

NEW ENGLAND'S LGBTQ+ MAGAZINE

VOL. 17

NO. 1

savoirflair

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LGBTQ+
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BOOKS

Forever Home

RIDES

Racing Pride

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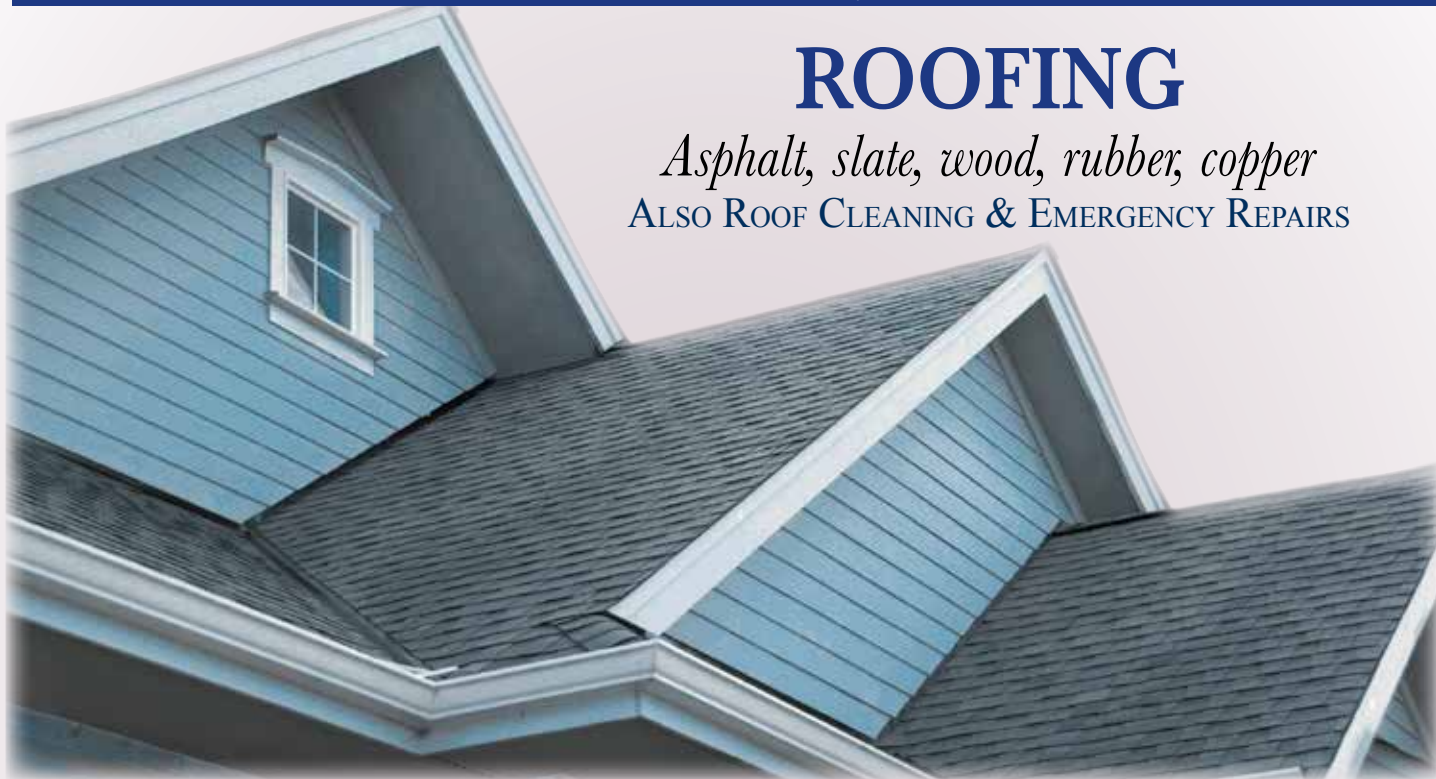
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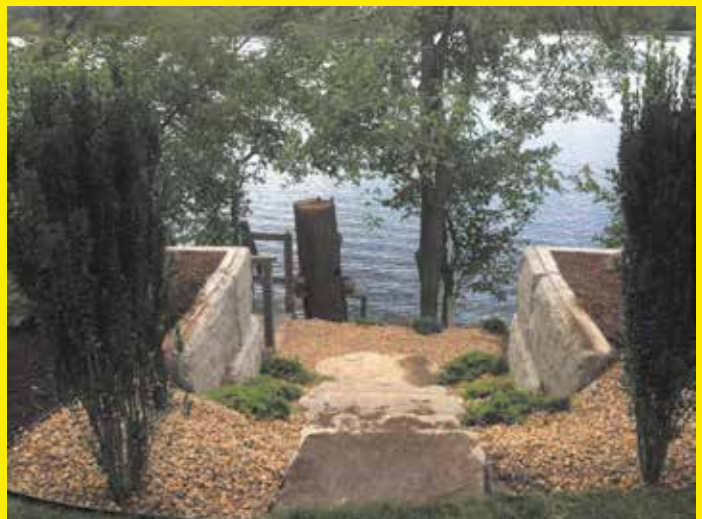


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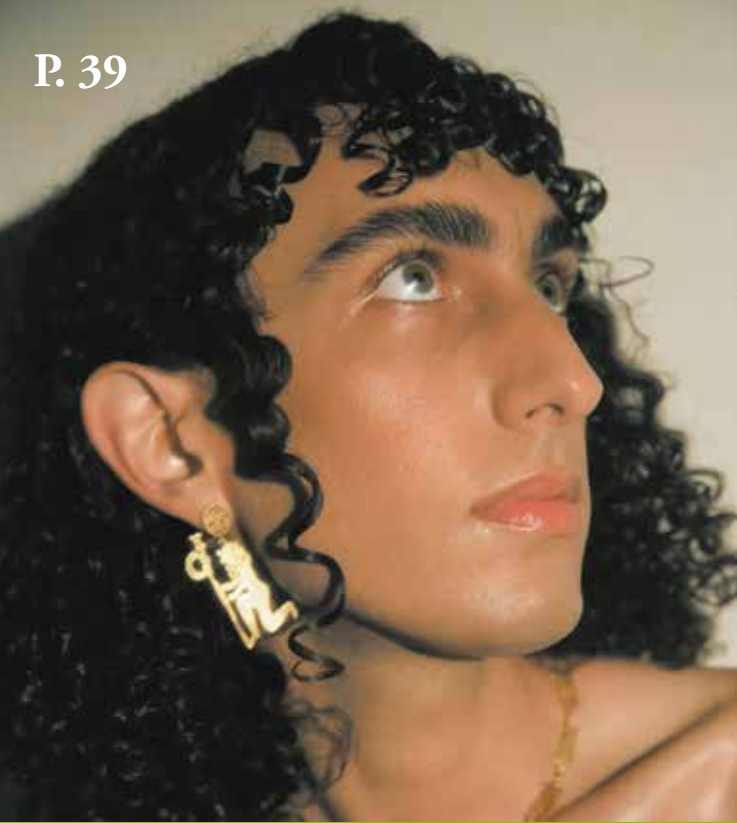
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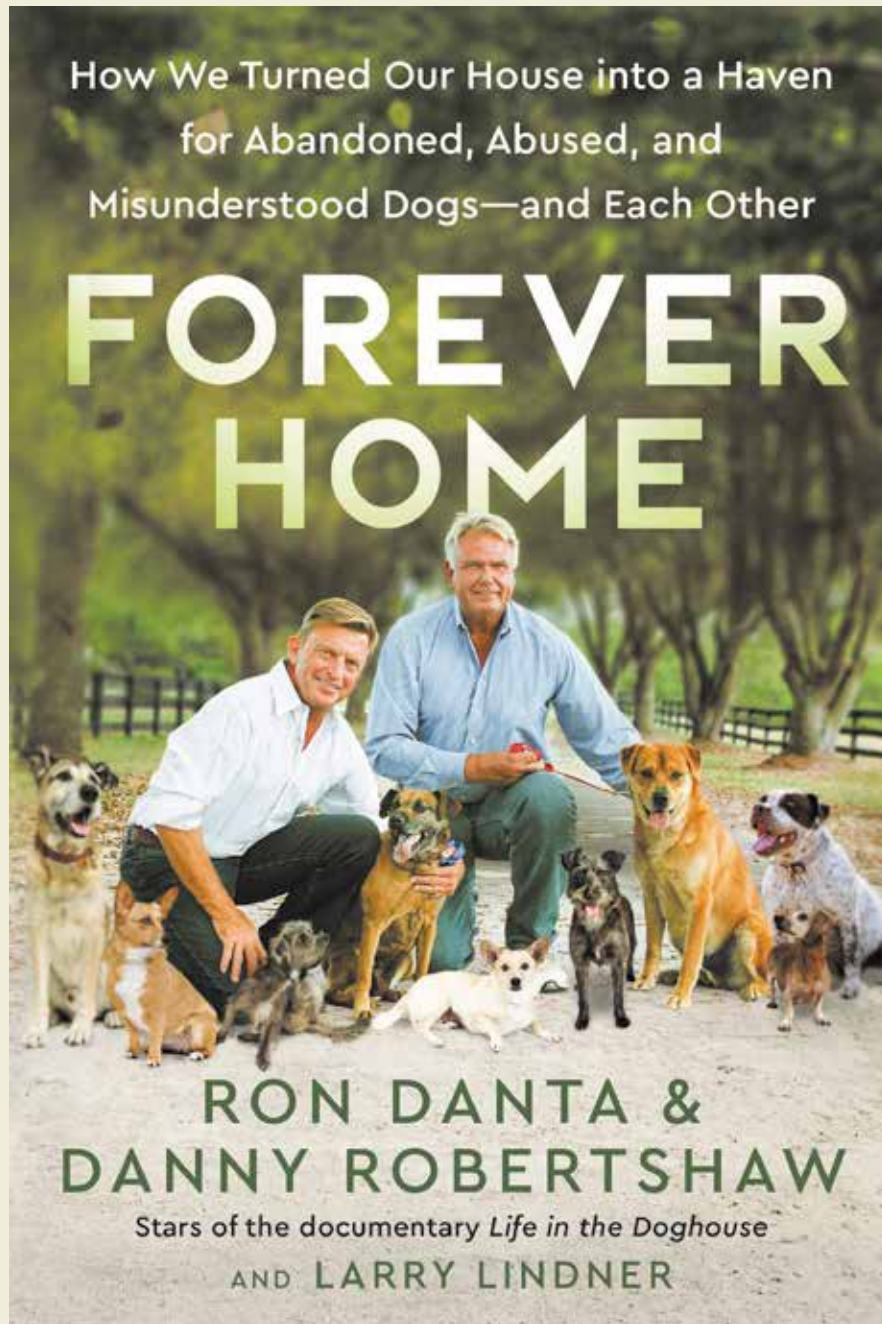
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Book Reviews by Terri Schlichenmeyer

