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PUBLISHED BY THE CAMDEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

VOL. 71, No. 10 • JUNE 2023

This is the last Barrister edition until September. We hope it has been an interesting and informative Barrister year for you, our readers, and we look forward to continuing the tradition over the next year. Of course, we will still have our weekly e-mails to help you stay informed and up-to-date.

In addition to the regular columns that appear, The Barrister is fortunate to receive several interesting articles throughout the year from various Bar members. To those of you who pen

these articles, thanks and please keep them coming!

This is YOUR Bar publication, written for and by members of the Camden County Bar Association and we're always looking for a fresh idea for a new regular column and additional articles on various topics. We would especially appreciate substantive articles from our committees as they meet and work throughout the year. We invite submissions from ALL Bar members.

Please remember that submissions are due on the 10th of the month prior to publication, i.e., August 10, for the September issue, etc. Articles should be no more than 750-1,000 words, 12pt. type, double-spaced and forwarded as an email attachment in MS Word format to kim@camdencountybar.org.

For additional information on submitting articles for publication, please contact Bar Headquarters at 856.482.0620 or via email to kim@camdencountybar.org.

On June 24, 2023 at Cooper River Yacht Club, Craig D. Becker will be installed as the 97th President of the Camden County Bar Association and Dawnn E. Briddell as the President of the Camden County Bar Foundation and other trustees of CCBA and CCBF. Please register to attend by June 16th. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

# Annual Installation of Officers

The installation of Craig D. Becker, Esq. as the President of the Camden County Bar Association, Dawnn E. Briddell, Esq as the President of the Bar Foundation, and the Officers and Trustees, by The Honorable Eric G. Fikry, J.S.C

une 24, 2023 at 2:00pm

Join us for a clam bake" on the lawn of the Cooper River Yacht Club - 450 S. Park Drive, Collingswood

## Officers and Trustees to be installed for CCBA

Matthew T. Roonev—President-Elect Thomas A. Hagner—Vice President Jeanette Kwon—Treasurer Timothy S. Farrow—Secretary Carly K. Fowler—Member-at-Large

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### Officers and Trustees to be installed for CCBF

Dawnn E. Briddell - President Steven Salinger - Vice President Tommie Ann Gibney - Treasurer Lvnda Hinkle – Secretary Andrew Parsintz, Trustee

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# THE DOCKET

JUNE 2023

# Monday, June 5

CLE: Mediation Process & Techniques in Civil & Chancery Disputes 4;15 p.m.- 6:15 p.m. Via Zoom

# Wednesday, June 7

CCBF Spring Fundraiser -Sip, Savor, & Support Merchantville Country Club, Cherry Hill 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

# Saturday, June 24

The Installation of Craig D. Becker and CCBA and CCBF Officers and Trustees
The Cooper River Yacht Club, Collingswood
2 p.m.-5 p.m.

# 21

# Tentative Agenda for June 21<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting

A tentative agenda for this month's regular Board of Trustees meeting is as follows. The meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m. via teleconference. All meetings are open to the membership. Anyone interested in participating should notify and confirm their attendance by calling Bar Headquarters at 856.482.0620.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes from Meeting
- III. Treasurer's Report
- IV. President's Report
- V. Executive Director's Report
- **VI. Committee Reports** 
  - a. Membership Committee
  - b. Young Lawyers Committee
  - c. Standing Committee Reports
- VII. Foundation Update
- VIII. NJSBA Update
- IX. Old Business (if any)
- X. New Business (if any)
- XI. Adjournment

# THE BARRISTER

Published monthly, except July and August, by the Camden County Bar Association.

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# VERDICTS IN THE COURT

May 2023 — Superior Court of New Jersey

VERDICT: Case Type: Judge: NO CAUSE AUTO – Neg Tort Michael J. Kassel, J.S.C.

Plaintiff's Atty: Joel Garber - Evan Garber - Cindy Shearer

Defendant's Atty: Christopher Marcucci

L1421-19 JURY

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

APPROVED BY CCBA BOARD

## **Private Sector**

### Bret Feldman, Esq.

Sweeny & Sheehan, P.C. 216 Haddon Avenue Westmont, NJ 08108 Date Admitted- 08/19/2016.

