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Life As Few Know It[™]

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GREETINGS

- JOHN KLEMISH, THE GREENBRIER SPORTING CLUB BROKER IN CHARGE -

The start of 2022 has been incredible for The Greenbrier Sporting Club, as excitement is at an all-time high. Seven lots and six homes have sold already this year, and there are some exciting new listings on the market.

It's shaping up to be another banner year, as word continues to spread about the amazing lifestyle afforded to our members. Whether looking for a home close to the fairway or one tucked away among the West Virginia hills, buyers understand that The Greenbrier Sporting Club is like no other place on earth. It's the perfect place to fulfill every need in a luxury environment that features landscapes that are truly "Almost Heaven" as the West Virginia anthem, "Take Me Home, Country Roads" proclaims.

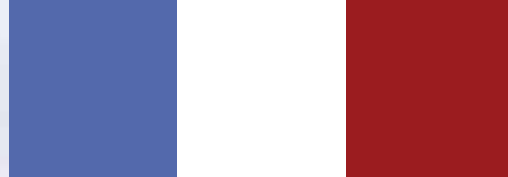
Ahead in the next few months are The Greenbrier Concours d'Elegance, The Greenbrier Champions Tennis Classic and summer celebrations that can't be missed. The surrounding Greenbrier Valley is also a great place for families, with seemingly endless outdoor adventure, arts and culture, shopping, world-class dining and more. The connection to America's Resort, The Greenbrier, provides opportunities unique to The Greenbrier Sporting Club. Where else will you find authentic southern hospitality, a private casino, professional sports, fishing streams, four incredible golf courses, a world-renowned spa, a state-of-the-art clinic, and the unmatched history of a resort that dates back to 1778?

More and more people are discovering that West Virginia is a great place to call home—or a home away from home—and The



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HISTORY

The GREENBRIER'S century long connection to AUTOMOBILES

One aspect that sets The Greenbrier Concours d'Elegance apart from other concours events around the country is the deep connection between The Greenbrier and the automotive history that has been built for more than a century.

Automotive manufacturers, dealers, engineers and owners have been holding meetings at America's Resort™ almost since the doors to the current hotel opened in 1914, and some of the finest vehicles in the world have driven through the resort's 11,000 acres.

The Greenbrier has been a part of a number of car designs over the years, including several unique projects featuring the resort's iconic name.

In 1952, Nash Motors released the Nash Rambler Greenbrier station wagon. The cars received upgraded trim with two-tone painted exteriors, and they were originally priced around \$2,000. The 1953 Nash Deliveryman model also included a Greenbrier trim, and 3,536 of those were sold that year. In 1959, Nash, now owned by American Motors, introduced a new Greenbrier model, the Nash Rambler Greenbrier Super Wagon.

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The Greenbrier name was also used on a pair of Chevrolet vehicles in the 1960s and early '70s. The Chevrolet Corvair Greenbrier Sportswagon was in production from 1961 through 1965. It seated up to nine people with an available third-row seat. From 1969 through 1972 the Chevrolet Chevelle Greenbrier was produced. This was a deluxe model of the company's four-door station wagon.

The Greenbrier's famed interior decorator, Dorothy Draper, was involved in designing several car interiors, including a line for Packard and Chrysler in the 1950s.

Of course, The Greenbrier has owned plenty of automobiles of its own over the years and still has a fleet of vehicles today used for transporting guests and moving equipment. Vehicles owned by the resort in the past include Packards, Cadillacs and Mercurys, Rolls-Royces and numerous transport vans and trucks.

In 1950, the governors of all 48 U.S. states and the nation's four territories met at The Greenbrier for the 42nd annual Governors' Conference. Ford Motor Company provided 60 new 1950 automobiles for the occasion, all painted in the distinctive Greenbrier Green. Each governor had access to one of the cars with a state police chauffeur throughout the stay. Cadillac, Buick, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Nash, Lincoln, Packard, Plymouth and Oldsmobile have all used the signature Greenbrier brand in advertising campaigns over the last century. The connection between The Greenbrier and the automobile world is an extensive one and today those roots are not only continued, but they are celebrated with the annual Greenbrier Concours d'Elegance.

Previous page: 1952 Nash Rambler; Above clockwise: James Layman Davis with Sam Snead, 1950; Fords lined up at Governor's Conference; Filming of 1956 Chrysler commercial.



