Tommy Thayer is someone who is living the dream.

KISS returned to Portland on June 22, playing at the Clark County Amphitheater. Why am I writing about it and what makes this such a momentous occasion? Well, it's all because of Portland's own Tommy Thayer, KISS's newest guitarist. My first interview with Tommy was after he returned from Germany, when Black 'n Blue recorded their first Geffen Album. Now, 20 years later, I had the opportunity to ask Tommy about his new job with KISS.

How did you become the new guitarist? Can you talk about what led up to you being chosen?

There was no audition, no long decisions, it was almost like nobody told me. KISS was getting ready to play a concert in Jamaica back in February 2002 and Doc McGhee (KISS's manager) called and said to get ready for the trip, etc..., "Oh and by the way, Ace has decided not to go, so you're playing guitar." So that's how it went. I was actually filling in for an absent Ace for the first two or three things. By the time we left for Australia in February 2003 for the monumental KISS Symphony show in Melbourne, I was officially on board.

How does it feel coming back to Portland and playing as a member of KISS?

It's incredible, not bad for a geeky kid from Beaver-

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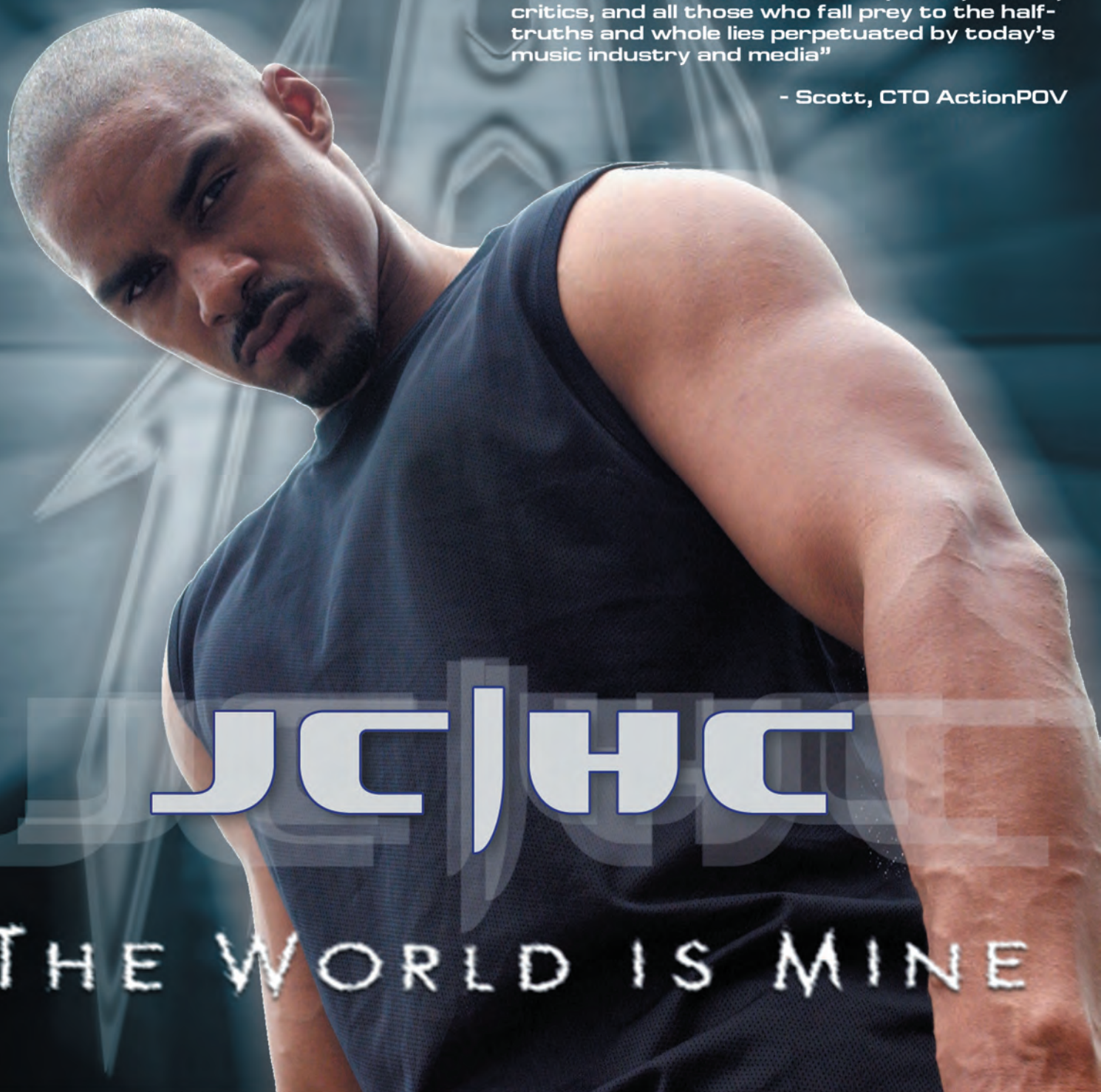
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Continued from page 33

ton. Believe it or not, KISS was one of the earlier bands I saw live in concert when I first started venturing out to the Paramount Theatre and the old Memorial Coliseum in the early to mid 70s. KISS was the opening act once for Savoy Brown and another time for a band called Ballin' Jack, at the Paramount. I used to stand outside in line with every other kid out there, freezing my ass off anticipating the rock 'n' roll magic that we couldn't wait to witness inside—it was a magical time those days. I never would have imagined that I would be able to do all the things I've been fortunate enough to experience playing guitar. Coming back now to play in Portland as a member of KISS is mind boggling, to say the least.

Were you a little disappointed on the last tour, that the closest you got to Portland was Seattle?

No, not really. In that case all of our closest friends made the road trip north to Auburn.

How have your responsibilities and interaction with the band changed now that you are a band member?

After Black 'N Blue ran its course over ten years ago, I started working for Paul and Gene doing anything that needed to be done. I needed a job at the time and I was lucky enough to get one doing something that interested me. So I've come up through the ranks in the KISS organization, starting at the bottom and working my way up. It was never a conscious thing though. I always cared a lot about what I did, so most of the time it wasn't like working. To be honest, the transition of coming into the band was seamless. I'd done so much recording, sound checking, and rehearsing with KISS through the years that it was very natural to step up onstage and be in the band. I actually came very close to subbing for Ace onstage when he almost missed a couple shows on the 2000 tour, but that's another story!

Are you still doing the same things behind the scenes or has somebody else taken over those jobs?

I wouldn't have the time to do much else. We have new people that have taken over the road management that are getting the job done well. As far as the video production work goes, I'm still very much involved with that. I put a lot of time into the KISS Symphony CD and DVD.

What other rolls do you play within the KISS organization?

Since I've been on the team for so many years, in many situations I might have a point of view or an opinion that others might heed to. Or in other situations, I might run with the ball and take care of business. Paul and Gene have said at times I'm the glue that holds things together, so to speak.

You said "I'd done so much recording, sound checking and rehearsing with KISS through the years that it was very natural to step up onstage and be in the band." Have you filled in for Ace in the studio?

Yes, I have at times. At other times I've recorded with the band on tunes I might have written on a certain KISS album.

Gene Simmons just released his second solo album "Asshole." Did you work on this project in any capacity?

No I did not, on purpose. I believe that Gene wanted to use musicians outside of KISS (even Eric at the time) exclusively so that there were no conflict-of-interest issues, so that his solo record was defined as being a separate project outside of KISS.

I was reading somewhere that a live recording is made of every show and you can buy a CD of this recording after the show is over. Will KISS be doing this at the Portland show?

Yes, I think it's called 'instant live.' It's a new thing that other bands like The Who have done successfully, where you can take a CD recorded live of the show home with you, a great concept!

It's the morning of the show, how do you feel? Are there any extra jitters knowing you are playing Portland tonight?

Feeling good, no extra jitters!

How was the Portland show? How did it go for you? Do you have any stories you can share?

The Portland show was amazing. It was honestly one of the loudest crowds so far on this tour. It was a particularly special night for me because my mom was there and it was her 80th birthday. I had about 25-30 close friends and family backstage for pre-show dinner, drinks and a huge birthday cake with the 4 members of KISS leading the singing of "Happy Birthday!"

Can you talk a little about the tour?

The band is far tighter and more powerful than ever, so says everyone. This is a new high-octane KISS and we're taking it to the next level. The stage show is better and more advanced than ever before. Everyone's excited!

KISS is a phenomenon, whether it's with Ace or Tommy playing Guitar. KISS is the one band that presents the most extravagant and flossin' show on the planet. So even if they are not your particular cup of tea take the time and make an effort to see them the next time they come to your town.



Black 'N Blue in August of 1984 at the Stage Door of Portland's Memorial Coliseum. Tommy is on the far right. This was the bands first gig in Portland's Coliseum, they opened the show for Dio and Whitesnake.

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JHB Inc.

by Fawn Aberson

Millionaire Jeff Belle's advice for smart money investments

They say to be a successful investor you have to act like a successful investor. Hang around successful investors and do what successful investors do. Part of Flossin' Magazine's mission is to educate and inspire our readers. For this reason, we have sought out flourishing entrepreneurs in hopes of leading our readers down a strong and fit financial path. This issue focuses on real estate. Though the opportunities in this article exist mainly for qualified investors, (IRS guidelines for qualified investors say, among other things, that you must have a minimum of \$200,000 to invest.) our opening statement is meant to inspire even the most humble investor to make smart choices. So listen up people, because this is how the big boys play.

One of the most profitable ways to make money in this world is to invest in real estate. The Donald (Donald Trump) knows it, comedian Steve Harvey knows it, McDonalds, and Home Depot know it, too. They have all invested, with financial reward, in land and development. To get a better understanding of today's opportunities in commercial land investment, we asked Jeff Belle, the CEO of JHB Inc. (www.jhbinc.com) and a seasoned commercial property manager and land developer of 20 years, to give Flossin' the insight.

When asked what makes this such a good time to invest in commercial real estate Belle comments, "There is a window of opportunity because of the combination of low interest rates spurring on housing construction that in turn is spurring on the commercial section of the real estate market. Interest rates are so low and the banks are very aggressive in their funding, so we are able to get returns that we haven't seen in a very long time."

Indeed, Belle's comment is supported by the price index report of the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO), which shows 2004 as having had the largest one-year increase since 1979. The states experiencing the greatest increase in growth were Nevada, Hawaii, California, and Rhode Island. OFHEO Chief Economist Patrick Lawler released a statement which said, "These data show no signs of the long-anticipated and ultimately inevitable, slowing of the house price inflation."

So with all arrows pointing up, what does this mean for the commercial investor? Belle explains, "If you have a good project that has some major tenants, such as Lowe's

or Food 4 Less, then developers who are in a position like we are at JHB Inc. are going to be able to get a nice financing package together, which in return will increase the cash flow as well as boost the ultimate return."

You may be thinking, well, that's a great opportunity for the big developers, but where can a more modest investor fit in? Belle breaks it down like this: "The complexities of development are very unique. I could write you a book on how to become a developer but to be cognizant of time frames and certain nuances entailed in the entitlement process, it can be complex. I mastered it because of the years spent in the business. The truth is that there are only a few companies out there who allow the investor the opportunity to invest into the shopping center project, and only a handful of companies out there that do this kind of shopping center, so to be involved or be part of it can be intricate. There are, however, a few companies, like mine at JHB, that are on the small side of the bigger developers and because of that there is opportunity to still take part in this type of project. Ten years from now there may not be an opportunity, five years from now there may not be an opportunity, but now because of the growth aspects of the industry itself you can still find occasions in the smaller companies."

Seeing the potential in a deal is one thing, but lack of knowledge and questions about the security of getting involved in the process can be overwhelming, as Belle admitted earlier. He addresses quandaries like these from this perspective: "As far as feeling secure, real estate is tangible. You can go and stand on the dirt and see what you have. You can feel it as opposed to some other nebulous investments, like stocks or bonds. It is an asset that—when you use smart developers and planners—usually ends very profitable for all involved. The right developer will help create a portfolio that can be sold as a whole or in portions. This lowers the risk factor. Being involved in the business for 20 years, every now and then you're going to experience some mistakes. But there are always safeguards put in place and the length of time for a big deal is anywhere from one to two years on up. So there are many hurdles that you cross and each hurdle has its own expectations and risks. You must cross one hurdle before moving to the next, which is good because then you don't have to put

everything in one pot at one time, which allows you more control. And perhaps the most important part of feeling secure is to know who you are dealing with. Whoever I deal with—an investor, tenant, or banker—my goal is to create relationships with longevity. I have done business with the same people for ten, fifteen, and even twenty years. By treating everybody like family and friends you deal with them fairly and with respect. I am after deals that are a win for all involved.”

Flossin’ is always searching for the formula of success and Belle shared with us his view on the matter: “Well, one component of the formula is Spirituality, the inner drive that you have to compete in whatever arena you are in. The football players call it heart. It is just that little difference, the thing that drives you on the inside. As a businessman it has to be a part of you. I believe that as we receive, so shall we give back. For example, I am the commissioner of the Sierra Football League in Reno, Nevada. It’s a special program that allows every child to play football despite being too skinny or overweight. We place them on teams by age, not size. We started with

about 400 kids and it has grown to nearly 2,000. I am so dedicated to this program that I have had a football field put in my backyard so that we would have a place to play and practice. We team up with Reno Christians Fellowship and they have thirteen NFL players come and interact with the kids. A lot of these pros came from the inner city, surrounded with drugs, gang violence, and poverty. They could have gone either way but chose football as an alternative and I feel that it probably saved some of their lives. With the support of committed individuals and communities anything is possible. Then there is Knowledge. You have got to know what you’re doing, upside down and inside out. You need to have a Plan. Without it you lose sight of your goals. You have to Implement. There are so many people with great ideas but they don’t apply them. You have to put it into action. Finally there is Luck; luck is when preparation meets opportunity. Be ready to answer the door when opportunity knocks. And, finally, you have to BELIEVE that whatever it is you want to do, you can.”

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“Whoever I deal with—an investor, tenant, or banker—my goal is to create relationships with longevity. I have done business with the same people for ten, fifteen, and even twenty years. By treating everybody like family and friends you deal with them fairly and with respect. I am after deals that are a win for all involved.”





