



Tied Up with a Bow:

West Chester's Retail Scene is Full of Happy Endings

PHOTO CREDIT: TIMLYN VAUGHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

**CELEBRATE THE GIFTING MOMENTS THAT DELIGHT IN A WAY
NO GIFT CARD EVER COULD.**

Cara Corridoni

IT'S DECEMBER. THERE'S A NIP IN THE AIR. THE brick sidewalks sparkle with frost. Evergreens have been hung over the doorways with care. The lamp poles are wrapped bright with lights. Shoppers hurry along gripping their lists and checking them twice.

It's the holiday season in West Chester, a magical time of year. Put on your winter coat, lace up those boots, and get ready to make some holiday dreams come true.

PERSONAL STYLE

Over the past two years, the West Chester retail scene has really begun to shine with the addition of several independently owned clothing and specialty boutiques focused on personalization.

True by Kristy is a must-stop shop for any jewelry lover on your list. Best known for its permanent jewelry collection — meaning a

selection of bracelets, anklets or necklaces that are secured directly to the wrist, ankle or neck — the shop on South Church Street also offers a wide array of traditional items and a charm bar with literally hundreds of locally made charms to choose from. Or design your own. “We can do anything,” said owner Kristy McKillop.

Looking for another custom experience? New vintage shop **Clara Mae Company** on North Church Street upcycles flannel shirts by sewing vintage-inspired T-shirts to the back. The store has a rack of options to choose from, or bring your favorite tee and owner Jessica Smedley will create something truly special for your someone truly special. The store also features vintage items and fun sports-themed merchandise, like their popular “Birdweiser” T-shirts.

Jessica promises pink confections planned for the holiday. “I’m making [the store] into a candy house,” she shared. Follow on Instagram for themed pop-ups planned throughout the holiday season.



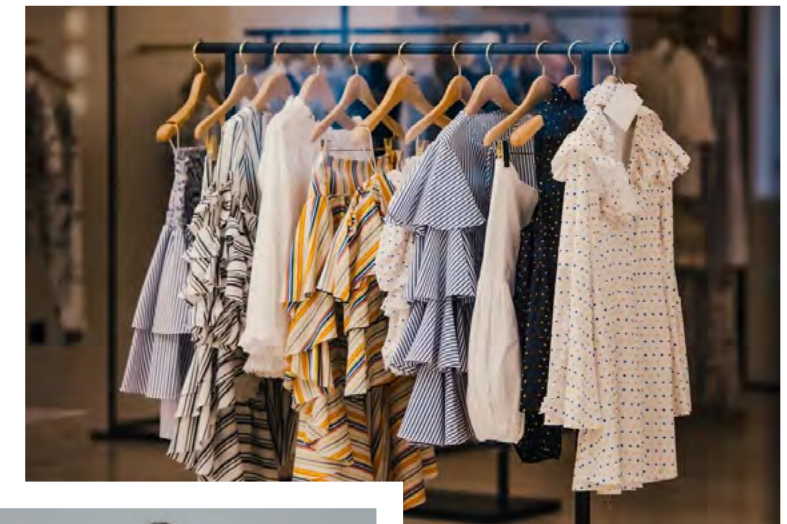
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While you're on Church Street, stop to admire the clothing of **Deborah Ann Mack**. Her line of luxury clothing is made, as Deborah Ann likes to say, for every “body.” Her timeless designs evoke confidence, comfort and cool style. And while they're perfectly tailored to their end wearer, there's no need for lengthy fittings. Deborah can work from measurements you provide and arrange for the finished product to be shipped to the recipient's door.

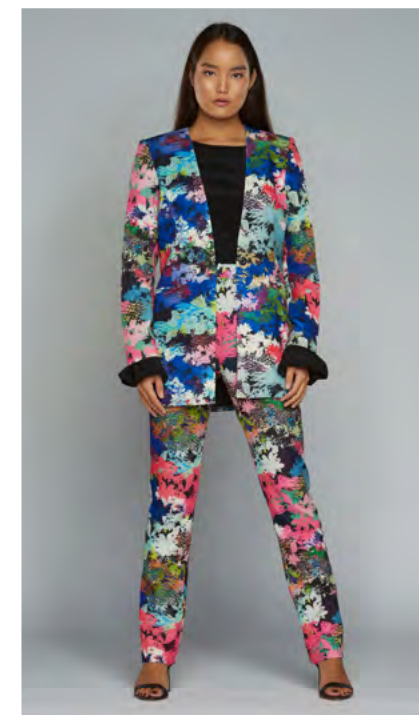
THE GIFT OF PEACE (AND QUIET)

Is there anything better during the holiday than to pop into a store and be enveloped in calm? Well, West Chester has you covered with two new bookstores and a tasting room that will blow your mind (in the most zen way).

