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DECEMBER 2023

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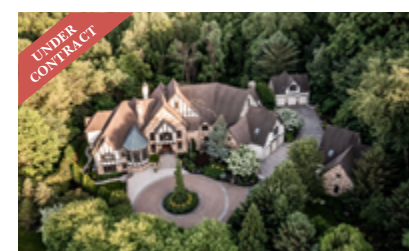
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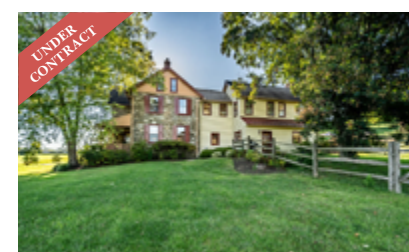
### Penn Township | Unique Estate Opportunity

Set on approximately 32 acres off a quiet country road and privately located down a long lane, sits this four bedroom, two and a half bath antique home that offers a special opportunity to create a fabulous equestrian farm or a superior gentleman's estate. The gracious, light-filled home features generously sized rooms and period details throughout. The oldest section of the home dates to the mid-1700s with a mid-1800s section and a still later Kitchen and Family Room/Office addition dating from the 20th century. The large Living Room features an original fireplace with a period mantel. The adjoining Dining Room is conveniently located just off the Kitchen, with its plentiful counter space and bay windows. The south facing covered porch is a perfect location to relax and enjoy the farm's bucolic views across protected meadows. Upstairs, all four bedrooms each have several windows, large closets, and original wood flooring. There are two hall bathrooms. The two bay Garage has a large storage area on the second level that could be converted to a Home Office or other use. The large bank-barn features a spacious loft with post and peg construction and a lower level, once used for the farm's dairy operation. Well priced and adjoining preserved farmland, this 3-parcel property offers a wonderful opportunity to live the epitome of a country lifestyle. Lastly, there its a unique opportunity here for any Agricultural Conservation Easement with the Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. Call us to hear the positive benefits of this easement.

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## from the EDITOR

Ho, Ho, December! Stores, trees and houses are ablaze with lights. There's music in the street. Carolers stroll the towns. The holidays are here!

So, consider the "Holidays at the Theater," by Elizabeth Hughes, filled with ideas. Take in a show at People's Light, Media Theatre, Uptown and more. Your seat awaits!

For more festivities, read how eight towns plan their seasonal celebrations. From tree lighting to train rides, Erin McGinniss visits area towns asking "Ho Ho Ho — Who Wouldn't Go?"

Cara Corridoni says Christmas in West Chester is back with all the charm you've come to expect, along with surprises. Read "New Shops Liven Up West Chester's Holiday Shopping Experience" for a tour.

Thinking about gift giving? In "Gifting Made Easy," Shelley Laurence of Main Point Books recommends a trip to your local bookstore to breeze through your list. Sustainable choices can be part of gifting. In "Planting Holiday Joy," Shannon Montgomery suggests giving plants, the original green gift. Or choose sparkling wines, special pairings, warming spirits. Liz Tarditi shares suggestions in "The Ultimate Holiday Gift Guide."

To help, Marci Tomassone compiled a list of local shops, museums and restaurants with great gift ideas in "Holiday Window Shopping." Plus "Holiday Style" has more options.

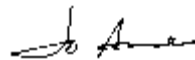
Perhaps give yourself the gift of travel. How about a cruise? Whether for education, adventure or pure luxury, Ed Malet has advice in "Get Aweigh?"

Brandywine Table's Courtney Diener-Stokes shares recipes for some of the best gifts — homemade cookies — in "A Sweet Bite of Family History." Yum!

Or, instead of giving traditional gifts, donate to a local nonprofit in the name of a friend or family member. In "A Giving Back Guide," Abbey Gau finds way to make a difference in the community.

Finally, our Best Local Events section is our special gift! So many ways to celebrate this season.

Our best wishes for the season and a Happy New Year!

  
Jo Anne Durako  
Editor

## COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

December 2023

Volume XLVII Number 4

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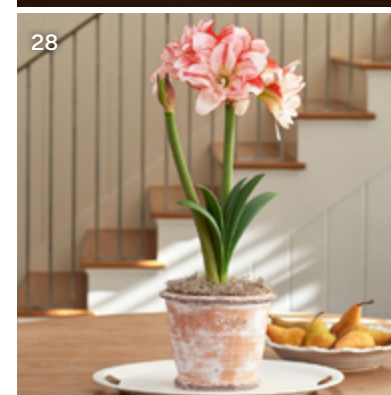
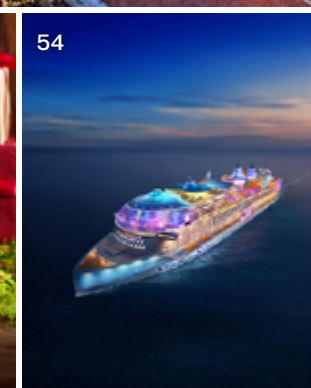
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Cover photo and top photo this page by Timlyn Vaughan Photography



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Children's Holiday SingAlong

Our Holiday  
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## MAKING MEMORIES FROM THANKSGIVING TO NEW YEAR'S EVE

DANCE



**12/29 Ballets With a Twist**  
Holiday Ballet Party

JAZZ



**12/19 The Cartoon Christmas Trio**  
Includes Local School Choirs  
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MOVIE  
MONDAYS

**12/4 Elf**  
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NYE

**12/31 New Year's Eve**  
**A Sparkling Start!**  
Spend your New Year's Eve  
at Uptown!

### [Good to Know]

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

**Get Inspired.** Let your creative juices flow at **Randall Graham Studio**, new in West Chester, above Pine + Quill. In addition to showcasing Graham's paintings, the studio offers adult art classes taught by Graham. Open to all skill levels, classes are designed around intensive, personalized training, with just eight



students per class. The 12-week winter session starts the week of November 27, with in-person and online options available. 25 N. Walnut St., West Chester. [RandallGraham.com](http://RandallGraham.com).

**Scottish Story.** This holiday season, gift an animal-loving kiddo ***The Story of Neeps and Tattie*** (Maine Authors Publishing), a new book from Valley Forge resident Amy Johnson and sister-in-law Diane Madden. It's based on the true story of Annie, a 10-year-old in Loch Ness, Scotland who adopted two young tortoises. Now 62, Annie still cares for the tortoises — which can live over 100 years! A portion of the book's proceeds benefit tortoise rescue groups. [NeepsAndTattie.com](http://NeepsAndTattie.com).



**Wintry Webs.** Here's a new Christmas tree decorating tradition: Ukrainians add an unusual adornment — **spiderwebs**. Legend says a poor widow and her children found a pinecone had taken root outside their home. They tended the sapling until it grew into a beautiful Christmas tree, but they couldn't afford to decorate it. On Christmas morning, they awoke to find a spider had spun intricate webs on the tree, which shone silver and gold in the sun. [Ukraine.com](http://Ukraine.com).

**Soothing Sounds.** Unwind with the sound of **singing bowls**, a form of sound therapy originating thousands of years ago in Tibet, thought to promote deep relaxation and healing. Discover the effects yourself at two events hosted by Carol Metzker of Sound and Wellness: "Rediscover Your Glow," December 13 at 6:30 p.m. at JusticeRain in West Chester, and "Find Peace in the Chaos of the Holidays,"



December 16 at 10 a.m. at the newly opened Calabrese Performing and Creative Arts Center in Kennett Square. [Facebook.com/SoundAndWellness](https://www.facebook.com/SoundAndWellness).

**Portraits with Plants.** Need a gift for a photographer in your life, or want to polish your own skills? Longwood Gardens is hosting an **Introduction to Portrait Photography** course. Start with an online orientation on February 22, then head to the gardens on the 24th for a photoshoot with your classmates — all cameras welcome, including smartphones! Finally, wrap up with an online critique on February 29. \$116–\$129. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. [LongwoodGardens.org](http://LongwoodGardens.org).



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# West Chester Christmas Parade &



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## December Picks

Our Picks for top events this month

### Yuletide at Devon

Through December 31



Head to the Devon Horse Show Grounds to see a winter festival that blends the feel of a traditional European Christmas market with the thrill of a festival and holiday experience. Highlights include music, gourmet food, an Enchanted Forest with

over 900 real and artificial Christmas trees, photos with Santa, amusement rides and world-class shopping. *Devon Horse Show Grounds, Rt. 30, Devon. Wed.–Fri., 3 to 10 p.m.; Sat.–Sun., noon to 10 p.m.; Note: Dec 18–21 opens at noon. \$22.99–\$34.99. [YuletideDevon.com](http://YuletideDevon.com).*



### Yellow Springs Village Holiday Stroll

December 8

Join in an evening of festive fun in the village. Stroll through and enjoy the decorations, lights and luminaries lining the village with tree lighting, crafts, storytelling, music, Santa and refreshments. *1685 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. 5 to 8 p.m. Free. [YellowSprings.org](http://YellowSprings.org).*

### Winter Luminary Nights at Jenkins Arboretum

December 8–10



Bundle up for a walk down to the pond while enjoying luminary lanterns and delicious bites and brews outside the John J. Willaman Education Center.

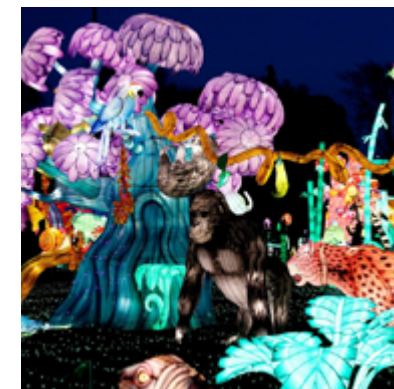
The giant wreath will

also be on display, creating the perfect backdrop for holiday photos. Refreshments available. *631 Berwyn Baptist Rd., Devon. 5 to 8 p.m. Donations accepted. [JenkinsArboretum.org](http://JenkinsArboretum.org).*

### LuminoCity Holiday Lights Festival

Through January 15

This year's theme, "Golden Holiday," is a state-of-the-art production that brings art, light and color to life through remarkable displays of dinosaurs. It's a winter wonderland where you'll encounter dinosaurs with lighting sculptures surrounding them, a decorated Christmas tree and life-sized candy canes. *Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Wed.–Mon., 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$29–\$32. [LuminoCityFestival.com](http://LuminoCityFestival.com).*



### Holiday Shows at The Colonial Theatre

December 8 & 17

**Dec. 8,** Jessica Lynn's "A Very Merry Country Christmas" is a full multi-media presentation featuring dancers, choirs, surprises and special FX. Experience the magic of Christmas while raising money and collecting for Toys for Tots.

**Dec. 17,** City Rhythm Orchestra Holiday Style will get you in the holiday spirit with exciting and innovative versions of seasonal classics. *227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. Times and tickets, 610-917-1228; [TheColonialTheatre.com](http://TheColonialTheatre.com).*





# best Local Events

## FAMILY FUN

### DECEMBER 1 & 2

#### Christmas Celebrations in Wayne.

*Dec. 1*, enjoy carriage rides, arts and crafts, carolers, tree lighting and Santa's arrival, 5:30 to 8, tree lighting at 7:30 pm. *Dec. 2*, Radnor Memorial Library Elves for Shelves Fun Run and 5K at 8 am and the Santa Parade, 9:45 am down Lancaster Ave. with Santa pictures on the veranda of Rosalie Restaraunt, Wayne Hotel, 139 E. Lancaster Ave. [WayneBusiness.com](http://WayneBusiness.com).

### DECEMBER 2

**Coatesville Christmas Parade.** Lively event with bands, floats, antique cars, cartoon characters and entertainment. *Business Rt. 30, Strode Ave. to 11th St. Starts at 10 am. CoatesvilleChristmasParade.com.*

### DECEMBER 2, 16, 31

**The Holidays in Media.** Media will be alive for the holidays with carolers strolling in the State Street District. On *Dec. 2*, pose for a family photo atop a giant inflated snowman chair at Plum Street Mall and on *Dec. 16*, enjoy complimentary hot chocolate. *Dec. 31*, ring in the new year at the Ball Drop in the center of town. [VisitMediaPA.com](http://VisitMediaPA.com).

### DECEMBER 6 & 9

**Brandywine River Museum of Art Family Events.** *Dec. 6*, Read Aloud Pajama Night. Children are invited to wear their pajamas and listen to the tale of *The Polar Express* as they enjoy hot chocolate and cookies, 7 pm, \$12–\$20. *Dec. 9*, Breakfast with the Trains, an exclusive, behind-the-scenes, before-hours visit includes a private tour of the trains in action and a continental breakfast in the café. 8:30 to 10 am. \$25. *1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford, Brandywine.org.*

### DECEMBER 9

**Holiday Craft Market and Tree Lighting at Springton Manor Farm.** Lots of holiday fun with kids' inflatables, ornament making, pictures with Santa, crafts, food and more. Explore the barn for those one-of-a-kind gifts and stocking stuffers. 860 Springton Rd., Glenmoore. Noon to 5 pm. Tree lighting at 5. Free. [ChesCo.org](http://ChesCo.org).



### DECEMBER 9

**Celebrate the Holidays in Downingtown.** The hometown Christmas parade features local bands, dancers, scouts and, of course, the arrival of Santa Claus. *From Beaver Creek Elementary School down Rt. 30 to East Ward Elementary. 3. DTownChristmas.com.*



### DECEMBER 16

**The Philadelphia Orchestra Children's Holiday Spectacular.** Celebrate with the Philadelphia Orchestra and enjoy sing-alongs, sounds of the season and special guests—you never know who might pay a special visit to Verizon Hall! *Kimmel Center, 300 S. Broad St., Philadelphia. 11:30 am. \$28–\$57. KimmelCulturalCampus.org.*



### HOLIDAY TRAIN RIDES

*All Aboard the Holiday Trains! Be sure to check websites for hours and ticket info.*

**Colebrookdale Railroad.** *Through Dec. 23, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas and Santa's Polar Bear Express Trains. 64 S. Washington St., Boyertown. Colebrookdale-Railroad.com.*

**New Hope & Ivyland Railroad.** *Through Dec. 30, Santa's North Pole Express. 32 W. Bridge St., New Hope. NewHopeRailroad.com.*

**Railroad Museum of PA.** *Dec. 2 & 9, Home for the Holidays. A nostalgic look back at railroading's holiday past with festive decorations, Yuletide music, costumed interpreters and Santa himself. Register at RRMuseumPA.org.*

**Strasburg Rail Road.** *Through Dec. 31, choose from Santa Claus Limited, Night Before Christmas Train and Santa's Paradise Express. 301 Gap Rd., Ronks. StrasburgRailRoad.com.*

**West Chester Railroad.** Santa Express: *through Dec. 17*, join Santa for a journey through the Chester Creek Valley. Christmas Tree Train: *Dec. 3, 10*, take the train to Wiggins Tree Farm, cut down your tree which will be banded up, tagged and placed on the train. 203 E. Market St., West Chester. [WCRailroad.com](http://WCRailroad.com).

**Wilmington & Western Railroad.** *Dec. 6–30*, ride the Holiday Lights Express. *Through Dec. 23*, take the Santa Express. Greenbank Station, 2201 Newport Gap Pk., Wilmington. [WWRR.com](http://WWRR.com)

### HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

#### THROUGH DECEMBER 2

**Brandywine Museum of Art Annual Holiday Critter Sale.** Delightful, distinctive ornaments and tabletop decorations handmade using natural materials, each with its own unique personality and expression—no two are the same. Chadds Ford Historical Society, 1736 Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. Preview Wed, 10 to 4; Thurs–Sat, 10 to 5; Sun, 10 to 3. [Brandywine.org](http://Brandywine.org).

#### THROUGH DECEMBER 30

**Holiday Season at Nemours Estate.** The Christmas decorations at the Nemours Estate mansion are often inspired by the architecture of the home, the customs of the du Ponts or French tradition. Nemours Mansion, 850 Alapocas Dr., Wilmington. Tues–Sun, 10 to 5. \$10–\$20. [NemoursEstate.org](http://NemoursEstate.org).

#### THROUGH JANUARY 1

**Holidays at Hagley.** Returning this year with the theme “Treasures and Traditions” that celebrates the little things in life that bring us joy. Featuring the sixth annual Gingerbread House Competition, Santa Day and Holiday Nights Tours. Hagley Museum, 200 Hagley Creek Rd., Wilmington. Times and tickets, [Hagley.org](http://Hagley.org).

#### THROUGH JANUARY 2

**Herr's Snack Factory Holiday Lights Display.** Enjoy the free display of over 600,000 dazzling lights on their corporate campus, 271 Old Baltimore Pk., Nottingham. Dusk to dawn, 5 pm to 7 am. Free. [Herrs.com](http://Herrs.com).

