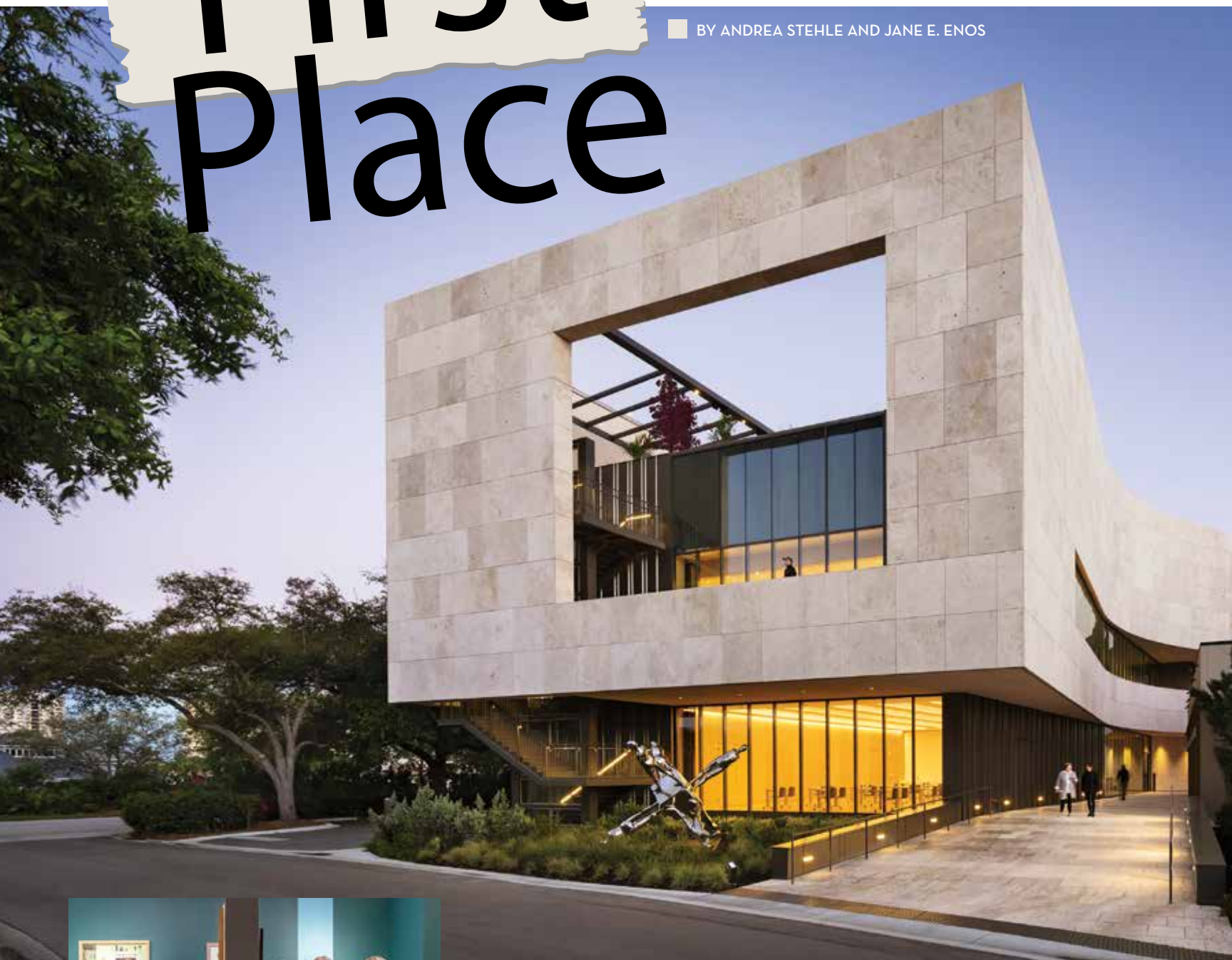


IN THE First Place

AS NAPLES CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL, WE'RE PAYING TRIBUTE TO PLACES THAT HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AS SOME OF THE FIRST OR LONGEST RUNNING ESTABLISHMENTS

