

# The Artful Life

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IN THE BEAUTY OF THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY,  
THERE'S ART ALL AROUND.

CONSIDER PENNSYLVANIA'S FALL FLOWERS—CHRYSANTHEMUMS, dahlias, sunflowers, late-season roses. They herald special occasions and shift moods. Captured in still life paintings they create ambiance, transform walls and, for centuries, hold beauty for an artful life.

Southern Chester County, home to Longwood Gardens and the Brandywine River Museum of Art, presents galleries, shops and unexpected venues to shape an artful life. Artists, artisans and creatives in all fields bring inspiration and splendor to homes, bodies and souls.

Farm at Oxford



Woven table runners from Tie-Up Textiles



Pumpkin bowl with succulents from The Farm at Oxford

## THE ARTFUL TABLE

If the heart of the home is the hearth, the table is its soul. A table can inspire you to write the perfect letter or can summon opportunities for relaxed conversation, alluring banquets or memorable moments through artful design.

To create a table that makes a statement, linger at **workS**—a curated shop in Kennett Square (hence the capital letters KS) of vendors' handcrafted, vintage and unique goods. Among them, see Tie-Up Textiles, The Farm at Oxford and workS's new Kitchen Shop.

**Tie-Up Textiles'** woven table runners set the stage for trivets and nature-inspired napkin rings, celebrating succulents, leaves and miniature nature arrangements. Set an artful table for a special occasion or just Tuesday morning coffee.

Centerpieces from **The Farm at Oxford**—extraordinary burgundy and pale yellow sunflowers and merlot-colored dahlias—or succulents in bowls carved from pumpkins grace a November table. Moving into December, evergreens and berries embody the season. Visit the site of sustainably grown cut flowers—which last much longer than those from another continent—or schedule a wreath-making workshop in December at their New London studio.

The **Kitchen Shop at workS** opened in September, just in time to prepare for holiday festivities. Choose gorgeous kitchen tools for the art of cooking or displaying: marvelous pizza cutters and ice cream scoops with wooden handles of exotic colors and exceptional metal skillets.



workS features vendors' handcrafted, vintage and unique goods

PHOTO COURTESY: CARLY ABBOTT





Schedule a wreath-making workshop



Square Pear gallery



Oil painting by Michael Brock at Hardcastle Gallery

Thanks to bees at West Grove's **Swarmbustin' Honey**, wrap holiday leftovers in Be Our Guest sustainable beeswax wraps instead of plastic film. With options of adorable patterns and colors, the refrigerator looks like it's stocked in gift packages.

Any consideration of artful tables should include the most famous one in the area—the farmtable at Kennett's **Talula's Table**. For over a decade, magic has transformed the gourmet-market-by-day into the site of the artful Farmtable Dinners, the most sought-after reservations in the country for super-seasonal, eight-course tasting menu for 8 to 12 guests—still a year's waiting list.

One final nod to culinary art is in the direction of **Verbena BYOB**, the 2019 *Philly Mag*-designated Best New American restaurant. In less than two years, this star on State Street helmed by Chef Scott Morozin has drawn fans and raves. A personal favorite: the stun-

ning sculptural construction of Lancaster Farms chicken, mushroom duxelles, charred pickled Napa cabbage, trumpet mushrooms, leek confit, truffle. Better yet, see the photo below. Then taste for yourself.

#### INVITING GALLERIES FOR THE BODY AND SOUL

Art also helps us explore new ideas, deal with life's mysteries and see beauty in the imperfect.

According to Corien Siepeling, owner and curator of the **Square Pear** in Kennett Square, art exhibits can stretch a viewer's imagination. Siepeling helps visitors find pieces to generate an artful life among her gallery's monthly themed exhibits. She encourages them to consider paintings, sculpture and glass to express what they love. Square Pear's upcoming exhibit, "Little Gems," features dozens of artists' little paintings that make one-of-a-kind enchanting gifts.

Tucked into the corner of Square Pear, discover Stephanie Ryan's brand new gallery space. While some collectors may have encountered Ryan's patterns on Lenox dinnerware or special greeting cards, few may realize her physical presence in Kennett Square. Ryan describes her paintings, prints and pillows of flowers, intuitive symbols and nature as elusive scenes that seem as though they were painted in a dream and must be captured before she awakes.

Capturing examples of quintessential scenes of the Brandywine Valley, **Barbara Moore Fine Art Gallery** offers works of "Wyeth, Skip and a Frolic." This refers to works of the Wyeth family of artists (N.C., Andrew and Jamie), plus Paul (Skip) Scarborough and Frolic Weymouth, along with many others. Moore's 43 years in the business give her both expertise and stories to share. Located in the Chadds Ford Barns Shops, the gallery is worth a stop.

Another gallery with a long history is down Route 52, just across the state line in Centreville, Delaware. Established in 1888, **Hardcastle Gallery** has a full schedule of shows on its calendar. Its October showcase for four local artists—Ruck, Newitt, Galer and Brock—is wrapping up, but its annual Holiday Mini Show launches on Black Friday (November 29). This popular show features a wide selection of smaller pieces, perfect for giving the gift of art this season. Ask gallery owner, Mike Brock, to tell you about his painting in the White House.

