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Holiday Issue

Gifting Comfort

Close to Home
for the Holidays

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Seekers of Joy

Making a List . . .
Checking It Twice
in West Chester



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Chester Springs

Historic 4 BR, 1.1 BA | 57.4 Acres
Abuts Bryn Coed Preserve | Barn w/15 stalls
Great Easement Potential | Oversize Ring
\$2,630,000



Near Marshallton

4 BR, 4.1 BA | 15 Acres | Great Views!
Fabulous Floor Plan | Volumes of Space
Lg. Barn | Grand Pool Area | A Showcase!
\$2,450,000



Willistown

5BR, 5.2 BA | 4.4 Ac | Builder's Home
Hi-End Features | Fabulous Lwr Level
Chef's Kitchen | Luxurious Master Bath
\$1,690,000



West Marlborough

46.2 Ac. Parcel | On quiet country road
Midst of equestrian area | Protected views
Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
\$1,685,000



Unionville

77 Acres | Mix of Open & Woodlands
Fabulous Views of Protected Countryside
Equestrian Area | Unionville Schools
\$1,595,000



Unionville

4 BR, 3.2 BA | 20.5 Acres | Private!
New Construction - Pick from 4 models
Unionville-Chadds Ford Schools!
\$1,480,000



Newlin Township

5BR, 3.1 BA | 14.4 Acres | Private!
Fabulous Kitchen | Unionville Schools
Updated Baths | 4 Stall Barn | Protected View
\$1,250,000



Thornbury Township

Historic 4BR, 5.1 BA. | 7+ Acres
High-end Kitchen | Privately Set
Once Home to F. Scott Fitzgerald!
\$1,098,000



Warwick Township

6 BR, 5.1 BA | 22.5 Acres | Very Private!
Historic Home, Stone Barn & Pond
Abuts Horseshoe Trail & Warwick Park
\$1,075,000



Chester Springs

5BA, 3.1 BA | 5 Acres | Pastoral Views
Great Pool Complex | Chef's Kitchen
4 Fireplaces | Spacious Master Suite
\$950,000



East Bradford

5BR, 3BA | 1.1 Acres
Voluminous Open Floor Plan!
Great Location! Move-in Condition
\$789,000



Chadds Ford

5 BR, 3 BA | 2.1 Acs. | Pool
1 BR Guest House | Well Off Road
Impressive List of Improvements
\$768,000



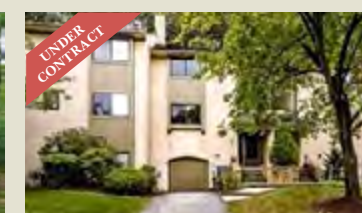
London Grove Township

4 BR, 2.1 BA | .79 Acres | 4,100 SF
Set in Hills of Sullivan | Protected Views
Large Family Room | Great Kitchen!
\$420,000



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10 Acre Building Parcel in Preserved Area
Idyllic House Site | Great Price
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from the EDITOR

We're planning for a very different holiday season this year—one that's still mighty merry, even if we are changing some of our usual gift giving and other traditions.

Yes, we have pages of fun Things To Do this month and we look at what's happening in our towns. In "Close to Home for the Holidays," Alyssa Menko and Olivia Smith tell us about celebrating in Phoenixville, Kennett Square, West Chester, Wilmington and other towns in *County Lines* country and beyond. This year, there's plenty of fun just a short car trip away.

For example, you can "Celebrate Holiday Magic" at the Brandywine River Museum of Art, featuring exhibits of the Brandywine Railroad, Ann Wyeth McCoy's dollhouse and the Critter ornaments. Special private group tours are available.

One tradition that continues—shopping local! Read "Making a List ... Checking It Twice in West Chester" to see what Ed Malet finds—clothing, art, flowers, jewelry, restaurant gift certificates. All your family and friends could want.

For even more gift ideas, read Madison Meinel's "Gifting Comfort." Local subscription boxes, family recipe books, plus ideas for visiting and sharing remotely this year. Some ideas may be worth continuing even in the new normal.

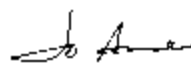
Local independent bookstores are also ready to help with your shopping. Cathy Fiebach recommends books for cooking, kids, local interest and laughs. These should help get us through the winter.

During the giving season, Chester County Community Foundation's Karen Simmons asks "This Holiday Season—How Will You Give Back?" She advises on doing it wisely.

A merry holiday season must include food and drink. Alyssa Thayer's Brandywine Table column covers "Much Ado About Brunch" and Jessica Roberts suggests four wines and four spirits in "The Gift You Deserve This Year!"

We hope these pages help with your holiday planning.

From all of us at *County Lines*, we wish you the Happiest of Holidays!


Jo Anne Durako
Editor



COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

December 2020

Volumes XLIV Number 4

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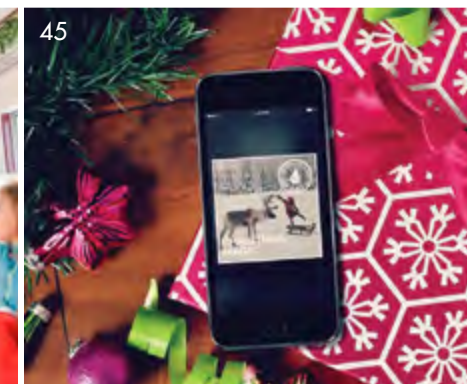
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Cover photo of downtown West Chester by Timlyn Vaughan Photography

[Worth Knowing]

This Holiday Season – How Will You Give Back?

“For it is in giving that we receive.” — Francis of Assisi

Karen A. Simmons, Chester County Community Foundation

Americans can expect a very different holiday season ahead. While the pandemic took away many traditions—the annual turkey trot, volunteering at the soup kitchen, gathering with extended families and friends, and children sitting on Santa’s lap—the spirit of “giving” this season is more prevalent than ever. And giving wisely is even more gratifying! Our world is full of good.

Every year, generosity to nonprofits peaks during the holiday season. And nonprofits—especially those that provide basic needs such as food, access to healthcare and financial support—have an increased need this year for flexible, unrestricted funding to meet heightened needs and to recover from COVID-19 with innovation and resiliency.

How can you find legitimate charities that do cost-effective, impactful, good work? Here are a few things you should know before you make your giving decisions this year.

DUE DILIGENCE

Before you donate to a charity, you want to make sure your gift is going where you intend. For this, you need to do a little research or due diligence.

Due diligence has two levels. The first level is merely compliance: Is the charity registered properly? The second level is performance: Does the charity’s work make a significant positive difference?

Compliance is relatively easy to determine. First and foremost, the grant or gift must be made to an organization that’s identified as a public charity or religious organization as approved by federal standards.

In Pennsylvania, generally, charities that solicit donations must register with the Pennsylvania Department of State. Contact that office to verify that a charity is registered (go online or call 800-732-0999).

You should also ask what portion of the charity’s revenues are spent on programs and services, as compared to fundraising and admin-

istration. Look for a minimum of around 75% spent on programs.

But compliance is not enough when it comes to large charitable gifts and estate planning.

To help determine performance, begin with GuideStar by Candid. This free national database works in cooperation with the IRS and the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance. Go online to find IRS Form 990 tax returns of charities throughout the U.S. along with information on the charity’s programs, financials and operations.

GIVING LOCALLY

Many donors want their financial contributions to benefit their neighbors and local communities. And there are many opportunities for local giving. There are 1.5 million registered nonprofit charities in the U.S., 13,000 in Pennsylvania, 8,000 in the Delaware Valley, and 800 in Chester County.

Again, research is key to finding organizations that serve constituents in your town, county, borough and state.

COVID-19 TAX CHANGES

To stimulate philanthropy, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act offers extra tax incentives this year for individuals and corporations. These provisions end on December 31, 2020, so you’ll want to act soon to take advantage of them.

- Taxpayers can deduct up to \$300 in charitable giving, even if they don’t itemize.
- Taxpayers can deduct up to 100% of adjusted gross income for charitable cash contributions (normally 60%).
- Corporations can deduct up to 25% of taxable income for charitable contributions (normally 10%).

There are a few tax exceptions to these provisions to consider, including gifts to private foundations and donor advised funds, such as those held at the Chester County Community Foundation. We suggest checking with your tax advisor to see how your charitable giving can be amplified using CARES Act incentives.

RELYING ON EXPERTS

It’s always good to ask for help when dealing with important financial decisions. When looking to donate, your local community foundation has a wealth of information on community issues, as well as the local, regional and national charities best positioned to meet community needs and aspirations.

The Chester County Community Foundation urges donors to give generously and wisely. We connect people who care with

causes that matter, so their legacy makes a difference, now and forever. ♦

Karen Simmons is President & CEO of Chester County Community Foundation, which connects people who care with causes that matter, so their legacy makes a difference. The Community Foundation helps donors discern which charities meet their criteria for giving generously and wisely. 610-696-8211; ChesCoCF.org.



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[Good to Know]

Just a few things we'd thought you'd like to know this month

Season's Socks.

Guaranteed to knock your socks off, December 4th marks the less-appreciated winter holiday—**National Sock Day**. Celebrate the rarest of all marriages, a matching pair of socks. Don't know how to mark the occasion? Match your socks with friends, family and even pets, then show off your best toe-tapping pairs on social media with #NationalSockDay. The Day's creators and sock company, Pair of Thieves, will donate socks and care kits to those in need with every hashtag posted. NationalSockDay.com.

Wrapping Up.

This year avoid spending on expensive wrapping paper only for it to be torn to shreds—literally. Instead of watching your money be ripped up in seconds in the excitement, and soon tossed in the trash, try using inexpensive, recycled material like newspapers and brown paper. Not only do these **wrapping alternatives** save money and reduce paper waste—they're also stylish! Top the gift with twine and live greens so your package is completely recycled and guilt proof. WrapWithNewspaper.com.

The Giving Season.

In-person volunteering may be on hold, but there are other options for helping. All you need is to open a computer, a book and your heart to give back this season. Volunteer with **Bookshare**—a free online library serving those with print disabilities—visual impairment, dyslexia and cerebral palsy. Volunteers simply scan new books or proofread previously scanned files, all from home! Join the giving season by volunteering on their website. BookShare.org.

Winter Walks.

Need a reason to get out of the house? You're in luck! Willistown Conservation Trust has an educational walk through Kirkwood Preserve to show the untouched December grasslands where many bird species nests. Join the free "**Winter of the World**" trail walk on December 10th to see the pristine grasslands. You might even catch a blue-gray gnatcatcher or magnolia warbler preparing for winter. Spaces are limited so register in advance at KirkwoodPreserve.com.

Distant Traditions.

Getting cozy by the fire, snuggling under a blanket, and gathering to watch a favorite holiday movie with the extended family is as important as decorating the tree. But with big gatherings on hold, get into the holiday spirit safely this season with the free Chrome extension, **Teleparty**, that synchronizes streaming services between devices. Distant family members can watch favorite holiday classics together—*Polar Express*, *Home Alone* and *Love Actually*—without actually getting together. Plan your holiday streaming now! NetflixParty.com.

Art for Kids!



Creativity doesn't stop during COVID—now is the perfect time to connect your kids with art at the Delaware Art Museum! Visit us online to experience art through storytelling for the whole family or spark young imaginations with a kit of art supplies and activities from the Museum Store. For a family outing, stop by in person to explore the Museum, Sculpture Garden, and Labyrinth. Visit delart.org for details.

COVID-19 Health and Safety measures in place at the Museum.

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December Picks Our Picks for top events this month

West Chester Charity Ball

December 5

Ticket holders pick up goodies for “Champagne, Canapes & Chocolate” at West Chester Golf & Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St., West Chester, on the day of the event and return home to enjoy an evening of digitally delivered entertainment including a raffle. Benefits Friends Association, providing shelter and prevention programs to families in Chester County struggling with homelessness. 7 p.m. \$150. 610-431-3598; FriendsAssoc.org.



Delaware Art Museum Presents “Seeing Essential Workers through a New Lens” Through March 14

Photographs of local heroes throughout Wilmington. The exhibit shows the faces and voices of the many people who have kept the Wilmington community going, combining portraits with personal stories of working on the front lines, exploring what essential work entails and honoring those who continue to dedicate their lives to their work every day.

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.



Yuletide at Winterthur

Through January 3

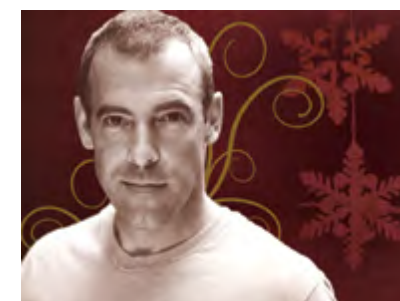
Celebrate the holidays with many exciting events including a 3D light show, beautiful dollhouse, carolers and concerts, workshops, brunch with Santa, pop-up shops and more. 5105 Kennett Pk. (Rt. 52), Winterthur, DE. Mon.–Sun., 10 to 5:30. Timed tickets required. \$6–\$25. 800-448-3883; Winterthur.org.



