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8-11 • The Barn Identity Intro

12 · The Party Barn Built to look old, this Washington County barn is ready to party

 $17 \cdot A Barn to Cook In$ This multi-purpose barn in Fayette County serves up style with taste

> 22 · Barns Repurposed Barns are being repurposed and reclaimed

 $26 \cdot \text{Spousework}$ John and Laurie Lowery never intended to work together

> 40 • Starting from Scratch Sally Maxwell's life as an artist

 $51 \cdot A$ Ouarter Century A look at the Round Top Family Library's 25 years

> 56 · Tastemaker How to pack a picnic



ABOUT THE JULY ISSUE

I've been fascinated by barns forever. Growing up, our barns were utilitarian -- and often held together by baling wire and a promise. You were just as likely to find barn cats, varmints and the occasional rattlesnake as you were hay or feed. A couple of years ago, when I cleaned out my daddy's "big barn" for the last time, I found 16 handle-less shovels, grain scoops and spades...I kept those and the memories.

This issue shines attention on a new kind of barn where making memories is part of the goal.

To help illustrate these new barns, I turned to Tracy Robinson with Spryart Photography in The Woodlands to lend her creative spirit to capture our

/RoundTopRegister

cover photo. On a bright sunny Sunday, with puffy clouds and wildflower-strewn trails as a backdrop, she caught the essence of summer. Inside, her work shows how two couples have taken the lowly barn to new levels – with a nod to hospitality – and memory making.

Come along as we introduce you to John and Laurie Lowery, who put out the "open" sign on their own barn in Round Top's Henkel Square. Learn about scratchboard from one of the nation's premier artists Sally Maxwell of La Grange...and discover how an old-church-turned-hay-barn found new life as the Round Top Family Library.













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6 9 0 ROUNDTOP.COM Once a utility structure, barns are enjoying a prominent place in today's Roundtopolis™. Throughout the area, there are old barns being repurposed for living; new barns being built for entertaining – and utility; and barndominiums are providing a combination of living/working space. Some ancient barns are also being deconstructed and moved across the country to be incorporated into new "old" buildings.

In this issue, see how some in the Roundtopolis[™] have created barns that elevate the utilitarian to an architectural wonderland, all while reflecting the needs of their owners.



8 8

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12





THE **PARTY BARN**

There were ulterior motives when a Washington County couple decided to build a barn on their ranch.

"We wanted our four children to want to come home," the wife says. "So far, none of them have missed a Spring Break yet."

The couple's barn also serves a dual purpose: giving display area to their collection of old signs and movie posters.

"If we had to do it all over again, he would say make it bigger," the wife says. "He loves collecting."

BUILDING THE PARTY BARN

The barn, from the outside, looks like it's been there for at least a century and is not out of place on their working cattle ranch.

Clad in reclaimed and weathered barn wood, with an ancientlooking tin roof, the structure would not be out of place on any property in the Roundtopolis[™]. However, the front porch, which faces a wildflower-strewn meadow separating it from the couple's main house, is festooned with its own neon sign: Wagon Wheel Dance Hall. That's the first clue this barn is more than a barn.

The couple collaborated with Jack Lorentz of Brenham to build the barn in 2010. They purchased the working ranch in 2000, after falling in the love with area and the local antiques shows.

"The majority of our décor came from the show," the veteran Round Top Antiques Show shopper says. "From doors, to lamps, to signs, to posters. It's so integral to our barn."

As part of the planning and building process, they were intent on using as much reclaimed wood and windows as possible.

"We learned of Mack Farr," the husband says. "He is a local master woodworker. He did hand-planed cedar columns and beams for the porches. The live-edge mesquite stair treads. The post oak supports for the stairs. He is the best."

The couple also sourced reclaimed pine for the main living area floor. Other areas are stained concrete to aid in easy cleanup.

Drawing from her event-planning experience, the barn's footprint was designed to accommodate parties of all sizes.

by KATIE D. STAVINOHA

"The porches are deep enough to hold eight-foot round tables and chairs," she says. "I can pull all of the furniture out of the living area for a dance – or to hold more dining tables."

Both thought long and hard about entertaining.

"We love music and knew that high ceilings clad in tin, which is what we wanted, will echo," he says. "We brought in a sound guy from Austin, who recommended using 5-millimeter rubber – essentially pool liner – on the floors, the walls and the ceiling to improve acoustics."

The 3,000-square foot barn's first floor is mainly living area – with large windows reclaimed from a Galveston school that was being torn down. Doors were sourced from Sleepy Hollow at North Gate Field, in the fields of Warrenton. The mesquitetopped bar began as a door, but with surgical precision and an adept carpenter, became the bar separating the cooking area from the living area. The cooking area includes a commercial cooktop, a double pizza oven and a commercial dishwasher that completes its cycle in two minutes.



"We don't want to spend time cleaning," the couple says. High above the kitchen bar is a Western-themed poster reclaimed from an Oklahoma City McDonald's – with a button click a projection screen lowers to offer movie or television watching.

Completing the first floor are a "girls" bathroom and a boys

"bathroom. A master bedroom with its own bath - separated with one of the Galveston windows rounds out the first-floor footprint.

Up the mesquite staircase lies two bedrooms - again a girls room and a boys room with multiple beds to accommodate guests.

"I have 30 cots in storage," she says. "One of our daughters is in med school and another is in law school - they bring in loads of kids to spend the night."

THE DÉCOR

Tall ceilings offer ample display options for their collections of old movie posters, ceramic signs, movie props, paintings and photographs. Many of these finds have deep ties to the area.

The Grand Prize beer sign reflects a time when Howard Hughes owned the beer company. There are early Shiner beer advertising signs. The B & B sign is how Blue Bell was known before it became Blue Bell.

"I learned how to wire a chandelier," the wife says, pointing to the wagon wheel lights that hang above the great room. The husband and one of their daughters created a lighted Texas sign as well.

THIS BARN IS MORE THAN A BARN.

They are regular shoppers at the Round Top Antiques Show - with a keen eye for what works in their party barn.

"He had been collecting neon for a number of years before we decided to build," the wife says. "This became a place to showcase that – and the Wagon Wheel neon was our gift to ourselves."

Again, for enticement to children the space has a jukebox - complete with Ernest Tubb – pinball machines, video games and reasons to unplug and talk.

"Our four children love it here. So that means we met our goal in building this."







