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At Their

Best

The East End boasts its fair share of creative types: Artists, designers, architects, actors, chefs—the list goes on and on. In this issue, we shine the spotlight on three very different talents: Devi Kroell, Radu, and Lilee Fell—to learn what's really in the heart and the mind of a master.

Flower Girl

as told to Cindi Cook

The floral artistry of Lilee Fell has Hamptons residents arranging appointments—and fast. Her pieces have been sold in the most sophisticated boutiques, and have graced the foyers and coffee tables of some of the most elegant residences in town. Here, Fell tells *Hamptons* how she keeps the bloom on the rose.

FLOWERS ARE GENETICALLY programmed into my family. My grandmothers, two of my aunts, and my mother are floral and horticulture enthusiasts and Garden Club of America ladies. I started in flowers when I was in college, with a part-time job at Topiaire in Southampton. Erin does lovely work and gave me very good basics. Fifteen years later I can't think of anything else I'd rather do than work with cut flowers or gardens.

I'm in awe of the beauty and joy one can create with flowers. My favorites are lady slipper orchids, frangipani blossoms, and poppies, but each season brings new choices—I especially love spring's peonies, lilacs, and viburnum.

After working "by appointment" for years, I have a wonderful group of clients who, in some ways, have become a second family. In addition, I ran Antony Todd's shop in Southampton for two years, which was a terrific experience. Antony is amazingly talented, with a great sense of style; he's also a wonderful teacher. He brought my arranging to a new level and opened many doors for me. I worked with him on the Roberto Cavalli opening at the Met, and was flown to a four-day wedding in Anguilla where we ran on little sleep and worked like never before. Especially challenging were the logistics of getting the flowers there in one piece, but the end result was stunning. I do many weddings, but they're particularly fun when the couple thinks outside the box.

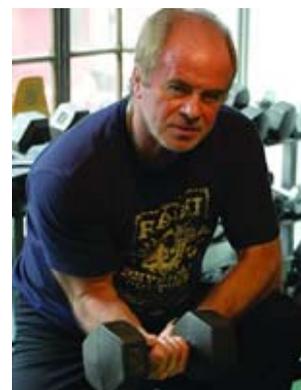
Along with doing weekly house flowers, holiday house decorating, and garden design work, I've been the décor chair for the Group for the South Fork's annual benefit for the past five years. My other favorite event is



ABOVE: Floral artistry of Lilee Fell



ABOVE: Lilee Fell



ABOVE: Radu

Grand Prix Sunday at the Hampton Classic—the tables are mind boggling!

During the past seven years, I've been very lucky to be able to take two to three months off to travel through the Caribbean. But while there, I always find myself doing impromptu wedding bouquets and dinner party flowers. I've taken to carrying my Felcos (special gardening tools), stem wrap, and waterproof florist tape with me wherever I go. I think the next hat I'd like to wear is that of a tropical landscape designer. This fall I'm joining forces with Jennifer Pace at Fiore, a lovely flower boutique in Roslyn, Long Island. I look forward to being close to the city for the fall and winter, then back out here in the summer when the season starts. I think it's getting the best of both worlds.

Lilee Fell can be reached at 631-456-3926

Do You Radu?

by Cristina Greeven Cuomo

Anyone can train you, but Radu can actually change you. The man behind many fit bodies is celebrating his one-year anniversary in the Hamptons.

RADU WAS MEANT TO BE A TRAINER. Everything about him fits the part: a sculpted frame, near-preternatural lack of aging, rapid-fire cadence, and Romanian accent all come together to form this self-improvement maven. The intensity not only makes the man, but also exemplifies the experience. Radu was at the forefront of a gym-focused society in 1977 when he opened his first Radu Physical Culture in New York City, years after arriving from Romania with his wife and son. He's come far since those early days: Last August Radu decided to bring his old-school workout ethic to Southampton when he opened on Hill Street. Today, he's busy staging a big move from his West 57th Street address to the Plaza Hotel.

His regimen includes counting calories, training the heart, lungs, and muscles, improving flexibility and strength, and giving people the power and knowledge of movement—in the form of organized classes as well as fun, unstructured activities (like biking, jogging, swimming, or playing tennis). This foolproof format has kept many a celeb coming back for more. Matthew Broderick, for example, comes to play ping-pong or table tennis with Radu in Southampton. "Matthew is very much aware that he needs to keep moving," says Radu. "We do classic training, but we also play basketball, volleyball, and a little soccer." By breaking down clients' expectations when they come to the gym each time, Radu makes sure they get more out of their workouts—without losing enthusiasm.

