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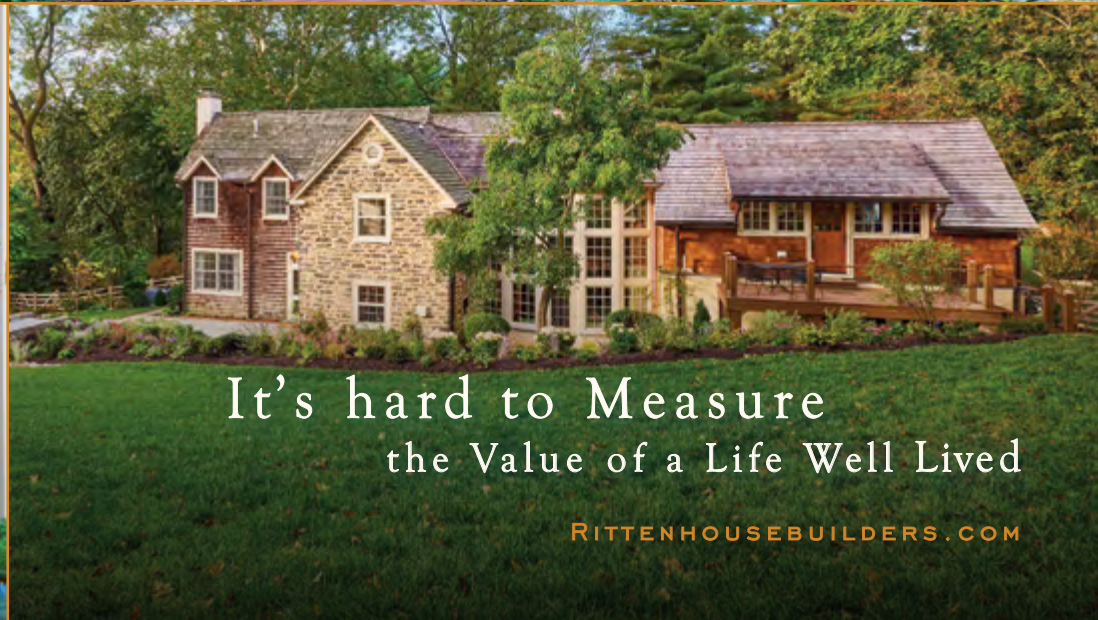
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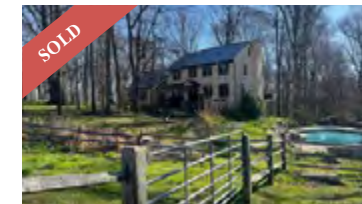
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Newlin Township  
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Last List Price



Newlin Township  
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Last List Price



East Marlborough Township  
\$1,695,000  
Last List Price



East Marlborough Township  
\$990,000  
Last List Price



West Pikeland Township  
\$988,000  
Last List Price



Pocopson Township  
\$985,000  
Last List Price



East Marlborough Township  
\$895,000  
Last List Price



Honey Brook Township  
\$689,000  
Last List Price



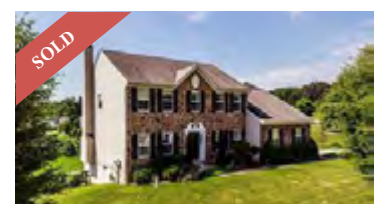
Newlin Township  
\$665,000  
Last List Price



West Marlborough Township  
\$610,000  
Last List Price



West Nantmeal Township  
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Last List Price



West Clan Township  
\$389,000  
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#### Easttown Township

4/5BR, 4.5B Walter Durham designed home on 12 acres. Main Line location with a country property feel. Pond & woods. Conservation easement and deed restriction.

Presented by Rob Van Alen

**\$1,600,000**



#### West Pikeland Township

41+/- acre parcel formerly a major part of the incredible "Ker-Feal" Estate. Features lovely open meadows wrapped by mature woodlands, gentle topography & ultimate privacy. Under Conservation Easement.

Presented by Mark Willcox

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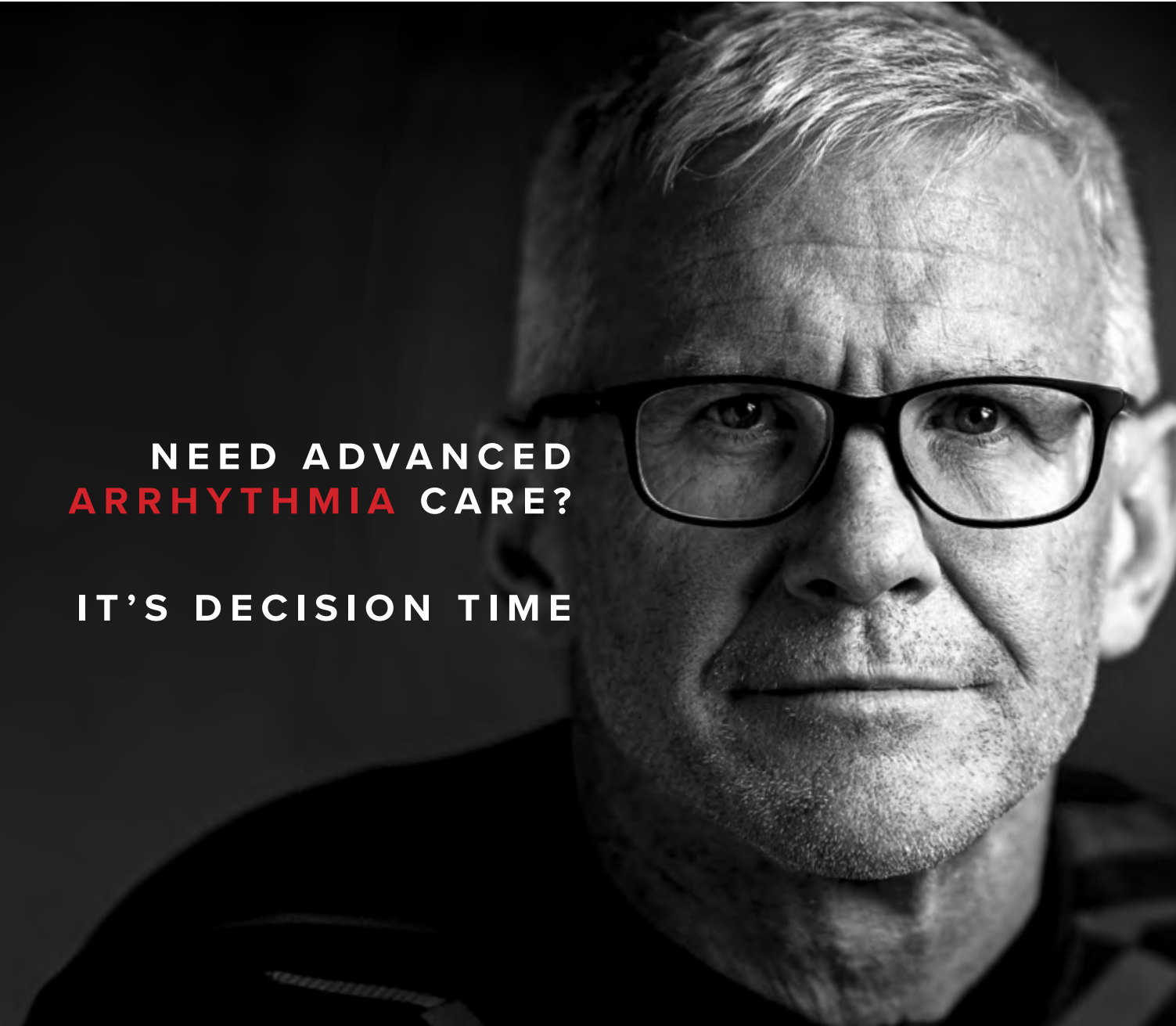
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# Finding a primary care provider who really sees you.

Anna Batten, 72, is actively involved in managing her health. But she started to feel invisible after her doctor’s practice was absorbed into a large health system. That’s when she found Patina.

Patina is primary care for adults 65+. Our practice bases care on relationships and convenience, so you can keep thriving and living your best life.

Read on to learn more about Anna’s experience with Patina.

**What were your first interactions like?**

Anna: Everyone I met with was really kind and compassionate – so genuine. During my initial visit, my PCP, Michelle, said to me, “What’s most important to you right now?” This really set the stage for our future discussions and dealing with some of my health concerns.

**How does Patina differ from your previous primary care experience?**

Anna: Appointments are set up at my convenience and yearly wellness visits can be scheduled in my own home – no need to drive anywhere, deal with traffic or pay to park! And the 24/7 access to a nurse practitioner is so valuable should the need ever arise.

**What’s it like to work virtually with your care team?**

Anna: It gives me peace of mind that they’re always there for me. I can have anyone I want sit in on any visit because it’s virtual or via phone. I also like that I can send messages when it’s convenient to me, like maybe I think of something after hours or even if I’m out shopping.

**How would you describe your overall health now?**

Anna: I am doing a lot better since being under Patina’s care. I feel cared for and listened to for the first time in a long time.

“This is very different from my prior experience, but in a good way. There are so many benefits to becoming a Patina patient, but one of the best parts is how the team truly cares about YOU.”

Anna Batten  
Patina patient

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from the  
EDITOR

February has an extra day this year. Why not use it to read about fine homes, fitness, fowl, food and the family fun ideas in our Best Local Events section?

Our fine homes coverage heads to Big Bend, former home of legendary Frolic Weymouth. See its current splendor after recovering from Hurricane Ida. Emily Hart gets the story from the current generation, Mac Weymouth. Also see some of Frolic's artwork, including a piece in the Brandywine Museum of Art's collection.

The Dower House, West Chester's oldest home, takes the spotlight in Brandywine Stories, our first in a series of local interest articles. Malcolm Johnstone digs into its history in "The First Home in West Chester." For more on historic homes, read "Recognizing West Chester's Historic Treasures," as Jane Dorchester reviews winners at last year's Preservation Awards Ceremony.

We checked in with local realtors for Qs & As in "2024 Real Estate Roundup," collected a half-dozen stunning kitchen in "Dream Kitchens" and put together our "Fine Homes & Design Resource Guide" for even more inspiration.

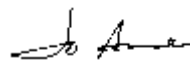
In our town focus, see what Ed Malet discovered in "Coatesville Dreaming," for Chester County's only city. A railway station is being rebuilt. Construction of a sports complex has begun. Restaurants, retail ... it's just beginning.

For parents, choosing a school for your child is one of your most important decisions, writes Shannon Montgomery in "Choosing the Right Private School for Your Child." Start by visiting open houses and check out our "Guide to Area Private & Independent Schools" by Marci Tomassone.

And for fitness and fowl, we have "Pilates 101" from Shannon Montgomery, plus "Bird Brained" by Natural Lands' Kit Werner on the benefits of birdwatching.

Finally, Brandywine Table's Courtney Diener-Stokes is thinking of food around the fire: apple fritters, chili, soup, s'mores, maple popcorn. Cold weather cooking!

Enjoy February and thank you for reading..

  
Jo Anne Durako  
Editor

## COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

**February 2024**

Volume XLVII Number 6

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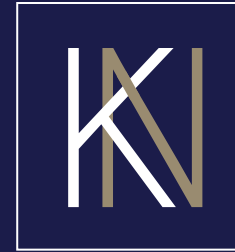
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# The Susan Fitzgerald Team

Sue Fitzgerald, Kim Marren, Michele Loose, Linda Quereau



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## [Good to Know]

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

**New Threads.** Looking to refresh your wardrobe? Head to West Chester's newest clothing store, **One Thread** on East Market Street. Promising "one-of-a-kind pieces for one-of-a-kind people," One Thread specializes in custom embroidered apparel,



including T-shirts, crewnecks, hats and tote bags. Just in time for Super Bowl Sunday, pick up an Eagles-inspired design, like the "Sundays are for the Birds" trucker hat. Stop by the store or order online. 138 E. Market St., West Chester. [OneThreadLLC.com](http://OneThreadLLC.com).

**Local Charm.** Our area is home to many charming small towns, but one stands out from the rest. Chadds Ford was picked for *World Atlas*' **12 most quaint small towns** in the Mid-Atlantic. *World Atlas* praises Chadds Ford's "artistic legacy," as home to the Wyeth family and Brandywine Museum of Art. They also recommend the Brandywine Battlefield, Chaddsford Winery and Sanderson Museum. Other towns on the list include Rehoboth Beach, Cape May and Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. [WorldAtlas.com](http://WorldAtlas.com).



**Acres in Aston.** Attention Delco residents: look forward to a **new park in Aston**. With the help of Media-based conservation group Natural Lands, Aston Township recently acquired 46 acres of land from the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Located along Convent Road, next to West Branch Chester Creek, the property will be owned and operated by Aston Township as a passive-use park, with hiking trails through woodlands and an open meadow. [NatLands.org](http://NatLands.org). [AstonTownship.net](http://AstonTownship.net).

**Home Improvement.** Affordable housing is hard to come by in Chester County, especially for those with mental illness. Fortunately, the Chester County Commissioners recently approved \$2.8 million for **renovations to Phoenixville's Liberty House**. A former military hospital, Liberty House provides 48 affordable housing units for individuals with mental illness. The upcoming renovation includes



structural improvements, ADA-accessible updates, plus upgrades to common areas, including the community kitchen, which provides two meals per day to residents. [Chesco.org](http://Chesco.org).

**Ladies' Choice.** Mark your calendar for Leap Day on February 29 — or, as the Irish call it, **Bachelor's Day**. Popularized by the movie *Leap Year* starring Amy Adams, this tradition where women propose to men supposedly dates back to the 5th century. Legend says Saint Brigid complained to Saint Patrick that men were too slow to pop the question, so they struck a deal allowing women to propose once every four years. The rest is history! [IrishCentral.com](http://IrishCentral.com).





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## February Picks Our Picks for top events this month

### Philly Chocolate, Wine & Whiskey Festival

February 3



Enjoy chocolate in a multitude of decadent presentations — from sweet hand-rolled truffles to melted chocolate fondue and an amazing selection of bean-to-bar artisan chocolates, then quench your thirst with Champagne, prosecco, premium wines and a sip of fine whiskeys. Included in your ticket price is a tasting glass to enjoy unlimited wine and whiskey along with a selection of craft beers, ciders and nonalcoholic beverages. *Greater Phila. Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. \$69–\$90. TasteUSA.com.*

### WCU Live! Presents Popovich Family Pet Theatre

February 10



Here's entertainment for the whole family, featuring the unique blend of comedy and juggling skills of Ukrainian circus performer Gregory Popovich and the extraordinary talents of his performing pets. His entourage consists of world-class jugglers, Diamond the Shetland Pony and over 30 performing pets including house cats and dogs (all rescued from animal shelters), geese, white doves and parrots. *Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, West Chester University, West Chester. 7 p.m. \$15–\$25. WCUPA.edu/OCA/WCULive.*



### The Colonial Theatre Presents The Police Experience

February 16

Calling all fans of The Police! This band is globally renowned as the most authentic tribute to The Police and has been lauded by Stewart Copeland, the drummer for The Police, for their meticulous attention to detail and impeccable reproduction of every nuance and rhythm. *227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 8 p.m. \$35–\$59. Times and tickets, 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.*

### Kennett Winterfest

February 24



Bundle up and enjoy winter brews from over 60 unique craft breweries, live music and food trucks. Ticket price includes unlimited tastings of delicious craft beer and a mug. Visit the event website for a complete brewery list. Benefits Kennett Collaborative. *600 S. Broad St., Kennett Square. Regular admission, 12:30 to 4 p.m., \$60. DefConn Admission, early entry at 11:15 a.m. with exclusive tastings plus a catered lunch, \$100. Designated driver, \$15. 610-444-8188; KennettWinterfest.com.*

### West Chester Restaurant Week

February 25–March 3

Liven up the winter doldrums with a very tasty treat. West Chester's culinary masters will create special multi-course prix fixe menus for \$30, \$40 or \$50 featured for one week only. Dine-in and takeout options available. Visit the website for a complete list of participating restaurants. *DowntownWestChester.com/RestaurantWeek.*





# best Local Events

## FAMILY FUN

### 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 lounge areas, heated private event tents, local entertainers and DJs, theme nights, food and beverages. A portion of proceeds are donated to the Delaware County Veterans Memorial Association. 4901 West Chester Pk., Newtown Square. Wed–Thurs, 4 to 8; Fri, 3 to 10; Sat, 11 to 10; Sun, 11 to 8. \$12–\$15. [FlightOnIce.com](#).

