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Top 25 North Shore Influencers of 2024

For this year's list, we've included some of our favorites from over the years and also added new names, from TV hosts and pop stars to restaurateurs and nonprofit visionaries. All the individuals included in this list, however, have at least one thing in common: They are all amazing people doing extraordinary things in the region.

Join us on Thursday, October 10th, at the stunning new venue, The Cut in Gloucester, for an unforgettable evening celebrating the North Shore's top influencers! This event brings together the changemakers shaping our community in entertainment, government, healthcare, and more. It's going to be an incredible night of inspiration, networking, and great company. Don't wait—get [your tickets](https://topinfluencers2024.eventbrite.com/?aff=webedit) (<https://topinfluencers2024.eventbrite.com/?aff=webedit>), now!



Anna Rossi | Photograph by Elise Singer

Anna Rossi

TV host

From her own North Shore kitchen to Parisian bistros, Anna Rossi's TV segments and social media content immerse viewers in the delights of good food, friends, and family. As the host of *The Chef's Pantry* on NBC Boston, Rossi shares delicious recipes, insider restaurant tips, and her infectious love of food with her dedicated audience.

Jonathan Knight and Kristina Crestin | Photographs by Doug Levy

Kristina Crestin and Jonathan Knight

Host, HGTV Farmhouse Fixer; Host, HGTV Farmhouse Fixer, pop star, New Kids on the Block and

A New Kids on the Block fan as a kid, Kristina Crestin now gets to hang out with one of her former idols, Jonathan Knight, all the time. The pair met when Crestin was hired to do design work on Knight's house and took their collaboration to a new level with the launch of their HGTV show "Farmhouse Fixer," which was followed by other productions. And Knight has not given up on his first career: He recently completed a 40-city tour with the New Kids – and Crestin was definitely in attendance. "I was not prepared for Jon in sequins," she says, drawing gales of laughter from Knight.

Armani Thao | Photograph by Armani Thao

Armani Thao

Founder, ForkingWithArmani

Armani Thao's lush photography, expansive knowledge, and playful puns make his local restaurant and dining content somehow simultaneously relatable and aspirational (and his 56,000-plus Instagram followers agree). This year, he made these talents more widely available when he left his full-time executive assistant job to focus on photography, content creation, and social media marketing, as well as becoming head of marketing for nonprofit Autism Eats. We sense a DINE-asty in the making.

Joe Faro | Photograph by Sarah Jordan McCaffery

Joe Faro

Founder, Tuscan Brands

Joe Faro started out selling gourmet pasta sauce inspired by his family's Sicilian roots. Today, his company, Tuscan Brands, runs several popular restaurants and is in the midst of redeveloping the former Rockingham Park racetrack into a mixed-use development that has become Salem, New Hampshire's de facto town center. A luxury hotel opened on the property last year, and there's plenty more to come.

Jenny Johnson | Photograph by Lauren Poussard

Jenny Johnson

TV host, "Meet Boston"

For 20 years, Jenny Johnson has been a fixture on Boston TV, exploring restaurants, shining a spotlight on important community organizations—and winning three Emmy Awards along the way. But she's not planning to rest on these accomplishments: Just this year, she and frequent cohost Billy Costa debuted "Meet Boston," a new show on NESN that dives into Boston's cultural scene.

Sheree O'reilly | Photograph by Shawn G. Henry

Sheree O'Reilly

Owner, Beauport Hospitality

Sheree O'Reilly's grandfather and father both worked in hospitality, and she has put her own stamp on the industry with an award-winning portfolio including Gloucester's acclaimed Seaport Grille, the Beauport Hotel, and Beauport Cruiselines. And she is happy to pass along some of the lessons she learned on her way up—O'Reilly is a sought-after speaker for local business and women's groups.

Sean Stellato | Photograph by Joel Laino

Sean Stellato

Founder, Stellato Sports

Sean Stellato—NFL agent, Salem native, lover of fedoras and flashy suits—went viral last year when he was captured in the stands at a New York Giants game celebrating an impressive drive by a client. He was parodied by Jimmy Fallon and featured in the *New York Times* and has no intention of losing momentum now, as he uses the surge of fame to build his business and his clients' careers.

