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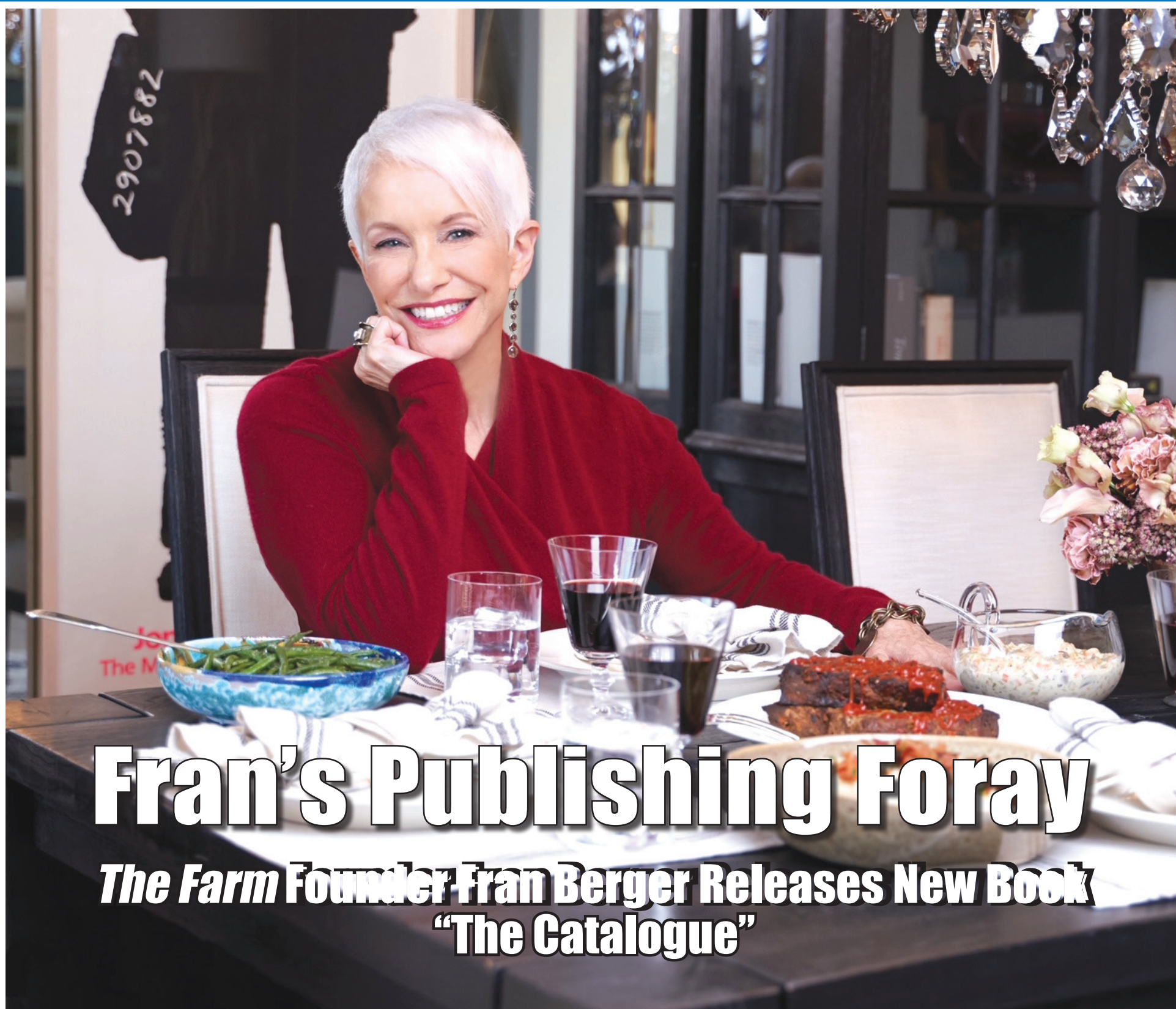
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Fran's Publishing Foray

***The Farm* Founder Fran Berger Releases New Book "The Catalogue"**

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FRAN'S PUBLISHING FORAY

The Farm Founder Fran Berger Releases New Book "The Catalogue"

By Danielle Berjikian

Tell us about your new book "THE CATALOGUE"

I am so excited about this book. It was two years of work on it because last year was more of a planning and strategic [time] for the book. It's all about entertaining and I show you how to use the things you already have, maybe things you didn't think about. It's mostly a photographic book so it's really a beautiful art book [and] definitely a coffee table book. I show you how to use all of those things [pieces you already have] in maybe a way you didn't think about that would be new to you and give you some new ideas on how to do it. I threw some entertaining tips in there; I threw a recipe for champagne vinaigrette in there just because I've got a chapter on salad bowls. I think that's an area that people tend to forget that they're all eating now. So, there's just something simple in there about that.

I decided that there was no resource for [home entertaining]. You can find resources for fashion and you can find resources for home design, but there's nobody showing you how to entertain with grace, sophistication, and ease. It should be easier, [but] we just won't do it. I became that resource, I decided that resources needed to be there. That's why I started the book.

Many of our readers know your North Beverly Drive restaurant, "The Farm."