## Alexandra L. Pooner, Esq.

Law Office of Jeffrey Pooner 1813 Berlin Road Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 Date Admitted- 11/11/21-(Young Lawyer)

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# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

# How Can We Help?

By Craig D. Becker



Ilove being an attorney. I am proud of my work and couldn't imagine doing any other job. Despite the above, being an attorney is hard. We're asked to work long hours and often accomplish near perfection. We often have strict deadlines that care little about our personal life or needs. Few people are excited to have to meet with their attorneys. Most people hate us, yet everyone eventually needs us. We're often the messenger of bad or uncomfortable news. We frequently do crucial work on an emergent basis. Often only other attorneys can understand what we go through.

You don't have to and shouldn't face the above alone. The Bar Association is here to here to help!

Many people believe that the Bar Association is only for networking. Although the Camden County Bar Association is an excellent tool for networking and expanding your business, it is much more! We help support attorneys throughout all issues related to the practice of law. The above includes, but is not limited to, seminars, community service, wellness, and social opportunities!

Almost 15 years ago, I joined the Camden County Bar Association to help grow my practice. Although the Bar Association helped me build my practice, it has given me something more valuable. Many of my closest friends are people I met through the Camden County Bar Association. They have become trusted sounding boards for many of the issues attorneys face. They have given me a strong sense of community in legal practice. They've also pushed me to expand my practice and myself. They've also helped keep me focused on the work-life balance and the importance of maintaining physical and emotional health when working a high-stress job. Due to the help of the Camden County Bar Association, I get to live my dream of running my law practice while also having quality time to spend with my wife, kids, and dog.

Please let us know how the staff, officers, and trustees of the Camden County Bar Association can help you. Whether it's marketing your practice; building your network; giving back to the community; having new experiences; or building new friendships, we are here to help you. The best way to get the most out of the Camden County Bar Association is to join a committee and become involved. Even if you have limited time, we appreciate all our members and want to ensure you get the most out of the association. Thank you for joining our association. We are happy to have you as a member. Please reach out to us at any time with any questions or comments.

# **MILLENKY MEDIATION**



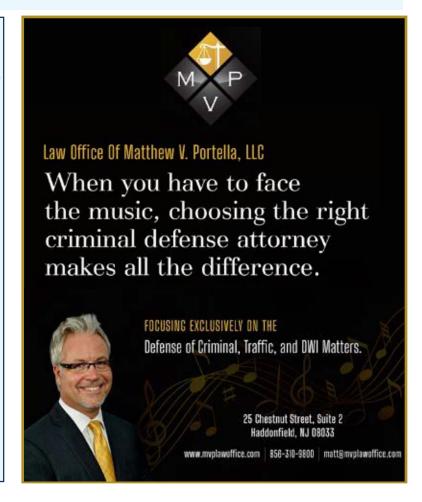
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# CAMDEN COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION WINE TASTING EVENT PLEA

Four days after your Bar Foundation treats busloads of children to a picnic in the park it will be entertaining Foundation friends and supporters to an extensive tasting of wine, beer, and whisky at the beautiful Merchantville Country Club. While we are calling this "Sip, Savor, and Support," it is important as we get closer to June 7th that we emphasize the last word since the funds being raised through your generosity will enable the CCBF to continue its many community outreach programs. As you know from seeing all the smiling faces pictured in The Barrister, children who are less fortunate than many in our county enjoy the late spring barbecue, games, and music at the picnic and the always festive December party where magic is in the air along with some occasionally on key singing by Santa's elves. That holiday highlight, of course, is the children's chance to whisper to Santa their Christmas wishes and to receive early holiday gifts. Of course, the Foundation's focus is not only on young children. Scholarships to students from county high schools as well as law schools also are underwritten by funds we raise from events such as the upcoming tasting.

The Foundation events you support help display to adults and future adults in the communities in which we practice that lawyers are good-hearted people who truly care about others. However, attending the tasting on June 7<sup>th</sup> is much more than simply supporting what we hope is one of your favorite charities. This really will be an awful lot of fun for you and all whom you invite to join you. If you read Jim Hamilton's Wine and Food column, or are even the most casual consumer, you know that the best way to learn about wine or expand your wine knowledge is through your personal

tasting experiences. Thanks to **Charlie Beatty of Wineworks in Marlton**, some of the best importers and distributors of wine will be offering event guests an array of wines from their impressive portfolios. While the number of wines that will be featured continues to expand, you can be assured that there will be more wines being poured than you will be able to try, so the challenge will be deciding which wines to taste as you move from table to table.