“Forever Home: How We Turned Our House into a Haven for Abandoned, Abused, and Misunderstood Dogs – and Each Other”

by Ron Danta & Danny Robertshaw and Larry Lindner

c.2022, HarperOne, \$27.99, 262 pages

The leash is hooked tight. One end on your dog's collar or harness, the other end firmly wrapped around your wrist, and he's not going anywhere without you. Rescuing this puppers was the best thing ever and now, as in the new book by Ron Danta, Danny Robertshaw, and Larry Lindner, he's Forever Home.

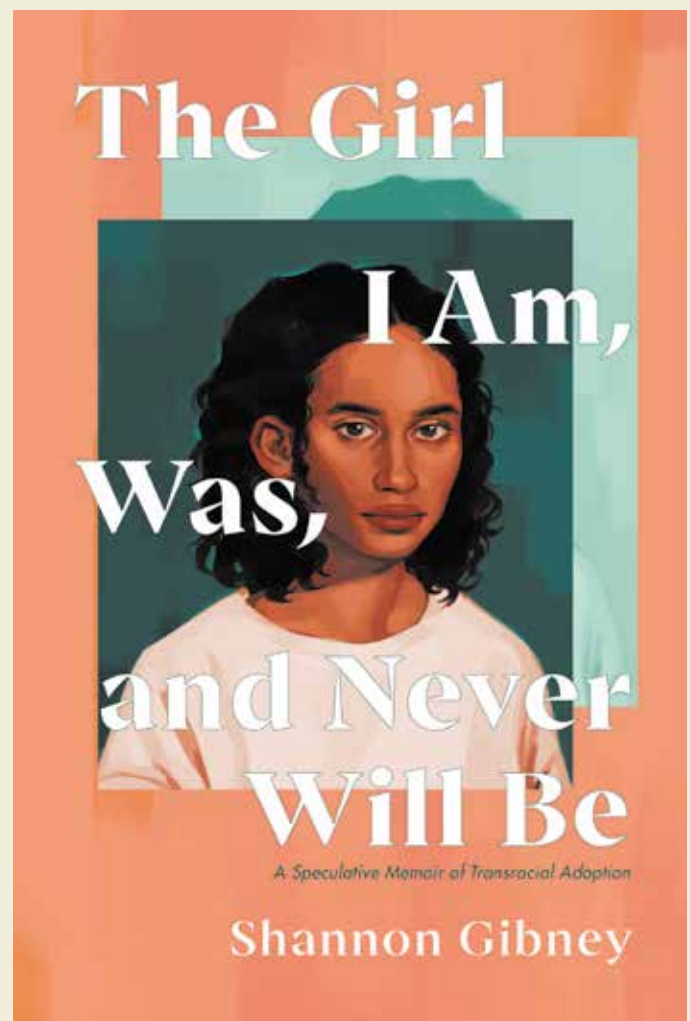
It all started on horseback.

Danny Robertshaw, who'd loved horses since he was small, was well-known as a rider and trainer up and down the east coast. Ron Danta had moved his horses to South Carolina to a farm he'd purchased with the hope of launching a business. The two men had met but it wasn't until their lives began to circle closer to one another that they became good friends; not long after they'd decided to become business partners, Danta divorced his wife and had an epiphany. The two men became partners in life. It helped that both had deep and endless loves of horses and dogs. When both men were boys, growing up in separate states, their mothers impressed upon them the habit of adopting stray dogs and unwanted, unloved pups. All their lives, both men had picked up side-of-the-road, mistreated, or elderly dogs, rehabilitated them, and rehomed them.

It wasn't cheap. The dogs they sheltered had varying medical problems, and many had issues stemming from fear, abandonment, and abuse. Danta and Robertshaw paid for the dogs' vet bills out-of-pocket, then housed and trained each pup until the dogs could be properly adopted out as "Danny & Ron dogs." That was a pure labor of love, but their house was soon wrecked and their furniture, shredded. At one time, having hundreds of dogs in their care, they turned their home into a "doghouse" – this, despite terrifying personal health crises; in the middle of hurricanes, filming a documentary, and their marriage; overseas, and in conjunction with causes and people close to their hearts.

"It's good to know that rescue – being loved, living with dignity, belonging – is happening on more than one front." Few can resist an adorable puppy. But what about the dogs who've seen better days? Can you resist scooping them up? If the answer is "no," then you'll want "Forever Home."

In a consistently upbeat manner, authors Robertshaw, Danta, and Lindner share the story of a movement that has saved the lives of countless dogs and other animals through the years, and the two men behind it. While these stories are sure heart-capturers, they're also very repetitious, as if the animal's name and breed are all that changes from tale to tale. Readers will notice, too, that there are lots of happy stories here but they're quite of-



ten preceded by wincing accounts of abuse and neglect. Still, that's not news to pet lovers. Heavy sigh.

Despite further confusion as to who's telling the story, "Forever Home" will appeal to anyone who's shared a bed with a dog, a sofa with a cat, or a ride with a horse. Open the cover, read a page, and you'll be hooked tight.

"The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be"

by Shannon Gibney

c.2023, Dutton, \$18.99, 245 pages

It's okay. You'll just make it up.

Not the right toys when you were a kid? No problem, you had your imagination. No impressive friends to brag on? You can always pretend to know the rich, famous, or infamous. Boring job, cheap house, hoopty car? It's fine, you can conjure whatever you want and who cares? As in the new book, "The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be" by Shannon Gibney, it's all a fantasy anyhow.



There are facts. Provable, honest facts.

Shannon Gibney was born January 30, 1975 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. So was Erin Powers. Both were daughters of a Black petty criminal, and a white lesbian mother who struggled to give them up.

Another fact: Shannon was Erin, before she was adopted. Shannon grew up in a middle-class white family with two brothers, a good education, toys, vacations, and stability. She had a “short relationship” with her birth father when she was an adult, and a longer (but shaky) one with her birth mother, which made her wonder what life might have been like, had she been raised as Erin...

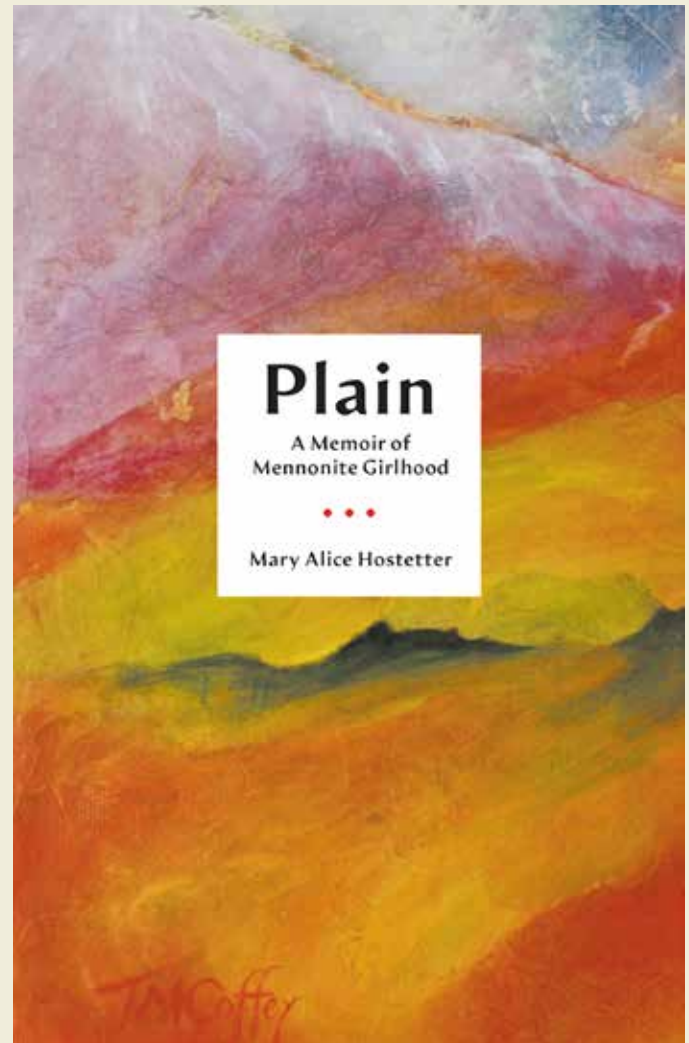
When Erin was nineteen, she learned that her mother was dying of breast cancer, and wasting what life she had left. At ten, Erin had to learn to get along with her mother’s latest girlfriend; and she had to listen to racism from the white side of her family. Also at ten, she saw a spiraled portal and another girl who looked like her, but she didn’t entirely understand it.

Every year on her birthday, her mother mourned an adoption she never wanted to happen.

When Shannon was ten years old, she was cruel to a boy who liked her, and she wasn’t sure why. When she was nineteen, her parents loaned her their car so she could visit her birth mother and her birth mother’s partner. And at 35, she was reminded of the legacy her mother left her, one she must be “diligent” about for the rest of her life.

