

THE WEEKLY PRINT

Gainesville's Golden boy; Jewish groups urge Supreme Court to take up religious accommodations case; Mobileye files for IPO amid barren Wall Street landscape; A growing teen leadership program at an Orthodox synagogue is combining Jewish text and college credit; A relaxing retreat with a slice of history on Mount Carmel; and Ten books to read in October.

OCTOBER 6, 2022

Gainesville's Golden boy

Todd Golden, the new head coach of the Florida Gators men's basketball team, owes his professional success to the Jewish coaching community — and a connection made at the 2009 Maccabiah Games

By Gabby Deutch

Like a lot of Jewish kids, Todd Golden played basketball at his local Jewish community center when he was growing up, driving just five minutes down the road to the Phoenix JCC.

Unlike most Jewish kids, however, Golden took his JCC hoops experience to college's big time. Earlier this year he was hired to be the head coach of the University of Florida men's basketball team, signing a reported six-year, \$18 million contract. In an effort to boost excitement about Gators basketball, one of his first moves when he got to Gainesville this spring was to visit UF's three Jewish fraternities. (UF has the largest number of Jewish undergraduates of any American college, with 6,500 Jewish undergrads, according to data compiled by Hillel International.)

"There's a huge Jewish community here at UF, probably one of the biggest at any institution in the United States," Golden told

Jewish Insider in a recent phone interview. "For me, it's just ... it feels really good to be able to be a part of it."

Golden is one of a growing number of Jewish head coaches at major Division I basketball programs. At this year's March Madness tournament, he won the Coach of the Year award from the Jewish Coaches Association, a nonprofit that connects youth, high school and college basketball coaches. "It's a pretty neat brotherhood," said Golden. "You don't really think of the Jewish faith as being super, super strong in basketball. But I do feel like we're making progress, which is cool."

He rattled off a list of his fellow Jewish head coaches: Earlier this year, Jon Scheyer took over for the legendary coach Mike Krzyzewski at Duke. The University of California, Santa Barbara is coached by Joe Pasternack. Josh Pastner coaches Georgia Tech, and Eran Ganot, the son of an Israeli

immigrant and the head coach at the University of Hawaii, is "like a big brother to me," said Golden. Bruce Pearl has coached Auburn since 2014.

It was Pearl — who in recent months has gained a reputation as an outspoken supporter of Israel and a proud Jew, going back to comments he made during March Madness about applying the lessons of Purim to the war in Ukraine — who helped set Golden on his professional path.

"Todd is just a leader, a competitor. He looks like Jane, plays like Tarzan," Pearl told *Jl*. "He's got this young, very youthful appearance. But he's smart, and he's tough, and he knows what he's doing."

Pearl and Golden, who is 37, met in 2009, when Pearl coached the U.S. men's basketball team at the Maccabiah Games — the global Jewish games held every four years in Israel — to a gold medal, beating the Israeli team in overtime. (Scheyer, who was a

point guard for Duke, was supposed to be on the team, too, until he had to drop out at the last minute to meet school requirements.)

At the time, Golden was playing professionally for Maccabi Haifa, an Israeli team, after a career at Saint Mary's College in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was pretty self-aware about his own basketball skills: "I probably wasn't good enough to play in that league as an American," the 6-foot-3 former guard admitted. But the Israeli league had a rule that two of the five players on the court must be Israeli. "Because I made *aliyah* after my senior [year], I was able to play in Israel as an Israeli, which gave me a huge competitive advantage and allowed me to have a two-year professional career over there," he explained.

His time in Israel followed an unexpected and successful college career at St. Mary's, where he earned a scholarship and eventually became team captain after joining the team as a walk-on.

"There just aren't many Jewish kids that work their way to get paid to play anymore, so he's living the dream," said Pearl, who talked Golden into joining his Maccabiah team during the Israeli basketball league's off-season.

But Pearl saw the Maccabiah Games as more than just a basketball competition; it was an opportunity to help young Jewish men connect to their Jewish identity, and for Golden, the spiritual mission clicked.

"I thought my responsibility as the coach of that team was to take some Jewish boys, let them wear the USA uniform, but bring them back better Jewish men," said Pearl, who at the time was the head coach at the University of Tennessee. He hosted the men for training camp in Knoxville, Tenn. "I took them to temple on a Friday night, and half the guys had never been to synagogue before. It just wasn't part of their makeup. But this was gonna be more than just a basketball trip, and they were gonna learn about Israel, they were gonna learn about its history, like 3,000 years ago through post-Holocaust and current day, and we got real close as a team."