If wine is not your thing, don't worry, there will be craft beers and whiskeys, soft drinks and plain old water to enjoy with the food and the conversation with your friends and colleagues. And don't forget that an event such as this is a great way to entertain clients or to network, so please do not pass up the opportunity to attend and to **Sip, Savor, and Support** your Foundation on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Now, here are the details for joining in the fun.



# Luke Griffith awarded Professional Lawyer Award 2022

**Luke Griffith** was overwhelmingly voted to posthumously receive the **Professional Lawyer Award 2022**, presented by the New Jersey Bar Association's Commission on Professionalism.

Luke was a partner in the law firm of **Weinberg**, **Kaplan**, **and Smith** in Marlton, NJ.

Luke focused his litigation and mediation practice largely in the areas of family law, estate drafting, and means of alternative dispute resolution of contentious matters. He acquired extensive experience handling many family-related issues.

Luke, a Court approved mediator, was also a Matrimonial Early Settlement Panelist in Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington Counties. Luke was selected as a Co-Chair of the Burlington County Superior Court Family Law Bench Bar Committee, while also serving as a Co-Chair of the Thomas S. Forkin Inns of Court Programming Committee. He was recognized and selected to Rising Stars in 2018-2019 and was recognized for several years, including 2022, as a "South Jersey Top Attorney."

Luke obtained his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Catawba College, a master's degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University, and thereafter completed his Juris Doctor at the Rutgers University School of Law in Camden. Luke is fondly remembered by the Camden County Bar Association, friends, and colleagues.

The Professional Lawyer Awards Lunch is scheduled for July 12, 2023, at 12 noon, at the Forsgate Country Club, Monroe Township.



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# Frequently Overlooked Public Benefits for Personal Injury Victims

by Thomas D. Begley, Jr., Esquire, CELA and Emily Schurr

Frequently personal injury victims are seriously injured and completely unable to work, are seriously injured but are limited in the work they can perform or are simply personal injury victims

who never could perform a high level of work. There are a number of benefit programs that may be available to these individuals that are often overlooked. Personal injury victims often apply for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, and Medicaid. However, they often overlook Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called food stamps, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), and Federally Assisted Housing. These programs provide different benefits and have different goals. This article will highlight each program individually.

## **Federally Assisted Housing**

Federally Assisted Housing provides assistance with housing expenses for eligible individuals and households. There is an income limitation of 50% to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). AMI varies and is calculated on a regional basis, rather than a statewide basis. It includes earned income received by family members aged 18 and over and unearned income from all family members including those under 18 years of age. There are certain income exclusions. There are deductions for dependents and elderly or disabled family members.

Under the new HOTMA regulations affecting Federally Assisted Housing that were implemented in February 2023, the net family assets cannot exceed \$100,000 (this amount will be annually adjusted for inflation). In addition, the family cannot own real property not occupied by the family, unless the property does not meet accessibility/disability related needs. Again, there are certain

specified exclusions including items of personal property, retirement plans, and certain personal injury settlement recoveries. There is a two-year lookback for transfers of assets. This includes transfers to trusts but does not include a disposition of assets through foreclosure or bankruptcy. The penalty is simply that the family would not be eligible for benefits for the two-year lookback period. A Special Needs Trust would be required if the excess dollars are considered "net family assets," but not if they fall within an exception, such as a personal injury settlement.

# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

This program, commonly called food stamps, provides a food voucher to qualified individuals.

> Benefit Amount. The payment is based on income and household size. SNAP benefits come on an electronic benefit card (EBC) that works like a debit card. The amount of the benefit depends on the number of people in the household.

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Maximum Possible Amount</u>
1	\$281
2	\$516
3	\$740
4	\$939

> Income Limit. The income limit for SNAP eligibility also depends on household size.