■ BY ANDREA STEHLE AND JANE E. ENOS



■ FIRST AND FOREMOST

The Naples Museum of Art, now known as The Baker Museum at Artis—Naples, was the first full-scale art museum in Naples, offering visitors displays of permanent art collections, traveling exhibitions, and other attractions. The museum's first few seasons offered an appealing range of exhibits, including works from local photographer Clyde Butcher, glass-works from artist Dale Chihuly, and an impressive collection of watercolors and drawings from French Neo-Impressionist Paul Signac. The museum's inception drew national media



COURTESY OF THE BAKER MUSEUM AT ARTIS—NAPLES

THE BAKER MUSEUM AT ARTIS—NAPLES SHOWCASES IMPORTANT TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS IN ADDITION TO INSTALLATIONS OF WORKS FROM ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION.

coverage, notably from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*.

“The opening of The Baker Museum, then the Naples Museum of Art, in 2000 was a significant milestone in the cultural development of Naples,” says Courtney McNeil, director and chief curator of The Baker Museum.

Today, The Baker Museum at Artis—Naples is one of the foremost fine art museums in Southwest Florida. It continues to host impressive traveling exhibitions; these complement installations of works from its permanent collection, which comprises more than 4,000 unique art pieces.

“Now entering its third

decade, The Baker Museum is an important destination for locals and tourists alike and provides a vital contribution to the multidisciplinary mission of Artis—Naples, illuminating ties between the visual arts and other art forms,” explains McNeil.

As Naples has grown through the years so too has the museum. In fall 2020, Artis—Naples proudly opened an 18,000-square-foot expansion of The Baker Museum and is enjoying a wonderful new era of patrons engaging in its spaces in diverse ways, including through exhibitions, performances, educational activities, and social events. (artisnaples.org)

COURTESY OF NAPLES HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Standing humbly and in stark contrast to the mansions that line Gordon Drive is Naples’ oldest home: Historic Palm Cottage, a prominent landmark stewarded by the Naples Historical Society. Located on the corner of Twelfth Avenue South and Gulf Shore Boulevard, Palm Cottage dates to 1895; it’s partly constructed of tabby mortar—a type of concrete made from sand, shells, and water. The home, which was built by Walter N. Haldeman, a newspaper owner and publisher from Louisville, Kentucky, spans approximately 3,500 square feet and now appears within the National Register of Historic Places.

The cottage has weathered many storms in its more than 120 years, forced to close its doors recently because of Hurricane Ian. As of press time, this local treasure is scheduled to reopen in early

Naples Starter Home

April 2023.

“For the record, I am immensely pleased with the restoration progress to date,” says Elaine L. Reed, chief executive officer, Naples Historical Society. “We are tackling this major capital project with the finest of intentions to be good stewards of Historic Palm Cottage. We also have had a few good [Naples Historical] Society friends help us manage some expenses to date. For that we are all grateful.”

Naples Historical Society recently purchased the home and property adjacent to Palm Cottage and has plans to create museum exhibits within its interior. A winding pathway on the newly acquired prop-



erty will feature educational signage—or “history stations”—explaining notable historical events in Naples.

In addition to tours (planned to return later in 2023), Palm Cottage hosts several exciting events throughout the year, including Croquet & Chardonnay and Summer at the Cottage. (napleshistoricalsociety.org)

COURTESY OF THE BAKER MUSEUM AT ARTIS—NAPLES



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: INTERIOR OF HARMON-MEEK GALLERY WITH WORKS AND TEXTS FROM ARTIST HUNT SLONEM; GALLERY EXTERIOR; JULIANA MEEK WITH WORKS FROM ARTIST REYNIER LLANES.

DOWN TO AN ART

Established in 1964 by Foster Harmon on Third Street South, Harmon Gallery (now Harmon-Meek Gallery) is the oldest gallery of fine art in Naples. In 1972, William Meek joined forces with Harmon as assistant director, later purchasing the gallery in 1978. The gallery's name officially changed to Harmon-Meek Gallery in 1982 and relocated to Fifth Avenue in the '90s.

