

# CELEBRATING 132 YEARS



**Squire Rushnell, Louise DuArt, Sissy Biggers, Bernard Chiu, Jean Wong, Scott Little**

## THE HARBOR VIEW HOTEL GETS A GODWINK

What do a multi-media powerhouse, a famous comedian, and an award-winning broadcaster have in common? For SQUIRE Rushnell, Louise DuArt, and Sissy Biggers; it's an unbridled love for the Harbor View Hotel, along with being year-round islanders. Last Thursday, July 27th, the trio delivered a rip-roaring, hilarious, brilliant and emotional tribute celebrating the hotel's 132nd anniversary and its owner, Bernard Chiu.

Under a crystal-clear sky, guests poured into the Edgartown Room, where gin gimlets beckoned and lobster rolls wooed. Soon, heads were bopping to 1890s chart toppers like "A Bicycle Built for Two" and "Yankee Doodle Dandy" performed by *Vineyard Violin*. Red Chinese lanterns sprinkled the ceiling, just as they did when the hotel first opened in 1891, foreshadowing the formidable role the property would serve on the island. (Chinese lanterns symbolize prosperity since, back in the day, only successful folks could afford to travel to the exotic lands of Asia and bring back such luxuries.) The crowd dressed to impress! Women donned flowy floral maxi dresses while gents sported freshly-ironed Bermuda shorts. It could have been a scene straight out of... well, 1891.

## OF VICTORS, NOT VICTIMS

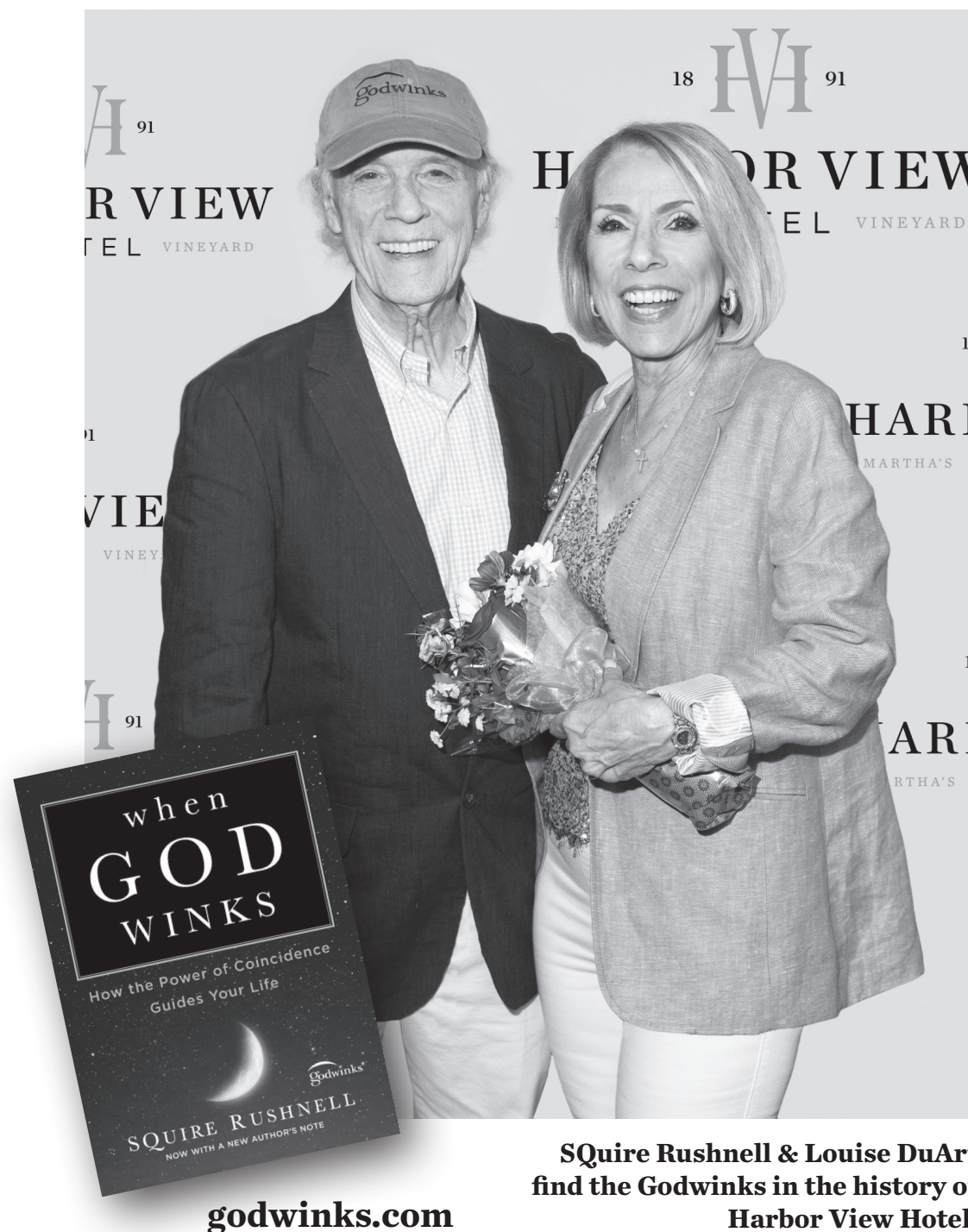
But it's 2023, not 1891, and as the evening's emcee Sissy Biggers pointed out, the Harbor View Hotel has come a long, long way. Biggers enjoyed an illustrious career as a national TV host for the Food Network and Lifetime Television, among others. Now living full time here, she serves as the director of the Carnegie Heritage Center, a nonprofit caring for 20 landmark properties on the island. "I am a dear friend to this hotel," she said to the crowd, "In a room full of dear friends," setting the perfect tone for saluting the history of the Harbor View Hotel.