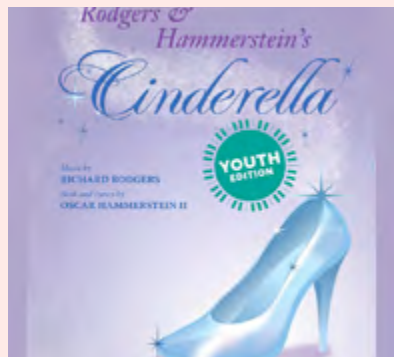
### THROUGH FEBRUARY 26

**Franklin Institute Exhibits.** Now open, Wondrous Space—journey through the cosmos as you explore this immersive, multisensory, two-story exhibit. Opening in Feb., The Art of the Brick exhibit by artist Nathan Sawaya is a collection of inspiring artworks made exclusively from the LEGO brick. 222 N. 20th St., Philadelphia. Daily 9:30 to 5. \$21–\$25. [FI.edu](#).



### FEBRUARY 4–26

**Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella: at Media Theatre.** The timeless enchantment of a magical fairy tale is reborn and



will warm the hearts of children and adults alike. 104 E. State St., Media. Sat & Sun, 11 am & 2 pm. \$19–\$24. 610-891-0100; [MediaTheatre.org](#).

### FEBRUARY 25

**Immaculata Symphony Children's Concert.** This year, the symphony performs Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* along with several other animal-inspired works such as Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze* and Anderson's *The Waltzing Cat* and *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*. Immaculata Univ., Alumnae Hall, 1145 W. King Rd., Immaculata. 3 pm. \$10. [Facebook.com/ImmaculataSymphony](#).



### MARCH 2 & 3

**Delaware Mineralogical Society's Mineral & Fossil Show.** The show features exhibits of mineral, lapidary and fossil specimens, fine dealers of minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry and lapidary supplies, demonstrations and a children's table. *DoubleTree by Hilton*, 4727 Concord Pk., Wilmington. Sat, 10 to 5; Sun, 11 to 5. \$3–\$6. [DMSRocks.org](#).



### MARCH 8–10

**Greater Philadelphia Pet Expo.** Fun for the whole family with special attractions including The Dynamo Disc Dogs, Rainforest Reptile Shows, Piggyville and more. *The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center*, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Fri, Family Night, 3 to 8; Sat, 10 to 7; Sun, 10 to 5. \$5–\$13. [FamilyPetShows.com](#).

### BOAT SHOWS.....

#### FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 3

**The Atlantic City Boat Show.** Celebrate life on the water. Climb aboard hundreds of boats for every budget and lifestyle. Atlantic City Convention Center, One Convention Blvd., Atlantic City, NJ. Wed–Fri, noon to 8; Sat, 10 to 8; Sun, 10 to 6. \$20. [ACBoatShow.com](#).



### BOOKS.....

#### FEBRUARY 1, 21, 22

**Wellington Square Bookshop. NonFiction Book Group:** *Feb. 1, American Nations* by Colin Woodard, 7 pm. **Fiction Book Group:** *Feb. 21 & 22, Signal Fires* by Dani Shapiro, Wed, 2 pm, Thurs, 2 & 7 pm. 549 Wellington Sq., Exton. [WellingtonSquareBooks.com](#).

#### FEBRUARY 20, 29

**Main Point Book Club. Feb. 20, Fiction Book Group:** *The Dictionary of Lost Words: A Novel* by Pip Williams, 1 pm. **Feb. 29, NonFiction Book Group:** *Breaking Through* by Katalin Kariko, 7 pm. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. [MainPointBooks.com](#).

### DANCE.....

#### FEBRUARY 23–25

**First State Ballet Theatre Presents Triple Bill.** This is a program of three world premiere ballets created for FSBT performing at The Baby Grand Theater, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Fri, Sat, 7 pm; Sun, 2 pm. \$42–\$62. [TheGrandWilmington.org](#).



### DESIGN HOMES.....

#### FEBRUARY 23–25

**Philly Home + Garden Show.** Visitors will find fresh inspiration, helpful tips, innovative products and fantastic deals on remodeling, home improvement, decor and outdoor spaces from hundreds of experts. Greater Phila. Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Fri, 11 to 8; Sat, 10 to 8; Sun, 10 to 6. \$10–\$12. [PhillyHomeAndGarden.com](#).



### FOOD & BREWS.....

#### FEBRUARY 10 & 11, 18 & 19

**Berks County Wine Trail Chocolate & Wine Weekends.** Two weekends of pairing fabulous wines of the region with chocolates and other sweet confections. For details visit [BerksCountyWineTrail.com](#).

#### FEBRUARY 24–MARCH 3

**Restaurant Week in Annapolis, MD.** Take a daytrip to Annapolis where participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menus for you to enjoy for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Visit [DowntownAnnapolisPartnership.org](#).

### FUNDRAISERS .....

#### FEBRUARY 23–25

**Unite for HER—Annual Pink Invitational.** Over 4,000 athletes compete to raise funds to support local breast cancer and ovarian cancer patients. Enjoy a vendor fair and gymnastics at all levels. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. Daily 8 am to 10 pm. \$15–\$20. [UniteForHER.org](#).



#### MARCH 2

**Cheers for CHOP.** Party with a purpose and enjoy an evening of music, cocktails, dancing and an incredible silent auction. Benefits Behavioral and Mental Health Services at

Children's Hospital of Phila. The Fillmore Philadelphia, 29 E. Allen St., Philadelphia. 7:30 pm; post-party, 11:30 pm. Tickets \$225 and up. [CheersFor.CHOP.edu](#).

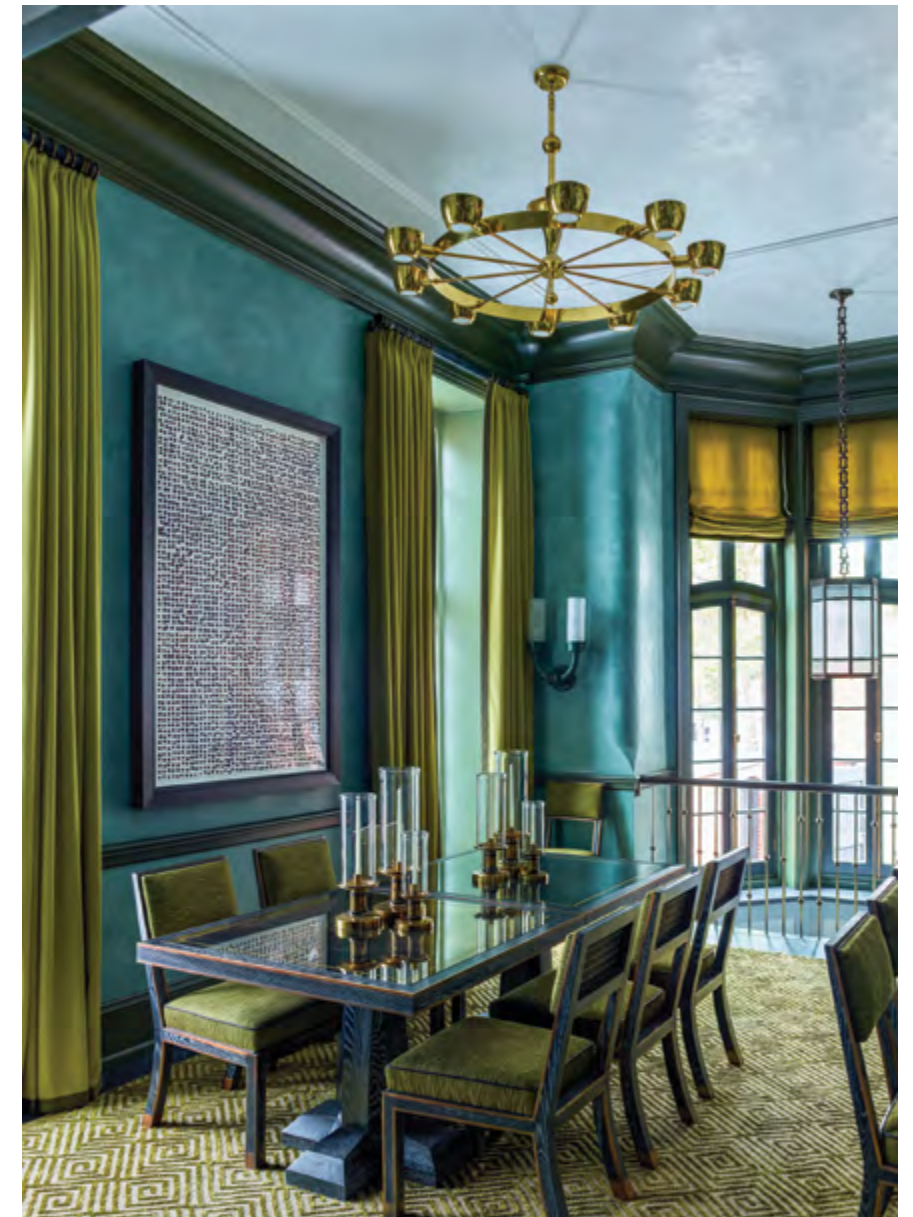


#### MARCH 2

**Lights of Life “Bond for Breast Cancer” Gala.** Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's gala evening made possible with community support and directly benefits breast cancer survivors in the Delaware region. Enjoy dancing, silent and live auctions, hors d'oeuvres, dinner and an open bar. Bally's Dover Casino Resort, 1131 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover, DE. 5 to 9:30 pm. \$150. [DEBreastCancer.org](#).

#### MARCH 5

**Chester County Community Foundation's Sweet Charity Event.** A charitable evening



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## Local Farm Markets

**Artisan Exchange**, 208 Carter Dr.  
Unit 13 B, West Chester. Sat, 10 to 1.  
[ArtisanExchange.net](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://GrowingRootsPartners.com).

**Kennett Square Farmers Mkt.**, 401 Birch  
St. Fri, 3 to 6. [KSQFarmersMarket.com](http://KSQFarmersMarket.com).

**Lancaster Central Market**, 23 N.  
Market St. Tues, Fri & Sat, 6 to 3.  
[CentralMarketLancaster.com](http://CentralMarketLancaster.com).

**Lancaster County Farmers Mkt.**, 389  
W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed, Fri & Sat, 6  
to 4. [LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com](http://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](http://GrowingRootsPartners.com).

**Media Farmers Market**, Edgemont St.  
between Front & State Sts. Beg. Dec. 3  
through Apr. 1st & 3rd Sun, 10 to noon.  
[FarmToCityMarkets.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://WestChesterGrowersMarket.com).

**Westtown Amish Market**, 1165  
Wilmington Pk., West Chester.  
Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7; Sat, 8 to 4.  
[WestChesterAmishMarket.com](http://WestChesterAmishMarket.com).



filled with delicious food and great company. This dessert competition between the finest caterers, restaurants and bakeries supports CCCF's mission to connect people who care with causes that matter. Whitford Country Club, 600 Whitford Hills Rd., Exton. 4 to 7. Tickets \$125 and up. [ChesCoCF.org](http://ChesCoCF.org).



## GARDENS.....

### THROUGH MARCH 24

**Winter Wonder at Longwood Gardens.** Relish the beauty of winter both indoors and out. Stroll through a beautiful indoor winter wonderland with a tropical twist. Outdoors, experience the serenity of winter with subtle hues throughout the landscape. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Wed–Mon, 10 to 5. \$13–\$25. [LongwoodGardens.org](http://LongwoodGardens.org).

### MARCH 2–10

**Philadelphia Flower Show.** This year's theme, "United by Flowers," celebrates the unique and colorful community born out of our shared love and appreciation of gardening and the connections and impact they create on our everyday lives. PA Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. Mar. 2–9, 10 to 8; Mar. 10, 10 to 6. \$25–\$39. [TheFlowerShow.com](http://TheFlowerShow.com).



## MUSEUMS.....

### ONGOING

**Winterthur Museum.** "Outside In: Nature-in-

spired Design at Winterthur." In partnership with the DE Museum of Natural History, the exhibition brings selections from their collection of natural specimens together with collections drawn from Winterthur, demonstrating the connection between nature and the decorative arts. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. Tues–Sun, 10 to 5. \$8–\$25. [Winterthur.org](http://Winterthur.org).

### THROUGH FEBRUARY 28

**Brandywine Museum of Art.** *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](http://Brandywine.org).



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FEBRUARY 2  
**Art is Tasty at the Delaware Art Museum.** Join in for a guided discussion of N. C. Wyeth's *The Springhouse*, then enjoy lunch in Kaffeina at the Thronson Cafe. Advance registration recommended. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Noon to 1 pm. \$18. DelArt.org.



**MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT .....**  
FEBRUARY 2-MARCH 2  
**The Keswick Theatre Presents.** *Feb. 2*, Who's Bad (Tribute to Michael Jackson); *Feb. 3*, Jonathan Van Ness; *Feb. 4*, A Live Conversation with John Cusack; *Feb. 9*, Mr. Big; *Feb. 10*, Vic DiBitetto; *Feb. 13*, Cat Power Sings Dylan; *Feb. 15*, Criminal Podcast; *Feb. 16 & 17*, Tom Papa; *Feb. 22*, A Conversation with

Hayden Panettiere; *Feb. 23*, The Legendary Wailers with Junior Marvin; *Feb. 24*, The Princess Bride: An Evening with Cary Elwes; *Feb. 25*, Bianca Del Rio; *Mar. 2*, The Irish Tenors. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Times and tickets, KeswickTheatre.com.



FEBRUARY 9-MARCH 1  
**Longwood Gardens Indoor Performance Series.** *Feb. 9*, Nicole Keller; *Feb. 15*, Blue Note Records 85th Anniversary Celebration; *Feb. 23*, Mnozil Brass; *Feb. 29*, Lúnasa; *Mar. 1*, Time for Three. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. LongwoodGarden.org.

FEBRUARY 9-MARCH 3  
**American Music Theatre.** *Feb. 9*, Little River Band with Firefall; *Feb. 17*, Jo Dee Messina; *Feb. 18*, '50s Dance Party: The Music of Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens; *Feb. 21*, On Your Feet! The Story of Emilio & Gloria Estefan; *Feb. 23*, Boyz II Men; *Feb. 27*, The Simon & Garfunkel Story; *Mar. 2*, Lee Brice: Me & My Guitar; *Mar. 3*, TUSK: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute. 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. Times and tickets, AMTShows.com.

FEBRUARY 15-MARCH 2  
**At The Grand in Wilmington.** *Feb. 15*, Get the Led Out—Led Zeppelin cover band; *Feb. 16*, Oleta Adams; *Feb. 17*, The Rock Orchestra Plays Bruce Springsteen; *Feb. 24*, The Genesis Show; *Mar. 2*, The Joni Project—Tribute to Joni Mitchell. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

MARCH 2  
**The Colonial Theatre Presents.** Total Mass Retain: YES Tribute Band. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. Times and tickets, 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

MARCH 8 & 9  
**Lancaster Symphony Orchestra Concert: Vivaldi's Four Seasons.** Featuring violinist William Hagen. Gardner Theatre,

Lancaster Country Day School, 725 Hamilton Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-291-6440. LancasterSymphony.org.

**OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....**  
FEBRUARY 24  
**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., Lititz. 7:30 to 10 pm. \$35, must be 16 years old. WolfSanctuaryPA.org.

**THEATER.....**  
THROUGH FEBRUARY 4  
**Small at People's Light.** Bullied for his size, a boy from Long Is land finds purpose and respect atop a racehorse in this wild, autobiographical ride written and performed by stage, film and television star Robert Montano. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 11  
**It Happened in Key West at Fulton Theatre.** A romantic musical comedy based on a true story. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 17  
**Dutch Apple Theatre Presents Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap.** Seven strangers are snowed in at a remote countryside guest-house with a killer in their midst. 510 Centerville Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-898-1900; DutchApple.com.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 25  
**Hello, Dolly at The Candlelight Theatre.** Candlelight kicks off the 2024 season with this musical adaptation of Thornton Wilder's play, *The Matchmaker*. 2208 Millers Rd., Wilmington. Times and tickets, 302-475-2313; CandlelightTheatreDelaware.org.

