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Arthur and Lola, then and now.

# Perfect pitch

*A story of love and 75 years of marriage*

by Erin Quinn

**I**N 1945, a strapping young man named Arthur Weiss was enrolled in New York University's School of Dentistry. One day, he and some friends went to the USO in Manhattan,

where a young woman playing the piano caught his eye. "Not only was she playing the piano," said Weiss, who will be 100 years old in October, "but she was playing while her legs were crossed. I'd never seen anyone do that before!" When Weiss began to sing next to the dexterous pi-

ano player, he realized that she not only could play with her legs crossed but that her musical pitch was absolutely perfect. "I never sounded so good in my life."

He asked the young woman, named Lola, to dance. He soon felt himself gliding across the floor. "She was a wonderful dancer, and I was smitten," he said. After that night, Arthur, who lived in Brooklyn, was determined to see her again.

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Lola was in her final year of Hunter College and lived in the Bronx.

“I thought he was cute,” said Lola, now 95, with bright eyes and dangling earrings, looking effortlessly elegant. “He was dressed sharply and was a good dancer and sang well, and then there was his interest in dentistry. I was intrigued.”

Arthur decided to move in with a fellow dental student in the Bronx so he could be closer to Lola.

When their courtship reached the two-year mark, Arthur recalled them sitting on a park bench in the city, and Lola said, “I’ve been going with you for a long time now and want to know what your intentions are.”

Feeling at that moment like the world was his for the taking, Arthur replied, “Well, I have a lot of travelling I want to do.”

Lola was not impressed. She gave him an ultimatum. “He called that night,” she said.

“I couldn’t even make it one day without her,” he said, laughing.

**A life of adventure**

Exactly nine months after their marriage Lola gave birth to the first of their three sons, Jon, now 74. He was followed by Eric,

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now 71, and then Adam, the baby, now 61 and living with his wife Laura in the artist John Pike's former home in Woodstock.

Arthur worked at building a dentistry practice, and Lola continued as a piano teacher, travel agent and dancer and devoted mother. This love story only heightened over the years, with the two travelling all over the world, moving to Arizona (where Lola worked at a Native American museum) and then, after a yard sale in which they parted with all their possessions, to a tiny town in Mexico when he was 91 and she 87.

They had lived in Mexico for a time before. "We both spoke Spanish and had always wanted to go back there," said Lola, as though moving to another country at their age was no big thing.

"We had travelled there when the kids were younger, and I fell in love with it," explained Arthur. "There was no tourism, no one spoke English, the people were so kind and welcoming, and I remember thinking, I'm killing myself building my practice on 51st Street in midtown Manhattan, when we could live here as a family for \$100 a month!"

Family lore has it that Adam, then eleven years old, would not bear living in a tiny village in Mexico. He wanted to get back to his school, friends and sports in the States. Though his parents did return then, the desire to go back to that little village in Mexico never quite left the couple. After they had retired co to Arizona and travelled to China, France, Italy, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand and many other places, the lure of that magical place in Mexico brought them back decades later never left them.

"We loved it there, but eventually we realized that we were of an age that we



The couple recently celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a full musical score, singing, dancing, all three of their sons, their grandchildren and more than 35 people spanning four generations.

wanted to be closer to our family, so we moved to Woodland Pond [in New Paltz]," explained Arthur. "I said, Mom and Dad, we can't travel to Mexico every three

months to see you!" said Adam.

### They remain very active

The couple recently celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Adam and Laura's house in Woodstock. There was singing and dancing. All three of their sons and their grandchildren were there. More than 35 people spanning four generations celebrated with a triple chocolate mousse cake with fresh raspberry wedding cake with a miniature bride and groom on top. That extravaganza had been made by Laura, a former pastry chef.

"She presented it to them with 'Here Comes the Bride' playing in the back-

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ground,” said Adam. “We even had a picture blown up of them kissing at their wedding.”

Arthur and Lola have continued to live a busy life. “We’ve always been very active, athletic people whether it was tennis, running, swimming, dancing,” said Arthur, “and we’re so happy that at Woodland Pond they have an indoor pool where we swim three times a week and also go to the gym several times a week.”

They also grow their own vegetables in their own garden.

What has kept them together all these years?

“Arthur is very tenacious when he goes after something,” Lola said. “He’s always learning, always searching whether it’s his spirituality or a new language or instrument. [He took up yjr flute at age 80.] He went back to school at Iona in New Rochelle to become a Jungian analyst! After he retired, he also became an expert videographer and he’s also interested in people. He reaches out to them and wants to hear their stories.”