<b>Household Size</b>	Maximum Allowable Income
1	\$2,096
2	\$2,823
3	\$3,551
4	\$4,279

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# Frequently Overlooked Public Benefits for Personal Injury Victims



- > Resource Limit. The maximum countable resources for the household is \$2,750, unless one member is disabled or age 60+, which raises the resource limit to \$4,250.
- > Transfer of Asset Penalty. The transfer of asset penalty is imposed with a lookback of three months. The penalty ranges from one to twelve months depending on the amount transferred.
- > Self-Settled Special Needs Trust. A Special Needs Trust could be utilized in certain situations to maintain eligibility; however, the individual must be disabled and meet the other requirements for a Self-Settled Special Needs Trust.
- > Employment. Participants aged 16 to 60 must work unless disabled.

# Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP pays for home heating and medically necessary cooling costs. The benefit is based on income and household size. There is a related program known as New Jersey Weatherization Program. Eligibility for LIHEAP is limited to households whose income is 60% of the New Jersey State Median Income Level. For 2023, households are subject to the following income eligibility requirements:

Household Size	Maximum Allowable Income
1	\$3,464
2	\$4,530
3	\$5,596
4	\$6.662

There is no resource limit and, therefore, no transfer of asset penalty. A Special Needs Trust is not required.

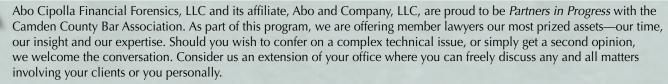
# Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

LIHWAP provides assistance to low-income families with their water and sewer bills. This is a temporary grant that provides forgiveness of overdue water and sewer balances. The maximum benefit is \$4,000. Income eligibility requirements are based on household size and are the same as the income eligibility requirements for LIHEAP. There is no resource limit, so no transfer of asset penalty, and no Special Needs Trust is required.

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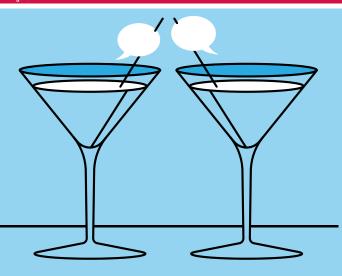
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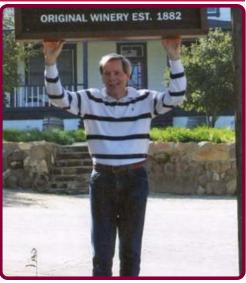
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"Open your mind and taste" is both a slogan and sage advice from one of our area's more important wine distributors, Polaner Selections. Many wine drinkers limit their consumption to producers, regions, or labels with which they are comfortable. At tasting events offering an array of different wines, some people who enjoy the first wine poured will venture no further, even though the opportunity to explore and possibly discover a wine they like better is right before their lips. Whether knowing what you like and sticking with it is short sighted or an efficient use of time, taste buds and tolerance can be debated. Ultimately, wine is a beverage to enjoy, so deciding what wine to choose is purely personal. Lucky for us, we will have the opportunity to sample as many, or as few, of the wines being poured at our June 7th Sip, Savor, and Support tasting event that will raise funds for the many wonderful charitable programs underwritten by our Bar Foundation. I hope to share a glass or two with many of you at Merchantville Country Club.

One purpose of this column is to encourage exploration of unfamiliar wines, knowing that you won't like every recommendation offered, while also realizing that since many wines discussed will be sufficiently off the beaten track that even more daring merchants have not ventured there, you may be unable to find some wines of interest. One way to locate a wine mentioned here or elsewhere is to ask your friendly retailer to order it. This, however, ignores the reality that few people will buy more than a bottle or two on faith, and shops generally must buy wines by the case. Still, it won't hurt to ask, particularly if you have developed a relationship with the store.

Another alternative for sourcing a wine that piques your curiosity, or that you had once and want to enjoy again, is using your now well-honed internet skills. In our increasingly mobile device dominated lives, some view shopping by shoe leather as dated as the special effect of George Reeves flying. A popular website that takes advantage of consumers' greater comfort



with online shopping is www.wine-searcher. com. It allows you to type in the wine you are seeking and locate and identify stores that carry it as well as its current price at each store. In many instances, it also will provide reviews by professional critics and/or consumers who post their impressions.