The **Bookstore Bakery** on West Gay Street is a quaint shop that prides itself on being in tune to its readers' interests, along with a yummy selection of baked goods. Stop in to try their homemade “Santa's Favorite Cookie,” a brown butter, chocolate chip delight, while you browse the latest *New York Times* best sellers. Have a little reader on your list? Pair a holiday classic



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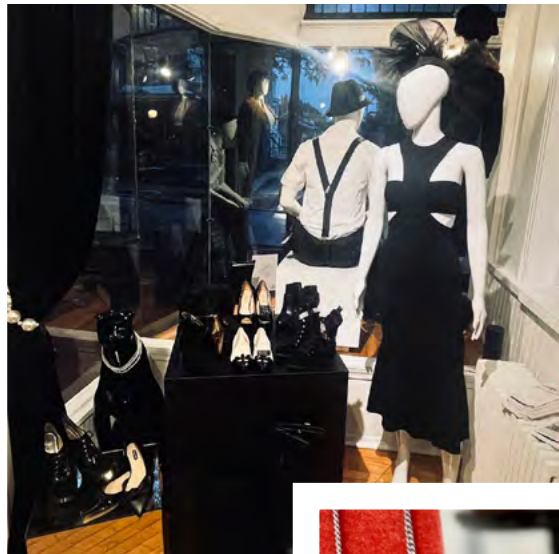
1. True by Kristy
2. Clara Mae Company
3. Deborah Ann Mack Fashions
4. The Bookstore Bakery

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5. Bookmarks
6. Turk's Head Tasting Room & Wine Lounge
7. DRK MTTR
8. Tiger Snake Vintage

8



and couple of homemade gingerbread men for the perfect night before Christmas.

A few blocks down, on the corner of East Gay and North Walnut Streets, is **Bookmarks**. Just opened over the summer, Bookmarks occupies two floors of a historic Borough home. Decorated with blue wingback chairs and period-appropriate prints, the shop has a nostalgic feel that lends itself perfectly to a little holiday calm. Bring the kids in to flesh out their Christmas lists in the children's section while you browse the shelves for that perfect holiday vacation read.

Next, if you get a chance (and you really should get a chance), pop into the new **Turk's Head Tasting Room & Wine Lounge**. Formerly a coworking space, the historic 1880 market house has been transformed into an elegant tasting room with an expansive marble-topped bar and plenty of quiet tables to tuck away with your packages and recount the day's stories over a glass of their namesake Sonoma Valley wines. Once you're recentered, pop into their Bottle Shoppe and stock up on a few signature bottles for those unexpected gifting occasions.



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VINTAGE FLAIR

"What's old is new again" is how the saying goes and so is the case of West Chester's growing vintage scene. Still anchored by the infallible **Malena** at her eponymous shop on Gay Street, the options have multiplied and diversified over the last few years.

Opened earlier this year, **DRK MTTR**, a vintage house on East Gay, focuses on all things coal but with a definite point of view — the entire inventory at the store is black. Yet you'll still find an incredible amount of variety within the limited colorway. From designer finds to off-the-rack gems, there's something here for everyone on Santa's naughty (and nice) list.

If you prefer your vintage worn in and cozy as well as in a rainbow of colors, make a note to seek out **Tiger Snake Vintage** on the second floor of the Gay Street Commons. The newly opened shop stocks a full colorway of vintage sweatshirts embroidered with fun Philly-centric sayings like "Wiz wit" or "citywide special." "The great thing about vintage sweatshirts is that they're super soft and worn in," said owner Lisa Karen. You'll also find a treasure trove of vintage jewelry and accesso-



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9. Jawn Supply
10. Nightingale Materials
11. Graham Painting Studio
12. The Green House

12



ries. Tiger Snake is open weekends, Friday through Sunday. Just look for the A-frame sign out front.

Have a diehard Philly fan on your gift list? Head to **Jawn Supply** on South High Street. This vintage store with direct connections to the pros is known for its selection of classic Philadelphia sportswear from the '80s and '90s. You'll also find a wide selection of one-of-a-kind vintage tees, sweatshirts and hats. Note the Philly stuff can go fast, so follow @Jawn.Supply on Instagram to get first notice of new deliveries.

ART AND CRAFTY

Sometimes the best gift is one you make yourself, and West Chester now has plenty of options to supply all those crafty souls on your list.

