



FRIENDS
of
VILLA FINALE

THE BEE LINE

Friends of Villa Finale Quarterly Newsletter

March 2022 www.VillaFinale.org

Vol. 1 Issue 1

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The Bee Line

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From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

We are pleased to introduce the first edition of our quarterly newsletter, "The Bee Line." With the rapidly changing times, we hope this more frequent communication will keep you up-to-date on all that's happening at Villa Finale: Museum & Gardens.

"The Bee Line" was invented by our clever Manager of Collections & Interpretation, Sylvia Gonzalez-Pizaña. Originally an online newsletter for our volunteer staff at the museum, "The Bee Line" is an homage to one of the favorite symbols of Napoleon (the Bee) as well as a creative play on words.

The only site in Texas of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and one of only twenty-eight in the United States, Villa Finale is honored to carry on the vision of the historic home's last owner, Walter Nold Mathis. Mathis dedicated his life to the collection of fine and decorative arts and antiques (including Napoleona), and to the preservation of material culture, historic houses and properties. In future editions of "The Beeline" we will be featuring items on his important work.

While the past two years of the pandemic have subjugated our ability to produce in-person events at the site, we hopefully plan to carefully reintroduce on-site programming in the very near future. In this newsletter you will see how we have created ways to keep our patrons engaged, as well as find information on upcoming programs. Following our mission, we look forward to providing meaningful experiences at Villa Finale to both educate and entertain a diverse community.

Thank you for your support of this important local resource. Please consider becoming a part of our "Friends of Villa Finale" to enjoy special member benefits; more information is included in "The Beeline" or available online at www.villafinale.org.

With best wishes for 2022,
Jane Lewis
Executive Director

Operational Updates



March

31 - Fiesta begins.

April

8 - Villa Finale closed for Friends' Retreat preparations.

9 - Villa Finale closed for King William Fair and Friends' Retreat.

May

28 - Villa Finale closed in observance of Memorial Day.

30 - Villa Finale offices closed for Memorial Day.

June

18 - Villa Finale closed in observation of Juneteenth.

20 - Villa Finale offices closed in observation of Juneteenth.

Upcoming Program Highlights



APRIL

9th - Saturday

Villa Finale Friends' Retreat

It's back! "Friends of Villa Finale" are invited to enjoy the respite of Villa Finale's shaded grounds and complimentary food and beverages during the King William Fair. Our front gate will open for entry following the King William Parade, with "come-and-go" admission for Friends until 4:00 PM. Admission to the King William Fair is sold separately by the King William Association.

Please contact us at (210) 223-9800 or villafinale@villafinale.org to RSVP or to renew your Friends of Villa Finale membership.

21st - Thursday

Villa Finale After Dark

5:00pm - 8:00pm

\$10.00 / \$12.00 non-member

Have you ever wanted to visit Villa Finale, but your work schedule got in the way? Now you can experience Villa Finale in a whole new light! Join us for our special evening self-guided tours and experience the beauty of Villa Finale after dark...

MAY

21st - Saturday

Behind the Scenes at Villa Finale

10:00am - 12:00pm

\$15.00 / \$20.00 non-member

Visit Villa Finale as an insider during the first installment of our latest series. Explore the parts of this magical home that are not seen on the tour and hear stories from staff about what makes Villa Finale tick. Includes morning refreshments and a tour of Villa Finale.

JUNE



25th - Saturday

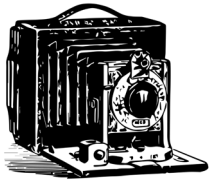
"Who Done It?" A Murder Mystery at the Edward Steves Homestead

6:30pm - 9:00pm

\$25.00 / \$30.00 non-member

There's been a murder committed at the historic Edward Steves Homestead and it's up to you to solve the crime! Join us for this macabre evening and enjoy refreshments, adult beverages, and murder mystery mayhem!

Visit our website www.villafinale.org for additional programs and updates.