Arthur is similarly positive. “Bottom line she is beautiful, highly intelligent, a wonderful communicator, and she can play in any key!” he said. This husband of 75 years went on to sing his praises about the productions she directed, wrote music for, choreographed.

There’s a way that this pair look at each other that makes you think that they haven’t quite gotten over the fact that they’ve found each other and made their

joint life an adventure, a journey.

“We’re partners in crime,” said Lola. “We’ve had to dodge a lot of curve balls, and we just kept on loving one another and raised these three sons. I think that is our greatest accomplishment,—raising these three beautiful human beings.”

**Unconditional mutual support**

And what do their sons have to say about their parents?

“Mom will often make the joke that it was having separate cars,” said Adam. “But my take is an unconditional support of each other in all facets of life as well as self-care both physically and spiritually.”

Eric credited his parents being “both being extremely curious and interested

in many things.”

Jon said the 75th wedding anniversary had been “an opportunity of a lifetime.” It had been, Eric said, “an unbelievable joy, knowing that less than one percent of people in the world get to honor both of their parents with this achievement.”

Adam agreed that the celebration had been the most loving gift ever. “To see them smiling and enjoying the chocolate wedding cake my wife made, surrounded by four generations of family! What more could you ask for?”

These two are extraordinary people whose contagious love of life begins with their appreciation for each other. They are a living testimonial to what love can mean. Cheers to Arthur and Lola!

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# Partying is back

*Some things may be a little different now*

by Susan Farkas

**A**H, THE SUMMER of 2021. New York State is open! If you planned to get married last year but couldn't have your dream wedding with friends and family to cheer you on, you probably postponed your nuptials. This summer, we can let loose, drink, dance and hug a little, right?

Right. Parties are definitely back. Not just weddings, but anniversaries, birthdays, baby naming -- any good excuse to gather with friends and family in person again.

Though most people are giddy about being together after way too long apart, there is often a bit of trepidation. News of Delta variants are scaring some folks. With a few adjustments, though, your

party can be as beautiful, fun and safe as any pre-pandemic bash.

Kayla Reinherz and Sam Levine planned to get married last July. Both 28, they've been together for nine years, ever since he helped her, an arriving freshman, move into a dorm at the University of Chicago. They've spent this past spring wondering whether enough people would be vaccinated and whether restrictions on gatherings would be lifted in time for them to tie the knot this summer. When they sent out their invitations, they let their guests know it was important to them that everyone be vaccinated or have a negative Covid test before their wedding.

CATERERS THROUGHOUT THE HUDSON Valley have been outfitting themselves with thermometers, plexiglass sneeze

guards, and floor stickers to mark social distances. They've been making floor plans for parties smaller than 100 guests, with dancing only with people at your own table.

Bob McBroom, co-owner of the Onteora Mountain House, a popular wedding venue in the former Hellmann mansion above Boiceville, had been suggesting his May and June clients push their weddings back to the fall. The guests at the first wedding of the season had their temperature taken, and there were separate tables for the vaccinated and the unvaccinated.

In early June, the New York State Department of Health dropped its restrictions on public gatherings. The socially distanced floor plans and Covid-inspired paraphernalia were (temporarily) packed away.

Kayla and Sam's wedding was definitely



A wedding at the Onteora Mountain House in Boiceville

PHOTOS BY DION OGUST

on, almost a year to the day after it was originally planned. Kayla, a data-science manager at Facebook, and Sam, a reporter at *The Guardian* newspaper, enclosed a card with their invitations informing their guests that they expected them to be vaccinated or have proof of a negative Covid test.

Outdoor weddings are always popular in the beautiful Hudson Valley -- especially this summer, when they also feel safer. The couple selected the Onteora Mountain House for their special day, figuring their family and friends would be happy to make the two-hour trip from New York City to experience the outdoor venue and the beautiful Catskill views.

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They were also conscientious about getting everyone's contact information, in case contact tracing would prove necessary. They're pretty sure every one of their 101 guests was vaccinated.

OF COURSE, A WEDDING IN 2021 RAISES the question of "to mask or not to mask." Caterers like Mary Anne Erickson of Blue Mountain Bistro-to-Go and Bruce Kazan of Main Course in New Paltz say their staff is fully vaccinated and is comfortable leaving the choice up to the clients, who sometimes prefer that servers wear masks and even gloves. Hand sanitizer is almost always available on the bar or somewhere convenient.

How meals are served may be somewhat different now. Buffets are rare; partygoers feel more comfortable with seated table servings, with food untouched by other guests. But passed hors d'oeuvres are back, sometimes in small individual cups.

