

Elegant Lifestyles Magazine Late Fall 2017

What's Inside: HOLIDAY GIFTS AND FASHION TRAVEL PET HOLIDAYS THANKSGIVING RECIPES AROUND TOWN RESTAURANT REVIEWS And more!

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is published by New Jersey Hills Media Group 100 South Jefferson Road Suite 104 Whippany, N.J. 07981 (908) 766-3900

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Loyal Readers,

We tend to associate Thanksgiving with family bonding, delicious foods, and a slew of traditions passed down from generations before us.

When I think of Thanksgiving days past, my mind recalls my aunt's bomemade stuffing, my dad and uncle watching endless hours of football on the couch, and my cousin and I gleefully filling up on black olives and tiny gherkin pickles during the long wait for dinner. You probably have your own fond memories and unique traditions.

I'm sure practically every person you talk to is planning on having a turkey and pumpkin pie somewhere on their dinner table, but it's the unusual traditions and amusing mishaps that often create the most vivid and fond memories.

So, step out of the norm this Thanksgiving season and you may find yourself with not only a new tradition to pass along through the years, but also a funny tale to share each time your family and friends gather. I hope you take this opportunity to make memorable moments and also have a very Happy Thanksgiving!

- Roberta Burkhart, Editor

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TAKE

Holiday Gifts

We all make a winter getaway around the holiday season one way or another; perhaps a short trip upstate to visit family or a longer haul to the lodge in Jackson Hole.

This season, we like to see gifts that add convenience and provide a touch of luxury when making these trips. Why not give a gift that quickly becomes a sidekick or trusty travel mate? Everything here fits nicely into a suitcase – or as in our first suggestion, is the suitcase.

PACK SMART

Eureka! The carry-on has finally been perfected. **Raden** has invented the first suite of "smart luggage" with TSAapproved sizing that is trackable via an iPhone app, contains a self-weighing handle to avoid overage fees, and has a phone charging USB connection. The case is a strong, yet lightweight polycarbonate shell; it won't add excess weight to your belongings but will survive the frequent wear and tear of travel. The suitcase eliminates three of the major headaches, which easily justifies its cost (\$295 on raden.com). Ever walk between gates in Washington Dulles with a heavy duffle?

THE DETAILS

Add some magic to a loved one's toiletry kit with a new fragrance from **Heeley** (\$105-\$145 at jamesheeley.com).We discovered the line of unisex scents in the hip boutique, **Nomad**, during a visit to Toronto.Their new travel offerings break down a 100ml bottle into miniaturized, travel-friendly 15ml sprays.

The fragrance, Sel Mer "evokes sun, warm sand and a gentle breeze of fresh sea air" perfect if your Christmas tree looks more like a palm than a Frasier Fir. For men, the unusual Cardinal fragrance is our favorite. The perfumer notes that Cardinal is "built around the traditional incense notes of labdanum, ciste, frankincense and myrrh. An air of lightness and purity is portrayed by a note of fresh, clean linen." We think it's like walking into a Parisian cathedral in the wintertime. Spraying on a fresh fragrance upon arrival is a token way of saying "I'm here." **Frey Wille** bangles (available at **Diamond Dream**, Bernardsville) are a practical and elegant choice for travel. These sleek, striking bangles will instantly add a touch of personality to your travel

wardrobe. Stack them up and mix them in with your watch.

ON BOARD

It's a fact – good sunglasses are more important than more legroom. The oftenuncomfortable lighting in the cabin along with direct sun from a morning flight can prove to be a real nuisance. **Krewe** sunglasses,

the emblematic designer from New Orleans, keep the glare off the tarmac with style. The industrial steel bridge is a nod to the architecture from the Warehouse District in New Orleans. Choose from classic matte or shiny tortoise to pearls and bright blues. Krewe die-hards range from fashion icons ducking into yellow cabs to rock stars playing festivals in the sun, so you'll be in good company.

Our friend Aubrey, who worked at the famed **Blue Tree** boutique in New York's Carnegie Hill neighborhood, highlights the **Armand Diradourian** Chronos Travel Pillow with Eye Mask (\$215 on spring.com). This is the equivalent of



2017 Trends in Holiday Gifts

by Nicholas Crown

bringing the Four Seasons Hotel bedding on board with you. Fully cashmere and filled with duck down, say goodbye to sleepless flights. Did we mention it looks cool too in lime green? Everything zips

down into the pillow for an easy walk to the gate after landing.

WITH A LIGHT HEART

For the rare scotch fanatic that seemingly has a tried everything, **Bruichladdich** from Islay, Scotland, is a special gift that isn't found around town. Their infamous, heavily-peated Octomore can be ordered directly from the distillery along with unpeated, floral Classic Bruichladdich; a

friendlier foray into these spectacular single malts. Surprise your recipient with a bottle after dinner has been served, and don't be shy about opening it up at their request.

