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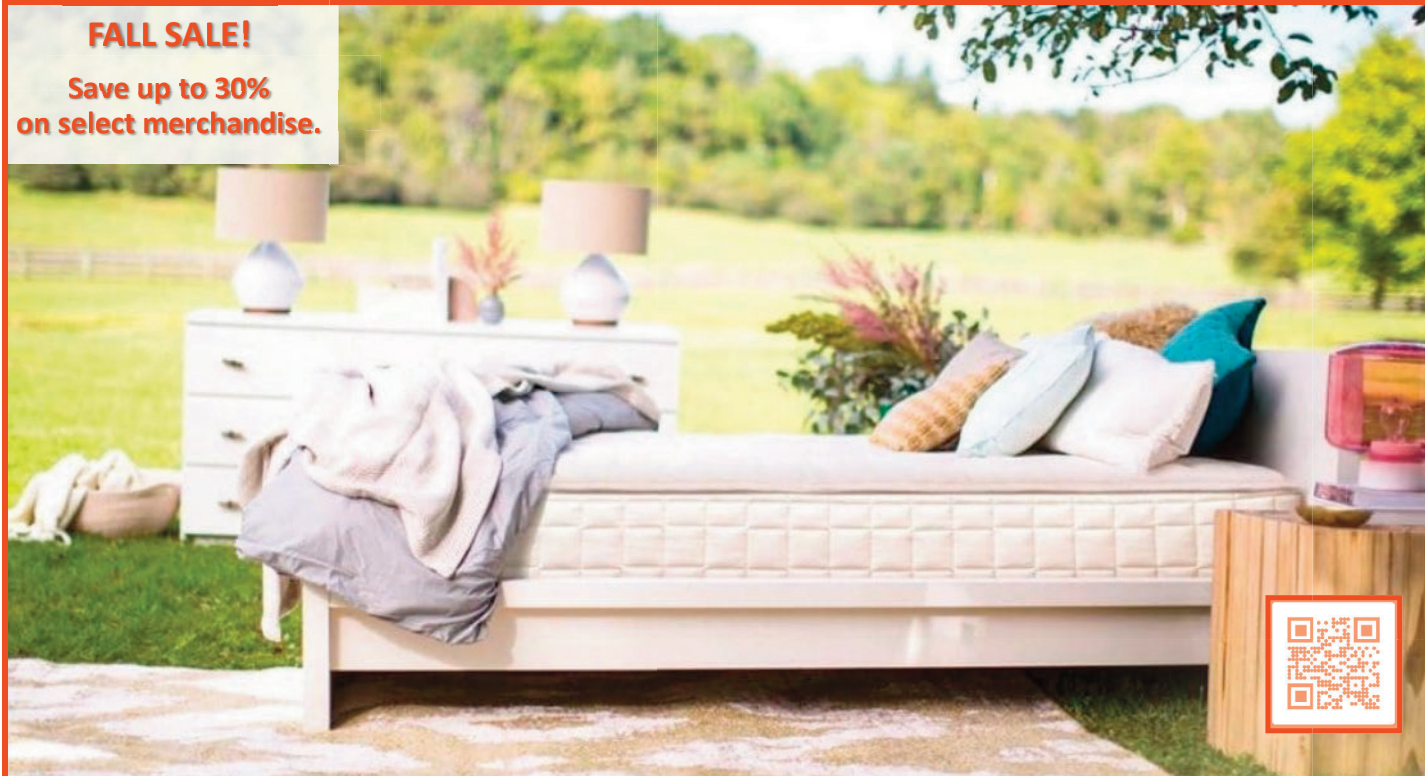
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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

When the season shifts from summer to fall, the signs can be subtle. But as the air turns crisp and the shadows grow long, the transition seems somewhat magical. To me, fall isn't just a season, it's a feeling. And this issue of *Elegant Lifestyles* is all about "feeling fall."

Feeling cozy?

Look to our tips for creating a comfy book nook anywhere in your home. Add a glass of wine, from the selections featured in "Fall Wines," and curl up with your favorite read. If it's a décor changeup that tickles your fall fancy, our how-to for creating an autumnal tablescape might be just what you're looking for.

Feeling festive?

If you want to throw your very own Oktoberfest party, or seriously elevate your game-day tailgate, our features on both will have you celebrating the exciting activities that fall has to offer.

Feeling ghoulish?

Our fashion edit highlights bewitching trends to get you in the spirit. And whether your vibe is haunted or happy, look to our "Fall Fun Guide" for ideas on how to spend a perfect autumn day (or evening).

No matter what feeling fall evokes, I hope you enjoy this transformative season.

