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placid pond or on an intimate balcony off the main bedroom suite. From nodding garden hydrangeas, the front door's antique hardware, the foyer's black and white checkerboard Italian marble tile once gracing an English manor, to an upstairs sunlit bedroom window seat and downstairs screening room with Moroccan lanterns, every detail is thoughtful and exquisite. Make morning lattes in the built-in Miele espresso machine in the kitchen graced with Pennsylvania farmhouse floors and exposed ceiling beams. Cook omelets on the Lacanche range next to white marble counters. Linger at the kitchen's eat-in nook, cozy sitting area or through French doors on the sweeping veranda while watching ducks on the pond or butterflies in the garden.

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from the EDITOR

Let the holiday fun begin! From bedecked West Chester doors on our cover to even more festive wreaths on the final pages, this issue is packed with holiday recommendations.

Find out about holiday house tours, holiday style options and holiday musical and theater performances in our area. See *The Nutcracker*, hear *The Messiah* or watch a local production of *A Christmas Carol*.

Plan your shopping after an armchair review of our “Holiday Window Shopping” feature. For more ideas, let Cathy Fiebach suggest books and Fred Naddeo recommend wines. Mercedes Thomas pitches giving experiences—a green and appreciated option.

West Chester is always worth a visit during the holidays. Malcolm Johnstone looks at what’s new and what’s not to be missed in “Winter Lights in Downtown West Chester.” There’s also a nostalgic look at the origins of Old Fashioned Christmas with reminiscences from its originator, Kay Eby Moore. Plus details on the QVC West Chester parade.

We suggest you also plan a visit to our other towns—Wayne, Malvern, Phoenixville, Kennett Square, Media, Downingtown and Centreville. Hania Jones and Casey Meyer write about the festivities in “A *County Lines* Country Christmas.” If you visit Delaware’s grand historic homes and museums for their holiday displays, you’ll appreciate another side of the presentations after reading Karen Jesse’s “A Feast for the Eyes Only.”

For more on food, read Alyssa Thayer’s interview with John Serock, of catering fame, about hosting a heavy hors d’oeuvres party. Our Brandywine Table column has you covered for holiday entertaining.

For something a little different, but part of the season for many, Zack Malet previews a documentary about the Philadelphia Eagles and their fans, titled “Maybe Next Year.” Yes, maybe ...

We have even more ideas about how to enjoy the season in our Best Local Events Section, along with a full page of Family Fun activities. So many ways to celebrate!

Finally, from all of us here, we wish you the Happiest of Holidays!


Jo Anne Durako
Editor

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COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

December 2019

Volume XLIII, Number 4

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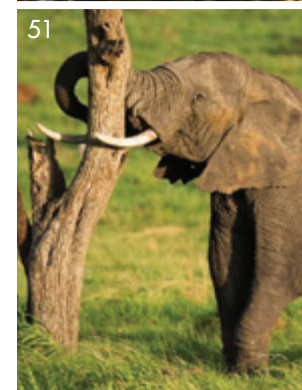
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Cover photo collage of the doors of West Chester by Timlyn Vaughan Photography.
Signed prints of the holiday door collage are available at Visual Expansion Gallery in West Chester.



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[Good to Know] *Just a few things we'd thought you'd like to know this month*

New Age Specs. Smart Caption Glasses technology is here! People's Light in Malvern is the first theater in the U.S. to offer this live captioning breakthrough. Using augmented reality and smart glasses technology, **Smart Caption Glasses** will revolutionize the way those who are deaf, hard of hearing, and non-English speakers enjoy live theater—live and in real time. The best news? Smart Glasses are available for People's Light's January 2020 show, *The Children!* PeoplesLight.org.



Local Stamp. Festoon your holiday cards with an image from the glorious gardens of **Winterthur** this season and throughout the year. The U.S. Postal Service released a new series of Forever stamps celebrating the beauty of ten classic American gardens, including Winterthur Garden in Wilmington. This new group of 20 stamps features ten different photographs of lush gardens from around the country, including the iconic view of azaleas blooming around Winterthur's reflecting pool. A perfect way to make a personal card or letter even more memorable. USPS.com.



No Plan(et) B. The next generation is hitting the trails running, learning how to protect the environment for years to come. Natural Lands and Trellis for Tomorrow are working together on a program, **Youth Environmental Stewardship** (or YES), giving jobs to youths with rocky beginnings. Providing real-world career opportunities, YES has teens 13 to 17 digging their hands into local conservation projects, planting the roots for a vibrant future, plus finding possible career opportunities in conservation. More at Trellis4Tomorrow.org.

Ugly Is In Season! 'Tis the season to be jolly and what's jollier than an Ugly Christmas Sweater party? How about a whole day dedicated to the concept—December 20th is **National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day**—and a crowd of friends to share in the celebration? Get into the spirit by shopping locally for festive sweaters with the most outrageous twinkling lights, bells, whistles and more truly disturbing details. Go way over the top, because the uglier, the jollier! More at NationalUglyChristmasSweaterDay.org.



Warm for the Winter. December 3rd is National Roof Over Your Head Day, a time to appreciate a cozy home during cold winter months. Spread this grateful spirit by contributing to **Joy of Sox**, the Phoenixville non-profit that collects thousands of socks to distribute to programs serving homeless populations in our area. As the chill of December blows in, consider warming others' hearts—and feet—by donating to this cause. More at TheJoyOfSox.org.



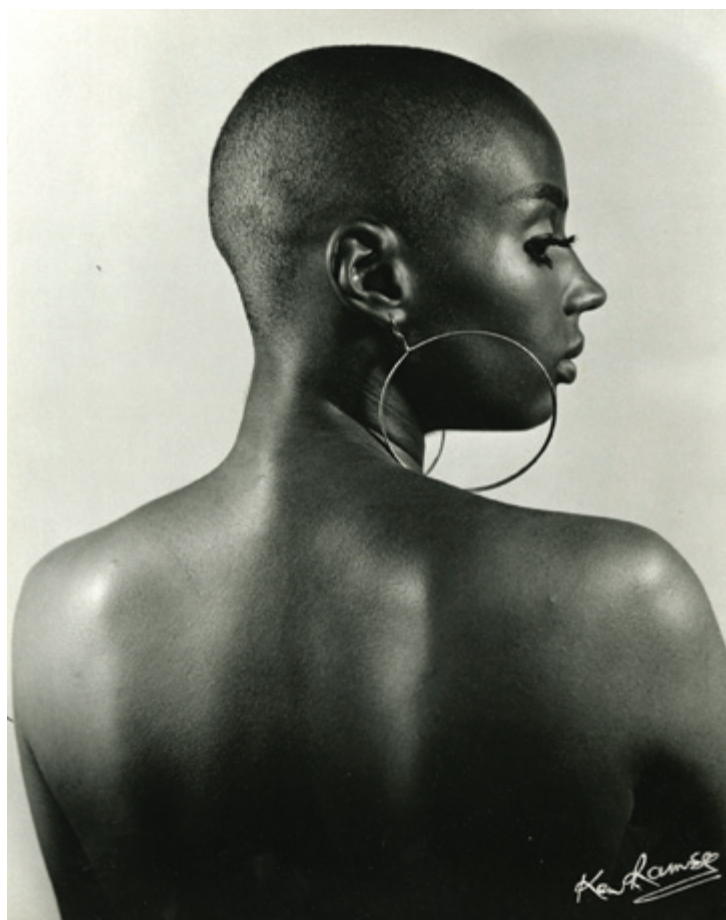
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December Picks Our Picks for top events this month

8th Annual Arts Festival Reading & Holiday Market

December 14–15



Explore GoggleWorks historic campus and shop handmade items from over 75 regional artists, artisans and craftpeople. Watch live demonstrations, enjoy make-and-take workshops, live music, food and fun. *GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, 201 Washington St., Reading. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$10, under 12 are free. 610-374-4600; ArtsFestivalReading.org.*

Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center Is Puttin' On The Glitz 2019

December 31

Welcome 2020 with dinner, dancing and entertainment at this annual New Year's Eve Gala. This is a party with a purpose to support Uptown as a home for live performance, film, education and the life of our community. The First Ladies of Rock & Soul will perform, John Serock Catering offers fabulous fare and you can join in the auction and raffle. *226 N. High St., West Chester. 6:30 p.m. \$150. 610-356-ARTS; UptownWestChester.org.*



7th Annual Coffee & Tea Festival

December 14–15

Join more than 50 exhibitors from around the country as they pour tastings of their finest coffees and teas and introduce you to new and award-winning products. The exhibit also features sweet and savory foods to complement the collection. *Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$5–\$20. CoffeeAndTeaFestival.com.*



Winter Luminary Walk at Jenkins Arboretum

December 13



The Arboretum will be aglow with luminary-lined paths, up-lit trees, floating lanterns and hot beverages. Bundle up for a walk down to the pond, then enjoy delicious bites and brews from

La Cabra Brewing (pay as you go) up at the John J. Willaman Education Center. *631 Berwyn Baptist Rd., Devon. 5 to 8 p.m. Donations accepted. 610-647-8870; JenkinsArboretum.org.*

Wolf Sanctuary of PA Full Moon Fundraising Event

December 14

Bring a blanket, flashlight, chair, some hot dogs and marshmallows, then sit around the fire and listen to live entertainment. Later take a self-guided tour through the sanctuary. Guides are stationed at each pack to provide information. *465 Speedwell Forge Rd., Lititz. 7:30 to 10 p.m. \$20, must be 16 years old. 717-626-4617; WolfSanctuaryPA.org.*



best Local Events

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH NOVEMBER, WEDNESDAYS
Story Time at Reads & Company. Every Wednesday morning at 11 am back at the Reading Rocketship at Reads & Company, 234 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 484-920-3695; ReadsAndCompany.com.

NOVEMBER 23–DECEMBER 28
Celebrating the Holidays in Kennett Square. Nov. 23–Dec. 28, Sat. shuttle to and from Longwood Gardens, timed tickets 1:30 to 6:30; Nov. 29, Holiday Light Parade, 6 pm; Nov. 30, Small Business Saturday; Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 21, Brandywine Singers caroling, 2 to 5; Dec. 7, 8, 14, 15, Kennett Holiday Village Market, 11 to 5 at The Creamery; Dec. 12, Tinsel on the Town, State Street holiday shopping and fun, 6 to 9 pm. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.



NOVEMBER 29, DECEMBER 1
Visit Media for the Holidays. Nov. 29, Holiday Stroll, noon to 3 and the Festival of Lights and Tree Lighting at the Armory on State & Church Sts. at 5 pm. Dec. 1, 6th Annual Santa Parade and Fun Run with exhibits, giveaways, refreshments and activities at the block party on Veterans Square between State and Front Sts. 2:30 to 6 pm. VisitMediaPA.com.

NOVEMBER 29–DECEMBER 31
Morris Arboretum's Holiday Garden Railway. Display and buildings, decorated for the holidays with lights, are all made of natural materials. Morris Arboretum, 100 E. Northwestern Ave., Phila. Daily, 10 to 4. \$10–\$20. 215-247-5777; MorrisArboretum.org.

NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 7 & 14
Holiday Events–Downingtown. Nov. 30,

Christmas Tree Lighting in Kerr Park, 6 pm; Dec. 7, Santa at the Downingtown Log House, 10 to 2; Dec. 14, Christmas Parade, 3 pm. For more info, 610-269-1523; DTownChristmas.com.

DECEMBER 1
Ryerss Farm For Aged Equines Holiday Open House. Come out to meet the horses and Santa. 1710 Ridge Rd., Pottstown. 1 to 3. 610-469-0533; RyerssFarm.org.

DECEMBER 6–7
Christmas in Wayne. Dec. 6, horse-drawn carriages, ornament making, face painting and more in the firehouse, plus hot chocolate stations, strolling carolers in town. Then gather to light the tree and welcome Santa on his fire truck at Wayne train station at 7:30 pm. Dec. 7, Santa Parade at 10 am. Meet Santa at The Wayne Hotel until 11:30 am. See website for details, WayneChristmas.com.

DECEMBER 6–22
The Holidays in Phoenixville. Dec. 6, Holiday Parade and the new Winter Wonderland Village in the Main & Bridge Street Parking Lot, starts at 5 pm, tree lighting follows; Dec. 7–22, weekends, visit Santa at the house on Bridge St.; Dec. 11, Luminaria Shopping Night. 610-933-2154; PhoenixvilleFirst.org.

DECEMBER 7
Christmas on King. Malvern is set to deck the halls with their tree lighting and a day filled with shopping at the Mistletoe Market and King Street merchants. You'll enjoy two outdoor cocktail lounges, food trucks, and lots of activities for children, including a visit from Santa. Everything happens on King Street and in Burke Park, Warren Ave. & Roberts Rd. Noon to 7 pm. Malvern-Festivals.com.



DECEMBER 7
Merry Night at the Delaware Museum of Natural History Museum. Wear your favorite pair of holiday PJs and enjoy winter-themed activities, crafts, scavenger hunt, live animal presentations and more. 4840 Kennett Pk., Wilmington. 5 to 7:30 pm. \$3–\$12. 302-658-9111; DelMNH.org.

DECEMBER 7
Colonial Christmas at Rockford Plantation. Celebrate a Colonial Christmas by decorating a homemade gingerbread cookie, playing games and making a simple craft and enjoying snacks. For ages 4 and up. 881 Rockford Rd., Lancaster. 2 to 3 pm. \$2. 717-392-7223; RockfordPlantation.org.

DECEMBER 8
Tree Lighting in Newtown Square. Christmas Tree Lighting in St. Alban's Circle featuring Santa's arrival by fire truck, dance exhibitions, live Christmas music, carols and hot chocolate. Off Rs. 3 & 252. 7 to 8:20 pm. 484-424-6140; NSBPA.com.

DECEMBER 13
Historic Yellow Springs Holiday Stroll. Lots of activities including holiday stories, snacks, holiday music, tree lighting and Santa arriving to greet children at the Washington Building, 1701 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. 4:30 to 8 pm. Free. 610-827-7414; YellowSprings.org.



DECEMBER 14
Sweet Holiday Celebration in Bird-in-Hand. Gingerbread cookies and carriage rides, caroling and Santa Claus. Bird-in-Hand Bakery & Café, 2715 Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-in-Hand. 9 am to noon. Free. 717-768-1501; Bird-in-Hand.com.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS.....

See also: Family Fun

THROUGH DECEMBER 29

2019 Holidays in Historic Odessa, DE. The Corbit Sharp House will be decorated as scenes based on the classic children's novel, *The Secret Garden*. Holiday Candlelight Tours on Tues & Thurs through Dec., except Christmas Eve. 201 Main St., Odessa, DE. Mon by res.; Tues–Sat, 10 to 4:30; Sun, 1 to 4:30. \$8–\$10. 302-378-4119; HistoricOdessa.com.

THROUGH JANUARY 5

A Longwood Christmas. Celebrate the many shapes of the season with a display that is both nostalgic and inventive, from poinsettias to pinecones to snowflakes. Outdoor firepits, colorful fountains, music, a half-million lights and carolers fill the gardens. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Timed admission tickets req. \$16–\$30. LongwoodGardens.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 5

Yuletide at Winterthur. Embracing the warmth and festivity of the season with a magnificent holiday tour of Henry Francis du Pont's mansion as well as breathtaking trees, dazzling room displays, a magical dollhouse and the opportunity to shop and dine at the weekly Yuletide Jazz & Wine series. 5105 Kennett Pk. (Rt. 52), Winterthur, DE. Mon–Sun, 10 to 5:30. Timed tickets required for Yuletide. \$6–\$20. 800-448-3883; Winterthur.org.



NOVEMBER 23–JANUARY 1

Holidays at Hagley. The 1803 du Pont family ancestral home, Eleutherian Mills, will feature holiday decorations, the celebration of Twelfth Night, Twilight Tours, Dec. 7, a visit from Santa and month-long Gingerbread House competition. 200 Hagley Creek Rd., Wilmington. \$6–\$15. 302-658-2400; Hagley.org.

NOVEMBER 29–JANUARY 5

A Brandywine Christmas. Enjoy a gallery filled with a model train display, trees decorated with critter ornaments (Critter Sale Dec. 5–8), events and programs such as Breakfast with the Trains, Breakfast with Santa, caroling and parties. Brandywine River Museum of Art, Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 9:30 to 4:30

(closed Christmas Day). \$6–\$18. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.



NOVEMBER 30

Holiday Events in Centreville, DE. A yearly Santa Stroll on Small Business Saturday, where the shops sponsor a "passport program," allowing visitors to have their passports stamped at area shops to get a chance to win a gift certificate to one of the area merchants. Trees, holiday greens vendors and food trucks also on hand. 302-777-FIND; CentrevilleDe.info.

DECEMBER 1

Crafted at Winterfest at Eagleview. This year's event features artists and crafters, dancers, performances, live music and much more. There

Brandywine Christmas



NOVEMBER 29–
JANUARY 5

ALL ABOARD
FOR A LIFETIME
OF MEMORIES!



BRANDYWINE
RIVER MUSEUM
OF ART

Route 1, Chadds Ford, PA
brandywine.org/museum

Be sure to look in our special West Chester section for events there. Also, check out *Holiday House Tours*, *Holiday Performances to Brighten the Season*, and *A County Lines Country Christmas* for details about events in area towns.

will also be a selection of food, local spirits and winter-time treats ending with the annual tree lighting. Eagleview Town Center, 565 Wellington Sq., Exton. 11 to 5 pm. Free. Eagleview-TownCenter.com.