People's Light – A Christmas Carol in Concert

December 3–January 3

Gather the family for a joyous, music-filled celebration of Charles Dickens' beloved classic. Hosted by renowned actor Ian Merrill Peakes, this virtual concert event features a stellar ensemble of actors and musicians performing newly-arranged 19th-century English carols, original music and excerpts from Dickens' novella. Digital access for the entire family, \$25. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.



Chadds Ford Historical Society's Virtual Gingerbread Event

Through December 27

Everyone can participate, it's free to enter, and it's an activity that can be done safely at your home! Details are on the website about specific guidelines, categories and prizes. Photos of completed gingerbread houses should be emailed to CFGingerbreadhouse@gmail.com from Thanksgiving



Day, Nov. 27, until midnight Dec. 27th. ChaddsFord-History.org.

best Things To Do

Many events are on hold for now, but there are still many fun things to do in our area. Please be sure to check websites often for the latest updates. *TBD—to be determined.

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH DECEMBER
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.*



THROUGH DECEMBER
Coatesville Christmas Parade. While the event is cancelled this year, you're invited to view 16 years of past parades on their website. Catch all the things you may have missed standing outside in the cozy warmth of your home. *Coatesvillechristmasparade.com.*

THROUGH DECEMBER
Chester County Library System. You'll find workshops on everything from resume writing to starting a business and even genealogy. They are also offering Virtual Storytime for children of all ages. *Visit CCLS.LibCal.com.*



THROUGH JANUARY 1
Herr's Annual Christmas Lights Display 2020. Pile the family in the car and drive-through Herr's corporate campus and enjoy the enchanting holiday display featuring more than 600,000 lights. *20 Herr Dr., Nottingham. Dusk till dawn. Free. Visitors should stay in cars for safety. 1-800-344-3777; Herrs.com.*



THROUGH JANUARY 3
"The Presidents" by Madame Tussauds at The Franklin Institute. Pose with all 56 wax figures of American presidents (and historical leaders including Benjamin Franklin, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X and Michelle Obama) in iconic settings. *20th St. & Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia. Wed–Sun, 10 to 6. 215-448-1200; FI.edu*

THROUGH JANUARY 10
Holiday Magic at Brandywine. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 4
Annual Tree Lighting and Santa Arrival in Wayne—TBD. Holiday fun for the family! Gather along N. Wayne Ave. to light the tree and welcome Santa on his fire truck at Wayne train station. *6:30 to 8. WayneChristmas.com.*

DECEMBER 5
Full Moon Fundraiser at Wolf Sanctuary of PA. The event features a roaring bonfire (weather permitting), live entertainment and guided tours. Learn about wolves, wolf conservation and biology. Bring a blanket, a flashlight and a chair. *465 Speedwell Forge Rd., Lititz. Age 16 and older only. Res. req., \$35. 717-626-4617; WolfSanctuaryPA.org.*

DECEMBER 18
"Tiny Tim's Christmas Carol," a Live Stream Event at Uptown! Make some figgy pudding (find the recipe on the website) and enjoy this family musical from the comfort of home. Based on the classic Charles Dickens tale, Tiny Tim enchants viewers with his pure innocence and will for life, teaching Scrooge to soften his cold heart. *7 pm. \$25/family. UptownWestChester.org.*



HOLIDAY TRAINS

All Aboard the Holiday Trains! Be sure to check websites for restrictions due to COVID-19 and ticket info.

Colebrookdale Railroad. Through Dec. 20, weekends, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Train. Wear your pajamas, sip hot cocoa and listen to 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. *E. 3rd St., Boyertown. Colebrookdale-Railroad.com.*

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

Strasburg Rail Road. Through Dec. 27, Santa's Paradise Express and The Night Before Christmas Train. *301 Gap Rd., Ronks. StrasburgRailRoad.com.*

West Chester Railroad. Through Dec. 20, Fri–Sun, The Santa Express will be operating at 50% capacity and tickets are limited. *230 E. Market St., West Chester. WestChesterRR.com.*

Wilmington & Western Railroad. Through Dec. 23, weekends, Santa Claus Express. *Greenbank Station, 2201 Newport Gap Pk., Wilmington. WWRR.com.*



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

THROUGH DECEMBER 24

Christmas Village in Philadelphia. The authentic open-air German-style Christmas Market is open with a considerably modified layout and extensive safety precautions in response to COVID-19. Enjoy traditional European dishes, great vendors, the holiday carousel and more. *LOVE Park, 1500 Arch St., Philadelphia. Sun–Thurs, 11 to 7; Fri–Sat, 11 to 8. Phila.gov/Departments/Philadelphia-Parks-Recreation.*



THROUGH JANUARY 3

Delaware Hospice Festival of Trees—A Virtual Event in 2020. Beautifully decorated trees and wreaths and a variety of events, a festival marketplace, live entertainment and activities help make the weekend truly special. Visit website for details closer to event. *302-235-6000; DelawareHospice.org.*



THROUGH JANUARY 3

Winter in Wilmington Drive-Thru Holiday Light Show. Thousands of lights make up this dazzling show featuring animated installations, interactive music and holiday cheer. *Frawley Stadium, 801 Shipyard Dr., Wilmington. Advanced online reservations/admission required. Thurs–Sun, 5 to 9:30 pm, excluding Dec. 24, 25, 31, Jan. 1. \$25 per car. TheGrandWilmington.org.*

THROUGH JANUARY 10

Longwood Gardens—A Longwood Christmas. The tradition continues in the conservatory and outdoors with lights, the Garden Railway, fire pits and more. Visit their website for tickets and details. *1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Mon, Wed, Thurs, Sun, 10 to 6; and Fri–Sat, 10 to 10. 610-388-1000; Longwood-Gardens.org.*



DECEMBER 1–JANUARY 3

Holidays at Hagley. Visit Hagley this holiday season and see the property decked out for the holidays and enjoy a variety of activities. *Dec. 1–*

Jan. 3, Gingerbread House Competition; Dec. 4–Jan. 3, Santa's Workshop Selfie Station; Dec. 5, Santa and Mrs. Claus stop by for a socially distant visit. 200 Hagley Creek Rd., Wilmington. \$4–\$8. 302-658-2400; Hagley.org.

DECEMBER 5

Phoenixville Candlelight Holiday Tour is Online. Mark your calendar for this year's Annual Holiday House Tour. Once again the tour features gorgeous homes decorated for the holidays, complete with Christmas trees, lights and other classic elements. The tour is a once-



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a-year opportunity to see inside some of Phoenixville's unique historic houses and modern-day homes. Visit their website from 3 to 7 and enjoy for free. PhxHolidayTour.weebly.com.

DECEMBER 5
56th Annual Christmas in Odessa. Enjoy a self-guided tour to see festively decorated homes and learn about the historical town. Fresh greens will be on sale. End the day at a tree lighting at the Old Academy Building, 315 Main St., Odessa, DE. Noon to 5. \$10–\$50. 302-593-4953; ChristmasInOdessa.eventbrite.com.

DECEMBER 5–12
West Chester Public Library's Holiday Door Tour. The tour includes front doors and porches decorated for the holidays. With your donation you'll receive a booklet with a tour map, a list of scavenger hunt items to look for and an entry in the Holiday Raffle Drawing to take place on Dec. 12. 610-696-1721; WCPublicLibrary.org.

DECEMBER 5–6, 12–13
Historic Kennett Square presents the Holiday Village Market at The Creamery of Kennett Square. Plans are to hold a safely distanced

version of the Holiday Village Market this year. Purchase timed tickets to this holiday shopping event. Visit the website for details as they become available. HistoricKennettSquare.com.

DECEMBER 9
Luminaria Shopping Night in Downtown Phoenixville. Over 1000 luminaries will line the downtown streets during this second annual event. 5 to 9 pm. PhoenixvilleChamber.org.

DECEMBER 12
Delaware Art Museum Winter Festival. Shop from regional artisans, local fine food and beverage purveyors and listen to festive music performed by strolling carolers. Seasonal fare available for purchase. Capacity is limited and masks req. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 10 to 4. Held Dec. 13 if inclement weather. Timed reservations sold in advance, free for members, \$5 for non-members. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

DECEMBER 12
19th Annual Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE. Enjoy a full day of concerts, free house tours, crafts, refreshments and sharing the Christmas Spirit. 50 E. Market St., New Castle, DE. 9:30 to 5:30. Free. 302-328-3279; NewCastleHistory.org.

DECEMBER 13
Pottsgrove Manor by Candlelight. Take a self-guided tour of the mansion by candlelight as costumed interpreters portray Colonial residents celebrating Twelfth Night with music, dancing and hearth cooking. 100 W. King St., Pottstown. 2 to 8 pm. \$2 donation. 610-326-4014; MontcoPa.org/PottsgroveManor.

DECEMBER 19
16th Annual Firebird Festival in Phoenixville is Virtual. The festival will livestream via YouTube and present a program that features community submissions with local artists and residents who want to share a memory of the event (submit by Dec. 12), musicians and a few special surprises. The link to the livestream will be on the website, closer to the event. 8 pm. FirebirdFestival.com.



DECEMBER 26–28
"Silent Night" at Historic Rock Ford. Take in the atmosphere of a winter's evening in the late 18th century, eavesdropping on the residents who always seem to be just a room away. Visitors

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THROUGH JANUARY 10, 2021
Brandywine River Museum of Art. **Betsy James Wyeth: A Tribute.** 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Wed–Mon, 10 to 4. \$6–\$18. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.

THROUGH MARCH 14, 2021
Delaware Art Museum. “Layered Abstraction: Helen Mason and Margo Allman.” *Through Mar. 14*, “Seeing Essential Workers through a New Lens,” see *November Picks*. 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.

DECEMBER 31
5th Annual New Year's Eve Gala—Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. Hosts Chris and Beth Knauer invite you to ring in 2021 virtually with this live stream event. The gala event supports the “Raise Up the Curtain” campaign to sustain operations during the shutdown. As they livestream from the stage, you'll enjoy live entertainment, an auction, a raffle and much more. 8 to 10 pm. \$100 per household. Uptown-WestChester.org.



MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT.....

DECEMBER 4, 6, 18, 20 & 11–13
Vox Amadeus Concerts. Live 60-minute concerts following protection protocols including masks and physical distancing in venues large enough to safely hold a small audience. *Dec. 4, 6, 18, 20*, Ama Deus Ensemble—Handel *Messiah* Highlights; *Dec. 11–13*, Vox Renaissance Consort—Renaissance Noël. VoxAmadeus.org/Concerts.



DECEMBER 6, 13
The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia's Musical JewelBox. Performances and conversations with extraordinary guests, composers, conductors and musicians live-streamed on the orchestra's YouTube channel. *Dec. 6*, Writing for Film with Dirk; *Dec. 13*, Holiday Party. Find out more at ChamberOrchestra.org.

THEATER.....

THROUGH DECEMBER
Coming to People's Light. See *December Picks*.

THROUGH JANUARY 2
The GÜT Life at Bird-in-Hand Stage—Christmas with the Yoders & Nick! A Yuletide comedy that's a lighthearted look at traditions and cultures, interspersed with music, tales of lost love and a lesson about the meaning of Christmas. 2760 Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-in-Hand. 717-768-1568; BirdInHand.com.



TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

ONGOING
LancasterHistory Launches Access to Online Collections Database. Search all of LancasterHistory's historic collections using one search tool through the website as well as the James Buchanan Presidential Library, which provides online access to the papers of James Buchanan.

DECEMBER 3–12
Lancaster County's 12 Shops of Christmas Tour. A unique shopping adventure featuring 12 off-the-beaten-path shops, two cafes and a winery. For tickets and tour booklet, phone 717-721-9409; BestKeptSecretsTour.com.

DECEMBER 5, 12, 17
Chester County History Center Holiday History Stroll. Explore 200 years of Christmas tradition in West Chester borough with a walking tour. Visit West Chester's early churches, department stores and cultural sites, learning about what Christmas meant to the people of West Chester from the late 1700s to the early 1900s. At the end of the tour, you'll toast the season with a festive libation! ♦

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Holidays at Hagley

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Celebrate Holiday Magic

at the Brandywine River Museum of Art

THROUGH JANUARY 10, 2021

THE WONDER OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON STARTED early at the Brandywine River Museum of Art this year.

The annual Holiday Magic at Brandywine exhibits have opened with the traditional crowd pleasers: the Brandywine Railroad (a holiday favorite since 1972), the return of artist and composer Ann Wyeth McCoy's dollhouse (featuring six rooms filled with three-dozen dolls and hundreds of miniature objects), and the whimsical Critter ornaments.

While slightly modified this year to provide a safe and socially distant experience, the Brandywine Railroad display will still have plenty of model trains, miniature details and the engaging elements that everyone loves—including interactive components operated by hands-free foot pedals. The iconic O-gauge display will feature trains running on a thousand feet of track through a small village, a drive-in movie theater and even a carnival.