A dozen pages or so into “The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be,” author Shannon Gibney wrestles with the nature of lies, explaining that her book does, and does not, use “manufactured literary devices.” In other words, get ready for one really weird read.

And it remains as such, until you understand what’s going on: the story here is fiction mixed with fact, an imaginary life framed by a real one. “Erin” is the fiction, as Gibney imagines her life as a series of struggles, personal and otherwise, living with her birth mother. “Shannon” is Gibney’s story of finding out who she is and where she came from. The tales merge and diverge, neither with a lot of sense until you’re well past the halfway mark of this book. Can you stick with it that long? Readers ages 15 and up



might at least try; you’ll lose a little time adjusting to “The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be,” but don’t worry. You’ll make it up.

“Plain: A Memoir of Mennonite Girlhood”

by Mary Alice Hostetter

c.2022, University of Wisconsin Press, \$26.95, 160 pages

Every kid wants to fit in.

The shoes everyone else has are mandatory, and flashing a movie character is key. Same brand of notebook, even the same kind of pens could matter if you hoped to be on the good side of the popular kids. Everyone wants to fit in but in the new book, “Plain” by Mary Alice Hostetter, going against the tide can eventually work out fine, too. The table in the kitchen where Mary Alice Hostetter grew up was a long one; it had to be, to fit twelve children

and two parents. The kitchen was the hub of the large Mennonite family, and though her parents never said the L-word, “treats like doughnuts were as clear an expression of love as hearing the words.”

Born in her parents’ bedroom in rural Pennsylvania, Hostetter remembers that there was a strict division between women’s work and men’s work among the pacifist Mennonites. Her father and brothers tended the farm, while her mother tended home and children. And yet, when she was needed, Hostetter was allowed to do “boy’s work,” and it left a heady feeling.

Figuring out her own recipe for soup at age ten was a moment of pride, but Hostetter longed for more. What was it like to have your own bedroom? How would feel to have sunshine on her legs instead of a long dress, for modesty?

At fourteen, she struggled with a main tenet of her faith; at fifteen, she accepted that tenet, attended church, and tried to be a good daughter, but life outside the community beckoned. Hostetter wanted to go to college.

Her parents wanted her to wait and see if she might want a family first.

Her growing up was “such a beautiful way of life,” she says, and “I sometimes felt almost proud I was part of that way of life... until I remembered how eager I was to get away as soon as I could.”

In “Plain,” author Mary Alice Hostetter writes, among other gentle memories, of her mother as a storyteller. Can something like that be inherited? Because Hostetter is a storyteller, too – and a fine one, at that.

If you’ve ever been a fan of “The Waltons” or Laura Ingalls Wilder, you have an inkling of the kind of old-fashioned tales you’ll find in Hostetter’s book. Life is quiet on her parents’ farm, she and her siblings each have two pairs of shoes (one for “good,” one for chores), dinnertime is family time, and modern things rarely appear.

The difference is that Hostetter’s tales are warm, but not cheerful. Proud, but also embarrassed. They chafe with the need to escape, but with one foot still on the farm and despite a quick, surprise happy ending and another kind of L-word, they leave hanging a wonder of what might have been.

But don’t hang. Instead, enjoy this book and leave it on the table, because you might want to read it again. “Plain” is worthy, and short enough to fit in your schedule now.

“The Family Outing: A Memoir”

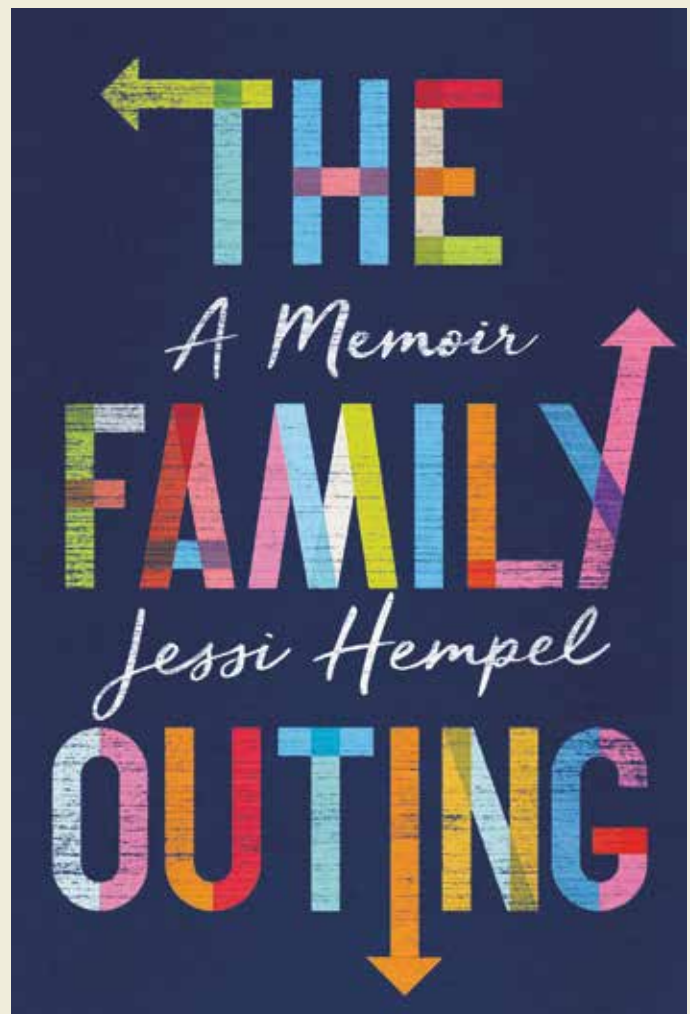
by Jessi Hempel

c.2022, HarperOne, \$27.95, 320 pages

Don’t tell the children.

For most families in America in the last century, that was the maxim to live by: the kids are on a need-to-know basis and since they’re kids, they don’t need to know. And so what did you miss? Did you know about familial philanthropy, rebellion, embarrassment, poverty? As in the new memoir, “The Family Outing” by Jessi Hempel, did secrets between parent and child run both ways?

“What happened to me?”



That's the big question Jessi Hempel had after many therapy sessions to rid herself of a recurring nightmare. She had plenty of good memories. Her recollection of growing up in a secure family with two siblings was sharp, wasn't it?

She thought so – until she started what she called “The Project.”

With permission from her parents and siblings, Hempel set up Skype and Zoom sessions and did one-on-one interviews with her family, to try to understand why her parents divorced, why her brother kept mostly to himself, how the family dynamics went awry, why her sister kept her distance, and how secrets messed everything up.

Hempel's father had an inkling as a young man that he was gay, but his own father counseled him to hide it. When he met the woman who would eventually be his wife, he was delighted to become a husband and father, as long as he could sustain it.

Years before, Hempel's mother was your typical 1960s teenager with a job at a local store, a crush on a slightly-older co-worker and, coincidentally, a serial killer loose near her Michigan neighborhood. Just after the killer was

caught, she realized that the co-worker she'd innocently flirted with might've been the killer's accomplice.

For nearly the rest of her life, she watched her back.

One secret, one we-don't-discuss-it, and a young-adult Hempel was holding something close herself. What else didn't she know? Why did she and her siblings feel the need for distance? She was trying to figure things out when the family imploded...

Ever had a dream that won't stop visiting every night? That's where author Jessi Hempel starts this memoir, and it's the perfect launching point for “The Family Outing.”

Just prepare yourself. The next step has Hempel telling her mother's tale for which, at the risk of being a spoiler, you'll want to leave the lights on. This account will leave readers good and well hooked, and ready for the rest of what turns out to be quite a detective story.

And yet, it's a ways away from the Sherlockian. Readers know what's ahead, we know the score before we get there, but the entwining of five separate lives in a fact-finding mission makes this book feel as though it has a surprise at every turn.

Sometimes, it's a good surprise. Sometimes, it's a bad one. A happily minimized amount of profanity and a total lack of overtness make “The Family Outing” a book you can share with almost anyone, adult, or ally. Read it, and you'll be wanting to tell everyone. 🏳️‍🌈

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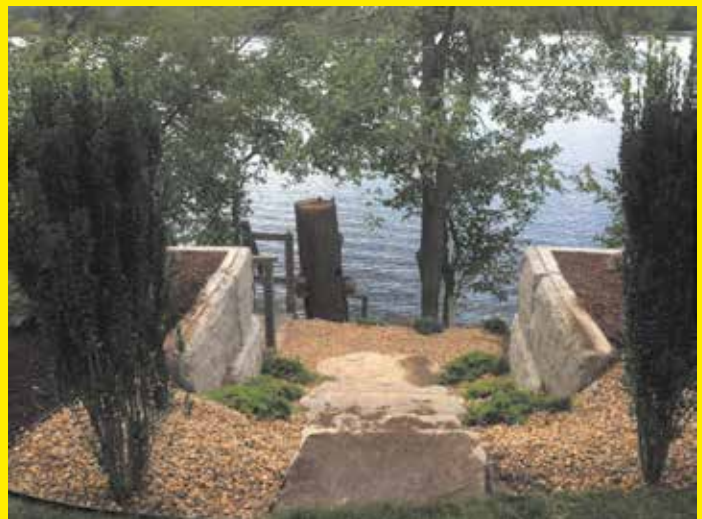


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Paramount+'s *Fire Island* with an all LGBTQ+ cast, filmed on location on Fire Island

BROS + FIRE ISLAND + I AM NOT OK WITH THIS

by Mark Adams

Say what you will (and you know that I will), this has been a good year for LGBTQ+ representation in the film industry. Gone are the days, we hope, of the “gay sidekick” of recent rom-coms, or, even worse, stereotypes the likes of Arthur Treacher, Franklin Pangborn (or, as my husband refers to him, “Franklin Ping-Pong”— don’t even ask), Clinton Sundberg. If you have no idea who they are, Google them and watch some of the films they appeared

in, certainly never openly gay, but always good for a laugh or two. Now we get to movies and TV series that have performers with their names appearing not just in the closing scroll credits, but as the leads.