FEBRUARY 16-MARCH 3  
**Equus at Fulton Theatre.** Adults only. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

FEBRUARY 21-MARCH 24  
*the ripple, the wave that carried me home*



**at People's Light.** By Christina Anderson. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

**TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....**  
JANUARY 5  
**1st Fridays**  
**Lancaster City,** 717-509-ARTS; VisitLancaster-City.com. **Oxford,** 610-998-9494; OxfordMain-Street.com; **Phoenixville,** 610-933-3253; PhoenixvilleFirst.org. **West Chester,** 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com. **Wilmington Art Loop,** 302-576-2135; CityFestWilm.com. ♦

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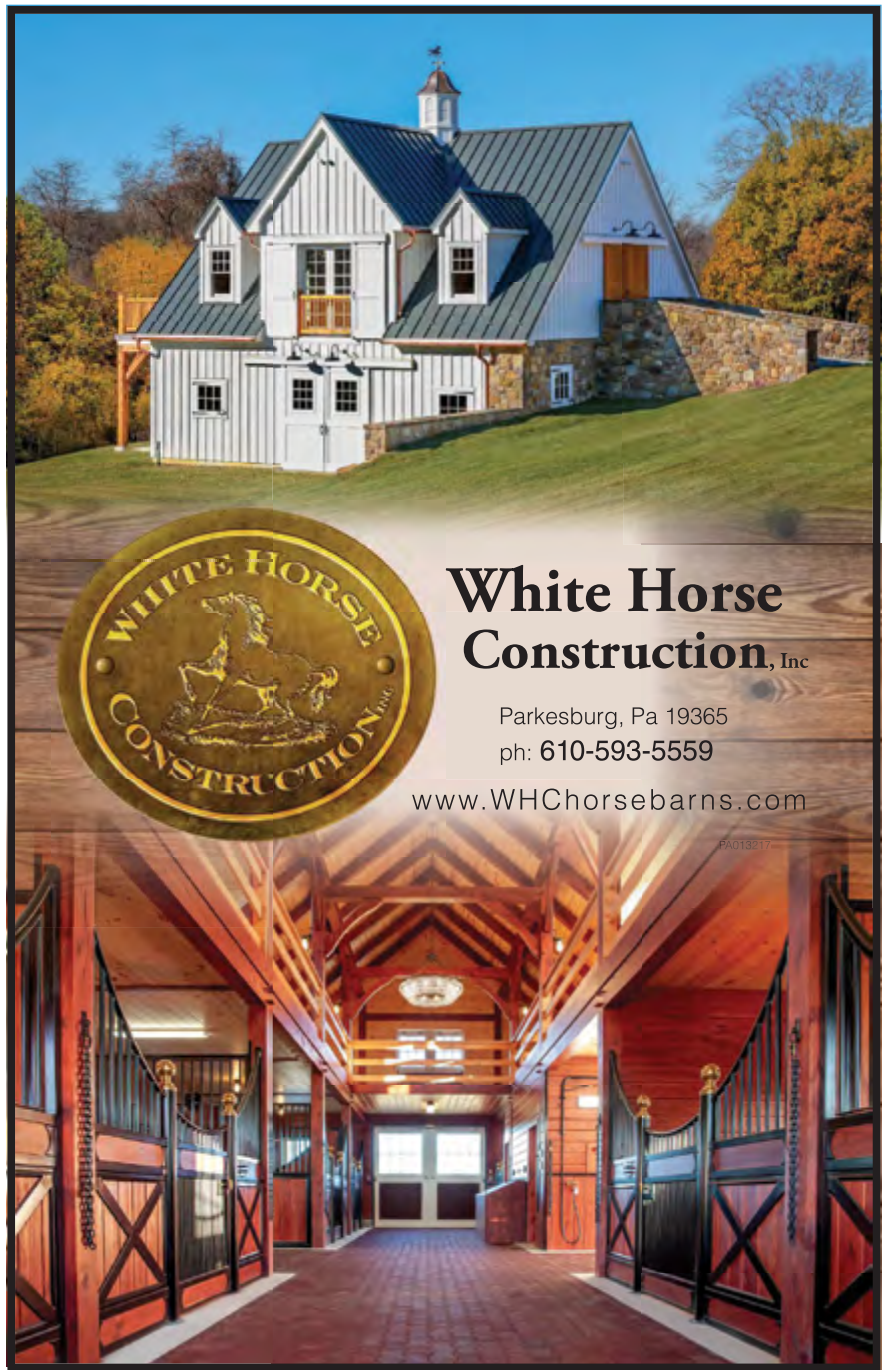
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# The First Home in West Chester

THE DOWER HOUSE, THE GATEWAY TO THE BOROUGH

Malcolm Johnstone

EVERY DAY, THOUSANDS OF TRAVELERS DRIVE south into West Chester along Pottstown Pike as it turns into North High Street at Goshen Road. Yet very few pause to glance at two historic structures located at the intersection with Goshen Road.

On the right, ruins can be seen on the golf course — the remains of a once vital farmhouse built by Thomas Hoopes. The Hoopes family were among the first settlers to Chester County, along with two others, the families of Robert Eachus and Joseph Collins, who also established farms near Goshen Road.

But it's the Dower House, located at the Goshen Road intersection, that's considered the oldest continuously occupied home in West Chester.

## COLONIAL BEGINNINGS

It all began in 1681 when King Charles II of England granted William Penn a charter to create a new colony in America, later named Pennsylvania. The ink had barely dried on the charter when Penn secured a ship, *The Welcome*, to take some 65 followers to the New World in search of religious freedom.

Early photo of the Dower House. Original house on right.

By 1684, a group of Welsh Quakers settled a 40,000-acre parcel and established family farms in what would become part of the Township of Goshen. West Chester would eventually be located within its boundary.

To grow the community, a road was needed to connect Goshen in Chester County to Philadelphia and to the City of Chester, the county seat. Goshen Road, as it was called, was mapped from trails and landmarks such as creeks, hills and even trees. Today it marks the northern boundary of West Chester. Improvements were made to accommodate wagons and carts, opening the area to the development, with gristmills, sawmills, wheelwright shops and schools.

It was the beginning of the community, and the Dower House was at its center.

## EARLY YEARS

There's uncertainty about the exact date the Dower House was first completed as a stone structure. Early records show John and Mary Wall purchased 150 acres on the south side of Goshen Road in 1712, located just inside the boundaries of what's now West Chester Borough. This property was near a spring providing

clean water, and the fertile soil provided healthy crops and a vegetable garden.

The Walls first constructed a small log cabin on the farm, which was later replaced with a small stone house that exists today. Some historians place the date as early as 1715, while others insist it was 1721. The current owner, Tait Norden, discovered a long-hidden stone plate engraved with 1755. The property's county tax map number is 01-01-01, identifying it as the 'First Parcel.'

Whatever the date, the first two-room, stone construction of the Dower House serves as a model for each subsequent expansion. This ensured the small farm could grow and contribute to both residents and neighbors, including a treasure of fresh produce well into the 20th century.

## 20TH TO 21ST CENTURY

In the 1920s, popular author Joseph Hergesheimer (1880–1954) and his wife Dorothy purchased the Dower House and invited the famous regional architect Brognard Okie (1875–1945) to share it as their home. Together, they embarked on modernization projects that made the house more livable while retaining its historic character.

In 1926, Hergesheimer published *From an Old House*, a book describing the home and its many improvements. For his part, Okie used his work on the house to create new styles of architectural preservation that become known as Colonial-Revival architecture. Examples of Okie's work can be seen in homes throughout Chester County.

The home became both practical and comfortable, with large indoor fireplaces for cooking and warmth, enlarged windows to provide scenic views, and an updated rear terrace for outdoor comfort next to the garden.

The Dower House continues to undergo further expansion and improvements today.

Seven years ago, Tait and Lisa Norden made the Dower House their new home. Since then, they've planned another renovation that would respect the original architecture while enhancing livability.

Working with Archer & Buchanan Architecture in West Chester and Rittenhouse Builders of Coatesville, the Nordens are ensuring that every improvement meets the highest standards of historic preservation.

As with past expansions, the intention is to preserve and celebrate West Chester's first home and to maintain it as a proud symbol of historic preservation not only for West Chester, but the entire region. ♦

HISTORIC PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHILLIP B. WALLACE, 1926.  
CHESTER COUNTY HISTORY CENTER.

*Malcolm Johnstone is the Community Engagement Officer for Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation for the Cultural Alliance of Chester County, an initiative of the Chester County Community Foundation.*



View of the rear of the Dower House showing the garden that existed over two centuries.



"When the afternoons grew warmer tentative Windsor chairs and a wagon seat appeared on the terrace; there were stools to keep the satin slippers from the flagstones."  
— *From an Old House*



Proposed expansion by Rittenhouse Builders.





**P**ILATES. THOUGH IT SEEMS TO BE A BUZZWORD these days, many of us may not know exactly what this form of exercise entails. Touted by celebs from Jennifer Aniston to Kylie Jenner, plus superstar athletes like David Beckham and Cristiano Ronaldo, it's clearly having a resurgence.

We have everything you need to know about this uber-popular exercise — the basics, types, benefits and how to get started. Unfurl your mat and start your Pilates program now.

## THE BASICS

So, what exactly is Pilates? It's a low-impact exercise (a typical workout lasts around 45 minutes to an hour) that focuses on precise movements, with an emphasis on strengthening your body's core — known as the "powerhouse" — and targeting muscles in the abdomen, lower back and hips. This improves your posture and alignment, as well as balance and flexibility. Another key element of Pilates is the mind-body connection, encouraging body awareness and focusing on your breathing.

For example, one of the most popular Pilates exercises is "The Hundred," a warmup exercise performed lying on your back with your legs raised at a 45-degree angle. It consists of 10 reps of 10 arm pumps — five pumps inhaling, five exhaling — for a total of 100 pumps. Other common exercises include the roll up (slowly curling your body into a C-shape), single- and double-leg kicks, and planks.

Pilates is often compared with yoga. While they share similarities — precise movements, breathwork, mindful awareness — yoga started as a spiritual practice, originating in India over 5,000 years

ago. In contrast, Pilates focuses primarily on physicality and is much more recent, developed by German physical trainer Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century. He conceptualized Pilates (which he called "Contrology") while interned during World War I and later introduced the practice to dancers recovering from injuries. As a result, it's become popular for rehabilitation, though it has benefits for people of all ages and abilities.

Of course, like any workout, Pilates comes with a few caveats. First and foremost, be sure to check with your doctor before starting Pilates. Also, expect to feel muscle burning and soreness, especially when first starting out. Some Pilates practitioners experience delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) a day or two after exercising.

## TYPES OF PILATES

At first, getting started with Pilates may seem daunting — what kind of Pilates should you try? What are those crazy contraptions you see at the gym? But it's not as intimidating as it looks.

There are two main types of Pilates regiments, mat Pilates and reformer Pilates. Here's a quick overview of both, as well as a few other common variations.

As the name suggests, mat Pilates is performed on a mat — think yoga mat, but thicker. Mat Pilates exercises leverage your own body weight to build strength. It's a great entry point for beginners due to its accessibility — it doesn't require special equipment, it's easy to practice at home as well as at the gym. Mat Pilates also allows newcomers to focus on learning the basic movements and techniques without the added stress of learning how to use new equipment.



Reformer Pilates, on the other hand, uses a special machine called, not surprisingly, a reformer. Invented by Joseph Pilates, it resembles a bed frame with a platform (called the carriage) on wheels that roll up and down as you move. It also has a bar on one end and a set of long, stretchy straps with handles on the other. Depending on the exercise, you may put your hands or feet on the bar, or place your feet inside the handles to use the straps with your legs. The reformer adds weight and resistance to Pilates exercises, which can be adjusted to make moves easier or more difficult. This adaptability is a major benefit of reformer Pilates, creating a customizable workout to fit your specific needs and goals.

In addition to mat and reformer Pilates, there are several other Pilates variations to explore. Joseph Pilates invented many pieces of equipment, which he called apparatus, in his lifetime. These include the Wunda (a chair with padding and springs), Magic Circle (a ring used to create resistance) and Cadillac — a table with a metal frame above it, resembling a canopy bed, used for advanced Pilates moves.

You may have also heard of TikTok's viral wall Pilates. This at-home exercise consists of traditional Pilates moves performed against a wall, essentially acting as the reformer's foot bar and creating a similar resistance. There's also chair Pilates, performed seated in a kitchen or dining chair, which has been gaining in popularity, especially with older adults.

## BENEFITS OF PILATES

So, why Pilates? "If you are looking to improve your mental and physical health, Pilates is a great class to incorporate into

your wellness routine," says Jackie Canan, Senior Director of Group Exercise at the YMCA of Greater Brandywine. "Pilates provides a full-body workout, including stretching and toning exercises that improve your posture, strength and balance. Plus, you'll increase your mindfulness with deep breathing exercises that contribute to your mental wellbeing."

Indeed, Pilates boasts many physical and psychological benefits. With a primary aim to strengthen the core, it's known to relieve back and hip pain, and many physical therapists recommend it for rehab. Pilates is also great for improving flexibility and mobility. Plus, the emphasis on deep breathing helps improve lung capacity and circulation, as well as increase your overall energy level.

In terms of mental health, Pilates' focus on mindfulness and body awareness helps to relieve stress and improve concentration. Pilates is also known to improve mood. While all exercise boosts endorphins, research from the University of Limerick in Ireland suggests that Pilates specifically reduces symptoms of anxiety, depression and fatigue.

Finally, an important benefit of Pilates is its adaptability. "Best of all, Pilates can be tailored to your own abilities," says Canan. "It's a workout for beginners to enthusiasts and all levels in between." Pilates workouts



can be tailored to your personal goals, both physical and mental.

This winter, beat the cold-weather blues and try Pilates. Your body — and mind — will thank you. ♦

## Getting Started

Ready to try Pilates? Your local Y is a great place to start. Here are some beginner-friendly classes offered at through the YMCA of Greater Brandywine.

**Yoga/Pilates for Beginners.** Wednesdays, 9:15 am. *West Chester Area YMCA, 605 Airport Rd., West Chester.*

**Beginner Pilates.** Wednesdays, 5:35 pm. *Jennersville YMCA, 880 W. Baltimore Pk., West Grove.*

**Chair Pilates.** Wednesdays, 1 pm. *Lionville Community YMCA, 100 Devon Dr., Exton.*

**Virtual Pilates - LIVE.** Wednesdays, 10 am. *On the YMCA360 app, YMCA360.org.*

*Find more classes at YMCAGBW.org.*

In addition to in-person sessions, you can find virtual Pilates classes (both live and pre-recorded) on apps like YMCA360, Pilates Anytime and Peloton, or on websites like YouTube.





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# Bird Brained



## BIRDWATCHING CAN IMPROVE MENTAL WELL-BEING.

Kit Werner, Natural Lands

“I’VE HAD THIS RECURRING DREAM THAT I CAN fly,” says Mike Niven. “In my dreams, I run, take a leap and I’m flying. When I was a teenager, I got really into flying gliders. I guess it makes sense that I’ve become fascinated with birds.”

Mike is among the 45 million birdwatchers — also known as birders — in America, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their interests range from casual observation at a backyard bird feeder to a passion that propels them around the globe in search of new species to add to their “life lists.”

It wasn’t until he retired a few years ago that Mike’s interest in birds deepened. A dedicated volunteer with nonprofit conservation organization Natural Lands, Mike makes time to birdwatch daily.

“I remember watching a barn swallow in my yard, and I started thinking about how incredible it is that that tiny bird can fly almost 7,000 miles from South America to my house in Pennsylvania. My interest grew from there.”

Scientists are taking a closer look at the benefits of birding for human health. Beyond the physical exercise that accompanies the hobby, research shows that birdwatching can change our brains and improve our mental wellbeing.

### AVIAN ATTITUDE

While numerous studies have shown the benefits of nature on mood, new research suggests there may be something particularly

healthy about birds. Two studies published last year in *Scientific Reports* found that seeing or hearing bird songs improved mental well-being.

In one study, researchers asked participants to record information about their environment and wellbeing three times a day using a smartphone app. In analyzing their logs, researchers found a significant positive association between seeing or hearing birds and improved mental well-being, sometimes even hours after the bird encounter. The benefits weren’t explained by other environmental factors, like seeing trees, plants or water, all of which the study controlled for.

One of the study’s authors, Andrea Mechelli, said he was searching for answers to why city dwellers may be more prone to mental illness. “I don’t have a particular agenda focused on nature myself. I wasn’t thinking we were going to demonstrate nature has a strong effect,” Mechelli told *National Geographic*.

A second study found that listening to audio clips of birdsong reduced feelings of anxiety, depression and paranoia in healthy participants.

Another study, published in 2020 in *Ecological Economics*, showed a correlation between happiness and the number of bird species around people’s homes and towns. Researchers concluded that being near 14 additional bird species was as satisfying as earning an extra \$150 per month.





