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PUBLISHER

**Corporation for New Jersey
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Amanda Richardson
 Executive Director

**NEW JERSEY HILLS
 MEDIA GROUP**

Joe Territo
 Executive Editor

Jerry O'Donnell
 Chief Operating Officer

Toni Codd
 Art Director / Designer

Account Executives

Pete Farrell
 Shelly Graziano
 Brian Johnson
 Loretta Kieffer
 Arielle Moss

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Isabella Bickenbach
Naomi Gruer
Patricia Lombardo
Judy Palermo

EDITOR
Kara Sibilila

To contact, email
ksibilila@newjerseyhills.com

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

The new year is traditionally a time for resolutions, particularly centered around wellness or fitness. The advertisements—you know the ones—that almost always come with unrealistic expectations, showing summer-bodied yogis sipping green juice while dabbing sweat from their glowing brows, shouting slogans like, 'Loose up to 20lbs. in 20 days!' or 'New Year! New You!'

Don't get me wrong, I love the enthusiasm of a new workout regimen or beneficial lifestyle change, but perhaps without the manic energy or timeline pressure. After all, 'it's a new year, let's set ourselves up for failure' ... said no one, ever. Plus, it's winter, which means it's cold, and I don't know about you, but I find myself wanting to hunker down during these months.

This issue of *Elegant Lifestyles* gently encourages a mindset shift into a slower, more contemplative season that's all about rest and relaxation, albeit with a few exceptions. First, we get behind the 'slow living' movement with an article on hobbies that encourage mindfulness and help beat the winter blues, then we focus on sleep hygiene in "A Long Winter's Night."

Our fashion feature covers clothes to keep you cozy—both inside and outside, and our travel article focuses on top destinations to escape the cold, whether you have a few days or a few weeks to spare.

February is National Wedding Month—it's actually the most popular month to *plan* a wedding, so our write-up presents design and décor ideas to help you do just that. And March 2nd is Read Across America Day, so our "Book Bounty" edit recommends reads in different genres, so you can curl up by the fire with a good book. And if you feel like an after-dinner drink, or a beverage that will go nicely with your book, our "Winter Wines" article is all about Port—a perfect pick for the season.

Stay warm (and relaxed) and see you in the spring!

Kara Sibilila, *Editor*

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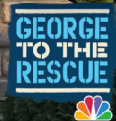


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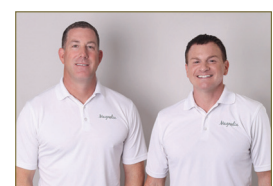


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Comfy & Cozy:

Clothing and Accessories to Keep Warm Inside and Out

By Naomi Gruer

This is the time of year when the weather can't decide what it wants to be. Winter's hanging on and, though spring is in sight, there's still a chill in the air. Inside, luxe blankets transformed into wearable throws, plush robes meant to be worn any time of day, and slippers in a multitude of styles protect against drafty windows, hunched shoulders, and cold toes. Outside, battery-heated vest, jackets, and gloves supply built-in warmth. Bundling up is the best way to keep icy air at bay.

Wear a Blanket

If you've ever draped a blanket over your shoulders while making a cup of cocoa, consider a wearable throw. This "poncho-style" apparel comes mid-length and full-length, with sleeves or without, and some with hoods and pockets. Meant for both women and men, Free the Sheep's Eden Hoodie features breathable openings, sensory-friendly faux fur lining, and a slightly weighted design. L.L. Bean's Cozy Sherpa Wearable Throw is hooded and mid-length, and REI's Campwell Camp Wrap doubles as a camp or car blanket. Wearable throws with electric blanket elements allow "personal thermostat" adjustments. The Snuggie Heated Shawl has four settings, and the Heated Wearable



Sharper Image Heated Wearable Blanket

Blanket by Sharper Image includes a panel set in the chest/abdomen area with three settings and an auto shutoff timer.

Wrap Yourself Up

Robes in a variety of fabrics layer coziness no matter what time of day. Traditional after-bath robes are sewn from cotton terry cloth, fabric made of uncut loop piles which stand up on base fabric. Available for women and men, The Company Store's Company Cotton Long Robe is a soft and highly absorbent "wearable towel." For a "making-breakfast-on-a-chilly-morning" feel, The Vermont Country Store's Sherpa-Lined Portuguese Cotton Flannel Wrap combines cotton-brushed flannel with sherpa—a fabric where one side has a stitched wooly appearance. Robes made of poly-plush, fabric consisting of soft pile that imitates fur, have a decadent "hang-out-all-day" feel. Restoration Hardware's Luxury Plush Long Robe and Pottery Barn's Faux Fur Ombre Robe provide warmth without weight. Haven Well Within's Organic Cotton Quilted Duvet Robe gives a "ready-for-bed" vibe.



Haven Well Within Organic Quilted Duvet Robe



Free the Sheep Edan Hoodie (wearable throw)

Warm Up Cold Feet

Stay warm from the bottom up with a pair of comfortable and fashionable slippers. Designers of indoor footwear have stepped up their game with a large assortment of styles to choose from. For women, Dearfoams' Fireside Sydney Genuine Shearling Scuff Slipper is a moisture-wicking, temperature-regulating, clog-style slipper. Another trendy and fuzzy option is UGG's Tazz Maxi Curly Genuine Shearling Platform Slipper. For men, Sorel's Dude MOC Faux Fur Lined Slipper is made from suede but has a soft, faux-fur lining, and UGG's Ascot Slipper is a loafer-style which sports a suede upper, cozy wool lining, and rubber sole. Bombas' Gripper Slipper Booties for men and women may look like socks, but they envelope feet and ankles with sherpa lining. To lengthen the life of slippers, whether fuzzy, fleece, leather, suede, or made from synthetics such as polyester, rayon and nylon, consider the material. Fabric may be washed, suede can be treated and brushed, and leather can be treated and conditioned.



