

VISUAL ARTS

Keys, Swizz Beatz pour all the love into exhibit

'Giants: Art from the Dean Collection' is coming to the High.

By Felicia Feaster
For the AJC

Art might be Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz's love language.

The musicians' first date was at an art gallery, says Keys, at a private showing of the Russian father of Art Deco, Erté.

"He told me he would introduce me to Erté," Keys said of Beatz, aka Kasseem Dean. "I connected with it so much that I ended up buying. That was one of my first purchases."

"It was the beginning of not only our love, but also the beginning of the way that we connect to art," Keys added, speaking from Los Angeles about her 14-year marriage to DJ and musician Dean, who was on the other line from Cannes, France.

Art is also the way, the couple has said in interviews, that they communicate self-love to their children — with artworks by Black artists featuring people who look like them.

Love of self and love of community is the focus of the expansion.

Art continued on E7



Swizz Beatz and Alicia Keys had their first date at a private showing of Erté, kicking off their love story and their collective collecting. COURTESY OF COLE COOK

EXHIBIT PREVIEW

"Giants: Art from the Dean Collection of Swizz Beatz and Alicia Keys"

Sept. 13-Jan. 19 at the High Museum of Art. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays; noon-5 p.m. Sundays. \$23.50. 1280 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta. 404-733-4400. high.org.

AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE



2023 Jere Allen (far left) celebrates the finish of his 44th AJC Peachtree Road Race last year with his wife Faye (front), his children and grandchildren. Jere has turned running the race into a family tradition. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BILL ALLEN



2021 Jere Allen (right) with son Bill (back, center) and grandkids (from left), Tripp, Sophie and Kate.



2014 Jere Allen celebrates with his family after he ran the Peachtree at 80 years old.

At 90, he's still on the run

Retired pastor ran his first Peachtree Road Race in 1979.

By Keri Janton | For the AJC

A mile from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race finish line, at the corner of Peachtree and 10th streets, Jere Allen will search for Faye, his wife of 64 years. Surrounded by their family, Faye will be searching the crowd of runners for him. She'll wave with relief when she spots him, thankful her 90-year-old husband is OK, then she'll bask in the joy of the occasion, of this family tradition that Jere unwittingly began 45 years ago.

Jere and his older brother Marion grew up thick as thieves. When Marion died from a sudden heart attack in 1976, Jere was devastated over the loss of his only sibling.

"We were close, and it was so awful, such a shock," said Jere, of Birmingham, Alabama. "I realized when he died that the same could happen to me. I was 43 years old and that's when I started running."

Jere took to it immediately. Easy and enjoyable, running became a part of his daily routine, one that, aside from a few exceptions, he has not missed since Jan-

'If I'm determined to do something, I'm going to do it.'

Jere Allen, on his push to complete his 45th race through the heat and heart of Atlanta

Peachtree continued on E8

THINGS TO DO

Glamping with impala and bison and bongo? Safari, so good!

See ostriches, watusis and rhinos, too — from the deck of your tent.

By Blake Guthrie
For the AJC

MADISON — After moving to Georgia's lake country 11 years ago, I read reports about a new safari park "coming soon" to Madison. Target opening seasons were announced but kept getting pushed back. Originally called the Georgia Zoo and Safari Park, the name was changed in 2016 to better align with a "mission-based programming to save

wildlife and their natural habitats through conservation, education, connection and inspiration," according to local press reports at the time.

Now, after a decade of red tape, construction delays, a pandemic that caused a pause and a shift in plans with even more red tape and construction delays, the Georgia Safari Conservation Park is finally open.

The 530-acre property 60 miles east of Atlanta sits among gentle rolling hills in the woods and pastureland just south of I-20, its main entrance only a quarter-mile

Safari continued on E8



It's likely you'll meet curious ostriches when touring the park. PHOTO BY BLAKE GUTHRIE

MORE INFORMATION

Georgia Safari Conservation Park
1761 Monticello Hwy., Madison. 706-342-4296. georgiasafari.com.
■ Guided safari tours: \$39 and up
■ Private VIP tours: \$2,500
■ Overnight stay with tour: \$590 and up

IF YOU GO
» Find places to stay, dine and more on your visit to the safari park. E8

BROWN & CO.
JEWELERS

ROSWELL | 674 HOLCOMB BRIDGE RD | 770.993.1080
BUCKHEAD | 3005 BOLLING WAY | 404.814.9800

LIVING & ARTS

Peachtree

continued from E1

uary 1977.

Jere was a pilot in the Air Force for three years after graduating from Auburn University and became a pastor in his late 20s. In 1979, he took a job with the Southern Baptist Convention, and he, Faye, and their three children, Bill, Lorena and Dawn, moved from Birmingham to Atlanta. By then, Jere had a few 5Ks and 10Ks under his belt and decided to register for his first AJC Peachtree Road Race. He remembers it as a great run with maybe 20,000 runners – a huge contrast to the 50th anniversary race in 2019, he said, which had three times as many participants.

