

Gina Alteri

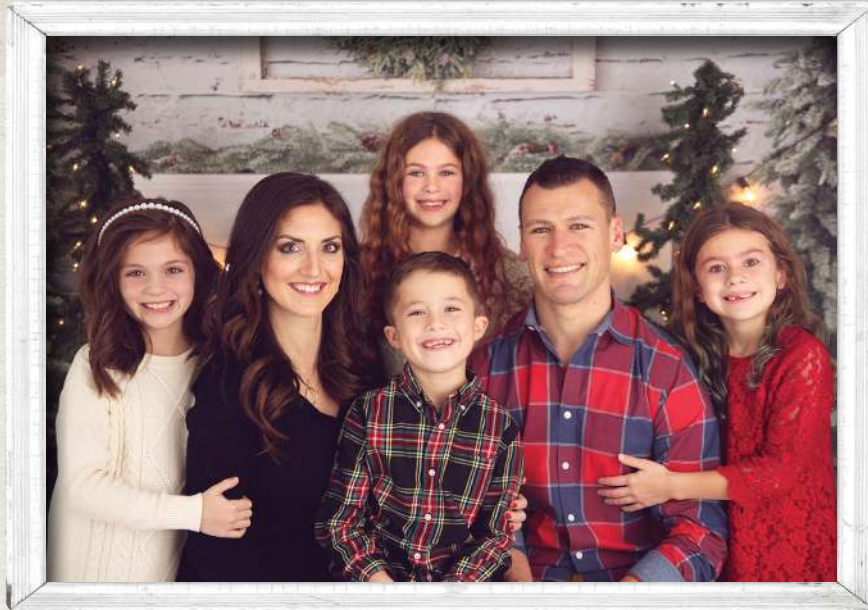
Communicating
Through Creativity
& Design



RESIDENT FEATURE

BY JENNA CAPUTO

PHOTOS BY ANGELA MIA PHOTOGRAPHY & CONTRIBUTED BY GINA ALTERI



Gina Alteri HAS HAD AN EXCITING YEAR. IN ADDITION TO HER CAREER TAKING OFF AND WINNING PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS, HER FAMILY IS GROWING WITH A NEW ENGAGEMENT, AND ALL HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE GIVING HER MUCH TO BE GRATEFUL FOR.

Growing up right here in Niskayuna, tennis was a huge part of Gina's early life. It was a family sport—her parents coached a local team, her two brothers played as well, and it was something Gina excelled in from elementary all the way through high school. She became the number one singles player at Niskayuna High School as a freshman and held her place on the team for all four years. She played in numerous tournaments, the Empire State Games, and even the Junior Olympics. "I loved tennis and wish I had more time to play these days," says Gina. "This summer, I bought my kids racquets and I've been teaching them the basics in the driveway so far. My skills are actually still pretty good!"

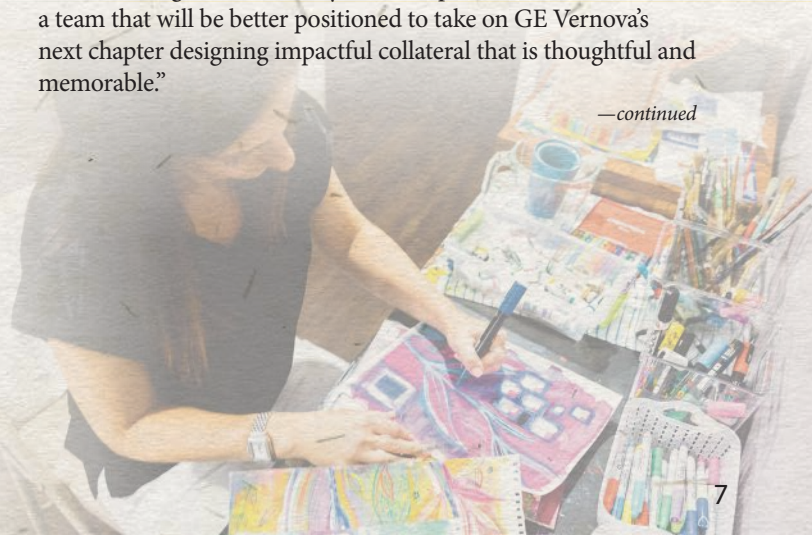
Art also played a big part in her life. She had raw talent, and painting and drawing came naturally to her. She attended art camps and various classes for fun and decided to pursue it further in high school. She took college art courses after school in perspective, figure drawing, and watercolor so she could build a strong portfolio to present at her college interviews. As Apple computers took over, digital art became more popular. Gina decided to take the Adobe Photoshop class offered at Niskayuna High School and instantly became hooked. "The possibilities were endless," she says. "Mixing classic art techniques with computer generated outputs were so fascinating to me. Graphic design was a natural path to explore in college."

Graduating from RIT in 2005, Gina jumped into her career as a graphic designer. She landed a job with GE right away and never left. She is now in her 17th year at the Schenectady campus.

Throughout the years, Gina has cycled through many design roles, but has recently been promoted to Senior Creative Marketing Director at GE Gas Power. "Since GE's announcement to spin off into three separate companies, work has been extremely exciting and fast paced, especially in the marketing and communications functions," she says. "It's a very exciting time to work at GE—so much change and opportunity. The leadership is top-notch, and I've learned so much over the years. My network has exploded, and I've had the opportunity to work with other departments including HR, legal, commercial, regional teams, and more. I've even been on calls with attendees in four different time zones!"

The focus this year is on GE Vernova's new brand. "I hope to be more involved in building out the strategy and implementing it and training others," she says. "I have plans to recruit and build a team that will be better positioned to take on GE Vernova's next chapter designing impactful collateral that is thoughtful and memorable."