#### THROUGH JANUARY 7

**Brandywine Railroad Holiday Train Display.** This iconic O-gauge model train display features trains running on 2,000 feet of track and includes locomotives, passenger and freight trains, and trolleys that pass through a small village, a farm, factories, a drive-in movie theater and even a carnival. Brandywine River Museum of Art, 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Daily, 9:30 to 5. \$10–\$25. [Brandywine.org](http://Brandywine.org).



### The Holidays in Kent County

*Take a day trip or plan an extended stay to enjoy all the area has to offer.*

#### December 1–2

**Dickens of a Christmas Weekend** Step back into 1840s London and experience the holiday season as Charles Dickens imagined it with carriage rides, home tour, food and more. Fri, 5 to 9 pm; Sat, 8 am to 6 pm. [MainStreetChestertown.org](http://MainStreetChestertown.org).

#### December 1–17

**Little Women** Take a break from the holiday bustle and enjoy a classic at the historic Garfield Center for the Arts, 210 High St., Chestertown. [GarfieldCenter.org](http://GarfieldCenter.org).

#### December 2

**Santa Arrives by Boat and Crab Basket Christmas Tree Lighting** Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive by boat at The Bulkhead in Rock Hall, then Santa will travel by firetruck to Main Street to officiate the lighting of Rock Hall's Crab Basket Christmas Tree. Enjoy s'mores roasted over a community firepit and follow Santa and Mrs. Claus to “Santa's House” in the Visitor Center for children to make their Christmas wishes.

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227 Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460



THROUGH JANUARY 7

**A Longwood Christmas.** “A Very Retro Christmas” is the theme this year. Reminisce amid a vintage Christmas street scene, make new memories amid dazzling light displays—including some super-sized surprises—and revel in the radiance of retro at every turn. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. \$16–\$30. Timed tickets req. LongwoodGardens.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 7

**Yuletide at Winterthur.** Explore the house decorated in all its finery with its signature traditions including the dried flower tree, artistic Christmas trees inspired by Ann Lowe gowns and a spectacular table set for Christmas dinner. 5105 Kennett Pk. (Rt. 52), Winterthur, DE. Timed tickets required. Winterthur.org.

DECEMBER 1

**Bryn Mawr Rehab Craft & Vendor Fair.** The fair, sponsored by Bryn Mawr Rehab’s Volunteer Auxiliary, features a variety of crafts and products, such as animal collars, jewelry, artisan woodwork, children’s books and more. Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital, 414 Paoli Pike, Malvern. 10 to 4. MainLineHealth.org.

DECEMBER 1

**Feel The Holiday Spirit in Phoenixville.** This is First Friday Holiday Edition with tree lighting downtown, 6 to 8 pm. Phoenixville-First.org.

DECEMBER 1-3

**Hibernia County Park Mansion Candlelight Tours.** Walk through the halls and rooms by candlelight in the fully restored mansion, hearing stories of this ironmaster’s home. Tours are continuous through open hours. 1 Park Ave., Coatesville. Fri–Sat, 5:30 to 8:30; Sun, 2 to 4. \$5; under 10, free. ChesCo.org.

DECEMBER 2

**Uwchlan Garden Club Christmas Fair.** Fresh cut local greens, handmade wreaths and swags, centerpieces and planters, treats, raffle and more. Benefits the 1756 National Historic Site. 1756 Uwchlan Meeting House, 5 N. Village Ave., Lionville. 8 to 2. UwchlanGardenClub.org.

DECEMBER 2 & 3

**Candlelight Tours at the Muhlenberg House.** Savor the sights, sounds and smells of an authentic Pennsylvania German Christmas. Interpreters in authentic period clothing will share stories from the Muhlenberg family in each room. Stock up on holiday gifts in the gift shop. 201 W. Main St., Trappe. Sat, 3 to 9; Sun, noon to 4. \$5. HistoricTrappe.org/Events.

DECEMBER 2 & 3, 9 & 10

**Kennett Square Holiday Village Market.** Shop dozens of artisan and vintage vendors while

enjoying live music, festive cocktails, food trucks and more. The Creamery, 401 Birch St., Kennett Square. 11 to 5. KennettCollaborative.org.



DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23

**Christmas in Kennett and Longwood Gardens.** Park in Kennett Square and enjoy shopping, dining and strolling. Then catch the shuttle and revel in A Longwood Christmas at Longwood Gardens. Reservations required. 1:30 to 6:30. \$16–\$30. LongwoodGardens.org/Events-Performances/Events/Christmas-Kennett.

DECEMBER 8

**Holiday Open House & Auction at The National Iron & Steel Museum.** Walk through candlelit grounds, enjoy holiday refreshments, listen to the Lukens Band and tour decorated historic buildings. The online auction site will allow you to peruse the wonderful gifts and items open for bidding. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. 5 to 8 pm. Donation requested. SteelMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 9

**Phoenixville Firebird Festival.** The mission of this annual event (now in its 20th year) is to foster a collaboration of local artistic and creative talent and to enhance the cultural life of Phoenixville. Burning of the Firebird at Veteran’s Field, 192 Mowere Rd. 5 to 10 pm. \$30–\$140. FirebirdFestival.com.

DECEMBER 9

**Christmas in Marshallton.** Come out to Marshallton United Methodist Church to enjoy these holiday favorites. The cookie sale starts at 9 and handmade crafts will be available from 9 to 1. A free community lunch of soup and sandwiches starts at 11:30 am. 1282 W. Strasburg Rd., Marshallton. MarshalltonChurch.org.

DECEMBER 10

**Holiday Candlelight Tour & Open House at Historic Waynesborough.** Take a tour of the beautifully decorated mansion by local garden clubs and craft festive ornaments for the tree. In addition, you’ll enjoy holiday music and refreshments. Open 4 to 6, tree lighting at 5. \$10, \$5

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. Sat, 9 to 1. Beg. Jan. 6 through Mar. 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. FarmToCityMarkets.com.

**Downingtown Farmers Market,** Kerr Park, 28 E. Pennsylvania Ave. Sat, 9 to 1. Beg. Jan. 13 through Apr. 27, 2nd & 4th Sat. 10 to noon. GrowingRootsPartners.com.

**Eagleview Farmers Mkt.,** Eagleview Town Ctr., 570 Wellington Sq., Exton. Thurs, 3 to 6:30. Beg. Jan. 4 through Apr. 18, 1st & 3rd Thurs. 11 to 1. GrowingRootsPartners.com.

**Kennett Square Farmers Mkt.,** 401 Birch St. Fri, 3 to 6. KSQFarmersMarket.com.

**Lancaster County Farmers Mkt.,** 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed, Fri & Sat, 6 to 4. LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.

**Malvern Farmers Market,** Burke Park, 26 S. Warren Ave. Sat, 9 to 1. Beg. Jan. 6 through Apr. 20, 1st & 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. GrowingRootsPartners.com.

**Media Farmers Market,** Edgemont St. between Front & State Sts. Beg. Dec. 3 through Apr. 1st & 3rd Sun, 10 to noon. FarmToCityMarkets.com.

**Phoenixville Farmers Market,** 200 Mill St. Sat, 10 to noon. Beg. Jan. 6 through Mar. 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

**Thornbury Farmers Mkt. & CSA,** 1256 Thornbury Rd., West Chester. Thurs–Fri, noon to 6; Sat, 9 to 6; Sun, 11 to 5. ThornburyFarmCSA.com.

**West Chester Growers Mkt.,** Chestnut & Church Sts. Through Dec., Sat, 9 to 1. Jan. 6 through Apr. 20, 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

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

for children, \$25 for families and groups of four. PhilaLandmarks.org.



DECEMBER 16

**The Belsnickle: PA Germans Holiday**

**Traditions at Landis Valley Museum.** Enjoy light refreshments and shopping, make a punched tin ornament, learn about PA Dutch holiday and agricultural traditions, hear a reading of the PA Dutch *Night Before Christmas* and meet the Belsnickle. 1 pm. \$20–\$30. 2451 Kissel Hill Rd., Lancaster. LandisValleyMuseum.org.



DECEMBER 31

**Midnight in the Square in the Mushroom Capital of the World.** Kennett Square will be aglow with the light of a giant mushroom on New Year’s Eve, and there will be much merriment surrounding the event with live entertainment and dancing. Held at the intersection of State and Union Sts. The raising of the mushroom takes place at 8:55 and festivities continue until the countdown and Mushroom Drop at midnight. KennettCollaborative.org.

ART, CRAFTS & ANTIQUES.....

THROUGH JANUARY 1

**Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market.** Local artisans, designers, crafters and jewelers offer their holiday-inspired handmade goods and gifts. Dilworth Park, west side of City Hall, 1 S. 15th St., Philadelphia. Sun–Thurs, noon to 8; Fri–Sat, noon to 9. MadeInPhila.com.

THROUGH JANUARY 28

**Bryn Mawr Rehab’s 28th Annual Art Exhibition & Sale.** An international juried exhibition and sale that features work by artists with physical and cognitive disabilities and hearing and visual impairments. Special events throughout the exhibition. MainLineHealth.org/Specialties/Rehab-Art-Ability.

DECEMBER 1-9

**Community Arts Center Holiday Sale.** Featuring over 60 local, handcrafted gifts by members of The Potters Guild and other artisans. Jewelry, ceramics, wood, fiber and more. 414 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford. Mon–Fri, noon to 7; Sat, 10 to 5; Sun, noon to 5. Free. CommunityArtsCenter.org.

DECEMBER 1-JANUARY 20

**CraftForms 2023, 28th Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft.** An interna-

Handel’s Messiah



*Handel’s Messiah celebrates the story of the season, and you can see it at several nearby locations. Visit websites for times and tickets.*

DECEMBER 1, 3, 15, 17  
Vox AmaDeus

A holiday tradition on original Baroque instruments. Performed at 4 locations. VoxAmaDeus.org.

DECEMBER 2 & 3  
Lancaster Symphony Orchestra

First Presbyterian Church, 140 E. Orange St., Lancaster. LancasterSymphony.org.

DECEMBER 20 & 21  
Philadelphia Orchestra

Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall, 300 S. Broad St., Philadelphia. PhilOrch.org.



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**IRON & STEEL**  
HERITAGE MUSEUM

**Holiday Open House and Auction**  
**December 8, 2023**  
5pm — 8pm

Enjoy the magical beauty of the Lukens Historic District, dressed in holiday finery. Luminarias line the pathways, refreshments abound, music wafts through the air, and Santa waits for wish lists from eager children.

We are also continuing a wonderful component to the revelry: an on-line auction filled with enchanting items for all.

Children/Free Adults/\$5

**Steelmuseum.org**  
**610-384-9282**  
50 South 1st Avenue  
Coatesville, PA 19320



## Where to see The Nutcracker

A holiday tradition with ballet companies across the area taking us on the magical journey, all to the backdrop of Tchaikovsky's mesmerizing score. Visit websites for times and tickets.



### DECEMBER 8 & 9 Schuylkill Valley Regional Dance Company

Phoenixville Middle School Theatre, 1000 Purple Pride Pkwy., Phoenixville. SVRDC.org.

### DECEMBER 8-30 Philadelphia Ballet

Kimmel Center, Academy of Music, 240 S. Broad St., Philadelphia. PhiladelphiaBallet.org.

### DECEMBER 15-17 Brandywine Ballet

Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester. BrandywineBallet.org.

### DECEMBER 15-17 Wilmington Ballet

The Playhouse on Rodney Square, 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. WilmingtonBallet.org.

### DECEMBER 16, 17, 22, 23 First State Ballet

Copeland Hall, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. TheGrandWilmington.org.



tional juried exhibition of contemporary fine craft, in basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art and wood. **Dec. 1**, Preview Party, 6 to 10, tickets start at \$100. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. See website for hours. WayneArt.org.



### DECEMBER 9

**Holiday Craft Market at Sugartown.** Over 40 local crafters and artisans are featured. Locust Lane Craft Brewery and Chaddsford Winery offer a Biergarten and food trucks, and a hot cocoa bar will help you warm up. Santa will also be on hand to greet shoppers. Benefits the village of Sugartown. 260 Spring Rd., Malvern. Noon to 4. \$10. HistoricSugartown.org.

### DECEMBER 16 & 17

**Brandywine Holiday Festival of the Arts.** Featuring 150 artists and artisans, offering shoppers unique holiday gifts, decorations, handmade jewelry and much more. Benefits Children and Families First. Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. 10 to 5. VisitWilmingtonDE.com.

### BOOKS

#### DECEMBER 5, 7

**Main Point Book Club.** **Dec. 5**, Fiction Book Group: *Oh William* by Elizabeth Strout, 1 pm. **Dec. 7**, NonFiction Book Group: *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., 7 pm. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. MainPointBooks.com.

#### DECEMBER 6, 13, 27

**Reads and Company.** **Dec. 6**, Big Reads Book Group: *America Fantastica* by Tim O'Brien. **Dec. 13**, International Voices Book Group: *The Bear Woman* by Karolina Ramqvist. **Dec. 27**, The Bridge Street Book Group: *A River Enchanted* by Rebecca Ross. All meet at 7 pm. 234 Bridge St., Phoenixville. ReadsAndCompany.com/Events.

### FUNDRAISERS

#### DECEMBER 2

**The 47th Annual Grand Gala.** Enjoy the concert featuring The Commodores in Copeland Hall followed by The Ultimate After Party at The Hotel Du Pont, 42 W. 11th St., Wilmington,

featuring gourmet food, top-shelf bars, dancing and live local music. Concert, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. 8 pm. Tickets \$250 and up. TheGrandWilmington.org.

### MUSEUMS

#### THROUGH JANUARY 7

**Winterthur Museum.** "Ann Lowe: American Couturier," featuring 40 iconic gowns, many that have never been on public display. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. Tues-Sun, 10 to 5. \$8-\$22. Winterthur.org.

#### THROUGH FEBRUARY 28

**Brandywine Museum of Art.** **Through Jan. 21**, "Allan Freelon: Painter, Printmaker, Teacher." **Through Feb. 18**, "Abstract Flash: Unseen Andrew Wyeth." **Through Feb. 28**, "Rooted: Family and Nature in Contemporary Children's Book Illustration." Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. Wed-Mon, 9:30 to 4:30. \$8-\$20. Brandywine.org.

### MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

#### THROUGH JANUARY 7

**Longwood Gardens Performance Series.** Organ music, carillon recitals and outdoor Christmas musicians. Ring in the New Year at Longwood, open till 10 pm. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. LongwoodGardens.org.

#### DECEMBER 1-17

**VoxAmaDeus Holiday Concerts.** **Nov. 17**, *Brahms Requiem*, a German Requiem and Alto Rhapsody with additional works; **Dec. 1, 3, 5, & 17**, *Handel's Messiah*; **Dec. 9 & 10**, *Renaissance Noël*, celebrating the glorious Renaissance Christmas music of Old Europe. Multiple locations. Times and tickets, 610-688-2800; VoxAmaDeus.org.



#### DECEMBER 2

**Valley Forge Chorus—Barbershop Blizzard Holiday a Cappella Show.** The women's a cappella chorus performs their holiday show at Players Club of Swarthmore, 614 Fairview Rd., Swarthmore. 3 pm. \$15-\$20. ValleyForgeChorus.com/HolidayShow.

#### DECEMBER 3

**Immaculata Symphony Christmas Concert—"The Holly and the Ivory."** Start the

Christmas season with this entertaining program of holiday favorites complete with audience sing-alongs and favorite melodies that will certainly get your family in the holiday spirit. 3 pm. ImmaculataSymphony.org.

#### DECEMBER 3

**Delaware County Symphony—Aus Deutschland.** Featuring the music of Wagner, Schumann and Beethoven. Neumann University Meagher Theatre, 1 Neumann Dr., Aston. 3 pm. \$17-\$20. DCSMusic.org.

#### DECEMBER 6

**Concerts on Kentmere: Celebrate! Pyxis at the Holidays.** Holiday favorites, including selections from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* and, in conversation with the Museum's exhibition "The Rossetis," the ensemble offers Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trio. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 7:30. \$15-\$35. DelArt.org.