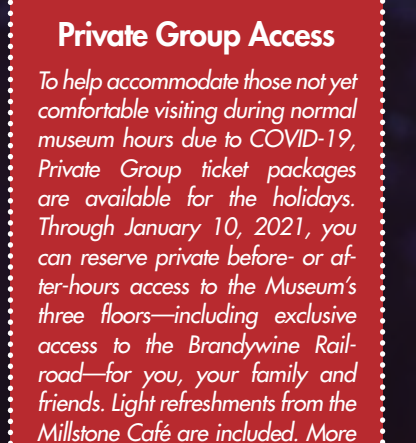
This year the Brandywine will also introduce two model train sets with layouts once owned by Nicky and Jamie Wyeth—sons of American artist, Andrew Wyeth. Nicky Wyeth's standard gauge train display features historic "tinplate" Lionel trains from the 1920s and '30s traveling around colorful buildings and scenery,

including a large bridge modeled after New York's Hell Gate Bridge. The 8-x-12-foot display was also recently enhanced with modern reproductions of a 1940s monorail.

Artist Jamie Wyeth's N-gauge train display was originally co-owned by Wyeth and his friend and fellow toy collector, artist Andy Warhol. Included in the 4-x-6-foot landscape are foothills of a mountain, train tunnels with a bridge crossing a lake, and even a diminutive industrial town with a main street packed with businesses and rowhouses, a steel mill, and a large metal warehouse featuring an oversized reproduction of Wyeth's own famous painting, *Portrait of Pig*.

Another favorite, the Brandywine's Critter ornaments—handcrafted by volunteers at home this year—are back to decorate the towering trees in the Museum's three-story atrium. Thousands of these unique treasures are available for purchase during the annual Holiday Critter Sale, December 2 to 6. New this year, a selection of some of the Brandywine's most popular Critter creations are also available for purchase online and can be shipped across the country.

Share a local tradition and enjoy some Holiday Magic! ♦



Private Group Access

To help accommodate those not yet comfortable visiting during normal museum hours due to COVID-19, Private Group ticket packages are available for the holidays. Through January 10, 2021, you can reserve private before- or after-hours access to the Museum's three floors—including exclusive access to the Brandywine Railroad—for you, your family and friends. Light refreshments from the Millstone Café are included. More information on the website.

To ensure the safety, security and quality of the visitor experience, the Brandywine has implemented a variety of new COVID-19 procedures, including face mask requirements, timed ticketing and capacity limits. Visitors must reserve timed tickets before visiting. Advance reservations are recommended. Route 1 in Chadds Ford. Admission: \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors, \$6 for students and children 6 and up; free for under 5 and members. Current hours Brandywine.org/hours; 610-388-2700.





Close to Home for the Holidays

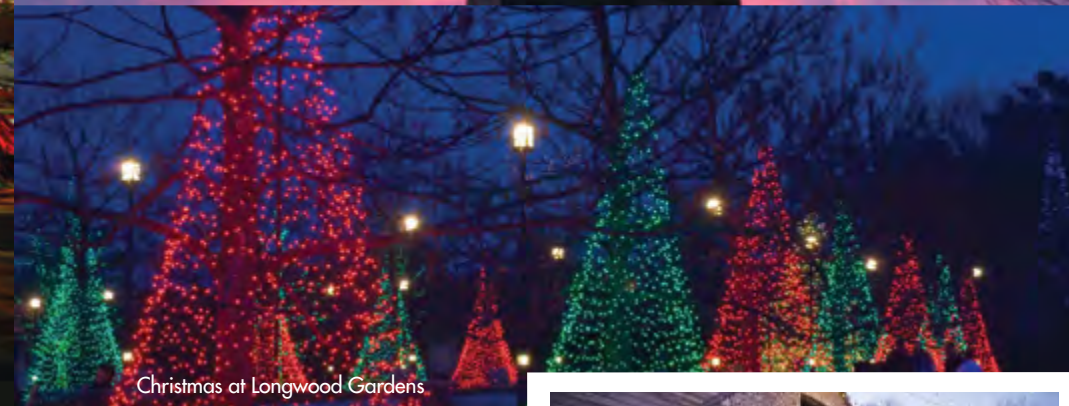
Christmas Village in Philadelphia, an open-air German-style Christmas Market at LOVE Park and City Hall, through Dec. 24.



Christmas Lights



Firebird Festival in Phoenixville



Christmas at Longwood Gardens

A Far Away Holiday

Gather your family in the car for a fun outing a little farther from home. These three holiday destinations are well worth the drive for festive fun and a change of holiday scenery.

Lancaster County

Go the distance to the City of Lancaster for the **Weekend Winter Wonderland** on December 4th and 5th. Spot Santa on his journey around the city in the Kringle Caravan and listen for the heavenly harmonies of the Prima Theatre on wheels in their Lancaroler holiday performance.

Shop and dine after dark at the annual **Lancaster Shops Late** night on December 10th. Enjoy the merry atmosphere of downtown with roaming entertainment, warm beverages and tasty treats at select locations. More at VisitLancasterCity.com.

On your way to the city, ride the rails with Santa and his helpers at the **Strasburg Rail Road**. Listen to holiday stories at the station before heading down the tracks. Reserve your seats on the steam train at StrasburgRailroad.com.

Bucks County

The car ride is worth the fun of the destination! Seasonally styled in one million lights, **Peddler's Village** in New Hope, continues their Christmas celebration through January 10th. Travel there for 60+ shops with holiday treasures and a glimpse at the renowned gingerbread house competition and "Elf on the Stealth," outdoor walking mystery event. PeddlersVillage.com.

Odessa, DE

Take a trip to the **Annual Odessa Christmas** on December 5th. Enjoy the festive ambiance of decorated homes, fresh evergreens (sold for decoration) and end the day with a tree lighting at 5 p.m. at the Old Academy Building. ChristmasInOdessa.com.

SO MANY WAYS TO CELEBRATE LOCALLY

Alyssa Menko & Olivia Smith

CHRISTMAS IS COMING! LET US COUNT THE ways to celebrate.

In a year of online celebrations, modified gatherings, virtual tours and drive-through displays, our area still offers many ways to share the dreams of a very merry holiday. Here are some ideas for bringing joy to your world—safely—this season.

FESTIVE FUN IN PHOENIXVILLE

Let your heart be light (online) at the **Phoenixville Candlelight Holiday Tour** on December 5th. Get an inside look at historic houses and modern homes decorated from front doors to living rooms in evergreen trees, bright lights and all the holiday trimmings. Tune in to the tour from 3 to 7 p.m., free at PhxHolidayTour.weebly.com.

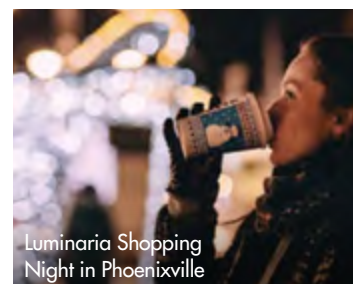
Then make your spirits bright at the **Luminaria Shopping Night** in Downtown Phoenixville. On December 9th from 5 to 9 p.m., over 1000 luminaries will light up the streets with a festive glow, perfect for holiday shopping at your favorite Phoenixville spots. Buy toys for all ages at Generations Toy Store or head to Reads & Company for books, book-themed candles and other gift recommendations.

The Phoenix will always rise—just online this year. The **16th Annual Firebird Festival** is calling for community members to submit art, videos, stories or other creative ideas to share the spirit of the Firebird (deadline December 12th). On December 19th at 8 p.m., join the livestream celebration for an evening featuring Firebird dancers, music, poetry and all the fiery submissions from the community. For more fun ideas, visit FirebirdFestival.com.

KEEPING CHRISTMAS IN KENNETT

Holiday happenings in Kennett Square begin November 29th with the spectacular annual display at **Longwood Gardens**. Through December, A Longwood Christmas offers fragrant flowers, dancing fountains and towering trees sprinkled with a half million lights, glitter and holiday cheer. To visit, purchase timed admission tickets online (\$16-\$30). LongwoodGardens.org.

Kennett is planning a **Light Up the Square** initiative to make the town more festive than ever. And get help with your holiday shopping at their **Holiday Village Market** held at The Creamery on the weekends of December 5th and 12th. Take the downtown



Luminaria Shopping Night in Phoenixville



Holiday Market in Kennett Square

shuttle to the site for unique vendors, holiday cocktails, firepits and wreath-making tutorials. Purchase timed tickets on their website. HistoricKennettSquare.com.

A VERY MERRY MEDIA

Celebrate the holidays at **Linvilla Orchards' Christmas Around the Farm**. Through December the orchards will be transformed into a winter-wonderland—farm style. Got a family tradition of cutting your own Christmas tree? You can chop your own, then shop at their holiday market for gifts, holiday plants and even pre-cut trees—if you want to leave the work to them. (See the sidebar for more places to cut your own tree.)

Santa will make special appearances Saturday and Sunday evenings so you can get that perfect photo in time for your holidays cards. Get out of the house and join in the festivities! Linvilla.com.

WEST CHESTER WONDERLAND

All aboard! Your family's perfect holiday excursion is on **West Chester Railroad's Santa's Express**. Take a scenic 90-minute holiday train ride through Chester Creek Valley while enjoying live music and visits from Mr. Claus himself. Trains are limited to 50% capacity, so get your tickets in advance through December at WCRailroad.com.

Rather walk than ride? Try West Chester Public Library's new **Holiday Door Tour**, running from December 5th to 12th. Enjoy the festive front doors and porches, sure to inspire your own decorating ideas. With a donation, you'll score a booklet with a tour map, scavenger hunt list and entry in the Holiday Raffle Drawing. WCPublicLibrary.org.

And be sure to stroll through the downtown business district to get in the holiday spirit. Read more in "Making a List ... and Filling It in West Chester" in this issue.

PHOTOS CREDIT: TIMELYN VAUGHAN AND DYLAN FRANCIS

Cut Your Own Tree This Christmas

Find the perfect tree out in the fresh air, far away from others. Local farms with cut-your-own tree options are a great way to get a live ever-green and stay safe while doing it. Whether it's a blue spruce or Douglas fir, your live tree supports local farmers and brings a special part of Christmas to your home.

First, a few tips to make your outing stress-free:

- **Check Before You Visit.** Some farms haven't updated with COVID-19 guidelines yet.
- **Measure It.** Measure the space where you'll put your tree, and bring a tape measure on your hunt.
- **Do a Walk Through.** Ask which tree types are where before heading out on the farm. When you've explored your options, check your final pick for bald spots or live animals before cutting.
- **Freshness Test.** Grab a branch and run it through your closed hand. Outer part should bend and needles shouldn't easily shed.
- **See Saw.** A lightweight saw is best for cutting. Most farms provide saws, but call ahead to make sure. Cut the tree low to the ground to avoid splintering and to allow it to resprout.
- **Shake It.** Give the tree a good shake to get rid of loose needles and critters before taking it home.

Boswell's Tree Farm
1093 N. Grange Ave., Collegville
484-902-0148; BoswellsTreeFarm.com

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

Corkum Tree Farm
797 Bridge Rd., Collegeville
610 489-3448; CorkumTreeFarm.com

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

Hague's Christmas Trees
755 Forty Foot Rd., Hatfield
215-368-4542; HaguesChristmasTrees.com

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

Linvilla Orchards
137 West Knowlton Rd., Media
610-876-7116; Linvilla.com

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

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

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

Sitko Tree Farm
1141 Kepler Rd., Pottstown
610-468-6647; SitkoTreeFarm.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



Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE



Herr's Christmas Lights Display



Christmas in Odessa, DE



West Chester Railroad



The Holidays at Hagley

A CLASSIC COATESVILLE CHRISTMAS

You can have yourself a merry little Coatesville Christmas with holiday floats, bands, antique cars and entertainment—all from the comfort of your own home. Relive 16 years of past **Coatesville Christmas Parades**, though virtually. Co-creator of the parade, Greg DePedro, suggests you immerse yourself in the spirit of Christmas past: "Maybe it was a year your favorite string band was featured, or your child's scout troop walked the parade route, or maybe it was a year you yourself were in the parade." Catch something you missed or loved from parades of yesteryear on their website. CoatesvilleChristmasParade.com.

DECKING THE HALLS IN DELAWARE

Celebrate the ho ho **Holidays at Hagley**, a du Pont ancestral home decked out with Christmas decor and festive French finery. On December 5th, Santa and Mrs. Claus will make a socially-distanced visit to the Gibbons House kitchen along Workers Hill. Stop by the Millwright Shop to admire the sweet entries in this year's gingerbread house competition or sample individually wrapped cookies outside the 19th-century kitchen. Check for dates and other festivities at Hagley.org.