PERFECT 10 INSIDE AND OUT



Appropriately located high above the holy land of flossin'—Beverly Hills, California—is where you will find one of the great shrines dedicated to flossin'. It is within these 16,000 sq. feet of perfection where Norm Zadeh lives and conducts business. With ceilings reaching 25 feet, this anything-but-humble abode features seven luxurious bedrooms and an oversized office with a state-of-the-art, flat-screen computer. The home also boasts 12 bathrooms, each of which is equipped with heated toilet seats and automatic flushing technology. One bathroom is so large it has two toilets and multiple-head showers. An extraordinary weight and conditioning facility is located just below what is—in my opinion—the best workroom in the house: the photography studio. When playtime roles around, however, my love for the studio wanes (just a little) as the flossin' VIP room becomes my room of choice. In this room, flossin' VIPs live like rock stars. If you are lucky enough to attend a party at a “perfect 10” house, especially if you are deemed a VIP, you’ll notice as you leave (because the sun will most likely be up) the landscaping around the temple. It is nearly breathtaking, with its perfectly manicured lawns, gigantic swimming pool, quaint Jacuzzi, majestic rock fountain, and unrivaled sport court. This is the home we all dream of visiting. Turn the page and you need not dream any longer—you can visit with us!

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MORROW CEO HOWARD

by Fawn Aberson



Two men look out through the same bars: one sees the mud, and one the stars.

—Frederick Langbridge,
“A Cluster of Quiet Thoughts,” 1896

The CEO

Howard B. Morrow, nut and candy emperor of Morrow’s Nut House, sold his company in 1985 for around \$35 million. Now in his early 70s, Morrow sat before me with the sparkling excited eyes of a happy child, and offered me a piece of candy from his pocket. While unraveling the wrapper, Morrow began to unwrap for Flossin’ the tale of his great grandmother, the origin of the Morrow nut and candy legacy, his failures, and how kindness and learned optimism have led the way to his own success.

The mythology

“My great grandmother, Elizabeth Rebecca Zane (Betty Zane), was a full-blooded Wyandotte Indian. She lived on the Wyandotte Reservation in Quindaro, Kansas in the 1850s, which was a free-soiler town—in other words, against slavery. Because back then up and down the river each town would either be anti-slavery or slavers. At the beginning of the Civil War the Yankees sent their army into the Quindaro. My great grandfather, Peleg Caswell, was one of these soldiers and he soon met and married Betty Zane. He took her off the reservation and sent her back to Lafayette, Indiana, where he lived and then he went off to war. There was a Confederate prison camp near Lafayette and at the end of the war they went to let these prisoners out. Unfortunately many of them were too sick to travel back South so some of the townspeople took them into their houses and nursed them back to health. My grandmother took in one of these men and when he got well enough to leave he wanted to repay her for her kindness but he had no money. Instead he said to

her, ‘I will teach you how to make candy and your family will never go hungry, because you can always make some candy and sell it and make a living.’ Betty quickly picked up on this new skill and the Confederate and she parted in peace. It was, as the Indian people would say, a good trade.”

Two generations later, Morrow’s father found himself in the candy business. As I sat listening to this story-weaver’s hypnotizing tale, I was lost to the present day while his story took me through the past.

“My father had a candy store on the boardwalk in Atlantic City in 1928, but so did everybody else. Saltwater taffy was a huge thing, though we called ours ‘Confederate Taffy’ because a Confederate taught us how to make it. Needless to say, my father started going broke. He finally got to the point where he had no sugar left and couldn’t make any candy. He did, however, have some Spanish peanuts left, so he decided to try to do something with them. He filled a copper kettle full of coconut oil and threw the peanuts in and cooked the peanuts in the oil, then drained the oil out, and put butter and salt on them. Well—and this is a true story—” he said as his eyes twinkled and he moved his arms in a sweeping motion that I’m sure my mesmerized head followed, “now the wind that was blowing out to sea suddenly changed and blew through his store. As it did so, it blew the smell of the roasting nuts out onto the boardwalk, and the people went crazy for this smell, and came clamoring for the nuts. It was a novelty. He called the stand Morrow’s Nut House because it was like a joke, he thought you had to be nuts to work there because no one had ever heard of roasted nuts. So, typical of my family, in six weeks he made a lot of money, and when the season closed for Labor Day, he closed the store. He’d retire for the winter to California, and then come back in the summer. This went on until he met my mother who, a staunch Presbyterian, said he had to work year around.”

This playboy mentality (in the Morrow blood, it would seem) came also with grounding principles, as Morrow remembers the advice given to him by his father.

“My father would always tell me, ‘Never work for anyone else. Why do you want to make money for them? Make it for yourself.’”

Philosophy

“My father would always tell me, ‘Never work for anyone else. Why do you want to make money for them? Make it for yourself.’ He would tell me that I had to learn about business because I was going to be a businessman. So that summer I’d go and get a job at JCPenney selling shoes, to learn about retail. The next summer I’d go get a job in a bank and learn about banking. I marked the board at the stock exchange to learn about that. I would get these jobs because I was pretty cocky. For instance the bank. I’d say, ‘Look, I just finished my freshman year in college and I am interested in banking. Could you possibly give me a summer job?’ and they said, ‘Of course.’ None of the jobs ever paid you much. I think at JCPenney I made 35¢ an hour, but I learned about business. My father and his brothers grew up as vagabonds, moving all over the country. It is so interesting to me because you ask my father what he thought of his childhood and he would say, ‘I had the most wonderful childhood in the world. I never had to wear shoes. I never had to go to school and I could have all of the hot dogs and soda pop I wanted.’ My Uncle Bill, his brother, would say, ‘I had a horrible childhood. We were so poor I couldn’t even wear shoes. I never got educated and my stomach is a mess because I grew up on hot dogs and soda pop.’ My father was the ultimate optimist that I am, and he taught me that when you feel that way you are a happy person and you have a happy life.”

Independence

After college Morrow decided to join the Air Force, which seemed a natural decision considering both his father and stepfather were pilots; at age 14 Morrow himself had flown solo across the country in a small plane. My eyes must have widened at that because he shrugged it off like it was nothing, saying, “There were a lot of small dirt runways back then and you could fly for a couple of hours, land, and the people there would take you in, give you something to eat and a place to rest, and you would be on to the next.” The Air Force served to boost Morrow’s ego, and after serving his tenure he went into business for himself.

Failure

“I started a radiation survey training center to test nuclear weapons, and we designed these for the Air Force. And I thought, oh boy we’re going to make a fortune. Well, being young and not real knowledgeable,

I didn’t realize that they didn’t need a whole lot of these test sets, because they could use it on a lot of them so they wouldn’t have to buy thousands of them. It wasn’t a viable business. We should have been manufacturing ammunition and would have been in better shape. We went into the bomb shelter business, making survival kits and protective clothing, and that seemed like it was going to make me a fortune, but then all of the sudden people felt like it wasn’t such a big threat anymore. So I had to shut down the business and I felt humiliated. After that, I collected something like \$65 every two weeks of unemployment. I remember going to meet with the gal and she would say, ‘Have you looked for work this week?’ and I’d say, ‘Yes’ and she’d say, “Well, what did you look for?’ and I’d say, ‘President, but there were no positions open.’ So she’d look under ‘p’ and sure enough, no jobs for president were there, so she would issue my check. I just couldn’t let go of being my own boss. Most of my life I was in the right business at the wrong time. I started the stuffed baked potato business before anybody wanted stuffed baked potatoes and I had to close it. I opened a fast food Mexican restaurant in a shopping center court in the East and they don’t eat Mexican food—they do today. When I did these things I was way ahead of myself. I went into the cookie business. I opened a cookie store in Cleveland, Ohio in the early 80s and I decided I was going to make it the coolest place, and so I decided to serve the best coffee I knew, Starbucks coffee. This is when it was only served in Seattle. I can remember I went to Starbucks and I told them, ‘You know, I want to sell your coffee back in Cleveland,’ and they said, ‘Why?’ I had the best formula for the best cookies and the best coffee, and you know what? The public didn’t want it. I had to give up Starbucks and get regular restaurant coffee, like Farmers.

And I made these incredible muffins. You know, the big thing in our family’s entrepreneur code is that if you start something you do it yourself to begin with.

You’re in the store, you run it, you’re hands-on, you make everything. Then you teach other people what to do and then you can open other stores.

You create a very successful business and you sell it



Continued on page 48

and then you think, well gee, I made all this money doing one business—I can do anything. And you think, I'll go in the cookie business, I'll go in the baked potato business, and you lose your ass. You don't know the business. By the time it took me to figure out what the public would buy, I had lost the amount of money I had set aside to try the business.”

Achievement

“So finally I say, ‘Well, I guess I'll go into the nut and candy business.’ I had no money and no location, but I believed in me. So I walk into the [office of a] leasing agent of a mall in Los Angeles. I walk in to see the guy and say, ‘Hi, I am Howard Morrow of Morrow's Nut House and I want a location.’ The guy looks at me and says, ‘No, you're not Howard. He's older.’ Turns out he knew my father. He gave me a location. So that's when you know God loves you. It takes luck, but God has to love you. So I got a little kiosk in the center of the mall. I went to another guy to get my signs made for the store and he said, ‘I need a deposit,’ and I said, ‘Well, I'll pay you after we open,’ and he said, ‘OK.’ So this was just magical, the luck I was having. I opened the store and it was a

largest confectionary store in the U.S. I had sponsored Olympic teams and even got our nuts on the space shuttle with a trail mix product. I had a great run.”

Spirituality

“The older you get the more you want to talk to God. I believe God loves me and that we need to love each other. Also my father used to say, ‘You should be nice to an ugly woman because no one ever is, and dance with old ladies at weddings.’ The point is be kind, gentle, and love people.”

Formula for Success

“The first thing is to be honest with yourself and the public. If people aren't happy give them their money back. If you need help, then be honest in telling why you need it. The second thing is to stay focused—to be of one mind and focus on doing the one job and not get distracted. If you have to work 24/7 you do it. I remember getting on an airplane in the middle of the night and going to a store that was in trouble. I didn't like doing that. I was tired but I did it because if you want to succeed, then that's what you do. Third, you have to believe in what

“So in the end I had had 300 stores doing a gross volume of \$80 million a year and being the largest confectionary store in the U.S. I had sponsored Olympic teams and even got our nuts on the space shuttle with a trail mix product.”

tremendous hit. I paid everyone off in increments. Shopping malls started coming to us to be in other malls. We had and extremely high-quality product, all homemade and fresh, and I would hire beautiful, smart women to run it [the stores].” At this he winked and smiled. “Then one day a guy walked up to me and said, ‘Is your store a franchise?’ I said, ‘What's a franchise?’ So he tells me and I said, ‘I don't think I want to do this,’ but I go to my attorney, who was also a mentor of mine, and asked him what he thought of the idea. He said what attorneys always tell you: ‘There could be a lot of liability in that. I don't know if you should do it.’ But I decided to try it. The vice president of a retail shop called Lerner's came to me and said he wanted to buy it. The return on investments with Morrow's Nut House was less than nine months. So this guy quit his job at Lerner's and bought three more stores. Eventually we started growing: a bigger candy factory, a fleet of trucks, and warehouses throughout the country. I hired people that I liked, the ones I thought had the attitude to really care about people. So we grew and the company got so big that I didn't know what the hell was going on. I didn't know the managers anymore and I had supervisors report to me. It just became too impersonal, so I sold it. In the end I had had 300 stores doing a gross volume of \$80 million a year and being the

you are doing.”

Life, Death, and Love

“Life is a wonderful, wonderful thing. If I die today, I've had it all. I am very happy with my life. I love being an American.”

“Death, I think I can handle it. I think that there is something on the other side. I don't know if I'll meet Jesus or maybe be reincarnated. But I feel there is something more than this life.”

“Love is the most wonderful thing in the world. If you don't have love you have nothing. You must have love for your fellow man, for nature, and for people.”

Morrow's energy never left the conversation, and when asked what if he was to go broke? he laughed and with confidence said, “Even today I have a portable candy making outfit in my garage. If I were to go absolutely broke I'd make a batch of candy and go stand on the corner at three in the afternoon and sell it, and my family would have dinner that night.”

Though doubtful the nut and candy legend will ever have to do this, Howard Morrow's tenacity and pioneering spirit are a reflection of the inner self that he has managed to demonstrate so clearly to the outer world. In a word, Mr. Morrow is flossin'. **-fm**



Howard proudly poses with his two granddaughters Hannah and Caroline.