Kara Sibilis, *Editor*

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Bewitching Fall Fashion:

Dark and Moody Trends, 2025

By Naomi Gruer

Ulla Johnson's Brin
Dop Waist Long
Sleeve Dress

AKNVAS Tissy Lace Gown
(Nieman Marcus)

Dark romanticism describes fall's focus on textural layers, longer hemlines, and the color black — elements that give off a “witchy” vibe. Moody and mystical trends overlap with pop culture. Stevie Nicks, Chappell Roan, “Wicked,” Wednesday Addams, and the movie “Sinners” all come to mind when shopping an aesthetic that combines the Victorian era with goth subculture and occult symbolism. Designers translated these undercurrents into chic attire for any occasion. Black lace and sheer chiffon were present on the Paris runways of Alaïa, Dior, and McQueen. Victorian ruffs and leather paraded in Milan on Ferragamo and Alberta Ferretti runways. Though designers showed a variety of fabrics and silhouettes, their aim was modern femininity infused with a large dose of lace.

In 16th-century Europe, handmade lace was a luxury and status symbol. Royalty and aristocrats wore it in the form of collars, cuffs, and gowns. As a result of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th-century, machine-made lace became affordable to the masses. By the Victorian era,

lace had moved to the mainstream and was prevalent in wedding gowns, blouses, and undergarments. Black lace was used in everyday wear and mourning clothes. Today, lace may feel ethereal, bohemian, feminine, chic, or edgy. Add an air of mystique to your wardrobe by translating haute couture's dark and moody trends whichever way suits your style.

DRESSES:

Built-In Capes to Bat Wings

Enchant in dresses which come with built-in and removable capes, bat wings, and fluted sleeves. Silhouettes from peplum to flowy to Morticia Addams meet midi and full hems. The Tissy Lace Cape Gown by AKNVAS is a full-length lace

dress with a smocked bodice and attached self-tie cape. Ulla Johnson's Brin Drop Waist Long Sleeve Dress says feminine-with-mystical-influences. Layer a jacket, belt and mixed-metal necklace on top of McQueen's Asymmetric Lace Hem Sleeveless Midi Dress. Chiara Boni La Petite Robe's Cocoon Collar Trumpet Gown, with its V-neck and fitted bodice, transforms to elegant-and-edgy when topped with accessories such as a cape, choker, and cocktail ring with a dark gemstone.

JACKETS:

Subtle to Celestial

Cast a spell with a stand-out blazer on which an entire outfit is built. Fabrics such as organza, lace, chenille, velvet, tweed, vegan-leather, and leather are tailored to suit an endless array of ensembles. Want to recreate Chanel's ethereal-and-tailored runway looks?



McQueen's Asymmetric Lace Hem Sleeveless Midi Dress (Niemman Marcus)

Chanel runway look

Pair Adrianna Papell's Organza Tie Front Wrap Jacket with slacks, a skirt, or a dress. In the mood for color? Wear saturated dark purple, burgundy, mid-night blue, or emerald to add a gemstone element. Feeling creature-of-the-night energy? The Mercer Velvet Blazer by LYSSE in dark purple does just that when worn over a top with fluted sleeves and a long, flowy skirt. Two jackets that illustrate this season's spirit: CINQ À SEPT's Roxie Lace Trim Blazer with its lace trim at the cuffs and hem and brooches on the lapel; and EMPORIO ARMANI's Moon Chenille Jacket.



Cont. on page 8



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TOPS:

Wednesday Addams to Saturday Night

Working like a charm are tops which feel like finery. They stand on their own while also coordinating with blazers and bottoms. Think about how a blouse's fluted sleeves will work under a jacket, how its neckline will lay under a blazer's lapel, and if it will be tucked in or worn out. Take Free People's Bell Sleeve Sheer Cotton Blend Lace Top. It's jewel neck and long, fluted sleeves are meant for layering, but it's not so long that it must be tucked in. The Bow Lace Top by CeCe feels inspired by Wednesday Addams with its white Peter Pan collar and bow adorning a black body. This description for the Women's Button-Front-Flared-Sleeve Lace Shirt is a sure sign of the season: "A dark romance is yours with this gorgeous lace shirt from Avec Le Filles, a Gothically charming design that features



CINQ À SEPT ROXIE
Lace trim blazer
(Bloomingdale's)

subtle ruffled trim and dramatic long flared sleeves."

