

DEC 2024

LIVING



BY AURIA

AURIA'S GOLDEN HEART

Honouring those
who shine

GRATITUDE AT AURIA

It's impact on
quality of life

Ballito with Penny

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Coral Cove's Opening

The Holiday Edition



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• DEAR RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES •

October 4th, 2017 was a historic day for Auria, and for the residents at San Sereno. It was the day that we introduced Auria as the new owner of San Sereno, the start of a remarkable journey for all of us. October 4th, 2024 was the seventh anniversary of this milestone day—which got me thinking of the significance of the number '7'.

The number seven has greatly symbolic associations in religion, mythology, superstition and philosophy. The seven classical planets resulted in seven being the number of days in a week. The number seven is significant in all major religions. In the Old Testament the world was created in six days and God rested on the seventh, creating the basis of the seven-day-week we use to this day. In the New Testament the number seven symbolises the unity of the four corners of the Earth with the Holy Trinity. The number seven is also featured in the Book of Revelation (seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven stars). The Koran speaks of seven heavens and Muslim pilgrims walk around the Kaaba in Mecca (Islam's most sacred site) seven times. In Hinduism there are seven higher worlds and seven underworlds, and in Buddhism the newborn Buddha rises and takes seven steps. It was also prominent in many ancient cultures. Most famous of all were the seven wonders of the world which comprised a bucket list for every world traveller. Seven not only represents the jackpot on casino slot machines, but is also the basis for many myths and folklore.

From an Auria perspective, most of our residents are in and beyond their seventh decade of life. In the metaphysical philosophy of numerology, those affiliated with the number seven are believed to be insightful, intuitive, truthful, introspective, intellectual, and wise. No doubt many of our residents will identify with these traits. The number seven, given its biblical context, is often associated with the concept of creation. I'm sure I speak for everyone on the Auria team, when I say

From our CEO

Barry Kaganson
CEO, Auria Senior Living



that the past seven years have been an absolute pleasure and privilege for us, having been able to participate in the creation of our Auria communities.

Last but not least, the rainbow, with its seven colours: the ultimate symbol of hope, good luck, new beginnings, promise, equality, communication and peace. May all of these be bestowed on all within our Auria Communities as we enter into the New Year.

Wishing everyone well over the Festive Season, and my thanks to our residents, all the wonderful people in our Auria team, and everyone who visited and contributed in any way to our communities over the 12 months, for a year of thriving, kindness and growth within our Auria Communities.

Thanda's Golden Heart



*Congratulations, Thanda!
Your heart-driven
actions remind us of
the extraordinary impact
that each of our team
members can have.*

Thanda Nkosi from Melrose Manor

Our Auria Golden Heart Recognition Programme was created to honour team members whose dedication and care go far beyond their daily duties, embodying the true spirit of The Auria Way. This award symbolises not only an exceptional commitment to our residents but also an inner strength that shines through acts of genuine compassion.

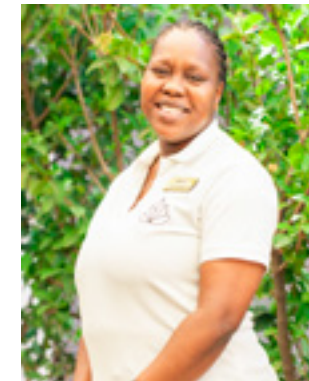
We proudly recognise Thanda Nkosi from Melrose Manor as the latest recipient of the Auria Golden Heart Award. Thanda's quick thinking and awareness recently made a significant difference in one of our resident's well-being, showcasing her commitment to creating a safe and caring environment.

Getting to know our **Auria team**

Charity Maphanga Café Auria's Supervisor

Charity, originally from Pietermaritzburg, now calls Melrose Manor her second home. Starting as a waiter at Pembury, she honed her barista skills at Café Auria and is now its supervisor.

A proud wife and mom to two energetic kids, Charity unwinds with her love for music. One of her proudest achievements? Achieving third place in last year's barista competition at Royal View. She cherishes connecting with residents and takes pride in creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere at Café Auria, making it a special place for everyone.



M



Tiffaney Fish Community Manager

Tiffaney, raised in Alberton, Verwoerdpark, by a loving English and Afrikaans family, discovered her passion for helping others early on. Inspired by remarkable individuals, especially her beloved grandmother, she pursued a Social Work degree at the University of Pretoria, graduating cum laude. Over the years, Tiffaney has worked across medical, oncology, child protection, dementia, and frail care disciplines. She believes her purpose is to make a positive difference, building meaningful connections and making others feel valued. Now a proud member of our San Sereno Team, Tiffaney lives her purpose daily, guided by her grandmother's words, "even the tiniest act of kindness can have a significant impact."

S

Tunisha Govender Care Centre Manager

Tunisha began her career in 2011 after completing a four-year programme in general, community, midwifery, and psychiatric nursing. She served as Nursing Services Manager at a primary health facility in Durban, KZN, for nine years before joining Royal View. Tunisha, a mother of two, developed a fondness for working with older adults in her previous role. "I was ecstatic to have been chosen to join Auria."

I hope to add my nursing expertise, abilities, and team spirit to our Royal View Team. Our Royal View Community's warm and compassionate welcome has given me a sense of belonging, and it continues to do so.



R

Ryan Pillay Executive Sous Chef

Ryan's culinary journey began in Durban and took him around the globe, including six years in the UAE, where he mastered diverse cooking techniques. In 2021, he launched Chef Ryan's Bakery for Pets, blending his love for animals with culinary creativity by crafting treats for fur babies. When not cooking, Ryan enjoys tending to bonsais, woodworking, or mountain biking Cape Town's trails. Ryan's all about integrity, compassion, and leading by example. He's grateful

to be part of our Woodside community, where he's embraced by our residents and team alike. For Ryan, every day is a chance to share his skills, connect with others, and continue his journey—right here in our welcoming community.



W

Sipping into Summer

With pink sangria, gin and tonics, and lemon spritzes by the pool, Melrose Manor residents, friends, and family welcomed the season in style! An evening of balmy breezes, delicious bites, and live music set the perfect tone for summer vibes. Cheers to warm nights and good company!

The Auria experience is curated on four pillars: an engaged lifestyle, quality of care, constant advice and support and complete peace of mind. With our exciting events, activities and wellness calendar on offer, our residents get to enjoy their best quality of life. Every single day.





Heritage Day: *a kaleidoscope of colour*

Our Melrose Manor community was a celebration and immersion into diverse, vibrant and colourful traditions. Our team showed up and showed off their unique heritage and stories that make us who we are—as individuals, and as a community.



A stylish South African dinner

Smoked snoek with apricot salsa, springbok shank, pap and chakalaka, malva pudding, melktart and koeksisters were the specials of the evening. **Local is Lekker!**



Melrose Manor delights in J.A.M!

J.A.M, a dynamic group of formerly homeless artists, brought the house down with their talent and heart. These cultural experiences delighted and entertained even the most discerning of audiences.



Spooky FUN

*mischievous
moments &
treats galore!*

This year, Halloween brought all kinds of delightful chills and thrills to San Sereno! Our community transformed into a playground of ghouls, ghosts, and giggles as our residents, their guests and our Auria Team joined in on the Halloween fun. From creative costumes to trick-or-treat stations and spooktacular decorations sent shivers down our spines, in the best possible way!





For the love of... *dance*

Our San Sereno residents brought their dancing A-game to our first Spring Dance Social. From elegant ballroom moves to the infectious energy of jive, the night celebrated the power of dance to bring people together. It was a spectacular showcase of talent, camaraderie, and the undeniable love for music and dance!



Sally Williams and Bronwyn James, San Sereno's Front of House Manager

Sally Williams's *sweet success*

Our residents were captivated by the incredible Sally Williams, South Africa's nougat mogul and businesswoman extraordinaire, as she shared her story of building a sweet legacy. Paired with delectable treats crafted by Chef Werner and his team, it was a celebration of creativity, and, of course, a love for life's finer flavours.



• SAN SERENO •

Annual Bowls *Gala Dinner*

Every year our residents who are part of our Bowling Club, come together for an evening of 5-star cuisine, lively conversation and a shared appreciation for our San Sereno Bowling Green. Beyond the game itself, it has become a place where friendships thrive and our community grows stronger.



Aisne Jacobs and Stuart Lee won the Auria San Sereno Bowls Club Mixed Players Trophy 2024

By Mo Brown
San Sereno Resident

San Sereno Bowling Club's friendly match with Reading Country Club

On a beautiful Sunday morning, a team of 14 enthusiastic bowlers from San Sereno took to the green for a friendly face-off against Reading Country Club's seasoned players. The event was made even more special thanks to the connection between San Sereno's own Roy Andersen and Allan Sinclair, Reading's captain and Director of the SA National Museum of Military History. With Roy serving as Chairman of the Museum's supporting Trust, this friendly match was a celebration of friendship, sportsmanship, and community spirit.

Though the league-experienced Reading team took the victory in all four matches, just barely edging out San Sereno, the game was filled with good-natured rivalry and laughter. Donning brand-new Auria shirts, proudly provided by Management, our San Sereno Team looked sharp and represented our community with pride.

After the match, everyone enjoyed drinks and an array of delicious snacks generously prepared by Pen Williams, wife of San Sereno Bowling Club Chairman, Mike Williams. The morning was filled with camaraderie, shared stories, and a sense of togetherness that truly embodies the spirit of our community.

Reading Country Club versus San Sereno Bowling Club





the no pressure Coffee club

By Dot Willis

Retirement often refers to being able to cease working, relax, and have more free time. At San Sereno, all of that takes up a small portion of your time, with the remaining 95% filled with activities meant to occupy the hands, body, mind, eyes, ears, stomach, and, of course, socialising. In this exhausting but delightful run about, it can be tough to find time for a coffee and a talk with a friend. Bernadine Boltman suggested that we meet for coffee and a discussion on the first Monday of each month at 10h00.

What a great idea! We then decided it would be wonderful to include a one or two, then three, until a total of 12 people were invited to have coffee every month. Women enjoy chatting, and this number quickly rose as everyone had a friend, until the last gathering had nearly 50 people!

Bernadine and I were supplying all of the food until volunteers began offering to provide a plate of something. After they reached 50 people, we decided to organise a four-person committee to assist. Helga Wellsted is in charge of food management and organises the volunteer roster, while Marcelle Franck assists the other two with seating arrangements, name tags, and the overall well-being of our ladies.

The 'no pressure' component of the title was intended to make it a peaceful morning. There is no need to make an appointment; simply show up if you can. You may come and go at any moment during the morning and talk as much as you want. It has become an excellent approach to introduce new residents, who are greeted and seated next to someone with whom to get to know.

"It is a place where everyone belongs, where new people meet 'old' people, and where 'old' people occasionally encounter 'old' people they have never met before. It's a wonderful environment full of friendliness and caring, and I'd venture to say it's a monthly highlight."

One is warned to "be careful what you ask for," and Dot and Bernadine still don't have time for coffee together!



Who's got talent?

Royal View's Got Talent brought out the star power in our community, with our residents showing up and showing off in an evening of royal laughs and unstoppable fun.





Hau'Oli Maoli Oe! A taste of Hawaii at Royal View



Our Hawaiian-themed dinner brought tropical vibes, delightful flavours, and a touch of paradise to Royal View. Poke bowls, sweet spiced short ribs with coconut rice, indulgent pineapple upside-down cake, flowers, friendship, and island-inspired magic. **It was a night to remember!**



• ROYAL VIEW •



Step by step!

Our line dancing class keeps the energy high and the spirits higher; fun, fitness, and fancy footwork all in perfect harmony! Keep moving, keep grooving and step in line!

Creative horizons

At Royal View, we keep things exciting with art classes like glass painting and water marbling. These fun activities are part of our wellness and social programme, sparking creativity while boosting mental agility and overall wellbeing. Exploring new techniques inspires joy, builds confidence, and even forges fresh pathways in the brain. From the luminous charm of glass art to the mesmerising beauty of marbling, every session is an adventure in creativity. After all, creativity never ages and neither do we!





WOODSIDE
Rondebosch

Elegance is not just what you wear, but how you live as our fabulous Woodside residents strutted their stuff showcasing the timeless and sophisticated designs of local designer Anre Uys, creator and founder of Tabita Fashions. That day it was a Woodside's Women's World!

