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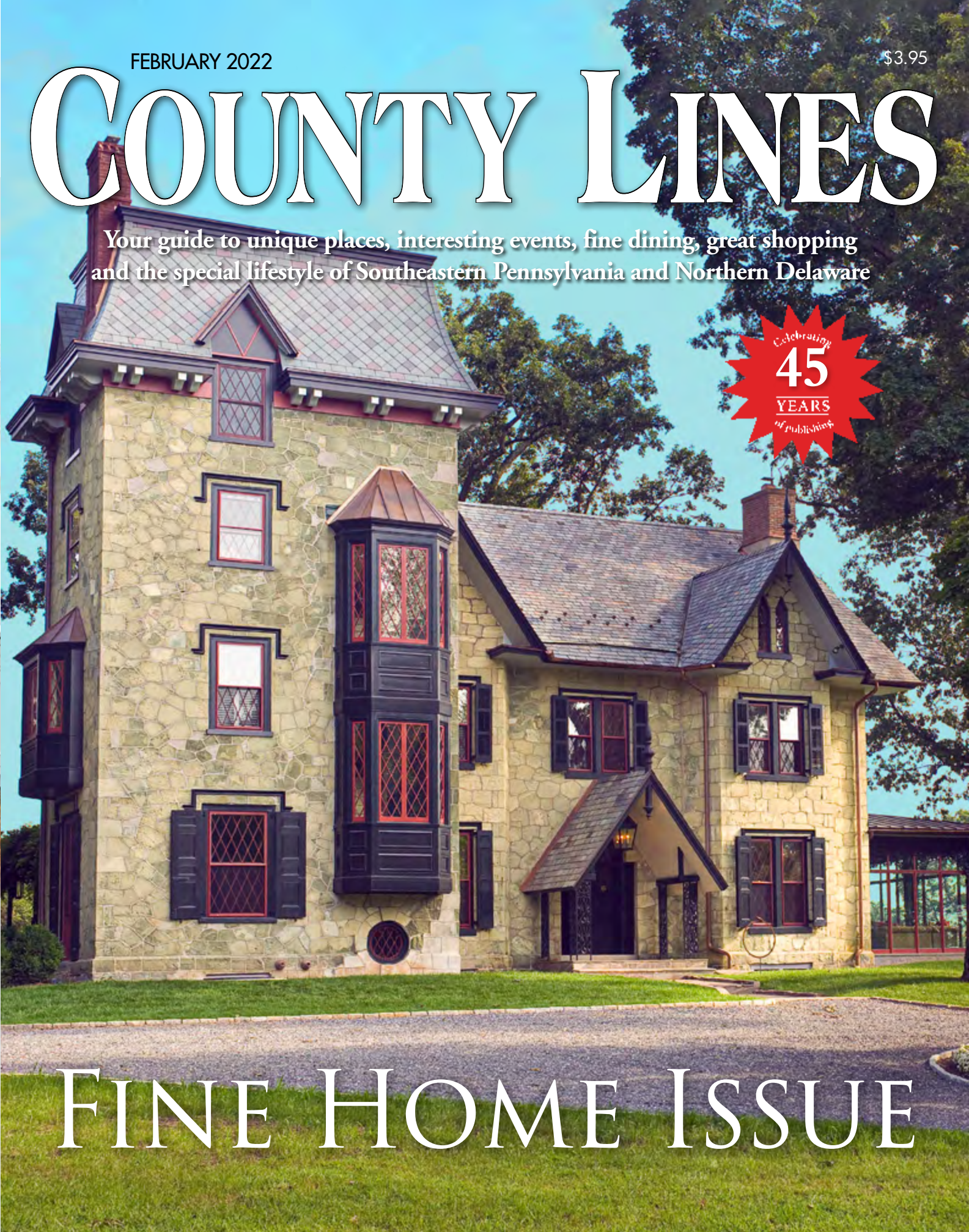
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FINE HOME ISSUE



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Fox Hill Farm | East Marlborough Township

Fox Hill Farm is set on 80.2 bucolic acres complete with a fabulous house, pool, pond, tennis court, barn, indoor and outdoor arenas plus a dressage ring, and cross-country course. The Archer & Buchanan designed home of 10,000 square feet represents the epitome of gracious country living. The 7 bedroom, 5.4 bath stone home features rare details like Italian marble floors and 200 year old wood floors from a French chateau. The workmanship in this home is spectacular! The large Kitchen features high-end appliances and marble counters. The Master Suite is really special! The Lower Level has a large Wine Cellar, Exercise Room, Theater, and Game Room. The Barn and Indoor Arena offer 27 stalls. Great equestrian community and located in the nationally ranked Unionville-Chadds Ford School District!

\$6,875,000



Bittersweet Drive | Pocopson Township

Set on 7.3 exceedingly private acres in Pocopson Township, sits this spectacular 18,000 square foot, tutor style home featuring a spectacular main level Master Suite with “His” and “Her” bathrooms, Walk-in Closets, a private Office, and a large Bedroom. The home boasts 5 Bedrooms, 8.3 Bathrooms plus a four room guest/in-law suite easily accessed by way of the home’s three level elevator. The main level Living Room, Dining Room, incredible Kitchen, and stellar Family Room must be seen to be appreciated! All of the Bedrooms enjoy En-Suite Bathrooms. The Lower Level features an amazing Wine Cellar, Theater, Game Room and second Family Room. This fabulous property is located with easy access to Wilmington plus set in the nationally ranked Unionville-Chadds Ford School District!

\$4,995,000



Chadds Ford

The Happy Hill estate is set on a long, private road and its location guarantees privacy. The stately home is a well constructed Manor House featuring spectacular walnut moldings, stained glass, and museum quality mantels. Gardeners will love the Pennsylvania champion trees like Yellow Buckeye and Cucumber Magnolia. The property is a “diamond in the rough” as work is required to return the property to its former grandeur but the home’s stellar location and great bones make it an excellent investment!

\$1,350.00



East Bradford Township

You must see these 23.1 beautiful acres that are perfect for an investor or someone seeking to build their dream home or farm! The land is high, level, open ground close to the Borough of West Chester. The property could be divided into a possibility of seven attractive lots. West Chester School District and convenient to shopping and major commuting routes. Please call us for a additional details.

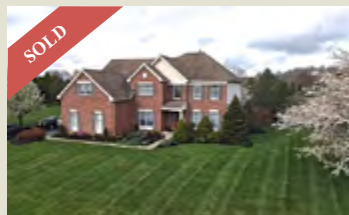
\$1,085,000



Thornbury Township

Set on a near two acre lot in the sought-after Dilworthtown Woods community, sits this fabulous 4 Bedroom, 2.1 Bath brick home inspired by a Philadelphia Society Hill 18th century Georgian home. Blessed with an excellent floorplan, the Primary Suite’s bathroom was featured at the Philadelphia Home Show prior to installation. Located in Ruston High School zone- considered the best in a great school district!

\$760,000



East Bradford Township

4 BR, 2.2 BA | 1 Acre | Two Offices!
Fabulous \$200K Finished Lower Level!
Great Master Suite | Chef’s Kitchen
\$849,000



South Coventry Township

4 BR, 3.1 BA | 6200 SF | 8.6 Acres
Great Floor Plan | Pond | 6 Stall Barn
Geothermal Heat/Cooling | 1st Fl. Master
\$1,725,000

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FELLOWSHIP ROAD | CHESTER SPRINGS | 64 ACRES

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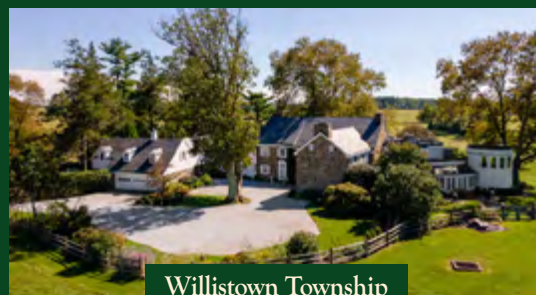
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London Grove Township

Federal home has a wonderful balance between country casual & sophisticated elegance. Charming, cozy fireplaces & comfortable living spaces throughout w/many amenities. Expansive stone terrace overlooks gardens & leads to a tranquil pool & original tennis court. Manageable barn w/5 stalls & 2nd floor storage/workshop area. Paddock/pastures. Also, 2BR apt over 4 car garage. Nestled on 34+/-ac in Cheshire Hunt countryside for enjoyment of country living yet convenient to major arteries, golf courses, polo fields & airports. Under conservation easement. Highly ranked Avon Grove Schools. \$2,400,000



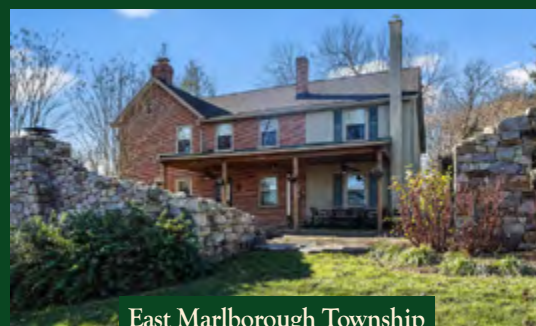
Willistown Township

Spectacular Radnor Hunt Estate - Iconic Heartwood Farm on 72 acres, includes stunning Chester County stone home, 24 stalls, riding ring, pool, tennis court & breathtaking views. Price Upon Request



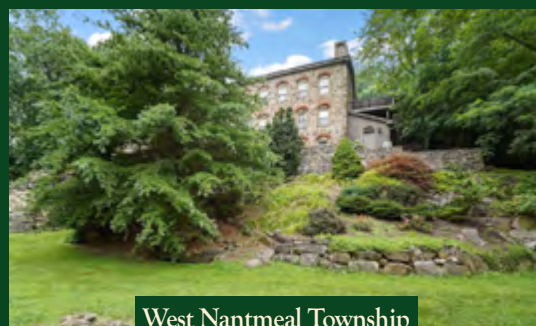
East Fallowfield Twp.

Relaxing, warm & comfortable describes this well maintained 3BR Victorian style farmhouse. Set on 54+/- ac farm in Cheshire Hunt countryside near The Laurels Preserve. Incl. 5 stall barn & 3 car garage w/bonus room. Price Upon Request



East Marlborough Township

Charming 1830's brick colonial w/custom kitchen & baths, lovely gardens & creative stone water features. Atmosphere of privacy as property is surrounded by rolling countryside. Price Upon Request



West Nantmeal Township

A creative adaptation of Isabella Furnace into a unique residence with 26 acres and other structures. The restoration of historic structures has been a passion of current owners for many years. Price Upon Request



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from the
EDITOR

February is our Fine Home and Schools issue, with some fitness, food and fun added to help the month seem even shorter than it is.

First, take an armchair tour of what writer Matt Freeman calls a “Serpentine Stunner.” Owned by the Sharpless, Biddle and Rudibaugh families, this home has been massively restored.

There’s more history in our Home of the Month feature. Isabella Furnace, once a hub of iron making, was converted into a unique home. It’s on the market, so get a peek.

Jane Dorchester’s “Preserving West Chester’s Historic Treasures” highlights winners of local historic preservation awards. Another fun tour!

For more on homes, see “Dream Kitchens” to inspire you to consider an upgrade or complete reno this year. Our “Fine Homes & Design Resource Guide” may get you thinking about even more home projects.

Or if you’re thinking it’s time for a new home, read what local realtors have to say about the upcoming spring real estate market as they share insights and advice.

Turning to schools, our publisher, Ed Malet, shares “Teaching Creativity: Rising to the Challenges of the 21st Century.” He talks with area private and independent schools to see how they teach this vital skill. For more about schools see our School Guide in this issue.

For fitness, Shannon Montgomery, our new Assistant Editor, looks at combining meditation and exercise in “Mindfulness in Motion.” Try out this trend with a walk through Stoneleigh. Natural Lands’ Kirsten Werner describes some of the top ten trees in Pennsylvania located there, plus a few more, in “Stoneleigh’s Trees to See.”

Looking for a winter celebration? How about Chinese New Year on February 1? Brandywine Table’s Alyssa Thayer describes the dinners a group of friends have prepare for almost 30 years and shares some of their recipes.

Finally, our Best Local Events section is filled with family fun and more.

Thank you for reading.