SKIRTS AND SLACKS

Leather and Lace

Stir things by combining Victorian vibes with modern sentimentality. One chic look: pair the Vegan Leather Skirt from Elie Tahari with a lacy, ruffled blouse and combat boots. And another: for day, wear ALLSAINTS' Josie Lace Skirt with tall, black boots and a knit top under a capelet; for night, change to a high-necked blouse with bow details. Bottega Veneta's Colorblock



Free People's Bell Sleeve Sheer Cotton Blend Lace Top (Nordstrom)



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Leather Gathered Midi Skirt has a full circle, sun and moon feeling. Faux leather pants in wide legs, straight legs, cropped, or leggings have a bohemian, rock-star look when worn with lacy blouses and gem-colored jackets. Mod pants such as Bayeas' High Waist Crystal Embellished Lace Wide Leg Jeans and Ungaro's Celia Floral Lace Flared Pants dressed with solid tops, statement necklaces, and sheer wraps or shrugs read upscale ethereal.



Avec Les Filles, Women's Button-Front Flared-Sleeve Lace Shirt (Macy's)



Which Jewelry is Witch?

Victorian

Pendants and rings made with rubies, garnets, sapphires, emeralds, and onyx; chokers, cameos, and brooches.

Gothic

Blackened steel, rose gold, and titanium in thick, layered necklaces, and pendants of skulls, bats, and crosses.

Celestial

Rose quartz, amethyst, moonstone, aquamarine, and other healing stones set in moon phases, stars, and mystical symbols.

Nature

Images of thorns, animal forms, and botanicals set in silver or dark metals.

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How to Host an Oktoberfest Party

By Patricia Lombardo

While summer's end may not be your favorite time of year, as Labor Day closes out the barbecues and sunscreen—autumn brings the nostalgic back-to-school feels, cozy sweaters, colorful outdoor landscapes, fall harvests, and beautiful, changing weather.

But before you're ready to carve that jack-o'-lantern, early fall is the time to honor the beloved and globally-celebrated Oktoberfest! Originally held for a royal wedding celebration in Munich in 1812, the days-long party was such a success—the tradition carried through over the years. Now, Oktoberfest is the world's largest Volkfest (“folk festival”) and attracts millions to Germany each year to enjoy music, games, food tents, amusement rides, and Bavarian delights. And, of course, beer! Not yet ready to jet off to Germany for the party? Why not host your own Bavarian fest at home!

Here are some ideas to get your party started ...
German-style.

The Invite

Traditional Oktoberfest starts mid-September and ends the first week-end of October. So, your invitations should go out around Labor Day. Traditional paper designs include Bavarian styled blue & white prints, festive fonts, and beer mugs. Or you can choose to send digital invites or create a festive group chat and give your event a fun name: OktoberFEAST, Backyard Wiesn, or Biergarten Bash!

The Beer

Munich hosts six official breweries: Paulaner, Spaten, Hofbräu, Löwenbräu, Augustiner, and Hacker-Pschorr. These authentic brews are typically lagers offering strong, smooth, and malty flavors with golden amber in color. If these are not easy to come by for entertaining your crowd, several options are similar in style and flavor. Samuel Adams Oktoberfest, Sierra Nevada Oktoberfest, and Ballast Point Dead Ringer are fine replacements. And for variety, offer some pale ales or wheat beers.

If you're looking for lighter alcohol content, serve up a classic radler. Radlers are a refreshing, low-alcohol beer cocktail typically made by mixing ales with a citrus-flavored soda, like lemonade or grapefruit. These cocktails, known for a light, crisp, and citrusy taste, are a nice option. Non-alcoholic beer options have come a long way and are also readily available in a wide range of labels and tastes.

Be sure to serve in 1-liter mugs if you can find them. If not, steins or glass pints will surely do.



Image by National Distributors

The Dish

Oktoberfest food is definitely hearty and meant to pair perfectly with your chosen ales. Here's a list of some favorite fares to last throughout the celebration!

Mains:

- Bratwurst - a grilled German sausage served in a bun with mustard and sauerkraut.
- Weisswurst - a mild, white sausage traditionally eaten with sweet mustard.
- Currywurst - a sliced sausage topped with curry-spiced ketchup,

served with fries.

- Schweinebraten - a roasted pork, typically served with dark beer gravy and potato dumplings.
- Hendl - a rotisserie chicken, crispy on the outside, juicy on the inside.
- Leberkäse - Bavarian meatloaf, sliced thick and served in a roll or with potato salad.

Sides:

- Sauerkraut - a fermented cabbage, tangy and often served warm.
- Kartoffelsalat - a German-style potato salad made with vinegar or mustard (and sometimes mayo).
- Rotkohl - a sweet and sour red cabbage, often slow-cooked with apples and cloves for extra flavor.
- Brezn - a giant, soft pretzel sprinkled

Cont on page 12

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with coarse salt. What is Oktoberfest without the pretzel?!

Desserts:

- Apfelstrudel - a warm apple strudel with cinnamon and raisins, served with vanilla sauce.
- Bavarian Cream - a rich, vanilla-flavored custard.
- Dampfnudel - a steamed sweet dumpling, served with vanilla sauce.