Women's Day Fashion Show



Feast of the *senses*



The Artist Dinner at Woodside was a celebration of creativity, showcasing everything from resident artwork to culinary masterpieces. Justin and our culinary team, artists in their own right, delivered a menu good enough to frame!



Focaccia Frenzy

Kneading, slicing, and baking perfection! A delicious masterclass that truly rose to the occasion for all our Woodside bread lovers.



Coastal Blooms, colourful meadows and the company of friends was the order of the day at our recent outing to the West Coast.

Wonders of the West Coast



Reflections on 2024

Community, growth and living well at Woodside

As we wrap up 2024, some of our Woodside residents share their reflections on what it means to live in a thriving community. From gratitude for modern amenities to the joys of companionship and continued personal growth, their words offer a heartfelt glimpse into life at Woodside and beyond.

“

One of the joys of Woodside for booklovers is the well-stocked and up-to-date library. There is a vast array of fiction, non-fiction and DVDs on offer. Besides this, one can also find a great selection of puzzles and we have an excellent librarian. The high-tech cinema offers us a fine selection of films, documentaries and the Metropolitan Opera House screening of many enchanting operas. In addition, various talented residents offer us a variety of fascinating and enlightening presentations. **What a privilege it is to live here.**

Ian and Carrol Farlam

“

Amongst many highlights in our lives at Woodside are our aqua classes in the pool. **Far from being just a tedious workout dutifully attended for health benefits, it is a fun filled 45 minutes where jaws are exercised as much as bodies.** It is a privilege to be instructed by our young, professional staff, who seamlessly challenge us, buy into our oldie's music and care for the capabilities of each individual. We laugh and joke and sing-a-long as we go and it sets us up for the coming day. We love it and are so grateful to have classes right on our doorstep.

Les and Jenny Masterson

“

With the hustle and bustle of construction activity throughout 2024 at Woodside I decided to adopt a 'glass is half full' attitude. The inconvenience that development and construction brings is also simply a sign of life and progress and that, more importantly, also heralds the future arrival of new residents, who have the opportunity of joining our wonderful Woodside community.

Paula Venter

“

Since the opening of our Wellness Centre I enjoy at least four swims a week in our immaculate heated pool as well as three age-appropriate classes in the gym. **The cherry on the top is the fact that my 9-year-old grandson loves visiting his granny.** I can only get him out of the pool with the promise of a costly visit to Café Auria, where he can watch soccer from 'his' table next to the television screen.

Sue Folb

“

Villages were the communities and were the way people lived years ago. It has proved to be a good model for Auria Senior Living. We are fortunate to live in a prime example of this. The most important requirements for us have been met; from being in lovely surroundings, being allowed to have dogs and cats, having exercise options including a heated pool, classes being led by a physiotherapist or a biokineticist, health care, mental stimulation, companionship and friendship, and most importantly, security. **And improvements continue to be made – life is good!**

Garth Hutton

“

I count my blessings every day with such gratitude.

One of my great blessings is the gym—such lovely young instructors who kindly but firmly encourage us to be in the best physical shape we can be.

Jean van Zyl-Smit

And beyond...

“

With the increase in worldwide extremes of heat, cold and storms, there is a greater, and growing, acceptance that climate change is a reality, not a fantasy.

Llewellyn Botha

“

I agree with the climate change scientists. The local evidence of extreme weather events is compelling. I am puzzled by the high cost of electric vehicles which are easier to make than internal combustion engines and gearboxes.

Paul Fanner

At Auria, community is more than a word; it's a way of life. Our residents embraced the year with warmth, resilience, and a shared spirit of togetherness. With a sense of humour, grace, and a keen appreciation for the little pleasures—like a heated swim, a favourite spot in Café Auria, or a well-loved book from the library.

And with all that, it's a wrap!

Happy holidays to all of our residents with wishes for a blessed festive season, at Woodside and beyond.

Move over Martha, we've got Penny!



CORAL COVE
Sheffield Beach

In recent years, Martha Stewart (83) took the world by surprise as the cover star of Sports Illustrated's swimsuit issue, redefining perceptions of age with elegance, beauty, and a touch of sass. But here on South Africa's KZN North Coast, we have our own ageless icon making waves—Penny Rey Coelen. As the first Miss World from Africa and a trailblazer in her own right, Penny's life has been filled with glamour, travel, and a spirit that defies time.

Penny is the very first resident of Coral Cove, Auria's newest luxury senior living community on the KZN, North Coast, nestled within the breathtaking Zululami luxury Coastal Estate, in Ballito.

Recently, our Auria team spent a sun-filled day with Penny, exploring Ballito and the lifestyle that Coral Cove residents will soon enjoy. From forest walks to poolside relaxation, shopping at the Ballito Lifestyle Centre, and a scenic promenade stroll, Penny has given us a sneak peak of what life at Coral Cove for future residents will be all about.

◀ *There's nothing quite like Vitamin Sea—Penny revelling in the glory of wild ocean breeze, and golden sands of Ballito Beach*



Penny soaking up the serene vibes by the clubhouse pool, relaxing in style and taking in the perfect view

Penny Rey Coelen is the very first resident of Coral Cove, Auria's newest luxury senior living community on the KZN, North Coast, nestled within the breathtaking Zululami luxury Coastal Estate, in Ballito.



Cooling down with a sweet treat from Wedgewood Nougat because nothing says summer like a scoop (or two) of happiness!



Penny on a mission for floral perfection at Laugh Love Florist

With Coral Cove's opening just around the corner, anticipation is brewing among our future residents. Here's what they have to say about the lifestyle that awaits them:

"I had been researching retirement estates for a while, and Coral Cove seemed to have everything I dreamed of. I signed up without a second thought. Move-in day can't come quickly enough!"

Graeme Russell

"I'm excited to sit on my patio, wine in hand, soaking up that sea view! The whole Coral Cove experience has been a pleasure from day one."

Hilary Jordaen



All smiles at Wedgewood Nougat when purchasing the perfect gift!



As the countdown to Coral Cove's opening continues, we look forward to welcoming more inspiring individuals, just like Penny, into our newest Auria Community.

Penny's perfect day isn't complete without a little retail therapy at Ballito Lifestyle Centre

"My husband and I knew Coral Cove was the perfect fit from the moment we attended an early launch event. We've chosen our finishes, connected with other future residents, and even found fellow bridge players! 2025 can't come soon enough."

Colleen and Tony Botes

"As soon as I heard about Coral Cove, I knew that was the lifestyle I wanted. The Coral Cove Team has been incredible, and I can't wait to settle into my two-bedroom maisonette."

Manuela (Chookie) Pissarra

DAVID ROTHSTEIN ►

Royal View

What is something you have always wanted to do but haven't tried yet?

Painting, I was always busy with work and never had the opportunity to do it yet.

If you could re-live any decade of your life, which one would you re-do?

My 30's and 40's, my wife was still well and healthy and we were able to travel. We travelled very well during that time.

What are the most important lessons you have learned in your life?

Remember where you come from and where your roots are from. Be what you are and be real.



SIEGRID (SIGGY) BRAININ

Royal View

If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be?

My grandkids and great grandkids, they are the light of life.

If you could go back to any age, what would it be?

My teenage years, I enjoyed the freedom and the parties. School was the most memorable. Also meeting my husband, we first met at the age of 12 attending a mutual friend's birthday party at the ice rink but were not aware of our meeting until seven years later in college. We were together since then.

What do you look forward to everyday?

Waking up everyday and being able to spend time with my family and still getting to enjoy the good things life has to offer.

Welcome

We have recently welcomed residents to our Auria Communities and wish them many happy years with us.

MARY SCHNEIDER ►

Royal View

Which of your five senses would you say is the strongest?

Eyes, I have a 20/20 vision which I am grateful for as I am still able to drive and only required to wear glasses when reading or looking at anything close.

If you could have lived in a different era, what would it be and why?

During the regency period, I loved the clothes and elegance of everyone. The people were also very gentle.

Who has influenced you the most in your life?

My father was a doctor, a humanitarian and a very kind man. He had a very good heart and only knew how to help others. I wish to emulate his spirit.



JIMMY AND MARIA SOFIANOS

Royal View

What are you most excited about right now?

Maria: Change, the ability to afford a beautiful place such as Royal View. Being able to adjust and adapt to the new change has been great. **Jimmy:** The staff being understanding and accommodating, made moving a very pleasant experience. Being here has been very convenient and glamorous.

What is your mantra for your life?

Jimmy: Just being content and staying happy. **Maria:** Stay healthy, and well enough to enjoy the good things life has to offer.

What’s the most beautiful place you have ever seen in person?

Jimmy: I have seen many beautiful places in my life, however the Dolomite Mountains stand out the most as they have retained their natural beauty, and no development has destroyed it. **Maria:** No specific place as Europe as a whole is very advanced in culture and art, however if I were to pick one place it would be Venice as it is very unique place to be at and experience.

GUS AND PAM MUNRO

San Sereno

What inspired the move from Parktown North to San Sereno?

Well, it was Pam’s love for gardening! Her beautiful garden made our old home irresistible to buyers.

Pam, what’s next for your green thumb here at San Sereno?

I can’t wait to join the Friendship Garden Club and catch up with my friend Trish Van Zyl. The gardening community here is fantastic!

Tell us about your family.

We have a son and a daughter. Our daughter recently moved to New Zealand, so we’ll be visiting there soon!

What are you both looking forward to in the San Sereno community?

Pam: Meeting new people and reconnecting with old friends—there’s such a welcoming vibe here!

Gus: Absolutely, we’re excited to be part of this wonderful community.



SUSAN ANDREWS

San Sereno

Tell us about your family.

I have four wonderful children, one son in Cape Town, two daughters in Johannesburg, and a daughter in the UK. I’m also a proud grandmother to nine grandchildren.

What are some of your interests and hobbies?

I’m an avid bridge player and love traveling. Hong Kong and Australia are two of my favourite places, I find exploring different cultures fascinating.

How do you like to stay active?

I go to the biokineticist three times a week here at San Sereno with Nicole Fish.

Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Definitely a morning person.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs, without a doubt!

*I’m an avid
bridge player
and love traveling.*



**CHARLANA AND
RUSSELL RAMSDEN**

San Sereno

How did you two meet, and what’s the story behind your whirlwind romance?

It was love at first sight! We met and, three days later, we were married! Some might call it impulsive, but we’d say it was just meant to be.

What do you love doing together after all these years?

We both love playing bridge and traveling, these are our shared passions. And we never miss a chance to visit our home in Mabula.

Tell us about your family.

We have two wonderful children, a son in

Zurich and a daughter in Texas. Visiting them gives us a great excuse to travel internationally.

What are some of your individual hobbies?

Charlana: I’ve always been active. I love Pilates and golf, and I like to keep moving! **Russell:** I enjoy birdwatching and socialising. I guess you could say I’m the academic type, but I’m also very outgoing.

Any friends here in the community?

The Roys and Jim and Christine Laing. It’s wonderful having close friends nearby.

What’s next for you both?

More travel, more adventures, and celebrating many more anniversaries!

JOHN AND CORINNE ROY
San Sereno

How long have you two been married?

We'll be celebrating 63 wonderful years together on October 21st!

Tell us about your family.

We have two daughters and four grandchildren—two boys and two girls, perfectly balanced!

Corinne, how do you like to stay active?

I go to the gym regularly, and I'm excited to try the classes San Sereno has to offer.

What's something surprising you've learned with getting older?

Corinne: Ageng definitely slows you down. **John:** And that's not always a bad thing! Sometimes when you forget your keys and have to walk back, you end up getting exercise you wouldn't have otherwise!

John, we hear you're a golfer. Are you excited about anything specific at San Sereno?

Absolutely! I'm looking forward to getting back on the greens once we're settled in. Plus, I can't wait to try the exercise classes and gym here.

What other hobbies do you enjoy, John?

I'm into wood carving, sudoku, and word trivia. They keep me sharp!

What excites you most about moving to San Sereno?

We're looking forward to this new chapter! We already know some residents here and can't wait to rekindle old friendships and make new ones.