Jo Anne Durako
Editor



COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2022

Volume XLV Number 6

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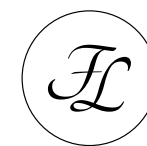
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Cover photo of Edgewood, courtesy of Pine Street Carpentry

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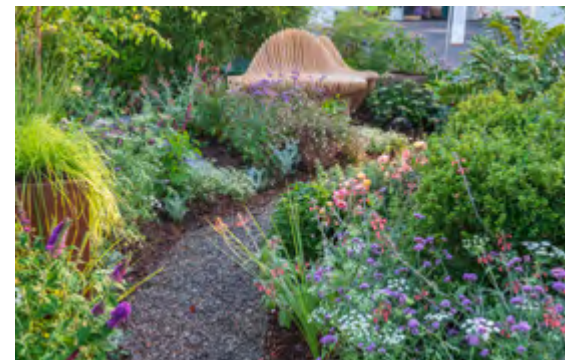
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[Good to Know] *Just a few things we'd thought you'd like to know this month*

Flower Power. During this dreary midwinter, we all need something to look forward to. Fortunately, tickets are already on sale for the **2022 Philadelphia Flower Show**, scheduled for June 11–19. This year's theme, "In Full Bloom," focuses on the restorative and healing power of plants. Daydream about thousands of plants and green events, including gardening workshops, a behind-the-scenes tour and an outdoor butterfly exhibit. The perfect antidote to winter doldrums. Tickets \$50–\$20. *FDR Park, Philadelphia. PHSONline.org.*



Sensory Garden. Enjoy a treat for your senses at Kennett's **New Leaf Sensory Garden**, currently undergoing an expansion. The new and improved garden will include a new nature-inspired children's book for the Story Walk, new plants in the Pollinator Garden and a new Story Rock area for creating your own fairy tale. The garden is a relaxing space for children and adults alike, especially those with sensory processing issues. Open year-round, dawn to dusk. Free admission. *776 Rosedale Rd., Kennett Square. FLCForSCC.org.*

In A Pickle. Looking to break a sweat and have some fun? Try **pickleball**, a fast-growing sport combining elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong. With a paddle and plastic ball, players of all ages can pick it up quickly for a casual or



competitive game, singles or doubles. Ready to play? The YMCA of Greater Brandywine has nearly 40 indoor and outdoor courts across Chester County, or check USA Pickleball's "Places 2 Play" locator to find courts near you. *YMCA BW.org; Places2Play.org.*

Eye of the Tiger. February 1 marks the start of the Lunar New Year and the **Year of the Tiger**. What does that mean? According to the Chinese zodiac, the Tiger is strong and quick to action, plus it's a Water year, which



represents emotion. Expect a year of strong emotions and rapidly changing situations, so be ready to adapt to change and be willing to take risks. This year may be tumultuous, but you can also find great success. *ChineseNewYear.net.*

Lincoln's Lost Love. You may have heard that the first biography of Abraham Lincoln was published in West Chester, kickstarting Honest Abe's presidential bid. But that's not the only local tie to our 16th president. Visit the town of Rutledge (near Swarthmore) and you'll find a sign claiming **Ann Rutledge**, "early sweetheart of Abraham Lincoln," as the town's namesake, although the Kentucky native never set foot in Pennsylvania. So what's the real namesake? An 1860 romance novel, according to the borough's founders. *RutledgePA.org/history.*





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[February Picks] Our Picks for top events this month

Harry Potter Exhibition at The Franklin Institute

Opening February 18

Celebrate the iconic moments, characters, settings and beasts as seen in the films and stories of "Harry Potter" and the "Wizarding World" through immersive design and technology. Visitors will get an up-close look at authentic props and original costumes from the "Harry Potter" and "Fantastic Beasts" films as they engage with magical environments and installations. 222 N. 20th St., Phila. 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evenings Thurs.–Sun., 5 to 8 p.m. \$30–\$59. Adv. timed tickets req. FI.edu.



American Music Theatre Lights up the Stage

February 3–27

Treat yourself to one of these fantastic shows. **Feb. 3**, An Evening with Harry Connick, Jr., best-selling musician, singer, composer and live performer; **Feb. 18**, "Scooby-Doo! and The Lost City of Gold," an original live entertainment spectacular; **Feb. 19**, Roy Orbison and Buddy Holly: The Rock 'n' Roll Dream Tour; **Feb. 20**, The Righteous Brothers: Bill Medley & Bucky Heard; **Feb. 25**, Masters of Illusion; **Feb. 26**, Kansas: Point of Know Return Tour; **Feb. 27**, The Price is Right Live! 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. 717-397-7700; AMTShows.com.



Kennett Chocolate Lovers Festival

February 6

Sample as many chocolate delights as you wish—cakes, brownies, candies, cookies, cupcakes—made by three categories of bakers: professionals, amateurs and students. Benefits United Way of So. Chester County. Held rain, snow or shine. Unionville High School, 740 Unionville Rd., Kennett Square. VIP tickets, \$35, noon entry; gen. adm., \$17–\$25, 1 p.m. entry. 610-444-4357; KennettChocolate.org.



Brandywine River Museum of Art Plein Air Inside Out

February 18 & 19

Enjoy the wintry beauty of Brandywine Creek from the museum's expansive atrium windows. Artists working in all media are invited to explore the vista from inside the museum where they can sketch, paint or photograph while staying warm. Participants may also enjoy sketching (with pencil) in the museum's galleries, provided they bring all art materials, including drop cloths.



Advance registration required. 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$20. 610-388-8336; Brandywine.org.

Philly Home & Garden Show

February 25–27

Stroll through more than 7500 square feet of inspirational gardens showcasing new gardening techniques, ideas and must-have products for 2022. Shop the flower shop, garden market and succulent bar and kick back and relax in the Wine Garden. Special guest on **Feb. 26**, Mina Starsiak-Hawk, home renovation expert, real estate agent and star of the HGTV hit series "Good Bones." Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Rd., Oaks. Fri., 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. \$9–\$11. PhillyHomeAndGarden.com.



best Things To Do

Many events are coming back, so take out your calendar and fill it in with fun. Please be sure to check websites often for the latest updates and for COVID protocols.

FAMILY FUN

ONGOING

Behind the Steam: A Collection Exploration Speaker Series at Marshall Steam Museum. This virtual event takes a close look at a special item in the collection and then

Zooms out for a larger discussion with experts and enthusiasts. *3000 Creek Rd., Yorklyn, DE. 7 pm. \$5; \$30 for the year. 302-239-2385; AuburnHeights.org.*

FEBRUARY 5-27

Saturdays, Sundays

Disney's The Jungle Book Kids! at Media Theatre. Adapted from Disney's animated film and the works of Rudyard Kipling, the "man cub" Mowgli bounds through the jungle and learns what it means to be human. *104 E. State St., Media. See website for times. \$14-\$17. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.*



FEBRUARY 7 & 21

Chester County Library System Presents Fun with STEAM on Zoom. Interactive, hands-on science, technology and math activities you can try at home. Geared to ages 5+. *5 to 6 pm. Register by calling 610-696-1721 or visit WCPublicLibrary.org.*

FEBRUARY 10, 17, 24

Brandywine River Museum of Art Children's Read Aloud. Young children and their grown-ups hear a story, interact with art in the Museum and make their own creative works in this popular program. Advance registration is requested. *1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. 10:30. \$5. 610-388-8382; Brandywine.org.*

FEBRUARY 13

Adventures in Music Children's Concert. Let the music take you adventuring in this

exciting and interactive concert. You'll hear the instruments of the orchestra demonstrated individually and through the performance. Afterwards, children are invited to meet the musicians and to see and hear the instruments up close. *Immaculata Univ., Alumnae Hall, 1145 W. King Rd., Immaculata. 3 pm. \$15. ImmaculataSymphony.edu.*



FEBRUARY 17-27

Lititz Fire & Ice. Feel the warmth at this free, family-friendly event in downtown Lititz. The ice festival features live ice carvings, food trucks, music, shopping and more. *Feb. 17, Launch Party with live ice sculpture carving and music, a photography exhibition, light hors d'oeuvres and a free drink, 6 to 10, \$40. Visit LititzFireAndIce.com.*



MARCH 4

WCU-Live! Presents Johnny Peers & the Muttville Comix. This is a slapstick comedy dog show like no other. Johnny leads over a dozen rescue dogs through challenging and hilarious tricks as he plays the straight man role in this wonderful family show. *Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, University Ave. & S. High St., West Chester. 7 pm. \$10-\$22. 610-436-2266; WCUPA.edu/Live; MCTInc.org.*



ART, CRAFTS & ANTIQUES

THROUGH FEBRUARY 6

Academy of Notre Dame de Namur 49th Annual Fine Art Show & Sale. The exhibition will feature over 100 artists' works in a variety of mediums, including oils, watercolors, acrylics, ceramics, metals and glass. The Mansion, 560 Sproul Rd., Villanova. Show hours daily, noon to 4 by appointment. More information at NDAPA.org/ArtShow.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, 2022

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience. A 360-degree "art event" with 60 projectors bringing 200 of Van Gogh's masterpieces to life with projections that animate the floor and walls around visitors, creating an immersive experience. Tower Theater, S. 69th & Ludlow Sts., Upper Darby. Mon, Wed-Fri, 10 to 7; Sat, Sun and holidays, 9 to 9. Tickets \$19.90-\$54.50. VanGoghExpo.com.



FEBRUARY 8

Brandywine River Museum of Art Virtual Creative Escape: Block Printed Tea Towels. A virtual program featuring a hands-on opportunity to carve a printmaking block and print a repeated pattern on tea towels. A kit will be assembled for you that contains everything for the workshop. Program fee includes supply kit, shipping and the live Zoom program. Register one week before workshop. 6:30. \$35. Brandywine.org.



AUTOMOBILE SHOWS

MARCH 5-13

2022 Philadelphia Auto Show. Recognized by the industry as one of the top auto shows in the country, with vehicles from more than 40 manufacturers. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Philadelphia. 215-418-2000; visit PhillyAutoShow.com.

BOAT SHOWS

MARCH 2-6

The Atlantic City Boat Show. Celebrate life on the water. Climb aboard hundreds of boats for every budget and lifestyle. Atlantic City Convention Center, One Convention Blvd., Atlantic City, NJ. Check website for hours and admission prices. 718-707-0716; ACBoatShow.com.



BOOKS

FEBRUARY 3, 16 & 17

Wellington Square Bookshop. NonFiction Book Club: Feb. 3, "White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era," by Shelby Steele. 7 pm. **Fiction Book Club: Feb. 16 & 17,** "Writers & Lovers" by Lily King, 2 & 7 pm. 549 Wellington Sq., Exton. 610-458-1144; WellingtonSquareBooks.com.

FEBRUARY 15, 24

Main Point Book Club. Fiction Book Club: Feb. 15, "Go Tell it to the Mountain" by James Baldwin, 1 pm. **NonFiction Book Club: Feb. 24,** "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin, 7 pm. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. 484-580-6978; MainPointBooks.com.

FEBRUARY 24

DelArt Readers Book Club. A virtual event on Zoom. This month, "Georgia: A Novel of Georgia O'Keefe" by Dawn Tripp. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 6 to 8 pm. Free. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

DANCE

FEBRUARY 18-20

The First State Ballet Theatre Presents Giselle. Experience this transcendent love story



that follows an innocent village girl transformed into a tender spirit after dying of a broken heart. Baby Grand, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Fri, Sat, 7 pm; Sun, 2. \$40-\$60. 302-652-5577; TherGrandWilmington.org.

FOOD & BREWS

FEBRUARY 24

Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet. Celebrate those who stood out above the rest during the previous year as the Chamber's outstanding citizens and businesses. The Desmond Hotel & Conference



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Center, 1 Liberty Blvd., Malvern. Cocktails, 5:30, dinner, 6:45. \$125 and up. 610-696-4046; GWCC.org.

FUNDRAISERS

THROUGH MARCH 31

Notable Kitchen Tour & Chef's Tastings. Held virtually this year and features Tabletop Art via Facebook. Designers offer useful tips and visuals for setting beautiful casual and formal tables. Benefits The Philadelphia Orchestra. Donation requested. NotableKitchens.com.

FEBRUARY 18–20

Unite for HER—14th Annual Pink Invitational.

Over 3,600 athletes compete to raise funds to support local breast cancer and ovarian cancer patients. Enjoy a vendor fair and gymnastics at all levels. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. Daily 8 am to 10 pm. \$15–\$20. UniteForHer.org.



FEBRUARY 26

Cheers for CHOP. An evening of live music, cocktails, dancing and an incredible silent auction. Benefits Behavioral Health at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Live! Casino & Hotel Philadelphia, 900 Packer Ave., Philadelphia. 7:30 pm. For more information, CheersForChop.edu.

GARDENS

THROUGH MARCH 27

Winter Wonder at Longwood Gardens. Experience glorious winter with outdoor spaces and an indoor oasis where you'll find hundreds of orchids in spectacular bloom. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Daily 10 to 5, closed Tues. \$16–\$30. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.

MUSEUMS

THROUGH FEBRUARY 6

Delaware Art Museum. *Through Jan. 2*, "Fantasy and the Medieval Past;" *Through Feb. 6*, "I Sit and Sew: Tracing Alice Dunbar-Nelson." 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.

THROUGH JULY

Tour the Marshall Mansion at Auburn Heights.

Explore one of the best examples of a Queen Anne style Victorian mansion at the former home of the Marshall family. 3000 Creek Rd, Yorklyn, DE. Thurs & Fri, 1 pm. \$7–\$14. 302-729-4280; DEStateParks.com.

FEBRUARY 5–MAY 8

Brandywine River Museum of Art. "Wayne Thiebaud 100: Paintings, Prints and Drawings." 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Wed–Mon, 10 to 4. \$6–\$18. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.

FEBRUARY 20–MAY 15

The Barnes Foundation Presents "Water, Wind, Breath: Southwest Native Art in Community." A major exhibition of historic and contemporary Southwest Native art, including Pueblo and Navajo pottery, textiles and jewelry. Roberts Gallery, 2025 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia. Thurs–Mon, 11 to 5. \$5–\$25. 215-278-7000; BarnesFoundation.org.



MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 2

The Keswick Theatre Presents. *Feb. 4*, Marky Ramone: My Life as a Ramone; *Feb. 5*, The McCartney Years; *Feb. 6*, Peabo Bryson & Oleta Adams; *Feb. 10*, The FABBA Show–Tribute to ABBA; *Feb. 11*, Who's Bad (Tribute to Michael Jackson); *Feb. 12*, Saturday Night Fever Featuring The New York Bee Gees, The Trammps and Bill Jolly; *Feb. 14*, Andy Grammer; *Feb. 17*, The Neal Morse Band; *Feb. 18*, The Marshall Tucker Band; *Feb. 19*, The Life and Music of George Michael; *Feb. 20*, Trey Kennedy: The Are You For Real Tour; *Feb. 21*, Letterkenny Live!; *Feb. 23*, Steve Vai; *Feb. 24*, Masters of Illusion; *Feb. 25*, The Price is Right Live; *Feb. 26*, The Thankful Tour, Beth Hart; *Mar. 2*, Big Band of Brothers: A Jazz Celebration of The Allman Brothers Band. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Visit website for updates, times and tickets. 215-572-7650; KeswickTheatre.com.

FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 4

The Grand is Back! *Feb. 4*, bluegrass music

Local Farm Markets



Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr. Unit 13 B, West Chester. Sat, 10 to 1. ArtisanExchange.net.

Bryn Mawr Farmers Market, Lancaster Ave. Bryn Mawr train station lot. Jan. 15–Mar., 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. FarmToCity.org.

Downingtown Farmers Market, Kerr Park next to Veteran's Memorial, Pennsylvania Ave. Jan. 8–Apr., 2nd & 4th Sat, 10 to noon. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Eagleview Farmers Market, Eagleview Town Center, Exton. Jan. 6–Apr., 1st & 3rd Thurs, 11 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Kennett Square Farmers Market, The Creamery, 401 Birch St. Fri, 3 to 5. 610-444-8188; KSQFarmersMarket.com.

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

Malvern Farmers Market, Warren Ave. & Roberts Rd. Jan., 3rd & 5th Sat; Feb.–Apr., 1st & 3rd Sat., 10 to noon. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Phoenixville Farmers Market, 200 Mill St. Sat, 10 to noon; seniors, 9–9:30. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

Thornbury Farmers Mkt. & CSA, 1256 Thornbury Rd. Fri, noon to 6; Sat, 9 to 6; Sun, 11–4:30. ThornburyFarmCSA.com.

West Chester Growers Market, Chestnut & Church Sts. Jan. 15–Apr., 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat: 10 to noon . 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

Westtown Amish Market, 1165 Wilmington Pk., West Chester. Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7; Sat, 8 to 4. 610-492-5700; WestChesterAmishMarket.com.



with Seldom Scene at The Baby Grand, 8 pm; *Feb. 5*, comedian Whitney Cummings at Copeland Hall, 8 pm; comedian Colin Quinn, 8 pm; *Feb. 11*, Marielle Kraft Band; *Feb. 12*, Tro plays Tom Petty; *Feb. 18*, An Evening with Gaelic Storm; *Mar. 4*, Red Hot Chilli Pipers. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. For times and tickets, 302-652.5577; TheGrandWilmington.org.

FEBRUARY 12, 19, MARCH 4

Point Entertainment Presents at The Colonial Theatre. *Feb. 12*, The You and Me Tour: An Evening with Drew and Ellie Holcomb; *Feb. 19*, Van Halen Nation; *Mar. 4*, Marty Stuart And His Fabulous Superlatives. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. For times and tickets, 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

FEBRUARY 4, 5, 15

Kennett Flash. *Feb. 4*, Raymond The Amish Comic, 8 pm, \$20; *Feb. 5*, Sin City Band–48th Anniversary Concert, 8 pm, \$20; *Feb. 15*, Bettye LaVette (with Full Band), 8 pm, \$75. 102 Sycamore Alley, Kennett Square. 484-732-8295; KennettFlash.org.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

FEBRUARY 1–24

Wellness Yoga at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. Bring a yoga mat, small towel and a water bottle. Wear layers appropriate to the season. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur. Tues & Thurs at 9 am. \$10. Winterthur.org.

THEATER

FEBRUARY 22–MARCH 20

The Sound of Music at The Fulton Theatre. Enjoy all the cherished songs, including "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "My Favorite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" and the title number, "The Sound of Music." 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

MARCH 2–27

Personality: The Lloyd Price Musical at People's Light. The first musical to celebrate the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame legend Lloyd Price with a cast of 12 singers and dancers performing iconic hits "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," "Stagger Lee" and "Personality." 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Check website for times. \$40–\$45. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

MARCH 2–27

Baby The Musical at Media Theatre. Three couples on a university campus deal with the consequences of pregnancy and upcoming parenthood. 104 E. State St., Media. Tickets and times, 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

FEBRUARY 4, 12, 17

1st Fridays, 2nd Saturdays, 3rd Thursdays.

First Fridays: *Feb. 4, Lancaster City*, 717-509-ARTS; VisitLancasterCity.com. *Oxford*, 610-998-9494; DowntownOxfordPA.org. *Phoenixville*, 610-933-3253; PhoenixvilleFirst.org. *West Chester*, 610-738-3350; DowntownWest-Chester.com. *Wilmington Art Loop*, 302-576-2135; CityFestWilm.com.

Second Saturday Virtual Arts Stroll: *Feb. 12*,

Media, 484-445-4161; MediaArtsCouncil.org.

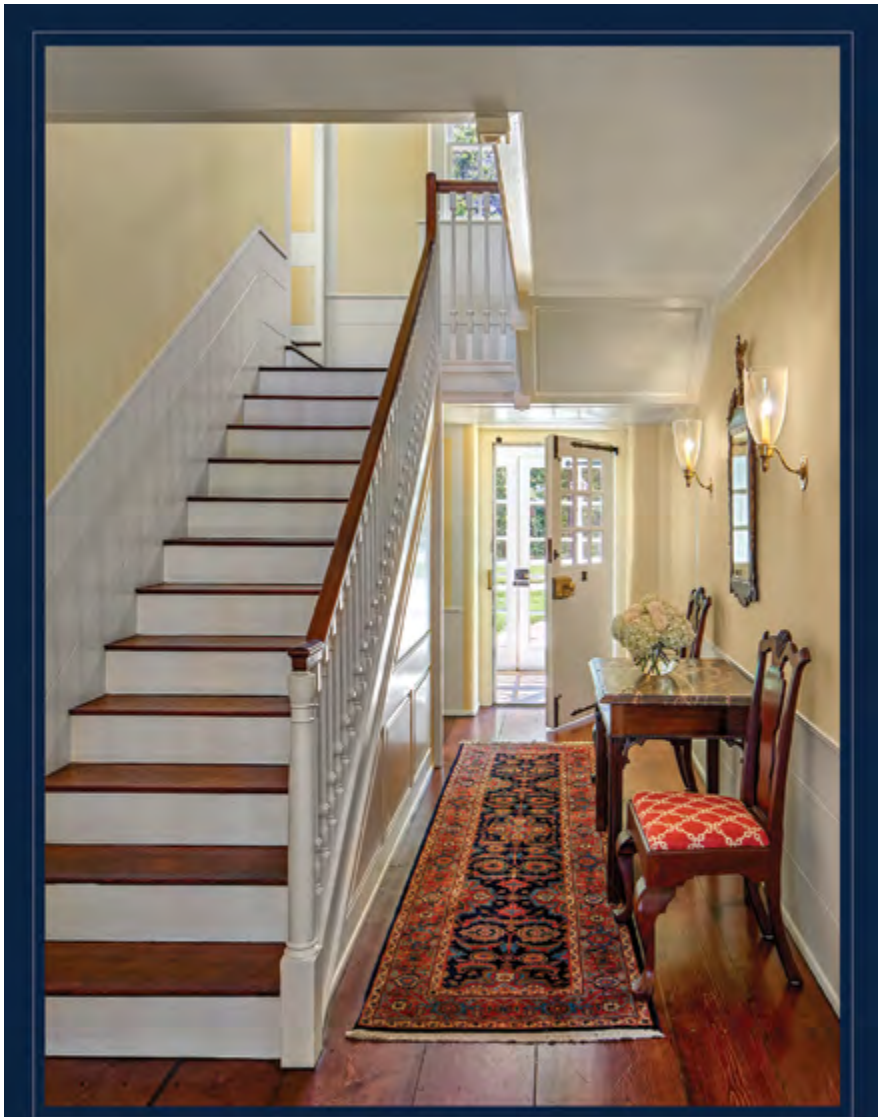
Third Thursday Malvern Stroll: *Feb. 17*, MalvernBusiness.com.

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Send a description of your activity to Info@ValleyDel.com by the first of the month preceding publication.

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MINDFULNESS

in Motion

COMBINE MINDFULNESS AND EXERCISE IN THIS NEW FITNESS TREND

Shannon Montgomery

IF THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVE TAUGHT US ANYTHING, it's that taking care of our mental health is just as important as caring for our bodies. But can we do both at the same time?

As mindfulness meditation has skyrocketed in popularity—with countless apps and online classes—the next step is to combine mindfulness practices with our fitness plans to improve both.

Although we may picture meditation as sedentary, there are many ways to practice mindfulness in motion. For example, yoga is known for combining physical and spiritual elements, and mindfulness walking has become increasingly popular during the pandemic (see *County Lines* May 2021 article by Jenkins Arboretum).

It's time to change how we view both meditation and exercise by embracing mindful fitness, a new way to incorporate mindful practices into our workout routine. Beyond yoga and walking, mindfulness can become part of virtually any type of exercise, from barre classes to running and even high-intensity interval training (HIIT).

MINDFUL FITNESS

First, let's be clear about what mindfulness is. In short, it's a conscious effort to exist in the present moment, not dwelling on the past or thinking ahead to the future. The key is focusing on your current experience—noticing your surroundings, the rhythm of your breath, any sensations or feelings in your body. It's also about being aware of your thoughts, acknowledging them without engaging with them.

Practitioners of mindful fitness are happy to welcome newcomers. At Vibe Vault Fit, a boutique fitness studio in Exton, founders Kristine Carroll and Bhavna “Dr. B” Shyamalan offer a variety of mind-and-body workouts, from yoga and meditation to dance workouts and HIIT.

They started their studio with the idea that the self functions as a system. “You can't be fully healthy or thriving unless all parts of the system are healthy. We can work on our bodies, but we must also address our thoughts, beliefs, emotions and mindsets ... By that we mean mindful living as well as a sense of connectedness, meaning and purpose. Without that combination, we will always stop short of meeting our fullest capacity in life, even in terms of our physical health.”

So how do we incorporate mindfulness into our workout routines and connect the mind and body? While many of us tend to zone out while we exercise, mindful fitness involves being truly present while we work out. This requires a tremendous amount of mental energy and willpower in addition to physical effort.

GETTING STARTED

You can incorporate mindfulness into most workouts by following these steps.

First, start your workout with a moving meditation while you warm up. Often workouts are squeezed in between other activities, and you may already be stressed before you begin, making this quiet time even more important. Take a moment to clear your mind and engage with your mind and body.

Next, while you exercise, pay attention to your body. Notice how your body is moving and how it feels to move it. Pay attention to your muscles, your breathing and any resistance or tension you feel. Observe how your body reacts to changes in pace and intensity.

It's equally important to pay attention to your thoughts and feelings during your workout. Acknowledge and accept them, but do your best not to get caught up in them.

Finally, incorporate reflection time into your cool-down routine. Be aware of the feeling of your muscles stretching. Notice how it feels to slow down in both your body and mind.

End with a short gratitude exercise. Thank your body for all the work it does. Appreciate what it's allowed you to do today.

BENEFITS

Though mindful fitness is a relatively new concept, we're already discovering benefits. For example, being mindful and present under the physical stress of working out improves our ability to carry this heightened sense of awareness into other parts of our lives.



Benefits of Mindfulness

Not convinced of the power of mindfulness? Consider these benefits:

Less stress. Mindful meditation practitioners will tell you it's a calming experience, and the National Institute of Mental Health identified nearly 40 studies showing mindful practice reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.

More emotional control. Mindfulness teaches us to detach from our emotions and regain control when we're overwhelmed—it may also literally change our brains. One study suggests that it improves our emotional regulation skills, and those emotions may be processed differently in our brains.

Stronger relationships. Studies have shown the ability to be mindful can predict relationship satisfaction. Mindfulness helps us react better to stressors, including relationship tension and helps us communicate our feelings more effectively.

Better memory. Regular mindfulness meditation can improve our memory. A study from the University of Pennsylvania compared soldiers in a highly stressful environment. Those who took part in an eight-week mindfulness training saw improvement in their working memory, while their non-meditating soldiers saw memory decrease.

Sharper focus. Mindfulness is a state of heightened awareness and attention to the present moment, so it makes sense that practicing it improves our ability to focus. One study found those with meditation experience scored significantly higher on all measures of attention than those without.

Convinced yet?

Also, a study from Rutgers University found that 30 minutes of aerobic exercise paired with 30 minutes of meditation twice a week reduced depression symptoms by about 40% in just two months. Non-depressed participants also reported that they had fewer negative thoughts and ruminated on them less.

Rebecca Mackey, Chester County-based fitness coach, can attest to that. “As someone who’s struggled with depression and anxiety, I use fitness as a healthy way to cope with those feelings,” she says. “On my worst mental health days, dragging myself to the gym and working out on the treadmill helps me get out of that hole.”

TIPS

Practicing mindfulness while exercising can be a big change from our usual routine. These ideas may help.

Have a purpose. The best way to get through a workout is to have a goal. While long-term goals like getting in shape and improving your health and wellbeing are a good start, begin each workout with a more specific goal in mind—exercising for a set amount of time, focusing on a part of your body, reducing stress, or anything that works for you. When you feel like giving up, remember your purpose.

Mackey says that this “why” has to come from within yourself: “Do it because it makes you feel good, not because others tell you to.”