Jere made his best time ever at age 55 when he completed the PRR in 48 minutes. He's battled prostate and vocal cord cancers over the years, neither of which kept him from running the annual race. He and Faye moved twice after leaving Atlanta, first to Washington, then back to Birmingham, and still made sure to return to Atlanta for the race every July 4th.

"I've always said the Peachtree is not as much a race as it is an event," said Jere. "They've made some course changes over the years, all of them good, and it's always a memorable experience to be part of such a large group, a community of people taking exercise seriously. And now not only am I running, but I've got my family running with me."

Bill Allen, 57, joined his father in the race for the first time in 1996 when he was 29.

"I'd watched dad since I was 13 or so and for all those years after, wanted to join him," said Bill, a Peachtree Corners resident. "I didn't realize until I had kids of my own that it was a sacrifice for him that first year. He was fast, and he slowed down for me."

Like his father, running came easy to Bill, and it's something he continued after his first AJC Peachtree Road Race. For nearly 20 years he's run five miles three mornings a week with the same two friends.

Jere's daily runs are solo and vary in distance throughout his neighborhood, from one to three miles, and 6.2 miles once a week. He still preaches once a month at a retirement home, so he often rehearses his sermons in his head as he runs. He's also an avid golfer and sometimes opts to play 18 holes in his mind.

He recently fell while on a long run and required five stitches in his hand.

"I know my age is a factor," said Jere. "My family has a lot of nurses and they have me eating more protein and making sure I'm as prepared as I can be for the Peachtree."

Along with Bill, whose full name is William Jere Allen Jr., Bill's son Tripp (William Jere Allen III, 19) runs the AJC Peachtree Road Race. He began at age 10, the minimum age requirement, and continues each year. Following Jere's lead is important to the Allen men.

"We do it to honor him," said Bill. "He's the guy who taught me everything I know, and I want to be like him. He's an awesome dad and the most generous, kindest man. He's my inspiration in all ways."



2022 Jere Allen (left) and wife Faye pose with their son, Bill (right), his wife Lisa and their three children.

Tripp feels the same, as is evident in a college essay he wrote in 2022. He described his first AJC Peachtree Road Race, his excitement at the start line, followed by a relentless downpour throughout the 6.2 miles. As he ran, miserable with the weather conditions, he looked next to him to find his grandfather, his hero, smiling at him.

"It doesn't get better than this," Jere said to his grandson, and the two crossed the finish line side by side.

Tripp wrote that he was unhappy with his race time in 2022. He walked a mile back on the course to join his family, who were still cheering on the sidelines, waiting for his grandfather's wave of runners to go by. When Jere passed, however, Tripp didn't think he looked well, so, despite his fatigue and frustration with

his own finish time, he jumped onto the course and ran alongside his grandfather for the final stretch. When he told his grandfather his shoelaces were untied, Jere responded "I don't care, I'm not stopping."

"This reminded me of the determination he taught me," wrote Tripp. "I now see the race as less about the time I run and instead the time I get to spend with him and my dad."

Since that race, it has become a tradition that a family member joins Jere for the final mile.

The three Allen men, along with Bill's daughters, Jere's sons-in-law and a cousin, run in various waves of the race, but they all know where to go when they finish.

The corner of Peachtree and 10th streets near Colony Square has always been their meeting

spot. They gather for cheers, hugs and photos, then the entire crew heads to Bill's house for a barbecue.

"Our big celebrations are always together – Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and we always know we'll be together in Atlanta on the Fourth of July," said Faye, 87. "It's just wonderful."

Jere is often tired the day after the race and takes his time to recover, but he has no plans to slow down.

"It's always been exciting, but, of course, now that he's 90, it makes me a little nervous," said Faye. "I wonder if he'll ever be able to give it up. I'm afraid he won't, but he's something of a hero in our community."

Jere humbly laughs at the use of "hero" to describe him.

"Or something of an idiot," he quips. "It's kind of stupid, but I'll have to be pushed to quit. If I'm determined to do something, I'm going to do it. I'll go as long as I can. It gets harder every year, it takes me a couple hours to finish now, and I know there will come a point when I have to say that's it. I don't look forward to it, but it'll surely come."

Jere is delighted by the way his family has latched on to the AJC Peachtree Road Race, grateful they want to continue his legacy.

"I never imagined the race would grow to be what it is for our family, with so many of them running," said Jere. "And, boy, how special to see them rooting for me, joining me for that last mile to be sure I don't fall. The older I get, the longer they have to wait, but they're always there, watching out for me."

Safari

continued from E1

from exit 113. Currently, 286 acres are in use, 230 of them as pasture habitat where grassland animals reside behind a dual fence line inside a perimeter fence encircling the property.

The park had a soft opening June 1 and was permitted a limited number of visitors this month to ensure the animals have time to acclimate to their new surroundings before a wider opening later in July. Finishing touches are being applied – mostly landscaping and road work around the parking areas and on a trail leading to the safari-style tents where overnight guests stay.