One type of wine about which consumers have become much more open-minded is rosé, particularly in warmer weather. Since these wines typically are made using red grape varieties, they can serve as an alternative for red wine lovers to open when higher

Continued on Page 11



# LRS – Renewal: Open Enrollment Begins for the 2023-2024 Lawyer Referral Service Panel

Enrollment is now open for the Association's Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) for the 2023-2024 Bar year. Panel membership is open to any lawyer who meets the necessary qualifications. The new LRS panel will begin on June 1 and will continue through May 31, 2024. **Members serving on the current panel must re-enroll for the new LRS year.** 

Each year, the LRS makes over 2,000 referrals to callers with legal problems who are able to afford a private attorney: many of them feegenerating cases. You can be part of this important program that helps expand your client base through pre-screened referrals while providing a terrific community service for individuals requiring legal services.

The annual registration fee remains only \$75 for those admitted to the New Jersey Bar for up to five years, or \$150 for those admitted for six years or more. Please note that all LRS panel members are required to remit back to the Association 10% of fees collected in excess of \$500 for all matters referred by the LRS. The fee applies to any referral received from the LRS and is payable when the participating attorney receives payment for services rendered.

A completed application, together with the appropriate enrollment fee and required original certificate of malpractice insurance coverage, must be returned to the Bar Association before referrals can be made in the new Bar year.

Applications can be downloaded from the Association's website at **www.camdencountybar.org** or by calling **Marian McBeth** at Bar Headquarters at 856.482.0620. Questions about the LRS? Contact Marian by phone or email at **mmb@camdencountybar.org**.



# WIROD



temperatures and often lighter foods can make bold or tannic red wines seem overbearing. Additionally, as celebrities or rosé specialists began promoting these wines, they increasingly have caught the attention of casual consumers. Among the more popular rosés in our area have been Miraval, Whispering Angel, and Hampton Water (formerly called Diving Into Hampton Water). The elegantly packaged Miraval is from an estate located in that hotbed of rosé wine production, the southern French region of Provence. It is owned (yes, still) by the similarly stylish Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. Whispering Angel is perhaps the most popular wine in the lineup and is crafted by Provence rosé specialist, Chateau d'Esclans. Hampton Water is the project of Jon Bon Jovi and his son, Jesse, and while it may conjure up visions of wealthy Long Island beach dwellers, the wine itself is made in southern France. Other celebrities who are offering rosé wines for their or rosé wine fans to buy include musician Dave Matthews' Dreaming Tree Rosé, Drew Barrymore's eponymous labeled rosé made from California Pinot Noir, John Legend's LVE Côtes de Provence Rosé, Sting's Il Palagio rosé made in Italy from Sangiovese grapes, Sarah Jessica Parker's Invivo Sud de France Rosé, John Malkovich's French Les Quelles de la Coste Rosé, and basketball legend Dwayne Wade's Three by Wade Rosé from California. The venerable Provencal estate, Domaine Ott, once was the torch bearer for rosé wines. It still has a following despite an increasingly high price that may be disproportionate to its performance, but interest in rosé wines has caught the attention of many producers. established or new, who want to join the rosé parade. It certainly helps that, increasingly, consumers are finding them fashionable to drink.

As the demand for these wines continues to climb, and the number of wines being made and distributed experiences the wine equivalent of the Big Bang, most retailers are finding room on their shelves or in their bins for a greater array of rosé wine offerings. Furthermore, where these wines once were seasonal, sprouting up in the spring only to die back come fall, as enthusiasm for rosés has spread, they have become a wine for all seasons. The wines are made from a variety of grape types, and while there are higher priced bottles one can buy, most tend to retail in the \$10 to \$20 price range. For years, the popularity of white Zinfandels that were off-dry and simple caused consumers to think that all pink wines were sweet. However, the success and proliferation of dry rosés has largely dispelled that perception and consumers have embraced the drier style that largely dominates the market. Let's focus on some of the more affordable rosés that should be available to us.

A personal favorite Provençal rosé performs well again this year. **2022 Pigoudet** is quintessentially pale in color, and on opening has a somewhat muted nose. The initial impressions are of minerality, and a steely penetration of sour cherry fruit accompanied by notes of underripe melon. As the wine sits and warms it gains volume and develops more of a wild strawberry profile. It is a refreshing, food-friendly wine that will offer the versatility one may desire when pairing it with food.

