

# Westshore *Living*

***Carrying on the  
Legacy of Cigar City:***

***Meet Lliana Fuente  
and  
Manuel Garcia***

***Also Inside...***

**"Expert Contributor: Antitrust Issues in our Health Insurance Industry Are Real" By Ron Moore • Page 6**

**"In 2025 the Sun is Rising on The Rays!"  
By JP Peterson • Page 12**

**"Spotlight on Streetlight Taco: A Michelin Bib Gourmand Restaurant" By Sydney Sultenfuss • Page 14**

**COVER PHOTO BY BRIAN BRANAGAN**

POWERED BY



BEST VERSION MEDIA



Kevin Cool • Private Wealth Advisor

Investment Portfolio • Retirement Income Plan  
College Planning • Wealth Transfer



*The Cools wish our South Tampa neighbors  
a healthy and happy 2025!!*

1511 N. West Shore Blvd., Suite 1100 • Tampa, FL 33607  
Office: 813-868-6907 • Cell: 813-205-0880 • Fax 866-374-1995  
Email: [kcool@sfsfirm.com](mailto:kcool@sfsfirm.com)

Securities and investment advisory services offered through **Osaic Wealth, Inc.**, member FINRA/SIPC.  
**Osaic Wealth** is separately owned and other entities and/or marketing names, products or services  
referenced here are independent of **Osaic Wealth**. Branch number 813-287-8800.



Making Real Estate  
a Breeze



COMPASS

Uncover the hidden gems  
of the Tampa Waterfront  
with the help of a trusted  
area expert.

**Bret Crino**

The Sails Team  
813.416.1122

[bret.crino@compass.com](mailto:bret.crino@compass.com)



The Sails Team is a team of real estate agents affiliated with Compass, a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws.

I love  
this  
town.



**Jim Cornwell, Agent**

4305 Bay to Bay Blvd

Tampa, FL 33629

Bus: 813.835.8892

[Jim.cornwell.bxj5@statefarm.com](mailto:Jim.cornwell.bxj5@statefarm.com)





POWERED BY



BEST VERSION MEDIA

**Team Tampa**

**PUBLISHER**  
Carl Walker

**SPONSORSHIP CAMPAIGNS**

Contact: Carl Walker

Email: [cwalker@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:cwalker@bestversionmedia.com)

Phone: (813) 390-0859



**CONTENT COORDINATOR**  
Savannah Tindall



**DESIGNER**  
Tom Zielinski



**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Brian Branagan



**LIFESTYLE CONTRIBUTOR**  
Sydney Sultenfuss



**CONTRIBUTING SPORTS WRITER**  
JP Peterson



**CONTRIBUTING WRITER**  
TJ Muscaro

**New for 2025!!!****South Tampa Scene**

At a charity function, event or party...

Send us pics with names and where you are!! Send to Savannah at [stindall@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:stindall@bestversionmedia.com)

Any content, resident submissions, guest columns, advertisements and advertorials are not necessarily endorsed by or represent the views of Best Version Media (BVM) or any municipality, homeowners associations, businesses or organizations that this publication serves. BVM is not responsible for the reliability, suitability or timeliness of any content submitted, inclusive of materials generated or composed through artificial intelligence (AI). All content submitted is done so at the sole discretion of the submitting party.

© 2025 Best Version Media. All rights reserved.

*Publisher's Perspective:***April 2025: Passover, Taxes, and a Late Easter...**

There are traditional and important dates in April to remember, celebrate, and enjoy with family. Also, on April 24th is the Holocaust Remembrance Day. In a recent survey, only one in 15 young adults can name a concentration camp from World War II. Roughly 225,000 survivors remain from the 1940's genocide of the Jewish population in Europe from Nazi Germany's short-lived empire. These heroes are declining in number at a rate of roughly 10 percent each year. I highly recommend the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, but locally, we have the Florida Holocaust Museum in downtown St. Pete at 55 5th Street S (Call: 727.820.0100). The museum is currently enjoying a renovation with improvements including a 43-foot-long fishing boat, Thor, which helped rescue over 4,000 people from Denmark. The museum is opening soon, so make a day of it and head to downtown St. Pete, where admission is only \$20.

Like most Tampians, I love Steven Stamkos and his commitment to our city and the Bay area. He earned the right to finish his career in our (and his) city. But in the high-stakes world of professional sports, everyone needs to make objective decisions. As yours truly predicted, GM Julien BriseBois let Stamkos go, but he ONLY has the best interest of Lightning wins in his sight, and it is paying off. Vasy is locked in, and with backup goalie Johansson back from an "undisclosed" injury, we should see Andre getting some breaks down the stretch. Also, the D is dialed and dependable on all three lines, creating security when we have a lead and solid transitional odd-man rushes for our forwards when we need a push. Congrats to Coach Coop, "Blackjack", Hags, and AC as Team Canada took down a formidable Team "Truchuk" USA, which was must-see TV in the Four Nations NHL break tourney. Brandon Hagel even got a takedown in his fight! This tourney should be a blueprint for all sports and "all-star" contests, even with the risk of fatigue and injury for those participating.

**DID YOU KNOW:** As we enter the "Lord Stanley" time of year, the Lightning are right where they need to be, and it is because of one constant, John Cooper. Over the last 10 years, finishing 2/28/2025, the Lightning have the most wins in the NHL with 471 and the largest point differential at 440. The formula has not changed this year, as we are in the top three teams in point differential. Also, a trade deadline move adds fan favorite Yanni Gourde and the solid Oliver Bjorkstrand from the Kracken which will provide immediate impact. Sure, we have community-minded ownership, a solid front office, and great players who love Tampa, but the "day-to-day grind" key is Coop, and he has us poised for another run.



I was saddened to hear about the passing of Harold Walker, who was THE VOICE OF THE PANTHERS throughout the Robert Weiner glory days. I was a "spotter" for Harold for a couple of years, and he was always prepared and passionate about the beloved Panthers. This behind-the-scenes "LINK" will be remembered fondly and truly exemplified ONE HEARTBEAT.