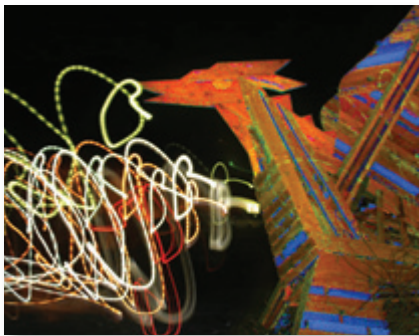
DECEMBER 1
Garrett Hill Tree Lighting Celebration. Bring an ornament to decorate the tree and canned goods and winter jackets for collection for veterans. Then sing carols, enjoy hot chocolate and snacks. Clem Macrone Park, 810 Conestoga Rd., Bryn Mawr. 5:30. 484-222-6106.

DECEMBER 5-7
Hay Creek Historical Assoc. Christmas at Joanna Furnace. A vintage Christmas celebration. Enjoy the Victorian decorations in this historic building, horse-drawn carriage rides, Christmas Market, bonfire, live Nativity and tours. Rt. 10, 3 mi. N. of Morgantown. Fri, 5 to 9; Sat-Sun, 4 to 9. \$7. 610-286-0388; HayCreek.org.

DECEMBER 7
Coatesville Christmas Parade. Lively event with bands, floats, antique cars, cartoon charac-

ters and entertainment. Strode Ave. to 11th St. Starts at 10. CoatesvilleChristmasParade.com.

DECEMBER 7
15th Annual Firebird Festival in Phoenixville. Annual burning of the Firebird. Shuttle buses from Veteran Field connect with downtown, where there are street performances and a pub crawl. At 6:30 back to Veteran Field, 192 Mowere Rd. Events start at 4, burning of the Phoenix at 8. 610-933-9199; FirebirdFestival.com.



DECEMBER 7
Christmas in Odessa Holiday House Tour. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

DECEMBER 7
Christmas in Marshallton. The festivities begin at 9 am at Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Rd., West Chester, with homemade cookies and crafts, a free Community Soup and Sandwich lunch at 11:30 and live music. Tree Lighting at Martin's Tavern, 1400 W. Strasburg Rd. at 4 pm. 610-696-5247; MarshalltonChurch.org.

DECEMBER 7
Chadds Ford Historical Society Candlelight Christmas. Visit the historic John Chads House, Springhouse and Barns-Brinton House decorated for the season. You'll experience the culinary history of Colonial America, sample beverages as well as sweet and savory foods from original 18th-century recipes, Colonial dancing and light refreshments. 1736 Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. 1 to 6. \$15. 610-388-7376; ChaddsFordHistory.org.

DECEMBER 7
Annual Candlelight Holiday Tour in Phoenixville. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

and ...
Strasburg Holiday Home Tour. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

and ...
Chestnut Hill Holiday House Tour. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

DECEMBER 8
Historic Pottstown Holiday Tour. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

DECEMBER 9
Pottsgrove Manor by Candlelight. Embrace the history of the holiday and experience a candlelit tour of the manor, play parlor games, refreshments and kids activities. 100 W. King St., Pottstown. 2 to 8 pm. \$2 donation. 610-326-4014; MontcoPa.org/PottsgroveManor.

DECEMBER 13
National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum Holiday Open House. Stroll through candle-lit grounds, listen to carolers, enjoy refreshments and see a train display. Canned goods donations are welcome. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. 5 to 8. Free. 610-384-9282; SteelMuseum.org.



DECEMBER 14
A Sugartown Christmas. Explore the historic village decorated for the holiday season. Visit with Santa, decorate holiday cookies, make Victorian-style ornaments and cards and check out the gift shop for unique gifts. Park at 260 Spring Rd., Malvern. 11 to 3. \$8. 610-640-2667; HistoricSugartown.org.

DECEMBER 14
The Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE. See *Holiday House Tours* in this issue.

DECEMBER 31
Midnight in the Square—Kennett Square Mushroom Drop. Kennett Square's annual tradition has something for the whole family with activities for kids, live entertainment, food vendors and more. Kids and parents kick off the celebration at 6:30 pm. "Raising the lighted Mushroom will take place at 8:45. Free. MidnightInTheSquare.com.

DECEMBER 31
New Year's Eve Community Celebration and Ball Drop in Media. Come on out, snow or moonlight, to State and Jackson Sts. in Media to ring in the new year. Music at 11 pm, ball drop at midnight. VisitMediaPA.com.

ART, CRAFT & ANTIQUES.....
THROUGH JANUARY 26
Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital Art Ability Exhibit & Sale. Artists from around the world with physical, cognitive, visual and hearing disabilities submit their work to this juried exhibition and sale. 414 Paoli Pk., Malvern. 484-596-5710; MainLineHealth.org/ArtAbility.

DECEMBER 5-7
Workshops & Events at Scott Arboretum. *Dec. 5-6*, Green Wreaths Workshop, two sessions each day, phone to register, \$55; *Dec. 7*, Holiday Sale with lots of activities for the whole family. The Scott Arboretum, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore. \$45-\$60. 610-328-8023; ScottArboretum.org.

DECEMBER 5-14
Community Arts Center's Holiday Sale of Fine Craft & Pottery. Featuring handmade work by members of the Potters Guild. *Dec. 5*, Preview Party, 7 to 9:30, \$5. Mon-Fri, 10 to

8; Sat-Sun, 10 to 5. 414 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford. 610-566-1713; CACHolidaySale.org.

DECEMBER 6-FEBRUARY 1
2019 Craft Forms at Wayne Art Center. An international juried exhibition of contemporary crafts. *Dec. 6*, Opening Gala, 6 to 10, \$75 and up. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. See website for hours. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org.

DECEMBER 13-14
Delaware Art Museum Winter Arts Festival. Celebrate the season at this family-friendly event where you can shop for holiday gifts from 20 regional artisans, listen to festive music

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HOLIDAY TRAINS

Children of all ages get a thrill out of trains. Cruising through the woods on a snowy day, or hosting Santa and his team on the train at the museum. All Aboard the Holiday Trains!

Colebrookdale Railroad. Dec. 13-23, Santa's Polar Express and 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Train. E. 3rd St., Boyertown. ColebrookdaleRailroad.com.

National Toy Train Museum. Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21, Santa will be at the National Toy Train Museum, 300 Paradise Ln., Paradise. NTTMuseum.org.

New Hope & Ivyland Railroad. Through Dec. 31, Santa's Steam Spectacular and the North Pole Express. 32 W. Bridge St., New Hope. NewHopeRailroad.com.

Railroad Museum of PA. Dec. 7, 14, Home for the Holidays and Christmas with the Conductor Parties on one of the historic railroad cars. 300 Gap Rd., Strasburg. RRMuseumPa.org.

Strasburg Rail Road. Nov. 23-Dec. 22, Christmas Tree Train, Santa's Paradise Express and The Night Before Christmas Train. 301 Gap Rd., Ronks. StrasburgRailRoad.com.

West Chester Railroad. Nov. 23-Dec. 22, Christmas Tree Train and the Santa Express. 230 E. Market St., West Chester. WestChesterRR.com.

Wilmington & Western Railroad. Dec. 6-30, Holiday Lights Express. Greenbank Station, 2201 Newport Gap Pk., Wilmington. WVRR.com.



Local Farm Markets

Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr. Unit 13 B, West Chester. Sat, 10 to 2. ArtisanExchange.net.

Bryn Mawr Farmers Mkt., Lancaster Ave. Bryn Mawr train station parking lot. Sat, 9 to 1. FarmToCity.org.

Downingtown Farmers Mkt., Log Cabin Field, Kerr Park, Pennsylvania Ave. Sat, 9 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Eagleview Farmers Mkt., Eagleview Town Crt., Wellington Sq., Exton. Thurs, 3 to 7. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Kennett Square Farmers Mkt., 113 E. State St. Fri, 3 to 7. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.

Lancaster County Farmers Mkt., 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed & Fri, 8 to 6; Sat, 8 to 4. 610-688-9856; LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.

Malvern Farmers Mkt., Warren Ave. & Roberts Rd. Sat, 9 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Phoenixville Farmers Mkt., 200 Mill St. Sat, 10 to noon. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

West Chester Growers Mkt., Chestnut & Church Sts. Sat, 9 to 1. 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

Westtown Amish Mkt., 1165 Wilmington Pk., West Chester. Thurs, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 8; Sat, 8 to 4. 610-492-5700; WestChesterAmishMarket.com.

performed by local choirs and enjoy seasonal decorations. Winter-themed art projects will be available for children and their families. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Fri, noon to 8; Sat, 9 to 4. Free. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

DOG SHOWS.....

DECEMBER 4-8

Valley Forge Kennel Club Dog Show. The Winter Blast dog show's annual celebration of dog sports including a dog show each day. The weekend's activities include obedience and Rally competitions as well as a new Scent Work trial. The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Begins 9 am daily. \$5-\$10. For more info, ValleyForgeKC.org/Show.

EQUESTRIAN.....

NOVEMBER 23

History and Hunts at Historic Yellow Springs. HYS is hosting Kimberton Hunt Club for a ceremony describing the hunt itself, the clothing worn and other traditions and seeing off the Hunt in the meadow. A Hunt Club breakfast

will follow around 12:30 in the Washington Building, 1701 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Donations accepted. HistoricYellowSprings.org.

FESTIVALS, PARADES & FAIRS.....

See also: [Holiday Happenings](#)

NOVEMBER 30

Patriot's Day at Brandywine Battlefield. Firing demos, 18th-century baker, military fife and drum music, open fire cooking and military medical display and demonstration. 1491 Baltimore Pk., Chadds Ford. 10 to 4. \$5-\$8. 610-459-3342; BrandywineBattlefield.org.

FOOD, BREWS & SPIRITS.....

DECEMBER 14

9th Annual Valley Forge Beer & Cider Festival. Serving over 150 beers and ciders with food trucks, holiday festivities and more. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Two sessions: 12:30 to 4 and 5:30 to 9. \$45-\$65. 631-940-7290; ValleyForgeBeerFest.com.

FUNDRAISERS.....

See also: [FOOD](#)

NOVEMBER 23

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"Silver Stars." The evening includes open bar, cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres and dinner. The evening will be emceed by Cecily Tynan and feature live music, open bar, fabulous food, photo booth, auctions, raffle and casino gambling. Benefits Paoli Hospital. White Manor Country Club, 831 Providence Rd., Malvern. 6 to 11 pm. \$225. 484-565-1380; PaoliAuxiliary.org.



NOVEMBER 23
Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce 2019 Charity Gala, "Roaring 20s." Dinner, dancing and silent auction with great items. Benefits Barnstone Art for Kids. Rivercrest Golf Club & Preserve, 100 Golf Club Dr., Phoenixville. 5:30. Visit website to register. 610-933-3070; PhoenixvilleChamber.org.

NOVEMBER 23
Linda Creed Breast Cancer's Fun, Fashion &

Friends Luncheon. Join the fun with great food, raffles, auctions, shopping and cash bar. Hilton Philadelphia, 4200 City Ave., Philadelphia. 11 to 2. \$65. 215-564-3700; LindaCreed.org.

DECEMBER 4-5

Women's Committee of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Holiday Boutique. The finest boutiques participate to benefit CHOP. Merion Cricket Club, 325 Montgomery Ave., Haverford. Preview Wed, shopping and hors d'oeuvres, 5 to 9, \$150; Thurs, 9 to 5, lunch available, \$10 (\$35 for shopping and lunch). 267-426-6498; CHOPHolidayBoutique.org.

DECEMBER 6

CASA Gala Supporting Child Advocacy. Court Appointed Special Advocates of Delaware and Chester Counties helps abused and neglected children, giving them support networks they need. Enjoy open bar, dinner, awards, auctions. Drexelbrook Catering & Special Event Center, Drexelbrook Dr., Drexel Hill. 6 to 10. \$150 and up. DelcoCASA.org.

GARDENS & WORKSHOPS.....

DECEMBER 8

Gifts from the Garden—A Children's Workshop at Jenkins Arboretum. Children aged 5-10, accompanied by an adult, will create gifts for their favorite teachers, grandparents,

siblings or friends. Four gifts will be made, each using natural materials found in the Arboretum. Dress for mess! 631 Berwyn Baptist Rd., Devon. 2 to 3:30. \$10-\$15. 610-647-8870; JenkinsArboretum.org.

MUSEUMS.....

THROUGH JANUARY 5, 2020

Brandywine River Museum of Art. "Cinderella & Co.—Three Fairy Tales Reimagined." 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Daily, 9:30 to 5. \$6-\$18. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.



THROUGH JANUARY 5, 2020

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. "Costuming *The Crown*," "Hamilton & Burr: Who Wrote Their Stories?," "Follies: Architectural Whimsy in the Garden," 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. Tues-Sun, 10 to 5. \$15-\$30. 302-888-4600; Winterthur.org.

THROUGH APRIL 12, 2020

Delaware Art Museum. *Through Jan. 26*, "Posing Beauty in African American Culture." *Through Feb. 2*, "Structure & Spontaneity: The Clay Monoprints of Mitch Lyons." *Through Apr. 12*, "Angela Fraleigh: Sound the Deep Waters." 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed, 10 to 4; Thurs, 10 to 8; Fri-Sun, 10 to 4. \$6-\$12, Sun, free. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT.....

See also: Fundraisers

THROUGH JANUARY 1

Magic & Wonder: A Magical Merry Christmas in Bird-in-Hand. Take a journey to the North Pole and watch toys come to life in Santa's Workshop from master illusionist Brett A. Myers. Bird-In-Hand Stage, 2760 Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-in-Hand. \$14-\$49. 800-790-4069; Bird-in-Hand.com/Stage.



DECEMBER 1

Theatre Organ Society of DE Valley. Holiday Concert with Rudy Lucente and Friends. The Colonial Theatre, 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 2 pm. \$5-\$10. 610-917-1228; TOSDV.org.

DECEMBER 6-22

Vox Amadeus Holiday Performances. *Dec. 6-22*, Handel's *Messiah* by the Ama Deus Ensemble Soloists, Chorus & Baroque Orchestra; *Dec. 13-15*, Renaissance Noël by Vox Renaissance Consort Voices and Period Instruments. Check website. \$10-\$25. VoxAmaDeus.org.

DECEMBER 7

Kennett Symphony Orchestra—"Pops Goes the Holidays." All ages get into the holiday spirit enjoying festive favorites, a full chorus and a lively sing-along. Rustin High School, 1100 Shiloh Rd., West Chester. 7:30. \$10-\$58. 610-444-6363; KennettSymphony.org.

DECEMBER 8

Delaware County Symphony Concert. Featuring the music of Tchaikovsky and Arutunian. Neumann University, Meagher Theatre, One Neumann Dr., Aston. 3 pm. \$15. 610-879-7059; DCSMusic.org.

DECEMBER 13, 14

Point Entertainment Presents ... Dec. 13, Big

Bad Voodoo Daddy's Wild and Swingin' Holiday Party; *Dec. 14*, A Night with The Love-master Craig Shoemaker, comedian, actor and author. The Colonial Theatre, 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 8 pm. \$27.50-\$49.50. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

DECEMBER 13, 14

Chesco Pops' Holiday Pops, featuring The Brandywine Singers. Come enjoy the usual holiday fare on *Dec. 13*, Unionville High School, 750 Unionville Rd., Kennett Square; *Dec. 14*, Church of the Good Samaritan, Rt. 30, Paoli. Both concerts at 7 pm. \$15-\$25. ChescoPops.org.

DECEMBER 14, 15

Chester County Choral Society presents Handel's *Messiah*, Part I, and other holiday musical favorites. *Dec. 14*, Bayard Rustin High School, 1100 Shiloh Rd., West Chester, 7:30; *Dec. 15*, Church of the Good Samaritan, Rt. 30, Paoli. 3:30. \$20. ChescoChoral.org.

THEATER.....

THROUGH DECEMBER 28

A Bird-in-Hand Christmas To Remember. Bird-In-Hand Stage, 2760 Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-in-Hand. \$17-\$38. Check website for times. 800-790-4069; Bird-in-Hand.com/Stage.

CHESTER COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Chester County Choral Society presents Handel's *Messiah*, Part I, and other holiday favorites by John Williams, John Rutter, Robert Shaw, and others.

Handel's beautiful and dramatic Baroque masterpiece will be led by Gary Garletts, Artistic Director, and accompanied by a string ensemble.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.
Bayard Rustin High School
1100 Shiloh Road, West Chester

Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.
Church of the Good Samaritan
212 West Lancaster Avenue, Paoli

Adult tickets: \$20. For details please visit www.chescochoral.org

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THROUGH JANUARY 5

Little Red Robin Hood: A Musical Panto. Fairytales collide in this brand new holiday panto at People's Light, 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Check website for times and tickets. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 12

Elf: The Musical. A must-see holiday musical, based on the 2003 hit film. The Media Theatre, 104 E. State St., Media. Check website for times and tickets. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 15

Saturday, Sunday

Delaware Children's Theatre Presents Disney's Frozen, Jr. Take the family into this spellbinding winter wonderland with Elsa and Anna. 1014 Delaware Ave., Wilmington. 2 pm. \$15-\$16. 302-655-1014; DEChildrensTheatre.org.

NOVEMBER 24-DECEMBER 29

Media Theatre Presents Jack Frost Saves Christmas. The heartfelt musical about a boy who is unique because everything he touches turns to ice. 104 E. State St., Media. Sun, noon. \$12-\$15. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 24

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The

family classic and Delaware Valley tradition. 64 Rose Valley Rd., Rose Valley. See website for times. \$20-\$37. 610-565-4211; Hedgerow-Theatre.org.