MAJOR FIGURES IN THE AUTOMOBILE WORLD HAVE BEEN VISITING THE GREENBRIER FOR NEARLY A CENTURY AND CONTINUE TO MAKE TRIPS TO AMERICA'S RESORT™ TODAY. INCLUDED ON THAT LIST ARE:

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- Edsel Ford** – Only child of Henry Ford; President of Ford Motor Company
- Alfred P. Sloan** – Chairman, President and CEO of General Motors Corporation
- Denny Hamlin** – 2019 Daytona 500 champion
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FUNCTIONAL DESIGN

When Jenna and Matthew Mitchell decided to build the ultimate getaway in the hills overlooking The Old White Course at The Greenbrier, they wanted to create space that embodied the spirit of “fun” — a place where family and friends could escape to spectacular views, impeccable service, and lasting memories. Oh yeah... and also a home with a half-size bowling alley, a kid’s slide from the children’s suite to the lower level, and see-through, custom floor-to-ceiling wine casements.

“The Mitchells are joyful in their pursuit of life, and they wanted this home to really speak to that,” says interior designer Anna Marie Lewis Cutlip, from Lexington, Kentucky, the Mitchell’s home town.

Matthew Mitchell, the highly successful former coach of the University of Kentucky Wildcats Women’s Basketball Team, was born in Mississippi and worked his way up the coaching ranks. He and his wife, Jenna, are an active part of the Lexington community and heavily involved in both athletics and non-profits. Their love for family-time brought them to The Greenbrier a couple years ago.

“We were looking for a place that valued family and community,” says Matthew. “We also wanted a place we could easily reach from our home in Lexington and we found all of that at The Greenbrier. We were immediately struck by the warmth and hospitality of the people of the Greenbrier Valley and felt at home right away.

“The natural beauty is stunning. Our family loves the outdoors and we are inspired to get out and experience the many activities these mountains offer. From the first day we woke up in the house, it was clear we’d created a home away from home, a place where we will create amazing memories as a family and establish lifelong friendships.”





The center island features a leathered quartzite top, while (opposite) the floor-to-ceiling wine casements look elegant and hi-tech against the immaculate stonework.



Agsten Homebuilders, no stranger to custom homes in The Ridges at The Greenbrier, began working on the site nearly two years ago. “We had a lot of work to prep this site,” says Scott Wallace, president of Agsten Homebuilders. “It has such great views of the course and tennis stadium down below. It’s just a spectacular setting and we wanted to accentuate that with the design and build.”

The house, designed by Charlottesville-based architect Madison Spencer, was designed to look like an old barn that had been updated, a feeling not lost on anyone entering through the main doors into the vaulted great room. Large, exposed beams of local hemlock create a vernacular setting, coupled with the local limestone archways and massive hearth stacked by local stonemason Joe Kaminsky, who has worked on a number of Sporting Club homes throughout the years. The ceiling is imported European beech, a dense, stable wood, while the rest of house—floors, banisters, and even the kitchen banquet—features white oak.

The great room, which also showcases a large custom walnut dining table, opens directly to a spacious, bright

kitchen with leathered Quartzite countertops, a custom steel range hood, luxury Wolf appliances (including the espresso machine and built-in microwave) and massive center island with eat-in spaces and extra storage. The breakfast nook showcases a quarter sawn white oak banquet and live edged walnut table with seating for at least a half a dozen. A flat screen TV is cleverly hidden into the

“The Mitchell’s are joyful in their pursuit of life, and they wanted this home to really speak to that.”

design and rises like a phoenix from its spot in case the kids want to watch some morning cartoons. Floor-to-ceiling wine encasements are individually temperature controlled so that one side of the stacked-limestone arch houses reds, while the opposite site houses the whites and bubbles.

Leaving the great room, a tempered glass NanaWall slides back into its pockets,

revealing a massive outdoor covered living space with wood-burning fireplace, and a see-through Phantom Screen that rises up like a garage door to flow out into the infinity pool and jacuzzi area, flanked by Bluestone pavers. The views from here are striking, and the infinity pool edge looks as though the water is falling right off Greenbrier Mountain. Around the side, a gas firepit is dropped in, with bench seating for a dozen people, while an outdoor kitchen with Wolf appliances, a Big Green Egg, and porcelain countertops give a new meaning to “Backyard BBQ’s.”

“Jenna, Matthew, Anna Marie, and Madison—and we spent a great deal of time to make sure that the exterior living spaces are easily accessible to the interior, and yet are private,” explains Peter McKinney, Vice President of Construction at Agsten Homebuilders. “The use of stone walls and steps helps achieve this, so that the completed area is both beautiful and practical.”

The living spaces start out with a spacious master bedroom suite, with views off the back of the mountain and a cozy fireplace. Mid-century modern furniture fits perfectly into this space, which spills into a bathroom with pearlescent ceramics to give it



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Clockwise from below: The bunk room features 8 bunks built into alcoves and is adjoined by a large living room; this impressive custom chandelier features 90 glass stars; a twisty slide makes for a fast escape from the kid's room down to the main level; this "wet room" comes not only with dual showers, but a large tub as well, making for the perfect place for kids to splash around and not worry about the mess.





