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## Windsor: Dog shows and polo

BY MICHELLE GENZ  
Staff Writer

By far the most solemn participant last week's First Annual Windsor Dog Show was a 4-year-old girl in a long satin gown, officiously leading resident David Bardes and his poodle, Pansy, around the ring.

"Here come David Bardes and his handler,"

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Stacey Lewis showing dog at Windsor. PHOTO BY BENJAMIN HAGER

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**Windsor: Dog shows and polo**

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quipped the emcee.

Never mind that the little girl's grandparents are Helmut and Danna Swarovski of the cut crystal Swarovskis. Or that the emcee, Herb Fitzgibbon, once played at Wimbledon. Despite the setting and celebrity, this parading of the Windsor family pets was not to be managed for a magazine spread.

Windsor, ever preened and camera-ready, has a side that doesn't translate to a Town & Country cover. Beyond the feint of concept ads is a boots-on-the-ground reality guided more by an attitude of laissez-faire than noblesse-oblige. Windsor deliberately tries not to be "over-legislated," as Dewey Arnett, director of golf, once put it. He lets dogs ride on golf carts.

Marketing director Jane Smalley has a word for it: Fun. "You should see them on St. Patrick's Day."

In a sense, Smalley is a "handler" herself these days, responsible for the care and feeding of the Windsor brand.

Arriving in December a year ago, she joins a roster of new hires toiling behind the white fences and clipped bougainvillea as a great administra-



tive machine, vigilantly maintained by the hand of Canadian developers Galen and Hilary Weston, who keep an oceanfront home there.

That machine's recent tune-up includes not only a new event planner and a new gallery manager, but a new club general manager, Bob Gallagher, who joined the company in September. Gallagher, omnipresent on his golf cart,

residents say, held the same post at the Jupiter Island Club, as well as the Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley, N.Y., and the Maidstone Club in East Hampton.

Meanwhile, Betsy Hanley, the longtime president of Windsor Real Estate, was named in December president of Windsor's holding company, Torwest.

Even the chef is new.

Windsor for the past two seasons has dined on a menu guided by one of Europe's most celebrated French chefs, Eric Chavot, formerly of The Capital Restaurant in London. His cuisine was considered the best French food in London and — until he left — earned The Capital two Michelin stars.

While much of the top tier of staff may be new, its purpose seems to be to make sure the third decade of Windsor hews close to the first and second. Family traditions are important here and Windsor events nudge them along.

Conjured by New Urbanist visionaries in the late 1980s, Windsor was designed to be friendly, with its front stoops close to its quiet streets, and houses set close together. Numbering around 350, a fourth the population of John's Island, Windsor residents may be more likely to know their neighbors than at other island enclaves. As years pass, there is growing continuity among families.

Today, Hanley says a significant percentage of homeowners are working families who vacation here, many of them second generation Windsor residents.

They are a community of "quiet philanthropy," says Hanley.

One longtime beneficiary is John Walsh's National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Along with the local humane society and St. Edward's School's scholarship foundation, Walsh's center was beneficiary of another first this year, this one open to the public: the inaugural Charity Polo

Match at Windsor, a sellout, to be held every two years.

While the return of polo to Windsor — it was known for years for the sport and once drew Britain's Prince Charles to play — may not exactly mark a move toward the mainstream, other entertainment at Windsor is even more rarefied.

Earlier this month, residents were treated to an afternoon of "traditional Hungarian Archery Dance and a Hungarian Horseback Archery Exhibition."

For some, that may lend Windsor a certain cache, at least from the outside looking in.

Three years ago, Travel and Leisure magazine named Windsor to its Top 25 Golf Communities in the Country list, noting that its sporting clay program, overseen by gun instructor Count Nikolaus Szapary, who flies in every year from Austria for the season, lends the place "an insouciant, Sonny-and-Klaus sort of atmosphere."

Considerably more accessible is the Windsor Salon series, another recent addition for residents.

In March, it hosted political commentator Peggy Noonan, an occasional visitor who has friends in Windsor. Created by Hilary Weston in 2009, the private lecture series has featured Niall Ferguson, the late Christopher Hitchens and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the Somali-Dutch feminist and atheist activist.

Many Windsor residents are passionate collectors of art, and deeply involved with the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Residents Richard and Pamela Kramlich, are among the world's most significant collectors of video art. Another collector, Georgia Welles, is on the museum executive committee.

The Westons are also ardent about art. In yet another innovation at Windsor, the Westons have entered into a three-year relationship with London's prestigious — and edgy — Whitechapel Gallery.

The first evidence of that partnership came in December when, in conjunction with the international Art Basel art fair in Miami, it staged a show co-curated by Whitechapel of the Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes.