Speaking of libations, with an added tendency for drinking a few extra glasses of red wine over the holidays, we dug for a restorative remedy for the next morning. It's worth its weight in gold.

A junior engineer from Tesla developed an FDA-approved hangover cure after several visits to Seoul with his party-hopping friends. **Morning Recovery** (\$48 for 12 on morningrecoverydrink.com) is all the rage in the tech community with buy-ins from top venture capital funds and praised by Silicon Valley folks who enjoy an after-work cocktail or three. The robins egg blue bottles and quirky story make for a great stocking stuffer as well as a necessity for your checked luggage.



Holiday Gifts

TRAVELING WELL

The Florence, Ala., designer, **Billy Reid**, has stitched the perfect topcoat for men and women on the go. For men, the Lancaster Coat (billyreid.com, \$795) is unlined and breathable, great over a suit or a sweater and hits about the knee, making it the ultimate travel piece. The soft shoulders look perfect right off the hanger. For women, the Ronson coat (\$795 onbillyreid.com) breathes like a favorite sweatshirt in open wool and alpaca weave, unlined again, allowing the coat to drape naturally over your ensemble on the first wear. Under the collar you'll find leather detailing



on each, featuring heirloom ribbon embossing, should you need extra warmth on a ski trip or gusty avenue.

Our friend, Faina Shapiro, at **Diamond Dream** in Bernardsville highlights **Issey Miyake's** Cauliflower Parachute Jacket, "it rolls into itself, forming a small pouch that will keep luggage light. This stylish, lightweight jacket never needs to be ironed, making it the

perfect travel accessory." It's a blazer you can put mileage on with a small footprint.

CARLISLE

The **Ghurka** Folding Snap Tray No. 58 (\$175 on ghurka.com) is an indispensible, packable travel piece to house your valuables when you arrive at the hotel or cottage.Throw in your watch, rings, and bracelets into the tartan lining and is a godsend for organization on the move.The vintage chestnut leather is gorgeous.

On the move, Faina also recommends an **Issey**



Miyake cross body bag (available at **Diamond Dream**, Bernardsville). She notes it "allows your hands to remain free to



snap more travel photos, while the zippered interior will keep your belongings secure. As a bonus, the sleek design transitions from day to evening wear." We love dual purpose, especially in a high-design package.

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Drew University

The 5 Browns Saturday, November 18th, 2017 8:00 pm

da Camera Concerts continue at The Concert Hall at Drew for the 2018 season, with a performance by The 5 Browns! Siblings Desirae, Deondra, Gregory, Melody, and Ryan Brown are all concert pianists. They're the first and only family quintet to be simultaneously accepted to the Juilliard School where they studied piano, each of them having taken lessons since the age of 3. The 5 Browns wake up classical music by adding their own brand of youthful energy.

They first garnered critical attention when People Magazine called them the "Fab Five," just a few years before their debut album would claim the #1 spot on Billboard Magazine's Classical Album chart. In fact, each of their six albums has claimed that #1 spot, largely due to their unique combinations of players, ranging from piano duets to quintets. Last summer, they recorded their upcoming album - their first album since 2013 - as well as scenes for their upcoming documentary, Digging Through the Darkness, by award-winning filmmaker Ben Niles - at the Concert Hall at Drew.

This concert will include a wide range of pieces, from a quintet performance of Beethoven's Fifth to various solos and duets, programming unmatched by any other classical performing group. In the words of the New York Post, "One family, five pianos and 50 fingers add up to the biggest classical music sensation in years...When these kids do Rachmaninoff, they'll make you forget about Marshall amps."

This program will feature five Steinway concert grand pianos, generously provided by Steinway NY, for two full course ensembles and a variety of arranged performances. 5 Browns performances bare their souls, bringing both raw emotion and graceful composure to an intense musical experience.

The Concert Hall at Drew University invites you to join us on Saturday, Nov. 18th. The performance begins at 8pm, with a pre-concert discussion with the performers at 7:15pm. Tickets are available online at drew.edu/boxoffice/, by phone at 973.408.3176, and in person at the Concert Hall box office in the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts.

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Saturday, November 18, 2017 The 5 Browns

Not one, not two, but five Steinway concert grand pianos make for an extraordinary program when The 5 Browns (siblings who are all Juilliard trained and Steinway artists) take the stage.



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Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery presents 'Perceptions' PAINTINGS BY PETER FIORE NOVEMBER 1, 2017 - JANUARY 27, 2018

Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery in Bernardsville offers the work of many talented New Jersey artists. The two small windows on Route 202, with eye catching rotating art, are deceiving. The gallery is 2,500 square feet, on the second floor at 5 Morristown Road, in the beart of Bernardsville. In November, the gallery is bonored to be featuring the oil paintings of a new artist, Peter Fiore.