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A BARN TO **COOK** IN

After 30 years of celebrating Easter with They wanted space for family to enjoy. A "We had sort of stopped looking," the

friends in the Shelby area, a Houston couple decided to look for a place of their own. big need was a well-appointed kitchen due to the wife's love for cooking and the fact that when their immediate family gathered together, the number totaled 27.

husband said, "until we heard about this place that was soon to go on the market." After the first tour, and while having lunch with their realtor at Royers Café, they decided to act. In February 2008 they acquired their perfect property, which included a 17-year-old stucco, Mexican-style house and the original homestead cottage that dates to 1885. Neither home, however, included a kitchen large enough to handle the meal preparation required for family

holiday gatherings.

"We have one oven in our main house and one in the original homestead cottage," she says. "But we were constantly running back and forth while cooking scrambling for oven space."

"We started thinking about a barn, and it was the perfect time to talk about incorporating a larger kitchen for our constantly expanding family," she says. Also, the couple didn't want to renovate the kitchen at the main house, which suited them well as a couple.

As plans were being drawn with the Houston-based architectural firm Higgins Inc., the kitchen became a key part of the design.

"On the ground floor, the only air-

by KATIE D. STAVINOHA

conditioned spaces are the kitchen and bathroom," the husband says. "We can open the barn doors on all four sides to get a breeze flowing through- we built on this rise to take advantage of that."

THE CONSTRUCTION

The gray barn, which is clad in durable, weather-resistant HardiePlank, is board-andbatten construction. The concrete footprint is nearly 8,000 square feet on its first floor, including 12-14-feet deep porches on three sides offering views of the countryside, including a large stock tank, with white and terra cotta trim on the sliding barn doors and windows. A front stone patio allows easy access for vehicles / farm equipment to enter and exit the first floor.

The first-floor area was constructed with massive Canadian white pine timber framing and traditional mortise-and-tenon joinery (or joints.) The barn can comfortably seat 100 guests on long tables and in chairs found during the Round Top Antiques Show a number of years ago. The couple, and their children, have hosted not only family gatherings, but also meetings and events for the businesses and charities they are involved in – and an entire Division I women's collegiate soccer team. The first party in the barn was a Sunday fried chicken picnic for all the construction workers and their families to see the finished product of all their collective hard work and talent.

Inside, there are sliding-door enclosed storage areas, and a workshop. Open bays house utility vehicles and the wife's 50th birthday present: a 1948 Ford pickup named







Miss Myrtle. (Ford and Chevrolet stopped making pickups during World War II and the 1948 edition was the first model produced after the war's conclusion.)

"Ciarinn Higgins, and his staff, Maegan deVolld and Laura Bard, designed the barn to be as low-maintenance as possible," the husband says. "Concrete floors with drains allow us to hose down everything. So, cleanup is easy."

While the barn has a very traditional look, the original plan included the more German-style cupolas, seen throughout the area. The wife and the architect modified the plans to include dormers to add more light into the living space upstairs and also the open barn downstairs. Additionally, the height of the original cupolas would have been a maintenance challenge.

WE BUILT THIS TO ENJOY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Built by Barry Brown of Brown Ridge Builders, also of Houston, the couple used many local contractors as part of the process. Brown was instrumental not only in the building, but also in the evolving design of the barn project. Ranch Manager Eric Schobel was the day-to day supervisor and project manager.

"Barry and Eric were an amazing team. Both bringing insight and experience to the site," the wife says.

THE INTERIOR

In addition to the chef's kitchen and the storage and tool rooms, the first floor also features a bar, a retro operating Coke machine, and four swings – for seating and grandchildren entertainment.

Up a massive wooden staircase, with a handy shoe storage system at the bottom



that welcomes people to remove their shoes, lies the family entertaining area.

"Our builder used insulated commercial glazing to enclose the second floor," the wife says. "It keeps the barn-like feel and airiness while keeping it warm or cool depending on the season."

She chose a mixture of old and new furniture to complete the comfy look – and scoured the fields of Round Top and Warrenton to source items. Repurposed cottage doors from the old homestead act as the cover for the mechanical room access.

The second floor includes a suite, bedrooms featuring custommade bunk beds, full bathrooms, and the wide-open game room with ample seating for all.

A second-floor balcony is deep and spacious for viewing the

property's large stock tank, Padel court and distant vistas and the sunset.

THE RESULT

Overall, the couple says the building process was a long one, but they could not be more pleased with the team effort and outcome.

"Our kids love to come stay out here," she says. "We have bunk rooms upstairs, along with a game room/hangout room that allow all our family to stay together.

"We built this to enjoy for generations to come," the couple says.

And to cook in.







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BARNS REPURPOSED dy LORIE A.

by LORIE A. WOODWARD

In early America, barns marked the march of civilization across the new nation.

"Barns were the center of the pioneers' daily lives," said Mark Bowe, who owns Barnwood Builders with locations in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia and Round Top. "Their survival

literally was based on their crops and livestock. The barns sheltered those vital assets."

Bowe and his team specialize in recovering restoring 19th century hand-hewn log and timber structures and focus on showing people how barns can be repurposed for today's living. Bowe and David Snell offer these previews at The Boneyard at Round Top during the spring and fall antiques shows.

"Barns symbolize community, hard work and perseverance," Bowe said. "The pioneers overcame incredible challenges in their tenacious pursuit of freedom and opportunity."

While building materials have evolved over time, barns still capture imaginations. In fact, Texans combined the practicality of a barn with the comforts of home to create a one-of-a-kind structure known as a "barndominium."

"Originally, horse enthusiasts started adding small apartments in their barns as a place for their help to live," said David Dunlap, owner of Round Top's Dunlap Welding and Fabrication who has been constructing metal-framed buildings since the 1980s. "As people saw the benefit of having their homes and their hobbies or workshops under one roof, it took off. Today a barndominium is only limited by the client's imagination and budget."

Cori Kmiec, owner of Kmiec Construction in Burton, noted

that barndominiums are primarily a Texas trend, but they are a beloved addition to local countryside.

"In the past, people would come to the country and build a barndominium as a transitional living space until they could construct their dream home," said Kmiec, who specializes in rural building projects including barns, barndominiums and custom homes. "Today for many people, a barndominium is their dream home."