Pro tip: using a crock pot (slow cooker) makes it easy to serve warm, flavorful, traditional-style German food with minimal fuss and it's perfect for feeding a crowd!

The Vibe

To start, state the following either on a chalk board or with a banner: "Willkommen zum Oktoberfest!" (Welcome!)

Blue and white lozenge (diamond) patterns, like the Bavarian flag, are essential! Use them (or blue and white checkered, if you can't find

diamond designs) for tablecloths, napkins, plates, and balloons or bunting. Create centerpieces with pretzel sticks in mugs and mini German flags with battery-operated string lights. Outdoor enhancements can include hay bales for rustic seating or decor and wooden barrels or crates for drink stations.

Nothing says a party more than music or in this case, "Musik." Set your mood and create or stream a playlist of traditional oompah music, German drinking songs, or fun Oktoberfest-themed party playlists (Spotify has tons)!

The Dress

Oktoberfest is meant for fun and laughter. It is also the perfect celebration for your guests to give back to the bash by encouraging them to go the distance with festive and appropriate wear. Lederhosen for men and dirndls for women are the obvious choice, but if those garbs are hard to come by, finding something festive is easy—think suspenders, checkered shirts, alpine hats, etc.

The Fun

Activities are always welcomed at any party. For your Oktoberfest, games like these are the perfect addition to your fest: stein-holding competitions (fill a liter mug with water and see who lasts longest), pretzel-eating contests, yodeling contests, costume judging, or beer tasting flights.

The most fun thing about Oktoberfest is the lively, joyful atmosphere where everyone comes together to celebrate culture. Enjoy yours to the fullest. Prost!



Sit by the Fire and Enjoy!

Apple Cider Sangria

Courtesy of RecipeGirl.com

Ingredients:

Yields – 6 Servings

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2 small pears thinly sliced | 1/2 cup apple whiskey or regular whiskey |
| 2 small apples thinly sliced | 1/4 cup brandy |
| 1 medium lemon cut into wedges | 1 1/2 cups sparkling white wine or Prosecco |
| 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds | Cinnamon sticks for garnish |
| 2 cups apple cider | |

In a large pitcher, add pears, apples, lemon wedges and pomegranate seeds. Pour apple cider into pitcher followed by apple whiskey and brandy. Refrigerate for a few hours and then add sparkling wine or Prosecco right before serving. Pour chilled sangria into glasses.

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Fall Fun Guide

By Isabella Bickenbach

*September can either be one of your best months, or one of your hardest. With warm weather ending, vacations becoming a faint memory, and life starting up again, it's easy to fall into a gloomy stupor. However, it's important to remember that fall can be just as magical, that is, when we remember all the great things to it. In this article, take part in planning your finest fall yet, whether that's through chilling ghost tours, apple picking, pumpkin patches, and more!**



Photos: hauntedhistoryproductions.com



Photos: riamedefarm.com



Photos: theredmill.org

Bernardsville

Haunted Bernardsville, "We're Back!": Are you looking for a mysterious, spine-chilling October? Take part in this special, one night only ghost tour where you can uncover the haunted tales of Bernardsville. Meet the local legends of the afterworld and the architects of the town's bygone years.

When: October 11th

Hours: 5:30pm - 8pm

Where: 45 Mine Brook Road, Bernardsville

Details: hauntedhistoryproductions.com



hauntedhistoryproductions.com

revealing Chester's dark and haunted history. Purchase tickets (\$25 each) in advance to secure your spot. Stroller kids and children under five are free.

When: October 4th

Hours: 5:30pm - 8pm

Where: Municipal Field & Gazebo, Borough Park, 155 Main Street, Chester

Details: hauntedhistoryproductions.com

Chester

Haunted Chester, "Lore & Legends": An interactive, 55-minute family-friendly ghost tour. Embrace the eeriness of these unforgettable, spooky stories

Chester

Riamede Farm: A welcoming, charming environment with apple picking, hay wagon rides, live music, and more

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When: Wednesday - Monday

Hours: 9am - 4:30pm

Where: 122 Oakdale Road, Chester

Details: riamedefarm.com
(908) 879-7762

Clinton

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When: Friday - Saturday

Hours: 5pm - 10pm

Where: 56 Main Street, Clinton

Details: theredmill.org,
(908) 735-4101

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The Madison Chamber of Commerce and Madison P.B.A. #92 will be hosting their 30th annual Madison Car Show in conjunction with Bottle Hill Day.



for more information got to www.rosenet.org

Fall Fun Guide

Cont. from page 16



East Hanover

Funtober: Relish in these three week-ends of fun with live music, games, mummy wrapping and hay bale tossing competitions, pie eating contests, face painting, balloon twisting, 360 photo booths, tractors, obstacle courses, pumpkin patches and painting, and trick-or-treating.