Fiore is an American landscape painter who is best known for painting light with bis striking use of color and bis exploration of the implied narrative. He has won a number of awards, including first place for landscape in the Art Renewal Center's Annual Salon as well as receiving a Grand Prize in the America China Oil Painters Artist League (ACOPAL) Open Competition.

He bas been featured in an assortment of publications including Fine Art Connoisseur as an "Artist to Watch" and bas been named a "Living Master" by the Art Renewal Center. Most recently, be won the American Art Collector Award of Excellence. Fiore has had one or more solo shows every year since 2007, and been in more than 50 group shows in galleries and museums throughout the U.S. and China. His paintings are in many private and corporate collections.

Fiore was born in Teaneck and he studied at Pratt Institute and the Art Students League of New York. Previously, he worked as a professional illustrator collaborating on thousands of projects. He has been on the faculty at Pratt Institute, Syracuse University and now teaches at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

Fiore has given numerous guest lectures and workshops on painting. His work is represented in prestigious galleries across the country. Fiore's studio, which he shares with his wife, Barbara, who is a sculptor, is located along the Delaware River in northeastern Pennsylvania. His legacy continues in his two grown children, Lisa and Paul, who are both talented artists in their own right.

Fiore explains: "I am especially drawn to the winter landscape. It is a time when the earth loses its leafy covering and reveals it's true self. Covered in snow, the world reflects light and creates a spectrum of colors that are both dramatic and beautiful. The true subject in any of my paintings is light and how it defines and endlessly changes the landscape around us. For me, light is more than a visual tool, it is an emotional subject. It is through the manipulation of light – how it falls, changes, sculpts, colors and creates various moods on a subject – that intrigues and inspires me."

The current exhibition, "Perceptions," will run from Wednesday, Nov. 1, through Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018. Artist receptions will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Fridays, Nov. 10 and Dec. 1. The gallery is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays to Saturdays. The gallery can be rented for events or business meetings, for 25 to 150 guests. It is located at 5 Morristown Road in Bernardsville with free parking on site.



Winter, Golden Pass, oil/linen, 36" x 36"

For information, contact Director Kathleen Palmer at (908) 963-0365. Sign up for show announcements at www.studio7artgallery.com.



Perceptions

PAINTINGS BY PETER FIORE NOVEMBER 1, 2017 - JANUARY 27, 2018



Distant Light, December • 30" x 40", oil/linen

Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery Artist Reception and BernARTsville Art Walk Friday, November 10th & Friday, December 1st, 6-9 pm

5 Morristown Road, Bernardsville, NJ 07924 908-963-0365 www.studio7artgallery.com Gallery Hours 10-4pm Wednesday-Saturday • Free Parking on Site



Travel

For the curious traveler, America is pretty cool right now. Tennessee Williams famously quipped, "America has only three great cities: New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans. Everywhere else is Cleveland."

The problem is – Cleveland isn't *Cleveland* anymore – it's pretty hip. So is Pittsburgh (there's an Ace Hotel there!). Don't get me started about Detroit; it's back and better than ever.

Against all odds, the cities that suffered heavy, post-financial crisis blight have fallen into the hands of artists, chefs, and social doers at a cheap buy-in.The American dream at a discount!

The urban hubs have lifted the standard on Main Street too, sending people out to far corners of the country to realize their creative visions. And there's more demand for the hard-to-reach and unique than ever before. Your Airbnb in Tuscaloosa may become famous on Instagram and there is even a cult bed and breakfast in Hudson, New York!

So why would a busy, and relatively sane, travel writer rent a car and drive 17 hours from New Orleans into the West Texas abyss just to sleep in a trailer? Past the infinite swaths of cattle grazing and word-ofmouth taco and enchilada depots (more on this later), there is the magical (the choice adjective of locals), impossibly chic town of Marfa, Texas.

Start Here

Getting to Marfa isn't easy. It's actually a challenge. I feel as though it's been de-





signed that way, but it's well worth it. There are several approaches to choose from varying in difficulty and expense, but starting in San Antonio is the winner. There are plenty of direct flights from Newark and JFK, with a 17-minute trip to your lodgings. The Hotel Emma, re-fabricated inside a magnificent 19th century brewhouse, is an immediate eye-opener in the passage into luxurious Texan design and hospitality.Architecture gurus will drool over the soaring industrial ceilings, beautifully decorated in a lived-in, shabby-chic of Tribeca-meets-English manor mode. There's a Harry Potter-esque multi-tiered library to tuck into with a good book. The lobby is a joy to explore with an in-house "larder" supplying wines, beer, and small tapas items to picnic throughout the hotel.A fine cocktail bar is built into retrofitted fermentation tanks from the previous brewery.