▲
TERRY AND ANNE DAVIDSON
San Sereno

What have you learned about life so far?

All we know is that we have just had the most amazing life so far.

What is the best part about your day?

Waking up in the morning is a good start!

Tell us about your family.

Together we have four children, 18 months apart! We have ten healthy, happy grandchildren,

What are your favourite hobbies?

Terry: I enjoy playing golf once a week, woodworking, and keeping fit with regular sessions with my long-time biokinetics. **Anne:** I've always been sporty! In my youth, I was very active, and before I retired, I was the sports mistress at Roedean. I loved playing golf and tennis, and now I enjoy bridge and reading. I might even take up bowls soon!

How long have you been married?

This year, we're celebrating 59 wonderful years of marriage.

JACKIE MACDONALD
San Sereno

What brought you to San Sereno?

I wanted to be closer to my sister, Vivien Dubb, so moving here felt perfect.

Tell us about your family.

I have two children—a daughter moving from Mauritius to Cape Town this year and a son living in Perth. I'm also a proud grandmother, and I hope to become a great-grandmother soon!

Are you a beach or mountain person?

Definitely the beach! I find the sound of crashing waves so soothing. I even have a time-share on the north coast for an annual seaside getaway.

What's your favourite flower?
Roses!

How have you been settling in?

I'm an extrovert and love engaging in conversations, so I've been spending time at Café Auria and already made a few connections!

Any hobbies?

I love baking, especially cakes. Plus, I just retired last year after 56 years as a bookkeeper, so I'm excited to enjoy more baking and time with family.

What are you most looking forward to here at San Sereno?

I can't wait to make new memories with Vivien and enjoy this wonderful community together!

ANTHONY AND GLYNIS KOSSUTH
San Sereno

What excites you most about this new chapter?

Anthony: I'm thrilled to finally be free from pool maintenance! It's going to be wonderful to have more time for ourselves and to enjoy each other's company. **Glynis:** Honestly, I haven't had a chance to reflect with the whirlwind of the move, but I'm looking forward to being at San Sereno, surrounded by friends and embracing retirement.

What do you think is the most essential life skill?

Anthony: For me, it's the ability to accept things as they are and recognise what has happened. That's the key to happiness. **Glynis:** I believe it's the ability to get along with others in a meaningful, impactful way.

What's your favourite season and why?

Anthony: Definitely summer! We love outdoor activities like fishing, swimming, and bush walks. **Glynis:** I prefer winter. You can always add layers to stay warm, while the extreme heat of summer can be quite unbearable.

JOY RENWICK
San Sereno

What are you most excited about now?

I'm most excited about being closer to my family. Originally from Knysna, I was quite a distance from my daughter, who lives in Johannesburg. Being here, close enough to see her in person more often, is something that brings me a lot of joy.

What do you think is the most essential life skill?

I'd say one of the most valuable skills is recognising and utilising your unique talents. It's about acknowledging your strengths and actively putting them to use, rather than letting them go to waste.

What are your favourite memories from your childhood?

One of my most cherished memories is welcoming my father home from the war when I was seven. Family holidays hold a special place in my heart, especially teaching my younger brother, who is eight years younger than me, how to swim. Those times highlighted my free-spirited nature and the joy of pushing boundaries and exploring life with the people I love.

DELANO AND ANN CARAS ▶

Woodside

Do you have any daily or weekly rituals?

Delano: Weekly art classes on Wednesday afternoons with my daughter.

Do you prefer a beach or mountain holiday?

Delano: Neither. I prefer game reserves and cruises. **Ann:** I enjoy city holidays with art galleries.

What's the best place you've travelled?

A cruise to Alaska with it's dramatic and exquisite scenery. We also enjoyed a floatplane experience.

What are you most excited about right now?

Managing to get into Woodside and living life here. It is the right place and the right time. Exciting about not having to move again and just love it here!

Do you have any children? Grandchildren?

We have a son, daughter and four grandchildren who we are fortunate to see on a regular basis. They are my biggest blessings!



◀ **ANN IRVINE**

Woodside

What are the most rewarding things about getting older?

Life is what you make of it – you can do with your time as you please.

Who has influenced you the most?

Children in general. As a teacher I learned from my pupils and of course from my own children.

What are you most excited about right now?

All the new and exciting things at Woodside. There are so many groups and activities to participate in. I love the sunsets on my patio – a most magnificent view.



RUTH AND BILLY KNIGHT ▼

Woodside

Do you prefer a beach or mountain holiday?

Ruth: Mountain holiday. I love nature and climbed Table Mountain regularly when living in Cape Town many years ago.

Where are you from?

Ruth: As a banker's child, we moved around a lot. We spent a lot of time in Cape Town and moving back here has felt like coming home. **Billy:** I spent most of my life in the Eastern Cape and finished my schooling at Selborne College in East London. After retiring we moved to Plettenberg Bay and lived there for 10 years before coming to Woodside.

Who has influenced you the most?

Ruth: My parents – their Christian way of life and the values they have taught me.

Do you have any children?

Grandchildren?

We have three children, twin boys and a daughter. Both boys live in Cape Town and they have two children each who they love spending time with. Our daughter is a missionary and has recently had a baby. She and her family will be going to Chad for mission work soon.

What are the most rewarding things about getting older?

Billy: When I retired from my profession in Accounting I decided to travel and see as many different places as possible. The freedom to travel, stay active and take up new hobbies, like hiking and paddling is most rewarding.



▲ **HARVEY FLOWERS**

Melrose Manor

What is something you have always wanted to do?

To climb Mount Everest.

Who has influenced you the most in your life?

My friend, Monty, who I met whilst on a holiday to SA when I was 18 years old. I was living in Leeds, UK, and Monty convinced me to stay in SA. I shared a flat and eventually went into business with Monty and he became a lifelong friend. If it wasn't for him, I would have remained in the UK with the rain and bad weather.

What is one of your favourite memories from childhood?

Watching Leeds United Football at the stadium.



Pilates class at Royal View

Wellness at Auria

At Auria, our promise is simple: empowering our residents to enjoy their best quality of life. Every single day.

This commitment lies at the heart of our wellness and social programmes, designed to enhance physical health, foster social connections, and promote independence.

Our exercise programme is a cornerstone of this promise, offering a diverse range

of classes that target cardiovascular fitness, strength, and stability—addressing the unique challenges that may affect older adults.

In this issue of LIVING, Stacey Edelman shares her insights into the transformative benefits of Pilates, spotlighting the Auria Pilates Class as a key element in our wellness offerings across Auria Communities.

Am I too old to exercise?

The answer to that is NO. You are NEVER too old and it's NEVER too late!

Exercise is the answer to the prevention of many chronic health conditions, some people will just need more guidance than others. Any way you choose to introduce movement to your body will only give you a wealth of benefits in the long term. I believe that the low impact exercise of Pilates is one of the best forms of exercise one can do. Pilates offers a holistic approach to fitness that addresses the unique needs of seniors, making it an invaluable addition to any exercise routine.

By Stacey Edelman
Senior Physiotherapist
at Royal View

What is Pilates?

Pilates is a type of mind-body exercise developed in the early 20th century by German physical trainer Joseph Pilates, after whom it was named. It is practiced worldwide, especially in developed countries. Pilates uses a combination of around 50 repetitive exercises to activate and strengthen muscles.

Each exercise flows from the 'five essentials': breath work, spinal alignment, shoulder girdle stabilisation, pelvic mobility, and utilisation of the transversus abdominis (deep abdominal corset).

Pilates utilises stretching and toning techniques, breathing exercises, postural alignment and stabilisation, spinal mobility and balancing movements.

Combined, this improves strength in the core muscles which provide support and stability for the spine, increases muscle flexibility and improves balance and coordination.

Down to the core of the matter with
Pilates

What are the benefits of doing a Pilates class?

I love teaching Pilates due to the many beneficial aspects of the exercise. It is low impact but at the same time can produce beneficial results that will impact anyone's quality of life.

Pilates is unique in that it encourages joint flexibility and supports joint health, while at the same time encourages muscle strength. By improving flexibility and gaining muscle strength, pain can be alleviated in many ailments such as arthritis and other joint conditions.

Pilates is designed to improve strength in the core muscles which provide support and stability for the spine. These muscles are essential for the improvement of your posture. Poor posture is built up over our lifetime due to muscle weakness and joint stiffness.

Pilates increases body awareness by emphasising proper alignment and body mechanics. It encourages you to become more aware of your movements throughout your daily activities thereby helping to improve posture, reduce pain and improve overall function.

In addition, the increased flexibility that Pilates helps to achieve can reduce

stiffness and enhances mobility thereby promoting independence and sustained quality of life.

Pilates exercises often involve balancing movements, which can help improve your balance and coordination. This is crucial for reducing the risk of falls.

One of the most important uses of Pilates for me as a Physiotherapist is that Pilates aids in rehabilitation. Pilates can be an effective part of rehabilitation programmes for individuals recovering from surgeries or injuries. The gentle, controlled movements promote healing while assisting in regaining strength and function.

Most importantly, apart from the many physical benefits as can be seen from above there are many psychosocial benefits of doing Pilates.

Participating in Pilates classes within a group provides you with a sense of community, allowing you to socialise and meet new people, thereby improving mental health.

By having an hour to do one thing for your own health, a natural endorphin is released, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels by focusing on breath and control which encourages mindfulness, promoting mental clarity and emotional well-being.

Improved strength, flexibility, and balance empowers older adults to maintain and foster their independence as they age. This sense of autonomy is vital for mental and emotional health.

The Pilates classes are a fun social event. Come and enjoy a supervised class, every Tuesday at 10am, taught by an experienced physiotherapist who can modify the exercises and make them easy if you are a beginner and more challenging if you consider yourself a pro.

Looking forward to seeing you there soon!

Hear what our Pilates class fans have to say

“It has been such a joy, for Steve and I do the Pilates class with Stacey. The classes are very personalised, with Stacey being aware of any weaknesses and strengths. She will modify exercises to ensure that there are no injuries. We're indeed very fortunate to have an instructor who is so highly qualified and experienced. The classes are so enjoyable, together with lovely music! We are enjoying reaching new levels of fitness. We really look forward to our class each week!”

**Steve & Hilary Franklin
Royal View**

“Having had a back operation my Neurosurgeon advised me to engage in Pilates and water aerobics exercises afforded by Royal View. With some reluctance I did but after attending Stacey's first few classes I could not wait for the next class. What appeared to be a chore, became not only socially pleasurable but one felt so much better and more motivated, as one's body responded to Stacey's cheerful and enthusiastic comments and input, and as one was able to extend the exercises and build up more strength, movement, tone and muscle. Thank you so much Stacey for your efforts and inspiration.”

**Michael Salomon,
Royal View**



Stacey Edelman qualified as a Physiotherapist in 2005 at Wits University. She has a Master's degree in Physiotherapy and has also done a course in Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy (OMT). In addition, she is a qualified Pilates instructor. With almost 20 years of experience, not only can Stacey give you an effective physiotherapy treatment with strong hands, she is also passionate about empowering people to take charge of their health through exercise and rehabilitation in order to optimise their quality of life. She loves working with people of all ages and abilities within all fields of physiotherapy. She is here to assist you to reduce your pain, improve your flexibility, promote and enhance your general strength and mobility and most of all have fun while you are doing it.

Feel free to contact Stacey on 072 225 1655 to book an appointment or join in her classes every Monday and Tuesday at 10am.



Green Tea

A healthful choice for healthy ageing



Healthy ageing means maintaining a healthy diet which becomes even more crucial for supporting our body's changing needs. Green tea, with its wealth of beneficial compounds, has emerged as a health-promoting drink that can be especially beneficial for older adults.

It has its origins in China, where it was first cultivated over 4,000 years ago during the reign of Emperor Shen Nong. According to legend, the emperor accidentally discovered green tea when leaves from a wild tea plant blew into his pot of boiling water. The resulting brew, with its delicate taste and refreshing aroma, captivated the emperor, and green tea quickly gained popularity throughout China as both a beverage and a medicine. Over centuries, green tea spread to other Asian countries, including Japan, where it became an integral part of traditional tea ceremonies and culture.

