

MODERN LUXURY PALM BEACH

**IN HER
SHOES**
Palm Beach
County Women
Entrepreneurs



Haute Swim Style

Next GEN

EQUESTRIAN EVE JOBS TAKES THE REINS

©MLPALMBEACH
MLPALMBEACH.COM



LIFE OF THE PARTY

With over 15 years in the event industry, Michelle Durpetti Events (durpettievents.com) has taken Chicago by storm and has now set its sights on South Florida. We sat down with owner Michelle Durpetti to talk major milestones, her seamless partnership with husband Collin Pierson and their recent expansion to Palm Beach County. *BY ELISABETH BRIGHAM*



Can you share with us a little bit about your history in event planning and what inspired you to create Michelle Durpetti Events? I began working in the events industry with my very first internship at Jascula/Terman & Associates, a public affairs firm in my hometown of Chicago. I eventually grew to be a member of their events team and had the immense privilege of working on projects that included former President Clinton's library opening in Little Rock, Ark., the Declare Yourself campaign with Norman Lear and advance work for former President Barack Obama's campaign here in Illinois before his time as president. I learned the importance of details, production value, timing and timelines from my team at J/T and am still incredibly close to Rick Jasculea, who is a mentor that I have the utmost respect for. When you are responsible for events that include 30,000 people in an audience and it is live in some 30 countries, you just have to get it right. Discipline, effort, results. It was a formative time in my career and my life!

I also have to factor in the restaurant, Gene & Georgetti, that has been in my family since 1941. Hospitality is essentially part of our DNA, so it was a very natural extension of what I had always known. I opened MDE 15 years ago with the express purpose of producing nonprofit galas and social events but never really with a focus on weddings. In 2008 the economy required that we shift a bit, and an employee at the time suggested we do weddings. That first year, we had one.

PHOTOS BY COLLIN PIERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

The next year, we had 21. And it just went from there. I believe we have produced over 400 weddings and events now. It's just incredible to think about how far we have come as a business!

I know your husband, Collin Pierson, is also a wedding photographer. Talk about a dynamic duo! How have you been able to team up and grow together in this industry? My husband is an incredibly talented photographer and just a really artistic, creative person who also happens to be great at math. That combination does not happen often, so I really lucked out! We met because of this industry, and we learned very early on in our relationship that our chemistry together extended far beyond our personal relationship and really came to life in business as well. We collaborate often on creative endeavors while we often work



Clockwise from top: Michelle Durpetti and her horse Lucca; Durpetti and Collin Pierson's wedding was held at The Breakers Palm Beach; Durpetti and Pierson on their wedding day. Opposite page, from left: Chicago wedding by Durpetti Events; Durpetti working the event.

"PALM BEACH IS IN OUR HEARTS. FROM THE FABULOUS RESTAURANTS TO ALL OF THE AMAZING PROPERTIES FOR WEDDINGS AND CELEBRATIONS, WE JUST LOVE IT."

—MICHELLE DURPETTI



EQUESTRIAN PHOTO BY S. KIRKLE SHULTZ PHOTOGRAPHY WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID L. DILLIEMANSON

together for couples and corporate clients, and we now also run my family's restaurant together too. We spend a lot of time together, so our ability to team up but also remain on the same team and root for and support one another is invaluable to our quality of life.

I want to congratulate you on your recent move to South Florida. Why did Palm Beach feel like the best place to expand your business? This is actually a second home right now with the intention to make it a permanent home base in the near future. Palm Beach is like

another home for us for some time now. My horses winter in Wellington every year, so we are familiar with the area from that, and I spent time here as a child with my parents. In fact, Collin and I are celebrating five years of marriage in January of 2023, and we were married at The Breakers and it was such an incredible day! Palm Beach is in our hearts. From the fabulous restaurants to all of the amazing properties for weddings and celebrations, we just love it.

You have an extremely impressive portfolio of private events, weddings and more. Can you talk about some of your major milestones and how you've seen yourself grow in the past few years? Oh boy, this is a tough one! Honestly, I think that when you work hard and also happen to love what you are working on, a solid career will eventually manifest, and now that I have been doing this for 21 years with 15 of them being with MDE, I can honestly say that my

biggest milestone has probably been my consistent growth. We now travel internationally for clients when seven years ago I would have only dreamt of that. I produced a wedding just last August that was a career highlight, and I am this far into my career—I love still having those exciting moments and feeling all of those feelings with regard to my profession.

To top it all off, you're also an equestrian who competes at the Wellington Equestrian Festival each winter. Can you walk us through your equestrian journey? I am! I am an amateur equestrian and it means everything to me. My horses are my why! They are actually the motivation behind the farm property that brings us here to Florida. The equestrian community is such a cool one to be part of because it is international and dynamic. I train at True North Stables with Caitlyn Shiels and being part of a horse and rider team is the most profound experience. What I learn from my horses I carry through in every other element of my life. **Q**

