

A Word to the Wise: 10 Arizona VIPs

Written by Claire Perkins

AN AWARD-WINNING MIXOLOGIST. ONE OF TOP LOCAL SINGING TALENTS. A WELL-RESPECTED RESTAURATEUR. THESE 10 VALLEY VIPs ARE AT THE TOP OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PROFESSIONAL TURFS (AND SOME ARE LOOKING TO OVERTAKE OTHER FIELDS, AS WELL). SO, HOW DID THEY GET TO WHERE THEY ARE TODAY?

STORY BY MELISSA LARSEN

PHOTOS BY JASON BLACK



"Since graduating high school, I've been in the beauty industry. First, as a model, then as the owner of a modeling agency and now as a makeup artist and photographer. It's interesting how people can see a photo in a magazine and think 'I want to look like that.' What I love about what I do is that I get to help people see their own beauty and feel confident, comfortable and sexy in their own skin. The beauty industry can be shallow and harsh—I like to think I've brought a little depth and compassion. There is nothing more satisfying than helping someone see the beauty and uniqueness they possess. I'm living my dream, and it feels amazing."

—MICHAEL FRANCO, MAKEUP ARTIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER

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"Being good at what you love requires dedication to knowing yourself and continuous learning of what you can accomplish through your craft. This is an ongoing process for a singer/songwriter and musician. Being restless and staying curious is a vital part in what drives me to where I am today and will continue to be moving forward. Surrounding myself with people who gift me with their support, love and honesty also keeps an even keel. Above all, I love connecting with people through music, which gives me the motivation to keep growing and having a good time!"

—TALIA KENDRIX, RECORDING ARTIST

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"I am the W Insider at the W Scottsdale, where every day I answer your questions: what's new and what's next? I make your stay at the W Scottsdale memorable by giving you 'inside' tips and 'inside' information, facilitating contacts for lifestyle-related hot spots, including boutiques, restaurants, galleries, concerts, sports venues and premier events. Rachy's Cakery is all about cakes, pastries and delectable custom-made culinary experiences. I knew at a very young age that I loved baking cakes, pies and cupcakes while crafting morsels into customized bites of sheer heaven. I graduated from culinary school, and I design the perfect flavor palate for your special event with crafted cakes and melt-in-your-mouth homemade buttercream frosting."

—RACHAEL BIENZ, W INSIDER AT THE W SCOTTSDALE AND OWNER/PASTRY CHEF AT RACHY'S CAKERY

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"I am inspired by excellent food—both the classic recipes and the new, creative ones that add something fresh and unexpected to the repertoire. I am also inspired by hospitality. Whether it's at my own home or at the restaurants, I thoroughly enjoy providing the necessary elements for people to have a great time: delicious food, good music, pleasant décor and outstanding service. I am very grateful that I am able to do what I love for a living, and feel very lucky to be surrounded by an excellent team of people who help me build my dream business every day."

—GERMAN OSIO, FOUNDER OF OSIO CULINARY GROUP (SUMOMAYA, CENTRAL BISTRO AND LOCAL BISTRO)

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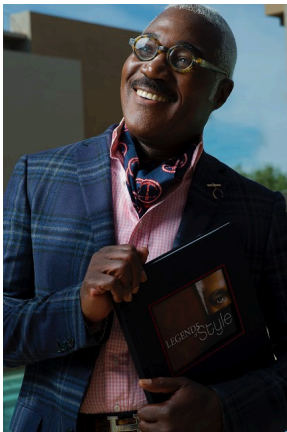
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"I got my start as a barback when I was just 17 and eventually graduated to the role of bartender at the upscale and old-fashioned steakhouse where I began by mixing up the classics. When I moved to Flagstaff to attend Northern Arizona University, I discovered an interest in wine and studied to obtain my introductory sommelier and certified specialist of wine (CSW) certifications while working in several wine bars. I helped open and run Criollo Latin Kitchen, a tequila and mezcal bar where I fell in love with spirits and cocktails. With a new interest in the creation of flavors, I came to Phoenix to head up the cocktail program and bar at Blue Hound Kitchen & Cocktails and LUSTRE Rooftop Garden at Kimpton's Hotel Palomar Phoenix in September 2012, where I began experimenting with flavor and accessibility in craft cocktails."

—STEPHANIE TESLAR, HEAD MIXOLOGIST AT BLUE HOUND KITCHEN + COCKTAILS

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"For three decades I've dreamed of publishing 'Legends of Style', the ultimate sartorial guide for men. Working for Valentino paved the path, and my dream became reality. I believe there's no shortcut to success. In spite of the challenges in life, I never gave up. I thank God himself, who grants us creativity and power to achieve what we dream. With the touch of a sartorial stylist, a well-dressed man realizes when he enters a room there's a change in the very molecules. He then understands the meaning of my philosophy: 'Your image is your bank.'"

—REMY TOH, AUTHOR OF "LEGENDS OF STYLE"

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"I have been very fortunate in my career to have many mentors that have helped me evolve. It started with my father who taught me that what is most important in business is the customer experience. In my 30 years of the luxury retail and real estate business, I have been able to create and implement high-impact customer-based initiatives. This is my passion. My focus has always been on client relationships and continually striving to elevate the experience each time they walk through our doors. Now to have finally arrived at Saks Fifth Avenue, it seems like a dream come true and an incredible opportunity to be part of the future and the growth of this amazing brand and luxury business. Our company has such a powerful vision for the future. It is exciting and a true privilege to be part of it. The Phoenix community has been so welcoming and has such a connection with the legacy of Saks. I have no doubt that together we will create something truly magical and share our vision and product with everyone."

—MARIE BLISS, GENERAL MANAGER AT SAKS FIFTH AVENUE AT BILTMORE FASHION PARK

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"I credit my success to two simple concepts: Hard work. And trusting my gut instincts."

—CRAIG JACKSON, CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF BARRETT-JACKSON AUTO COMPANY

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"I was very fortunate to start working for the Mastro family at only 19 years old. We have become family and what I do is based on everything I have gained from their experience over the past 23 years together. As part of my job, I am lucky to interact with people that want an amazing experience they can't get anywhere else. Whether it's a party or an event, a romantic dinner, celebrating an occasion, a business deal or an evening among friends, I want it to be the most perfect experience and always go above and beyond to make sure this happens. It's rewarding I am able to be part of making these memories happen."

—OLIVER BADGIO, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AT DOMINICK'S STEAKHOUSE AND STEAK 44

TWITTER @DOMSTEAK @STEAK44



"I am just so happy to be in this place in this moment. It just doesn't feel like work when you love what you do. Interior design has always been a passion, but what means more to me is the collaboration with clients and the end result of a project. It is my mission to let the world (OK, this town anyway) know that working with a designer doesn't have to be a luxury and is not beyond anyone's reach. I have spent a lifetime dreaming of a design studio and a place where I am dying to come to work every day. This dream came true when we debuted the opening just this year. It is called Style Source. I have curated a collection of over 500 brands and created a place where designers and individuals can plan, work, dream and live to their hearts' content."

—SUZANNE BIER'S HARRINGTON, OWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER AT SUZANNE BIER'S FOR STYLE SOURCE AND THE SUZANNE BIER'S COMPANY

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