From kids to adults and novices to pros, **Nightingale Materials**, the adorable new art supply store on North High Street, has something to make every art lover clap with delight. Choose from high-quality art supplies and curated gifts, or gather your friends for a holiday class. Sign up for a greeting card-making class on December 7 and get ready to embrace all those holiday craft feels.

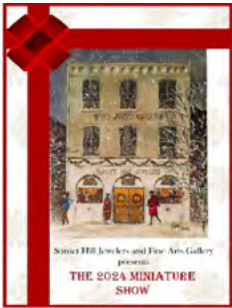
Have a friend or spouse looking to expand their artistic horizons? Treat them to a class at the **Graham Painting Studio** on North Walnut Street. Led by celebrated local artist Randy Graham, classes range from a single afternoon private session to a 14-week immersion course. No matter the duration, all classes are designed to help unlock the student's inner artist and help reach his or her artistic goals.

If your artistic tendencies tend more toward the green thumb variety, pop into **The Green House** on Gay Street. Originally opened a year ago on North Church, the little greenhouse that could moved around the corner to a much larger retail space this summer (the former Fairman's spot). With more space comes more plants, more hand-poured concrete planters and more organic skin-and-body-care products. From hostesses to teachers to office colleagues, these gifts will easily help you cross off a dozen names on your list at this one lovely little store.

A day in West Chester is always worthwhile but perhaps never more so than during the holidays. Let the twinkle lights and wandering carolers help your mission to find joy and not just buy more stuff. ♦

West Chester Events

THROUGH DECEMBER 22
West Chester Railroad. Santa Express: *Weekends, Nov. 23–Dec. 22*, join Santa for a journey through the Chester Creek Valley. **Christmas Tree Train:** *Dec. 1, 8, 15*, take the train to Wiggins Tree Farm. *Trains depart at 203 E. Market St., West Chester. \$10–\$40. Times and tickets, WCRailroad.com.*



THROUGH DECEMBER 24
Sunset Hill Fine Arts Gallery Annual Miniature Art Show. The show features paintings by a variety of artists in many mediums, subjects and artistic styles, perfect for the beginning collector and those with small spaces. 23 N. High St. *SunsetHillJewelers.com.*

★ **THROUGH JANUARY 2**
Holiday Weekends in West Chester. Every weekend features West Chester's dazzling 25-foot-tall Christmas tree and the Professional Gingerbread House Competition. *Dec. 6*, Hometown Christmas Parade, tree lighting at 6:30 pm on the lawn of the courthouse, and the parade at 7 features marching bands, cheer squads and dance teams, culminating with Santa on a custom-made float. *Dec. 7, 14, 21*, Making Spirits Bright Holiday Music Series on the courthouse steps. *Dec. 7, 14, 21*, catch Santa cruising through the borough on a classic fire truck. For details, *GreaterWestChester.com.*

THROUGH JANUARY 3
"Gifted"—the Annual Holiday Exhibit at The Art Trust. Give the gift of original art. 25 talented artists' work is for sale — paintings, ceramics, fiber art and more. Net proceeds of art sales go towards art scholarships. *Dec. 12*, Bourbon & Bubbles, 5 to 8. 16 W. Market St. Gallery hours, Mon–Fri, 9 to 4:30. *TheArtTrust.org.*

★ **THROUGH JANUARY 5**
Chester County Hospital Lights Up Holiday Weekends in West Chester—Gingerbread House Competition. Professional builders include Bookstore Bakery, John Serock Catering, The Master's Baker, Yori's Church Street Bakery and Maryellen's. To vote: visit display locations and scan the QR code there. *GreaterWestChester.com.*

DECEMBER 1–JANUARY 4
Chester County History Center—Season of Lights. This is a celebration for all community members to share in the warmth of the holiday season. *Dec. 1*, opening night offers culinary delights, family programs and entertainment, 3:30 to 7:30. *Dec. 13*, holiday concert with Kennett Symphony Orchestra's brass quintet, 6:30. 225 N. High St. *MyCCHC.org/SeasonOfLights.*

DECEMBER 6–30
Holiday Events at Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. *Dec. 6*, The Holiday Cheer Show; *Dec. 7–29*, "Beauty and the Beast;" *Dec. 9*, The Celtic Tenors; *Dec. 13*, Rock This Town Orchestra; *Dec. 17*, Cartoon Trio Christmas; *Dec. 18*, Twelve Twenty-Four Rock Orchestra. **Films:** *Dec. 2*, "Elf;" *Dec. 16*, "It's a Wonderful Life;" *Dec. 23*, "The Polar Express;" *Dec. 30*, "Frozen." 226 N. High St. Times and tickets, 610-356-2787; *UptownWestChester.org.*