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almost an oyster shell vibe. Silestone countertops on his and her sinks, with a matching tub, give the master bath a modern, fresh vibe, while an upstairs living space means Matthew and Jenna have plenty of room to relax in private.

“Make sure you get a picture of the hearts in the stonework,” says Anna Marie, from her design studio in Lexington. As a nod to their two girls, Anna Marie collaborated with the Agsten team and stonemason to have two hearts stacked into the exterior stonework so that the girls can see them from their alcove daybeds. Around the corner, the kid’s bathroom features a “wet room,” where the bathtub is encased in the shower area making for all kinds of splashing fun. Want some more excitement? How about a twisty slide that drops from the room down to the main floor!

“It was a fun surprise to show The Mitchells the hearts,” says Anna Marie. “They are a forever symbol for the sisters to come back to as they grow and age—to remind them of the memories made during their time spent in this special place.”

The opposite wing from the family’s quarters is built with more than a few guests in mind. With four private bedrooms on the lower and middle levels, the upper level features a bunk room with eight built-in bunkbeds and another massive family room. Originally, Mitchell envisioned this as a place he could bring his players for some team building and fellowship. In all, this wing of the house could sleep up to 16 people.

Also found throughout the home—a modern fitness center with a mirrored wall and exposed beams that were actually salvaged from the original hanger in which Howard Hughes built the Spruce Goose, an airplane that, at the time, was six times larger than anything built before. The lower level features the cutest bowling alley ever, with half-size balls.

“All homeowners moving to the Greenbrier have different ideas about the house that will meet their needs,” notes McKinney. “Our commitment is to work with owners and their architect and other designers to build the exact house the owners envision. Jenna and Matthew’s house is unique in every way, and it was a great pleasure to work with them, and with Anna Marie and Madison. And Windy Knoll Nursery did a fabulous job on the landscape architecture.”

Homebuyers continue to dream up exciting new projects for The Greenbrier Sporting Club and sales continue to be brisk as we roll into the spring and summer months. To speak with someone about opportunities to call The Greenbrier your home, visit www.greenbrierliving.com or call 855-823-0515.

Top to bottom: The infinity edge pool overlooks the resort amenities below; two hearts placed into the exterior masonry act as a “forever symbol for the sisters to come back to, to remind them of the memories made during their time spent in this special place.”; This private living room, off the master suite, features a large gas fireplace and modern furnishings.

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THE ACCIDENTAL EXPERT

DR. ROBERT CONTE TALKS ABOUT
HIS 43-YEAR CAREER AS THE
GREENBRIER'S HISTORIAN

Elvis has left the building. After 43 years as The Greenbrier's official historian, Dr. Robert Conte, who literally wrote the book on the resort and often served as its knowledgeable public face, has retired.

For more than four decades Dr. Conte's personal history has meshed with the fabled history of his employer. The California native arrived in Monroe County, West Virginia, in the 1970s armed with youthful optimism, a Ph.D. in American Studies from Case Western Reserve, and a slender resume that included a year of work at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. He planned to pursue a back-to-the-land lifestyle, but he quickly discovered that (a) he didn't know enough about farming, and (b) his meager bank account wasn't going to support the life of a country squire. He thought about opening a bookstore in Lewisburg, but he needed a day job.

He applied for a job at The Greenbrier, expecting to work at the front desk. As luck would have it, his doctorate and experience at the National Archives caught the eye of General Manager Bill Pitt, who called him in for an interview. Pitt explained that the hotel's attic contained 15 rolling canvas laundry carts piled high with archival materials and miscellaneous bric-a-brac that had been accumulating forever. He hired him at \$4.50 an hour, told him to dress well and gave him his infamous job description. "Do whatever it is that historians do," he charged him. Conte rolled the laundry carts to an empty cottage and began his research/archeological dig.

The young historian never really set out to become the greatest living expert on The Greenbrier and its predecessor resorts, which date back to 1778, but as time went on that's exactly what happened. As his role and his salary expanded, he found himself giving public tours, lunching with media representatives, doing on-camera interviews and penning "The History of The Greenbrier: America's Resort", a definitive, colorful volume that has sold well over 100,000 copies since its 1989 publication. His comfortable, smiling presence, endless trove of knowledge and talent as a raconteur turned Dr. Conte, Dr. Bob or Doc, as he is variously known, into one of the resort's popular amenities.