Katie Theoharides | Photograph by Krista Guenin

Katie Theoharides

President and CEO, The Trustees of Reservations

A nature-lover since childhood, Katie Theoharides studied biology before realizing her future lie in combining science and policy to help preserve and improve the environment. It's a path that has led great places: After a series of environmental policy jobs, she became Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs in 2019. Last year she took the helm at The Trustees of Reservations, where she gets to help celebrate and protect some of the state – and the North Shore's – most beautiful places.

Rob Blood | Photograph by Doug Levy

Rob Blood

Founder, Lark Hospitality

The hands-on hotelier behind some 30-plus quirky, boutique hotels, Rob Blood brings both a distinctive vision and an on-the-ground dedication to his work. Along with partner Megan Kennedy, he also leads design firm Elder & Ash, which was named Boutique Design Firm of the Year by *Boutique Design* magazine last year. Between the two ventures, the team has plenty more projects in the works to further share their colorful, nostalgic vibe with the hospitality world.

Steve DiFillippo | Photograph by Ted Fitzgerald

Steve DiFillippo

Owner, Davio's

When Steve DiFillippo opened Davio's at MarketStreet it was a homecoming for the Lynnfield native. The venerable chain of Northern Italian steakhouses—11 locations along the East coast—has some traditional roots, but DiFillippo keeps it current with new dishes, proprietary beer and wine offerings, and special events. And locals aren't his only fans: Bruce Springsteen once asked if he could get an appetizer recipe from the chef.

Nancy Kerrigan | Photograph by Shutterstock

Nancy Kerrigan

Olympic figure skater/author

Raised in Stoneham, Nancy Kerrigan was a national sensation when she competed in the Olympics in the 1990s. Today, she remains a presence on the North Shore and beyond. Last year she published her first children's book, "Stronger Than She Thinks," an inspirational story of persistence and hard work. And amateur skaters who looked up to her during her Olympic days can even learn from their hero at one of her adult skate camps.

Billy Costa | Photograph by David West

Billy Costa

Radio and TV personality, Kiss108/NESN

A presence on the greater Boston airwaves for more than 40 years, Billy Costa is among the region's elder statesmen of broadcasting. But he isn't slowing down: He cohosts Kiss 108's *Billy and Lisa in the Morning* for four hours every day, explores the food scene on *Dining Playbook*, and just this year launched *Meet Boston With Billy & Jenny* on NESN. What next? We'll just have to tune in to see.

Jenny Holaday | Photograph courtesy of Encore Boston Harbor

Jenny Holaday

President, Encore Boston Harbor

The first woman to head a casino operation in Massachusetts, Holaday brings a depth of knowledge and enthusiasm to her work at Encore, where she relishes creating a destination where visitors can escape everyday life. Under her guidance this year, the resort opened two new restaurants and a speakeasy bar, hit one million packaged meals donated to families in need, and secured a coveted Forbes Five Star award for the third year in a row.

Al Wilson | Photograph by Jared Charney

Al Wilson

Founder and CEO, Beyond Walls

When Beyond Walls started in 2016, former tech and media leader Al Wilson had no experience in nonprofits or public art. Today, the organization he envisioned has spearheaded more than 200 sprawling murals in Lynn, Haverhill, and beyond, involving creators from teens to internationally acclaimed artists, adding vitality to urban neighborhoods, and drawing in visitors to help energize local economies.

Marion Godin and Jeff Christensen | Photograph by Elise Sinagra

Vincent and Marion Godin and Jeff Christensen

Real estate, Plum Island

It started with the purchase of a fixer-upper rental house. Then Jeff Christensen and Marion Godin—siblings who grew up in Newbury—and Marion's real-estate-developer husband Vincent Godin opened provisions store The Cottage and then restaurant and bar The Sunset Club. "It's always been our intention to make the island be the best version of itself," Marion Godin says. "We're just trying to add to and enhance the place we love so much."

Vin Cipolla | Photograph by Anthony LeDoux/ Red Eye Photography

Vin Cipolla

President and CEO, Historic New England

Vin Cipolla has had an impressive and somewhat eclectic career, ranging from publishing to serving as president and CEO at Fidelity Capital. Today he brings that depth of experience to bear as president and CEO of Historic New England where he oversees, among other things, museums, historic house properties, and a vast collection of historic artifacts. Perhaps most visibly, though, he's also a galvanizing force for the transformation of the historic Lang and Burgess Buildings in Haverhill into the Haverhill Center for Preservation and Collections, a cultural center-slash-new headquarters.

