

GASTON ALIVE

MAGAZINE

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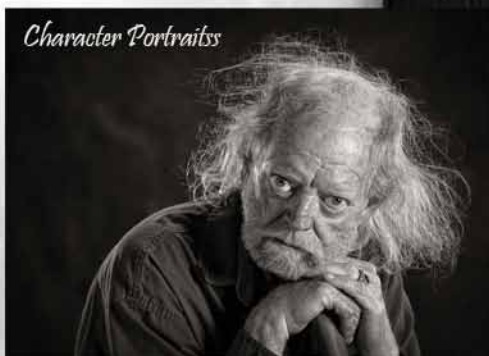
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HOW TO SELECT ART FOR
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on the cover



On the cover this month is a painting entitled "Beach Cherubs" by local Gastonia artist Curt Butler. To purchase art or inquire about classes go to butlerstudio.org. Graphic design by David James.

our staff

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GOLF FITNESS -

BETTER BODY, BETTER SWING, BETTER GAME!

By Bob Forman



*Bob Forman, MS Exercise Physiology
Certified Golf Fitness Instructor Manager,
CaroMont Health & Fitness Center*

Ever since its introduction in 2006, the golf fitness technology has been helping golfers play better, healthier golf. You'd be hard pressed to find a tour player that hasn't included a golf fitness instructor to his or her professional team. As word is getting out about the many benefits, more and more amateur golfers are seeking this expertise as well.

Benefits such as greater distance, better ball contact, more consistency, and improved playing performance and satisfaction are all desirable outcomes that can be obtained from a well designed golf fitness program. Reducing golf-specific aches and pains and helping injured golfers get back out on the golf course are also very coveted results for many.

The reason for this rapid growth in golf fitness and its impact on the game is that for the first time we are taking a look at the mechanism that is swinging the golf club, the golfer. Up until 2006 the only available options a golfer had to improve their game were external in nature...a new driver, the latest in golf ball technology, teaching aides, golf lessons, and/or a subscription or two to a golf publication.

Though good and necessary, these options are analogous to putting four new, top of the line tires on a newly purchased used car that doesn't run well and expecting the car to run better. Without a tune-up to the engine, the mechanism that's running the car, those tires won't really make much of a difference.

The same goes for golf as the research clearly demonstrates a very strong correlation between anatomical deficiencies in the body and inefficiencies in the golf swing. These deficiencies, in the form of muscle weakness, tightness, and imbalances, lead-up to poor



swing mechanics, poor performance, and an increased risk of injury. Without fine tuning the body, it really won't matter much what type of driver or golf ball the golfer is using.

The result is generally the same. But identify and correct the muscle deficiencies that are holding back performance and it's a refreshing improvement to the game.

In order to accomplish this, the golf fitness program must start with a physical assessment. This fairly simple to administer series of screens will bring out the golfer's problem areas and offer a personalized road map as to what course of action is necessary. Once this has been done, a targeted program of corrective exercises can be designed to correct the golfer's deficiencies. This manages the exercise time better and expedites benefits so that improvements in the game will be noted sooner out on the golf course. Golfers can expect to gain some distance, not ache as much after a round of golf, and have a better feel about their game. Nagging injuries may also start to improve or dissipate entirely.

A good time frame for the corrective phase is based on the number and severity of deficiencies, but generally significant results can be achieved in as little as a few weeks. Compliance to the recommended exercises is a major influence in that outcome. Once sufficient progress has been achieved, the golfer can transition into more golf specific strength and balance exercises. These functional exercises should isolate and mimic specific movement patterns of the golf swing and build upon and enhance what has been achieved in the corrective phase. They should address the physical demands and the environmental forces the golfer is confronted with so as to further improve ball contact, swing consistency, and shot accuracy.

Improving strength and balance will result in less fatigue during the round. With less fatigue, the golf swing will remain consistent throughout, producing good ball contact from the first tee to the 18th green. It will also reduce the incidence of injury as oftentimes, fatigue is a precursor to injury. Distance will continue to improve as a result of this phase, but if distance is truly desired then power exercises should eventually be added. Power produces speed and that comes from the recruitment of the fast-twitch muscle fibers. These fiber types are responsible for short, quick bursts of energy, like when swinging a golf club. Enhance the recruitment process and swing speed increases. That equates to even more distance down the fairway.

Golf fitness, though still relatively new, is making a huge impact on the game and the way golfers are approaching it. Working with a certified Golf Fitness Instructor who has a firm knowledge about body physiology, and exercise design and progression is highly recommended and will maximize the golf fitness experience. Once engaged, you'll enjoy the many benefits your golf fitness program will offer. Combine it with swing instruction and proper equipment, and you'll truly experience the ultimate package in player development. 🏌️

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SUZANNE FAIRBAIRN AND HER DOGS EQUAL

A RECIPE FOR LOVE

By Ben Dungan



Suzanne Fairbairn, Zip, and Will Goodwin.



It takes a special dog to be a pet therapy dog. But I wonder if it may take even more of a special person to be a therapy dog trainer/owner.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to attend one of our pet therapy friendship visits at Holy Angels - a residential facility for children and adults with intellectual developmental disabilities, many of which that have delicate medical conditions. My job that day was to snap a few pictures and capture the interaction between Zip, the therapy dog, and the residents he was there to visit.