In the area, Harmon-Meek Gallery was the first to exhibit art by established and master artists, and its selective standards for artist representation have not vacillated. To be considered for representation, artists must be in museum collections.

In 2012, Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek, William's daughters, joined Harmon-Meek as assistant directors. Kristine and Juliana currently serve as co-directors and co-owners. William, regarded

for his extensive knowledge of American art and the first art dealer awarded the New York Artists Equity Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Visual Arts, now holds the title of director emeritus.

"Because of our season, we would often get works from artists before their New York galleries," explains co-director Kristine. "Often people visiting and 'snow birding' would be able to see the artists they enjoyed in Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and New York in Naples."

The gallery has since made a historic return to the Third Street South district; a second location on Ninth Street is used as a private sales gallery, providing ample space for consultations with collectors. (harmonmeekgallery.com)



COURTESY OF HARMON-MEEK GALLERY



THE FOUR CORNERS INTERSECTION IS A LONGTIME NEXUS FOR THOSE LIVING IN OR VISITING NAPLES.

COURTESY OF JOSEPH MCCABE



CORNERING NAPLES

Many attractions draw visitors to Naples, and one of the most well-known and beloved is Fifth Avenue

South, the unofficial Main Street of the city established in the 1920s. What must be one of the busiest intersections in Naples now, the junction between Fifth Avenue South and Ninth Street South, was known to locals as the “Four Corners,” presumably so named because businesses existed on each corner of the intersection.

The Tamiami Freightway Station and Frank’s Hardware appeared on the southeast corner. On the southwest corner was Naples Liquors and on the northwest a Sinclair station. In the ’20s and ’30s, Naples was a sleepy fishing village; however, many considered the northeast corner of the Four Corners the city’s social center. Here stood the Gulf service station, but it was also the location of Club 41 restaurant, where early Neapolitans would gather for good food, fun, and conversation.

By 1948, the Four Corners intersection necessitated a traffic light, the city’s first. Of course, there’s still a stoplight today, but—depending on the time of year—several thousands of vehicles pass through daily. Except for the northeast corner of the intersection, which is currently green space and absent of any buildings, a bevy of businesses from multiple industries now occupies this crossroads.

At the northwest corner stands First Foundation Bank, which at press time was temporarily closed from Hurricane Ian. At the southeast corner is a building holding Wells Fargo (temporarily closed at press time), Galt Insurance, Naples Flooring Company (closed due to remodeling at press time), and more. Closer to the hustle and bustle along Fifth Avenue South to the southwest is a building holding Sushi Thai, Project Glammers med spa, and more.

While the intersection was once chiefly utilized by only Neapolitans, it’s safe to say that persons from all corners of the globe now drive and walk the Four Corners. (fifthavenuesouth.com) ◀◀

A NaplesOriginal



Since 1953 Kelly’s Fish House Dining Room, located in Tin City, has been serving fresh seafood to residents and visitors of Naples, making it the oldest seafood restaurant in Naples still in operation. It began as a net and gear shop frequented by shrimpers and other local fishermen, eventually evolving into Kelly’s Fish House Dining Room.

The family-owned restaurant imparts an Old Florida feel and is situated directly beside the Gordon River bridge on Fifth Avenue. With a rustic aesthetic, it looks much the same as it did 60 years ago, complete with cypress walls and a knotty pine ceiling.

The current owner, Kelly Ellis, explains that his stepfather was a commercial fisherman and bought the seafood business from Bob and Pat Combs in 1957; Ellis acquired the



PAT SHAPIRO/FLYING COLORS OF NAPLES

restaurant in 1971. It has remained largely unchanged ever since.

Menu highlights include Gulf shrimp and stone crab, Florida Gulf grouper, Gulf snapper, and scallops. Ellis buys from independent fishermen who work on consignment to bring in local fish.

What’s responsible for the restaurant’s long run besides the fresh catch? According to Ellis, it’s his employees, many of whom have worked at the location for several decades. (kellysfishhousediningroom.com)