Peter Nikolakopoulos | Photograph by Elise Sinagra

Peter Nikolakopoulos

Owner, Pomodori and Beefie Boys

Fast-casual food entrepreneur Peter Nikolakopoulos has plenty to keep him busy: He currently operates pizza-and-sandwich shop Pomodori Newburyport, roast beef food truck Beefie Boys, and full-service catering company Kefi Catering, and organizes an epic annual fundraising Halloween party. He may not know exactly what comes next, but he is definitely not slowing down quite yet: "I'm excited about future possibilities," he says.

Salvatore Lupoli | Photograph by Lupoli Companies

Salvatore Lupoli

CEO and founder, Lupoli Companies

Lupoli Companies expanded its restaurant portfolio with a new Italian restaurant this year—Haverhill’s BOSA—but the eatery is just a tiny portion of what Sal Lupoli has cooking. The developer plans to build on his thriving portfolio of restaurants and residences with new developments in Haverhill, Lowell, Andover, and more. But his goal is not just business—he is committed to using his work to improve the communities and economies in which he builds.

Kim Driscoll | Photograph by Jared Charney

Kim Driscoll

Lieutenant Governor, Massachusetts

Kim Driscoll was the first woman to be mayor of Salem, and she is part of the first all-female state executive team ever elected in the U.S. But Driscoll is interested less in firsts, and more in what's next. In her time as lieutenant governor, that has included working to address housing shortages, welcoming an offshore wind hub to Salem, and much more—and she still has at least two years of “what's next” to go.

Maria Sansone | Photograph by Doug Levy

Maria Sansone

TV personality

A bit of a broadcasting prodigy, Maria Sansone got her start on local TV in her Pennsylvania hometown at the age of 11. And she's just kept going, with stints on MTV's college channel, a morning show in Los Angeles, and as a contributor to many, many other programs. Today, she brings her relatable, down-to-earth style to *The Hub Today* on NBC Boston and MOM2MOM, an award-winning TV show and podcast.

Petra Slinkard | Photograph by Bob Packert, courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum

Petra Slinkard

Director of Curatorial Affairs, Peabody Essex Museum

For Petra Slinkard, fashion is not just about the outfit—it's an expression of identity, culture, and even commerce. She brings this multifaceted perspective to thrilling life at the Peabody Essex Museum, where she curates thoughtful exhibits that garner attention locally and nationally. Her Instagram is a must-follow for anyone interested in fashion, art, and community on the North Shore and beyond.

Mark, John Paul, and Ron Martignetti | Photograph by Elise Sinagra

Ron, John Paul, and Mark Martignetti

Partners, Sogno

After 40 years as a lawyer and with experience in real estate investment and development, Ron Martignetti, along with his sons, John Paul and Mark, followed their Italian roots with the opening of Italian restaurant Sogno in 2022 to rave reviews. The company is following up its successful first act with more ventures into the hospitality world: chartered, catered cruises by Sogno at Sea and the redevelopment of a waterfront inn next to Gloucester's Good Harbor Beach. "We're going to do everything—every piece of silverware, every napkin, every piece of artwork—everything we do, we do absolutely first-class," Ron Martignetti says. "That's our goal."

Brian Kelly | Photograph by Joel Laino

Brian Kelly

Owner, Kelly Automotive Group

Since he started working on his father's used car lot at the age of 13, Brian Kelly has expanded the business to seven locations representing nine brands. But his work extends beyond cars: Kelly and his business support organizations providing food, healthcare, and other resources to local families, as well as a range of medical research causes and the Salem Career Closet, helping students with their own dreams of entrepreneurship get started.

Markus Sebastiano | Photograph by Taylor Greeley

Markus Sebastiano

Artist, Blochaus

Mixed-media artist Markus Sebastiano's bold, textural pieces can be seen alongside work by other contemporary artists at his Newburyport gallery Blochaus. But his reach goes well beyond the North Shore: He has created custom artwork for major international brands, did a pop-up installation at Miami's Art Basel, and is finishing up a series for a hotel in Times Square. Local art-lovers can check out his new collection debuting at Blochaus this fall.

