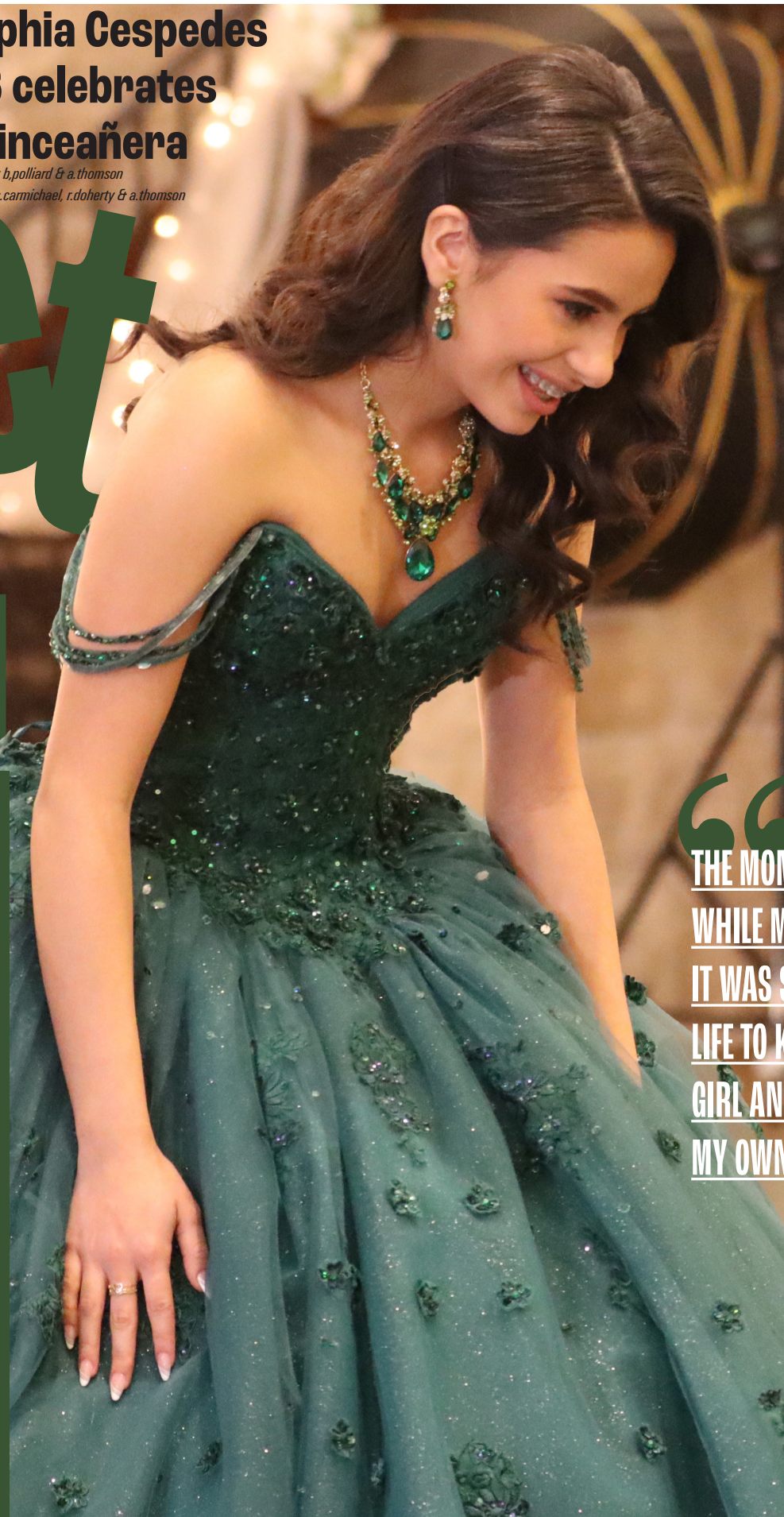


AND here she is MISS Sweet FIFTEEN

Sophia Cespedes '26 celebrates Quinceañera

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AS SOPHIA CESPEDES '26 WALKED INTO THE ROOM AT THE BELLA SERA IN HER EMERALD GOWN, SHE WAS GREETED BY HER MOTHER, FATHER AND BROTHER AS THE CROWD OF ATTENDEES CHEERED HER ON. She sat in a chair as two little boys presented her with a pair of shoes that her father put on her. Cespedes' Quinceañera was underway as she turned 15 on Feb. 11.

The event took months to plan from the food to the choreographed dances. Cespedes had to balance the planning while competing in pageants. Finding the perfect dress for the occasion took planning, according to Cespedes.