Metal frame construction allows builders to span greater distances than traditional wood construction. Because of the construction materials and building methods, metal-framed buildings generally go up more quickly than traditional wood frame buildings.

"Metal-framed buildings, when the weather cooperates, are efficient to construct, and although metal materials prices have jumped in recent, it is still relatively inexpensive," Dunlap said. "Generally, a metal-framed building can be dried in for less per square foot than a traditional wood-framed building." Once the metal building is dried in, the contractors can apply foam insulation for optimum energy efficiency, and then frame the interior with traditional wood construction.

"Because of the countless options in exterior construction materials and interior finishes, a barndominium can be as elaborate as any custom home," Kmiec said.

FOR MANY PEOPLE, A BARNDOMINIUM IS THEIR DREAM HOME.



Early barndominiums reflected the industrial aesthetic of a metalsided building. Today, barndominium exteriors can feature the warmth of wood and stone. They can be covered in hardie board siding or one of the new products featuring corrugated metal with a baked polyester finish. The latter, which is a 30-year finish, comes in a myriad of colors. BARRN

"If someone is considering building a country home, I encourage them to explore the possibilities of a barndominium," said Dunlap, noting many of his current clients are drawing inspiration from historic barns. "There are so many options [for building materials] now that didn't exist in the past, making it easier than ever for people to live out their country dreams."



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AT THE HUMBLE DONKEY STUDIO

By LORIE A. WOODWARD | Photos by BERNARD MENDOZA

John and Laurie Lowery, the husband and wife team who co-own Humble Donkey Studio in Round Top, never intended to work together.



"He agreed to go look at properties under the condition he f the two of us, I'm the artist—and I had always wanted a gallery," said John, who also founded and owns Dewouldn't have to do anything on the place," Laurie said. sign at Work, a Houston-based ad agency. "I'm used to John recharged his battery by riding big Harleys with a motorcycle club. For him, adrenaline trumped quiet. Initially, the Lowerys were looking for a five-acre home site. Laurie, always supportive of the agency, had her own career As the search continued, the Roundtopolis[™] began to cast its spell. John opined, "We need something bigger." Bigger was better for them. In April 2014, they purchased "We never worked together before the gallery—and were almost 60 acres near Burton. That June, John crashed his motorcycle on a Houston freeway. The wreck was a serious, lifechanging near-miss. "The wreck made the transition easy because John was ready to give up motorcycles," Laurie said. "He traded his bike for a

being an entrepreneur and when we started Humble Donkey, I envisioned it as an extension of my other business." as an event planner for the Women's Energy Network, a national networking group for female oil and gas professionals. She arranged more than 100 events a year. pretty convinced we couldn't," said Laurie, who also worked in management for Marshall Fields in Chicago before returning to her native Houston. "Professionally we had very separate lives in Houston."

Two disparate circumstances put the couple, who have been tractor—and never looked back. These days he probably loves married 27 years, on the path to co-owning a small business in the country even more than I do." a small town. Laurie longed for the simplicity of the country. The countryside also spoke to John's creative spirit, providing John survived a serious motorcycle him, a lifelong city dweller, with a accident. whole new world to paint.

CITY LIFE

Although they met in high school, it wasn't til after they'd pursued degrees and embarked on careers that their paths crossed again. By this time, John was an art director at a Houston ad agency. Laurie had returned from Chicago to work in her family's manufactured housing business.

They began dating. John got downsized. Laurie got a phone call in which John reported, "The bad news is I got laid off. The good news is I started my own business."

Design at Work was born. As the pace of their lives escalated,

friendship blossomed into romance. They married in 1992. Their daughter, Hope, was born seven years later.

Shortly after, John moved the agency from Clear Lake to the Upper Kirby area in Houston. For 10 years they lived life in the fast lane, periodically slowing down to explore the countryside with their Airstream in tow.

"I loved the city—and still do—but we loved to camp and get away," said Laurie, noting they were camping every month. "All the time we were spending outdoors gave me a nagging desire to own land in the country. It was my Scarlett O'Hara moment." They had a friend with a weekend farm in Burton.

COUNTRY LIFE

While Laurie craved a bucolic life where the family could recharge, John, a self-described "go-go-go type" was less enthusiastic about the prospect.



"Life in the country gave me a chance to chill out and notice the smaller things like tiny plants and animal tracks," John said. "It's as if I got new eyes and could see old things in a fresh way."

The wealth of subject matter inspired him to paint and express his own style and vision.

"For the first time in my life, I created for me instead of a client," said John, whose bold style showcases farm animals and the rural countryside using a bright acrylic palette.

GALLERY LIFE

John, a lifelong artist, always wanted to own and operate an art gallery. One Saturday, the couple was strolling around Round Top's Henkel Square when John spotted a small vacant building.

Gerald Tobola, the property manager, walked up about the same time. When John inquired about the rent, Tobola's quote struck the artistic entrepreneur as "just right." It was Laurie's turn to be less than enthusiastic.

"I said, 'We can't do this. We live in Houston. We have two jobs, and a junior in high school," Laurie remembered.

To which John replied, "I'm doing the math. The firm [Design at Work] will handle this. We can do it."

Laurie relented.

"Before the accident, it was my job to say no to all of his crazy ideas," Laurie said. "After he survived that near-miss and gave up his motorcycles, I couldn't say no to this."

John, true to his word, enlisted the help of his creative team.

LIFE & STYLE 27

Within three weeks from signing the lease, the Humble Donkey Studio was open.

"The gallery was typical of John's m.o.—no plan, just an urgency to move forward," Laurie said.

Although it was small, the gallery was well-received. John's work began flying off the walls. Drawing inspiration from Harley Davidson dealerships, John began ringing a bell and announcing, "A donkey gets its wings," every time a painting or print sold.

"When you buy a Harley, the dealership rings a bell and makes a big deal of it," John said. "I'm a little bit like P.T. Barnum. I like to deliver a good show and a good time for our customers. My art isn't changing the world, but it can change people's moods."

John hired an employee, but he often worked in the gallery and Laurie pitched in periodically. The Lowerys noticed when they were in the shop sales increased.

Still they didn't contemplate working together until John set his sights on more square footage. As luck would have it, a bigger location on Henkel Square (which they have since expanded) was coming available, opening the opportunity to include antiques and vintage items in the mix as part of Lower 40 Found Objects.