So that's what I did. And in those moments between the clicks of the camera, I stood there in awe. I knew the effect a loving dog could have on a person. After all, I've been around dogs my whole life. What struck me more than anything was the person behind the dog. That person was Suzanne Fairbairn.

I had never met Suzanne prior to this day. In fact, I knew very little about her, except that she worked with therapy dogs. However, in just a few moments, I could tell she was a kind soul just by watching her. She was friendly, warm and personable with each and every resident that she and Zip interacted with that day.

I expected Zip to connect. That's his job. It's what he was trained to do. But Suzanne connected with those residents far better than I could have imagined. But if you ask Suzanne, it wasn't always that way.

You see, Suzanne claims she's a shy person by nature. That surprised me. There's something about a dog that seems to bring her out of her shell.

Or as she says, dogs just make her a better person.

Ask Suzanne and she'll tell you that she has two passions. She loves dogs and she loves music. Music pays the bills. Her love of dogs pays too - just in a different way. It feeds her soul.

Suzanne is the Music Director at First Presbyterian Church in Belmont - a job she has held for the last 26 years. She loves the job, but admits it can be stressful and demanding at times. That's where the dogs come in.

Suzanne recharges her batteries by spending time with her two dogs, Zip and Pippin.

She and her dogs have been visiting Holy Angels residents on a consistent basis over the last 15 years. But that's not the only place they go. One day it may be a visit to an Alzheimer's unit at an assisted living facility and the next day it could be visiting with students at a local elementary school. People of all ages need dogs. And Suzanne knows this.

Wherever there's someone that needs a little TLC, that's where you will find Suzanne, with her sidekicks Zip or Pippin.

With pet therapy, some may think that the dog is the channel - the channel in which unconditional love and affection flows. And it probably is. But you can't have a communication channel without a receiver and a transmitter.

Suzanne may be the transmitter, but I guarantee she is receiving as well. Watching her dogs connect to the people they visit is exactly why she does what she does.

Suzanne was once called in to spend some time with a young girl who was going through a difficult time at home. She had become emotionally withdrawn. She wouldn't interact with her other classmates and would barely communicate with her teachers. School officials recognized this and decided to have Suzanne and her dog, Allie, meet with this girl for about thirty minutes a week.

Thirty minutes a week doesn't seem like much, but thirty minutes with a loving dog can work wonders. Over time, this young girl began to gradually interact. First with Allie, and then with Suzanne. It wasn't long after, she would interact with her teachers, and then finally her classmates. Over time, this young girl slowly emerged from her shell.

Just like Suzanne.

What is it about dogs? They somehow find a way to force us out of our shells. That's what they do.

So on second thought, maybe the dog isn't the channel after all. It takes all three to effectively communicate and connect. Everyone transmits. And everyone receives.

At the end of the day, everyone wins. Everyone is in tune. Suzanne may even say, it's perfect harmony.



SELECTING ART FOR YOUR HOME

By Nan Bridgeman



One of the pleasures of moving into your own space is creating a home that reflects your taste, your interests. When folks come into our shop, they usually go about confidently selecting rugs, furniture and lamps, but are often hesitant when selecting a few pictures to hang on their walls. They are often unsure what style and medium they want. I can completely sympathize.

When I first took my job developing children's programs at a local museum, I was charged with developing a 40 minute script for high school art students who would be visiting our coming Salvador Dali exhibit, borrowed from a Washington DC museum. As the crates arrived and were opened I watched with near panic as the strange scribbblings emerged from their multiple wrappings. I was a history major who just had a passing interest in art, and I knew I was in way over my head. I asked to speak with the director, (whose advanced degree in art history from Duke further intimidated me), and explained my inadequacy. The director reassured me that I could handle this job and to keep in mind, art is very subjective. I should just give a brief bio of Dali, followed by a rudimentary explanation of surrealism, and then allow the students to browse the gallery. I followed up asking each student to select a piece of Dali's work and sharing what he or she thought of it. The students enjoyed participating and I loved hearing their opinions. There were as many views as there were students and I learned a great lesson. Art is very, very personal!

So my first piece of advice is to view as much art as you can, and start seeing what styles please you. This is a fun assignment best accomplished by browsing art venues and perusing art books and magazines. This also calls for introspection, as you start learning a bit more about your likes and dislikes. Do you like precise, realistic drawings or paintings, or soft blurry watercolors, or perhaps vivid



abstract paintings? Take time to see what style of art draws you in, intrigues you, and calls your name.

Next, I believe your art should stand on its own merit. Select a piece of art based on your emotional and intellectual responses rather than choosing art because it matches fabric swatches and paint chips. Art chosen by the later method rarely brings lasting satisfaction. I know it seems

backwards, but think about using your artwork as inspiration for your room, and then pick out your wall paints, upholstery colors, etc. If you start with what you love and what "speaks to you", your room should be a success.