Get engaged in our publications! Know an interesting family for us to feature, a superstar pet, a charity that you support, or have a photo you want to share in our new South Tampa Scene? Call or e-mail all suggestions to our

Content Coordinator Savannah (info listed on this page)! We want to hear from YOU!

My granddaughter, **Sofia**, loves reading our publications each month to see what is happening in South Tampa! Sofia also loves supporting our local SPONSORS whenever possible, they make it ALL possible!

**THANKS for supporting all our local sponsoring businesses listed inside that help us grow and bring you these publications monthly!**

Your neighbor-

*Carl*

**Dentistry**

Dr. Tim Muscaro, D.D.S.  
**Muscaro & Martini Dentistry**  
 813.839.6999  
[muscaroandmartinidentistry.com](http://muscaroandmartinidentistry.com)

**Private Wealth Advisor**

Kevin Cool  
**Signature Financial Solutions**  
 Office: 813.868.6907 • Cell: 813.205.0880  
[kcool@sfsfirm.com](mailto:kcool@sfsfirm.com)

**Real Estate**

Bret Crino  
**Compass**  
 813.416.1122  
[BetterGetBret.com](http://BetterGetBret.com)

**Insurance**

Jim Cornwell  
**State Farm**  
 813.835.8892  
[jim.cornwell.bxj5@statefarm.com](mailto:jim.cornwell.bxj5@statefarm.com)

**Hospitality**

Jeff Gigante  
**Next Level Brands**  
 813.768.9989  
[uniontampa.com](http://uniontampa.com)

**Jeweler**

Kevin Burns  
**Associated Watch and Jewelry Buyers**  
 813.288.0022  
[associatedjewelers.com](http://associatedjewelers.com)

**Mortgage Lending**

Brooks Cunningham  
**Regions**  
 843.345.9467  
[brooks.cunningham@regions.com](mailto:brooks.cunningham@regions.com)

**Small Business Employee Benefits**

Ron Moore  
**Providence Benefit Solutions, LLC**  
 813.477.4974  
[Ron@provbenefit.com](mailto:Ron@provbenefit.com)

**Home Design and Renovation**

James Ramos  
**Ramos Companies**  
 813.259.1111  
[Ramoscompanies.com](http://Ramoscompanies.com)

**Generator Expert**

**Suncoast Power Solutions**  
 813.829.0037  
[Info@SuncoastPowerSolutions.com](mailto:Info@SuncoastPowerSolutions.com)  
[www.SuncoastPowerSolutions.com](http://www.SuncoastPowerSolutions.com)

To learn more about becoming an expert contributor, contact BVM at [cwalker@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:cwalker@bestversionmedia.com) or 813-390-0859.

**South Tampa Business Owners!**

- Brand your Business in our Publications!
- High Demographics & Geo-Targeted.
- Supporting our Community.
- Print, Digital, and On-Line Presence.

**Call Carl at 813.390.0859**

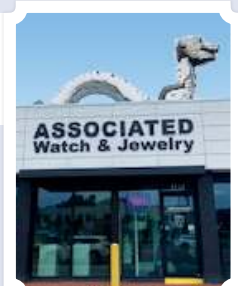


## ASSOCIATED Watch & Jewelry Buyers

**Serving Tampa for over 35 years!**

Specializing in buying diamonds, estate and antique jewelry, and fine watches.

Kevin Burns & Joe Huchro, owners



3418 W. Kennedy Blvd. Tampa, FL • 813-288-0022  
 Hours: Monday–Friday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm



# Affordable HOME UPGRADES

Home improvements don't have to cost a fortune. These cost-effective home upgrades are DIY friendly and can also increase the overall value of your home.

## Paint the kitchen cabinets

New cabinets are expensive, but a few coats of paint can transform both your cabinets and the kitchen itself for less than half of the cost.

## Replace hardware

Weathered cabinet handles can drastically age your home. Swap out the hardware in the kitchen and bathroom for modern knobs and handles.

## Update light switch plates

Did you know that you can replace a light switch plate for less than one dollar? Paint or swap yours so they match their surroundings.

## Add moldings to walls

As long as you have the proper tools, adding molding is relatively simple. You can choose from two popular types—crown molding or panel molding.

## Give the outside of your home a face-lift

Easy DIY projects like repainting your front door, adding new shutters, and planting bright flowers in window boxes can add a welcoming ambience.

## Revamp indoor light fixtures

Instead of spending your money on brand new fixtures, consider giving your current ones a makeover with some fresh paint.

## Repaint walls with neutral colors

Although bright colors are fun, a neutral palette in colors like cream, gray, or tan can make your home feel clean and timeless.

## Frame your bathroom mirror

Does your bathroom have a plain plate-glass mirror? Not to worry! Adding decorative trim around it can make a world of difference.

## Hang curtains high and wide

Help a small window out! Hanging drapes high and wide will give the illusion of a larger window as well as make the room appear airier.

## Add visible storage

Isn't it annoying to have to open a door or cabinet to get to your storage? Floating shelves are both a simple and aesthetically pleasing solution.

## Give your air grilles a fresh look

Since a return air vent is a necessity, why not make it look its best? A simple coat of paint can make this eyesore blend right in.

Best Version Media does not guarantee the accuracy of the statistical data on this page. The data does not represent the listings of any one agent or agency but represents the activity of the real estate community in the area. Any real estate agent's ad appearing in the magazine is separate from the statistical data provided which is in no way a part of their advertisement.

## Thinking About Selling?

I have **TWO** clients looking for property in Beach Park on the east side of Westshore Boulevard. Both are **CASH** Buyers and flexible on the closing date. If you have considered selling, give me a call!