**2021 La Spinetta Il Rosé di Casanova** is the polar opposite of a Provençal rosé. It is much darker in color, more copper than pink, and the nose is more savory, with Portabella and loam initiating the sensory

Continued on Page 12





experience. On the palate, there are citric flavors, with blood orange and pink grapefruit expressions that have a definite mineral and mushroom foundation. Giorgio Rivetti, the man behind the label, is one of the most approachable and likeable winemakers/entrepreneurs I've had the pleasure of meeting. He got his foot in the marketplace with Moscato d'Asti but progressed into making a wide variety of mostly red wines, including standout Barolos and Barbarescos. His rosé is made from equal parts Sangiovese and Prugnolo Gentile (a Sangiovese clone).

2021 Producta Vignobles BDX Revolution is a rosé that was new to me, but one I wanted to try because I respect the importer and wanted to see how the 100% Cabernet Franc grapes were handled. I later learned that the man behind this cooperative effort was the person who established the well-known New Zealand winery, Cloudy Bay. Cabernet Franc is not among the more widely used grape varieties for making rosés and is one for which ripeness is particularly important to avoid imparting vegetal flavors. This wine displays a spicy attack, with a chalky salinity conveying rhubarb and cassis fruit and apple skins, along with a touch of the greenness the grape can yield, here perhaps snap peas, but in a complementary rather than overt fashion. There is a touch of quinine and a streak of slate driving the mineral impressions that define the finish. Like the Pigoudet, this is a rosé that is less a fruity summer sipper than a wine to accompany a meal.

**2021 M. Chapoutier Belleruche Rosé** is fashioned primarily from the Grenache grape that thrives in France's Southern Rhone. Chapoutier probably is one of the most influential winery empires in southern France, making wines at many levels of esteem and corresponding price in such appellations as Hermitage, Cote-Rotie, and Condrieu in the northern Rhone and Chateauneuf-du-Pape in the southern Rhone. This

inexpensive rosé displays a salmon color and subdued nose but delivers plenty of fruit resembling crisp watermelon layered within a core of pink grapefruit and barely ripe raspberry. There is a stoney aspect to the finish of this medium bodied effort.

**2021 Crios Rosé of Malbec** was a starter wine served with empanadas at a recent Argentinean wine dinner featuring the wines of that country's first female winemaker, Susana Balbo. Crios is the entry level label for her wines, and this one is made employing the signature red grape of her country. It shows a vivid deep pink color, a relatively subdued nose, but vibrantly extracted flavors balancing forward strawberry fruit etched with citrus with a counterpoint of subtle earthiness. It delivers the fruit in a nicely textured, medium weight frame.

Finally, let's end with **2021 Triennes Rosé**. Domaine de Triennes is a Provençal estate begun by two of the most revered winemakers in France's Burgundy region, Jacques Seysses of Domaine Dujac and Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée- Conti. While purchasing their Burgundy wines may require a second mortgage, Triennes wines are very affordable. The rosé is made from mostly Cinsault grapes and displays a pale peach color with a subdued citrus nose and taste impressions of white peaches, strawberries, and hints of lemon peel. There is a creamy, lactic quality to its light to medium body, but it does not cloak the underlying vibrancy the wine conveys.

While so-called pink wines should not be relegated only to the summer, this certainly is a good time to stop and smell (and taste) the rosés. *The Barrister* will be taking its traditional summer break, and hopefully you will find time for vacation, relaxation, and, of course, good wine. Cheers!



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Don't miss this opportunity to support one of the Foundation's most cherished projects and explore the Abo Wonderland as featured in the February, 2013 issue of SJ Magazine.

WHEN: 6-8 pm, Wednesday, July 19th

**WHERE:** The Home of Marty & Jane Abo

104 St. Vincent Court, Cherry Hill, NJ

TICKETS: \$30 per person

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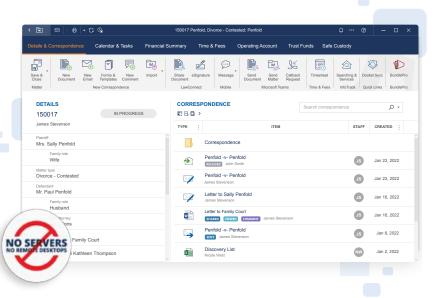
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# **Annual Installation of Officers**

The installation of Craig D. Becker, Esq as the President of the Camden County Bar Association, Dawnn E. Briddell, Esq as the President of the Bar Foundation, and the Officers and Trustees, by The Honorable Eric G. Fikry, J.S.C.