Today, green tea is celebrated worldwide for its health benefits and continues to play an important role in holistic wellness. Not only does it bring a moment of relaxation, but it also provides a host of health benefits that can support longevity and wellness in later years. This article explores the findings of the research the many ways green tea may enhance health for older adults, including cognitive function, cardiovascular health, and overall well-being.

1. Supports cognitive health and memory

Green tea's impact on brain health has been a focus of research with the antioxidants and polyphenols playing a protective role by reducing inflammation and fighting oxidative stress, which are key contributors to cognitive aging. Studies suggest that regular consumption of green tea may improve memory, attention, and processing speed, all of which are critical for maintaining independence and quality of life as we age. The amino acid, L-theanine, also

promotes relaxation, which can improve mood and reduce anxiety.

2. Promotes heart health

Cardiovascular disease risk increases with age, and maintaining heart health becomes a top priority. Green tea has been shown to support heart health by improving cholesterol levels, lowering blood pressure and reducing inflammation. Research suggests that green tea can lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and increase HDL (good) cholesterol, while the catechins relax the blood vessels assisting the heart to pump blood assisting to lower the blood pressure. Chronic inflammation is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and the anti-inflammatory properties contribute to a healthy heart.

3. Boosts immune system

Ageing naturally weakens the immune system, making us more susceptible to infections. The antioxidants in green tea, particularly catechins, have antimicrobial properties that may enhance the immune system's response to viruses and bacteria. Furthermore, the polyphenols in green tea support gut health by promoting healthy gut bacteria, which is closely linked to immune function.

4. Aids in joint and bone health

Conditions such as osteoporosis and arthritis

are common in older adults, leading to joint pain and reduced mobility. Epigallocatechin Gallate (EGCG) is a powerful antioxidant compound which may help protect cartilage and reduce inflammation, potentially easing arthritis symptoms. This can only assist with decreasing the risk of falls.

5. Aids in weight management and metabolism

The natural slowing of our metabolism as we age makes maintaining a healthy weight more challenging. Green tea is known to boost metabolism, thanks to its caffeine and catechin content. The increase in the body's rate of burning calories, aiding in fat oxidation and boosting metabolism. This may support healthy weight maintenance, especially when paired with regular physical activity.



By Louise Sole
Head of Care

Louise Sole, Head of Care for Auria, holds an MBA from the GIBS and diplomas in Intensive Care and General Nursing, Psychiatric and Midwifery. She has a 24-year career with the Mediclinic Group, thirteen of which allowed her to combine her passion for medical care and business, managing Mediclinic Sandton as the Hospital General Manager.

Tips for enjoying green tea safely

Before heading out to the shops to buy your green tea please be aware that it could interact with certain medications, including blood thinners. Please consult your doctor before adding it to your diet. A general guideline to help maximise its health potential is to stick to 2-3 cups a day as excessive consumption may lead to caffeine-related side effects like jitteriness or digestive discomfort.

Whether enjoyed hot, cold, or in a smoothie, green tea can be a daily ritual that promotes wellness, longevity, and a higher quality of life. So, raise a warm cup and toast to better health!

By Dr Jos van Niekerk
and Louise Sole

Canes:

the new chic accessory for balanced living

In the Victorian era, canes served not only as practical walking aids but also as symbols of elegance, power, and authority, particularly among men. For women, canes were not a sign of weakness, but rather a fashionable and dignified accessory that enhanced their grace and poise. Carrying a cane reflected a woman's confidence and refinement, blending both style and subtle strength into her appearance. Whether for men or women, canes in this period embodied sophistication and elevated the stature of those who carried them.

Today, with good scientific research to back it, we state that using a cane, or if you prefer the words, a walking stick, is a way to allow you, as you grow older, to walk in a more secure and safer fashion. Many men and women, who should, for their health and safety sake, be using a walking cane do not do so because they feel that it makes them look older.

To address the statement above, we would simply note that walking with a stooped back, a limp, or an uneven stance can age your appearance significantly more than walking upright with the aid

of a cane. A well-chosen cane not only provides support but can also add a touch of elegance and style, making you look more poised and even dashing.

It is a fact that falls in older adults, that is us and our friends, who all live in retirement communities, are at a high health risk of injury from these falls. It is thus logical that anything that is done to decrease our chance of falling is beneficial to our health.

The decline in the number of people wearing high heels is already a positive trend, and it has become the norm for many. Coupled with the widespread use of rubber-soled shoes, this is a great step towards improving comfort and mobility. However, if you experience any issues with balance, incorporating the additional support of a cane is a smart and practical choice for maintaining stability and confidence while walking.

It is sometimes said that using a cane will, in the long run, decrease your muscle power and make you dependent on it. This may sound logical but in fact has no scientific basis. The fact is that as we get older our muscle power decreases as a normal change. Nobody over the age of fifty plays for the Springbok team. That is just a fact of life.



Dr Jos van Niekerk is a well-known orthopaedic surgeon and former president of SAOA (The South African Orthopaedic Association) with 52 years' experience as a surgeon. He is a resident at San Sereno and a regular contributor to our newsletters.

Who should use a walking cane?

If your walking is in any way impeded, either by problems related to your muscles, your balance or your eyesight, you are safer with a cane and should use one. Your cane should be the right length for you and you should use it correctly. Ask your physiotherapist to help you.

One last thought, a cane can look like a fashion statement and not an obvious sign of weakness or ageing. Look at these options and ask your family for a sexy cane for your next birthday or other happy event.

“He who walks with a cane, walks with confidence.”



By Jess Rylance
Head of Quality of Life

Grateful Gatherings

Conversations with PURPOSE

In our fast-paced world, it's all too easy to overlook the simple yet profound practice of gratitude. Over 25 years ago, Br. David Steindl-Rast, founder of Grateful Living.org, had an innovative idea: small groups of people could come together to discover, practice, and share gratitude as a way to combat life's challenges.

Grateful living is a transformative, research-backed way of life that supports daily living through both times of joy and adversity—peak and valley experiences. As Br. David, a WWII survivor and pioneer in interfaith dialogue, says, “Joy is the happiness that does not depend on what happens in life.”

Grateful living is more than just a fleeting emotion; it's an orientation to life, a deeply rooted perspective that transforms your inner world and your interactions with others. It provides insight into your life as you discover your meaning and purpose. This practice acts as a pathway that gives us the skills and perspective we need. It opens our eyes to the opportunities in each moment, helping us discover deep meaning in the everyday.

This vision is part of a worldwide initiative led by Grateful Living.org, which

we adopted with their support. The Grateful Gatherings, especially during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, became a lifeline for our San Sereno residents. When lockdowns kept us apart, these gatherings allowed us to stay connected, foster community, and promote well-being. Our trained community managers, equipped with social work expertise, facilitate these sessions, creating an enriching experience for all involved as we join a global community of practice.

What are gratefulness gatherings?

So, what exactly are Grateful Gatherings? They take place monthly and are open to all residents who want to cultivate a deeper sense of connection and purpose in their lives. Led by our community managers, these gatherings provide a space for lively reflection, engaging conversations, and practical tools to live a fulfilling life. Whether you're looking for inspiration, resources, or just some good company, these gatherings are a warm and welcoming place for everyone.

The benefits of gratitude on quality of life

You might be wondering, why focus on gratitude? Research has shown that practicing gratitude can significantly enhance the quality of life, especially for



Jess Rylance, an experienced social worker with a strong medical social work background, served as San Sereno's Community Manager from 2018 to March 2024. Now, as Auria's Head of Quality of Life, Jess collaborates with community managers to enhance resident well-being while driving operational excellence through team development. Passionate about fostering positive change, Jess ensures quality of life remains central to Auria's mission and service delivery. Outside of work, she's a devoted wife and mom to two boys, balancing her professional and personal life with unwavering dedication.

older adults. Let's take a look at some of the compelling benefits backed by science:

- **Better physical health:** A study published in Health Psychology found that people who regularly express gratitude tend to experience fewer health problems and report being more physically active. For older adults, staying active is crucial for overall health and vitality.
- **Improved mental well-being:** Research in The Journal of Happiness Studies indicates that gratitude can help reduce depression and anxiety. Participants who kept gratitude journals reported feeling more satisfied with life and experienced lower levels of distress—something that can be incredibly beneficial as we age.
- **Stronger social connections:** A study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that expressing gratitude can strengthen relationships and foster deeper social bonds. This is especially important for older adults, who may face isolation; strong social connections can greatly enhance emotional well-being.
- **Cognitive boost:** Engaging in gratitude practices can even improve cognitive functions. A study in The Journal of Psychosomatic Research found that gratitude practices enhance memory and focus, which are vital for maintaining independence as we grow older.
- **Greater resilience:** A study in Psychological Science revealed that

practicing gratitude helps individuals build resilience in the face of challenges. For seniors, this means being better equipped to handle the ups and downs of aging, health issues, or loss with a positive mindset.

What to expect at a gathering

At each Grateful Gathering, we create an inviting atmosphere where participants from all walks of life can feel at home. Before each meeting, our community managers curate a selection of readings, poetry, videos, and music centred around specific themes. We kick things off with three foundational sessions that lay the groundwork for a grateful living practice. After that, each month we explore themes like 'Discover Delight,' 'Awaken to Awe,' and 'Act with Courage,' encouraging everyone to dive deep into meaningful conversations.

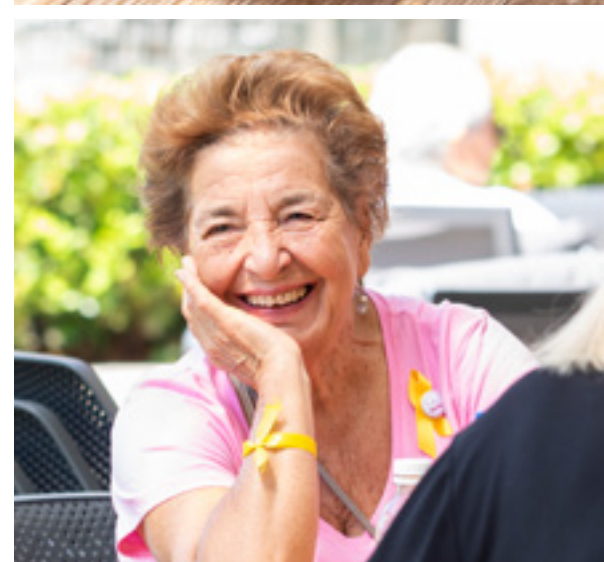
Join us in gratitude

If you're interested in joining a Gratefulness Gathering or even facilitating one, we encourage you to connect with your community manager. Their unique skills in social work make them great guides for these sessions, ensuring a heartfelt and enriching experience for everyone involved.

By embracing gratitude in our community, you're enhancing not just your own quality of life but also positively influencing those around you. We invite you to join us in exploring the benefits of gratitude and to grow together as a community.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month at Auria

Our Walk for Cancer at Royal View brought together residents from both Royal View and Melrose Manor for a meaningful morning on the Royal Golf Course. The walk, followed by a relaxing brunch on the deck, was a show of support for Breast Cancer Awareness. At Auria, initiatives like these are expressions of our commitment to making a difference together and having a great time in the process.