AndreaWebbGroup.com 727.560.4341 |  
Team@AndreaWebbGroup.com



GLOBAL  
LUXURY®

AW  
ANDREA WEBB GROUP  
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY



## EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR



## Antitrust Issues in our Health Insurance Industry Are Real

BY RON MOORE

There are systemic issues in the delivery of health insurance that employers provide to their most valuable resource, their employees. Most employees are reliant on the benefit option plans being offered by his or her company, which is the most affordable way to elect into health benefits.

Many of you reading this have recently received notification that Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) is in the process of settling a 2020 antitrust litigation for \$2.7 billion. BCBS was accused of restricting competition by limiting how its member companies competed against each other. The complaint is that BCBS used its structure to suppress competition and keep premiums artificially high

I always like to remind everyone that since 1985, United Healthcare's stock price has been up 200,000%. The good news—insert tongue in cheek—is that BCBS is a “nonprofit, not for profit” health insurance provider.

There are only two other health insurance companies remaining, CIGNA and Aetna, which are now a part of CVS Health. Humana stopped writing commercial health insurance in 2023. Currently, there are now only four carriers offering their respective health networks.

The “4 Horsemen” left standing.

Back to antitrust, in 2017, the federal courts blocked mergers of Aetna-Humana as well as BCBS-CIGNA. Both mergers were deemed anti-competitive.

There are many issues that keep us at Providence Benefit Solutions (PBS) on our toes, working on behalf of our employer groups and their employees. We are constantly looking for ways to beat the “4 Horsemen” at their collective game. It is not easy, but we can and do win for our clients.

We can quote health insurance for any company for January 1st as well as June 1st effective dates. The difference is that June will have a 6% higher premium. The carriers call this “trend increase”. As far as PBS is aware, there is no other industry that sets its price increase at 12% annually. This practice has been going on for decades.

Let me give you a real example of a local Tampa Heating and Air Conditioning company with 60 employees. They had been with United for 15 straight years. We requested the opportunity to compete for the business. Their rates were absurdly too high, and the benefits were a watered-down mess that barely qualified as health coverage. We delivered a 40% rate reduction with better, more comprehensive plans from Aetna. Their broker at the time was left to scramble and went to United's other division and received a rate match - a 40% reduction.

Aetna now understood that United knew the risk, thus lowered the rates another 10% for a total of 50% decrease. Carriers like United previously considered this cannibalizing their own block of business. HOWEVER, recall that there is that pesky BCBS \$2.7 billion settlement paving the way for some real religion by United and other carriers.

If you would like to have a second opinion, it would be our privilege to advocate on your behalf of and your employees. Until next time, stay healthy.

**Providence**  
BENEFIT SOLUTIONS

EXPERIENCE THE BENEFIT OF OUR SOLUTIONS

### Employee Benefit Specialists: REDI

- Reducing Cost
- Educating Employees
- Decreasing Turnover
- Increasing Employee Satisfaction

Experience the Benefit of Our Solutions  
**Contact Us Today! 813.210.9680**

Ron Moore  
Owner & Founder

**ProvBenefit.com**  
3410 West Cypress St., Ste 203, Tampa, FL



# Ground-Up Custom Homes by Ramos Companies

BY AMANDA KOENN | PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY RAMOS COMPANIES

A home should be more than just a structure—it should reflect your lifestyle, taste, and long-term needs. At Ramos Companies, we specialize in ground-up custom builds, taking homes from initial concept to completion. Whether it's a luxury waterfront retreat on Anna Maria Island, a contemporary masterpiece on Davis Islands, or a coastal haven in Pinellas, our team designs and builds one-of-a-kind homes tailored to each client.

Our process begins with understanding your vision and lifestyle. Our team collaborates to create a detailed design plan that includes materials, budgets, and timelines. Once the design is finalized, our construction team brings it to



life, ensuring quality craftsmanship at every stage.

We tailor every home to fit our clients' unique styles and needs, from modern farmhouse charm to sleek coastal retreats. Our expertise spans diverse architectural styles, ensuring every detail—from exterior finishes to structural reinforcements—is thoughtfully executed.

For waterfront homes like those in Anna Maria Island, Davis Islands, and the Tampa Riverfront, we navigate complex site conditions, including flood zones, by elevating foundations and implementing hurricane-resistant materials to meet FEMA requirements. Expansive windows, open floor plans, and seamless indoor-outdoor

living create breathtaking spaces that balance beauty with durability.

As a full-service design-build firm with over 200 years of combined experience, Ramos Companies seamlessly manages everything—from permitting and site preparation to construction and final finishes. Our expertise ensures a stress-free experience, whether you're building a modern estate, a transitional home, or a timeless coastal retreat.

If you're considering a custom home, our team is ready to bring your vision to life. From Tampa Bay to Sarasota, we specialize in creating homes that are as unique as the families who live in them.

Rooted in experience and committed to excellence, the Ramos name has stood for quality construction since 1956—and will for generations to come. Interested in starting your ground-up custom home? Contact Ramos Companies today for a free consultation.



## DESIGNS THAT HELP BRING FAMILIES BACK TO THE TABLE

At Ramos Companies, we recognize the importance of a home, which is why we offer a range of services focused on bringing families back to the table. We provide turn-key services from design through renovation and maintenance. Our seasoned team has over 100 years of combined experience in bringing our client's dreams to life.

- Renovations & Additions
- Ground-up Construction
- Property Maintenance
- Owners' Representation



813-259-1111

[ramoscompanies.com](http://ramoscompanies.com)  
[info@ramoscompanies.com](mailto:info@ramoscompanies.com)

General Contractor - James A. Ramos  
CGC1522125 CGC1522836

View our portfolio



## Carrying on the Legacy of Cigar City:

# Meet Liana Fuente and Manuel Garcia

BY SAVANNAH TINDALL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BRANAGAN AND ADDITIONAL PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY LIANA FUENTE AND MANUEL GARCIA

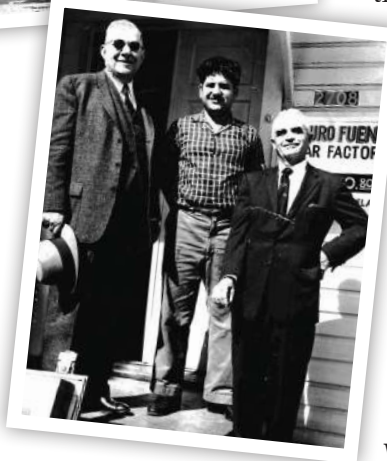
**Y**bor City is synonymous with Cigar City, thanks in large part to savvy entrepreneurs like Arturo Fuente. After immigrating from Güines, Cuba due to the Spanish-American War, he ended up in West Tampa and at 24 years old, he launched the Arturo Fuente cigar brand in 1912. Since then, the business has been passed down from generation to generation.