I hope you’ve had a chance to take on the one that received a lot of press recently, the Billy Eichner film “Bros.” It is funny, well-produced and well-performed. Partially-filmed a while back in Provincetown, this was, it has been said, the first major release to feature an all-gay cast and production workers. Critics like to dwell on the fact that “Bros” didn’t do as well at the box-office as they would have liked. And yes, there was a tiring lot of pre-release promotional activity on social media (much of it by Eichner himself) to “get out and see my movie.” But judging on just the film itself, it was refreshing to see, and, at last look, was available for viewing in the privacy of your home on Peacock (which is free with several cable company plans, or you can get yourself a few days free viewing and then cancel your service. Did I say that...?) Eichner has been around for a while, previously most



Bros with Luke Macfarlane and Billy Eichner

known for his cable series “Billy On The Street,” where he literally ran through the streets of Manhattan, shoving a microphone into people’s faces and asking them silly questions. He was irritating, and could easily get on your nerves. I loved it.

While I’m mentioning streaming services that don’t really have a lot of “bang for the buck” (if you’ll pardon the expression), Paramount+ is yet another that might be bundled with your cable company’s 6-figure monthly bill. Among the better of their offerings is “Fire Island,” described in promotional material as “...a group of young men living together in a beachfront house as they search for romance, temptation and thrills on the island that’s brought the LGBTQ+ community together for decades.” People do get paid big bucks for writing this stuff. But I digress. Not being a fan of reality TV types, I had pretty much written this one off, but extreme boredom can lead you to do funny things. This was surprisingly entertaining (or I’d had too many sips of sherry), the men (and the women) were quite attractive, tho I’d never heard of any of them, and I do find it hard to believe that this stuff still goes on, but I don’t get out much. You can zip through the seven episodes pretty quickly and there are worse ways to spend a rainy day. When you search for

it, make sure you get the correct “Fire Island” — there appear to be a gazillion shows/movies with that title.

Another unexpectedly entertaining series is “I Am Not OK With This,” about Sydney, a teenage lesbian who moves to a new town and develops feelings for her best friend Dina. Does this sound like a series I’d like? I think not, but I was wrong. The seven 30-minute episodes moved quickly, thanks to a clever script and excellent performances from the actors, about whom I know nothing (well, I do, cause I looked them up). There is only one series, currently on Netflix; a second series was never made because of COVID.

Many have commented that it would be nice during award season to see some of these new and exciting LGBTQ+ shows nominated for Oscars, Emmys, or Golden whatever. You can add me to that list — as one of my colleagues commented, “Perhaps if Sean Penn had played the lead, (they’d) be talking about it more.” Would be nice to be proven wrong. 🏳️‍🌈

Mark Adams has been a popular contributor to LGBTQ+ media for many years, writing extensively on film and video of interest to the community. You can email him at vidioview@gmail.com with any of your favorites for a future scribbling.



I Am Not OK With This with Sophia Lillis and Wyatt Oleff





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Our LGBTQ+ Ancestors

Alice James + Katharine Peabody Loring

by Jeff Parsons

Alice James was a American diarist. She was sister of novelist Henry James. Her and Katharine Peabody Loring was one of the most celebrated *Boston Marriages*. "I wish you could know Katharine Loring. She is a most wonderful being. She had all the mere brute superiority which distinguishes man from woman combined with all the distinctly feminine virtues. There is nothing she cannot do from hewing wood and drawing water to driving run-away horses and educating all the women in North America."

Of his sister's relationship with Loring, Henry James, wrote, "A devotion so perfect and generous ... was a gift so rare ... that to brush



it aside would be almost an act of impiety. In Alice and Katharine, James found a model for the feminist characters in *The Bostonians*.

Born into a wealthy and intellectually active family James soon developed the psychological and physical problems that would end her life at age 43. Youngest of five children, she lived with her parents until their deaths in 1882.

James began to keep a diary in 1889. Full of witty, acerbic, insightful comments on English life



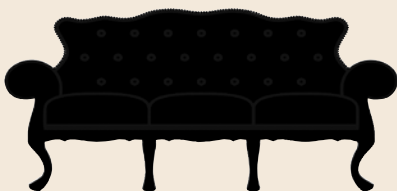
Top right: Alice James c. 1873,
Photographer unknown
Courtesy of the Houghton
Library, Harvard University

Left: Katharine Peabody Loring
c. 1890, Photographer unknown
Courtesy of the Houghton
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and manners, it included excerpts from various publications to support her opinions. The diary was not published for many years after her death due to sharp comments on various persons whom she had mentioned by name. The diary has made James something of a feminist icon. Henry, one of Alice's brothers, read this work with deep alarm (because of its candid indiscretions about family and friends) but also with enormous admiration. "The diary, he said, displayed for him Alice's great "energy and personality of intellectual and moral being."

Katharine Peabody Loring (1849-1943), along with a sister and two brothers were born to Caleb William Loring and his wife, Elizabeth Smith Peabody Loring. The family lived in Boston, but in 1852 Caleb built one of the first summer homes at Pride's Crossing, Beverly, which he called Burn Side. From a young age, Katharine was a prolific writer, and she also liked to sketch.

In 1884, James was "overwhelmed by violent turns of hysteria" she wrote in her diary that she was both suicidal and homicidal. She was struggling with the urge to kill her father, though this diary entry does not state the reason why she was patricidal. James traveled to New York to receive "therapeutic exercise" and in 1884 she received electrical "massage." She hoped that a change of scenery would improve her health.

Together with Katharine, Alice they relocated to London in 1884, at 10 Clarges Street, in mid-August. In the beginning of September, with Henry James leaving for Scotland, James and Loring moved to his rooms at 4 Bolton Street. At the end of the month, they were back to the United States. The pair returned to England shortly after until Alice's death from breast cancer in 1892 at the age of forty-three. From Alice's biography it appears that their relationship was romantic, as well as a platonic.

Alice herself, did not see her illness as a product of conflict between her character and her "usual world" surroundings. To her it was instead the outcome of a struggle between her "will" or "moral power" and her "body."

After Alice's death Katharine returned to her home in Beverly, MA. Along with her sister, Louise participated in humanitarian activities throughout World War I. They also did relief work after the Great Salem Fire of 1914 and were active in combatting tuberculosis: Louise Loring was the founder and president of the Aiken, South Carolina Sanitarium, director of the Beverly Hospital, and founder of the Anti-Tuberculosis Society in Beverly. In 1917, Katharine helped compile the Loring family genealogy and in 1932 she wrote, *The Earliest Summer Residents of the North Shore and Their Houses*. Always low-sighted, Katharine Loring became completely blind in old age, and taught herself braille. She died 94 years old in 1943 in Beverly, Massachusetts. She was buried with her sister Louisa, who died earlier in 1924, at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. 

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Two-Spirit *New England*

By Jeff Parsons

“Two-Spirit” is the term Native American/Indigenous/First Nations people use as synonymous with LGBTQ+. It was adapted from Anishinaabe term “niizh manidoowag,” meaning “two spirits,” and it was put into circulation in 1990, by Myra Laramée (Cree) as part of a deliberate resolution that came out of an Annual Inter-tribal Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. “Two-Spirit” is intended to convey the broad range of gender and sexuality roles with a term that is strategically open-ended, leaving room for people to assess each other based on their personal gifts and their contributions to the community, rather than being categorized by particular gender or affiliation or attraction.

The term was also designed to acknowledge the traditional Native American belief that Two-Spirits possess special gifts from the Creator. These gifts confer special status, and Two-Spirit individuals have been celebrated for their knowledge of both genders (like the Greek seer Tiresias, who had lived as a man and also, for a seven-year period, as a woman). As a result of this special status, Two-Spirits have traditionally been revered in many tribes as medicine men and women, and as shamans, visionaries, mystics, and conjurers, and they have been entrusted with their tribes’ oral tradition. In Iroquois tribes, it was even a tradition to put Two-Spirits in the front battle lines, to frighten the enemy with the sight of warrior women or men in women’s clothes.

To be clear, Native Americans are not one unified group, but thousands of distinct cultures, each with their own specific customs and terms surrounding gender and sexuality, and some prefer Indigenous people to Native, whereas Canadians use the term First Nations people. The term “Two-Spirit” has

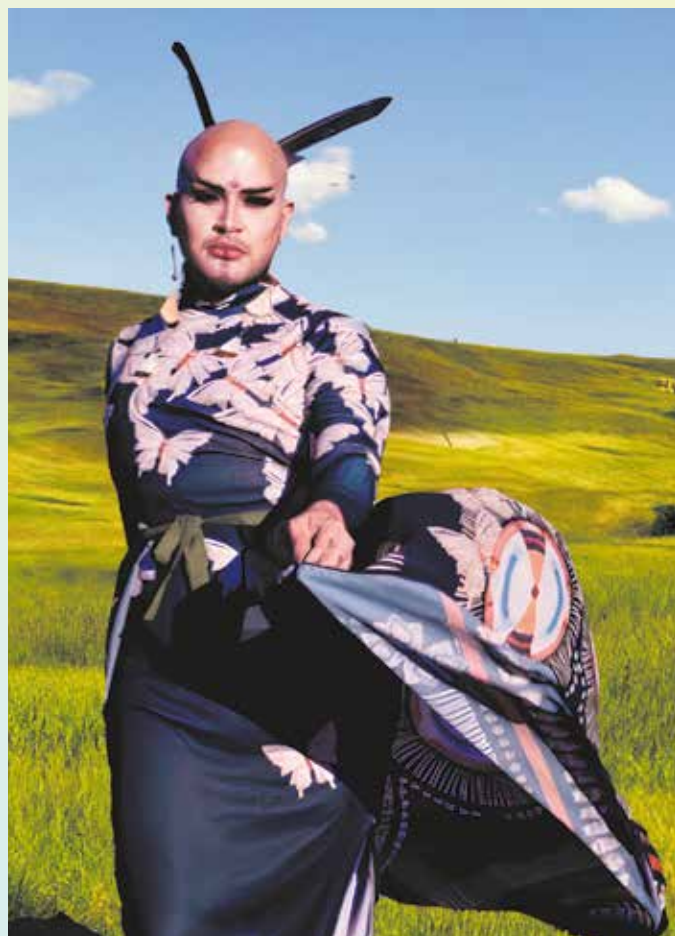


Photo by Sipis Recipaq Elumogesiik

Geo Soctomah Neptune, a Passamaquoddy Two-Spirit basket maker, educator, storyteller, and drag performer

become widespread as the Red Power movement of the 1960s and the LGBTQ+ movement have increased visibility for a diverse group that was driven underground for hundreds of years, after missionaries and settlers suppressed and destroyed any evidence of Two-Spirit culture, killing Two-Spirits as they forced Native Americans to adopt the restrictive roles prescribed by Christianity. Today the pendulum has swung back, and in some cases, same-sex marriages among Native Americans have been used as a model for legalizing same-sex marriages throughout the U.S., in much the same way that Native’s democratic social structures inspired American democracy.