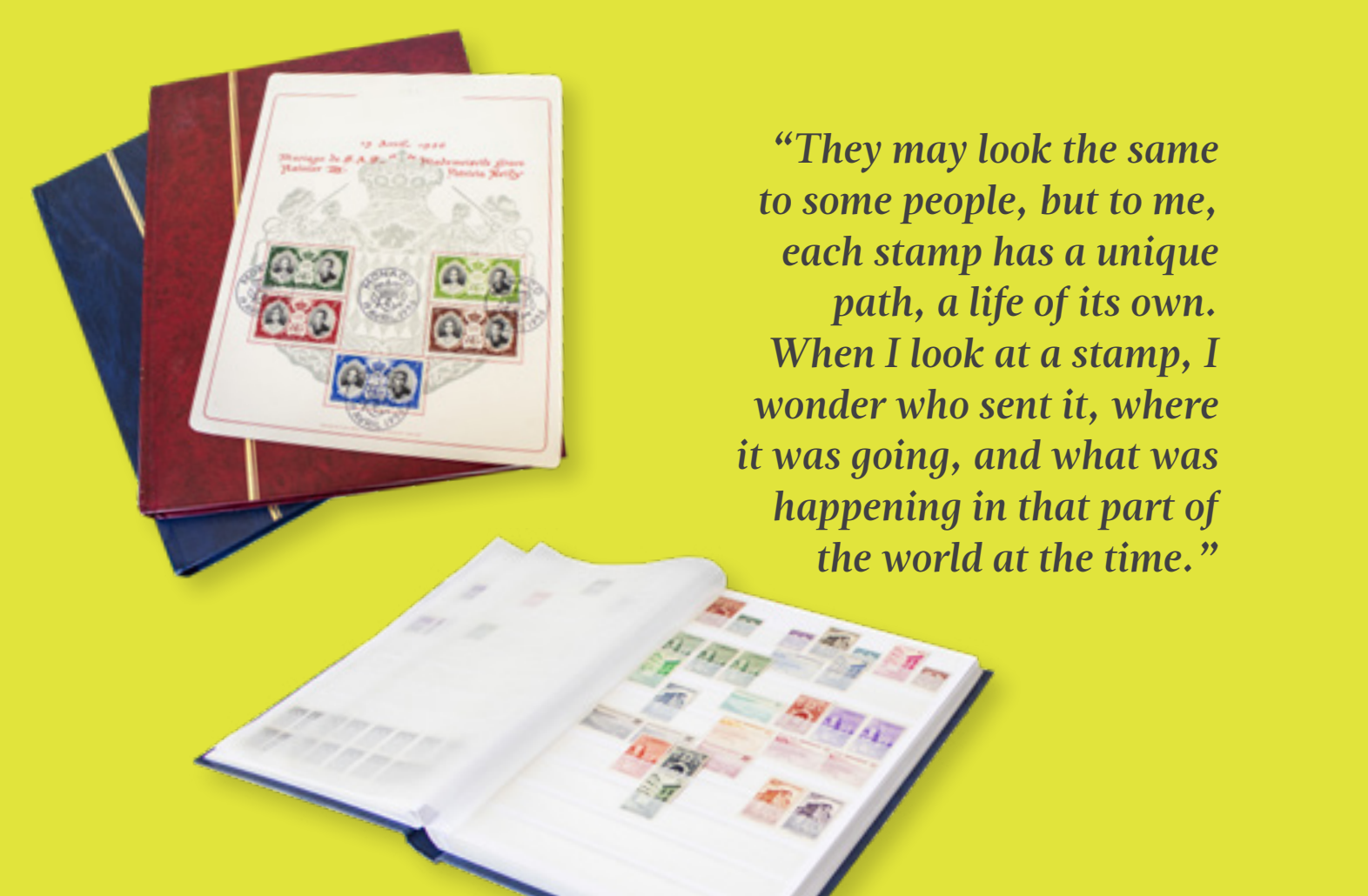
By Adi Gelbart
for Royal View

The world of a true Philatelist

with Royal View's
Barney Lewus

The word 'philatelist' comes from the Greek word *ateleia*, which means 'exemption from payment'. The 'phil-' at the beginning of the word means 'love.'

Barney, a retired pharmacist and lifetime stamp collector, welcomed me inside his apartment, eager to show me the most recent acquisitions to his ever-expanding stamp collection. I was greeted by a mound of stamps covering every corner of the dining room table, half-organised as if at the beginning of a 1000-piece puzzle. Barney admits that having adequate space for his stamps was his first goal and deciding factor in moving to Royal View.



“They may look the same to some people, but to me, each stamp has a unique path, a life of its own. When I look at a stamp, I wonder who sent it, where it was going, and what was happening in that part of the world at the time.”

In his cosy ground floor unit, complete with a small garden and patio, a world of history and imagination resides in the form of meticulously kept stamp albums. For Barney these albums are portals to the world, each stamp a tiny artefact with its own story.

Barney’s extensive collection, accumulated over decades, spans continents, cultures, and eras. His albums are filled with stamps from every imaginable corner of the globe, each one catalogued with care. But what sets Barney apart from your typical collector is his deep curiosity about the journey each stamp has taken to find its way to him. To Barney; they’re like little time travellers.

“I like to think about the stories behind each one,” Barney says with a smile, his fingers brushing the edge of an album cover as if it’s a treasured volume of poetry. “They may look the same to some people, but to me, each stamp has a

unique path, a life of its own. When I look at a stamp, I wonder who sent it, where it was going, and what was happening in that part of the world at the time.”

Barney’s passion for stamps began in childhood. After moving from Peddie to Port Elizabeth, he visited a family Sunday tea, where his cousin gave him a Craven A cigarette tin packed with stamps. Among them, a Venezuela stamp drew his attention. He rushed home, ran to his room, and looked up Venezuela in his atlas. He vividly recalls this moment as the impetus for his lifelong obsession with stamps—an interest that would carry him through his undergraduate years, his pharmacy profession, and now into retirement, with his collection still close at hand.

Over the years, his collection has taken on a life of its own. Shelves line the walls of his study, bedroom and living room, packed with albums of all sizes.



All brimming with stamps that transport him across continents. From Africa and Victorian England to modern-day Asia and the Americas, Barney’s collection is a vivid history of the world in miniature.

He also lives with a particularly spirited Chihuahua, whose vigilant guardianship of Barney and his stamp collection rivals that of a full-scale security detail, albeit one in miniature form, complete with the trademark audacity and zeal that only tiny dogs can muster, and who, I must admit, did eventually warm to my presence!

What I realised, is that it is the idea of connection that fascinates Barney the most—how these tiny squares of paper have traversed distances, crossed oceans, and survived wars and political upheavals to end up here, in his quiet Royal View home. ***“It’s a small miracle, really,” he muses. “Each stamp has been somewhere, experienced something, and yet here it is, in my hands.”***

The phone rings and that is my cue to leave Barney to get on with his day, of Brain Gym, dog walking and stamp sorting. What a warm and wonderful man and the first true Philatelist I have ever met.



Grace & gratitude

The artful life of San Sereno's Marie-Louise van Niekerk

Marie-Louise's secret: "You have a choice between adopting a red robot mindset or a green robot mindset."

Meet Marie-Louise van Niekerk (nee Kruger—yes that Kruger!), a beloved member of our Auria community, celebrated for her warmth, wisdom, and artistic flair. With a BSc in Biochemistry and Chemistry and a family filled with high achievers, one son and three daughters, who are all now accomplished professionals—Marie-Louise's lives her life with faith and optimism counting her blessings at every turn.

At 60, she fell in love with painting and sculpting and welcomed this new creative delight and talent to her journey. Her life has taken her around the world; from organising international gatherings to exploring places like Fiji, Hawaii, and the UK. Grounded in her devout Christian faith, Marie-Louise radiates gratitude and positivity which reflect the truly blessed life she has had.



Marie-Louise was born into a well established family in Pretoria, where tradition, faith, and community values ran deep. Her father, a pioneering engineer, and her mother, a teacher, ensured a disciplined upbringing for Marie-Louise and her two younger siblings. Being the eldest, she had the privilege (and perhaps the occasional challenge) of setting the example.

Her father was one of the renowned ‘40 Thieves’, a select group of steel industry engineers who were sent abroad to acquire best practices in the global steel business before returning to enhance South Africa’s own Iscor. This tradition of tenacious ambition appeared to pervade the Kruger household, encouraging Marie-Louise’s own dedication to education and excellence.

Schooled at the prestigious Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool, Marie-Louise excelled in, well, just about everything. Her knack for conversation rivalled her natural aptitude for academics, excelling in Science, English, Math and Biology throughout her school career. Her natural charm and intelligence made her a favourite then as much as it does today!

Like many young women with a gift for academics, Marie-Louise initially had her sights set on a career in medicine. But her father,

ever the pragmatist, envisioned a different path. Perhaps fearing the toll that a demanding medical career might take on her future well-being, he used an intriguing mix of persuasion and subtle dissuasion to gently steer her elsewhere—a strategy that, much to his relief, worked.

Instead, Marie-Louise pursued a Bachelor of Science in Physiology and Chemistry at the University of Pretoria, where she also caught the eye of one Jos van Niekerk, a charming young man with serious intentions. Despite some friendly rivalry from Andre and his flashy Porsche, Jos emerged victorious, winning not just Marie-Louise’s heart but also the warm approval of the entire Kruger family. And thus began a partnership marked by shared values,

curiosity, and a love that has endured beautifully.

They tied the knot in 1961 and together set up their forever home shortly thereafter in Johannesburg where Jos started an Orthopaedic practice. With three children under three years old, it would be fair to assume that obstetrics was the one class that Jos did not excel at, on his way to earning his medical degree!

Marie-Louise worked as a science teacher at Jan Celliers Laerskool during the early years of her four children’s education. During these years, she became Hoër Meisieskool Helpmekaar’s first female chairperson of the board (an appointment that was previously solely limited to the male school dominee). The Helpmekaar schools were founded after the Boer War to help orphaned

and underprivileged Afrikaans children in the community. A revolution indeed!

Marie-Louise and Jos share a unique perspective on the world. From riding mules through the Grand Canyon (despite her dread of both heights and horses) to exploring the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Santa Fe and even climbing the famed Sydney Harbour Bridge, they’ve embraced adventure at every opportunity. But, with her signature smile, Marie-Louise asserts, *“I haven’t been everywhere yet—‘everywhere’ is still on my list!”* And, given her zest for life, I have no doubt she means it.

Despite her vibrant spirit, Marie-Louise’s journey has not been without its hurdles. She’s faced her share of health challenges

but has triumphed over each, thanks to the steadfast support of her family and her unshakeable faith. Today, she embraces life with a ‘bionic spine’ and a smile, embodying resilience in every sense of the word.

Moving to San Sereno seven years ago was the best decision they’ve made. She has converted their second bedroom into an art studio, while Jos has transformed the study into his home office, complete with artefacts, paintings, and photographs from their incredible journeys.

When they need a change of scenery, they travel to

their beloved Millstream (holiday home) for four weeks each year, which they have been enjoying since 1991.

What is your secret, Marie-Louise? I enquire, “You have a choice between adopting a red robot mindset or a green robot mindset,” she says. “We are blessed to be here and fortunate to have moved to San Sereno when we did. It is an investment in the NOW.”

From Biochemistry to brushstrokes and all the blessings in between, Marie-Louise is creating a truly magnificent masterpiece!



Marie-Louise and Jos on their wedding day



Marie-Louise's Std 3 report card

A Gift from the Heart: Marie-Louise painted this cherished piece for her granddaughter, capturing the charm of her school and favourite tree as a lasting reminder of special memories.



By Adi Gelbart
for Woodside

Woodside's Syd Cullis

Retired surgeon takes on the world in the over-75 2024 Masters Hockey World Cup

Syd's hockey career began at UCT in 1962, when, after playing rugby throughout his school years, he opted to move to hockey to avoid injury. With little prior experience, he joined the third team as a left wing, which is a less popular position. He was able to win his place thanks to connections formed while playing cricket, when he met experienced hockey players. By his second year, he had been promoted to the first squad and led them to victory in the Ohlsson's Cup, which sparked his enduring passion for the sport.

Syd's skills improved, and the following year, he competed in the Intervarsity Tournament in Pretoria and was chosen for the South African Universities Team (The Proteas). In his final year, he captained the UCT squad at the Intervarsity

Tournament at Rhodes University, guiding them to a memorable triumph despite the absence of their top players.

In 1973, Syd moved to Cape Town for a surgical registrar position at Groote Schuur Hospital And joined the Western Province Cricket Club, contributing to an unbeaten streak for their 2A team.

Syd's hockey journey continued internationally. In 1993, he was part of the first unofficial South African Masters team to tour Australia, winning a silver medal at the Western Australia Masters Tournament. He also played in the Golden Oldies Tournaments, representing WPCC in Dublin in 1997 and a Canadian side, The Jokers, in Den Bosch in 2005, thanks to his UCT hockey connections.

In 2012, he represented the South African Over-70 team at the Grandmasters World Cup in Oxford and, two years later, in The Hague.

Following that, the cost of abroad competitions, as well as the related physiotherapy expenses, hindered his continued participation in World Cups until it was announced that the 2024 Masters World Cup was to take place in Cape Town. Syd decided to compete.