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Scientists have two main theories for why nature may soothe us. The first is that homo sapiens evolved in nature and so urban environments are jarring to our very beings. The second theory is called attention restoration theory. Like the first, it postulates that modern daily life requires intense focus. Nature allows us to disengage that focus and engage in a sort of open-eyed meditation.

Mike Niven can relate. “Birding allows me to be in the present moment,” he says. “When I’m outside with my binoculars or even just listening to birdsong while I’m weeding my garden, I’m immersed in it. Everything slows way down.”

### THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON BIRDS

Another study published last year suggests the effects of birding on the brain go beyond mood. A deep dive into birding may even boost cognitive ability.

Aptly named researcher Erik Wing and his colleagues asked birders of varying experience levels to identify images of both familiar and unfamiliar birds. All participants were shown bird images and asked to arrange them according to perceived similarity. Experts tended to group birds based on specific features, such as tail or beak shape. In contrast, the non-experts more often based their grouping on superficial features like color.

Next, the researchers tested participants’ memories. First, they showed each subject a series of bird photographs. They then showed them a second series, containing both novel and repeated bird species, and asked the participants whether they had already seen each bird in the first series of photographs. The researchers found that those who grouped birds based on specific features performed better in the memory task than those who grouped birds based on color.

Wing concluded that long-term knowledge of avian species helped people remember new birds more easily, and that gaining deep expertise in a subject area can change mental “scaffolding,” literally rewiring the brain.

Natural Lands volunteer Mike Niven likes the idea of birds helping his memory, mood and mind. He feels birds have enriched people’s lives — including their physical and mental health — so much, he only hopes humans can return the favor.

“As I’ve gotten more involved in birding and volunteering with Natural Lands, I find myself focusing on habitats. Without supportive habitats — meadows, forests, wetlands — we’re not going to have birds. So, we all have to do what we can to save and care for nature. After all, what will we do with our stress if the birds go away?” ♦

*Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature’s wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. As the Greater Philadelphia region’s oldest and largest land conservation organization, member-supported Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 42 nature preserves and one public garden totaling more than 23,000 acres. Nearly 5 million people live within 5 miles of land under the organization’s protection. Land for life, nature for all. NatLands.org.*



Pileated woodpecker at Bryn Coed Preserve



Yellow-rumped warbler at ChesLen Preserve



Barn swallows



# Recognizing West Chester's Historic Treasures

## WINNERS AT THE 12TH ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS CEREMONY

Jane E. Dorchester, Founding Preservation Awards Committee Chair

West Chester Post Office Preservation

WEST CHESTER IS JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF its ongoing efforts to preserve its historic character by promoting the preservation of its extensive collection of distinctive historic buildings. Much of the pleasure from living in, working in or visiting West Chester comes from experiencing its historic character — its history visibly reflected in its architecture and streetscapes.

One way the Borough raises awareness and promotes preservation is with the annual West Chester Historic Preservation Awards

Ceremony, sponsored by the West Chester Downtown Foundation and hosted at the Chester County History Center. For those who don't know the history, the Awards Program started in 2008 when Malcolm Johnstone, then the Executive Director of the Business Improvement District, took an idea from Tom Walsh and presented it to the Downtown Foundation Board. And now we've celebrated 12 years of recognizing the value and power of preservation.

Last October, the Awards Ceremony honored projects and people in several categories, recognizing five Bricks and Mortar Awards, one



Wineski Residence Restoration, 346 W. Union St.

Preservation Service Award, one Special Recognition Award and one Preservation Legacy Award.

### AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

**Bricks and Mortar Awards** recognize a wide variety of construction projects that demonstrate the creative ways best preservation practices can be used to preserve, restore or rehabilitate historic buildings and their settings.

The **Major Seneca G. Willauer House Restoration**, 106 South Church Street, won its award for the owners' careful restoration of the exterior of this elegant c. 1846 house to its 19th-century appearance. Work included restoring the side porch to its original appearance and redesigning the public-facing side yard. A large Civil War-era canon was installed in the garden, which befits the home of a former soldier who pursued President Lincoln's assassin. This project demonstrates how a limited amount of carefully planned work can restore a distinctive historic structure's early beauty.

**West Chester Post Office Preservation**, 101 East Gay Street, was recognized for the U.S. Postal Service's meticulous preservation of this important Borough landmark. The classic revival-style Post Office had suffered from years of deferred maintenance, so its preservation entailed extensive repair of almost all of its exterior fabric, including rebuilding and repainting windows, repairing and repainting woodwork, and repointing exterior stone walls. This project is an



Franklin Corners Rehabilitation

excellent example of what collaboration among community leaders at all governmental levels — from local to federal — can achieve for preserving our historic resources and improving our streetscapes.

**Wineski Residence Restoration**, 346 West Union Street, won in recognition of its owners' outstanding restoration of the exterior of this c. 1885 house. Work included repair and restoration of the deteriorated front porch, removing vinyl shutters plus restoring and reinstalling the original wood shutters, repairing and painting the original windows and woodwork, installing a new roof on the main house block, repairing and painting the front and rear porch roofs, and restoring the brick sidewalk along West Union Street. This project demonstrates how restoring a historic resource can make a significant contribution to the integrity of its neighborhood as well as the Borough.

**The Spence Building Restoration**, 29 East Gay Street, was recognized for the owners' decision to restore and reuse this iconic, landmark building instead of demolishing it. The restoration of the exterior of the building — including uncovering and restoring its original stone exterior walls, replacing its slate roof in-like-kind and rehabilitating its interior — has ensured the building's continued use as a restaurant or retail space with apartments above. This project is an excellent example of how collaboration of property owners with Borough officials achieved a positive outcome that's beneficial to all.



Now we've celebrated  
12 years of recognizing  
the value and power  
of preservation.

Major Seneca G. Wallauer House Restoration, 106 S. Church St.



West Chester Preservation Award for Franklin Corners



Rettew Program by Chester County History Center







Spence Building Restoration



West Chester Historical & Architectural Review Board

“ Stan (Zukin) bought and restored many buildings throughout the Borough and in the process, he and his real estate firm had been awarded five Historic Preservation Awards.

Franklin Corners Historic Industrial Complex Rehabilitation\*, 301 Lacey Street and 501 & 515 South Franklin Street, won in recognition of the owner's decision to adapt this expansive industrial space — including three historic industrial structures and one sympathetic modern construction near the West Chester Railroad — into commercial offices. The project followed a site design that unified the buildings and included cleaning and repointing the brick and stone walls and installing compatible new windows and roof materials, as well as the sensitive reorganization of interior spaces and insertion of modern amenities. The result is an inspiring commercial project currently housing a variety of vibrant businesses in an economically successful adaptive reuse site.

The Preservation Service, Special Recognition and Preservation Legacy Awards recognize contributions to the better understanding of the history of West Chester and to the preservation of the physical evidence of that history.

The Chester County History Center received a Preservation Service Award in recognition of its G. Raymond Rettew Program, which has documented and celebrated Rettew's groundbreaking work in the race to commercially mass produce penicillin. This program started in 1973 and over the years has included publishing a book, creating an exhibit, producing a documentary film and erecting a historical marker.

The West Chester Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) was presented with a Special Recognition Award for 35 years of volunteer service to the community. Over those years, the HARB (affectionately known to some as the hysterical review board) has endeavored to promote and oversee preserving the historic fabric of West Chester and ensuring the preservation of its distinctive historic character.

The 2023 Preservation Legacy Award was presented posthumously to Stanford Roland (Stan) Zukin for his longtime efforts to preserve and restore the historic character of the Borough. From 1978 until his death in 2018, Stan bought and restored many buildings throughout the Borough and in the process, he and his real estate firm had been awarded five Historic Preservation Awards.



#### FOR 2024

The 13th Annual Preservation Awards kicks off in April when nominations for 2024 open (they close in June). Nomination forms and rules are available at the West Chester BID office and online at [DowntownWestChester.com](http://DowntownWestChester.com). Winners will be announced in July, and the Awards Ceremony will take place on October 17, 2024.

Please help recognize projects that have enhanced West Chester's historic character by submitting a nomination. ♦

PHOTO CREDIT: TIMLYN VAUGHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

*\*Editor's Note: County Lines Magazine's office is located in Franklin Corners. Its editor, Jo Anne Durako, nominated the site for the award.*

Jane E. Dorchester has worked in the preservation field since 1983. She specializes in historic property research, historic resource inventories and surveys, and National Register nominations. In 2001, Jane received her Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. She's currently operates a historic preservation consulting firm located in East Goshen Township.



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# Coatesville DREAMING

## BORN IN STEEL, THE CITY IS REEMERGING AS AN ENTERTAINMENT, RESTAURANT AND RETAIL CENTER

Edwin Malet



Máquina

GOING WEST ON LINCOLN AVENUE, PAST Downingtown, past Thorndale and Caln, past a very, very long commercial strip, is downtown Coatesville. Darlene Jenkin-Walls of the Chester County Economic Development Council says there's a lot happening here. A railway station is being rebuilt. Construction of a sports complex has begun. Restaurants, retail ... it's just getting started.

Since 2019, over 30 businesses — for example, [Máquina](#), a coffee roaster; [John Belli](#), a custom furniture maker; [The Stem's End](#), a floral arrangement company; and [CZ Woodworking](#), specializing in handcrafted, custom-made furniture — have taken residence in the Midway Arts building at 139 East Chestnut Street. The five-story space is already filled. According to Amber Little-Turner, Executive Director of the 2nd Century Alliance, the building has “a consistent waitlist.”

On Lincoln Avenue, [The Record Kitchen + Bar](#) and [The Iron Eagle Bar and Grille](#), have been open and operating since last year. Several small retail businesses — [Looker Books](#), [West Branch Herbs & Tea](#), [The Butter Pecan Café](#), [Stingy Brims](#), [Mimi's Favorite Things](#) and [Closet Babe](#) — are incubating at the Made in Coatesville Market. Others — [Steel City Brewing](#), [30 Prime Seafood and Chophouse](#), [Andrea's Jazz Café](#) — are still under construction and scheduled to open this year.

In short, though some of Coatesville's future still remains a dream — for instance, a performing arts center at the Gateway Project is still seeking partners — after years of positive forecasts and prom-

ises, downtown Coatesville appears to be gathering steam.

What's there is already worth a visit. And as things continue to develop, another visit. It is, after all, Chester County's only city.

### SOME HISTORY

Although its earliest days held substantial promise, Coatesville's future hadn't always appeared bright. It's a born-again story.

In the 19th century, the city's future was tied to the expanding steel and railroad industries. Coatesville's Lukens Steel Company had become one of the largest steel companies in the United States. At its zenith, during World War II, it employed about 6,000 steelworkers.

Beginning in the 1830s, the railroad business grew alongside Coatesville's steel mill. By 1868, a two-story depot — Italianate architecture, arcaded passageways, ornamental brickwork — was built in Coatesville.

Through the mid-20th century, Coatesville was a bustling city. Sears Roebuck, Woolworth's, a national bank, four grand hotels, the mansions of the Lukens, Hustons, Gibbons, Pennocks and others who derived their fortunes from steel dotted the landscape. A large YMCA was built at the town center. The High Bridge crossed the Brandywine River. Just north of downtown, people swam, rowed and canoed at Kurtz Dam (known as Boathouse Row) on the west branch of Brandywine Creek. It seemed idyllic.

Business in Coatesville, however, declined in the last quarter of the 20th

century. While Chester County as a whole was experiencing tremendous growth and prosperity, Coatesville, along with the steel industry generally, was languishing. Employment at the steel mill was down to 600, a tenth of its peak. The train station fell into disuse. Retail declined. Commercial vacancies went up.

### REDEVELOPMENT

It was not until 1999 when the Coatesville Redevelopment Authority was created that the city's commercial trajectory began to change. By 2010, polo player Crosby Wood of New Heritage Properties, native of Unionville, had begun plans for what would become the [National Sports and Events Center](#). Eventually, David Chauner, a two-time Olympian cyclist and graduate of Harrington High School, became involved. So did local politicians.

As currently planned, the Center will be a 245,000-square-foot facility with 2,500 seats, a velodrome track (for bicycle track racing), a floor for concerts, conventions and sports events, a virtual gaming center, and a bar and bistro. Completion is expected by the end of this year.

In 2021, in concert with the Center, ground was broken on a new, modern Coatesville railway station. The redevelopment plan today calls for retail space. Jenkins-Walls says there will be food kiosks as well, along with improved platform access, canopies, lighting and elevators.

Interest had grown. And other businesses have begun to scout Coatesville's streets and buildings.



Looker Books



The Iron Eagle on Lincoln Bar & Grille



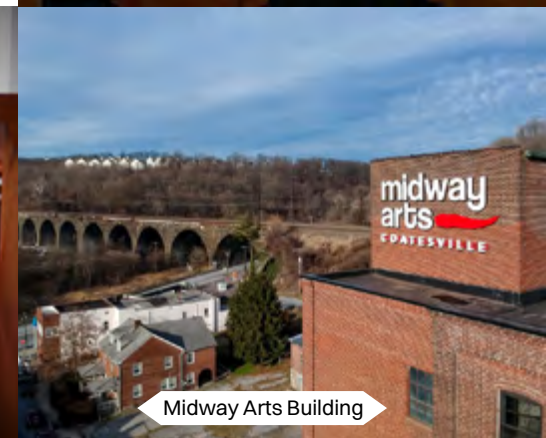
The Record Kitchen + Bar



John Belli

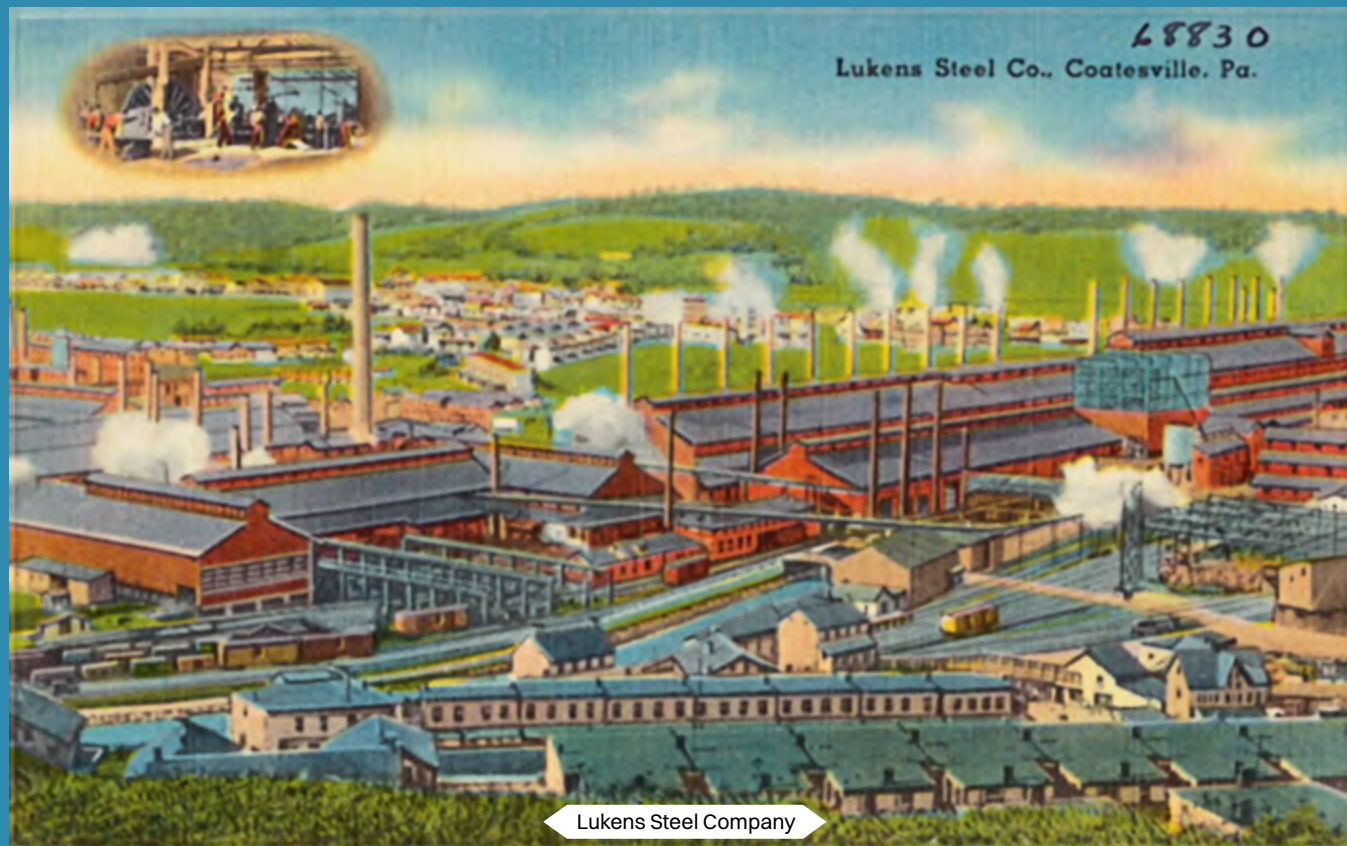


CZ Woodworking



Midway Arts Building





Lukens Steel Company

## NEW RESTAURANTS

With plans announced for the train station and sports center, Coatesville's downtown began to take shape. In the last five years, restaurants, retail and other commercial enterprises have sprung to life.