When: September 27th - 28th, October 4th - 5th, October 11th - 12th

Hours: 10am - 9pm

Where: 182 NJ-10, East Hanover

Details: thefunplex.com
(973) 428-1166



Madison

Bottle Hill Day: This year, Madison will honor the 50th anniversary

of their signature fall festival, first established in 1974 by Mayor Elizabeth Baumgartner. Come celebrate with sidewalk sales, live music, amusement areas, food and 225+ vendors.

When: October 4th

Hours: 10am - 5pm

Where: Downtown Madison

Details: rosenet.org



Bottle Hill Day Photos: rosenet.org

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Fall Fun Guide



Conklin Farm U-Pick: For the perfect fall atmosphere, head over to this beautiful farm and delight in haunted hayrides, hot cider donuts, fresh apples, and painted pumpkins. Take a shot at winning a 100-pound pumpkin on Saturdays or Sundays. Children under the age of seventeen must have adult supervision.

When: Monday - Sunday

Hours: 10am - 6pm

Where: 10 Vreeland Ave.
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Details: conklinupick.com



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When: Monday - Sunday

Hours: 8am - 6pm

Where: 1111 Mt Kemble Ave.
Morristown

Details: wightmanfarms.com
(973) 425-9819



Photos: conklinupick.com



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*All events subject to date/time changes. Please check listed websites for any updates.



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Fall is in the Air ~ What's in Your Wine Glass?

By Chris Cree, *Master of Wine*

As summer fades into autumn, bringing earlier sunsets and a refreshing chill to the air, my palate begins its seasonal shift. Lighter, casual summer fare gives way to heartier menus, and my wine choices follow suit. Roasting and pan-searing replace grilling, and fuller-bodied reds and whites take over from summer's rosés. The kitchen is filled with more classic preparations, and the table with wines to match.

One of my favorite sources for fall wines is France's Rhône Valley—a diverse region offering a wide range of wine styles shaped by its many subregions and varied terroirs. Generally speaking, the Rhône's sunny southern location and Mediterranean climate yield robust wines with deep flavor and character.

The region is divided into two parts: the Northern Rhône (Rhône Septentrional) and the Southern Rhône (Rhône Méridional). The north has a slightly more continental climate and covers a smaller, steeper area carved by the Rhône River. Here, Syrah is the dominant red grape, supported by Roussanne, Marsanne, and Viognier for whites.

Syrah from the north is typically bold yet refined, showing notes of black fruit, black pepper, olive, violet, and sometimes licorice or espresso. The most famous wines come from Côte-Rôtie and Hermitage, with prices often in the hundreds of dollars. Other excellent appellations include Saint-Joseph, Cornas, Crozes-Hermitage (for reds), and Condrieu (for whites). While still full-bodied, Northern Rhône wines tend to show more finesse and elegance.

In the Southern Rhône, the valley widens into rolling hills with soils of gravel, sand, and the large stones known as galets roulés. The warmer climate here favors Grenache, often supported by Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and others. White wines are made from Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Marsanne, Viognier, Clairette, and Bourboulenc. Southern Rhône wines are typically more plush, ripe, and powerful.

Thanks to its diversity of grapes and styles, Rhône wines pair beautifully with a wide range of foods. While I enjoy



them all year, they really shine when the first nip of fall arrives. Here are some of my favorite seasonal picks from our award-winning selection—along with food pairing ideas.

White Wines for Fall

Château de Valcombe Costières-de-Nîmes Blanc 2024 (\$25)
From a 10th-generation family estate near the Mediterranean, this blend of 70% Roussanne and 30% Marsanne is fermented in stainless steel to preserve its freshness. Clean and floral, it's perfect with salads, seafood, chicken, cheese, or simply on its own.

J.L. Chave Sélection Hermitage Blanche 2021 (\$85)
From one of the Rhône's most historic names, this

Fall Wines



Marsanne-Roussanne blend delivers depth and elegance. While not from the estate vineyards, it's made with the same care and tradition. Pairs beautifully with lobster, scallops, halibut, or or roast chicken.

Red Wines for Cozy Nights

Xavier Vignon Côtes du Rhône 2020 (\$20)
100% Grenache, this is a go-to value wine—ripe, round, and versatile. Ideal with pizza, burgers, roast chicken, turkey, pork, veal, or lamb.

Domaine des Remizières Crozes-Hermitage “Origine” 2023 (\$30)
A Syrah from the north showing cassis, black pepper, and olive notes. Serve with grilled meats, stews, or mushroom-based dishes.

Clusel-Roch Côte-Rôtie “Champon” 2019 (\$120)

A stunning wine from a small family domaine. Mostly Syrah with a touch of Viognier, this wine has dark, earth-tinged fruit with licorice and mocha notes. Drink now or age for a decade or more.