DECEMBER 4-29

A Christmas Carol. Five actors bring some of Dickens' most beloved characters to life. Delaware Theatre Company, 200 Water St., Wilmington. Check website for show times. \$40-\$60. 302-594-1100; DelawareTheatre.org.

DECEMBER 7

Peabody Opera Theatre Children's Opera—The Hiding Tree. Based on a folktale from the islands of Micronesia, this depicts two sisters who, through the power of love, overcome a monster who has invaded their island home. Opera Delaware Studios, 4 S. Poplar St., Wilmington. 10:30. \$6-\$10. 302-442-7807; OperaDE.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

DECEMBER 6, 14, 19

First Fridays, Second Saturdays, Third Thursdays. Dec. 6, First Fridays: *Kennett Square Art Stroll*, 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com. *Lancaster City*, 717-509-ARTS; Visit-LancasterCity.com. *Oxford*, 610-998-9494; DowntownOxfordPA.org. *West Chester*, 610-738-3350; West-Chester.com. *Wilmington Art Loop*, 302-576-2135; ArtLoopWilmington.org.

Dec. 14, Second Saturday Arts Stroll: *Media*, 484-445-4161; MediaArtsCouncil.org.

Dec. 19, Third Thursday Malvern Stroll, MalvernBusiness.com.

DECEMBER 12

Town Tours & Village Walks Supper Lecture & Armchair Tour—Beware the Belsnickel. Rich Pawling will bring his talents as an educator, living history reenactor and presenter to the final lecture. Historic Yellow Springs, 1685 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. 6 to 7:30. \$20. 484-873-2779; ChesCo.org/Planning/TownTours.

DECEMBER 17

Black Powder Tavern Historical Dinner Series. The focus for this evening is Fort Mifflin with presenter: Beth Beatty. 1164 Valley Forge Rd., Wayne. 5:30. \$45 includes light apps and dinner, tax and gratuity. 610-293-9333; Black-PowderTavern.com. ♦

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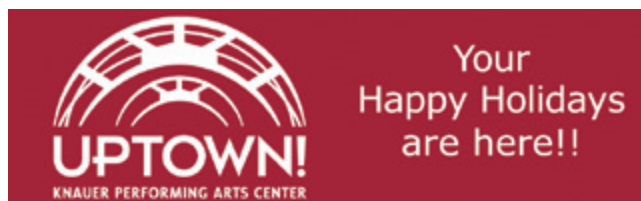
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Dec 6 & 7- WCStudio Holiday Cheer

Dec 12 - Dueling Pianos

Dec 13-29- RTC's Into the Woods

Dec 23- Keshar Israel Congregation Band

Dec 31 - New Year's Eve Gala

The Jazz Cocktail Hour
Cartoon Christmas Trio
Dec 19



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HOLIDAY HOUSE TOURS

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DECEMBER 7

West Chester Public Library's Holiday Home Tour. Ten homes, ranging in architectural styles from Victorian, Cape Cod, Dutch Colonial and Craftsman, are decorated for the holidays and open from 10 to 3 p.m. Tickets at library, 415 N. Church St. or online. \$40. 610-696-1721; WCPublic-Library.org.

DECEMBER 7

Chestnut Hill Holiday House Tour. Experience the rich architectural heritage of Chestnut Hill, touring five of the neighborhoods' homes decorated for the holidays. See a special exhibit of Princess Grace of Monaco's memorabilia. Benefits Chestnut Hill Community Association. Self-guided or by special event trolley. 10 to 4 p.m. \$50. ChestnutHill.org.

DECEMBER 7

Annual Candlelight Holiday Tour in Phoenixville. Homes decorated for the holidays. Benefits The Clinic, Phoenixville Senior Center, Ann's Heart Code Blue Shelter and Firebird Theatre. 3 to 7 p.m. \$25. Details 610-933-9181; PhxHolidayTour.weebly.com.

DECEMBER 7

Strasburg Holiday Home Tour. Tour festively decorated homes all with unique decor ranging from historic to new. Benefits Strasburg Heritage Society. Event Center at First Presbyterian Church on S. Decatur St., Strasburg. 10 to 4 p.m. \$25. 717-687-3534; StrasburgHeritageSociety.org.

DECEMBER 7

Christmas in Odessa, DE Holiday House Tours. A self-guided walking tour of private homes and public buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Sponsored by the Women's Club of Odessa as a fundraiser for local student scholarships. 10 to 5 p.m. \$25-\$30. For tickets, 302-378-4900; ChristmasInOdessa.com.

DECEMBER 8

Historic Pottstown Holiday Tour. Take a self-guided or trolley tour to about a dozen stops throughout the borough. This community event benefits July's GoFourth! festivities. 1 to 5 p.m. House and trolley tour, \$25-\$35; historic tour only or historic trolley tour only, \$15-\$20. PottstownGoFourth.com/Tickets.

DECEMBER 14

The Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE. A full day of concerts, house tours, shopping and refreshments, ending with a tree lighting. New Castle Presbyterian Church, 25 E. Second St., New Castle, DE. Free. 302-328-3279; NewCastlePresChurch.org/Spirit.

HOLIDAY PERFORMANCES TO BRIGHTEN THE SEASON

Edwin Malet

LIFT UP YOUR SPIRITS WITH A LIVE PERFORMANCE OR FIVE.

MANY OF US WILL TRAVEL FOR THE HOLIDAYS. To the places where we grew up or where our far-flung family now calls home. Maybe a sunny holiday vacation to a resort in the Caribbean. I suppose you should go now, while the islands are still above water ...

But many will pass on the irritating airport lines, over-long car trips and the sand, palm trees and pina coladas for now. Instead, we'll find ourselves here at home, yearning for something special and seasonal to do.

We suggest the theater, dance or a live musical performance: the glorious melody of a grand chorus, the graceful footsteps of sprightly dancers, the resonant echo of the playhouse.

THE MESSIAH

A performance of Handel's *The Messiah* may be high on your To-See list. For some, this soul-stirring music is at the top of the list every year.

Vox Ama Deus, an ensemble playing baroque and classical instruments, performs this classic under the uplifting and improvisational leadership of Maestro Valentin Radu. Steve Cohen of the Broad Street Review compared the group's rendition of *The Messiah* to three others—the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the Pittsburgh Symphony—and found our local group “produced more effervescence and joy.”

The baroque instruments—played by about 30 musicians and accompanied by 45 in the chorus—are handled masterfully, sounding half a tone lower—true to history—than modern orchestras. The soloists this year include soprano Andrea Lauren Brown, alto Jody Kidwell, tenor Timothy Bentsch and base Ed Bala—each sparkling.

Catch a performance of Vox Ama Deus at Daylesford Abbey in Paoli on December 8 or at St. Katherine of Siena Church in Wayne on December 22. The ensemble will also perform in Chestnut Hill on December 6 and in Philadelphia on December 20.

More opportunities exist for fans of this musical experience. *The Messiah* will also be performed by the 80-voice Chester County Choral Society on December 13 and 14, first at West Chester's Bayard Rustin High School and then at Paoli's Church of the Good Samaritan.

In addition, The Brandywine Singers are performing *The Messiah* at the Uptown Knauer Performing Arts Center, but you'll have to hurry. They're performing on Saturday and Sunday, November 23 and 24.

THE NUTCRACKER

Then there's Tchaikovsky. *The March, The Waltz of the Snowflakes, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, plus Clara and Prince Charming and all the other beloved melodies and characters that have warmed the hearts of many throughout the years. Watch your kids' eyes light up as the large troupe of dancers frolic across the stage in full costume!

What sets the Brandywine Ballet's version of *The Nutcracker* apart is the Victorian-style Act I choreography that David Kloss and Donna Muzio created 34 years ago and left virtually unchanged. In contrast, due to the size of its cast—about 200 people in all—the changes to Act II have been on-going, with the choreography, set and costumes getting polished or updated. Eight performances, from December 13 through 22, are scheduled at Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall on the West Chester University campus.

The Nutcracker will also be performed by the Pennsylvania Ballet at the Academy of Music in Center City on December 6 through 31 and by First State Ballet at Delaware Theatre in Wilmington on December 21 and 22.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Another season classic, *A Christmas Carol* was authored by Charles Dickens in 1843, and it wasn't long before the novella had become a play, an opera, a movie (both silent film and “talkie”) and an animated feature. In all, there have been about 400 different takes on the time-honored story.

Why has *A Christmas Carol* been adapted so often? Basically, the lesson—the value of giving versus the poverty of hoarding—never gets old. Especially during the holidays.

The miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, has become a part of our lexicon. Poor, ailing Tiny Tim represents the pitiful masses. The Ghost of Christmas Past becomes the Ghost of Christmas Present, then the Ghost of Christmas Future. Scrooge is transformed. *A Christmas Carol* is a simple yet uplifting story.

This year you can choose from three local venues that are performing *A Christmas Carol*. The Hedgerow Theatre in Media hosts shows from November 29 through December 24. And the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia offers a second option from November 30 through December 22.

But the performance at Wilmington's Delaware Theatre is arguably the most interesting and unusual. Using nothing more than props, puppets and the power of imagination, five actors bring some of Dickens' most beloved characters to life right before your eyes.

INTO THE WOODS

Musical theater lovers have a special treat in store. On December 13 through 29, at the Uptown Knauer Performing Arts Center in West Chester, the Resident Theatre Company is performing the musical fantasy *Into the Woods*, a modern twist on a collection of Brothers Grimm fairy tales—*Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Rapunzel*. The original show first appeared on Broadway in 2014 (not to be confused with the Disney film starring



Pennsylvania Ballet



Brandywine Singers

Meryl Streep) and won three Tony awards, including Best Score by Stephen Sondheim and Best Book by James Lapine.

Into the Woods tells the story of a baker and his wife, who yearn for a child but are under the curse of a witch. To lift the curse, the witch requires the couple get her a white cow, a red cape, yellow hair and a gold slipper. By the finale, the couple has acquired all the items, meeting Cinderella, Red Riding Hood, Jack and Rapunzel along the way. Watch each of the characters on a quest to fulfill a wish.

FROZEN JR.

Building on Disney's 2013 film *Frozen*, its 2019 film *Frozen 2*, and its 2018 *Frozen the Musical*, there's yet another version of the story. *Frozen JR.* is playing at the Delaware Children's Theatre. (And it wouldn't be a Disney production unless there were also toys and logoed clothing.)

Overflowing with adventure and comedy—and not a little bit of magic—*Frozen JR.* comes to life in the mystical kingdom of Arendelle, filled with dancing snowmen and comic trolls. It tells the story of the optimistic princess Anna, the sarcastic ice harvester Kristoff and his sidekick reindeer Sven, who search out Anna's elder sister, the Snow Queen Elsa, who is responsible for casting the land under an icy spell. The music, including five new songs, is written by Oscar-, Tony- and Grammy-winners Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. We'll let it go with that.



Delaware Theatre



Hedgerow Theatre

In short, you can find plenty of entertainment this season. And you won't get sunburned. More details at CountyLinesMagazine.com events page. ♦



Vox Ama Deus

A County Lines Country Christmas

Hania Jones & Casey Meyer

SIX HOLLY JOLLY HOMETOWN CELEBRATIONS YOU CAN'T MISS!

Tree Lighting in Wayne

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS! Our area towns are transforming into winter wonderlands, conjuring dreams of a White Christmas.

We recommend you stay close to home and join the local fun with everything from charming horse-drawn carriage rides to the dramatic burning of Phoenixville's iconic bird.

DREAMING OF A WAYNE CHRISTMAS

What's more fun than riding in a one-horse sleigh? Starting Friday, December 6th at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., experience the magic of a horse-drawn carriage ride along South Wayne and Runnymede Avenues. Kids will love face-painting and ornament decorating at the Radnor Fire House from 5:30 to 7:15 p.m. Then listen to festive carolers from Valley Forge Military Academy as they sing Christmas classics.

The night's highlight is the Christmas Tree Lighting at the Wayne Train Station



Wayne Christmas Parade

at 7:30 p.m. with retired 6ABC Action News Reporter Vernon Odom. Look for Santa on his new sleigh—the Radnor fire truck—as he rides down East Lancaster Avenue in style, bringing cheer to all. Old St. Nick is back on Saturday morning as he travels down Lancaster Avenue, accompanied by Radnor High School Marching Band & Cheerleaders and the Valley Forge Military Academy Field Music Group for the Santa Parade.

Warm up with hot chocolate and enjoy fresh baked cookies while visiting with Santa on the veranda of the Wayne Hotel after the parade. Santa will be around until 11:30 a.m. for photos.

Still looking for the perfect gift? Take advantage of Wayne's Holiday Shopping Weekend, December 14th and 15th, to find unique holiday presents from the 30-some local artisans and merchants. You're guaranteed to find something special in Wayne.

More at WayneChristmas.com and WayneArt.org.



Christmas on King in Malvern



Malvern Kids

A CLASSIC CHRISTMAS ON KING

It's the most wonderful time of the year in Malvern as the town celebrates Christmas on King. Oh, hoe, the mistletoe, hung where you can see ... and also the inspiration for Malvern's Christmas market! The Mistletoe Market has all sorts of goodies from local artisans and craftspeople. Visit this festive market and the King Street merchants to score the best presents for friends and family.

Santa didn't forget the big kids this year, providing adults with some liquid merriment and cheer with not one, but two, outdoor cocktail lounges. Continue the cheer by grabbing food truck fare, and then head over with the kids to visit old St. Nick!

More at Malvern-Festivals.com.



Phoenixville Luminaria Shopping Night

LIGHT UP YOUR HOLIDAY SPIRIT IN PHOENIXVILLE

Santa's coming to Phoenixville! On December 6th, hear those sleigh bells jingle-jangle and watch Santa greet his fans. Visit the new Winter Wonderland Village at the Main & Bridge Street parking lot, starting at 5 p.m., with a tree lighting to follow.

From December 7th to the 22nd, Phoenixville weekends will be merry and bright with fun activities like visiting Santa at his adorable house on Bridge Street. Don't worry—he isn't relocating from the North Pole. And Wednesday, December 11th, is Luminaria Shopping Night, a beautiful time to visit shops as the streets are lined with holiday luminaria casting a winter glow on every corner.

If you're looking for unique holiday cheer, Phoenixville's annual Firebird Festival is the place for you! Mark December 7th on your calendar to watch the burning of the Phoenix this year. The community works together for months to construct the bird and plan the event for people from all over to enjoy. Come join the fun in Phoenixville!

For more visit PhoenixvilleFirst.org and FirebirdFestival.com.

(MUSHROOM) CAP OFF THE YEAR

Have yourself a merry little Kennett Square Christmas. The season starts Friday, November 29, with the Holiday Light Parade and Tree Lighting at 6 p.m., featuring marching bands,



Holidays in Kennett Square



Mushroom Drop in Kennett Square

antique cars and Santa! Afterwords, pose with Santa and the Mrs. for pictures and drinks at Anchor Life + Fitness.

Cross shopping off your to-do list on Small Business Saturday, November 30th. Browse local art, pottery and specialty food items that Kennett shops offer, many with gift wrapping available. Enjoy the sounds of seasonal caroling from 2 to 5 p.m., with more on December 7th and 21st.

A free downtown shuttle will whisk you to Kennett's Holiday Village Market at the Creamery on December weekends—from the 7th to 15th—for more gifts from local and regional vendors. Food trucks, live music, ice sculptures and more entertainment!

Beginning November 22nd, Longwood Gardens has some of the prettiest sights to see this holiday season, and Kennett Square's shuttle makes travel easy. Gaze at Longwood's twinkling displays inspired by holiday ribbons and colorful confectionary to pine cones and snowflakes. Tickets available online.

While most New Year's Eves involve confetti and champagne, Kennett Square celebrates its own way. Ring in the New Year in a fungi, funky way with the Annual Mushroom Drop. At midnight, remember to snap a picture of the 8-foot, stainless steel icon.

More at HistoricKennettSquare.com.

DASHING THROUGH DOWNINGTOWN

Downingtown is making spirits bright with holiday cheer. Festivities kick off with the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting on Saturday, November 30th, at 6 p.m. in the Log House Field. While you wait for Santa to arrive and light the tree, enjoy cookies, hot chocolate and a s'mores station and listen to the House Band from the School of Rock.

Bring family and friends to the Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade December 14th at 3 p.m., starting at Gable Avenue and on to Green Street. Get a glimpse of floats, Downingtown Blue & Gold and Bishop Shanahan marching bands, string bands, dancing and twirling groups. Stay to see Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive on a brand new float!

More at DTownChristmas.org.

IT'S A SWELL TIME IN MEDIA

Bundle up in mittens and earmuffs to keep out the frosty air as you delight in Media's Holiday Stroll! The fun begins at 10 a.m. on Black Friday, November 29th. There's holiday music by The Brass Works, starting at 4 p.m. by the Town Tree outside the Armory (Trader Joe's) at Church and State Streets. Once the tree shines its twinkly glow, the Festival of Lights begins!

Bring your note to Santa because Media's Strolling Postman will patrol State Street during the Festival of Lights, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., to ensure the safe delivery of your most important letter of the season. Kids who include their name and address can expect a response straight from the North Pole, no postage required.

Media's 6th Annual Santa Fun Run & Walk adds to the festive spirit. Dress up in your favorite holiday garb—ugly sweater or



New Year's Eve in Media



State Street in Media

greens in the Canby Grove Park, and grab baked goodies for the season. Food trucks and vendors will be there, so bring your family for some seasonal fun. Carolers and Santa himself will be there for the tree lighting at 4 p.m. Share the Centreville holiday spirit!

