

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2025

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

ASH AVILDSSEN

BEHIND THE
SCENES WITH
THE DIRECTOR
OF "QUEEN OF
THE RING"



ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

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FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

It's a gift—and a chance to become the best possible version of yourself.

Every summer around the Fourth of July, I start thinking a lot about this Albert Camus quote: “Freedom is nothing but a chance to be better.” I've fully bought into that idea: How freedom is so much more than the ability to live and speak and worship as we please. It's a responsibility. To the nation that gave us these things, yes, but also to ourselves. Freedom without discipline, without mastery of self, turns toxic and we see it every day. When you use your freedom to become the best possible version of yourself, then freedom becomes the ultimate and most precious resource on Earth.

For myself, I answered the question of who the best possible version of Robert Irvine is through my foundation. Because I know that the best possible version of Robert is one who gives back and uses his position and his success to elevate others.

As the Robert Irvine Foundation continues to grow, help more people, and expand its footprint, the foundation is a topic that comprises a larger portion of



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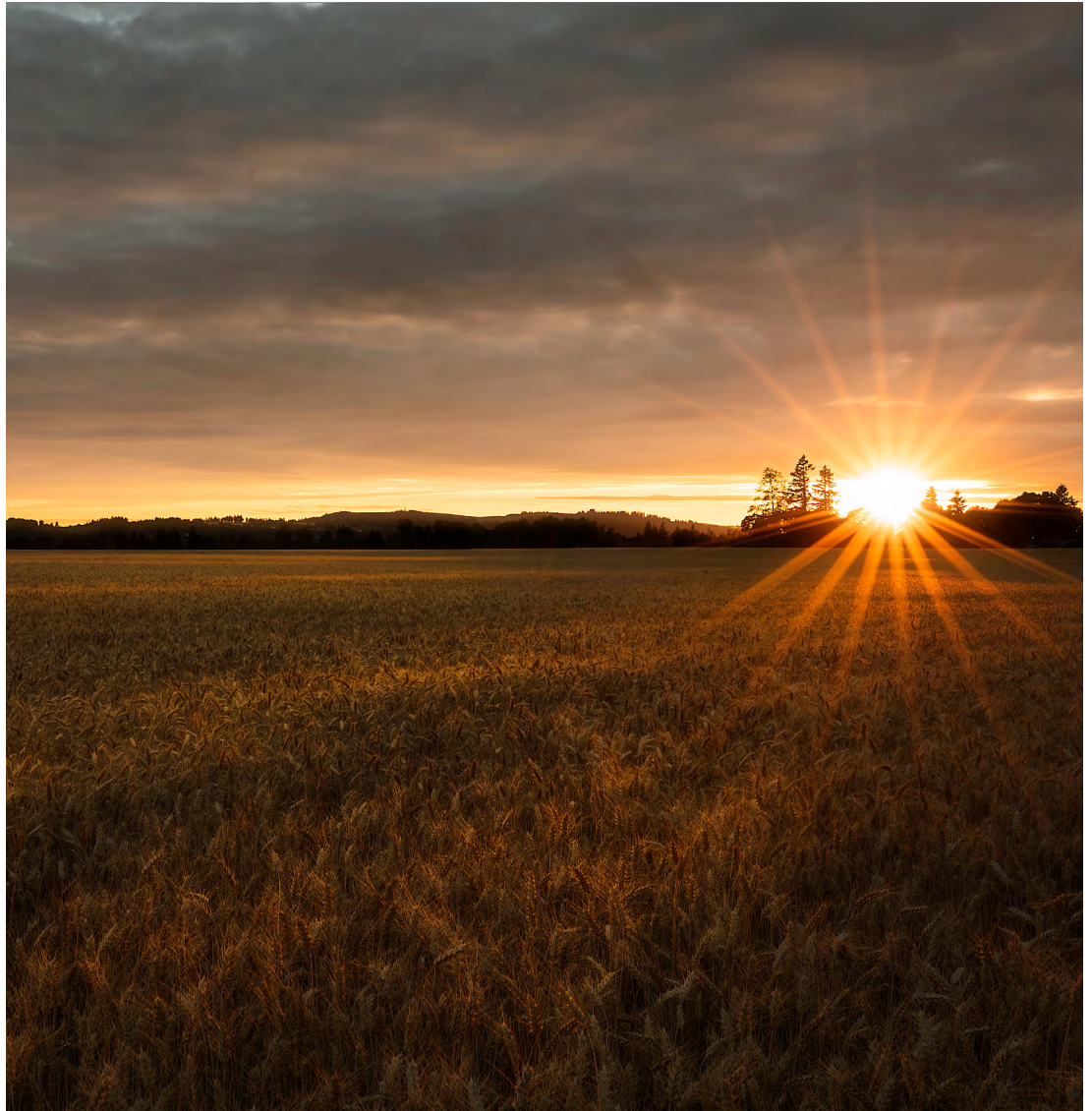
ROBERT'S LETTER

what I am asked in most interviews. One recent interviewer asked me at what point I would consider the mission of the RIF to be complete. I answered that the mission will never be fulfilled. As much as we grow and as many more people as we are able to help year over year, there is always more to do.

This fact could be a source of sorrow or regret. Indeed, the idea that there are yet more veterans out there not getting the support they need is one that could keep me up at night. Instead, I use this fact to strengthen my resolve, and my team follows suit. I have a tremendous amount of pride in our organization and the tireless, passionate efforts of everyone who works at the RIF. Collectively, we will never allow perfect to be the enemy of good.

Ronald Reagan was perhaps more to the point when he said, "We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone."

I want you to carry that ethos with you in your daily life. You'll never be able to help everyone who needs help, but one small act of kindness could inspire other acts of kindness in the world around you. Moreover, helping others is good for your mental health. Counterintuitively, it is



The "Amber Waves of Grain" represent so much more than the abundance of this great nation. Their seemingly endless, expansive stretch represent the boundless opportunities we have to become whatever we wish to be.

not hobbies or leisure or pleasure-seeking that can bring us the most joy and happiness. It is helping others. Because unlike selfish acts, selfless acts give us purpose, resolve, and meaning. And it is why, even if you feel like you might be the one most in need of help, it is important to find someone to whom you can lend a helping hand.

You could be saving two lives:

theirs and yours.

Until next time, remember the words I live by:

Nothing is impossible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Irvine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent initial "R".

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THE BEST WAY TO LONG-TERM FAT LOSS

Why the old calorie restriction-and-cardio combo is a trap you need to avoid.

BY STEVE WRONA, C.S.C.S., CPT

It's supposed to be simple: burn more calories than you eat on a daily basis to burn that stubborn body fat. But why does something that is so seemingly simple prove to be so difficult? What happens when eating less and moving more stops working, and why do some people work so tirelessly but see little to no success?

The problem with eating less and moving more is that it doesn't seem to be an effective long-term strategy for keeping those pounds off. In fact, if you've tried dieting to lose weight in the past you've probably realized by now just how hard it is to achieve long-term weight loss. Restricting calories and doing cardio is a great way to lose weight in the short term, but the moment we decide to ease up on the structured cardio plan and go "off" our diet and



back to a more normal way of eating we often see all that extra weight come back with a vengeance. Many people rebound from a diet and wind up even heavier than they were before they began.

The problem is that with a lack of good information about how to achieve lasting success and

with so many mixed messages being spread in fitness media and the latest trends on social media, our heads spin and we seek the next quick fix or revert to what worked for us last time – eating less and moving more.