—continued





40 Under 40 Award

Her work there has not gone unnoticed. She was recently honored by the Albany Business Review as one of 2022's 40 Under 40 Top Professionals. As one of over 300 nominees, the award was a special honor for her. She also just won the 59th Anniversary American In-House Design Award™. As the oldest and largest program for in-house creative excellence, this is a very prestigious award with more than 7,000 entrants. Her work for GE's Cutting Carbon Podcast logo and episode graphics was one of the top 10% winners.

"Design is a way to communicate visually," she says. "I love the challenge it presents, and it's ever present—from restaurant menus, billboards, magazines, ads, and websites. When something is well designed the user experience is effortless and often unnoticeable. On the contrary, when it's hard to digest or is tedious to decipher, your experience is negative, and your actions are affected as such. I often ask myself, what's the fastest but most creative way to tell a story with my 'tools'—fonts, colors, space, imagery, etc. When I do that while making a client happy, I've done my job."

Truly loving her job, Gina also runs her own freelance company. She began by working on smaller projects for friends and family, posting ads on Craig's List, and offering free design services for non-profits to get her name out there. Over the years, she continued to hustle, and projects came rolling in. "I've had repeat clients for years now. Being able to meet all walks of life in different industries and helping clients tell their story in a meaningful and engaging manner is very satisfying."

She has designed for everything from farms to fashion and loves working on any kind of project. Her clients come from all over and include big businesses as well as small, local startups. Her favorite design work is logos. They present a unique and exciting challenge. "Such a small mark can have such a big impact on a company," she explains. "Building out a brand is also something I try to educate clients on. Logos are only as good as the comprehensive strategy behind it. I dive into audiences, mission statements, color palettes, typography, alternative marks, and design elements, among others. I also design social media graphics, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, signage, and more."

She enjoys the collaboration process and the opportunity to help others. It is fulfilling to be able to use her unique skillset to have a tremendous impact on a business' future. Building a business is always challenging, and she has learned many things along the way. Her advice for others starting a business is to start small and do it in phases. "Don't boil the ocean," she advises. "I'd also tell people to enjoy the process. I sometimes need to take my own advice because I find myself rushing to get to the next project or to reach the next big milestone. The quiet moments will eventually add up and lead to the party music!"

In addition to her design work, Gina volunteers for the GE Veteran's Network creating web graphics and other communications to help grow awareness and support for the group. She's also heavily involved with the GE Women's Network, which supports women in STEM. Gina is on a committee that has raised over \$25K in the 2022 Virtual Scholarship Auction to support scholarships for women in STEM studies. The scholarships are given out by the Society of Women Engineers, who partners with GE. She has also donated a custom logo to the auction for the past two years. Supporting these organizations have been a rewarding experience for her.



Gina has two children—Sienna (8) and Samuel (7). "They are my pride and joy and biggest personal accomplishment (well, a work in progress)," says Gina. "They are very playful and silly kids. Their personalities are quite big for such a young age. They keep me on my toes!"

They are an athletic family and Gina has been exposing the kids to all kinds of sports to see what takes. She's also sharing her love of



art with a dedicated art area in the house, supplied with tons of mixed media for whatever art mood they're in. There's always a project or painting in progress. This summer, both kids attended an art camp. She's also fortunate to have an amazing family that helps out with the kids and makes it possible to juggle their busy schedules.

Gina thinks the world of her new fiancé, Robert. Robert's two girls, Everly (9) and Laken (7), are a special addition to the family. Together, they love to frequent the bike path, enjoying the time outdoors and soaking in the beautiful views of the Mohawk River. Their family attends the Starpoint Church in Clifton Park. Being active, they're always attending sports practices, games, and tournaments as well as all kinds of activities, but Gina is loving watching her kids grow up and learn new things along the way.

During the rare moments that Gina has time on her hands, she usually spends them painting or cooking. Connecting to her Italian roots, she cooks almost every night. "Creating meals that my family enjoys where we can sit down and chat about the day is important to me. I make a mean meatball and pot of sauce!" she says. "My kids are good eaters because of it. It's fun to try new foods or grow them in my garden. I grow basil every summer because my favorite food is pesto sauce. I freeze it to last throughout the winter."

Gina enjoys traveling and is looking forward to getting back to it someday soon. Her favorite place she has visited so far is Italy. "I'll never forget how huge the lemons grow in Sorrento! It's a country with breathtaking views and I'd love to go back someday." She also makes time to regularly get together with a group of high school girlfriends that have remained close over the years. "It's an amazing group of strong and funny women and we've all grown up together. We've shared in each other's milestones—weddings, divorces, births of children, family loses, and everything in between," she explains. Being back in Niskayuna has been a blessing, not only in sharing those moments with friends but just by being surrounded by such a supportive family and community. "Niskayuna is a wonderful area and has so much to offer," she says. "It's a great location with fantastic schools, endless sports options, cultural diversity, and job opportunities. I didn't realize this until moving back, and I appreciate this town more as an adult for what it can provide to my kids."



Gina's Painting

Gina is left-handed and may not be able to whistle, but she does know design, drive, and passion. As she continues to build upon both her career and her personal life, she constantly reminds herself to expand her horizons and push herself to new boundaries. It's a concept that can help any of us in our day-to-day lives as well. "A mentor once told me to 'think bigger,' and it really resonated with me," she says. "It forced me to try to go beyond what is expected, think of what's next—how can an outcome or solution be *that* much better. I have this phrase on a post-it note in my office and look at it daily!"

For more information on the women in STEM scholarships, please visit swe.org/scholarships.

For more information Gina's design services, visit ginaalteri.com.

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