More at CentrevilleDE.org.

No matter where you shop or see Santa, have a Happy Holiday Season! ♦

a full Santa suit—as you sweat off those leftover turkey-day pounds. There's no admission fee, but do bring an unwrapped toy for CityTeam Ministries or canned goods for the Media Food Bank.

For more visit VisitMediaPA.com.

A CENTREVILLE CHRISTMAS

Centreville's Winter Stroll and Small Business Saturday, November 30, is a sweet spot for shopping. Bring your Christmas list and browse for unique finds in shops like Adorn Goods, Wild Thyme, Found Antiques & Decor and more!

Get your Centreville Passport and have it stamped six times from the dozen participating independently owned shops. You may just win a \$200 gift certificate at the participating local business of your choice.

While you're there, find the perfect Christmas tree for your home, shop holiday

A GIFT FOR PLANET EARTH—BUY A LOCAL FRESH-CUT TREE

What's better than the scent of a live evergreen tree to get you in the holiday spirit? Whether it's a Douglas fir or white spruce, live tree sales support local farmers and the gigantic air purifiers that are Christmas tree farms. One tree-farm acre produces 10,000 pounds of oxygen or enough for 18 people to breathe for a year.

Make it a family tradition to give to the planet as you pick your holiday tree from one of our local tree farms and suppliers.

Clarks Christmas Tree Farm
235 Pusey Mill Rd., Cochranville
610-358-4933; ClarksChristmasTrees.com

CT Farm
175 S. Church St., Parkesberg
717-442-3132; CTFarmsTrees.com

Old Stone Farm
688 Strickersville Rd., Landenberg
484-798-8413; OldStoneFarm.com

Heylman's Pine Hill Tree Farm
1174 Sheep Hill Rd., Pottstown
610-323-8045; PineHillTreeFarm.com

Marsh Creek Tree Farm
301 Marsh Creek Rd., Elverson
610-996-TREE; MarshCreekTree.com

Schmidt's Tree Farm
1741 Flint Hill Rd., Landenberg
610-274-8560; SchmidtTreeFarm.com

Tricolor Tree Farm
1480 Hall Rd., West Chester
610-269-1034; TricolorTree.com

Westlake Tree Farms LLC
2421 N. Hill Camp Rd., Pottstown
800-564-TREE; WestLakeTreeFarms.com

Wiggins Christmas Trees
1257 Westtown Thornton Rd.,
West Chester 610-344-7822
2176 Gap Newport Pk., Cochranville
WigginsChristmasTrees.com

Yeager's Farm & Market
1015 Pike Springs Rd., Phoenixville
610-935-8244; YeagersFarm.com

Concerned about that pesky spotted lanternfly hitching a ride on your tree? A Penn State Extension educator advises live Christmas tree fans not to worry.

While there's always a chance insects will come indoors with a tree—and the spotted lanternfly is no exception—horticulture educator Tanner Delvalle says “the risk is small and should not be a reason for anyone to forego having a live holiday tree. ... Overall, the benefits of having a live tree outweigh any risks associated with pests.”

And remember to stay green and recycle your tree. It makes great mulch.

Make plans to find your perfect tree!

* Check websites before you visit. Some farms haven't posted hours and activities for 2019 yet.



Downingtown



Downingtown



Centreville, DE

HO, HO, HOW ABOUT A BOOK FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

Cathy Fiebach
Main Point Books

There's bound to be a fit for everyone on your list.

LET'S BE HONEST. HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING CAN BE an incredible pleasure or an incredible chore. I really enjoy finding the perfect present, but I know not everyone shares that feeling. Plus satisfying the ones we love the most and those we know the least can be quite stressful.

Hopefully, the following suggestions will help you pick the ideal gift for everyone from your great-aunt to your youngest cousin. And let you enjoy a little more of that holiday cheer!

Can you imagine doing a good chunk of your holiday shopping at just *one* store?

Laurel: Modern American Flavors in Philadelphia

by Nicholas Elmi

If you can't get a reservation at *Top Chef*-winner Nicholas Elmi's 22-seat gem on Passyunk Avenue in Philadelphia or just want to spend a little less money, this cookbook might be perfect. Plus, there's the added bonus that you might get to try the results! Elmi's book focuses on recipes for the four seasons in nine separate tasting menus. The chef/author will be signing his cookbook at Main Point Books in Wayne on Small Business Saturday,

November 30th at 1 p.m. Stop by for an extra special gift. Extra signed copies will be available while they last.

Making Comics

by Lynda Barry

Got an artist in your life? This book could be the perfect choice. An influential indie cartoonist and winner of a MacArthur "genius" grant, Barry condenses her visual storytelling courses into an instructional book that doubles as a work of art. Through her signature comics and collages, Barry provides guidelines for creating characters, drawing comic strips and the mechanics of making mini-comics. This one is for teachers, students and aspiring artists alike. Or someone who just loves comics.

The Great Book of Philadelphia Sports Lists, Completely Revised and Updated

by Glen Macnow and Big Daddy Graham

What true sports fan doesn't salivate over stats and lists? I've got at least four in my life who will be getting this book. Passionate Philly fans will be able to dominate holiday dinner conversation with topics like what local athletes gave the best performance in

film or TV? What are the top area sports bars? And who are the most overrated and underrated players in Philadelphia history? Inquiring minds want to know!

And that brings us to the next suggestion ...

Brilliant Maps for Curious Minds: 100 New Ways to See the World

by Ian Wright

We all know someone who gets lost in maps. This beautiful book features one hundred full-color maps; some serious (the distribution of the world's major religions), some more humorous (countries where there aren't any McDonald's). It's full of surprising connections that may change the way the reader sees the world.

Or maybe you or someone you know needs inspiration planning a special trip? A coffee table book from DK Eyewitness Travel Guides, **Where to Go When: Unforgettable Trips for Every Month**, is another suggestion on my holiday wish list.

The Starless Sea

by Erin Morgenstern

Here's a shocker. I can't buy a book for someone without buying one for myself! And this might be my pick. If you're looking for an escape this holiday season, you can't do much better than Erin Morgenstern's new book, *The Starless Sea*. Morgenstern, author of *The Night Circus*, takes you to a magical, underground world filled with books, lovelorn prisoners and magic. This novel should be read on a snowy weekend in one long gulp.

The Gift Inside the Box

by Adam and Allison Grant

Local author Adam Grant, psychologist and Wharton professor, and his wife, Allison, have the perfect antidote to holiday madness

with *The Gift Inside the Box*. This wonderfully illustrated children's book tells the tale of a mysterious package that wants to get into the hands of someone deserving of it. The book asks the reader "what would you give and to whom?" It's the perfect holiday message for the young ones in your life.

The Crayons' Christmas

by Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers

Looking for a new holiday classic to add to your child's collection? Check out the spinoff to the popular kid's book *The Day the Crayons Quit*. In *The Crayons' Christmas*, young readers will learn how the crayons and their families celebrate the season. It features real, folded letters from the crayons, games, punch-out ornaments and even a pop-up tree! It's sure to be a holiday hit!

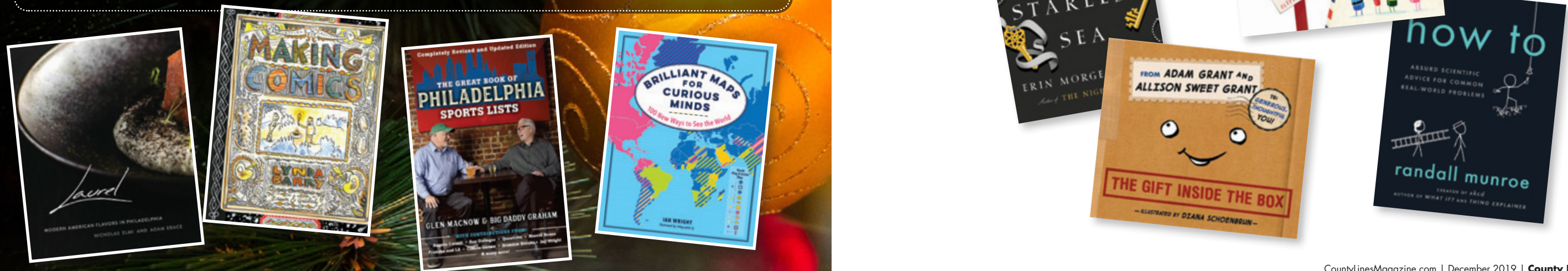
Absurd Scientific Advice for Common Real-World Problems

by Randall Munroe

This book might be perfect for the lover of science or of the absurd in your life—or possibly both. The former NASA roboticist behind the popular webcomic *xkcd* proposes unusual and unnecessarily elaborate ways of accomplishing mundane tasks—such as, to cross a river, freeze it. I have an 80-year-old uncle and 12-year-old cousin, both of whom will absolutely love this book.

Have a very Happy Holiday Season and Happy Shopping! ♦

Cathy Fiebach is the owner of Main Point Books, an independent bookstore with a handpicked selection of books for every member of the family. Please check out the great events, book groups and children's activities at MainPointBooks.com or on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne.



A Feast for the Eyes Only

Karen Jessee

Come holiday time, grand historic homes and museums in Delaware will have tables set with a spectacle of holiday dishes and grand feasts that look so real the only thing missing is the aroma. But it's all fake food.

TRANSFORMING HISTORIC HOMES INTO HOLIDAY extravaganzas is a gargantuan undertaking that requires many people to remove, pack and store all sizes of countless decorative items and antiques as well as move furniture to other rooms not on display.

There's another part of the process to set the tables for the holiday feasts. Here's a peek behind the curtain.

WINTERTHUR MUSEUM'S 40TH YULETIDE

The childhood home of Henry Francis du Pont was elegant and festive year round, but never more so than at Christmas with tables bedecked with sweet and savory wonders. More than 175 years later, the holiday festivities continue, and the tables are laden with culinary delights.

Today, none of the food is real.

"This is our 40th anniversary of Yuletide at Winterthur," says Interpretation and Collections Assistant, Catherine Westbrook. "Forty years ago that food would have been real, sitting on period dishes. The staff refrigerated and changed out the foods. Washing and drying table settings that were part of the historic collection meant the potential for damage was considerable."

In time, freeze-dried food was used. But when a freeze-dried piglet named Portia began to reconstitute while in storage, it was clear this system couldn't continue. Fresh foods could attract pests that could then impact the collection objects. Now, making, ordering and storing faux food is the common practice.

The faux oysters are painted Model Magic. The game pie, pig's foot and petit fours are works of art in clay and plaster. The tea and coffee are painted round Mylar inserts that sit inside the cup just below the rim.

"The goal isn't just to make food; the goal is to make the food look historically accurate," says Catherine. "Chickens of yore were smaller, scrawny and far from perfectly smooth. Apples and other fruits weren't the colorful beauties we expect today, so we have to be historically true to not only what foods were being eaten but what they looked like."

Much research goes into historic foods before their mock ups reach the table. Old recipes, books on hearth cooking and historic recipe books give creators a chance to make the real foods first so they know what the finished products look like before trying to replicate them from other materials.

Winterthur's perfectly roasted turkey was made so long ago no one remembers how it was made, but it is beautifully constructed and carefully stored. Today, a faux turkey can cost several hundred dollars.

And come the holidays, every museum needs a turkey.

NEMOURS ESTATE'S GRANDEUR & BEAUTY

If you know the home of Alfred I. du Pont contains more than 70 lavish rooms, then the display on the dining room table might not be a surprise in its grandeur and beauty. Be prepared to be surprised anyway.

"We have shopping lists and seating charts, but we don't have any menus from this house detailing exactly what was served historically, so the foods on our tables are open to interpretation and a lot of creativity," says Paula Phipps, who has been Supervisor of Interpretive Programs for the past two and a half years. "The new director, John Rumm, wanted to make Nemours more welcoming and thought there was no better way to do it than to display a veritable feast of food."

Paula should know. In the past two years, she has made most of the food, all magnificently sculpted from clay, paper or plaster that embellishes the main dining table and the social areas around the house.

"I've made casts in order to make multiple foods," says Paula. "I used a dog's toy to make a cast for the lamb chops. The fried chicken is made of plaster using latex molds made from real pieces of fried chicken. The ham began as



Cakes and sweets fill the tables in Empire Hall at Winterthur



The food on display at Nemours is sculpted from clay, paper and plaster



Nemours' pineapple upside down cake made of Styrofoam and clay

The tables are bedecked for Yuletide at Winterthur



Twelfth Night desserts cover the tables at Hagley



Faux meringues found at Hagley

a plastic bottle. Ice cream and mashed potatoes are the same recipe: corn starch and hair conditioner.

“When I had to make Fritos, a favorite snack here, I used thin sheets of Styrofoam, painted them, and heated them until they curled. It was the first thing I ever made,” she says.

After that, it was Paula in her kitchen creating vegetables, condiments, main dishes and tea sandwiches. Her pineapple upside down cake of Styrofoam and clay will leave guests drooling and in awe.

When asked what she would like to have that she doesn’t, in spite of closets bursting with her artistic efforts, there is a pause and then Paula says, “We need a turkey.”

HAGLEY MUSEUM’S TWELFTH NIGHT DESSERTS

Visitors with a sweet tooth should head to the home of E. I. du Pont, the founder of the DuPont Company, at Hagley. “We do a traditional Twelfth Night display of desserts because we know from our archives that Twelfth Night parties actually took place here,”

says Debra Hughes, Curator of Collections and Exhibits.

“We’ve had many years spotlighting a raspberry bomb, a Styrofoam cake covered in artificial raspberries. However, this year, we’ve done an actual Twelfth Night cake,” says Debra.

The cake, made of painted plaster, rests upon a more contemporary cake plate that can take the weight, a reminder that faux foods on period plates must be light so as not to cause damage. Surrounded by faux sugary lady fingers, the cake is a masterpiece. There are also glasses of colorful plastic gelatin along with plates of petit fours, fruits, and wedges of faux sweet potato pie.

Debra says, “We order or make everything. I even pick up things from craft shows. If someone has made a very real looking ceramic cherry or apple pie, I buy it.”

This year, the theme is going to be Christmas Past and Present, and once again, Debra is going to be in her kitchen creating garnishes called Frosted Boxwood, a recipe from 1837. Though a time-consuming effort, they are the perfect sparkling touch to the many faux delights that adorn Hagley’s sweet, dessert-laden table.

ODESSA’S STORYBOOK MEALS

Guests in love with children’s books will be visiting the Corbit-Sharp House or the Wilson-Warner House. Since 1986, this town has welcomed guests young and old into the holiday season with an exciting and nostalgic journey through classic children’s literature.

“Each year we choose foods for the table and decorate one of these homes based on themes from children’s tales and poems,” says Brian Miller, Associate Curator. “This year’s theme is *The Secret Garden*.” Visitors from previous years walked through *Sleeping Beauty*, *Peter Pan*, *Hansel and Gretel* and Beatrix Potter stories.

Odessa boasts a remarkable collection of faux foods. “I’ve made a few

things,” says Brian, “but it’s a lot of work and messy. Last year, we inherited a good stash of wonderful faux foods from a former staff person of Colonial Williamsburg who made these pieces. She was downsizing and gave us not only the foods, but many of the molds as well for nearly 50 different foods including rockfish, meats and vegetables.”

For guests who have secretly drooled over the tarts and candies, Brian recommends going on the Curator Candlelight Tour held the last Thursday before Christmas. Brian will choose plaster and clay delicacies from the tables to hand guests.

For those planning holiday tours of any of these grand homes and museums this season, go for the history, go for the spirit and the fun ... and now ... go for the food. You won’t believe your eyes. ♦

For years, Karen Jessee has been a contributing writer to local publications. A former teacher and business woman, she’s now a speaker on women’s history and the accessories and clothing that tells women’s stories. Her articles and presentations have won both state and national awards. More at BustlesToBras.com



The Curator Candlelight Tour at Odessa will feature mouth-watering plaster and clay delicacies



Ready for a grand feast at Odessa

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Winter Lights in Downtown West Chester

Story by Malcolm Johnstone
Photos by Timlyn Vaughan Photography

COME SEE THE LIGHTS AND SHARE THE
HOLIDAY SPIRIT IN THE BOROUGH.



AS OLD MAN WINTER MAKES HIS ANNUAL VISIT TO West Chester, casting his festive blanket of seasonal cheer, the shops and restaurants once again light up their windows to welcome shoppers and diners adding to the holiday spirit.

Holiday-themed events add to the good cheer, from roving carolers and a cozy Breakfast with Santa to the all-out, televised extravaganza that is the QVC West Chester Christmas Parade, attracting thousands. West Chester beckons residents and visitors alike to share the magic of the season in a town that knows how to celebrate.

There are so many great reasons to make a trip to the heart of this historic downtown. Here are a few new places to visit, plus a few of our favorites, along with a shopping map and roundup of don't-miss events.

WINDOWS AND SHUTTLES

This holiday season, you'll notice as you stroll through West Chester's streets that local businesses have stepped up to the challenge to be selected as one of downtown's best decorated storefronts. The [2nd Annual Holiday Decorating Contest](#), presented by the West Chester Business Improvement District and the Borough Public Arts Commission, is in full swing!

There will be plenty to see, so be sure to invite family and friends to come downtown to enjoy the beautiful variety of

lights and holiday displays, both big and small. It's a window-shopper's wonderland.