Here's why this is such a terrible cycle and why this approach doesn't work. Our daily calorie

TRAINING: PRO TIPS

burn is a combination of a few different components. The most impactful of those components on our long-term success is our basal metabolic rate or BMR (the number of calories we burn at rest each day). The biggest factor in determining our BMR is our lean body mass (or lack thereof). A person with more muscle mass and more lean body mass will burn a heck of a lot more calories than somebody with very little muscle mass and less lean mass.

This is where we start to connect the dots and talk about why cardio and restrictive dieting is not helping you stay lean. Our bodies are fascinating machines.

They can adapt to almost any situation and are constantly listening to the signals we are sending them through our behaviors so that they can adapt and become more efficient. Doing lots of cardio sends a signal that the body needs to get better and more efficient at doing lots of cardio.

Since cardio does not require a lot of muscle mass, one way our body adapts in response to cardio is by getting rid of excess muscle in an effort to make cardio less calorically demanding. In regards to diet, eating a tiny amount of calories for a period of time sends a signal that the body needs to adapt to having less available energy. This can

also cause the body to get rid of some lean mass because muscle tissue requires a higher amount of calories to maintain and excess muscle is not vital for our survival. Adaptations to cardio and restrictive dieting usually include a reduction in lean body mass which is sometimes quite significant. With less lean body mass comes a lower BMR and a lower overall daily calorie burn. We are left at the end of our diet with a slower metabolism than when we started.

When we go back “off” the diet it’s even easier to regain the lost weight since our metabolism is slower and we are likely eating the same way we did before our



TRAINING: PRO TIPS



trying to convince people of the many health benefits of strength training: A more aesthetically-pleasing body, an improved mood, a more youthful hormone profile, healthier blood lipids and cholesterol, decreased all-cause mortality, increased bone density, and less joint pain as a few would just be giving you the tip of the iceberg. In fact, there are few things in this world that provide as many benefits as a properly executed strength training program, and the biggest benefit

diet started. Now we're heavier than before we began and we've done damage to our metabolism. Is this starting to make sense? How can we lose weight and keep it off if every time we try we gain it right back and slow our metabolism down even further? The real horror in this lies in its cyclical pattern.

A person who has undergone multiple diets and relied on cardio as their primary catalyst for calorie burn will most likely have done so much metabolic damage that they will be left in one of two places: !) They are heavier than ever before with

less muscle mass, more body fat, and a metabolism that is so slow their old method of dieting and doing cardio seems to do nothing... or 2) They are skinny but not very muscular and the only way they can maintain that is by doing absurd amounts of physical activity and eating like a bird.

I don't know about you, but to me both of those positions sound like a very frustrating prison. Luckily for you, for me, and for anyone in those scenarios, there is a solution: and it begins in the weight room.

I've spent my entire career

when it comes to long-term fat loss is an increase in lean body mass.

When we build muscle by following a structured weight training program, we increase our BMR and boost our metabolism at rest.

Even just adding a few pounds of muscle can have a profound effect on our metabolism. The best part of all is that it doesn't take much to effect positive change.

Most beginner and intermediate trainees can see incredible results with only 1 to 3 days per week of strength training

TRAINING: PRO TIPS

the whole body in just 30 to 60 minutes per session. As we adapt and advance over time we can add additional workouts or spend a little more time per session, but for most people a minimal investment can provide a tremendous return. Strength training is like investing in your future. Each time you come to the gym and train with weights you are investing in your metabolism. By making small deposits week in and week out your metabolism will grow just like your 401K.

Over a few months or years of making these investments your BMR can increase by hundreds of calories per day and help your body burn more fat around the clock each day.

Someone who raises their BMR by 500 calories per day (ex. From 1500/day to 2000/day) will burn an additional POUND of body fat every single week while at rest.

That's 52 pounds of bodyfat in a year just because we got our metabolism to function better! If you're already at a healthy place and don't want to lose 52 pounds of fat that's fine, just think of how much additional food you can enjoy year-round all while maintaining a lean and healthy physique.

The one hurdle that we must overcome to get these benefits is the desire for instant gratification. Muscle isn't built overnight and a damaged metabolism isn't magically made healthy after a

couple of weightlifting sessions. When you walk a mile into the woods you still have to walk a mile to get back out. This is why initially I would encourage those of you ready to try this path to put away the scale for a few months and focus on getting stronger.

Your body will begin to look and feel better, but as you gain muscle mass and start eating in a less restrictive way to fuel your metabolism you will probably not see many pounds fall off right away. What you will see is a reduction in body fat and an increase in muscle mass. Your belts will fit a little tighter and you'll start to be able to lift heavier weights for more reps. You'll also probably feel yourself getting hungrier each day. These are all positive signs that your metabolism is trending towards health.

Remember, we are looking for long-term fat loss not just a flash-in-the-pan crash diet that leaves you worse off than when you started. Once you've made a significant investment in your metabolism then you can begin with a mild caloric deficit and watch as your body fat melts off much easier than ever before. I've seen people go from overweight to fit and healthy by following this protocol and the best part is that they are eating more calories now than they did when they were overweight.

If you've struggled with unsuccessful diet and exercise

programs in the past and are looking for long term success, don't lose hope. The first step is to take it easy on yourself. You're going to need to be nice to your body for a little while by feeding it well and starting an introductory weight training program. The best steps you can take are to seek help from a professional coach or trainer who can help you create a custom training program and work with you to understand what type of healthy nutrition your body needs to function its best.

I will be working with Robert Irvine and his team to continue to provide you with the best fitness information to help you stay empowered and thrive. In future articles we will explore the best way to begin with a functional strength training program and discuss how small changes can provide BIG results.

I look forward to providing you with guidance and information to help you all live healthier and more vibrant lives. Remember, the first step is always the hardest but if you can learn to enjoy the process you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish when you get the momentum rolling in the right direction. Now go invest in your health and watch your life get better, bit by bit.

Steve Wrona is a Tampa, FL-based personal trainer whose newest client is our very own Robert Irvine. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

TRAINING: SUMMER WORKOUT



THE MED BALL WORKOUT

You don't always need a full gym and an hour to train. Sometimes, 20 minutes and a medicine ball will do.

DIRECTIONS: Perform the following workout as a circuit; do all the reps listed for each exercise and then move on to the next exercise without resting. Rest 90-120 seconds after each round. Do Circuit I three times before moving on to Circuit II, then do Circuit II three times through, resting 90-120 seconds at the end of each round. In addition to the med ball, you will need an open space and a wall.

CIRCUIT I

EXERCISE

Med Ball Squat
 Med Ball Slam
 Wall Ball Shot
 Overhead Toss
 Russian Twist
 (15 each side)
 Med Ball Lunge-
 and-Twist
 (10 each leg)

REPS

15
 15
 10
 10
 30
 20

CIRCUIT II

EXERCISE

Med Ball Pushup
 Side Slam
 (10 each side)
 Wood Chops
 (10 each side)
 Overhead Squat
 Med Ball Situp
 Med Ball Plank

REPS

12
 20
 20
 15
 20
 60
 seconds

TRAINING: SUMMER WORKOUT

EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS

MED BALL PUSHUP (at right):

Set a medicine ball on the ground and get into a pushup position with both hands on the ball. Squeeze the ball to keep it stable and prevent it from rolling away from you. Lower your chest to the ball and then push back up. Concentrate on keeping your body from shoulders to ankles in a straight line.