SOREL DUDE MOC™ Men's Slipper



Women's Fireside Sydney by Dearfoams Shearling Scuff Slipper

Cont. on page 8

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Turn Up the Heat

Take winter wear up a notch with battery heated apparel and accessories. Sandwiched between inner and outer layers of fabric, flexible



Gokozy's Heated Ski Gloves 7.4V

heating elements connect to rechargeable lithium-ion batteries to deliver, typically, 5V, 7.4V and 12V of warmth. Battery heated garments are safe to wear when they include auto shut-offs to prevent overheating and have certifications to guarantee safe performance.

Gobi's Cirrus Womens Heated Vest, with heat zones in the chest, back and neck, can be adjusted to Low (113°F), Medium (131°F), and High (140°F).

Ororo's Women's Heated Puffer Parka Jacket contains loose-fill Thermolite® insulation as well as three heating zones: mid back and left and right-hand pockets. Gokozy's Heated Ski Gloves 7.4V may sound like other ski gloves with their 3M Thinsulate insulation layer, velvet fabric lining, combo polyester and PU leather exterior, and waterproof and windproof membrane, but these gloves feature carbon fiber heating elements.

In addition to vests, jackets, and gloves, other options to consider are battery heated hats, socks, and portable hand warmers.



Ororo's women's Heated Puffer Parka Jacket



Gobi Cirrus Womens Heated Vest



Ten Types of Slippers

- **Clogs** are slip-ins with open backs and cork or rubber outsoles.
- **Booties** cover entire feet and ankles and are made from knits or shearling.
- **Loafers** closely resemble shoes and offer arch support and stability.
- **Moccasins** feature decorative stitching, fluffy lining, and rubber or leather soles.
- **Fuzzies** have a loose fit and are made from fleece or faux fur.
- **Arch Supports** fit snugly and provide comfort for foot issues.
- **Shearlings** are crafted from sheepskin and have plush lining.
- **Platforms** are fashion-forward with suede or faux fur outers atop thick soles.
- **Slides** allow air to circulate and may be made from cotton, linen or terrycloth.
- **Slip-Ons** may be plush and meant for inside or practical and worn outside.

(Source: Nordstrom.com)

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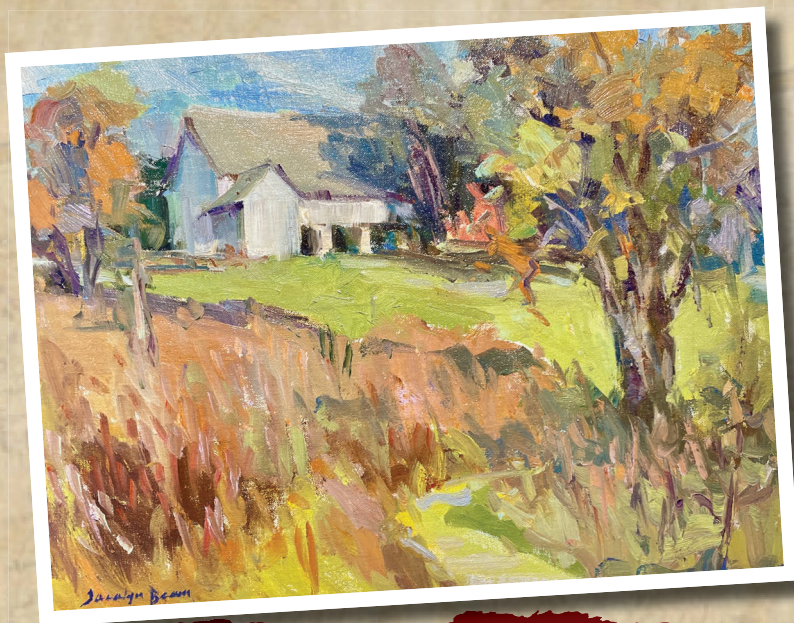
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Slow Living Hobbies to Beat the Winter Blues

By Patricia Lombardo



Photo: Great Brook Gallery

With the holiday craziness over, we all are looking to sit back and unwind a bit. But it may be hard to find necessary and fulfilling activities while you're inside and taking it easy. Below you'll find some mindful and relaxing options that will have you engaging in some "slow" hobbies to help you focus on the present moment and enrich your time.

Painting is such a gratifying activity and whether you are a beginner or an expert—it's great to just focus on the fun knowing the end result will always be beautiful. Start by gathering your basic supplies: paints (acrylics, watercolors, etc.) brushes, canvas/paper, a palette, an easel (if you choose) and find a cozy, yet well-lit area in your home to create your masterpiece.