Within the supplementary buildings to the

Pearl Brewery facility are restaurants, bars, and music clubs, all uniquely inspiring depending upon your mood. Pay homage to the origins of this incredible space with a cold ale at Southerleigh Fine Food and Brewery, which carries on the tradition of producing quality Texas suds. With quirky names and sometimes flavors (The "Texas Uncommon Ale" is brewed with mint), Southerleigh is a great place to pop into to unwind from the flight; it's a casual and boisterous first stop.

Everything is reachable on foot, and roaming Madrid-style between bars isn't frowned upon.After an olive or two from The Larder, Cured, a charcuterie-focused restaurant was particularly excellent upon a recent visit.The array of house-cured meats is astounding, all displayed like luxury items (the Prada of prosciutto?) in vintage glass refrigerators.The wine list is interesting and offers a ton of value. Make a reservation and order to share. Don't

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Travel

skip the house-made Italian 'nduja sausage, which can be spread over hunks of the amazing house-

"Arriving on the main drag in Marfa is somewhat like pulling into a live movie set."

baked bread. A nightcap will be waiting for you at the Sternewirth, the inner sanctum bar of your hotel. It's romantic and transporting – a proper way to end the evening.

The Destination

Okay, here's the hard part. The drive is a touch under six hours from San Antonio to your hotel in Marfa. There is a lot of ranchland in between. However, a magnificent snack exists between the two points – Mi Taco in Ozona, Texas. Gas up the rental and pick a few simple tacos from the family-operated, roadside cantina, open 5 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Arriving on the main drag in Marfa is somewhat like pulling into a live movie set. The whitewashed buildings, gas stations-turned-art galleries, and high-end boutiques seem truly outrageous after the six hours of grassland views. It's easy to imagine Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean milling about – they were guests of Hotel Paisano while filming "Giant" in 1956.

If you paced your wine intake, you should have no problem arriving for a late lunch in the lobby of Hotel Saint George. You may as well have just stumbled into another universe when you enter the lobby



- a bookstore fit for the Museum of Modern Art sprawls into a sleek, modern bar that's pushing out craft mezcal margaritas infused with hibiscus. Pick on shishito peppers and Wagyu beef tartare and chat with the bartender about the

local events – there's always something fun on the calendar.

Five minutes down the road is the otherworldly retreat of El Cosmico. Part rustic, wellness center that borrows on Native American and Mexican culture and part Texas Americana musician scene, the hotel

was a trailblazer in the concept of high-end camping. The hotel has multiple immaculately restored motorhomes from the 1950s complete with polished mahogany interior and deckedout linens. Teepees and yurts line the perimeter of the property, along with raw wood outdoor showers and clawfoot tubs. It's not a traditional hotel by any means, but doesn't lack high-end amenities or opportunities for catching the ethereal "Marfa lights."

For dinner, Capri, inside the Thunderbird Hotel is a design splendor with a wood burning fire, sparse and modern interior, with local folk art hung on the walls. The ambiance is so dramatic

you'll think once again that you're on a film set – except you are, Sean Daly, Hollywood set designer of "Sherlock Holmes", outfitted the space. Nibble on locally made cheese, charcuterie, and pickles. Beware of the pickled peppers; the author is still recovering from the heat. Yucca blossom tempura is especially unique. The menu is rounded out with duck breast and a proper dry-aged ribeye.

Stellina provides a sophisticated meal for night two, outfitted with a long dining "bar" popularized by Michelin-starred Momofuku Ko in New York. Stellina takes on a modern, Mediterranean mode with fresh burrata and speck alongside grilled sardines. Letting dinner drag out into an extra bottle of wine is a great idea when locals and visitors alike swell into the bar later in the evening. It's fun and social, you may forget that you're in the desert.

While there are many exhibits to explore, particularly the trailblazing Chinati Foundation that put Marfa on the map, none are quite as popular as the Prada Marfa installation. You may have seen a photo of this incongruous luxury boutique erected highway-side, in what appears to be the official middle-of-nowhere. Ballroom Marfa commissioned the piece in 2005 and has been a cult icon ever since. The work can-



Photos : Hotel Saint George



not be entered, however a perfectly framed exterior shot is a classic keepsake from Marfa – I recommend bringing along a tripod to nail the photo.

Before you head back to San Antonio, pick up some palo santo wood from the gift shop in El Cosmico, it can be smelled throughout Marfa. It's a built-in prayer wood that has been used to cleanse the home of evil spirits and just general "bad vibes" for thousands of years. It's also the easiest way to bring yourself right back to the magic, even after you've arrived back home, far from the mezcal, tacos, and Western heels.

Pets



Most pet parents would never dream of excluding their furry friends from important boliday celebrations, but it is important to be aware of seasonal dangers that could spoil the fun.