MED BALL LUNGE-AND-TWIST (below right):

Hold a medicine ball straight out in front of you and perform walking lunges, keeping your torso upright throughout. As you step forward, twist toward your the side of your forward leg, keeping the ball away from you.

MED BALL SQUAT: Holding a med ball at your chest, squat low to the ground; try to get your thighs parallel to the floor on each rep.

MED BALL SLAM: Hold the med ball overhead with both hands and your arms fully extended. Explosively slam the ball to the ground, aiming for a spot just in front of your feet. Catch the ball on the rebound and immediately go into the next rep.

OVERHEAD TOSS: Hold the medicine ball with both hands at your waist. Go into a half squat, then explosively extend your hips and raise your arms quickly. Release the ball overhead so that it propels behind you. Run to get the ball, then immediately go into your next rep.



TRAINING: SUMMER WORKOUT



WALL BALL SHOT (at left): Stand facing a wall. Holding the medicine ball at your chest with both hands, squat low to the ground. As you explosively stand back up, throw the ball up the wall, shooting it as high as you can. Catch it or let it fall to the ground, then immediately go into your next rep.

RUSSIAN TWIST: Sit on the ground holding the medicine ball at your chest with both hands. Extend your arms away from your body, bend your knees and raise your feet off the ground, then twist the ball from side to side, reaching for your hips with each rep.

SIDE SLAM: Stand next to a wall holding a medicine ball straight out in front of you. Twist away from the wall, then twist back toward it, releasing the ball into the wall as you do so. Catch the ball on the rebound and then immediately go into your next rep. Perform an equal number of reps on each side.

WOOD CHOPS: Stand holding a medicine ball overhead, extending your arms over your right shoulder. Make a chopping motion across your body, bringing the ball down to your left foot. Do 10 reps from your right shoulder to your left foot, then 10 reps from your left shoulder to your right foot.

OVERHEAD SQUAT: Stand holding a medicine ball with both hands over your head. Keeping your arms fully extended, squat low to the ground. Try to get your thighs parallel to the ground on each rep.

MED BALL SITUP: (See Pg. TK) Hold a medicine ball away from your chest and lie on the ground. Sit up, keeping the ball away from your body. Don't round your back.

MED BALL PLANK: Get into a plank position with both elbows on the ball and your entire body in a straight line. Flex your abs and breathe behind this brace.

LET'S HELP OUR HEROES



The Robert Irvine Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of our military personnel, first responders, and their families. 100% of all funds raised go directly to those who need it most. To learn more about Robert's commitment to our military and first responders, please visit [RobertIrvineFoundation.com](#)

**ROBERT
IRVINE**
FOUNDATION



ON THE COVER:

ASH AVILDSEN

Queen of the Ring is the incredible true story of Mildred Burke, the preeminent pioneer of women's professional wrestling.

We sat down with director Ash Avildsen to talk about what drew him to the story, and what drives him to be his best self every day.

INTERVIEW
BY MATT TUTHILL

ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE: I want to talk about all the casting, but let's start with Josh Lucas. He gets these roles as a smarmy, sleazy kind of guys, but you gave him a lot more to work with playing promoter Billy Wolfe. I found myself really wanting to trust him, even though I knew I probably shouldn't. As someone who didn't know how the story plays out, he brings you along for that ride.

ASH AVILDSEN: Yeah, it was totally by design, and some of that was taking creative liberties from the book because Billy was a lot



Ash Avildsen photos by Storm Santos

more brutal in the book, but he was still the only show in town. So it's like if Harvey Weinstein, if you're an actress and you want to be in movies and that's your dream, and there's only one movie studio and it's run by Harvey and

there's no one else that can put you in a movie. It's like, what do you do?

So when I was designing the screenplay, I realized that we need the audience to still identify with Mildred and why she would

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

go back to Billy. Because you're watching a woman get emotionally abused, physically abused, there's infidelity, yet we're rooting for her and relating to her going back to her abuser, and that's a fine line to walk.

So I think Josh did a great job, because the way we played it was like, let's still give him that glimmer of hope that maybe he can change and we'll forgive him with Mildred, we'll tolerate him just one more time.

RI: I felt that anyone who's been in an abusive relationship, any family members who have had to witness one, would look at that and it's going to play as real. It's going to just resonate in such a way, because when abusers are not abusing, they can be quite charming.

ASH: Yeah. We had a single mom come to the St. Augustine Film Festival and she brought her son and she was in tears after. What she had to say was so powerful. She was saying exactly what you're saying. It was the way it hit her because she had lived it, and Josh was so good with showing how with certain people, you keep giving them another chance and you keep getting more and more

messed up by it. I felt the fact that it's landing like this with the women that have had the most similar stories to Mildred in real life, no matter what happens, I will be able to sleep at night and knowing we landed the plane with the people that I think are the most important.

“No matter what happens, I will be able to sleep at night knowing we landed the plane with the people that I think are most important.”

RI: How many people did you audition for Mildred, and what was it that won you over about Emily?

ASH: Emily we went out to. So it was challenging to find an actress that was in the right age range that already had some body mass that would be believable as Mildred, but even before putting on muscle and whatnot, that had the right natural physique. 'Cause some of this is just genetic.

You can put on muscle mass and whatnot. You can gain weight and all those things, but your natural body type and your bone structure and all these things are also a part of this.

And so she had, I think, a very believable natural body mass that could be seen to be Mildred.

And you can't really fake that. No matter how much someone trains, you still have to have a natural physique to emulate what Mildred Burke was. So that honestly narrowed it down a good bit, especially when she starts off wrestling men. And she wasn't tall. She really had a very defined wrestlers legs, which was... There just weren't a lot of women that were putting themselves out there back then that had that type of physique.

So Emily, she didn't actually straight-up audition. I found her. And I wasn't familiar with her work, but I found her looking around on agent's sites and I was like, "Wow, she's got the face, she's got the charisma, she's got the physique. This could be our Millie." And then after watching a bunch of her footage, we sent her the script and see if she responds to the material, and she immediately did. And then it was just, I can't imagine anyone else

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

playing her now. I'm so thrilled with her performance and I'm so happy that audiences and critics are both really praising her. I really hope it leads to her getting more leading roles because she can totally lead a feature film and she deserves all the praise she's getting.

RI: What was it that really grabbed you about the book and connected with you? Because

you must read a million magazine stories and books and your head must be floating with all different ideas that this could be a great movie, but to actually go down the path and then spend a few years of your life working on just this one story, it must've had a deep resonance with you. Is it because Mildred is this outsize heroic figure and she's a single mother, and you were also raised by a single mother?



Actress Emily Bett Rickards was offered the part of Mildred Burke outright. "I'm so thrilled with her performance," Avildsen said. "I can't imagine anyone else playing her now."

ASH: Yeah, I was raised by a single mom and also a single mom that took me to a wrestling match, not because she liked it, but because she knew what it meant to me, I grew up a fan. But the relationship between her and her son and also just her being a single mom and wanting to still chase her own dreams while not giving up being a great mother, it really got to me on the human level because of my upbringing. And then as a wrestling fan and someone who just loves history, I was just mesmerized that all these things had happened back then that I had never heard of because the WWE at the time didn't really address any of them.