Last year, the Iron Eagle on Lincoln Bar and Grille opened in the former building of the Coatesville Cultural Society. The kitchen is headed by Cameron Hugendubler, graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, offering a menu that blends old and new worlds. It features a host of Asian-inspired starters — togarashi pork belly, bahn mi spring rolls, Korean BBQ quesadilla — but combines them with dishes such as spiced Southern fried chicken, a soft-shell crab po'boy or "Three Jacks Mac" — a macaroni and cheese dish made with cavatappi and three kinds of cheeses. The bar selection is superb as well, especially at the daily Happy Hour, 4 to 5:30.

Across the street, in the building that housed the *Coatesville Record* — the city newspaper from 1908 to 1974 — the Record Kitchen + Bar has also opened, headed by Chef Arthur Cavaliere. The restaurant offers appetizers — spicy bang bang shrimp or wings are outstanding — wood-fired pizzas, fresh-baked sandwiches, local beer, wine, cocktails and a kids' menu. Happy Hour is on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. You can't go wrong!

## OPENING SOON

Though not open yet, the old YMCA building at 132 East Lincoln Highway is about to become a brewpub, Steel City Brewing.

Chef Phil Ferro, restaurateur with more than 25 years' experience and responsible for Chadds Ford Tavern, Kings Tavern and other eateries in the area, will open Steel City Brewing in the spring. Besides brewing onsite and supporting a beer hall with dartboards and pool tables on the first floor, Steel City will also feature a restaurant on its upper level.

Down the block, Ferro will also open a steakhouse, 30 Prime Seafood and Chophouse, at the old Coatesville Bank Building, scheduled for this year. In the same building will be an event space and an express buffet at lunch.

Meanwhile, at 236 East Lincoln, Bridget Dudley and Dennis Dantzer are planning to open the 55-seat Andrea's Jazz Café, perhaps as early as this spring. It will offer live entertainment — jazz, blues, country. Since 2020, investing their own money and time, the two entrepreneurs have worked on the façade and now the interior. According to Dudley, they are "really committed."

## STILL DREAMING

Retail too is getting off the ground. Much of the activity is at the Made in Coatesville Market, located at 228 East Lincoln. Looker Books is in front. Dana Looker operates the store. It's small, only temporary, she says, until she finds a bigger space.

At West Branch Herbs & Tea, Sarah York offers more than 60 kinds of tea and herbal teas — everything from Darjeeling to Earl Grey — plus a host of bulk herbs, local honey and a variety of tea-making accessories. She also offers several kinds of bath salts.

Jamoca Harkins is the proprietor of the Butter Pecan Café, opened last year. Her shelves are stocked with sweet potato pie, peach cobbler, banana pudding and other Southern-style desserts, which she has been making for her church. Her favorite, she says, is butter pecan ice cream, which she also sells in her shop.

Standing tall at Made in Coatesville is Fred Sharpe, representing Stingy Brims Hat Company. He's been selling hats — fedoras, caps, Stetsons, Kangols, other brands and styles — for 15 years. Some of them, he says, cost \$1,000. He'll order those. On display are hats for \$140, \$60, \$35 or less. His "dream store" has a "nice selection of hats, comfortable leather chairs, a nice coffee bar where you can get a refreshing drink, take your time, shop and enjoy yourself."

Coatesville may be still a work in progress. But progress is visible and real. The train station, the sports center, the restaurants, the retail stores, maybe a performance venue ... They're all coming together. Dreams, it seems, are coming true. ♦

## BONE UP ON YOUR STEEL HISTORY

The National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum is a project of the Graystone Society, which is dedicated to promoting an understanding of the iron and steel industries.

Located at the Lukens Executive Office Building, in the vicinity of the steel mill, the museum's collection includes a 1911 locomotive, a sonarsphere (used in submarines to detect sound), original art — about 5,000 pieces — from industrial artist Klaus Grutzka, and films, drawings and photos of significance to the steel industry.

This is also where you'll learn about Rebecca Lukens, the first female industrialist, and other heroes of our industrial heritage. Additional excursions allow visitors inside two historic ironmasters' homes: Terracina (1850) and Graystone Mansion (1889). The third ironmasters' home, Brandywine Mansion (1739), is under reconstruction and not open for tours.

Gen. adm. \$15; additional tours \$5.  
50 S. First St., Coatesville. [SteelMuseum.org](http://SteelMuseum.org).



Made In Coatesville



Steel City Brewing



Multi-Sports Complex



Coatesville train station



# 2024 REAL ESTATE Roundup

Laurel Anderson

IN THIS ISSUE FOCUSING ON HOMES — FINE homes, oldest homes, dream kitchens — we wanted to touch base with local real estate professionals to see what they have to say about the market outlook for this year.

Clearly our area remains a hot spot for real estate activity. After all, no less than Zillow identified West Chester as the top small town searched on that site for 2023. So, we asked our panel of realtors what questions they wished their clients would ask them about the market — and then share their answers.



**Q: What do you think will happen in the market this year?**

A: “I have an optimistic outlook for increased inventory and a robust real estate market in 2024. As interest rates continue to decline, many sellers are now freed from the ‘interest-rate lock’ that kept them in their homes. Reduced inflation and the year-end stock market rally have given sellers renewed confidence in their finances and the economy. In addition, the mounting pressure of life events may finally be at the breaking point, motivating sellers to stop waiting and make a move now.

“For Baby Boomers, the need to move to a retirement community may have increased in priority due to declining health. Move-up buyers may have outgrown their current homes with the addition of more children, so selling now is more of a priority than ever. All these factors suggest an increase in inventory and a positive outlook for the 2024 housing market.”

*Sue Fitzgerald, Compass RE*



**Q: Are people still buying and selling in this market?**

A: “Absolutely! On the buying side, even when mortgage rates spiked to over 8%, buyers were still there to purchase. Some changed the target price range of their next home to accommodate higher interest rates, but they still wanted to buy. In 2023, buyers saw limited inventory to choose from. But in that last quarter and start of 2024, we’re seeing more inventory — a welcomed sign. Surprisingly interest rates have dropped to the 6.5% range (down from 8+%). Good news for buyers.

“Yes, sellers are still selling even in this long-running sellers’ market. Sellers expect to get top price for their home and multiple offers, if priced correctly. For a few years, many sale contracts excluded inspections — good for sellers, but nerve-racking for buyers. That’s changing. Sellers seeking top price from qualified buyers find inspections part of the agreement. Here’s to a great 2024 in real estate!”

*Kit Anstey, Kit Anstey Real Estate Team*



**Q: Should I try to time the market?**

A: “I always say, ‘Even the greatest economists don’t time the stock market or any market perfectly.’ Very few people are financially able to sell at the market’s peak then wait for a historic low to buy — not to mention the inconvenience of renting while waiting for prices to drop.

“In our area, more people want to live here than there’s housing stock. So Economics 101 tells us when inventory is low, prices are high. I counsel folks instead to focus on their goals, establish their priorities and then make the best decision they can, even if it’s not timed perfectly.

“If you need more room, upsize; or less room, downsize. Got a good job offer? Take it and move. Do what’s best for yourself and your family, and don’t worry about timing the market. You don’t have control over it anyway, so focus on the things you can control.”

*Debra Sparre, RE/MAX Direct*

**Q: How can I get my home ready for market?**

A: “We always offer advice about this, but if sellers ask the question, it means they’re willing to do what’s necessary to present their property in the best light. When sellers follow our advice to get their property ready for market, it makes it much easier to sell their property for top dollar. It also greatly enhances the seller’s experience of the process, as they can see the results of their hard work and quickly get rewarded for it.

“In every case where our clients have followed our advice and done everything on the punch list, their properties have sold exceptionally well, and they’ve earned a huge return on the added investment. Few things are more satisfying than putting your home in tip-top condition and seeing the fruits of your labor returned to you many times over in a higher sales price.”

*Stephen Gross, Holly Gross Group, BHHS Fox & Roach Realtors*



**Q: The interior of the house should be staged, but what about the exterior?**

A: “There’s an adage that 10% of the value of a house should be allocated to landscaping and the grounds. While 10% doesn’t sound like much, with the increased values over the last five years it’s important to keep up with the aesthetic of your home’s architecture and frame it with appropriate landscaping.

“Because there’s often a lot on a seller’s plate when they decide to move, landscaping sometimes gets pushed aside. But if you have a beautiful property and grounds — as well as a beautiful house — have the landscapers over early and often. Not only does this extra care enhance the presentation of your property, it shows pride of ownership, which translates to higher valuation and an easier sale of your home.”

*Robert B. Van Alen, Country Properties Office / Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices*



**Q: What do you think will be a key issue in the 2024 real estate market?**

A: “This year’s real estate market will focus squarely on value. By this I don’t mean home value. Instead, what will be important is the value of advocacy and representation by experienced, professional realtors.

“The national discussion around home sales commission sharing will highlight realtors’ value, leaving behind agents who are focused merely on selling buildings and assets. Experienced realtors will demonstrate their skills and value, whether navigating complicated sales contract terms or advising on zoning regulations, conservation easements and emerging land-use legislation. Only realtors focused on delivering client-minded service will prevail.

“The stakes are high for buyers and sellers today, and the collective interest to ensure value in representation will finally take center stage.” ♦  
*Karen Nader, Monument | Sotheby’s International Realty*



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# Big Bend's Prior Owner

## — Frolic Weymouth

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED HOME HAD A FAMOUS OWNER.



George A. Weymouth, *The Way Back* (1963)

THE CURRENT OWNER OF BIG BEND, Mac Weymouth, shared with our writer that “Art anchors this house.” Weymouth’s home displays several of his father’s artworks, along with pieces by other artists that grace the walls. But there’s pride of place given to work by Frolic Weymouth, including a locally known painting highlighting the home and titled *The Way Back*.

Some background: George A. “Frolic” Weymouth (1936–2016) was perhaps best known for his philanthropic work, in particular as a founder and longtime chairman of the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art. He was also a remarkable artist.

Much like his friend and artistic mentor Andrew Wyeth, Weymouth was private about his painting. Also, as they were for Wyeth, his subjects tended to be friends and family and the scenery that surrounded him — in Weymouth’s case the bucolic landscape of his estate in Chadds Ford, Big Bend.

Artists going back to the 19th century have celebrated the beauty of the Brandywine Valley. Weymouth carried on that tradition and created its next chapter. After his death, the Brandywine Museum of Art organized the first comprehensive exhibition of Weymouth’s artistic career in 2018, featuring 65 of Weymouth’s best works and revealing the breadth of his artistic career.

Encouraged by his mother, Dulcinea “Deo” du Pont, Weymouth expressed an early interest in art. Formal training began with art classes while at St. Mark’s School and later at Yale University. For the rest of his career, Weymouth, influenced by Andrew Wyeth, worked in both watercolor and egg tempera to create haunting, hushed landscapes such as *August* (1974) and *Swelter* (2011), that speak of his love of nature. In these paintings, Weymouth created rich atmospheric works and demonstrated his skill in capturing varying effects of light. He once spoke in an interview about the challenges of realism, saying, “You paint as fast as you can, but then something moves, the light changes. ... I call it the curse of realism.”

You can see examples of Weymouth’s art in the Brandywine Museum of Art’s permanent collection, which includes 25 works by the artist, several of which are frequently rotated into the galleries throughout the year. ♦

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE FROM AUDREY LEWIS, ASSOC. CURATOR, BRANDYWINE MUSEUM OF ART. IMAGES © GEORGE A. WEYMOUTH. USED WITH PERMISSION.

**IF YOU GO:** *Brandywine Museum of Art, 1 Hoffmans Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org*



George A. Weymouth, *Swelter* (2011)  
Collection of the Brandywine Museum of Art



George A. Weymouth, *August* (1974)



# BIG Bend:

A HISTORIC FINE HOME'S NEXT ADVENTURE  
LONG SITUATED AT A CURVE IN THE BRANDYWINE CREEK

Emily Hart

AT A LARGE BEND IN THE Brandywine Creek, on land once inhabited by the Lenape people, a house nestles into a valley between hills and riverbanks.

At the fieldstone home's family entrance at the end of a long drive, a beautiful brass turtle graces the step to the threshold. It pays homage to the land, its former Lenape stewards and history, while honoring the continuity of the site and its human keepers.

Step into the comfortably elegant home of Mac and Frances Weymouth, young adventurers Jasper and Harley Mackay and two furry four-footed Bouviers de Flandres.





## RENOVATION

The 1750s stone home was inherited by Mac from his father, Frolic Weymouth — known for his extraordinary art, conservation of land in the Brandywine Valley and revelry throughout life. With the designs of Archer & Buchanan Architecture and a team of equally talented artisans and crafters, Mac renovated the home's interior from 2017 to 2020.

"My parents instilled agency in my creative process and confidence in my aesthetics," said Mac. "I wanted to keep the historical integrity of the structure." At the same time the exterior and surrounding land were to experience minimal impact, it was time for updates to the interior to accommodate current lifestyles.

Archer & Buchanan's designs with attention to exquisite details perfectly dovetailed the old and new, building and natural surroundings, and memories of the past with continuity into the future. Five of the original nine hearths still stand in the home. Sophisticated lighting that spotlights artwork adds to the sconces and candlelight in keeping with the home's history. Graceful arches, wood trim and case-work make rooms' entrances and exits something special.

## A DRAMATIC ENTRANCE

Perhaps the most unexpected and breathtaking change to the home's interior is the sight that greets visitors the moment they enter. A stunning elliptical staircase curves upward from a herringbone oak floor on the first level. Rising with the steps, brilliant yellow walls painstakingly matched to the previous color of the stairway hold sconces. Different vantage points from the curves awe viewers with Frolic's sketches and *Portrait of Anna B*, of Mac's mother (Anna Brelsford McCoy).

Return to the base of the stairs by foot on the oak steps to glimpse Frolic's iconic painting, *The Way Back*. Or — if you're one of the home's smallest, youngest adventurers, travel downward by belly on the gleaming wooden bannister above the marvelously crafted metal balusters — proving that "Big Bend" is truly a living home.

From the foyer, turn left to discover a library with second-story mezzanine or turn right to enter the family's dream kitchen. When a dazzling Christmas tree isn't in the foyer, look forward and under the staircase to see the home's entrance that faces Brandywine Creek.



## A FAIRY TALE LIBRARY

The library with views into the second-story mezzanine is every reader's fantasy: a first-floor wood stove, sunny window seat for curling up with a book, and spiral staircase leading down to a wine room and to the home's original kitchen.

The mezzanine above, accessible by the central staircase, calls up memories for Mac. "I came home from the hospital to this house in 1968," he says. "According to the stories, champagne flowed that night." The merriment continued over the years.

"The mezzanine space was my childhood bedroom. Often I couldn't sleep because the piano downstairs would play long into the night after my parents and their friends came home from parties at the Chadds Ford Inn."

Today the room has spectacular architectural interior appointments. On one side, a wooden colonnade with pillow-vaulted ceilings leads to the owners' bedroom suite. A wooden railing overlooks a wagon wheel-style chandelier with candles above the first floor. Custom bookcases and paintings line the other walls.





## THE NEW FAMILY KITCHEN

On the first floor opposite the library, a small yet still grand kitchen serves Mac, Frances, the two boys and pets perfectly, with flawless style. Each feature is superb on its own — a black Nero Marquina marble island with white veins, a backsplash of handmade glazed clay pearl-white tiles and a dark Belgian bluestone floor with a special finish. Together the elements create luxury and simplicity at the same time, offering a wonderful ambiance for arranging hors d'oeuvres for an intimate gathering or cooking up French toast for kin.