Golden played in the American Maccabiah games every summer when he was a teen, representing the Phoenix Jewish community in places such as Dallas, Charlotte, N.C., and Boca Raton, Fla. But

playing for Team USA in Israel was a life-changing experience.

"It was that experience, honestly, that kind of provided different pathways and opportunities for me in my career, and I don't think I would be the coach of Florida without that experience," said Golden.

After moving back to the U.S. (Golden had been "homesick," he said, although he did enjoy living in close proximity to Tel Aviv), he moved to San Francisco to work in sales and marketing.

"He was making real money, you know, taking advantage of his smarts and his personality," Pearl recalled. But Golden wanted to get into coaching, eventually taking a job at Columbia University in New York. "I'm like, 'Todd, what are you doing coaching? Forget about coaching. You had a great career, you know, go coach your son, and you've got to keep that job,'" Pearl counseled.

But Golden had caught the coaching bug, and he wanted to give it a shot professionally. After two seasons as an assistant coach at Columbia, he moved down to Alabama to join Pearl's coaching staff at Auburn. Two years later, in 2016, he left for the University of San Francisco, ultimately becoming head coach and leading the Dons to the NCAA tournament earlier this year, its first March Madness appearance since 1998.

"That's a typical path," Pearl said of Golden's trajectory. "It just went faster [for Golden]."

Golden hasn't experienced antisemitism, either as a player or as a coach. "I think it's because I'm pretty prideful about it. I don't try to hide it and I'm not, like, running from it, and so I think people respect that," he reflected.

In December, Golden will take on his mentor Pearl in an away game at Auburn. The two men now lead rival teams in the Southeastern Conference. But as Jewish coaches in the public eye, they share some goals, one of which is bringing their players to Israel. Pearl took his team there this past summer, where they played against Israeli teams and his players — most of whom are devout Christians — visited biblical sites. He wants Golden to take the Gators next year, and expose his squad to the Jewish state.

"There are a lot of people that don't know, that haven't been affected yet, that may be

on the fence or that someday are going to face and see some real antisemitism, or experience some Israel hate. And now these kids are going to be in a position to handle it a little differently," Pearl told JI's "Limited Liability Podcast" in August.

"Bruce has not been shy about trying to get me to take the team over to Israel next year," said Golden, who added that he has been exploring ways to fundraise for a trip. "We're trying to do something where we take our team to Israel and then Africa, because we have an African kid in our program."

At UF, his goal is to turn the Gators into a team "that's getting deep into the NCAA tournament every year," he said. When Golden was in college, the Gators won back-to-back national championships in 2006 and 2007, and he wants to make that a possibility again. The team lost in the second round of the NCAA tournament last year. The basketball season starts Nov. 7, with a home game against Stony Brook.

"Year one is really difficult in terms of making sure you have your foundation laid for your program, as well as getting everybody up to speed and on the same page. So [we're] just really daily working on that," said Golden. "The great thing is, I feel like we have some really talented student athletes and we have a good coaching staff, so I think we'll be able to do it." ♦

Jewish groups urge Supreme Court to take up religious accommodations case

The case has the potential to expand the accommodations employers are required to provide for religious observance

By Marc Rod

Several Jewish advocacy groups are urging the Supreme Court to take up a case that could overturn decades-old precedent and significantly expand the scope of religious accommodations that employers are required to provide to their employees as the Court begins its new term.

In *Groff v. DeJoy*, a former mail carrier is suing the U.S. Postal Service, which disciplined him and threatened to terminate him because he refused to work on Sundays. USPS attempted to fill some of his Sunday shifts, but was unable to fill all of them. The mail carrier, an evangelical Christian, quit his job, saying that his religious beliefs did not permit him to work on Sundays.

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended in 1972, employers must accommodate their employees' religious beliefs unless doing so causes an "undue hardship." Soon after this provision was passed, the Supreme Court ruled in *Trans World Airlines v. Hardison* that employers are not required to grant accommodations that impose anything beyond a "de minimis cost" on the employer.

The 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals said earlier this year that efforts to grant the postal employee an exemption from work on Sundays had strained USPS resources and forced his co-workers to take on additional shifts and responsibilities, spurred workplace tensions and negatively impacted morale, creating "undue hardship" to the USPS and his co-workers.