La Fagotière Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2022 (\$55)

Classic southern Rhône—ripe cherry fruit, rich texture, and earthy complexity. Great with roast lamb, braised short ribs, or hearty stews.

Domaine Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Rouge 2021 (\$320)

For the collector or celebratory occasion. A masterfully blended Syrah from different plots in Hermitage, this is deep, dark, and awe-inspiring. Drink now with a long decant, or cellar for 10+ years.

Whether you're sipping wine by the fire, pairing with roast duck, or setting the Thanksgiving table, the Rhône has something for every fall occasion. As always, we're happy to help guide you toward the perfect bottle.

Cheers!

Chris Cree, Master of Wine



About the Author

Chris Cree is one of only 60 Masters of Wine in the U.S. and the founder of Cree Wine Company in New Jersey. With decades of experience in wine education, import, and retail, Chris brings a passion for storytelling and discovery to every bottle.

About Cree Wine Company

Cree Wine Company is a wine bar, shop, and event space offering curated wines, classes, private events, and experiences in the heart of New Jersey. Our selection features small producers, sustainable farming, and wines with a sense of place.

Create a Cozy Book Nook Anywhere

By Patricia Lombardo

The joy from a great read is almost always guaranteed. A cozy, personal space where you can curl up with your favorite book, tablet, magazine, or newspaper can be the most coveted space in your home. A book nook can encourage a healthy downtime by providing a designated and personal boundary—reminding you to slow down. If you are looking to create this treasured space (or update your current one) you can find some helpful ideas here.

When creating your cozy nook, the perfect spot is essential. You can even use what you already have—rearrange furniture, repurpose a lamp or side table, or recycle your decor for a charming, budget-friendly space. There are multiple options in your home that you may never have thought of that can easily transition into this quiet and personal space.

The classic window seat is a built-in alcove with seating directly under a window. Specifically designed for relaxation, it combines natural light and privacy—ideal for reading or just enjoying the view. The addition of upholstery or a fitted cushion will add the comfort you need. Some window seats may have window treatments to draw for extra “me time” and hinged lids beneath the seat for storage—perfect for your reading materials.

The “cloffice” is exactly what it sounds like: a closet and office combination. Here is where you can turn an unused closet into a



Photo: bhg.com



Photo: Hibernate Bedding

small, unique reading spot. This space-saving area is perfect for smaller homes or even apartments with extra closets. With the smaller niche, you'll have more focus to customize your shelving ... where once was a pile of sweaters is now a row of literary classics! A love seat and a mini chandelier add the perfect touch, making the area feel less like a closet. Fun wallpaper might find a home here, too. And if the space feels closed in, add a mirror opposite the light source to reflect brightness!

Creating a bookshelf hideaway is an easy job just by moving your portable bookshelves next to your favorite seating. If room allows, a chaise or small daybed would be ideal here, or nestle a comfy seat between two shelves. Pile on the pillows and add a decadent throw for a perfect spot with your favorite read. If you're looking to freshen up your pillows, stop by Hibernate Bedding in Bernardville. “We offer a curated selection of pillows and comforters from companies like The Pillow Bar, Naturepedic, Savvy Rest, and Sleep & Beyond,” says owner, Pamela Nardone. Once you've procured the perfect pillows, add a small standing lamp, plus a side table for maybe a scented candle, and you've got yourself a nook in no time.

A tent space is the ideal place for the kids to hit the figurative road with a literary adventure. Whether it be a fun bean bag or large seat cushions, your chosen seating will have them stay put for hours. With

Cozy Book Nook

a hanging egg chair or hammock and some fairy string-lights, even the dreaded homework may have a greater chance of survival here!

For any of these spaces, personal additions are sure to improve your nook: soft throw blankets, plush pillows for support, a basket of books, an accent table for a beverage and reading glasses, or a charming, little rug to enhance your area. And remember, lighting is everything. Combine natural with softer lighting—like a lamp or any dimmable light source.

Creating and spending time in a book nook isn't just a cozy pastime—it actually offers a number of benefits for your mind and body. Reducing stress and boosting mental clarity will improve your emotional resilience. You will be encouraged to read longer, only helping your brain unwind and relax.

Your newly found nook will become your wellness sanctuary by allowing you to decompress and enjoying solitude. So, put your phone on Do Not Disturb and go ahead, escape.



Photo: Hibernate Bedding



Photo Credit: Edmund Barr

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Tailgating Tips - Elevate Your Game Day

By Judy Palermo

Whether you're a regular in the MetLife Stadium parking lot or prefer to pregame in your own backyard, 2025 is the year to elevate your tailgate party from guzzler to gourmet. There are so many products that are easy to transport and set up in seconds to transform your tailgate space into party central. With four categories to consider for tailgate success—location, setting, food, and entertainment—you can mix and match party elements to raise your game day experience to a tailgate to remember.

