

# Behind the Stories:

# A DECADE OF OUR BEST

UNPACK THE BACKSTORIES BEHIND 10 YEARS OF FLORIDA'S BEST FEATURES—TOLD FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS AND EDITORS WHO BROUGHT THEM TO LIFE.

# 2016

SPRING / VOL. 1

## The Beauty of the Bay

Telling the generational story of Apalachicola oystermen

By **Katie Hendrick Vincent**, writer

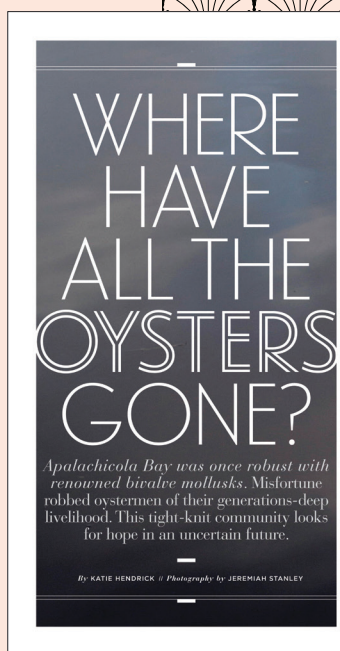
I was living with my grandfather when I got the assignment. He was a quiet man, but I knew he was excited because the morning after I told him, he forwarded me an email chain he'd already had with his friends—whose family once owned an Apalachicola newspaper—to see if they still had contacts in the area. Soon, his friends' friends had me in touch with Tommy and T.J. Ward, fourth- and fifth-generation oystermen, and I had a trip planned to the Panhandle.

In the meantime, I reached out to Southern food expert John T. Edge, with whom I'd emailed when I was an intern at another magazine. He appreciated that Flamingo wanted to spotlight the plight of this iconic industry and seconded that I needed to talk to the Wards. In addition, he recommended I interview Lynn Martina, a third-generation oyster dealer turned restaurateur. These sources, in turn, connected me with others. I was blessed that so many people

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— Katie Hendrick Vincent

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believed in this story from the get-go and made sure I had the voices needed to bring it to life.

After an afternoon exploring Apalachicola's waterfront, I spent two full days talking to oyster dealers, touring empty packing houses and patronizing local restaurants like Boss Oyster, which sadly was destroyed by Hurricane Michael in 2018. I left with a notebook full of information and a stomach full of bivalves.

When I write, I rarely begin with the intro. This time was an exception. I knew I wanted to capture the beauty of the bay—indeed, shimmering like sequins—and the peace of Florida's Forgotten Coast.

On my way home, I spent a night at my dad's cousin's home in Sopchoppy. I debriefed her on my story, and she mentioned her friend who started farming oysters. I interviewed him a few days later and had my kicker. I was relieved to find something optimistic to end on.

“Where Have All the Oysters Gone?” won best feature story from the Florida Magazine Association in 2016. Accolade or not, this story was my proudest professional achievement.

# 2017

SPRING / VOL. 5



## The Design Madam of Palm Beach

On the hunt for vintage Lilly Pulitzer

By **Christina Cush**, editor

Let's take a Technicolor time warp and uncover the making of “Long Lost Lilly.” Before I lived in Florida, my many years of magazine feature assigning and editing in New York City had well equipped me to tackle the logistics around this colorfully complicated 12-page feature story in my role as Flamingo's executive editor.

First, we did our own research to get an understanding of what was uniquely Flamingo about Lilly Pulitzer's designer tale. Turns out, it was the way she connected dots across the state, just like we aimed to do at the magazine. Writer Nancy Klingener, a former NPR correspondent based in the Florida Keys, shared that Lilly bridged Palm Beach country clubbers with a cadre of artists and small business owners in Key West. After squaring away the story angle and writer, we dug into how and

where to find the best vintage Lilly threads in the Sunshine State and borrowed several pieces from two sources in South Florida: Nancy Noonan and Elinor Stephens.

To bring Lilly into the present tense, we hired a fresh-faced model, Eve Gay, who conveniently lived near our Flamingo headquarters in Ponte Vedra Beach and made herself available for a massive fitting. We also visited Emly Benham and Penelope T boutiques in Jacksonville Beach, obtaining accessories to keep Eve looking current and chic. Knowing we were going to make this story a combination feature and fashion piece, we had to get the location right. A scouting trip to Flagler University in St. Augustine, the surrounding streets and nearby Lightner Museum revealed that one Florida icon, Lilly Pulitzer, deserved to be photographed with another, Henry Flagler.

The day of the shoot, photographer Mary Beth Koeth arrived from Miami with her calm and positive demeanor. The weather and lighting were perfect. One of my favorite memories of that day was being on shoe patrol, making sure the bottoms of the borrowed Jimmy Choos that Gay was wearing didn't get scratched by covering them with yellow sticky notes. This story went back in time, yet it was also precocious, evoking the Palm Beach cool that is currently reflected in Apple TV's campy hit show “Palm Royale.”