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Winter 2023

*Elegant
Lifestyles
Magazine*



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

It's that time of year again, the season of back-to-back holidays! From Hanukkah, to Christmas, to Kwanzaa, to New Year's Eve, December brings so much to celebrate!

The hustle and bustle of the holidays, though energizing to some, can be exhausting to others, but don't let the doldrums get you down. This issue of *Elegant Lifestyles* is dedicated to helping you manage the minutiae and minimize the stress.

Whether it's taking the guess work out of wine selection, whipping up some quick hors d'oeuvres, easy ambience for entertaining, purchasing presents for your favorite people, attending neighborhood happenings, or giving back to local charities, our featured articles are filled with ideas to make the most of the holidays.

No matter your plans, we wish you a wonderful season filled with family and friends; and festivities that are merry and bright.

Happy holidays and see you in the New Year!

Kara Sibilias, *Editor*

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For many New Jerseyans, remembering those who are less fortunate and giving back to the community is an important part of the holiday season. Whether donating goods, services, or cash, there are many charitable organizations throughout New Jersey that are both highly rated and highly effective, and look to their communities for both funding and volunteerism. *Following are four worthy organizations to consider this year:*

nourish.NJ
nourishnj.org
info@nourishnj.org

nourish.NJ, located in Morristown, creates lasting solutions for hunger, homelessness, and poverty. Offering food, housing, work readiness, medical, social, and educational services, all services are provided free of charge, no questions asked. Food services include direct assistance, benefits assistance, and direct referrals. Housing services include assisting with applications, stability plans, mediation, education, and technical assistance. Health and mental health services include navigation, referrals, support, advocacy, and intervention. Services to ensure financial stability are geared towards gaining income and managing resources to create prosperity and sustain basic needs.

Nourish offers many volunteer opportunities, both onsite and offsite. Onsite volunteers must be 14 years of age or older, and are needed Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 6:00 pm. Volunteer spots are posted and fill up one month in advance. Offsite volunteers pack meal kits and health and wellness kits or collect needed items for donation. And of course, cash donations are always appreciated and can be made directly through the website.



Child & Family Resources
cfrmorris.org
info@childandfamilynj.org

Child & Family Resources (CFR), located in Mount Arlington, creates and implements programs and services that support the development of children and families. Services include child care referral and parenting supports, child care provider trainings, and efforts to

increase the quality and availability of child care. By engaging and partnering with the community, CFR envisions enhanced childcare where community shares the responsibility with families. Programs are funded in partnership with the NJ Department of Human Services Division of Family Development.

Volunteers with particular skills, or who can offer particular services, such as photography, printing, writing, professionals development training, or catering are encouraged to contact CFR. Programming space, including available conference rooms and lecture halls, are also needed. Hosting "Diaper Drives" is a continuous need.

Dream to Succeed
dreamtosucceedfounda-
tion.org
info@dreamtosucceed.us

Give Thanks, Give Back

Dream to Succeed, located in Morris Plains, develops and empowers under-represented Latin American professionals in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and Business, offering opportunities for reskilling and upskilling to increase equal job opportunities and positively impact the global economy. Volunteers help administrate programs, while mentors help members develop effective career plans. Donations provide scholarship funds, professional development opportunities (such as training courses and certifications in new and emerging technologies) and webinars.

**Woodlands
Wildlife Refuge**
Woodlandswildlife.org
wildliferehab@yahoo.com

Woodlands Wildlife Refuge, located in Alexandria Township, New Jersey, cares

for nearly 2,000 orphaned and injured wildlife annually, and then returns the wildlife to their natural habitats. Woodlands cares for species, including but not limited to, raccoons, skunks, opossums, rabbits, woodchucks, foxes, squirrels, coyotes, bats, otters, porcupines, bears, venomous snakes, and even the occasional bobcat. They also offer programs about the habits and habitats of local wildlife.