#### DECEMBER 6-10

**At The Grand in Wilmington.** **Dec. 6**, Indigo Girls; **Dec. 7**, Watchhouse; **Dec. 8**, Anthony Nunziata: My Italian Christmas; **Dec. 9**, The World Famous, Glenn Miller Orchestra; **Dec. 10**, An Evening with Judy Collins. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

#### DECEMBER 8, 10

**Chesco Pops.** The concert will include a variety of old and new holiday favorites, some featured vocalists and an appearance by Ol' Saint Nick. **Dec. 8**, First Presbyterian Church West Chester, 130 W. Miner St., 7:30 pm. **Dec. 10**, Phoenixville Area Middle School, 1000 Purple Pride Pkwy., 3 pm. Guests are asked to bring a donation of nonperishable food. ChescoPops.org.



#### DECEMBER 9

**Delaware Youth Symphony Orchestra.** Highly qualified artists from the Music School of Delaware and major orchestras along the East Coast perform. 4101 Washington St., Wilmington. 7 pm. Free. MusicSchoolOfDelaware.org.

#### DECEMBER 9

**Chester County Choral Society Holiday Concert.** Performing a variety of holiday favorites. Church of the Good Samaritan, 212 W. Lancaster Ave., Paoli. Times and tickets, ChesCoChoral.org.

#### DECEMBER 9

**West Chester University Wells School of Music—102nd Annual Holiday Program.**



This year's performance will include the symphony orchestra, combined choirs, Criterions and will feature Monteverdi's *Beatus vir*. Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester. 3 pm. \$14. WCUPA.edu/Music.

#### DECEMBER 12

**Delaware Symphony Orchestra—Holidays at the Hotel.** Showcasing the brilliance of the string section, beginning with Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3* and culminating in *Serenade for Strings* by Tchaikovsky. 42 W. 11th St., Wilmington. 7:30. \$100. DelawareSymphony.org.

Happy Holidays

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

THROUGH FEBRUARY 26

**Flight on Ice.** An outdoor “real” ice skating rink brings a season full of family fun, including ice skating sessions, fire pit areas, heated private event tents, entertainers and DJs, theme nights, food and beverages. 4901 West Chester Pk., Newtown Square. Thurs–Fri. 4 to 8 pm; Sat. 11 am to 10 pm; Sun, 11 to 5. For tickets, FlightOnIce.com.



DECEMBER 23

**Wolf Sanctuary of PA Full Moon Fund-raiser.** Bring a blanket, flashlight, chair and a sense of adventure. The event features a roaring bonfire (weather permitting), live entertainment and educational wolf tours that are self-guided with volunteers. 465 Speedwell Forge Rd., Litzitz. 7:30 to 10 pm. \$35, must be 16 years old. WolfSanctuaryPA.org.

THEATER.....

THROUGH DECEMBER 23

**It's A Wonderful Life at The Candlelight Theatre.** One of the most popular Christmas tales ever written. 2208 Millers Rd., Wilmington. Times and tickets, 302-475-2313; Candlelight-TheatreDelaware.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 24

**A Christmas Carol Comedy at Hedgerow Theatre.** A favorite holiday tradition with a playful take on a yuletide classic. 64 Rose Valley Rd., Media. Times and tickets, 610-565-4211; HedgerowTheatre.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 27

**Disney's Frozen, Jr.—Dutch Apple Children's Theatre.** Featuring all of the beloved characters and loaded with magic, adventure and humor. 510 Centerville Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-898-1900; DutchApple.com.

THROUGH DECEMBER 30

**Our Christmas Dinner at Bird-in-Hand Stage.** A holiday musical igniting memories of the true meaning of Christmas. 2760 #A Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-In-Hand. Times and tickets, 717-768-1568; Bird-In-Hand.com/Stage.

THROUGH DECEMBER 30

**A Christmas Carol: The Musical at Dutch**

**Apple Dinner Theatre.** A season classic! 510 Centerville Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-898-1900; DutchApple.com.

THROUGH DECEMBER 30

**Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at Fulton Theatre.** The bright lights of Vegas meet the age-old story of brotherly love and betrayal. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31

**A Christmas Carol at People's Light.** A fresh approach to Dickens' classic. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.



THROUGH JANUARY 14

**Mary Poppins at Media Theatre.** Come watch as the magic unfolds before your eyes. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

DECEMBER 1-17

**The Sound of Music at SALT Performing Arts.** Ring in the holidays with one of your favorite things. 1645 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Times and tickets, 610-488-2585; SALTPA.com.



DECEMBER 6-24

**Peter and the Starcatcher at Delaware Theatre Company.** Upending the century-old legend of Peter Pan with a wildly theatrical reboot. 200 Water St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, 302-594-1100; DelawareTheatre.org.

DECEMBER 18

**At The Playhouse in Wilmington. Dec. 18, A Christmas Carol.** Celebrate the true spirit of the holidays with your family. 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

DECEMBER 1, 9, 21

**1st Fridays, 2nd Saturdays.** First Fridays: Dec. 1, Lancaster City, 717-509-ARTS; VisitLancasterCity.com. **Phoenixville,** 610-933-3253; PhoenixvilleFirst.org. **West Chester,** 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com. **Wilmington Art Loop,** 302-576-2135; CityFestWilm.com.

**Second Saturday Virtual Arts Stroll: Dec. 9,** Media, MediaArtsCouncil.org.

**Third Thursday Malvern Stroll: Dec. 21,** MalvernBusiness.com. ♦

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A novel about “Coming of Age” in Delaware County, PA

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# Holidays at Hagley



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f i t i



# HOLIDAY House Tours



## December 2

**Annual Christmas in Odessa Holiday House Tour.** Take a self-guided walking tour of private homes and public buildings, many dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, decorated for the holidays. Fresh Greens Sale at the Fieldstone Stable, 202 Main St. from 9:30 to 4. Women's Club of Odessa fundraiser for local student scholarships. 10 to 5. \$30. [ChristmasInOdessa.com](http://ChristmasInOdessa.com).



## December 2

**Holiday Home Tour in Strasburg.** See seven lovely homes, of varying age and style, all decorated for the season. Tour tickets, lunch, greens, craft vendors and a silent auction, all at the First Presbyterian Church, 101 S. Decatur St., Strasburg. 10 to 4. \$25. [StrasburgHeritageSociety.org](http://StrasburgHeritageSociety.org).



## December 2

**Phoenixville's Annual Candlelight Holiday Tour.** Visit decorated homes and churches on this self-guided tour, also featuring crafts, music and refreshments. Benefits Phoenixville Area Senior Center. *Begins at the Senior Center, 153 Church St. \$25. 4 to 8. 610-933-9181; PHXHolidayTour.Weebly.com.*



## December 8

**Surrey Holiday House Tour & Shop.** The tour, featuring six Main Line homes from Bryn Mawr to Berwyn, is sold out for this year. Gifts for sale at the Holiday Shop, 11-6, Eisenhower Hall at Valley Forge Military Academy, 1001 Eagle Rd., Wayne. Benefits Surrey Services. [SurreyServices.org](http://SurreyServices.org).



## December 9

**Spirit of Christmas in Historic New Castle, DE.** Stroll through homes and museums, meet Santa, enjoy music, a Winter Market, and food from restaurants and vendors. Join caroling and the tree lighting. 25 E. 2nd St., New Castle, DE. 10 am. Free. [SpiritOfChristmasDE](http://SpiritOfChristmasDE).



## December 9

**Chestnut Hill Holiday House Tour.** Explore Chestnut Hill's stunning homes, each with festive decorations that capture the holiday spirit. Drive your car or take the event trolley on a self-guided tour. Get map at Chestnut Hill College, 9601 Germantown Ave. 10 to 4 pm. \$50. [ChestnutHill.org](http://ChestnutHill.org).



## December 3-18

**West Chester Public Library Holiday Home Tour and Holiday Door Tour.** *Dec. 2*, the Holiday Home Tour features eight homes in the Borough decked out for the holidays. 10 to 3, \$40. *Dec. 2-17*, the Holiday Door Tour is a self-guided tour of doors and porches decorated in holiday finery. Donate to receive a map and a list of scavenger hunt items to look for among the decorations. [WCPublicLibrary.org](http://WCPublicLibrary.org).



## December 2

**Dickens 2023 House Tour in Chestertown, MD.** Explore beautifully adorned homes, each with its unique, festive charm. Immerse yourself in the warm ambiance and enchanting decor that captures the spirit of the holidays in downtown Chestertown. The Bank, Dickens Welcome Center, 211 High St., Chestertown. 10 to 2. \$40. [MainStreetChestertown.org/Dickens](http://MainStreetChestertown.org/Dickens).



## December 3

**Pottstown Historic House Tour.** This year, the tour explores homes highlighted in the recently released book based on Pottstown's Chicken Hill, *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride, visiting homes in the Chicken Hill neighborhood and beyond. Tour on your own or on the Historic Guided Trolley Tour. 1:30-3:30. \$30-\$60. [PottstownGoFourth.com](http://PottstownGoFourth.com).



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# Holidays at the Theater

CATCH A SHOW AT A LOCAL THEATER THIS MONTH

Elizabeth Hughes

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE THE THEATER. As you sink into your seat, program in hand, the feeling of anticipation grows. Then, the house lights dim, the spotlight shines, and you're transported to another time and place — 19th-century England, the depths of the ocean or a magical world unlike our own.

As the curtain rises on this festive season, it's the perfect time to take in a show. Our local theaters have been gearing up for the holidays and have plenty of exciting performances planned.

Join us on a tour of the region's performing arts scene, spanning Chester and Delaware Counties as well as Wilmington. No matter your age or taste, you're sure to find the show for you.

## CHESTER COUNTY

We start in Chester County, where area theaters have put together a holiday season jam-packed with exciting performances. From classic musicals to big band and bluegrass concerts, there's something for everyone.

Starting in Lionville, the **Barley Sheaf Players** perform *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, December 1 to 10. Based on the book by L. Frank Baum (author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*), the play answers all your questions about Santa Claus — where he

came from, how he started making toys, why he climbs down chimneys, and even how he learned to laugh “ho, ho, ho!” For tickets and times, visit [BarleySheaf.org](http://BarleySheaf.org).

Over in Phoenixville, **The Colonial Theatre** has two special holiday shows planned. First up is Jessica Lynn's “A Very Merry County Christmas” on Friday, December 8. This national touring show combines traditional holiday songs with dancers, choirs, special effects and more, all while raising money and collecting toys for Toys for Tots. Come back on Sunday, December 17 to see the City Rhythm Orchestra's annual Christmas show, “Holiday Style.” You'll hear innovative versions of holiday classics in their renowned big band style, along with featured vocalists and soloists. For tickets and times, visit [TheColonialTheatre.com](http://TheColonialTheatre.com).

In Malvern, see **People's Light's** rendition of *A Christmas Carol*, running through December 15. Experience Charles Dickens' classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future like never before. This fresh retelling features both original songs and traditional English carols to delight audiences of all ages. For tickets and times, visit [PeoplesLight.org](http://PeoplesLight.org).

For another holiday staple, Chester Springs' **SALT Performing Arts** puts on a lively version of *The Sound of Music*, December 1 to 17. The final collaboration between Rodgers and Hammerstein, the

beloved story of the von Trapp family features all your favorite songs, including “Do-Re-Mi,” “My Favorite Things” and, of course, “The Sound of Music.” For tickets and times, visit [SALTPA.com](http://SALTPA.com).

Still looking for more holiday fun? West Chester's **Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center** has events for all ages and tastes. Kiddos will love “The Holiday Cheer Show,” featuring Uptown Studio's youth performers, December 1 at 5 p.m. The show runs for about an hour, leaving plenty of times to scout out a spot for the West Chester Christmas Parade at 7. Then, see all your favorite princesses perform holiday and Disney classics at “A Dream Is a Wish,” December 23.

For grownups, Uptown's December musical lineup includes Accent's “An A Cappella Holiday” on the 6th, Nefesh Mountain's bluegrass holiday concert on the 14th and Twelve Twenty-Four: The Holiday Rock Orchestra, the nation's longest running Trans-Siberian Orchestra tribute, on the 22nd. For tickets and times, visit [Uptown-WestChester.org](http://Uptown-WestChester.org).

## DELAWARE COUNTY

Moving east, you'll find that Delaware County is full of talented performers as well. Here's what two Delco theaters have in store this month.

Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, Media's **Hedgerow Theatre Company** puts on *A Christmas Carol Comedy* through December 24. This fun and festive adaptation of Dickens' story returns to Hedgerow after its U.S. premiere there last year, featuring two actors playing Scrooge and “everybody else.” As an added bonus, the December 10, 14 and 17 shows include live performances by WXPB folk duo Last Chance. For tickets and times, visit [HedgerowTheatre.org](http://HedgerowTheatre.org).

In downtown Media, the **Media Theatre** has two exciting musicals to enjoy for the holidays. Part of their Broadway Series, *Mary Poppins* runs from December 5 to January 14, with all the music and magic of the classic Disney film. In addition, the Children's Theatre performs *Finding Nemo Jr.* on Saturdays and Sundays, December 16 to January 14. This 60-minute musical adaptation of the Pixar movie features all new songs, including “Just Keep Swimming,” “Fish Are Friends, Not Food” and “Go With the Flow.” For tickets and times, visit [MediaTheatre.org](http://MediaTheatre.org).

## WILMINGTON

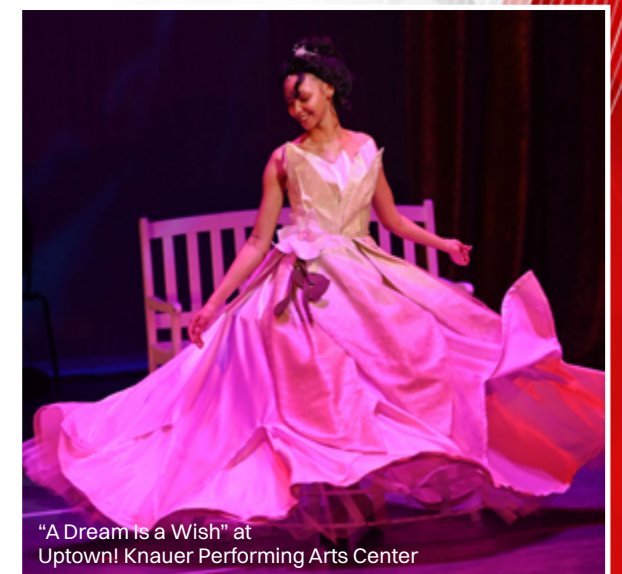
Consider a trip across state lines to Wilmington, where the city's theaters have an exciting holiday season planned.

First, the **Candlelight Theatre** performs *It's a Wonderful Life*, running through December 23. Based on the iconic Frank Capra film, this show follows George Bailey and his Guardian Angel in a heartwarming story of love and friendship. For tickets and times, visit [CandlelightTheatreDelaware.org](http://CandlelightTheatreDelaware.org).

For a twist on an old classic, see the Delaware Theatre Company's performance of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, December 6 to 24. This Tony Award-winning play is “a grownup prequel to *Peter Pan*,”



A Christmas Carol at People's Light



“A Dream Is a Wish” at Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center





chronicling how a nameless orphan became The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up. Twelve actors take on the roles of over 100 memorable characters in this sensational show. For tickets and times, visit [DelawareTheatre.org](http://DelawareTheatre.org).

Last but not least, there are even more holiday shows at The Grand. On Decem-

ber 10, see a 50-year music veteran at "An Evening with Judy Collins: Holidays and Hits." Later this month, the First State Ballet Theatre brings *The Nutcracker* to Copeland Hall, December 16 to 23. Or, see the Wilmington Ballet's version at The Grand's sister stage, The Playhouse on Rodney Square, December 15 to 17. Also at The Playhouse, catch Perseverance Productions' new adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* on December 18. For tickets and times, visit [TheGrand-Wilmington.org](http://TheGrand-Wilmington.org).

This holiday season and beyond, we encourage you to support the performing arts and take in a show at a local theater. Better yet, get into the giving spirit by gifting tickets to your friends and family. Happy holidays! ♦



## More in Lancaster County

*There are even more holiday happenings in Lancaster County. Here's what our western neighbor has in store this season. Check websites for tickets and times.*

### American Music Theatre

November 7-December 30: "The 2023 Christmas Show: The First Noel," 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. [AMTShows.com](http://AMTShows.com).

### Bird-in-Hand Stage

October 26-December 30: *Our Christmas Dinner*, 2760 Old Philadelphia Pk., Bird-in-Hand. [Bird-In-Hand.com/Stage](http://Bird-In-Hand.com/Stage).

### Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre

November 17-December 30: *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*, 510 Centerville Rd., Lancaster. [DutchApple.com](http://DutchApple.com).

### The Fulton Theatre

November 17-December 30: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. November 30-December 23: "Holiday Cabaret." December 2-30: *Peter Pan*, 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. [TheFulton.org](http://TheFulton.org).