As Fred Mayo, co-author of "Modern American Manners," says, it's important to honor people's anxieties. Some guests may still be anxious about hygiene. Mayo attended one wedding where the couple leaned into pandemic anxiety by offering monogrammed masks as party favors.

Weddings are, on average, a bit smaller this year. Older relatives and interna-

tional guests may be staying home. After 15 months of social distancing, people are more comfortable with a bit more space. As Beekman Arms sales coordinator Stephanie Stack put it, "We're not going back to the sardine kind of thing." They're serving people at smaller tables of six or seven.

IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHETHER HUGS and kisses are okay, Kazan reports seeing more fist bumps than handshakes. Mayo suggests a "Covid hug," a full body hug with air kisses off to the side.

Receiving lines may be disappearing. If people are uncomfortable sitting close together, Mayo suggests a private ceremony, since it's easier to spread out during the party rather than huddled around the exchanging of vows.

Mayo's own grandson Sinjin Wightman, 30, married his fiancé Christine Myers, 28, in his father's New Paltz back yard in May, with only grandfather, parents and siblings present and Christine's sister officiating. Both doctors of physical therapy, the newlyweds look forward to a big party for friends next summer.

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SEVERAL AREA VENUES ARE ALREADY booking weddings for 2023.

Kazan says many of the weddings he's catering this summer are for couples, like Kayla and Sam, who postponed from last summer.

While his clients may have put their ceremonies on hold, their lives have progressed. Five of this summer's brides were pregnant.

If you are having a party or wedding,

you may find, as Kayla and Sam did, that this summer is a special time to gather relatives and friends. They hadn't seen many of their guests in almost two years.

The evening was an emotional event that proved a lot of fun. "Everyone's been holding stuff in for the past year. It was great to let loose," they said.

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# Glamping celebrations

*“Glamorous camping” has social distancing built in*

by Celia Watson Seupel

**T**HE CELEBRATIONS INDUSTRY got crushed during Covid. No gathering, no partying, no fun. For locals who count on drawing crowds to the Hudson Valley, it was a scary time. But that makes our recovery all the more sweet.

“During Covid, I had nothing,” said Nicole Friedman, who owns Saugerties-based Glampstars (<https://www.glampstar.com>), a glamping business that provides on-site luxury tents for campers and events. Now, she says, the phone is ringing off the hook.

Glamping, or “glamorous camping,” is the latest in luxury camping. Experiences can range from a furnished tent to tiny houses with butler service. Not only do glamping sites provide fun and comfortable accommodations, but they often serve as a lovely setting for celebrations like weddings and reunions.

Glampstars provides a service that,



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while not unique, is different from many Hudson Valley glamping venues. Instead of maintaining her own campground, Friedman sets up specialty accommodations wherever an event is being held. She travels all over the Hudson Valley to create a luxurious camping experience in fields, back yards, campgrounds and campsites.

Friedman originally got the business idea, she said, one Saturday night when

she was bartending for a caterer. “I saw people in a field boarding a school bus to go to a hotel,” she said. How much better it would be if they could just stay there, she felt.

On the other hand, Friedman noted, people don’t want to go buy a tent and a sleeping bag and everything else needed for a night or two.

Modeled after a successful Australian business Friedman saw on Instagram, Glampstars provides everything needed for a comfortable stay anywhere in the Hudson Valley.

Friedman’s dome tents are fifteen feet across and nine feet high. They are set up with mattresses, linens, rugs, ottomans,

low tables, chairs and chandeliers. Friedman has 20 tents with lots of furnishings, and she’s in the process of acquiring more.

But in early spring, 2020, after four successful years, Glampstars went on hold as the pandemic gripped the nation. Friedman’s already-booked weddings were moved ahead a year or simply canceled. So were other events: girls’ weekend getaways, anniversary parties, birthday

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parties ... all canceled. The one wedding that did proceed, said Friedman, changed the order from 20 tents to just four. Friedman said she survived on unemployment.

Covid was hard, said Friedman, but since March of this year Glampstars has rebounded better than ever. "We have weddings coming up, a bar mitzvah, a whisky lounge for a party," said Friedman. "We set up tents for a family at Nickerson Campground [Gilboa, New York] so they could stay for a week."

Glampstars down, business surged at Outlier Inn (<https://www.outlierinn.com>), a more traditional type of glamping campground. "We were completely slammed," said Josh Druckman, owner

of the twelve-acre property in Mountandale. Covid closed the events part of his business, but his accommodations were booked solid.

"People were coming to quarantine and

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stayed long-term,” said Druckman. His short-term rentals were even busier. Prior to the pandemic, Druckman said, most short-term rentals were on the weekends, or included guests attending an event on the property.