The kitchen opens into family dining and living spaces equally cozy and tasteful on the riverfront side of the home. Sunlit windows, light walls and beautiful yet understated wood trim are worth much more than a glance, yet provide an understated backdrop for antiques and Brandywine Valley art.



## A DOOR TO THE PAST AND PRESENT

Between those rooms, a wonderful, weathered wooden exterior door placed by Frolic and retained by the family leads to a formal entrance from Brandywine Creek.

One look at the door's character and touch of the knob evokes images of the all the artists, friends, neighbors and celebrities with vast personalities and backgrounds who have come to the home. The sweeping view from its opening and first step outdoors calls to mind the people and creatures who roamed the area centuries ago.

Long before Frolic drove his carriage to the entrance to the 1700s-built abode as depicted in his painting *The Way Back*, the home was a trading post constructed in the 1600s. Swedish traders would have made their way to the post from the water's edge to meet with the Lenape, who sold the land to William Penn in 1683.

In more recent history, Frolic added a graceful symmetric curved staircase to the façade. It was a memorable setting for Mac and Frances's wedding in September 2023.

Indeed it's the outdoor views from the staircase and other points on the property — the landscape of horse country and hills — that Frances cherishes most about Big Bend. "Behind every tree is one amazing adventure after the next," she says.







## THE ENCHANTED DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN

After a romp along the water's edge or an epic lawn party flowing with food and drinks, prepare for another moment of awe when entering the home's lower level. Gaze at the original dining room. "It's an enchanted room," says Mac of his favorite space in the house. "It gives the illusion that you're back in the 1700s because there are no visible signs of electricity."

Except for flood mitigation essentials added by Archer & Buchanan, the space is just like it was in the 1960s. The dining room has its original walk-in fireplace and holds the same furniture. The table, perhaps more swayed after surviving Hurricane Ida in 2021, continues to hold 16 vintage wedding-ring candlesticks. A wooden jamb on the wall is still blackened after a candle fire years ago.

The adjoining lower-level kitchen has new appliances to support festivities for a few hundred guests, but retains the round table Mac and friends gravitated to as kids and return to as adults.

The lower level might also be enchanted for another reason. When relaying the brick floor during renovation, workers found a skeleton. Some speculate that it was a Revolutionary War soldier, but no one seems certain. No spirits have revealed an identity ... yet.

## UPPER STORIES

Nighttime beckons the family to the beautifully designed upper stories.

The second floor, in addition to the library's mezzanine, holds the owners' suite with study, lovely bedroom, bath and shower rooms. Thoughtful, fine details include an alcove with a soaking tub with a line of sight into the adjoining room's fireplace. The bathroom includes monolithic marble slab floors and a separate, open shower with an outdoor view.

The attic level — now headquarters for explorers Jasper and Harley — has two bedrooms with full baths under the original roof rafters.



## INTO THE CARRIAGE MAZE

In addition to an occasional polar plunge into the creek, today's family adventures include trips on foot and ATV into the elaborate carriage maze built by Frolic and enjoyed earlier by famous tenor Luciano Pavarotti and British royalty.

Mac recalls watching over his father's shoulder from the top of a carriage. In spring, bluebells lined the riverbanks and the carriage maze's field turned golden with wild mustard. "It still happens each year," he says.

## THE CORNERSTONE

At the foundation of the Weymouths' home's history, design and decor lies art. Much of the art is by Mac's family — by his father and mother, who was the great-niece of N.C. Wyeth, as well as by other Wyeths. Paintings tell the stories of land and people who have been in and out of the house.

One large, legendary painting lives in the family room by the window that provides the same view as seen in the painting. *The Vidette* by N.C. Wyeth depicts a Union soldier on horseback in the snow, with the background of trees leading to the river and hill in the real scene just feet away.

Mac sums it up perfectly — "Art anchors this house." ♦

- **Photography:** Jeffrey Totaro
- **Architects:** Archer & Buchanan Architecture, Richard Buchanan & Patrick Mohan
- **Builder:** Griffiths Construction, Inc.
- **Structural Engineer:** Structural Design Associates
- **Reclaimed floors and beams:** Barnyard Boys
- **Metalwork for stairs:** Heritage Metalworks
- **Stair Fabricator:** Saienni Stairs
- **Finish Carpentry:** David Dougan, Cabinet Maker





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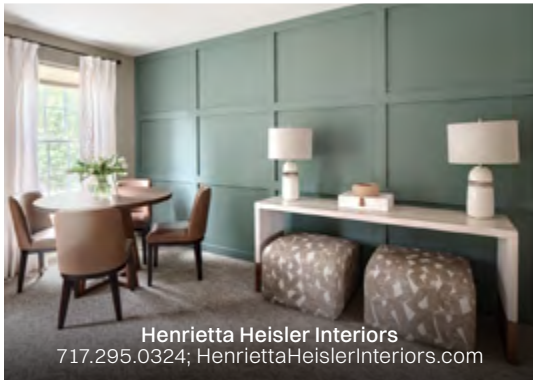
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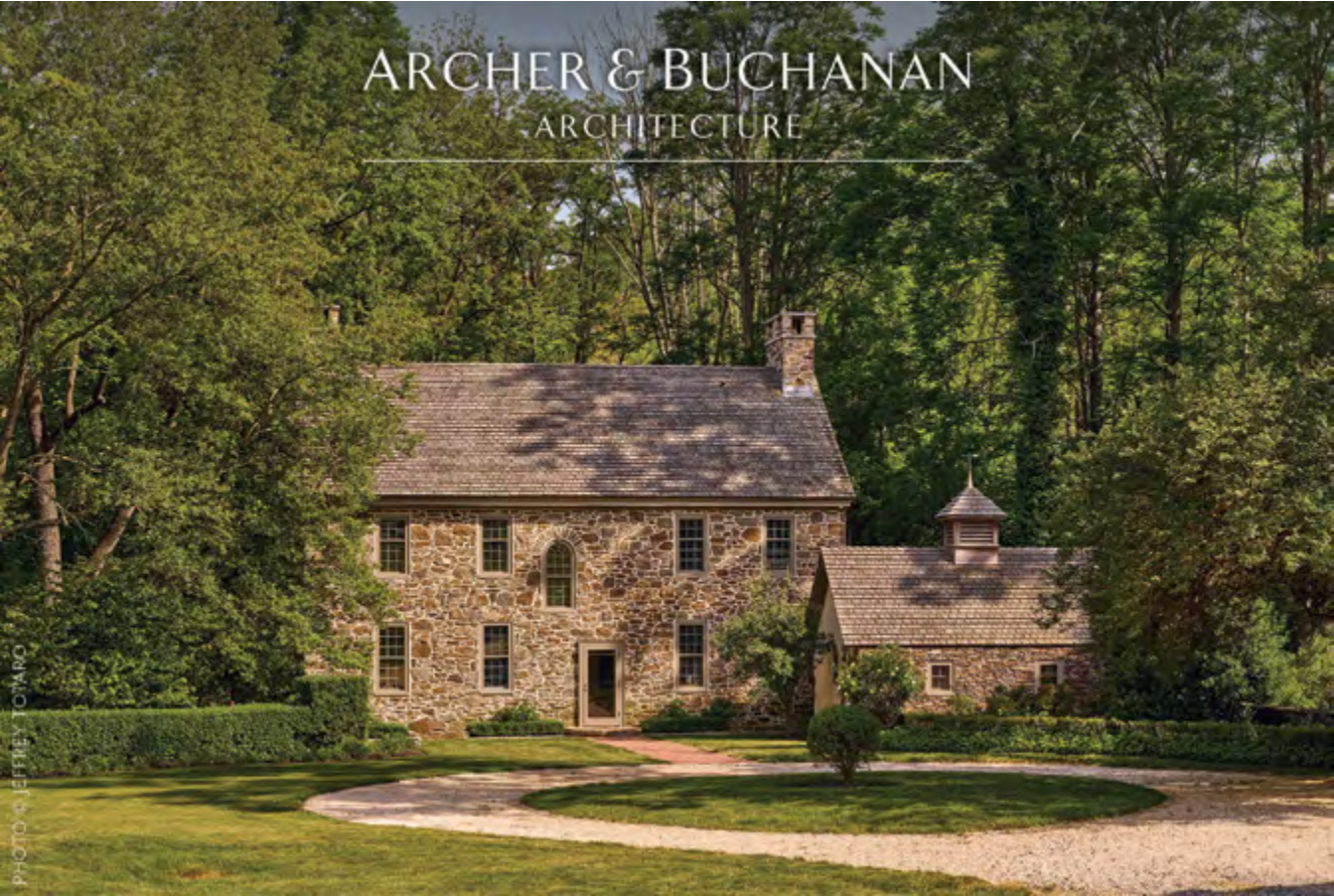
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PA029378 **G10**

# DREAM KITCHENS

After spending (too much) time in your kitchen over the holidays, you now know what works and what needs to change in 2024. Get some kitchen inspiration as you dream about what could be in your and your kitchen's future.

Warm, cozy, bright and inviting with a touch of drama — these are the words that come to mind when describing this beautiful kitchen. It's the perfect gathering space for quaint family meals or for hosting extended family and friends, while providing all the necessary counter space and appliances a cook could want or need to prepare both large and small meals. With warm hardwoods, a combination of light and dark cabinetry and black accents, this kitchen is the best combination of form and function — a true “dream” kitchen.

PHOTO CREDIT: DEWSON CONSTRUCTION



The view from this beautiful, bright kitchen looks out across the owners' property — an inviting scene to enjoy while cooking for a family. The cabinetry was custom built by a local cabinet company and installed by the Trethewey team. Rocky Mountain Hardware adorns the classic cabinets with countertops and a full-slab backsplash in Calcutta gold marble to finish. The range hood, custom designed and installed above a Wolf double-oven range, is complemented by brass hardware and lighting, adding a sophisticated touch to the space. Newly refinished character grade white oak flooring adds warmth to the room.

PHOTO CREDIT: E.C. TRETHEWEY BUILDING CONTRACTORS

This tailor-made kitchen features inset custom cabinets using Belcastel hardware to seamlessly integrate with the flat panel doors. The homeowners wanted a custom color resulting in a perfect timeless “greige.” The large cove moldings complement the inset style of the cabinetry, creating a sophisticated space. A serving bar was added for additional storage and workspace. The wall cabinets were built with an open back to show the unique feature of the brick wall. This highly organized kitchen has many organizational features, a blind corner swing-out, pull-out trash can and custom silverware drawer to name a few.

PHOTO CREDIT: DREAMWOOD DESIGNS





# DREAM KITCHENS



Tucked inside a historic home, this kitchen was part of a large-scale home remodel. The active family wanted an updated space with professional-grade appliances, lots of counter space and storage without the room feeling filled with cabinets. Curved island ends and custom-curved hood add modernity while echoing the classic arched doorway. Carrara marble tops with a custom apron sink bring a touch of history. While the triple windows wash the room in light, extra tall worktop cabinets emphasize the height of the space, making this kitchen a warm and inviting space for family and guests.

PHOTO CREDIT: MAIN STREET CABINET CO.

This newly designed kitchen was part of a thoughtful re-imagination and complete reconstruction of a beautiful apartment overlooking Rittenhouse Square. With a reclaimed 19th-century dressmaker's table from Paris as the focal point, this kitchen features custom cabinetry, marble walls and tops, all cut from the same slabs, and a custom brass-and-steel hood plus brass-and-glass shelving by local artisans.

PHOTO CREDIT: PINEMAR, INC.; SEAN LITCHFIELD (PHOTOGRAPHER)



A classic Main Line kitchen with sophisticated details, designed by Trez Pomilo of Sugarbridge Kitchen and Bath Design, features custom cabinets by Christiana Cabinetry, state-of-the-art appliances, New Ravenna backsplash tile and quartzite countertops. The monochromatic aesthetic sets a perfect stage for seasonal color schemes and decorations and allows any chef to zero in on their culinary art with the over-all serene feeling of the space.

PHOTO CREDIT: SUGARBRIDGE CUSTOM KITCHENS & BATHS

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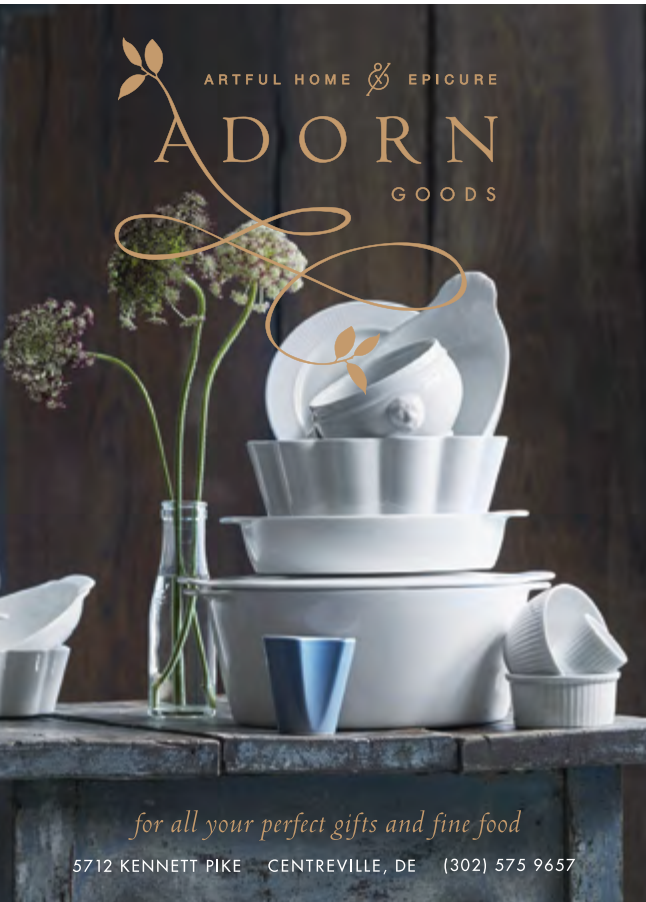
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# Choosing

## the Right Private School for Your Child

### ADVICE FOR OPEN HOUSE SEASON AND BEYOND

Shannon Montgomery

SO, YOU’VE DECIDED TO CONSIDER SENDING your child to a private or independent school for the next academic year. Great news! Our area is full of fantastic private schools offering a broad variety of programs fit for every learning style and interest. But the wealth of choices makes the process of finding the right fit that much more difficult for your family.

Choosing a school for your child may be one of the most important decisions you’ll make as a parent. How do you know you’re making the best choice? It starts by visiting open houses at local schools and discovering what makes each unique.

We spoke with local educators about making the most of your open house experience and what to do next. Whether you’re choosing your child’s first school, transitioning from public school or moving on to middle or high school, read on for what the experts say on finding the right fit.

#### PLAN AHEAD

An important first step in choosing a school is to make a plan of action. First, decide what kind of schools you want to visit and

which to start with. Jennifer Rose, Director of Enrollment Management at Villa Maria Academy High School, recommends casting a wide net. “Visit various types of schools. Whether you’re interested in single-sex, coed or don’t know, investigate them all.”

Once you’ve made your picks, it’s time to create a schedule. The spring open house season starts in February, but many schools continue hosting events throughout the school year (see our “Guide to Private & Independent Schools” on the following pages for scheduled open houses and other events).

Each school handles open houses differently — some take place during the school day, others are on nights or weekends, and some are hosted virtually (online). With proper planning, you should be able to schedule a visit to all the schools on your list.

Finally, be sure to do your homework before coming to campus. “Come prepared,” says Rose. She advises families to take a careful look at schools’ websites, which will answer many of your preliminary questions — about academics, sports and activities, as well as whether the school is faith-based or offers service opportunities. Your research is also likely to raise more specific questions relating to

your child or family. Prepare a list of these questions to ask at each school’s open house.

#### AT THE OPEN HOUSE

During the open house, plan a long enough visit to allow yourself to take time to get a feel for that particular school. Pay close attention to how students and faculty interact, and how students interact with each other. What’s the overall feeling you get in the halls? Is there student art on the walls? Do students seem happy, friendly and engaged? Try to envision your child at the school — is this a place where they could thrive?

And of course, talk to as many people as you can — staff, students, other parents. At Sacred Heart Academy in Bryn Mawr, “We tell [families] not to leave campus until all their questions are answered,” says Tammy Hart, Director of Enrollment Management.

Sacred Heart’s open house, called Red & White Breakfast on the Hill, take place while school is in session. “We’re literally opening up our house,” Hart says. The event starts with breakfast in

the mansion, with administrators on hand to greet families and answer preliminary questions. Families get a tour from student ambassadors, and teachers welcome them into their classrooms.

