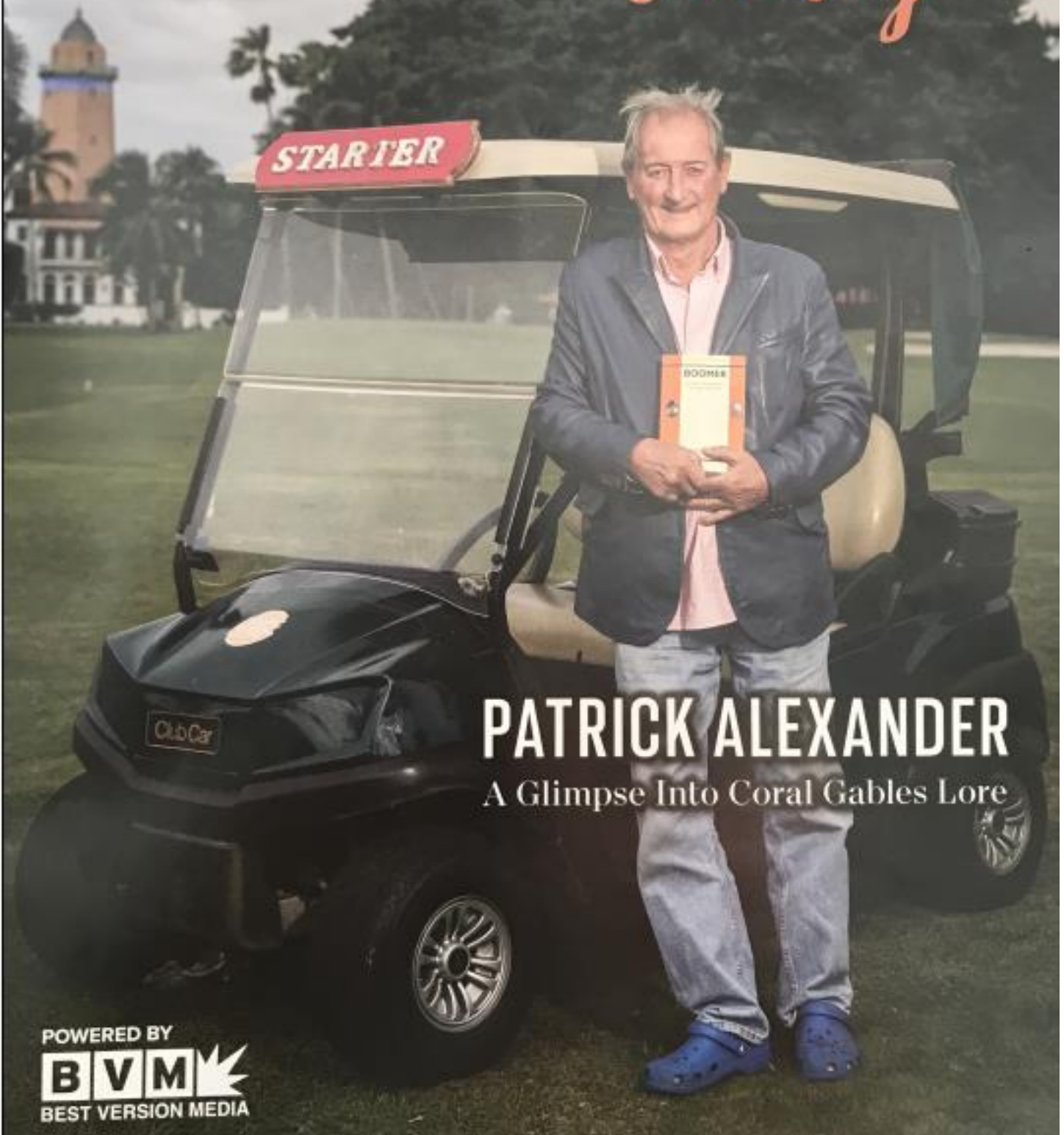


AUGUST 2024

# GABLES

*living*

Photo provided by Patrick Alexander  
and Rodolfo Benitz



**PATRICK ALEXANDER**

A Glimpse Into Coral Gables Lore

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# Patrick Alexander

## A Glimpse Into Coral Gables Lore

By Christopher Miyares | Photos provided by Patrick Alexander and Rodolfo Benitz

Described as “one of Coral Gables most interesting residents” Patrick Alexander is also one of its least known local writers, even though three of his novels are set in a fictionalized Coral Gables, renamed Greenhaven.