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★ **DECEMBER 7**
Santa at the Square. The borough of West Chester will host pictures

with Santa at Marshall Square Park, 405 N. Franklin St. 4:30 to 6:30. *DowntownWestChester.com.*

DECEMBER 7
Breakfast with Santa. Come to the Chester County History Center to meet Santa and enjoy breakfast. 9 to 11 am. 225 N. High St. \$15. Pre-registration req. *West-Chester.com.*

DECEMBER 7
36th Annual West Chester Charity Ball. Friends Association celebrates 200 years of serving families in our community, and the Charity Ball has helped in their mission to end homelessness in Chester County. Enjoy dinner, music, dancing, auctions and more. West Chester Golf & Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St. 6:30 pm. \$200. *FriendsAssoc.org/Charity-Ball-2023.*

DECEMBER 7
West Chester Public Library Holiday Home Tour. *See Holiday House Tours in this issue.*

DECEMBER 7
American Helicopter Museum Presents SantaFest 2024. Santa arrives at 11 am, ready to hear children's wish lists. Bring your cameras to take pictures and enjoy hands-on activities. 1220 American Blvd. 10 to 2. \$15, members and children under 2 free. *HelicopterMuseum.org.*

★ **DECEMBER 14**
Photos with Santa. Bring your camera and your kiddos to M&T Bank for free photos with Santa and free hot chocolate and coffee. 10 N. High St. 2 to 4 pm. Hosted and sponsored by M&T Bank.

DECEMBER 13–15
Brandywine Ballet Presents "The Nutcracker." Ring in the season with Tchaikovsky's timeless score and be transported with Clara to the magical Land of Sweets. West Chester University, Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St. Fri, 10 am and 6 pm; Sat, 11 am & 5 pm; Sun, 11 am & 3 pm. \$30–\$50. 610-696-2711; *BrandywineBallet.org.*



DECEMBER 14
5th Annual Christkindlmarkt. The holiday market features over 90 vendors offering handcrafted and locally designed products, such as art, ceramics, jewelry, homewares, food and more. Hosted by Chester County Art Assoc. and Downtown West Chester. Gay St. (between Darlington & Matlack Sts.). Free. *DowntownWestChester.com/Christkindlmarkt.*

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

Downtown West Chester



Holiday Shopping Guide

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| 1. Tish Kids | 32. The 5 Senses |
| 2. Old Soul | 33. Mainline Custom Clothiers |
| 3. Bobbles & Lace | 34. Kaplan's Fine Jewelry |
| 4. Mayday Coffee & Shop | 35. HOP Fidelity |
| 5. Artistic Eyewear | 36. Kilwins West Chester |
| 6. Visual Expansion Gallery | 37. La Chic Boutique |
| 7. Sabrina Ann Couture | 38. Coins of Chester County |
| 8. Nightingale Materials | 39. Sunset Hill Jewelers & Fine Arts Gallery |
| 9. Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry | 40. Bookmarks |
| 10. Salty Paws | 41. DRK MTTR |
| 11. KALY | 42. Tish Boutique |
| 12. The Green House | 43. Pine + Quill |
| 13. Clara Mae Company | 44. Graham Painting Studio |
| 14. Le Berger | 45. Prince of Puff |
| 15. Deborah Ann Mack Designs | 46. Ever After Bridal |
| 16. Turks Head Wines | 47. Woman's Exchange |
| 17. Malena's Vintage Boutique | 48. Church Street Gallery |
| 18. Precision Eye Care | 49. True By Kristy |
| 19. Kerkula's Jewelry | 50. Paper Moon Stationery |
| 20. Tiger Snake Village | 51. All the Dogs |
| 21. Vape & Beyond | 52. Art Trust Gallery at Meridian Bank |
| 22. May 23 Clothing & Accessories | 53. Éclat Chocolate |
| 23. Creep Records | 54. Bryn Mawr Running Co. |
| 24. Pomp West Chester | 55. A Taste of Olive |
| 25. Bookstore Bakery | 56. Mimi's Tea Cottage |
| 26. H. Rose Boutique | 57. Kati Mac Floral Design |
| 27. Blink | 58. Jawn Supply |
| 28. Green Eyed Lady | 59. Ginkgo Arts |
| 29. Taylor's Music Store | 60. Phineas Gage |
| 30. Thistle Be Perfect | 61. G-Spot Modern Retro Thrift Boutique |
| 31. e.b.c. Brown Studio | |