As it turned out, 1989 was a watershed year for Bob Conte: it was also the year he married Betsy Powers, who had moved to the area the previous year to work as the resort's Director of Social Activities. Their July wedding took place in front of The Greenbrier's historic Springhouse, and their reception was held in the Presidents' Cottage Museum.

Fast-forward 32 years. After working together amiably for over three decades, in 2021 the couple decided it was time to retire to their Monroe County home. Their new job description, "Doing whatever it is that retirees do", will include travel, spending time with their four children and granddaughter, and pursuing their personal interests.

We sat down with Dr. Conte, Bob to his friends, on a beautiful fall afternoon, to talk about his exceptional life, his 43-year run as, very possibly, the only full-time resort historian on the planet, and The Greenbrier's evolution over the years.



WE KNOW YOU CAN TALK FOR HOURS ABOUT THE GREENBRIER, BUT LET'S START BY TALKING ABOUT

YOU. TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND.

I grew up in San Jose, California, before it was Silicon Valley. My father came back from World War II, got a job at the Post Office and worked there for the next 30 years. My mother was a nurse. I was one of five children, and the others are still in California. My Uncle Phil was the family's big success story. He went to Santa Clara University and he majored in history. He was a football star; he played in the Sugar Bowl. He became a teacher and then a high school principal. That was about as high as I could imagine anyone climbing in life. I wanted to be like Uncle Phil, so I went to Santa Clara University and majored in history.

AND YOU PLAYED IN THE SUGAR BOWL, TOO.

No, but I've got an interesting NFL story from The Greenbrier I'll tell you later.

WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER YOU FINISHED COLLEGE?

Like many young men in 1969, I was drafted and I went to Vietnam. My saving grace was typing. I'm forever grateful that mother had made me take a summer course in typing. I made sure they knew I had that skill and I ended up in an office job, which beat being in the jungle. When I came back, I had the GI Bill. I remembered reading about a program called American Studies, and it sounded like all you did was read comics and smoke dope. It seemed like a good deal, so I applied to five schools and I was accepted at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland. Needless to say, the program wasn't what I imagined.

SO YOU SET OUT TO READ COMICS AND SMOKE DOPE AND YOU ENDED UP BECOMING DR. ROBERT CONTE, THE EMINENT HISTORIAN?

Something like that. My dissertation was about how interpretations of American History have changed over time. Once you have a Ph.D., they assume you'll be a scholar and a professor. I thought I would teach somewhere, but I ended up working at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., in a project supported by a grant. Like all grants, it ran out, and my brilliant academic career was failing to materialize. A lot of guys had gotten advanced degrees to avoid the draft, and there seemed to be an oversupply of bearded guys with briefcases looking for work.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO WEST VIRGINIA?

A Washington Post article about homesteading. The writer interviewed several people in Monroe County and it sounded like an interesting place. Later, by chance, I saw an ad in the paper for a rental house in Monroe County. I was married by then, and on a lark my wife and I decided to check it out. The house wasn't much, but Monroe County was beautiful, the locals were friendly and there were all these folks with fascinating stories who'd moved there from other places. We found another house and we made the move. I quickly discovered that even if your rent is just \$100 a month, you've got to pay it.

WHICH IS HOW THE GREENBRIER ENTERS THE STORY?

Right. I applied expecting some kind of front desk job. As luck would have it, I was interviewed by Jack Horton, who turned out to be a big history buff. People with Ph.D.'s in

history don't apply there every day, and I guess he told the General Manager, Bill Pitt, about me. Pitt called me in, took me up to the attic in the Virginia Wing, showed me all the laundry carts and offered me \$4.50 an hour to sort through them. He didn't realize I was so desperate for a job I would have taken even less. He told me to wear a coat and tie, told me where lunch was served, and told me to "Do whatever it is that historians do." That's when I realized that I could get away with a lot.

SO YOU HAD TO CREATE YOUR OWN JOB AND FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF INDISPENSABLE?

Exactly. That was 1978. For the first year I worked in isolation, going through all these piles of stuff in one of the empty cottages. I don't think anyone knew I was there. Then in 1979 we hosted the Ryder Cup and I had to work on the program and write about the history of golf at The Greenbrier. Golf was never played in our family and I didn't know anything about it, but I ended up giving a slide presentation to the European team. That was the beginning of my life as a public figure instead of a hermit in a cottage. From then on, I was trotted out to tell the story of the hotel to groups and reporters. I never knew I had any ability as a public speaker, but before long I was giving regular tours and throwing in jokes like I'd been doing it all my life. I wore a 3-piece white linen suit like Tom Wolfe, one of my favorite writers. I actually had the opportunity to meet Wolfe through a friend who'd had him as a student at Washington & Lee. We met him in Blacksburg and had lunch with him. He looked exactly like you'd think Tom Wolfe would: white suit, blue shirt, white tie. I was totally starstruck. I thought if I dressed that way I'd look more like an historian, but I was teased mercilessly by my coworkers.



