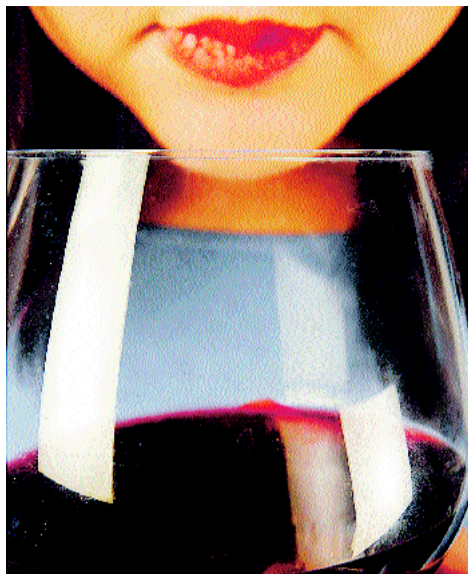


Better Living

Sun. 11.08.09



Playwright Sarah Ruhl, left, has let her imagination run all the way to Broadway 4

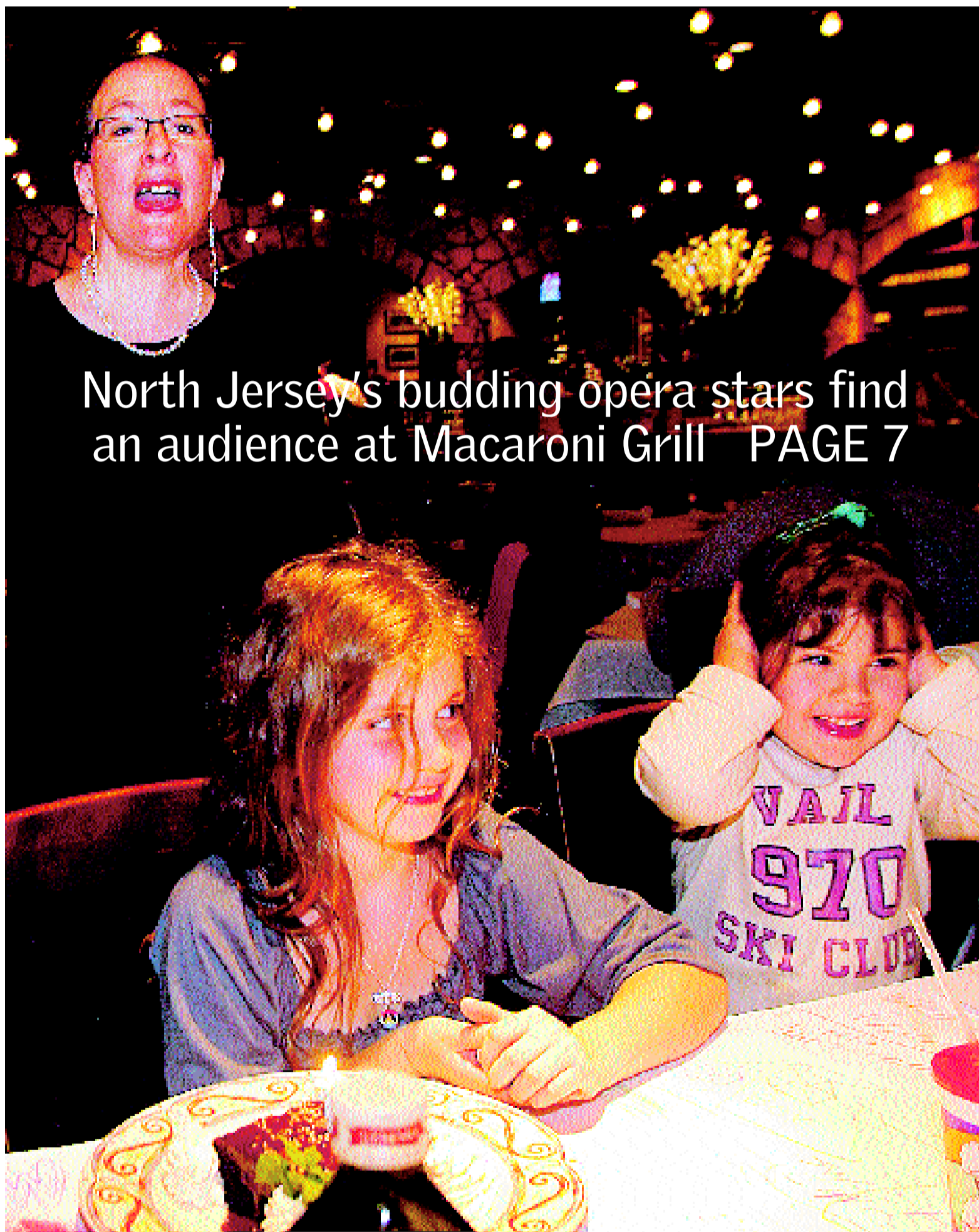


Corner Table: Nothing can ruin a fine-dining experience quicker than misbehaving children. 12



On your holiday movie preview: "Fantastic Mr. Fox," sci-fi, detectives and vampires. 3

DINNER AND AN ARIA



North Jersey's budding opera stars find an audience at Macaroni Grill PAGE 7

Jill Burstein sings "Happy Birthday" for a Mahwah family at Romano's Macaroni Grill in Ramsey. Burstein, of Paramus, is one of several professional singers employed by the restaurant chain. In addition to birthday serenades, she often sings opera pieces.

LESLIE BARBARO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Cesar Millan will be figuratively taking the pulse of North Jersey's dog owners.

He speaks the dogs' language

By VIRGINIA ROHAN
STAFF WRITER

When he was growing up in rural Mexico, Cesar Millan saw skinny dogs, but he never saw dogs filled with aggression or anxiety. He never saw dogs attack their owners or suffer panic attacks.

"In America, dogs are nice and chunky, but they're unstable," Millan says, on the phone from California. "Now, why are they unstable? Because their needs are not met."

The unmet needs of American dogs have made Millan a rich and famous man. On "Dog Whisperer," his popular National Geographic Channel show — which kicked off its sixth season last month — the dog behavior specialist performs miraculous interventions in difficult canine cases and teaches owners to become assertive pack leaders to their dogs.

Who: Cesar Millan, the Dog Whisperer.

What: Live show.