"When we got more floor space, we got more opportunities," John said, "Antiques made sense—and involving Laurie, who has great taste and experience with antiques, made even more sense."

WINGED DONKEYS AND ANTIOUES

Although the Lowerys successfully transformed the Humble Donkey Studio from a solo show to a joint exhibition, the transformation wasn't without a few challenges.



"In the beginning, there was a little power struggle over arranging the shop," Laurie said. "It was his and then all of the sudden it was ours." They've come to recognize and value one another's strengths.

"Initially, it was a battle of wills over whose opinion would win," John said. "Now, if disagreements occur, they're productive and they all lead to what's best for the store."

John is the artist and the entrepreneurial visionary.

"As an artist, I create," John said. "Of the two of us, I'm more go-go-go and get it done now, while she's more cautious. Our differences work to

our advantage because she's pickier, choosier and curates in the truest sense of the word."

Laurie is in charge of merchandising as well as all things antique. She also acquires complementary products such

as jewelry and ponchos from Carmine's Mallory et Cie and Ecuadorian imports from Houston's Moochilla, as well as handling the nuts and bolts details.

"John is going to keep painting and I'm going to keep finding cool things at good price points, so that people can comfortably buy what they love," Laurie said.

GIVING OLD THINGS NEW LIFE MEANS THE PIECES CONTINUE TO BE PART OF PEOPLE'S LIVES AND EVENTUALLY THEIR FAMILY'S MEMORIES.

Pairing people with things they love is the Lowerys' ultimate goal. Although the gallery has sold 92 of the 109 originals John has painted since its opening, he insists that his art be available in many different forms.

"I have a commercial background, so it's very important to me that my work is available in a variety of reproductions," John said. "Just because people may not be able to afford originals, doesn't mean they shouldn't be able to enjoy art."

He receives photos from clients around the country showing off his work in their homes.

"We get pictures of my art in people's homes," John said. "Sometimes it's an original and sometimes it's a set of coasters, but regardless they're proud to display it. That thrills me."

Laurie scours antiques auctions and estate sales to find her one-of-a-kind pieces. Many times, she elevates the old by adding a fresh twist. Case in point, a Biedermeier sofa from the mid-1800s she had reupholstered in vintage ticking and backed with vintage feed sacks. While the sofa's scale is far from massive, it commands the attention due a focal piece.

"Giving old things new life means the pieces continue to be part of people's lives and eventually their family's memories," Laurie said. "To me, that's a big part of the beauty of this."

While the Lowerys estimate about 80 percent of the people who enter the gallery are first-time visitors, the couple continuously arranges and rearranges their offerings to show them off to their best advantage. They curate the gallery so it is as unexpected as their country life has been.

"It's amazing that we came to the property, to the gallery and to the community without a plan," John said. "We were drawn to the magic of this place and the power of relationships built within a community."

They describe their journey to the country and small business ownership as a process of discovery, an experience they try to replicate for customers in the gallery.

"Discovery takes time, so our goal is to help people slow down and be in the moment, so they can find the beauty in the unexpected of what we've put together," John said. "Humble Donkey is a mix of art and artistry. It's who we are. It's what we do."





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THE DESIGNER — SPREE — Continues

Now coming into its fourth year, Designer Dream Spree has helped introduce Round Top to internationally recognized designers. In turn, those designers have shared the "Round Top magic" with new legions of followers and clients.

"I love Round Top and the show," says Julie Dodson of Houston-based Dodson Interiors and the founder of Designer Dream Spree. "It has been an honor to invite designers to the show -- and then enjoy what they find and share with the world."

Dodson, along with a number of sponsors, will again host a cadre of designers during the Fall 2019 Round Top Antiques Show. The shopping spree ends with a panel discussion at sponsor The Compound on Oct. 1.

"The goal of Designer Dream Spree is to share the Round Top Antiques Show with designers -- many of whom have heard about it but have never attended," Dodson says. "We give the designers ample time to shop the fields and venues -- and I know they come with a list to fill for their clients. I'm always excited to see what they find -- thus our panel discussion is centered around one or two finds they select. The panel discussion aims to showcase their finds -- and get a glimpse behind a designer's decision-making process. The "big reveal" at the panel discussion is always fun."

Traditional Home and Back Row Home of Houston are both sponsors of the four-day event. Both are second-year sponsors. Editor's note: Like The Compound, Round Top Texas life & style is a returning four-year sponsor of the event.







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DESIGNER DREAM SPREE PANEL DISCUSSION: Oct. 1 JUNK GYPSY PROM, ZAPP HALL: Oct. 3



If you are planning a trip to the Fall 2019 Round Top Antiques Show, it's time to get serious. Day trips are easy from Houston, Waco, College Station and Austin. If you truly want to experience the whole enchilada – with kolaches and strong coffee in the morning through to happy hours, shows with late hours and music, and dinner reservations at the end of the day – you should plan to stay overnight.

For those with long shopping lists, a multi-day trip is imperative. There is no way a person could see everything in a single day. With 25 miles to cover, and upwards of 80-some separate venues, it's a marathon not a sprint.





- 1. IT'S NOT JUST ROUND TOP. The Round Top Antiques Show began in 1968 in one dancehall with a handful of antiques dealers. As the show has evolved, it has spilled out into neighboring communities such as Carmine, Warrenton, Burton and Fayetteville. And only the U.S. Postal Service knows where one community begins and ends.
- 2. BOOK LODGING EARLY. There are a multitude of options from bed & breakfasts to inns in Round Top and Carmine to chain hotels in Giddings, La Grange, Brenham, Columbus, Bastrop and Schulenburg. You may want to "glamp" at the Lone Star Glamp Inn or stay in the world's only container hotel at Flophouze. Have an RV – check out The Ranch at Round Top. The key is to book early – and know that many require a two-night minimum stay – and the peak periods of Sept. 29-Oct. 5 will likely be the most difficult to schedule unless there are cancellations.

FALL 2019 -**ROUND TOP ANTIQUES SHOW**

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- 3. KNOW BEFORE YOU GO. If you have a shopping list, and are looking for something specific, study the *Round Top* Antiques Show Guide to hone in on the fields/venues you want to shop first. Instagram is a great resource for "pre-shopping." Follow dealer and venue accounts to see who's bringing what to the show.
- **BE PREPARED.** If you're a regular, never-miss-a-show 4. shopper, then you likely know the lay of the land. If you are a first-timer, talk to others who have been before. It's easy to get overwhelmed by the myriad shopping opportunities available. Just take a deep breath, pack your patience, and enjoy! The Round Top Antiques Show Guide, available in early September, is a great resource.
- LOOKING AHEAD. The Spring 2020 Round Top Antiques Show dates are set for March 19-April 5, 2020. (FYI: Easter is April 12, 2020.)