### Sight & Sound Theatres

November 3-December 30: *Miracle of Christmas*, 300 Hartman Bridge Rd., Ronks. [Sight-Sound.com](http://Sight-Sound.com).



# A Giving Back Guide

GIVE THE GIFT OF A HELPING HAND

THE HOLIDAYS ARE A TIME for family, friends, gratitude and giving. And this year, instead of giving traditional gifts — another candle, scarf or gift card — why not donate in their name to a local nonprofit?

Here are some suggestions for making a difference in our community.

**Chester County Food Bank:** The Food Bank is the central hunger relief organization for the County, working with 150 community partners. These partners are a network of food cupboards, hot meal sites, shelters, school districts and other social service organizations that distribute over 3.6 million pounds of food annually, with 55% being fresh produce, fruit, eggs, dairy and protein.

**Ways to Give:** \$50 per month provides two seniors with a Grocery Box of shelf-stable food to stretch their budget. \$100 per month sponsors a family of four through the Fruit and Vegetable prescription program.

**Home of the Sparrow:** Their mission is to partner with women facing homelessness to secure housing, achieve long-term stability and chart new paths for their futures. Last year, this nonprofit was able to help 896

“ \$25 provides a clicker, treats and microchip for one puppy in training. \$50 feeds one dog in the kennel for a month.

women and children facing homelessness in Chester County.

**Ways to Give:** Adopt a family through the Holiday Gift Program with a \$100 donation.

**Handi-Crafters Opportunity Center:** This group runs one of the largest nonprofit employment- and disability-focused support service programs in the region. It provides outsourcing solutions that empower individuals with employment barriers.

**Ways to Give:** A \$50 donation directly supports individuals with intellectual and

developmental disabilities through meaningful employment.

**Canine Partners for Life:** For over 35 years, CPL has trained service and companion dogs to assist individuals who have physical, developmental and cognitive disabilities. At any given time, CPL has 60 to 80 dogs in the training program and supports over 150 active service and companion dog teams across the U.S.

**Ways to Give:** \$25 provides a clicker, treats and microchip for one puppy in training. \$50 feeds one dog in the kennel for a month.

**Open Hearth, Inc.:** A leader in resource coordination and community-building efforts, Open Hearth provides innovative programs to support and empower people to end the cycle of homelessness, get affordable housing and a means of transportation, plus achieve financial stability.

**Ways to Give:** A \$50 donation will provide a client a one-on-one session with a financial navigator to help develop a budget and provide financial coaching.

Spread the good cheer this year ... and next. ♦

— Abbey Gau

## Better Together



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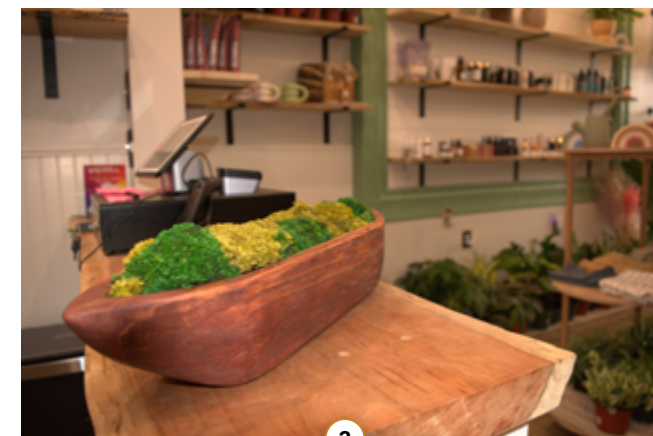




# PLANTING Holiday Joy



1. Holiday plants from Mostardi Nursery
2. Snake plant, jade plant and ZZ plant from Matlack Florist
3. Preserved moss from The Green House



## GIVE THE ORIGINAL “GREEN” GIFT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Shannon Montgomery

**T**IS THE SEASON FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING! While you’re making your list and checking it twice, be sure to consider the impact your celebrations have on our planet.

Making sustainable choices is important all year round, but there’s no better time to keep the environment in mind than the holiday season. Stanford University reports that household waste increases more than 25% between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day, resulting in an additional million tons of trash produced weekly.

While there are many options for eco-friendly gifting (see our December 2022 issue), this year we’re focusing on giving plants — the original “green” gift! Not only do they make beautiful presents, they also provide a host of environmental benefits. Plants purify the air, are biodegradable, don’t require any packaging and don’t need to be wrapped — according to the Clean Air Partnership, around 8,000 tons of wrapping paper (that’s about 50,000 trees’ worth) are used and discarded each year.

Here are some of our favorite plant (and plant-related) gifts, all from local businesses and organizations. As always, consider shopping small and local, which further reduces your carbon footprint and helps support the local economy.

### PERFECT PLANTS

Kick off your holiday shopping at our area’s nurseries, greenhouses and garden shops. While you’re browsing the rows and rows of dazzling plants, be sure to keep your recipient in mind. “There are several important factors to consider before buying a plant as a gift,” says John Rapini, Green Goods Buyer and Garden Shop Manager at Longwood Gardens. “Consider the recipient’s skill level, their light conditions and if they have the right space to plant it.” Luckily, our local businesses have a wide inventory and experts on hand to help you pick the perfect plant.

Stop by **Mostardi Nursery** in Newtown Square, a perennial favorite since 1976. They have all the classic Christmas flowers

— poinsettias, amaryllis, paperwhites — as well as other seasonal greenery, many with festive names. The experts at Mostardi recommend succulents like Christmas cactus and Kandy Kane kalanchoes as well as frosty ferns, flowering helleborus and ardisia plants, plus rosemary and lavender trees.

In West Chester, shoppers have multiple options for finding the perfect plant for anyone on your list. At **Matlack Florist**, co-owner Clare Mulloy says, “Unless your recipient is a seasoned plant parent, we tend to think the best plant gifts are low-maintenance, able to thrive in low-light environments and can tolerate a fair bit of neglect.” She recommends a snake plant, jade plant — “an attractive, slow-growing succulent that’s known to represent growth and prosperity” — or unique-looking ZZ plant, all of which are both pretty to look at and easy to care for.

At **The Green House**, recently opened on Church Street in West Chester, you’ll find a variety of plants in unique pots made by owner Peter Giuffre. For those who love plants but struggle to keep them alive, Giuffre recommends preserved moss. “Preserved moss doesn’t need water or sunlight,” he says. “This solves the problem of giving some greenery but with no strings attached.” Giuffre also suggests wood-trough succulent or cacti gardens. “These are unique, low-maintenance vessels that are great as centerpieces on kitchen tables, coffee tables,” he says. “Anybody would love one of these for their house.” As for flowers, Giuffre says, “My personal favorite is red and pink anthuriums. Their blooms last forever.”

Still looking for more? You’re sure to find a special plant at **The Garden Shop at Longwood Gardens**. Manager John Rapini has recommendations for recipients of all skill levels. For those with less experience, he suggests “easy houseplants such as sansevieria, succulents, hoyas and ferns. Tillandsia (air plants) can make themselves at home practically anywhere.”

For those up for more of a challenge, Rapini recommends a bonsai or orchid. “The gift of bonsai is more than just a plant; it’s the opportunity to have a whole new hobby,” he says. “Orchids can also open up a new hobby for houseplant enthusiasts.”

Finally, Rapini says that you can’t go wrong with **Planted by Longwood**, “a collection of living works of art that are designed and planted onsite by The Garden Shop Design Team at Longwood Gardens. These terrariums and potted plants are beautiful and easy to care for, making them an ideal gift for plant lovers or those looking to add a touch of greenery to their homes.”

### ARTFUL ARRANGEMENTS

Know someone who loves plants but doesn’t have the time — or green thumb — to care for them? You may want to opt for a flower arrangement. Not only are they gorgeous to look at, they require little attention (just add water) and can be composted or dried after they’ve wilted.

For a beautiful gift that supports a great cause, choose an arrangement from West Chester’s **Kati Mac Floral Designs**. Over half the



employees have special needs, and the business provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow. Partnering with local flower farms, they create stunning arrangements using fresh, seasonal plants. Choose an arrangement with red and white flowers along with pine sprigs for a festive gift that's sure to spruce up the recipient's home.

Another great option is Hilltop Flower Co. Their Kennett Square shop offers seasonal bouquets as well as artisan goods for the home and garden. For a unique gift, give a dried floral wreath made with leftover flowers from Hilltop's wedding arrangements — beautiful and sustainable!

Or, give the gift of flowers all year round with a BloomBox subscription from Kenny's Flower Shoppe, a Media staple for over 40 years. Get a custom, handcrafted flower arrangement delivered every month, plus a free stuffed animal. Three-, six- and 12-month subscriptions are available.

### MEMORABLE MEMBERSHIPS

Alternatively, give the beauty of plants without any of the hassle with a membership to one of our area's public gardens. Plus, membership fees contribute to con-

servation efforts, so you can do good with your holiday gifting.

A membership to Winterthur Museum, Gardens & Library includes unlimited free general admission, dawn-to-dusk garden and estate access with miles of paths, discounts in the café and Museum Store, and a free Yuletide at Winterthur house tour, which runs through January 7. Similar benefits are offered at Longwood Gardens and other area gardens.

Can't pick just one garden? With 38 public gardens, arboreta and historic landscapes in the region, Philadelphia is America's Garden Capital, making it a tough choice. Fortunately, you can give the gift of an America's Garden Capital Passport, along with tickets to participating gardens. Encourage your friends and family to log their garden visits and get their passports stamped, just like an international travel passport. In addition to Longwood and Winterthur, participating gardens include Pottstown's Welkinweir, Devon's Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens and Villanova's Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden. Passports are available for free at participating locations or online at [AmericasGardenCapital.org/Passport](https://AmericasGardenCapital.org/Passport).

### A Tree-mendous Gift

Help support reforestation through the U.S. Forest Service's **Plant-A-Tree program**. For as little as \$10, you can plant a tree in a special someone's name. Your donation will be used to acquire and plant seedlings in a national forest of your choice or wherever it's needed most. You can then choose from three different certificate designs to download and present to your green gift recipient. Learn more at [PlantATree.FS.USDA.gov](https://PlantATree.FS.USDA.gov).

This holiday season, reduce your environmental impact by giving the gift of plants. Your loved ones — and Mother Nature — will thank you.

Happy holidays, and happy (green) shopping! ♦

“With 38 public gardens, arboreta and historic landscapes in the region, Philadelphia is America's Garden Capital.



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4. Bonsai from The Garden Shop at Longwood Gardens
5. Holiday arrangement from Kati Mac Floral Design
6. America's Garden Capital Passport

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# Holiday Gifting Made Easy

BECAUSE THERE'S THE RIGHT SIZE BOOK FOR EVERYONE

Shelley Laurence, Main Point Books

LET'S FACE IT. WE ALL LOVE TO GET GIFTS. BUT buying the perfect holiday present for others can be overwhelming, especially if you've got a long list.

A trip to your local independent bookstore is a great way to breeze through the whole gift-buying process! There's something for everyone, whatever their interests.

## START SHOPPING

For example: who doesn't love a well written story that makes you think? *Absolution* by Alice McDermott fits that bill. My colleague, Anmiryam Budner calls *Absolution* "a stunning book that forces you to consider the nature of good deeds. Is a good deed really for the benefit of the recipient or is it for your own? With its Vietnamese setting, this novel ties together the personal and the societal level considerations of these questions brilliantly." She asks the question, "Why have I not read Alice McDermott before?" Have you?

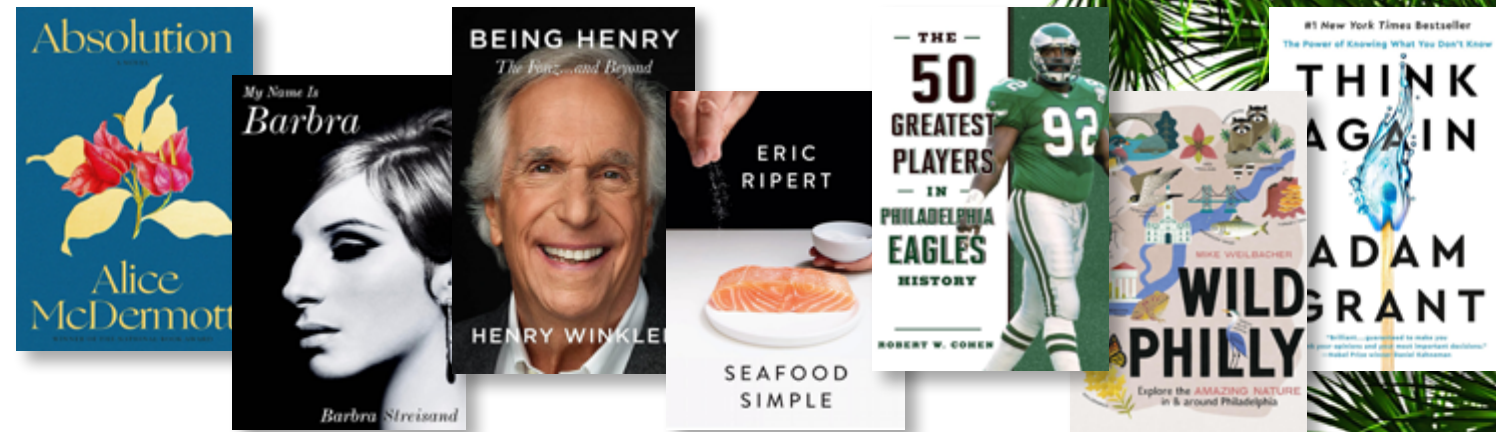
Got a pop culture vulture on your list? A celebrity memoir could be a great choice, especially from a major superstar. Barbra Streisand tells her own story in *My Name is Barbra*. The book is just like Streisand: frank, funny and opinionated. From her early struggles to the break-

out performance (*Funny Girl*) that made her a star, Barbra dishes on everything, including her famous friends and her marriage to actor James Brolin. *My Name is Barbra* is a must for any Streisand fan.

Know someone who fancies The Fonz? They'll love *Being Henry* by Henry Winkler. The actor's memoir is a thoughtful and deeply felt history. He shares stories of his heartbreaking childhood, his struggles with severe dyslexia and the pressures that come with success. This book has it all: heart, charm and, above all, a sense of humor.

Need a book for a cook? Give them the definitive seafood guide from Eric Ripert, the three-Michelin-starred chef of Le Bernardin. *Seafood Simple* features mouth-watering photos and 85 step-by-step recipes for preparing incredible fish at home. Does the thought of tuna carpaccio, crispy fish tacos or shrimp tempura set your mouth watering? *Seafood Simple* is a master class in these dishes and more, created especially for the home cook.

Here's a great gift idea for the Eagles fan in your life (and who doesn't have one of those?). Robert W. Cohen offers up *The 50 Greatest Players in Philadelphia Eagles History*. Cohen scrutinizes the careers of the 50 players who made the greatest impact on the Birds.



It's sure to spark a great debate around the table at Christmas dinner. At least three people on my list are getting this book!

Know someone who wants to spend more time in the great outdoors? *Wild Philly* by Mike Weilbacher is the perfect choice. If you think Philadelphia is a concrete jungle, think again. Weilbacher is the executive director of the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, our area's largest and oldest nature center, and his book is a vibrant, family-friendly guide to the unexpected nature around us. But don't just take my word for it. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* agrees, saying "This guidebook by Mike Weilbacher includes the region's natural history, 101 species to know and 19 field trips in the city, surrounding suburbs and South Jersey."

Want to help someone achieve a goal? With *Think Again*, Wharton professor Adam Grant offers a new framework for raising aspirations and exceeding expectations. Former tennis superstar Serena Williams is a believer, saying "This brilliant book will shatter your assumptions about what it takes to improve and succeed. I wish I could go back in time and gift it to my younger self. It would've helped me find a more joyful path to progress."

## FOR THE KIDDOS

There are plenty of new holiday books for kids, and some are sure to become your next family classic. Mo Willems brings us *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh*. The Pigeon has made his holiday wish list,

and the thing he wants most is to drive a sleigh. Will his dream come true? Your kids will have a great time finding out.

Matt Tavares offers up another holiday classic in the making. *Dasher Can't Wait for Christmas* is a joyful ode to helping others. Dasher gets lost after sneaking out for a holiday party and can't find the North Star in the sky to lead her home. With the help of a child and an unexpected gift, will she make it back in time to guide Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve?

Celebrate Hanukkah with your favorite Diggers! This one is perfect for kids who can't get enough of trucks. *Where Do Diggers Celebrate Hanukkah?* shows diggers, cranes, cement mixers and more eating latkes, lighting the menorah and playing dreidel with friends.