Billboard M



Diana Ross

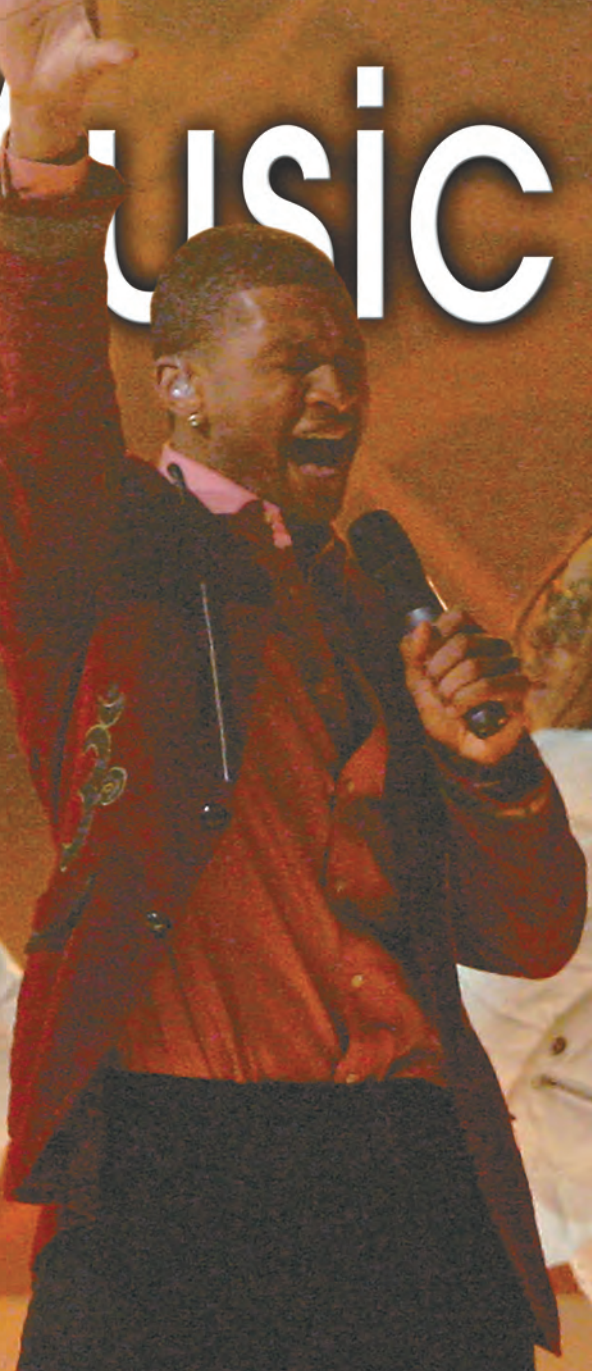
The 2004 Billboard Awards marked the ending of a rocky winter season for award shows. But unlike the violence of the Vibe show and the overmedicated award presenters of the AMAs (sorry, Anna Nicole Smith), the Billboard's delivery was on point. And I am sure the execs at Fox are wiping their collective brows. Ryan Seacrest hosted, relaxed and grounded. Fortunately, he was not his normally clichéd self and even took some risks as he balanced on the head of one of Alicia Keys' background dancers. Good for you, Ryan, you were genuinely funny—maybe you're getting the hang of this stuff. Everyone was on their best behavior. Though Lil Jon gleaned a little mischief while Usher accepted one of a number of awards, it was no more than little-rascal level. After all, who can resist Lil Jon? He's a nut. Musical performances were delivered without flaws and were moving. Usher's performance was sharp and his moves refined. In 2004 he rose to that elusive next level. Alicia Keys kept true to the East Coast flavor. Her unadulterated delivery is always a feel-good. Nelly brought theater to the show, addressing social issues. Gwen Stefani? Well, what can you say? Anyone who gives a performance on 16-inch heels without taking a nose dive into the audience gets my ovation. Kanye West continued his streak as newcomer of the year. His dead-on truth lyrics are where I hope the direction of hip-hop is going. He has raised the bar high for the competition and

it's being picked up all over the world. Britney made her first public appearance since her wedding, and although her body-banging dress showed out, she was for the most part an uneventful part of the show.

The year 2004 was an incredible one for rap music. Eight of the top ten albums of the year were from rap stars. What's the draw? Transformation? Trauma? Truth? The answer may be elusive but people around the globe are seeking its light. Stevie Wonder was honored with tributes from Mary J. Blige, Destiny's Child, and Diana Ross. Each one of them glammed it up in outfits that were feminine, sexy, and revealing. When Stevie stepped onto the stage, instead of giving an acceptance speech he went right into song, and sang to accolades. After all, no one can sing Stevie Wonder like Stevie. He took it home, but there seemed to be some sadness in his face when he finished his song and I wondered, "What was that was about?" Then insight came. He came to the mic with his speech and he revealed some of it. He challenged us to see a day where we can come together and live God's way. War is not His way, terrorism is not His way, and hatred is not His way—significant for this time that we are living in. He challenged and encouraged singers, rappers, poets, and all people with expressive roles to use their energy to encourage people to come together in love. Wise insight. Thank you Stevie, we needed that.

-fm

Music Awards 2004



Reigning R&B king of 2004, Usher



Britney Spears



Gwen Stefani



Destiny's Child

photos Dave Smith/FOX

Mike Nekta Designer

by Kuwana Watson

“Nekta Watches embraces the idea that no two people are the same and, consequently, no two people’s tastes and timepiece needs are either.”



Mike Nekta

For over four generations the fine craftsman and expert watchmakers of the Nekta family have continued their quest for perfection and beauty as they produced masterpieces for their high profile clientele. Today the current Nekta generation continues its family’s time-honored tradition and shares its passion for beauty and excellence with a broader client base than ever before. While the Nekta name has grown in acclaim over the years, their commitment to customer service has not changed.

Mike Nekta, designer and partner in the new fashion watch brand, Nekta Watches, knew at a young age that he was destined to be a part of the watch business. While growing up in Queens, New York, he became interested in timepieces through his grandfather, father and uncle, who had long careers as watchmakers and jewelers in Russia. His father set up shop in the diamond district about 30 years ago and the rest is history.

Mike Netka officially began his tenure in the industry in his father’s shop in 1999. Very early on, he would often visit the shop, and when he became older, he would work there during summers off from school. Mike gives credit for his knowledge and skill to his family, whom he kept a close eye on while they worked. After becoming GIA diamond certified, he’d built his self-confidence and a solid foundation in the jewelry industry. He was now ready for his next challenge as an entrepreneur.

What made you do your own line of watches?

After many requests from private clients seeking something new in the ultra-saturated watch market, the idea for Nekta Watches was born. I founded Nekta Watches in conjunction with my cousin, Dave Nekta, with a strong belief in combining the beauty of a fashion product with the best Swiss watch making techniques. This tradition continues today into the next generation, with us.



photos courtesy Nekta

JL2221(Yellow), only 10 pcs. of this style were produced.

Explain what the Nekta watch collection consists of, and what makes you different from the rest of designers?

We frame each of our magnificent creations with polished casings and rugged construction to accent the intricacies of the watch face itself. Hand-set diamonds adorn our most beautiful timepieces, along with interchangeable bands that are offered in a wide array of colors



JL2313 (rose), only 33 pcs. of this style were produced. Mike says "You won't find these watches on QVW or the Home shopping Network."

and materials, ranging from exotics to polyurethane. The choice of faces includes flat or faceted crystal, and both help to distinguish the Nekta watch brand. The King and Jumbo Luna lines feature moon phase, chronograph, and date functions. The Magic and Empire lines feature a chronograph and alarm with day and date functions. And last but certainly not least, the Jasmine line, which boasts a dual time face. The collection is also available

with diamond bezel and full pave diamond options, and Magic features an interchangeable bezel for the fashion-conscious client who wants options. The entire collection also features deployment buckles and, of course, Swiss movement.

What is your philosophy behind the make of each timepiece?

What is right for one person's wrist may not be for another. Nekta Watches are built around this philosophy. With a very diverse and trend-setting selection of timepieces available, Nekta Watches embraces the idea that no two people are the same and, consequently, no two people's tastes and timepiece needs are either. For this reason, the company has created an innovative collection of high-end and fashion-forward watches.

For our bolder clients, Nekta Watches is introducing yellow steel and rose steel variations into the collection. The steel used for the cases goes through a special process during production that gives it that shimmering shade of yellow or rose. It's all about the price point. Nekta Watches is a fashion watch brand; our clients already own their share of famous watch brands. The options I offer allow the client some room to play. Mixing and matching bands and case colors is what the Nekta collection of fashion watches is all about. The band on a Nekta watch is no less special than the face or body construction. Whether you opt for a stunning blue alligator pattern, or a luxurious sepia tone, or any of our wide color and style selections to offset your piece, you will be getting the finest quality leather available. The durability is matched only by its elegance of design and craftsmanship. From design concept to finished product, the Nekta watch is a work of stunning art. The Nekta watch collection is guaranteed for two years and is priced from \$2,100 to \$11,200. The collection is currently available exclusively at www.nektawatches.com.

Mike Netka's enthusiasm and belief in his company are apparent in his designs and his capability to create a successful watch brand. The "New Kid on The Block" of the fashion watch scene has arrived, following a long family tradition in combination with a youthful and refreshing approach. Mike Netka and Nekta Watches will certainly be a brand to watch.

-fM

"While growing up in Queens, New York, Mike became interested in timepieces through his grandfather, father and uncle, who had long careers as watchmakers and jewelers in Russia."



Responsible Fatherhood Foundation
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Du's Functional Family

By T. Demar Phillips

The Playhouse



photos courtesy PK



*Egypt
Before radio: Chuck E. Cheese
Life: going out more, being nicer
Love: lust, infatuation
Death: scared, I don't want to go to hell
Definition of flossin': rich dude*

If you look up the word family you'll find several definitions. One goes as such: "a group of people who are generally not blood relations but who share common attitudes, interests or goals, and frequently live together." And as weekday mornings on radio go The Playhouse, on Jammin 95.5 (KXJM), is a Portland mainstay, exposing listeners to its family secrets on a daily basis. The Playhouse crew includes PK, the ringleader; Sonie, who plays the role of mom; Scooter, the say-it-like-it-is older brother; Ivan, the tattle-telling play cousin no secret is safe from; DuRyan, the naturally funny daredevil little bother; and Egypt, the little sister who agrees she's always the butt of the jokes.

The Playhouse began locally and now airs nationally with syndicate spots in northern California, Montana, Maine, Alaska, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as Oregon. With personalities like Howard Stern leaving the airwaves, more syndicate spots have surfaced. "Of

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"They're known for stunts and prank phone calls, both morning favorites... 'Every show imaginable is doing prank calls now,' says PK. 'They're all the same. I try to do the most outrageous 40-second calls.'"

Dy's FUNCTION



PK
Before radio: fast food
Life: work
Love: work, but looking
Death: mystery
Definition of flossin': living the life well



Sonie
Before radio: worked at a trucking company
Life: experience
Love: don't have enough
Death: not looking forward to
Definition of flossin': living big



Scooter
Before radio: worked at a car dealership
Life: now
Love: awesome (wife and two kids)
Death: horrible
Definition of flossin': being happy and having the finer things in life

course we'll try for some of the spots but those stations are more of a rock format; we cater more to an alternative audience," PK states. One main reason for expanding the show is that dedicated fans are leaving the Portland area due to jobs, families, etc. "It wasn't the money," PK explains. "Fans would call in saying how they'd miss the show. Hopefully in these other cities those fans can still be a part of the show." A wider fan base wasn't ruled out, either. PK goes on to say, "The more people we can reach, the more stories we get in from listeners, the more fans [we get], and the more it contributes to the show." Now the show receives 12,000 calls in any given month.

As in any family, you'll always find them constantly cutting each other off, bickering, and snitching on each other. "I'll be the first one to call someone out if I know something," Ivan comments. Everyone seems to agree he's the official informant. He's also PK's right-hand man, "Mr. Smithers to Mr. Burns," as Egypt describes him. The interactions they have with each other—on and off the air—are personal. Scooter says, "I see the show as an extended family. Some days you wake up and just hate them, but at the end of the day you love them to death." PK calls it a "deep relationship." Sonie believes she is the flame tamer. "It's true in every sense," she says. "It's me who always either breaks it up or makes it up, the devil's advocate I guess you can say." She goes on to say, "It's a role I've accepted. I like it."

PK, who is opinionated and sets the tone on air, explains how everything seems to flow: "For me, when I'm running the show I'm thinking about what's going on on-air. If I'm thinking twice of saying something off the air, on the air I say it and we'll go from there. If that causes an argument off-air, big deal."

DuRyan and Egypt play familiar roles on The Playhouse. They dated about four years and both seem to be the topic of most jokes. "I thought I won \$50,000," DuRyan says, referring to an incident when The Playhouse set him up with a fake lottery ticket. "It looked so real," he says. "That really hurt my emotions." Egypt, "the face of Virgin Mobile" as Scooter puts it (she also appeared on the reality TV show *Forever Eden*), tells how she ended up on Virgin Mobile's website: "I was shopping in LA and a guy ask me to take a picture for kid's style in LA. I told him I wasn't even from LA." A fan later saw the webpage and e-mailed it to The Playhouse. Scooter tauntingly makes sure to point out that Egypt doesn't get a dime for the image. At this, Egypt flips him the finger.

They're known for stunts and prank phone calls, both morning favorites. These include calls like "the guy who wants to eat little babies" and "ransom man" (a fake videotaped ransom note), as well as calls antagonizing local businesses. "Every show imaginable is doing prank

onal Family

calls now,” says PK. “They’re all the same. I try to do the most outrageous 40-second calls.” Some stunts can be a little out of the ordinary. Members of the crew once took a golf cart for a ride on the Interstate. “We got pulled into the office for that one and fines were passed out,” Scooter shrugs, as if he thinks it wasn’t that serious. “The Mystery Box” feature (everyone can see into the box except the cast member with their hands in it) has led to DuRyan getting bit by scorpions and Harley (the phone girl) with her hands in dog crap. There have been threats thrown their way. A man told Scooter he was going to kill him because he joked around with his grandmother. Another time a guy visiting the station started to run around, looking to attack PK. “With the good comes the bad,” says PK.



Ivan

Before radio: radio/TV ever since I was a kid

Life: learning experience

Love: a beautiful thing, the good and the bad

Death: comes when it comes

Definition of flossin’: success

“The Playhouse began in Portland, OR and now airs nationally with syndicate spots in Northern California, Montana, Maine, Alaska, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as Oregon. With personalities like Howard Stern leaving the airwaves, more syndicate spots have surfaced.”

Sometimes the jokes seem more harmful than they really are, as is the case with JV, a mentally challenged honorary member of The Playhouse. “We really treated him, and he treated us, as his brothers and sisters,” states PK. “So much with JV went beyond the on-air.” JV came on the show every Thursday and did things like the alphabet. They even gave him a job and put him on the payroll. There was an outcry from a small group of people who thought the show made fun of JV, and thought it was tasteless. Unfortunately their cries got JV thrown off the show. “For about a year, JV had the time of his life. Those people have never seen his apartment,” says PK, referring to how JV colored-in his calendar, marking Thursdays. “JV cried when he got fired,” notes Egypt.

They all seem to agree they’re not role-model types. “I consider us an adult show for adult people,” PK says. Scooter and Egypt both have had kids approach them and say that they’re their role models. “A girl came to me and told me her daddy said she would be just like me,” Egypt says. PK quickly responds, “If daddy says, ‘I want you to be like Egypt when you grow up,’ that’s a bad dad.”

The Playhouse has a reality show airing on cable access TV in Portland. You can purchase their DVD at www.radioplayhouse.com. In the end, a family that plays together, stays together, and the formula for this dysFUNctional family is one their listeners hope they never mess with.