In preparation, he participated in multiple Grandmasters Interprovincial Tournaments, as well as the physiotherapy sessions that followed!

He was thrilled to have been chosen for the South African Over 75! During their opening match against Germany, Syd sustained a

calf injury, sidelining him for the rest of the tournament. "We had beaten Germany 2-0 but later lost to Wales, England and Australia and, unfortunately, then lost 2-0 to Germany in the play-off for the bronze medal."

"Maybe this was a message that retirement from hockey was not such a bad idea." Syd reflects not before adding that he feels nothing but gratitude for the sport that brought him so much joy, camaraderie, and global friendships.

"I'm grateful to my parents, my family, my teammates, coaches, umpires, managers and the many friends I've made around the world through hockey," he says. "And, of course, I'm especially grateful for my wonderful wife, who I met at the pub after a hockey match in Durban, who has been my greatest supporter throughout."

As a resident of our Woodside Community, we couldn't be prouder of Syd's accomplishments and the example he sets. His legacy in hockey and his positive, grateful outlook remind us all of the enduring joys of passion, perseverance, and friendship.

**Congratulations Syd,
your Woodside family
celebrates with you!**

Sydney pointing at the number 81 on his outfit, which coincidentally was his age when competing!



Michael Boyns

San Sereno's Knight

Michael had a most intriguing doormat which, instead of saying 'welcome' said NANA and SIR. Although this was a fun mat and had nothing to do with his story it activated curiosity and this is how I discovered, Michael is indeed a Knight and here is the story.

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (Order of St John)

The Order of St John came into existence as a pilgrim hospital in Jerusalem which was still under Muslim control. Twenty years later, in 1099, the First Crusade took the city and the two centuries of the Christian government in the Levant that followed, provided the environment in which the hospital grew into a military order, without abandoning its responsibilities for the care of the sick and the poor. From the late twelfth century until well into the nineteenth century it's military functions were of prime importance.

To stand with them came great wealth, a degree

of political power and, as the ruler of island principalities—first Rhodes from 1309 to 1523 and then Malta from 1530 to 1798—recognition as a sovereign entity.

But from the 1840s, in a world which had turned its back on crusading, it reverted to its original function of caring only for the sick. The Order of St John in Britain has known hard times. King Henry VIII dissolved it in 1540. Queen Mary reinstated it in 1557 but it was largely dormant in England until its revival in 1831. Queen Victoria gave the modern British Order a royal charter in 1888, recognising the resurgent of the Hospitaller tradition which had brought about the foundation of the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade (all volunteers) in a Britain which badly needed organised emergency medical care. It also

brought the foundation of the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in East Jerusalem, a much loved institution which flourishes today and has expanded to include a clinic in Gaza.

With priories in Scotland, Wales, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, United States and branches in thirty former Commonwealth countries, caring for the sick and the poor is it's business as it was for the Hospitallers in 1099.

HRH the Duke of Gloucester, under the orders of the Sovereign Head, King Charles III, is the Grand Prior of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem.

“I was approached by the CEO of the South African Priory to the Order of St John which is situated in Westcliff, Johannesburg, in May 2002 to become their Priory Receiver General. This position was sanctioned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 23 July 2002 which I held until retiring from the Order in February 2019. I was also appointed in May 2002 to be a member of the all the committees of the South African Order. On 5 January, Her Majesty sanctioned my appointment as a Knight of Justice in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem.”



Mike and Pat

Before the investiture could take place, Mike was required to have a Coat of Arms. This was designed and produced by the State Herald in Pretoria. He incorporated important facets of Mike's life which Pat had given to him. A bull is right on top as Mike was born in May, hence the Taurus. In the centre below the bull are cricket stumps due to Mike's involvement in the then Transvaal cricket. This is flanked on one side with an eagle from the badge of Hyde Park High School and on the other the cross of the Order of St John. The legend across the bottom reads 'Strength and Integrity.' The investiture took place at St George's Church in Parktown.

“On the 24 June 2014 I was appointed Priory Vice Chancellor, another position I held until retiring from the Order in February 2019. Upon the sudden death of the Priory CEO on 15 July 2017 I was requested by the then Chancellor to take up the position of Acting CEO until we could find a suitable replacement. This I did until 31 October 2017 when we appointed joint CEOs on 1 November 2017. I had the pleasure during my time with the South African Order of St John of working under four Priors, one of whom was Desmond Tutu.”

Mike was born in Cambridge and came to South Africa at the age of 15. He attended Hyde Park High School and matriculated in 1960. This is where he met Pat and they married in 1967. Pat became a teacher and Mike, a Chartered Accountant.

He joined EY (Ernst & Young) as an articled clerk and enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand where he completed the Certificate in the theory of Accountancy on a part time basis and wrote and passed his Board Exam in May 1969, becoming a Chartered Accountant.

He was admitted as an audit partner of EY in March 1974 and left them after 36 years in 1997 to accept an invitation to join an Anglo American listed company (Johnic Holdings Ltd) where our current State President Cyril Ramaphosa and his consortium had acquired a controlling interest. He worked for them as Senior General Manager Finance and Company Secretary for nine years until his retirement at age 63. During this time he also became Company Secretary of a further four listed Group Companies.

Within one month of his retirement he was approached by two Directors of Anglo American to help in the listing on the JSE of a metals trading company and became Company Secretary thereof for the next seven years. Thereafter he became the Financial Director of a private company situated in Durban for the next five years before finally retiring.

Mike and Pat moved into San Sereno in June 2021 . They have three daughters and four grandchildren. We are indeed honoured to have such a distinguished member of our San Sereno family.





A WOODSIDE ICON

The story of Nina Russell

I am so graciously welcomed by Nina into her charmingly appointed home; her cottage at Woodside that has been her comfort and joy for over 28 years. As a lifelong, passionate gardener, she has created around her an enticing vista of beauty and delight. Truly a feast for the eyes. Her north facing outlook slopes gently down to the running water of the Liesbeek Canal.

Nina brims with positivity as she recounts the varied stages of her life and with an infectious smile, wonders whether she is ‘chattering on too much’. At 98, soon to celebrate her 99th birthday, Nina embodies the spirit of youth and joy, effortlessly challenging the idea that age defines us. **“Age is just a number,”** she often says with her signature smile. Her positivity, resilience, and enduring curiosity make her an icon in the Woodside community—a beacon of wisdom and warmth who is adored by residents and staff alike.

Born in 1926 in Stutterheim, in the Eastern Cape’s Border Area, Nina’s life story began on a farm where she grew up alongside her younger brother. From a young age, she developed a deep connection with nature, spending much of her childhood outdoors. She recalls with fondness the thrill of riding horses with her brother through bumpy farm roads to visit friends, her laughter echoing as they navigated the rugged terrain. This connection to the land would follow her through life, becoming one of her greatest sources of joy.

Her love for the ocean also blossomed during her early years, when her family would spend sun-drenched holidays at their sea cottage at Kei River Mouth, near Morgan Bay. The memories of

Christmases spent by the water, the sounds of the surf, and the smell of the salty air remain precious to Nina to this day.

Her education, shaped by home schooling in her early years, eventually led her to Rhodes University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. It was during this time that she met Ian Russell, a civil engineer. The two quickly became inseparable, marrying shortly after Nina’s graduation. Their journey together took them to several towns across South Africa, including Cathcart, Vereeniging, and eventually Cape Town, where they settled down and raised three wonderful children.

It was in Cathcart that Nina discovered a new passion—golf. **“I was taught to play golf there, and I was hooked,”** she says with a knowing smile. Her love for the sport would last for many years, becoming one of the many activities that defined her vibrant social life. But it was more than just a game for Nina—it was a way to build friendships, stay active, and find joy in life’s simple pleasures.

The family’s eventual move to Cape Town in the 1960s marked the beginning of a new chapter. Nina and Ian formed deep friendships, raised their children, and even began traveling the world. They ventured across the globe, visiting countries far and wide, with Japan standing out as one of Nina’s favourite destinations. **“The beauty of Japan’s landscapes and the kindness of its people left an indelible mark on me. It felt like stepping into another world,”** she recalls.

Sadly, Ian passed away in 1991, leaving a deep void in Nina’s life. Yet, in typical Nina fashion, she faced this loss with

strength and grace. She remained in their beloved home for six more years before making the life-changing decision to move to Woodside.

Initially, the idea of leaving her Pinelands home, with its lovingly tended hydrangeas, was difficult. **“Those hydrangeas were the talk of the town!”** she says with pride. The sight of mud and construction around her soon-to-be Woodside cottage left her in tears. But true to form, Nina promised herself that she would create something beautiful out of the chaos. And that she did.

Nina’s move to Woodside in early 1997 turned out to be one of the best decisions of her life. In her new home, she found not only a place to live, but a community where she could thrive. Her talent for gardening turned her cottage into a jewel of the village, with her flowers blooming brightly for all to admire. More than that, Nina herself became a pillar of the Woodside community, known for her graciousness, wisdom, and boundless energy.

Her warmth and positivity are infectious. She is always eager to share stories of her life, from the happy memories of her childhood on the farm, to her beloved family, to the joys and trials of life’s later years. Nina’s deep faith is central to her outlook, and she credits her Christian beliefs with helping her find peace and joy, even in difficult times. It’s this inner strength and her ‘can-do’ attitude that has endeared her to everyone at Woodside.

The residents and staff admire Nina not only for her remarkable life story, but for the way she lives each day with purpose and positivity. Whether she’s tending to

her garden, engaging in conversations, or offering a kind word, Nina is a constant source of inspiration. She often reflects on the role Auria has played in enriching her life, particularly in recent years. “The expertise and care Auria has brought to Woodside have truly enhanced my life,” she says.

For all these reasons and more, Nina Russell is much more than a long-standing resident—she is an icon. Her life is a testament to resilience, love, and the beauty of living fully at every stage. Nina has shown us all what it means to age with grace, dignity, and joy. And for that, we salute her.

“The expertise and care Auria has brought to Woodside have truly enhanced my life.”

Royal View's

Val Blumenthal

*The heart behind YALE,
a vision of belonging*



By Adi Gelbart
for Royal View

At Auria Senior Living, we are privileged to have residents whose stories inspire and remind us of the power of resilience, compassion, and vision. Among those making a significant impact is Val Blumenthal, a resident at our Royal View community, who established YALE (Young Adults Learning and Earning), an organisation that has changed the lives of many.

Nominated for Women of Worth by Fair Lady and subsequently selected as Jewish Woman of the World in South Africa. Val's exceptional achievements have given a sense of purpose and community to individuals who, in the perspective of conventional society, may have been disregarded.

Val's charity initiatives began during her children's early years. She started fundraising for Selwyn Segal and eventually joined The Hamlet Foundation, which works with mentally impaired children. Later, as chairperson, she established the Hamlet Gift Shop and assembled a dedicated team of capable women from the community, all motivated by a shared mission and enthusiasm.

The inception of YALE occurred when Val identified the distinct needs of her daughter, Loren. Loren, Val's firstborn, faced mild intellectual challenges but accomplished remarkable feats—attending a regular school, earning her standard eight, and even obtaining a driver's licence. Despite her efforts, Loren faced significant challenges both socially and professionally, finding herself in a space where conventional services fell short of addressing her unique needs.

As Val observed Loren's siblings engaging in their vibrant social lives, she experienced the sharp sting of her daughter's isolation, a pain that resonated deeply within a mother's heart.

Confronted with the lack of choices available for Loren and others in similar situations, Val took a remarkable step: she resolved to establish a community where they could feel at home. She imagined a supportive space where young adults facing similar obstacles could discover meaning, connection, and employment. In the late 1980s, Val established YALE, motivated by the conviction that every individual should have the chance to make a significant impact on society, irrespective of their perceived differences.

*“Good, better, best,
never let it rest, until
your good is better and
your better's best.”*

*Ediythe Lees,
Val's late mom*



Val and her grandchildren



Val and her children; her sons on the left and her daughter on the right



Val with Geoff Shein, fellow resident and close friend

Val's vision was straightforward yet deeply impactful. She aimed to establish three fundamental pillars within YALE that would improve the quality of life for these individuals.

1. A supportive social group

An environment where young adults can engage freely, unburdened by the need to conform or face judgement, promoting connections and a feeling of belonging.