Jewish groups — particularly those representing Jews who strictly observe the Sabbath and Jewish holidays — have long sought to overturn the "de minimis cost test" established in the *Hardison* ruling. The Supreme Court has declined to take up

similar cases in recent years, although three justices — Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Neal Gorsuch — have indicated an interest in overturning *Hardison*.

The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA), Orthodox Union and The Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty (JCRL) each filed briefs urging the high court to consider *Groff v. DeJoy*, with a range of Orthodox groups — including Agudath Israel of America — joining the COLPA brief.

While justices do not provide their reasoning for rejecting petitions, the groups that have filed briefs are hopeful that a new justice who joined the court since the last rejection of a similar case — likely Justice Amy Coney Barrett — will be supportive of this petition. Four justices must support a petition for a case to be considered by the court.

"Just the calendar of this month is a great illustration [of the Jewish community's interest in this case] — because so many Jews have to take off so many weekdays for Rosh Hashanah, for Yom Kippur, for Sukkot." Nathan Diamant, the OU's executive director for public policy, told *Jewish Insider*. "And thankfully, most employers are accommodating of that sort of thing, but not all are and we don't want anybody to be forced to have to choose between their livelihood and their ability to observe holidays or Shabbat."

The Jewish groups argue that the *Hardison* ruling effectively invalidated the Title VII provisions.

"That's not what Congress intended... that was such a very big blow," said Nathan Lewin, a constitutional lawyer who authored the COLPA brief; Lewin also argued the

original *Hardison* case as a "friend of the court" and was involved in drafting the Title VII language in question.

Lewin told JI, "I thought, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had so held by that time," that the language in Title VII, "meant that you should accommodate" employees' religious observances.

"Since [Hardison] has come out, pretty much anything the employer says is a hardship is sufficient, and they don't have to provide any evidence," Howard Slugh, JCRL's general counsel, told JI. "The courts have gone really far on this to even say, 'Even hypothetical hardship is sufficient.'"

Lewin emphasized that he "cannot overstate... the importance of this case" and that he regularly receives calls from Orthodox Jews who say they have been denied jobs or promotions because their employers have rejected accommodations for them.

"I've seen lots of cases in which Orthodox Jewish individuals have, as we said in the brief, had their careers curtailed, have lost jobs because of *Hardison*," he said.

In addition to *Groff*, JCRL has also filed briefs in other cases which the justices have already agreed to consider this term.

In 303 *Creative v. Elenis*, a Christian website designer who refused to create wedding websites for same-sex couples is challenging Colorado's anti-LGBTQ discrimination laws. The judges will rule on whether compelling "an artist to speak or stay silent violates the free speech clause of the First Amendment."

Slugh said that the Colorado law dictates that "artists effectively have no First Amendment rights, their speech is

never protected,” and argued that, if allowed to stand, it could force a Jewish designer to create art celebrating *Kristallnacht*. “We wanted to highlight how potentially dangerous this was to a large swath of identifiable individuals.”

Caroline Mala Corbin, a law professor at the University of Miami specializing in the First Amendment’s speech and religion

clauses, told JI she expects the court to rule in favor of the website designer.

“Traditionally, preventing discrimination against a historically subordinated group has been seen as a compelling government interest... This court does not care,” Corbin argued, warning that such a ruling could also provide a Christian wedding vendor latitude to deny services to a Jewish couple.

JCRL also filed a brief in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, which challenges affirmative action practices. “Schools should not discriminate on immutable characteristics... but if they’re going to they should discriminate in favor of people who have minority faith,” Slugh said. ♦

OCTOBER 2, 2022

Mobileye files for IPO amid barren Wall Street landscape

Israeli self-driving car company owned by Intel may seek to raise more than \$30 billion with Nasdaq share sale

By Jonathan H. Ferziger

The article first appeared in The Circuit.

While stocks drop ever lower and corporate funding sources remain dry, investors saw some light last week when Mobileye, the Jerusalem-based chipmaker for self-driving vehicles that is owned by Intel Corp., filed for its long-anticipated initial public offering.

When the IPO will take place and how much Mobileye will seek to raise on the Nasdaq remains unanswered. But the company’s filing of its S-1 preliminary prospectus with the SEC late Friday generated rare optimism during a tough year.