Unplug. Remove distractions before starting your workout—put away your earbuds or phone and turn off the TV. Take time to truly engage with the workout and pay attention to your body. A great way to maintain focus is to get outside. Engage your senses and notice your surroundings, taking in all the sights and sounds.

Listen to your body. Observe how your body feels. What is it telling you? Should you pick up the pace? Slow down or take a break? Especially in the beginning, it might be telling you to stop. Listen and adjust accordingly.

Focus on your breath. When in doubt, go back to the breath. If you get sucked into negative self-talk or get stressed by everything on your To-Do list, turn your focus on breathing. Feel the air travel through your body—in through your nose, down your throat, filling your lungs and out through your mouth. Use your breath as an anchor when you lose focus or get overwhelmed by thoughts.



Practice kindness. Treat yourself with compassion. Don’t compare yourself to others or to your past self. Appreciate your ability in the present moment and thank yourself for showing up. Let yourself be proud and feel good about your accomplishments.

This positive self-talk is crucial to developing a healthy relationship with fitness. Carroll and Dr. B note that “we try to be extremely cognizant of the power of language and messaging at [our studio], especially when we teach a class. We work to promote body positivity, self-love and empowerment throughout all we do.”

That said, the most important advice is not to worry about whether you’re “doing it right.” Mindfulness is about finding peace in the present moment. Whatever feels right for you is what is right for you.

Give yourself the gift of wellness in both body and mind and begin your mindfulness journey. ♦



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STONELEIGH'S Trees to See

VISIT SOME OF THE TOP 10 TREES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Kirsten Werner, Natural Lands

THE MAGNIFICENT TREES AT STONELEIGH: A Natural Garden, represent more than 150 years of landscape design and careful stewardship. Many of the largest trees at Stoneleigh—the public garden in Villanova owned by nonprofit Natural Lands—were planted more than a century ago by some of the most influential landscape architects of their day, including the Olmsted Brothers firm.

All of these beauties can photosynthesize, stabilize soil, capture carbon and clean our water, but those native to Eastern forests and grasslands best support the life around us. These native trees provide essential food and shelter for insects, which support vertebrates like birds and small mammals, which in turn help build biodiversity in our communities (and beyond).

Several native specimens at Stoneleigh are among the largest of their kind in Pennsylvania and make a visit to this celebration of the natural world even more inviting.

TURKEY OAK (*Quercus cerris*; #2 specimen in Pennsylvania)

Native to southern Europe and western Asia, turkey oak is a large, deciduous tree in the white oak group. Its acorns, which have a shaggy cap that covers half the nut, give this tree its alternate common name: moss-cupped oak.

This particular tree at Stoneleigh is of special significance to the Haas family. It was transplanted by John and Chara Haas from their home in Haverford, where they lived before moving to Stoneleigh in 1964.

SOUTHERN CATALPA (*Catalpa bignonioides*; #3 specimen in Pennsylvania)

Southern catalpa is native to the Gulf Coast states but is now widely naturalized to much of the United States. Indigenous people called these trees “catawba,” meaning “winged head,” likely in reference to the winged seeds that emerge from the trees’ long bean-like pods.

PHOTOS BY DAVID KORBONITS, BENJAMIN SZWIDT, AND JOANNE BOSCO



- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Stoneleigh | 5. Cucumber Magnolia |
| 2. River Birch | 6. Franklinia flower |
| 3. Turkey Oak | 7. Eastern Hemlock |
| 4. Catalpa | |

The tree produces a bitter-tasting chemical compound that deters most herbivores. Yet the catalpa sphinx moth caterpillar not only tolerates these compounds, but thrives on them. In fact, the catalpa tree is the sole source of food for this species’ larvae. The caterpillars may defoliate a tree three times in one summer without killing it.

The Stoneleigh catalpa is the third largest of its kind in Pennsylvania, with a massive trunk measuring 204 inches around and a spread of 63 feet. The tree measures 82 feet tall, a remarkable height for a species that usually maxes out at 40 feet! Its height

is even more remarkable considering the Stoneleigh tree lost a huge section of its main trunk in a storm decades ago.

RIVER BIRCH (*Betula nigra*; #10 specimen in Pennsylvania)

River birches have a special type of flower structure called a “catkin,” derived from the old Dutch word for kitten—the cylindrical flower clusters resemble a kitten’s tail. The native river birch is a host plant for Mourning Cloak and Dreamy Duskywing butterflies. In nature this tree is often found in moist soils but is widely adaptable.

Franklin Tree

(*Franklinia alatamaha*; #5 specimen in Pennsylvania)

Stoneleigh is home to the fifth largest Franklin tree in Pennsylvania. In the summer, large, white flowers burst forth with a scent like honeysuckle. The story of Franklinia—somewhat of a horticultural mystery—is as intriguing as the tree is lovely.

Thick forests covered our land for millennia before European colonists began to document the unique species here. Two of these colonists, Philadelphia botanist John Bartram and his son William, encountered a “rare and elegant flowering shrub” in October of 1765, after losing their way during a botanical exploration of southeast Georgia. John served as Royal Botanist for King George III, a role that including traveling throughout the colonies to gather both seeds and living plant specimens.

The Bartrams took seeds and cuttings from these unusual trees and grew them back in their garden outside of Philadelphia, naming the species in honor of their friend Benjamin Franklin. Today, every single living Franklinia tree—an estimated 2,000 of them—can be traced back to those grown at Bartram’s Garden. That’s because the species has been extinct in the wild since 1803.

Scientists aren’t sure why the plant disappeared. Could it have been fire, flood or over-collection? One theory involves a soil fungus introduced with the cultivation of cotton.

Another mystery surrounding this plant is whether it’s native to the U.S. As the Franklin tree was only ever documented in that one location in southern Georgia, some people postulate it was an accidental introduction—as so many non-native species are—brought by the French in the 1600s or on a trading ship.

Franklinia has a reputation for being finicky. It needs rich, acidic, well-drained soil in full sun or light shade. It’s not pollution tolerant and is sensitive to root disturbance. But given the right conditions, it’s a spectacular addition to your garden.

Or simply visit the magnificent specimen at Stoneleigh, where the mystery lives on.



8. Stoneleigh
9. Main House



9

The tree can be easily identified by its cinnamon-colored, exfoliated bark and is a great choice for home gardens.

CUCUMBER MAGNOLIA (*Magnolia acuminata*)

This tree, native to the eastern U.S., makes a great shade tree and is a fast grower. Sadly the flowers of this magnolia species are not showy. Its unripe fruits resemble small cucumbers—giving rise to its name—but ripen to a dark red color.

Native peoples were said to have used cucumber tree bark for toothache pain. Settlers combined extracts from the green fruit with whiskey for a fever medicine.

EASTERN HEMLOCK (*Tsuga canadensis*)

This graceful evergreen is the state tree of Pennsylvania. A long-lived tree, the oldest recorded specimen was more than 550 years old.

Hemlocks are susceptible to woolly adelgid, a tiny sap-sucking insect accidentally introduced from Asia in the 1920s. This pest has killed most of the old-growth hemlocks in the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Park, and has greatly affected Eastern forests as well.

Because there are more than 140 hemlocks at Stoneleigh, the gardens are an excellent place to experience the character of a species once dominant in Appalachia. ♦

Stoneleigh is open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 to 5, free admission. StoneleighGarden.org.

Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature's wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors. As the Greater Philadelphia region's oldest and largest land conservation organization, member-supported Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 43 nature preserves and one public garden totaling more than 23,000 acres. Nearly five million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. Land for life, nature for all. NatLands.org.



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Preserving West Chester's Historic Treasures

RECENT BRICKS AND MORTAR AND LEGACY AWARD WINNERS

Jane E. Dorchester, Founding Preservation Awards Committee Chair
Photos by Timlyn Vaughan Photography

THERE WAS TIME THIS PAST OCTOBER TO come together to celebrate community. And that's what the West Chester Downtown Foundation did when it marked the 10th anniversary of the West Chester Historic Preservation Awards with a ceremony at the Chester County History Center.

The awards ceremony honored the preservation of West Chester's essential historic character—part of what creates the special charm of the Borough. In the midst of unpredictable times, people gathered together to honor an essential link to the past.

The decision to recognize local historic preservation efforts started when Malcolm Johnstone, then the Executive Director of West Chester's Business Improvement District, took the seed of an idea of Tom Walsh, local preservationist, and presented it to the Downtown Foundation Board. That small step grew into ten years of recognizing the value of preservation to our community.

Here are the seven honorees recognized for their contributions. We hope this gives you a new reason to enjoy a tour of West Chester.

AND THE WINNERS ...

For 2021, awards recognized two categories of achievement—six Bricks and Mortar Projects and one Legacy Award.

Bricks and Mortar Awards recognize a wide variety of construction projects of sterling quality that demonstrate the creative ways buildings and their settings can be preserved, restored or rehabilitated. Winners may mark the award with a plaque installed on the building.

Benjamin Freeman House, 127 W. Barnard Street, was recognized for the owners' efforts to thoughtfully restore this house. Although the house had suffered years of neglect, through meticulous attention to detail and careful removal and repair of original elements, it has been restored to its original state. This project demonstrates how attention to detail can lead to the restoration of not only a resource significant to the history of West Chester, but also an important component of the character of the Borough.

Lokhorst-Rittenhouse House, 314 W. Barnard Street, won for the efforts of its owners to meticulously maintain this house and its grounds. The owners purchased the house on its 100th anniversary (1995) and have carried out a long-term maintenance plan with the help of local craftsmen, using historic materials and methods where



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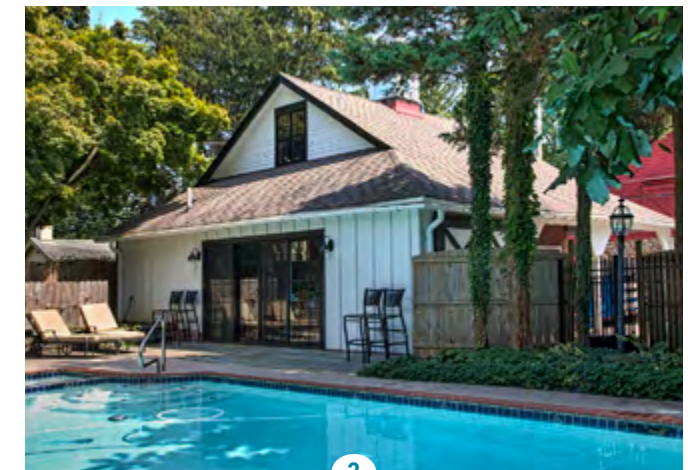
appropriate. This project is a good example of how good stewardship of a historic resource helps preserve the historic character of the Borough.

Varney-Wallace Carriage House Rehabilitation, 315 N. Matlack Street, earned an award for the careful adaptive reuse of an otherwise obsolete building. The owners' needs for additional space for a pool house, workshop, in-law suite and home office were incorporated into the carriage house yet did not sacrifice its original massing, footprint or fabric. This project is an outstanding example of how rehabilitating a historic resource can be accomplished without sacrificing its character.

Sharples Homestead Residential Development, 25–29 Dean Street, won its award in recognition of its ground-breaking development of this property. A 27-unit apartment building was slated for this site. Instead, ten townhouses (with designs based on rowhouses along South Darlington Street) and two carriage house residences (with designs based on the Sharples Carriage House) were sensitively inserted so the view from the Homestead would not be compromised. This project is a very good example of how modern infill can be designed to enhance rather than detract from the historic character of the surrounding community.

Nebel Residence, 327 S. Walnut Street, was recognized for the thoughtful way the owners completed the restoration of this house. This project completed the conversion from a three-apartment residential building back to its original use as a single-family residence. In addition, the structurally unsound kitchen addition was replaced and the dilapidated carriage house was rehabilitated into a modern garage. This project is a good example of how important it is for the continued stewardship, across time and ownership, of West Chester's historic resources.

West Chester Friends Meeting "Open Doors Project", 425 N. High Street, earned its award for its sensitive addition of a special entrance for those with mobility impairments. The Meeting wanted to ensure it was accessible to all, but also wanted to



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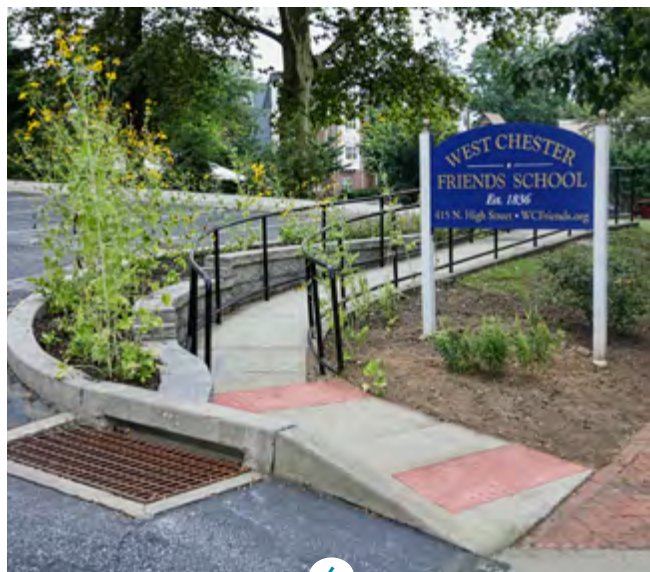


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1. Benjamin Freeman House
2. Lokhorst-Rittenhouse House
3. Varney-Wallace Carriage House Rehabilitation
4. Sharples Homestead Residential Development



5



6

respect the historic character of the Meeting House. The solution was a restrained, unobtrusive ramp incorporated into the porch of the 1813 portion of the Meeting House. This project is a very good example of how historic resources can be sensitively retrofitted to accommodate modern accessibility needs.