Finally, I encourage you to enjoy art at every stage of your life regardless of your budget. When I was a newlywed, I remember buying a large poster of Picasso's, "Le Bouquet", which I proudly hung in the little eating area of our apartment. It was not a numbered lithograph, just a large inexpensive print I had framed. I loved that print then and still do. Entry level art can be a poster or a giclee which is a computer driven reproduction that is mass produced usually on canvas. As the years passed, I started buying small original paintings or sketches when we traveled as a memento of a happy occasion and hung these small paintings in our bath so I could enjoy them every day. I highly recommend this type of souvenir as the joy lasts forever.

As you age and discover more about your taste, you will probably want to purchase some original pieces of art that speak to you. These are usually pricey and some buyers believe their purchases might be a good financial investment. I refrain from justifying a purchase of art based on the hope the piece will increase in value as this is risky for the best of investors. I buy what I like and if the art work does appreciate in value, then that is a boon. I recommend this relaxed attitude to you when go about selecting your art.

Finally a tip on creating a pleasing arrangement of various types and sizes of art on a wall. Nate Berkus suggested once, using the same color frame to unify small art. For instance, black frames on your mixed media collection will help add some calm and unity to unrelated pieces. I also recommend laying out all your art on the floor beneath the wall dedicated to hold your collection. Move your pieces around until you create a good design, with balanced spots of color, visual weigh and interest. Then pull your pieces of art into a fairly tight composition. A tightly arranged display keeps your art visually corralled with no pieces distractedly "wandering" on your wall. Then use a pencil to lightly mark your wall where the nails should go. A small leveler is also helpful in keeping your frames straight.

Lastly, a word of warning. Collecting can be addictive and lead to unimagined consequences. When I retired from the museum, my husband took me on a wonderful alumni trip to Netherlands to study the Dutch Masters. We cruised up the Amstel River and enjoyed presentations by art professors explaining the key elements of the art of Rembrandt, Ruben, Vermeer and Van Gogh. I was in heaven! My husband enjoyed the lectures and museums but drew the line when we had free time to shop. No way was he going shopping! So I shopped with a darling young professor and we purchased many beautiful oil paintings. When my crates arrived, I realized I had a big problem..... too much beautiful art! I began selling my extra Dutch oil paintings stacked in my guest bedroom behind the bed to friends. Soon I was on missions to locate a handsome antique chest of drawers, and find a great pair of lamps for someone. I enjoyed helping others "feather their nest". Within a year of my retirement from education, ventured into retail and have loved it. Who knows where your collecting will lead you!

Nan Bridgeman retired as an educator at a local museum, and owns Blythe Gallery, an interiors shop in Belmont. She enjoys helping customers create their own personal "happy place".



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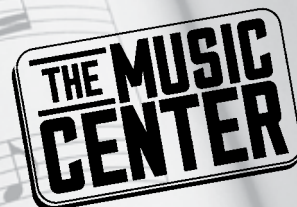
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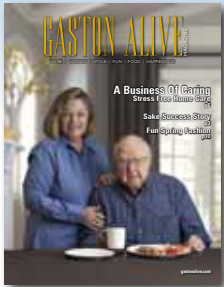


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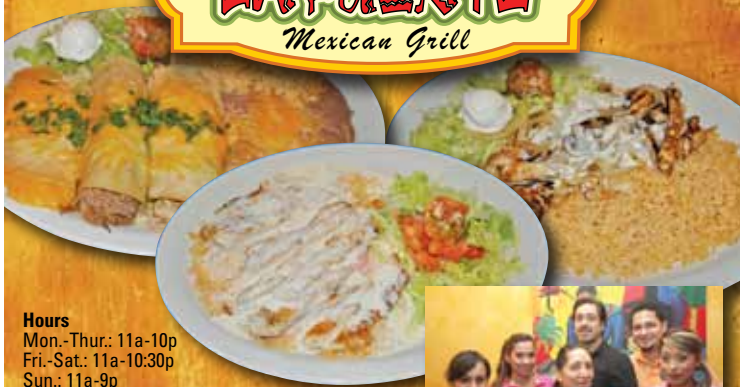
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2017 BEST OF GASTON
"INVESTMENT FIRM" AWARD

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Belmont Capital Advisors Wins 2017 Best of Gaston "Investment Firm" Award.



Joseph Roop,
Founder & Chief
Investment Strategist

From Founder & Chief Investment Officer JoePat Roop:

It's official! **Belmont Capital Advisors** has won "**Best Investment Firm**" in the **2017 Best of Gaston Awards**. It was an honor just to be nominated, but we are especially excited to take the award back to our new home at 123 North Main St.

In addition to winning Best Investment Firm, we were also finalists in the Best Financial Advisor/Planner (JoePat Roop) and Best Insurance Agent (Cory Shuford) categories.

We'd like to thank everyone who voted, as well as the community of Belmont and clients throughout the Greater Charlotte Area for their continued support.

At Belmont Capital Advisors, we view clients as members of our extended family, so it's nice to know they feel the same way about us.

Thanks again, from everyone at Belmont Capital Advisors.

CALL US TODAY TO SCHEDULE A COMPLIMENTARY, NO-OBLIGATION CONSULTATION: 704.825.1560
www.belmont-capital.com

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