

Palisadian Mom, Blogger Clocks In At Patrick's Roadhouse



Palisadian Michelle Villemarie was curious to see if six years of motherhood had equipped her to be a competent waitress. Photo: Micky Hohl

By JENNIKA INGRAM
Special to the Palisadian-Post

When Michelle Villemarie, Palisadian mother of two, sat at Patrick's Roadhouse writing her blog *HomeMadeMimi*, she found herself daydreaming. As she watched the servers in the hustle and bustle of their shift, she wondered if the skills she learned as a mother would make her a better waitress.

She decided to find out. The owner of Patrick's Roadhouse, Anthony Fischler, agreed to let Villemarie take a Sunday shift earlier this month. From 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Villemarie donned an apron and became the newest Roadhouse trainee.

Villemarie had worked as a waitress at Stage Deli in Boston and at the famous Los Angeles Sky Bar – but it had been more than a decade since she clocked in last.

Her tasks included filling water glasses, bringing out food and drinks, bussing tables, seating people – all with a friendly smile.

Fischler said Villemarie chose a particularly busy Sunday and Fischler admitted he was pretty surprised at how well she did.

"Trial by fire," he said. Fischler said at the end of the shift he considered giving Villemarie a job. Her experiment could have landed her a new position.

Villemarie's motivation was to find out if parenting had increased her skill level. Fischler wasn't convinced it made a difference. He said his opinion comes from having hired many mothers over the years.

"Being a mother really has nothing to do with it. It's all up to the individual." Fischler said, "Michelle just did a great job."

Villemarie felt like she succeeded. She enjoyed the camaraderie in the workplace and despite Fischler's assessment; she felt her mommy skills made a difference. She saw herself as more efficient, more committed and better at organizing than she had been in her early years as a waitress. However, she added it was challenging not to be a supervisor and noticed she was less patient.

Happy to rest her weary feet after a six-hour shift, Villemarie was joined for a meal by her husband Jonathan Abrahams and their daughters Pearl, 6, and Vivi, 3, Fischler joked with Villemarie, "I'm going to fire you."

"No, you won't," she piped back. "Because I'm going to quit."

While Villemarie may not be the typical waitress, her choice to explore returning to the workforce post motherhood has become more popular.

Carol Fishman Cohen, co-author of the book *Back on the Career Track: A Guide for Stay-at-Home Moms Who Want to Return to Work*, writes "It's not uncommon for people returning to the workforce to do this type of thing as a transition back to a career."

Cohen, who also founded iRelaunch, hosts events to help parents transcend the isolation they feel and reconnect with others in their efforts to resume their careers after time away from the workforce.

While Villemarie won't be picking up any more shifts, she said ultimately her goal is to be a role model for her children. She wants them to see her working and to see that she has interests outside of the home that are connected to the community and the world around us.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Opens to an Eager Crowd

By LENA FORD
Special to the Palisadian-Post

Tennessee Williams' most popular play, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, opened on June 6 with ticket holders and more pouring into Pierson Playhouse. A crowd of all ages celebrated with generous refreshments before the show with overall cheer as they eagerly awaited curtain call.

Once seated the audience was easily transported to a plantation home in the Mississippi Delta through the realistic set design by Director Michael-Anthony Nozzi, then given full knowledge of the struggles of the childless couple of Margaret and Brick, played wonderfully by Sienna Farall and Ted Detwiler respectively.

Winner of the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for best drama, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* covers timeless themes of greed, superficiality, decay, desire and death, which are highlighted through the performances of Maria O'Connor as Mae, Timothy Roscoe as Gooper, Joanna Churgin as Big Mama, Peter Miller as Reverend Tooker and Michael Willens as Doctor Baugh.

Yet it was Brian Robert Harris as Big Daddy and Ted Detwiler as Brick capturing the true-to-life tension between father and son, that took the audience's full attention as each character tried in vain to understand the angst of the other. Big Daddy with his health on the line, and Brick grappling with his 'unnatural' sexual desires, catapulted the stakes to their highest and moved the drama along—and with it Tennessee Williams at his best.



Brian Robert Harris as Big Daddy and Ted Detwiler as Brick hash it out as father and son. Photo courtesy of Joy Daunis

Director Michael-Anthony Nozzi chose to direct the play as Williams originally intended leaving in all of the original homosexual references, which he was forced to change under the McCarthy era.

By keeping the original script, Nozzi gives audiences a rare chance to experience this

version of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* professionally produced only two other times; once in London and once on Broadway.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, produced by Martha Hunter and Sherman Wayne runs at the Pierson Playhouse Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. through July 13.

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