Justine Kovacs, owner of Great Brook Gallery in New Vernon, explains,



Photos: Glassworks Crafts Studio

"I started painting as a hobby—however, as my family grew, I had time to fit painting classes into my schedule." Trying different paints over time, and with different schedules, Kovacs says, "I found oil paint! I love the smell, texture and depth of color and the

ability to paint for a short length of time or for the afternoon—it is a very forgiving medium. Two years ago, we opened Great Brook Gallery. Here I can show my work, the work of my friends (many who are nationally famous), and I have a place to paint daily."

Venture outside for a little pre-spring sunshine and visit this warm and beautiful gallery as they have classes taught every other month by artists extraordinaire. Go to greatbrook-gallery.com for details and call to reserve your spot (next class will be March 11th/12th).

Looking for that lost knitted scarf or the woolen hat that's gone missing? No time like the present to pick up some knitting needles and try your hand at making your own showpiece! An honored hobby, knitting is a perfect craft for all ages. Many video tutorials will help you with step-by-step instruction including the supplies needed, certain stitches and information on different fabrics.

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Winter Hobbies

Cont. from page 11

Start small with beginner-friendly projects like dishcloths, trivets and headbands and go from there!

A perfect shop for all of your knitting essentials is The Blue Purl. With locations in Harding and Madison—you're sure to find everything you need from supplies, to scheduled half hour drop-ins (if your creation needs some help), to instructive classes for all levels! It's here you will be guided "through your first project to your most complicated sweater." Visit thebluepurl.com for more information.

Looking to explore your artistic side and design unique, colorful pieces? You can create beautiful stained-glass projects from the comfort of your home with stained glass kits. Available for purchase on-line or from local craft and hobby shops or even your hardware store, these kits offer endless possibilities for personalizing home décor, gifts, or even



Image: The Blue Purl



Image: etsy.com

jewelry. And with most kits including all necessary tools and materials, you'll have your dazzling creation in no time.

If you're looking to step it up a notch, try glass fusing and head over to Glassworks Crafting Studio in Morristown. Co-owner Sherri Schachter notes, "Many of our customers make glass-fusing their hobby, crafting a project once a month or so, especially when weather is inclement. We have about 75 different objects you can make, and design is limited only by the imagination, so the possibilities are pretty limitless."

Unique paintings, cherished knits, and brilliant mosaics ... all treasures that you can create, peacefully, on a chilly day. These timeless and traditional hobbies can be handed down from generation to generation for winters to come.

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Blast freezing is a main ingredient in Wild Fork Foods' business model. This ultra-fast process freezes food at temperatures as low as -40°F. Scott Kenkelen, Wild Fork Food's Marketing Leader for the Northeast, says blast freezing "locks in flavor, nutrients, and texture, preventing the formation of large ice crystals that can ruin quality. Translation? No soggy, sad-looking steaks. No freezer burn. Just juicy, tender, and flavorful cuts that taste as if they were freshly butchered when you cook them."

Wild Fork Foods, a direct-to-consumer meat retailer, is opening its fourth New Jersey location at the end of February with a Grand Opening event in March. It will offer beef, chicken, pork, and seafood as well as exotic meats such as yak, alligator, kangaroo, and whole rabbits. Also available will be pre-seasoned meat, kosher meat, vegetarian and gluten-free options, appetizers, ready-to-heat meals, and desserts.



"When someone walks into a Wild Fork, we want to be able to provide the best recommendations possible, whether you're a professional BBQer or someone looking for something quick and easy to put on the dinner table," says Kenkelen. Staff members, or "Forkies," go through a 3-day-long Culinary Training.

Delivery is available throughout the country, and "anyone who lives within 15 miles of East Hanover is eligible for same-day shipping," Kenkelen says. A Wild Fork Unlimited Membership is \$2.90 per month or \$29.90 for the whole year.

Wild Fork Foods at 233 NJ 10 East Hanover will be open 7 days a week from 8am to 9pm. For more information, visit wildforkfoods.com or [Instagram.com/wildforkfoods](https://www.instagram.com/wildforkfoods).

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Winter Weddings Theme & Décor Ideas

By Isabella Bickenbach

Photos: Brides.com



• **Fun Fact:** We wear our engagement and wedding rings on the fourth finger of our left hand because it was once believed that a vein from that finger led directly to the heart.

Rustic meets Elegance:

Gaining popularity are the “rustic” or “barn” weddings, which have an outdoorsy or natural feel. This is where you can get really creative, as sprucing up a cabin in the woods is no easy task. Might you place mason jars filled with flowers on barrels or logs. Fresh fruit such as pomegranates or apples make excellent, natural centerpieces. Your runner can be built with natural elements from local vendors or farmers markets. Currently trending are “cake meadows,” which are tier cakes surrounded by cascading flowers, fruits, and decor. Complete the night with sparklers to send off the newly married couple.

• **Fun Fact:** The first known diamond engagement ring was gifted in 1477 from Archduke Maximilian of Austria to Mary of Burgundy.

You might be surprised to learn that February was named the “National Weddings Month” by the National Association of Bridal Consultants, when most weddings seem to take place in the summer months. However, the consultants highlight how February is the most popular month to *plan* a wedding, as most proposals happen during the holiday season. Besides, with Valentine’s Day that Feb. 14th, what better time to plan a wedding than the month of love? And after recovering from the holiday rush, there’s finally time to start booking venues, sending out invitations, and hiring entertainment. See inspiration below to design your dream wedding, envisioning the perfect place to say the words “I do.”