Poisonous and Hazardous Holiday Plants

Many common fall and winter plants are poisonous to pets. While they may add indoor decorative appeal, plants like holly berries, mistletoe, poinsettias, amaryllis and the Christmas rose should be avoided in homes with pets. While some plants, such as poinsettias, are only mildly irritating, others are extremely toxic. Holly berries contain saponins and other harmful substances. Ingesting the berries can lead to symptoms of extreme nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. If you suspect your pet has consumed any of these plants, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Once the tree goes up, it is a good idea to keep an eye on rambunctious pets. Be sure to anchor your Christmas tree securely to prevent it from tipping over and keep pets away from stagnant water at the base of the tree. Standing water is a breeding ground for bacteria and the additives designed to keep the tree fresh can be toxic.

Other tree hazards include breakable ornaments, which can cause injury or lead to intestinal blockage when swallowed. Playful puppies chewing on electric lights can result in burns and electrical shock. Cats are particularly attracted to tinsel but swallowing the shiny decoration can produce vomiting or blockage.

Tasty Temptations

A juicy golden turkey is certainly tempting for both humans and pets, but giving your pet a large serving of poultry isn't a good idea. If you can't resist, slip Fido a small bite or two, but try not to overdo it. Limit samples to a few pieces of lean white meat with no skin or bones and avoid rich fatty toppings like gravies and sauces. Other foods that are taboo for pets include grapes and raisins, artificial sweeteners, chocolate and vegetables that contain alliums, such as onions, garlic and leeks. Yeast dough is another no-no that can cause painful gas and bloating.

To avoid

stomach upset or more serious health conditions, try to stick closely to your pet's routine diet. Plan ahead and purchase one or two appropriate treats such dental chews, stuffed Kongs or a few lean high-protein snacks.

Beware of table-surfing and food theft. With all those tasty treats, even well-behaved pets can find it hard to resist temptation. It is best to confine your pet to a crate or separate room during mealtimes.

Lookout for Liquids

Never leave alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine, mixed drinks and other liquor unattended when pets are around. Even small amounts can cause illness in pets, and if consumed in greater amounts, alcohol can lead to coma or deadly respiratory failure.

House Rules

If you are expecting guests for the holidays, make sure they know ahead of time you have pets. As guests arrive, share basic rules on food and behavior and keep a close eye on doors and exits, since excited pets sometimes bolt. Be sure to ask guests to keep all medications safely tucked away and out of the reach of nosy pets.

Provide a safe, quiet place where pets can retreat if the activity is too much. This is especially important for elderly or shy pets. Don't forget to provide plenty of water and place a few familiar items in the space for comfort.

Special Holiday Gifts

The holiday shopping season kicks-off on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving. Of course, your best furry friend is likely on your list. Here are some popular gift ideas for the precious pet in your home:

For the gift that keeps on giving, consider a membership in a Dog Toy of the Month club.At Woof Woof Mama, toy packages start at \$8.99 a month and shipping is free. Online Bark Box offers 1-, 3-, 6- and 12-month gift subscriptions, ranging from \$35 to \$249.All boxes include two toys, two bags of all-natural treats and one chew.

Kitty will appreciate the Bascolor electric rotating butterfly or catnip infused scratcher lounge made from corrugated cardboard. The Firik foldable bed is another cat favorite. It is designed for lounging as well as scratching and retails for around \$20 on Amazon.

Celebrate Safely

No one wants to see holiday fun spoiled by pet injury or illness. Focusing on pet safety is the best way to ensure both people and pets enjoy the holidays.



Excludes : At 5 Spea worth Ontaloor Frontes, Benjamin moore Faint, Weber Grills, previously discounted merchandise and in-store services. May not be combined with any other offers.

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Restaurant Review ~ *The Tuscan Table in Denville*

The Tuscan Table in Denville: A flavorful feast of Italian delights

B Very lucky diner who sits down at Denville's Tuscan Table for lunch or dinner is treated to a heaping plateful of the most divine focaccia I've ever tasted. Not only is the bread crisp on the outside and chewy on the inside, but it is also the perfect foundation for an extremely generous drizzling of house-made fresh pesto, melted mozzarella cheese, fresh cherry tomatoes and an indecent amount of grated Parmigiano. Every bite of this amazing appetizer elicited moans of appreciation from my dining companion.

Still reeling from the focaccia, our eyes grew wide when our waitress placed one of the restaurant's best-selling appetizers in front of us: the Giant Meatball topped with a piping hot dollop of house-made ricotta dotted with fresh basil. A generous dusting of Parmigiano and fresh, chunky tomato sauce completed this savory chef-d'oeuvre. This mammoth meatball – made from a mix of beef and veal – was tender throughout and perfectly seasoned. The tangy bed of tomato sauce was a perfect counterbalance to the earnest umami overtones. By Roberta Burkbart

For our main entree, we were served the divinely creamy and flavorful Risotto Cacciatore, which is not on the regular menu but is often featured as a special. This creamy masterpiece, which was more than enough for two to share, boasted generous servings of scallops and jumbo shrimp over perfectly prepared Arborio rice dotted with cherry tomatoes, red and green bell peppers, fresh peas and shiitake mushrooms.