# June 24, 2023 at 2:00pm

Join us for a clam bake\* on the lawn of the Cooper River Yacht Club - 450 S. Park Drive, Collingswood attire casual

\$100 per person/ \$175 per couple/ \$90 attorneys admitted 5 years or less Register at www.camdencountybar.org by June 4

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# The Wacky & Wonderful

# WORLD OF ABO

A Cherry Hill couple create a home like no other (and when we say no other, we're not kidding)

# By Sally Friedman

Welcome to the world of Abo. Welcome to trompe l'oeil (fool-the-eye) illusions, to unexpected accessories that instantly elicit a giggle. It's a happily zany world where humor dominates, and something quirky lies around every corner.

Jane and Marty Abo are the George Burns and Gracie Allen of the domestic scene, a perfectly matched team with a unified sense of whimsy and humor that suggests they were, indeed, meant for each other.

While their home decor is definitely not run-ofthe-mill, the Abos are thoughtful people with serious jobs and life commitments. They simply decided to let themselves have fun with their home, to forget the "rules" and just live out their delightfully humorous sensibilities. Their remarkable home makes it clear that conventionality just isn't their vibe.

Marty Abo talks fast, thinks fast, laughs easily and is totally at home in a home where the outdoors and indoors are juxtaposed and where the ordinary is out to lunch. "We like things lighthearted, and we like to mix things up," says Abo, an SJ CPA with a specialty in forensic accounting. "If you can't laugh, what's the point?"

Abo gets those laughs in a home that is like no other, not just in their Cherry Hill neighborhood, but arguably almost anywhere.

Jane met Marty, unmistakably a man with a New York state of mind — and accent — when she was in college. Tiny, vivacious and almost always described as "adorable," Jane fell for the funny guy with the instant wit. Marty fell hard for the pixie who also had a penchant for theater. ▶

**Photos by David Michael Howarth** 







son-in-law. Jane and Marty, not ever above a visual joke turned real, keep it operating.

Nearby, more confusion. Is that a working traffic light in this hallway? It is. And who is that old woman in a bandana — oops, make that a mannequin — just hanging out nearby?

The Abos are accustomed to the surprise factor that keeps visitors doing double takes – and then dissolving into laughter. While they're used to the sofa in the living room that fits between the fins of a classic Cadillac convertible and the miniature piano that serves as a coffee table, most others find all that surprising.

hile the homeowners admit their own child-hoods were spent in conventional homes, the Abos two grown sons, Ben and Zach, had a far different experience. They brought their friends into a home so full of sight gags and zany objects that house tours provide a day's entertainment.

How many kids could boast a family room with one of its major features a cluster of glass-topped coffee tables with three impressively large Sumo wrestlers as bases? In the same room, a reindeer hanging on a wall bursts into conversation and song





Cabinet pulls, chez Abo, are actually repurposed hardware store spigots. A neon arrow points down to the trashcan. The whimsy goes on and on in this SJ fun house...minus the crazy mirrors.

But life is not just fun and games. Jane is passionate about family, and is known for hosting a Passover Seder with an eclectic guest list that includes one of her closest friends, a former nun.

Such events are held in the home's dining room, which boasts a table custom-designed for Jane's diminutive height by being lowered several inches. Around the perimeter of the table is a message designed to tease nosy guests who love to know what things cost: "Very expensive table" it reads. Its high-back chairs add a touch, not of humor, but of design drama.

The home's bedrooms continue the winkand-nod mood. Zach's room was painstakingly set up as a restaurant, and nearby, the laundry area is deliberately right out in the open, incorporated into the interior landscape. Jane's nasty thoughts about being the family laundress are incorporated in irreverent signs.

In a home with so many showstoppers, the guest room may just take the grand prize. And it prompts another story, this one from Jane, who tells of a trip to Ikea for a bargain table that ended up with the impulsive purchase of a very expensive round bed.

The Abos were then off and running, creating a zany guest room with a motif of *zaftig* (ample) women cavorting in a wallpaper border, and a gigantic bra and panties as wall decor. In a largely male household, Jane went for lots of pink, lots of frou-frou and netting – and a big smile. "Why not have a little fun?" she asks with an impish grin.

Jane recalls the laughs that came in a steady stream as she and a friend decorat-

"I like to think that our home is warm, welcoming and definitely a bit unusual. And if it's fun – well, that's a bonus, isn't it?"





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