2. A non-competitive work environment

Val recognised the significance of fostering a sense of productivity. She created YALE as a space for young adults to participate in impactful work, free from the pressures of conventional workplaces.

3. A home away from home

Val aimed to establish a living space that would allow these young adults to coexist with appropriate yet unobtrusive oversight, safeguarding their well-being while fostering their autonomy.

On January 11, 1989, Val's vision came to fruition with the launch of YALE on George Avenue in Sandringham, a facility committed to offering sheltered employment and a nurturing atmosphere for young adults. Decades later, the organisation continues to stand resilient!

Val recognised a fundamental truth that resonates deeply with many of us at Auria: the importance of belonging, purpose, and community in crafting a meaningful life. Her work and vision in the creation of YALE reflect the core values we uphold in our Auria communities—spaces where every individual is appreciated, supported, and inspired to achieve their best quality of life. Every single day. At any stage of life, the feeling of belonging is essential to one's overall quality of life.

Through YALE, Val Blumenthal established a crucial support system for individuals who might otherwise have been overlooked. Her legacy embodies resilience and the pursuit of joy, impacting herself, her family, and community.

“Good, better, best, never let it rest, until your good is better and your better's best.” These words from Ediythe Lees, Val's late mom, capture the essence that has shaped Val's extraordinary path.

A tribute to Loren, Val's daughter, who unfortunately passed away two years ago, age 57.

By Adi Gelbart
for Woodside

In our recent fashion show at Woodside she graced the runway in a stylish dress from Tabita boutique, and exuded confidence and joy, proving that true strength does not lie in one's physical ability, but in one's heart and spirit.

by friends, Wendy returned to Cape Town, where a vibrant social scene awaited. She joined the International Women's Club, finding camaraderie among a diverse group of women from around the world, played golf—winning many a golf tournament—and travelled.

Three years ago, Wendy experienced a life-altering event when she lost her leg. Yet, rather than letting this setback define her, Wendy chose gratitude and positivity. She still drives, maintains her independence, and approaches each day with a determination that inspires everyone around her. Her focus isn't on what she's lost but on making the most of what life has to offer, embracing each day with enthusiasm and joy.

being wheelchair bound is somehow less than. Wendy is passionate about being a voice for change, advocating for better accessibility and awareness. From ensuring restaurants and cinemas have wheelchair-friendly facilities to raising awareness about inclusive practices, Wendy is determined to inspire progress and reshape perceptions

Wendy encourages us all to embrace change, face challenges with optimism, and find joy in the simple act of living.

Here's to Wendy and all the women within our Auria communities—may we know them, may we celebrate them, and may we be inspired by them every day.

Strength in stride

Woodside's Wendy Georgeu

Celebrating Women's Month at Auria gave us a moment to honour the remarkable women in our communities who embody strength, grace, and resilience. Woodside's own Wendy Georgeu embodies all of the above and her journey speaks to the power of courage and adaptability in the face of life's challenges.

Born in Leicester, England, Wendy trained as a radiographer in the 1950s—a bold choice in an era when career options for women were limited. Drawn to South Africa by a high demand for her skills, Wendy worked first in Cape Town, then Johannesburg, where she witnessed the intense realities of mining accidents at

the Chamber of Mines Hospital before moving to private practice.

Yet, at 40, she felt the call for change. Inspired by her sister-in-law's success in fashion in London, she decided to try her hand in a completely new field. She answered an ad for a buying position, aced the interview, and was hired on the spot. Wendy thrived as a senior buyer for Stuttaford's, specialising in dresses, coats, and maternity wear, building strong connections with her clientele and earning a reputation for her flair and impeccable taste.

It was during this time that Wendy met Alec Georgeu through a friend that led

to marriage within three months. Alec Georgeu's lineage traces back to the early 19th century, when his ancestors travelled from Greece to South Africa, anglicizing their name and becoming entrepreneurs. Alec's grandfather, a true pioneer, founded the Waldorf Restaurant and was among the first in South Africa to serve ice cream, bringing back an ice cream machine from America—a novelty at the time.

They moved to Hermanus and enjoyed a few blissful years together before Alec's passing. Encouraged

In our recent fashion show at Woodside she graced the runway in a stylish dress from Tabita Fashion, and exuded confidence and joy, proving that true strength does not lie in one's physical ability, but in one's heart and spirit.

Navigating these new challenges takes a lot of getting used to and she shares that one of the toughest aspects of adapting to her new life is the shift in how people perceive her. Often, individuals mistakenly treat her differently, speaking to her carer instead of directly to her, as if by



Wendy gracing the runway at Woodside's fashion show

By Adi Gelbart
for Melrose Manor

Some lives shine not just through achievements but through the meaningful connections and moments that define them. Yvonne Plit, a Melrose Manor resident, illustrates such a life, interlaced with love, intelligence, and an unrivalled social impact. From her roots in Orange Grove, Johannesburg, to her years with her late husband, Mike, Yvonne has had beautiful adventure filled with lasting links to people who impacted the course of history.

Wings of Grace

with Dr Yvonne Plit





Yvonne and Mike

Born in 1938, Yvonne grew up in Johannesburg's Orange Grove, completing her matric at Waverley Girls High. A true Jozi girl, she went on to study at Wits University, where destiny would soon introduce her to Mike. It was 1958, at a Rag Ball, that Yvonne, the Rag Princess, met her prince. Theirs was a love story that endured over 62 unforgettable years.

A scholar at heart, Yvonne graduated in 1959 with a BSc in Physiotherapy, later earning an MBBCh in 1965. In 1967, she married Mike, kicking off their adventure with a honeymoon in Tehran before heading to Jerusalem, where Mike went to work at Hadassah Hospital and Yvonne, went to Ulpan to learn Hebrew.

Their time in Jerusalem was both exhilarating and tumultuous. On 6 June 1967, sirens blared, announcing the outbreak of the Six-Day War. With that, Mike took charge of a Triage Station with Yvonne, cutting short her time on Ulpan.

Returning to South Africa, they settled into their professional lives. Mike, a trailblazer in pulmonology, established the country's first private practice in the field. Yvonne, ever the multi-tasker, balanced motherhood with her medical career. Their daughter, Lisa, born in 1970, became the precious centre of their world. As Lisa grew up, Yvonne became increasingly involved in her schooling joining the PTA and even taking on

the role of a school rugby doctor after advocating for improved first aid services following a devastating rugby tragedy.

Mike's prominence in the medical field opened doors to the world, attending over 40 international medical conferences around the globe. Their personal travel highlights included visits to the Great Wall of China, The Terracotta Soldiers in Xian, The Taj Mahal in Agra, India, The Galápagos Islands and Antarctica, sharing adventures that enriched their lives and deepened their bond. Yvonne emphasises that her best travel destination was Singapore, where her daughter Lisa and husband David lived for 11 years and where her two precious grandsons were born.

As avid birders, they savoured witnessing bird migration patterns in India's Bharatpur and Israel's Hula Valley—experiences that spoke to their shared love of nature and exploration, as well as amazement with the breathtaking richness and vitality of the sky. ***"The bird colours in the sky are so uplifting,"*** she says with astonishment, pointing to the enormous tree outside her flat, which also draws some of our local beautiful birds.



President Nelson Mandela and Mike Plit

In April 1992, they received a call that would forever alter their lives. The phone rang, and when Yvonne answered, a familiar voice said, "Hello, Madiba here." Thinking it was a prank, she replied, "Rubbish, man!" But the voice calmly persisted, "No, it's Madiba, to speak to Mike Plit."

On the cusp of becoming South Africa's first democratic president, Nelson Mandela was seeking Mike's medical expertise. This moment marked the beginning of a remarkable doctor-patient relationship that soon blossomed into a profound friendship. It granted Yvonne and Mike a place in Madiba's inner social circle, sharing moments with one of history's most iconic figures. From lunches with Mandela to encounters with global leaders like Bill Clinton, the Plits were part of history.

Madiba's affection for the couple was evident, especially when he surprised Yvonne at her 60th birthday. Picture this: their Hyde Park home adorned with a marquee in the garden, hosting 60 of their closest friends. The gathering was in full swing when, to everyone's astonishment, Mandela's car pulled into the driveway, flanked by 16 bodyguards. Gasps of disbelief filled the air as Madiba stepped out to personally wish Yvonne a happy birthday. Their friendship with Mandela was marked by extraordinary milestones, including celebrating his 90th birthday and his 10th wedding anniversary in Qunu, Eastern Cape, Madiba's hometown. Reflecting on Mandela's retirement in Qunu, Yvonne fondly recalls his quiet moments: ***"He loved to sit with Graça Machel in the evenings, looking up at the stars, holding her hand. Such a special man,"*** she shares.

Tragically, on 7 May, 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, Mike passed



away in Yvonne's arms. Just hours later, she attended her grandson's Barmitzvah via Zoom, balancing profound loss with familial joy.

"I am so comfortable and happy here at Melrose Manor—I was welcomed so warmly," Yvonne shares, adding with a smile that she has never been busier! A passionate music lover, Yvonne contributes to the Thursday music appreciation evenings held in our cinema. "It's a huge hit among fellow music enthusiasts," she says proudly, adding, "there's no need to go to the Linder Auditorium!"

A well-lived life is not measured by milestones alone but by the relationships we build and the impact we leave behind. Yvonne's story shared with humility and grace, is one that enriches all who are fortunate enough to know her. As she carries forward the memories of her prince, and her remarkable friendships.



Yvonne and Mike with Graça Machel, George and Damon Bizos, Arthur Chaskelson and Madiba



Benny Bompeti, winning barista

2024 Barista Showdown

Woodside takes the crown!

September brought a caffeine-fuelled thrill to our Auria communities as our baristas from San Sereno, Melrose Manor, Woodside, and Royal View showcased their coffee-making flair in our second annual Barista Showdown!

With top-notch judging by Avanti, Woodside's own Benny Bompeti brewed his way to victory, making it Woodside's second consecutive win.

A huge thanks to all our talented baristas for their passion and skill—raising the bar for coffee across Auria. Here's to another year of delicious brews and friendly competition.





Garden talk

I have been fortunate enough to have worked with Auria for the past seven years. This past year I have also been garden manager for the Auria team at San Sereno. We have worked well together and achieved a lot. As a horticulturalist working in the serene gardens of San Sereno, I have the unique privilege of combining my passion for plants with the joy of creating a beautiful environment for our residents. This past year has been a great journey, and I want to take a moment to acknowledge our incredible team who have played a pivotal role in transforming our gardens into a peaceful sanctuary.



San Sereno Garden Maintenance Team



The Flower Station Team

Celebrating a year of growth: a tribute to our team

By Natasha Alexander
Auria's Horticulturist



“This edition of Garden Talk is dedicated to our San Sereno Garden Team, without whom I wouldn’t have been able to achieve what we have in the past year.”

A Collaborative Effort

Landscaping is not just about plants and design; it’s about people. Our team has diverse talents, each member contributing their skills and dedication. Each team member, whether working in new developments, the common gardens, mowing team or privately for residents, has worked to ensure our gardens thrive, every individual has been essential in our collective success.

Together, we’ve worked to cultivate a space that enhances the beauty of San Sereno, but also fosters a sense of community. Whether it’s planting seasonal flowers, pruning trees, or organising gardening activities, each effort reflects our commitment to creating a warm and welcoming environment to residents and their families.

Highlights of the Year

This year, we embarked on several exciting projects that have significantly enhanced our gardens. We have

upgraded the gardens in many areas by installing irrigation, designing new beds and creating rockeries in some areas. We have used a lot of waterwise, indigenous plants in order to conserve water and add colour throughout the seasons.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on our accomplishments thus past year, we also look forward to new opportunities. With the changing seasons, our gardens will continue to evolve, and I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we will enhance our existing projects and find initiatives that further enrich the lives of our residents.





Living our core values

At Auria Senior Living, we adhere to a set of core values that guide all aspects of our operations.

These values are more than just words on a page; they serve as the foundation for our company culture, relationships with our residents, and commitment to excellence.

Our Star Performers who have exemplified these core values are nominated each month.

For this issue of LIVING we recognise our Star Performers at each Auria community over the last quarter. Well done to you all! Thank you for your kindness, respect, friendliness, communication, teamwork and excellence!