Why walk through a winter wonderland when you can drive instead? Through January 3rd, fill your eyes and ears with thousands of lights, animated installations and interactive music at the **Winter in Wilmington Drive-Thru Holiday Light Show**. Advance reservations required. Check for dates and tickets at TheGrandWilmington.org.

NOT-SO-SILENT NIGHTS IN NOTTINGHAM AND OXFORD

Have a holly, jolly Christmas with more than just snacks at **Herr's Annual Christmas Lights Display**. The drive-through celebration may be far, but it's got a lot of wattage—featuring more than 600,000 lights (mostly energy efficient LEDs). Enjoy the dazzling display for free from dusk to dawn from the safety of your car through January 1st. Herrs.com.

In full swing this season is **Oxford's Country Christmas** special. Get into the spirit from December 4th to 9th with live entertainment, vendors, food trucks and more. Masks are required but all are welcome to this special event. DowntownOxfordPa.org.

CAN'T WAIT FOR CHRISTMAS IN WAYNE

Santa is coming to Wayne! Plans are on for Christmas season in Wayne with their Christmas Tree Lighting and Santa photo op. Wayne's traditional seasonal events are a flurry of fun, so bring the kiddos for the outdoor lighting of the town's tree, tentatively scheduled for December 4th. Plus free socially distanced photos with Santa, December 5, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Wayne Winter Grove Tent. WayneChristmas.com. ♦



Country Christmas in Oxford



Wilmington Light Show

All I Want for Christmas Is ... a Good Book

FIND THE PERFECT BOOKS FOR THIS SEASON

Cathy Fiebach

WHEN I RECEIVE THE PERFECT PRESENT, BIG OR small, it always makes me feel a little special. And with everything that's happening right now, who doesn't want to make family and friends feel extra special this holiday season?

Unfortunately, with pandemic slowdowns and supply chains strained to the max, it might be tougher than ever to buy a great gift in time for the holidays.

Luckily, there really is a book for everyone. And a book won't go bad if it's delayed in the mail. Or better yet, a great book that supports an independent book store is two gifts in one!

Here are some suggestions to make your holiday gift shopping a bit easier during this busy season. Enjoy!

BOOKS THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH

This year, a good laugh might be just the ticket. David Sedaris's *The Best of Me* is a collection of stories and essays spanning his prodigious

career. It's full of joy and the incisive humor that has led Sedaris to be called "the funniest man alive" (*Time Out New York*).

Or how about *A Wealth of Pigeons: A Cartoon Collection from Harry Bliss and Steve Martin*? Yes, that Steve Martin, whose observations about life are always spot-on.

Need something for someone who celebrates Chanukah? Try *Have I Got a Cartoon for You!*, the best book of Jewish cartoons as selected by Bob Mankoff. I've shared each cartoon in the book with different members of my family, and they've loved them all.

BOOKS FOR THE COOK

I love to give cookbooks! OK, I admit it's because I love to eat and I have the secret wish that the recipient will invite me to sample a meal inspired by the gift.

There are many great cookbooks coming out this season, but I'm most excited by Ina Garten's *Modern Comfort Food*. Who couldn't use more comfort these days? And the *Barefoot Contessa* author's recipes come out perfect every time, even if you're only an average home cook. Garten's recipes are childhood favorites on steroids—think Cheddar and Chutney Grilled Cheese sandwiches, Smashed Hamburgers with Caramelized Onions and hash browns made in a waffle iron.

For the vegetarian in your life or someone who just wants to add more veggies to their meals, try Yotam Ottolenghi and Ixta Belfrage's new cookbook, *Flavor*. Ottolenghi and Belfrage offer a next-level approach to vegetables that breaks down the fundamentals of cooking into three key elements: process, pairing and produce. And the results are tasty!

Finally, Melissa Clark of *The New York Times* has a new cookbook aimed at kids, ages 8 to 14. It's called *Kid in the Kitchen: 100 Recipes and Tips for Young Home Cooks*. Yours will be turning out tasty treats like Brown Butter French Toast, Sweet or Savory Dutch Babies and Burgers with Kimchi Mayo!

BOOKS FOR THE KIDS

If Santa brings your small fry a good book, you might get to sleep a few minutes later.

For the 4 to 8 year old in your life, *The Couch Potato* by Jory John has a sense of humor and seems particularly appropriate at the moment. This Couch Potato has everything he needs within reach of his sunken couch cushion. But when the electricity goes out, Couch Potato is forced to

peel himself away from the comforts of his living room and venture outside.

For the 8 to 12 year old who needs a good laugh, check out the 12th book in the popular Bad Guys series. In *Bad Guys in the One!* the gang continues their silly misadventures. It's a series along the lines of Captain Underpants.

Jimmy Fallon of *The Tonight Show* wrote a sweet children's book, *5 More Sleeps 'til Christmas*, about not being able to wait for Christmas to arrive. Make the week before Christmas even more magical by counting how many "sleeps" there are until the arrival of Santa and his reindeer.

BOOKS WITH LOCAL INTEREST

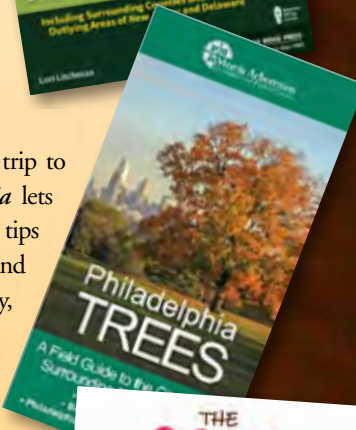
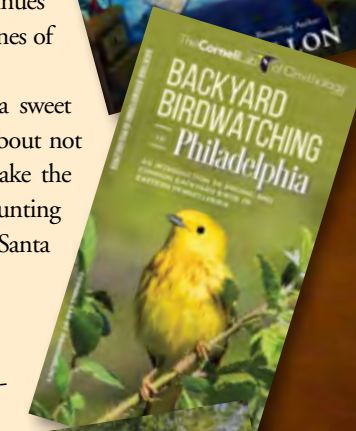
Everyone we know is spending more time outside, so give family and friends books to help them enjoy the great outdoors.

Backyard Birdwatching in Philadelphia: An Introduction to Birding and Common Backyard Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania is a pamphlet from Wildlife and Nature Identification. If someone is sharing their workspace with our fine, feathered friends, learning about them could be fun.

You can put that pamphlet in a nice gift basket with *Philadelphia Trees, A Field Guide to the City and the Surrounding Delaware Valley*, *60 Hikes within 60 Miles Philadelphia* and *The Hidden History of the Main Line* by Mark E Dixon.

Want to get your child excited about a big trip to Philadelphia? *The Kid's Guide to Philadelphia* lets them help plan the day. It includes kid-tested tips on where to go, where to eat, what to see, and where to get the best souvenirs. Along the way, the kids are engaged with fun facts. The book also includes awesome games to keep everyone busy on the ride. ♦

Cathy Fiebach is the owner of Main Point Books, an independent bookstore with a handpicked selection for every member of the family. Check out their Zoom events at MainPointBooks.com or on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Order on-line for delivery or pick-up. 484-580-6978; 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. Check for holiday hours on-line.



Holiday Style

Treat yourself and those on your list to something special this holiday season.



Sporty Gold & Diamond Earrings by SUNA
Walter J. Cook Jeweler, Paoli



johnnie-O Vest
johnnie-O Flannel
AG Cords
Phineas Gage, 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



Sydney Evan Bracelets to Collect Stack and Layer Fine Jewelry with Precious and Semi Precious Stones and Charms
Adorn Goods, Centreville, DE



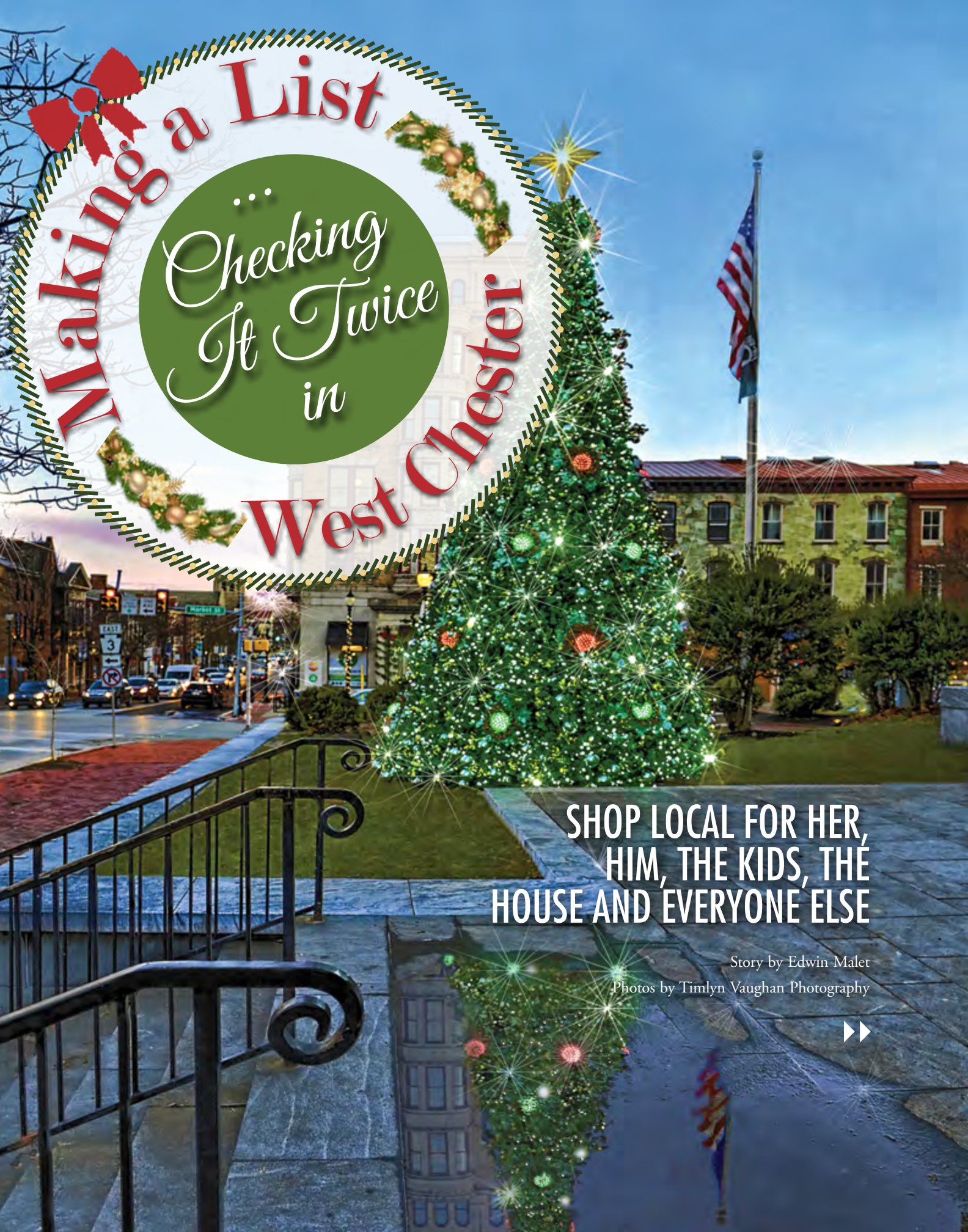
Top quality diamonds for engagement and wedding rings, designer jewelry, and custom-made pieces.
Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry, West Chester



Tweed Poncho
Classic European outdoor footwear and apparel for men and women. New stores in Wayne, PA and Greenville, DE.
See Dubarry.com for details.



Necklace and earrings...Blue Topaz, brushed sterling silver and gold fill by Mar of Santa Barbara.
The 5 Senses, West Chester



SHOP LOCAL FOR HER, HIM, THE KIDS, THE HOUSE AND EVERYONE ELSE

Story by Edwin Malet
Photos by Timlyn Vaughan Photography



Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winner, 2019



Floral Designs Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winner, 2019

SUPPORT LOCAL! WORDS TO SHOP BY. AND THERE'S NO better place for finding holiday gifts than Downtown West Chester. The decorated, walkable streets lined with locally owned shops and boutiques make finding something special even more fun and enjoyable. And although the traditional Christmas Parade may not be happening this year, the shops and restaurants have stepped up for the season and are putting on a show.

This season's fun and merriment won't be stopped by the pandemic, says John O'Brien of West Chester's Business Improvement District. The Borough is "safe and Covid-conscious."

The landmark ornamented tree at the Old Courthouse stands tall and Instagram ready. Lights are twinkling, bells are ringing and storefronts are bedecked. Aromas of hot chocolate, Christmas candy and savory meals are rising on a breeze. Musicians serenade throughout the downtown. Santa is dutifully taking letters.

And if the photos of decorated windows from last year are any indication (see photo on these pages), West Chester businesses will be pulling out the stops to create a winter wonderland in the Borough.

A hint of snow is in the air! All you need is a shopping list. This should help.