Woodlands offers many volunteer opportunities for those over the age of 16, ranging from working directly with wildlife and cage maintenance, to assisting with education programs, to serving as board and committee



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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

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members. No experience is necessary as Woodlands provide all necessary training. Monetary donations are accepted directly through their website.



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Perfect Wines

For Your Holiday Table

By Christopher Cree, Master of Wine

During the holidays with so many festive dinners and celebrations, I like to step up the wine selections to reflect the season. For starters there is nothing like true French Champagne to bring a festive element to any occasion. Produced only in the cool northern region of France from which the wine takes its name, (anything else is some other form of sparkling wine), Champagne is the result of a combination of factors that make it one of the best beverages on Earth! First there is the cool, northern climate, yielding grapes (mainly Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier) that struggle to ripen and produce tart, acidic wines. Second is the winemaking process where an addition of yeasts and a little sugar (liqueur de tirage) is added and the wine goes into the bottle for a second fermentation. Capped and sealed, the CO2 created during this period can't escape and the bubbles stay in the wine, and voila—you have Champagne!

Pairing Champagne is easy—it goes with everything—almost! It's perfect with all kinds of appetizers and hors d'oeuvres, chilled shrimp, seafood, oysters, caviar, sushi, crudo, all work

with Champagne's magic. There are multiple styles as well, Brut (dry), Extra Brut or Zero Dosage cuvees are very dry, there are Vintage Champagnes, Blanc des Blancs (100% Chardonnay) crisp and focused, Rosé Champagne, fuller with deeper fruit tones, and Blanc de Noir (all red grapes). Fuller styles can even work throughout a multi-course pairing dinner. However it is served, my only rule is to have plenty on hand this time of year!

I also love crisp, mineral whites from cool climates like Chablis, Sancerre, Muscadet, and Pouilly Fumé, as they are perfect with light seafood, oysters, sushi, and more. For richer fish like scallops or lobster, I am a big white Burgundy fan. Wines from the famed villages of Chassagne Montrachet, Meursault, and Puligny Montrachet are some of my favorites, or you can choose a more affordable Bourgogne Blanc from a top grower, or Chardonnays from the cool Sonoma Coast.

Pinot Noir picks up where white Burgundy and Chardonnay leave off—serve with lighter meats like a roasted loin of pork, veal, duck breast or game birds that are in season, and of course

a traditional turkey dinner! Oregon's Willamette Valley, California's Sonoma Coast or Santa Barbara/ Sta. Rita Hills, or France's Burgundy region are great sources for world class Pinot Noir.

For lovers of fuller bodied wines—perhaps with a classic roast beef or beef Wellington—my go-to regions are Bordeaux, both left Bank wines from Saint Julien, Pauillac, and Margaux, and right banker examples from Saint Emilion or Pomerol. Napa Cabernet fits the bill here, as do wines from both the southern Rhone regions of Châteauneuf du Pape or the northern Rhone regions of Hermitage or Cote Rotie.

For after dinner you really can't do better than a glass of Port with chocolate desserts. Vintage Port, often regarded as the most prestigious style, is produced, or “declared” only several times a decade and only in the best years. It spends about 18-24 months in cask, and is then bottled where it does the majority of its aging. It is sweet when young, and can be drunk in its youth, but a great Vintage Port should ideally be aged in a cool, dark cellar for a decade or more before it reaches its peak. During that time the wine

Wine Pairings

mellows and softens and becomes more complex, losing its black purple youthful color and moving more towards ruby, finally becomes “brick-ish” after many years. It also throws a deposit as the color and tannins precipitate out over the years, and Vintage Port should always be decanted before serving.

Or try a Tawny Port, aged in cask so they are ready to drink on release. They are often bottled by age, 10-year, 20-year, 30-year and all the way up to 50-year Tawny, 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, making them a little easier to enjoy.

And then there are dozens of sweet white wines, great for crème brûlée, panna cotta, fresh fruit, and lighter desserts. Sauternes from Bordeaux, German Beerenauslese or an Eiswein from Germany or Canada, or a Vin Santo from

Tuscany are all favorites. With the abundance of sweet treats and desserts during the holidays, it pays to keep a few after dinner options around—there’s no better way to cap off a great meal! Mix up a case or two of these tried-and-true classics and you will have everything you need to create great holiday memories. Cheers!