“I am thrilled,” Michael Granoff, founder and managing partner of Maniv Mobility, told *The Circuit*. “Mobileye is the most impactful company that has ever been created in Israel, and its impact may grow manyfold in the years to come,” said Granoff, a veteran automotive technology investor who doesn’t hold an interest in the company.

If Mobileye starts selling shares before

the end of 2022 as executives have indicated, it will be one of the biggest IPOs of the year. The IPO market has shrunk amid a 33% slide in the Nasdaq Composite Index since the end of 2021, a steady rise in interest rates and global tensions from the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

According to the filing, the IPO is being led by investment banks Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. Among the 24 financial advisors listed are Citigroup, Barclays, Evercore ISI and RBC Capital Markets.

The document leaves the size and timing of the IPO blank. Intel, which bought Mobileye for about \$15.3 billion in 2017, had hoped to raise \$50 billion with the IPO and has since trimmed the target to \$30 billion, according to *Bloomberg*. Neither company has confirmed the report. Only two IPOs have raised \$1 billion or more on New York exchanges since Jan. 1, compared with 45 in 2021.

Mobileye is one of the leaders in creating software, semiconductor chips, cameras and sensory arrays to enable the development of self-driving vehicles. Chief executives

from the world’s largest car companies have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to see the company and meet with CEO Amnon Shashua.

In Friday’s filing, Mobileye said it plans to use proceeds from the IPO to pay back debt to Intel, as well as for working capital and general corporate purposes. Other details gleaned from the prospectus are that Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger will serve as chairman of Mobileye and that the board will include Jon Huntsman, the former governor of Utah. Huntsman, who previously served as U.S. ambassador in both Russia and China and was a Republican candidate for president in 2012, serves on the board of Ford Motor Co. The document notes that Mobileye acquired Moovit, a popular app and transportation business, from Intel this year. Intel bought the Israeli company for \$900 million in 2020.

Shashua said in a July letter to employees that the IPO was being postponed until markets stabilize. “We still hope that the offering will take place in 2022 and meanwhile the company is prospering

on all fronts and the future seems more promising than ever,” he wrote. In last week’s prospectus, the company reported a 21% increase in revenue for the first half of 2022 compared to the same period last year.

Gelsinger said in an interview with *Calcalist* while visiting Israel in March that Intel was closely following market conditions to determine the timing for the IPO. “The electric car market is heating up

and I want Mobileye to be a prominent player there,” Gelsinger told the financial news site. “We are fully invested in Mobileye’s success but I think it will be a greater success after the IPO.”

New registrations for electric vehicles in the U.S. have increased by more than 250% over the past five years. Sales of electric cars in China nearly tripled to 3.3 million last year, about half the global total.

Granoff, whose fund is an investor in Israel’s Otonomo Technologies, which collects data from network-connected vehicles, said the Mobileye IPO will be good for the emerging industry of autonomous vehicles.

“They pioneered concepts that have made vehicles safer and have set the stage for cars that are increasingly automated,” he said. ♦

OCTOBER 6, 2022

A growing teen leadership program at an Orthodox synagogue is combining Jewish text and college credit

The Solomon Leadership Program doesn’t fit neatly into a box.

By Ben Sales

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Joelle Carmel is Jewish, and is active in Jewish programs when she’s not in her high school classes — but one of her most impactful moments in a synagogue in recent years didn’t take place in prayers, a youth group or a Jewish class.

Instead, it was a conversation with a local juvenile court judge, who explained the dilemmas she confronted when dealing with defendants facing harsh sentences.

“She felt compassion for them, even though she had to follow the rule of the law,” Carmel, now a junior in high school, told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. “She also had to consider what they were going through and find a balance. There was a difference between going by her values and going by what the law required.”

Carmel said it was a lesson in “sticking to your core values” in adverse situations

— one of the goals of a quickly growing youth educational program, founded in a South Florida Orthodox synagogue, that’s spreading across the country and globe.

The program, called the Solomon Leadership Program, doesn’t fit into the usual mold. It was founded at, and partially runs through, the Palm Beach Synagogue, which is Orthodox, but welcomes non-Jewish participants. It grounds all of its lessons in Jewish texts, but is not a Jewish education class and is affiliated with a local Christian university. It’s a college-accredited course that affords students three credits, but doesn’t give them letter grades.