Born in England, Patrick studied philosophy at Sussex University before joining Price Waterhouse & Co. as a chartered accountant in the City of London. He moved to France where he married and raised his children. After a decade as an international tax consultant based in Europe, Patrick and his family moved to America where he worked as international business director for two different software corporations which took him all over the world. Finally, tired of all the

travel, he was hired as Director of Professional Advancement at the University of Miami.

Having moved to France in his early 20s and raised his family in the wine country near Bordeaux, followed by the Piedmont wine country on the Swiss/Italian border, and then the wine country of northern California, he finally moved to South Florida where, he discovered, there are no vineyards! At the University of Miami, he developed a popular wine appreciation program which was offered exclusively in the Faculty Lounge. For almost twenty years, Patrick has offered the very popular six-week wine class at the nation’s premiere independent bookstore, Books & Books and at the Coral Gables Museum. Following the

2020 Covid pandemic, Patrick switched his in-person classes to Zoom – some of which can be seen on YouTube. Wine In a Time of Cholera.

After retiring from UM, to devote himself to writing full time, Patrick’s wife decided he needed part-time employment to get out of the house and not become a literary recluse, and so has worked at the Coral Gables Museum since its opening in 2010, doing everything from giving history tours, tending bar, setting-up exhibits, sweeping the floors, writing local history books and editing the monthly newsletter. As a volunteer for Dade Heritage Trust, Patrick conducts monthly historic tours of the famous Biltmore Hotel, while the Miami Herald has

published more than 120 of his ‘Grumpy Old Man’ Op Eds over the past 20 years.

Patrick’s first US book, ‘Marcel Proust’s Search for Lost Time’ was published by Vintage Books in 2008 and was based on a yearlong course that Patrick had taught at the University of Miami. Another book which was based on a program he first developed at U.M. was ‘The Book-lover’s Guide to Wine’ published by Books & Books Press. Taking advantage of the COVID lockdown, Patrick reread all seven volumes of Proust’s ‘In Search of Lost Time’ as well as all twelve volumes of Anthony Powell’s ‘A Dance to the Music of Time’ in order to compare both novels and their authors. The resulting ‘A Dance to Lost Time’ was re-