Among the novelties you can enjoy this month—and throughout the year—is the new [West Chester Free Ride](#). This all-electric, five-passenger transit vehicle service, started by Keith Hontz, takes passengers nearly anywhere in the Borough in the evening.

Dinner downtown followed by a performance at West Chester University? No problem. Want to try that dessert place on the other side of town? That works. Details at [WCFreeRide.com](#).

A BOUNTY OF BOUTIQUE SHOPPING

An exciting trend continues downtown as many of the independent boutiques offer private label styles that bring designs customized to local shoppers. Whether you're looking for sassy and saucy or elegant and graceful, there are plenty of sources for stylish shopping.

You won't want to miss visiting two new boutiques, each with its own unique brand.

Emily Scott, owner of [Compendium Boutique](#), 134 East Market Street, showcases contemporary clothing "for the girl with her own style." Featuring fashions for college-aged women, Compendium





Jacqueline's Boutique



Malena's Vintage Boutique



H. Rose Boutique



Bryn Mawr Running Co.

strives to bring flattering and chic styles from limited productions. Visit often because new styles arrive every Friday. Bonus feature: same-day delivery options for West Chester University dorms.

Jacqueline's Boutique, which Jacqueline Tucker opened at 141 West Gay Street, was created as a place for women to come and enjoy a pleasant shopping experience. The boutique's hip and sophisticated clothing lines are selected to provide clients with a sense of confidence and beauty.

Regular shoppers will notice expansions, new locations and new names among some of their favorite stops for shopping locally.

If vintage clothing intrigues you, Malena Martinez's eponymous West Chester mainstay **Malena's Vintage Boutique**, corner of Gay & Church Streets, has expanded its collections. Be sure to visit the Specialty Showroom, next to the main store. There's always something new—yet old—at the place where styles that stand the test of time continue to rule.

More long-term boutiques have relocated and expanded downtown. **H. Rose Boutique**, now located at 148 West Gay Street (across the street from its prior location), has new items for every lady in the family from 6 to 60. It's "a boutique for mom-mom, mommy and me," says proprietor Rachel Becker. Go for multi-generational shopping for apparel, accessories and gifts.

G-Spot Thrift Boutique, has also moved. You can now find Gigi and her eclectic collections—"a modern retro boutique and uncommon objects emporium featuring vintage and designer fashion and accessories for men and women, antiques, original and unique art and decor, vinyl records and CDs, vintage electronics and kool kitsch"—at 144 East Market Street.

Think of it as a runners' boutique with a new name but the same location and mission. It's now **Bryn Mawr Running Co.**, at 24 South High Street, where they love running and comfortable feet. This continues to be the place to meet with experienced runners about footwear needs for serious racers or casual enthusiasts. Join them six days a week for group run workouts. Other locations in Media and, of course, Bryn Mawr.

BOUTIQUE-QUALITY SERVICES

There's little doubt Kara Larkin has quickly become a fashion influencer with the opening of **Cinq: a Kara Larkin Salon** at 25 South High Street. Growing up among three generations of five girls each—thus the name Cinq, French for five—has given Kara a knack for connecting with women in special ways. "We listen closely to each client so we can make their inner beauty part of their outer beauty," says Kara. Services also include bridal parties. "It's always a joy to be part of a celebration for such a major event in someone's life," she says.

For home improvements with beauty and sophistication, try **Interiors by DECO** (part of TONO Group's family of companies) located at 121 East Market Street. DECO, from the word décor, draws on years of interior design experience to select, procure, stage and install furniture, artwork, lighting and décor. "Our team of design professionals adds all the finishing touches to

Happy Holidays

.Rose

A Boutique For Mom-Mom,
Mommy, & Me

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corporate, institutional, hospitality and residential spaces,” explains Sharlee Van Tine, TONO Group’s Director of Architecture. “We tap into an unlimited selection of high-quality brands to create interior packages that include every last decorative detail.”

FINAL BITS OF NEWS

This wouldn’t be a tour of West Chester without at least one mention of food, right? We don’t want to disappoint.

When certified yoga teacher Kari Dandrea began following a holistic approach towards health and nutrition, she started blending her own tea. After sipping a myriad of concoctions, Kari’s favorite eight blends became **Pureblend**, now in a small production room at 16 South Church Street. “As I continue to create the freshest, purest blends, it’s always my desire to bring better quality and value to the tea drinking experience,” she says. “I think of it as a blended cup of joy.” Find Pureblend at growers markets, select shops in West Chester, and local retail outlets, cafes and coffee shops.

And happily **Chester County Historical Society** did well enough in the nationwide National Geographic “Vote Your Main Street” challenge to get its much-needed new roof! The “Under One Roof” campaign was a worthy effort at community building. Stop by to see the treasures that are protected under that roof.

As you shop local and shop small this holiday season, consider doing all your shopping in a pleasant afternoon walk around West Chester. Carolers will be singing holiday favorites (full schedule at DowntownWestChester.com) while Christmas decorations brighten the historic Courthouse lawn to keep the holiday spirit alive. ♦

*Elle Steinman contributed to this article
#WCHolidayWindows*



More Favorite Boutiques

- Look and see your best after a visit to **Artistic Eyewear**. Largest selection of unique and designer frames. 127 N. High St.; ArtisticEyewear.com.
- **Blink** specializes in trendy apparel and premium denim from a variety of contemporary designers. 136 W. Gay St.; ShopBlink.com.
- A women’s boutique and a vintage jewelry store, **Green Eyed Lady** features unique items from fashion apparel to vintage wedding accessories. 132 W. Gay St.; ShopGreenEyedLady.com.
- Kiki travels each season to Europe, California and New York bringing back the newest fashion to **Jane Chalfant/Kiki Boutique**, with everything from sweaters to accessories to stylish wraps. 123 N. High St.; JaneChalfant.com.
- An eclectic women’s boutique focusing on clothing made in the U.S., **Kaly** offers sustainable gifts and unique jewelry created by artisans. 37 W. Gay St.; KalyClothing.com.
- **Phineas Gage** offers the latest in men’s contemporary style for casual wear, with hand-picked new and classic brands. Stop by for personal styling. 29 S. High St.; Phineas-Gage.com.
- Featuring the latest fashion trends, combined with classic pieces, **Tish Boutique** helps women feel and look their best at any age, size or budget. 138 E. Gay St.; TishStyle.com.

Shops for Gifts and Decor

- **The 5 Senses’** functional art objects satisfy the senses. Hand-crafted, local and fair trade items—each with a story. 133 W. Market St.; The5Senses.com.
- Experience **Old Soul Décor’s** unique curated collection of home decor items and thoughtful gifts. Plus design services. 119 W. Market St.; OldSoulDecor.com.

Bring on the Bling

- You’ll find personalized service at **Big Diamonds’** wholesale shop where they assist customers in selecting the perfect diamond for engagement rings, wedding bands, or fashion jewelry at any budget. 15 W. Gay St.; BigsDiamonds.com.
- **Sunset Hill Jewelers** features unique jewelry including antique, vintage, contemporary and classic designs, as well as fine quality jewelry made in the US. Plus a fine arts gallery upstairs. 23 N. High St.; SunsetHillJewelers.com.

HOLIDAY FUN in West Chester

NOVEMBER 30

Chester County Historical Society—Breakfast with Santa. Enjoy a buffet breakfast with Santa. Children get to sit with Santa to share their Christmas wish lists, take photos and receive a goody bag. Seats are limited and registration is required. 225 N. High St., 9:30 to noon. For tickets, 610-692-4800; ChesterCoHistorical.org.

DECEMBER 6

QVC West Chester Christmas Parade. See article “Blast from the Past: Celebrating 40 Years of Christmas Fun.”

THROUGH DECEMBER 22

West Chester Railroad Santa's Express. See *Best Local Events* section.

THROUGH DECEMBER 24

21st Annual Miniature Show & Big Red Bow Lighting at Sunset Hill Fine Arts Gallery. Featuring miniature paintings by a variety of favorite Chester County artists done in all mediums and artistic style. *Nov. 29*, Opening Reception, 4 to 8 pm; lighting of the bow at dusk. *Dec. 12*, Men's Night with great savings and complimentary gift wrap. 23 N. High St. 610-692-0374; SunsetHillJewelers.com.

NOVEMBER 23–DECEMBER 31

Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center.

Nov. 23–24, The Brandywine Singers present Handel's *Messiah*; *Nov. 29*, PA Philharmonic Big Band with Holiday Swing; *Nov. 30*, Better Than Bacon Comedy Improv's Gives Back Benefit; *Dec. 1*, Opera tutti, “Amahl and the Night Visitors”; *Dec. 12*, Dueling Pianos. 226 N. High St. Check website for tickets and times. 610-356-2787; UptownWestChester.org.

DECEMBER 7

West Chester Public Library's Holiday Home Tour. See *Holiday House Tours*.

DECEMBER 7

West Chester Charity Ball. Dinner, dancing and auction. Benefits The Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children, Outreach, Emergency Family Shelter and the Homeless Prevention Program. West Chester Golf and Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St. 6 to 11:30. \$175. 610-431-3598; FriendsAssoc.org.

DECEMBER 8

Brian's Run. Started as a fundraiser for an injured 15-year-old football player, now benefits “Homes for our Troops.” Races start at Henderson High School, 400 Montgomery Ave. 12:40 Diaper Dash, up to age 3; 12:45 Tot Trot, ages 3–8; 12:50 Fun Run, ages 9 and older; 1 pm Brian's Run, 5 mile. \$25–\$30. Sign up at BriansRun.org.

DECEMBER 12

Safe Harbor of Chester County's Santa Band. Playing in restaurants and bars throughout the borough. Starts at Iron Hill Brewery at 6:30 until 9:30 pm. The band will be dressed as Santas. Donations benefit Safe Harbor. 610-340-1182; SafeHarborOFGWC.org.

DECEMBER 13–22

Brandywine Ballet Presents *The Nutcracker*. See article, *Holiday Performances to Brighten the Season*.

DECEMBER 14

American Helicopter Museum Santa Fest. See Santa arrive by helicopter to greet and hear the wish lists of good girls and boys. Bring your camera for a photo opp in Santa's Workshop. Music, snacks, crafts and more. 1220 American Blvd. 10 to 1. AmericanHelicopter.museum.

DECEMBER 8

Holiday Festival at Oakbourne Mansion. Enjoy holiday crafts, games, music, refreshments, cookie decorating and photos with Santa. 1014 S. Concord Rd. 10 to 1. Free. 610-692-1930; WesttownPA.org.

DECEMBER 31

Puttin' On the Glitz 2019. See *December Picks*. More at DowntownWestChester.com.



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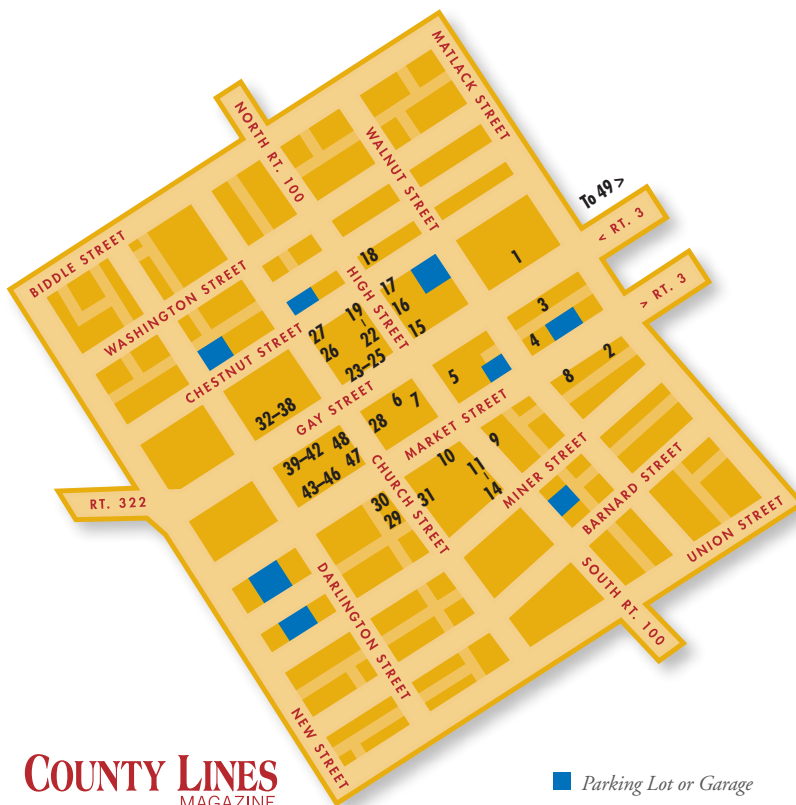
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DOWNTOWN WEST CHESTER

HOLIDAY SHOPPING GUIDE



1. Luxey Little Ones
2. G-Spot Thrift Boutique
3. tish Boutique
4. Imperio Maya Mexican Grocery
5. Sunset Hill Jewelers Fine Arts Gallery
6. La Chic Boutique
7. Coins of Chester County
8. Compendium Boutique
9. Phineas Gage
10. Art Trust Gallery at Meridian Bank
11. Kati MacFloral Designs
12. A Taste of Olive
13. Éclat Chocolate
14. Bryn Mawr Running Co.
15. Veruzka
16. Jane Chalfant / Kiki Boutique
17. Artistic Eyewear
18. Chester Co. Hist. Soc.
18. Paper Moon @ CCHS
19. G&G Cigars
20. Sabrina Ann Couture
21. Visual Expansion Gallery
22. Emily Alice
23. Fairman's Skate Shop
24. KALY
25. Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry
26. The Prana House
27. TranquilTEA
28. The Antique Shop
29. Church Street Gallery
30. Woman's Exchange
31. All the Dogs
32. Clout Glass
33. Jacqueline's Boutique
34. Creep Records
35. Rimons Coffee & Grocery
36. May 23 Clothing & Accessories
37. Precision Eye Care
38. Malena's Vintage Boutique
39. H. Rose Boutique
40. Blink
41. Green Eyed Lady
42. Taylor's Music Store & Studios
43. The 5 Senses
44. Mainline Custom Clothiers
45. Old Soul Décor
46. Kaplan's Fine Jewelry
47. Second Reading Book Store
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Gay Street photo courtesy of Fred Weyman

Blast From The Past: Celebrating 40 Years of Christmas Fun

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Christmas parade in downtown West Chester! When the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce sent out an article from 20 years ago about the origin of that tradition, we asked to share the story with our readers.

Here's a bit of history about the tradition of the annual Christmas parade written by Kay Eby Moore, the originator of Old Fashioned Christmas. This is how it all began ...

History of Old Fashioned Christmas in Historic West Chester

Written by Kay Eby Moore, OFC originator,
Friday, December 10, 1999

In the late summer of 1980, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce. This is and was a very active group, and each member of the Board heads up or champions particular projects. It was in September of 1980 that I was asked to look into new Christmas decorations for the Borough. No one could remember how old the current decorations were—but as bent and fallen plastic angels, it was long past their time to be replaced.

The conversation at that board meeting concentrated on how to enhance and invigorate the retail community of downtown West Chester, especially with the onset of the holiday season. Christmas decorations were one solution but in my mind the retail community needed something else. They needed an attraction ... an event to bring shoppers to town.

So I took the Christmas decoration assignment and came back to the Board in October with a business plan. I proposed that we capitalize on the historic nature of this small town with an event that would take people back in time.

I proposed to recreate a Victorian town at Christmas with an Old Fashioned Santa parade, costumed vendors on street corners selling hot cider and roasted chestnuts, kerosene lantern walking tours of historic sections of the city led by costumed guides and showcasing period tableaux in the windows of offices and homes, a Gilbert and Sullivan opera in the Courthouse with a presiding judge as star, fresh greens and ribbons on all the storefronts and of course, new decorations on the street.

The ideas for the new Christmas decorations came from Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia) where each Christmas that town is transformed by little white lights in all the trees lining the boulevard. It was a simple yet dramatic solution to transforming the town. And it was the kind of idea that would not go out of style and was more natural than the plastic decorations of the past.



The Board enthusiastically embraced the ideas but with some concern as to whether it could be a reality by Christmas, less than two months out. It really was a potentially enormous project but I believed that there were lots of people in town who would be willing to support a project like this. I went home that night and called everyone I knew to see if they would be interested in getting their friends to help.

In two months and 100 plus volunteers, Old Fashioned Christmas in Historic West Chester debuted in town. Here are some of the people who in that first year made the event a success:

- Eric Lorgus who headed the storefront decorating committee amongst a whole host of things including driving to Camp Horseshoe in Maryland to borrow kerosene lanterns for the walking tours.

- Nancy Halladay (Halladay Florist) and the late Lois Heins (The Greenery) who contributed to the thousands of ribbons used to decorate the stores.

- Lawyers David Bortner and John Spangler who played the parts of Marley and Scrooge at a tableau in their Miner Street office.

- Eileen Weiss Merlin, John Shumard and Liz Sweeney who manned the information booth.

- Diane O'Brien who was responsible for designing the look of downtown, the natural swag of pine roping on the storefronts and the large red signature ribbons on the light posts.

- Tom W... and Dick Webster who conducted the historic tours, sections of town and reveled walkers with folklore of the town.

- The late Rob Gawthrop who presided as the judge in Trial by Jury and was a larger than life contributor to the annual event.

- The late Marshall Jones and Ira Hicks who provided the perfect sleigh for Santa, the late Warren Mercer.

- Joan Pennell, the secretary of the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce who kept everyone organized and enthused.

- Dawn Lheureux who was the costume historian of the event and who with her husband James presided over the Lincoln Building on Market Street.