Today, Two-Spirits are celebrated for their accomplishments in the arts, for campaigning against stereotypes, for revitalizing lost traditions, and for doing the hands-on work of protecting their communities from violence, and securing access to housing, healthcare, and spirituality.



Here are some highlights of Two-Spirit culture in New England:

Abenaki Two-Spirit

The Abenaki of northern Maine are members of the Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance, which brings together Two-Spirits and their allies among the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik, and Passamaquoddy, as well as the Penobscot, Innu, Inuit,

and the Métis of Labrador First Nations in Canada. Their goals are to bring visibility to their population, and also to advance specific policy goals, ranging from developing social supports for Two-Spirits to conducting and publishing research to preserving and sharing Two-Spirit cultural knowledge. More than anything, the Alliance advocates for equal rights and representation in all levels of society.

The Alliance has held local, regional and international gatherings in the region in collaboration with First Nations, Friendship Centres, and other regional 2SLGBTQ+ organizations, including three regional gatherings in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Bangor, Maine.



Statue of Keewakwa Abenaki Keenahbeh in Opechee Park in Laconia, New Hampshire (standing at 36 ft.)

Mi'kmaq Two-Spirit

In 2019, Bretten Hannam, a Two-Spirit, non-binary Mi'kmaq person, premiered the film, “Wildhood,” at the Toronto International Film Festival. The film follows Link (Phillip Lewitski), a Two-Spirit Mi'kmaq teenager, as he escapes his abusive father and searches for the mother he thought was dead.

“As I started to make short films,’ Hannam says, ‘they were inherently queer or Native Indigenous stories, and as I figured out my identity and my community, and where I fit, there were a lot of dissenting voices from different directions — “You can't do that” — and that makes me want to prove them wrong.”

“If you are going to pick a label for yourself, that's fine, that's your choice, your power. But if other people try to pick a label, or stuff you into a box, seldom do you fit, and occasionally, you will burst out, burn stuff down, and run away. There is a whole world and experiences that opens up. “

According to a review in Salon, “the film is an auspicious feature debut. Hannam displays a real sensitivity in telling a story about community and family.”



Filmmaker, Bretten Hannam

Photo Bretten Hannam



Iroquois Tribe courtesy of Wikipedia Commons



Pequot Two-Spirit

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribe in Connecticut legalized same-sex marriage within their jurisdiction in 2010. A recent study of their cemeteries revealed numerous instances of 17th-century burials in which the deceased were buried with objects that were exclusively associated with the opposite gender, which researchers have seen as evidence of “non-binary gender systems in seventeenth century southern New England.”

Narragansett-Harris Two Spirit

Narragansett Two-Spirit gender-queer powwow dancer Sherenté Mishitashin Harris has drawn attention to the Two-Spirit

cause through the documentary, *Being Thunder*, which highlights multiple dualities, for being both Indigenous and queer and for embracing both male and female identities.

French filmmaker Stéphanie Lamorré tells Harris’ story as a



Powwow dancer Sherenté Mishitashin Harris

“universal story about love and acceptance,” which shows audiences “how hard it is to survive and keep your roots alive” in a history where colonists wanted to “destroy and dominate the Native culture.”

Harris was dancing at powwow in the womb, and feels a strong connection to the rhythm and the dancing. According to the 21-year-old college student, who uses they/them pronouns, they are staging a rebellion simply by being themselves, “announcing themselves as Two-Spirit, and by dancing the traditionally female Fancy Shawl dance within pow wow circles” where judges and tribal members debated whether

it was appropriate. To take her place with the Fancy Shawl Dance as an out Two-Spirit makes a powerful statement.

“I identify as Two-Spirit to make clear that my queerness is based in a cultural framework that’s foreign to how we think about gender and sexuality today—it’s not so ‘queer’ at all. It acknowledges a tradition spanning back centuries.”

“My journey really started,” Sherenté said, “with the wish to dance, but it very quickly unfurled into a greater journey of needing to be seen for the many voiceless cousins and loved ones that I had that were Two-Spirit that did not feel welcome in our powwow circle or perhaps only felt welcome as a certain version of themselves that was not their true self.”

“I want every Indigenous kid to feel empowered and to know and to be reminded that they are something so unique and special and that they should never take that for granted, that they come from powerful people and that their ancestors are still with them every day.”

Passamaquoddy – Geo Soctomah Neptune

In a video for them, the Condé Nast online platform, Geo Soctomah Neptune, a Passamaquoddy Two-Spirit basket maker, educator, storyteller, and drag performer defines Two-Spirit as “a sexual orientation, a gender identity, a spiritual identity, [and] a societal role” that are not separate “but exist into one intersectional identity.”

Neptune crafts their identity through the traditional role of basket-maker, and they were designated a master basket-maker, the youngest in tribal memory, at 20 years old. They made history again in September



Soctomah Neptune, an educator and activist

Photo by Sipis Peqtiq Elanogessik

2020, when they were the first openly transgender person in Maine elected to a school board, in Indian Township, which consists of Passamaquoddy tribal lands in Eastern Maine.

The 32-year-old educator and activist plans to use the position to advocate for curricula that includes permanent art and cultural programs that will connect Passamaquoddy communities to the land, language, and culture where their ancestors have lived for more than 13,000 years.

“I feel very lucky,” they said, “to live in a place where my community accepts me because a lot of trans people don’t have that.”

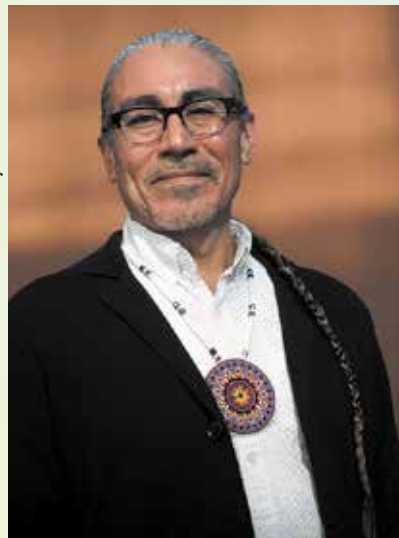
The NorthEast Two Spirit Society (NE2SS)

Harlan Pruden is a member of the Cree Nation from Alberta Canada, but when he came to New York City, he found the largest population of urban Native people, and founded

the the NorthEast Two Spirit Society (NE2SS) as a regional organization for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and Two-Spirit American Indians of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.” NE2SS is an advocacy group whose goals include greater visibility

and access to resources

for historically under-served and overlooked people, in essence a return to the cultural pride, respect, and spiritual richness Two-Spirits represented before colonialism. Pruden’s goal is to build partnerships and educate communities about their proud legacy, in addition to performing detailed needs assessments, in order to direct funding from the state government to autonomous.



Harlan Pruden, founder the the NorthEast Two Spirit Society (NE2SS)



Chief Shonga-Sa-Pa (Black Dog) and Chief Paw-Ne-No-Pa-Zhe (Not Afraid of the Pawnees), 1874 | Colorized by Photoshop Neural Filters

Photo courtesy of The Smithsonian Institution

Two-Spirit Organizations

In the words of Amelia Vigil, the Executive Director of the Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits organization (BAA-ITS), which sponsored the first ever Two-Spirit powwow in 2012, “If your community is rejecting you because homophobia is rampant like a disease... We have a cure and the cure is human connection.”

Taken together, all of these Two-Spirit artists, activists and leaders’ work is probably summed up best by ‘Respondent 13,’ in the 2013 Tribal Community Scan published by NE2SS: “I feel that the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights is interlocked and interwoven with tribal rights and tribal sovereignty. And what we want as tribal peoples. For me, I think all that goes hand in hand: our liberations are interlocked.”

Photos courtesy of The Globe and Mail

MINIMALIST Interior Design



By The Minimal Criminal



Image Credit: pinterest.com

There is a misperception that so many people have about minimalism. In fact, it's not only about having almost nothing in your house. Designing a minimalist home doesn't mean you need to sacrifice the design style that you like. The core principle is to remove unwanted distractions and emphasize the essence you value the most in the house.

When architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe idealized the concept of 'Less is more,' he surely knew what he was talking about. A minimalist home not only has minimum furniture, but each piece is minimal in itself. This doesn't necessarily mean the house will look cold, stark, unfinished, and sterile. In fact, after the process of minimizing, you'll be feeling more at home than ever. Your home will be a place you anticipate returning to every single day.

Since spacing is a real-world problem these days, the design aesthetics must not only make the space feel cozy and personal but do so while reducing the number of items to the bare essentials.

However, you can't live with just a bed, a stove, a fridge, and a wardrobe. They may be the necessities but you also need a washer and dryer, a television set overlooking the couch for entertainment, a microwave, a well-designed kitchen with all amenities, a dining area, a vanity, and the list just goes on from here.

