



Message in a Profile

Writing is one of my favorite pastimes; ironically, my least favorite genre is narcissistic non-fiction. Lisa Gundersen is my name, though I'm known as "Display Girl" amid the food industry. "Display Girl" is a moniker I revel in, namely because it means word is out about my Grandfather's legacy, Ivar's Displays. Most folks can separate who they "are" from what they "do", yet compartmentalize the distinction I cannot. What I "do" is central to who "I am" since a large portion of my identity is rooted in my roots.

Ivar Gundersen moved from an island in Norway to "Hollyweird" following WWII, when most Norwegians were flocking to Minnesota and Seattle to pursue the American Dream. Why the Sunshine state? Moving to a warm climate was supposed to lessen his Wife's Rheumatoid Arthritis pain. Imagine leaving a respected and secure career as a ship Captain to pioneer (albeit uncomfortably) your way to a foreign land. Upon arrival, imagine knowing no one and being met with the challenge of learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, and creating a new source of livelihood to provide for your family. Now, that's a patriarch to be proud of! And that is why keeping Ivar's legacy alive is one of my life's delights and passions (he's my hero).

My work at Ivar's started long before paychecks. Business rhetoric was learned at the dinner table, weekends were spent "skateboarding" the warehouse on dollies, and Christmas money was earned with elbow grease. Learned a "lazy susan" wasn't my Uncle Ivan dissing my Aunt Susan in grade school. Phew, what a relief! While I've worked jobs prior, during, and following my studies as a fierce Anteater at UC Irvine (ZOT! ZOT!), working with family and for family fuels my life with added meaning, purpose, and connection.

Learned long ago that the simple things in life are the most important and that the present of presence is the best gift of all. Don't let my non-Norwegian looks fool you, I'm Scandinavian from the inside out, and most proud to be American. Long live the Free Enterprise System! At my core is a love for life's simple pleasures and blessings of family, faith, friends, learning, travel, sports, and the outdoors. The greatest joy in my life is being "Auntie" to many, and one lad in particular. A modern-day Marry Poppins, I'm all about supporting my kin's innate talents and passions, while whimsically instilling the Black Belt tenets of: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit. Vikings may be savage Norsemen of days past, yet I share their love for the mountains, the sea, and for family (including my family-of-choice, i.e. friends).

Bon Voyage! (The Enduring...)