- The Exchange Club led by Ulrich Klabunde who decorated the tree on the courthouse lawn.

A major project that first year was covering up the empty storefronts of which there were many. Christmas trees were halved and nailed up in front of a vacant Harrison Theatre. The fifth and sixth graders of Dennis

Haggerty at West Chester Friends School painted a mural on a vacant Kaufman's department store.

And other volunteers – Darlene and Wayne Clapp, Mike Pillagalli, Nancy Klabunde, Mel Josephs, Jerry Moore, John Moore, John and Wynne Milner, John O'Brien and all of their friends and neighbors who gathered with ladders and staplers, with greens and ribbons on Gay, Market and Church Streets to decorate the town.

It was all of these volunteers and more who, in that first year, had the vision and the belief that Old Fashioned Christmas could be the success it was and continues to be today.

No one was more surprised and pleased than me to see that Old Fashioned Christmas has continued year after year as it now heads into its 20th year. It requires hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers, man-hours and the continued commitment of the retail community, the Chamber of Commerce and the Borough. It has certainly grown larger over the years, expanding into a three-day weekend event, but it is also rewarding to know that the elements of the event begun back in 1980 are continued today.

As we see West Chester experience a renaissance, I believe we should thank its people ... those who have volunteered to serve on Borough Boards and Commissions, participated in town events, rallied to the call to save historic buildings and who have consistently championed the belief that West Chester is truly a unique historic town and a fabulous place to live and work. ♦

2020 QVC West Chester Christmas Parade—December 6

The evening starts with the Jingle Elf Run, a childrens' race, 2-mile run and 1-mile walk, 6:30 pm, sponsored by the US Air Force.

In the center of West Chester, the Key Financial Holiday Village on High St., between Gay & Market Sts., offers family-friendly fun and complimentary treats from 5 to 9 pm.

The parade will broadcast live on QVC, and program host David Venable will be available for a meet-and-greet from 5 to 6 pm in the QVC tent.

QVC West Chester Christmas Parade, with Master of Ceremonies ABCs Adam Joseph, begins at 7:15 pm. Local schools, businesses, volunteer fire companies and other service organizations join marching bands, floats and antique vehicles for the parade around the downtown.

For more info, GreaterWestChester.com.

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WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE. LOOKING OVER OUR holiday shopping list, we come across that name that stumps us. Every year. Maybe she insists she doesn't need anything, or he already has everything he wants. Or maybe you just can't think of a gift worthy of someone that special to you. What to do?

Experience gifts are gaining traction, and are special presents for the trickiest folks on your list. More pluses: these gifts involve less wrapping, less waste and are less likely to be re-gifted.

For experience gift ideas to fit everyone on your list—and to fit every budget—read on.

ONE-NIGHT ONLY EXPERIENCES

For adrenaline-racing fun, brain-racking mysteries and all-star performances, *County Lines* country has a lot to offer!

Axe throwing is all the rage, with throwing lanes at **The Creamery in Kennett Square** and at brand new **Stumpy's Hatchet House** in West Chester. "It's an exhilarating, safe activity that can be enjoyed by a large demographic," says Brad Wurtz of Stumpy's. So grab tickets for you and a friend for an axe-citing night!

Another idea for someone looking for something new—get their heart racing with indoor skydiving at **iFLY** in King of

Prussia or enter a brand new reality at West Chester's **Neverland Virtual Reality**. For the amateur detective on your list, give a visit to an escape room. You'll find them everywhere, including **Xscape The Room** in Media or **Escape Room Mystery** in King of Prussia.

"Escape rooms are those experiences that people may want for themselves, but often put it off, maybe because they have never done one or for budget reasons," says Noel Keen of Escape Room Mystery. "Gifting it truly gives them something they might never have bought for themselves."

And you can't go wrong with a classic—dinner and a show. Buy tickets to an upcoming performance at Malvern's **People's Light, Media Theater** or the **Resident Theater Company** in West Chester, and make dinner reservations for two nearby.

TRAVELS & TOURS

Trekking through dense forests, sunbathing on a relaxing cruise, tasting your way through the cuisine of a new country—wanderlust is nothing new. So for the boldest on your list, why not give a once-in-a-lifetime travel experience?

"Gifting an experience is very different because it's something the person will be doing versus receiving," says Scott Masciarelli



Try something new at
Stumpy's Hatchet House

US Hot Air Balloon Team

Add on a wildlife safari to
that special someone's trip



A yoga class at Focus
Fitness Main Line



Solve a mystery at Escape Room Mystery



Take a class at the Community Arts Center

of [Connoisseur Travel](#). “They get to experience it, be involved in it, and learn from it.”

When considering the gift of a trip, think about the recipient’s likes, dislikes, schedule and tolerance for novelty. Does the person enjoy going to a spa and wants to see Iceland? An Icelandic cruise hits both interests while also adding the fun of a cruise.

Consider adding on to a pre-planned getaway. “Paying for a part or a supplement to a trip makes this option more available to more people,” says Masciarelli. Schedule an excursion, like a tour of a historic winery if Italy is the destination, or book a wild-life safari as part of a trip to Africa. These add-ons are more affordable than an entire trip, and still give the recipient unique and lasting memories.

For the homebody, keep it local. Try tickets for the [Berks County Wine Trail](#), reservations for a tour at [Pennsylvania Distilling Company](#) in Malvern or a gift certificate for a hot air balloon ride with the [US Hot Air Balloon Team](#) in Pottstown.

PAMPERING

Who doesn’t enjoy a bit of pampering?

The holidays are a busy time—filled with shopping, family visits and holiday parties. So a day at the spa may be exactly what’s needed to unwind—either mid-holiday madness or later.

If you don’t know if a massage or facial is the right choice, get a gift card to spas like [Cole Wellness Spa](#) in Wayne, or West Chester spas [Balance Hair Spa](#) or [Remedi Day Spa](#). All offer full menus of

services, from hair styling and conditioning, facials, massages, waxing, to make-up services and more.

And some men enjoy pampering, too. While most salons and spas serve everyone, others cater specifically to men. Glen Mills’ [The Ultimate Shave](#) and Berwyn’s [The American Male](#) offer services tailored to men, like haircuts and shaves, coloring and waxing, and massages and facials.

Paying for a trip to the nail salon, an appointment for eyebrow shaping or eyelash extensions, or a session or two of airbrush tanning are also great options for a relaxing “me” day for someone special.

CLASSES

For the life-long learner, a class is an experience gift that gets an A+.

“The big thing is when you gift a material item, it’s relatively finite and maybe even limited in a way,” says Paul Downie of the

Community Arts Center. “But when you gift a class, it’s like a door opening.”

Culinary classes like those offered at the Paoli [Kitchen Workshop](#), the [Inn Keeper’s Kitchen](#) in West Chester and [Haneeda’s Kitchen](#) in Glen Mills can teach basics to a beginner and elevate the palate of an expert. You may even benefit the next time you’re invited for dinner!

Or consider art class—drawing, painting, ceramics, jewelry, metals. Both the [Community Arts Center](#) in Wallingford and the [Wayne Art Center](#) hold classes lasting several weeks, as well as one-day workshops that give that special someone a chance to try something new without making a long-term commitment.

Shopping for someone who’s not into cooking or art? No problem. Consider dance lessons from West Chester’s [Carousel Ballroom](#), yoga and fitness classes at Bryn Mawr’s [Focus Fitness Main Line](#) or acting



Some pampering at Balance Hair Spa



“Adopt” a wolf at the Wolf Sanctuary of PA

classes from [WC Studio for the Performing Arts](#) held at Uptown!

Not only will the recipient get the gift of the class, they may find new friends and a new passion. “Classes are a way to create

new friendships and enter a whole new community who connect around this shared interest,” says Paul Downie of the Community Arts Center. “And it all starts from ‘let’s try something new.’”

MORE IDEAS

Sponsoring an animal lets you do good while you gift. Typically these sponsorships involve monetary donations that provide care for the animal, while you receive an “adoption” certificate, photo and other goodies.

Try the Adopt A Wolf program with the [Wolf Sanctuary of PA](#) in Lititz, or the Sponsor-A-Horse program with [Ryerss Farm for Aged Equines](#) in Pottstown for the animal-lover in your family.

Or come up with a new family tradition and give the gift of family this holiday season. Gather the troops and head to the movie theater for a holiday movie or buy the whole family tickets to your favorite event of the year—a horse show, restaurant festival or film festival.

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Canvas reindeer drawstring bag features dimensional antlers, embroidered facial features, buffalo check flannel lining and twisted cording backpack handles.
H. Rose Boutique, West Chester



Handmade silver earrings made by local jewelry artist, Hattie Weselyk.
Merchant of Menace, West Chester



Mitchies Matching wool hat with sparkle and fur pom pom
Jane Chalfant, West Chester.



Phrenite and champagne diamond statement earrings from the Lotus Collection. Hand-crafted in 18k yellow gold, dangling from signature clover ear wire.
Alexis Kletjian, Kennett Square



Artistic Eyewear has hundreds of frames to gift this holiday, including Oliver Peoples sunglasses inspired by Cary Grant.
Artistic Eyewear, West Chester



Exquisite diamond and gold necklace by Hulchi Belluni.
Walter J. Cook Jeweler, Paoli



Johnnie-O 1/4 zip, Johnnie-O Yorke pant, Johnnie-O Jackson button down, Seavees Mariner's boot, Richer Poorer chief sock.
Phineas Gage, West Chester

HOLIDAY Window Shopping

Let's look forward to some festive time with family and friends, make lists, stroll the shops, meet for dinner, a beverage or some apps at one of the amazing restaurants in our area and then take some time to enjoy a few of the fun things to do this month. Check our Best Local Events column for all you need to know.

Browse the shops on these pages, stop in a museum and be sure to schedule a festive lunch or dinner, too. Maybe a happy hour to celebrate your shopping skills. Make a day of it, you'll be glad you did!

As always to our readers and advertisers, our most heartfelt thank you and our best wishes for a very Happy New Year!

Happy Holidays!



◀ Pennsylvania ▶

Chadds Ford

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Brandywine River Museum of Art
610-388-2700 • Brandywine.org

Chester Springs

Visit **Historic Yellow Springs** to pick up one-of-a-kind holiday gifts as Art Show Poster competitors and members—professional and student artists—will exhibit and sell their work from Dec. 14–22. The winning poster and other artist's poster entries are on display, along with another piece of their choosing, all exhibiting



Historic Yellow Springs Art Show
610-827-7414 • YellowSprings.org

in a wide array of mediums. 1685 Art School Rd. 610-827-7414; YellowSprings.org.

Simpson House Tea Room, located in the Village of Eagle, is the place for all your tea needs. Lunch and Afternoon Tea served daily, over 100 loose leaf teas, tea paraphernalia, private events, celebration rooms, catering and delicious baked goods. 110 Pottstown Pk. 610-458-0120; SimpsonHouseTeaRoom.com.

Exton

Appetites on Main, located in Main Street at Exton, offers casual American comfort food at a good value. It's a great place to stop and relax during the busy holiday season. Daily Happy Hour, 4 to 6 p.m., includes \$2.50 select domestics, \$1 off all appetizers, craft beer and cocktails. Open daily, 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., full menu until 1:30 a.m. 286 Main St. 610-594-2030; AppetitesOnMain.com.

Deck the halls this holiday season with 18th-century through Victorian-era original and reproduction furniture, lighting fixtures and furniture hardware. Visit the showroom at **Ball & Ball** to find unique gift ideas including candlesticks, bookends, lanterns and fireplace accessories made on the premises in brass, tin, copper and hand-forged iron and bronze. All perfect gifts this holiday season. Open Monday–Friday, from 8 to 4:30; Saturday hours, October–March, 9 to 1. 463 W. Lincoln Hwy. (Rt. 30). 610-363-7300; BallAndBall.com.



Ball & Ball
610-363-7300 • BallAndBall.com

There's no place like **Ron's Original Bar & Grille** this holiday season! Come and indulge in some "Real Food, for the Health of it." Offering a family atmosphere, Italian fare, live music and some of the best craft beer around, they invite you to stop in for a bite, enjoy some take-out or delivery, or call them to cater your next event! 74 E. Uwchlan Ave. 610-594-9900; RonsOriginal.com.

Kennett Square

Alexis Kletjian's namesake jewelry gallery is curated with one-of-a-kind jewels in stunning colors and striking textures. Glittering gemstones stand alongside timeless pieces and exquisitely selected Luxuries for your Soul. An award-winning jewelry designer, Alexis can also redesign your treasured heirlooms. If you are a lover of all things beautiful, stop by and give yourself the gift of luxury. For a daily dose of sparkle, follow Alexis on Instagram @alexiskletjian. 131 E. State St. 610-615-9200; AlexisKletjian.com.

Contact **Connoisseur Travel** and give the gift of travel this holiday season. They look for destinations that are authentic, unique and emerging—the new frontiers of travel. Seeking that special gift—choose experiences over material things. Your friends and family will thank you for the lasting memories. 312 W State St. 800-858-0011; CTLtd.com.



Connoisseur Travel
800-858-0011 • CTLtd.com

Using only the finest and freshest ingredients, highlighting the northern region of Italy, **La Verona** is committed to making your meal a memorable one, with professional service in a welcoming, vibrant, social atmosphere. They have a private dining area for parties up to 65, and they invite you to join them for Happy Hour, Monday–Friday, 4 to 6 p.m. 114 E. State St. 610-444-2244; LaVeronaPA.com.

Malvern

The holidays can be a hectic time of year. Let **Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co.** take care of your party planning needs with custom

party platters for family get-togethers or office parties. Everything from delicious antipasti to homemade classic pasta dishes and Italian favorites. Tonino's now offers private dining with seating for up to 50 guests. Call to plan your holiday festivities today. Gift certificates available. 235 Lancaster Ave. 610-240-9566; ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com.

Marshallton

This holiday season, why not introduce some creativity, art, innovation and fun to your gift-giving? Visit the **Merchant of Menace Re-Imaginers Gallery** and check the whimsical and inventive items that will delight everyone! Their artists see possibilities everywhere and create amazing works from a variety of reclaimed materials. Find furniture crafted from New England barn wood, animal sculptures made from antique tractor parts, jewelry created from silverware and much more! 1351 W. Strasburg Rd. 215-704-7419; TheMerchantOfMenace.net.

Newtown Square

Gourmet gift baskets and luscious fine chocolates are two reasons to stop at **Christopher Chocolates**, making life sweeter since 1986 as a family-owned and operated business. They have a great selection of gourmet foods, candies, sugar-free items and fine chocolates for a customized gift basket to delight all on your list. Open daily from Thanksgiving to Christmas. 3519 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3). 610-359-1669; Christopher-Chocolates.com.



Christopher Chocolates
610-359-1669 • Christopher-Chocolates.com

Get your Christmas plants and flowers at **Mostardi Nursery**. Featuring distinctive plants for every season, Mostardi offers a selection that will have your home looking greener and even better than last Christmas. The Christmas Shop features trees, wreaths, poinsettias, garden accents, ornaments and accessories. Mostardi is dedicated to providing avid gardeners and homeowners with plants for every season and every reason. 4033 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3). 610-356-8035; Mostardi.com.



Mostardi Nursery
610-356-8035 • Mostardi.com

Paoli

As always, **Walter J. Cook Jeweler** has curated a fresh collection of unique gems designed to fit many styles and price points. Owner Michael Cook has selected exquisite diamonds, one-of-a-kind colored gemstones and both classic and contemporary pearls. Wonderful gold items as well as mixed metal artisan jewels help complete this year's collection. Chestnut Village Shoppes, 36 Chestnut Rd. 610-644-5347; WalterJCookJeweler.com.



Walter J. Cook Jeweler
610-644-5347 • WalterJCookJeweler.com

Phoenixville

Foresta's Market has all of your holiday favorites. Rib roasts and filet roasts using the tastiest Certified Angus Beef. Honey Baked Hams sliced to your liking, made with their homemade

glaze, topped with a pineapple ring and cherry. For those in the mood for a holiday bird, Foresta's has Jandl Grand Champion turkeys, ducks and geese. 1098 W. Bridge St. 610-935-1777; ForestasMarket.com.

Wallingford

Make it a handcrafted holiday. **Community Arts Center and the Potters Guild** present their Holiday Sale, featuring functional and decorative ceramic, mixed media, fiber art, jewelry, papier-mâché, flowers, wood, soaps, baskets, metal and holiday decor from over 60 artists, December 5–14. Special shopping events include a preview party and Holiday Happy Hours. 414 Plush Mill Rd. 610-566-1713; CACHolidaySale.org.



Community Arts Center
610-566-1713 • CommunityArtsCenter.org

West Chester

Nestled in the historic downtown areas of Chestnut Hill, West Chester, and Doylestown, PA, **Artistic Eyewear** represents the epitome of style and elegance. They carry a large selection of unique and designer frames and sunglasses from around the world at prices to fit everyone's budget. Their friendly, efficient and professional service helps ensure that you look and see your best. Stop in for an adjustment or just to browse and see what frames look unique and fabulous on you. 127 N. High St. 610-738-7150; ArtisticEyewear.com.

To add sparkle to the holidays, visit the Ultimate Jewelry Store—**Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry**, specializing in Ideal Cut Diamonds, engagement rings and wedding bands at wholesale prices. See their big and unique engagement rings and fashion jewelry collection for 2020. Italian and Spanish designer jewelry is available in all price ranges. They are also a full-service jeweler, including in-house repair, custom design and appraisals. 15 W. Gay St. 610-692-7707; BigsDiamonds.com.