The tender scallops were pleasantly seared; the shrimp perfectly cooked. The crisp-tender slivers of bell pepper and fresh peas provided a pop of fresh flavor and the tender shiitakes were stand outs. A white wine clam sauce pushed the dish into the realm of extraordinary.

Tuscan Table prides itself on offering a standard menu layered with the freshest ingredients and finest locally available meats. Specials change weekly and on weekends, and feature the chef's choice of a rotating array of delectable Italian specialties.

Reservations are a must on weekends, holidays





and during their popular Ladies Nights on Monday evenings.TheTuscanTable, located at 28 Diamond Spring Road right off Main Street, is BYOB friendly and is open daily, 365 delicious days of the year.



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Thanksgiving Joy

by Nita Crighton

EXPERIENCE

THE JOY

Today's Thanksgiving Day celebrations have little in common with the 1621 original where the Pilgrims and Wampanoag broke bread together and gave thanks for the colonist's first successful harvest.

Nowadays, the national celebration is synonymous with food, family and football.Thanksgiving also marks the start of the annual holiday season.With all that energy tucked into a single four-day weekend, it is no surprise the specialness of holiday sometimes gets lost in the shuffle.

Even if you haven't established any lasting Thanksgiving traditions, it is never too late to develop meaningful traditions and create memories the entire family will cherish. Incorporating unique activities focused on your family's hobbies and personalities ramps up the fun and serves as a reminder of what Thanksgiving is really about.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving, as the name implies, is all about being grateful for the blessings we enjoy. Look for ways to highlight the important people and things in your life. Gather bare branches in a pot and distribute paper leaves or plain ornaments to each guest. Ask everyone to jot a word or two on the item indicating something they are thankful for and hang it on the branches to create a gratitude tree. Another idea – leave a simple note sheet at each place setting for guests to record a list of personal blessings, then take turns reading the lists aloud.

Include children in the festivities by scattering crayons across a table draped with a paper cloth and encourage them to draw pictures of people or things they are grateful to have in their lives. Entertain eager children during the meal preparation process by asking each child to write something they are thankful for on strips of colored paper. Afterwards, link the papers together to create a thankful chain to be draped around the edge of the table or displayed in a prominent place during dinner.

HELPING HANDS

Instead of burdening the hostess with all the meal preparation chores, get the whole family into the act.Ask everyone to choose a task or encourage guests to bring a favorite dish. Even little ones can join in the fun by measuring ingredients, stirring or tackling kid-friendly recipes. Encourage teens and older children to contribute by experimenting with new dishes or special desserts.

THANKS FOR GIVING

Help make the holiday meaningful for others by donating food to the local food pantry or pitching in to serve food or assisting with clean-up duty at a local soup kitchen. Market Street Mission in Morristown estimates they will serve approximately 22,500 meals during the Thanksgiving season.A \$2.82 donation



Thanksgiving Jov



covers the cost of one hot meal for someone in need. For more information on how to donate as well as volunteer opportunities, visit www.servicenetwork.com.

Pet lovers can get into the act by dropping off food or supplies at a local animal shelter. St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center in Madison accepts monetary donations or specific pet food items, blankets, towels, cleaning supplies and more. Check out the itemized wish list online at www.sthuberts.org.

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Look for activities the whole family can enjoy year after year. Gather everyone for a group walk after the feast or divide up into teams for a friendly game of touch football on the front lawn. Help others and have fun at the same time by signing up for the Interfaith Food Pantry and Literacy Volunteers of Morris County's 11th annual Morris Township Thanksgiving Turkey Trot 5K. Look for details about the race at www.morristownshipturkeytrot.org.

MAKE IT SPECIAL

No matter how you choose to celebrate, it is always special when family and friends come together. With just a few extra touches, you can make your Thanksgiving gathering more memorable and more meaningful year after year.



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Restaurant Review ~ Benito's ~ Authentic Italian Food in Chester

Benitos Trattoria might be located in the beart of Chester, but a lunchtime visit to the cozy eatery confirms its roots are firmly planted in northern Italy. Nestled in a quiet location just steps from busy Main Street, Benitos serves fresh, tasty Italian dishes in a casual, yet elegant, setting.

or a starter salad, you won't go wrong with the Insalata di Pere, a fresh bed of baby greens sprinkled with a generous blend of walnuts, feta cheese and sliced pears and drizzled with a tasty, savory sweet honey mustard dressing.

Appetizer choices were equally appealing and I selected both the Asparagi Parmigiano and the baked stuffed tomato. The tender roasted asparagus spears packed a punch of fresh flavor. Tossed in olive oil and topped with tasty Parmesan, this dish was so delicious even the most avid veggie hater would have difficulty resisting.