The Georgia Safari Conservation Park has the distinction of being the only overnight safari park in the Southeast. One- and two-bedroom tents represent glamping at its finest, with air conditioning, luxurious furnishings and linens, walk-in tiled showers, stand-alone soaker tubs, kitchenettes, dens, floor-to-ceiling windows and wraparound decks overlooking a private savanna not included on the daily safari tours. A one-bedroom suite inside the giraffe barn has large picture-frame windows with views of the giraffe habitat and a balcony overlooking the outside enclosures.

Standing on the deck of the safari tent after checking in, I was greeted by three curious ostriches who wandered up to the fence line. With the provided binoculars, I spotted water bucks and watusis nearby, and two Southern white rhinoceros in the distance. The rhinos were in their own enclosed field relaxing under a sailcloth shade next to a giant mud hole they seemed to relish rolling around in. It was hard to tell their actual color since both were fully caked in Georgia red clay mud.

The rhinos also were visible from a closer standpoint on the daily guided safari tour, which is included with all overnight stays. This is the main wildlife experience offered by the park, where guests are led through the grassland habitat in a covered open-air vehicle by an expert guide on a 90-minute tour.

During my tour, I saw two newborns – a 2-day-old impala and a 1-day-old American bison. Both were up and walking around, sticking close to their mothers. Other species seen on the tour were groupings of Asian water buffalo, common eland, roan, Grant's zebra, bongo (a threatened species) and a single desert addax (a critically endangered species).

The tour group was led by animal care specialist and pasture lead Tiffany Portillo. She called every animal we saw by name and referred to them, collectively, as her "kiddos."

The animals come from similar facilities around the U.S. Rhinos Mo-Joe and Akagera came from a park in Ohio and the 1½-year-old reticulated giraffe named Phoenix arrived from a safari park in Texas. Portillo stressed that soil



Asian water buffalo are one of the many grassland species you'll see on the guided safari tour at the Georgia Safari Conservation Park. Tours are included with overnight stays. PHOTOS BY BLAKE GUTHRIE



The luxury one- and two-bedroom glamping tents overlook a private savanna not included on the tour.

and water testing is done before any animal comes into its new home to make sure it's a suitable habitat. There are no big cats yet, but they're part of a longer-range plan requiring a new habitat with specialized high fencing.

Along with the guided safari tour, the park offers a private VIP tour for up to eight people that includes a hands-on encounter with exotic small creatures such as a fennec fox and a bearded dragon. A giraffe and rhino encounter providing an up-close experience with these large land mammals is also available.

No dining options currently exist inside the Georgia Safari Conservation Park – that's coming later in a future phase along with the big cats. The closest place to eat that isn't interstate exit chain fare is at the Farmview Market Café 3 miles away, south of exit 114. Farmview Market sells food sourced from local farms at a specialty grocery store and at its farmers' market every



Beautiful Grant's zebras roam the grassland during the tour.

Saturday between May and September. The café serves breakfast and lunch every day except Sunday. For other non-chain dining options, head 3.5 miles in the other direction to the historic district of downtown Madison.

Madison has come a long way

on the dining front in the last few years. A lot of that progress can be attributed to one man, Preston Snyder, and the company he founded, MAD Hospitality, which operates five food and beverage establishments within a block of each other around the

IF YOU GO

GEORGIA SAFARI CONSERVATION PARK



STAY

New South Motor Inn. \$115 and up. 1240 Eatonton Hwy. 770-728-1655. newsouthmotorinn.com.

EAT

The Dining Room. \$85 and up for prix-fixe dinners, \$21 and up à la carte menu. Reservations recommended. 146 E. Washington St. 706-478-7893, mad-hospitality.com/the-dining-room. Farmview Market Café. \$8 and up. 2610 Eatonton Road. 844-210-7030. farmviewmarket.com.

VISITOR INFO

Welcome Center. 115 E. Jefferson St. 706-342-4454. visitmadison.com.

town square.

Snyder relocated to Madison from Atlanta in 2018 to be closer to his aging parents on Lake Oconee. A former managing partner at Braden Fellman, an Atlanta real estate development company, he fell in love with Madison's historic vibe and started acquiring vacant properties. Sensing a need, he turned the properties into a French bakery, Patisserie on Main; an English-style pub, Hart & Crown Tavern; a coffee shop/cocktail bar, The Sinclair; a diner, Betty Gene's; and a chef-driven fine-dining restaurant, The Dining Room.

"I went back into the restaurant business," said Snyder, whose first job as a young man was working as a server at the Dining Room in the old Ritz-Carlton Buckhead location during its Günter Seeger glory days. Atlanta patrons of a certain age may feel like they've walked through a time portal upon entering the Dining Room in Madison, its interior design an homage to the former Ritz-Carlton Dining Room of the late 1980s. Across the square, Betty Gene's, named after Snyder's mother, is an affordable breakfast and lunch spot that serves the best biscuit this side of Athens.

The latest of Snyder's Madison ventures isn't a restaurant but the 15-room New South Motor Inn, formerly called the Old South Motor Inn. Snyder purchased the dilapidated property and was amazed to find that the old sign out front still had its original neon from the mid-20th century. The restored neon now lights up the main highway between the interstate exit and the downtown historic district, serving as the gateway to Madison.