Since 1933, the Jane Chalfant shop has provided casual fashions in a friendly atmosphere. Today, **Jane Chalfant / Kiki Boutique** features sweaters, pants and jackets for your everyday lifestyle. Everyone is pleasantly surprised by the size of the shop, which enables them to carry a great selection including fun, fashion accessories. It's worth the trip! Free parking behind the shop at 123 N. High St. 610-696-0290; JaneChalfant.com.

When you stop into **Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers**, it's more than just a meal or a sweet treat you're getting. They pride themselves on making sure every guest leaves with a smile on their face and plenty of cheerful memories! They hope to see you soon! 1302 Wilmington Pk. 484-315-8606; FreddysUSA.com.

H. Rose Boutique, a shop for Mom-Mom, Mommy and Me is a three-generational business built on the love of family, fashion and unique design with gifts for every lady (& little gentlemen) from newborn through plus size. Let the H.Rose Style Squad help you find the perfect gift. Follow them on Instagram, [@h.rose.kiddos](https://www.instagram.com/h.rose.kiddos). 148 W. Gay St. Monday–Friday, 10 to 6, Saturday, noon to 4. 484-887-0085; HROseWC.com.

The **Inn at Whitewing Farm** is hidden on a country road, quietly nestled in the historic Brandywine Valley, adjacent to the world-renowned Longwood Gardens and just minutes away from world-class attractions. Settled on 13 bucolic acres, Whitewing is home to a fishing pond, spring-fed pool and tennis court, 10 romantic guest rooms & suites with seasonal fireplaces, private entrances and plush amenities, making Whitewing Farm the perfect escape. 370 Valley Rd. 610-388-2013; InnAtWhitewingFarm.com.



Inn at Whitewing Farm
610-388-2013 • InnAtWhitewingFarm.com

You'll find fresh, handcrafted beers, creative New American cuisine and friendly and attentive service at **Iron Hill Brewery**. Their beers have won national and international acclaim for over 20 years. They're open 7 days, for lunch and dinner, with Happy Hour Monday–Friday, 5 to 7 p.m. Buy \$75 in gift cards through December 31 and receive a \$20 bonus card! 3 W. Gay St. 610-738-9600; IronHillBrewery.com.

Stop by **The Lincoln Room** and enjoy High Tea or a quiet lunch in the lower level of the circa 1833 Lincoln Building. Select from their extensive menu of holiday or specialty teas, sweet scones served with their own lemon curd, quiche specialties and their signature dessert—Croissant Bread Pudding with crème Anglaise. BYOB. Private parties, Sunday–Tuesday; Lunch and Tea offered

Wednesday–Saturday from 11 to 3. Reservations suggested. 28 Market St. 610-696-2102.

Visit **Matlack Florist** for all your holiday needs. Centerpieces and fresh flower arrangements make a great holiday gift. The Greenhouse is bursting with poinsettias, Noble Trees and Holiday Garden Baskets. Fruit and Gourmet Baskets with local items are sure to please. Stop by the gift shop for a wonderful selection of home décor items, accessories and holiday giftware. Same-day local delivery is always available. 210 N. Chester Rd. 610-431-3077; MatlackFlorist.com.



Matlack Florist
610-431-3077 • MatlackFlorist.com

Looking for the perfect gift for the men in your life? Check out **Phineas Gage**, located in downtown West Chester for a great assortment of men's contemporary clothing and accessories. They carry everything from outerwear, sweaters, wovens, denim to socks, belts and wallets. Let them help you pick the perfect gift to outfit your man from head to toe! 29 S. High St. 484-266-7344; Phineas-Gage.com.

Pietro's Prime is an upscale yet casual Steakhouse and Martini Bar located in the heart of downtown West Chester. They are known for their quality cuisine and remarkable service. Whether you're celebrating a milestone event or just looking for a delicious meal, Pietro's Prime is the place to go. 125 Market St. 484-760-6100; PietrosPrime.com.

With a focus on craft beer, whiskey and quality food, **Rams Head Bar and Grill** is the perfect place to visit this winter. Try

out their new menu items, or book your holiday parties in their spacious lower level. Visit the amazing bar staff for Happy Hour every weekday from 5 to 7 p.m. 40 E. Market St. 484-631-0241; RamsHeadBarAndGrill.com.

Touch ... Sight ... Taste ... Smell ... Sound ... **The 5 Senses**. You can find something for everyone on your shopping list for any occasion (and something for yourself as well) at this shop. They offer North American and Fair Trade, handmade, functional works of art, from pottery to candles to jewelry and gift art. They also have a large selection of all-occasion cards, gift cards, gift wrapping and shipping. 133 W. Market St. 610-719-0170; The5Senses.com.

◀ Delaware ▶ Wilmington

Come INN and enjoy the spirit of the holidays at **Columbus Inn**. Join them for a cozy dining experience on Thanksgiving, Sunday Brunch with Santa, Christmas Eve, or New Year's Eve Dinner. They also have private spaces for work or family celebrations. Open for Happy Hour & dinner, Monday through Saturday and lunch Monday through Friday. 2216 Pennsylvania Ave. 302-571-1492; ColumbusInn.net.

Celebrate the season at the **Delaware Art Museum**! Discover a variety of gift ideas including handcrafted jewelry, vases, ceramics, textiles and books at the Museum Store. On December 13 and 14, the annual Winter Arts Festival will feature holiday gifts from 20 regional artisans, music by local choirs and decorations. Winter-themed art projects will be available for children and their families and snacks and beverages will be available. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.



Delaware Art Museum Store
302-571-9590 • DelArt.org

Put a little natural sparkle into the holidays with science and nature-related gifts from the **Delaware Museum of Natural History**, including rocks, minerals, amber and stone jewelry, kitchen accessories, candles and more. New this year are wrapping paper, notecards and tree of life posters by Fairhope Graphics. For children, stuffed animals, science kits, games or a gift certificate for summer camp. And, of course, dinosaur gifts! 4840 Kennett Pk. 302-658-9111; DelMNH.org.



Delaware Museum of Natural History
302-658-9111 • DelMNH.org

Leave the stress of the mall behind and shop **Hagley Museum & Library's** newly renovated Museum Store. Find thoughtful gifts for everyone on your list. Items available include jewelry, china, decorative and functional home goods, stationery, toys, and Hagley-branded items. Stay for a tour of the Holidays at Hagley, "Christmas Trees: Past and Present." 200 Hagley Creek Rd. 302-658-2400; Hagley.org/Store or Hagley.org/Holidays. ♦



Hagley Museum & Library
302-658-2400 • Hagley.org



Movie Preview: “Maybe Next Year” From Grit to Glory – A Story of Fandom

Zack Malet

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT EAGLES FANS DURING THEIR SUPER BOWL VICTORY SEASON SHOWS THE PASSION OF SPORTS FANS EVERYWHERE.

“**M**AYBE NEXT YEAR” HAD ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT the Philadelphia Film Festival on Monday, October 21, yet the outcome of the 2017–18 Eagles’ season—which is a springboard for this documentary’s broader story—is already engrained in every Eagles fan’s mind. Just as much as the mantra—and film title—that fans repeat at the end of every disappointing season.

Spoiler Alert: the film brings Birds’ faithful back to when Carson Wentz was tragically injured, the Philly Special was born, and the Eagles underdog playoff run to the Super Bowl proved nearly every sports bookie and national commentator wrong.

But this film is about much more than the on-field heroics of Doug Pederson and Nick Foles. It’s a story about fans and fandom. In fact, the feature-length documentary was going to hit the big screen no matter the outcome of that fateful football season. Clearly fate smiled on this project, from Wavelength Productions, by providing a storybook ending.

The film tells several stories, beginning with the often-stigmatized Eagles fans. They are the lunatics that (allegedly) threw snowballs at Santa, fought Bradley Cooper in the Linc parking lot in “Silver Lin-

ings Playbook,” and had a jail cell in the basement of the Vet (not to be confused with the Flyers recently opened Rage Room). And for Director Kyle Thrash, a Philly native and Drexel alum, he simply “wanted to show where that passion comes from.”

To do this Kyle follows four die-hard Eagles fans as their lives orbit around a magical Eagles season. There’s Eagles Shirley, a local legend for her passionate calls to sports radio station 610 WIP; Barry “The Hatchet” Vagnoni, a super-fan who built an Eagles-inspired man-cave, called the Locker Room and big enough for 100 fans, at his home in Reading, PA; Jesse Callsen of Delaware County, a multi-generational fan, with a dying father and young son, who Kyle’s production team met at a local pub; and Bryant Moreland, a YouTube personality in Los Angeles infamous for his profane rants about the Eagles.

Kyle found these four prototypical fans, embodying fandom’s many dimensions, by casting a wide net. Shirley, Barry, Jesse and Bryant are shown throughout the season with families and friends sharing and celebrating their love of the Birds. We get to know them and the challenges that make each personify the grit and blue-collar spirit of Philadelphia and an Eagles team that was counted out too many times.



Barry Vagnoni built his “Locker Room” with money he saved for retiring in Florida.



Inspired by documentaries “Heavy Metal Parking Lot” and “American Juggalo,” plus sports films “Friday Night Lights” with a dash of “Rocky,” Kyle and his team explore the day-to-day of being an Eagles fanatic. Eagles’ wins inspire foolish behavior, shown by Barry driving doughnuts on his golf cart and ruining his lawn. Losses bring out the negativity: “Eagles are the scapegoat for all of my failures,” laments Bryant in a profanity-laden post.

Non-game days offer other ways to engage with the team. Jesse tosses a football and teaches his autistic son to spell Eagles. Meanwhile, Eagles Shirley teaches a “Football 101” class—a community outreach to women

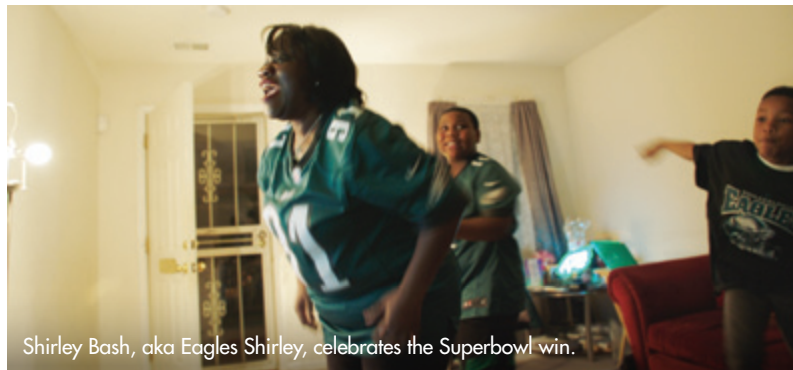
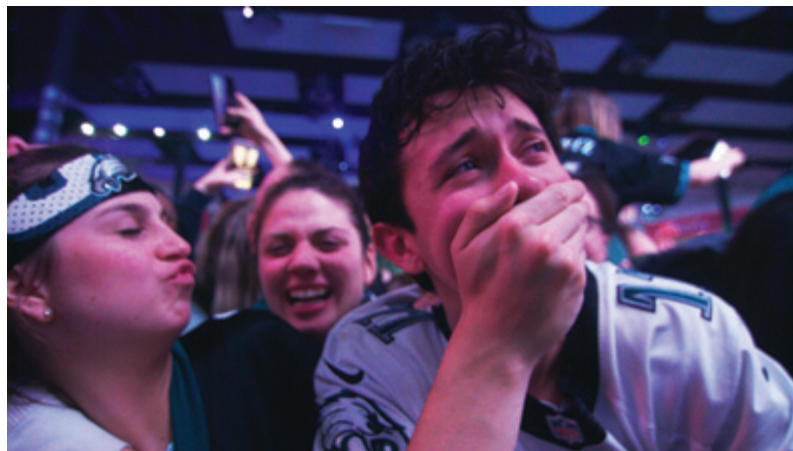
trying to understand their significant others’ Sunday rituals and the Do’s and Don’ts of Eagles fandom. Shirley explains about the class, which is still alive and thriving, “It’s important to pull back the curtain on that side of Game Day.”

The movie’s focus expands to show the tribal nature of Eagles fans—from the antics at the beer-centric tailgates to the crowds in sports bars of all sizes in all kinds of neighborhoods. When the NFC Championship kicks off, downtown streets are empty as the entire city shuts down. And fair warning: this documentary shows the full and not always admirable emotion of Eagles fans. As a policeman notes, “It’s not good when the Eagles lose.”

One early voice from the film suggests that a city gravitates towards sports as a way to find its identity. “Philly has always been an underdog,” says Jesse before the NFC Championship game. Kyle and his film team lean into that identity.

The city of Philadelphia becomes another character in the documentary, captured by the use of local musicians and the film’s cinematography. Kyle’s team set up drone shots over Broad Street on Super Bowl Sunday, 2018, showing the extent of the mass celebration. Everyday shots from around the city convey the fans’ spirit displayed by signs on overpasses, store windows and front yards.





Shirley Bash, aka Eagles Shirley, celebrates the Superbowl win.

This understanding of place lifts the film from sports documentary to an exploration of what brings four vastly different people and a city of four million people together—to yell their faces off at the Birds every Sunday in the fall, and talk about it every Monday through Saturday in between.

Shirley, Barry, Jesse and Bryant persevered through their struggles along with the Eagles in this story about faith, hope and a shared vision—as believers, as underdogs, as part of the City of Brotherly Love. Fans of family, grit, happy endings and even of the Philadelphia Eagles will find something in this documentary full of heart.

Here's hoping it finds a distribution deal beyond its two local screenings in October. Fly Eagles Fly! ♦

*"Maybe Next Year," run time 83 minutes
Wavelength Productions
Directed by Kyle Thrash*

Zack Malet, Associate Director of Content Distribution at Disney/ESPN, is a lifelong Eagles fan who traveled from Connecticut to join the Super Bowl 52 victory parade through Philadelphia on February 8, 2018—one of his top 10 memories.

[Food News] A few of our favorite things to share this month about local food and drink

Mangia! Newly opened **GG Italian** brings the zest to Glen Mills! This upscale spot serves a modern twist on traditional dishes like lobster arancini, black truffle tagliatelle and ricotta



gnocchi alla vodka. Save room for delectable desserts—cannolis and honey ricotta cheesecake. Local chef Joe Ferro's new location blends family and food—named after his young daughter and inspired by his grandmother's recipes. Savor classic dishes with gusto. 1110 Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills. GGItalian.com.

Move Over, Pumpkin Pie! In Pennsylvania, eggnog reigns supreme. For worry-free eggnog, use a cooked egg base, egg substitute products or pasteurized eggs. Spice up this holiday classic with brandy, rum or whiskey. Need eggnog in a pinch? Try locally made 'nog from Kolb's Farm Store. Churning out about 1,000 gallons yearly, Kolb's 43-year favorite delivers a rich, sweet pasteurized elixir so good locals start clamoring for it two weeks before production! 151 Kolb Rd., Spring City. KolbsFarmStore.com



Edible Ornament. Shirley Temple once sang about "Animal Crackers In My Soup," but did you know this beloved treat has shown up in other unusual places? In 1902, the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) marketed the British snack to Americans as holiday decor. The string on the **Animal Crackers** box was intended to be used to hang the decorative box on the Christmas tree for all to see. Guess Shirley could have added a new verse to her song.

A Christmas Tradition. This season, learn 100-year-old family recipes to bring to your table with **Christmas Eve Italian Fish Traditions**. The Chester County Night School classes, held at Artisan Exchange, feature local award-winning chef, Christina Familetti on Thursdays Dec. 5 and 12 at 6:30 p.m. Hear the story of the "7 Fishes," learn to prepare mussel marinara and shrimp scampi over linguini, and sample stuffed calamari and bacala. Aprons will be provided, but BYOB! Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr. # 13B, West Chester. 610-719-0282 or ChesterCountyNightSchool.org.



Not Another Pumpkin Beer. Chocolate and alcohol go together this season! Be sure to catch a historic collaboration as **Yuengling and Hershey's** intertwine their PA roots to concoct a **Chocolate Porter**. The brew combines Yuengling's classic Dark Brewed Porter, a 200-year-old recipe, with the sweetness of real Hershey's chocolate. Served at Hershey Park, select stores and bars in 14 states, including our tri-state area. Get it quick! This limited release is available until mid-February. Check the website for locations. Yuengling.com.



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SAY HAPPY HOLIDAYS WITH WINE

Fred Naddeo

THERE'S A WINE FROM BURGUNDY FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST.

WITH THE HOLIDAYS BACK AGAIN, WE'RE ALL looking for appealing gift ideas for family, friends, coworkers, as well as hostess gifts. For those of us yearning for one-size-fits-many, buying wine has great appeal.

There are plenty of convenient wine shops around—no need to head for the mall or drive to a distant specialty store with limited shopping hours. Wrapping doesn't require yards of holiday paper, and it's likely not the wrong color or size—though some may want the larger size. Plus it's easy to have a spare present or two tucked away for gift emergencies.

Simply put, it's easy to choose wine when working through your gift list. Just stop at your local wine store for recommendations from your favorite wine specialist. They likely even sell festive gift bags.

But what to do when you're on your own to select the wine? Or if you don't know what the recipient likes, or what's being served at the dinner party? The best solution is to choose a wine that's smooth and not overpowering on the palate. And with an impeccable reputation.

Pinot noir and chardonnay fit the bill. Both are from the prestigious Burgundy region in central France, a small area with a huge influence on the wine world. Known for its terroir, the region produces some of the most expensive and sought-after wines in the world, characterized by their elegance, aromatics and complexity.