DuRyan

Before radio: worked at Chuck E. Cheese (“The Rat”)

Life: play on play out

Love: got to have booty

Death: I hope I come back as a ghost so I can look at girls

Definition of flossin’: self-respect

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AKA Mr. Biggs

Ronald Isley

by Kuwana Watson



Mr. Biggs Fur Collection

Ronald Isley has been the godfather of “smooth cool” since hitting the R&B scene in the 1950s with hits such as “Twist and Shout” and, later, “It’s Your Thing.” As the lead singer of the legendary sibling group the Isley Brothers, Ronald Isley sang Motown, gospel, and hard funk with equal skill and verve. As one of the music industry’s longest running family acts, the Isley Brothers have existed for almost 50 years.

Marking a milestone in their five-decade music career, Ronald and Ernie Isley were recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BET Awards.

Isley’s distinctive sense of fashion and style was the driving force that propelled him to get involved in designing his unique men’s fur collection, as well as a line of his ’n’ hers furs. Both collections are sold under Isley’s moniker as the Mr. Biggs Fur Collection, which refers to



photos courtesy Mr. Biggs



his alter ego from *Eternal* and its follow-up, *Body Kiss*.

Isley's approach to fur design is thoroughly hands-on. After teaming up with Tandler Furs, a third-generation furrier located in the heart of the fur district in New York City, Isley worked with the Tandler design team to sketch the looks and silhouettes that would best illustrate his personal style—classic, elegant, chic, and with a strong sense of panache. His love of long-hair furs such as sable, chinchilla, mink, fox, and rex rabbit is evident throughout the inaugural eighty-five piece collection that debuted fall of 2004.

The Mr. Biggs Fur Collection is available at fur retailers, specialty stores, and department stores nationwide, and will have suggested retail prices of \$800 to \$15,000. The fur collection is Isley's way of sharing his lavish and extravagant sense of style with the world. In addition to being a music icon, Ronald Isley will now be able to add the title of fashion icon to his belt. The future is looking big for Mr. Biggs and everything he puts his hands on.

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SANDRA COSTA

by Alex Zampi



Sandra Costa designs Estate homes, boats and airplanes for the comfort of celebrities and VIP's. A few of the famous client's are Britney Spears, Princess Anne Claire Van Shaick Pahlavi, Oscar De La Hoya, Pierce Brosnan, Criminal Attorney Peter Knecht, Entertainment Guru Andy Gould, The Hilton Family and other International Dignitaries. When asked to tell more about the famous personalities lives and how much they spend, she laughs and directs the conversation onto something else. It seems you'll only hear what Sandra Costa want's you to know and she's not telling.



all photos Danny Liao

Sandra Costa invites friends Lorenzo Lamas and Fiancé Playmate Barbara Moore to Sunday Brunch party.

It's no surprise that former Playboy Bunny Sandra Costa leads an exciting life, jetting throughout the world from one assignment to the next. The native New Zealander, known as "The Kiwi," thinks of herself as a natural woman with a built-in radar for winners. With a quick sense of humor and striking good looks, she claims creative energy makes her happy, and that her love for construction and design projects makes working never seem like work. Walking around the celebrity rental estate home she designed in Malibu for Britney Spears, Costa says, "Today, we all want fast gratification. A few years ago a home like this took six months to furnish but today I do it in a few weeks. My clients love the fact they can get what they want and don't have to wait months." When a home is finished Costa and longtime friend and realtor Wendy Carroll host elaborate charity parties. "The guests' most common remark about Sandra's homes is, 'I want this,'" says Carroll.

"I have a fabulous time spending money and sometimes I even have change left over, which shocks the hell out of my clients," Costa drawls in a British accent. When Costa is asked how she compares her design business to the entertainment and management business she runs with her sons Adriano Costa (known in Hollywood as "Draino") and Angelo Costa (aka "Gelow"), and with her niece, actress/singer Princess Ann Claire, (who has the hit show *Love is in the Heir* on E! Entertainment Television), she answers, "Designing, building, and decorating are executive management. Once the idea has been developed you had better be a good business manager to delegate the budget and organize the people to get the

work done. Personal management is run on the same principles. I thrive off building something from nothing and I do it with my eyes closed, and I love being a part of my kids' lives. I have music in my life and it shows in my work. I love it. And speaking about love, my mother once said this and I have repeated it hundreds of times, 'Love is an attitude.' Be the best you can be and men will see that in you. No matter how old you get you will have that something special because you like yourself. And I don't worry about death—maybe how it will happen. But I have an incredible story and will write about it one day. And I'll tell you what flossin' means to me: dreaming. I can say my dream is flossin' and flossin' is my dream. It's all good as long as you keep it real and can laugh."

Costa sits in the great room of the Malibu home and looks more than comfortable. Her cell phone rings with traditional chimes, the kind we had before we had 101 tones to choose from. With a client list of the Who's Who, you wonder who is on the line. "That was one of my clients who wants me to design a custom chair for him. He's 280 pounds and six foot eight, so this will be fun. I'll sketch it up while I'm in Nashville with Princess Ann Claire and make it in three weeks for him. That will make him happy." With that she stands by the fireplace and the raging flames create an aura around her. There is something appealing about the way she talks and points to different comforts around the house, and there's certainly a lot that is appealing about the incredible work she does and the piece of work she is.

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"The location of this house is great" states Sandra Costa.

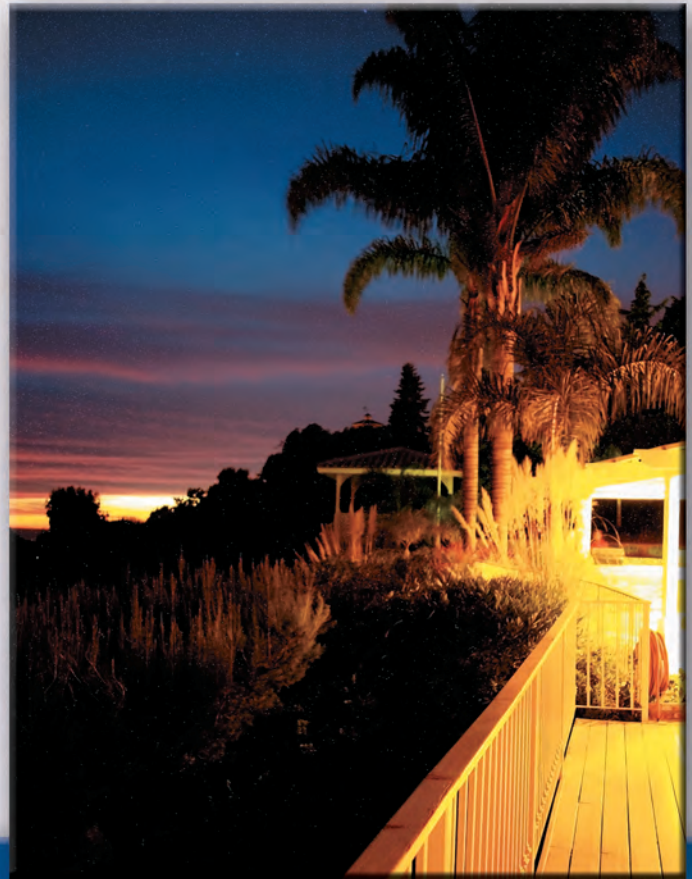
"In the day you can see Catalina and at night the sky is midnight blue laced with fiery streaks".

"I like statements and simplicity at the same time and a perfect example is the bar in this house. Creating contrast by utilizing black and white I gave the area drama without being over decorated and by blending Zen with contemporary I gave warmth to the breakfast room."

pages 64-65.

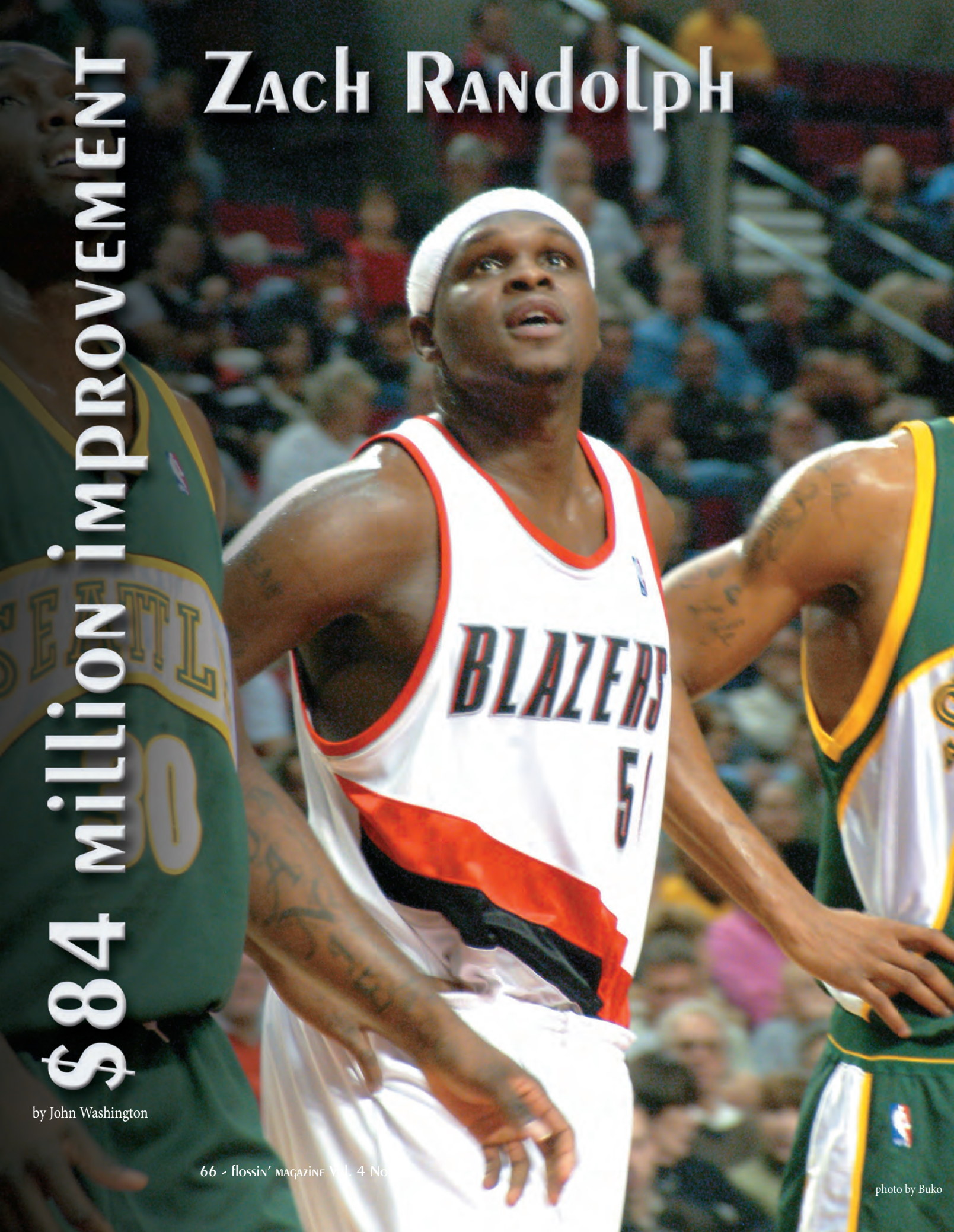
"I carried a theme throughout the house and kept the contrast in all the rooms. I choose natural colors, weaves, linens and ethnic furnishings that really make it comfortable to live in. When I stand in the room and say 'This feels and looks good' I know it's a hit."

-Sandra Costa.









ZACH RANDOLPH

\$84 million IMPROVEMENT

by John Washington

“Randolph was named a USA Today First Team All-American, Indiana Player of the Year, a Parade First Team All-American, and Most Valuable Player of the 2000 Ronald McDonald All-American game. He received a scholarship to Michigan State University and as a freshman became an instant star on campus, and in the Big Ten conference, with a smooth and groomed left-hander style of play. After his freshman year he was selected by the Portland Trail Blazers as a first-round draft pick.”

Some say leaders aren't born, they are made. One of the largest challenges that NBA teams face these days is choosing and grooming athletes to take roles of responsible leadership. From a pool of talented players, each team must at some point pick their own franchise player. That player gets the big contract and all of the scrutiny that comes with it. In some cases that player is obvious: Shaquille O'Neal's overwhelming size, Kevin Garnet's killer instincts, and Tim Duncan's statuesque finesse made them their teams' clear choice. But what happens when those choices aren't as obvious? Or what happens when you choose the wrong leader and he goes rogue? Or what if the leader you focus on has DNA coding for self-destruction, based in a traumatic past of poverty, growing up in a single-parent household, violence, and abuse? How do you determine if that leader will blossom or self-destruct? Unfortunately the NBA knows this coding all too well. A large percentage of the league's players have had one or more of these symptoms of trauma. The league also knows that financially rewarding said players is no guarantee that they will check themselves before they wreck themselves. Getting too much, too soon, for too little. The Ron Artests, the J.R. Riders and the Jason Williams are the players who will forever be the league's reminders. So with histories checkered with trauma, why would the NBA's teams put their faith, efforts, and check-books in the hands of players like these?

We took a look at the Portland Trail Blazers, who recently ordained 23-year-old Zach Randolph an emerging leader of their team when he signed a six-year contract extension worth \$84 million. So here comes the scrutiny. His past behavioral issues, both on and off the court, have been questioned by sponsors, fans, and the police. That's right, this 84 million dollar man is no angel. He has been near ground zero a few times, with charges and accusations including minor in possession, shoplifting, illegal weapons possession, and falsifying eyewitness testimony related to a shooting involving his brother in his hometown. On the court he assaulted teammate Ruben Patterson, breaking his eye socket, and in the past month head coach Maurice Cheeks benched him for attitude and selfish play. But I am not sharing any new information on Randolph that the Trail Blazers don't already know, and he has reached resolution with most, if not all, of these issues. I am merely taking stock—just as the NBA's organizations must do—of what type of man we are dealing with. And after all that was said and done, the Trail Blazers decided that Randolph

was a man that they could back. Why? His hunger and his growth.