Our core values and what they mean to us

Kindness

We show care, consideration, and generosity to all those with whom we interact.



Respect

We have regard for the feelings, dignity, wishes, rights of others as well as awareness and understanding of everyone's needs, circumstances, and diversity within our Auria communities. We are polite and courteous at all times.



Friendliness

We are engaging and pleasant and show interest in all those within our community.



Communication

We value clear, concise, and timeous communication, good listening skills and honesty.



Teamwork

We collaborate within our communities to work cohesively, take ownership, celebrate successes, and take individual and collective responsibility for results.



Excellence

We strive to do our best at all times by continually learning, consciously improving, making clear choices, anticipating changes, being innovative and planning for the future.



◀ Royal View Star Performers

Susan Nemangaya, Caregiver
Kindness
Diana Li, Office Administrator
Friendliness
Tracy Talane, Supervisor
Teamwork
Mohlatleho Rathaha, Enrolled Nurse
Teamwork



▶ Woodside Star Performers

Cameron Jacobs, Commis Chef
Teamwork and Excellence
Nolitha Balintulo, Housekeeper
Teamwork
Zia Petersen, Waitress
Excellence



▶ Melrose Manor Star Performers

Andrew Dlamini, Concierge & Driver
Respect and Excellence
Jumaima Phogole, Care & Wellness
Teamwork
Davie Chikhalika, F&B
Friendliness



◀ San Sereno Star Performers

Lehlohololo Mbele, F&B
Excellence
Dineo Madibane, Housekeeping
Kindness
Sr Marcia Komana, Care & Wellness
Excellence and Teamwork





By Adi Gelbart

In this fifth instalment of **Still Got It**, we continue to feature ordinary older adults doing extraordinary things. From Greta Pontarelli, the 72-year-old world champion pole dancer, to Leonard Baumann, the 101-year-old businessman behind the beloved Strawberry Swirl, and Sue Kreitzman, who transitioned from culinary writing to vibrant visual arts, we've explored inspiring stories that show life's accomplishments have no expiration date.

Diane Friedman, a 102 year-old athlete shattering records in the 100 to 104 year-old category of track and field.

Still got it!

Diane's journey back to the track began at 95 when she met Dr Bruce Sherman, an exercise physiologist with extensive experience training older adults. Initially a fitness trainer for Diane, Bruce soon became her coach after noticing her incredible potential.

After 17 years away from running, Diane amazed Bruce by effortlessly sprinting down her apartment hallway. Within a month, she returned to competitive track and field, breaking world records in the

95-99 age category for the 100- and 200-metre sprints.

Her success didn't stop there. At 98, she set a world record for the 400-metre, beating the previous record by over a minute. By 100, Diane broke more records in the 100- and 200-metre events, showcasing not just her physical ability but her indomitable spirit.

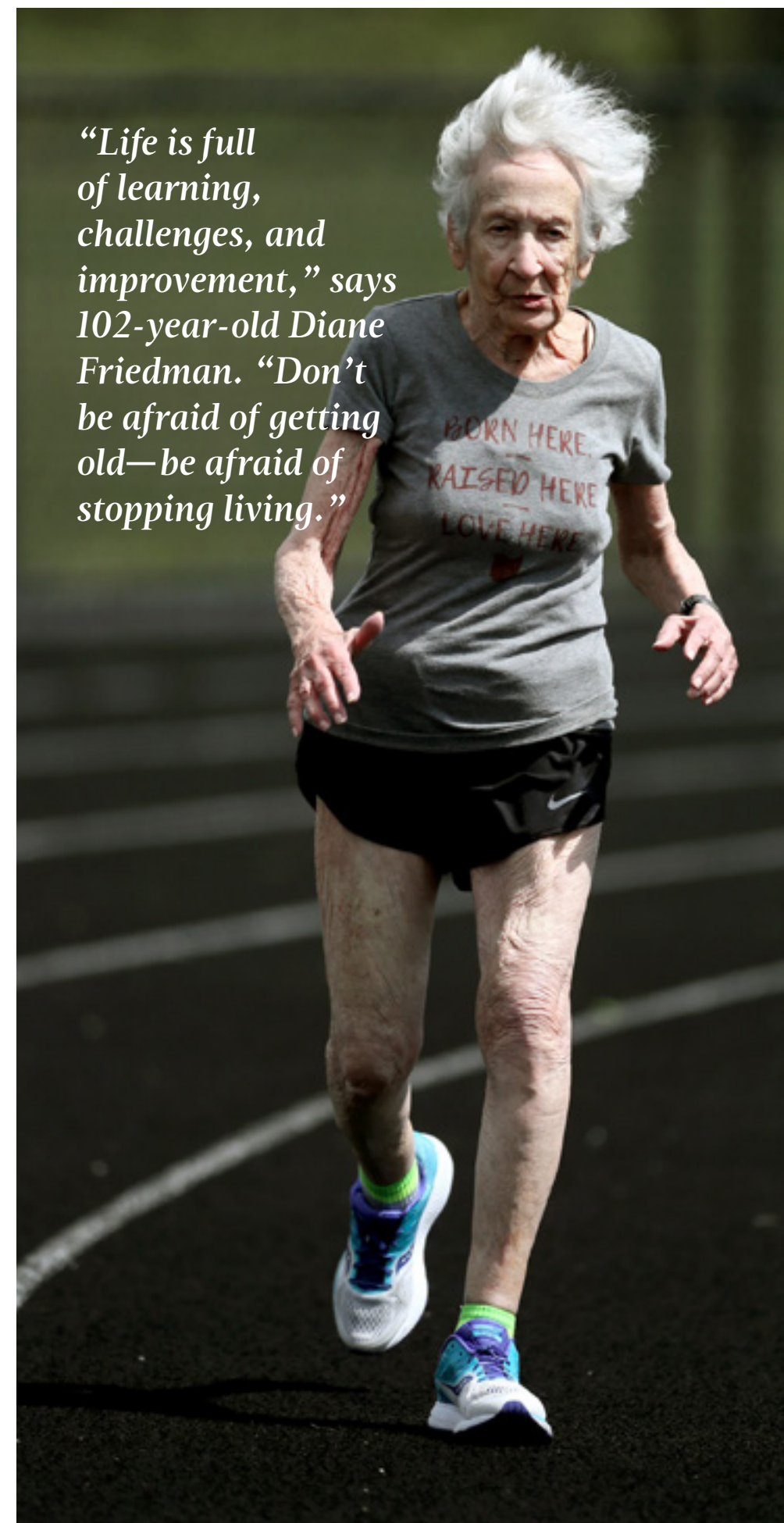
Diane also competes in the javelin throw and continues to set new benchmarks for

what's possible. At 99, she even completed 100 chair dips in just three minutes—a feat many younger athletes would envy.

Bruce credits her remarkable performance to a full-body training regimen that includes aerobic endurance, strength, balance, and power exercises. Diane's programme incorporates everything from lateral walking with weights to medicine ball tosses, treadmill inclines, and recumbent biking. Even as a centenarian, Diane's body responds to training, proving that the physical benefits of multi-modality training is the most effective programme for older adults. Consistent and regular activity is the one avenue we can all pursue at any age to improve our longevity and quality of life.

"Life is full of learning, challenges, and improvement," says 102-year-old Diane Friedman. "Don't be afraid of getting old, be afraid of stopping living."

When asked why she runs, her simple yet powerful answer is, "I feel good." Diane's determination to stay active and keep improving is both inspirational and mind-blowing.



"Life is full of learning, challenges, and improvement," says 102-year-old Diane Friedman. "Don't be afraid of getting old—be afraid of stopping living."

Letters from our residents

We love hearing from you! While space allows us to share just a few, your feedback, opinions, and gratitude mean the world to us. Please keep writing!

Living at San Sereno

By Douglas Gibson
San Sereno

If there ever was a question as to whether moving to San Sereno five years ago was a good move, recent events certainly justified living here.

On 27 June, at 7.30am, I heard my wife groaning as she struggled to stand up. She managed it and put her hand out to steady herself against the nearby wall. She called to me, saying she could not walk and needed help. I rushed around the bed and managed to get her to the bathroom. Afterwards, I got her back on the bed, and realising that she had probably had a stroke, I pressed the panic button. The person at the Care Centre answered it within a minute, and I explained the situation. She said she would contact the nurse right away.

Our garden villa is about 800m from the Care Centre, but Nurse Betty

arrived in about three minutes by golf cart. She diagnosed the problem and took Pam's blood pressure, which was 207/108. She said I should phone our doctor. I did so and the doctor said we should get Pam to the Sandton Clinic immediately so that if the stroke had happened recently, we might be fortunate and able to make use of the three-hour window period for stroke victims.

Nurse Betty phoned for an ambulance and to my astonishment, it arrived within 5 minutes, taking only another few minutes to the hospital where Pam received immediate treatment. Her blood pressure had meanwhile risen to 277/111. She was in hospital until 9 July and was then discharged and moved to the Care Centre at San Sereno. She was told she should not stand unaided, but unfortunately, she did so. She fell and broke her hip. She was readmitted to Sandton Mediclinic, had an operation to repair the hip, and came home to the San Sereno Care Centre on 14 July. She is being cared for by kind, pleasant,

and very professional people in bright, cheerful, modern surroundings. With physiotherapy and other assistance, we hope she will have no major lasting damage flowing from the stroke and the broken hip.

We are both convinced that without the prompt, professional care of San Sereno, the outcome might have been very different. Pam has asked me to thank Nurse Betty, the staff, our neighbours, and all our friends at San Sereno, and elsewhere, for their loving care and concern.

“The one regret one hears from San Sereno residents is that they regret not having moved in much earlier. This is a happy place.”

Please don't think our residents spend their time getting sick, but when misfortune befalls, as it does occasionally, this is the place to be. When we both had COVID-19, but not seriously enough to go to a hospital, we had the nursing staff visit us twice a day to measure all our vital signs and to see that we were alright. When I broke my arm last December, Auria sent a male nurse down to remove the fancy arm brace and shower and dress me every day for six weeks.

But life is never all about sickness. At San Sereno, many residents wake up to a new and better life. The best time to move in is when one is healthy enough to enjoy all the various activities on offer. One is often told that new friendships are not easily made when we are older; it is simply not true. We have made many new friendships (and renewed some old ones) at San Sereno.

One of the hallmarks of this delightful senior living community is the friendliness of so many compatible people. Our neighbours are all wonderful, kind, and pleasant. They are the sort of people one would choose as neighbours if one had a

Douglas Gibson, a writer, commentator, public speaker, former opposition Chief Whip, and Ambassador to Thailand and proud San Sereno resident, shares his heartfelt experience at San Sereno's Care Centre, reflecting on the outstanding care and compassion he encountered.



choice. But we do not get in each other's hair. We are never short of people to have drinks or dinner with, or of 'playmates' to attend the many enjoyable activities that are presented for the entertainment of the residents, ranging from Happy Hour (buy one, get one free), to Bingo, theatre nights, cinema evenings, and all the rest.

Apart from the beautiful gardens and all the facilities like the cinema, the bowling green, the heated swimming pool, the card room, the hobbies room, the coffee shop, the main dining room, the lounge, and the bar, to name a few, one of the outstanding characteristics of San Sereno is the friendliness and eagerness to serve shown by our wonderful staff. In five years, I have never encountered one person reluctant to serve or being unpleasant. I do not know how Auria does it, but clearly, they select staff carefully, train them and make them feel appreciated.

Our chef, Werner, has worked in some five-star hotels, and the quality of the meals he serves, especially on the dine-out and à la carte nights, rivals any five-star restaurant you could name.

The one regret one hears from San Sereno residents is that they regret not having moved in much earlier. This is a happy place.

Get involved with our magazine

We invite all our residents and their families to get involved with our magazine, and to send us your stories, jokes, poems, photos—anything that our communities may like to read about.

There is so much to share; hobbies, interesting people you may have met, travels you have experienced, recipes you may have tried. Perhaps you have had an interesting career, or there was a particular event within your career that others may like to read about. Sons and daughters could write about their parents from their perspective. Or proud grandparents could share their grandchildren's achievements.

**It doesn't have to be grand.
It only needs to be from the heart.**

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