Instead, it’s billed as a chance for 10th to 12th graders to get the training in life that they may be missing in their school curriculum. The course at Palm Beach Synagogue, which lasts about six months, has roughly two dozen participants study eight “pillars” of leadership — such as character, communication or judgment —

meet with adult guest speakers and mentors, and complete coursework that helps them explore how those values play out in their own lives.

“It’s helping them understand themselves better, and saying, ‘This is what’s really important to me,’” Sarah Dworcan, the program’s executive director, told *eJP*, adding that the program is about “being able to guide their moral compass, and as much as we hope that a traditional education does that, unfortunately it doesn’t do it in its entirety because often it’s just about getting the good grade.”

The program is also growing. It doubled its budget this year from \$260,000 to \$500,000, and after having started in 2016 in Palm Beach, it has been licensed to 15 synagogues in Florida and as far afield as Sydney, Australia. Its principal funder has been the Palm Beach-based Sosnow Foundation, and healthcare entrepreneur Lawrence Sosnow is the program’s co-chair,

though it is hoping to broaden its funding base as its budget increases. The students pay a fee of \$300 to participate.

All of the synagogues running the program, so far, are either Chabad centers or synagogues led by a Chabad rabbi. Many of the Jewish texts or stories in the curriculum that don't come from classical sources such as the Talmud also center on Orthodox rabbis. But Rabbi Moshe Scheiner, who co-chairs the program, hopes it spreads not just to a broader spectrum of Jewish life, including non-Orthodox synagogues, but also outside of it. He's in talks with a local church that's interested in the curriculum.

"We designed this as a local Palm Beach Synagogue program, and then another synagogue down in my neighborhood heard about it... and they were interested in running it there," Scheiner told eJP. "We have the formula, we have the curriculum, we had everything to license it to them."

The program meets every two weeks, and its curriculum has three prongs: For each of the "pillars," students complete coursework and readings at home. Then, each two-hour class begins with a guest speaker who discusses that session's theme. Finally, the students meet in small groups with a mentor who encourages them to consider what they've learned, then complete an online quiz on the unit.

For the first pillar, "Character," students first need to review a list of around 100 qualities (self-control, loyalty and versatility, to name a few) and check off which apply to them. They then organize those qualities into up to four groups, then describe how they put the quality into action. They're also assigned readings, including a portion of a David Brooks column in *The New York Times* called "The Art of Gracious Leadership," stories about Presidents George Washington and Harry Truman and a method for self-improvement composed by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Leffin in 1812. It ends with a quote by Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, the 19th-century figure regarded as the founder of the Jewish ethical Musar movement.

"It's a way to introduce and welcome many new families to our community," said Rabbi Eliezer Wolf of the Beit David Highland Lakes Shul in Miami, which began its own chapter of the program last year with 12 students. "This is a chance to engage

them."

The guest speakers for the Palm Beach Synagogue chapter of the program range from government officials to business people to nonprofit executives and military veterans. Many, though not all, are Jewish. Each chapter finds its mentors and guest speakers, who are unpaid, locally.

"It's no different from adults in the corporate world," said Betsy Sheerr, a communications professional and lecturer who is a mentor at the Palm Beach Synagogue program, regarding the teens' concerns. "There's a fear [among the teens] of public speaking, there's a lack of self-confidence, there's an anxiety of being perceived as less than perfect, and as such there's a reluctance to present a point of view."

Students in the program receive three college credits from Palm Beach Atlantic University, a small Christian school. The accreditation comes via Arthur Johnson, an emeritus professor of leadership at the university. Johnson told eJP that the curriculum for the course — with two to four hours of homework per biweekly session, plus a final essay and presentation on what students learned — is as rigorous as the university's freshman leadership seminar. It's no problem, he feels, that the course materials are peppered with Jewish texts — something he also does in his own courses.

"In my opinion, the Solomon Leadership Program is a values-based youth leadership program based upon Judeo-Christian values," Johnson told eJP. "In all of my syllabi, I have a verse, usually from Proverbs or Psalms, that is relevant for the course. It does not end there obviously, as there are many examples of various kinds of leadership displayed in what we as Christians refer to as the Old Testament."

Dworcan also told eJP that affiliation with a Christian college poses no obstacle to the Jewish-themed program, noting that the curriculum was composed by the program's educational director, an observant Jew. "It has no bearing on the course," Dworcan told eJP regarding the Christian affiliation. "The curriculum is based on Judaic values which they naturally respect and appreciate."

