

MAKING MEMORIES

Kathleen Pagan finds joy leading a virtual community of designers

WRITTEN BY JORAM MUSHINSKE



Kathleen Pagan believes that watching what children do tells you exactly who they truly are. In her case, while most kids were playing with their friends, she was sitting in her mom's kitchen begging to learn how to cook. "I played 'party hostess' for my parents and re-designed my bedroom more times than I can count," she says. So, after spending years crunching numbers as she worked her way up to CFO of Terra Life Sciences, a pharmaceutical company, she couldn't shake the memories of how much she'd enjoyed rearranging her furniture, dolls, and other childhood belongings.

Her new line of work started with a blog. It was a place for Pagan to nurture her passions as a home cook and self-taught interior designer, while also carrying out the duties of a demanding career.

Through the blog, she built a community of close to 20,000 people with similar interests and was able to interact with them through chats, newsletters and various social media platforms. Inspired by the following that she had built, Pagan decided it was time to go for it. "After 36 years on Earth, I finally listened to that 8-year-old little girl within me," she says, "and I launched Endlessly Elated, my very own company."

Endlessly Elated is a direct-to-consumer, luxury homewares company. "It is a virtual destination inspired by the beauty and sacredness of home," Pagan says. "From recipes to interior design to creating home products, the company's mission is to celebrate life's everyday moments."

The company took the blog to the next level by offering Pagan's first tangible item for sale, a champagne coupe. She polled her online community, which decided that the stemware was the perfect item to celebrate the launch. "It was co-created with my consumers. They were part of the process," Pagan says. "After I understood what we should launch, it was my job to design it, find materials and a place to manufacture it." >

GET TO KNOW KATHLEEN PAGAN

endlesslyelated.com

[endlesslyelated](#)

AGE: 38

BORN AND RAISED IN Washington Heights, N.Y., before moving to West New York, N.J. at age 12

CURRENTLY SPLITS TIME BETWEEN Rutherford and a cottage in the Hudson Valley area

EDUCATION:

- Memorial High School, West New York
- Bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance, Hofstra University
- Continuing and professional education: Interior design/ The New School at Parsons School of Design

FAVORITE FOLLOWS: "I believe inspiration is creativity for the soul, and there are so many amazing accounts and websites out there. It's all about intentionality for me, and each of these accounts serves as a beautiful reminder that thoughtfulness is of utmost importance."

Interior Design

- Eye Swoon (eye-swoon.com)
- Colin King (colinking.com)
- Devol Kitchens (devolkitchens.com)

Food

- Flamingo Estate (flamingoestate.com)
- Baguette & Butter (baguettesandbutter.com)
- St. Helena Olive Oil (sholiveoil.com)
- Masa Memory (masamemory.com)

Travel, Art, and Culture

- Please, Do Tell (plsdotell.com)
- The Color Kind Studio (thecolorkind.com)
- Josh Young Design House (joshyoungdesignhouse.com)

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS: "My lifelong dreams and aspirations are to develop Endlessly Elated into a globally recognized brand that (helps create) a life worth celebrating. That means continuing to bring in seasonal food and recipes via cookbooks, interior designing for clients that amplify their stories of home and creating an array of intentionally made, one-of-a-kind home products that get to live with them for generations to come. The heirlooms of tomorrow."



KATHLEEN PAGAN

**FAVORITE THINGS
TO DO IN BERGEN**

"When it comes to favorite places to eat locally, I love **PASANO'S**, **CAFÉ MATESE**, and **ELIA MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT**. These are all in my Rutherford neighborhood and perfect for a date night or night out with friends. I also love visiting **ARMA'S FARM** in Wyckoff, a family-owned sustainable farm equipped with a farmers market, tasting room, and petting zoo. It's the perfect way to spend a day. Hiking is always a good idea as well, so definitely try the **RAMAPO RESERVATION**, which will give you all-around sweeping views, and **PALEADES INTERSTATE PARK**, which has trails right along the Hudson River."

Can you tell me about your upbringing?