Today, you can still purchase Arturo Fuente cigars from local cigar shops in Ybor like Tabanero Cigars and Sweetheart Cigars, and his great-granddaughter, Liana Fuente, is proudly carrying on the family tradition with her husband, Manuel "Manny" Garcia.

"Legacy is a beautiful yet intimidating word because it describes something to be honored and remembered," says Liana. "Yet, it places a lot of stress and expectations on those who must carry it on. I, for one, am very grateful for my family story, which is the story of the American Dream. We live in the greatest country in the world, where the Fuente story was written with so much love, passion, and sacrifice.

"Yes, it can be challenging working in a family business, but the reward of continuing in the footsteps of those who came before you, carrying on their values and dreams, definitely outweighs any negative components," she continues. "It is definitely a privilege to be involved in our family business and industry, and to be able to honor someone like my grandfather Carlos A. Fuente, my hero."

She has spent over 15 years at the cigar brand, working her way up to the Vice President of Brand Development



role under the tutelage of her grandfather, who taught her "the importance of keeping your word, living with integrity, and putting family first." While she has recently stepped away from her day-to-day role at the company, she still serves on the board with Manny and she is currently in the process of restoring Arturo Fuente Cigar Factory. It is the oldest standing Arturo Fuente Cigar Factory, located on 18th Street and a short walk away from the J.C. Newman Cigar Factory.

"As I restore the oldest Arturo Fuente factory located in northern Ybor City, I continue to keep in mind our past and traditions but also think about what I can do to keep Tampa moving forward. We really appreciate all the projects going up, especially those that restore or replicate Tampa's history, and not just tear down for the sake of having new buildings," says Liana passionately. "There is a lot of work ahead to make sure we don't lose the essence of Tampa - that town with southern charm, Latin flavor, and sunny weather - but to also embrace the future and grow strategically for all residents."

With the old factory being over 100 years old, it's been a process, to say the least, but 110% worth it to preserve both a vital part of her family's and Tampa's history. Liana has felt like she has grown personally from this process and has a





newfound respect for "individuals' ingenuity of those that came before us to build this piece of history." Manny has always been Liana's number-one supporter throughout this project. He has been serving as the Vice President of Operations and General Counsel for Arturo Fuente since 2020. Prior to that, he was Florida Counsel for the New York Yankees.

"I have been lucky enough to work for two family-owned businesses, two great global brands in two wonderful and fun industries, and to be able to be part of amazing teams of people who are passionate and hardworking," shares Manny. "I have been very lucky, as a Cuban-American kid from West Tampa, to have been able to experience and see so much in my career - from the opening of the new Yankee Stadium and winning the 2009 World Series Championship to numerous cigar and company of the year awards and the restoration of the oldest Arturo Fuente cigar factory. I have been, and am, truly blessed."

The couple have been living in Sunset Park since April of 2012 and have formed a close-knit community with their neighbors. They took Liana's grandfather's advice about

investing in prosperity, so when the opportunity arose, Liana jumped at it.

"Our kitchen is where the party is. Whether it's making coffee in the morning, or prepping doggie treats, or getting ready for dinner, the music is always on, dancing takes center stage, and happiness radiates throughout the house," says Manny. "Sometimes, it's the simple things in life that bring the most joy, and our home truly provides the place for that."

"As they say the kitchen is where the heart of the home is, every morning we make Cuban coffee together, talk about current events, and dance to music to start our day," agrees Liana and adds on, "[Plus,] one of our favorite spots as well as our side yards. One side yard is for the adults, and on the other side, we laid turf from our actual wedding for the pups to enjoy while we are outside smoking a cigar with them."

They have had 11 dogs over their marriage and currently have five fur babies that are Boston Terriers and Frenchies: Bella, Bruce, Bruno, Scrappy, and Rosie. Their home is cleverly nicknamed "The Fuente Dog Pound" due to all of their rescues that they very dearly. Liana herself is a self-proclaimed animal lover and has had chickens, birds, and cats in addition to dogs; she would love to add a baby goat or pig to their four-legged family, but Manny is a bit

*Continued on next page*





SCAN FOR A FREE QUOTE

**SOUTH TAMPA'S CHOICE**

300 5-STAR GOOGLE REVIEWS

**We do pressure washing too!**

813-440-3566

stgutterandwindowcleaning.com



JARED BILSLAND,  
Your Westshore Neighbor

## Bank with your neighbors!



**COGENT**  
BANK

Moving You Forward

**CONTACT US TODAY AT**  
**813.492.8030**  
for more information or to schedule an introduction.

**We live in the South Tampa community and would welcome the opportunity to meet you.**

Cogent is a full-service commercial bank with a full spectrum of lending, depository, property and treasury management services to meet the unique needs of our clients. We have local decision-making authority and are passionate about the success of our clients.