The crab stuffed baked tomato was delivered warm from the oven. The scooped center of the slightly sweet, acidic fruit was replaced with a generous helping of fresh crab meat, spinach and roasted peppers. Topped with a lovely Dijon mustard sauce, the colorful dish was a feast for both the eyes and the palate.



Although there is no shortage of flavorful pasta dishes at Benito's, I opted for the homemade gnocchi. The traditional Italian potato dumplings were plump and fluffy – just as they should be – and the chopped shrimp, asparagus and sun dried tomatoes nicely complimented the rich penne alla vodka sauce.

I confess to sampling a trio of entrées, starting with a delightful chicken cutlet crowned with eggplant and tomato and finished with a delectable brandy cognac sauce sprinkled with nutty fontina. The perfect flavor blend made this a dish I look forward to enjoying again.

The second entrée arriving at my table was a wonderful veal scaloppini. The melt-in-your-mouth veal was topped with the same savory brandy cognac sauce this time, dotted with shrimp, asparagus bits, and Shiitake mushrooms, providing a perfect compliment to the tasty veal.

The Grande finale was an impressive fresh market, panseared striped bass fillet resting on a bed of creamy Risotto with a traditional Italian red sauce on the side. The exquisitely prepared fillet was perfectly crispy on one side, while the center remained tender and flaky.

If you still have room after dining on one of the aforementioned gastronomic delights, Benitos offers a selection of fresh-from-the-kitchen homemade desserts. The winning combination of great food and impeccable service makes this trattoria a must-try.

By Nita Crighton

Benitos Trattoria

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B

Thanksgiving Recipes

Wow Your Thanksgiving Guests With Elegant, Updated Starters



Whether you are a traditionalist or prefer a new take on old recipes, Thanksgiving is up next on the calendar and it is time to get ready for this big autumn feast.

Many of the recipe favorites during this celebration include pumpkins, squash, cranberries, apples and pears, green beans and sweet potatoes. I have taken a few of these darlings and upgraded the appetizer portion of your meal. The dishes are light, simple, healthy and will still keep you yearning for dessert!

We begin with Baked Green Bean Fries and a Lemon Aioli sauce for dipping. If you are tired of green bean casseroles at Thanksgiving but still want your greens, this is the perfect beginner for your guests. Breaded and baked, these green beans taste phenomenal with the Lemon Aioli.

A Butternut and Roasted Pear Soup is a perfect appetizer – whether served at the table or in small cups. The roasted pears add a new dimension of flavor to the squash with a naturally slight sweetness and creamy texture without the heavy cream.

The next appetizers are a must to be served together: an easy Pumpkin Focaccia with a hint of salt and basil and a Pumpkin White Bean Hummus with Pistachios for dipping. The savoriness of these unique flavors compliment each other beautifully. One slice will not be enough to satiate you!

I finish with simple yet delectable **Cranberry and Brie Tartlets**. These babies are served in ready-made phyllo shells. Drizzle them with a touch of honey and they will be gone before they reach the table.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Baked Green Bean Fries with Lemon Aioli

20-30 green beans, washed and trimmed 1/4 cup flour 2 eggs, beaten 1 tablespoon mustard 1 1/2 cups seasoned Panko bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking pan with parchment.

Place flour in a bowl. Beat eggs with mustard in another bowl. Place bread crumbs in a third bowl. Line the bowls up like an assembly line of flour, eggs and bread crumbs.

Drop green beans a few at a time into the flour and coat. Then drop into eggs and coat. End with the bread crumbs, covering each bean, and place them on the bake sheet.

Bake at 425 degrees for 8 minutes then 400 degrees for another 4 to 6 minutes or until bread crumbs look crisp and brown. Watch them to ensure that they do not burn! Remove from oven and eat with Lemon Aioli.



1/2 cup mayonnaise
zest of one lemon
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons minced garlic*
2 tablespoons olive oil*
1 1/2 teaspoons borseradisb
1/2 teaspoon sugar
salt and pepper



*Please note: The garlic and olive oil can be replaced with 2 tablespoons garlic infused olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder.

Whisk all ingredients and season to taste. Serve.

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Thanksgiving Recipes



Butternut with Roasted Pear Soup

3 Bosc pears, halved and cored
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 Vidalia onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
1 medium butternut squash peeled and cubed
1/2 teaspoon allspice
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
3 cups broth plus 1 cup
1/2 cup apple juice
salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Brush pear halves with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and place face down on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes until soft and tender. Remove from oven and cut into cubes.

Place the remaining oil and butter in a large pot. Melt butter on low heat and add onion and garlic. Sauté until translucent, about 5-7 minutes.

Add butternut, allspice, brown sugar and a 1/2 teaspoon of salt and stir. Allow to cook for 3-5 minutes.

Add 3 cups of broth and cubed pears. Bring to a slow simmer with lid partially on and allow to simmer for 25 minutes.