"I grew up in New York City, in a tiny little apartment with both my parents who migrated here from Puerto Rico. When I was a young adult, we moved to New Jersey, where my parents bought a home to afford a better life for me and my sister — something I will forever be grateful for. Upon graduating high school, I went off to college to study finance, a profession that I thought would lead me to a steady well-paying job. What I neglected to realize was that I was simply ticking a box, not necessarily seeking out my purpose.

"After college, I went on to climb the corporate ranks, ultimately becoming a CFO. On September 12, 2012, however, my life changed in an instance. As I was sitting in my office I got the call: My dad had passed away. With a lot of grief also comes a lot of clarity. I began questioning my life's decisions, asking myself, 'Am I living a fulfilled life?' It took no time to realize that while I was grateful for so many things in my life, the work I did every day was simply not what I yearned for."

Why Endlessly Elated?

"After my dad's passing, I promised myself that I would always attempt to live a life full of purpose, extreme gratitude and fulfillment — a life worth celebrating. I hope that Endlessly Elated inspires others to do the same.

"We are a company that proudly co-creates with its consumers by putting them at the head of our 'dinner' table and giving them a voice and a seat. We are truly customer-obsessed. It is simply non-negotiable for us.

"Next up, we are launching a vase/vessel in March 2022. It is part of the same process as the coupe. My community told me what they wanted and we co-created it together. It's been a little over a year in the making. The product has been designed and I am currently waiting on a sample from the manufacturer to make sure all the design aspects are perfect."

How did your time as a CFO prepare you for starting your own business?

"Looking back, the dots always connect. If it weren't for my finance career, I wouldn't have known how to manage my business finances, make solid financial decisions, create budgets and inevitably scale my company. It is important to remember that we all learn from our paths, no matter how disconnected they may seem from what we ultimately desire."

What is The Femme Think Tank?

"The Femme Think Tank! is a private Facebook page I created to give back to the community who supported me. It is a place for like-minded women to support one another, to obtain practical business tactics, and to get highly motivated and inspired to live life to its fullest potential.

"We hold an annual event that I host along with featured speakers and storytellers. It isn't a networking event, although lots of networking naturally goes on. It's about inspiring you to believe you are worthy and to execute the heck out of your life."

What does a typical day in your week look like?

"These days, life is pretty hectic. No day is like any other, with the exception of my mornings, which are reserved for mindfulness. Meditating, journaling and exercising is non-negotiable for me. The rest is all up for grabs. Lots of strategy meetings for upcoming launches, collaborations, marketing tactics, sales goals, and finances. There's also picking and packing orders, and checking in with the team that makes it all possible."

What do you love about entertaining around the holidays?

"One word: gathering. There is nothing that brings me more joy than when I have family and friends gathered around a table, clinking glasses. The laughter that bounces off the walls, the stories that are being exchanged, the voices talking over each other yet still somehow managing to listen to one another (yes, I have a crazy bunch!) is simply palpable. I find that with every gathering, I stand and admire the smiles across the faces of those I love and cherish the most. The idea that this simple gathering is what creates so many fond memories is truly humbling." ■



ENDLESSLY ELATED'S CHAMPAGNE COUPE

ENTERTAINING TIPS

PREP AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

"I'm a hostess who likes to be a guest the day of an event. So, I always tell everyone to prep as much as possible. There are so many things that can be done days in advance. Chop all the veggies, make all the sauces, marinate all the meats, and even batch cocktails, if possible. Don't forget to dress the table as well. The more prepping, the easier it is to enjoy your party and your guests."

HAVE THE DISHWASHER AND THE TO-GO CONTAINERS READY.

"I always ensure my dishwasher is unloaded, a detergent pod is ready to go, and my to-go containers are nearby when needed. The trick here is, as I clean up after courses, the dishes go into the dishwasher, not the sink. Also, this is the time I get guests going with their to-go containers. While they grab those leftovers, I put those same serving platters in to wash. And just like that, it's like magic: a clean table in no time."

HAVE INTENTION.

"During the holidays, it's easy to get overwhelmed with all the to-do's, but remember why you are doing this in the first place. The goal is bigger than the meal and cocktails. It's about gathering with loved ones around a dinner table to celebrate life. Perspective is everything."