

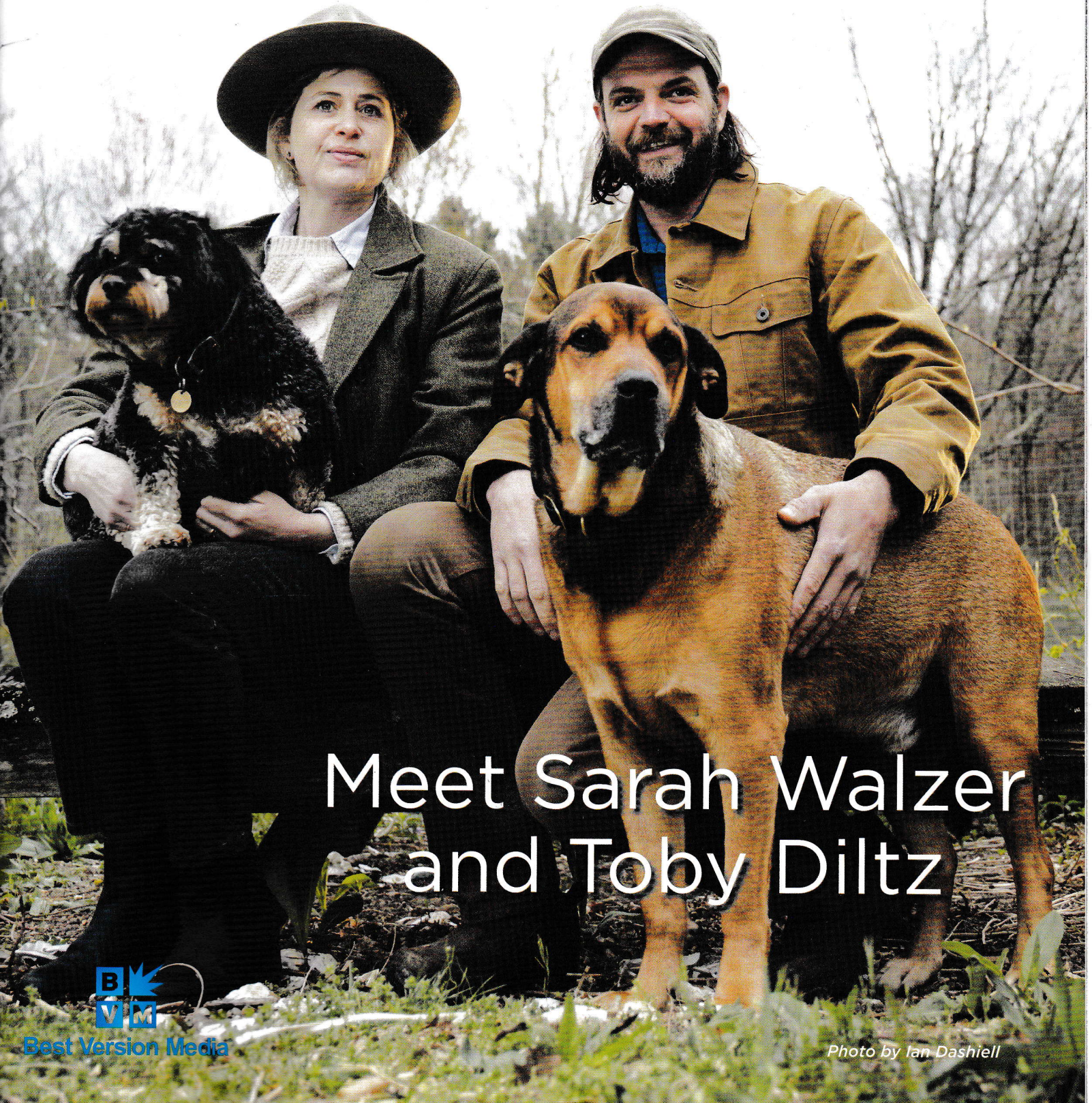
BLOOMSBURG

An exclusive magazine for residents from
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NEIGHBORS

June 2023

Bringing People Together



Meet Sarah Walzer
and Toby Diltz



Best Version Media

Photo by Ian Dashiell



Meet Sarah Walzer and Toby Diltz

By Brittany O'Reilly | Photos by Ian Dashiell and provided by Sarah Walzer

For Sarah Walzer and Toby Diltz, ethical and sustainable living aren't just trendy ideas. In their work as owners and operators of The Blind Pig Kitchen in downtown Bloomsburg as well as at their six acre rural homestead, the couple keeps sustainability at the forefront of all they do.

"Here in Pennsylvania we are lucky to be surrounded by a cornucopia of farms and people whose primary goal is to grow and produce high quality products using sustainable methods. To us, sustainability means creating and interacting using responsible methods," Sarah said.

Originally from Los Angeles, Sarah has only turned to the restaurant industry in recent years. Sarah graduated from UCLA with dual degrees in art and Italian language, and then she spent a decade working in the art world. After meeting Toby on farmersonly.com, combining their shared interests led them down the path towards opening The Blind Pig Kitchen.

Toby grew up locally in Mifflinville, and has worked in the restaurant industry since he was a teenager. With wide-ranging experience in farming, animal husbandry and a self-taught chef, Toby had his sights set on opening a restaurant.