For Randolph the growth started in Marion, Indiana, where he grew up playing ball. He grew up without much contact with his father, and his mother struggled most of the time on welfare to provide for Randolph and his three younger siblings. Randolph's mostly black AAU basketball team had to accept racial inequalities, such as improper facilities and equipment. Despite these variables Randolph's team, the Marion Giants, emerged as the dominant force on the basketball court, and he helped lead the 4A school to the Indiana state prep title, as well as the ranking of the sixth best overall team in the nation. He was also named a USA Today First Team All-American, Indiana Player of the Year, a Parade First Team All-American, and Most Valuable Player of the 2000 Ronald McDonald All-American game. Randolph received a scholarship to Michigan State University and as a freshman became an instant star on campus, and in the Big Ten conference, with a smooth and groomed left-hander style of play. After his freshman year he was selected by the Portland Trail Blazers as a first-round draft pick. His love for the game and his work ethic soon had him seeing a lot of playing time as an instrumental clutch player. In the 2003-2004 season Randolph was named the NBA's Most Improved Player, and with the trading of controversial team captain Rasheed Wallace to Detroit, he became a contender for a position of leadership within the Trail Blazer organization. This past fall, with his big contract extension, it seemed as if he had been awarded the role. In an informal interview with Randolph we asked him to comment on these expectations. “They are building a team with me in mind and I have given my commitment, but even before I signed this contract they wanted me to be a leader.” Still we have to ask, why Randolph? He is tall, but not the tallest, he works out hard but does not have the muscle definition of NBA standards, and his baby face and soft eyes aren't the most intimidating. Coach Cheeks has his own reasoning: “The reason why he [Randolph] is sitting up here right now with this contract is he has been a hungry player every day. He just loves to play this game. I've seen his growth, I've seen his maturity that he's achieved so far, so I am excited for him.” Clearly, Randolph is still hungry and has a sense of purpose, and that's basketball. Now, can he begin the grooming process and acquire all the mature qualities of a leader while still feeding the hunger that drives him?

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“Assisting players’ transitions into the league is an incredible challenge that David Stern, the Players Association and individual teams have recognized. The Blazers have positioned me to spearhead the resources of the above-mentioned to empower the players.”

—Darnell Valentine



Zach's jersey retirement in Marion.

photo Elaine Buschman

Continued from page 67

Randolph is putting work into it. He has become a generous participant in community projects. He donated \$50,000 to Portland Parks and Recreation so that youths could have new basketball jerseys, as well as pouring money into similar programs in Marion. He also donated time at the end of summer to teach at basketball camps in South Africa. He spoke on the awakening that the experience left him with: “The people are so nice but they don’t have hardly anything. It really opens up your eyes to see just how blessed we are being from America and how important it is to give back. I also got to meet Nelson Mandela and to shake his hand. When you look at

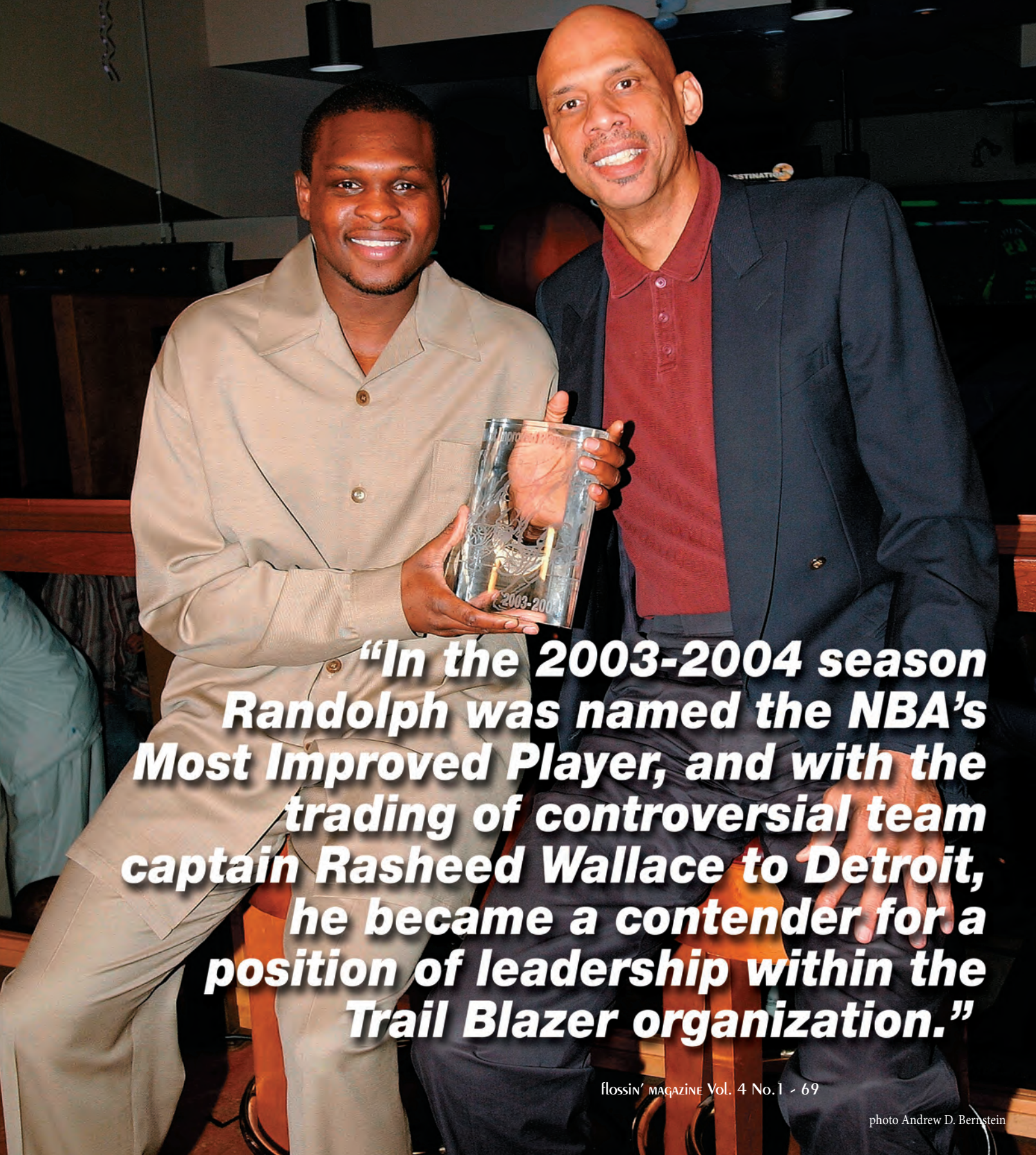
this man who has accomplished and influenced so much in his lifetime—I considered it a blessed encounter, and one of those memories of a lifetime.” Randolph agreed with our inquiries about the trauma that many men coming into the league face, not only coming from where they come from, but what they face once they get into the league. He shared this advice: “You have got to stay strong against the temptations in life. Just find and stay close to positive people that really care about you and not what you got. Focus on the positive things you want to happen and then get out there and get it.” A final card in Randolph’s hand may be his role as father. “I have a son and it is so important for me to be involved in his life and stay strong for him. I grew up without my father and it’s not good.” Randolph seems to be transforming. He is in touch with the idea that, one to whom much is given, much is expected, and his heart and focus are probably strong enough to prevent him from self-destructing. But what about other players to come?

Is the NBA doing enough? Is it the job’s responsibility to train people, or do you look for already-qualified employees and build upon that foundation? If you look at the NBA’s track record, the number of early draft entries is escalating, especially those out of high schools. Some young players are looking to get struggling families out of poverty situations, and others simply don’t want to go to school. These are indicators that the NBA is willing to do on-the-job training. So what systems are in place to orient these young guns and current players struggling with newfound fame and fortune?

We spoke with Darnell Valentine, director of player relations for the Trail Blazers and a former NBA player, and he had this comment: “Assisting players’ transitions into the league is an incredible challenge that David Stern [NBA commissioner], the Players Association and individual teams have recognized. The Blazers have positioned me to spearhead the resources of the above-mentioned to empower the players. Being like a big brother, coach, or personal assistant, my goal is to ensure there’s a support system in place to address any needs players may have. It’s more than meets the eye, and everyone realizes that all players are not polished and worldly individuals. My mission is to proactively prepare players for the many risky situations they’ll be exposed to, and to react in a professional way both on and off the floor.” Taking a look

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Zach Randolph receives his Most Improved Player of the year trophy with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar on April 23, 2004 at the Lucky Strike in Los Angeles, California.



“In the 2003-2004 season Randolph was named the NBA’s Most Improved Player, and with the trading of controversial team captain Rasheed Wallace to Detroit, he became a contender for a position of leadership within the Trail Blazer organization.”

“Randolph also donated time at the end of summer to teach at basketball camps in South Africa...’The people are so nice but they don’t have hardly anything. It really opens up your eyes to see just how blessed we are being from America and how important it is to give back. I also got to meet Nelson Mandela and to shake his hand. When you look at this man who has accomplished and influenced so much in his lifetime—I considered it a blessed encounter, and one of those memories of a lifetime.”



photo courtesy Zach Randolph

Zach shakes hands with Nelson Mandela.

Continued from page 68

at the recent violent events that have escalated on and off the courts, one may wonder how effective people like Valentine can really be.

The post-traumatic stress disorders that many of these kids come into the league with (things like witnessing, before the age of sixteen, one or more acts of violence to themselves or to someone close to them) make them better candidates for therapy than a big brother. But conventional forms of therapy just don’t work in this culture. (How do you get a man with a million dollars in his pocket to admit he has a problem?) We do agree with Mr. Valentine that this is an incredible challenge and undertaking. The NBA and its players are microcosms of a bigger societal problem. Society faces these same challenges with cultural and economic issues (get in where you fit in). Where there is history there are predictable indicators. The history and evolution of the NBA over the last 75 years has shown us that sports reflect the changes in society. And players are a product of their environment. History has also shown us that the dominant player has usually been a member of a subculture (a minority). For example, the Irish and the

Italians were once the minority and the dominant players back in the origin of the NBA. Today the minority is the African American and he is also the dominant player in the NBA. And tomorrow? The NBA is currently scanning the globe and, true to form, some of the areas they are searching are under heavy reconstruction. Who’s to know what set of issues will come to the table next? Now it’s drugs, dog fighting, and fan punching; who’s to say the next issues won’t be of international concern? So, if players are products of their environments, it would make more sense for the NBA to influence the environments they come from (i.e. after-school programs, community and social service programs, etc.). And though the league makes efforts towards supporting these communities, their efforts do not match the demand for entertainment and the league’s need for bigger and better competitors. What’s also apparent is that the NBA machine has outgrown its abilities to enforce its own policies and game plan. They don’t really have the player profile dialed in. Don’t get us wrong, it makes a lot of millionaires each year, but as history has also shown, throwing money at cultural issues isn’t enough to impact some of the major concerns that the NBA is having with some of its players (violence, self-worth, attitude, and chemical dependency).

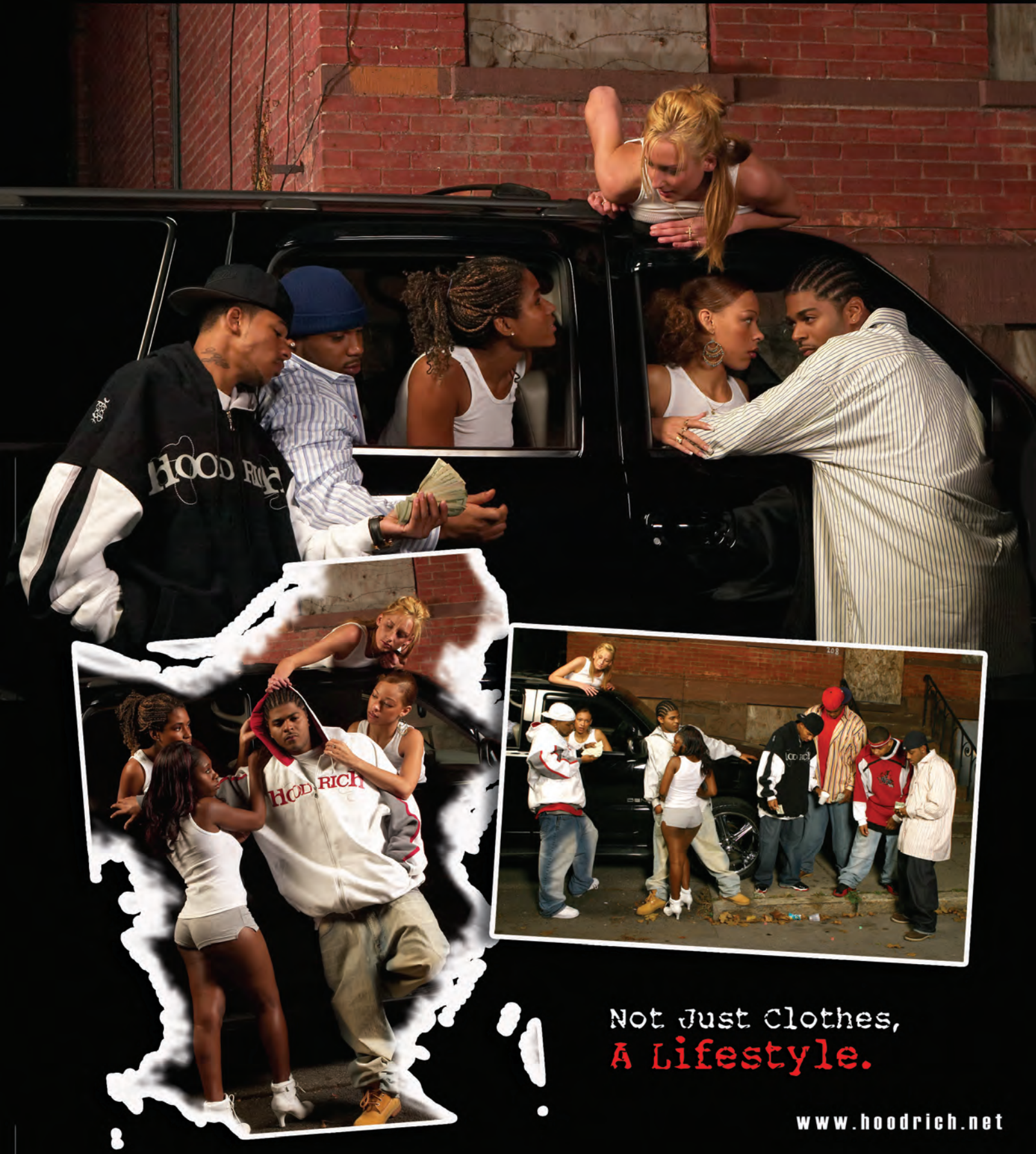
We consulted with a representative from Care counseling who commented, “I believe there needs to be a wellness program that caters to the needs of each individual player in transition. It should connect from him back to his family of origin and his community. It would appear to me that there are a lot of early warning signals that aren’t being picked up on, that are symptomatic of some larger issues which can and do lead to player self-destruction. There are also some culturally specific needs that are not being addressed.”