Few folks are better suited to tell that journey than year-rounder SQUIRE Rushnell, who, if storytelling was an Olympic sport, would be a gold medalist. SQUIRE zoomed his way up as a producer at Boston's WBZ before ultimately getting poached by ABC TV. There, he established Good Morning America as the number one rated morning talk show and created the legendary series, "Schoolhouse Rock." Today, out of their Edgartown home, he and his wife, Louise DuArt (we'll get to her in a bit), produce the Godwink series, which includes twelve books, Hallmark and Netflix movies. What is a Godwink, you ask? 'They are little "coincidences" that aren't coincidences, but instead, spring from divine origin,' says SQUIRE, who coined the term. When Chiu asked him to speak at the 132nd anniversary, SQUIRE chalked it up to another Godwink. "Louise and I are simpatico with Bernard," he says. "We are all about the mission and excellence. If you do the mission right, everything else will follow." That was the theme that SQUIRE poetically detailed to the crowd about the heritage of the hotel and Chiu, who grew up in Hong Kong and started working in a factory at the age of nine. Chiu, SQUIRE explained, would become a hugely successful entrepreneur in America because even at that early age, he decided to always be a "victor, not a victim."

## KISSING KATHERINE HEPBURN (NOT)

In tandem with Chiu's coming-of-age story, SQUIRE dove deep into the legacy of the hotel. Edgartown made itself a name for being a supernova whaling town. When that industry dried up, a group of investors decided a fancy hotel could save the day. It did. Tourism prospered in our enchanting village, and soon other Vineyarders wanted to make their mark. Alfred Hall, a highly respected community leader and businessman, would take the reins, and found himself in the company of vacationing Hollywood celebrities. Including one puppy-love-eyed Katherine Hepburn, who had the hots for... a very married Hall.

Enter stage left: Louise DuArt. Impressionist. Comedienne. Actress. DuArt is all these things. Exploding on the scene originally as a stand-up comedian, DuArt was discovered by – guess who – her now husband SQUIRE Rushnell (Godwink?). Broadway, TV series, stints with Carol Burnett, and a national tour with Tim Conway and Harvey Korman followed. But in the Edgartown Room on this particular night, DuArt was Katherine Hepburn. "Alfred, I want to kiss you on the lips," DuArt recounted as Hepburn. Hall said no, ma'am. He was married. No kiss for Kate. SQUIRE followed up Kate's performance by attesting that it was a true story directly from a family member.