And Kwanzaa takes center stage in *The Night Before Kwanzaa* by Natasha Wing, with Kirsti Jewel. You'll meet a little boy who's excited to celebrate with his family. Every evening, they light a candle and learn about their history.

This is just small sample of what you'll find at your local bookstore. Drop in and get some help to put a dent in your holiday list. Happy shopping! ♦

Shelley Laurence is a bookseller at Main Point Books, an independent bookstore with a handpicked selection for every member of the family. Check out their events, book groups and children's activities at [MainPointBooks.com](http://MainPointBooks.com) or on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Order online for delivery or pick-up. 484-580-6978; 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne.

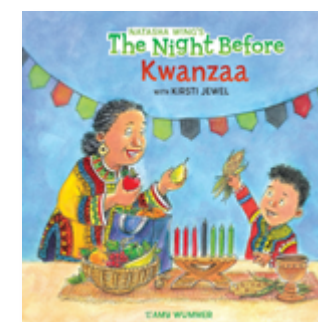






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# SHINY and BRIGHT:

## New Shops Liven Up the West Chester Holiday Shopping Experience

### // NEW SHOPS & OLD FAVORITES ARE HOLIDAY READY //

Cara Corridoni

STOREFRONTS ARE WRAPPED IN PINE. LIGHTS are twinkling. Shop windows are decked out in their holiday best. You can almost hear Bing Crosby singing, “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas...” Or maybe that’s the Uptown Singers performing on the Historic Courthouse steps?

Christmas in West Chester is back with all the charm you’ve come to expect. Only this year, as you make your way up a snow-covered Gay Street (one can hope), you’ll find a bounty of exciting new shopping options tucked in between the tried and true gift deliverers.

### LET’S TAKE YOU TO CHURCH ... STREET

Let’s begin this shopping journey under the holiday lights of Church Street. The already-charming side street is being included this year in the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce’s popular “Lights Up West Chester” program, making it all the merrier.

Church Street is also home to a trio of noteworthy stops. West Chester’s newest coffee shop, **Twin Valley Coffee**, is located on the ground floor of the Church Street Market House (120 N. Church). This is the third location for the local roasters, whose rich, creamy coffee is known to draw fanatics from miles around. Grab a holiday latte and some expert-approved coffee paraphernalia for the caffeine lover on your list. Have a coffee devotee in the family? Twin Valley offers refillable growlers. Gift a filled growler now and the recipient can refill it at a discount in the future. Coffee lasts about two weeks.

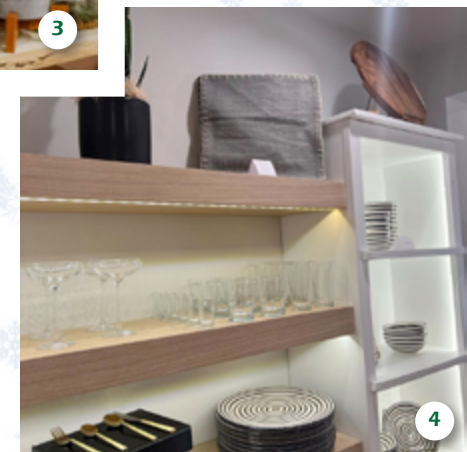
After our caffeine fix, let’s head across the hall to **Turks Head Wines**, a new package shop delivering handcrafted Northern California wines to our area. In January 2022, owner Allison Owen decided to leave the corporate world behind to pursue her passion for world-class wine. Today she sources fruit and produces a diverse portfolio of approachable yet elegant wines. Grab a bottle or two for your next holiday party. Pair with a wine accessory for a perfect hostess gift.

Now that we’re properly caffeinated, and armed with a few bottles of wine, let’s head across the street to the **Green House**, an adorable plants-and-more shop that opened this summer (107 N. Church). While the rest of the world is brown and barren, this little shop is an oasis of green. Choose from a selection of hardy house plants homed in cement pottery made by owner Peter Giuffre. With potted plants ranging from \$15 to \$65, you’ll be tempted to swap all your hostess bouquets for something that lasts long past your visit. Handmade, staff-curated gift baskets are also available.

### GO TO GAY STREET

Turn the corner and head to Gay Street, where you’ll find many of your old favorites. But stay sharp because sprinkled along the way are some fun new finds.

First, go west to **Pomp West Chester** (141 W. Gay). Inside you’ll find a one-of-a-kind collection of small-batch, ethically sourced decor and home goods. The Moroccan Market Basket is gorgeous and surprisingly versatile. Or win



1. Twin Valley Coffee // 2. Turks Head Wines // 3. Green House // 4. Pomp

PHOTO CREDIT: TIMLYN VAUGHAN PHOTOGRAPHY





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with a gift of a chunky wool blanket sure to warm the spirits and the toes of just about anyone on your holiday list.

Next head east and up the stairs to **Solome** (117 W. Gay), a fashion house featuring contemporary women's, men's and kids' clothing. West Chester-based designer Solome Katongole specializes in using bold fabrics and distinctive shapes to create stand-out designs. Wow the crowd at the holiday party with an elegant gown or spice up your winter staples with a bold designer jacket.

### HEAD TO HIGH STREET

Next on to **Bobbles and Lace** (125 N. High), another new boutique. According to owner Crystal Gambardella, Bobbles and Lace offers high fashion at an affordable price. But it's not just the clothes that make this shop worth visiting. "What sets us apart is our styling experience. Every client who walks in will be styled head to toe, whether they leave with one piece or a whole wardrobe," says Gambardella. They also offer private shopping events. So, why not gather a couple of friends and knock the holiday shopping out together while enjoying light refreshments, a 15% discount and lots of laughs?

Right next door is another West Chester newbie generating a lot of chatter, **Mayday Coffee** (125 N. High St.). It opened earlier this year in the retail space regular visitors will recognize as the former longtime home of women's clothier Jane Chalfant. The new location has a distinctly different look and feel, but not all is forgotten. The bold red Jane Chalfant signature can still be spotted out back. Inside you'll find a laid-back West Coast vibe and a curated collection of gifts. Order a handcrafted drink to sip while you peruse hand-poured 1502 Candles and select Poppy & Pout chapsticks for all the lips on your list.

If a change-up from coffee is what you need, how about a spot of tea? Continue south on High Street past the old Courthouse and the splendor of West Chester's 25-foot Christmas tree to **Mimi's Tea Cottage** (30 S. High). Enter a traditional

English tea room filled with floral garlands, brocade chairs and dainty tea cups. Plan to meet friends for a full afternoon tea service, including a selection of sandwiches, scones and pastries. Mimi's also carries a selection of unique tea-themed gift items.

Refreshed and revived, head back out on the street again, this time to **Jawn Supply** (40 S. High), a vintage clothing store specializing in throw-back Ts, sweatshirts, sports apparel and jeans. Merchandise moves quickly in this store, so every day brings a new find. A must-stop if you have Phillies, Eagles, Sixers or Flyers fans on your list.

### A FINAL STOP

Now, one last stop before we stash all our treasures and find a place to cozy up with a cocktail and rest



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### Old Favorites

*Yes, there are plenty of new stops to shop, but a trip to West Chester just wouldn't be the same without a visit to these longtime favorites.*

**Malena's Vintage Boutique.** No one quite knows how to throw a holiday shopping party like Malena's. Expect music, refreshments and rack after rack of the best finds in the business. After 20 years, it's reassuring to know vintage never goes out of style. 101 W. Gay.

**Sunset Hill Jewelers.** There are few gifts that thrill like jewelry, and Sunset Hill Jewelers has been brightening Christmas mornings for 30 years. Not sure where to find the shop? Just look for the bright red bow that wraps the outside of their shop each holiday season. 23 N. High.

**Kaly.** Women's clothier and hostess gift destination, Kaly has been coming to the rescue of holiday shoppers for the last 35 years. With a proven selection of the practical, beautiful and funny (who doesn't need a kitchen towel with sass?), this is a perennial favorite. Plus, they gift wrap. 37 W. Gay.

**The 5 Senses.** Each year this gift shop stocks a unique collection of handmade ornaments, including ornaments in materials from hand-blown glass to felt. You'll need to stop in to see what kind of wonders they have in stock this year. 133 W. Market.

**Visual Expansion Gallery.** What better surprise to find under the tree than a piece of original artwork? The Visual Expansion Gallery has been delighting the West Chester community with an impressive selection of attainable artwork since 1975. 132 N. High.

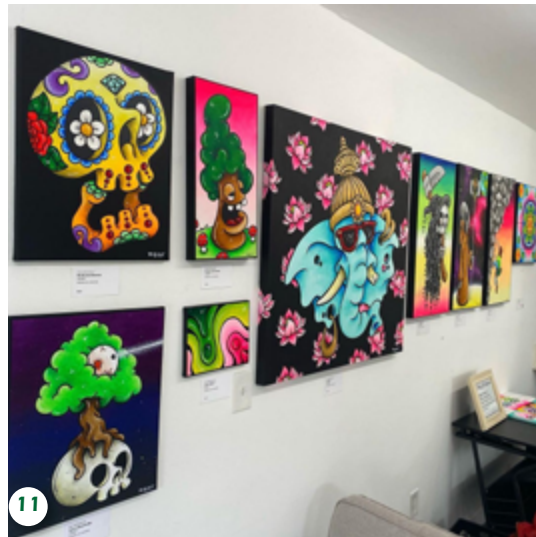
**Taylor's Music.** There's something timeless about the gift of music, and Taylor's has been doing it better than anyone in the region for more than 90 years. Choose from an impressive selection of instruments, accessories and sheet music. Throw in a few lessons for good measure. 116 W. Gay.

**Fairman's Skate Shop.** Serving the skateboard community since 1977, Fairman's reliably delivers wins in one of the toughest gifting categories of all time — boys 12 to 17. Choose from boards, kicks or one of their signature T-shirts. 43 W. Gay.

5. **Solome**  6. **Bobbles and Lace**  7. **Mayday Coffee**  8. **Mimi's Tea Cottage**

9. **Jawn Supply**  10. **Fairman's Skate Shop**





11. Corner Art Collective

our weary soles. This one is just a little outside the downtown district. In the former home of a neighborhood corner store is the new **Corner Art Collective** (341 S. Matlack), a modern art gallery operated by artists. In this narrow space, you'll find bold works of art from a fresh collection of local artists. Don't expect traditional landscapes or muted colors. Everything here is intense, and whimsy is embraced.

With our bags full and our list in tatters, it's time to make our way back to town for a well-earned celebratory happy hour and dinner. And be content to know that this holiday season is sure to be bright ... in part because you shopped local and supported new businesses in their first year! ♦

## Downtown West Chester



## Holiday Shopping Guide

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Tish Kids                            | 30. Erica Brown Studios                 |
| 2. Old Soul                             | 31. The 5 Senses                        |
| 3. Bobbles & Lace                       | 32. Mainline Custom Clothiers           |
| 4. Mayday Coffee & Shop                 | 33. Kaplan's Fine Jewelry               |
| 5. Artistic Eyewear                     | 34. HOP Fidelity                        |
| 6. Paper Moon                           | 35. Kilwins West Chester                |
| 7. Visual Expansion Gallery             | 36. La Chic Boutique                    |
| 8. Sabrina Ann Couture                  | 37. Coins of Chester County             |
| 9. Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry | 38. Sunset Hill Jewelers                |
| 10. Salty Paws                          | 39. Pine + Quill                        |
| 11. KALY                                | 40. Tish Boutique                       |
| 12. Fairman's Skate Shop                | 41. David Katz Gallery                  |
| 13. Green House                         | 42. Prince of Puff                      |
| 14. Le Berger                           | 43. Ever After Bridal                   |
| 15. Turks Head Cafe                     | 44. Woman's Exchange                    |
| 16. Turks Head Wine                     | 45. Church Street Gallery               |
| 17. Kerkula's Jewelry                   | 46. All the Dogs                        |
| 18. Solome                              | 47. Vida Beale Consignment              |
| 19. Vape & Beyond                       | 48. Art Trust Gallery at Meridian Bank  |
| 20. Malena's Vintage Boutique           | 49. Éclat Chocolate                     |
| 21. Precision Eye Care                  | 50. Bryn Mawr Running Co.               |
| 22. May 23 Clothing & Accessories       | 51. A Taste of Olive                    |
| 23. Creep Records                       | 52. Mimi's Tea Cottage                  |
| 24. Pomp West Chester                   | 53. Kati Mac Floral Design              |
| 25. H. Rose Boutique                    | 54. Jawn Supply                         |
| 26. Blink                               | 55. Ginkgo Arts                         |
| 27. Green Eyed Lady                     | 56. Phineas Gage                        |
| 28. Taylor's Music Store & Studio       | 57. G-Spot Modern Retro Thrift Boutique |
| 29. Thistle Be Perfect                  | 58. Corner Art Collective               |



**RIVER STONE UNITED**  
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY




**MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL**  
— West Chester —  
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484-297-9180

We Offer A Place Where Your Children are Uniquely Valued, Welcomed Into Community, Educated and Encouraged To Deeply Connect With Their God-Given Purpose. With Small Classes For Greater Achievement.

**OPEN HOUSE**  
Sunday, February 4 @ 1:30 PM

**SUNSET HILL JEWELERS**



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www.sunsethilljewelers.com  
23 N. High St West Chester, PA  
EST. 1983

Photography by Brian Vaughan

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**610-430-7717**  
Halcogrills.com



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West Chester, PA  
**302.383.9759**  
pineandquillshop.com

# West Chester Events

## THROUGH DECEMBER 17

**West Chester Railroad. Santa Express:** *Through Dec. 17*, join Santa for a journey through the Chester Creek Valley. **Christmas Tree Train:** *Nov. 26, Dec. 3, 10*, take the train to Wiggins Tree Farm. *Trains depart the station at 203 E. Market St., \$10–\$35. Times and tickets, WCRailroad.com.*



## \*\*THROUGH JANUARY 2

**Holiday Weekends in West Chester.** Every weekend features West Chester's dazzling 25-foot-tall Christmas tree and the Professional Gingerbread House Competition. *Dec. 1*, West Chester Christmas Parade, tree lighting at 6:30 pm on the lawn of the courthouse and the West Chester Christmas Parade

at 7 pm features marching bands, cheer squads and dance teams, culminating with Santa on his very own custom-made float. *Dec. 2, 9, 16*, Making Spirits Bright Holiday Music Series on the steps of the courthouse. Catch Santa cruising through the borough on a classic fire truck. For details, *GreaterWestChester.com*.

## \*\*THROUGH JANUARY 2

**Gingerbread House Competition.** Professional builders include: Cakes and Candies by Maryellen, Carlino's, John Serock Catering, Kilwins West Chester, Yori's Church Street Bakery and The Master's Baker. To vote, visit display locations and scan the QR code there. *GreaterWestChester.com*.

## THROUGH JANUARY 5

**"Gifted"—18th Annual Holiday Exhibit at The Art Trust.** Give the gift of original art. 20 talented artists' work is for sale — paintings, ceramics, fiber art and more. Net proceeds of art sales go towards art scholarships. *Dec. 7*, Bourbon & Bubbles, 5 to 8. 16 W. Market St. Gallery hours, Mon–Fri, 9 to 4:30. *TheArtTrust.org*.

## DECEMBER 1-29

**Holiday Events at Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center.** *Dec. 1*, The Holiday Cheer Show; *Dec. 6*, Accent: An A Cappella Holiday; *Dec. 7*, Constantine Maroulis; *Dec. 8*, Hypothetical House Band; *Dec. 14*, Nefesh Mountain Holiday Show; *Dec. 15*, Holidays in Hollywood; *Dec. 17*, The Nuttiest Nutcracker; *Dec. 19*, The Cartoon Christmas Trio; *Dec. 20*, The Last Big Band with Erich Cawalla and Tony DeSantis; *Dec. 22*, Twelve Twenty-Four: The Holiday Rock Orchestra; *Dec. 23*, A Dream is a Wish; *Dec. 29*, Ballets with a Twist. 226 N. High St. 610-356-2787; *UptownWestChester.org*.

## \*\*DECEMBER 2

**Santa at the Square.** The borough of West Chester will host pictures with Santa at Marshall Square Park, 405 N. Franklin St. 4:30 to 6:30. *DowntownWestChester.com*.

## DECEMBER 2

**Breakfast with Santa.** Come over to the Chester County History Center to meet Santa and enjoy breakfast. 9:30 to 11 am. 225 N. High St. \$15. Pre-registration req. *West-Chester.com*.