LIFE & STYLE 35



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SATLY MAXWELL

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

by LORIE A. WOODWARD photos by BERNARD MENDOZA, MENDOZA PHOTOGRAPHY and courtesy of SALLY MAXWELL

Harnessing her passion for art and nature, Sally Maxwell of La Grange elevated scratchboard, a 19th century black-and-white graphic design medium. to fine art.

"It became my life's goal to add color to scratchboard and raise it to an art form accepted and displayed by galleries and museums," said Maxwell, who has been working in the medium for 52 years and is one of seven original Master Scratchboard artists worldwide as designated by the International Society of Scratchboard Artists

er goal crystallized in the early 1970s when a Midwest amateur art competition judge called Maxwell out during the awards ceremony. She had entered several graphite pencil drawings enhanced with color.

"From the microphone in front of everyone, he told me that I in Jackson Hole, Wyo. didn't need to be with amateurs because my work was far better "My dad took me on long walks in the woods where he taught me the names of everything—I've just always been an outdoors than amateur," Maxwell said. After the ceremony, the judge sought out Maxwell, who was girl," said Maxwell, a self-described introvert who gravitates the co-founder, creative director and graphic artist at a design to rural living and moved to La Grange in 1982. "Early in my firm in McHenry, Ill. Her formal art education consisted of high career, I preferred animals to people, but as I began to represent school art classes coupled with several college-level art history my own work I learned to be interested in people and their courses at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Ill. stories. We develop a kinship based on the stories of my work The judge, who was the director of the Marshall Field's and the stories of their lives."

Art Gallery Division, offered to buy every piece of Maxwell's graphite art if she could add more color. Maxwell took his challenge—and raised him one.

"At the time, scratchboard, which is also known as scraperboard, was relegated to commercial art," said Maxwell, who taught herself scratchboard illustration using the book, How To Cut Drawings on Scratchboard. "I worked with it every day and sensed it could be so much more, especially if I could add color."

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

"Flat surfaces work best for me," said Maxwell, noting that a Scratchboard is a form of direct engraving where the artist diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis at age 22 makes her vigilant uses a variety of tools ranging from knives, pins and dental tools about protecting her body from repetitive motion injuries. to scalpels, emery paper and sanding sponges to "scratch off" "I work on several pieces at a time and spend no more than

black India ink, revealing a smooth white layer of Kaolin clay. The clay can be colored by "painting in" specially formulated India inks.

In her office, she created black-and-white advertising illustrations for clients. At home, she rendered animals, birds, plants, fruits, vegetables and other natural subjects-and experimented with adding color. She tried everything from food color and traditional watercolors before finally settling on India ink.

"I kept pressing the medium and found I had to cut it in a totally different manner to prepare it to receive color," Maxwell said. "More had to be removed in order to keep the color brilliant instead of muddying it."





Today her portfolio includes primarily African and North American wildlife enhanced with a full palette of vibrant color. Her work is represented by Copper Shade Tree in Round Top, Monitou Galleries in Santa Fe, N.M. and Mountain Trails Gallery

Maxwell was pregnant with the first of her three children when she began repositioning scratchboard as fine art.

"Besides its artistic possibilities, scratchboard was the perfect medium for a working mom," Maxwell said. "It is light, portable and unlike watercolor you can stop at any moment without ruining the piece. I never had to choose between rescuing a crying child and wrecking a piece in progress."

In the beginning, Maxwell worked on her kitchen table and, in a holdover from those formative days, still works on a flat surface.

> about 20 minutes using one particular technique, tool or motion before I rotate to something different."

Her La Grange studio, which she designed so it could be easily converted into a small house when the time is right for downsizing, also includes work stations that allow her to sit or stand.

"Whether it's art or life, it's a matter of finding balance in all things," Maxwell said.

Creating multidimensional, colored scratchboard art takes time-a lot of time.

"When people ask me how long it takes to finish a piece, I tell them, 'As long as it would take you to count every line in it," said Maxwell laughing. "And that doesn't include all of the time I spend answering every

LIFE & STYLE 41

email, marketing, shipping, visiting galleries, attending shows, developing techniques and on and on...."

The process begins with a photograph taken by Maxwell during her frequent travels.

"I sell art to fund my travel habit," said Maxwell, who has traveled throughout the world, including journeying to Africa three times. "Travel feeds me with new landscapes, new people, new experiences—it keeps my perspective fresh."

The photograph inspires a drawing, which Maxwell backs with chalk. She outlines the image, which transfers guidelines onto the scratchboard.

Using a line tool, she scratches off the basic guidelines. Once the basic guidelines are established, she continues to add more lines thereby removing more black ink until the piece reaches a "gray" stage. She then strategically cuts in highlights.

As a young girl, she wanted to be a chemist, but a bad grade in calculus derailed that ambition without dampening her love of science. She attributes her success, in part, to her obsession for anatomy and physiology.

"If I'm going to be a realist, it better damn well be real," she said. "I think many contemporary artists portray animals in abstraction because they can't render animals accurately."

Once all of the texture and tonal ranges are cut, the image is painted with colored India inks using a technique similar to watercolor. Unlike watercolor paintings, scratchboard provides the artist black guidelines.

"Some artists use watercolor instead of ink, but I've found that watercolor stains the clay beneath and you can never scratch it back to pure white," Maxwell said.

Once the color has dried, the piece can be cut again to add final highlights.

"Some painters complain that it's difficult to stop working on a piece, so they run the risk of overworking it," Maxwell said. "I had the opposite problem. I tended to stop too soon."

She credits Robert Bateman, one of the world's leading wildlife artists, for inspiring her to "throw away the photograph" and use her eyes to identify what areas needed extra attention to create the depth and dimension she was seeking.

WHETHER IT'S ART OR LIFE. IT'S A MATTER OF FINDING **BALANCE IN** ALL THINGS.

"With oils and watercolors, it is easier to push elements farther into the background or pull them into the foreground than it is with scratchboard, so I had to figure out how to do it," Maxwell said. "Now I'm striving for weight and flow within my art."