So the fact that women's wrestling was illegal, the fact that they were actually drawing more than men, that they were shoot matches (a wrestling match with no pre-determined outcome where the wrestlers legitimately fight one another) with live audiences. I mean, I was like, this is... what a world. How does nobody know about this? I was hooked on an emotional personal level because of all the elements with the family side. And then just from a storytelling standpoint and the truth is stranger than fiction. It was a wild time in American culture and in female athletics. I was enchanted.

And I recommend to everyone if they liked the movie at all, if they have any interest, definitely get the book. The book is so great. There's so much story in there, and all these different characters really deserve their own movies.

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

RI: The movie is so smart about not sugarcoating the sexist and racist obstacles that the women faced, but also not ruminating on them in a made-for-TV movie sort of way. Were you consciously aware of or fearful of not being too, I don't know, just melodramatic about it? It didn't stew on that stuff. It was really just about how these women overcame all these obstacles. It was all about their triumph.

ASH: Yeah, I didn't want to beat the audience over the head with it. It's heavy subject matter. And there's movies, of course, that are dedicated just to those specific types of plot points. But I also didn't want to just omit them. Because it gives you perspective, especially for Mildred as a character and everything she was doing then that you need to have all that around so you really can understand the gravity of what they were going through and how they really were just trailblazing culture. So while there are a lot of characters, and I wish we could spend time with more of them, we're limited because it's a movie that needs to have a beginning, middle, and end, and ideally under two and a half hours.

So I tried to be as tasteful as possible with including all those elements, but not taking too much time away from Mildred's story. She is our hero.

RI: You managed to cast the man of the moment, Walton Goggins as a wrestling promoter. Tell me about your experi-



In addition to creating Sumerian Pictures, Avildsen is also the founder of [Sumerian Records](#). Follow him on [Instagram](#).

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

ence working with him. He's such a magnetic scene-stealer, no matter what he's in. What did you do to get him to be part of your movie?

ASH: Yeah, Walton was great. I actually personally just reached out to his manager myself when we were going through all the agencies and the normal casting protocol. We were just running out of time and I was like, I just need as the director to make sure that these actors are actually getting the script. Because a lot of times it's easy to just never have an actor actually read your script because of just going through the gauntlet to get the script into their hands.

So I reached out directly to his

manager. She read the script right away, thought it was great, connected it to Walton and connected me to Walton. We had some great conversations and he signed on, and I just wish we had more time because he had a long time family vacation booked overseas. So we shot all of his scenes in the first five days of the film, because those are the only days he was available during our production.

And he was just terrific, man, and I'm so thrilled. This was before *Fallout* and *White Lotus* happened. So it's been just, as someone who's been a long-time fan of Walton and thought he didn't get the kind of attention that he deserves, now seeing him just completely catapult as the man

of the moment, I'm just cheering him on. I'm like, "Yes!" Give him his flowers. He totally earned it and he's so deserving of it all. So I'm just so thrilled for him.

RI: Your dad was a legendary filmmaker (John Avildsen, *Rocky*, *The Karate Kid*) but I read that he was not part of your life growing up, though you reconciled before he passed (in 2017). I think if I were in your shoes—if most people were in your shoes—they would want the answer to that question, "Why weren't you around?" to be really, really good. Did he have this great reason that you understood? Or did you just decide to table everything?



Walton Goggins plays the role of wrestling promoter Jack Pfefer. "He was just terrific," Avildsen says. "Seeing him completely catapult as the man of the moment, I'm just cheering him on."

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

ASH: I grew up very upset by the rejection and having his last name and not having him in my life and knowing that he was never there. And so at one point in my life, I was considering just changing my last name. So I was like, if I've never even spent time with him, why would I want to continue carrying the name? And when we finally connected in my thirties, at first I was just so excited to finally know him that I tried not to hold on to the anger from my youth and just meet him human to human and get to know him. And then after we had spent few months together, and it was so apparent like, yes, you are my dad and we have all sorts of simpatico, and this is really wonderful. When we went out for my first birthday together, he was like, "Hey, I'm not going to be here forever, so please ask me any hard questions you want."

And I asked him those hard questions, why he never acknowledged me or was in my life. And he didn't try to sugarcoat anything. He faced it, he owned it, and he apologized over and over and it felt very genuine. And forgiveness, it's not something that everyone is able to do, both to give or receive. And I'm really grateful that I did. It was very, very cathartic for me. And we just had such a great time for those two-and-a-half years that we were close before, sadly he just fell sick out of nowhere.

But yeah, I think, and again, going back to Mildred's story and single parent and her son growing up without a dad, that's

one of the biggest problems in society that doesn't get talked about a lot is that most boys that grow up without dads usually go to one extreme or the next. They usually are constantly trying to overachieve because of the psychological element of feeling that rejection and need to prove yourself. Or I think the statistic is somewhere around like 68 to 73% more likely to end up in a life of crime, poverty, drugs, or violence.

That's not a political statement, that's just the data. When you really look into the data of kids that grow up in single parent households, but especially boys without dad, it's pretty devastating. And this is a long-winded answer, thanks for listening to my TED talk, but being able to forgive him was... When you hold on to anger and resentment and hatred or any of that, it's like you're swallowing poison, but wanting it to affect the other person.

RI: Did he get to mentor you at all about filmmaking?

ASH: He did. Yeah. And we actually started working on the book together. We went out to dinner with Jim Ross who told me about the book. Me and my pops and JR went out and then we were both reading the book and we said, "Hey, let's each read it on our own and underline our favorite scenes and moments and lines and then compare independently what we gravitated towards our own." And it was like nine out of 10, we were picking all the same moments, which was

really fun to see that we had such similar taste in what we thought the best parts of the book were to put into a film.

Because there's so much story in there. I mean it really is an incredible piece of non-fiction, and it's just never ending the amount of material in there that you can pull from. But we did read the book together and then started this after the screenplay, and then sadly he passed away from pancreatic cancer.

He didn't know anything about pro wrestling, but he just loved the theatrics of all. He just thought it was so clever and he was really kind of watching just an older person discover the magic of wrestling for the first time, especially someone that comes from a theater storytelling background and then falling in love with the art form. So that was really cool to watch as he read the book.

RI: You've written, you've directed, you created your own music label, you've enjoyed success in these hyper-competitive industries. We have readers that write in to Robert all the time and say they feel stuck. They feel stuck in bad relationships, stuck in their fitness goals, they can't lose weight, stuck in lousy jobs. What is your best advice for getting unstuck?

ASH: I would say find out in your heart why you feel it is that you are stuck, acknowledging this is why it's happening. And come up with an idea, and it doesn't have to be all at once,

ON THE COVER: ASH AVILDSSEN

but somehow that you can get better than you were yesterday. And it's easy to feel like I need to be here by now. And everyone, there's a great joke I heard from a good friend. He's like, "My entire life can be summed up in one sentence. 'Well, that didn't go as fucking planned.'" And we can all laugh and relate to that. I thought everyone was going to love period women's wrestling, and this movie was going to be lightning in a bottle and everyone was going to go, "Oh my God." And it was going to be like the eighties all over again.