In Focus

Updates from Villa Finale's Managers

Collections Corner - by Sylvia Gonzalez-Pizaña

Hello, Friends. It is my pleasure to update everyone on the highlights in the Collections department. First, I took the time during our brief closure due to Omicron to rearrange and organize Collections spaces throughout the site and to begin polishing the silver in the Dining Room. By the time you read this, all silver will be gleaming! And speaking of the Dining Room, we are currently working on replacing the weathered drapes in that room. We're very excited to see that project completed, so stay tuned for updates.

Also, if you have visited us recently, you may have noticed that we had some artwork missing. Those pieces, which were being displayed at National Trust headquarters in Washington, D.C., are now back at Villa Finale!



Bonners and Onderdonks displayed at National Trust headquarters being returned on March 9, 2022.

Buildings & Grounds - by Orlando Cortinas

Greetings from the Buildings & Grounds department. Like for many of you, last year's harsh freeze and snowfall greatly affected our landscape, as we lost many plants and vines. Managing the effects of climate change is a real issue that we must deal with not just at our site but all the sites owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

I recently found out firsthand as I sat in via a zoom meeting, hearing the stories from different site staff how extreme weather is affecting their historic sites around the country. This new reality really makes you think about future planning to preserve and protect not only our historic landscapes but the structures as well. Fortunately, we have not seen as extreme weather as other sites further north but, with your support, we will continue to preserve our site for future generations to experience and enjoy through sustainable practices.



February 2021 at Villa Finale.

Programs & Events - by Farrah Varga

We're so excited to announce a return to in-person programs at Villa Finale after many long months of cautious optimism and careful precautions. While we've been open for tours throughout most of the pandemic, we have taken great care to protect our guests by switching to a virtual format for lectures, art lessons, and more. Be sure to follow us on social media to see what we've been up to and to stay up to date on all virtual programming still to come!

We're kicking off our spring season with everyone's favorite event – *Villa Finale's Friends Retreat at the King William Fair*! This party - free for our "Friends of Villa Finale" members - will offer food, drinks, and fun in the shade of our ancient oak and pecan trees. It's the perfect respite from the raucous King William Fair outside our gates!

See the "Upcoming Programs Highlights" section of this newsletter for more information. We hope to see you there!



We're looking forward to seeing your creative headwear!

“Bee” An Insider Behind-the-Scenes at Villa Finale



March 2022:
silver pitcher
before and
after polishing.



January 2022: ivory piece
boxed and ready to be taken
for cleaning and repairs.



Spring 2021: painter working
on the rear porch.

‘Tis The Season: Spring

2022 is off to a roaring start at Villa Finale! We’ve been busy with tours and the beautiful King William neighborhood has been full of visitors enjoying the early spring sunshine and longer days. March means Spring Break in San Antonio and we’ve already seen more families stopping by Villa Finale to tour the house, to marvel at the collections and, of course, to learn a lot about art, architecture, and preservation in San Antonio. We love to see this!

We have our outdoor exhibition in place through the spring, entitled *Still Standing: The Many Faces of Villa Finale’s Owners*, so even a stroll through the garden this season yields a new perspective on Villa Finale and the King William neighborhood.

On that note, the gardens here at Villa Finale have been slowly coming to life this month, though progress has been tentative after a late February cold spell. By the time this newsletter hits mailboxes, the mountain laurels will likely be in bloom and the fruit trees in blossom. The magnolias will flower before we know it and the pecan trees will leaf out in all their glory – hopefully in time for our *Friends Retreat at the King William Fair*!

Spring is certainly a glorious time at Villa Finale. Come by for a tour, a picnic, or even just a stroll in the gardens!



A Day in the Life at Villa Finale

In this section, we offer a behind-the-scenes peek at what we do at Villa Finale! This spring, we thought we would see what a day in the life at Villa Finale looks like for our interpretive staff, Doug Daye and Sara Taylor.



First things first! Doug opens the house to begin readying it for the first guests of the day.

Giving tours requires fuel in the form of caffeine. This may be the most important moment of the day for Sara!



Keeping the house as clean as possible for our guests is a top priority. Though our Manager of Collections & Interpretation, Sylvia Gonzalez-Pizaña, maintains the house and collections, daily touch-ups are necessary to keeping the home looking its best.