SOMETHING FOR HER

First, on East Gay Street, is **Tish Boutique**, a gem of a shop run by Tonda DiPasquale and Ashley Tischler Darlington. Its inventory comes from a long list of hip designers, though Tonda prefers DL1961 Premium Denim and Vince while Ashley prefers Zadig & Voltaire and Free People. Like other stores, they're using Instagram and offering curbside pickup and free gift wrapping.

Next up on High Street, **Jane Chalfont** has been a destination shop in West Chester since 1933, with customers drawn from over an hour away, attracted by individualized service, wearable fashions and beautiful clothing. This holiday season, owners Kiki and Pat Comerford have repurposed part of their store for local artisans to sell their work—a potter, two wood turners, an artist making small paintings. But the store still offers its popular sweater collection, scarves, hats, handbags, and fun fashion jewelry.

Then head for **KALY**, a women's boutique for 30+ years, specializing in unique clothing and "comfy clothes." Owner Polly Zobel also carries artisan



Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winner, 2019



Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winner, 2019



Brow Bar



The 5 Senses



Classic Diner



La Chic Boutique



Chester County Courthouse

jewelry, accessories, fun baby and other gifts. Join her on Facebook for “Live with Polly from Kaly” for more gift ideas. Comfort, style and quality are “uppermost in our minds as we buy what we love for you.” She suggests a gift card if you can’t decide.

“Plan early, especially this year,” advises Colleen Cottrell of **Green-Eyed Lady**, a boutique with trendy brands, unique jewelry and shelves filled with scarves, sweaters and hats for the cold weather. Colleen recently noticed a move toward “comfortable and cozy” away from “event” wear and “no dry cleaning,” she says.

Looking for something vintage? **Malena’s** at West Gay and North Church is a treasure trove of envy-worthy pieces, including from high-end designers. Owner Malena Martinez has racks of dresses, gowns, scarves, jewelry and other accessories dating back to the 1850s. You can browse through the boutique, make an appointment to visit the showroom or find things online, on Etsy, Ebay or social media. Find a unique gift with some history.

FOR MOM, DAD AND THE KIDS

With fashions for women, tweens and children, **H. Rose Boutique** has you covered. They carry Mudpies and POL lines for women; POL, Hayden and Andree for plus-sizes; Hayden for Tweens; and Mudpies, Ruffle Butts and Rugged Butts for children. Rachel Becket, who operates the store with her mother, Mariann Godwin, also suggests wine glasses, purses or earrings as gifts. To protect its customers, the shop take private appointments only, but is open 6 days a week to help you find the perfect gift.

Though only open since 2017, **Phineas Gage** has established a reputation as the premier spot for the fashionable guy with its lines of high quality, largely sporty men’s clothing. Owner Jaime Hazley Weisbrot—who mentioned that golfing attire sales have been up recently—stresses customer service and building relationships, and strives to deliver a safe, comfortable, enjoyable experience in her charming shop. And she’s ready for the “friendly competition” of downtown West Chester’s holiday window decorating contest.

To satisfy the runners, joggers and many walkers who’ve been racking up on the miles during the pandemic—or maybe just to get them started—visit **Bryn Mawr Running Store** (previously Chester County Running). It has a superb selection of ... running shoes! Better have the experts help with a perfect fit, so maybe put a gift card in a shoe box.

Now that we’re upping our time outside, some designer sunnies may be just the ticket for someone on your list ... or for yourself. Stop by **Artistic Eyewear** to check out designer frames from around the world—from Oliver Peoples, Tom Ford, Persol, Paul Smith and classic Ray-Bans. Call for an appointment. You may have to invent your own gift certificate, but that won’t be hard.

For something a bit different, Regina Weaver of **Coins of Chester County** recommends “Christmas Rounds.” Maybe for a child or grandchild? A Christmas Round is like a coin, but made of a precious metal, such as gold or silver. This year, the round is embossed with Santa on one side and a snowman and tree on the other, done in .999 fine silver. If not a coin, the store also offers stamps, vintage jewelry and antique toys.

Don’t forget Fido! Becki Hoffman at **All the Dogs** reports that customers are giving gifts, not only to their own pets, but also their neighbors’. A sweater will keep the pooch cozy, and treats and toys will always be welcome by our four-legged friends.

SOME BLING TO TOP IT OFF

Sunset Hill Jewelers’ owner, Sandy Riper, is planning many of the same traditions the store is known for, most memorably, the building lit up and decorated with a huge festive red bow. Inside, you’ll ogle rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets and watches—many one-of-a-kind pieces. Wish lists will be available on-line, and Santa has a dropbox for lists in front of the store. They’re happy to help Santa by wrapping and shipping gifts.

Still hunting for jewelry? Another stop should be **Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry** on Gay Street. Eran “Ron” Gadol focuses



Jaramillo Hair Holiday Window Decorating Contest Winner, 2019



Limoncello



Malena's Vintage Boutique



Sabrina Ann Couture

on diamonds, no surprise, and he's got very reasonable prices, which may be a welcome surprise for such a dazzling gift. Prices are even better on certain fashion items. Browse the extensive selection (you may want to wear those sunglasses from Artistic Eyewear) or design your own sparkler.

FOR THE HOUSE

Ashlee Smith of *Kati Mac* had anticipated a lighter season for centerpieces this year, primarily due to fewer weddings, yet her customers are doing more to decorate the exteriors of their homes. Wreaths of all types and colors are especially popular. Greenery boxes, too. She's also doing a limited roll-out of plantings for your outdoor planters and window boxes. In addition to its seasonal greenery, the store likes to cite its program with EBS Healthcare of helping kids with special needs.

Perhaps some art is on the list? Then visit *Visual Expansion Gallery*, where owner Mary Manning can tell you about the collections there, about 85% of which is associated with our area—the steeple at the Old Courthouse, the West Chester library, or a view of the downtown rooftops. Several are



the works of local luminaries, such as Andrew Wyeth, Philip Jamison or Richard Chalfant, along with local photographer Timlyn Vaughan, whose photos are on these pages. Map lovers will appreciate the reproductions of antique maps of the Borough.

At the west end of Market Street, by the Justice Center, sits **The 5 Senses**, a gallery showcasing handcrafted art and gifts. Owner Karen Cavin selects art that's often functional—a glass vase, wooden box, or decorative towel. Other pieces are purely fanciful—an owl made of recycled metal, for example. The shop recently began offering the popular collection of “spirittles” by Houston Llew. Each piece has a story. Just ask.

SOMETHING SWEET AND SATISFYING

For a stocking stuffer, or something for after presents have been opened, there's nothing like chocolates, especially from **Eclat**. Master Chocolatier Chris Curtin treasures the shop's West Chester roots and offers chocolates, chocolate bars, truffles, mendiants, mondiants, caramels and caramel sauces at his shop on High Street. See if you can wait until Christmas morning!

Every part of West Chester is very ready for shoppers. Your favorite local restaurants are inviting you to visit. From **Andiaro** to **Dolce Zola** for a satisfying meal and **D'Ascenzo's** or **Gemelli's** for gelato while you're shopping. Enjoy a holiday meal and consider a giving a gift certificate or two—the gift that always fits!

So take a day. Or two. Stroll through the town. Dress warmly. Remember your mask and social distancing. And do shop local this year! ♦

Holiday Giving

See the **Best Sweater Selection** in the area

Largest selection of sweaters

Zaket and Plover
Claudia Nicole
Kinross Cashmere
Skovhuus
Sno Skins
Andria Lieu

Jane Chalfant
kiki
BOUTIQUE

123 North High Street
West Chester, PA 19380
610.696.0290
janechalfant.com

MAKE YOUR PG LIST, WE'LL CHECK IT TWICE!

Shop this holiday season in-store or at home for the perfect holidays gifts for him this year!

SHOP ONLINE: Free local delivery or curbside pick up!

SHOP IN-STORE: Safe and friendly staff here to help!

PG
phineas gage
• MEN'S CLOTHING •

29 S High St, West Chester • Tuesday-Friday 11-6
Thursday 11-7 | Saturday 10-5 | Sunday 12-4
Shop online at phineas-gage.com!
Follow us on instagram @phineas_gage_wc #keepitPG

Downtown West Chester



COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

■ Parking Lot or Garage



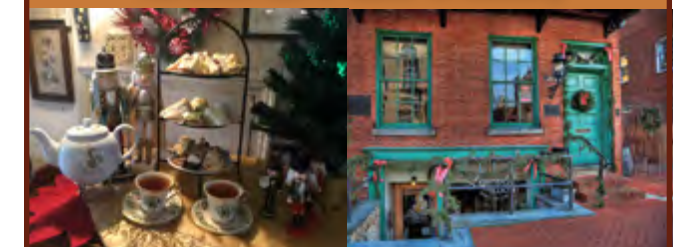
Holiday Shopping Guide

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Luxey Little Ones | & Accessories |
| 2. Tish Boutique | 25. Precision Eye Care |
| 3. David Katz Gallery | 26. Malena's Vintage Boutique |
| 4. Sunset Hill Jewelers
Fine Arts Gallery | 27. H. Rose Boutique |
| 5. La Chic Boutique | 28. Blink |
| 6. Coins of Chester County | 29. Green Eyed Lady |
| 7. Veruzka | 30. Taylor's Music Store
& Studios |
| 8. Jane Chalfant / Artisan Gallery | 31. Thistle Be Perfect |
| 9. Artistic Eyewear | 32. The 5 Senses |
| 10. Chester Co. Hist. Soc. | 33. Mainline Custom Clothiers |
| 10. Paper Moon @ CCHS | 34. Kaplan's Fine Jewelry |
| 11. G&G Cigars | 35. HOP Fidelity |
| 12. Sabrina Ann Couture | 36. Your CBD Store |
| 13. Visual Expansion Gallery | 37. Woman's Exchange |
| 14. Emily Alice | 38. Church Street Gallery |
| 15. Fairman's Skate Shop | 39. The Antique Shop |
| 16. KALY | 40. All the Dogs |
| 17. Big Diamond Importers
& Fine Jewelry | 41. Art Trust Gallery at
Meridian Bank |
| 18. The Prana House | 42. Phineas Gage |
| 19. Le Berger | 43. Kati MacFloral Designs |
| 20. TranquiliTEA | 44. A Taste of Olive |
| 21. Clout Glass | 45. Éclat Chocolate |
| 22. Jacqueline's Boutique | 46. Bryn Mawr Running Co. |
| 23. Creep Records | 47. G-Spot Thrift Boutique |
| 24. May 23 Clothing | 48. Steele House Nutrition |

SUNSET HILL JEWELERS
EST. 1983
Chester County's Most Trusted Jeweler
610.692.0374

Welcome to The Lincoln Room

An Innovative Taste of History



We are still here and we miss you!
We hope to be open to the general public soon. Wishing you a wonderful holiday season.



The Historic Lincoln Building
28 W. Market St., West Chester, 610.696.2102

IT'S A GIFT CARD WONDERLAND.



HOLIDAY CHEERS
IRON HILL
BREWERY & RESTAURANT

GIFT CARD
IRON HILL BREWERY
CRAFT KITCHEN, SCHWAB BREWERY

Buy \$75 in Gift Cards.
Get a \$20 Snowflake Card.

Now through December 31st.

IRONHILLBREWERY.COM

Snowflake Card is redeemable between
January 1st and March 31st, 2021



HOW TO SPREAD CHEER DURING THIS VERY DIFFERENT HOLIDAY SEASON

Madison Meinel

THE HOLIDAYS MAY LOOK AND FEEL QUITE A BIT different this year, but that doesn't mean the season has to be any less merry. We've gathered some festive ideas—from gifts to new twists on old traditions—to help you plan for a very special holiday season.

GIFT GIVING

Although it's likely fewer of us will be visiting family and friends, it's still important to spread plenty of holiday cheer, no matter the distance. And supporting local businesses while we do that gives each gift extra meaning.

Subscription boxes are becoming a hot ticket as the gift that keeps on giving, brightening many months beyond December. The concept is that the recipient gets monthly, bimonthly or periodic packages—reminding them each time just how much you care about them.

While there are countless variations of subscription boxes to choose from online from national sources, we suggest you use their ideas as a starting point. Instead make your own personalized gift subscription boxes by shopping at local stores.