The curriculum does not only appeal to Jews — or Christians. While synagogues that have adopted the course may teach only Jewish teens, the original program at Palm

Beach Synagogue has attracted students from varying religious backgrounds. The key, said Dworcan, is finding students who are "already driven and already motivated to want to succeed and be a leader." Carmel's extracurricular activities, for example, range from water polo to youth orchestra to NCSY, the Orthodox youth group.

Raunak Manchanda, a Hindu student who took the course in 2021 and was mentored by Sheerr, said that she appreciated the Jewish themes in the course.

"I didn't feel a difference learning about Hinduism and learning about Judaism," Manchanda, now a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin, told eJP. "All of the learnings that were coming from the Bible or the Jewish text, I took them like I would take anything from a Hindu text... We didn't really emphasize who was Jewish, who wasn't. I think everyone really connected with it in the same way because if you take the religion out from it — the learning, the teachings they're giving us, it's just basic humanity." ♦

A relaxing retreat with a slice of history on Mount Carmel

The Elma Hotel's origins have roots in an early law that mandated time off for Israeli workers, creating one of the country's first socialist spas

By Ruth Marks Eglash

The article first appeared in The Circuit.

Guests arriving at the Elma Arts Complex and Luxury Hotel in this hilltop town nestled into the side of Mount Carmel will likely be struck by the light-filled lobby or the striking array of artwork that fills every wall and every corner. They'll also be taken by the sweeping views of Israel's majestic coastline, its sharp blue skies dotted with graceful paragliders, its lush green edged with pink bougainvillea.

Yet it is the story behind the building and of how it became one of Israel's most exquisite lodgings that is perhaps most enthralling.

And it is all those elements pulled together that make Elma such a special place.

While every building might have its own unique back story, few have a history like the Elma. Tucked up high on the side of Mount Carmel, gazing over the fisheries of Kibbutz Maayan Tzvi and the picturesque stretch of beach known as Dor, the stacked whitewashed structure not only tells the story of Israel's socialist origins, it also spotlights the inevitable clash as the country began embracing its capitalist present.

Add to that mix an indomitable scion of a notable Zionist family and a family of prize-winning Israeli architects, and Elma captures not only hearts but also minds of hotel-goers even during the shortest of stays.

Its story begins in 1951 with Israel's passing of a national law requiring that all workers receive a weeklong vacation once a year. Based on that law, the Histadrut Labor Federation, the General Federation of Workers in Israel, opened wellness retreats around the country affording its members a short respite from work and daily life. One of

those places was the Mivtachim Sanitarium, which was dedicated in 1968 and today forms the main body of the Elma hotel.

Designed by renowned Israeli architect Yaakov Rechter, who received the Israel Prize in architecture in 1972 for the flowing design that blends with the rolling mountaintop, the complex reflects the 1960s Brutalist style, as well as many of his other iconic structures in Israel – the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Cameri Theater and the Atarim Square.

Throughout the 1970s and through the 1980s, the complex housed workers for short breaks, hosting some of the country's most iconic leaders such as former Prime Ministers David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir. By the mid-'80s, however, Israelis had begun to seek family-style vacations and preferred resorts in more exotic places such as Eilat or Tiberias. The complex was frequently used as a convention center for large company events during the 1990s, until it was shuttered completely in the early 2000s.

In 2004, Lily Elstein, a then 75-year-old patron of Israeli arts and culture who hails from one of the country's founding families, outbid and outmaneuvered fierce real estate developers vying for one of the country's most picturesque spots to replace the historic compound with a luxury residential neighborhood. Incredibly, the Mivtachim Sanitarium, which had stood as an icon of Israel's socialist days on the side of Mount Carmel, was not listed as a historical building or protected by the state.

Determined to see the complex preserved in all its glory, Elstein, whose late husband Moshe Elstein (grandson of Yoel Moshe Solomon) founded Teva Pharmaceuticals, hired Rechter's son

Amnon Rechter, and hotel architect Rani Ziss to ensure the building was renovated to its original grandeur.

The upgrade took more than 10 years to complete, with the architects working to preserve the original design, including the floors and airy interior, while adding modern touches such as high-tech infrastructure, creating larger rooms and building a new, more accessible, wing. The team also replaced the old entertainment hall – where patrons sent by the worker's union enjoyed watching movies – with a state-of-the-art acoustic theater replete with a 1,414-tube organ and two grand pianos.