And even though people love the movie, that's not what happened. It's a small indie film and we're fighting for anyone to even hear about it. But with life, it's so easy to put all of this weight on ourselves of like, I should have done this, or I should be here by now. But all we can do is be better than the day before. And that's the only real way you can gauge anything is like, how am I today versus yesterday? And if you constantly strive to just be better and further along than you were yesterday and you go literally day

by day, it's much easier to see the progress. But we lose track of the day by day. And if you just set the daily goals, if you set the daily goals and less than the daily goals, it's the hourly goals, then you can start to make progress and that can inspire you. And then you can actually see, okay, things are happening hour by hour, day by day. I am making progress in what I'm setting out to do. And it's just way too easy to get lost in the weeds of just generalizing things by months and years and then feeling hopeless.



Rent or buy *Queen of the Ring* on [Amazon](#) or [Fandango at Home](#).

HOW I SAW IT

Gail Kim-Irvine is a women's wrestling legend, so there's no one better to deliver an unvarnished review of *Queen of the Ring*.

Gail Kim-Irvine is much more than Robert's better half. She's a legendary wrestler with a rabid fanbase (just check the fanatical engagement on her social media sometime) having wrestled in both WWE and TNA. In the latter promotion, she was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2016. She retired from the ring in 2017, but continued to work behind the camera as a producer. So just what did a seasoned veteran of women's wrestling think of Queen of the Ring? Well, here she is in her own words:

"I went into it with a very open mind. It's a movie that is, first and foremost, celebrating women's wrestling and the pioneers who put it on the map. I think it's amazing that someone made a movie about that and I didn't want technical nitpicking to get in the way of my enjoyment. It's hard for wrestlers to watch anything pro wrestling-related and not look at it through the lens of knowing the business. For a quick example there are little things—like when there's an open challenge at the fairgrounds and some guys come in off the street—they enter the ring like pros. Non-wrestling regular people have no idea how to enter a ring; it's an awkward thing to do, even though it seems like such a simple thing. I have watched fans get into a ring and have no clue how to. At the

same time, I understood this is a movie for general audiences, not just for wrestling veterans. So I set that aside and just enjoyed the movie for the entertainment and historical details.

When I did: wow. The promoter played by Josh Lucas, Billy Wolfe—everything about him seemed like an accurate portrayal of what a wrestling promoter would be like, especially back then. Some of the stories that were brought up in this film are challenging, and could be a triggering reminder of what women have had to endure and on a lesser scale today of what they still struggle with.

There are still a lot of challenges that women in wrestling today will face such as pay equity and the lack of female leadership in companies. But seeing how far we have come, especially recently with the popularity of women's wrestling rising, the movie was a reminder that it's taken that long to make this much progress.

I know a lot of women who were in it, and it was very nice to see



people from the wrestling world represented. Every woman wrestler had such a great performance and I loved the diversity of the cast and it was always a pleasant surprise to see each familiar face pop up. Shout out to Jim Cornette's cameo in the film, as well.

Final thoughts: Yes, I would recommend it. It puts a spotlight on women's wrestling and Mildred Burke in particular, who was very important. Even if so many of the same challenges still exist, she and her contemporaries were true pioneers. I always welcome movies or shows that highlight those who fought for the progress that has been made for future generations."

INTERVIEW:

MARCIA KIMPTON

She's an author, an award-winning filmmaker, and a world traveler who's seen it all. (She's even got a new app—Kimpton Travels and Films—that's loaded with recommendations for both, as well as original content.) Here, she talks about why it's so important to see the world, and her game-changing decision to stop living “in resistance” and start embracing everything coming her way.

INTERVIEW BY
MATT TUTHILL

ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE:
You're a passionate traveler. What is it that feeds your soul about seeing the world?

MARCIA KIMPTON: I just love every aspect of planning and getting ready, even if it's a place that I've been to many times. For a long time it was the adventure of finding a new place and a new experience. I find I'm more creative, curious, and open when to new ideas when I'm in a new place. Right now, I'm planning a trip to France and



Photo by Storm Santos

Kimpton is the author of the memoir [Escaping The Hollywood Bardo](#). She grew up as a frequent traveler, and is the daughter of the late Bill Kimpton, founder of the prestigious Kimpton Hotel chain.

I love every aspect. And France is the one country I've gone to over and over more than any other. But it's interesting, because I'm getting just as excited about France as I would about Bhutan.

RI: When did you get the bug and what was the first place you visited where you said that sort of, I don't know, gave you that itch to see more?

MK: Well, I grew up with two sets of

INTERVIEW: MARCIA KIMPTON

parents. My parents got divorced early and I grew up north of Chicago and San Francisco, and both sets traveled a lot to Europe. At 18, my mother and my stepfather gave me the gift of going with my stepfather to Europe. So we must have gone to five or six countries at 18 and then that was it. I spent the whole next summer of college saving all my money to go the next summer with my boyfriend at the time and his friends backpacking. And then we went to I think eight, nine countries and that was it. So by 20 years old, the only objective to my life outside of knowing I wanted to be a filmmaker and wanting to be in the entertainment business, I I wanted to travel.

There was this spontaneity and meeting different cultures and different food and different everything. And back then it really, the EU currency didn't work, you didn't have a cell phone, and you didn't easily get around. You really felt like when you went from France to Italy, it was completely different with currency, hotel, everything.

RI: When you don't get to travel for a while, what do you notice about yourself? Do you start to get antsy? Down, depressed, anything like that?

MK: I think the longest I've ever been home at one time is two or three months. I always seem to be moving house. And I've been recently living in

Hawaii – the past nine months. And right now I'm in Colorado.

I used to suffer from very serious depression and I medicated with alcohol and marijuana for years. And then once I got seriously into my yoga and meditation practice, I really don't. So I don't really suffer from depression about it. I just like things that are unfamiliar; it keeps my curiosity and it keeps life interesting and exciting. But I don't get depressed

*“Life can be so hard,
but you can get
through anything.
I promise you.”*

about it. It makes it hard sometimes with your social life because if you're always moving, you don't really have the same community.

RI: Even as someone who doesn't travel a lot, I understand the appeal. You meet new people, you appreciate all this beauty, you absorb all this wonder and it's this incredibly stimulating experience. But aside from just enjoying it, what do you think it has given you?

MK: I think it does open pathways for

writing because I'm a creator. I think when I go to different places, there are certain places that stimulate me more like Greece. And Hawaii is where I write my best. The thing that it really does, it makes me realize that people are really good and that it's the media that is making us into different than what we are. I mean, if you're not in a war zone, you can find your way anywhere and people are generally good and want to help.

And whenever there's an opportunity to be in the local situation, to get away from the beaten path and do as the locals do, I just thrive on it. Like in India, I didn't want to do the taxi if I could take a rickshaw. I find that there are so many good people constantly wanting to tell you about their culture.

RI: Do you have a bucket list place that you haven't gotten to yet?

MK: Norway and I want to do the fjords.

I really want to go to St. Petersburg, Russia and I don't know why I haven't yet. But at the moment that's obviously an iffy situation.

Another one, Israel I'm dying to go to, as well as Lebanon and Jordan. Oh, and Namibia, I'm going to go there. That'll be my next African country.

RI: The average American—maybe they go somewhere on their honeymoon, Hawaii or Cancun or something like that and then it's like 20 years before they go somewhere else.