Tour time! Doug & Sara spend most of their day with our guests, leading self-guided tours throughout both floors of the home. They love chatting about the house and collections with visitors from all over the world.

Another day at Villa Finale is done! Sara locks the front gate while Doug takes care of securing the house. They'll be ready to do it all again tomorrow, though. Come by soon to take a tour and get to know Sara and Doug!



From Our Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Villa Finale: Museum and Gardens, I'd like to welcome you to celebrate 2022 at San Antonio's beautiful National Trust historic site, in the heart of King William.

For those of you who haven't been able to visit Villa Finale these last two years you will be pleased to see that extensive exterior work has been completed on the house, and the gardens have been brought back to their lush beauty as they were prior to the ice storm of last year. The gardens will be ready to welcome all "Friends of Villa Finale" to the *Friends Retreat at the King William Fair* in April.

We have many exciting programs planned for your enjoyment in the months to come, and we look forward to your in-person participation once again.

Dru Van Steenberg
Chair of the Board



Dru Van Steenberg

“Trust” In the News Updates from the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Cultural Heritage Matters!

In late February, the Trust announced its 2022 HBCU Cultural Heritage Steward Grant recipients - Shaw University, Florida A&M University, Johnson C. Smith University, Rust College, and Voorhees College.

These five Historically Black Colleges and Universities will receive technical assistance and funds for new Cultural Heritage Stewardship Plans, which in turn will empower them to protect, preserve, and leverage their historic campuses and landscapes. These academic institutions are symbols of African American pride and will continue to inspire and educate future generations. Congratulations to the recipients!



The Medical Dormitory located on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Constructed in 1881, the building was razed in 1967. (United States Library of Congress)

Lyndhurst Dazzles on a Must-Watch Series

The National Trust's Lyndhurst, a Gothic Revival mansion in Tarrytown, New York, played host to the cast of HBO's *The Gilded Age* as they filmed key scenes for the new binge-worthy series. This historical drama, created by Julian Fellowes of *Downton Abbey* fame, is set in the United States during the late 19th century "Gilded Age" boom years.

Though Lyndhurst is no stranger to lights, cameras and action, this would prove to be the biggest production they've hosted to date. Visit www.savingplaces.org for behind-the-scenes photos and more details!



Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York.
(Wikimedia Commons)

Delightful Diversions



DID YOU KNOW?



Villa Finale has over 80 rolls of music for its 1921 Bechstein-Welte Reproducing Piano. Genres include classical to early 20th century music and rolls vary in length from four minutes to nearly twenty!

The piano is demonstrated only during special “Music for Your Eyes” tours and other special occasions. However, if you happen to be walking by the site on a Monday, you might hear the piano playing. It’s not a ghost! Villa Finale’s Collections Manager plays the music machines once on Mondays - when the site is closed to the public - to maintain them in proper working order.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



King William Parade 2011

Villa Finale served as Grand Marshall of the 2011 King William Parade!

Here, Buildings & Grounds Manager Orlando Cortinas (at far left) poses with volunteers after completing Villa Finale’s float. How time flies!



Ask Villa Finale

Have you got a burning question about Villa Finale that you’ve been dying to ask? Do you have special interest in an item from our collection? Or maybe you just need to know more about what makes Villa Finale special?

Ask us!

Send us an email at villafinale@villafinale.org or give us a call at (210) 223-9800 and hit us with your questions. We can’t wait to hear from you!



VILLA FINALE: MUSEUM & GARDENS
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San Antonio, TX 78204

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Friends of Villa Finale Membership

Become a “Friend of Villa Finale” and help support our educational programming throughout the year!



Friend of Villa Finale -- \$100

Friend of Villa Finale – Plus One! -- \$150

Contributing Friend of Villa Finale -- \$250

Supporting Friend of Villa Finale -- \$500

Sustaining Friend of Villa Finale -- \$1000

Visit www.villafinale.org to discover full membership benefits or call us at (210) 223-9800 to become a “Friend of Villa Finale” today!

The Bee

Napoleon Bonaparte chose the bee to represent his status as emperor due to the creature’s industrious habits. The bee symbolizes hard work, diligence, industriousness, and orderliness.



A Site of the
**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**