Cats like Valentine have their work cut out for them, as does the NBA. The problems they are having in the league we are also having in society. They are not only socialization issues but cultural issues. Let’s hope that guys like Valentine are steadfast, and put together a strong enough system of support for these players. Let’s hope that players like Zach Randolph stay strong, and continue to mature in a healthy way. We all must confront our demons at some point, but we must believe that we can win. And with an appropriate system of support around us, we can.

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Apple Bottoms

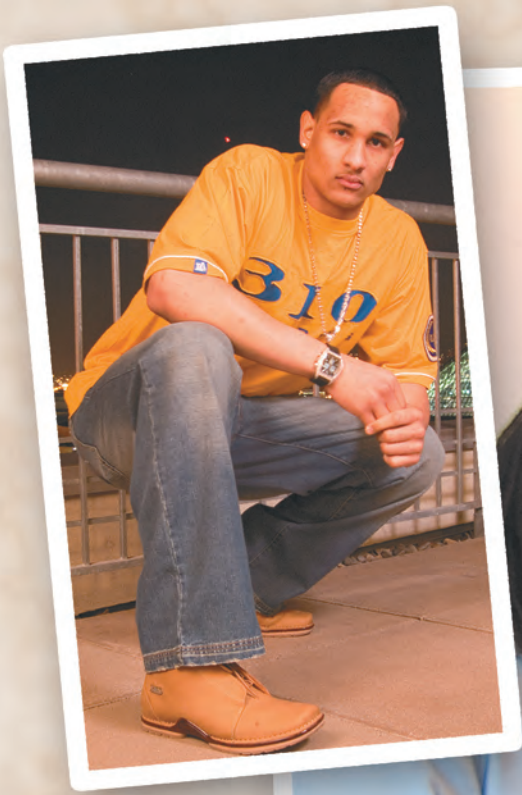


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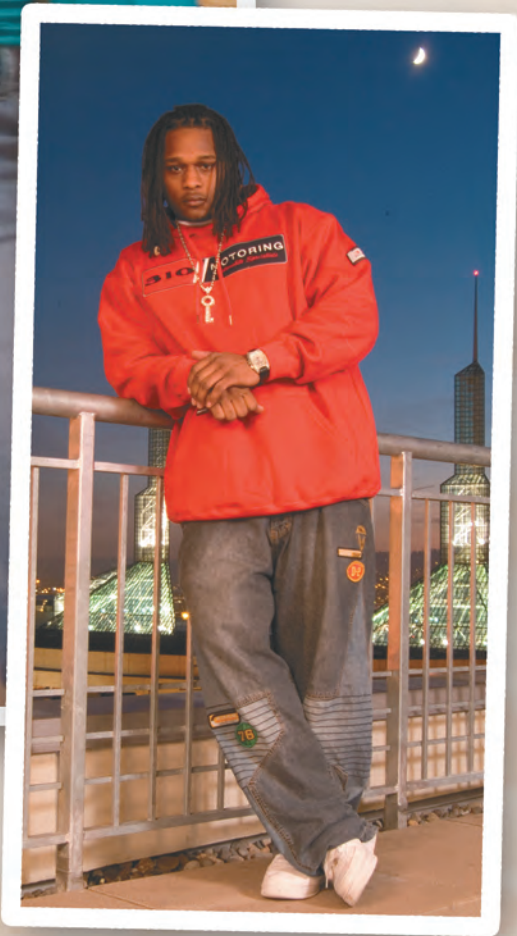


Rap star Nelly is searching for the perfect Apple Bottom girl for his hot sassy clothing line. Girls love the fit even Oprah has put her stamp of approval on Apple Bottom when she wore a pair of the jeans on her show.

The 310 collection has the right stuff to handle the casual male look. Their fantastic shoes and clothing are just the combination needed to impress those sassy Apple Bottom girls.



Apple Bottoms



and 310

Ciara

By T. Demar Phillips

“When you enter Ciara’s world you got to keep it crunk, so get your 1, 2 step on and see what kind of goodies she has in store for you.”

In today’s world, hip-hop culture has more than taken its place in the music industry. The Southern-bred “get crunk” style of rap has added a new element to the game. Crunk&B music combines R&B with the get-crunk style and introduces Ciara as First Lady of the latest trend in dance music.

The 18-year-old dancing diva resides in Atlanta. Born in Austin, Texas, Ciara grew up a military kid, living in Germany, New York, California, Arizona, and Nevada. She’s shot to the top of the charts with her whistling debut single “Goodies,” which is also the album’s title. Goodies contains collaborative tracks with artists like Ludacris, Missy Elliott, Jazze Pha, and R. Kelly. Ciara and Elliott also team up for Ciara’s second single, “1, 2 Step.” Goodies has reached gold on the charts but is still steadily on the rise with Ciara’s first two hits.

Ciara came into the music business about three years ago. Yes, it’s a short time, but she feels she can handle the pressure, and refers to herself as “more than the average teenager.” While living in the ATL she has worked with some of the industry’s hottest producers, including Jazze Pha, who signed the young star to his Sho’ Nuff production label after working with her for little under a week. She also has had Laface Records, her priority label, and Zomba productions to help her bring her first project together. After watching

a popular ladies singing group on TV, she knew what she wanted to be—her mind was locked into singing. Becoming a diva is not only Ciara’s goal, it is her dream. She attributes her maturity level to her will to pursue them both. “I wrote down on paper that I had a goal to be a professional singer,” she says. “I had to sacrifice a lot of things, and I think that was the key to getting where I am.” Everything seemed to fall into place from there. First, a brief stint with a female group, which she left to go solo. Then Ciara got a publishing deal and eventually found Jazze Pha. The two are very close to each other. As far as the music goes she says, “God put him in my life for a reason. Our vibe is incredible.”

It may seem like Ciara’s in competition with other female artists like Ashanti, Beyoncé, Brandy, Christina Milan, and Monica, but the way she feels is a little different. She does admit people are going to make comparisons regardless, and that all those ladies are beautiful, but she also takes it as a compliment to be compared to them. Certainly her age doesn’t speak to where her head is at, and in the music industry that spells longevity.

What’s left for the young, tall, and slender dancing damsel? Only time will tell but do check out Ciara on her website www.ciaraworld.com. When you enter Ciara’s world you got to keep it crunk, so get your 1, 2 step on and see what kind of goodies she has in store for you.



photo courtesy Ciara

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“I wrote down on paper that I had a goal to be a professional singer,” she says. “I had to sacrifice a lot of things, and I think that was the key to getting where I am.”

THE EVOLUTION OF

by Dana Kirk

USHER



photo courtesy Usher

Okay, is it just me, or did Usher go from being a cute, round-faced young man with vocal promise to a multi-faceted superstar and style icon overnight? Usher has always had style, but as he has grown, his style has as well. When you are a teenage boy, it's about sports attire, baggy pants, and name brands emblazoned on your clothes for everyone to see. You aren't thinking about clean lines or how the outfit is tailored, because that just screams "boring." Teenagers love to have fun and that was the style of Usher in 1994 when he was seen in metallic separates in the video "Think of You."

Although Usher wasn't a household name after his first album, he definitely showed enough promise and marketability to be the next big thing in the world of R&B. When his follow-up album *My Way* hit the charts in 1997, grown folks had to take a step back and acknowledge the young crooner. For now, it wasn't about thinking about a girl, it was about taking things "Nice and Slow." We were now seeing an older Usher, a fit Usher, an Usher who was gaining a sense of self, style, and income—the album went on to sell 7 million copies.

Usher's style sensibility continued to grow from there. By the time his new multi-platinum album *8701* hit the charts, we weren't even thinking about Usher as a growing icon. He was an icon, and by now had millions of fans all over the world, was touring with Janet Jackson, and was starting to display the talisman of all successful artist: "the ice."

Jump to the present day. The knit skull caps have been replaced with the popular Atlanta Braves ball caps and felt fedoras. The matching, colorful outfits have been replaced with tailored suits, and the collection of ice has quadrupled in size. Usher can now be seen on every Best Dressed list there is and I'm sure there is more to come. Rumor has it he is following in the footsteps of one of his own style icons, P.Diddy, and starting his own men's line. Usher, you remind us at *Flossin'* of a man who represents talent, sensibility, and style, and therefore, we must salute you as this issue's male Evolution of a Star.

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THE EVOLUTION OF ALICIA KEYS

When you think of the name Alicia Keys, pure star power comes to mind. Immediately you think of a young, vivacious singer/pianist who is not only ruling the charts, but also the concert stages, and soon, the silver screen. What better choice for this issue's Evolution of a Star than Ms. Keys? Keys is a woman who represents the merging of classical, hip-hop, and old soul.

In the beginning, Alicia Keys was a young, fresh-faced teen making her name known as Clive Davis's protégée with the hit song "Fallin'." You'll notice Alicia's style was very earthy. Dark colors, scarves, and bohemian tops were a huge part of this soon-to-be superstar's wardrobe. And, of course, who can forget those braids? Those braids that started what seemed like a national movement to go natural and protest free-flowing, beauty queen hair. Alicia made you feel her soul—not only with her music, but with her style as well.

It wasn't long, however, before Alicia let us take a peek at her sexy, feminine side. With growing popularity came tighter pants and exposed midriffs. Alicia, however, definitely still took some fashion risks and continued to express herself through her style. Who can forget the teal Christian Dior frock with the heavily glittered eyelashes that she stepped out in at the Grammys? Still, ever growing, Alicia continued to evolve into the butterfly she is today.

Now, Alicia Keys can definitely be put in the category with other fashion-forward celebrities. We are no longer seeing the suit-and-hat-wearing fresh face from the "Fallin'" video. In the "My Boo" video with heartthrob Usher, we see a stylish suede trench coat, a diva wearing Yves Saint Laurent. Alicia can now be hailed as one of the most beautiful women in the entertainment industry. Her melodious vocals, beauty, and soul-stirring lyrics make her a triple threat worth watching. This is why we at Flossin' had to give "props" where they are due and celebrate Alicia Keys as this issue's Evolution of a Star.



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photo courtesy Alicia Keys

JUST, LEON

by Marcus Matthews

Smooth, suave, good-looking, and talented are the words that come to mind when I think of the multi-talented Leon. I know everybody remembers that dude in high school and college that dressed the baddest, had the smoothest walk, and knew all the right words that made all the girls melt.

Ladies and gentlemen, Leon is that dude. He is that dude Jay-Z raps about when he refers to getting his “grown man on” and he is a part of that rare class of folks that go by one-name monikers.

Let me see: We have Prince, Madonna, Jordan, Kobe, Shaq, and of course Leon. I’m pretty sure he doesn’t mind being mentioned in that company, yet his goal is to create a different niche for himself.

“I always strive for if not the best, then at least to be different. I don’t strive to be different, I just am,” says Leon in a smooth, laid-back tone. “I think if I put my best foot forward as Leon that’s the best thing I can offer someone. We are all actors, singers, entertainers, we all do the same thing, but I think the best thing we can offer the world is ourselves. The one role nobody can play better than me is Leon.”

Leon has played so many distinctive roles in his career that it’s hard to pinpoint that one role that separates itself from the others. I know my favorite is the one he

“I ALWAYS STRIVE FOR, if NOT THE BEST, THEN AT LEAST TO BE DIFFERENT. I DON’T STRIVE TO BE DIFFERENT, I JUST AM,”

played as the older brother of Tupac in the basketball-themed *Above the Rim*.

Many relate to his portrayal of J.T. in *The Five Heartbeats*. The answer you get from Leon on this topic all depends on when you pose the question. “To be honest with you, because I really get into my roles the role that I’m playing at the current moment is the one I like the most,” says Leon.

“After I finish a role I just leave it. There are some movies and performances that I’ve done, luckily, that people won’t forget and I feel very blessed that’s happened. Like David Ruffin in *The Temptations*, J.T. in *The Five*



photo Mathew Jordan Smith



“LEON ALSO HAS ENOUGH IN THE TANK TO BE LEAD SINGER OF HIS NEW YORK-BASED REGGAE/SOUL BAND THE PEOPLES.”

photo Rudy Rimanich

Heartbeats, Derice Bannock in Cool Runnings, and Little Richard. People constantly talk about these roles and I'm happy. That's why I act. It's for them; I don't act for me.”

Leon must really love the people because the way he stays on the grind, it's hard to keep up with what the man is working on at the moment. Currently Leon has his hands full with Friends and Lovers, a play based on the New York Times best-selling book by Eric Jerome Dickey.

He plays the lead role of Tyrel, a computer-company executive whose career is far more steady than his love life. “Very rarely do I get to play a role in any medium that allows me to do so many different things that I can do. I can be dramatic, romantic, and sexy and extremely funny, while using my voice as well. This role requires everything, and I'm happy they marked me as the guy who could fulfill all that. It was great and they surrounded me with a dynamite cast.”

Leon is also busy on the TV tip these days, hosting and producing his show L-Bow Room, which features Leon and personalities from the sports, entertainment, and media worlds. Topics can range from politics to legalizing marijuana to booty calls, even to brothers on the down-low.

Good friend Bob Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television, came at Leon with the idea

and he instantly jumped at the opportunity.