The truth of the matter is, even though 'less is more,' you still need more to live a comfortable and sustainable life.

So, how do we fix the problem of small spaces?

We have a solution. There is a whole division of interior design that focuses on minimalism and decluttering your space while optimizing the furniture and fixtures for comfortable living. And I have decided to share some of these pearls of wisdom with you so you can incorporate minimalist interior design in your home too.

Where it all started...

The journey of the minimalist home design was conceptualized based on the Zen philosophy that governs many oriental countries. In places like Japan, Korea, and other such regions, the available square footage to build a home is quite limited. Even the apartment spaces available are quite scanty.

This, however, did not deter Asian interior designers from developing the best possible home interiors with expressive character. They embraced the teachings of Buddha and opted to enhance the functionality of their home without giving up the comforts.

Zen philosophy revolves around finding a peaceful living in your surroundings. Therefore, it is not about relinquishing luxe, rather the

sheer art of inculcating greenery, creating open spaces, and introducing natural elements. These philosophical bends are all connected together to enrich human life by grounding man with nature. Zen is about decluttering your life to find peace within yourself, and today we will learn how to incorporate that into our fast-paced lifestyle.

How to integrate minimalist design into your home without compromising on essentials.

SUBTLE AND NEUTRAL COLOR SCHEMES

One of the first and foremost principles of minimalist interior design is the use of a neutral color scheme or pastel shades of natural hues. Since minimalism is grounded in simplicity, a vibrant color palette is unconventional. However, if you prefer a splash of shading in your interior design, you can always add that with patterns and textures. You can use simple lines on the walls against the neutral colors or use items of home decor with chrome colors and arrange them in alternate placements. It creates a colorful design in your minimalist home. Circling back to the ideal color palette, you can use white walls for the most minimalist look. This inadvertently creates a blank canvas for your design ideas. You can get creative with your color scheme as long as you keep it to monochromes of green, brown, beige, and white shades for the most part.

Feel free to introduce patterns into your minimalist space but keep them simple with clean lines against the monochromatic color scheme.

OPEN UP THE SPACE

Swinging doors and windows tend to obstruct open areas of the living space. In order to minimize the intrusion, consider installing sliding doors and windows in your home. Even if you have a large home, these design trends work well with minimalism.



Image Credit: pinterest.com

If, on the other hand, you have a small home or apartment, these sliding doors sure work wonders but there's more. You can install sweet little collapsible room dividers and screens to create separate spaces. They can be stored away when not in use, thereby opening up the living space for a smooth flow of natural elements such as light and air.

INTRODUCTION OF NATURAL LIGHT AND LIGHTING

The third most important component of minimalist interior design styles is derived directly from Japanese interior design.

You need tons of natural light and breeze in your home.

Do you remember the layout of Shinchan's home? Although animated, it is a classic example of minimalist décor. The large glass doors allow abundant natural light to flow into the interiors of the house, thus cleaning the air and the aura.

Then there is the lighting. Minimalist decor promotes the use of functional lightings such as overhead LEDs, pendant lights with simple lines, and sconces with monochrome themes. You can scatter these lighting fixtures around the house, for, it is important that you keep a minimalist home well-lit. Since the design style promotes using open spaces, lighting up the house makes the space feel expansive, especially in small homes.

If you are so inclined, you can install floor lamps as well but ensure that they do not hinder the open spaces. Also, chandeliers can work if they adhere to minimalist designs.

GO GREEN

No, we are not talking about installing eco-friendly furniture and fixtures, although that is something we do recommend.

More to the point, we are talking about introducing greenery in your living space. Culturally speaking, the introduction of greenery adds a sense of life in your home along with the connotations of good luck and good vibes.

continues on page 60



Image Credit: pinterest.com

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Mid century modernism is at the core of my Jonathan's design and philosophy. His furniture and lighting reproduces the feel and motifs of Mid Century design. Although Jonathan has been also inspired in some cases by the counterculture designs of the 60's. His design philosophy is a craft-based approach and the use of impeccable materials resulting in chic and elegant products made to classical proportions, often disrupted by an almost subversive readiness to abandon his self-imposed rules and surprise us.

JA

Jonathan Adler

His unique design vision

by D. Bullen

Jonathan Adler is a potter, interior decorator, and author whose passion for culture and craftsmanship come through in every single one of his projects. His design inspirations, which started with pottery, have mainly come from the mid-century modern style art and global pop culture. Now in addition to designing pottery products, as well as producing some stellar interior designs, Adler maintains ongoing collaborations with luxury brands such as The Shade Store for light filtering & blackout roller shades; Kravet, with carpets, fabrics, and trims, Paperless Post, for invitations. Col-



Jonathan's sense of humor is evident in these slightly naughty pottery motifs.



Jonathan Adler relaxes surrounded by his many creations.

laborations in the past have ranged from Clinique to Fisher Price, Toms to Motorola, among many others.

Adler started his career as a potter. He discovered the pottery wheel at a summer camp when he was 12, then prevailed on his parents to buy a wheel of his own, as well as a kiln for firing his creations. In the southern New Jersey household where he grew up, creativity and design were held in high regard by his father, an attorney, and by his mother, an artist, who collected modernist furniture for their contemporary home. On Adler's website, his bio states: "spends entire adolescence in basement...throwing pots."

When Adler went off to Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, he selected semiotics and art history for his concentrations, but he continued to work with ceramics at Rhode Island School of Design nearby, making Chanel-inspired teapots and Sevres-inspired urns that reflected his interest in pop culture, early hip hop, contemporary art, and fashion. Adler's conservative teachers dismissed his work as superficial. In an interview with Dominic



Jonathan's uses unique motifs in his pottery

Lutyens for London's Independent, he recalled one instructor cautioning him against pursuing a career in the creative arts. "I don't think you have what it takes," Adler recalled being told, adding, "I was crushed."

After a stint in a New York City talent agency, which gave him an intense dislike for the entertainment industry, Adler ventured back into ceramics full-time around 1993, when some financial support from his parents allowed him to experiment with starkly chic vases and other wares in mostly black and white shades, with a signature vertical-stripe design. This work led to his first big break when Aero, a home design store in SoHo, picked up his work. Then then led to an order from Barneys New York, the high-end retailer.

Through Barneys, Adler's wares found celebrity buyers such as French film star Catherine Deneuve, and fashion designers from Geoffrey Beene to Cynthia Rowley. By 1998, his work had taken off, and he opened his own store in SoHo. At this point, he was no longer making every piece by hand, but he had started to contract with pottery-makers in Peru, whom he met through a nonprofit called Aid to Artisans. Peruvian artisans allowed him to launch an affordable line called "Pot au Porter." By the end of the 1990s, his business was earning more than \$2 million annually, and both Adler and his wares were regularly mentioned in magazines that target the home and home design.

Adler's growth from potter to interior designer continued when he launched a furniture line under his name in 2002.

He also began taking interior design jobs for private clients, which led to larger-scale hotel-renovation projects. Adler's signature touch was opening doors, and a project in the wealthy Florida enclave of Palm Beach led to another in the Parker Palm Springs desert resort in Palm Springs, California. In an interview with the New York Times, Adler put his insouciant wit and style on display when he said that "If the hotel is where your elegant great-aunt lives, the restaurant is where her wastrel husband spends his time." Adler told the Times that he wanted the Palm Springs resort to be a "baronial Mick Jagger castle in the 'Let It Bleed' era. Lurid, slightly menacing with a psychedelic overlay of Gothic chairs with mod upholstery."

By 2005, Adler was presiding over a veritable home décor empire, with seven stores nation-wide, and a full line of accessories for the bed, bath, and dining room. He still made the occasional ceramic piece, selling his higher-end wares under the limited-edition "Couture" line. These works were liable to take inspiration from somewhat unusual sources,



Jonathan with partner, Simon Doonan on the left

such as the architecture of Reform synagogues. “I have always been driven by and fantasized about moving into those synagogues,” he told the New York Times. “They have such a groovy, brutalist, modern thing going on. Growing up, we went to a Conservative synagogue, and I was always jealous of those kids who went to Reform.”

Today Adler’s business operates 26 stores worldwide as well as an e-commerce site, and a wholesale business with over 1,000 locations worldwide. In addition to ceramic design, Jonathan Adler Enterprises has expanded to become a design brand offering decorative objects, tabletop collections, bedding, bath accessories, gifts, candles, furniture, rugs, pillows, lighting, and most recently handbags.

Through it all, Adler has managed to maintain a healthy dose of eccentricity in his designs, with a central theme running through every project. “My entire philosophy,” Adler said, “is that when you come home, your house should have the effect of Zoloft. I truly believe that good decorating can cure a lot of psychological ills, and make you feel good about yourself as well as your home.”

Adler has created this effect with his designs by sticking close to his love of pottery, and the creative process that grew out of his influences. “My career has been completely serendipitous,” he says. “When I chose to become a potter, I feared I was sacrificing any kind of financial security and would spend my life just peddling my work at rain-soaked crafts fairs,” but Adler’s career is testimony to the power of good design, to find and grow its audience.

Adler recently returned to his Soho roots by opening Atelier Adler, a three-story, 6,000-square-foot a retail-meets-creative studio experience in SoHo near the studio where he began.

He has expanded his empire into print as well, with the publication of his first book, a 2005 how-to guide for do-it-yourself decorating and entertaining. *My Prescription for Anti-Depressive Living*, published by Regan Books, was built around witticisms such as “minimalism is a bummer,” and “We believe that when it comes to decorating, the wife is always right. Unless the husband is gay.”



Jonathan’s pottery is predominantly white, giving it a sculptural quality.

Adler has also become an active member of the LGBTQ+ community. He married his partner, Simon Doonan, in California in 2008. Adler and Doonan are frequently profiled together, for the British-born Doonan is also a renowned style-setter and author, serving as the creative director for Barneys New York, as well as an occasional judge on the since-canceled reality series *America’s Next Top Model*.