Don't forget to [get your tickets \(https://topinfluencers2024.eventbrite.com/?aff=webedit\)](https://topinfluencers2024.eventbrite.com/?aff=webedit) to our Top Influencers Event and celebrate the amazing people who make the North Shore such a rich and vibrant place.

Jeff Harder, Alexandra Pecci, and Sarah Shemkus contributed to this story.

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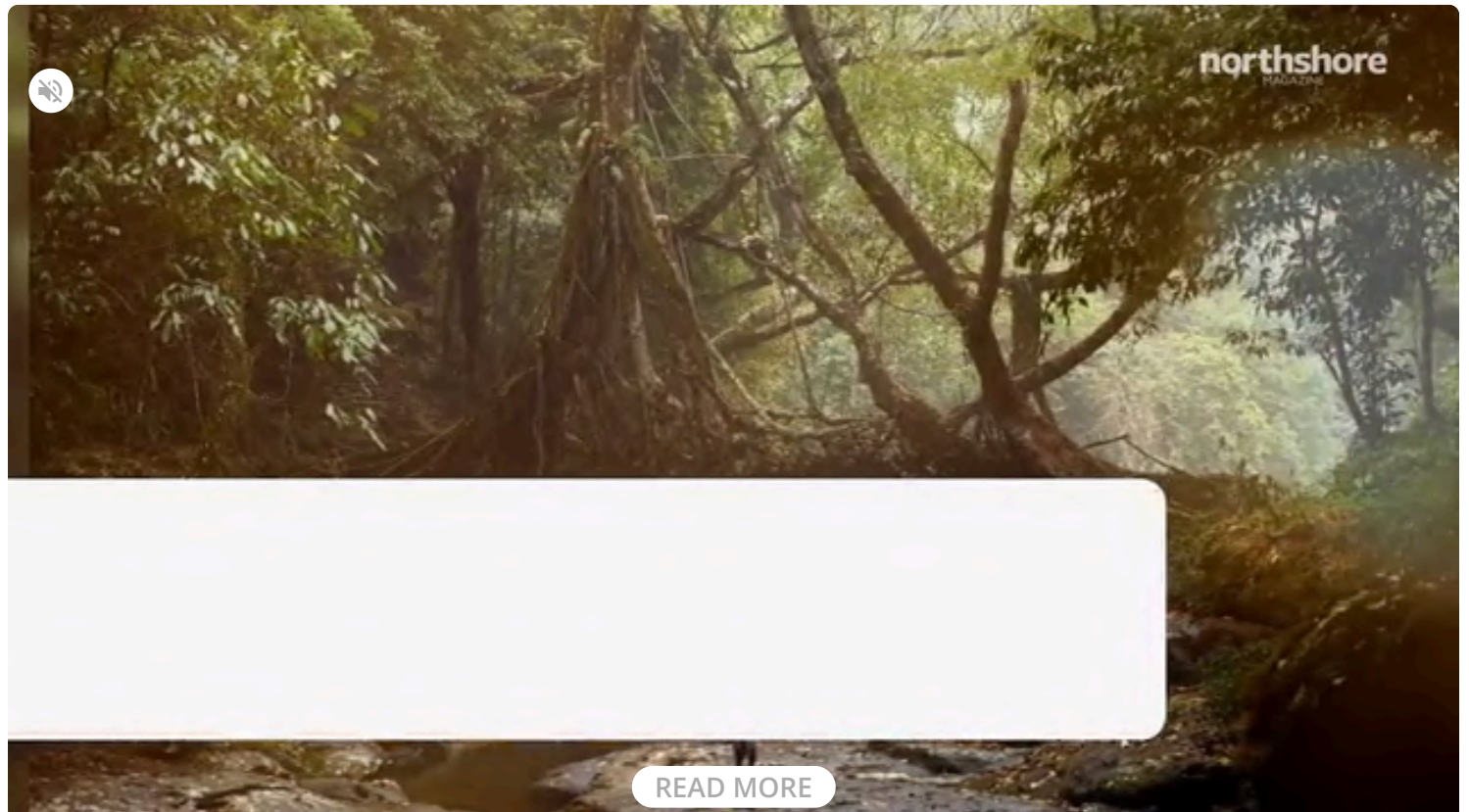
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