## DECEMBER 2

**2023 West Chester Charity Ball.** Friends Association celebrates 200 years of serving families in our community, and the Charity Ball has helped in their mission to end homelessness in Chester County. Enjoy dinner, music, dancing, auctions and more. West Chester Golf & Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St. 6:30 pm. \$200. *FriendsAssoc.org/Charity-Ball-2023*.

## DECEMBER 2-17

**West Chester Public Library Holiday Home Tour and Holiday Door Tour.** *See Holiday House Tours in this issue.*

## \*\*DECEMBER 9

**Photos with Santa.** Bring your camera and your kiddos to M&T Bank in downtown West Chester for free photos with Santa and free hot chocolate and coffee. 10 N. High St. 2 to 4 pm. Hosted and sponsored by M&T Bank.

## DECEMBER 9

**American Helicopter Museum Presents SantaFest 2023.** Santa arrives by helicopter at 11 am ready to hear children's wish lists in the colorful Santa's Workshop. Bring your cameras for pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus. SantaFest will feature holiday-themed crafts and movies in the theater. Friends from Paws for People will be there, too. 1220 American Blvd. 10 to 3. \$7–\$10. *AmericanHelicopter.Museum*.

## DECEMBER 9-10

**4th Annual Christkindlmarkt.** A 2-day holiday market featuring over 90 vendors offering individually handcrafted and locally designed products, such as art, ceramics, jewelry, homewares, food and more. Hosted by Chester County Art Assoc. and Downtown West Chester. Gay St. (between Darlington & Matlack Sts.) Sat, 1 to 8; Sun, 11 to 4. Free. *DowntownWestChester.com/Christkindlmarkt*.



## DECEMBER 15-17

**Brandywine Ballet Presents The Nutcracker.** Ring in the season with Tchaikovsky's timeless score and be transported with Clara to the magical Land of Sweets. West Chester University, Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St. Fri, 10 am & 6 pm; Sat, 11 am & 5 pm; Sun, 11 am & 3 pm. \$30–\$50. 610-696-2711; *BrandywineBallet.org*.

## \*\*DECEMBER 17

**Touch a Truck.** Head for the parking lot at the corner of Chestnut and Church Streets. See ambulances, police and West Chester Fire Department trucks, along with some construction vehicles. Meet the firefighters, get hands-on with a firetruck and more. Hosted by the West Chester Business Improvement District.

*\*\*Part of Chester County Hospital Lights Up Holiday Weekends in West Chester, presented by the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce. Visit GreaterWestChester.com.*






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# Holiday WINDOW SHOPPING

To make things easier for you, we've compiled a list of shops, museums and restaurants — everything you'll need to complete your shopping.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Coatesville

**National Iron & Steel Museum's** online auction offers gifts for everyone on your list. Come out for their Open House, December 8 from 5 to 8 p.m., to enjoy refreshments, live music, luminarias lining the pathways plus Santa, who's waiting for the lists from eager children. Benefits the museum's mission, providing education and community involvement. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. 610-384-9282; [SteelMuseum.org](http://SteelMuseum.org).



**National Iron & Steel Museum**  
610-384-9282 • [SteelMuseum.org](http://SteelMuseum.org)

### Glen Mills

**Team Toyota of Glen Mills** wants you to drive safe this holiday season. Whether you're looking for a new or used vehicle, you'll

find it there. They also have service specials to keep you on the road this winter. Visit in store, 1050 Baltimore Pk., call 484-845-7921, or at [TeamToyotaGlenMills.com](http://TeamToyotaGlenMills.com).



**Team Toyota**  
484-845-7921 • [TeamToyotaGlenMills.com](http://TeamToyotaGlenMills.com)

### Exton

Deck the halls this holiday season with 18th-century through Victorian-era original and reproduction furniture, lighting fixtures and furniture hardware. Visit the showroom at **Ball & Ball** to find unique gift ideas including candlesticks, bookends, lanterns and fireplace accessories made on the premises in brass, tin, copper and hand-forged iron and bronze. All perfect gifts for this holiday season. Open Monday–Thursday, 8 to 4:30; Friday, 8 to 1. 463 W. Lincoln Hwy. (Rt. 30). 610-363-7330; [BallAndBall.com](http://BallAndBall.com).



**Ball & Ball**  
610-363-7300 • [BallAndBall.com](http://BallAndBall.com)

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



Malvern

The holidays can be a hectic and stressful time of year. Let **Tonino’s Pizza & Pasta Co.** take the worry out of planning your holiday gatherings with custom party platters featuring all your Italian favorites. You can also order a seven fish dinner for two available for pickup on Christmas Eve. Tonino’s offers private holiday dining, and gift certificates make a great gift that you can pick up at the restaurant. Delivery and curbside pickup are always available. *235 Lancaster Ave. 610-240-9566; ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com.*

Marshallton

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



**Merchant of Menace Re-Imaginers Gallery**  
215-704-7419 • TheMerchantOfMenace.net

Newtown Square

Get your holiday plants and flowers at **Mostardi Nursery**. Featuring distinctive plants for every season, Mostardi’s offers a selection that will have your home looking fresh, green and festive. The Christmas Shop features trees, wreaths, poinsettias, garden



**Mostardi Nursery**  
610-356-8035 • Mostardi.com

accents, ornaments and accessories. Mostardi’s is dedicated to providing avid gardeners and homeowners with plants for every season and every reason. *4033 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3). 610-356-8035; Mostardi.com.*

Nottingham

At **Dubarry of Ireland**, you’ll find an Irish Heritage brand that has been expertly crafting premium performance footwear, clothing, bags and accessories since 1937. No matter the weather or occasion, they have you covered from head to toe with their all-weather timeless collection. Visit their holiday pop-up shop at Yuletide at Devon or shop online. *106 W. Christine Rd. 1-866-658-3569; Dubarry.com.*



**Dubarry Of Ireland**  
1-866-658-3569 • Dubarry.com

Paoli

**Walter J. Cook Jeweler** is proud to continue providing signature personalized customer service. Their exquisite collection of exceptional jewels from around the world are personally curated by owner Michael Cook. Dazzling diamonds, elegant one-of-a-kind colored gemstones and lustrous pearls in both classic and contemporary styles are artfully displayed in the showroom. Handcrafted gold and silver designs complete the collection again this year. *Chestnut Village Shoppes. 610-644-5347; WalterJCookJeweler.com.*



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

Peach Bottom

Looking to redecorate for the holidays? **The Barnyard Boys** is a hidden gem in southern Lancaster County and has been offering reclaimed lumber and antiques to Chester County for the past 23 years. Shop for antiques, reclaimed lumber, antique house flooring, barn beam fireplace mantels, sliding barn doors, butcher block countertops, farmhouse tables, custom built furniture and so much more. Open Monday–Friday, 6:30 to 4:30, and Saturday, 8 to noon. *740 Nottingham Rd. 877-548-8855; BarnyardBoys.com.*



**The Barnyard Boys**  
877-548-8855 • BarnyardBoys.com

Phoenixville

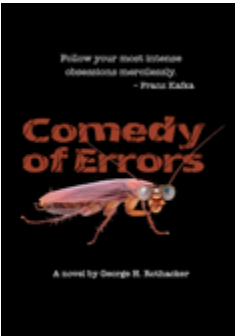
**Foresta’s Market** has all your holiday favorites. Rib roasts and filet roasts using the tastiest Certified Angus Beef. Honey Baked Hams sliced to your liking, made with their homemade glaze, topped with a pineapple ring and cherry. For those in the mood for a holiday bird, Foresta’s has Jaindl Grand Champion turkeys, ducks and geese. *1098 W. Bridge St. 610-935-1777; ForestasMarket.com.*



**Foresta’s Market**  
610-935-1777 • ForestasMarket.com

Radnor

**Comedy of Errors** is a fictional autobiography of author George Rothacker and growing up in Upper Darby during the 1950s –1970s with handicaps that might have led to failure, but instead propelled him to a successful career in cartooning. It’s a story of persistence, passion and survival and available by searching the author on Amazon, or from Main Point Books in Wayne.



West Chester

**The 5 Senses** hosts a collection of functional art objects chosen to satisfy one or more of your five senses. Located in historic downtown West Chester, The 5 Senses opened in the spring of 2005. Their focus is on North American handcrafted functional items, including 25 local artists. They pride themselves on providing insight into each artists’ work. *133 W. Market St. 610-719-0170; The5Senses.com.*



**The 5 Senses**  
610-719-0170 • The5Senses.com

For more than 40 years, **Halco Grills & Fireplaces** has carried top-of-the-line fireplace and outdoor grill products and accessories. They have a fully stocked showroom with the most popular high-end outdoor grills, electric fireplaces, firepits and gas fireplaces. They offer in-house installation services for all of the gas fireplaces



**Halco Grills & Fireplaces**  
610-430-7717 • HalcoGrills.com





Since 1932, **Ball and Ball** has set the standard for the finest reproduction and restoration of 18th Century through Victorian Era antique hardware and lighting. Meticulously crafted period house and furniture hardware, fireplace accessories, sconces, chandeliers, lanterns and candlesticks are all made on the premises in brass, tin, copper, pewter, hand-forged iron, and bronze.

BallAndBall.com    Exton, PA    1.800.257.3711

and local delivery service for all products. 1151 McDermott Dr. 610-430-7717; HalcoGrills.com.

**Matlack Florist** is an award-winning gift shop offering an ever-changing selection of seasonal and unique gifts and home decor items. With a focus on local artisans and vendors, their customers can find one-of-a-kind gifts to suit any taste or occasion. 210 N. Chester Rd. 610-431-3077; MatlackFlorist.com.



**Matlack Florist**

610-431-3077 • MatlackFlorist.com

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

Kick off your holiday shopping at **Mimi's Tea Cottage**. After you enjoy a delightful assortment of tea sandwiches, house-made soups, scones and, of course, eclectic desserts, check out the gift shop. Brighten your loved one's homes with unique gift ideas including specialty tea pots, seasonal aprons, candles, organic honey and jams, Mimi's tumblers, thoughtfully sourced tea and more. Thursday–



**Mimi's Tea Cottage**

484-355-0970 • MimisTeaCottage.com

Sunday, 10:30 to 4. 30 S. High St., West Chester. 484-355-0970; MimisTeaCottage.com

**Pine + Quill**, located in downtown West Chester, has all your holiday favorites. From home decor to gifts, furniture and art, you'll be sure to find something for everyone on your shopping list — including yourself! You'll find a lot of locally sourced items, from hand-poured candles, wall art, jewelry and reclaimed wood creations. Black Friday weekend kicks off holiday shopping and celebrates three years in business! Shop Monday–Saturday, 10 to 6; Sunday, 11 to 5. 23 N. Walnut St. 302-383-9759; PineAndQuillShop.com.



**Pine + Quill Shop**

610-692-0374 • PineAndQuillShop.com

Beautiful jewelry is a gift from the heart, precious and personal. This holiday, create a meaningful memory with the gift of fine jewelry from **Sunset Hill Jewelers**. Family owned for four decades and renowned for attentive service, Sunset Hill Jewelers is trusted for their expertise and integrity. 23 N. High St. 610-692-0374; SunsetHillJewelers.com.



**Sunset Hill Jewelers**

610-692-0374 • SunsetHillJewelers.com

**DELAWARE**

Centreville

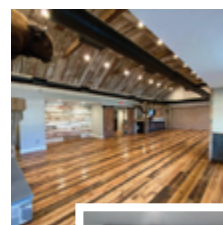
Happy Holidays! **Adorn Goods** welcomes you to enjoy the destination and experience the joy of in-person shopping this holiday season. A modern general store located in Centreville, Dela-

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We specialize in reclaimed lumber, antiques, and architectural items, custom barn doors, furniture, and flooring from salvaged and reclaimed materials.



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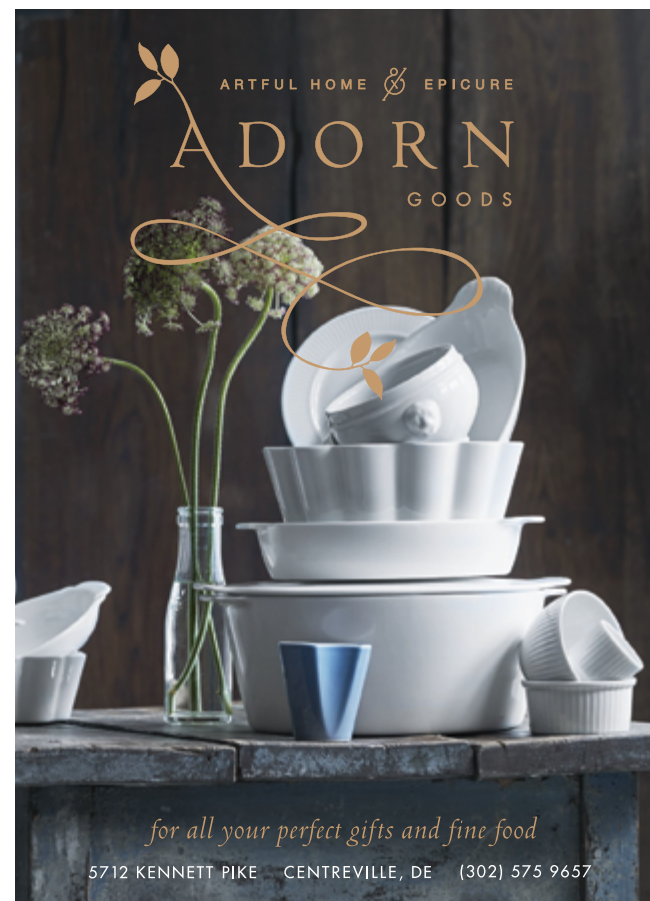


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**Holiday** WINDOW SHOPPING

ware, Adorn Goods is a charming, small shop environment for all your perfect gifts and fine goods. Truly unique and something for everyone. Stop in ... shop ... stay for a while. 5712 Kennett Pk. 302-575-9657; [AdornGoods.com](http://AdornGoods.com).



**Adorn Goods**  
302-575-9657 • [AdornGoods.com](http://AdornGoods.com)

**Wilmington**

Stroll through the **Delaware Museum of Nature & Science's** new ecosystem-based exhibits, then shop in the Museum Store for gifts inspired by the galleries, featuring an expanded inventory with a wide variety of books for all ages, science kits, rocks and minerals, science-themed apparel and accessories, plush animals and more. Or, give the gift of membership to the newly renovated museum! 4840 Kennett Pk., 302-658-9111; [DelMNS.org](http://DelMNS.org).



**Delaware Museum of Nature & Science**  
302-658-9111 • [DelMNS.org](http://DelMNS.org)

Leave the crowds behind and enjoy a relaxing shopping experience at **Hagley's Museum Store**. You'll find a thoughtful assortment

of gifts for friends and family with a one-of-a kind selection of holiday tea towels, handcrafted jewelry, hot toddy mixes and toys. After shopping, be sure to enjoy the "Treasures and Traditions" of Holidays at Hagley, including their sixth annual Gingerbread House Contest. Shop free, 10 to 4 daily. 200 Hagley Creek Rd. 302-658-2400; [Hagley.org](http://Hagley.org).



**Hagley Museum & Library**  
302-658-2400 • [Hagley.org](http://Hagley.org)

**MARYLAND**

**Chesapeake City**

Get exactly what you want this holiday season. **Gallorette Boutique** offers a variety of fine art, high-end clothes and equestrian wear. Riders and non-riders alike will find something they can't leave without at this beautiful equestrian boutique. Located in historic Chesapeake City, MD, the fashion you'll love is closer than you think. 222 Bohemia Ave. 267-374-5265; [GalloretteBoutique.com](http://GalloretteBoutique.com).



**Gallorette Boutique**  
267-374-5265 • [GalloretteBoutique.com](http://GalloretteBoutique.com)



**Ho, Ho, Ho**  
— *Who Wouldn't Go?*



**EIGHT TOWNS  
CELEBRATE THE  
HOLIDAY SEASON**

Erin McGinniss

**S** JACK FROST NIPPING AT YOUR NOSE? Well, don't let that cotton-headed ninny muggins (*Elf* fans understand) keep you bundled up inside this December. Instead of binge-watching *A Christmas Story* or *It's a Wonderful Life* from the comfort of your couch, brave the winter weather and find warmth in all the holiday cheer that *County Lines* country has to offer.

From tree lightings to train rides, we've got you covered with fun that'll last through the 12 days of Christmas and beyond. Like Rudolph at the front of Santa's sleigh, let us be your guide. We triple-dog-dare ya!