If that's not enough for one man's plate, Leon also has enough in the tank to be lead singer of his New York-based reggae/soul band The Peoples. There is, however, one area that Leon won't touch. “The one thing I don't do is golf,” Leon reveals as he bursts into laughter.

One of Leon's ace cards that has made him so popular is his knack for making the ladies swoon, a quality he's going to ride until the wheels fall off. “I embrace it [being a sex symbol] because that's what people deem me to be. It doesn't make sense to fight it. There are definite benefits that come with it, I guess. I've just kind of gone along with it. If people find me sexy then that's great. Someone's got to be sexy, so why not me?”

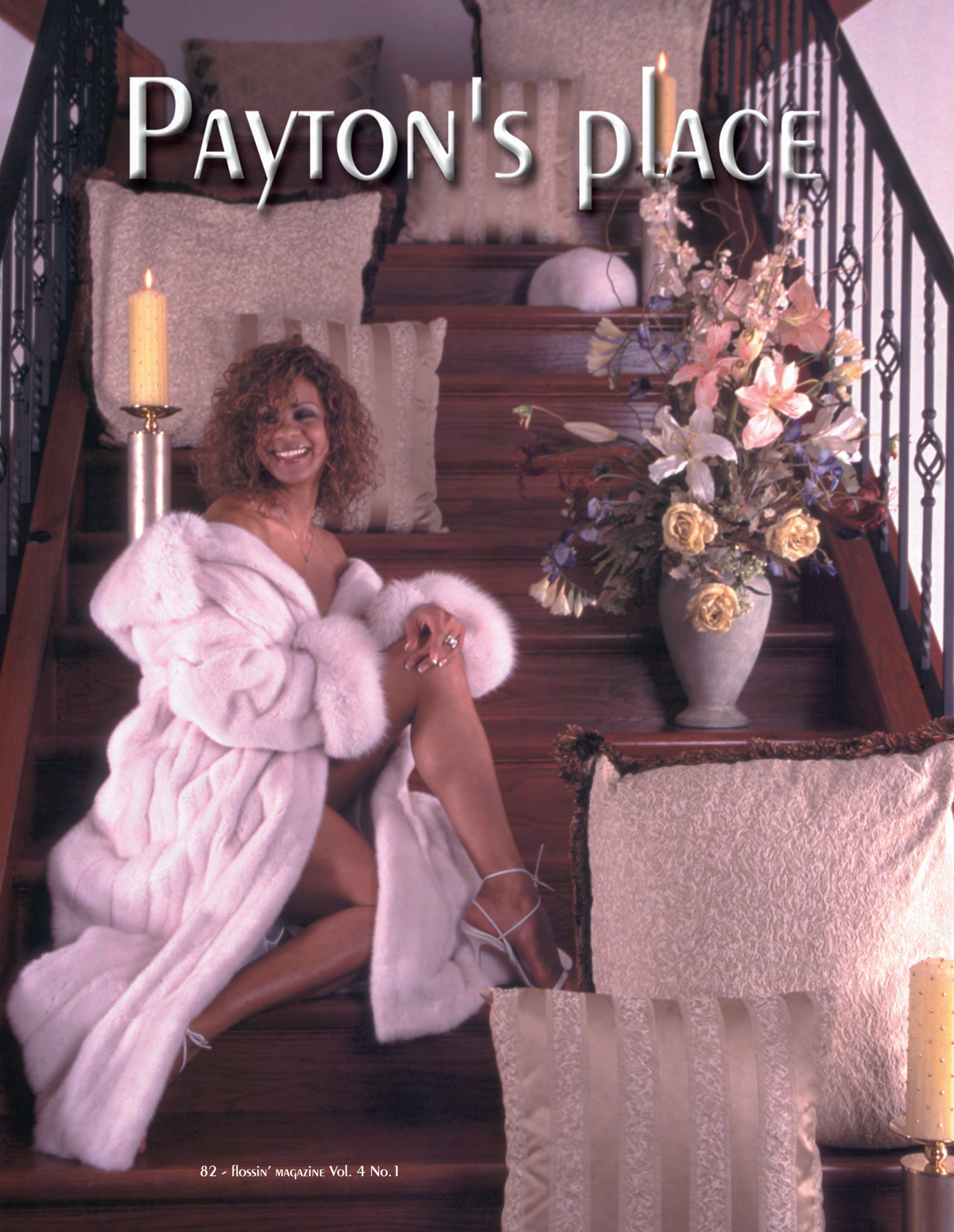
Don't be fooled though, because Leon is not your regular flossin' type of cat, which comes as no surprise to this writer. “I don't really consider myself much of a flosser. I wear no jewelry, have no tattoos or piercings. I'm au natural since the day I was born, only bigger. I don't think flossin' in the traditional sense applies to me but when I'm doing my thing, whether it be acting, singing, or whatever, that's when I getting my floss on.”

Well put, good sir, well put.

CREDITS - BET.COM, JUSTLEON.COM, WWW.ERICJEROMEDICKEY.COM

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PAYTON'S PLACE



Like her husband's NBA career, Monique Payton has got the numbers: fifteen years of love with Gary Payton (seven as his wife), three beautiful children, five houses, twenty-four cars, a twenty-five year old male nanny, a nine karat platinum anniversary ring, a \$12,000 full-length mink coat, one gorgeous body, and one gorgeous smile. Does she have it all? Well, she is a damn sight closer than most.

Beautiful Mrs. Payton gives us a glimpse of what it is like to be the wife of one of today's hottest NBA superstars, Gary Payton of the Boston Celtics.

We settle into the den of the Payton's place. There is



photos Dave Ross

a library of books behind us. Six-year-old Julian Payton thumbs through his section of books, never far from his mama. There is also a pool table, four or five arcade games, a full bar, and an exotic 400 gallon fish tank. "Mo," as she refers to herself, is wearing some hip-hugger jeans and a tee—very chic, very flirty. She acts a little tough but is never far from a smile. She has known Gary much of her life. They went to the same high school in Oakland, and, like Gary, she was also on the basketball team and very competitive. "We started dating during our college years. Gary ran into my brother during the summer and got my number from him. He asked me out for dinner and we have been together ever since." Ever since has put her at some pretty poignant moments in Gary's career, like his 1990 first-round (second overall) draft pick. Her face beams with pride as she recalls, "I was working doing some data entry at the time Gary was going to the draft. I wanted to buy him a suit but didn't have any money. I asked my boss for an advance and went out and bought him one. He wore that suit and looked so cute. I was just so proud and so happy for him."

In 1991, Gary asked her to marry him, and in 1997, five hundred people gathered to celebrate its actuality. My eyes must have shown surprise for the length of the engagement because Mo laughed and shook her head, saying, "I know, it took a long time. I just wanted to make sure that he was really ready. There were times in our relationship that were not always easy, and I left for a while. But he would always call and say, 'OK, it's time for you to come home.' Then he would get cold feet and I didn't want him to feel pressured to do anything. We had two other dates set and then this last time he was like, 'Lets do it babe.'"

You may wonder how the wife of a millionaire superstar spends her time. "A typical day for me? Well, I take the kids to school at eight o'clock. I usually take the green Escalade with 22-inch rims. If Will, our nanny, takes the kids to school then I cruise the SC43 convertible Lexus. My favorite ride is in California: it is the E 320 ruby red convertible." Her nose crinkles in delight. "Then I go downtown, where I work out with my personal trainer from 8:30 to 10:30.

If I stay in the city, I may meet a

Continued on page 84



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girlfriend for lunch and we'll go shopping, or I may meet Gary and we will have lunch and catch a movie. Once I get home, I'll talk with the kids and then I cook dinner around 6:00 or 7:00. Then we will take a Jacuzzi and have




some champagne and Alizé. I love champagne and Alizé. Afterwards I'll play some darts with Gary, or cards. We are very competitive and love to play games. And that's a typical day. I am at the point in my life where I am ready for more, though. I have been thinking of going back to school. I was a sociology major at San Francisco State. I was also interested in learning sign language. I have no excuse for not going back. I just wonder if mentally I would be into it, and I want to do it right."

Being in a high profile family isn't always easy, especially on the kids. "I feel bad for them sometimes.

The oldest, Raquel, used to get attitude from some kids like, 'Just because your dad is Gary Payton you think you're cool.' Or, if little Gary would go to a party it would be, 'Hey Gary, is your dad here?' So we talk about it and I tell them not to worry about it and just go with the flow, and people will mellow out. I got lucky. My kids are so great; I have really been blessed. As far as myself, I am always just 'Mo'. So I never let it get to me. Sometimes when we're out as a family people will come up to him and want autographs, and I don't mind too much. Hard to say no to some little kid who idolizes him. I can get feisty sometimes, though, and Gary knows it. People are always trying to be near him and if they go too far he knows that I will let them know.

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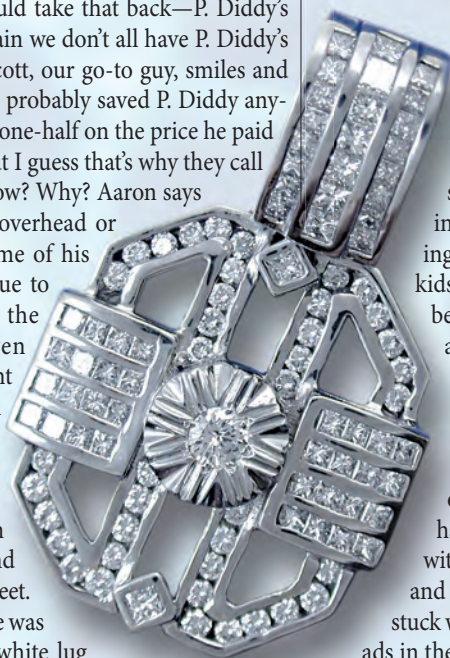
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I think secretly he likes that, because I will say what he may not. The only day I refuse to share him with the public is New Year's Eve. That is my day with him. On that day I say no to autographs and photos." Obviously, game time is a big deal for the Paytons. She goes to every home game but with three kids she doesn't go on the road too much anymore. Flossin' wondered if Gary snorted out fire after a loss or threw Mo in the hot tub, bathing her in champagne, after a win? "Oh my God!" she laughed. "Not hardly. He doesn't take it home with him. I know some wives who don't want to get in the car with their husbands because they are all uptight and tense, but Gary is not like that. If they lose then we talk about it and sometimes laugh, and then he's like, 'We got to get the next game.' If he wins he likes to go out and celebrate. I don't like to go out after every game like he does. So, he will go shoot pool with the fellas, hang out with them on our yacht." Off-season usually takes the Paytons to their house in Oakland, nearer to both of their families, or to their home in Las Vegas. "We love Vegas. The kids hang out in the pool all day and night, and we just relax and have fun on the town." As we pull away, I ponder Monique Payton's life. A thought strikes me about the good life. Too much of a good thing is still a good thing. That's what we call Flossin'.

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WHAT EVERY FLOSSER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT JEWELRY BEFORE HE STARTS HIS BLING COLLECTION.

We all know that Jacob the Jeweler is P. Diddy's go-to man in New York City, and just as he is Diddy's go-to guy, so is there a go-to guy for everything in every town across the nation. Flossin' Magazine took a look at the jewelry game in the Pacific Northwest and we found who we feel may be the biggest hustler, deal maker, and bling provider. On the corner of 3rd and Washington (304 S.W. Washington St.) in downtown Portland there stands an unassuming jewelry shop called, of all things, Affordable Jewelry. That's the other secret: these people are always unassuming. Well, I should take that back—P. Diddy's jeweler isn't, but then again we don't all have P. Diddy's money. To that Aaron Scott, our go-to guy, smiles and comments, "I could have probably saved P. Diddy anywhere from one-third to one-half on the price he paid for his big bling items, but I guess that's why they call it disposable income." How? Why? Aaron says he doesn't have the big overhead or the fancy lifestyle of some of his competitors. He stays true to the streets and true to the consumer. On any given day of the week you might catch Aaron standing on the sidewalk outside his small store, or walking between the two stores his father and sister run (Affordable Diamonds and Trade Shop) just up the street. The day we caught him he was dressed in some bright white lug tennis shoes, relaxed jeans, and a bright white tee shirt with a diamond chain that says "Lolows" hanging from his neck. He had a laugh, a grin, or a comment for anyone walking past him. Really in touch with the pulse of the street he worked on. He is always angling, always a phone in his hand, ready to make a deal just in case someone like "Diddy" wants to save a buck. "Nobody is in business to lose money but nor are we interested in robbing you with pretension either. I mean look at me, I am a simple guy." Indeed, it may be argued that the only things big about Aaron's lifestyle are his appetite and the money he is willing to save you. He says, "I mean look at my shop; it is modest, so my overhead is low, and I don't have to pay \$15,000 on rent, so I don't have to jack the



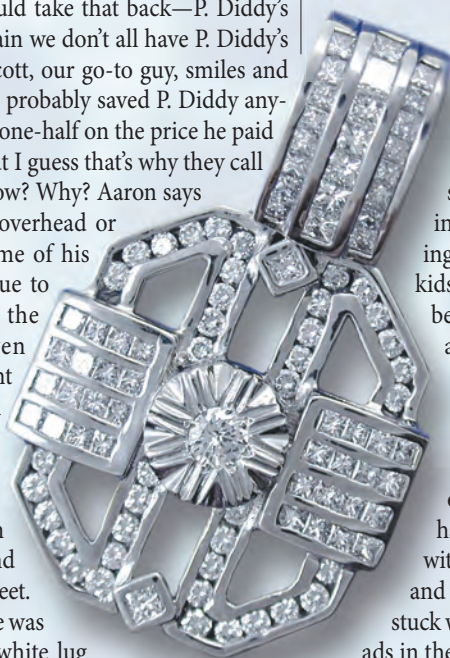
prices up to cover my monthly expenses and the customer reaps the benefits." So why would they operate that way? "It's a concept that started with my father and his coin trading business. Coins are a very competitive business so he made sure that we had the lowest price possible by checking with the competition and then we sell just below it. So we just rolled that concept into the jewelry business. We shop the competition because we want to have the lowest price. The idea is volume. We sell more because we sell more for less. Everyone talks about doing that, but we really do it."