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WHEN WE INTERVIEWED CARLETON VARNEY FOR THIS MAGAZINE, HE SAID JOAN CRAWFORD TOLD HIM, “CARLETON, I INVENTED ME AND YOU CAN INVENT YOU.” IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION. NOBODY KNEW WHAT AN HISTORIAN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AND YOU HAD TO CREATE A PUBLIC PERSONA.

When they asked me what I wanted on my name tag and I said Dr. Robert Conte, I didn't realize the effect it would have. People treated me with a certain deference that I came to appreciate and enjoy. Everybody started calling me Dr. Conte or Doc.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EVOLUTION FROM LECTURER TO BESTSELLING AUTHOR.

I never knew how long the job would last, but as I learned more about the history of The Greenbrier, I definitely wanted to write a book about it while I was still around. I did research at the Library of Congress, the Virginia Historical Society and WVU. When my first marriage unraveled, I didn't have any reason to hurry home in the evenings, so from the mid-to-late 1980s I would sit in my office until nine, working on the book. It came out in 1989.

SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS YOUR THERAPY.

It probably was. The creation of that book is one of the things I'm most proud of.

DID YOU HAVE ANY DEALINGS WITH TED GUP, THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTER WHO OUTED THE BUNKER IN 1992?

Yes. I knew something serious was going on when Ted Kleisner, our president and CEO, came to my office. Ted never went to your office, you went to his. He said there was a reporter from the Post who was asking a lot of questions. He said, “He's going to ask you what's under the West Virginia Wing.” He told me what to say. So Gup comes in, puts a tape recorder on my desk and I follow the script and say what I'm supposed to say. Then I have an inspiration. Assuring him we have nothing to hide, I invite him to look through our archives. Unfortunately, he noticed

some things on a diagram of the Exhibit Hall that I'd never noticed. He made a lot of detailed notes about the construction and jotted down the names of people who had worked on it. He went back to his room and started calling them. He told me later, “You provided some good information.” I said, “I certainly didn't mean to!”

HOW DO YOU THINK HE KNEW ABOUT THE BUNKER?

He'd been researching the government's Cold War Doomsday projects. He'd already written an article about the subject for Time magazine. I suspect someone he met in the government or the military who thought the Bunker was obsolete and a waste of taxpayers' money tipped him off. He knew all about it before he got here. I'm sure he expected us to be in full denial mode, and we were.



Robert Conte giving a tour outside of the north entrance of The Hotel, 1982.

THE REVELATION OF THE BUNKER'S EXISTENCE WAS OBVIOUSLY BIG NEWS.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER MILESTONES DURING YOUR FOUR DECADES AT THE HOTEL?

I'd say there were two major ones: the development of the Sporting Club, which completely changed things, and the purchase of The Greenbrier by Mr. Justice, which rescued the resort when it could have gone out of business. 2008 was a disastrous year for us. There were labor issues and a lot of big groups had cancelled their reservations. We were losing millions and it seemed like we

were on the verge of collapse. Marriott was pursuing a possible purchase of the hotel, but we didn't know what that would mean. When Mr. Justice appeared on the scene it was a huge relief. He had a history with us; he'd been coming here since he was a kid and he had an emotional tie that Marriott wouldn't have had. He added the casino, the chapel, the Sports Performance Center, the tennis stadium, the golf tournament. These past few years have been memorable ones.

HAS THE CLIENTELE CHANGED?

You see a broader range of guests now. There are a lot more day visitors coming through and you see things you didn't used to see. Carleton didn't decorate the Trellis Lobby with biker groups in mind, but you don't want to exclude people. Even 40 years ago people were saying the patrons weren't dressing

like they used to, but times change. Nowadays people don't want to have to dress for dinner every night like they're going to the prom. But through all the changes, the overwhelming sense of elegance and service has continued.

WHO ARE SOME OF THE CELEBRITIES YOU'VE MET?

Here's where I get to tell my football story. When the New Orleans Saints were here, they had a scrimmage with the New England Patriots. The Pats were using part of the Exhibit Hall and

Bunker, and when people kept referring to the Bunker, the players weren't sure what they were talking about. Coach Bill Belichick thought it would be a good idea if someone explained the Bunker's history to them, so they brought me in to give a little talk. I walked in the room and there was Tom Brady sitting in the front row and all the New England Patriots were staring at me. I thought, “I'm finally in totally over my head.” I gave a 15-minute presentation and then I turned to the coach and asked, “Is this what you wanted, Coach?” He said, “Perfect!” That's still my favorite review.

