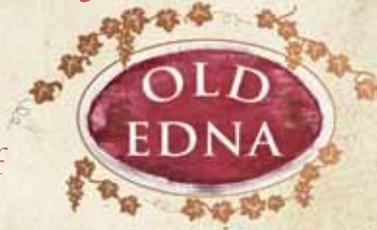


A Little Sweet

## Peek

Into My Past

My name is Pattea  
and this is a piece  
of history and a part of



an adventure lived  
with beauty, creativity,  
passion and sorrow.

*W*ur beloved gypsy wagon was built for my dear mother Jeannine, the “Duchess” by my father Walter known as the “Duke” in the 1970s. My mother was more affectionately known as “Pi Pi” (pronounced like the geometry symbol  $\pi$ ). I once imagined she garnered her nickname as a circus performer in her early years. But truth be known, my cousins gave her that nickname although

she indeed was a circus performer. Pi Pi’s eclectic love for the whimsical is embodied in the wagon and tells the story of her colorful life.

My memories are recalled from an adventurous childhood and although my two sisters and brother may see history in a different light, here are my recollections...

You see, both the lives of Duke and Pi Pi were filled with passion for the theatre



*La Mancha*



and arts. And so it made sense to animate their homes with whimsical themes and named them accordingly. Our first home “La Mancha” was built like a windmill in the 1960s which is now owned by my mom’s sister. Then we moved to “Dragonwyck Castle” built in the 1970s, as you may have guessed is like a castle nestled in the property called “Morning Star Acres” named by my sister. Duke, a gifted builder, worked as an ironworker at Vandenberg Air Force Base and built all of our homes with my brother working alongside him.

My childhood was filled with adventures you read about in books. I didn’t need to read about other adventures. I simply lived out my own. On one such adventure, we were gifted with a wondrous site. On a beautiful Summer day in Pismo Beach, we saw something we didn’t think to be real but there it was, an actual Gypsy caravan along with lovely... strong and sweaty horses pulling the wagons. The brakes jammed and a rather tarnished Danish man came forward. He introduced himself as Van Dalen. He and

his hippy companions were welcomed to our Dragonwyck home to share a meal. It was a magical night. He told us of tales of travels to distant countries and encounters with Gypsies while the banjo played in the background throughout the evening by the light of the

moon. We were mesmerized by his tales. After our encounter with Van Dalen and his compadres, mother never passed a hitchhiker without giving them a ride to their next destination in her green Ford Mustang or her Buick Riviera. Of course this was a time when it was safe to do so.

Van Dalen and his traveling companions stayed as our guest just long enough for my clever father, an avid dreamer, to study Van Dalen’s wagon so he could construct our own Gypsy wagon. It only took a few days for Duke to finish and the wagon eventually became my mother’s refuge. Her creativity was boundless. Pi Pi’s love for cooking brought me and my sisters together most evenings to help her prepare evening meals. Other outlets of her creativity and love for writing required solace, time away from the chattering noise of children and Duke’s constant singing. My parents were often the main characters of my living adventures. They were, in fact, my Romeo and Juliet.

Growing up this way allowed me to fall in love with restoration. I am an admitted



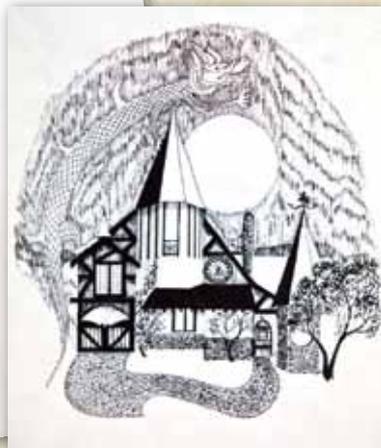
*Left: A picture of Pi Pi most likely contemplating her next poem she wants to write. Like they say, an amazing artist or poet is seldom known until they are gone. I treasure this and other works by her now.*

*Opposite page: The Duke's version of a Rolls Royce we took many a ride en route to PCPA where dad gave hours of his time helping with the set design.*

Last night as I sat in the cellar  
Twas Friday the thirteenth you know  
The milky way above me  
Spiders spinning below  
Silence. Silence. Silence.  
Midnight seems so late...  
The crickets chanting chanting  
Keeping Kitty Wicca awake.  
The flickering of candles,  
I didn't feel alone...  
And remembered again  
What night it was  
And walked toward my  
Castle home.

*Poem by Pi Pi,  
Jeannine Della Grace*

*Below: A line drawing  
of Dragonwyck Castle*





*Left and below: Mom being mom always very dramatic and so much fun!*

restorer. I not only enjoy, but am fixated on old structures. The current and past inhabitants tell me secret stories as I lay down to sleep each night. I hear the stories in these objects. Everything I love has a rich history one cannot read but can only experience in the restoring.

Sadly, after my Romeo and Juliet divorced, the wagon was neglected. When my mother passed away in 2007, I could no longer bear watching the Gypsy Wagon and all the childhood characters disintegrate into the sand on which it stood. As I mourned over the loss of my mother and the mental and physical decline of my father, I was called to my duty once again to restore the wagon. It was not time to mourn anymore but it was time to rejoice and celebrate the lives my parents lived together—a storybook romance. Their lust for life, the many many

friends they had and what Romeo and Juliet offered to me and my siblings.

By bringing life again to this Gypsy Wagon, the sad memories, for me, have all but disappeared and one of life's greatest romances, the Duke and Duchess will forever live on. I dedicate my efforts in the restoration process of the wagon in memory of my mother and wish to thank my amazing father Walter, for teaching me to explore a common love. My father taught me that the bond of romance can come in the form of structure.

Now, as you peruse this Hippy Gypsy Circus Wagon, please note each image symbolizes a part of my mother. She was born August 18, 1939 in the Chinese year of the rabbit. She passed in the house of desire under the Elms on April 27, 2007. The Asian characters represent love, peace, good luck and happiness. Pi Pi loved rabbits, dreamers, artists, hippies, gypsies, doctors, lawyers and people of every color. She always helped those that were in need inspiring me to do the same.

Special thanks to my trusty steed, Cowboy faithful to fix, build and repair just about anything. Thanks to artists, Sue O'Conner, Danny Shaffer and Nancy Beighley. Last but not least, a most heartfelt and loving thanks to my husband and life partner Jeff, for supporting me in all my ever livin' need to constantly build, create and resuscitate.

### European Farm Stay

*The Gypsy Wagon is available to rent in conjunction with the Suite Edna Guest House. Please call (805) 710-3701 for more information or visit us online at [www.olderedna.com](http://www.olderedna.com)*

*To be continued with... life in Edna*

[www.olderedna.com](http://www.olderedna.com)