When the new Elma hotel finally opened in 2015, Elstein, now 91, relocated to the site, bringing her personal art collection, including specially commissioned works, to the hotel.

The bright, sun-filled lobby that first greets visitors is dominated by a huge marble sculpture depicting a man and a woman pushing a rock. Created by Israeli sculptor Sigalit Landau, one of Elstein's patrons, the artwork is a rendering of Sisyphus, the figure from Greek mythology who cheated death twice but was eventually cursed with the eternal punishment of pushing a boulder up a hill.

More of Landau's work, as well as installations by multiple other artists, create a vibrant art exhibition that heightens the senses and inspires. Inside, the hallways leading to the modern and well-designed rooms are filled with engaging abstract paintings and photography. Outside, the extensive gardens and terraces are also dotted with sculptures and offer glorious panoramic views of the coastal plain.

The original outdoor swimming pool has been refurbished and an adjacent café

offers a range of cocktails, foods and other beverages. Beside it is a newly built indoor pool and spa facility with a variety of pampering and wellness services on offer.

And just a word about the food: Breakfast is included and, like with many other aspects of this hotel, is a carefully

thought-out affair going above and beyond the standard Israeli hotel buffet – extensive salads line the counter and nearby chef stations offer cooked dishes. The kosher kitchen also caters dinner options for an additional price.

While it is the modern touches that

make a stay at Elma both comfortable and luxurious, it is the unique history still lingering in the air that makes it a special experience.

The writer was a guest of the Elma Arts Complex and Luxury Hotel. ♦

OCTOBER 4, 2022

Ten books to read in October

The books on JI's shelf this month

By Melissa Weiss

In the latest installment of a series exploring new and upcoming books, the team at Jewish Insider previews top titles coming out in October:

***Confidence Man: The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America*, by Maggie Haberman (Oct. 4):** In one of the most-anticipated books of the season, the New York Times political reporter provides one of the most in-depth looks at the 45th president, from his childhood in Queens to his tumultuous four years in the White House.

***If You Want Something Done: Leadership Lessons from Bold Women*, by Nikki Haley (Oct. 4):** The former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations looks at 10 women — from former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir to Cindy Warmbier, who fought for her son's release from North Korean captivity — who have demonstrated courage and leadership, while sharing stories from her own trailblazing life.

***By Way of Deception*, by Amir Tsarfati and Steven Yohn (Oct. 4):** This fiction thriller, inspired by real events, looks at two Mossad agents' efforts to halt an Iranian plot to smuggle weapons of mass

destruction into Israel.

***Boldly Go: Reflections on a Life of Awe and Wonder*, by William Shatner (Oct. 4):** Known to millions as Captain Kirk of "Star Trek," Shatner — who grew up in a Conservative Jewish family in Montreal — is less an autobiography and more of a series of essays by the nonagenarian.

***Morgenthau: Power, Privilege, and the Rise of an American Dynasty*, by Andrew Meier (Oct. 11):** The former Time magazine reporter digs into the history of the Morgenthau family, and looks at the profound effect its members had at all levels of business and government over the course of four generations.

***Jewish Pride*, by Michael Steinhardt (Oct. 18):** The philanthropist traces his life's trajectory from the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bensonhurst to Wall Street and into the public sphere as one of the most prominent contributors to Jewish causes.

***Bibi: My Story*, by Benjamin Netanyahu (Oct. 18):** Weeks ahead of the election that could determine the final chapter in Netanyahu's political life, the former Israeli prime minister and current

opposition leader chronicles his life, weaving his personal narrative with the history of a young Jewish state.

***The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World*, by Jonathan Freedland (Oct. 18):** Freedland, a longtime Guardian columnist, spotlights Rudolf Vrba, the first individual known to have escaped from the notorious Polish concentration camp, bringing with him a detailed report of Nazi atrocities being committed against Europe's Jews.

***Reclaiming Our Story: The Pursuit of Jewish Pride*, by Ben Freeman (Oct. 24):** In his sophomore book, Freeman looks at the history and impact of antisemitism to help Jewish readers foment a sense of internal pride over their history and identity.

***The Women of Rothschild: The Untold Story of the World's Most Famous Dynasty*, by Natalie Livingstone (Oct. 25):** Livingstone's debut book dives into the history of the female members of the prominent Jewish family, and how they were key players in the Rothschild family's successes. ♦