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Clockwise: Robert Conte and Betsy on their wedding day; Conte with Lee Trevino, 2016; Conte with President George Bush in 1997.

YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN EXPOSED TO A LOT OF STAR POWER OVER THE YEARS.

I just missed giving a Bunker tour to Tom Cruise. I was about to start the tour when the power went off. I'd met a lot of well-known people by then, but he seemed like another level of celebrity. I was thinking, "Oh, my God, Tom Cruise - this is going to make a great story!" And then the lights went out and there went my story. Another time I was asked to speak to a big group, and when I got there Walter Cronkite sitting in the front row. I didn't know he was the keynote speaker and I was his warmup act.

TELL US ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON YOU MET AT THE GREENBRIER — YOUR WIFE.

Meeting Betsy was the number one highlight of my career, of course. She had a successful wardrobe consulting business in Charlotte and she'd come to the hotel a time or two to present her program. People were impressed

by her and when the Director of Social Activities position opened up, they offered it to her. One of her roles as Director of Social Activities was giving tours, so I volunteered to give her a tour and help orient her.

HMM. SOUNDS SUSPICIOUS.

Let's just say she'd caught my eye and made a definite impression. By way of explaining the larger subject of mineral springs, I took her over to Sweet Springs in Monroe County. We spent the whole day together, and when we got back to the hotel around seven, I said, "Let's just have dinner in the main dining room." The head of the dining room could tell something was going on because he gave us this little private table over to the side.

WAS IT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?

Totally. We were both coming off marriages that didn't work out and we had a sense of comfort with each other. We got married 10

months later. I'd say it's worked out pretty well – we've been together for 32 years.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN.

I have two children from my first marriage, Sam, who's a registered nurse in Baltimore, and Daniel, who lives in Portland, Oregon. Sam and his wife, Elizabeth, have our only grandchild, Ramona, who's 7. Daniel is our free spirit. He's worked in New York City, Korea and Alaska. Betsy and I have two children, Nicholas and Mary Cecilia. They're both graduates of Wake Forest. Nicholas and his longtime girlfriend, Aiden, live in Salt Lake City and he's finishing law school there. Mary Cecilia has a master's degree in linguistics from Gallaudet University. She recently married Francesco; they met when she was living in Bari, Italy, for three years. Oddly enough, that's where the Conte family was from, and my grandfather was named Francesco. They were married at the Presbyterian Church in Union, and Betsy was in her element, overseeing all the details

of the reception, which was at our place in Monroe County.

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT AN INTERESTING FAMILY, TO SAY THE LEAST. SO HOW DOES A RETIRED HISTORIAN STAY BUSY?

I have a Facebook page called The Greenbrier History Group where I share photos and stories from the resort's past, and I enjoy posting things and interacting with the people who read it. I'm still on three boards that I've been on for years: the Greenbrier Historical Society, the West Virginia Archives and History Commission, and the West Virginia Humanities Council. I'm sure they'll find things for me to do. And Betsy and I hope to travel, something we've managed to do quite a lot of over the years. I feel really lucky to have fallen into my job at The Greenbrier. It ended up giving me an identity and a life I would never have had anywhere else. I've been told at least 860,000 times, "You must have the best job in the world." I think I did.



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Story By Amanda Larch
Photos By Greenbrier Photography



FARM *to* TABLE



Returning this summer, The Greenbrier Resort's Farm to Table Dinner series features local ingredients, prepared with French techniques and southern influences.

The philosophy behind these outdoor dinners at the Creekside Gardens begins with ingredients, Executive Chef Bryan Skelding says. When planning each week's menu, Skelding inspects the gardens for fresh fruits, herbs, and vegetables, then checks with local and regional farms, such as River Oak Farms and Shenandoah Valley Beef, for other ingredients, including fresh beef, poultry, and cheeses.

"When it comes to ingredients, it definitely starts with what's at the garden that week, what's looking good, what's there enough of, and then of course any of the local farmers that are in the area in regard to protein, vegetables, syrups—anything and everything," Skelding says. "I reach out to Chef (Steve) Mengel, our chef administrator, on a weekly basis and discuss different cheeses being made in Virginia and whatnot. We include anything that's as close to home as we can and within the season as we can."



For Skelding and his team, creating the perfect atmosphere is just as important as the food on the table; his vision for the dinner is upscale but not too formal—and he says it should have a traditional Appalachian feel.