At Riverstone United Christian Academy, families get a glimpse into life at the school. “We invite families to learn how students’ lives are being transformed by a Christ-centered, supportive learning environment, where students are able to focus on developing their talents and purpose,” says Assistant Principal Eileen Roche.

On the other hand, some schools host virtual open house sessions. Though the format is different, the philosophy is the same. “The virtual open house is a great first pass as families get to know our school and community,” says Angela DiMaria, Associate Head of School and Director of Admissions & Program at Media-Providence Friends School. “During the virtual tour I essentially give a campus tour, peeking into many classrooms, interacting with students and teachers as I walk around. I am always joined by some current and alum parent helpers who can field questions from our attendees as well as share their unique perspectives on what life is



Villa Maria Academy High School



Sacred Heart Academy



Media-Providence Friends School



Riverstone United Christian Academy



like for their children and their families here at MPFS.”

For students with learning differences, the process might look a little different. Instead of a traditional open house, Center School offers personalized tours. Tiffany Getz, Director of Admissions, believes this is “the best way to get to know Center School.” It’s also especially important to make sure your questions are being answered. “We recommend parents create a list of questions to

ask the schools that they are considering so that they can equally compare and see what services and programs each school can provide their child and their unique learning style,” Getz says.

**NEXT STEPS**

If you like what you see (and hear) at the open house, it’s time to follow up with your top-choice schools as you narrow your list. Sacred Heart Academy’s Hart recommends

revisiting the school’s website: “It makes more sense after you’ve been here.”

This is also the time to talk to current parents and students. Ask around to friends and family, whose day-to-day experiences can paint a fuller picture of what the school is like. If you don’t have any personal connections, schools are happy to put you in touch with parents. For instance, Tatnall School’s website has a feature that helps put prospective families in touch with Tatnall parents. “We often find the deciding factor for a parent is connecting directly with other parents about their personal experience and engaging with our students,” says Alissa McGrisken, Director of Enrollment & Financial Assistance. “The ‘Connect with a Parent’ offers them an outlet without feeling like they have to go through us. It makes it feel more authentic.”

Your next step is often to return to campus. Beyond open houses, many schools offer more opportunities to get to know them better. Kimberton-Waldorf School opens up their classrooms for Discover events. These “are the best ways for students and families to see classes in action, meet teachers and dive into the philosophy of Waldorf education with administrators,” says Lilli Foster, Director of Enrollment. In addition to admissions events, Foster says, “Attending events like our school musical, winter fair or basketball games is a great way to get to know our lively campus and community.”

At Media-Providence Friends School, DiMaria gives in-person campus tours. “I truly love showing families around our school campus and answering questions,” she says. And like many schools, a student visit is a required part of the admissions process. “Our student visits look different depending on the grade of the child, anywhere from one-on-one with the teacher or a Saturday preschool playdate to two consecutive visit days for our grades 3 through 8 applicants,” DiMaria says.

In addition, many schools host information sessions for specific groups. Sacred Heart Academy holds MAC Mondays,



Tatnall School



St. Aloysius Academy

which gives parents of children in grades 1 through 4 insight into their multi-age classrooms. And Villa Maria Academy has special programming for students transitioning from public to private school. Ultimately, making the most of these experiences will help you make the best choice for your family. “The more events and opportunities you attend, the more you’ll get out of it,” says Hart.

Finally, take note of application deadlines and requirements. These deadlines vary greatly from school to school, so you may have to complete certain schools’ applications before you finish visiting all the others. In addition, many schools require recommendations, interviews, and admission or scholarship tests. Make sure to prepare

these materials as early as possible to ensure the admission process goes smoothly.

Finding the right private school for your child is a long process. From researching to attending events to applying and finally making a decision, there are many factors to consider. Yet at the end of the day, it often comes down to a gut feeling about a school. And the only way to get that feeling is by walking the halls and seeing the school community for yourself.

So, it’s time to explore the many excellent schools in the region during the open house season. We wish you the best of luck with your school search! ♦

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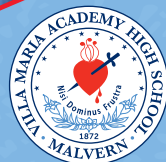
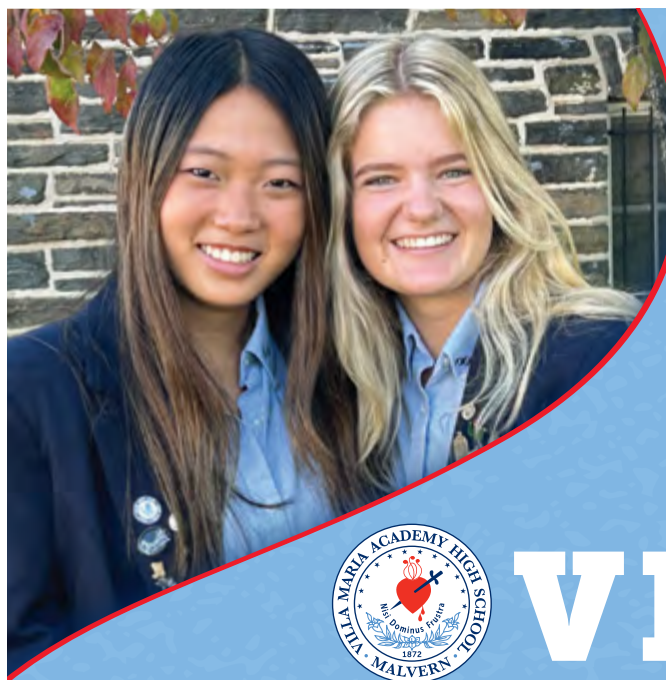
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**7th Grade Practice Exam**  
March 16, 2024

**7th Grade Visit Villa Days**  
April 17 and 18, 2024

**7th Grade Admissions Fair**  
May 1, 2024

**VISIT US  
THIS SPRING!**

Learn more and register at [www.vmahs.org/events](http://www.vmahs.org/events)

# Guide to PRIVATE & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Atglen

#### West Fallowfield Christian School

795 Fallowfield Rd.; 610-593-5011; [WFCS.org](http://WFCS.org)

For over 80 years, West Fallowfield Christian School has partnered with families and churches to nurture and grow children on their spiritual, academic and social-emotional journey. WFCS is a private preschool through high school (grades 11 and 12 coming in 24-25!) that creates an environment where children feel safe, respected and seen as the unique individual God created them to be. Their teachers and staff pray that each student, past, present and future, will leave the school equipped to shine for Jesus and make a difference in the world.

Open House: Feb. 28, 9 am



### St. Aloysius Academy

401 S. Bryn Mawr Ave.; 610-525-1670

[StAloysiusAcademy.org](http://StAloysiusAcademy.org)

Founded in 1895 by the Sisters, Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Aloysius Academy is the only private, Catholic, all-boys, K-8 school in the Philadelphia five-county area. St. Aloysius Academy provides an engaging and challenging learning environment for boys that recognizes

their needs and develops their gifts and talents. Within a faith-based setting, relational learning permeates the caring and formative atmosphere where each student can grow to be the best version of himself.

Open House: Jan. 31, Mar. 13, 9 am

To schedule a private tour, contact [Admissions@StAloysiusAcademy.org](mailto:Admissions@StAloysiusAcademy.org)



### Bryn Mawr

#### Sacred Heart Academy

480 S. Bryn Mawr Ave.

610-527-3915; [SHABrynMawr.org](http://SHABrynMawr.org)

Sacred Heart Academy Bryn Mawr (SHA)

is a girls, K-12, independent, Catholic school. Small by design, SHA is also part of the Sacred Heart global network of 150+ schools in 41 countries offering domestic and international exchange programs. Their unique Lower School Multi-Age Classrooms and Upper School dual enrollment with Villanova University set them apart, and their graduates attend leading universities.

Open House: Feb. 23, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 5, 9 to 11 am

Lower School Multi-Age Classroom (MAC) Virtual Information Sessions:

Mar. 11, Apr. 8, May 6, 10 am

Middle & Lower School Virtual Information Session: Feb. 21, 6 to 7 pm

Upper School Virtual Information Session: Apr. 24, 6 to 7 pm



### Haverford

#### Friends School Haverford

851 Buck Ln.

610-642-2334; [FriendsHaverford.org](http://FriendsHaverford.org)

Friends School Haverford fosters a lifelong love of learning, grounded in the Quaker testimonies of integrity, equality, service, community, simplicity and peaceful problem solving. Their place-based approach and beautiful outdoor learning environment provide age-appropriate challenges and stimulate students to achieve their full potential. At FSH teachers nurture student voices so they are empowered to speak their truth.

Open House: Apr. 27, 9 to 11 am

Register: [FriendsHaverford.org](http://FriendsHaverford.org)





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## Malvern

### Malvern Preparatory School

418 S. Warren Ave.

484-595-1100; [MalvernPrep.org](https://MalvernPrep.org)

Malvern Preparatory School is an independent Augustinian school for young men in grades 6–12. Malvern Prep offers its students a nurturing, Catholic community in which they can grow and become the best possible version of themselves. The curriculum balances rigorous academics, extracurricular commitment, spiritual development and Christian service, providing an experience that places students at the center of learning.

Visit [MalvernPrep.org](https://MalvernPrep.org) for Admissions and Enrollment information



### Villa Maria Academy High School

370 Central Ave.; 610-644-2551; [VMAHS.org](https://VMAHS.org)

Villa Maria Academy High School is a Catholic preparatory school located on a beautiful, 45-acre campus in Malvern. Villa Maria's curriculum is designed to empower young women with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and beyond. Students explore their passions on the lacrosse turf, at mock trial debates, in theatrical productions and through service. Cherished traditions connect students to each other, alumnae and over 150 years of Villa Maria excellence.

7th Grade Practice Exam: *Mar. 16*

7th Grade Visit Villa Days: *Apr. 17 & 18*

7th Grade Admissions Fair: *May 1*



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[instagram.com/staloyusiusacademy](https://instagram.com/staloyusiusacademy)



**Announcing 2s**  
*at Tatnall*

Coming in 2024-25 Tatnall's Early Childhood will now include a program for two-year-olds!

Our youngest students will engage in a curriculum specifically designed to nurture their unique cognitive and social-emotional needs while giving parents an exceptional early education and child care solution.

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*Register for an event or a tour!*

For more information  
[www.Tatnall.org/visit](https://www.Tatnall.org/visit)  
(302) 892-4285



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610.399.7884 | [westtown.edu](http://westtown.edu)

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— West Chester —  
[RIVERSTONEUNITED.COM](http://RIVERSTONEUNITED.COM)  
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

**West Chester Friends School**

An independent Quaker School serving three-year-olds through fifth grade students in the historic borough of West Chester



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For more information, call Barbara Rowe, Director of Admissions,  
610-696-2937

**West Chester Friends School**  
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415 N. High St. West Chester, Pennsylvania  
[www.wcfriends.org](http://www.wcfriends.org)

Media

**Media-Providence Friends School**

125 W. 3rd St.; 610-565-1960; [MPFS.org](http://MPFS.org)

A Quaker school for students age 2–grade 8 that awakens the passion and potential of all individuals within a welcoming, diverse community led by Quaker values. A close-knit learning community, MPFS offers students big views of the world ahead. In small classes, under the caring tutelage of early childhood, elementary school and adolescent experts who are passionate about teaching, students from diverse backgrounds and faiths grow up together.

Open House: Mar. 1, May 27, 10 am



Newtown Square

**Delaware County Christian School**

462 Malin Rd.; 610-353-6522 x 2212; [DCCS.org](http://DCCS.org)

For nearly 75 years, Delaware County Christian School has provided students with rigorous programs in academics, the arts, and athletics. Faculty mentors walk alongside students in Pre-K–12th grade during their formative years of intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth, and prepare them for a life of impact through an innovative and exemplary education rooted in Christ.

Lower Campus Open House (PK2–5th): Apr. 9, 9 am

Upper Campus Open House (6th–12th): Apr. 16, 9 am

Plan your visit today at [DCCS.org/Visit](http://DCCS.org/Visit)



Merion Station

**Waldron Mercy Academy**

513 Montgomery Ave.

610-664-9847; [WaldronMercy.org](http://WaldronMercy.org)

Discover the transformative power of a Waldron Mercy Academy education, where academic excellence and compassionate community have produced a century of success. With a focus on values, integrity and social responsibility, students are encouraged to explore their passions, engage in service to others and develop a deep sense of empathy and understanding.

Visit [WaldronMercy.org](http://WaldronMercy.org) to start your journey today!



**Episcopal Academy**

1785 Bishop White Dr.

484-424-1400; [EpiscopalAcademy.org](http://EpiscopalAcademy.org)

Since 1785, The Episcopal Academy has inspired Pre-K–12 students of all faiths through academic rigor, transformative character development and dynamic athletics, arts and extracurricular opportunities. Students thrive through a classical yet innovative curriculum, dedicated faculty and an expansive, state-of-the-art campus. They invite your family to discover who your child will become at EA.

Spring Open House: Apr. 18, 5:45 pm

Register at [EpiscopalAcademy.org/Events](http://EpiscopalAcademy.org/Events)







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[www.wilmingtonfriends.org](https://www.wilmingtonfriends.org)

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413 Fairview St.  
610-983-4080; [RAK12.org](https://RAK12.org)  
A tuition-free, college prep, fully-accredited, public charter school for grades K-12. Their mission is to prepare children for success as students, workers and citizens by providing them with a high-quality liberal arts, college preparatory education.  
Open House: Apr. 16, 6 pm. Call for details.



### Saint Agnes Catholic School

211 W. Gay St.; 610-696-1260; [St.AgnesSchoolWC.org](https://St.AgnesSchoolWC.org)  
Saint Agnes Catholic School was founded in 1872 and offers an exceptional community that is rich in history and alive in faith for children in Pre-K to grade 8. Students practice their faith daily along with the virtue of service. Their commitment to academic excellence has garnered recognition by the Department of Education, the Middle States Association and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.  
Individual tours are available by contacting [Info@SaintAgnesSchoolWC.org](mailto:Info@SaintAgnesSchoolWC.org)



## West Chester

### Riverstone United Christian Academy

430 Hannum Ave.; 484-297-9180; [RiverstoneUnited.com](https://RiverstoneUnited.com)  
Discover a transformative education at Riverstone United Christian Academy, where academic excellence meets Christian values. Their dedicated faculty nurtures students in grades 6-11, fostering a dynamic learning environment with small class sizes. Join a community that values faith, character and academic achievement where your students are uniquely valued and encouraged to deeply connect with their God-given purpose. Secure your child's enrollment today for a well-rounded education that goes beyond the classroom.  
Open House: Feb. 4, 2:30 pm



### Westtown School

975 Westtown Rd.; 610-399-7900; [Westtown.edu](https://Westtown.edu)  
A Westtown education could be the difference between your child growing up to be changed by the world and your child being a force for change in the world. Westtown is a Pre-K-12, Quaker school. Students learn and discover in the classroom and throughout their 600-acre campus, at their 13-acre lake, in the arboretum or outside amphitheater and in their athletic complex. Westtown supports students to find their voice and use it to develop confidence and stand up for deeply held beliefs, inspiring and preparing its graduates to be stewards and leaders of a better world.  
Middle School Open House: Feb. 13, 1 pm  
Lower School Open House: Feb. 14, 9:30 am  
Visit [Westtown.edu/Admission](https://Westtown.edu/Admission) to register







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610-696-2937; [WCFriends.org](http://WCFriends.org)

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Call 610-696-2937 or email [Admissions@WCFriends.org](mailto:Admissions@WCFriends.org) for a tour



### Wilmington

#### Tatnall School

1501 Barley Mill Rd.

302-998-2292; [Tatnall.org](http://Tatnall.org)

Students age 2 through grade 12 experience a transformative education on a gorgeous 100-acre campus. Tatnall provides each student a platform to experience endless educational opportunities. From diverse and enriching academics to top-tier arts and athletics, Tatnall's dedicated teachers, coaches and community are at the heart of what makes Tatnall extraordinary. The deep, authentic relationships built there elevate students' drive for learning, thus unlocking their full potential and innovative minds full of ideas.

Middle and Upper School Tour and Learn: Gr. 6-12. Feb. 13,

Mar. 5, 8:30 to 10 am

Early Childhood & Lower School Spring Open House: Age 2-Gr. 5.

Apr. 27, 9 to 11



### DELAWARE

#### Claymont

#### Archmere Academy

3600 Philadelphia Pk.

302-798-6632; [ArchmereAcademy.com](http://ArchmereAcademy.com)

Archmere's rigorous academic program challenges grade 9-12 students to advance their critical thinking, sharpen their skills, take ownership of their learning potential and advocate for their own goals. Archmere's variety of electives and extracurricular activities allow students to participate in classes and activities that match their interests. Graduates consistently share that their Archmere experience created a smooth transition into higher education and beyond.