When: 8 p.m. Monday.

Where: Bergen Performing Arts Center, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood. 201-227-1030, bergenpac.org.

How much: \$29 to \$89. Special VIP tickets, for \$125, entitle patrons to sit in VIP seats, get a doggie gift bag and one of Millan's books, and meet Millan after the show.

And this week, the man who's been called "a Dr. Phil for dogs" will reinforce those lessons when he comes to the Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood.

Although Millan has been to New Jersey many times, he'll make his first visit to Bergen County for this live show. In it, the dog rehabilitator will offer pointers, recall favorite moments from his TV show and take part in a discussion and Q&A session, the latter moderated by WABC-TV Eyewitness News anchor Lori Stokes.

"It always changes based on the venue," Millan says. "One thing that I have learned over the years is you get the feeling of what people are thinking. ... Everybody wants a better life, especially with their dogs. So I get a little bit of a taste of what the vast majority [want to talk about]. Is it fear? Is it aggression? Is it anxiety? And then I touch that, obviously."

Pets of audience members cannot come to the show. And Millan's beloved dogs — celebrities in their own right, because of the television show — won't be joining him on this short tour either.

Millan is the Energizer Bunny of the dog rehabilitation world. In addition to the TV show, he has written four best-selling books, including "How to Raise the Perfect Dog: Through Puppyhood and Beyond," published this fall. He also recently launched a new magazine, Cesar's Way. On his Web site you can find everything from on-

See **MILLAN** Page F-3