

INDULGE

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ULTIMATE GUIDE

50 Amazing Things to Do

FATHER'S DAY

7 Successful & Stylish Single Dads

Alain Perez

Summer
ISSUE!

+ 10 Coolest Ice Cream Shops | Upgraded Disney Getaway

DAD KNOWS BEST

IN TIME FOR FATHER'S DAY, WE TOOK SEVEN OF
MIAMI'S MOST SUCCESSFUL SINGLE DADS,
DRESSED THEM IN SIZZLING SUMMER STYLES AND
ASKED FOR THEIR PARENTAL WISDOM.

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ALAIN PEREZ

AGE: 46.

LIVES IN: Miami Beach.

CHILDREN: Kiahna, 19, and Samaya, 15.

OCCUPATION: CEO, Eventstar Structures.

WEARING: Brioni suit and Christian Dior shirt (his own), Ferragamo shoes from WOLF at Brickell City Centre.



WHAT'S YOUR BEST ADVICE FOR OTHER DADS?

"There are a few tools that I've learned along this journey called single fatherhood. Three key things that have helped me maintain positive relationships with my girls are communication, having the best possible relationship with their mother and trying to keep them humble. These have been the method to my madness.

"For me, **communication is king**. It is a recurring theme. Now, I travel a lot for work, but it is always important to ensure they understand that I am available to them, whether it is via text, email, a call or being physically present. I encourage you to let them know that you are there and present, even if you are on the go. If you happen to travel like me and cannot always be geographically present, never forget that you are there to play a role in their day-to-day lives and issues. I have found that situations arise, from school to friends to socio issues, and just creating the foundation and understanding that I am there makes a world of a difference.

"I know this is not always possible, but I think it is so important to have a good relationship with the mom. In my case, although we are divorced, we still co-parent, and we consult with one another over any decision-making regarding the kids as much as possible.

"Last but not least, I am currently working on keeping them humble. I believe dads should always take note of this. I am working with them on being self-sufficient and teaching them that working shows responsibility."





CHRISTIAN BIZZOTTO

AGE: 39.

LIVES IN: North Bay Village.

CHILD: Milla, 11.

OCCUPATION: Owner, Focused Movement Academy.

WEARING: Dolce and Gabbana shirt from Dolce and Gabbana at Bal Harbour Shops, Ermenegildo Zegna pants from Zegna at Bal Harbour Shops, Giuseppe Zanotti sneakers from Zanotti at Brickell City Centre.

WHAT DOES FATHER'S DAY MEAN TO YOU?

"Father's Day has always been important. I was born and raised in Italy, where family is super tight. Being a father, especially the father of a little girl, is the most important thing. I'm surrounded by powerful women every day. Having the ability and the responsibility to be a father to one of these powerful women comes from my mom and my mom's mom, who are powerful women.

"I feel like I have a huge responsibility, and I take being a father as my job. A lot of people put their careers or other things first. When her mom and I split up, **my role became being this little kid's superhero** for her to look up to. We celebrate Father's Day, but I don't know that we necessarily celebrate it more than anything else. I was involved in a bad accident in 2007, when Milla was just a few months old, and I spent 10 hours not knowing if I was going to walk again. I had to restart a whole bunch of sections of my life through recovery, so I celebrate every day, every moment.

"I definitely see fatherhood as the most important role in my life. There are a lot of dads who aren't really there for their kids. It's good to put an emphasis on the dads out there who give 100 percent."

Christian's daughter, Milla, competed in the BattleFrog Xtreme 24-hour race with her dad when she was 9, making her the youngest person to complete the course.



DJ WILLIAMS

AGE: 35.

LIVES IN: South Miami.

CHILDREN: Alessandra, 5,
and Adara, 4.

OCCUPATION: Founder and CEO,
Dyme Lyfe.

WEARING: Penguin shirt and
Armani shoes (his own), WOLF
pants from Brickell City Centre.

WHAT ADVICE FROM YOUR DAD HAS MADE YOU A BETTER FATHER?

“The No. 1 thing passed on to me by my father was to always let your kids be kids. You want to teach them life lessons and instill values, and sometimes it works best if you can make it fun. For example, I teach them math using money. Kids love to touch everything, so I let them hold a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, dollar — counting out the multiple denominations. By playing with it, they’re learning about the value of money and learning math at the same time.

“One of the most difficult parts of being a single dad is when you have a sick child, because all they want is their mother. That really makes you appreciate what moms go through. I am very grateful for my girlfriend Christina’s daily guidance. I don’t know what I would do without her.

“The most rewarding part is when my kids make me feel that I am their protector. They draw me portraits. They always make me big, with muscles. I love the details they put into it. And you can’t throw them away, so I keep a box full of drawings, which I cherish.

“On Father’s Day, I like to keep it simple. I like going to brunch, coming home, getting in the pool and relaxing. **I don’t like to be catered to; I like for everyone to celebrate being together.**”





SERGIO ANDRÉS MENDOZA

AGE: 39.

LIVES IN: Key Biscayne.

CHILDREN: Sergio Michael, 6, and Anaïs, 3.

OCCUPATION: Founder and Designer, Pharaoun Jewelry.

WEARING: Castangia jacket, Ralph Lauren pants, Massimo Dutti shoes and Uniqlo shirt (his own); Acqua di Parma bag from Brickell City Centre.



WHAT CAN EVERY DAD DO TO BE A BETTER FATHER?