It works.

In one of her signature pieces, the male leopard, appears to physically displace space as he's draped languidly over a limb.

Even after working as a professional artist for more than a half century, Maxwell continues to explore and push the boundaries. Currently, she is

experimenting with aqueous solutions to remove the black ink. She's begun studying sculpture, recently completing her first piece, a 3-D version of "Wild Thing," an earlier scratchboard work featuring a spirited palomino with a free-flowing mane.

After discovering only 5 percent of the art in American museum permanent collections are created by women, Maxwell became involved in the American Women Artists' movement dubbed "25 in 25." The initiative pushes for 25 museums to feature the work of women in the next 25 years. And she's contemplating a masterwork featuring a life-size, multi-dimensional elephant she estimates will take five years to complete.

Maxwell embraces challenges including those that can come with success.

"I've never asked why I do it [art], I just do it," Maxwell said. When she is working on a piece, Maxwell stays close until it is almost done. Then she steps away and considers it from a distance. In that moment, she contemplates where her art springs from and where it's going.

"Sometimes, when something new works beyond my imagination, I ask myself, 'How in the hell did I do that?'" said Maxwell laughing.

"But I'm never afraid that I've gotten as good as I can get because I've surpassed 'as good as I can get' time after time. I've worked hard to keep from becoming a caricature of myself by pushing for fresh, new and different. Frankly, I hate repeating myself, so I don't-and I won't."





A SERENDIPITOUS HOME

ife changes prompted Sally Maxwell to move to La Grange 1984, but serendipity made it home.

"When people ask me where I'm from, I've never been from where I happen to live," said Maxwell, whose father's jo caused the family to move 11 times before she graduated high school. "I'm from wherever I happen to be in that moment wi the people I'm with."

By the time her first marriage ended in 1982, her father Harold Shroyer, who had made a career as a consulting "business repairman," had retired with her mother Peggy. His second-to-last contract brought them Houston and then his final job was with Kaspar Wire Works in Shiner, which brought them to the area. They, like so many, were drawn to Fayette County, settling down on a La Grange ranch.

Two years later, her father began losing his long-time battle with emphysema. Maxwell and her youngest daughter, a third grader, moved to be closer to the whole Shroyer clan.

"If I was going to move, I was going to be near my family," said Maxwell, noting she had a design contract with a collectible plate company that allowed her to live and work anywhere.

In La Grange, she found the rural life and landscape that fueled her creative spirit. She also met George Maxwell, a lifelong La Grange resident, and fell in love.

"We became a united front and a team," Maxwell said. They married in 1987, immediately settling on almost 26 acres on the western outskirts of La Grange. Together, they carved out a 2-acre homestead surrounded by nature including woods and a six-acre lake.

just outside my window."

A few years after she and George married, Maxwell's contract with the commemorative plate company wasn't renewed. The

in	business change, combined with her newly empty nest, allowed
	Maxwell to focus on her art and seek out new opportunities.
	One of her best finds jumped from the pages of the Austin
)	American-Statesman in 1999.
	"I discovered Ampersand Art Supply," Maxwell said. "It was
h	an artboard company based in Buda [Texas] that came out of a
	student business plan presented at a University of Texas Moot
	Corp. business competition."

Maxwell ordered a sheet and was as impressed with the product as the professors who had lined up investors for the student entrepreneurs just five years earlier. Unlike earlier scratchboard, which was backed by cardboard, Ampersand's scratchboard was on "hardboard," a type of Masonite that could withstand more pressure during cutting and rougher treatments including the use of liquids.

"Its durability opened up so many artistic possibilities," Maxwell said. "I called the company president and said, 'We need to have a meeting. I have something you need and you have something I want!""

The president Elaine Salazar agreed. Their first meeting laid the foundation for a partnership and a friendship that continues today. Together, Maxwell and the team at Ampersand have collaborated on 28 scratchboard kits sold at retailers nationwide, three how-to manuals, and a line of specially formulated India inks as well as other innovations. Ampersand provides Maxwell with a steady supply of hardboard, so Maxwell can experiment freely and keep pushing the medium forward.

"The folks at Ampersand tell me that I single-handedly "I call it my Heaven on Earth," Maxwell said. "Inspiration lives redefined scratchboard," Maxwell said. "I don't know about that, but I do think I've made a difference. I consider myself the grandmother of scratchboard because of all of the people I've taught—and reached—using this art form."

LIFE & STYLE 43

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PARTY PLANNING WITH A HURRICANE

by ANITA JOYCE photos courtesy of CEDAR HILL FARMHOUSE

With our wedding just days away, a hurricane was headed straight for us. It was due to arrive on Thursday, just in time to wreak havoc on our Saturday wedding. I stared at the TV, willing the storm to move East or West, just not here. Surely it will wobble this way or that.

It didn't.

My praying mom prayed and prayed and prayed. I had seen mountains move before, I wondered if we would get a miracle.

If you're

stressed about

entertaining,

don't be.

Remember. it

could be worse.

We didn't.

My dad, always the voice of reason, was out of town until Thursday, so he wasn't there to calm me down. This was happening.

Hurricane Alicia hit Houston as expected on Aug. 18, 1983. The winds blew in, the rain hit the house sideways, and the power went off as expected. Then there was an eerie calm. Since my parents lived north of town, the effects of the hurricane there were minimal. There were a few tree limbs on in the yard, much less than I expected. I wondered if perhaps the storm wasn't as bad as we had feared. My dad

made it home safely and then we started making calls. The church where we were to get married had no power. That was not a good sign. My mother-inlaw also had no power. That was really bad news, since she planned to host the rehearsal dinner at her home Friday night. I read the next day about a couple who had to cancel their wedding because of the hurricane.

My memory about the exact timing of events is a little foggy, but I must have gone to town later on Thursday. I drove over to check on the house that Kevin and I had just bought, and planned to live in after we came back from the honeymoon. Here, the damage was quite different. The fence was down, and it seemed like there were more tree limbs in our yard than still attached to the trees. The good news is that our house had power. My guess was that our house was on the same grid as the nearby hospital and therefore it was one of the first restored. At least I could sleep with air conditioning. Kevin, the best man and I began the cleanup. It was exhausting. We set to work cleaning up the debris, which took part of Thursday and all day on Friday. I knew we wouldn't be able to face the clean up when we returned from our honeymoon. That is, if there was a honeymoon. We busied ourselves with

the yard clean up, and I tried not to think about my wedding.