You can gather a selection of the latest fashions and accessories at **Jane Chalfant** | **Kiki Boutique** and send a different item every month

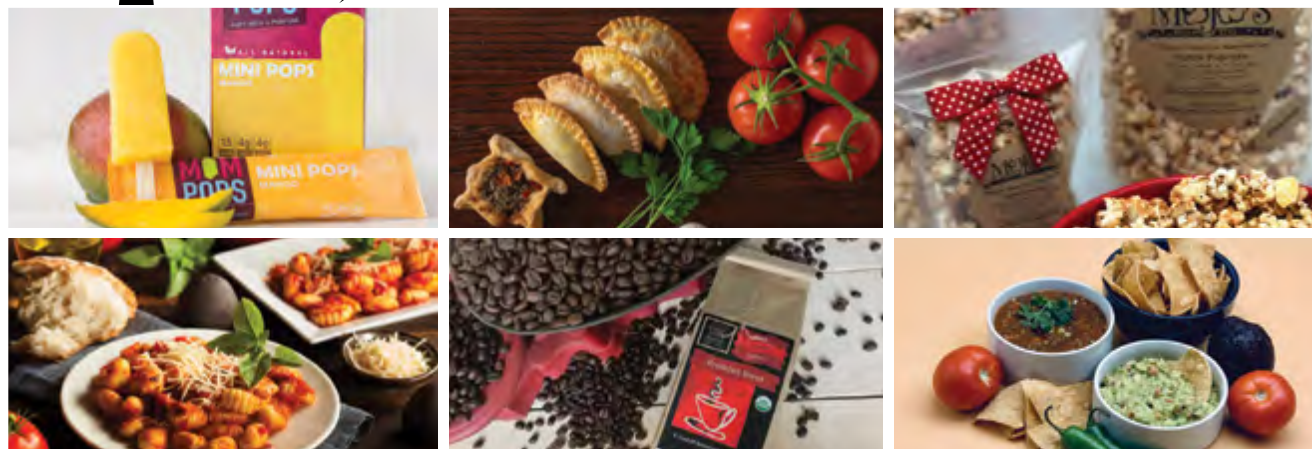
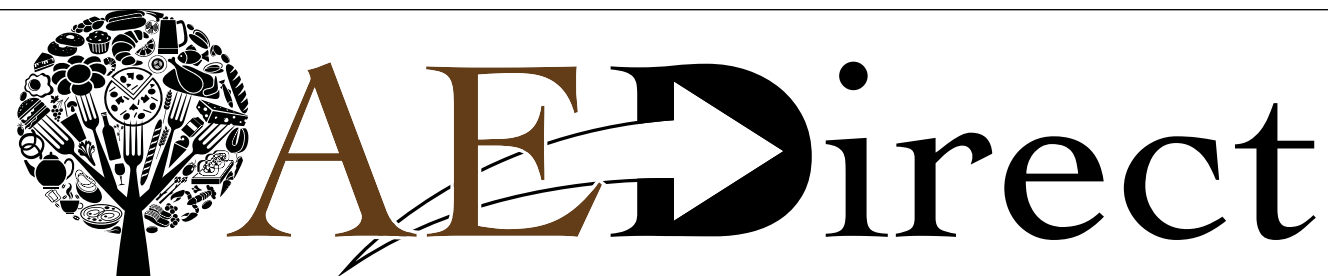
or two. Or put together self-care kits from **The 5 Senses** with hand-made candles and soaps to send throughout the year.

Food lovers will enjoy tasty treats from Chester County. Send a sweet treat from **Eclat Chocolates'** delicious destination series with chocolate bars that take your palate around the world—perfect for those with an itch to travel. Or create a wine subscription by sending selected bottles from local wineries like **Chadds Ford Winery**, **Galer Estate Winery** or **Paradox Vineyard**.

For something more seasonal, consider sharing a living gift of holiday plants, like bright poinsettias—classic red, white or variations—or the wintertime favorite amaryllis bulbs. Both bloom for weeks on end keeping the holiday spirit bright and merry. Follow up with plants and flowers for every season. Shop local for seasonal plants from West Chester's **Matlack Florist** and Newtown Square's **Mostardi Nursery**.

Customized local subscription boxes are a fun way to get creative with your gifts while adding the extra benefit of supporting the local businesses we know and love! And if the recipient lives close enough, you can do your own delivery to the front porch.

Gift cards are another way for you to gift the gift of supporting downtowns. Choose gift cards from your family's favorite shops and restaurants in the area. We call it the gift that always fits.

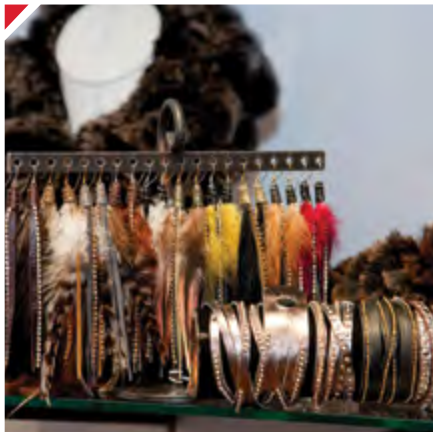


Great Food. Local Businesses. Delivered Directly to You!
Visit AEDirect.shop to Order

Use coupon code **CLMAG10** when you order to receive 10% off your order!



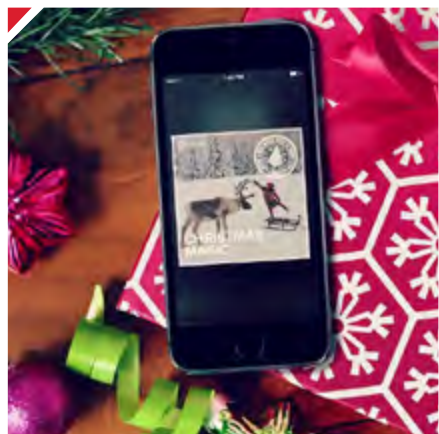
Local wine subscriptions



DIY accessory subscription, Jane Chalfant



Self care gifts, The 5 Senses



Share Spotify holiday playlists



Host virtual cookie exchanges



Gift greenery, Mostardi Nursery

Take a trip into town and admire the holiday window displays as you window shop and pick up gift cards to support buying local. This way family and friends have something to look forward to when they're ready to go out and about again. Plus restaurants also need the love during the cold months.

For those with family close by, consider giving the gift of time. Help out young parents in your life by offering to babysit (if it's safe) and give them a date night out. Bring homecooked meals to family and friends for a night off from cooking or help older family members decorate for the holidays.

How about making a **homemade coupon** book so they can cash in their free babysitter or homemade meal on a night of their choosing?

Or put together a **recipe book** filled with classic holiday dishes or comfort meals from family recipes. Send out the recipes early so family members can cook the same meals for holiday dinner.

NEW TRADITIONS

Yes, it will be harder for extended family to get together for the holidays. But thanks to technology (and some creativity) some traditions can still be celebrated.

In fact, you may be able to gather even more far-flung family members together since fewer schedules and travel itineraries need to be as carefully coordinated. Plus, it's easier for your West Coast friends to log on than lug luggage across the country.

So why not try some new twists on old traditions to keep the holiday spirit alive and well?

Start the festivities off right by dedicating time to decorating for the holidays. Get the whole family involved by sending out **holiday decorating gift boxes**—from places like SparkleAllTheWay or, of course, make your own—filled with fun and unique ornaments and decorations. Once each person receives their box, plan a night to decorate the tree over Zoom, Skype or your favorite link.

Add to the ambiance with a **Spotify playlist** to share all your favorite holiday jingles, and sing some carols while you're at it. For a full-on Griswold family Christmas, consider getting **matching pajamas**. You'll deck the halls while creating lasting memories together.

If some can't make holiday dinner (Zoom or not), create a **portrait gallery** of your family members, including those no longer with you. Another idea: print out a life-size version of their face, tape it to a paint stirrer and pop them into any family photo you take this year.

You can also create virtual family time after a socially distanced dinner. Well before dinner, have everyone submit some funny family photos along with fun facts you may not know. After dinner have a **caption-writing contest** with the photos and some **family trivia** with the background facts.

And don't forget the annual gift exchange! There are plenty of apps to download for the usual gift giving activities, like **Secret Santa**. The free app **Elfster** invites your friends and family to download, create a group wish list, draw names and mail the present. Easy as holiday pie!

If movies are a big family tradition, try a **holiday movie night** using **Teleparty** to sync streaming services between different devices and enjoy all your favorites during a group viewing of *White Christmas*, *It's A Wonderful Life* or *Elf*.

You can also have your house smelling sweet all month long with a **virtual cookie exchange**. Instead of sharing cookies in person, choose a few nights before Christmas to have each participant teach the group to make a cookie of their choosing over Zoom or Facetime. Amp up the fun and competition by voting for the best cookie. Add a special prize and bragging rights for the winner.

Another tradition to keep: checking out the **Christmas lights**. Instead of heading to the usual big Christmas light display, just drive around your neighborhood or surrounding communities to admire houses decorated in their holiday best. Stay in your bubble while still basking in the magic of Christmas spirit.

More for the kiddos: plan a visit from Santa Claus. But safely. Check out the website **JingleRing** for virtual Santa visit delivered right to your computer. Set up a live call with Santa or a prerecorded message (if the holidays are a bit too busy). Options can include a keepsake video, storytime with Santa and a guest appearance from Mrs. Claus.

And finally, if you're able to safely have family or friends over during the holidays, create a **welcome package** for them. Include a cozy blanket for guests to keep warm when sitting outside and a customized mask and house-made hand sanitizer for when they're inside and close to others. These welcome packages keep guests safe and are a useful keepsake.

No matter how you chose to celebrate this year, we hope you and your family stay safe and healthy. Happy Holidays! ♦



Tree decorating on Zoom



Visit local light displays



Virtual Santa visits, JingleRing

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 Things To Do 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

Exton

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–Thursday, from 8 to 4:30, Friday 8 to 1; 463 W. Lincoln Hwy. (Rt. 30). 610-363-7330; BallAndBall.com.



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

There's no place like **Ron's Original Bar & Grille** this holiday season! Offering a family atmosphere, Italian fare and some of the best craft beer around, they invite you to stop in for a bite, enjoy some take-out, delivery or curbside pickup or call them to cater your next event! Eat Clean. Live Well. Feel Good. Ron's. 74 E. Uwchlan Ave. 610-594-9900; RonsOriginal.com.

Malvern

The holidays can be a hectic and stressful time of year. Let **Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co.** take the worry out of planning your holiday gatherings with custom party platters featuring all your Italian favorites. They also offer private holiday dining following all social distancing guidelines. Tonino's Gift Certificates make a great

gift and you can pick up at the restaurant. Delivery and curbside pick up are always 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

Walter J. Cook Jeweler is celebrating their 75th Anniversary! Their showroom has an exquisite collection of exceptional jewels from around the world. Michael Cook has personally curated dazzling diamonds, elegant one-of-a-kind colored gemstones, lustrous pearls and amorphous opals in classic and contemporary styles. Hand crafted gold and silver designs 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 Jaindl Grand Champion turkeys, ducks and geese. 1098 W. Bridge St. 610-935-1777; ForestasMarket.com.

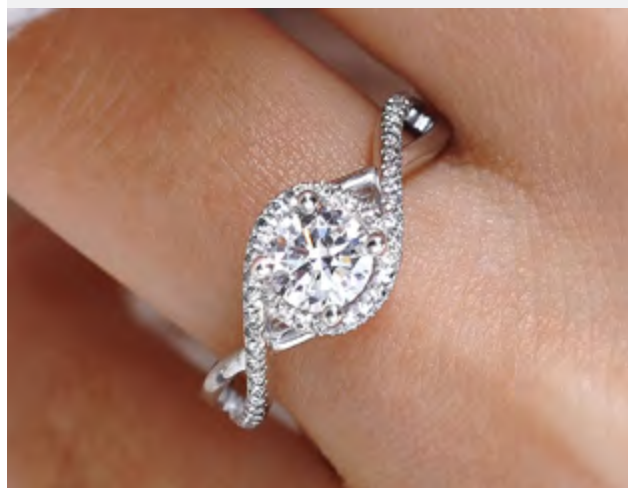
Bridge Street Chocolates is ready and eager to help you spread holiday cheer through their safe, efficient services and gourmet chocolates. Select one of our newest offerings with their decadent hot cocoa pods, seasonal truffles and assorted chocolate favorites. They offer online ordering, curbside pickup, local delivery and shipping to all 50 states. They're grateful for your support! 158 Bridge St. 610-935-8100; BridgeStreetChocolates.com.



BRIDGE STREET CHOCOLATES
610-935-8100 • BridgeStreetChocolates.com

West Chester

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 2021. 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.



BIG DIAMOND IMPOERTERS & FINE JEWELRY
610-692-7707 • BigDiamonds.com

The **Jane Chalfant** shop features beautiful sweaters and fun, fashion jewelry and accessories for gift giving. New this year is the addition of the their Artisan Gallery featuring handcrafted pottery, wooden bowls, cutting boards and cheese trays. Also presenting paintings by Terri Morse, a local West Chester watercolorist. Free parking behind the shop at 123 N. High St. 610-696-0290; JaneChalfant.com.



JANE CHALFANT
610-696-0290; JaneChalfant.com

Chester County History Museum Shop offers outstanding gifts, books, children's merchandise and home decor inspired by our museum/library. We are pleased to highlight local items, artists and authors. Your purchases are an important means of support for our mission to "inspire, inform, and build community identity by preserving and sharing the remarkable story of Chester County and its people." 225 N. High St. 610-692-4800; ChesterCoHistorical.org.