Winter Wonderland:

While the winter might seem like a bleak and gray time of the year to get married, it couldn’t be more perfect. For instance, embrace the opportunity to incorporate ice sculptures or icicle-like lights to create a winter themed wedding. Add some remaining holiday festivity such as evergreen wreaths or pine trees dashed with fake snow and lights. Cozy up with a fancy hot drinks bar including cider or mulled wine, and a cute rack of mugs to go with it. Continue the warmth and charm with a table length firepit to roast marshmallows.

Winter Weddings

Sustainable/Eco-Friendly:

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, an average wedding produces about 400 pounds of waste and 63 tons of carbon dioxide. You can still have your dream wedding even while being environmentally conscious. For example, invitations can be written on recyclable material. Including more vegetarian food options is another great start. Attendee gifts can be practical or earthy, including soaps from No Tox Life, lavender and herb sachets, or flowers to grow. Gifts don't need to be as extreme as Lillian Donovan's in *Bridesmaids*. Most importantly, focus on quality over quantity. Less is more!

• **Fun Fact:** It is estimated that as many as six million couples get engaged on Valentine's Day each year.

Fun and Engaging:

Who says that you need to do the traditional wedding in some ancient church with five shades of cream? 2025 brings about change. It's time to be bold and stand out. Add splashes of color through glasses, flowers, or a balloon arch. Do you really have to dance to "Marry You" by Bruno Mars, and "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran? Change up the playlist. Spice up the lighting with neon signs, twinkle lights, and floating candles. Have a dramatic aisle entrance such as an elaborate staircase or walkway. Include interactive activities for guests, such as a Jenga board or puzzle for them to write messages on. Hand out polaroid or disposable cameras so guests can capture the day. This will surely be an unforgettable wedding!

• **Fun Fact:** Seventeen tons of gold are turned into wedding rings in the United States each year.

Polished and Sophisticated:

Minimalistic yet charming weddings are looking to be plentiful this new year. These weddings focus on simple colors with rich metallics such as gold or pearl. They are adorned with layered drapes, cocktail towers, and macaron tiers. Delicate flowers like orchids, lilies, and lotus can be used frequently. Wisteria can also be used to hang from the ceiling. Invitations can be sent out in loopy calligraphy pressed with dried flowers.

• **Fun Fact:** According to the CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, there are over 2 million weddings in the US each year, which is about 5,500 weddings each day!





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Winter Weddings

Cont. from page 15

Beach Themed:

With the cold weather and frequent snowfalls, planning a beach wedding will keep one in high spirits. More and more couples are choosing a getaway location to enjoy coastal luxury with their family and friends. Palette wise, think sandy neutrals with splashes of teal and pink.

Decorate with dream catchers, woven basket lanterns, and driftwood signs. Your reception area can be cozied up with hammocks and pillows to sit on.



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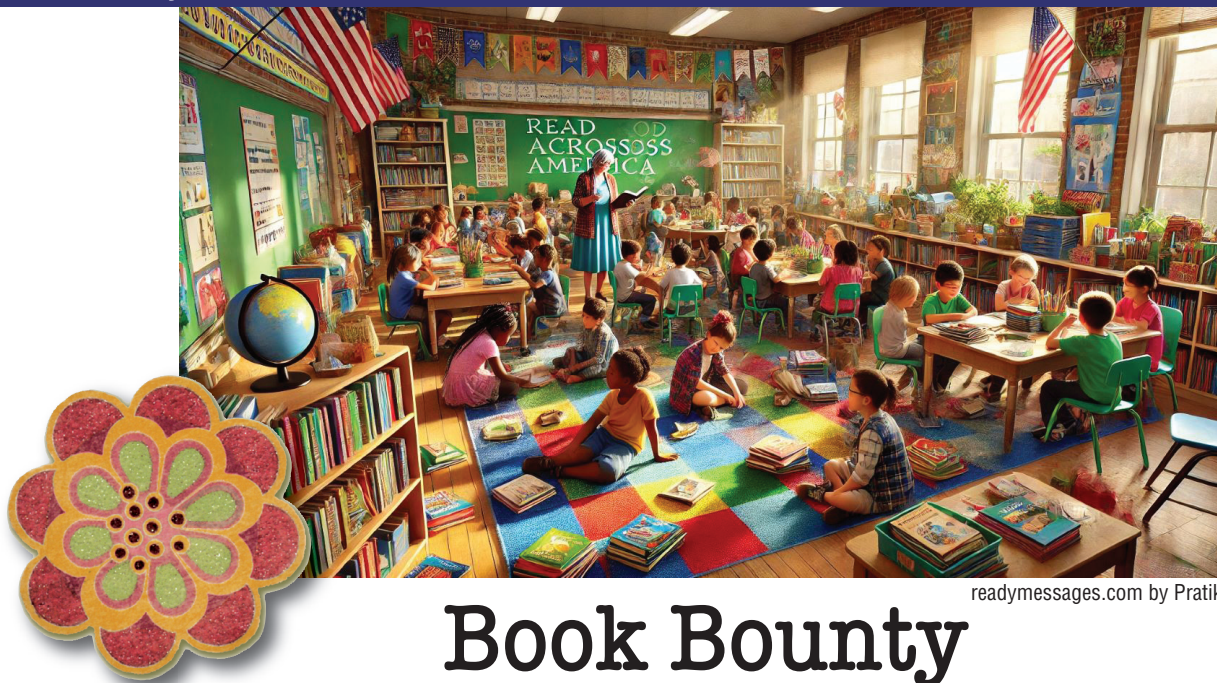
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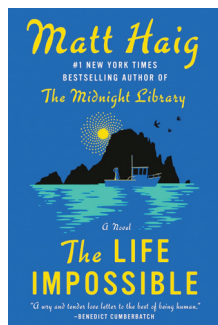
Book Bounty

By Patricia Lombardo

March 2nd is the National Read Across America Day! And this year it happens to fall on a Sunday, giving you the perfect excuse to curl up with a great book. Below you'll find some new and best-selling picks to ponder.

