

This page: The Central Park Conservancy Charity Tree Correspondence Cards from Pickett's Press, letterpressed by hand on thick cotton paper with hand-painted gold edges and hand-lined envelopes. \$45 for a box of 10 cards and envelopes; all proceeds go to the Central Park Conservancy. > Opposite page: Pickett's Press president and founder Kate Pickett photographed in Leta Austin Foster, a boutique on Via Mizner in Palm Beach that carries, among other home goods and designs, a line of Pickett's Press letterpress imprimables.

Pickett Perfect

BY DANIEL CAPPELLO

It's not every graduate of Harvard Business School who finds herself working in a back-of-house stock room, earning an hourly wage that's less than that of even her first teenage summer job. But for Kate Pickett, paper has always been a passion. So it was only natural that she found herself—two Ivy League degrees and one stint on Wall Street later—in the back room at Kate's Paperie, the fine-quality paper store in New York City.

It's as if Kate Pickett was born to be a paper-business professional. Today she is the president, founder, and head designer

of Pickett's Press, the custom letterpress stationery company situated in an airy showroom on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "Even as early as seven years old," Kate recalls, "I can remember designing pretend menus for family dinners and creating birthday cards by hand. I have always loved drawing and I have always loved the weight, feel, and touch of paper."

The drawing part came naturally. With an art teacher for a mother, friends often joke that Kate was born with a paintbrush in her hand (her bachelor's degree was in art history). And, as



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This spread, clockwise from left: Hand-engraved bunny gift enclosure cards on orchid-pink French paper (set of eight with white envelopes, \$25); custom home illustration notepads for Sunnymeade, in Southampton, NY; a selection of letterpress and engraved correspondence note cards by Pickett's Press; custom hand-drawn vintage plane empire-size note cards; Kate Pickett in the Pickett's Press showroom at 146 East 74th Street in New York, NY; monogrammed memo notes (set of 150 loose sheets in lucite holder, \$65 with customization).



a little girl, the first thing she'd do after returning from a party was to sit down and write a thank-you note. It was then that she noticed something: the nicer the paper, the more fun it was to write. And so a love of the beautiful and the bespoke was born.

In the end, the stock room job paid off; it was there that she met a letterpress expert who is now her partner at Pickett's Press. Founded in 2008, the firm specializes in letterpress stationery, digitally printed stationery, a home and accessories line (think salt-and-pepper shakers, playing cards, ice buckets, and iPhone covers), and—debuting this May—a first-ever engraving line, featuring both boxed and bespoke collections.

In today's high-end luxury stationery world, every competing firm must offer exceptional customer service and a diverse variety of offerings, but Pickett's Press stands out in its commitment to one-of-a-kind design, with original hand-drawn illustrations done by Kate herself. It's these custom illustrations—of clients' homes and pets—that has earned Pickett's Press an almost cult-like following on the Upper East Side. "We've never had a PR campaign," Pickett says. "It's always been word of mouth."

And judging by Park Avenue mailrooms, the word is out. Open any uptown mailbox, and you're bound to find a baby announcement, birthday invitation, or Christmas card bearing the Pickett's Press stamp. "Christmas is my favorite time of year," says Suzanne Johnson, wife of Jets owner Woody Johnson, "and I take our annual card very seriously. Kate and I collaborate to create something spectacular and unique! The proof is in the countless compliments my husband and I receive from family, friends, and especially fellow NFL owners."

Pickett's devotion to impeccable quality and a highly personalized touch is evident in every unique color, font treatment, and hint of whimsy that define her products' signature look. What is also evident is her devotion to New York City and the Central Park Conservancy, in particular. Pickett recently introduced a line of correspondence cards that benefit the conservancy's Tree Trust program, which she has long supported. So, when minding your manners this spring, perhaps there's no better way to say "thank you"—to your host, your friend, and even your city's most beloved park—than with a trip to Pickett's Press. ♦