“As a single dad, it’s important to realize what’s missing from your children’s experience and to reach out to friends and family who can help fill the parts that might be hard for you to do yourself. For example, my kids’ aunts, or people that we consider aunts, bring a lot of feminine energy to my daughter and to my son. You’ve got to reach out to get the parts that maybe you’re not that strong at.

“As a parent, there are certain things you want for your children that maybe you need to find elsewhere. It could be someone who is more artistic, athletic or patient — whatever you want to bring into your children’s life.

“I think equally important is looking for opportunities to enrich their experiences. When your children show momentum, **one of the best things that a parent can do is carry that momentum forward.** Their world is limited, so if they find something that means something to them, one of the things you have to do as parent is expand that part of their world.

“I may be a single dad now, but my life is all about powerful women. My sister, my mom, my grandmothers, my daughter. My wife, Sarah, was one of them, too. I’m really trying to channel that into the next stage of my life. I have a jewelry company, and it’s all about powerful, independent women feeling beautiful. It started with Sarah alive, and it’s kind of come into its own this year.”



MIKE GIBALDI

AGE: 56.

LIVES IN: Miami Beach.

CHILDREN: Calypso, 25, and Sophia, 23.

OCCUPATION: Treasurer, Surfrider Foundation Miami Chapter.

WEARING: Ermenegildo Zegna jacket, shirt and pants from Zegna at Bal Harbour Shops, Giuseppe Zanotti sneakers from Zanotti at Brickell City Centre.



HOW HAS BEING A FATHER SHAPED YOUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE?

“Being a father reinforces consciousness, caring and nurturing. How you raise your children is not only a reflection on yourself; it’s what goes out into the world and continues to make it a better place. Calypso works in high-end retail in the Design District, and Sophia is exploring, traveling, working and volunteering. She’s been through Southeast Asia, she’s in Australia now, and applying her organic farming horticulture degree.

“They’ve come out and participated with me at some of the Surfrider events and the volunteer activities that we do. I have a great photo of the three of us holding hands on the beach during Hands Across the Sand. That’s a global, peaceful movement to protest against offshore drilling and dirty fossil fuels and to advocate for clean and renewable energy. They’re well-rounded kids, contributing to society, and I’m very proud of them.

“I’ve tried to teach them about **not going to extremes and about keeping a cool head in difficult situations**. As they were growing up, if they misbehaved or got in trouble, there were consequences. But it wasn’t so crazy to scare them away or damage the communication of our relationship.”





MIKE ROMEU

AGE: 39.

LIVES IN: Cutler Bay.

CHILD: Melody, 6.

OCCUPATION: Founder and CEO,
Sweet Melody Crafted Ice Cream Co.

WEARING: Jacket by Stitched at Brickell
City Centre, Alexander McQueen shirt from
Neiman Marcus at Merrick Park and
Giuseppe Zanotti sneakers from Zanotti
at Brickell City Centre; Acqua di Parma
bag from Brickell City Centre.

WHAT ARE THE HARDEST AND MOST REWARDING PARTS OF BEING A SINGLE DAD?

"I tend to be the nostalgic type. My parents will be together 50 years, this year. It's hard that I can't give that to Melody. When she was 1 or 2, she would wake up between both of her parents, and that doesn't happen anymore. That's the hard part for me. I long for her to have that.

"The rewarding part is that she's literally my best friend. We go everywhere together. We do things together. She's learning how to bake, learning things in the kitchen. There are times when she has her moments, when I'm too busy and she gets a little sad, but for the most part, the ice cream business has brought us closer together. The most rewarding part is that it's just us. Our bond has become stronger because of that.

"The biggest value I want to teach her is hard work. **If this business were to take off and we have, like, 100 stores, I'd still want her to mop the floors.** I think there's no shortcut to that. It builds something within you that makes you a better person overall. There are times when it's like, 'Get in the car — we've got to make a delivery!' She's had to sit in on meetings. It's not ideal, but I'm seeing that she's recognizing those things, and that's what I want to teach her the most: kindness and the value of hard work."

More
ice cream!
See Dish,
p. 65.





RAY BAKALARZ

AGE: 40.

LIVES IN: North Miami Beach.

CHILDREN: Ellie, 10; Gabriel, 8; and Veronica, 5.

OCCUPATION: Managing Director, Stanton S.A.S.

WEARING: Ermenegildo Zegna shirt, jacket and pants from Zegna at Bal Harbour Shops.



WHAT DOES FATHER'S DAY MEAN TO YOU?

"Father's Day is a reminder of the dedication, love and passion that I have for my kids. It's a day to take a step back and reflect on the admiration that I share for my three children on an individual level.

"Father's Day is also special for me as it's nice to get a little pampered by them on this one day. That surely never hurts. I love how creative each of them are when it comes to their surprises. Although I'm always extraordinarily present in their lives, it is an opportunity to be extra focused during my time with Ellie, Gabriel and Veronica.

"When I play with them and we read their favorite books and I listen to their stories, **it is a constant reminder that I am the luckiest man in the world.** When I look at them on Father's Day or any day, I am proud of the job I have done as a father. They are truly what I live for, and Father's Day gives me an opportunity to be grateful and feel blessed for the love we all share as a family unit."

A few days before this photoshoot, Ray fractured his shoulder on a skiing trip with his kids. Ever the responsible and brave parent, he got his little ones safely down the mountain before driving himself to the hospital.