**Squire Rushnell & Louise DuArt  
find the Godwinks in the history of  
Harbor View Hotel.**

**godwinks.com**

As red roses glowed in the sun outside, the guests inside howled. DuArt would go on to impersonate George Burns, Barbara Walters, Joan Rivers and Judge Judy while SQUIRE continued to tell how Bob Carroll, another Edgartown steward, would be the next Harbor View owner, committed as ever to securing the hotel as a beacon of the community. One year, when hard times fell financially, and the hotel was in danger of bankruptcy, Carroll received a phone call. On the other end was a guy named Steven Spielberg. He needed 50 rooms for the cast and crew for a movie he was shooting called "Jaws." Those creditors vanished in "fin" air. (Another Godwink!)

## PICTURE PERFECT

"Oh, if these walls could talk," SQUIRE laughed with the audience. "The stories!" Chiu, of course, had heard them all. For 30 years, he had been an avid Vineyard vacationer, taking his family here, and walked past the Harbor View Hotel on his daily stroll. "It is the most amazing property. It is the most incredible location overlooking the Edgartown Lighthouse and the sea," Chiu says. "I always looked at it and dreamed of owning it one day." That day occurred five years ago when he purchased the property. In signature Chiu style, he immediately embarked on a mission to bring the hotel back to its glory days. With a colossal renovation and restoration, the hotel now boasts a spot on the wildly selective American Express Fine Hotels + Resorts list and Conde Nast's Reader's Choice awards, among others. It has scored accolades for Bettini, its prized restaurant, a complimentary Mercedes car fleet, and an expertly-trained staff polished by Forbes Hospitality.

As much as Chiu is proud of the Harbor View Hotel, he says there is much more to do. "The hotel is part of the community, and the community is part of the hotel," he says. "We want to build a reputation that will attract world travelers here. We want to benefit every business on the island. They are our friends." SQUIRE, DuArt and Biggers would agree. "As far as Bernard and the hotel go, this is the beginning of a lifelong friendship," DuArt says. Coincidence? The word is Godwink.



## A LETTER FROM BERNARD CHIU

Dear fellow islanders,

One of the most beautiful nights of my life was celebrating the 132nd anniversary of the Harbor View. For me, this hotel is not just a property, it is the heart and soul of everything that I love about Martha's Vineyard.

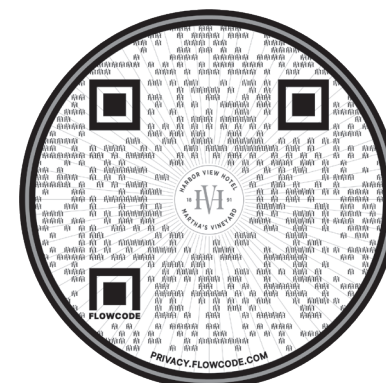
What makes this island unparalleled to any other place I have been is the sense of community. It is the stardust that makes this island sparkle. With that in mind, I ask islanders and hotel guests alike to consider the Harbor View your home. The lobby, your living room. Bettini, your dining room.

Back in 1891, when a group of islanders broke ground for this hotel, they rescued Edgartown from impoverishment. My staff and I remain deeply committed to making sure this community continues to thrive. We are devoted to having the best customer service staff on the island. We are dedicated to offering an exceptional and excellent experience for our guests.

As we embark on a new anniversary, please allow me to thank many dear friends and neighbors who helped last week's celebration become something so special. SQUIRE Rushnell, Louise DuArt, Sissy Biggers, you have no idea how much your participation meant to me. The time and energy you put into the evening was so humbling. I am proud to know you.

I would like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart who has supported our effort to make the Harbor View unrivaled. To my staff, guests and neighbors, I am grateful. The best is yet to come.

With gratitude,  
Bernard Chiu  
Steward of the Harbor View Hotel



Read more about the history  
of Harbor View Hotel.