In *Tell Me Everything* (Adult Fiction) by Elizabeth Strout, readers return to Maine, with their beloved character Lucy Barton as she deals with a shocking crime and investigation all in the midst of an unforeseen bond. From *The Washington Post*: “*Tell Me Everything* hits like a bucolic fable . . . A novel of moods, how they govern our personal lives and public spaces, reflected in Strout’s shimmering technique.”

Celebrated author Matt Haig brings us *The Life Impossible* (Adult Fiction). Here we meet retired math teacher Grace Winters with her one-way ticket to her inherited run-down house on a Mediterranean island. Her adventure there is filled with discoveries both about her friend's life and death . . . with her own life-changing past to deal with.



life and the lives of his loved ones. Stanley notes, “Sharing food is one of the purest human acts,” and here you'll be able to enjoy his journey of eating a

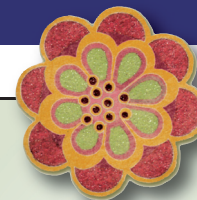


What I Ate in One Year: (and related thoughts) (Non-Fiction) by Stanley Tucci is surely one to sink your teeth into. Tucci shares his latest—a unique memoir reflecting on how his 12 months worth of meals has shaped his

variety of foods in various settings with friends, family, strangers, and occasionally on his own—all with a side of home-made memories and tales.

The Let Them Theory (Non-Fiction) by Mel Robbins is a best-seller across the board. This self-help book is one that countless readers are claiming to be a life-changing tool. Written as an easy-to-understand guide, Robbins shares relatable stories and explains, “If you've ever felt stuck, overwhelmed, or frustrated with where you are, the problem isn't you. The problem is the power you give to other people. *The Let Them Theory* puts the power to create a life you love back in your hands—and this book will show you exactly how to do it.”





Timing is everything and with *Self-Care for Winter: Seven steps to thriving in the colder months* (Non-Fiction) by personal help expert Suzy Reading



you'll be sure to find comfort from the cold. With Reading's devised steps you can sustain yourself during these colder months, "from regulating light activity to warming body move-

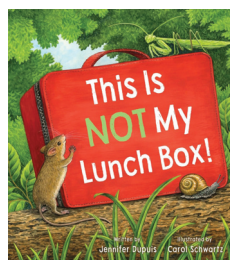
ments - you will learn how to alter your daily rhythms so that you can embrace winter." This read allows you to snuggle up and unlock the puzzle to making winter cool!

Need something for your teen? *When the World Tips Over* (Young Adult Fiction) by Jandy Nelson tells the tale of an enigmatic girl showing up and

tipping a troubled family over. Is she an angel or an ordinary girl? Somehow, she is vital to each of them. Before anyone can figure her out, catastrophe hits, leaving the family more broken than ever. And even more desperate to be whole.



And for our littlest reader (8 and younger) we have *This is Not My Lunchbox* (Picture Book) by Jennifer Dupuis. Aside from the rich illustrations, this is a fun and educational adventure beginning with a surprising camping trip and discovering the favorite meals of various forest creatures—from the wood frog to the moose!



Some local stores with new and used books are below:

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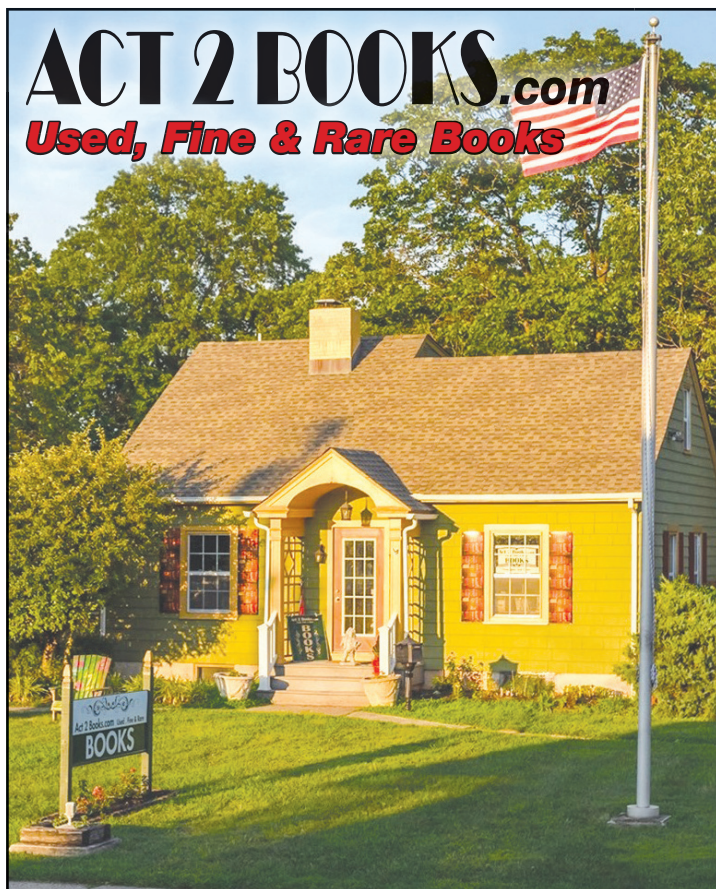
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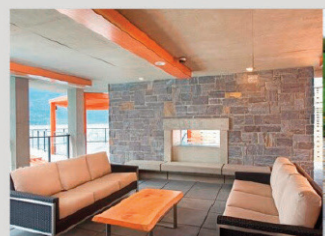
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PORT ~ *The Perfect Wine for Winter's Chill*