7th Grade Practice Test: Apr. 20, 9 am

Open House: Apr. 25, 6 pm

Register online: [ArchmereAcademy.com/Visit](http://ArchmereAcademy.com/Visit)



#### Wilmington Friends School

101 School Rd. (Rts. 202 & 95)

302-576-2900; [WilmingtonFriends.org](http://WilmingtonFriends.org)

A great place to grow up, offering an unsurpassed academic program with depth, asking students to question, collaborate, be creative and take risks, all within a caring community that balances focus on the individual with responsibility to the common good. 1:1 laptop/iPad program for Kindergarten-12th Grade, STEM labs and programming, International Baccalaureate program and competitive athletics. Celebrating their 275th anniversary!

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**Open House**  
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**610-696-1260**

email us at  
[info@saintagnesschoolwc.org](mailto:info@saintagnesschoolwc.org)




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**Contact Us**  
302-571-0230  
6201 Kennett Pike  
Centreville, DE 19807  
[centrevillelayton.org](http://centrevillelayton.org)





## Media-Providence Friends School



Meaningful Learning, Purposeful Life

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March 1 & May 17

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**WelcomeNeighborPA.com**

Or call Anne at: **610.742.9341**

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Explore EA at  
**OPEN HOUSE** Thursday, April 18  
Registration: 5:45 p.m. Program: 6 p.m.

Independent | PreK-12 | Co-ed | [episcopalacademy.org/events](http://episcopalacademy.org/events)

## LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

PENNSYLVANIA

Abington

### Center School

2450 Hamilton Ave.

215-657-2200; [CenterSchoolPA.org](http://CenterSchoolPA.org)

Since its founding in 1989, Center

School has successfully supported students with language-based learning differences in grades 1–8. Students are diagnosed with dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, ADHD, auditory processing disorder, executive function disorder or a similar language-based learning disability. Students receive individualized instruction so that they can become independent and confident learners from a highly qualified and dedicated faculty.

Call for a personal tour and information session



Conshohocken

### AIM Academy

1200 River Rd.; 215-483-2461; [AIMPA.org](http://AIMPA.org)

AIM provides extraordinary educational opportunities through a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum to children in Gr. 1–12. AIM is the Philadelphia area's largest school for children with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Students experience a rich, research-based curriculum and a range of elective and extracurricular arts, music, club and athletic opportunities. Discover AIM for Innovative Teaching and Fearless Learning.

Virtual Information Sessions: Feb 2, March 8, 9 am

Feb. 21, March 20, noon



## Guide to PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Media

### Benchmark School

2107 N. Providence Rd.; 610-565-3741

[BenchmarkSchool.org](http://BenchmarkSchool.org)

Benchmark School is an internationally recognized leader in providing effective, individualized education for children with dyslexia, ADHD and other learning differences. The school's exclusive research-based approach goes beyond basic reading programs to reach the whole child. Refined over five decades, the Benchmark Approach teaches children how to be critical, analytical thinkers with excellent emotional, social and decision-making skills. Visit to learn more about how Benchmark School helps to create confident and competent learners.

Open Houses for School and Camp: Feb. 28, July 18



**BENCHMARK  
SCHOOL**



DELAWARE

Centreville

### Centreville Layton School

6201 Kennett Pk.

302-571-0230; [CentrevilleLayton.org](http://CentrevilleLayton.org)

Centreville Layton School offers a robust educational and cultural experience for students who learn differently. The program identifies the academic and social needs of the individual and provides a curriculum that focuses on problem-solving and critical thinking. The school empowers each student to reach his or her potential through intervention and strengthening learning strategies. Pre-K–12 and post-graduate program.

Open House: First Wed. of the month, 9 to 11 am

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

**DIY Ice Cream.** Book **Hangry Bear Creamery's** studio with a dozen friends and create your dream ice cream flavors (\$340). It's pure fun, tasty science experiment or both,



complete with customized packaging, naming and labeling. Choose a base (non-dairy option), flavor (almond to white chocolate), inclusions (nuts, candy, chunks, baked goods), then add a swirl! Or let the experts at the creamery follow your directions. Inspired by creativity, fueled by hunger. 660 E. Cypress St., Kennett Square. [HangryBearCreamery.com](http://HangryBearCreamery.com).

**Fine Delco Dining.** Though a bit outside our usual coverage, **Rosemary** restaurant's raves attracted our attention. Owner Philip Breen (Stephen Starr) and Chef Elijah Milligan (Le Bec Fin, Vernick) bring serious chops to the former Burgundy Lounge in Ridley Park with their \$2-million, 100-seat venture. Savor smoked lamb mafaldine, Peruvian-style chicken and other delectables at what Craig LaBan called a date-night ambitious modern American bistro. And bring quarters for the meters. 25 E. Hinckley Ave., Ridley Park. [RosemaryRP.com](http://RosemaryRP.com).



**Adult Hangout.** 30 on Main was revamped into **Midtown Social**, a cocktail lounge and private event venue spread over two renovated floors. Hosting everything from baby showers to life celebrations, Sweet 16s to office parties, this space offers state-of-the-art tech and 100-inch screens, plus DJs, bands, darts, shuffleboard and pool. What more could you want? Maybe catering services plus sushi from nearby Motto, plenty of apps and sharables plus fun food like fondue. 660 Lancaster Ave., Berwyn. [MidtownSocial.net](http://MidtownSocial.net).

**Social Impact Dining.** Dining for a good cause can be routine with a membership at the **Epicurean Club** in Chester Springs. This partnership between the Epicurean Garage and Autism Village Foundation lets members take a culinary journey with a purpose by supporting vocational training for young adults with special needs. The historic Flowing Springs Inn is the site for First Friday dinners, Second Sunday brunches, Third Thursday pub nights, plus special events and entertainment. 4000 Pottstown Pk., Pottstown. [FlowingSpringsInn.com](http://FlowingSpringsInn.com).



**Spirits Funding.** Want to own part of a distillery? The folks behind Revivalist gins and Resurgent whiskeys plan to expand this local treasure into a global player with crowdfunding opportunities on StartEngine for **Botanery Barn Distilling**. Headquartered in a 130-year-old barn amid fields of botanicals, the distillery uses pre-Prohibition methods to infuse their distinctive spirits with botanicals. You can explore the world of craft spirits vicariously by becoming an investor. Details on Instagram. 350 Warwick Rd. Elverson. [@BotaneryBarnDistilling](https://www.instagram.com/BotaneryBarnDistilling).





# Food Around the Fire

## MAKING THE MOST OF THE COOLER SEASONS WITH OUTDOOR COOKING, SOCIALIZING AND FUN

Courtney H. Diener-Stokes

I USUALLY START HAVING AN ITCH TO BUNDLE UP by an outdoor fire as early as October. That's also when I'm craving apple fritters paired with the start of cooler nights and shared with extended family to join in on the fun.

For those fall outdoor fritters, my family sets up a large cooking tripod next to a big bonfire and gets a smaller fire going that's just big enough for a cast iron skillet. Once the oil sizzles in the iron skillet, I begin adding the thick apple batter I've made in advance.

As the fritters cook, the aroma of warming spices — cinnamon, mace, nutmeg — merged with apples wafts through the open

country air. But it's the taste of the fritters, along with the warming, crackling fire that feels like a celebration of the changing seasons.

For our November outings, we like to have friends over for a lantern walk, then a soup or chili potluck. Again, we get out the tripod, but this time we use it to hang a large metal pot to heat up apple cider. Adults gather round the fire to stay warm and talk, while kids are off running and playing. We set up a long table near the

fire for crockpots filled with soup and chili, along with crusty bread and cornbread. One of my favorite recipes is a friend's bulgur wheat-based vegetarian chili that includes lots of tasty topping options.

This past December, a few weeks before Christmas, I got together with family and friends for a holiday bake at my sister-in-law's farm, where there's a bakehouse with a wood-fired brick oven. Everyone brought different things to cook, resulting in a potluck feast of focaccia, pizza, flatbreads and pies. As each item came out of the oven, we'd add it to the outdoor table so everyone could get a taste.

Come January and February, if we're lucky enough to have snowy days, we invite friends and their kids over to sled and toboggan. In between downhill runs, we gather around the fire pit to snack on things like s'mores and maple popcorn, balanced with a hearty cheeseboard.

Read on for some of my favorite recipes to enjoy fireside, whether indoors by the fireplace or out by the fire pit. The outcome is just as good when cooked indoors, but there's a whole other dimension of pleasure added when eating outdoors in the crisp air by the warmth of the blazing fire.



Courtney cooking outdoors in a wood-fired cob oven

PHOTO CREDIT: SENECA BRAND



Fireside ambiance with wine and cheeseboard



S'mores aren't just for summer

## Two-Cheese Prosciutto Flatbread with Arugula and Balsamic Glaze

*When I spend a crisp winter afternoon cooking in a wood-fired outdoor oven, I feel most in my element, surrounded by three loves: spending time in nature, feeling the warmth of the fire and smelling woody aromas, and cooking flatbreads — they get a uniquely crispy crust from the high heat of the oven. As each flatbread finishes cooking, it's placed on a large cutting board for final toppings, seasonings, oils and glazes. Next, cut the flatbreads into pieces and call friends and family to dig in before starting to bake the next one. This two-cheese prosciutto flatbread pairs nicely with red wine.*



Serves 4 to 6

- 1 standard round of flatbread or pizza dough, divided in half (homemade or store-bought)
- 1½ C. shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- 2, 3-oz. packages of prosciutto
- Olive oil
- 1 C. shaved Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 C. packed, standard (or micro) arugula, divided
- Balsamic vinegar glaze (pre-made/store bought), to taste

If not cooking in an outdoor wood-fired oven, preheat an indoor oven to 450°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Flour one dough ball and stretch out thin to form a round or oblong shape and place on the lined baking sheet.

Sprinkle the top evenly with mozzarella. Then evenly place pieces of one package of prosciutto (keeping the pieces whole).

Bake for 11 minutes (likely less if cooking in a wood-fired oven that's at a higher temperature), then remove from oven (close door to retain heat) and brush the entire crust with olive oil.

Return to oven and cook an additional 1 to 2 minutes, until edges are golden brown and cheese has slightly browned.

After fully cooked, remove from oven and drizzle the top with olive oil. Sprinkle arugula evenly over entire flatbread. Next sprinkle with fresh Parmesan. Drizzle with balsamic glaze, left to right in a zigzag across the entire flatbread. Top with salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste.

Repeat process with second dough ball.

Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to three days.

**Note:** If you want to streamline the process and bypass making home-made dough, you can find fresh dough balls sold at grocery stores in the refrigerated area by the cheese section or buy a dough ball from your local pizzeria.

## White Chocolate Raspberry S'mores

*A friend's housewarming gift a few years ago opened me up to a whole new world of s'mores combinations. She gave me several gift bags, each with a different s'mores recipe and the ingredients for it. Her creative gift covered our dessert needs all week, and it was so much fun trying the different flavor combinations. I loved learning new ways to reinvent this beloved fireside tradition.*



Serves 8

- 8 whole graham crackers (standard or chocolate), cut in half
- 8 T. raspberry preserves (or fresh raspberries)
- 2 white chocolate bars, broken into squares
- 8 marshmallows

Lay out eight graham cracker halves on a tray.

Place a dollop of preserves on top of each, followed by two white chocolate pieces.

As each person finishes toasting their marshmallow, have them rest it on top of the pre-assembled stack (the marshmallow will rest on top of the chocolate bars).

Place the second half of graham cracker on top of the marshmallow and press down gently as the roasting stick is removed. (The soft and gooey marshmallow will hold the sandwiched s'more together.)

Store any leftover ingredients separately in their own resealable bag or sealed container.



## Sweet & Salty Maple Popcorn

*The moment I spotted an open-fire popcorn popper in Terrain unlike any design I've ever seen, I knew it had to be mine. I love the comfortable wooden handle and bowl-like cooking vessel with a detachable lid. We make buttered popcorn often in our home, so to make it special at a fireside occasion, our family makes a sweet and salty version using maple syrup. The kids can safely help with the popping process given the long handle of the special popper. This recipe works just as well to pop inside at the fireplace as it does outdoors at the fire pit. Pairs nicely with hot chocolate.*

Serves 4 to 6



2 T. butter  
2 T. maple syrup  
½ C. popcorn kernels  
Salt, to taste

In a small saucepan, melt butter and add maple syrup. Stir and heat on low just until it begins to bubble (1 to 2 minutes). Take off heat and set aside.

Once the kernels have popped, place popcorn in a large bowl. Drizzle the warm butter-syrup mixture all over the popcorn. Toss to coat evenly. Add salt to taste. Serve immediately.

Serve in mugs or small bowls for ease in holding it around the fire. You can make this popcorn just as easily on the stovetop or air popper (minus the oil). Storage not recommended for leftovers.

## Chili Sans Carne with Bulgur Wheat and Toppings

*Featured in the vintage Keeping the Hearth cookbook, written by parents, teachers and students of Kimberton Waldorf School in Chester County, this hearty chili is simple to make and is adored by meat eaters as much as vegetarians. The bulgur wheat adds a textural layer that nicely complements the beans. Triple the recipe if you want to fill up a*

*standard crockpot. Pairs perfectly with a selection of toppings, such as sour cream, avocado, shredded cheddar cheese, broken tortilla chips and chopped fresh cilantro.*

Serves 4 (bowls) to 6 (cups)



¼ C. olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 large green pepper, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, sliced  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. chili powder  
½ C. bulgur wheat  
2 C. cooked kidney or pinto beans  
2 C. chopped tomato  
1 T. soy sauce  
1½ C. water (½ C. reserved)

Heat oil in a large pot on medium heat and saute onion until translucent. Add green pepper, stir and saute for an additional minute. Next, add garlic, salt and chili powder. Stir briefly.

Add bulgur wheat and stir a minute more. Next, add beans, tomato, soy sauce and one cup of water.

Bring to a boil. Then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add a half cup water and stir to incorporate. Cook for another 15 minutes (the chili thickens significantly as the bulgur wheat expands while cooking). As you stir, scrape the bulgur on the bottom of the pot as it tends to stick.

Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to three days or freeze.

## Hay Creek Apple Fritters

*Adapted from the recipe used for fritters served at the annual Hay Creek Apple Festival. These fritters aren't greasy since the apples aren't deep-fried, making them perfect as a handheld dessert. This is one of my favorite ways to use apples, and I love watching people bite into the hearty fritter covered in the brown sugar and butter topping — it's a reward beyond*

*the taste. These can easily be made on a griddle or stovetop if cooking over an open fire isn't an option. Pairs well with a warm beverage, hoppy beer or milk.*

Makes 8-12 fritters (depending on size)



### Batter Ingredients:

2 C. ripe apples, diced  
2 eggs  
½ C. brown sugar  
½ C. milk  
2 T. butter, melted  
⅞ tsp. each of salt, nutmeg, cinnamon and mace  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 tsp. baking soda  
3 C. whole wheat flour  
Canola or vegetable oil (to cover pan when frying)

### Topping Ingredients:

1 C. brown sugar  
¼ C. butter, cut into small pieces

### To make the batter:

After peeling and dicing the apples, place in a small bowl and set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine eggs (slightly beaten), brown sugar, milk, butter, spices, vanilla and baking soda. Stir to combine.

Add the diced apples to the mixture and stir to combine. Next, add flour (one cup at a time) and stir until all ingredients are incorporated and begin to form a very stiff batter.

Grease a cast iron skillet or griddle and place on medium heat. Spoon ⅓ C. batter at a time onto the skillet, evenly spaced.

Flip over each dollop of batter and press down with a spatula to flatten the thick dough. Cook 10 minutes per side, flipping often, until dark golden brown and fully cooked in the center (the outside of the fritters may appear that they're fully cooked inside when not, so turn down the heat to low, if needed, to keep

them from burning).

When the fritters appear firm and no uncooked batter is visible, test doneness by cutting one fritter in half. Or use a toothpick to poke the center until it comes out clean.

Once finished, top with a generous spoonful of the brown sugar/butter topping and serve immediately. Store leftover fritters and topping, each in their own airtight containers, for up to three days. Fully wrap in foil and reheat at 350° for 10 minutes.

### To make the topping:

In a small bowl, combine brown sugar and butter with your hands, just enough to break down the butter into smaller pieces. ♦

*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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