Adler first publicly expressed his support for same-sex marriage in 2009 and works with various organizations to support LGBTQ+ rights. He and Doonan have both filmed videos for Dan Savage’s “It Gets Better Project.” They live in an apartment in Greenwich Village, and also spend time at a house on Shelter Island. 🏳️‍🌈

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Darius Khonsary JEWELRY DESIGNER

By Nicholas McCarty

Darius Khonsary is an artist and designer of fine jewelry who works under the Darius Jewels brand. She released her first collection of fine jewelry in the winter of 2020. She is known for her role in Gucci's 2020 fashion film, *Ouverture of Something That Never Ended*, directed by Alessandro Michele and Gus Van Sant.

Khonsary, a trans woman, has infused each piece with a very deliberate homage to femininity. At the age of five, Khonsary received a gift of jewelry from her grandmother: a solid gold pendant designed around the Persian numerology that represented the moment of her birth. "She said to me, 'This pendant is your magic square... She told me it was my protection. What it instilled in me is that magic is the fabric that



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Neckless From The Darius Collection

makes up our universe, and jewelry—specifically metals and gemstones—are the talismans that help us to connect to our own inner power.” With this gift, jewelry was imbued with magic and also with cultural significance, preserving her connection to her Iranian heritage.

Khonsary says that jewelry also symbolizes the transformational nature of creativity and identity. As a transgender woman, she feels that the magic of the creative process mirrors the potential of what she calls her ‘transness,’ and her trans sisterhood. “Transness is both enduring and eternal,” she says, “and many ancient cultures regard transgender individuals as sacred, holding places of power in society through their ability to tap into a vastness of archetypal cosmic energies.”

“Magic and transformation,” she elaborates, “have always been a part of the trans experience. Transformation as a process is associated with divinity, thinning the barrier between physical and spiritual worlds.” The pieces in her collection, she says, “speak to both ancient past and deep future, opening up the possibility of collapsing the expanse of time.”

Khonsary’s jewelry line draws on symbols and depictions of feminine archetypes that are both whimsical and reverent in their connection to Persian archaeology as well as her matrilineal Ancient Persian ancestry.

Each design is refined until it activates ancient energies, both through her choice of materials and the techniques she uses. Each piece she designs is manufactured by hand by a master jeweler in Los Angeles using ethically and ecologically sourced materials. Using a traditional Iranian technique, each piece is cast in 18k gold, then gilded with 24k gold, resulting in a warm, satin finish.

Khonsary’s jewelry is not gendered, but it is not unisex either: it is designed to be beautiful on its own terms, and to add beauty to whoever finds it beautiful. This is true for her intricate Sisters necklace or Snake Charmer ear pendants, her double stone rings, her zodiac charms and her signature chains studded with diamonds or precious gemstones. “It took a while to create my own language,” Khonsary says. “I’ll never forget the feeling I had when I saw something I’d designed forged in metal. It’s the highest honor I could ever ask for.”

“For as long as I can remember,” Khonsary says, “I have collected imagery and taken notes on things that inspired me. The inspirations could have been things I saw in museums or books. So much information has been lost from the ancient world, and I’m fascinated by these rare surviving fragments. Most of all, I’m drawn to symbols whose meaning has been obscured or hidden by the passage of time. I believe these symbols have their own kind of primordial power, and by working on them, I’m inviting them into the present.”



The Sister's Necklace From The Darius Collection

Khonsary draws on ancient art, including Akkadian cylinder seals, for pieces such as The Sisters necklace, which was the first piece Khonsary designed. She put her own spin on

the symbols the figures carried, turning the moon, sun, and water jug into emblems of archetypal feminine energy and



Neckless From The Darius Collection

magic that defy the cookie cutter motifs of mainstream jewelry designs. With this combination of ancient images and transformative modern magic, Khonsary's work achieves an elemental beauty that is at home in any time.

Her eponymous brand, Darius, ranges from \$1,000 for small hoop earrings up to \$33,000 for an antique Burmese double ruby ring. 🏳️‍🌈

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Our *Favorite* Wedding Photos

by Chloe Belle

Over the years, we have had the privilege of sharing glimpses of our communities' weddings. Whether it be an informal or a formal event, we have been able to experience these special days in a small way, thanks to the couples and their talented photographers. We have chosen some of our favorite LGBTQ+ wedding photographs.

Michele & Amy Lee, Photographer Marina Zinovyeva

Meeting in 2008, this Rhode Island couple knew it was I do after two weeks into dating. Michele said "I'm going to marry you" and I said, "I hope you mean that!" They did with a seaside wedding at the Bristol Harbor Inn.





Marc and John, Photographer David Murray

On a beautiful February evening, after a fresh blanket of snow fall, Marc and John were married at an intimate outdoor ceremony at Vermont's Riverside Farm. They wanted to arrive by themselves as a couple, but as equals as men. Their solution: riding independently next to each other on horseback.

Joseph & Efrain Photographer Paul Nash

Meeting in 2005, while Joseph was working at Verizon Wireless, Efrain had come in to upgrade one of his sister's cell phones. Obviously he got his own upgrade by meeting his future partner. They choose Connecticut's Mill on the River to celebrate their wedding.

Despite rain that fell for the majority of the day, they had a beautiful outdoor ceremony under the gazebo next to Vinton's Millpond.





Tamar & Kris, Photographer Seth Kaye

The Red Barn at Hampshire College in Amherst is a scenic venue where, weather permitting, ceremonies are held outdoors beneath an impressively large oak tree. Tamar and Chris and their many friends had a joyous occasion.



Emily & Bianca, Photographer Julie Ryan

Emily & Bianca met while working at a Boston hospital, where Bianca is a nurse and Emily is a police officer. What an exciting send off outside in Copley Square!



Beth and Amanda Photographer Magenta Weddings

Amanda and Beth met in the fall of 1999 while serving in the military but it wasn't until 2012 that they tied the knot in Connecticut at the Madison Beach Hotel. The brides took advantage of the hotel's private beach to have some stunning, romantic photos taken against the breathtaking backdrop of Long Island Sound.





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Our *Favorite* Wedding Photos



Danielle & Andi

Photographer Bryan Avigne

Meeting on Tinder during the height of the pandemic, this charming couple had their first wedding on the beach in Provincetown, without bringing in any outside guests, to keep the community safe pre-vaccine. “Many people gathered and watched us exchange our vows, while many others drove through the rotary at the Breakwater smiling and waving to show their approval.”

Danielle and Andi’s second, traditional ceremony, with family and a multitude of friends, took place at the Apple Tree Inn, in Lenox, MA, with the ceremony on the lawn overlooking the Berkshires.

Daniel & Séan

Photographer Kristin Maria

Meeting at a friend’s birthday party in Brooklyn, NY, this accomplished couple had their destination wedding in Iceland. “It was where we went on our first vacation together and during that trip we fell both in love with Iceland and deeply in love with each other.”



Julie & Laura

Photographer Kristen Schuler

Meeting at a Boston Hospital in May 2007, Julie & Laura became fast friends. In May 2011, they began dating saying, “Our work friendship turned into an easy, loving and fulfilling relationship.” They married shortly after, at the Red Lion Inn, near the ocean in Cohasset, MA and couldn’t be happier. 🏳️‍🌈

WITH THIS RING, I THEE WED

By Chloe Belle

Dating as far back as the Egyptians, wedding rings were exchanged. The materials that they were made out of changed throughout time as a variety of materials became available. The earliest wedding bands were said to be made of grass or straw. Leather, bone and stone were also used. Today you have only your imagination and a good jeweler to help with the limitless possibilities for your commitment rings.

The ring is said to be a symbol of eternity, life, happiness and never ending love. It's a wonderful way to have an outward display of your commitment to one another. Even before commitment ceremonies, civil unions and legal marriage LGBTQ+ couples used the exchange of rings to symbolize their love for one another. Today the tradition continues. How lovely that couples can now walk into community friendly jewelry stores and go through all the drama of picking out the rings together!

Today we don't see many straw or leather rings given - most people opt for silver or gold rings. Sounds simple, right? Oh no - nothing is ever that simple. Jewelry is a very personal thing and therefore much thought is usually put into the style of the rings.

Of course you can always use the mail order ads and web sites in just about any LGBTQ+ publication to find commitment rings, but why not use the many LGBTQ+ owned and friendly jewelers listed in this magazine and with other local resources? Now many couples decide on simple gold bands in a variety of widths - but why stop there? There are endless numbers of beautiful designs to choose from, as well as the idea of adding gemstones to the mix. And one great thing about a good jeweler, if you don't see what you want - they can usually make a custom design for you.

The diamond is still the most popular choice when adding stones into the ring - but if diamonds aren't your thing, consider the many options open to you. Below are listed a few of the more common gemstones and their meanings:

DIAMOND - innocence, success, conjugal affection, unshakable faith and the ever popular proposal of marriage

AMETHYST - sexual fulfillment, sincerity

AQUAMARINE - success in all endeavors

EMERALD - bright future, love, success

JASPER - happy omen for success and love

LAPIS LAZULI - faithful love

ONYX - happy marriage

OPAL - great wealth and success, hope

RUBY - lucky in love, contentment

PEARL - health and longevity

PERIDOT - married happiness

TOPEZ - fidelity



Many people choose gems because they may like the color, it's their birthstone, or for a variety of other reasons. It is often said that gem stones have a magical purpose. The legend says that many protective qualities and the prospect of good fortune were bestowed upon those that wore them. What ever your choice, the rings you choose should be a reflection of the love that you share with one another. And while you're at it, think about having them engraved; it's a nice little touch that will warm your hearts in years to come. 🏳️‍🌈

Nahant Country Club

Jeff Parsons with Yasmene Discroll

How long has Nahant Country Club been in operations and what is the history of the property?