By Chris Cree, *Master of Wine, Cree Wine Company*

When winter temperatures drop, Port is the perfect wine for the season. This soul-warming wine from Portugal is the perfect way to cap off a great meal or sip by the fire with a good book.

There are many styles of fortified wines, but they all have one thing in common—the addition of alcohol during the fermentation process. Typically, a neutral high alcohol distilled from grapes is added, boosting the alcohol levels and halting fermentation. This was done historically to stabilize wines for shipping in the days before temperature control and modern methods of preserving wine. It was also used to create the sweet, strong wines that were in vogue at the time.

Produced from grapes grown in the Duero Valley of Portugal, Port can be made from 100+ grape varieties. The most widely used include Touriga Francesa and Touriga Nacional, grown in steep, rocky, terraced vineyards along the Duero River. In the fall the grapes are harvested, crushed, and macerated to extract flavor, color, and tannins. This has been traditionally done by foot in cement or stone lagars—and many still do. Once fermentation starts, while alcohol is still low and the wine quite sweet, grape brandy is added taking the alcohol up to about 20%, leaving the wine sweet, inky purple and strongly flavored. From here it is the maturation process that creates the style of various Ports.

Vintage Port, at the top tier of the Ruby Port category, is often regarded as the most prestigious style and is “declared” only several times a decade in the best years. It spends 18-24 months in cask, and is then bottled where it does the majority of its aging. When young, it is inky black purple, and packed with sweet cassis-like fruit and solid tannins. While it can be drunk in its youth due to its rich sweetness, Vintage Port should be aged for at least a decade before it reaches its peak. During that time the wine softens and becomes more complex, losing its black purple youthful color, taking on



more ruby hue, and finally brickish after many years. It also throws a deposit as the color and tannins precipitate out over the years. Vintage Port should always be decanted before serving.

Ruby Ports, other than Vintage, are made with shorter maturation times and take their name from their ruby purple color. They show more dark cassis and cherry elements compared to Tawny Ports. Aside from Vintage Ports, there are Ruby Ports that are less expensive and can be drunk right away.

The second category is Tawny Ports—those that do the majority of their maturation in wooden casks. During this time the barrels soften and age the wine, with color and tannin precipitating out in the cask, leaving the wine a brick/tawny color for which the category is named. These wines can simply be labeled Tawny Port, or can be bottled by



Photos Courtesy of Cree Wine Company

age: 10 years, 20 years, all the way up to 50 years depending on how long the wine was aged in cask. Tawny Ports do not continue to age in the bottle like Vintage Port does, and do not need decanting prior to drinking. Tawny Ports are more caramel/brick tinged, with sweet baked cherry tones, and are viscous, rich, and complex on the palate, with a nutty note in the finish for the older ones. One of my favorite styles of Tawny Port is Colheita—a single-Vintage Tawny Port that spends at least seven years in casks. It is labeled with the Vintage year instead of how long it was in cask. Unlike Vintage Port you don't have to wait decades before you can drink them, they don't need decanting, and once opened they stay fresh for many weeks or more.

A few favorites are Kopke Colheita Port 1985 (\$25 glass/\$125 for a bottle), Kopke Colheita White Port 2005, rare and

delicious (\$19 glass/\$95 bottle), Kopke Late Bottled Vintage Port 2018 (\$6 glass/\$25 bottle), Niepoort Colheita Port 2009 (\$10 glass/\$50 bottle), and Dow's Vintage Port 2000 (\$32 glass/\$160 bottle.) Or splurge on Kopke's 50 Year Tawny Port, (\$35 glass/\$225 per bottle).

Port works best in the after-dinner category—chocolate, rich cakes, and all kinds of sweets—but it is also exceptional with Stilton cheese, raisins, figs, dates, fresh apple and pear, assorted nuts, and a good baguette. A mature Tawny Port is also perfect with a seared foie gras appetizer. And of course, a good cigar in front of an open fire isn't a bad way to enjoy a glass of Port either. Cheers!



Chris Cree is New Jersey's only Master of Wine, having passed the demanding MW Exam in 1996. He has a long career in many facets of the wine trade. He is the Founder and Managing Partner of Cree Wine Company, a wine bar, restaurant, wine school, event space and online wine seller located in a beautifully restored 1813 farmhouse and tavern in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

*For more information, visit:
www.CreeWine.com.*





A Long Winter's Night Suggestions for Your Best Sleep

By Patricia Lombardo

The month of March is National Sleep Month. This is the time to honor and uphold the gift of slumber. And if you're not getting the full night's rest you want and need—it may be a good time to check in on your sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene refers to practices and habits that promote good quality sleep and help you stay refreshed during the day. Here are some tips to improve yours.