A newcomer to the arts scene is a gallery for young emerging artists at **Oxford Arts Alliance**. The community-based organization that promotes art and culture teaches selected artists—from elementary school to college age—how to curate their exhibits and design displays. Art Coordinator Caitlin Daugherty says that Oxford residents are gravitating toward the exhibits, eager to see young talent and support new artists. They're planning an Artisan Gift Shop, November 15 to December 21, perfect for the holidays.

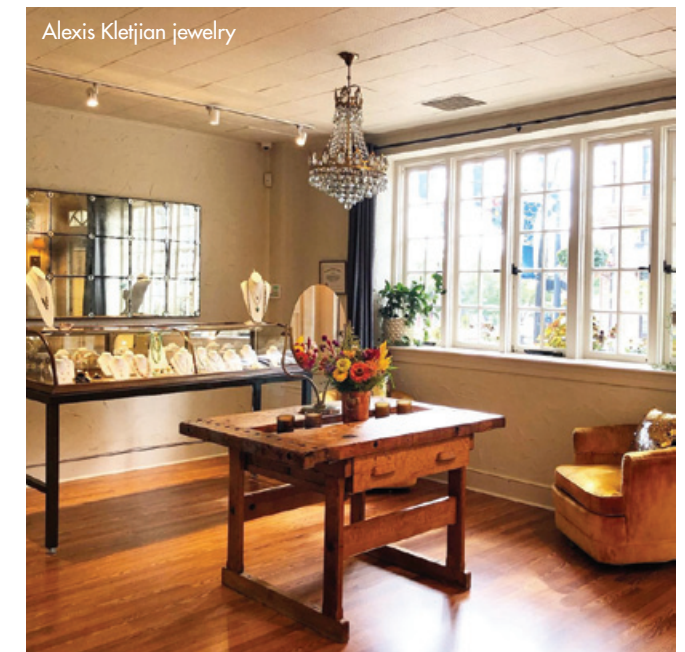
For a different kind of gallery, visit **Alexis Kletjian's** showroom, where her fine jewelry pieces have stories and collections are filled with meaning as they're displayed like the treasures they are. As the leaves are falling, holidays approach and people examine what they want to accomplish before the year's end, her Lotus Seed necklaces remind wearers of their potential and new growth in the future. Other unique pendants and earrings in her Lotus collection are inspired by the intricacies of lotus blossoms.

Kletjian is also passionate about helping women tell their stories through jewelry, reconfiguring diamonds with custom designs to leave a legacy. And creating wearable art.



Culinary art found at Verbena BYOB

PHOTO COURTESY: RSCVISUALS



Alexis Kletjian jewelry



## PICKING UP PAINTBRUSHES

**Laurie Murray**—painter, metal sculptor and artistic mentor for women whose expression has been silenced—advocates creating art in addition to collecting art. Have some fun, visit a new ice cream shop or café to find inspiration. Pick up paintbrush or paper or mix elements in unexpected ways, she recommends.

Also, look for art in unanticipated places, wherever you go. For example, **Galer Estates Vineyard and Winery** displays stained glass, a repurposed marble bar and outdoor sculptures that sometimes serve as the backdrop for music and art events. Co-owner Lele Galer manages the winery and is a practicing artist, painter and welder. Her support for the arts includes running art shows, managing the Brandywine Artisan Wine Trail and supporting the local arts community.

To boost creative processes and skills, southern Chester County and Delaware offer education and hands-on workshops to help creative juices, as well as paint and other media, flow. Stephanie Ryan's workshops combine music, meditation and intuitive watercolor painting for novices or the experienced. Square Pear gallery holds classes for children that honor their creativity, while teaching ways to enhance artistic expression. Oxford Arts Alliance has a variety of lessons for adults and kids in cartooning, photorealism and portfolio preparation, as well as creative art for adults with learning differences.

## ART-FILLED HOLIDAYS

Looking ahead to December, mark your calendars for more encounters with art in the Brandywine Valley. Be dazzled by the Saturday ice sculpture at the **Kennett Square Holiday Village Market** at the **Creamery**, a work of art in itself. Sip hot chocolate while shop-

ping for curated artisans' wares. Music lovers, lend your ears to the **Kennett Symphony Orchestra** under the direction of Michael Hall.

Across the state line, discover the **Center for Creative Arts** in Yorklyn, Delaware. On November 23 and 24, regional artists sell their crafts—fabric arts, jewelry, paintings, glass and sculpture—at the center. Workshops in holiday glass painting and printmaking are perfectly timed with the season for giving.

"Art brings us joy and connection," says Melissa Paolercio, executive director of the Center for Creative Arts. "Artists examine the world and present it back to us so we can experience life through someone else's eyes." ♦

See beautiful stained glass at Galer Estate Vineyard and Winery



Visit the Kennett Square Holiday Village Market