The history of Nahant Country Club starts when it was built in 1825 by Frederic Tudor, locally known as The Ice King. Tudor built the NCC estate as his summer cottage after making a fortune shipping ice from local New England ponds to warm climates across the globe. The NCC is even home to the 1938 wedding reception of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's son. The property is nestled in the middle of Nahant, Massachusetts, a maritime community located 20 minutes north of Boston. We are situated on seven acres of native lawns and gardens, creating the perfect indoor and outdoor space for your celebration, just minutes from the beach. We have four separate & unique spaces indoors and out, that accommodate up to 200+ guests. The name can be a little tricky because its not a 'country club' by modern day definition. We are truly a historic mansion used for private wedding and events.



Yasmene Discroll

What is your title and your role at Nahant Country Club?

I own the business and operate the mansion for private events—yet we are open to the public! Let's just say I wear many hats. Today, I would say my most important role is identifying what people need or want and working to make that come to life. Being a small business owner in a tough economy, while identifying what my clients need and how to make it happen for them, that's my biggest role today.

What makes Nahant Country Club different from other venues?

We are not a corporate machine. We cater each event to the individual and have been doing that for a long time. We're not a pop-up venue or a fad. We have found our niche in providing timeless events that combine our expertise and our clients vision.

Do you have many LGBTQ+ clients?

We have had many but it's never enough.

What are some of your favorite LGBTQ+ weddings that have taken place at Nahant Country Club?

Well I can't go choosing favorites because we have had only amazing and beautiful experiences with our LGBTQ+ couples! And let's be honest—if I start choosing favorites I'll be in trouble. :)

We have heard that you have a high level of client satisfaction, what's your secret?

Whether it is a shower or a wedding all of our events are treated with the same special attention. We're creative and flexible and backed with over 20 years of industry experience. I have a very easy going approach to event planning and that makes my guests comfortable. Our goal is making our clients feel part of the family. I think it's a combination of our approach to planning successful weddings, the customized service we provide and reasonable pricing are what make our guests truly happy.

What makes you proud of being a part of this venue?

This one grabs my heart. I moved to Nahant as a lost 12 year old girl from Toronto, Canada. My mom had remarried a man that would later become my father, best friend and business partner. He started here in 1987 and taught me everything I know. To be able to continue his legacy doing what I love makes me very proud. I'm also very proud of my staff. Each relationship plays an important role in the success of the business and satisfaction of my clients. Seasons change and people come and go but what we carry from them stands the test of time, each person leaving their mark. I'm proud of that too.

What is the biggest challenge you face when organizing an event or wedding?

I would say the biggest challenge of today is staffing... and the often unreliable product availability... and price increases everywhere. But other than that, its all good. :) 🇳🇮



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THE BRITISH ARE COMING | RACING PRIDE



Above: Stunt Driver/Drift Racer Zandara Kennedy, Photo Courtesy of Racing Pride

by John Axelrod

Last year UK's Racing Pride has announced a major expansion of its world-leading movement to positively promote LGBTQ+ inclusion through motorsport with the addition of a series of exciting new ambassadors and partners across North American motorsport. Launched in June 2019 with a group of UK-based ambassadors and partners, Racing Pride's goal is to positively promote LGBTQ+ inclusivity through the platform of motorsport. This involves highlighting the achievements and experiences of LGBTQ+ people involved in all aspects of motorsport, encouraging increased participation, and providing opportunities for those within the motorsport



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Travis Shumake behind the wheel, Photo courtesy of phoenixmag.com

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industry and fans of the sport to become visible allies for the LGBTQ+ community. Motorsport has a huge reach and by galvanising the sport to promote inclusivity, Racing Pride can inspire positive attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community in society more broadly.

Their website states “Visibility is a powerful thing. Someone, after all, has to be the first one on the dance floor. Or the racetrack. We choose to go race, go autocross, go to track days, go rally, go to media events, go everywhere as our authentic, whole selves. And we hope others will join us in this effort.”

Offering education around allyship, Racing Pride has worked with, and continues to work with, organizations and individuals across motorsport from grass roots to elite professional level. Topics of coverage are broad and include several automotive subcultures, but the common aim of all of our content is to increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ people in motorsports and the automotive industry.

Dr. Richard Morris, the Co-Founder and Director of Partner Relations at Racing Pride said in a statement—that the reception to the organization’s expansion has “been overwhelmingly positive.” They have already lined up a network of athlete Ambassadors, along with corporate and organizational partners to establish themselves in North America.

“I don’t underestimate the scale of the work ahead if we’re to have the impact we want to,” said Morris, “but I hope that this launch and the actions we’re going to take across this year and beyond will inspire members of the LGBTQ+ community in North America to believe that they can, and do, belong in motorsport.”

Among the Ambassadors in North America are stock car drivers Devon Rouse and Zach Herrin, drag racer Travis Shumake, touring car driver Tom O’Gorman, and stunt driver/drift racer Zandara Kennedy.

“I’ve been around motorsports for about 15 years now – the first 7 or so were all grassroots – then more re-

cently as a career.” said O’Gorman. “I started participating at 15-16 years old and didn’t come out until I was about 18, so my entry into motorsports and my self-acceptance as a gay man were on a similar timeline, but racing came first.”

However, O’Gorman experienced how much his presence was both a blessing and a curse. “Outside of my personal experience,” O’Gorman continued, “I’ve had a handful of LGBTQ+ people reach out to me as I’ve put my story out there. One worked in a leadership role with a racing series in the 90s. They told me about how they knew they were not safe to live authentically because they needed to maintain a level of respect from their coworkers, event participants, etc. to do their job effectively. It broke my heart to hear that.” “Others have shared that they have been cautious to bring significant others to events or dull aspects of their personalities at the track in order to fly under the radar or avoid confrontation,” said O’Gorman. “On the other hand, some have reached out more recently to say they feel empowered like I do. From these stories and my own experience, I feel motorsports has progressed similarly

to society as a whole; we’ve made a lot of progress but have a ways to go.

The most exciting part of Racing Pride’s expansion into North America is the potential impact it would have for fans – and, even non-fans – by connecting with the



Devon Rouse, Photo courtesy of Devon Rouse

LGBTQ+ community. “The thing that excites me the most about [Racing Pride] is youth,” said Shumake.



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“Is getting the next generation of race car drivers or the next generation of fans interested in motor sports, and speaking opportunities at high schools or to help recruit for trade schools in the automotive world.” “I think this is a really big shift for the automotive indus-



Zach Herrin, Photo by Matt Wishart

try and motor sports. And I think having this elevated platform as a group is a win-win for everyone involved.”



Tom O’Gorman, Photo by Rob Wilkinson

And I think for too long, there’s been a divide that we had to, whether it’s because my dad was in the sport or you have a passion for vehicles, we had to really force our way into the sport and we don’t see representation of ourselves in it.”

David Palumbo, Vice-Chair, Executive Board at You Can Play, said: “LGBTQ+ representation and visibility in motorsport here in North America is so important. As the sport grows so must its commitment to diversity. That’s why we’re excited to be working with Racing Pride.” 🏳️‍🌈

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Minimalist Interiors



Image Credit: pinterest.com

continued from page 31

Furthermore, adding plants, shrubs, succulents, and other indoor elements also contribute to the natural colors in your living room design aesthetic. If you incorporate flowering plants, they add a splash of bright colors as well.

You can add greenery around the living room, balcony, or entryway. You can also scatter them near the windows of your dining room for a fresh feel.

DECLUTTER

Remember what we said about Zen philosophy advocating for a clutter-free life? Well, that needs to translate to your home design as well. Declutter your home. Install as much storage space as you can in cabinetry, built-in cubbies, and closets. Store away all the toys, linens, blankets, and everything that you are not using 24 hours of the day. The simple art of decluttering your home activates the chi which cleanses and purifies the living space.

MINIMALIST SEATING AREA

The seating arrangement in a minimalist home does not call for expensive couches and designer sofa sets. Since minimalist homes use low-height furniture, you can simply invest in a high-quality floor mat and arrange some cushions and throw pillows around the coffee table. Furthermore, you can install a daybed in the living room where your guests can sit during the day. This can also convert into a sleeping area for overnight visitors. Not to mention, a day bed is an excellent addition in the house for a reading nook, a space for relaxation, and an area where you can work if you don't have a home office.

CREATE FOCAL POINTS

Now that your basic minimalist interiors are in place, work on the design aesthetic of your simple home.

The minimalist furniture design, lighting, and open spaces offer very little to the overall aesthetic value. The greenery provides some but you need the extra spice to liven up your home.

Consider creating focal points in the living room and dining room where you entertain guests. You can use accent lighting and clean lines to surround a piece of wall art, or your shelves full of décor items, or even DIY objects you built. Focal points inspire conversation and provide a means to display your prized possessions with valor without

compromising the minimalist theme.

WALL ART

Another way to spice up your minimalist home is with the use of simple wall art. You can plaster floral patterns and stickers on the wall. These keep up with the natural theme and improve the design aesthetics of various rooms. You can choose colorful ones or simple black designs on white walls. You can also opt for various works of art and place them in simple frames, preferably wooden ones.

As you know, minimalist interior designs promote functionality in small spaces. Therefore, you can also hang crystal wall art or a series of reflective surfaces. These elements reflect the natural light thereby creating an illusion of a larger room.

Lastly, consider hanging some photo frames with family pictures or decorate the walls with simple installations such as nerf boards and pinboards. You can attach various memorabilia or your children's school projects to personalize the minimalist home design.

You see, minimalism in life can bring a lot of peace and quiet. Much like Oriental interior design trends, Scandinavians also follow minimalist designs to furnish their home.

The concepts espoused by Zen philosophy eventually relate to creating positive energy and a flow of chi in your minimalist home. The positivity enriches your life and brings prosperity, and who wants to say 'no' to that, right? So look into instilling minimalism in your home and connect with the natural elements. If you are having difficulty in determining what you should and should not use in your home makeover, use the Foyr Neo software to create an accurate rendition of your minimalist space. You can design a minimalist bedroom, minimalist living room, minimalist dining area, and anything else you want. 🇳🇵

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