And finally, the **2021 Legacy Award** was presented to Malcolm Johnstone, an early participant in the National Trust's Professional Downtown Management Program, for his enthusiastic support of historic preservation in West Chester. In addition to being a champion of the West Chester Historic Preservation Awards Program, Malcolm has been a regular town tour guide and has been involved with West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas events.

FOR 2022

The next Preservation Awards cycle will kick off in April 2022 by opening nominations for another set of awards. Nomination forms and rules will be available at the West Chester BID office or online at DowntownWestChester.com. Nominations close in June. Winners will be announced in July, and the Awards Ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2022.

Please help recognize the projects that continue to enhanced West Chester's historic character and fabric by submitting a nomination. ♦

Jane E. Dorchester has worked in the preservation field since 1983, having earned a Masters in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in historic property research, historic resource inventories and surveys and National Register nominations through her consulting firm in East Goshen Township. Contact her at JEditorHSVP@gmail.com.



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WHO

WHAT

WHERE

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WHY

HOW MUCH

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE 2022 SPRING REAL ESTATE MARKET?

WHO

will be active in the spring real estate market is very difficult to predict, especially given the uncertainties caused by the pandemic and Omicron surge. The 2021 market was unprecedented, with properties selling in days, often with multiple offers and above asking price.

We think buyers who weren't successful in 2021 will be back in the spring market. Some took a break, planning to return when there's more inventory. Since interest rates are still attractive, buyers will continue to look to buy now.

In 2021, we saw many more people moving to Chester County from other states—especially New York, Florida and California—and we expect that trend to continue. Chester County is particularly attractive for these buyers as our quality of life is high, schools are excellent, and taxes are comparatively low.

Sellers who weren't ready in 2021 will be putting their homes for sale to take advantage of the strong spring market. And sell-

ers looking for a change—more space inside and out, second offices—will be motivated. Also those wanting to move near family and to buy their own dream home will be enticed by the good market.

We expect Baby Boomers to downsize or leave their family home. Many Boomers have changed their plans because of the pandemic and may not actually be downsizing but buying a place with room for their children and extended families, especially grandchildren. As they sell their homes, they become even more buyers in 2022.



Stephen, Holly & Stewart Gross
Holly Gross Group
Berkshire Hathaway Fox & Roach Realtors

WHAT

will buyers be looking for in the spring market? Many of the same things that drove them last year. At the top of most lists is a turnkey property—something in perfect shape, well-maintained, with upgrades and wish-list amenities. People want to move into a finished property, without a long punch list of projects to deal with.

What are hot interior features? Still open floorplans with good flow, particularly kitchens and family rooms. Of course home offices gained considerable importance, given the trend of working and schooling from home. As we get further into spring, buyers will start thinking again about outdoor entertaining spaces.

What should sellers do? It's a seller's market, yet properties that sell faster and for a better price are those in the best shape possible. It's worth

putting the time and money into getting your home in showing condition now. Your realtor will help you prioritize which improvements to make to get the most bang for your sales price buck. Even small projects like painting and staging can help.

What lessons have we learned from 2021? Demand from urban transplants to suburban and country properties created a new market dynamic. Coupled with low interest rates and low inventory, 2021 was an exceptional year. We'll see how it plays out long term—but for spring 2022, get ready, have your home in A1 shape on day one. And buyers get ready for the competition. Know what you want, be prepared and act fast!

Rob Van Alen
Country Properties
Berkshire Hathaway Fox & Roach Realtors

WHERE

are buyers coming from? The Brandywine Valley is still a very hot location and dream destination for a new home. That's likely to continue in 2022. It's even popular with people who already live here. I've been surprised how many people buying properties now who already live in the area. Sometimes they live in the region or in Chester County itself. I've even sold a property to someone who lived literally around the corner from their new home!

Plus this area is where many executive relocations happen. Local biotech and pharmaceutical companies often find homes here for families moving internationally. For example, a family from the U.K. recently bought a custom home on two acres in Glen Mills.

In terms of where the desirable areas are, I've seen lots of interest in southern Chester County—rolling hills, open spaces and horse country around Unionville is always popular. Chadds Ford, too, with its good schools.

Northern Delaware has been active as well. There's charming Centreville, plus the attractions for retirees looking for a place with favorable tax policy.

For a rural feeling, Chester Springs has become a hot spot, especially for those looking for open space yet close to shopping. That area is convenient to the Exton malls as well as dining and other attractions on the Main Line. Best of both worlds.

The entire area continues to buzz with interest—from small towns like Oxford to the county seat of West Chester.



Karen Nader
Brandywine Fine Properties / Sotheby's

WHEN

As for the timing of the market—the WHEN questions—we saw a normal slowdown around the holidays and because of rising Omicron infections. People were focused on things other than real estate then.

Yet some buyers didn't want to miss the perfect new home, so showings continued, with heightened health precautions and testing, of course.

The 2022 spring market won't be a typical market, which used to start after the Super Bowl, weather permitting. But with pent-up demand and low inventory, the spring market already started in January! Buyers are eager and some never stopped looking. Many still yearn for their dream house and hope by looking early they won't face bidding wars like in 2021.



When should sellers put their properties on the market? As early as possible! The warm fall weather let sellers to get exterior painting and other projects done to make their homes appealing to buyers. So there's no reason to wait before listing their properties.

I expect to see this spring market roaring on for many months, well beyond the usual season. That is unless, of course—with the usual Covid caveats—the pandemic continues to hit our area hard. Then people may stay home. Vaccinations, boosters, masks and other precautions have made people feel safer, but it's hard to predict when conditions will improve on the health front.

Finally, we are all hoping the weather and pandemic will cooperate and the spring market will give the economy a good boost!

Missy Schwartz
Berkshire Hathaway Fox & Roach Realtors

WHO

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HOW MUCH

WHY

is the market still hot, but cooling? Despite the market’s continued strength, many experts agree the peak market “frenzy” of 2021 has passed. The market is strong, but moderating—with rising interest rates, fewer bidding wars, fewer buyers waiving contingencies.

Strong demand is expected to continue, especially in our area, driven by factors such as still-low inventory, continued historic low interest rates, more Millennials reaching prime home-buying age (about 71 million!), continued remote work driving workers to the suburbs and a strong economy.

Those waiting for the real estate bubble to burst may miss a great opportunity, since conditions differ from the 2008-09 market bubble characterized by an over-supply of inventory and different economic conditions.

Why is this a good time to buy? The simple answer: housing affordability. Although housing prices are up, so is household income, while interest rates remain at historic lows. The result: average

monthly mortgage payments are a lower percentage of today’s median monthly income than in 2006 and in the 1980s and ‘90s.

You may be wondering why we’re seeing so many tear-downs in established neighborhoods. About a quarter of new single-family homes were built in established neighborhoods in 2020. There’s a significant shortage of building lots, so expect to see more new homes built in old neighborhoods as construction ramps up in 2022—around 39% of new single-family construction will be infills or teardowns! Who knew?

Sue Fitzgerald
The Fitzgerald-Loose Fine Homes Team
Compass RE



HOW MUCH

activity will there be in the spring market—buyers, sellers? I wish I had a crystal ball! Based on 2021, though, there’s reason to hope the spring market to be strong, and maybe even a bit stronger with some new inventory.

How much of the market will be made first-time time buyer and sellers new to the market? I’m working with first-time home buyers, and I’m sure there are others ready to jump in now—maybe some FOMO (fear of missing out). Similarly, I’d expect some new sellers in the market, now mentally prepared to move and who spent time getting their property ready to sell.

How much are sellers generally asking for their properties, compared with comparable prices? The market remains highly competitive, with the greed factor out there, so some properties are definitely overpriced. But buyers

are getting tired of seeing inflated prices, and overpriced properties often take longer to sell.

That said, depending on location, some high priced properties get sold immediately, overpriced or not. I think the market is about at its peak, so prices shouldn’t be getting much higher—I hope, for the buyers’ sake.

As for how much buyers should be willing to bargain to find their ideal property—I worry about buyers willing to forgo inspections or pay too high a price. Instead I advise finding other things that protect buyers but appeal to a seller—a quick or long settlement or home warranty for example. But for that dream home . . .

Margot Mohr Teetor
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DREAM Kitchens

Kitchens have continued to get more than their share of use in the past year or so. With more time at home—including more cooking and eating at home—family members have been hanging out and crossing paths in our kitchens.

Maybe some of that kitchen-time has prompted us to think about how to make the room more useful, attractive or welcoming.

We've asked local kitchen designers and builders to share some of their favorite kitchen projects with us. And maybe one of them will provide a little inspiration for your dream kitchen.

This kitchen is located in Villanova on the Ardrossan Estate. The lovely view is the focal point, so the kitchen was delicately designed to maximize the conversation between interior details and the rolling hills. The window area was trimmed and paneled to allow a seamless transition between cabinetry and landscape. This kitchen also features a large island with seating, a beautiful custom wood hood, 48-inch range and double ovens. A large working butler's pantry with paneled appliances is located down the hall.

PHOTO COURTESY:
SUGARBRIDGE CUSTOM KITCHENS & BATHS



This kitchen is featured in the oldest part of a Federal-style farmhouse. The custom kitchen features soapstone countertops, custom cabinetry and salvaged flooring. Some special additions are the built-in under-counter coffee maker and wine chiller in the island, perfect for entertaining guests.

PHOTO COURTESY:
E.C. TRETHEWEY BUILDING CONTRACTORS



This 1925 Arts & Crafts-era home in Wayne was bursting with Gothic and Tudor-inspired design, except for the early 2000s kitchen addition. Part of a whole-home renovation, the kitchen design focused on bringing the character found throughout the rest of the home into the heart of the home. Hand-hewn beams, leaded glass windows and Tudor elliptical arched openings replicate what would have been found when the home was first built. The custom range hood mirrors the original living room fireplace. A clover mark, found in original woodworking, is featured in the new cabinetry, bringing old world touches into the modern-day space.

PHOTO COURTESY:
PERIOD ARCHITECTURE



In collaboration with Kat Robbins Interiors and Superior Custom Cabinetry, every aspect of this West Chester kitchen was tastefully thought out and specified. The combination of walnut cabinetry along with a high glass finish island and perimeter cabinets provides a stunning modern look. The 10-foot island includes a Zip water system that provides instant filtered boiled, chilled and sparkling water in an elegant brushed gold finish fixture. The counter tops include a Calacatta gold Borghini island, while the perimeter is a custom poured concrete.

PHOTO COURTESY:
HAZLEY BUILDERS

This 1902 Wilmington home, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was remodeled to transform the space for modern living while retaining its historic elegance. The remodel removed a cramped butler's pantry to expand the kitchen and create better flow from room to room, opening the kitchen to the dining room with a structural steel beam (with custom molding), a remodeled mudroom with the addition of a powder room, and more. Exposed brick, inset cabinetry, soapstone and bronze tops, a marble backsplash and brass highlights throughout help capture the home's historic elegance.

PHOTO COURTESY:
PINE STREET CARPENTERS





PHOTO: DURSTON SAYLOR

This new home in Wayne was inspired by the timeless architecture of the Cotswolds. The cozy family kitchen features custom cabinetry with a stained white oak island with a marble top perfect for lunches and art projects with the kids, and a custom limestone range hood with a hand carved family crest. The sink overlooks an expansive outdoor dining and entertaining space through a custom leaded glass window. The kitchen ceiling is made from textured plaster and reclaimed beams and it flows into the adjacent family room to create the perfect family entertaining space.

PHOTO COURTESY:
PINEMAR

In a beautiful transformation for this long and narrow space, every inch is functional and so very appealing! Existing openings were altered—closing up some, widening others and removing a window to create an ideal cooking and entertaining space. The long island transitions into a seated area for morning coffee, homework or a quick meal. Generous prep space was added, along with new appliances, a pantry cabinet and wet bar to complete the design. Gray tones in the perimeter cabinetry pair perfectly with a mottled 'mother pearl' quartz countertop, subway tile and accent tile.

PHOTO COURTESY:
GIUSEPPE KITCHEN AND BATH



For more help and inspiration for transforming every room in you house into a dream space, see the Fine Home & Design Resource Guide in this issue.

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Serpentine Stunner

From Sharpless to Biddle to Rudibaugh—three families leave their mark on Edgewood

Matt Freeman

Not long after John Rudibaugh and his wife, Doris, bought their new home in 2007—a serpentine stunner on Birmingham Road known as Edgewood—one of their new neighbors invited the couple to dinner. Rudibaugh took it as a friendly gesture, which it was. But it was not only that.

When the couple arrived, John saw there were about a dozen people there, all local landowners themselves. The reason he and his wife were there, his neighbors told them—in what Rudibaugh makes clear was a quite serious tone—was so the group could tell the newcomers they considered themselves stewards of the area’s historical heritage ... and they expected Edgewood’s new owners to become stewards, too.

In the intervening years Rudibaugh has shown the neighbors they had no cause for concern—his efforts to renovate the house speak for themselves. The once-neglected property is restored now, after long and hard work by a talented team and the new owners.

Edgewood is now a landmark of architectural and historical importance and a comfortable, livable home.

EARLY HISTORY

It was a long trip back to its current grandeur for Edgewood. Rudibaugh had been looking for a historic home for years—ideally an old farmhouse with some land and unspoiled views, and in particular a place where his 13 grandchildren could play. He looked at many properties, but had his eye on Edgewood. Finally the stars aligned, and a deal was struck.