The opening drew 400, Smalley says, and an estimated 300 more who have scheduled tours by appointment — the gallery is the one area of Windsor that is open to the public.

Smalley comes to her marketing post with experience that dove-tails neatly with Windsor.

For four years, she was director of marketing and communications for Lake Nona, a vast master-planned community in southwest Orlando on 7,000 acres that includes schools, hospitals, and kindergarten-through-community college education.

Prior to that, she worked as communications director for Baldwin Park, a

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1,100-acre mixed-use urban redevelopment project. And before that, she worked for more than a decade with Trammell Crow, the huge real estate development and investment firm.

Smalley arrived in December 2010. She quickly hired a team to rebuild the website, launched last July.

The new site, which Smalley says is cleaner looking, is tweaked to get Windsor more hits through search engines like Google. It also includes platforms to make it accessible through Ipad and smartphones. With better navigation and visual tours of properties, it also offers registration to visitors for regular updates on real estate offerings. For residents, it includes news releases, event information, and a digital version of the Windsor newsletter, published every two months in season.

Smalley also spearheaded the shift of marketing dollars from running print ads to placing stories in magazines and newspapers. She hired a boutique PR firm in New York to work on pitching stories, including getting Skip and Kim Franco's house featured in the Wall Street Journal in October. Two more homes were featured in Coastal Living in recent months.

In addition to seeking publicity, she also has to fend some off.

"We're very selective," said Smalley. "We get offers all the time to do pictorials here. We're very careful about not diluting our brand. We have a really strong brand and we worked hard to do that."

In August, the Weston's Windsor home was featured in Architectural Digest, considered the zenith for many designers. But with lesser publications, Smalley has to consider that the biggest magazines and newspapers will not use a house that has been featured in another publication. German Architectural Digest, for example, refused to feature one Windsor house because it had been seen in a Vero glossy, she said.

The biggest change to come to Windsor comes at its very core: the expansion of its New Urbanist central neighborhood to include an area called the South Village. The 15 lots promoted as appealing to a more rural sensibility are accessed through a dense oak hammock via a winding dirt road, to the south of the main community.

While all Vero's clubs report being packed on Easter weekend, Windsor residents seemed to think there were more kids there than ever. Four days later, the playground was still "going wild," said Cynthia Bardes.

Others were riding at the equestrian center, still more were off on golf carts, especially the older kids.

Those carts are a major selling point



when prospective buyers bring kids in for their opinion, as is the private tunnel under AIA to get to the beach. "Kids love it here," Smalley said. "They have a freedom they can't have anywhere. They're so happy to just sort of be released."

"It's fun, year after year, seeing the same children growing up," said Bardes.

Those who graduated into the older crowd had their own flashlight Easter

egg hunt the Saturday night before Easter, while the little ones got to scour Easter morning for another 1,500 set about the lawn near the village store.

As for the adults, they were treated to a feast under the stars by Chavot. "He put on an incredible buffet," said Bardes. "It must have been a city-block long."

That party, an annual affair hosted by the Westons, was staged in the entrance allee, beneath rows of meticulously pruned oaks towering cathedral-like overhead. After the seated dinner, there was dancing to a live band.

"I got blisters on my feet," said another resident, Diane Fentress, who with Bardes co-chaired the benefit dog show.

The dog show, dreamed by up Fentress and Bardes last summer, was a huge success. Narrowly escaping a huge thunderstorm, it was followed by dinner at \$125 per person benefiting the Dasie Bridgewater Hope Center, an afterschool mentoring

and tutoring program in Wabasso that is desperately in need of money to continue its work.

Verna Wright, the founder of the center, brought two of her students to speak.

They stayed for dinner; all the while, the Windsor residents kept turning in their pledge cards, eventually raising a stunning \$130,000 including a matching grant by resident Betsy DeVos, and a pledge by emcee Fitzgibbon to cover half the center's food expenses for the year.

It was part of what Windsor's Betsy Hanley calls the "quiet philanthropy of Windsor."

"They're very generous here. But people don't always hear about it," she said.

At the same time, all seemed delighted at the notion that a new tradition had been whelped at Windsor. "It's already on the calendar for next year," said Bardes.

If on the other hand anyone had any hopes of a Windsor dog show being a snooty affair, Fitzgibbon's spoofing commentary snuffed them out. It was spawned of plenty of material: dogs in tutus, people in dog masks, and Fentress' husband Lee wearing a collar and leash dutifully paraded by his wife.

When one jittery charcoal fluff-ball suddenly squatted mid-introduction, a cat call came from the sidelines:

"It's a caca-poo!"

Residents resolved the mishap without fanfare, no staff required. ■