Even wildlife likes these grapes better than other varieties! This past year, owners of Navarro Vineyards & Winery in California captured video of a bear that's been

“stealing” grapes for a few years—the bear ignores other varieties and eats only the pinot noir grapes.

As even a California bear knows, these wines are so important that the most expensive wines at collector wine auctions tend to be from Burgundy. So, how do you select the perfect pinot noir or chardonnay without busting your budget? Here are some affordable options you will like, and more importantly, like to give.

Burgundy wine quality—from grand cru and premier cru to village and regional—is defined by the location of the vineyard the grapes come from, as well as the producer that makes the wine. These special wines make great hostess gifts as well as gifts for friends.

Let's start with **Bourgogne Select Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay 2018**, just \$12.99. This golden chardonnay is rich with flavors of peaches and nectarines and slight lemon notes. The bright acidity makes it perfect for seafood as well as poultry dishes.

Another option is **Nicolas Potel Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay 2017** for \$16.99. Yellow with a green tint, it showcases floral aromas of honey-suckle as well as almonds. This is an easy drinking white wine with rich flavors of green apple and pear. Try it with poultry and other white meats.

For a red wine option, try **Louis Jadot Pinot Noir Bourgogne 2016** for \$19.99.

Blended from a collection of pinot noir grapes grown in a variety of places in Burgundy, it has aromas of plums, cherries and red fruits. With traditional flavors reminiscent of earth and mushroom, it pairs well with chicken and pork dishes.

For a step up in quality but not necessarily price, choose **Frédéric Esmonin Les Genévrières Pinot Noir Bourgogne 2017** at \$19.99. Hailing from around the village of Genévrières, this red has notes of ripe dark fruits, like black cherry, along with hints of earth. Also excellent with poultry and pork dishes.

Every holiday has celebrations that call for some bubbly, and Burgundy can help with that as well. Since sparkling wines are typically made from pinot noir and chardonnay, Burgundy has the grapes to make top-notch sparklers.

First up, is **Vignobles Bulliat Crémant de Bourgogne Brut Nature Non-Vintage** for \$17.99 from the Beaujolais region of southern Burgundy. Made from chardonnay, it has aromas of citrus and flavors of white fruits. The perfect wine to toast with friends.

These wines are a great introduction to the Burgundy region and prove that you don't have to break the bank to drink and give good wine from the region.

If you're looking for some-

thing even more special—whether for your boss, a wine lover or a loved one—wines like these, from better vineyards and better producers, are sure to please.

A great red wine choice is **Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils Savigny-Lès-Beaune Les Lavières 2017** at \$54.99 from the town of Savigny-Lès-Beaune, in the middle of Côte d'Or in eastern France.

Côte d'Or, meaning “Hills of Gold,” connotes the high quality and expensive wines produced there. Notes of ripe red and dark fruits, with a touch of spice, complement its earthy notes. It's a perfect match for richer seafood dishes such as salmon.

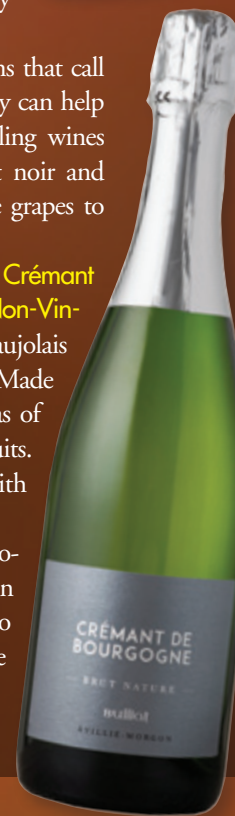
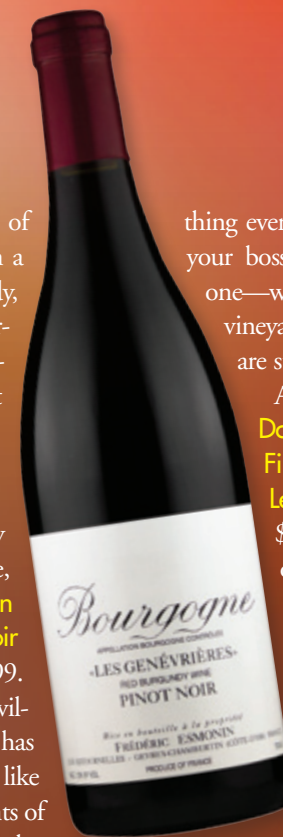
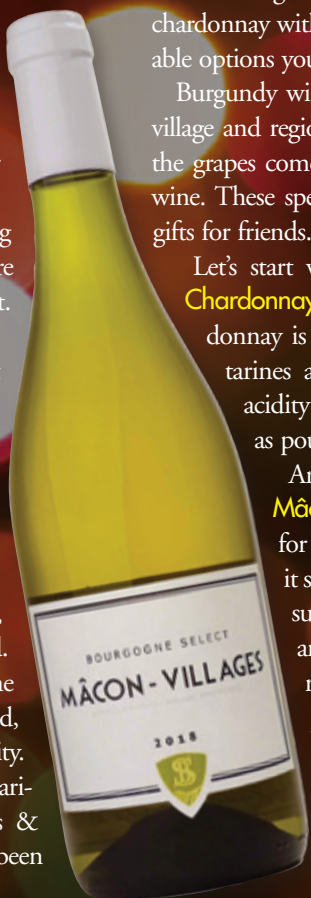
Our white wine choice is **Domaine William Fevre Chablis Premier Cru Montmains 2017** for \$54.99. Chablis produces some of the most expressive and elegant white wines in the world. The premier cru designation means this wine is near the top of the Burgundy quality pyramid. This wine received high ratings from several wine magazines, with the highest by *James Suckling* at 94 points, which noted the fresh lemon nose with hints of spiced almond biscuit and flavors of lemons, peaches and grapefruit.

Finally, for a quality sparkling choice, choose **Louis Picamelot Crémant de Bourgogne Blanc de Blanc Extra Brut 2014** for \$24.99. This 100% chardonnay-based wine brings green apple notes in a fuller bodied, Champagne-style wine, that's perfect for sharing a special holiday moment.

These wines are sure to impress and not because of the price—but for their outstanding quality. And if you can't find these selections, talk to your local wine specialist for other recommendations.

You don't have to spend a bundle to give a gift of Burgundy wine this season ... unless you want to. Cheers! ♦

What started as a hobby is now a career. Fred Naddeo began his wine journey more than 20 years ago when his wife bought a bottle of Black Tower Riesling to try something different. It marked the beginning of an exploration of the amazing world of wine that continues to this day. Fred is a wine specialist at the Springfield Fine Wine & Good Spirits store on Baltimore Pike in Springfield. Learn more at FineWineAndGoodSpirits.com.



Simpson House Tea Room



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- ❖ private parties
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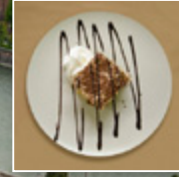
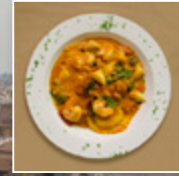
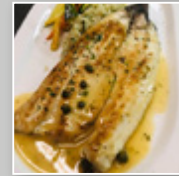
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[Brandywine Table]

Prepared to Party

PRO TIPS TO LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD
FOR A HOLIDAY PARTY WITH
HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES

Alyssa Thayer



FOR MANY OF US, JUST THE THOUGHT OF COOKING for company is enough to make us reach for a paper bag to breathe into. The reaction can be more severe when considering a holiday party—even one that involved only hors d'oeuvres. But for John Serock, that's a welcomed challenge.

You've probably heard the name. John is the owner of **John Serock Catering**, a full-service catering company based in West Chester. They do it all—from food to rentals—and they do it well, winning numerous awards and accolades from happy clients.

John found his passion at an early age (12, to be exact), at his uncle's club/banquet hall. It was a family affair, where Grandma cooked, his mom and aunt waitressed, and John bussed tables. "I loved serving people and always knew I wanted to end up in catering," he says.

After graduating from Johnson & Wales University and spending

time in many restaurant kitchens, John was ready for a change. A call from a friend asking John to cook for a family gathering, and he was back to his first love of catering.

For the first few years, John was a one-man show, doing under 100 events a year and bartending on the side. "I figured out early on that catering isn't like a restaurant, where you just hang an 'Open' sign and people start flowing in," he recalls. In 2006 he was finally able to hire his first employees and open a storefront.

Today, the company does well over 1,000 events a year, ranging from 25 to 800 guests at everything from simple cocktail parties to lavish 9-course dinners.

When asked how he and his staff keep track of all the details, John answered, "We plan, review, plan, plan and plan." They start with worst-case scenarios and work backwards. "We try to think of every disaster that can happen and how we'd handle it," explains John. Sage advice for all hosts.

Catering is a high-pressure industry. "There are no do-overs ... every event is that client's most important day," he says. But John loves the challenge, variety and adrenaline high when it all goes right. His favorite part is seeing it all come together. "We come in, completely transform a space and a few hours later we're gone as if we were never there. We're like magicians," he chuckles.

As we approach peak entertaining season, John urges us to remember, "People are thrilled to be invited to your gathering. Don't overcomplicate it." So, whether you DIY or hire a pro, have fun!



No detail is too small—down to microgreens on appetizers.



The John Serock Team matches food and uniforms to the event theme. Pictured here for Brandywine Health's "Night in Greece" Garden Party.

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Recipes

While the terms appetizer and hors d'oeuvres are often used interchangeably, appetizers are traditionally the first course coordinated with courses of a larger meal, while hors d'oeuvres are 1-2 bite, stand-alone snacks.

Heavy (or hearty) hors d'oeuvres are hot or cold, and are enough to pass for a meal. Skewers of meat or fish, lollipop lamb chops, mini beef Wellingtons ... pretty hearty fare. Add stuffed mushrooms, mac and cheese bites, puff pastry with savory fillings, and you've got a meal. The choices are endless. And, don't forget dessert!

The recipes below are an assortment of crowd-pleasing favorite hors d'oeuvres from John Serock Catering. They're a breeze to both serve and eat (no cutlery required), making them perfect for any occasion, especially for holiday parties when guests want to mingle.

We've added notes at the end of each recipe telling you what steps can be done ahead of time. Happy holiday hosting!

Fig Crostini

The perfect pairing of sweet and savory, these little bites will make you the toast of the town.



- 1 1/2 C. fig jam (store-bought or recipe below)
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, unpeeled
- 3 oz. shaved pecorino cheese

*Tip: Pecorino tastes best when purchased in a wedge and shaved into long slices at home using a vegetable peeler.

- 12 slices toasted baguette

*If bread is not toasted, place slices on a cookie sheet and toast in a 375° oven for 8–10 minutes until crisp.

Slice apples into long thin slices. If not serving immediately, place in a cup of cold water with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent oxidation, which turns the slices brown.

Spread 1 tablespoon of jam on each slice of bread, top with a thin slice of apple and sprinkle with shaved pecorino pieces. Arrange on a serving platter.

Makes 12 pieces.

Be the host with the most!

Tips and tricks from the pros to help take the stress out of entertaining.

1. Create a Timeline: Write out your menu and develop a full prep list, separating any steps that can be done ahead of time. If you find you have too many day-of To Do's, you may want to make adjustments.

2. Think About Shelf Life: When designing your menu, think about how long a dish will hold up (based on room temperature and people eating from the presentation). Choose items that do not need to be "refreshed" too often.

3. It's Okay to Supplement: You don't have to make everything from scratch. Find shortcuts that won't compromise the finished product. Example: Doctor up frozen cream puffs with a drizzle of chocolate and a dusting of powdered sugar. Or just buy the fig jam rather than making it from scratch.

4. Ask for Help: Hire a server for the night, or enlist the support of local high school or college students. Give your helpers a detailed list of all the jobs that need to be completed and the timing, so they can work independently.

5. Craft a Cocktail: Specialty cocktails are in vogue for a reason! Instead of needing a full bar of liquor and mixers, which takes up space and budget, come up with one or two premixed drinks that guests can pour themselves. If you know some guests prefer non-alcoholic options, create signature mocktails with the recommended liquor on the side.

Bonus points: add a sign that says "Spike as You Like."

6. Enjoy Your Party: Everyone has more fun when the host is relaxed and joining in the fun!

Fig Jam

- 1, 16-oz. package dry figs
- 1/4 C. sugar
- 1/2 C. water
- 1 oz. brandy

Place all ingredients in a small sauce pan and simmer for 10–12 minutes until figs soften. Remove from heat.

Add all contents into a food processor and process until smooth.

***Fig Jam can be made ahead and will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.*



Onion Soup Bites

A cozy winter favorite all dressed up and ready to party.



- 2 Tb. butter
- 2 large onions, sliced thinly
- 2 oz. sherry or white wine
- 1 C. water
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 2 packages frozen phyllo cups
(available in the dessert section of **the grocery store**)
- 8 slices Gruyere or Swiss cheese, each cut into 4 pieces

Preheat oven to 375°.

Melt butter in a saute pan over medium heat and add onions. Cook for 20–25 minutes without stirring, or until onions start to brown.

Once onions begin to brown, stir in wine, water, bouillon cube and pepper. Simmer until liquid evaporates (about 15 minutes).

Place a tablespoon of onion mixture into each phyllo cup and top with a square of cheese. Arrange on a cookie sheet and bake for 7–9 minutes, until cheese is melted.

Makes 30 pieces.

*** Onions can be done in advance and will hold in an air-tight container for up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.*

Bacon Wrapped Brussel Sprouts

Let's face it, bacon-wrapped anything is usually a winner, but this unique combination of flavors and textures is borderline addictive.

- 12 bacon strips
- 24 Brussel sprouts
- 1/4 C. packed brown sugar
- 2 T. smoked paprika

Planning for the Party:

An all hors d'oeuvres party, while it sounds like great fun, can be daunting when you have to decide just how much to serve. What time of day will it be? Dinnertime? In between lunch and dinner? How long do you expect your guests to stay and will you be serving alcohol?

Here are a few guidelines to help:

- If it's a dinner or lunchtime affair, guests will be hungry and probably expect to be satisfied. Figure 12–15 pieces/servings per person.
- For a pre-mealtime party, 8–10 pieces will probably be enough.
- If alcohol is served or if the party is going to last several hours, add a couple of pieces per person.
- And, an important reminder: Be sure to have plenty of plates, napkins and flatware, as guests will grab new ones a few times during the party.

Preheat oven to 375°.

Cut bacon strips in half crosswise.



In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until partially cooked but not crisp. Remove and place on paper towels to drain.

Boil Brussel sprouts in a small pot for 4 minutes, then immediately place in an ice water bath to cool.

In a small bowl, mix brown sugar and paprika. Dip one side of each bacon piece in brown sugar mixture. Wrap each sprout with a bacon piece, sugar side out. Secure with a toothpick.

Transfer to a greased baking pan. Bake 12–15 minutes or until bacon is crisp.

Makes 24 pieces.

*** Bacon wrapped sprouts can be rolled up to a day in advance and finished in oven day-of.*

Mini Reubens

An elevated take on a favorite dinner staple.



- 1, 1-lb. loaf cocktail rye bread, sliced
- *available at most grocery stores, or cut up regular size loaf into 2" squares
- 1 C. Thousand Island dressing

- 1½ lb. deli-sliced corned beef
- 1, 16-oz. jar sauerkraut, rinsed and well drained
- 1 lb. sliced Swiss cheese

Preheat oven broiler.

Arrange cocktail rye slices on a baking sheet. Top each one with about 2 teaspoons of Thousand Island dressing, then fold a ½ slice of corned beef to fit the bread, lay over dressed bread. Cover the meat with a small pile of sauerkraut, then top with ¼ slice of Swiss cheese, or as large as your slice of bread.

Broil 3–5 minutes, until cheese is melted. Serve warm.
Makes 20 pieces.

***For best results, Reuben's should be assembled no more than 6–8 hours in advance of your party. ♦*

Alyssa Thayer found her love of food at an early age, frolicking around her mother's organic farm and eating her weight in berries and snap peas each summer. She is a self-proclaimed urban farm girl, whose mission is to bring inspired ideas to life, passionate people together, and good food to every table.



For more great recipes visit
CountyLinesMagazine.com

Christmas Wreaths

BEDECK YOUR DOOR, FIREPLACE, WINDOWS OR EVEN YOUR BARN FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

OUR COVER PHOTO FOR THIS HOLIDAY ISSUE shows many doors in West Chester decked out for the season. These wreaths on front doors are a symbol of welcome to friends and families and hint at the festive spirit within.

Many Christians believe wreaths represent Christ's suffering—the crown of thorns worn on the cross, with red berries representing blood and evergreens for eternal life.

Some believe wreaths symbolize victory, from Romans hanging them on their doors after victorious battles. Others believe the circular shape represents the never-ending circle of life, with evergreens, which live through all seasons, representing continuous growth and life.

Whatever your beliefs and whether your wreath is made from greens, flowers, fruits or twigs, pick one that welcomes the season! ♦



Fresh, hand-made wreaths from the Farm at Oxford are crafted with local elements, so no two are alike. At workS, Kennett Square.



This detail from the photo shoot for our cover collage of West Chester doors deserves its close-up. Timlyn Vaughan Photography.



Dress your home with unique handcrafted wreaths, such as this whimsical horsehead made for passionate equestrians. Wreaths by Bobette

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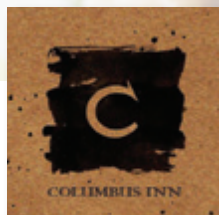
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