**CAROL OF THE BELLS  
IN COATESVILLE**

Santa's elves are hard at work preparing a holly jolly Christmas in Coatesville. First, snatch a seat for the Coatesville Christmas Parade on December 2 at 10 a.m. Then on December 9, visit Gateway Park for the 5th Annual Pavilion of Trees. Stroll through a winter wonderland of trees decorated by local organizations and vote for your favorite! Enjoy cocoa, cookies, activities, live music, local vendors, food trucks, beer garden and a visit from good old Saint Nick. [ChristmasInCoatesville.com](http://ChristmasInCoatesville.com).



Christmas in Coatesville



RIGHT DOWN DOWNINGTOWN LANE

There's nothing like the feeling of community at Christmastime. So, grab your hot cocoa and sit like an Elf on the Shelf on December 9 at 3 p.m. for the Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade, a hometown tradition. Featuring local bands, dancers, scouts and festive floats, the 1.7-mile journey along Lancaster Avenue begins at Beaver Creek Elementary School and ends at East Ward Elementary. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for an appearance from the man in red himself! *DTownChristmas.com*.



Good Neighbor Christmas Parade in Downingtown

SILVER BELLS IN KENNETT SQUARE

Holiday shop the right way with a trip to this twinkly town for Kennett Square's Holiday Village Market. On two December weekends (2 & 3 and 9 & 10), explore the artisan and vintage vendors at The Creamery (401 Birch St.) as you enjoy live music, festive cocktails, food trucks and more. Then, on December Saturdays (2, 9, 16 & 23) rock around Longwood Gardens. Just park in Kennett Square for strolling, shopping and dining before catching a shuttle to Longwood Gardens to enjoy a very retro Christmas with dazzling light displays, childhood-toy tinselled trees and more mid-century magic. If you missed the Holiday Light Parade and Tree Lighting on November 25, be sure to catch the annual Mushroom Drop on New Year's Eve. *KennettHolidayMarket.com; LongwoodGardens.org*.



Christmas at Longwood Gardens

HOLIDAY MAGIC IN MALVERN

Looking for last-minute stocking stuffers? We've all been there. On Thursday, December 21, jingle all the way down King Street for the Malvern Stroll. Enjoy extended shop hours and special one-night-only sales. Make a night of holiday shopping as you support small businesses and enjoy food, drinks and special guests! Check out *MalvernBusiness.com* for more.



Visit the Grinch in Malvern

MISTLETOE IN MEDIA

Round up your reindeer and take a sleigh ride to lively Media for family fun and photo ops. At the Plum Street Mall on December 2, strike a pose atop a giant inflated snowman chair (perfect for a holiday greeting card!) and stop by for complimentary hot chocolate on December 16. Throughout the season, carolers spread holiday cheer by singing loud for all to hear as they stroll the State Street district. Not feeling a New Year's trip to Times Square? Head to Everybody's Hometown on December 31 to watch Media's very own Ball Drop. Stay up to date at *VisitMediaPA.com*.



Christmas tree in Media

FROSTY FUN IN PHOENIXVILLE

Before Frosty melts away, run to have some fun in Phoenixville! Begin the merry month downtown at the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 1, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Then, kick off the Phoenixville Candlelight Holiday House Tour (see "Holiday House Tours" in this issue) on December 2, along with a holiday bazaar featuring over 30 vendors selling treats, ornaments, paintings and homemade goods waiting to be wrapped and put under the tree. Mark December 9 on your calendar for the 20th Firebird Festival, one of Phoenixville's signature events. After the burning of the iconic 20-foot-tall Phoenix, take a clay bird workshop and check one more gift off your list. *PhoenixvilleFirst.org; FirebirdFestival.com*.



Firebird Festival in Phoenixville

WALKING IN A WINTER WONDER-WAYNE

On the first weekend of December, wander through the wintry wonderland of Wayne. On Friday, December 1 (5:30 to 8 p.m.), enjoy crafts, ornaments and activities at the Fire House. Catch the tree lighting at the Wayne Train Station, emceed by Ducis Rogers from *6abc Action News*. Then, have milk and cookies to fuel up for The Elves for the Shelves Run and 5K, December 2 at 8 a.m. Afterwards, treat yourself to hot cocoa and Santa's parade, starting at 10 a.m. On Sunday at 4 p.m., top off the weekend at the holiday party. With singing, holiday treats and more, it'll be far from a silent night. *WayneBusiness.com*.



Tree lighting in Wayne

WHITE CHRISTMAS IN WILMINGTON


All aboard the Holiday Lights Express at Wilmington & Western Railroad! Beginning December 6 and chugging through most of the month, climb aboard a festively decorated, 100-year-old heated coach covered in thousands of holiday lights. On your hour-long adventure, view beautifully decorated homes in the area from your window seat. On December 16 and 17, stop by Wilmington's Chase Center on the Riverfront for the Brandywine Valley Holiday Festival of the Arts, featuring hundreds of artisans. Browse unique holiday gifts, decor, handmade jewelry and more. Then, on December 18, make the Ghost of Christmas Present proud with a trip to The Playhouse on Rodney Square for a production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. More at *WWRR.com* and *VisitWilmington.com*. ♦



Holiday Lights Express at Wilmington & Western Railroad

See the West Chester feature in this issue for holiday fun in the Borough.






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# HOLIDAY Style

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



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# Get Aweigh?

CRUISING ON THE OCEANS, SEAS, LAKES AND RIVERS THIS WINTER

Edwin Malet

American Queen Voyages



Royal Caribbean's *Wonder of the Seas*



Viking Cruises longship on the Rhine



Regents Seven Seas Cruises excursion in Rome

IMAGE PROVIDED BY REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

“A floating city, *The Wonder of the Seas* has accommodations for nearly 7,000 passengers, attended by about 2,400 crew, in some 2,900 staterooms on 16 passenger decks.

VACATION PLANNING? FEEL LANDLOCKED? Constrained to choose just one place to visit? The planning, the decisions of where to go and what to do, the packing and unpacking may seem too much. Getting away is supposed to be relaxing.

How about a cruise? Many happy cruisers can't wait until their next outing and start planning as soon as they return home.

## WHY A CRUISE?

John Sugg of Cruise Planners, based in Hershey's Mill, says his favorite part of cruising is, essentially, its convenience. “For many folks, ... not having to pack and unpack every day is a really nice benefit. You check into this beautiful floating hotel with great amenities and ... oh, by the way, we're going to another amazing destination tomorrow. And no, you don't need to repack your suitcase.”

At Avenue Two Travel in Bryn Mawr, Brigitte Feinberg agrees. “The best part of cruising is that it's a floating hotel that allows you to sample many locations without packing and unpacking. If there are cities that you visit and enjoy, you can add them to your list to revisit for a longer stay as part of a land-based trip.”

And at West Chester's Whirlaway Travel, Denise Booth also extols the convenience of “unpacking once.”

But there's more to vacationing than packing. Even if you decide to try a cruise, you still need to pick a specific cruise. There are at least 40 cruise lines, each with many separate cruise routes that can take you to nearly every place touched by water. Some cruise ships are virtual amusement parks. Others are a quieter, more genteel approach to cruising — like you see on PBS Viking River Cruise ads.

## ON MEGA-SHIPS

If you want a ship with every amusement, you can't beat *The Wonder of the Seas*, currently the largest cruise ship afloat. Part of

the Royal Caribbean International fleet, it's nearly 1,200 feet long. Think of the Empire State Building laying on its side (1,250 feet without its antenna). A floating city, *The Wonder of the Seas* has accommodations for nearly 7,000 passengers, attended by about 2,400 crew, in some 2,900 staterooms on 16 passenger decks.

*The Wonder of the Seas* departs from Port Canaveral, Florida largely on seven- or eight-day outings, heading for a host of Caribbean ports — St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, Honduras and more. On board, you'll be treated to lavish accommodations, gourmet dining, opulent casinos, myriad game rooms and extensive gyms, basketball courts, ice-skating rinks, climbing walls, zip lines, water slides and swimming pools.

This ship is the largest, but Royal Caribbean has 28 ships — *Oasis of the Seas*, *Icon of the Seas*, *Quantum of the Seas*, etc. (get the trademark?) — and covers the world.

## ON SMALLER BOATS

At the other end of the spectrum are the so-called river ships, expedition ships and yachts. (If you're thinking of your rich uncle's “yacht,” these vessels are *not* that. They're *much* larger.) With fewer than 200 passengers and fewer amusements than mega-ships, these smaller vessels have no swimming pools or ice-skating rinks, nor large theaters, elevators or water slides. But they're still substantial.

Viking River, for example, is the oldest and most luxurious of the river lines, offering about 50 boats on river or bay cruises in Europe, Egypt, Asia or the Americas. In Europe, they cruise the Seine, Rhine, Elbe and Danube and visit cities including Paris, Prague, Zurich and Amsterdam. Each ship carries about 190 passengers and treats them royally.

Sugg says, “Without question, my go-to cruise line for *all* river cruises is Viking Cruises. I've booked dozens of guests on Viking river cruises this year and, without exception, everyone raved about





Silversea Cruises



Tauck traveler at the Sistine Chapel



Seabourn cruise in Antarctica

PHOTO CREDIT: SEABOURN/UNRY TZEHEOVSKIY

their experience, praising the service, the ship, the shore excursion and ... the food! As one guest put it, 'Viking has it together.' And being voted #1 river cruise line year after year [by Conde Nast] has to mean something."

## OR ON AMERICAN PADDLE WHEELERS

If your want to see North America, Booth reports that American Queen Voyages, with seven ships — several are steam-driven paddle wheelers — has some very good itineraries, like their Great Lakes cruise from Chicago to Niagara Falls. "Their ships are very nice, comfortable and their enrichment lectures and activities are second to none."

Also, American Cruise Lines cruises the Mississippi and other rivers and coastlines in North America. Four of its 26 ships are paddle wheelers, so take along a copy of *Tom Sawyer*.

## TO ASIA AND AFRICA

With 28 ships, mostly in Europe, but several in Asia, Africa and Latin America, AMA Waterways is another good choice, says Booth. The *Zambezi Queen* is an eco-friendly boat, transporting just 28 passengers, providing brilliant views of wildlife and landscapes of the Chobe River in Botswana.

On the Mekong River, the *AmaDam* offers passage to 124 passengers, who can take advantage of massage rooms, fitness rooms

and deck pool. The Saigon Lounge is beautiful, and the regional and Western cuisine is excellent.

## TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

For many, a fabled Mediterranean cruise is what they envision when they think of cruising. Rome, Venice, Athens, Marseille, Monte Carlo, Barcelona ... Feinberg recommends Silversea, Regent or Seabourn cruise lines for luxury, fine dining and relaxation.

At Silversea, there are fewer than two guests for every crew member. On Regent's ships, people dress formally for dinner. And Seabourn stands for ultra-luxury. "They all offer high-quality dining, touring and service."

Feinberg also recommends Tauck. "The touring is included with the cruise, and they don't try to sell you extras on board. There are also fewer cabins on their ships than the mass-market river cruises, so there's more space for common areas."

Sugg has a different take. "For many folks, visiting Europe is about enjoying the people and the culture as well as the sites." He likes Azamara Cruises for its program of overnight stays and late-night departures in many ports.

## TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

For cruising in the South Pacific, Booth strongly recommends the Paul Gauguin cruise line, a one-ship company, accommodating 330 with a crew of about 200, visiting Tahiti, French Polynesia, the Society Islands, Bora Bora and the like.

"They do such a phenomenal job in this region on a luxury, small ship," says Booth. Sugg adds, "Paul Gauguin's long-term, focused experience makes them a great choice for discovering this beautiful part of the world, and their small ship appeals to most age-50+ travelers."

## OR POLAR EXPEDITIONS

Want to explore? Thinking Shackleton? That's ambitious. Perhaps Antarctica, the Arctic, the Norwegian Fjords, Iceland or Greenland?

Several cruise lines specialize in these areas. Sugg recommends Hurtigruten Expeditions, which has offered expedition travel for 130 years, taking you "to Antarctica's spectacular wildlife, penguins, seals and whales, hiking and kayaking ... It's been an industry leader in sustainability measures throughout their shipboard and onshore operations."

Going ashore is the "most important part" in Antarctica, says Feinberg. She thinks Abercrombie & Kent "do it best."

For her part, Booth speaks highly of Seabourn and Regent, and she and Feinberg both recommend Silversea for a traditional Alaska or Norwegian Fjords cruise. Booth notes that both "have invested a considerable amount of money and time to create incredible custom-built expedition ships ... [T]heir expedition leaders are second to none."

## CRUISING WITH KIDS

Many of the cruise lines discourage kids. Not so Disney, which operates six large ships in Alaska, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the Pacific and around the world. On board, expect encounters with the characters from Disney (Mickey, Goofy), Pixar (Woody and Jessie, Remy and Emile) and Marvel (Spider-Man, Iron Man). Live shows (*Beauty and the Beast*) are on stage.

A play room, tended by adults, is also available on Disney cruises. There are many pools and water features for kids as well as adults. Spas, exercise rooms, gourmet meals and night clubs also assure adults have something to do. Or not do. Look forward to fireworks lighting the night sky!

## MAYBE ADULTS-ONLY

Prefer a cruise without the kids? Most cruise lines more or less assume their passengers are older (average age 50 to 70). For instance, though not age-restricted, Seabourn provides an "elevated experience, great spa, incredible food and [is] tastefully decorated," says Feinstein.

Some cruises, like Viking and Virgin Voyages, explicitly forbid youngsters. According to Sugg, Virgin's "over-18 crowd is typically looking for a party with lots of entertainment, a drink in hand and like-minded folks."

## OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT: SAILING

Most of the ships recommended here are powered, usually with several diesel engines. But cruising under sail is another option. Both styles of vessels have staterooms and serve gourmet meals.

“Prefer a cruise without the kids? Virgin’s over-18 crowd is typically looking for a party with lots of entertainment, a drink in hand and like-minded folks.”

There's a German outfit called Sea Cloud Cruises, operating three square-rigged windjammers, plus the *Star Clipper*, a four-masted barquentine (a type of schooner), 366 feet long, with accommodations for 170. Windstar has three sailing ships, the largest accommodates 342 guests.

## ROUND-THE-WORLD

Finally, let's recall Ferdinand Magellan, who took nearly three years to circle the globe. Actually, he didn't make it. He died in a tribal skirmish on Mactan Island in the Philippines. Only his crew completed that cruise.

Today, you can circumnavigate the globe in about five months on Silversea, Regent or Seabourn. Cost for a couple is less than \$200,000. Luxury, scenery, relaxation all included.

Booth offers a caution though. Round-the-world cruises "do sell out, so if you're interested, be ready to book as soon as the cruises are released!"

So, choose your cruise style and destination, then pack your bag. You'll only unpack once. ♦



Silversea Cruises



Windstar Cruises



# The Ultimate Holiday Gift Guide

INDULGE IN EXQUISITE TASTES OF WINES AND SPIRITS

Liz Tarditi

‘T IS THE SEASON TO DAZZLE AND DELIGHT your loved ones with surprises under the tree. And to make your task of finding this year’s present to bring on the smiles, consider heading to your local wine and spirits shop. You’ll find everything you need for entertaining, gifting and perhaps even indulging a little yourself.

From prestigious Champagne to rare Scotch whiskies, this holiday gift guide is sure to make every sip a moment to remember. Get ready to spread the joy of the season with hand-picked selections that promise to elevate every celebration.

## TOAST WITH SPARKLING DELIGHTS

Start your holiday festivities with a touch of effervescence that transcends the ordinary. For leisurely brunches, afternoon gatherings or the perfect aperitif, choose **Château des Cossé Réserve du Marquis Brut Crémant de Loire 2019** (\$17.99). This sparkling dry chenin blanc with crisp green apple notes is grown in vineyards surrounding a fairytale chateau called the “Jewel of the Loire” in Anjou, France. And remember that crémant is a great alternative to Champagne at a fraction of the price.

But for that big celebration as the year draws to a close, it’s time to uncork the magnificent **Veuve Clicquot Vintage Brut Rosé 2015** (\$124.99). By tradition, opening a very special bottle on New Year’s is supposed to bring luck, health and prosperity for the coming year. Crafted from only premier and grand cru grapes, then held for pro-

longed aging in large oak casks, this 67th vintage released from the maison is notable for its complexity and aromatic intensity. Notes of orange blossom, yuzu and mandarin bring freshness, accompanied by mouthwatering aromas of cherry, aniseed and Vienna bread. A perfect accompaniment to pork, seafood or even desserts as you toast fond memories of the past and the sparkling promise of the future.

