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Entertainment

Lives of Style: Pari Livermore



(Juan Carlos Pometta Betancourt/Special to The Examiner)

Pari Livermore's 100-year-old Marin County home is a warren of rooms with interior windows and redwood paneled walls.

Elisabeth Laurence, The Examiner
2007-03-31 10:00:00.0
Current rank: # **2,480** of 3,677

SAN FRANCISCO -

It's easy to spot the twinkling, cornflower blue eyes, cap of shiny blonde hair and bright, Midwestern, Breck-girl smile — and to grin right back at her.

A virtuoso charmer, Pari Livermore's more than a pretty face. Intelligent, literary (her actress-grandmother taught her Shakespeare at 5), perspicacious, empathetic, philanthropic, she's at the apex of marital magic, putting society moguls, models, celebrities and glitterati together — the go-to-girl for matches made in heaven but which stand the test of reality.

Her book, to be published by Meredith Books, on Nov. 6, is called "How to Marry a Fabulous Man, 100 Secrets from Women Who Did." Poised to be a best-seller, it contains Pari's time-tested secrets, gleaned from women who realized relationships with men of their dreams. First date mistake? "The first date is not for advertisement. It's for conversation and questions. A woman should have a conversation with a man to find out if he's really worthy of her."

Pari's a maestro in the relationship department. Her success stories matching über couples reads like a "who's who" of San Francisco — and the world. "Bill Gates met a lot of girls at my parties." She's fixed up Scott McNealy and Larry Ellison; but upon meeting Melanie Croft, Pari pronounced her "exquisite" and received credit from Melanie for abetting her union to Ellison. She's partnered Koret's Dianne and Tad Taube: "Pari's really committed, because it's a labor of love with her. She loves to connect people," Catherine and John Debs, Kathy (Proactive) Fields and Gary Rayandt, Steven and Michéle Kirsch and Debra and Don Potter. Pari's advice helped steer Maria Constantino ("Pari's my highest mentor") as she was dating, then marrying Willem Roelands, CEO of Xilinx. And yes, shhhh, there are more celebs yet to be revealed.

Pari takes no money. Every dime she collects from titans looking for the love of their life is deposited directly to charity — this year it's Spotlight on Heroes, whose mission is to highlight volunteers and nonprofit organizations.

Pari's "How to Marry a Fabulous Man" radio show will launch in four major markets (San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago) on Clear Channel in October. She's co-host of the Comcast Show "Everyday Angels," and most of all, for 19 years, wife to Putnam "Put" Livermore, former managing partner of Chickering & Gregory, one of the founders of Trust for Public Land, and scion of one of San Francisco's pioneering families (Mount Livermore was named for his mother; his father was chairman of PG&E, his great-grandfather, Horatio Putnam Livermore was one of its founders).

Pari's also the founder and prime force behind the Red & White Ball, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, on April 3. The pre-eminent, elegant, singles event, hosting more than 800 people held at San Francisco's Fairmont hotel ("Where else can a woman walk in San Francisco and meet 400 eligible men?") is almost sold out. Featuring a "grand entrance promenade," entertainment, food from 40 restaurants, including Tommy Toy's, Postrio and Grand Café, the event is the nexus where Bay Area's most eligible singles dress up and mingle. Proceeds go to charity.

Pari Caldwell Livermore grew up in Park Ridge, a suburb of Chicago, and learned matchmaking early. She was a schoolmate of Hillary Clinton and Harrison Ford: "Harry probably had a crush on me. He used to pass me notes in study hall. He was sort of uncool — like a nonsexy John Travolta in 'Grease.'" Pari thought she was uncool, too. "I had a vision problem. My town was athletic. All of a sudden, that completely changed when I went to my cousin's school for a dance, got some confidence and started fixing people up. I discovered how much I like it. I haven't been able to stop."

She didn't. After studying at Northwestern, working for TWA, finishing her degree at NYU, Pari moved to the Bay Area to earn an M.A. in literature at UC Berkeley, and stayed on, expanding her avocation, now her vocation, helping others and giving back. "I always like to honor people."

Her expansive residence, in Marin County, is 100 years old, with the kind of rooted history that makes homes enticing. A warren of rooms with interior windows, slanted eaves, beamed floors and redwood paneled walls, it speaks of strength and familial harmony and tradition. Pari, a noted gardener (how she finds the time is amazing!) and cook (soups, salads) is happiest when she and Put are enjoying projects and activities together.

Jung said, "The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed."

Pari smiles again. "I found I could give people a gift and that's each other."

Keys to Pari livermore's style

STYLE PHILOSOPHY: Dramatic. Bright. I like big pieces of jewelry. Ninety percent of the jewelry I own is from Coreen Cordova, in San Anselmo. What I'm wearing is a necklace from the Nez Perce Indians (Trust for Public Land helped return land to them) with Coreen's red coral heart.

STYLE SECRETS: Be interested in people. That makes people more attractive. I'm also known for my red nails and red lips.

GOT STYLE FROM: I got kindness from my mother, Phyllis. She always has a good thing to say about others. I try to emulate her. As to style, I try to emulate stylish people I know: my friends Gail Glasser, Catherine Debs and I admire Charlotte Shultz. I've gotten exposure to style from the way they dress.

STYLE VS. COMFORT: Comfort

COLOR VS. TEXTURE: Color

FAVORITE COLOR: Red

HOW DOES COLOR MAKE YOU FEEL? Red makes you feel exciting. It says, "Look at me!"

SECRET CACHE OF: Birdhouses. I collect one every year. I also collect the Dickens' Village Houses.

THINGS PEOPLE WOULD NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU: Pari means equal in Greek. In Persian, it means angel.

MOST PRIZED POSSESSION: I always wear an angel. I feel that angels watch over me.

MOST VALUED IN MY LIFE: My husband. Put. He's my miracle. We met on a blind date. We fell in love. We married. He's strong, my biggest ally. He's president of the Pari Livermore fan club. He still makes me laugh. I see things the way he does. We are so aligned. My mother, Phyllis, has the same kind of positive energy. My cats: Isabel and Minny. I love animals.

WOULD NEVER DO: I'd never do anything to purposefully hurt anything.

MOST UNUSUAL THING ABOUT ME: I'm a practical idealist.

STYLE ADVICE: When you go on a trip, bring black slacks. You can pair them with skirts, jackets. It will cut down on your packing by one-third.

LIFE ADVICE: St. Francis of Assisi: It is in giving that we receive. Abraham Lincoln: You're about as happy as you make up your mind to be. And a Chinese proverb my father relayed to me: Fortunate are those who appreciate their good fortune.

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