“So, the way we approach that is with the china that we have, the table settings, the flowers and things like that, that definitely look nice and clean and crisp,” Skelding says. “Then we end up going into the service aspect of it, so canapés are passed as the guests come in and start arriving over at the garden.”

The dinner begins with a soup course, usually a gazpacho or chilled soup of some kind, and the rest of the meal is served family style, which helps guests bond over the course of the evening, Skelding says.

“From there, we will start doing different platters of different Virginia cheeses, fruits that are in season, homemade crackers and things like that, so every course after that, from essentially appetizers into salads, entrees, sides, starches and then into dessert, those would all be served family style,” Skelding says. “We would do small platters, so they’d be easy to share.”

While menus are prepared every week, they’re not printed until late afternoon the day before each dinner. This ensures all the ingredients will be as fresh as possible, or in case any changes need to be made. “For example, I don’t want to pick the green beans on a Tuesday if I can wait until Friday or even Saturday morning to get those picked,” Skelding says.



Additionally, based on the availability of the freshest ingredients in season, menus vary from week to week, though French influence and an infusion of Appalachian cuisine are a staple of each Farm to Table Dinner.

“I do try to keep it French influence in regard to the technique,” Skelding says. “Flavors are going to try to be as close to Appalachia as we can without it making it feel too much like a barbecue, so there are still those flavor profiles, whether it be different vinegars and spices and collard greens or a succotash or smoked meats, and different things on the grill or in the smoker.”

Skelding says each dinner is about balance between local and luxury flair. The ingredients should also feel upscale, and may be presented in an upscale fashion, but the importance of them being homegrown should be stressed as well. After all, it is the reason and purpose for the Farm to Table Dinners.

“We put some different cooking techniques and different flavor profiles into those things, and hopefully people see something they haven’t seen before,” Skelding says. “That’s the other part of it, I want them to walk away and say they’ve never had that before or had those flavors together before, that was a new texture, and things like that.”

The Farm to Table Dinner series was revamped last year thanks in part to Jill Justice; she reached out to Skelding about creating a larger garden on the Greenbrier’s property. From there, the idea grew to showcase fruits



“FLAVORS ARE GOING TO TRY TO BE AS CLOSE TO APPALACHIA AS WE CAN WITHOUT IT MAKING IT FEEL TOO MUCH LIKE A BARBECUE ”



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“TO SIT OUT THERE,
LITERALLY IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE GROUNDS OF THE
GREENBRIER, IS QUITE
BREATHTAKING,”

and vegetables from the gardens in a higher end setting, complete with pergolas, stone walkways, and beautiful gardens.

“As a culinarian, you’re always excited to hear things like that because there’s a huge investment in that, not only in time, but also in money as well,” Skelding says. “Years back, we were doing a smaller farm to table version across from our greenhouse that went over very well. The Justice family and the Greenbrier were interested in investing in a higher end setting, and we kept talking about it and tweaking it and different team members came into play.”

Skelding says one of his favorite aspects of the Farm to Table Dinners is the teamwork involved in preparing with his fellow culinarians and other members of Greenbrier staff. Once the menu is written, it is sent to marketing, followed by a collaboration with the beverage team to pair drinks with menu items.

“We prep everything ourselves,” Skelding says. “To experience being a culinarian and the privilege of being able to cook and be part of something like that, I think a lot of us culinarians are here at the Greenbrier because the fact is, our guests like good food, we like to cook good food, and we can work with some really neat ingredients—both local and rare and exotic and expensive ingredients as well.”

The weather, location, and scenery complete the dinner and create a unique venue, and a feeling of lighthearted comradery is established through sharing the dinner with others, which carries through the entire evening.

“To sit out there, literally in the middle of the grounds of the Greenbrier, is quite breathtaking,” Skelding says. “It’s such a gorgeous location; it really is one of my favorite locations on the property. You’re away from all the noise, there’s no light pollution, no noise pollution, and you have this really surreal venue to relax and enjoy good foods and hopefully maybe make some friends, too. Because you can be joined up with some different couples that maybe you haven’t met before. There’s a lot of people that really enjoy that kind of setting as well.”

The Farm to Table Dinners would not be complete without their outdoor environment and location, Skelding says, allowing him and his team to enjoy it almost as much as the guests.

The dinner series begins on May 29th and will begin running nearly every Saturday starting June 18th through September 24th. The only exceptions are instead of July 2nd, there are two that weekend- July 1st and 3rd, along with July 23rd. Reservations can be completed through Greenbrier Concierge.

Each dinner seats a maximum of 50 guests and the \$195 tasting menu includes wine, dinner, and a shuttle ride to and from the beautiful venue at the Greenbrier’s Creekside Gardens. These weekly summer dinners are open to the public, as well as Greenbrier guests and Sporting Club members.