"Sometimes the best situations are the ones that are impromptu and at the last minute. I want people to see all of that. I want people to see how beautiful even the simple things can be"

—Fran Berger

Can you tell us about the restaurant and how you got involved with that?

Yes, [it has been] over 20 years. We opened *The Farm* in May of 1995 and it grew to four locations. We had one out in Woodland Hills [and] one in Beverly Hills which is still open. I love that place [Beverly Hills location]. I am there regularly for breakfast. [We had] one at The Grove; we were there for ten years and then we had one at LA Live. So we had four, plus a commercial kitchen because of our 'Farm famous brownies.' I got in because it was started with a ton of dear friends of [mine]. I love food and we thought it sounded like a plan and it became an avocation. I loved it so much, it was great.

How did you get into home entertaining?

It was a natural transition because I was at *The Farm* so much. I was married and I had kids, and we entertained a lot at home. I was able to

watch clients and friends and associates [because of *The Farm*] come together [and see] how important it was for them to be making those connections. It was a natural transition for me from owning the restaurant because people kept saying "Fran we need to learn what you do. You do it so easily and we want to know it." So, it was an easy transition when I sold the restaurant back in 2015 when I turned 65 to get into home entertaining and helping people with that.

You stated that "Welcoming friends

into your home is itself an act of love. Providing a place for communion, facilitating connection - these things are vital in our increasingly disconnected world."

Can you elaborate on that?

I have always been one to have the family over at my house. I have sons and the kids [were always] at my house every weekend. I think there is a space in everyone's soul that is wanting those connections, that is wanting to be reconnected and I think that's what feeds our joy too. Feeding people, as I said, is an act of love. Everything for me revolves around the table. The table is just a metaphor. It could be a park bench with your girlfriend and a paper cup of coffee. The fact that you're sharing your day or those moments, or something that's important to you or just to say hello, that's what feeds our soul and fills us with joy. I think that it's important that people do it, and continue to do it.

Tell us about some of your appearances on Hallmark's Home & Family TV.

That was so much fun. I had the best time with the cast and crew. I got to explain why there is a rhyme and reason to how a buffet is set up and why some work and some get bottlenecked, and how to avoid those. I helped them with hostess gifts because my mother fed it into me that you never show up empty-handed. What hostess gifts are right and what ones are going to find themselves in the hall closet. I helped them with Al fresco dining which here in Southern California, in particular, is so much fun and so great outdoors. I was there as the home entertaining guru experiment. They came to me for things about that. It was fun, I loved it.

You have been outspoken as a Beverly Drive merchant. Do you believe outdoor dining should be made permanent?

Absolutely, without a doubt. I think that especially here in Southern California we love the outdoors so much and I think that it's enabled people who might be a little more concerned about dining



indoors, it gives them a place to still be able to connect and still be with friends and enjoy that time.

Not only do I think that out-

door dining needs to stay, I think those outdoor parklets they have set up on the street, I think those need to remain permanent. I love them, I love eating in them as often as I can.

What is one thing you wish you knew before starting your restaurant?

A lot of people think that being in the restaurant business is a very sexy business and what they don't realize is that it's a 24/7 situation. It's not all that sexy. It's a lot of work and a lot of worries if you want to be successful at it. I wish I'd known how much work it was. But I clearly loved it because I was there for 20 years. You have to be kind of a little bit of a crazy person to go into the restaurant business and I am obviously that kind of crazy because I was there and loved it.

What do you hope to achieve from your book?

I want people to understand how easy it is to entertain, to have those connections, to use those pieces that they might have. You might have inherited something from your grandmother that you think is just awful that you don't want to put on your table but you loved her so much that you want to honor her. I hope that they understand that and see that they can take maybe the sugar and creamer and use that on their table. I hope that they understand that entertaining is as easy as stopping on the way home at the market and picking up stuff for salad and bread and a bottle of wine. It doesn't have to be a perfectly planned dinner party. Sometimes the best situations are the ones that are impromptu and at the last minute. I want people to see all of that. I want people to see how beautiful even the simple things can be. I want people to see how they can mix and match things. I want people to understand that it is a resource and I am that resource for them to help with that.

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Jacob Jonas The Company presents ACTIVATE LA in association with The Wallis

Jacob Jonas The Company (JJTC) will be presenting ACTIVATE LA, a series of

dance programs presented in association with The Wallis. Non-traditional outdoor spaces will be transformed into open-air stages.

The programs will be presented at three different venues across Los Angeles, including Century Park on Oct. 1 and 2, ROW DTLA ON Oct. 22-24, and Water Garden Santa Monica on Nov. 12 and 13.

ACTIVATE LA features two different

programs of world-premiere works. At Water Garden and Century Park, JJTC presents At Work, with live music composed by Steve Hackman, a Los Angeles-based composer, producer, and conductor who has worked with orchestras including Seattle, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, and artists Doja Cat and Kanye West. At ROW DTLA, JJTC premieres Juxtapose, with live music composed by

Anibal Sandoval, a composer, movement performer, sound artist, and educator also based in Los Angeles.

All performances are held outdoors and attendees are requested to socially distance.

For tickets and information, please visit TheWallis.org/ActivateLA or call 310-746-4000.

--Briefs Compiled by Danielle Berjikian