INTERVIEW: MARCIA KIMPTON



Photo by Chantal Speiard

For the person who never travels, what is—not necessarily your favorite place in the whole world—but what is the first place you find yourself recommending. “Oh you’ve got to go to... blank”

MK: That’s such a hard question because I always say Bhutan, but truthfully, I’m in the Rocky Mountains right now, and if you’re an American and haven’t been to the Rockies, they are

just gorgeous. Bhutan is not the Rocky Mountains. Bhutan has got this architecture and dress and a certain kind of real peaceful happiness. But the Rockies have that peaceful happiness, too. So I wouldn’t say Bhutan for someone in America who could more easily go to Colorado. Another place that comes immediately to mind that would give you one of the most amazing experiences is Laos because it’s got this incredible

Asian culture mixed with the French because the French took over.

RI: The wellness retreats that you organize. I know those are kicking into high gear this year. So when is the first one? Where is it? What can people expect?

MK: They’re very small because I’m trying to curate them to be very small and affordable. They may turn into being a little bit bigger and a little bit more expensive. But the one I’ve got is in Oahu. It’s near the north shore and it’s very simple. There will be yoga, acupuncture, massage, meditation.

And then a boat activity. I’m also going to do Tahoe in September.

There’s an opportunity to change in five days, and there’s an option to do it three. I have gone through such a tremendous personal journey, learning how to heal myself out of real depression, which I think was not just genetic, but also spiritual. And then to see how to alchemize and transmute your life to have more joy and happiness.

Because I think a lot of people are struggling today. And the first thing I’d say is turn off the media. So there will not be any media. It’s a digital detox and helps you find a new sense of yourself. So that’s the goal with the retreats.

RI: These days, when you feel stuck, what do you do?

MK: Well, for years I lived in resistance because I couldn’t make it in Hollywood and I couldn’t get my projects sold and I lived in tremendous resistance.

RI: If we could pause there, what do you mean by you lived in resistance?

MK: It means that I didn’t accept what was coming at me and seeing com-

INTERVIEW: MARCIA KIMPTON

pletely the positive. I do that now. So the biggest change in my life is instead of going straight to the wine and going, “Fuck, why is this happening to me?” I try not to go to the wine. I mean it’s always a challenge because I love my Chardonnay, but it’s less of a challenge these days because I love feeling good. Now I go immediately to ground myself with God. I really believe in a higher self and I immediately find now what is the obstacle that I can transcend and not resist? The other thing: The mind will control you and it will find every negative obstacle, your higher self and God don’t do that. They’re always serving you, always finding a way for you to get out of your situation and find a new dimension of reality.

But what happens is we get stuck in what we think we want and what we think we know. And then the mind has kind of a groundhog day and it just keeps on going, over and over. So what happens is after enough resistance and depression and not getting my dreams—because I was going to be the big starlet and filmmaker and late-night host in Hollywood—once I didn’t resist anymore and I kind of accepted whatever was coming at me and found what could be good out of this and keep on asking God or my higher self for guidance in this difficult situation, I got out of it. I lived and I became stronger and better.

One thing I would recommend, even if you’re not trying to get it published, is to write your own memoir. I did the memoir, *Escaping Hollywood Bardo*, to people and especially women filmmakers. I’ve had a lot of adversity and trauma in my life and we all have it. So I’m not saying mine’s more than others. But I’ve had enough, yet I live with so much joy and happiness most of the



Be sure to download Kimpton’s app: [Kimpton Travels and Films](#). It’s loaded with travel and film recommendations, as well as original content like *An American in Amsterdam* and her award-winning film *Bardo Blues* (pictured above)

time that I had transmuted it. And I didn’t realize that by writing a memoir, what happens is, you start to see the patterns in your life and then you see the patterns that you had in childhood and then you realize, wait, I don’t want this pattern anymore. I don’t want to be rejected by Hollywood anymore. I don’t want to reject myself, which is drinking too much. How am I going to stop that?

And what was interesting is the second that I didn’t give Hollywood all that power, I started to make more success

in my art, even if it wasn’t recognized by Hollywood. My inner life became happy with the process of just creating the art and then like I’m going with my latest film to film festivals and getting the joy out of people just seeing it, even if Hollywood doesn’t put it in every theater. So what happens is if you write your memoir, you see the patterns that you need to change, you start changing them.

Life can be so hard, but you can get through anything, I promise you.

SUMMER GRILLING

MASTER THE FLAME



Whether you're firing up the coals or turning on the gas, summer means grilling. But it's time to move beyond burgers and dogs. With the recipes on the following pages, you can mix and match to throw your ultimate backyard barbecue.

SUMMER GRILLING

TOMATO & AVOCADO



SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED

RANCH DRESSING:

½ cup low-fat buttermilk
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ cup chopped fresh parsley
½ cup chopped fresh tarragon
2 tbsp reduced-fat sour cream
1 tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise
½ tsp grated lime rind
¼ tsp minced fresh garlic
¼ tsp sea salt
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp turmeric
Dash of ground red pepper

SALAD:

4 large heirloom tomatoes
16 leaves basil, finely shredded
¼ teaspoon salt
1 red onion, sliced thinly and soaked in cold water
2 peeled avocado sliced
Black pepper, coarsely ground

MAKE IT

1) Combine all the ingredients for the dressing in a small food processor or blender; process 30 seconds or until pureed, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Cover and chill.
2) Slice each tomato into 4 equal slices (about ½-inch thick). Place

1 tomato slice on each of 4 salad plates; sprinkle slices evenly with ¼ teaspoon salt and basil. Top each serving with a few onion pieces and slices of avocado. Repeat layers 3 times, ending with avocado. Drizzle 2 tablespoons dressing over each serving; sprinkle with black pepper, if desired.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 145
PROTEIN: 3 g
FAT: 11 g
CARBS: 14 g

STEAK PANZANELLA



SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

1 lb skirt steak, trimmed
½ tsp kosher salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
3 tbsp avocado oil
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
2 cups arugula
½ cup thinly sliced red onion
½ cup thinly sliced fresh basil
2 large heirloom tomatoes, cut into wedges
1 medium cucumber, halved lengthwise and sliced
3 oz multi-grain French bread baguette, cubed and toasted

MAKE IT

- 1) Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
- 2) Season steak evenly with some of the salt and pepper. Add steak to a high heat grill and cook 3 to 4 minutes on each side to get a great sear, cook longer if desired temperature is more well done. Place steak on a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Cut into thin slices.
- 3) Combine salt, and pepper with oil, and vinegar in a large bowl with onion, tomatoes, and cucumber, steak and bread cubes, toss and let marinated for 10-15 minutes, then toss with basil and arugula and serve.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 231
PROTEIN: 6 g
FAT: 15 g
CARBS: 12 g

SUMMER GRILLING



GRILLED SALMON

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

1 small red onion, sliced thin
4 center-cut wild salmon steak,
6-oz each
1 lb small yukon gold potatoes
2 lemons, skin zested and reserved
1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
2 tbsp coconut oil
1 tsp kosher salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 pt heirloom cherry tomatoes cut
in half

2 tbsp finely chopped fresh mint
1 tbsp capers, chopped
2 tsp apple cider vinegar
2 tsp dijon mustard

MAKE IT

1) Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
2) Cut potatoes in half and toss with avocado oil, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Place on the grill and cook until tender, toss them with fresh squeezed lemon and zest and chopped thyme.