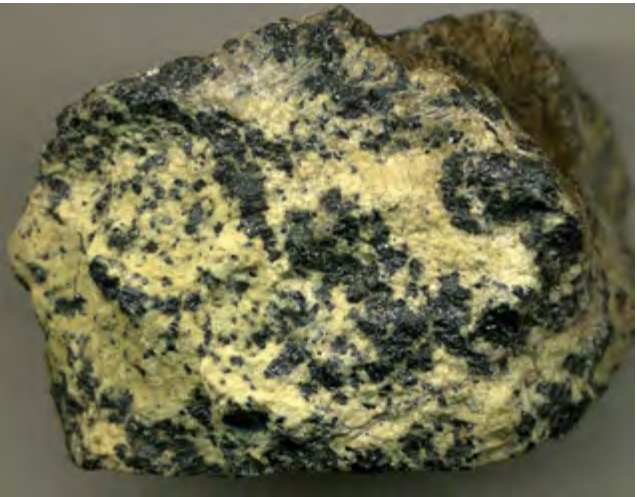
The grand house had been built for the Sharpless family in the middle of the 19th century. It was a large, symmetrical house in the Gothic Revival style, built of serpentine stone from a local quarry, with substantial walls about two feet thick.

Serpentine (technically “serpentinite”), a striking greenish stone, isn’t found everywhere, but Chester County is one of the places where it’s relatively common. (Once you become aware of this distinctive green stone, you’ll notice serpentine buildings dotting the county, including on West Chester University’s campus.)

But back to the Sharpless family, a prominent local Quaker family. From what he’s been told by experts in local history, Rudibaugh is confident the house was one of many stations in Chester County on the Underground Railroad. In the course of the renovation, a closed-off room in the lower part of the house was discovered, and in it plates and other artifacts were found suggesting it was a hiding place for fugitive slaves.



A sketch of the original house, before the tower was added to the left side.



A sample of serpentine stone, showing the green coloration

PHOTO JAMES ST JOHN



Serpentine is the major building material of Edgewood. Note the greenish hue.



A view through the window above the wine racks in the new wine cellar shows the area believed to have been where fugitive slaves hid on this stop on the Underground Railroad.

“Before” photo below



The lower level was completely redone and houses a playroom, storage, the mechanical systems and more.



FROM MECHANICAL TO MUNTINS

Early renovation efforts also uncovered the extent of the work the house needed. “I had no idea what I was going to get into in rehabbing this place,” Rudibaugh says.

The goal was always to take a period house and bring its heating, electricity and plumbing systems up to modern standards, and the Rudibaughs knew that would be a fairly extensive project. When they invited friends over for a party in 2009 to show them the “before” version, visitors discovered the fact that, frankly, the house was quite cold inside.

The existing heating systems ran on coal and oil, but only three of the four oil furnaces worked and the coal source didn’t work at all. The Rudibaughs redesigned the heating systems literally from the ground up, with heat pumps, radiant heat and a German boiler system.

Major structural changes—opening up smaller rooms, widening doorways, repairing rotted material—were also needed. Most of the construction work on the house was done by Pine Street Carpenters, Inc., with Bill Dolan heading the project. “I can’t say enough for Bill’s level of detail and his research,” Rudibaugh says. “He had really done his homework.”

The owners found a specialist—from catching an episode of the TV show “This Old House”—to modernize the chimneys so the many fireplaces could be made operational. Unfortunately the expert’s technique was unfamiliar to the township officials who had to approve it, and a great deal of persuasion was needed to get that step done.

Finally the heating side was taken care of, so that item was checked off the long list.

The electrical systems were updated too, with computer controls that could learn the Rudibaughs’ habits and adapt to them. Another check on the list. The old kitchen was small by modern standards, so they opened it up, and checked that off as well.

One of the many characteristic Gothic Revival designs in the house was woodwork crisscrossing the windows, recalling the diagonal muntins that held small panes of window glass in previous centuries. Like much of the rest of the woodwork in the house, this had been neglected and needed to be refurbished. “It hadn’t been touched for years and years,” Rudibaugh says.

The same was true for the extensive French ironwork. This too was all taken care of, and more and more the house emerged from the bad years and began to recapture its former elegance.



Before and after photos of the bathroom in the primary suite. Note the working fireplace and muntins in the windows.



THE BIDDLE TOWER

One prominent feature of the house, visible from Birmingham Road, is a four-story tower on the east side with some history of its own. In the later years of the 19th century, the house had been acquired by the Biddle family from Philadelphia. One owner was unenthusiastic about seeing her servants and engaged an architect to add a Gothic-style tower in which the help could live and work while troubling her with their presence the least amount possible.

Rudibaugh and his own architect, James Bradberry, thought it made practical and aesthetic sense to cap the tower with a Second Empire-style mansard roof, in part to hide some of the mechanical features. Many historical homes in the area have similarly blended stylistic elements over the years as fashions and needs changed. But again, the township authorities took some persuading about this variation to the dominant Gothic Revival style.

Large, spiky finials are another prominent element of the rooflines, and the list of additional Gothic Revival elements is a long one in a house that bristles with visual interest.

The tower added by the Biddle family to house the household help.

The Biddle family was known to be very social, throwing many parties and hosting guests at Edgewood. The current owner discovered a journal signed by some of the many visitors.



INTERIOR SPACES

The interior of Edgewood is equally appealing, decorated with a casual elegance. The gracious rooms reflect the genius of the late local designer Ronal Fenstermacher.

From the front door you enter an expansive hall that runs all the way to the rear of the house providing a view to the grounds beyond. On your right is a formal dining room, the thoroughly modern kitchen and a four-season room. On the left is the living room, a study and the multi-story tower to the front of the home.

The first floor is full of old-world touches like coffered ceiling in the dining room, but the furnishings, while harmonizing completely with their setting, have a cooler, more restrained modern air compared to the riot of ornate detail you might have seen everywhere in, say, 1890.

Up the elegant expansive stairs, which continue to the third floor, there’s an inglenook on the landing, and then bedrooms and baths complete with fireplaces. One room is devoted to dollhouses, this being, after all, a house meant from the beginning to be welcoming to all generations of the family.



In a part of the county where the 1777 Battle of Brandywine was fought—Lafayette is said to have been wounded just east of the property—historic buildings and landscapes are highly valued and strenuously protected. And Rudibaugh, no longer the newcomer, has Edgewood as it is today to demonstrate his commitment to those neighbors he dined with years before. “There’s a legacy here,” he says. ♦

RESOURCES

Architect: James Bradberry
Builder: Pine Street Carpenters, Inc.
Interior Design: Ronal Fenstermacher





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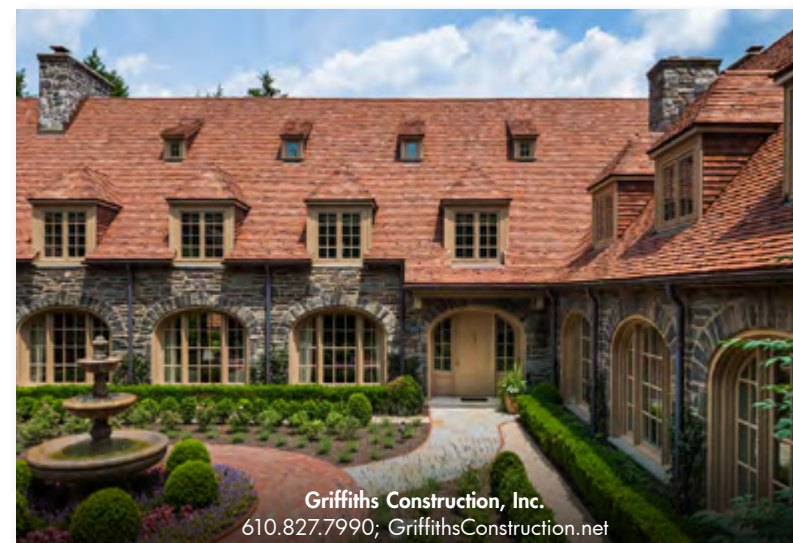
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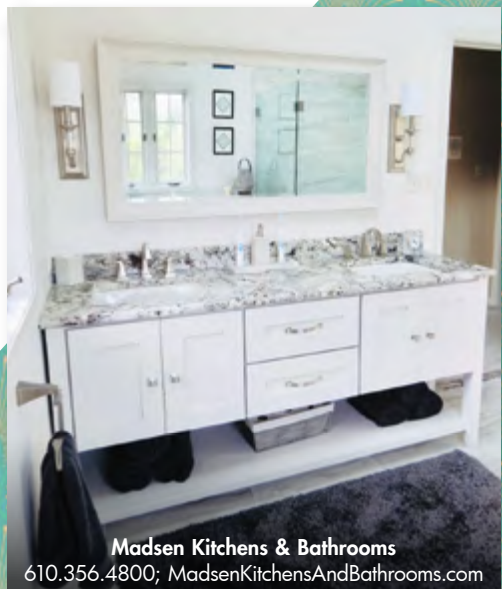
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Teaching Creativity

RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY Edwin Malet



West Chester Friends School

IN 1961, PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY CHALLENGED the nation to land a person on the moon by the end of the decade. By mid-1969, Neil Armstrong took a “giant leap for mankind.” At the end of 2019, when the deadly COVID-19 virus emerged in Wuhan, China, scientists worldwide began searching for a vaccine. Less than a year later, vaccines began entering arms. Until then,

it had taken a minimum of four years to develop a vaccine for such a serious disease. These tasks demanded enormous creativity, problem-solving, inventiveness, imagination, persistence, motivation, risk-taking and teamwork. As we consider current and future challenges, we wonder whether and how our schools develop these attributes in today’s students, who will be tomorrow’s leaders. Preparation at this level is a far cry from the basic 3 Rs. How are local schools teaching these essential skills?

IS CREATIVITY TEACHABLE?

The answer, almost universally among the independent schools in *County Lines* country, is yes, creativity is teachable, at least to some extent. Paulo Machado, Visual Arts teacher at [Wilmington Friends Middle School](#) says creativity is taught by “helping students imagine multiple solutions to a problem, to brainstorm, to not fall in love with the first idea that comes to you, to ask ‘what if’ questions, and to be open to failure and criticism.” Machado believes creativity is the ability “to bring something new into the world. Many people are imaginative, but they may not be creative. Creativity implies an idea, a medium and an art. To create is to make our thinking visible.”



Wilmington Friends School

Heather Brooks, teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) at [The Tatnall School](#), also believes creativity is teachable. But it must be controlled. Kids need “to wonder about things.” The teacher must be organized and need to have teaching methodologies. Teachers need to “allow messiness to happen,” while retaining full control of the situation. Students should be allowed to “investigate on their own terms, even if they’re going to hit a dead end. To learn, they must be allowed to fail first.”

Teaching art at [West Chester Friends School](#), Catharine Maloney observes that students “come to school with creativity built in. They aren’t afraid to mess up or to try new things ... As students grow, they often get self-conscious about their work. My job is to keep that engagement and creativity going.”



Angela DiMaria, Assistant Head of School at [Media-Providence Friends School](#), agrees but says that creativity looks different, depending on how each student approaches it. Finding creativity in each student is part of the challenge. A kid must be “encouraged to be brave, encouraged to take risks, to ask questions, to fail ... That’s how we learn.”



IN THE CLASSROOM

At Wilmington Friends School, Katie Martinenza, Performing Arts teacher in the Lower School, concurs with a resounding yes to creativity’s teachability. “Creativity is a skill that’s nurtured through experiences that allow us to use knowledge in new and innovative ways.” In fact, she believes that “non-creativity is a learned behavior.” She continues, “Look at children and the way they play. Young children use their imaginations to manipulate objects and come up with new ideas for how they can work.”

To inspire creativity, Martinenza encourages students to try different approaches. In music, students start by repeating a musical phrase and are led to improvisation activities, creating their own, different and varied replies to melodic and rhythmic questions. They are encouraged to develop their own chants and songs. To build confidence, she also lets “creativity shine through” by allowing students to have a voice in decision-making about choreography, costuming and instrumentation during self-accompanied songs.

A slightly different view is voiced by David Sigel, Visual Arts teacher at [The Episcopal Academy](#). His thought is that strengthening creativity requires “reconnection,” which in turn requires practice, focus and time. Creativity demands that we “push the envelope” and “step outside of our comfort zone.” He motivates students toward self-discovery.

Sigel is working in 2D (two dimensional) design, guiding his students in arts like animation, graphic novel, observational oil painting and collage. He’s especially proud of one student who “pushed her boundaries” making drawings and films, another making sketches inspired by his father, yet another who’s gone on to become a landscape architect. Before they studied under him, these students had no inkling of their creative side.

DEVISING NEW WAYS OF TEACHING

Media-Providence’s Angela DiMaria, who taught fifth grade, describes an exercise she used in math class. She would pose the problem, then give the answer, and ask for three different ways to come to the answer. The teaching point was that it’s not primarily about solving the problem quickly. Rather, it’s about solving the problem creatively.

She also describes a problem in science class involving aquaponics. The students must figure out the cause and effects of a multiple-factor system. “The interconnectedness of all the different disciplines is very important to us.”