**WADE FAIRCLOTH**  
Market President



**ED NEWTON**  
Commercial Relationship Manager



**AMY TEBBE**  
Deposit Relationship Manager

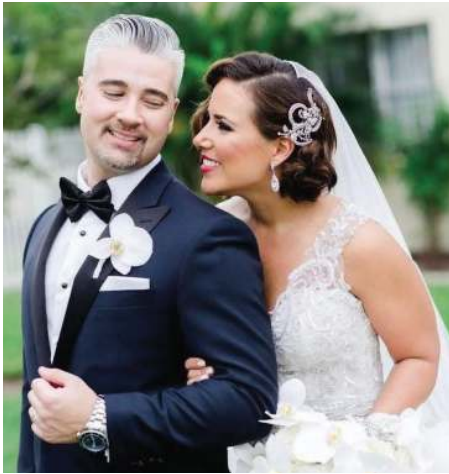


**MIRANDA PETERS**  
Banking Center Manager

**Tampa Banking Center**  
**1715 N. Westshore, Suite 150**

**cogentbank.com**

Member FDIC  
Equal Housing Lender



weary of that venture! Throughout the past 17 years, she has volunteered at the Humaine Society and has helped raise nearly \$750,000 for them as well as another cause close to her heart, breast cancer research.

In fact, they had a Boston Terrier as their flower girl at their wedding. Their wedding was nothing short of a spectacular event, with a “show-stopping couture wedding dress,”

two Grammy award-winning artists performing at their reception, and over 1,000 guests. The church service took place at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in West Tampa and the wedding reception took place in Ybor City, across the street from the historic cigar factory that houses the corporate offices for the Arturo Fuente Cigar Company.

“These areas have a historical connection to Cuba, the immigrant experience, the cigar industry, and the American Dream,” says Liana. “Honestly, the wedding was one of the best days of my life. People flew from all over the United States to be there for us. I had all my friends and family there. It was a true blessing; everyone was having so much fun and truly enjoyed our wedding with us. It was a night to remember. One of my favorite moments of the wedding was all the dancing. We had Grammy award winner Willy Chirino and dear friend Arturo Sandoval performing, and there was not a single person

**What sets Arturo Fuente apart from other cigar brands?**

“One of our longtime values at Arturo Fuente, which has become a well-known slogan of ours but still holds true as a core principle, is that ‘We will never rush the hands of time.’ Basically, we never sacrifice our commitment to quality or our core beliefs as a family business for a quick buck. We don’t follow the crowd, we don’t chase trends, and we don’t do gimmicks. We have learned over 113 years that what consumers really want is a company that is dedicated to the craft, that is “real” in all that it does, that is humble and respectful of the process, and, once again, is committed to quality. Arturo Fuente tries to do that on a daily basis, always remembering the consumer as well as the beauty, history, and tradition that makes the premium cigar industry so unique and fun. It brings people together and offers experiences like no other.” - Liana

**BRIO**  
italian grille



**LET US ELEVATE YOUR**

*Spring Events*

For events as meaningful as the memories you’ll create, trust Brio’s expertly crafted dining and catering to make them unforgettable.

**Book your event today.**

**Visit [BriolItalian.com](http://BriolItalian.com)**

**BRIDAL · COMMUNIONS · GRADUATIONS  
EASTER · MOTHER’S DAY · BABY SHOWERS**





sitting the entire night. Another bonus was at the end of the night we had local food trucks providing food for all the guests, which was a definite added treat after a long night of celebrations."

While they got married at 35, they actually met much earlier. They met at a mutual friend's birthday party at just age 14, and although the attraction was always there, they remained just great friends for a very long time until they became something even greater! 22 years after that initial meet-cute moment, Manny proposed in front of the house where they first met, and the rest is history.

"I remember seeing him and thinking he was so adorable," gushes Liana. "I can honestly say I married my best friend, and I would do it all over again if I had to. We both went into the marriage with love, mutual respect, and admiration for each other, and for that, I am truly blessed."



"31 years later, I can still close my eyes and relive that moment. At the time, we were just young kids at a party, with no idea how that moment would affect the rest of our lives. But here we are, decades later - God and the universe truly work in mysterious ways," says Manny, grinning from ear to ear. "To sum it up, I'm just happy I RSVP'd "yes" to our friend's birthday party!"

Both Manny and Liana are proud to be first-generation Cuban Americans born and

raised in Tampa sharing, "Whether it's the food, music, or language, it is a part of us which we celebrate. So, we may eat roast pork with our mashed potatoes on Thanksgiving, dance a little salsa before we open Christmas gifts, or simply remember our Cuban ancestors who fought unimaginable circumstances and came to this country to give us, their descendants, a better life - either way, it makes for a fun and meaningful life, which we cherish now and forever."



**Veterinary Medical Clinic, Inc.  
& Feline Wellness Center**



**Urgent Pet Care  
of South Tampa**

**Taking Care of South Tampa Pets since 1970 • Dr. E. Garcia, Owner & Clinic Director**  
**Daytime or After Hours: our location is available for all your pets medical needs!**

**Our Commitment to You & Your Pet**

- 🐾 **To provide quality, dependable and courteous service at all times.**
- 🐾 **We will always provide the most cost-effective means to meet your pet's medical needs without compromising quality care.**

[www.vmctampa.com](http://www.vmctampa.com)

**Clinic Hours**

Monday - Thursday: 7 am - 6 pm  
Friday: 7 am - 6pm | Saturday: 8 am - 12 pm



**4241 Henderson Blvd. South Tampa**  
**(813) 289-4086**

The AAHA Standards of Accreditation are widely used as benchmarks to measure excellence in veterinary medicine. Our clinic has been successfully evaluated by an outside consultant on over 800 standards that directly correlate to the care we are providing your pet.

**We take care of non-life-threatening cases so you can avoid the costly pet emergency clinic prices. Open for extended evenings and weekends. Closed some Holidays.**

[www.urgentpetcareofsouthtampa.com](http://www.urgentpetcareofsouthtampa.com)

**Urgent Care Pet Hours**

Monday - Friday: 6 pm - 10 pm  
Saturday: 12 pm - 10 pm | Sunday: 10 am - 6 pm

*McLeod's Auto Service Since 1953*



*Founder*  
**N.E. "Mac" McLeod**

**McLeod's Auto Service:  
Foreign and Domestic**

**Family-Owned and Serving  
South Tampa since 1953!**

**ASE Certified Master Technicians**

**Tim McLeod, Owner**  
**813.831.5130**

**2905 South Manhattan Avenue • Tampa, FL 33629**

JP PETERSON



BY JP PETERSON



## In 2025 the Sun is Rising on The Rays!

The Rays 2025 Season has a whole new look, new stadium, new players, and maybe...a new local owner.