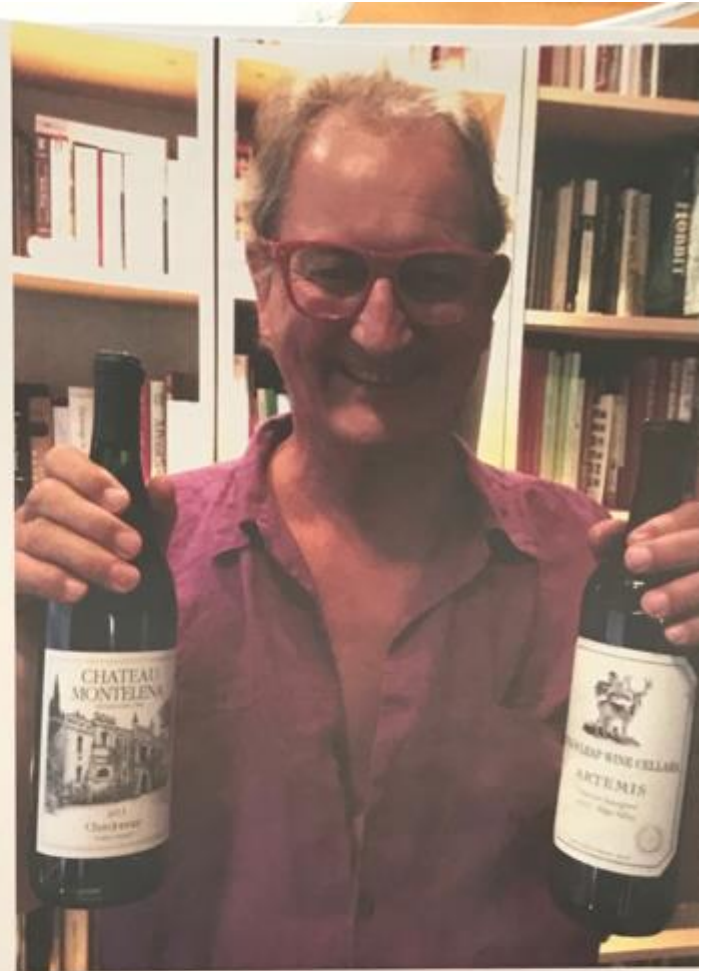


leased in 2022, the centenary of Proust's death. Patrick's most recent book is 'BOOMER', which tells the history of the baby boomer generation from 1946 till 2024, while a previous book, 'Building Paradise' tells the history of Miami, and South Florida. Currently Patrick is writing Coral Gables - the First Hundred Years to mark the city's centennial in 2025. Patrick's fictional works include 'The Nigerian Letter' and the Greenhaven Trilogy - three novels set in South Florida. And of course, all of these books are available at Books & Books in Coral Gables.

It was Patrick's other part-time job as Starter/ Ranger at the Granada Golf Course that inspired his three Greenhaven novels, all of which revolve around the 'Alhambra' golf course, nestled in the city of Greenhaven. An ongoing theme



through all three books is the battle between the city and a vulgar, Russian-financed developer who wants to convert the golf course into a vast multi-use hotel/office/retail/condo complex. The first book in the series, 'Death by Water' also traces the Cuban diaspora and its effect on life in South Florida. 'Death on the Eighth', begins with a dead body on the eighth hole of the golf course but also



explores the rather seamy and raffish history of Miami since the arrival of Henry Flagler and his railroad. The final volume 'Dead Naked' begins with the pogroms in Tsarist Ukraine and, via the New York gangs of the 1920s, traces Russian money to South Florida and its attempt to destroy Greenhaven's beloved golf course. All Patrick's books are of course available at Books & Books in Coral Gables.

Patrick recently recorded all his books for Audible, Amazon's audiobook subsidiary, from the recording studio he built at his home. All dozen books are now available as paperbacks, e-books and audiobooks. Patrick's home-studio was recently featured in the Bike Walk Coral Gables Literary Tour in May 2024.

Patrick and his wife Jude have

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lived in Coral Gables, near the Granada golf course for 38 years and celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 15th. Both their daughters, born in France, were educated at Coral Gables Elementary, Carver and Gables High, one going to FIU and the other to UM. Peggy lives and works in Paris with her son and daughter, and Bridie lives in South Carolina with her two daughters. However, all of them reunite each Christmas, and for the long summer vacations in Coral Gables. As Jude says, "A grandparents' home is where cousins become best friends." All four grandchildren first learned to swim in Coral Gables' historic Venetian Pool. Jude herself, after twenty years at U.M.s School of Architecture has since become a popular performer with the 'Dancing Gals' at the Coral Gables Adult Activity Center.

Patrick and his family have lived

in some of the world's loveliest places; in a 900-year-old watermill deep in the French countryside, on the shore of Lake Lugano surrounded by Alpine peaks, followed by the beautiful beaches of California's Santa Cruz - so why Coral Gables?

Patrick explained that even though Coral Gables will not celebrate its first century till next year, it has already crammed more history into that short span than other places do in a thousand. What other place can offer easy access to such beautiful beaches, can offer such rich tropical foliage or such beautiful architecture and as many unique and delicious restaurants as Coral Gables? It has all the sophistication of a large city combined with the charm and intimacy of a small village. And what other city in the world can offer a beautiful public golf course in its very heart!



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