Maintain a Consistent Sleep Schedule -

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This helps regulate your body's internal clock which can aid in improved sleep quality, enhanced energy levels, better mental health, increased cognitive function, and a boosted immune system.

Create a Relaxing Routine -

Engage in calming activities before bed, such as meditating or taking a warm bath. Avoid stressful conversations or stimulating activities like watching intense shows.

Optimize Your Sleep Environment -

Keeping your room cool and well-ventilated is important. (60–67°F or 16–19°C is ideal). Pamela Nardone, Owner of Hibernate Bedding in Bernardsville, tells us, “I know it's been a very cold winter, and all we want to do is stay warm, but please understand that when it comes to sleep, heat is your enemy and a major cause of sleep disturbance. One easy and extremely important way to get a good night's sleep is to lower the temperature in your bedroom.”

Comfort -

Invest in a good-quality mattress, pillows, and bedding. Nardone adds, “Another easy way to stay cool when you sleep is to get rid of that foam mattress. These foams, made from petrochemicals, not only are toxic but make you hot, which is why the foam mattress manufacturers add more chemicals (cooling gels, etc.) to cool the mattress off. Natural textiles like wool and cotton regulate your body temperature which also contributes to less sleep disturbance. Consider your bedroom as a safe place away from all the toxins in the environment. Hibernate Bedding offers a wonderful selection

Long Winter's Night

of chemical free mattresses, toppers, sheets, comforters, pillows, and more to help you sleep cooler and healthier. We promise to make the dreaded mattress shopping experience an easy one!"

Limit Exposure to Blue Light -

Try to avoid screens (phones, tablets, TVs) at least 1-2 hours before bed. Use blue light filters or glasses if you must use devices in the evening. But the days of page-turning book reading (especially a light, joyful read) can add to the benefits of a great night's sleep.

Watch What You Eat -

Be mindful of your diet later in the evening and closer to your bedtime. Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol and consider light snacks if you're hungry, like a banana or a small portion of nuts.

Limit Daytime Naps -

If you nap, keep it short (less than 30 minutes) and especially avoid napping late in the afternoon.

Getting Enough Sleep -

Experts recommend that adults should sleep between 7 and 9 hours a night. The CDC explains the health benefits of such sleep include: getting sick less often, staying at a healthy weight, reducing stress and improving your mood, improving your heart health and metabolism, lowering your risk of chronic conditions (type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke), and improving your attention and memory to better perform daily activities.

Manage Stress -

Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or mindfulness meditation will help to calm your mind.

If you find yourself struggling with chronic insomnia, excessive snoring, or other sleep disturbances, it may be time to address your sleep issues and consult with a healthcare professional or sleep specialist. In doing so, there is a great chance those ol' bed bugs won't bite.

Photos courtesy of Hibernate Bedding



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Top Destinations to Escape the Winter Weather

By Judy Palermo

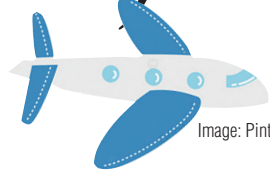


Image: Pinterest.com



Saint Augustine Pirate Treasure Museum
Trolleytours.com



Saint Augustine Botanical Nature Preserve
floridastateparks.com



Cas Abao Beach, Curacao
Travelandleisure.com



Willemstad, Curacao
Getty Images

Winter weather got you down? Find your place in the sun, whether you've got a weekend, a week, ten days, or more!

Saint Augustine, Florida

When you have a weekend to spare, and need a break from bundling up, Saint Augustine, Florida beckons. It's a 3-hour direct flight from Newark to Jacksonville, where you can pick up a car and relax on a gorgeous beach an hour later. And when it's time to get out of the sun, there's no shortage of opportunities for off-shore adventures, culinary tours, shopping, great live music—and learning a little history while you do it.

Settled before Jamestown, Saint Augustine's architecture reflects its heritage. No visit is complete without touring the Colonial Quarter, or taking a sip from the Fountain of Youth at the lush and leafy Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth Archeological Park. But what really draws visitors to Saint Augustine is its pristine coastline. Beyond the bathing beaches, Anastasia State Park offers stretches of sand rich with wild life and tidal marshes.

Curacao

After taking a five-hour direct flight from Newark, you arrive in Curaçao, the perfect destination for a week-long break. This laid-back island offers many outdoor adventures, including snorkeling with sea turtles, hiking Mount Christoffel for incredible views, and exploring the rocky beaches at Shete Boka National Park. And at only forty miles long, staying on the island of Curaçao means it's possible to do any of these activities in the morning, and still spend your afternoon relaxing on the beach or at your hotel's infinity pool. Willemstad, Curaçao's capital, is a quick ride from the airport, and makes for a great day trip. The colorful buildings and beautiful murals set alongside the Caribbean Sea are an unforgettable sight. Add in fun shopping and tasty island cuisine to make the most of your day in the city.