As the sun rises on the 2025 MLB season, there are Rays of hope and change on the horizon! The Rays will play in Tampa for the entire season outdoors at Steinbrenner Field, the Spring home of the New York Yankees. When the roof blew off Tropicana Field in Hurricane Milton, Tampa was clearly the best choice for many reasons. The location was perfect and way better than Tropicana Field. The clubhouse and ancillary facilities are Major League quality.

It only seats around 11,500, and the summer months will bring afternoon thunderstorms (the Tarpons only averaged 6 rainouts), but the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The premium seats cost up to 30K for a season ticket, and they sold out quickly. The rest of the tickets are nearly sold out, some at double and triple the price of Tropicana Field, where the Rays averaged just over 16K fans last year. With the significantly higher prices, the Rays will likely make more revenue in ticket sales than they did in St. Pete. It's going to be a tough and expensive ticket.

On the field, the Rays will likely have more than half the roster turned over from the opening day of 2024. New additions include former Padres Gold Glove SS Ha-Seong Kim, who will be a huge upgrade offensively. Veteran

Catcher Danny Jansen has wowed the Rays staff with his leadership, power, and defense in spring. But perhaps the most exciting player of Spring has been 21-year-old 3B Junior Caminero, who played in 43 games last year and hit 6 HRs. He's had a huge offseason in the Dominican Winter League (hitting the game-winning HR in game 7 of the championship series), and many experts believe he can be a consistent 30+ Home Run guy, something the Rays have rarely had in their lineup.

The pitching staff figures to be one of the best in baseball, with 6 legitimate starters vying for 5 slots. All-Star starter Shane Bieber returns from Tommy John surgery and looked great in the spring. Ryan Pepiot, Zach Littell, Shane Bieber, Drew Rasmussen, and Taj Bradley all have top-of-the-rotation stuff! This will keep the Rays in almost every game they play. The Bullpen returns with superb closer Pete Fairbanks and a stable of guys who can all throw 98! Edwin Uceta was sensational at the end of last season. Manuel Rodriguez, Kevin Kelly, and Garrett Cleavinger all return after excellent seasons. Many experts believe the entire staff is among the top 5 in baseball.

### A First Choice Pressure Washing, LLC

Serving South Tampa for 9 Years!

**Ask about our Spring Feature pricing  
on driveway cleaning and sealing!**

Commercial, Industrial & Residential

5 Stars (4.9 Google)

**24/7 Call us:  
813.770.5290**

**Mention "Cooper" for a  
discount on our services!**



Mascot Cooper



**Tune into the JP Peterson Show! The best 2 Hour daily  
Tampa Bay sports-centric talk show!**

**LIVE M-F from 10-Noon on FanStreamSports.com/  
Twitter @FanStreamJP/Facebook @JP Peterson and on  
the Fanstreamsports App. You can also subscribe to the  
podcast on Apple/Spotify by searching The JP Peterson  
Show.**



The Rays offense is the biggest question mark. They finished second-to-last in almost every category last year. Only the historically bad White Sox were worse. Other than Kim and Jansen—offensive upgrades but hardly sluggers—the notoriously cheap Rays spent next to nothing to upgrade the offense. They are banking on the young Caminero to provide pop, along with Josh Lowe (great 2023, terrible 2024) and Brandon Lowe returning to previous form. Jonathan Aranda and Yandy Diaz (former batting champ, limited power) also need to step up. GM Eric Neander admitted he's hoping to get to an "average" offense, and with this elite pitching staff, it might be enough to return to the post-season.

Off the field, the stadium saga continues to bedevil the team once known as the Devil Rays. As of this writing, it appears owner Stu Sternberg will renege on the deal he signed with St Petersburg and declared the Rays were "Here to Stay". The good news is that my well-placed sources within the negotiations tell me 2 groups based in Tampa are vying to buy the Rays. One group I would refer to as "Elite" and well-known businessmen. MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred is aware of these groups and has given them his blessing. He has repeated multiple times that the league has no intentions of leaving the Tampa Bay market, saying MLB LOVES the market.

My sources tell me both groups would prefer to build a stadium on the Tampa side, which has always been the preference of MLB. It's important to remember that Stu Sternberg CANNOT, under league rules, unilaterally sell the team and move them. It takes a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of owners to move a team, and MLB says that is extremely unlikely. My reporting has also been confirmed by the highly respected Ken Rosenthal of the Athletic and Fox Sports. It's my educated guess that the Rays will be sold to local ownership and a new stadium announced on the Tampa side within the next year.

So, big changes are happening for the Rays! This is a good thing. Players mentioned this Spring that the vibe in the clubhouse for the last 2 years has not been good and

needed to change. An ownership change would likely mean more spending on players and keeping players long-term instead of Sternberg's preference to sell them off when their contracts got too big.

Imagine, the Rays playing in front of a packed stadium every night in Tampa and winning big! I expect that to happen this year and many years to come! The Sun is rising on the Rays in Tampa!



OUR GOAL IS TO PLEASE  
**Third Generation, Family Owned Business**



License # CCC056926  
Bond # 047712 66286161

**FREE ESTIMATES**  
**COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL**



Eighteenth year appointee to Hillsborough County Licensing Board.

**Serving Hillsborough & Pinellas Counties And Surrounding Areas**

3502 E 7th Ave, Tampa, FL 33605

**813-839-7706**

*Life's a blur, sports pix don't have to be.*



South Tampa  
**SPORTS PIX**

Brian Branagan • c: 813.515.9794 • southtampasportspix.com

**Westshore Wednesday: 10% off orders mentioning this ad!**

**Blu Wave**  
SUSHI

P: 813.600.9723  
Dine in or Take Out

Visit our website to  
order the freshest  
sushi in Tampa!