Tailgate in the Parking Lot:

If you have tickets to the game, your preference may be to pull up to the parking lot and unload your party. But you can do more than open up the back of the SUV and pull out the cooler and sandwiches. More and more fans are setting up canopies and bringing comfy chairs. Camp chairs have gone beyond basics and now offer options with foot rests and rockers. Cup holders are common, but some chairs also offer side tables, coolers, cushioned seatbacks, and custom canopies. Coleman and Renetto are reliable companies to find a chair perfect for individual preferences. Now that your seating is taken care of, decorate your site with string solar-powered lights (in team colors, of course) and team pennants. When you're ready to eat, don't settle for floppy paper plates.



Photo: Midwest Life and Style
by Jen Svendsen



Portable Buddy® Heater
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Go one step further. If you can arrive early enough, consider setting up a smoker and making pulled pork or smoked wings. Pitboss, Cuisinart, and Masterbuilt all make portable smokers that are easy to transport. For those who would rather stick to burgers and dogs, Coleman, Weber, and Cuisinart all offer great options for portable grills.

Set your folding table with fine linens in your team colors. Disposable plates, wine glasses, and plasticware that mimic fine china, crystal, and silver are readily available at big box and specialty stores. And pair that pulled pork with a fine pinot noir and your wings with a bright sauvignon blanc.

Keep warm when the sun sets with soft throws across your chairs. Sherpa throws offer velvety smooth surfaces and optimal warmth, while cotton basket weaves are lightweight and colorful. Those who need even more heat can opt for small portable heaters. Popular brands include Mr. Heater and Black & Decker.



Portable Charcoal Grill
and Smoker
masterbuilt.com

Enhance the overall atmosphere with a portable sound system from names like Bose or JBL that pipe in music or pregame shows. Go one step further by setting up a battery powered television to watch earlier games, or highlight reels of your team's greatest moments. Prices range from very affordable low hundreds to thousands, depending on size, streaming capabilities, and accessories.

Tailgating

For additional entertainment, see which of your guests is the biggest football fan with a round of football trivia. Board games can be easily purchased online or in big box stores; football trivia sites are also found online.

Tailgate In Your Backyard:

Hosting the tailgate in your own backyard—whether you have tickets for the big game or will be watching it from home—offers a different experience. Early in the season, you can take advantage of the summer blooms still gracing your property, and later in the season, the explosion of autumn colors during peak leafing time offers a dramatic backdrop for any tailgate party. Drape team pennants across your deck or patio and replace white tree lights with lights in your team's colors. In your own yard, you can kick it up a notch. In addition to fine linens, real china, crystal, and silver add the finishing touches to your outdoor table. Add floral centerpieces created with flowers in team colors.

You may choose to smoke or barbeque, but kick it up a notch by serving filet mignon or cedar plank salmon. For a more casual spread, serve lobster roll or savory tea sandwiches to rival those sold at Harrod's or Kensington Palace. But start off with a custom charcuterie board shaped in your team's logo.



Photo: The Wooden Fig

Having a tailgate party in your own backyard allows time to be a kid again. Set up games like corn hole and ring toss. Make it like Field Day for grown-ups by adding tug 'o war and relay races. Consider adding a karaoke machine, but make the play list all sport themed songs.

When it's time for the big game—especially night games—bring out the projector and show the game on the big screen.

Serve hot chocolate made with high quality chocolate bars or baking chocolate and a custom cake topped with your team's logo.

Following are some local resources for gourmet items:

Custom Cakes

Cocoluxe Fine Pastries
Peapack, NJ
Cocoluxepastry.com

Lobster Roll

Verrilli's
Morristown NJ
Orderverrillis.com

Specialty Sandwiches and Savories

Paris Baguette
Morristown, NJ
Parisbaguette.com

Charcuterie Board

The Wooden Fig
Long Valley, NJ
Thewoodenfig.com

Fall Cocktail Recipe

Apple Cider Margarita

Courtesy of Erin Lives Whole

Yields 2 cocktails

Ingredients:

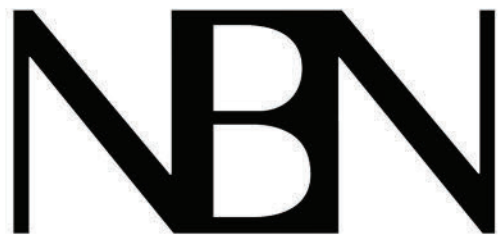
3 oz blanco tequila
5 oz triple sec
1.5 oz lime juice
8 oz apple cider
Salt & cinnamon OR sugar & cinnamon for rimming
Garnish: apple slice or cinnamon stick



Wet rim of 2 glasses and then rim with salt/cinnamon or sugar cinnamon. Fill glasses with ice.
In a shaker, add tequila, triple sec, lime juice and apple cider.