CHESTER COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM SHOP
610-692-4800; ChesterCoHistorical.org

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.



PHINEAS GAGE
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Pietro's Prime is an upscale yet casual Steakhouse and Martini Bar in the heart of downtown West Chester, 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.

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Wilmington

Celebrate the season during a family-friendly event held outdoors at the **Delaware Art Museum** on December 12! Shop for holiday gifts from regional artisans, listen to festive music performed by traveling carolers, and enjoy demonstrations by regional holiday craftsman. Timed tickets will be sold in advance: \$5 members, \$14 non-members, includes Museum admission. Due to Covid-19 restrictions this event's capacity is limited, please purchase tickets early. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.



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Put a little natural sparkle into the holidays with science and nature-related gifts from the **Delaware Museum of Natural History**, including crystals, collectible rocks, stone jewelry, apparel, and more. For children, stuffed animals, science kits, books, games, puzzles and more. And, of course, dinosaur gifts! Shop at the Museum through December 31 (Museum building is closed in 2021), online shopping is available now and throughout next year at delmnhsquare.site. 4840 Kennett Pk. 302-658-9111; DelMNH.org.



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The usual color scheme may be blue and white, but that's no reason not to go full red and green for your holiday decorations. Add bright red wreaths, stockings, ornaments and roping to make a festive statement for all to admire.
Courtesy Jennifer Steiner, Adorn Goods, Centerville, DE

Over the years we've shared ideas for decorating your holiday tree and dinner table settings, along with mantel magic for expressing your personality and festive holiday wreaths for your doors, windows or barn.

This year, we gathered a few ideas for bedecking your staircase, if you happen to have one. Feel the holiday spirit each time you climb or descend the stairs in your home.

Happy Holidays!

Holiday Staircases



A sophisticated mix of silver, gold and navy blue makes an eye-catching statement on this traditional staircase. Textures, lights, bows and a selection of holiday balls add further interest to this unique and unexpected accent to your home.
Courtesy Anita Yoder, Heritage Design Interiors, New Holland



This elegant staircase is one of many that graces Winterthur Museum. The dramatic curve of the Montmorenci Staircase is accented with garlands of greenery and pots of bright poinsettias for a simple but stunning display.
Courtesy Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library



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Collectors, Questers, Seekers of Joy

Got a collector on your holiday list? You may be tempted to add to the collection with a gift. But is that really the best idea?

Karen Jessee

The word “collections” can conjure up images from a kid with his bundle of baseball cards to the back room of a museum stacked with archival boxes and everything in between. Ranging from the small, silly and simple, to the hefty, unique and rare, collectibles always say something about the collectors themselves.

And there’s no shortage of ephemera—if it was created, it can be collected and antique shops, auction houses, estate sales, on-line sales, thrift stores and flea markets are only too happy to help those treasure hunters fulfill their undying passion for just one more.

Many collections bespeak the past laced with nostalgia, reminding us of how we once lived, worked, dressed and even how we played.

Take for example New York’s Mike McKenna, who works in costuming at the Metropolitan Opera. He has a personal collection of over 300 fedoras, 75 men’s straw hats, 40 bowlers, 40 top hats and 75 women’s hats, a collection running from the years 1880 to 1950.

Mike says, “These beauties have been rented out for stage and screen, and I have delighted in seeing pieces on some prominent actors.”

Then there’s Sandy of Wilmington who has beautifully encased and displayed her vast collection of vintage Barbies (she got her first Barbie in 1960) along with their fashions. Sandy says, “I was drawn to the original ones, which were haute couture, meaning their fashions were designed by a ‘name’ designer and hand sewn by Japanese housewives. My 1966 Barbie is signed by her creator, Ruth Handler. I have around 150 Barbies, of which about 30 to 40 are true vintage.”

Michael Messitt from Lewes, Delaware has a sizeable collection of cuff links, some with matching tie tacks, accessories that were once part of a gentleman’s attire for special occasions and even work—long before casual Fridays and working from home with no pants were options.

No one knows the thrill of the hunt, the joy of victory and the fun of bragging rights better than collectors.



Another type of collector, Andy of North Carolina loves vintage technology and has a collection of 65 vintage vacuum cleaners, 7 Sunbeam mixers and 20 cameras.

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

For some, the holiday season is the reason for all those Santas and nutcrackers they’ve accumulated. For Nancy Sakaduski of Lewes, the interest lies in vintage Christmas storybooks. Through a bit of serendipity, some of her books now can be seen each year among the trees and toys at Winterthur Museum at Christmas.

“The collection started 40 years ago when my husband, Joe, bought me an 1874 book of Christmas stories because he knew how much I loved Christmas,” says Nancy. “I now have approximately 400 books as well as boxes of vintage Christmas cards, postcards, sheet music, records, Christmas issues of magazines and other ephemera. While none of these items is particularly valuable, the items provide Christmas spirit both in my home and at Winterthur, where I loan some items each year to help decorate the rooms for their Yuletide Tour.”

Another Christmas-themed collector, Linda Maddux of New Castle, Delaware started collecting in 1968 in Argentina. “I began collecting small unusual pottery figures for a crèche. I have since collected from each place and country I’ve visited. It’s now vast and too large to get out each Christmas, but the collection is totally unique and holds a lifetime of memories,” she says.

QUESTERS

When it comes to collectors, Delaware can boast a powerhouse of people who have not only filled their homes, closets and curio cabinets with remarkable pieces, but who are well versed on the historic and educational value of these objects.





Questers, a national organization, is a group dedicated to history: preserving it, speaking on it, traveling to see it, and, of course, collecting it. Questers know only too well how a collection can grow from a few items to a few hundred.

The organization itself began in 1944 during World War II in the home of Jessie Elizabeth “Bess” Bardens who worked for the Red Cross. Her simple antique-store find of a blue syrup pitcher displayed on the corner of her desk garnered so much attention that she began gathering people in her home to talk about history and collections.

This group became the first Questers chapter, and what had begun as merely a distraction from the war grew into hundreds of chapters. Today Questers are both national and international with chapters abroad and in 41 states in the U.S. Pennsylvania alone has over 101 chapters with more than a thousand members.

BRANDYWINE QUESTERS

The Brandywine Questers chapter in Delaware was founded in 1977 by Carol Harvey, owner of the children’s clothing store Hansel and Gretel. Carol, who claims she was born a collector, began with a childhood collection of soap in the shape of animals that grew into her adult collections of Victorian antiques, ladies’ hand fans, vintage Valentines and a myriad of beaded vintage purses.

As most collectors will tell you, it began with “just that one that caught my eye.” For Carol, it was that vibrant red-orange beaded purse found at a garage sale.

Among her varied collections, Carol is perhaps best known for her Christmas collection, which includes hundreds of antique decorations as well as Russian hand-painted Santas. It’s a collection she’s shared over the years with hundreds of groups and individuals.



“I’d been a Quester in another state before moving to Delaware where there were four other Questers chapters when I arrived. Today, only Brandywine Questers is left,” says Carol.

Within the Brandywine Questers are some prodigious collectors. One has a houseful of historic and vintage hatpins and can speak on their history and materials. This collection began with the few pieces inherited from her grandmother.

Another member has a vast collection of historic German and French dolls that’s beautifully displayed in two rooms, one with lighted cabinets. Yet another has had her collection of Madam Alexander dolls on display at Wilmington University. A collection of Hopi Indian pottery has caught the eye and attention of the Smithsonian.

Through research and study, members of the group have given presentations on historic fashion, vintage accessories, trading cards, silver, jewelry, Valentines, lithographs, textiles, antiques and more. Some have given lectures or taught classes at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Delaware.

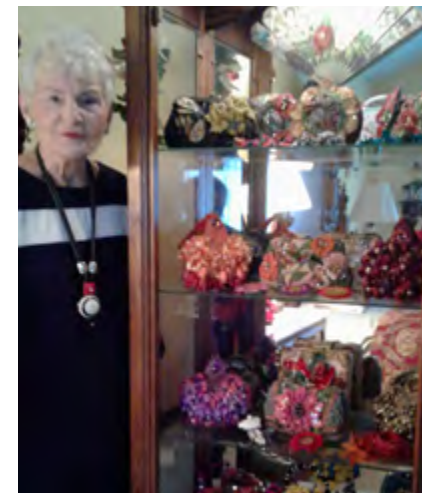
When asked how she began her group, Carol says, “My husband, John, worked for DuPont, and I began teaching courses in antiques at the DuPont Country Club, back in the 1970s. People would fill the ballroom for those classes,” she says. The Questers began with a few of the women



who were taking the classes and were already collectors themselves.

Besides sharing their knowledge of history, Questers go further. They donate funds to the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, landmarks and artifacts.

Carol says, “Our group has given to many charities and organizations. We’ve sponsored fellowships at Winterthur for students majoring in history and art restoration.



Money for these groups is made through an annual auction among our members each spring.” The group also works with the national organization headquartered in Philadelphia, has attended the national conventions, and contributed money and research papers.

There’s nothing more exciting for a collector than that bloodhound-like search and victorious discovery of yet “one more” to embrace and carry home. Whether a member of Questers or not, every collector knows their motto: “It’s fun to seek and a joy to find.” ♦

Interested in becoming a Quester? Contact President Carol Harvey at HanselAndGretelOfDE@verizon.net. The group meets monthly in homes and has a schedule of speakers, projects and trips.

For years, Karen Jessee has been a contributing writer to Delaware publications. A former teacher and business woman, she is now a speaker on women’s history and the accessories and clothing that tell women’s story. Her articles and presentations have won both state and national awards.

The Gift You Deserve This Year!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT WARMS THE SOUL AND LIFTS THE SPIRITS? READ ON.

Jessica Roberts

THIS HAS BEEN QUITE A ROLLER COASTER YEAR! So, let's make it easy to pick out something special to give to those you love—and just maybe, a little something for yourself as well! (You deserve it!)

Here are four wonderful wines and four special spirits that are sure to bring extra cheer to the holiday season. And you may even be offered a sip of the great gift you've given.

WINE FOR EVERY OCCASION

Let's start with wine. Red, white, rosé or sparkling—feel confident you have something for everyone with these suggestions.

Red wine is a popular pick for the colder months, especially those that are rich and warming. Wines from the Bordeaux region in France have been crowd-pleasers for hundreds of years. These wines are either heavily cabernet sauvignon or merlot based, making them very winter friendly.

For a good bang for your buck, try **Pezat Bordeaux 2016** at \$12.99. It's 85% merlot and 15% cabernet franc, medium-bodied

and full of dark fruit and cedar. Pair this wine with seared hams, juicy steaks and well-roasted veggies for a hearty meal.

For a white wine, **Rombauer Vineyards Chardonnay 2018** from the Carneros region of Napa Valley, priced at \$39.99, is an excellent choice. This time of year many people appreciate a fuller bodied wine when drinking whites, and this one certainly delivers. Imagine bright mango and citrus flavors alongside hints of vanilla and baking spice. This wine is creamy, buttery and full of warm oaky flavors with enough citrus acidity to balance it out to perfection. It's an excellent accompaniment to lighter meat dishes.

Although there's still a hint of mystery shrouding rosé, it's one of the most versatile food wines available for almost every course. One lovely option that's sure to help change any doubtful minds, is **Fabre en Provence Rosé 2019**, hailing from the homeland of fine rosé wines: Provence, France. This wine is full of bright citrus acidity along with lovely florals and enticing herbaceous notes. At \$13.99, the price is right to grab a couple of bottles to pair with your appetizers, salads, light meats and veggies.

The last recommendation is a sparkling option—a must for the holidays. Yes, the Champagne region of France is home to some of the best bubbles in the world, often with price tags to match. But consider a traditional sparkler that's both top quality and a little easier on the wallet.

Bollinger Champagne Special Cuvée Brut is James Bond's number one choice, and a top choice for many others as well. (Some movie trivia: Bollinger is featured in almost every Bond movie since *Live And Let Die*.) At \$59.99, this wine is full of fruits with hints of almond and yeast. Seafood and salty foods are going to be the best pairing for this fantastic bubbly that makes any occasion just a little bit more fun.

SPIRITS FOR THE SEASON

For a twist, use the holidays to explore some unique and exciting spirits!

Start off strong with **Absolut Juice**. These are wheat-based vodkas that come in three flavors—Pear & Elderflower, Strawberry and Apple—priced at \$19.99 each. By mixing in real fruit juice, Absolut created flavored vodkas that taste fresh, fruity and fabulous, even to those who aren't fans of flavored vodkas. All you need to do is add some of your preferred flavor to your favorite spritzer, and, voila, you've created a refreshingly light cocktail. And bonus: the cocktail is only 100 calories!