3339 S. West Shore Blvd. • Tampa, FL 33629

# Spotlight on Streetlight Taco:

A Michelin Bib Gourmand Restaurant

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SYDNEY SULTENFUSS

Bienvenidos a Streetlight Taco, a Michelin Bib Gourmand Mexican restaurant located here in South Tampa! Their menu celebrates a variety of Mexican culinary traditions, featuring heirloom masa, handmade corn tortillas, and an extensive selection of tequilas and mezcals.

Since opening last January as part of the Tastes Pretty Good restaurant group, Streetlight Taco has quickly become a beloved spot in the community. You can find Streetlight Taco at 4004 Henderson Boulevard, where there's something for everyone to enjoy.

During my last visit, I sampled as many dishes as possible and was never disappointed! The chips and dip sampler is the perfect way to kick off your meal, served with queso flameado, guacamole, and borrocha salsa. We followed up with a selection of tacos, with the brisket and the carnitas earning their spots as fan favorites. If you're a seafood lover like me, you can't miss the fried grouper and shrimp tacos. The shrimp taco features a delightful avocado goddess aioli, while the fried grouper is complemented by chipotle mayo, making both dishes unforgettable! For those who prefer to customize their meal, they offer build-your-own bowls with a choice of proteins like Bluefin Tuna, Skirt Steak, or Wood Grilled Chicken. Everything pairs wonderfully with



their delicious Elote Corn, available on or off the cob.

And don't forget to treat yourself to something sweet to finish off your meal! Currently, for strawberry season, they have a heavenly Tres Leches Cake on offer, or you can indulge in Chill Bros sweet corn blueberry ice cream or mango sorbet—both are delightful ways to wrap up your visit.

Streetlight Taco also offers an impressive selection of tequilas, mezcals, wines, sangrias, and more! For tequila enthusiasts, their margaritas are a must-try, with both classic and exciting flavors. I highly recommend the Coco Margarita, crafted with Cazcabel Blanco, coconut, Alma Finca, lime, and agave—it's one of the best drinks in town! Other popular options include the blackberry, passion fruit, or picante margaritas, not to mention their enticing frozen espresso martini.

Check out their late-night happy hour, available every day from 8 PM to close!



Whether you're searching for a new dining experience, catching up with friends over drinks, or gathering the family for a meal, Streetlight Taco has you covered. They're open seven days a week: from 11:30 AM to 9 PM Sunday through Thursday, and 11:30 AM to 10 PM on Friday and Saturday. For more details about the restaurant, menu options, and online ordering, visit: Streetlight Taco. Additionally, be sure to check out the Tastes Pretty Good website ([www.tastesprettygood.com](http://www.tastesprettygood.com)) to stay updated on their latest projects!

## FALL IN LOVE WITH A NEW SMILE!

# A B D O N E Y

O r t h o d o n t i c s



Complimentary Consultations | 813.250.0313 | [www.AbdoneyOrtho.com](http://www.AbdoneyOrtho.com)



# Mary Lee's House: A Night Out West

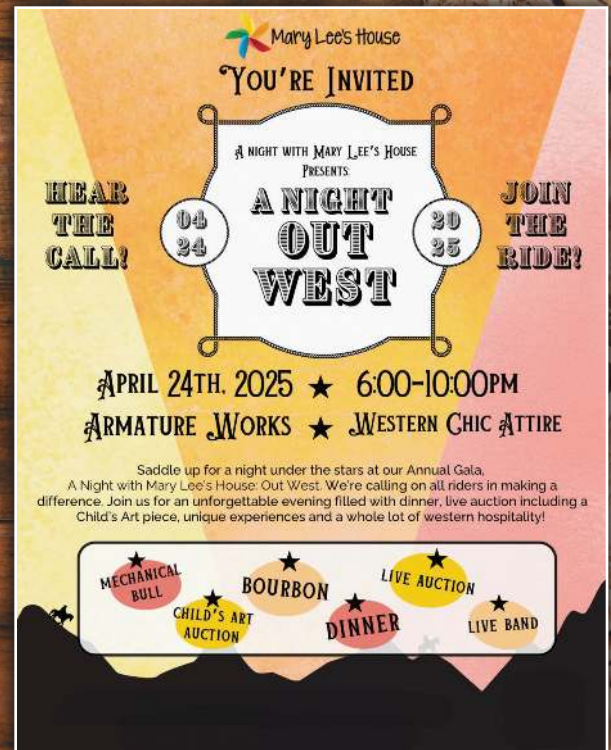
BY SYDNEY SULTENFUSS

Grab your cowboy boots and saddle up for A Night Out West! Presented by Mary Lee's House, this evening supports their critical work to protect children and families across Hillsborough County. Mary Lee's House helps children affected by abuse and neglect by coordinating efforts and building collaboration between public, private, and governmental agencies. This festive fundraising event will be held on Thursday, April 24th, at 6 PM at Armature Works.

Begin the evening enjoying a delicious drink at the Saloon cocktail hour, followed by a sit-down dinner from Good Food Tampa. Make your bids at the live auction, which offers a wide variety of items and experiences, including an original piece of artwork by one of Mary Lee's House's families. For even more excitement, be brave and take a ride on the mechanical bull!

Put together your chicest Western wear, and enjoy an unforgettable evening helping the children of Tampa Bay! To purchase tickets, please visit <https://www.maryleeshouse.org/news-and-events#ANightOutWestWithMaryLeesHouse>.

Are you unable to attend the event? Please consider supporting the organization to help a child in need! For more information about Mary Lee's House, their mission, and ways to help out, check out their website at [www.maryleeshouse.com](http://www.maryleeshouse.com)



# FAMOUS TATE

## APPLIANCE & BEDDING CENTERS

Largest Selection • FAST FREE Delivery\* • Guaranteed Lowest Prices

*Serving generations of South Tampa families for over 70 years!*

11 Tampa Bay Locations  
3347 Henderson Blvd. (next to the original Outback)

813.253.2421

\*on most appliances \$448 and up





PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY INDIVIDUALS FEATURED

Text your pics WITH NAMES and place to  
Sydney 813.629.0888 or Carl at 813.390.0859.  
Send us your Easter Family picture at church!