Add 1/2 cup of broth and 1/2 cup apple juice and simmer for another five minutes. Remove from heat and puree. More broth can be added for desired consistency. Add salt and pepper (to taste) and blast with the blender. Serve. Pumpkin White Bean Hummus with Pistachios

2/3 cup pure pumpkin
3/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 can organic white beans,
rinsed and drained
2 tablespoons tahini
3 tablespoons pistachios
2 garlic cloves
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons garlic-infused olive oil
salt, pepper, garlic powder

Place all ingredients except seasoning in a processor and grind. Season to taste.

Refrigerate for two hours to overnight to allow flavors to blend.

Serve with Pumpkin Focaccia



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ELS

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Thanksgiving Recipes



cup warm water (100 degrees)
 packet of rapid rise or instant yeast
 teaspoons sugar
 cups flour
 cup pure pumpkin
 cup olive oil plus 1/4 cup olive oil plus 2 tablespoons
 teaspoons salt
 tablespoon fresh basil
 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, divided

Dissolve sugar and water in a bowl of a stand mixer and sprinkle yeast over the top.Allow to bloom for 5 minutes.

Add 3 3/4 cups flour, pumpkin, 1/2 cup oil, salt, basil and 1 1/2 teaspoons spice.

With a dough hook, mix ingredients for 5-6 minutes until dough appears tacky. If dough is wet, add the remaining 1/4 cup of flour and knead it in with your hands.

Place dough in an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and a tea towel, and allow dough to rise for 1-2 hours.

Place 1/4 cup of oil in a 1- or 2-inch deep pan and spread to cover bottom. Take the dough from the bowl and lay it into the pan. Using your fingers, punch the dough and stretch it to fit the pan.

Cover and allow it to rest for 35 minutes. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Drizzle the remaining two tablespoons of olive oil over the finger indentations on the top of the focaccia. Sprinkle with 1 1/2 teaspoons of pumpkin pie spice and sea salt (if desired) and bake for 15-18 minutes until golden.

Remove from oven and cool slightly on a wire rack. Serve warm with Pumpkin White Bean Hummus with Pistachios.

Cranberry Chutney & Brie Tartlets



Cranberry Chutney

2 cups cranberries 1/4 cup dark brown sugar 1 tablespoon cornstarch 1 tablespoon lemon juice 1/4 cup orange juice 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Place all ingredients in a small sauce pan and stir.Turn heat on to medium low and allow cranberries to pop, stirring occasionally, 10-15 minutes. Once the liquid thickens, remove from heat and allow to cool. Can be made 2 days ahead, freezes well.

Assembly

Cranberry Chutney pre-made Phyllo tartlets Brie (approximately 1 teaspoon of brie per cup) honey

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place 1 teaspoon of brie on the bottom of the tartlets and spread. Place 1 to 2 teaspoons of chutney on top. Bake for 8 minutes and remove from oven. Drizzle with honey and serve.

Restaurant Review ~ Sally Lunn's Tea Room Offers a Lovely Spot o' Tea

...and so much more!

y proper English luncheon began with one of the day's soup selections: a savory butternut squash soup dotted with herbs and topped with a dollop of whipped cream. This seasonal offering, much to my palate's delight, traveled a savory route rather than a sweet one.

My main entree arrived next: a decadently rich and creamy Cauliflower Macaroni and Cheese dish accompanied by Sally Lunn's popular Power Salad: a mix of kale, sunflower seeds, walnuts, red onion, blueberries and a divine honey balsamic dressing. A generous serving of tender cauliflower topped thick, hearty pasta in this dish, which featured a delectable sauce made from white English cheddar, an upstate N.Y. Cheddar and Pecorino Romano. This creamy, cheesy masterpiece was topped off with a sprinkling of lightly toasted bread crumbs, giving each bite a satisfying little crunch.

Finishing the day on the sweetest note, I sampled a trifecta of sublime confections: one of



the shop's famous buttermilk scones (this one a seasonal apple cinnamon), a slice of Lemon Lavender Cake, and the unique flavors of Apple Blueberry Treacle.

I had never before sampled treacle, a decidedly British amber-hued syrup. The flavor brought molasses to mind but with a much lighter and more delicate flavor. It complemented the berries and apples and made the crumbled scone topping sing.

For lovers of all things lemon, the Lemon Lavender Cake is a must try. From the lemon curd and fresh lemon juice and zest, to the heavenly pairing of lemon and French lavender oil, this cake is the epitome of luscious lemon flavor.

The scone - I must admit - I boxed up to enjoy at home. In fact, every time I pass through Chester, I am tempted to stop by Sally Lunns and pick up a few. They are the shop's bestselling item for very good reason. Topped with house-made clotted cream and fresh strawberry preserves, a bite of these decadent scones will have you feeling like a member of the royal family.

By Roberta Burkbart





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