Hawaii

Bookend those winter weekends around that one vacation week to get at least ten days in the sun. You'll need to relax after that half-day flight—or two flights—to get from New Jersey to Hawaii. But once you step onto those

beaches—from black sand on the Big Island to white sand on Oahu, memories of that long flight will melt away. Jeep or ATV tours let you see parts of the islands you might not get to on your own. Tropical rain forests and gardens, lava fields, active volcanos, coffee farms, and waterfalls are just some of the glorious sights found on the Hawaiian Islands. And, of course, you will need to cross one more item off that bucket list and rent a car to drive the 52-mile Road to Hana along the cliffs and through the Maui rain forests! You'll also need plenty of downtime to enjoy your accommodations. Whether you opt for Disney properties, luxury hotels, or local guest houses, take time to soak in and appreciate the Hawaiian culture. And don't forget, with ten days or more you can island hop. Going by air is usually your best bet, but some of the islands have ferry service. And for cruise lovers, an inter-island cruise is an option.

Thailand

If you're lucky enough to take more than two weeks off at a time—you'll spend the better part of a day in the air each way—one of the best places to shed your winter skin is Thailand. With



Hawaii. HanaCoastalViews.com



Hawaii.RoadtoHana.com



Chao Phraya River, Thailand. Google.com



Bangkok, Thailand. Google.com



Wainapanapa-hana Tour, Hawaii. Roadtohana.com

dry season running from November to March, you'll score plenty of sunshine. Thailand is a great spot for budget minded travelers as well as those looking for a splurge. And this year, you can follow in the footsteps of *White Lotus, Season 3*, and travel to Bangkok, and the islands Phuket and Koh Samui. In Bangkok, take your time discovering both the old and new districts. Cruise the Chao Phraya River that runs through the city.

Enjoy the food scene, from Michelin starred restaurants to street food. Visit the Buddhist temples and the many markets for food, clothing, crafts and, flowers.

Leaving busy Bangkok, head for Thailand's largest island, Phuket, and its sugar-sand beaches. Many tourists spend all their time here, but there are plenty of opportunities to get away from the crowds. Visit the elephant sanctuary, take a Thai cooking class, a boat to James Bond Island, the site of

The Man with a Golden Gun, or plan a snorkeling day trip to the Phi Phi Islands. And when you really want to relax, make your last stop Koh Samui, voted one of the top islands in the world in *Condé Nast Traveler's 2024 Readers' Choice Awards*. This island paradise has long stretches of sandy beaches, but for those who want a little more adventure, hikes filled with Instagram worthy spots are ready for exploration.

So, what are you waiting for? Book your winter vacation today!

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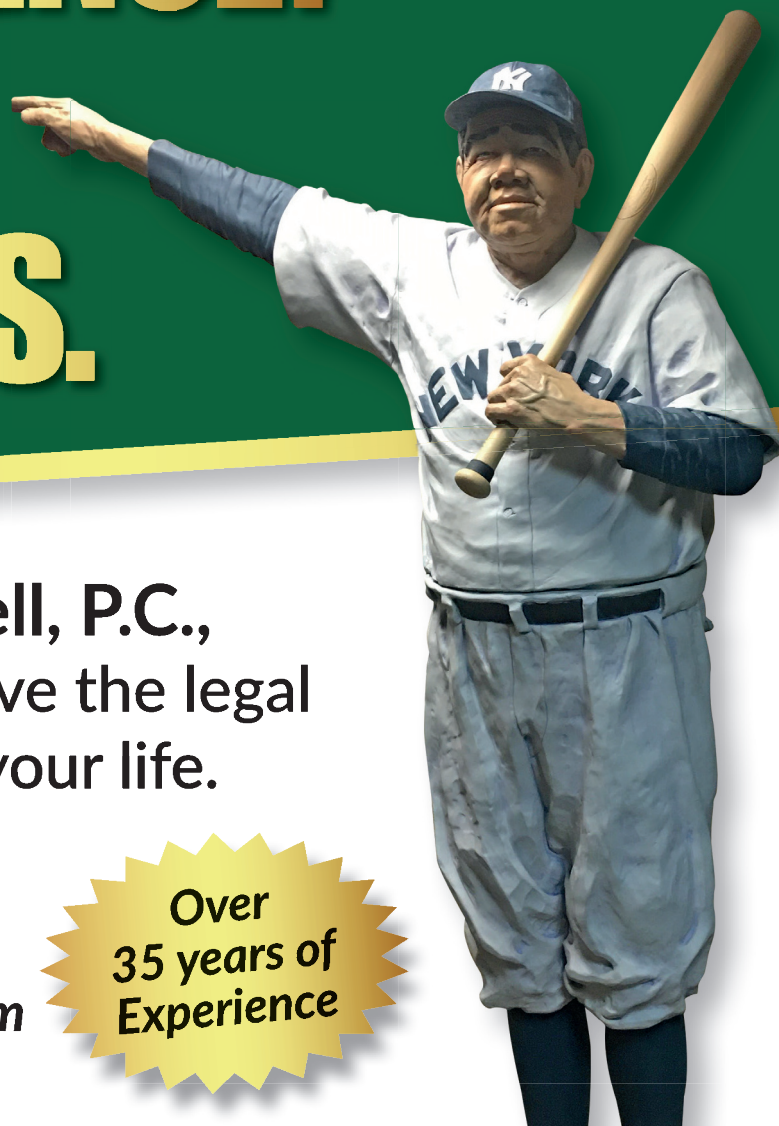
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