Nice seats, Alex Walter and Clay Hall.



Jack Heiss enjoys South Tampa with his daughters, Amanda and Hannah.



"School's Out" as Craig Kuhl gets a round in with Alice Cooper.



Jack Murray presents Buckeye Superfan Dave Alexander the Natty sweep plaque!



Coach John and Irene Few being the THUNDER.



South Tampa Icon Gayle Sierens-Martin with Bob Campbell and Pie Czar Mike Martin at Sunday Service.



AKA Marketing's Amanda Koenn with American Lung Asso. Director Steve Riddle at a recent South Tampa Chamber mixer.



Associate Pastor Kathy Conner welcomes new members Mitchell and Lindsay Campbell. Join us for Easter services at First Pres Church!





Carter Rising and Anderson Ehrhart crush the Gasparilla 5K!



Suzie Archibald, Sylvia Davis Walker, Jane Sultenfuss at the Michael Jackson show at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts.

## April Adventures: Top Ten Events in Tampa Bay

BY SYDNEY SULTENFUSS

### 1. Disney's The Lion King

April 2nd-20th

@ Straz Center for the Performing Arts

Time: Varies by date

### 2. NCAA Women's Final Four

April 4th & 6th

@ Amalie Arena

Time: TBD

### 3. Zoo Brews

April 5th

@ Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park

Time: 7:30-11:30 PM

### 4. Tampa Bay Blues Festival

April 11th-13th

@ Vinoy Park

Time: Varies by date

### 5. Tampa Bay Wine and Food Festival: Grand Tasting

April 12th

@ Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park

Time: 1 PM

### 6. Easter Brunch

April 20th

@ Maestro's Restaurant at Straz Center for the Performing Arts

Time: 11 AM

### 7. Bern's Winefest

April 21st-27th

@ Multiple locations, please visit <https://laxerfamilyfoundation.org/wine-fest-events/>

Time: Varies by date

### 8. Christ the King Carnival

April 24th-27th

@ Christ the King Catholic School

Time: Varies by date

### 9. Breakaway Music Festival

April 25th & 26th

@ Raymond James

Time: 5 PM

### 10. Alan Jackson's Last Call: One More for the Road

April 26th

@ Amalie Arena

Time: 7 PM

## Grand Opening Specials!

# FIT AF

MODERN PILATES LIKE NO OTHER...

813-215-1533 | [fitAF.com](http://fitAF.com)

3143 W Kennedy Blvd. | Easy Parking







## Show the power grid who's boss. **It's a power move.**<sup>TM</sup>

Nothing beats the sweet, sweet satisfaction of knowing you're in complete control.  
Get to know America's favorite home standby generator – here to power your home in any outage.

**Request a free quote today.**



SUNCOAST POWER SOLUTIONS  
813-829-0037  
[www.suncoastpowersolutions.com](http://www.suncoastpowersolutions.com)  
EC130114001







**Kirby's**

TAMPA'S SPECIALTY  
STORE FOR MEN

RAVAZZOLO  
CANALI  
SCABAL  
ETON  
SANTONI  
JOHNNIE-O

**NOW OFFERING TUXEDO RENTALS**

PHONE: 813-253-2681  
KIRBYSMENSWEAR.COM

1707 SOUTH DALE MABRY  
TAMPA, FL 33629



**PINELLAS TREE SERVICE**

**Dan Fields- South Tampa Resident**



- Tree Trimming
- Tree Removal
- Tree Evaluation
- Stump Grinding
- Firewood
- Free Mulch

Quality, dependable tree service since 1976

**pinellastree.com • 727-399-5858**

## Local Pet Superstars

By Sydney Sultenfuss

Photography by Sydney Sultenfuss



### Pet of the Month: Meet Theo!

Hello! I'm Theo, a two and a half year old cat living in the bustling heart of downtown Tampa. My mom adopted me from the Humane Society of Tampa Bay, and life's been nothing short of purrfection since.

I adore spending my days perched in the window, taking in the sights and sounds of the city. My other favorite pastime is playing with my toys, especially my penguins! I lend a paw when I can, acting as my mom's personal assistant on days that she works from home.

After a long day of supervising her work, you can find me sprawled out in another one of my favorite hangout spots—the sofa, chairs, dining table, or off to bed! If you're looking for a furry coworker or just a furry friend, visit the Humane Society of Tampa Bay or check out their website at [www.humanesocietytampa.org](http://www.humanesocietytampa.org).





Follow us on Twitter  
@askRegions



Like us on Facebook  
Facebook.com/  
RegionsBank



© 2020 Regions Bank. NMLS# 174490. All loans subject to qualification, required documentation and credit approval. Certain exclusions may apply. Loan terms and availability subject to change. The Annual Percentage Rate on all adjustable rate mortgages is subject to change after consummation period. Regions and the Regions logo are registered trademarks of Regions Bank. The LifeGreen color is a trademark of Regions Bank. (02/15)

## Brooks C. Cunningham

NMLS #1694918  
Mortgage Loan Officer

100 N. Tampa Street  
Tampa, FL 33602  
brooks.cunningham@regions.com  
p - 843.345.9467

[regionsmortgage.com](http://regionsmortgage.com)



The **Power** of a **Healthy Smile**.

(813) 839-6999

**Timothy Muscaro, D.D.S.**

**Caitlin Martini, D.M.D.**

3502 Bay to Bay Blvd. • Tampa, FL • 33629



MENUS & RESERVATIONS

1111 N Westshore Blvd. Tampa, FL 33607 • (813) 768-9989



"WESTSHORE'S PREMIER BRUNCH EXPERIENCE"