[The Haverford School](#), in fact, focuses on the interdisciplinary nature of real-world problems. In its Fords Focus Days, a seven-day program that’s been successfully inserted in the middle school curriculum by three teachers, the “need to think across disciplines” stands out. Students applied their problem-solving skills to “the earth’s problems” and the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. The practical experience promotes passion, perseverance, curiosity, intellectual humility and character: all aspects of useful creativity.



Cheryl Joloza, who teaches science to the fifth grade at The Haverford School, describes her class’s goal as “thinking differently.” She seeks to induce “out-of-the-box” thinkers, in part by stressing that there’s “no one right way to solve a problem.” She wants students that are willing to take risks and asserts that “failure is good learning.”

REINVENTING SCHOOL

My role is to “create the conditions where creativity can emerge,” says Dan Hickey, the Head of the [Upland Country Day School](#). He speaks of the music, visual arts and drama programs. The school has an “idea center” where students learn “important things.” Unshackled by the constraints imposed in a public school, the teachers are given autonomy and have responded with a “passionate” and “joyful” style. An English teacher himself, Hickey emphasizes risk-taking: the kids “can’t be afraid to fail.”

Brian Fahey, Head of West Chester Friends School, says, “I would measure success by observing students ... Are they comfortable taking a risk? Do they feel the need to copy others, or to ‘color between the lines’? Do they find freedom and joy in the creative process? What do they have to say about their own work?”

“Just trying something new, whether that new result is acceptable or not, is success,” says Brian Manelski, English teacher and Theater director at [Archmere Academy](#). “When students feel the freedom to write or say whatever comes to their mind, that’s the success. I tell students that they will fail 90% of the time that they explore the creative world. But persistence and willingness to build off failures means creative ideas later on.”

Risk-taking is rewarded. Messiness welcome. Failure invited. Imagination encouraged. Passionately, joyfully, our independent schools are blazing a new path to foster creativity in this generation of students. ♦



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Guide to PRIVATE, INDEPENDENT & CYBER SCHOOLS



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Crum Lynne

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370 Central Ave. 610-644-2551; VMAHS.org
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7th Grade Practice Exam: Apr. 2
7th Grade Admissions Fair: May 4



Media

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Virtual Open House: Feb. 25, Apr. 22, May 20
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Malvern

Malvern Preparatory School



418 S. Warren Ave. 484-595-1100
MalvernPrep.org
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Middle School Preview Morning: Mar. 11
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610-649-7440; FriendsCentral.org

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Lower School Open House: Nursery-Gr. 5, Virtual: Feb. 2, 12 noon;

Apr. 6, 9:30 am

City Avenue Open House: Stay tuned for spring Open House dates



Guide to PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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Entrance Exam Testing: Mar. 5

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DELAWARE

Wilmington

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Guide to **PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

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A Home at Isabella Furnace

LIVE WITH HISTORY IN NORTHERN CHESTER COUNTY

Laurel Anderson

FEW PEOPLE DREAM OF MAKING A HOME surrounded by the remains of the last iron furnace built in Chester County—not even history buffs familiar with our area's rich past linked to the iron industry.

Yet several fascinating properties, once sites of former iron furnaces, dot the pastoral northern Chester-Berks County border: Warwick Furnace Farm, maker of cannons and cannonballs for the Revolutionary War; Hopewell Furnace, a National Historic Site and 848-acre park; Joanna Furnace, started by Samuel Potts with others and named after Potts' wife; and the Reading Furnace Historic District with a showcase mansion house restored by R. Brognard Okie.

Another property near Elverson—Isabella Furnace, named after Isabella Potts of the Potts iron-making family—was the last iron furnace to operate in Chester County, going “out of blast” in 1894. And it was the first place that Ted and Debby Flint visited when searching for a new home in 1985.

“Ted fell in love with it on the spot during the open house, as we looked out at the snow on the grounds,” says Debby, remembering her late husband. “He’d worked at Bethlehem Steel and felt a real connection to the place and its history.”

And so the Flints created their dream home on a hill surrounded by 26 mostly wooded acres and the massive stone buildings from a bygone era. This property, on the National Register of Historic Places, is ready for its next owners.

MAIN HOUSE

Previous owners had taken the first steps in 1972 in converting one of the industrial buildings into a residence. Towering stone walls provided the “good bones” for a unique structure that became a 5,700-square-foot house spanning three floors.

The Flints continued the process of sensitively restoring the historic buildings and creating a grand yet comfortable home—an open-space design, with soaring ceilings, wood beams and stunning



stone walls. “Every window has a view of the grounds and, when open, lets in the sound of Perkins Run—a tributary of the East Branch of the Brandywine,” says Debby.

A modern addition added amenities and joined the house to a charming landscaped courtyard. The addition was part of the “upside-down” design of the home with most living space—foyer, living and dining rooms, kitchen, primary suite, powder room, laundry room and workshop—all on the top level.

The second level includes much more open space, along with a large study and wet bar, while the ground level is where the home’s second bedroom and two of the four full bathrooms are found.

This exquisitely restored and renovated two-bedroom, four-bathroom (plus two powder rooms) home has preserved the best of the historic character while adding modern amenities. You’ll find air conditioning, upgraded utilities, security system, modern

eat-in kitchen, four fireplaces, two-story open spaces, along with a pool, spa and gardens. Extra features include welcome details such as skylights, stained glass windows, cedar closets, soaking tub, wine storage and an electric vehicle charging station.

OTHER BUILDINGS

Along with the remains of the original massive stone furnace, several buildings—some fully, others partially restored—offer options for the next owners.

One of the largest stone buildings you’re likely to see in our area is the charcoal storage building. At 100’ x 50’ and 60’ tall, this massive stone building was once used by railroad cars to unload supplies. Railroad trestles and ties are still visible. It could easily house a large collection, of say, antique cars, or potentially be a stunning venue for events. It’s already seen one family wedding.

A second large building, the blast house, was rebuilt in 2007 and converted into a huge great room with fireplace and powder room on the main level, plus bedroom and bathroom above. The local historical society has held meetings and events in this large

entertainment space, which also hosted another family wedding.

A charming and much smaller brick building resembling a folly has been partially restored, and now boasts a green terra cotta roof. This could easily become an office, studio, potting shed or other special refuge. And yet another historic building offers even more options for restoration and imagination.

THE FUTURE

Debby Flint is ready to turn Isabella Furnace over to its next caretakers. After 35 years of enjoying large gatherings of friends and holidays with family—dinners included 30-some guests next to towering Christmas trees—as well as peaceful views from every window—of stone walls, deep woods, gardens—she’s ready to move on.

The process of placing a portion of the property under conservation easement has begun with the help of Natural Lands. This will help preserve the special character of an area with adjacent tree farms and other conserved properties.

Now Debby has a new project: finding the next owner. “I’m looking for a new owner interested in preserving this piece of history.” ♦

For more information about this historic home set on 26 partially wooded acres and offered by Country Properties, Berkshire Hathaway, Fox & Roach at \$2.1 million, contact Mark Willcox, 610-347-2065 or 610-716-0592. TheCountyProperties.com.



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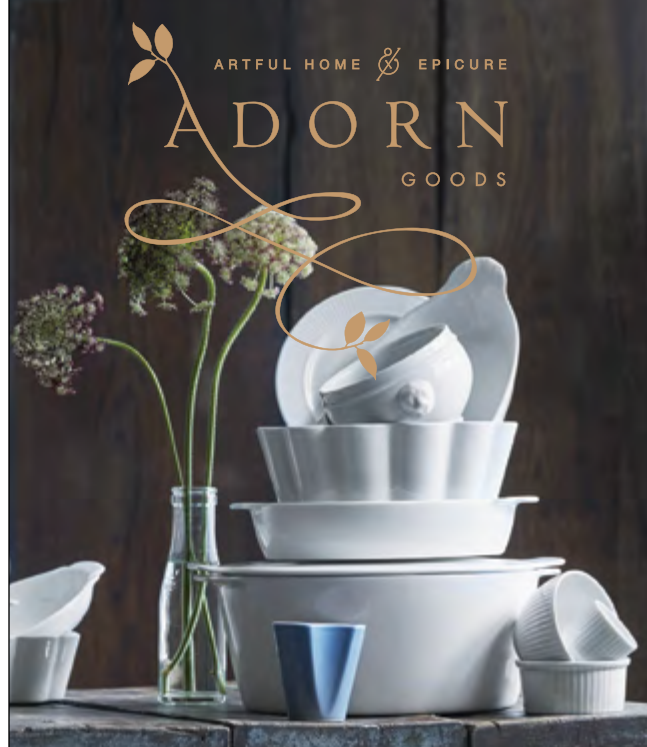
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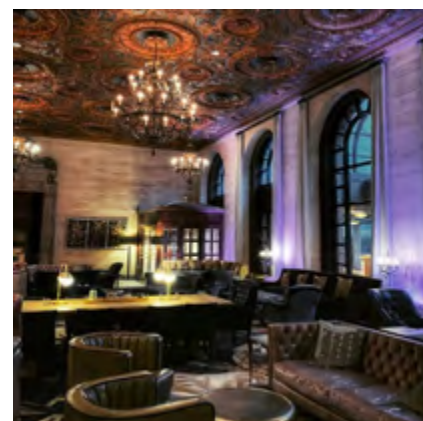


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[Food News] *A few of our favorite things to share this month about local food and drink*

Gilded Age Glamor. Spice up your weeknight happy hour at Hotel Du Pont's **Toast to Twilight**, a cocktail hour inspired by Gilded Age traditions. Both hotel guests and visitors can gather in the historic



hotel's lobby to sample artfully crafted drinks by Robert Kidd, beverage manager at the on-site restaurant, Le Cavalier. With seasonal cocktails and a rotating menu, there's always something new to try. *Mon.-Thurs., 5:30 p.m. 42 W. 11th St., Wilmington. HotelDuPont.com.*

Choco-Cocktails.

Looking for something sweet this Valentine's Day? Try one of the many **chocolate cocktails** popping up on local menus. Sip a chocolate martini at The Social in West Chester or Downingtown, order the salted caramel espresso martini with chocolate liqueur and chocolate shavings from Malvern's Farmhouse Bistro, or treat your inner child to an adult take on hot chocolate at Appetites on Main in Exton or Springfield's Tavola. *TheSocialWC.com; SocialOn30.com; FarmhousePeoplesLight.com; AppetitesOnMain.com; Tavalas.com.*



New Brews. Calling all beer lovers: Tin Lizard Brewing Company is opening a new location at the historic Pickering Creek Inn in Phoenixville. **The Pick Music Hall** will be joining the lively bar scene on downtown Bridge Street. The Pick will be serving up the barbecue Tin Lizard is known for and featuring beers from their Bryn Mawr tap-house and other breweries across Pennsylvania. Follow Tin Lizard on Facebook and Instagram for updates. *37 E. Bridge St., Phoenixville. TinLizardBrewingCo.com.*

Charcuterie Beauty. No party is complete these days without a charcuterie board. For custom boards that are just as good to look at as to eat, check out **Olive and Meadow** at the West Chester Artisan Exchange. Owner Ariel LeVasseur of Wallingford offers both classic boards and creative arrangements like charcuterie cones, cups and a champagne-glass tower. Boards can be ordered for pickup or delivery, or you can buy one at the Artisan Exchange Market every Saturday. *208 Carter Dr., Suite 13B, West Chester. OliveAndMeadow.com.*



Trains and Treats. Start your next trip to Center City at Wayne's historic SEPTA station and get something tasty from Named after the Revolutionary War general and town namesake, the café is owned and operated by local veterans. Make the wait for your train sweet with gelato, wake up with an espresso or sip an Italian soda. Online ordering, open 7 days a week. *135 N. Wayne Ave. MadAnthonyWayneCafe.com.*



Feast Among Friends

A GROUP GATHERS TO MAKE CHINESE NEW YEAR AN ANNUAL CULINARY TRADITION

Alyssa Thayer

IT WAS 29 YEARS AGO WHEN A GROUP OF EIGHT friends gathered for the first time to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Their elaborate, multi-course meal would be the first of many, stretching deep into the evening before the last courses were finished.

Today, the group still gathers annually for their good luck feast, albeit with fewer courses and a much earlier end time.

Liz Girvin-Marcus, the organizer of the event, has always loved hosting. When she moved to a new place (first New York City, then Boston and the Philadelphia suburbs), she used it as a way to forge new relationships. “Food is an invitation. People can be hesitant to host, but they always like to be invited,” she says.

Liz’s husband, David, who worked in the food industry, would often talk about lavish banquets he attended in Chinatown. After years of hearing of these festive affairs, Liz thought, “I love Chinese



food. Why don’t we try to make some and celebrate the Chinese New Year?” And so it began.

It started small, just one other couple, a noodle dish and stir fry. But slowly the group grew and so did the menu.

For a few years Liz did all the preparations. “It was like the Olympics of cooking,” she remembers. She would begin pouring through cookbooks months in advance. The week-of, she’d venture down to Chinatown to gather ingredients. Finally, in the days leading up to the dinner, she’d begin chopping, mincing and prepping for hours.

As with any longstanding tradition, it shifted over time. “As we’ve gotten older, we’ve paired down the number of dishes,” says Liz. The group kept the recipes they loved and dropped the ones they didn’t, and group members began taking on parts of the meal. One friend perfected sweet and sour soup, while another couple created the winning dessert combination of traditional almond cookies and refreshing citrus sorbet.

Deep fryers and rice cookers made preparation more efficient (and reliable). And about ten years ago, they began ordering a centerpiece protein, Peking Duck, from a local restaurant (Sang Kee Asian Bistro in Wynnewood) and never looked back.