For those who want something old school, gin is in. It's growing in popularity again, and **Bluecoat Gin**, straight out of Philadelphia, has a **Dry Gin** as well as a **Barrel Finished Gin**. At \$28.99, the original is made with organic Mediterranean berries and is full of sweet aromatics and earthy juniper. It's very soft, yet distinct, with a bright and long finish.

The Barrel Finished blend is aged for a minimum of 12 months, which adds hints of caramel and oak to an already beautiful gin. At \$34.99, this version is unique, and something special for those looking for something new.

With so many bourbon drinkers to buy for and bourbons to choose from, here's a quality brand that really hits the mark—**Bulleit**



Straight Bourbon 10 Year Old, priced at \$50.99. This blend of 68% corn, 28% rye and 4% malted barley has been aged for 10 years and comes in at 91 proof. Its deep russet color with rich, oaky aromas mix with a smooth taste of vanilla and dried fruit that finishes with a long, smoky finish. This choice makes an impressive gift for a bourbon lover and an excellent addition to your own collection if you buy a second bottle.

Finally, it wouldn't be the holiday season without a cream-based cordial. Although Baileys and RumChata are the typical go-to options, try **Somrus Chai Cream**, priced at \$25.99. It's made from real dairy cream with a rum base, bursting with eastern spices and delicate nutty nuances. Try this as an after-dinner treat with your coffee, chai tea or even poured over vanilla ice cream. This cream liqueur deserves a chance to sit in the spotlight!

Please treat yourself well, be healthy, stay well and remember to drink responsibly. Cheers to a wonderful end of the year! ♦

Jessica Roberts has worked with *Fine Wine & Good Spirits* for six years, taking the position of Wine Specialist a year and a half ago. What began as a hobby soon blossomed into a satisfying career. Jessica works at the Premium Collection store in Phoenixville. Stop by for one of her tastings or just to ask a question. Learn more at FWGS.com.





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Food News

A few of our favorite things to share this month about local food and drink

Coco Comeback. Upgrade your cup of hot chocolate to a delicious bottle of chocolate beer. For a limited time, **Yuengling Hershey's Chocolate Porter** is back in bottles after last year's brief availability on draft, now perfect for enjoying in the comfort of your own home. Hershey's creamy chocolate flavor is artfully blended with caramel and dark roasted malts for a rich chocolatey brew. Pair it with dinner and dessert or bring some sweetness to any holiday celebration. Check availability at Yuengling.com.



Traveling Snacks. Looking for a gift for your traveler who-can't-travel this season? **Universal Yums** delivers a box full of adventure with amazing flavors from all over the world—try salty pineapple candy from Thailand. Sample sweet and salty snacks from different countries combined with a booklet of trivia, recipes and surprises to guide your virtual travel. Sign up for the monthly subscription or as many months as you choose. Give the taste of safe travel at UniversalYums.com.



No-Egg Nog. Enjoy a creamy dairy-free nog for the holidays. **So Delicious Coconut Milk Holiday Nog** is rich, with a robust nutmeg flavor—close in taste to traditional nog. **Califia Farms' Almond Nog** is a tasty choice to drink by itself, and it's thin enough to sweeten your coffee. More for almond milk lovers, **Trader Joe's Almond Nog** is a thick nutty vanilla mix—perfect for holiday cocktails. Head to the grocery store and don't nog it 'til you try it!

Turkey Under Pressure. Master the art of a moist turkey and enjoy a pressure-less Christmas Day with **sous vide** cooking. French for under pressure or vacuum, sous vide uses an immersion circulator and submersion technique for longer cooking at a lower, consistent temperature. Prepare the turkey a day ahead—sealed in a bag, placed in a pot of water with the circulator—and spend less time cooking the day of. Do allow 30+ minutes to crisp in the oven. Recipe at AnovaCulinary.com.



Changing Chestnuts. While they might be roasting on open fire, the kind of **chestnut** you're tasting isn't the same crunchy, sweet nut enjoyed in the Christmas song. A blight wiped out the original acorn-like American chestnut tree, leaving us with imported nuts for the season—bland and soft, not that tasty. Skip the roasting and use them for baking and making cakes, stuffings and sauces for better flavor. Keep the chestnut tradition alive with recipe ideas at BBCGoodFood.com.



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[Brandywine Table]

Much Ado About Brunch

HOW THIS WONDERFUL WEEK-
END PASTIME SATIATES MORE
THAN JUST OUR PALATES.

Alyssa Thayer

MONTHS OF MORNING MONOTONY HAVE US craving something festive and indulgent. And in many ways, brunch fits the bill. From its humble origins as a post-church tradition, it has evolved into a mainstay of metropolitan culinary culture.

But no matter whether it's enjoyed in Sunday best, or alongside bottomless mimosas, the pillars of this pastime remain firmly intact: sumptuous staples, (read: eggs, bacon, and syrupy short stacks), good company (thanks to COVID it may be virtual), and a luxurious timeframe (thanks to its late start and easy pace).



One of the top local brunch destinations is **Autograph Brasserie** in Wayne, which serves up approachable dishes with a side of whimsy. “In the sycamore room, there is a tree growing straight through the middle of the room,” says Executive Chef James Davidson, as he describes the space, which touts unique decor and an expansive patio.

Autograph is part of the Fearless Restaurant Group, whose portfolio includes hallmarks such as White Dog Cafe and Moshulu. Chef Davidson says people feel taken care of there, noting it is not uncommon for patrons to request a specific server, room, or celebrity portrait to sit under (of which there are 1000 hanging).

Originally hailing from the famous steakhouses of Boston, Chef Davidson was mentored by culinary greats including James Beard award-winner Lydia Shire. “She told me to make each plate like I was cooking for someone I love,” he recalls fondly. To this day, he uses that philosophy to help him and his team stay motivated. “I want my guys to understand—this (meal) is important for someone, it could be their graduation or birthday, and we should be thankful they chose us.”

While Chef Davidson is admittedly a steak and eggs guy, he's got all the classics on his brunch menu—from eggs Benedict to buttermilk waffles. His philosophy on food is simple: straightforward, good quality ingredients, done well. And his aim is to make each dish cohesive, flavorful and fresh. “That's what people want to eat,” he says confidently.

Whether you're creating your own memorable morning or letting the pros at Autograph curate it for you, the important thing is to allow yourself a moment, to sip, savor and break the routine.

Follow the tips below and recipes to make yourself feel like a pampered guest, even if you know you'll be the one doing the dishes.

Recipes

Note, all of these recipes are for 1 hearty serving, but Chef Davidson recommends pairing and sharing them. You can also choose to brighten the meal up by adding a side salad or fresh fruit parfait.

Keys to Egg-celence:

“Eggs are like grandma’s gravy- everyone has an opinion of what they should be,” says Chef Davidson. That being said, there are some basic tips and tricks to help you achieve oozy greatness.

The Perfect Poach:

*Start with one at a time until you are more experienced.
Bring your water to a slight simmer- you don’t want it boiling.
A little vinegar helps the white firm faster, but don’t go overboard!
Pre-cracking eggs into a small bowl or ramekin makes it easier to lower them gently into the water.
Creating a swirling motion in the water before adding the egg, helps the eggwhite form around the yolk- “you don’t want a whirlpool though,” he warns.*

Once cooked (usually after about 2 minutes), remove from water and drain completely using a slotted spoon- the less it is touched and/or transferred the better.

The Down-Low on Sunny Side Ups:

Traditionally, sunny side up eggs are only cooked on one side. If you choose to flip it briefly but keep the yolk runny, it’s over easy, leave it in longer, the yoke firms a bit to become over medium.

Fabulous Fried Eggs:

*Keep your pan over low to medium heat (not high).
Use clarified butter or oil.
Once you crack eggs into the pan, leave them alone.
His parting words on eggs—after cooking, salt them! It brings out the flavor.

Avocado Toast

This delectable dish pairs the crisp texture of toast with the unctuous creaminess of egg and avocado. It simple, stylish and simply divine.



Brunch Basics

Although it can be difficult to duplicate the “je ne sais quoi” of a snazzy brunch spot, there are a few things you can do to elevate the experience:

Stylish Settings: Whether you are going boozy or sticking with mocktails, having elegant stemware and dishes makes all the difference.

Pro Plating: They say you eat with your eyes first, so take the time to make it visually pleasing, fan out your sliced avocado, dust the top of sweet treats, slice and stack your breakfast sammie.

Resist the List: One thing about leaving your home (which for many is also our office and school), is you leave behind the lengthy todo list- whatever you do, don’t let it come to the table.

Prime Procurement: Don’t skimp on your ingredients- if you are making french toast, go to the bakery for fresh brioche or challah, select seasonal produce, and opt for fresh-squeezed juice.

Feast of Flavors: Satisfy your taste buds by selecting a menu with a balance of sweet and savory dishes.

The main thing, Chef Davidson says, is to just have fun and to not take ourselves too seriously. “In a room filled with people you love, who cares how well you poached your egg.”

- 1 lime, juiced
- Salt and Pepper
- 1 slice sourdough bread, about 1/3 inch thick
- 2 eggs
- 1 sprig fresh tarragon (thinly sliced), substitute any favorite fresh herbs such as chives or thyme

Carefully slice, pit and scoop out avocado into a small bowl. Use a fork to smash it down, adding in the lime juice, salt, and pepper to taste.

Note: Acid in this case from the lime gives great tangy flavor, and keeps the mixture from browning as quickly.

Toast sourdough bread. Spread mashed avocado across toast. Poach 2 eggs (see tips above) and drain well using a slotted spoon before setting atop the avocado. Sprinkle tarragon leaves over top and drizzle olive oil.

Makes 1 large toast.

Optional extra: some folks like to up the ante with a few layers of smoked salmon between the avocado and eggs.

Bacon Hash

Many people make the mistake of throwing out rendered bacon fat after cooking, but as this hash proves, that stuff is liquid gold! Use it to elevate any saute or roast.

- ½ C. thick-cut bacon strips, sliced across for smaller quarter-inch strips
- ½ white onion, diced

- ½ red bell pepper, diced
- 4 red bliss potatoes, fork-tender (quartered, boiled in salted water approx. 5 min and drained)
- 2 eggs
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Old Bay seasoning to taste
- Queso Fresco, grated (for garnish)
- Scallion, sliced thinly (for garnish)



In a saute pan, fry bacon until crisp. Remove to a plate lined with paper towels, saving the bacon fat in the pan. To the bacon fat, add the onions and peppers. Cook over medium heat until soft and slightly browned (3 minutes).

Add potatoes and saute until crisp (1 minute If drained well). Add bacon pieces back into pan and sprinkle with old bay seasoning to your liking. Toss to coat.

Transfer to a plate and top with 2 sunny side up eggs (see tips above). Sprinkle queso fresco and scallion over top.

Makes 1 large serving.

Tip: Not using your bacon fat right away? Chef Davidson recommends keeping it in the freezer for future use (it can last at least a few months). He guarantees it will make any potato dish better- mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, you name it.

Breakfast BLT

Just add eggs to make this lunchtime classic into a brunch show stopper. Cutting it on the diagonal at the end isn’t just for looks- it ensures the richness of the yolk seeps perfectly into each bite.

- 4 slices thick-cut bacon
- 2 slices thick-cut brioche
- 2 T. mayonnaise
- 4 slices thick-cut tomato
- 1 leaf of green lettuce
- 4 slices avocado
- 2 eggs



Cook bacon in a skillet over medium heat until browned and crispy. Transfer to a plate covered in a paper towel to soak up extra oil.

Toast brioche. Spread both pieces with mayonnaise. On one piece, top with bacon, tomato, lettuce, and avocado.

Pan fry eggs sunny side up and place on top (bonus if you do it in the bacon grease). Place the other piece of bread on top. Cut diagonally, making sure the yolks run out. Enjoy right away!

Makes 1 sandwich.

Hash Browns

For this recipe, you are basically making one giant potato pancake—this can be an individual portion if having alone with eggs, or it can be split and shared as a great brunch side. Once again, feel free to add a spoonful of your rendered bacon fat to take it to the next level.



- 1 large potato
- ½ medium white onion
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 2–3 T. clarified butter or canola oil ghee
- Sea salt (to garnish)



The Sycamore room at Autograph is designed with a tree at the center and butterflies covering the walls.

Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat. Peel and shred onion and potato into a bowl (can also use shredding blade on a food processor).

Note: Grate the onion first to slow oxidation.

Season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice.

Heat butter or oil in the pan, enough to evenly coat the bottom. Using clean hands or a tea towel, squeeze the potato mixture until as much liquid as possible is removed. The less moisture you have, the less it will splatter.

Arrange the mixture in the pan carefully since butter/oil is hot (potato mixture should be about 1/4-1/2 inch thick). Using a rubber spatula, shape and smooth edges into a round shape.

Saute over medium heat until bottom is browned 3-4 minutes on both sides. Carefully slide the spatula underneath the hash brown and flip it over. Continue to saute until browned and cooked through the middle. Move to plate, sprinkle with sea salt, and enjoy.

Makes 2 side-servings. ♦

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.



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