My mother-in-law on Friday morning realized that the rehearsal dinner was not going to happen at her house that night. She asked if we could have the dinner party at our new house. The house had very little furniture, was not the best venue for a party, but she said she would bring everything we needed. So that was that. Finally we got word later that the church had power. We would be able to have our wedding in the church! As I exhaled, I realized I hadn't fully done so for days. The

rehearsal dinner was moved to our new house. At the rehearsal dinner, word got out that we spent the day doing hard labor instead of enjoying a spa treatment. People started asking to see my hands. I thought they wanted to see my engagement ring. No, they wanted to see the blisters on my hands from raking up all of the leaves. The rehearsal dinner went on without a hitch, if you don't count the fact that it was at a different house, the A/C wasn't working properly, and someone spilled an entire jar of juice in my brand new refrigerator.

And that is the story of the first time we hosted a party in our home. So if you're stressed about entertaining, don't be. Remember, it could be worse.



To ensure your party goes on without a hitch, here are a few of my tips.

- Put a plan together for the party. I like to make a list of what needs to be done far in advance of the party. Then I can space out the tasks so that they don't all have to be done the day before the event. Try to do as much as possible before the week of the event. If you need to do some cleaning or repair work, or you're waiting for a new sofa, you'll want to get those things handled long before the doorbell rings.
- 2. Do food prep ahead of time. I love to plan ahead and make some dishes that can be prepared the day before. If you decide to have some or all of the meal catered, that works too! Entertaining is all about enjoying a great time with your guests, so anything that makes that happen is fabulous in my book.
- 3. Set up for your party the night before. I love to set out all of the dishes that will be used the day before the event. I select the dishes, glasses, tablecloths, flatware, napkins and serving dishes for the event. I like to know where everything is going to go. If you think you might need to purchase supplies for your soiree, then I recommend sorting through these details a few weeks before the event.
- Use the good stuff. I love using my favorite dishes, linen napkins and silverware. I don't mind a little extra work at the end of the evening, hand washing those things. Honestly, what's the point of having nice things if you aren't going to use them? I say use them, unless the thought of doing those dishes makes you want to scream. In that case, go for the disposable stuff. A lot of people just don't want to deal with washing things after the party. If that's you, then it's just not worth it. Entertaining should be fun. When it the thought of prepping for a party goes from excitement to dread, it's time to change things up.
- Don't experiment on guests. This is not the time to try a new recipe unless you are a seasoned cook. If you are unsure about how the dish will turn out, then either test it before the party, or skip it. "I wonder how this will taste" is not something that should be said the day of your party.
- **b.** Set up a playlist. Think about the mood you want to create, then prepare a music playlist to be used for the party. After the party, you can share the playlists with guests who enjoyed the music.
- /. Have fun and don't worry if something goes wrong. Trust me, it will. So when something goes awry, try to roll with the punches. You'll have more fun, and your guests will too.



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A QUARTER CENTURY: **ROUND TOP FAMILY LIBRARY**

n the 25 years since its founding, the Round Top Family Library has grown and changed with the community it serves.

"A library brings people together when it serves the community as a whole regardless of our individual differences," said Barbara Smith, library director since 2004. "Everybody involved with the library—staff, board members and volunteers-strive to work with respect and unity to fulfill the needs of the entire community."

Originally conceived as a children's library, the Round Top Family Library broadened its offerings as community needs were identified and met. For instance, initially the library provided art after school and later music. Ultimately, the Round Top-Carmine school district adopted the arts and music curriculum, supported by the Round Top-Carmine Education Foundation.

As a community resource, the library, which holds the distinction of being the smallest accredited full-service public library in Texas, prides itself on partnerships.

"Working together allows us all to do more," Smith said.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

While the local school now has art education, the library continues its long-term partnership with ARTS of Rural Texas to provide art instruction after school. To instill an early passion for reading, the library works with the local school district to provide traditional and neighborhood story times. During the latter, Pre-K students travel to local destinations such as a business and enjoy a story related to the setting.

During June and July, the library is filled with area children participating in a variety of summer enrichment and educational activities designed to encourage reading.

The library also hosts the only Junior Master Gardeners program in four counties. The library's youth advisory committee, with representatives from each grade in the high school, provide ideas for programs and activities to enhance their education. Each year scholarships are awarded to graduating seniors.

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Volunteers teach adult yoga classes two evenings a week. Senior citizens gather monthly for game time and other social events. Local experts share their knowledge through a monthly FYI presentation. The restored Rummel Haus is available for meetings and private gatherings. Community volunteers and Master Gardeners meet at library's Grace Memorial Garden on the first Monday of each month to share their passion for gardening while maintaining the beautiful landscape.

"The library wouldn't be able to keep its doors open without the people who freely share leadership, volunteer time and monetary contributions," Smith said. "Within our walls, people fulfill the needs of the library and the community but they also fulfill our collective human need to serve the greater good."

The partnerships, the programs and the opportunities bring people together. "By name we're a library but by function we're a community center," Smith said. "It's a place where everyone is welcome. The library is a gathering

by LORIE A. WOODWARD | photos courtesy of ROUND TOP FAMILY LIBRARY

place where people can share ideas and experiences enriching themselves and others."

FROM THE GROUND UP

The Round Top Family Library traces its origins to a big dream shared by Chris and Cheryl Travis, formerly of Round Top, who now live in Pine Grove, Colo.

"It was a big wild hare of a dream, rooted in our desire to bring art and music to the area's children," Chris said.

Cheryl, a lifelong educator who specialized in early childhood education, saw the power of the arts in her Montessori schools. Chris, a restoration builder by trade, tackled children's issues as an avocation. Their son was a fifth grader when they moved to Round Top in 1991.

"It just felt like something that needed to be done," Chris said.

While personal experiences fueled their passion, the Travises were inspired by the unlikely presence of the Round Top Festival Institute and its motto: "Why dream the ordinary?"

> LIBRARY BUT BY FUNCTION WE'RE CENTER. IT'S A **PLACE WHERE** -EVERYONE-**IS WELCOME.**

"What they accomplished there was utterly impossible," Chris said. "We just told ourselves, 'If they can do it, so can we."