"I always had my eye on the location of our restaurant, since it is the perfect intimate and manageable size," Toby said.

In 2015, the couple opened The Blind Pig Kitchen on Iron Street, one block off of Main Street. The restaurant was a culmination of their shared desire to offer fresh, local and seasonal food to the community all year round.



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Left to Right Sandra J McGinley, Audiologist, Kristin Hale, Audiologist,
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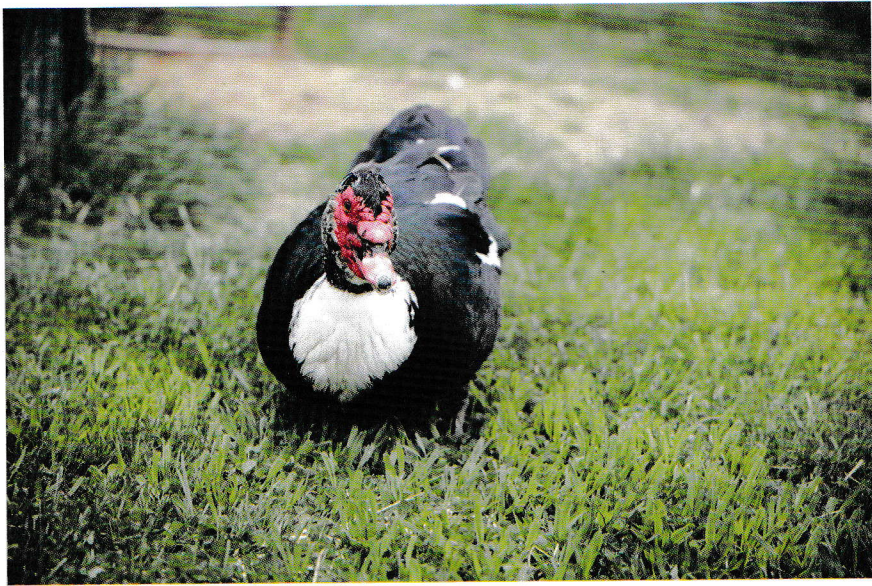


"We strive to create unique dishes using local and seasonal ingredients. We believe in supporting local farms and producers, sourcing ingredients from local farms using organic farming methods without the use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers. The meat we procure comes from animals that have been raised humanely outdoors and without the use of antibiotics or added hormones," Sarah explained.

The couple practices what they preach outside of the kitchen as well. They live on a homestead outside of Benton, and spend their free time raising animals and farming fresh produce. Using their wooded land, garden and greenhouse, they grow berries, vegetables, mushrooms, laying hens, turkeys and heritage breed hogs. Between 2016 and 2017, they planted an orchard of over 40 different berry bushes and 60 fruit trees while also adding honey and mason bees to the property.

Every year, Sarah and Toby focus on adding new perennial plants to the farm to enhance its biodiversity with the goal of having a self-sustaining permaculture. They added a "secret garden" to their property in 2018 which houses native flowering plants and an outdoor dining area for on the farm dinners. The following year they put the space to use and invited guests to delicious al-fresco dinners underneath their pergola.

With shared interests such as gardening, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and animal husbandry, it comes as no surprise that Sarah and Toby share pets along with their farm animals. They have two dogs including a six year old Cavapoo named Pepper who is a farm dog at heart, herding the chicken and



ducks, and another six year old Rottweiler mix named Larry who loves spending his time hunting frogs in the pond. Sarah has a horse named Knickerbacher, who loves trail riding and off farm adventures.

When they are not working at the restaurant or on their homestead, Sarah and Toby enjoy traveling to new places. They especially like tasting new foods and trying new cuisines while they travel, and Sarah makes sure to check out the local farmer's markets of their destinations when she can to see what is fresh and in season.

A bit closer to home, Sarah and Toby love living in a small town, and enjoy the opportunity to provide local and sustainable food to their community throughout the year. They are meticulous when it comes to the

freshness and quality of the food they serve at The Blind Pig Kitchen, and seek out only the best local suppliers.

"Our goal is to prepare the most flavorful, nutrient dense dishes we possibly can while being environmentally conscious. We believe that in order to achieve these goals it is important to source as many ingredients as possible from local farms," Toby explained.

Sarah and Toby focus on farms that prioritize sustainability, organic methods and, of course, quality. They chose to work only with farmers that don't widely spread herbicide or pesticides and they consider such details as how well the farmers manage their manure.



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Overall, the most important factor for Sarah and Toby when considering a farm is the attitude of the farmer.

“We only work with farmers whose first and foremost concern is the happiness and well-being of the plants, animals and employees on their farm, as well as the impact of the ecosystem they’ve created on the surrounding ecosystems,” Sarah noted.



Whether you stop in for a bite to eat at The Blind Pig Kitchen or see Sarah and Toby out and about while participating in First Fridays, make sure to give a warm greeting to this considerate couple who always puts sustainability first. ■

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**PHOTOGRAPHY BY
IAN DASHIELL**



Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate them to be featured in an upcoming issue! Contact Brittany O'Reilly at boreilly@bestversionmedia.com.