Like anything good, it is rooted in history. In Aaron's case it was the business taught to him by his father, Rodney Scott, that both he and his sister, Beth, have come to embrace with pride and energy. Rodney explains how he got started: "We had a minting company back in the mid-eighties and it required packaging and stamping envelopes, so I brought my kids in to help out and they have pretty much been working with me since they could walk and talk. As their skill levels increased so did what they did in the business. It's been absolutely wonderful." Aaron's father got into the jewelry business as a byproduct of getting into the coin business. He was one of those kids that in the third grade had one of those blue books that you fill with coins. "It was an easy way to save money and seemed fun to me," says Rodney, "so I just stuck with it, and by high school I was taking out ads in the paper to buy and sell coins. I remember when I was buying some of those coins, some people would also offer me a diamond ring or a piece of jewelry, asking me what it was worth and I really didn't have any idea at the time because all I knew were coins. I got an education from a retired watchmaker that lived close by and started learning about diamonds, gem stones, etc. When those opportunities again presented themselves I started buying more jewelry. Then I went through the GIA program which is a course that teaches you how to grade stones. So the natural transition flowed into jewelry, although coins will always be in my blood and business." Today when you walk in you will see rare coins alongside the diamond rings and watches. His most valuable coins are the Barber coins, which are really low mintages, some

THE GO TO GUYS

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Like anything good, it is rooted in history. In Aaron's case it was the business taught to him by his father, Rodney Scott, that both he and his sister, Beth, have come to embrace with pride and energy. Rodney explains how he got started: "We had a minting company back in the mid-eighties and it required packaging and stamping envelopes, so I brought my kids in to help out and they have pretty much been working with me since they could walk and talk. As their skill levels increased so did what they did in the business. It's been absolutely wonderful." Aaron's father got into the jewelry business as a byproduct of getting into the coin business. He was one of those kids that in the third grade had one of those blue books that you fill with coins. "It was an easy way to save money and seemed fun to me," says Rodney, "so I just stuck with it, and by high school I was taking out ads in the paper to buy and sell coins. I remember when I was buying some of those coins, some people would also offer me a diamond ring or a piece of jewelry, asking me what it was worth and I really didn't have any idea at the time because all I knew were coins. I got an education from a retired watchmaker that lived close by and started learning about diamonds, gem stones, etc. When those opportunities again presented themselves I started buying more jewelry. Then I went through the GIA program which is a course that teaches you how to grade stones. So the natural transition flowed into jewelry, although coins will always be in my blood and business." Today when you walk in you will see rare coins alongside the diamond rings and watches. His most valuable coins are the Barber coins, which are really low mintages, some

THE GO TO GUYS

coins set into them. They are investment pieces that rise and fall with the market value, and can be a unique gift.” The Scott family is well known in the sports realm (with baseball players like Greg and Mike Maddox), not only for jewelry but for coins as well, and have worked with Michael Jordan and other NBA players to design minted NBA collector coins. (See www.ajpm.com; click “custom minting.”)

The appraised value of an item is something that customers often have a misunderstanding about, I questioned Aaron’s father, Rodney, on the process with regards to jewelry. “Investment pieces are more the items that you’ve had priced per carat and shopped and compared. Some items, like bullion, increase in value. However, with most jewelry items the appraisal thing is very misleading, in that if you have something that was your grandmother’s and you take it to two different stores to have it appraised most likely they are going to give you a number that is probably inflated to the point where you could actually go somewhere and buy the item for quite a bit less than they are telling you it is worth. This has been going on for quite awhile with insurance companies. In the old days the insurance companies would just write a check; now they help you try to find the item that was lost and help you replace it, because they know how much money they can save versus just writing a check for the

appraised amount. If you take any item in our shop and take it to two legitimate appraisers of your choice, our average price probably is one-third of what they tell you that it is worth. So often a person will come into our shop looking to sell an item that they’ve had appraised for \$3,000, and expect to get that. But the difference between the real market value and the retail value placement is so huge that in reality you can buy it for about \$1,000.”

Aaron Scott and his family could keep you talking with them for hours, as if you were having coffee in their living room. Beauty surrounds them in their shops, their dispositions, and their way of business. Each one has a smile that jumps out and invites you to play. I think maybe one of the biggest keys to the success of their business is that it clearly has love.

It is the jewelry business, the precious metals and stones business, and the Affordable Jewelry crew have made a commitment to learning about it. They have educated themselves in it. They practice buying and selling it on a daily basis. They’ve been doing it for over 25 years, sharing their knowledge with each other and their customers.

The moral of the story is to educate yourself and you will learn the game. Play the game and you’ll get better. Stay with the game long enough, and you’re a success. Teach it to others and you’re flossin’.

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Aaron Scott; Keeping the family business in the family.

“AARON JINGLES A FEW COINS IN HIS HANDS AND SAYS, ‘WE ARE GETTING MORE REQUESTS FOR NECKLACES, BRACELETS, AND EARRINGS MADE WITH COINS SET INTO THEM. THEY ARE INVESTMENT PIECES THAT RISE AND FALL WITH THE MARKET VALUE, AND CAN BE A UNIQUE GIFT.’”





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Every two seconds, someone in America needs blood. Blood transfusions are often needed for trauma patients - accident and burn victims, heart surgery, organ transplants, and patients receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or other diseases, such as sickle cell disease, a blood disorder carried by 1 in 12 African Americans.

While blood compatibility is not based on race, rare blood types often are. Some rare blood types, such as U-negative and Duffy-negative, are unique to the African American community. Ethnicity is also critically important in matching bone marrow donors for patients with leukemia.

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Please donate blood today.

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*Taste
Feel and
Experience*

Justin's

We knew the atmosphere would be extraordinary, but we didn't realize the food would harmonize so well.

Stomachs growling, we gaze upon the wide variety of appetizers our waiter has just placed on the table, and our mouths begin to salivate. As we pick up our first choice, Puffy Shrimp, our eyes quickly shift back and forth around the room at the incredible ambiance and decor surrounding us. Taking in the atmosphere, our minds wander for a minute before we remember that we are sitting in the famous Justin's Restaurant & Bar in Atlanta, Georgia, Sean P.D. Combs' second such restaurant.

Savoring the taste of our Puffy Shrimp, and the environment, we understand why the Atlanta Journal-Constitution calls this the "place where the elite meet."

continued page 92



photos courtesy Justin's

Continued from page 91

With the likes of Magic Johnson, Sidney Poitier, and Jerry Seinfeld dining at Justin's, confirming our reservation was the right move. By 8:00 pm. this place was packed. "You'll be lucky to find a table," remarks our host.

Lights turned low and candles sparkling on the tabletops, the mood at Justin's is stress-free and relaxed. With an Usher CD playing softly in the background, we dive into the rest of our appetizers while admiring the craftsmanship of renowned architect Tom Parr. Incidentally, Parr boasts the homes of LA Reid, Toni Braxton, and of course P. Diddy on his extensive resume of accomplishments.

If you get a chance to check out Justin's in Atlanta, make sure you order the Mogul Combo appetizer plate for a taste of what's to come. Along with the delectable

Puffy Shrimp, we whet our appetites with the other incredible hors d'oeuvres, including the Catfish Critters, popcorn shrimp, crab cakes, and Shrimp Wellington. Expect your taste buds to detonate when you devour the spicy flavors that accompany the Catfish Critters and popcorn shrimp. Add a little sauce to the fresh crab cakes and they literally melt in your mouth. The Beef Wellington is almost indescribable with its flaky pastry and an incredibly tasty shrimp and crab filling.

Entering Justin's, we knew the atmosphere would be extraordinary,

but we didn't realize the food would harmonize so well. It is evident that executive chef Joe Rickersen, who oversees both Justin's restaurants, takes pride not only in the menu but also the presentation of each scrumptious meal. Placed in front of me was an incredibly succulent morsel, filet mignon. Taking the first bite, flavors exploded in my mouth while the filet melted on my tongue. Accompanying the steak were red potatoes, seasoned and prepared



Seafood roast.

flawlessly, dissolving in my mouth. Understanding the unbelievable work that goes into each dish, we know P. Diddy has hit platinum with his restaurants.

Conscious of the magnitude of celebrities that grace Justin's for dinner, the presentation and quality of service made us believe we were part of the elite. "You don't have to be a star to be treated like a star at Justin's. VIP for Justin's is everybody who walks through the door," explains Morgan. With a capacity of nearly 400, groups may reserve private dining areas for weddings, birthdays, or any occasion. Not only are the private rooms magnificent, but you can also cozy up in front of the fireplace or gather outside on the patio with your family and friends.

After we reflected on the various attributes of Justin's, our waiter returned offering apple or peach cobbler and sweet potato pie. Unfortunately that will have to wait until next time; I couldn't eat another bite. There definitely will be a next time, too. From the scrumptious appetizers to the enticing main courses, Justin's is an experience no one should pass up. From music to fashion to his now famous Justin's restaurants in New York and Atlanta, P. Diddy unquestionably has the Midas touch. Check it out!



Curry chicken.



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FLOSSIN' TALK

by Carlos Fletcher

conversation from the chair



There are many things to tackle when one ventures out to a new city! So many different issues arise that can make it overwhelming at times. One major problem is where to find a great barber or beautician. Most of us are creatures of habit and have been going to the same barber or beautician for years. There are many different anxieties that we must face when looking for a new stylist. Will they do a good job? What happens if they destroy my hair? It has been a challenge for me personally, being an outsider in a new city with the same problems facing many of us young professionals going after our dreams! After countless referrals, I was just not satisfied with the haircuts I was receiving, and the wait to go home to my barber of twenty years was just too long. So, we here at Flossin' are going to help alleviate that small, yet very large, problem! In my column I will do my best to bring you the hottest stylist in your city so you will not have to have these feelings of anxiety. The very last time I decided to journey out to find a new barber I was very fortunate. As I thought about what type of barber I was looking for, I knew I wanted to find someone with experience, someone who is innovative in their cutting techniques, and someone who was not just a barber, but an artist. I decided to make a pit stop at the neighborhood record store. While visiting with the owner I asked him about the new barbershop next door. The owner told me he was very talented. I decided to walk in, introduce myself, and sit down to wait for a haircut. While I waited, I proceeded to check out the skills of a master barber by the name of Paul Sims. I was very happy with the work I saw. I decided to give him a chance to earn my business. Not only was Paul experienced, he cut my hair as if I had been going to him for the last ten years. In my conversation with him, I found out he has

been a barber for over fifteen years. I decided to ask him a few questions.

Q: How did you develop an interest in barbering?

A: I started out cutting my own hair. When the neighborhood guys ask me who was cutting my hair, I told them I did. I started cutting the fellas for five dollars a haircut. I started to cut at school; before you knew it I had established some serious clientele. My mom told me I had too many people coming to the house so I had to make some changes. I got a part time job at the neighborhood barbershop. I went to school during the day and worked to put myself through school at night.

Q: How do you keep up your skills?

A: I am always involved in local and national hair shows. I travel to Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles often, to stay on top of the trends. I read National Solid Gold and Real Styles, out of Atlanta, which I was also featured in.

Q: What sets you apart from other barbers?

A: I have a very strong faith in God. I have always had full trust in him. He has never left me in my quest to be the best barber I can be!

Q: What do you hope to establish by having your own shop?

A: I would like to leave a legacy for my two children. I want to show them how to be a respected businessman in the community. I also would like my shop to be known as a family-oriented environment.

Q: Do you feel the movie Barbershop changed the way African American barbers are viewed?

A: Yes, it did. It gives outsiders the idea or the understanding of African American barbershops as places for social gatherings. All types of people, from gangsters to businessmen to pastors, can all relate to a similar interest within a barber shop. They speak on a variety of different

issues, from sports to community news to politics!

Q: Since you say customers speak on a variety of issues, how do you stay up on current events, since barbershops are usually an open forum of discussion?

A: I read the newspaper and watch CNN. I also listen to the overall conversations of my clientele. I have a broad range of customers, from athletes to judges, and just hard-working good citizens. The conversations in the shop are always stimulating, so that is how I tend to stay on top of things.

Q: I heard you say you have a broad range of customers—judges and athletes. Who are some of your famous clients?

A: Bobby Engram of the Seattle Seahawks, Ray Allen of the Seattle SuperSonics, and Washington State Supreme Court Justice Richard Jones, who so happens to be Quincy Jones's brother.

Q: Who is or what is your ideal customer?

A: I don't have an ideal customer. I can relate to anyone as long as they respect my environment. No discrimination is tolerated! All walks of life are welcome!



Q: There are many men who have problems with ingrown hairs when they shave. Do you recommend a certain product to help with that issue?

A: The only product I would recommend is called Tend Skin. I would like to come up with my own skin care line in the future.

Q: What are your biggest accomplishments as a barber?

A: I would have to say having my own shop and having the ability to take care of my family.

Q: Do you have any proverbs or words of wisdom you would like to express to the readers of Flossin'?

A: I would have to say to young people who want to be successful: keep God first. Don't limit yourself. Life is too short to procrastinate. Take action now, have a plan, and follow it!

Master Barber Paul Sims can be found at Paul's Custom Cuts at 9431 Rainer Avenue in Seattle, Washington.

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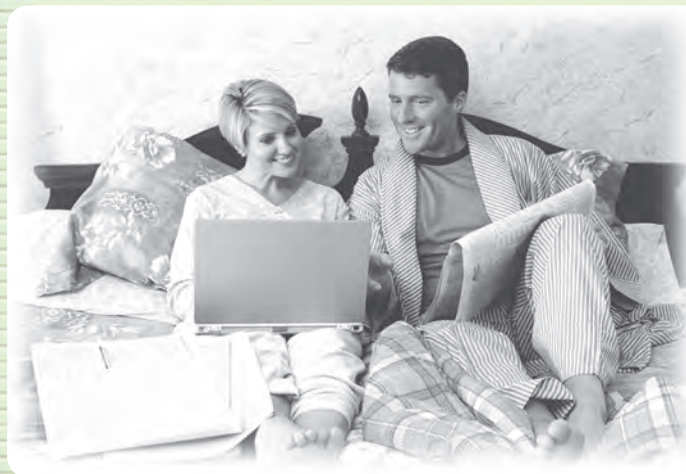
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