

## Blue and Gold “Spotlight”

*Featuring Mary “Ibby” Illig Cooper - class of 1967*

### HISTORY OF THE COOPERS

Jim and Ibby Cooper, owners and proprietors, came to Thorn Hill from hospitality and education careers in California, Michigan, Texas, and Florida. Their older children—excited to be involved—fit right in with a lifestyle that seems less a business than a constant round of entertaining good friends. Jim grew up in California where his family was involved in the ski business in the Sierras. He attended the University of Denver in Hotel and Restaurant Management where he met Ibby who was a graduate of Loretta Heights College. Ibby was a special education teacher along the way and set up a special project in Orlando. It was a special school for the homeless right in their own complex.

The oldest daughter, Nelle, is a graduate of Clemson and The University of Massachusetts Pharmaceucital School with a Physician Assistant degree. Nelle lives in Jackson with her husband Kevin. Nelle was married at the Inn September 5, 2002 to Kevin Killourie, a realtor at Badger Realty in Jackson. The next daughter in line, McKaella, returned to the Inn, as our new Pastry Chef, after getting married at the Inn August 30, 2001 to Richard Schmitt, our Head Chef for two years.



*The Inn at Thorn Hill & Spa*  
LUXURY WITH A VIEW

McKaella attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park. During her 2 years there, she completed an internship at the Four Seasons in Santa Barbara, and opened the Four Seasons Aviara Resort as an assistant pastry chef, in Carlsbad, California. Richard Schmitt graduated from culinary school in Boston, and then worked in Vail, Colorado, San Francisco and San Diego, California, before being called to open the Four Seasons Aviara in Carlsbad, southern California's only 5 star 5-diamond resort, where he met McKaella.

After opening the restaurants in Palm Beach, Florida, Richard traveled back to California to the El Encanto Hotel and Villas in Santa Barbara, where McKaella also worked. While here for his wedding in August 2001, he discovered the White Mountains, and the two decided to return to the Inn at Thorn Hill kitchen where Richard's New American cuisine provided a very unique dining experience. McKaella and Rich gave birth to a baby boy, Snoden Jackson, on May 23, 2002. In 2005 they moved to Maui and worked at the Hanna Lodge for 9mos and recently moved back to Santa Barbara where McKaella is the Executive Pastry chef at the San Ysidro Ranch.

Alexis is a graduate of New England Culinary Institute and is an Event Manager with The Catered Affair, after working as a chef at the Four Seasons Hotel's five-diamond restaurant in Boston. Alexis married Lance Davis, a Jackson native, on October 11, 2003, in Bordeaux, France. Lance is studying for a masters of wine and serves as a rep for a wine distributor.

Tyler graduated from Pine Ridge School in Vermont, and lives in Jackson and works at the White Mountain Hotel. Tyler and Allison gave birth to Daniel Tate on November 6, 2004.

Jon-Paul is looking forward to high school and enjoys playing and watching baseball, football, skiing, biking, basketball, and hockey; he enjoys studying history and geography.

For pictures of the Inn at Thornhill and Spa, visit the web site at [www.innatthornhill.com](http://www.innatthornhill.com).