In the 80s, when bodies were toning up instead of merely slimming down, Cindy Crawford found a home in Radu's gym—and in turn, she put him on the map. Crawford was "perfectly toned, a real woman," the fitness guru recalls. In 1985, Radu opened his first gym in East Hampton catering to the power elite like Calvin and Kelly Klein, Bianca Jagger, Paul Simon, and Christie Brinkley. He reconditioned Calvin Klein on the beach after his near-paralyzing horseback riding accident in the early 90s, forcing Klein into daily rehabilitation on Georgica Beach in East Hampton to strengthen his legs and ankles. Needless to say, he recovered, and supports Radu's philosophy on the importance of the synergy between indoor and outdoor exercise. "You have external factors that might pose obstacles, so it's more fun—like play," Radu says. "By adding an element of natural resistance, it's more challenging."

Another frequent visitor to the Southampton gym is Samantha Boardman



ABOVE: Devi Kroell



ABOVE: The signature pythons bag that Jessica Simpson carried.

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Rosen, who started going to Radu after her son was born this summer. In just a few months, she regained her strength as well as her trim physique. "You almost forget the pain!" Rosen says. "It reminded me of being in gym class as a child. Radu makes it fun." Top trainer Rodica Matthews, a former platform diver and national champion for Romania who has been with Radu for 10 years, took over Rosen's training and continues to build her strength and endurance. Matthews' feminine touch adds the perfect balance to Radu's tough edge—but don't discount her! All his trainers push clients beyond their limits. "Rodica is so intuitive and pays so much attention to detail," says Radu.

The gym craze has shifted focus over the last two decades as the worlds of yoga and Pilates collided with the aerobic universe, and personal trainers have been utilized more and more. Radu chalks it all up to convenience. But as a result, he's beefed up his personal training staff and has begun offering yoga and Pilates toning classes. "People are interested in getting into new forms," he says. "They want the great figure without doing so much work—but there is no way around it."

Radu can be reached for personal training sessions—in or out of the gym—at Radu Physical Culture, 33 Hill Street, Southampton, 283-9303; radufitness.com.

Carry All

by Anne-Marie Guarnieri

Wordly and winsome designer Devi Kroell transports her talents to the Hamptons.

ACCESSORIES DESIGNER DEVI KROELL owes part of her success to two wildly disparate sources: pythons and Jessica Simpson.

In 2004, Simpson was seen toting Kroell's signature python hobo bag all over the place. Caught in print and on TV, Simpson unassumingly helped to make Kroell's first foray into design an instant success. Other critically acclaimed collections followed, each drawing on the designer's love of exotic materials and eye for understated luxury. This June, Kroell was honored by the Council of Fashion Designers of America with the Perry Ellis Award for Accessories Design—after only two and a half years of business.

We sat down with the Swiss-born beauty to discuss snakeskin, "the Jessica bag," and her Hamptons store.

HAMPTONS: Why accessories, and why the exotic skins?

DEVI KROELL: When I first started, I just felt that there was something missing in handbags. I felt there was a customer who was looking for something very refined, very luxurious, and without all the gimmicks. That's how I introduced my hobo bag. I went for a shape that was quite classic. And people weren't really using exotic skins at that time. So my introducing them also contributed to their success.

H: And suddenly, your hobo bags were everywhere.

DK: It happened really quickly. I'd sent Vogue some information about what I'd done; they loved the product and did a one-page article about the collection, which more or less put me on the map. By the time the article came out, the bags had hit the stores, and several stars had bought them.

H: Stars like Jessica Simpson.

DK: Oh, yeah, everybody said, "I want the Jessica bag." None of the bags are called "the Jessica." I didn't realize what an impact she had, or that it

would make such a commercial difference, but it did.

H: Why did you choose the Hamptons for your first shop?

DK: I wanted to reach out to a Manhattan customer, and during the summer all the Manhattanites go to the Hamptons. It was a good territory to test the market without upsetting my New York-based retailers.

H: So far so good?

DK: Oh, yeah, I'm very happy with it. Having the store out here has taught me a lot—about the way I should be designing, the way customers react to the product, and what they really look at when they buy a product.

H: Tell me about the furs that are part of your fall/winter collection.

DK: When I was in the Hamptons last winter, I didn't have any chic vests that I could wear to go riding. And I liked the idea of having this kind of luxury keeping me warm while I was riding around, looking fabulous on my horse. That was the starting point.

H: And are you moving away from using snakeskins?

DK: Definitely. I've worked a lot with normal leathers and satin for my resort collection. I'm trying to keep my materials interesting, but I'm moving away from using the snakes. And it's something I saw in the Hamptons store. A lot of customers told me, "I'd love this, but not in an exotic."

H: What's on your holiday wish list this season?

DK: Oh, God, I'm so happy, I don't really need anything. I'm surrounded by all these beautiful things every day and I think I'm very lucky.

Devi Kroell, 2 Main Street, East Hampton, 329-2700; devikroell.com.

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