Instructions:

Shake well.
Pour into glasses and top with apple slices and cinnamon sticks.



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I cannot recommend "Neat By Natalie" highly enough! Her expertise and efficiency made our decluttering process before the move an absolute breeze! In just a short time, she worked wonders, helping us clear out and organize our space for the movers to pick up. Her professionalism and skill are unmatched, and she made what could have been a stressful experience incredibly smooth and even enjoyable. If you're looking for someone to help declutter and organize, Natalie Niemeyer is the absolute perfect choice! You will be glad you hired her and her team! - NaMO (Old Bridge, NJ)

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Fall-Themed Tablescapes - *Pumpkins and All!*

By Patricia Lombardo



An autumn tablescape is all about bringing the cozy feelings of fall right to your dining table! Whether you're hosting a casual harvest dinner, a spooky buffet, a Thanksgiving feast, or for your everyday meals just to feel a bit more seasonal, here are some ideas to inspire you.

Starting with your color palette—a contrast will make your table beam. Begin with warmer neutrals for your base. Creams, taupes, and warm grays are great for a subtle, elegant start. Next, layer in your rich autumn tones. Both bright and burnt oranges will work, as well as golden yellows, deep burgundies, vibrant purples and forest greens.

When decorating the table, think of both theme and fabric styles. Table cloths, runners, and napkins are an essential part of your tablescape. Choosing something like a textured linen cloth, a burlap runner and plaid flannel napkins certainly set the tone for many fall feasts. Adding placemats (think rattan or jute for adults, pumpkin-shaped for the little ones) over the runner gives extra flair and depth. And cloth napkins can be tied



Rustic Fall Table, Stacy Ling Brick 'n Blooms

with twine or velvet ribbon and a small sprig of rosemary.

Target (130 NJ-10 in East Hanover) offers a wide range of fall-ready table décor with plenty of choices. Picture a minimalist look with a simple runner, clean plates, and bold accent pieces like dark-hued pumpkins for contrast and elegance. Or a warm and inviting tone with rich fall hues

combined with wooden accents for a cozy, layered look. Both tablescapes make every seat feel welcoming.

Your centerpiece can easily be the showstopper. Fall is the time of year for natural abundance and color. Fill the center of your table(s) with pumpkins (real and faux), gourds, and squash mixed with apples, cranberries, and pears. Autumn blooms like dahlias and sunflowers and greenery or foliage (again, real and faux) are sure to enhance these copious centerpieces.

Candleholders also have quite the range from sophisticated to spooky. Adding warmth and height with pieces like glass taper holders, pumpkin tea light holders, or lanterns will surely give a glow to your fall table.

When it's time to set your table, really any coloring is acceptable and fun! Your plates, glassware, and flatware are of utmost importance—not because anything has to be expensive or too fancy, but because it can elevate the whole scene you've created! These are the pieces that will shine.

Fall Tablescapes



This can also be the time to have a little fun and mismatch your display. Why not? Think amber-tinted vintage crystal for character, gold or bronze utensils, ghoulish napkins and rings, and checkered runners. Have a ball with it!

Williams-Sonoma (1200 Morris Turnpike in Short Hills) has a myriad of tablescapes ideas and offerings. Their fall showcase includes seasonal accents perfect for creating a welcoming fall spread. Features include themed dinnerware such as Plymouth or Botanical Pumpkin, Peanuts™ “Great Pumpkin,” and Floral Autumnal. These artful choices will bring seasonal color to your surface with either elegant tones or festive characters. Even a haunted theme makes the cut this season with dinnerware, runners, and napkins donned with ghosts and skeletons alike!

A final and special touch may include mini pumpkins with names written in calligraphy for personalized place cards. The aroma of cinnamon sticks, clusters of cloves, and dried orange slices will not only fill the room for the evening but the spirit of your event! The rewards of your creative tablescapes are endless. Enjoy your celebration of a harvest setting, glowing candlelight, and good company.



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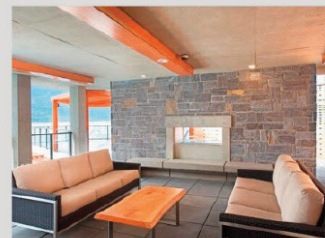
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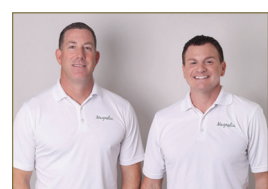
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