Along with La Grange-based architect Ed Mattingly, who designed Festival Hill's concert hall façade, the Travises incorporated the non-profit Round Top Library Association in 1999. Next they obtained a 30-year-lease for \$1/year from the Texas Pioneer Arts Foundation (now the Bybee Foundation) on the two-acre property holding the historic Rummel House, which was renovated, outfitted and opened with financial and in-kind donations.

Programs and rooms filled. One day Chris was driving his grandmother to an appointment at Temple's Scott and White Hospital. A peeling gothic church standing alone in a pasture near Buckholts in Milam County caught his eye.

Later investigation revealed the former Hope Lutheran Church building was owned by Elbert Svetlik, a 92-year-old Czech farmer. When his congregation voted to build a new brick church in the 1960s, Svetlik couldn't bear for the church to be destroyed, so he moved it to his property and used it for a hay barn. Svetlik initially refused to part with the structure until Chris hit on the idea of repurposing the church as a library.

"Mr. Svetlik wholeheartedly agreed to the idea—for a price," Chris said. Chris drew up preliminary plans for repurposing the old church into a library that reflected the building's history. He and Cheryl hosted a dinner for the library advisory board with the hope of generating a few seed donations for a capital campaign. Not a single check emerged.



The bruises healed quickly. The next day, the Travises' phone rang. Cheryl answered. It was Sterling McCall, a local resident and philanthropist, calling to say he and his wife Marianne wanted to underwrite the library construction project.

Shocked Cheryl blurted, "…you mean the whole thing?"

McCall confirmed their intent. Things began to move across

three counties. The old church had to be cut into seven pieces. On Nov. 15, 2001, the first sections of the Marianne and Sterling McCall Library Building arrived in Round Top.

"Sterling and Marianne McCall were the wind beneath the library's wings, but from the beginning it was one of those things that just had momentum," Chris said. "Cheryl and I kick started the process, but a huge community of people made it possible—and kept it going."

Cheryl added, "The library has surpassed our wildest imaginings." "And we dream big," Chris said.

THE NEXT BIG THING

"Our children's programs, especially during the summer, are so popular that we've run out of space to accommodate everyone who wants to participate," Smith said.

To once again grow into its mission, the Round Top Family Library acquired adjacent property at the end of 2018. Renovations are underway. The first goal is converting the existing garage into a children's art barn by summer.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

LASSO THE DREAM | SEPT. 7 Round Top Family Library Fundraising Gala Henkel Hall | Round Top, Texas FMI: www.ilovetoread.org.

NEW THIS YEAR! HEIFER RAFFLE

New this year, the gala committee and the library board are raffling 10 Brangus heifers. The lucky winner can either add the heifers to their existing herd or sell them through a local livestock auction and retain the proceeds. If the winner chooses to sell, the library will arrange to have the cattle transported to the auction.

Tickets are \$50 each and can be obtained from the Round Top Family Library or gala committee members. Only 800 tickets will be sold. The drawing will occur during the gala on Sept. 7; winner does not have to be present to win.

More than 90 percent of the library's operating budget comes from private donations and fundraisers.







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HOW TO PACK A PICNIC

by CORYANNE ETTIENE photo by SAM HENDERSON



From rolling pastures to lake fronts, there are so many stunning picnic spots in and around Round Top. Once you've picked your spot and planned your menu, remember these tips for planning your summer picnic.

- 1. Pack a lined blanket to keep the damp off your picnic spot.
- 2. Replace bags of ice with frozen bottles of water. They stay cooler for longer and won't soak your food.

I first fell in love with picnics 20 years ago when I would join friends in Hyde Park to meander an afternoon away, one bite of bread and sip of wine at a time. Soon my picnics with friends transformed into picnics with my new husband, to picnics with our growing toddlers, to full blown neighborhood affairs. It is safe to say that for every chapter in my life, there has been a picnic packed that both looks all-together different, but also much the same.

There is something magical about tossing a much-loved blanket into the air and watching it fall into place, setting the stage for the afternoon to come. Where laughter mingles with a summer soundtrack, where sharp cheese is washed down with a sweet tipple, and fresh bread is slathered with an aged spread. Picnics are where shade is coveted and sunshine is chased; where laughter mingles with a summer sound track, and stories are told to a background of birds chirping. Despite a stage set full with such potential for a fabulous day, it is the picnic itself, or rather, the contents of the picnic, that really decided the turn out of the day.

Too often baskets are over packed, making the march to the perfect spot bothersome and weighed down. Instead of packing everything that you might need, pack what you will need and go from there. Whether you are using a backpack, a wicker basket, or an insulated tote bag, pack what your bag can hold, and no more. And if the walk to your picnic spot is more than a 15- minute walk, limit your bags to one bag per person, or invest in an outdoor wagon to do the heavy lifting for you.

When it comes to planning your menu, whether you're running to the grocer to pick up olives and cheese, or you plan on cooking a set menu, it is important to remember the foods you pick should be simple, and be able to survive sitting outdoors for at least an hour before they are eaten. Despite this constraint, my favorite picnic hacks include these: packing a chilled summer soup in a thermos; keeping sandwiches and wraps fresh by packing the ingredients and making them at the picnic; packing frozen yogurt pots for fruit dips; using small jars for salad dressing pots to keep your salads fresh; and freezing fresh grapes, berries and melon for a cool snack.

- 1 Ripe Avocado 1 Garlic clove, roasted CORYANNE'S 1 Tablespoon of fresh 4 Tablespoons of FAVORITE lime juice Pecan oil SUMMER. 1 Tablespoons of water 1 Tablespoon of PICNIC Adobo sauce 1 Tablespoon of white DRESSING Pinch of salt wine vinegar
- 3. Create a picnic playlist and pack a portable speaker to keep the mood festive.
- 4. Give your presentation a sustainable make-over with bamboo plates and cutlery, Beeswrap and Weck Jars for storage
- 5. Pack a few trash bags and kitchen wipes for easy clean up.
- 6. Citronella candles create atmosphere and keep those pesky mosquitoes from joining the party.

- 7. Bring along a few travel games to keep everyone entertained.
- 8. Sprinkle baby powder or corn starch a few inches from your picnic to ward off ants.
- 9. If you are feeling romantic, pack a vintage vase to hold wild flowers you collect along the way to your picnic spot.
- 10. Wear sunscreen.



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