There were plenty of laughs and lessons learned along the way—like the time a grease fire broke out thanks to an unstable wok, and when they ended up deep frying spring rolls in the snow. And there was the memorable year when they prepared and devoured Ken Hom’s fried cashews, only to realize they weren’t hungry for the other courses.

As she thinks back on this tradition and the meaning of the holiday, Liz says warmly, “It’s about being with family and food. And this group is truly our chosen family.”



The 2019 Chinese New Year gathering. Plans are pending for 2022.

Hot and Sour Soup

Liz says you can tell how good a recipe is by how many grease and food stains there are on the page—the more the better. This recipe for hot and sour soup enjoyed for many years is from one member’s graduate school cooking class or “cooking therapy.”

Find the typed recipe on our website, CountyLinesMagazine.com.



Chinese Broccoli in Oyster Sauce

Chinese broccoli, or gai lan, is a deep green vegetable with flat leaves, long thin stalks and smaller florets. It has a slight bitterness that subsides when cooked. If you can’t find it, substitute broccolini (as seen in photo), regular broccoli or bok choy in a pinch.



Good Luck Eats . . .

The Chinese New Year—aka the Spring Festival or Lunar New Year—has a whole host of traditional foods and customs. All of them are meant to help usher in a prosperous New Year. Many of the foods have names that are similar to a saying or greeting.

Spring Rolls – These crowd-pleasers are said to represent wealth, as they closely resemble bars of gold. They are a savory mix of meat and vegetables rolled into a thin dough wrapper and deep fried to golden perfection.

Fish – Similar in Chinese to the word for leftover, fish (often prepared and served whole) represents having abundance to carry over into the New Year. There’s significance given to the type of fish, how it’s prepared and how it’s served, depending on how deeply you want to dive (pun intended).

Dumplings (Jiaozi) – Their purse shape also symbolizes prosperity. Word to the wise, make sure dumplings are well pleated and stuffed. Flat purses are not a good omen!

Nian Gao – The name of this sticky, soft cake sounds like the words for tall and is said to represent achieving or rising higher in the coming year. It’s made with traditional ingredients including glutinous rice flour and brown sugar bricks.

Noodles (long ones) – Many noodle dishes are found at almost every Chinese celebration. While the type of preparation can vary, the length of noodles does not. Long noodles represent a long and prosperous life.

- 2 lb. Chinese broccoli*
- 1½ T. vegetable oil
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1½ T. grated ginger
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 T. oyster sauce
- 1½ T. light soy sauce
- 1 T. Shaoxing rice wine
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- ½ C. chicken broth
- 2 tsp. cornstarch

***Note:** The larger the stalks, the more fibrous. If large and tough, peel the outside layer of stalk off before preparing.

Wash broccoli, chopping off and discarding tough ends. Cut diagonally into ¾-inch pieces. Blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes, drain and refresh in cold water to keep vibrant green color and stop the cooking. Dry completely.

Heat a wok over high heat. Add the oil and heat until very hot (should be shimmering). Stir-fry scallions, ginger and garlic for 10 seconds. Add broccoli. Cook until heated through.

Whisk together remaining ingredients in a small bowl. Pour into wok, and stir until the sauce has thickened. Toss to coat the broccoli and serve warm.

Serves 6.

Tips for Feasting with Friends

Not only is it a big job for one person to do all the cooking for a group gathering, it can be more fun to include others in the preparations. Here are a few tips and tricks to create your own super-club style event.

Take the Lead – Successful dinners have someone at the helm. This person can coordinate menus (see below), set up times and communicate changes. Liz says people want to participate, but they just need a little direction.

Set a Date – Trying to navigate schedules for busy people is tough. Choose a date and frequency well in advance and stick to it, even if it means you don't get everyone in the group every time.

Pick a Theme – Choosing a new cuisine makes the event more exciting and helps people think outside the box. It also keeps the menu cohesive so you don't get a potluck hodge podge.

Make a Menu – Just as we balance flavors in a dish, we should also balance the components of a meal—sweet/savory, rich/refreshing. Each element plays a part.

Ditch Perfection – Often people will delay hosting until they have acquired the perfect china, house or skills. Liz encourages us to find the courage to start where we are.

Know Your Audience – Have a vegetarian in the group? Add plant-based proteins. Know someone who doesn't like to cook? Assign them a dish along with suggestions of restaurants with to-go menus.

Pickled Vegetables

Liz prepares a batch of these for the table, as they offer some fresh acidity to the meal. To lighten the cooking burden on the day, prepare ahead of time and serve chilled day-of.

- 1 turnip (approx. $\frac{2}{3}$ lb.)
- 1 medium carrot
- $\frac{1}{3}$ lb. green cabbage or cauliflower
- 10 slices fresh ginger root
- 2 small dried hot peppers, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C. sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C. white vinegar or rice vinegar

Cut turnip, carrot and cabbage (or cauliflower) into bite-sized pieces. Combine in a large bowl. Add ginger root, red peppers and salt. Mix well. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 6 hours.

Lightly rinse vegetables with cold water and drain well. Add sugar and vinegar. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 6 hours. Serve cold.

Keeps in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Serves 6–8.

Lovebirds Shrimp

This recipe serves up two delicious preparations of shrimp in one dish and has become a perennial favorite among the group. One of the best parts of preparing new cuisines is the opportunity to try new ingredi-

ents—in this case it's the complex acidity of Shaoxing rice wine and the warm heat of chili bean paste.



- 1 T. cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{2}$ egg white, beaten
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- High heat oil for deep frying
- $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. snow peas, ends trimmed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sugar
- 1 scallion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. ginger, finely chopped
- 1 T. light soy sauce
- 1 T. Shaoxing rice wine*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sesame oil
- 1 T. chili bean paste (toban jiang)
- 1 T. tomato puree

***Note:** Its amber color differs from clear rice wine and has a more complex flavor.

Combine cornstarch with enough water to make a paste. Stir in egg white and a pinch of salt. Then add shrimp, stirring.

Fill a wok one-quarter full of oil and heat until a piece of bread fries golden brown in 15 seconds. Add shrimp and cook for 1 minute, stirring to separate. Remove from wok with a slotted spoon as soon as the color changes, then drain. Pour the oil out, reserving 1 tablespoon.

Reheat the reserved oil over high heat until very hot and stir-fry the snow peas with the salt and sugar for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Remove and place in center of serving platter.

Reheat the wok again and stir-fry the scallion and ginger for a few seconds. Add the shrimp, soy sauce and rice wine, and stir-fry for 30 additional seconds. Then add sesame oil. Transfer half the shrimp to one end of the serving platter.

Add the chili bean paste and tomato puree to the remaining shrimps, blend well, tossing to coat. Then transfer to the other end of the platter.

Serves 4.

Chicken with Fish Flavor

Asian recipes are filled with interesting word puns and naming conventions. Although the “fishy” name could seem off-putting, Liz assures us that “the dish does not taste like fish; it means the chicken is served in a sauce that is also used for fish.”

- 1 T. egg white
- Salt to taste
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cornstarch
- 6 dried black mushrooms
- 2 T. chili paste with garlic
- 2 T. light soy sauce
- 1 T. dry sherry or Shaoxing rice wine
- 1 C. shredded bamboo shoots*
- 8 small long green hot peppers, julienned
- 3 T. fresh ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C. carrot rounds, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, flattened but left whole
- Peanut, vegetable or corn oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$ C. plus 3 T. water
- 1 tsp. sesame oil

***Note:** These are most commonly found canned. Substitutions could include canned or fresh water chestnuts or sliced jicama.

Put shredded chicken in a large bowl. Add egg white, salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sugar and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cornstarch. Blend well. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Put the mushrooms in a bowl and add boiling water to cover. Let stand 15–30 minutes. Drain, cut off tough stems, and cut caps into shreds. Set aside.

Combine chili paste with garlic, soy sauce, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sugar, wine and salt to taste. Set aside.

Add bamboo shoots, fresh hot peppers, ginger and carrots to the mushrooms. Set aside.

Prepare smashed garlic and set aside.

In a wok heat 1 cup oil and add chicken shreds, stirring to separate. Cook 30 seconds, stirring, over high heat. Drain immediately.

To the same pan add 2 T. fresh oil and garlic. Cook, stirring, over high heat for 30 seconds. Add the mushroom mixture and cook, stirring, over high heat for about 50 seconds. Add the chili paste mixture and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of water. Stir and cook over high heat about 2 minutes. Then add the chicken and cook, stirring, about 30 seconds.

Blend the remaining 2 tsp. of cornstarch with the 3 T. water and stir it in to thicken. Cook for about 1 minute, stirring.

Pour into a serving dish. Drizzle with the sesame oil.

Serves 6.

Almond Cookies

These light cookies are a perfect treat to wrap up your “good luck” dinner—and in our opinion much tastier than a fortune cookie.

Orange sorbet or granita makes an excellent accompaniment and a refreshing bright note after the multi-course dinner.



- 1 C. shortening (don't use butter; Crisco works well)
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C. ground, blanched almonds
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. all-purpose flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 36 blanched almonds (wholes or halves)
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 T. water

Grease baking sheets and set aside. Preheat oven to 350°.

Mix shortening and sugar in a large bowl until smooth. Add egg, ground almonds and almond extract. Mix well.

In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Gradually add to egg mixture, mixing well. Dough will be stiff.

Shape dough into 36 small balls. Place balls 3–4 inches apart on greased baking sheets. Place an almond on top of each ball then press with the palm of your hand to make a 2-inch disc shape.

Mix egg yolk with water in a small cup to make a glaze. Brush each cookie with glaze and sprinkle with sugar. Place in preheated oven to bake for approximately 20 minutes or until lightly golden.

Cool on wire racks.

Makes 36 cookies. ♦

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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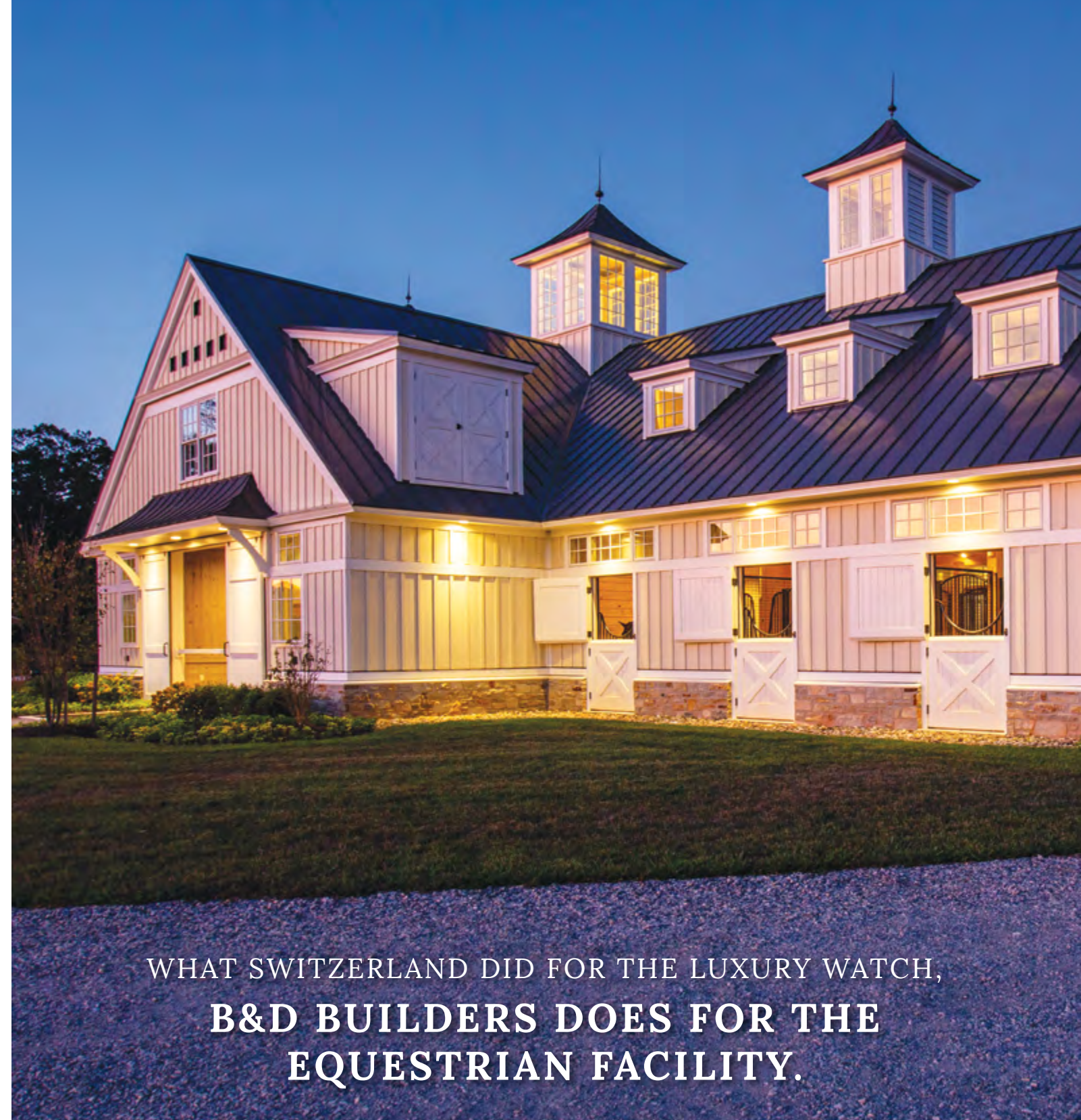
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