Half of Outlier Inn consists of year-round, indoor cabins and a recording studio. The glamping side includes tiny houses and two geodesic domes. Nearby outhouses serve for bathrooms, and there are outdoor showers and outdoor kitchens for cooking.

The property can accommodate 35 people for glamping, said Druckman, plus 40 people in cabins, totaling 75 people in all.

“Because people could work remotely, there was no difference between weekends and weekdays,” said Druckman. “People were checking in and checking out every day of the week.”

It took a lot of work, said Druckman, but “it was so gratifying just being able to offer people a safe place to escape, to take some time away from craziness.”

For a year, Outlier Inn hosted no events. That started to change early this summer. “A whole group of friends who hadn’t seen



Accommodations at Outlier Inn.

each other in a year rented the entire property for a get-together,” he said.

With long trestle tables and fairy lights strung outdoors for dining and dancing, Druckman hopes to increase his wedding business going forward. “Weddings postponed from last year are happening this summer,” he reported.

With long trestle tables and fairy lights strung outdoors for dining and dancing, Druckman hopes to increase his wedding business going forward.

TREETOPIA IN CATSKILL OFFERS EVEN more glamping luxury (<https://www.treetopiacampground.com>).

Not only does Treetopia host weddings, reunions, retreats and other events, said owner Jenny Yu, but Treetopia also creates its own fun for guests. Yu said Treetopia’s celebrations include Christmas in July, when everybody decorates golf carts for Christmas and parades them around, monthly music fests with local bands and a Fourth of July extravaganza.

The newly renovated 42-acre campground got off to a shaky start when Yu and her family bought it in October, 2019, four months before the first wave of the pandemic hit.

“There was a New York travel ban. We’d planned on renovations, but we had to stop work,” said Yu. “It was hard to get contractors and materials. It was extremely scary.”

Now, two years later, the renovations are finished and Treetopia is in full swing. For weddings and other events, they have two pavilions and a barn. Often, said Yu, the happy couple books one of Treetopia’s “specialty accommodations,” like a vintage Airstream or a treehouse, and shoot their photos there.

Yu explained that Treetopia has three kinds of glamping, depending on the type of experience a camper wants.

“The most rustic mimics traditional

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A treehouse at Treetopia.

camping,” said Yu, “but we’ve done the hard work for you.” Waterproof tents are set up in the forest on wooden platforms with beds, nightstands, chairs and a cooler. Tents can be clustered together for friends or family. For cooking, campers have a communal water source, shared grills, or they can rent a standing, propane grill. An on-site store sells food and ice.

Campers use a fully air-conditioned bathroom trailer, said Yu, as well as a new bathhouse, with toilets as well as indoor and outdoor hot showers.

Another kind of glamping at Treetopia is all about treehouses. Yu said they now have four. The tree-houses are two-storied platforms with electricity and running water. On the ground floor, there’s an open living space and a kitchenette with seating. On the second floor, there’s a glamping tent with bedroom furniture and a view

across a ravine. “When you walk out of the tent in the morning,” said Yu, “you really feel like you’re in the trees.” Treehouse dwellers also use the bathhouses.

For campers who prefer a more home-like experience with en-suite facilities, Treetopia provides four vintage airstream RVs, a tiny house and a cabin.

Glamping is ideal, said Yu, for people who want to get together and celebrate. So far this year, Treetopia has hosted a high-school reunion and a teambuilding retreat for a nonprofit organization. This fall, a local couple and their guests will stay together at Treetopia, enjoying their pre- and post-wedding events on site.

Yu said she’s happy when local people choose Treetopia for their events. “We’ve received a lot of support from Greene County,” said Yu. “We want to give back to the community as much as we can.”



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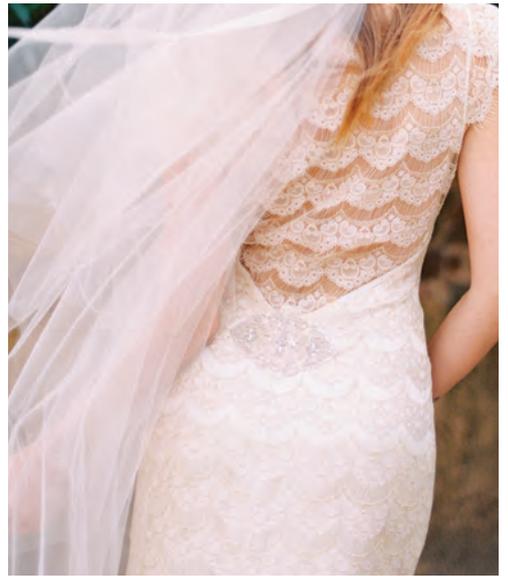
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