## HOLIDAY FEAST PAIRINGS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

You can tour the world as you sip these exquisite wines. Start by transporting your taste buds to Burgundy, France with the **Louis Jadot Pouilly-Fuissé** (\$33.29). This elegant chardonnay is rich with notes of ripe citrus, buttered brioche and a long mineral finish, and will pair beautifully with roasted birds, winter squash, pastry hors d’oeuvres and cheeses.

But if seafood is prominent in your family holiday celebration, add a vibrant New Zealand sauvignon blanc, such as **Walnut Block Collectibles Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2022** (\$14.99), bursting with tropical fruit flavors and crisp acidity.

Or when you’re pairing a marvelous rib roast, rack of lamb or filet mignon, nothing compares to a big, bold Tuscan like the critically acclaimed **Lisini Brunello di Montalcino 2017** (\$69.99). As the winemaker describes it: “The nose is slightly ethereal with extraordinary elegance with hints of undergrowth, tobacco, violet and

vanilla; dry flavor, but at the same time soft, full and harmonious, firm, consistent and aristocratic.”

Finally, nothing finishes a wonderful holiday meal so well as sipping an artisan farm-to-table liqueur like **Five Farms Irish Cream** (\$34.29), exclusively sourced and produced in County Cork, Ireland from generational family-owned farms dotted along the coastline by the sea.

## RAISE YOUR SPIRITS WITH ENCHANTING ELIXIRS

Looking for something a bit stronger yet refined? Then indulge in the regal spirit of **Empress 1908 Gin** (\$39.49). Distilled in small batches with exquisite botanicals — including butterfly pea blossom — this unique gin transforms from a deep indigo hue to a soft pink when mixed with citrus or tonic. A perfect gift for gin lovers who seek a touch of elegance in their cocktails.

For the tequila aficionado, raise the bar with the **Maestro Dobel Diamante Tequila** (\$57.19). This exceptional 100% agave sipping tequila is a blend of extra-añejo, añejo and reposado aged tequilas that’s filtered to remove the color while preserving complexity and indescribable smoothness, resulting in the original cristalino tequila.

Whiskey lovers will delight in the southern charm of **Bibb & Tucker 6-Year-Old Bourbon** (\$54.99). Aged to perfection, this small-batch bourbon showcases rich caramel, vanilla and toasted oak flavors, with a velvety texture and smooth finish. And it pairs particularly well with chocolate chip cookies!

For Scotch lovers — especially fans of the shows *Outlander* and *Men in Kilts* — the collection of **Laphroaig Islay Single Malt Scotch** (\$46.79 to \$99.99) currently offers a unique and distinctive gift in each box. Along with every bottle, there’s a certificate for a square foot of land in Scotland, making the recipient a laird or lady of the land. Now that’s a gift to remember! This peaty and smoky whisky presents with flavors of brine, seaweed and toasty oak, creating a truly remarkable Islay experience.

This curated list is just a glimpse of the many gems available at your local wine and spirit shops. And remember there are also gift options of glassware and other accessories to add to the enjoyment of sipping.

So, whether you seek a sophisticated wine or an exceptional spirit, share the gift of refined taste with friends and loved ones — and please, always enjoy responsibly. Happy holiday season! ♦

*Liz Tarditi is an entrepreneur and classically trained chef with 35 years’ experience in the culinary world. She holds a degree from Villanova University and graduated with honors from the Culinary Arts program at the Art Institute of Seattle. Liz has worked for Fine Wine & Good Spirits for five years, becoming a Wine Specialist in 2020. She enjoys pairing wine and food for special events and celebrations. See Liz at the Phoenixville Fine Wine & Good Spirits.*





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**FINE WINE & GOOD SPIRITS**

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

**Feeling Frosted.** Nobody does cupcakes like **Dia Doce**, so their holiday menu is a special treat (through Dec.



24). Festive flavors include red velvet candy cane, gingerbread, Champagne and more. Choose homemade cake topped with yummy frostings and tasty toppings, like crushed candy canes. Planning a party? Order holiday mini boxes, with a dozen cupcakes in select flavors, and pretend you baked them yourself. 100 S. High St., West Chester. [DiaDoce.com](http://DiaDoce.com).

**Rum-Pa-Pum-Pum.** Ever see a bar decorated like a Christmas tree? Returning again to Media is State Street Pub's **Holiday Pop-Up Bar**. Get in the holiday spirit with a whole lotta lights, festive specials, seasonal beers and creative cocktails. Try the “Grinch,” a delightfully sly rum-based drink, or “Ho Ho Ho,” a jolly vodka creation that’s sure to put you in a merry mood. 37 E. State St., Media. [@StateStreetPubMedia](https://www.instagram.com/StateStreetPubMedia).

**Popped Presents.** Packaged with bright red bows, **MoJo's Pop Co.'s** gourmet toffee popcorn makes a perfect gift, stocking stuffer or party favor. Try the holiday special, white chocolate peppermint, along with almond toffee, hot chocolate or dark chocolate



pretzel for a salty/sweet treat. Shop online or in person (more fun!) at Artisan Exchange on Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., to support MoJo's and other small businesses. 208 Carter Dr., West Chester. [MoJosPopCo.com](http://MoJosPopCo.com).

**Mull This.** Warm up a winter evening with a steaming glass of mulled wine. To DIY: mix one part brandy, four parts red wine with sugar, peeled orange slices, cinnamon sticks and mulling spices to taste over medium-high heat (experimenting encouraged!). When the mixture nears a simmer, turn heat to low, cover and gently simmer for 15 minutes. Then strain, garnish with cranberries for holiday flair and serve! Inhale the aroma as you sip by the fire.



**Hot and Cold.** It's never too cold for ice cream! Head to downtown Wayne for **The Vanilla Bean**, a new custom ice cream and coffee shop. Begin with a vanilla, chocolate or swirl base. Then have a blast choosing from 40+ toppings, including fruits, nuts, syrups, sweets and more. Afterward, warm right back up with a hot latte, mocha or cappuccino from the coffee menu. 102 E. Lancaster Ave. [TheVanillaBeanOfWayne.com](http://TheVanillaBeanOfWayne.com).





# A Sweet Bite of Family History

CHERISHED COOKIE RECIPES ARE PERFECT FOR GIFT GIVING OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Courtney H. Diener-Stokes

A GIFT OF HOMEMADE COOKIES IS ONE OF MY favorite things to receive during the holidays. Mostly, these holiday recipes have history and tradition, and so are made with careful thought, consideration and extra love. Some cookies I've received over the years have stood out among the rest, whether for taste, technique, presentation or the story that's behind them, which often spans generations.

Diane McCormick, a prolific home baker, taught me a trick to having cookie recipients fully appreciate a gift of cookies during the busy holidays: be the first one to give them out the week immediately following Thanksgiving. It's a time when anticipation for the holidays is high and people aren't already burned out on cookie consumption.

When I first bit into McCormick's signature extra thin and crispy cutout sugar cookies decorated with colored sugars, it was clear there was deeper meaning behind them. Turns out McCormick

is the third generation to make this recipe, and her grandchildren, who help her make them today, represent the fifth.

McCormick was just five years old the first time she helped her grandmother make her treasured sugar cookie recipe. "It was always a family get-together with my mom, my aunt and my grandmother," McCormick says. She recalled getting her first turn at rolling out, cutting and sugaring the cookies. Through watching

over the years, she was instructed on the special technique of rolling the dough out extra thin.

Now, 77 years later, McCormick has passed on the same tradition and technique to her own children, Dawn and James, and now her grandchildren. "I'm happy to see that the tradition means a great deal to them, especially my granddaughter, Kylie, and my grandsons, Ryan and Connor, who come by and do their share when they're on Thanksgiving break from college."

On the weekend following Thanksgiving, McCormick's home is the location for 'Cookie Day,' where they gather and set out to make dozens upon dozens of sugar cookies before dividing them up into perfect piles, sealing them in plastic containers or tins and then gently placing them into decorative gift bags. As soon as four days after Thanksgiving, they begin delivering the cookies to friends, family, co-workers, teachers and schoolmates.

Please read on for McCormick's beloved sugar cookie recipe, along with some other special recipes shared by Chester County residents who've also found that cookies make the perfect gift for friends and family. Happy Holiday Baking!



## Diane's Sugar Cookies

Diane McCormick and her daughter make several batches of dough for these sugar cookies prior to baking day. The dough needs to be refrigerated for at least 24 hours before rolling it out. Her tips for involving children in the process are based on her experience of letting them get started by choosing the colors of sprinkles and shapes of cutouts and then allowing them to evolve into making the cookies correctly without criticizing what they produce along the way. She has found that this tactic enables young bakers to fully enjoy being a part of the process and be more likely to carry on the tradition.

Today, McCormick's granddaughter, who's now a senior in high school and has perfected the technique of making the cookies, goes to the extra effort of taking special orders. Classmates get to request the shapes they'd like from a long list including Santas, reindeer, snowflakes and a bell.

After packing the cookies in festive tins or gift bags, they place packages of tea or hot chocolate inside to enhance the whole cookie experience for the recipients.



Makes about 6 dozen cutout sugar cookies (depending on size and thickness of cookies)

- 2 C. unsalted butter (1 lb.)
- 3 C. granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 7 C. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda (dissolved in ½ C. boiling water)

Using a stand mixer, cream butter and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time.

Next, add vanilla and then slowly add flour (mix on low speed).

As soon as all the flour is incorporated into the dough, add the baking soda/water mix. It's very important not to overmix this dough. Stop mixing as soon as the liquid is mixed in.

Divide the dough into four sections (it will be somewhat soft) and wrap each quarter separately in wax paper. Put each wrapped section into a plastic bag and place in the refrigerator (not the freezer) to chill overnight. (Dough can rest in the refrigerator for up to two days.)



Diane McCormick's grandchildren making sugar cookies

## Olga's Oreshki Cookies

Here's a recipe for a cookie that is, to date, the most special cookie I've ever received as a gift over the holidays.

When my friend Olga Sorzano handed these out to me and other moms several years ago when our children were in preschool together, I was impressed with how much time she clearly put into making them. The cookies have a very fancy appearance of looking like a walnut shell with a hint of filling peeking out from the inside. When I bit into my first cookie, I was blown away. When you bite down on the crispy, buttery shell you next encounter the dulce de leche, which is a rich caramel filling. The textural experience and flavor of this cookie is like nothing I'd ever experienced.

Every time Sorzano makes these shortbread-style cookies, she's transported back to her childhood in Siberia. Aside from time and patience, you'll need to invest in a special stovetop 'Russian walnut cookie' mold, but I can assure you that it will be worth it once you taste them and give them out as gifts. The reactions you receive will be a reward for your effort. I couldn't agree more with Sorzano when she told me, "These are one of the most incredible cookies you will ever taste in your life."

While Olga still makes her dulce de leche the old-fashioned way by simmering a can of condensed milk on the stove for three hours, she offers a faster alternative of using ready-to-go dulce de leche to save you hours in the kitchen.

Makes 4 dozen cookies

### For the cookie dough:

- 2½ C. all-purpose flour
- 1½ C. powdered sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 C. cold butter
- 1 large egg, beaten
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract

### For the filling:

1 can dulce de leche (Nestle's is Sorzano's go-to brand when she's in a pinch and can't make her own), or Nutella  
Excess cookie crumbs (reserve after baking the cookies)





#### For the cookie dough:

In a food processor, add flour, powdered sugar and salt. Pulse a few times and then gradually add cold butter. Continue mixing until the texture of the mixture resembles cornmeal.

Add egg and vanilla. Pulse until a dough is formed, but don't overmix.

Wrap dough in wax paper and refrigerate for half an hour.

Preheat your stovetop walnut cookie pan/mold according to instructions. Fill each cavity of the form with the dough balls and cook each side for about 2 to 3 minutes (again, following the instructions of the particular pan/mold you have).

After they have cooled, carefully break apart any cookies that have attached to each other while cooking.

Next, using your fingers, carefully break off any excess around each cookie half and reserve the crumbs in a bowl.

#### To make the filling::

Open a can of dulce de leche and spoon it out into a small bowl (as another filling option, Nutella can be used). Add leftover cookie crumb pieces and stir to combine.

#### To assemble:

Once all of the baked cookie halves have cooled, generously fill one cookie half with the dulce de leche mixture. Place an empty cookie half on top to adhere them together to form the walnut

shell shape. Repeat the process with the additional cookie halves.

Refrigerate the filled cookies for at least 30 minutes before eating or distributing.

If you have leftovers, the cookies should be stored in the refrigerator in a sealed container for up to a week. When ready to serve or give out, you can sprinkle the cookies with a small amount of powdered sugar for a light dusting.

### Stacey's Peanut Butter Blossoms

When Stacey Casto's four children were young, she recalls getting out her handwritten recipe book each year leading up to Christmas to make five beloved cookie recipes. One of her favorites has always been Peanut Butter Blossoms, which are the perfect combination of a soft peanut butter-based cookie topped with a chocolate kiss. Instead of using standard white sugar to coat the outside, she uses green and red to make them festive for the holidays.

Any time I go to a cookie swap, I take a version of this cookie, except that I use milk chocolate Wilbur Buds instead of Hershey Kisses because of their amazing creaminess. The cookies always get rave reviews. They look more difficult to make than they are given their attractive presentation. Even kids can easily get in on the fun process of rolling the dough into balls and then coating them in sugar before baking. You can also put the kiddos to work unwrapping all the chocolate kisses!

After the cookies are finished baking, be sure to let the chocolate kiss fully cool and harden on top of each cookie before packing them up for gift-giving.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies (varies depending on the size of balls you make with the dough)



½ C. granulated sugar  
½ C. brown sugar  
½ C. creamy peanut butter (unsweetened)  
½ C. butter  
1 egg  
2 T. milk  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1¾ C. all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. baking soda  
¼ tsp. salt  
½ C. red and green sugar, combined or ¼ C. of each color (for coating)  
48 Hershey Kisses, unwrapped, or Wilbur Buds

Preheat the oven to 375°.

Using a stand mixer, add all cookie ingredients (except decorative sugars or chocolate) and mix on low to fully combine until dough forms. Cover and refrigerate the soft dough for at least one hour.

Shape rounded teaspoons of dough into balls. Roll balls in a small bowl of sugar (one bowl if combining colors or two separate bowls of each color if not combining). Evenly space the coated balls on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until bottoms are lightly browned and the tops are slightly cracked.

After fully cooked, remove the cookie sheet from the oven and place on a flat surface. Immediately press one chocolate kiss or bud in the center of each cookie.

Carefully transfer cookies to a cooling rack and allow cookies and chocolate to fully cool to set.

Store in an airtight container for up to one week.

### Cindy's Sand Tarts

Cindy Maguire's Sand Tart recipe was passed down from her grandmother to her mother, Diane Yeakle of Chester Springs. This recipe always came out during the holidays, when Maguire recalls the steps of making them from when she pitched in as a child.

Each cookie is brushed with egg white prior to topping them with sliced almonds and nutmeg or cinnamon sugar. (You can also use pecans or walnuts and decorative sugars as topping alternatives.) There isn't a leavening agent in this recipe since the cookies are intended to be thin — what sets a sand tart apart from a sugar cookie.

The perfect combination of nuts, a warming spice and delicate buttery cookie makes this treat a lovely holiday gift rooted in Pennsylvania Dutch tradition.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies

1 C. unsalted butter  
1½ C. granulated sugar  
2 C. all-purpose flour  
1 egg, well beaten  
1 egg white (for brushing on top of cookies before baking)



Nutmeg or cinnamon sugar (made with ½ C. granulated sugar + 1 T. ground cinnamon)

½ C. sliced almonds (or pecans or walnuts)

Preheat the oven to 350°.

In a stand-up mixer, cream butter and sugar. Slowly add flour to fully combine on low speed. Add well-beaten egg and mix thoroughly.

Cover and chill in the refrigerator overnight.

Pull ¼ portion of dough from the refrigerator at a time and flour your work surface before rolling out the dough very thinly. Cut out with a 3"-round cookie cutter (or other cookie cutter shapes) and place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet.

Brush each cookie with egg white before decorating.

Sprinkle the tops of the cookies with a dash of nutmeg or a sprinkle of cinnamon sugar. Top with a few sliced almonds or other nuts per cookie (lightly press the nuts to set into the dough).

Bake for 10 minutes until the bottoms of the cookies are lightly browned.

Store in an airtight container for up to one week. ♦

*Courtney Diener-Stokes is an award-winning journalist, author, food writer, photographer and food stylist. Most recently she co-authored the Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook and Farmhouse Manna: Nourishing Recipes and Rituals for Head, Heart, Hands & Soul. She lives in the Oley Valley countryside with her husband, three children, two Babydoll Southdown sheep, a flock of bantam chickens and a Bernedoodle named Daisy.*



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