For those interested in learning more, or to see a complete list of dates, visit www.greenbrier.com/Holidays-Events/Farm-to-Table-Dinner-Series.

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B A C K D R O P

Reaching back to the turn-of-the-century, The Greenbrier has been at the forefront of fashion. Our Dorothy Draper design and varied spaces create the perfect backdrop for fashion shoots—from luxury brands and magazines to Instagram influencers. A bevy of patterned wallpapers and bold, colorful furniture, mixed with the stoicism of the Georgian architecture, can be seen in magazine shoots from *Wallpaper* to the cover of the Bergdorf-Goodman catalogue, while brands such as Anthropologie, Bienen Davis, and Draper James, have all hosted shoots here. The Greenbrier and high fashion have been synonymous since forever, and the following pages are a glimpse into some of our favorite shoots over the years.

Previous page: Hazen & Co. Holiday Shoot; Current Spread: In October 1950, famed Paris fashion designer Pierre Balmain unveiled his new creations at The Greenbrier. He was introducing his line to the United States and the show was staged in coordination with Washington DC's famous downtown department store, Garfinckel's (which housed the legendary Greenbrier Tea Room). Balmain was known for his "boldly feminine and opulent signature style in startling contrast to the utilitarian looks of the day." He hit his stride in the 1950's and his designs were worn by celebrities like Marlene Dietrich, Katherine Hepburn, the Duchess of Windsor, Bridgette Bardot and Sophia Loren.





Frances Valentine, the company founded by longtime friends Kate Spade and Elyce Arons in 2016, found The Greenbrier to be the perfect compliment to their fall 2021 collection. "Bright florals, animal prints, and geometric patterns drench the walls, floors, drapes and upholstery," notes the company. "It's a kaleidoscope of decor at which you can't stop looking. With prints and color as the driving inspiration behind our Fall 21 collection, The Greenbrier made for the perfect backdrop."



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Left: Image Courtesy of Aureta, Launch of Bienen Davis x Aureta Handbag Line at The Grenbrier in the fall of 2021. Clockwise, from top: Over a long weekend, Bienen Davis introduced a range of styles that pay tribute to the brilliant Aureta, muse to Bienen Davis. Her curated imagery combined with her vibrant use of color has been a rich source of inspiration since the relaunch of Bienen Davis in Fall of 2017. Inspired by Aureta's recent Safari the two have now combined forces to design a wild collection; Bergdorf Goodman's infamous catalog for their 5th Avenue luxury department store chose The Greenbrier, and particularly the banana leaf wallpaper, as the perfect backdrop for their cover shoot in the fall of 2012; Reese Witherspoon visited the resort in 2015 for a catalog shoot for her style brand Draper James. "The decor by Dorothy Draper is breathtaking," she remarked; In 2011, Wallpaper magazine sent photographer Miles Aldridge to The Greenbrier with IMG model Shirley Mallmann for their article "Lost Weekend." Styled by Beth Fenton and adorning an Hermes scarf, here Mallmann lounges in one of the spa's waiting areas.

After being introduced to the art of jewelry-making in 2002 at the age of nine, Taylor Turner has been making a name for herself with her jewelry and accessory company Hazen and Co. Based out of Austin, Hazen and Co. brought their fall collection to the resort for an inspired shoot of their timeless, elegant pieces. The signature brushed vermeil beads of the bracelets are the perfect accent to a glass of champagne in the North Parlor. Opposite: Francis Valentine heads to the bedroom suites for some floral fun.





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\$2,499,000 | White Sulphur Hill 51 | 5,200 Sq. Ft.



\$2,550,000 | Springhouse 6 | 5,398 Sq. Ft.



John Klemish
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\$3,750,000 | White Sulphur Hill 36 | 7,628 Sq. Ft.



\$2,495,000 | White Sulphur Hill 59 | 4,825 Sq. Ft.

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\$1,799,000 | Howard's Creek 33 | 4,087 Sq. Ft.



\$3,300,000 | Traveler's Hill 26 | 4,766 Sq. Ft.



\$1,200,000 | Creekside 326 | 2,600 Sq. Ft.

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\$1,075,000 | Village Run Road 197 | 3,000 Sq. Ft.



\$2,295,000 | Lodge Cottage 1 | 4,425 Sq. Ft.

\$1,795,000 | Village Run Road 199 | 2,700 Sq. Ft.



\$2,989,000 | Ridges 11 | 7,046 Sq. Ft.

Memories



OCTOBER 1950: THE MAIN DINING ROOM BUSTLING DURING THE VISIT OF PARISIAN FASHION DESIGNER, PIERRE BALMAIN.



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