3) Combine onion, avocado oil, salt, pepper, tomatoes, mint, capers, vinegar, and mustard in a bowl.
4) Dry the fish and season with salt and pepper and oil. Grill fish for 4 minutes on each side. Serve fish with potatoes; top with tomato-onion salad.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 428
PROTEIN: 37 g
FAT: 18 g
CARBS: 28 g

SUMMER GRILLING

MARINATED LAMB



SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

- 1/8 cup chopped parsley
- 1/8 cup chopped thyme
- 1/8 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- 2 tsp honey
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 lamb racks cut into chops
- 1 cup greek Yogurt
- 1/2 cucumber peeled and grated
- 8 mint leaves finely chopped
- 1 tsp honey

MAKE IT

- 1) Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl, stirring well. Rub the lamb well and let sit for 4-6 hour refrigerated.
- 2) Mix all ingredients for the yogurt—Greek yogurt, cucumber, mint leaves, and honey—and refrigerate.
- 3) Grill lamb on high heat, over wood if available, for 2 minutes on each side or until desired doneness is achieved. serve with side dishes and yogurt sauce.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 454
PROTEIN: 54 g
FAT: 21 g
CARBS: 10 g

SUMMER GRILLING

GRILLED CHICKEN

WITH PINEAPPLE CANTALOUPE SALSA



SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

½ cup pineapple, small diced
½ cup cantaloupe small diced
½ cup small diced peeled English cucumber
¼ cup diced red onion
4 Brussels sprouts, leaves removed and blanched and shocked
3 tbsp chopped fresh mint
3 tbsp chopped cilantro
1 tsp grated lime zest
2 tbsp fresh lime juice

4 tsp avocado oil
1 tsp minced red jalapeño pepper
½ tsp kosher salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, 6 oz. each

MAKE IT

1) Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
2) Combine first 11 ingredients; stir in salt and black pepper, tossing well to combine.
3) Season chicken evenly with

remaining salt and black pepper. brush with avocado oil and place chicken on a grill rack, grilling 5 minutes on each side or until done. Serve with salsa.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 338
PROTEIN: 49 g
FAT: 13 g
CARBS: 8 g

SUMMER GRILLING



CHERRY-APPLE CRISP

SERVES 10

YOU'LL NEED

½ lb. dried tart cherries
1 cup boiling water
½ lb sweet cherries, pitted
1 lb green apples, peeled, core removed and sliced
⅓ cup granulated sugar
3 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
4 oz all-purpose flour (about ¾ cup)
1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
¼ cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup sliced almonds

1 tsp salt
3 oz unsalted butter, melted

MAKE IT

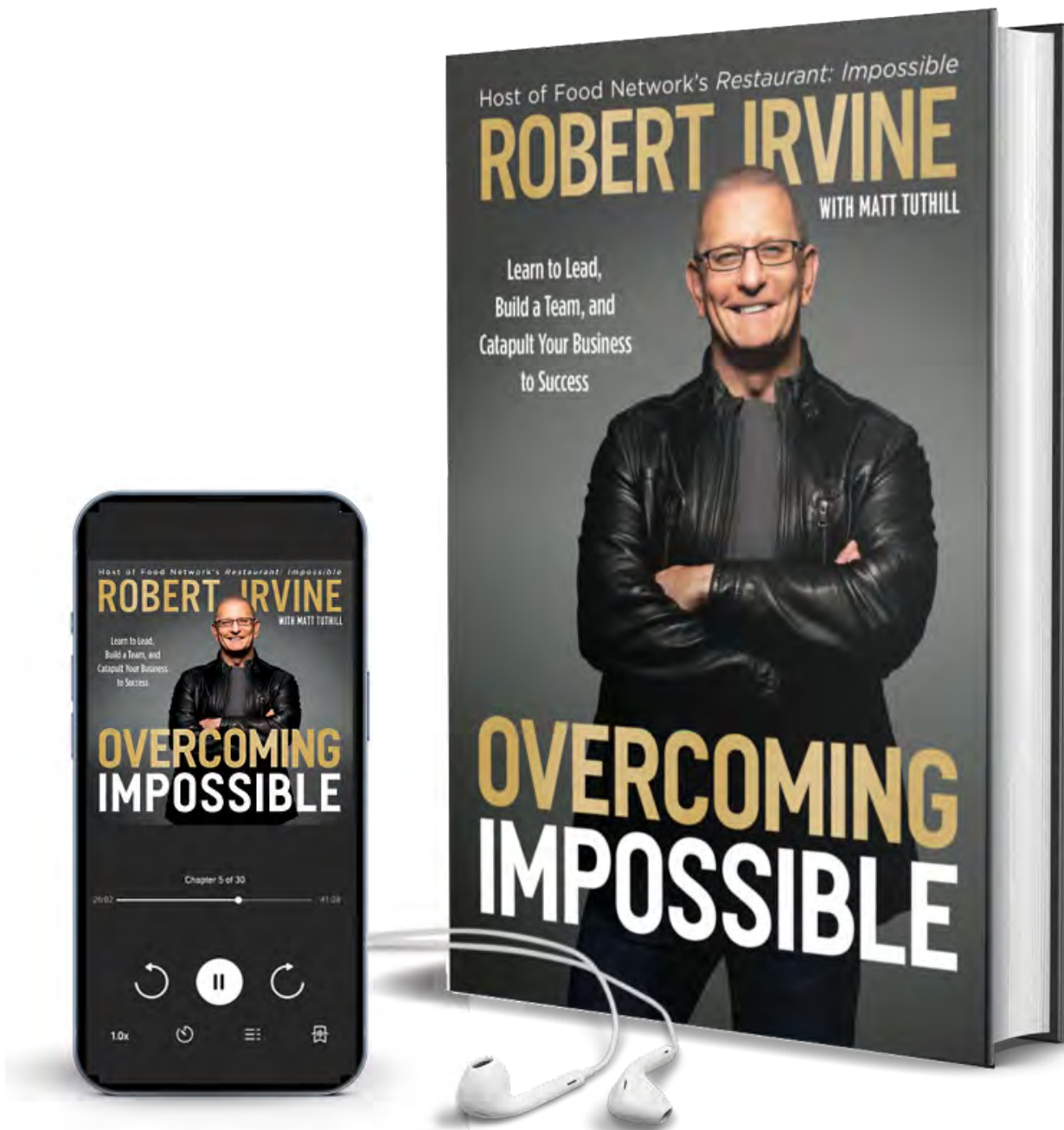
1) Combine dried cherries and boiling water in a small bowl; cover and let stand for 30 minutes.
2) Combine dried cherries with soaking liquid, 1 pound sweet cherries, 1 pound apples, sugar, flour, vanilla extract, cinnamon in a large bowl; stir well.
3) Pour the mixture into a 13 x 9-inch glass or ceramic baking dish lightly buttered. Bake at 375° for 40 minutes.
4) In a separate bowl add 4 ounces

flour, oats, brown sugar, almonds, and salt and stir well. Melt butter in a small bowl, and drizzle over oat mixture and mix well.

5) Remove the fruit from the oven, cover with the streusel topping. Bake for 20 minutes until golden brown. Let stand for 5 minutes; serve warm.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 288
PROTEIN: 6 g
FAT: 10 g
CARBS: 47 g



Wipe impossible from your vocabulary

Make achieving your goals and finding success possible with this one-of-a-kind guide by Robert Irvine, popular host of Food Network's *Restaurant: Impossible*.

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HOW TO: BEAT THE BLOAT

A comprehensive guide of what to eat and what to avoid before hitting the beach.

