

## **From New York Skyscrapers to Georgia's Lowcountry: Meet Paisley Piasecki**

### **The importance of intuition, networking, and finding things that serve you**

If you're a young adult working in Savannah, chances are you've heard of sq. TWENTY-FIVE. The new social club launched back in September and has already seen a lot of success. The founder, Paisley Piasecki, sat down with me to talk about her background and what she has planned for Savannah.

She graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor's in Communication in 2017, and despite everyone telling her she'd make a great chief creative officer, Piasecki knew where she was going. She received a full-ride scholarship to New York Law School and interned with companies like ABC News and Disney, Broadway theaters, and Louis Vuitton. She graduated with her JD in 2020\* and snagged a full time position with a large firm in New York.

"I had an office overlooking the entire north side of Manhattan," she told me. "You can see the Chrysler Building from my room, like in my office. When you think about leaving something like that, all I really felt was gratitude."

With her view of the Chrysler at her dream job, Piasecki was at the top of the world, but she had outgrown New York; it was time to go somewhere else, find something else to do, and she already had the perfect place in mind.

In the summer of 2021, she ended up on Tybee Island after rescheduling a vacation, and immediately fell in love. She visited as often as she could and even created an Instagram account called DEAREST to post pictures of her travels. Piasecki was meeting new people, starting new friendships, and hosting small get-togethers.

When it came to picking her next home, Savannah was a no-brainer.

But not everyone in Piasecki's life understood what she was doing. Her New York friends couldn't understand why she was moving to the South, why she'd give up her New York career. They were concerned it was too big a change.

"Yeah, it's a big change," she conceded. "But I was traveling here—just coming here and staying—it felt super natural to me. It felt good to not have to leave anymore."

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Piasecki landed in Savannah in June. By September, she had already made her irreversible mark on the community.

She created sq. TWENTY-FIVE, a social club aimed at young, working professionals. In New York, she'd had access to plenty of networking groups and professional social hours, but found

virtually nothing similar in Savannah. Instead of feeling discouraged or misplaced, she filled the void herself.

“My goals for it are to create a very intentional community in Savannah of young professionals who support each other and who want to see each other grow,” she said. “There were 24 original squares in Savannah that were meant to be gathering spaces. Every neighborhood was built around their square, and so for all intents and purposes, we’re the 25th because we are also a space for gathering and connection.”

Rachael Flora, a local woman who has a background in both creative and more traditional industries, has been following sq. TWENTY-FIVE since it launched.

“Savannah is so transient,” said Flora. “There’s so many people coming and going, and a lot of people move here for a job, and they don’t know anybody. I think something like an organized social club is a great way to meet people.”

So what is a social club? What actually happens at these events?

“I can’t answer your question directly,” Piasecki said. “Because every single event is different right now, and we’re doing that on purpose.”

Sq. TWENTY-FIVE’s kickoff event was called Guac and Talk, and it took place at Java Burrito Company on September 16th. In less than 24 hours from when Piasecki announced the event, she hit capacity with 50 attendees, but over 100 people had registered and been waitlisted. It consisted of a 15-minute mingling period at the beginning, a 45-minute panel, and another 15-minute mingling period at the end.

The mingling portion is an important aspect to include for Piasecki. Flora, as a member of the target audience, greatly appreciates the casual nature of sq. TWENTY-FIVE events and thinks that traditional networking is too contrived.

“I just want to meet people and talk to them,” she said. “I like an organic experience—friends hanging out with the added bonus of an experience.”

The panelists for Guac and Talk included Tyler Easterly, a member of sq. TWENTY-FIVE’s management committee; Danielle Hodes, the Executive Director of the Davenport House; Andrea Locorini, the Director of Marketing for the Perry Lane Hotel; and Kaile Napotnik, a local influencer known as The Savannah Lady.

“People like an opportunity to go learn or experience something,” Piasecki said. “And then have the opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other after and that’s exactly the kind of environment we want to create.”

Other events sq. TWENTY-FIVE has put on so far include a masterclass on home buying, presented by Andrew Cosey of Corcoran Austin Hill Realty; Yoga at the Telfair in collaboration with Savannah Power Yoga; A partnership with Joyride Boat Club offering half-off rides for the month of October; and Champagne and Connection, a launch event for the Leading Ladies network of sq. TWENTY-FIVE.

It's important to Piasecki that her events, despite sometimes including alcohol, aren't centered around drinking. She wants to offer something different that's focused on teaching new skills or providing unique experiences, believing that people her age want more than just a drink.

"I think at all of our events, there will be space for people to converse and connect, but we really want to focus each event around something really fun and learning something new," she said.

"I think it's great," said Flora. "I don't know how people haven't thought about that before. I'm really happy to see it here, and I hope that she's successful."

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One thing Piasecki believes in is the balance of traditional and creative industries. She says that plenty of other attorneys she knows use art as a creative outlet, and that managing the balance between industries is not only doable, but important. "It might literally change your life," she said. "I started DEAREST because I wanted an outlet. I moved to Savannah three years later.

At one point in our conversation, Piasecki mentioned seeing signs from the universe, and I asked her if she was a religious or spiritual person. She told me about her time growing up first in the Presbyterian Church, then the Catholic Church and her time in a Catholic boarding school.

"I call myself a very spiritual Catholic," she said. "Because I believe in universal signs and signs from God. I believe in knowing. I believe in intuition. I believe in astrology. I think everyone has intuition inside of them, and that's inherently spiritual."

While in law school, Piasecki participated in the Law Review. It was essentially the school's literary journal, and she was tasked with choosing a decided case and arguing why it was wrongly decided. After months of struggling to pick a case, she finally settled on one involving a hot air balloon crash. In just one month, she wrote her piece and was published in the Law Review. More importantly, she started seeing hot air balloons everywhere.

"I always believed that everybody had a sign, and I was like, why do I feel like this is my sign?" she recalled, and claimed that she sees them whenever she feels like she needs some reassurance.

On her second trip into Savannah, after starting to realize how much she enjoyed the city, she started wondering what it would be like to live here. She spent more time exploring, finding the

best coffee shops, boutiques, and bookstores. In E. Shaver's bookstore, she found herself looking at their wall of postcards. She did a quick spin in the aisle, and directly in front of her, hand-sketches on a card, was a hot air balloon.

*\*At the time of publication of this article, Paisley is a New York licensed attorney and not yet admitted to the Georgia bar.*