"I compete in pageants, so I have experience with dresses. I really wanted something that was able to differentiate from things I've competed in before," Cespedes said. "I found a color that I don't normally wear and am not used to but still expresses myself and makes me feel beautiful. That is how I found

emerald green. I feel the dress was extravagant but not super distracting."

The night before the Quinceañera there was a sleepover for the girls that were in Cespedes' dances including Abby Flancker '24, Olivia Salazar '26 and Jaylen Brooks '24.

"We stayed up until three in the morning even though we had to wake up at 7 a.m. We did ultimately survive until midnight, but we were definitely getting tired towards the end. We partied hard," Salazar said.

One highlight was a choreographed dance that Cespedes did with her friends in biker jackets.

"The most memorable moment was probably when I danced with my parents. They are the entire reason I was able to experience this in the first place. I really give all the glory to them," Cespedes said. "I am amazingly fortunate to be able to have a Quinceañera in the first place. I will definitely remember it forever."



1. DANCE TIME. Wearing heart sunglasses, headbands and biker jackets, Sophia Cespedes '26 and Abby Flancker '26 kneel down waiting for the music to begin a choreographed dance. "All of the girls in my party love to dance so I wanted them to be part of it," Cespedes said. *photo by j.padilla*

2. THANKS MOM. After their mother-daughter dance, Sophia Cespedes '26 hugs her mom Maria Ascencio as the audience in attendance claps and cheers. "Dancing with my mom and my dad were the most special moments of the entire evening. I will never forget it because they do everything for me," Cespedes said. *photo by a.flancker*

3. I LOVE THE SPOTLIGHT. After a dress change, Sophia Cespedes '26 returns to her Quinceañera to dance with her friends and family on the Bella Sera dance floor. *photo by a.flancker*

4. 15 AND COUNTING. After the attendees sang "Happy Birthday" to her, Sophia Cespedes '26 begins cutting her cake to give guests pieces to eat before continuing the dance. "I thought the cake was so beautiful, and it tasted so good," Cespedes said. *photo by n.nevarez*

“THE MOMENT WAS VERY EXCITING WHILE MEANINGFUL AND BITTERSWEET. IT WAS SUCH A BIG MILESTONE IN MY LIFE TO KNOW THAT I’M NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE BECAUSE I’M BECOMING MY OWN YOUNG WOMAN.”

sophia cespedes '26

HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Sophia Cespedes '26 walks up to her relative who was about to give her a hug and wish her a happy birthday on the dance floor at Bella Sera at her Quinceañera on Feb. 11. *photo by a.flancker*



how 'bout WE HEAR from my Friends



Sophia Cespedes '26 includes lifelong pals in ceremony

"SOPHIA AND I HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR SEVEN YEARS. OUR BROTHERS PLAYED FOOTBALL TOGETHER. THE QUINCEAÑERA WAS SUPER FUN. I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS TO DANCE IN FRONT OF PEOPLE, EVEN THOUGH I WAS A DANCER, BUT I FEEL IT'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT SINCE IT WAS ALL OF OUR FRIENDS. IT WAS A REALLY BIG NIGHT FOR SOPHIA AND AN IMPORTANT MOMENT IN HER LIFE. I'M GLAD I WAS A PART OF IT. THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT WAS WATCHING HER DANCE WITH HER BROTHERS."

ABBY FLANCHER '24

"SOPHIA AND I BECAME FRIENDS ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO. SHE MOVED HERE FROM MIAMI AND WAS IN MY SECOND GRADE CLASS. WE'VE GROWN UP TOGETHER SO SEEING THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS WAS SO SPECIAL. I SHED A FEW TEARS DURING THE NIGHT. SOPHIA WALKED DOWN THE STAIRS AND WALKED AROUND THE FLOOR, SHE THEN SAT DOWN ON A CHAIR WITH HER FAMILY SURROUNDING HER."

OLIVIA SALAZAR '26

"ME AND SOPHIA MET ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO BECAUSE OUR BROTHERS PLAYED FOOTBALL TOGETHER AND WE WOULD HANG OUT DURING THE GAMES. WE WORE THESE CHAMPAGNE DRESSES FOR HER CEREMONY. THEY WERE SHORT AND PUFFY WITH A COOL SET STYLE TOP. I BELIEVE IT WAS SOPHIA'S UNCLE WHO WAS ON THE DANCE FLOOR DANCING ALL CRAZY. HE'S ACTUALLY A GOOD DANCER."

JAYLEN BROOKS '24

we got it from here 109

AND THIS IS MY SPECIAL MOMENT
sophia cespedes' quinceañera

Special Instructions

Black Ink Includes Spot Color(s) Process 4-Color (CMYK)

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