QUESTION:

I love spending my summers at the beach but dread the feeling of walking around feeling bloated all day in a bathing suit. I eat clean regularly, but I can't seem to avoid getting bloated. What foods should I stay away from to help prevent bloating? And what should I eat instead?

- Alyssa in CT

ANSWER BY SJ

McSHANE, CN, CPT: A case of the bloats can be annoying. Not only is it uncomfortable, but it conceals the hard work you've put in the gym and kitchen. The good news is, steering clear of a few food and drink choices—and making a few simple swaps—will help keep unwanted bloating at bay so you can make the best of your beach days.

High-Sodium Snacks

Although sodium-rich snacks like salsa, chips, and hotdogs might not make you gassy, they do cause water retention which can leave you looking and feeling bloated – especially if you go overboard on



the serving sizes.

Swap it: opt for low-sodium varieties of your favorite beach snacks and/or pair them with potassium-rich foods like avocado, mango, and banana. Potassium helps help flush excess sodium out of the body making them perfect beach day bites.

Cruciferous Veggies

They're packed with vitamins and fantastic for long-term healthy eating, but they will not work in

your favor on beach days. Foods like cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, and cabbage contain a complex sugar called raffinose which is known for causing unwanted bloating.

Swap it: Crunching on sliced vegetables such as cucumbers, carrots, and celery will give you your fill of nutrients while helping flush excess water out of the body.

Carbonated drinks

Bubbly beverages and belly bloat

ASK US ANYTHING



go hand-in-hand due to the high amounts of carbon dioxide (a gas) causing belly budging, belching, and trapped gas.

Swap it: If you find yourself craving the bubbles, sparkling water is a decent substitute when sticking to one serving. Add lemon (or your choice of fruit) to plain, cold water which will help your body naturally detox while keeping you hydrated under the summer sun. Coconut water is another great alternative helping to replenish lost electrolytes.

Sugar Alcohols

Xylitol, sorbitol, and mannitol are popular for causing bloating since they reach the large intestines unchanged where the gut bacteria feed on them. Gum, certain processed foods, and sweet drinks can contain these sweeteners so keep an eye out before you pack your beach bag.

Swap it: Stevia or organic sugar will provide sweetness to your drink of choice without the tummy rumbles and bathing suit bulge.

Other belly-bloating foods to avoid on beach day:

Onions – This popular veggie contains soluble fiber, (fructans), which can cause bloating.

Alcohol – Can cause dehydration which leads to water retention, while the carbonation can give you an instant beer belly.

Wheat and Dairy – If your body doesn't respond well to gluten or dairy, it's best to omit them completely on beach days.

Beans – Contain high fiber which is healthy for the body, but can leave you feeling distended.

Junk food – Processed foods high in fat, carbohydrates, sugars and salts can lead to instant bloating and inflammation.

Float Without the Bloat: Anti-bloating Foods & Drinks

Organic, low-sodium lean meats
Fruits: watermelon, papaya, berries, grapefruit, oranges, antelope, avocado, banana, grapes, pears, pineapple.

Veggies: cucumbers, celery, carrots, spinach, zucchini, asparagus, spaghetti squash.

Fermented foods (if tolerated well)

Oatmeal with cinnamon

Quinoa

Yogurt

Almonds

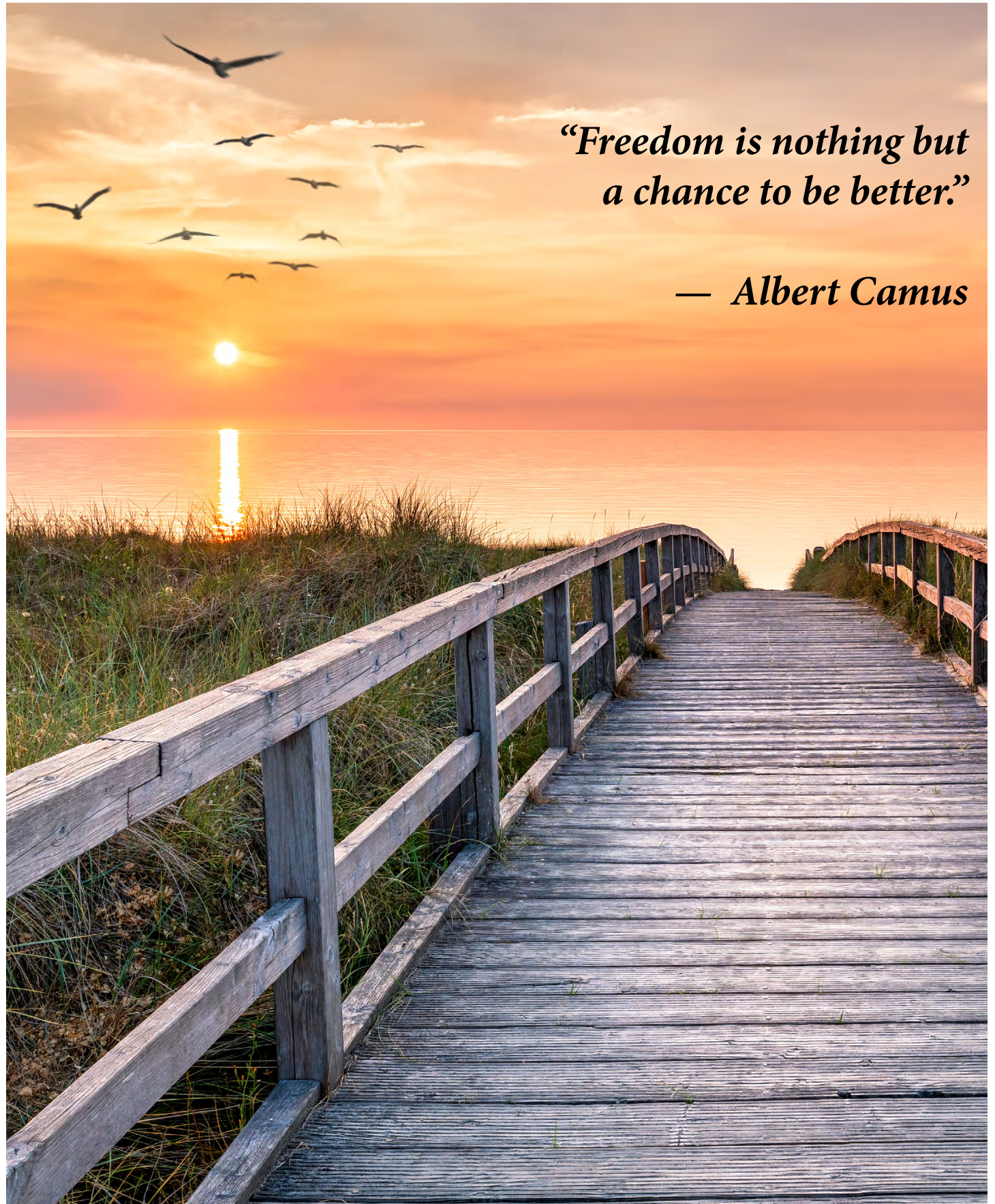
Water add-ins: Ginger, mint, lime, lemon, chia seeds,

Green tea, chamomile tea, peppermint tea

Kombucha

SJ McShane is a trainer, nutritionist, and Senior Writer for Robert Irvine Magazine. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and visit her [website](#).

WORDS TO LIVE BY



*“Freedom is nothing but
a chance to be better.”*

— Albert Camus