Master of Wine Christopher Cree is the founder and managing partner of the Cree Wine Company, a wine bar, wine school, event space and online wine seller located in the historic Perryville Inn in Hampton, NJ. In 1996, he became only the thirteenth American to have passed the Master of Wine Examination since it was first given in London in 1953. Today, there are 414 active Masters of Wine worldwide, with only 56 working in the United States.



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The Most Festive Time of Year is Here!

With frost in the air and storefronts dazzled with seasonal décor, you can be sure everyone is ready to share some holiday cheer. But few things are as anticipated as a New Year's Eve wish. If you're looking to celebrate ... First Night Morris County 2024 (December 31, 2023 to January 1, 2024) is one of the greatest New Year's Eve celebrations in Morristown! Providing a magnificent family-friendly celebration, this year's occasion features 70 Performances at 20 Venues (18 In-Person, 1 Streaming, and 1 On-Demand), and 50+ On-Demand Films. Events include dance, theater, music, visual arts, children's programs, film festival and much more. Craig Schlosser, President Emeritus & Advisory Board Chair of First Night Morris County states, "We are excited to bring the 32nd Annual First Night Morris County to life on New Year's Eve in Downtown Morristown. This year's program offers something for everyone and features over 30 different acts, 70 performances at 20 venues, plus a stream and on-demand library too."

Admission includes an all-access pass to all live performances, film festival, on-demand content, live stream, shuttles, and even complimentary parking at Morristown Parking Authority garages. This year's program is full of the diverse and top-notch talent that audiences have come to expect from First Night Morris County: Glenn Alexander & Shadowland which includes members of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, Dinoman Dinosaurs, comedians Daniel Tirado and Joe Matarese, the powerhouse blues vocalist and musician Eliza Neals, Harmonium Choral Society, hypnotist Stephen Christopher "Mr. Hypno", Square Dancing With Caller Mary Moody, Latin-Caribbean-African influenced music with Emedin Rivera, Baroque Orchestra of NJ, one of the most extraordinary guitarists Frank Vignola, Ty Stephens & (the) SoulJazz and Morristown's own Rio Clemente - The Bishop of Jazz and much, much more!

Schlosser continues, "Each year our amazing Sponsors, Partners and Volunteers make First Night Morris County a reality. We are thank-

ful for their continued support and excited to share this year's First Night Morris County with you and your family."

Noelle Gemma, Technical & FNM365 Lead, adds "First Night Morris acts as a platform to highlight the local assets that Morris County has to offer including arts, culture, film, and dining! We are excited to continue this annual celebration that all generations can enjoy together."

Samantha Rutledge, Event Manager, comments "An event that brings joy and happiness to families near and far, First Night Morris County is filled with so many highly renowned performers and artists. We are thrilled again to ring in the New Year with two firework displays, one at 9:15 PM and one at midnight, including a countdown."

For more information, the latest program updates, or to purchase tickets, please visit the First Night Morris County website at firstnightmorris.org.

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Holiday Entertaining Easy Ambience

By Patricia Lombardo

Are you the host who is short on time this holiday season? Need a festive tablescape in a pinch? No need to panic. Chances are everything you need is either already in your home, just outside your front door or locally sold! Creating a beautiful holiday tablescape is entirely possible with a little creativity and some resourcefulness. Here are some quick and easy ideas to help you decorate your dinner table...

Start by covering your table with a festive tablecloth or runner. If you don't have one, use a large piece of fabric in a vibrant color or pattern. Or if you have some leftover holiday wrapping paper from last year, roll it out down the center of the table for an impromptu table runner. Next, place candles in the center of the table for an instant touch of elegance. You can use real candles or LED ones for safety. Arrange them in candle holders or on a tray for a polished look. If you have extra ornaments, scatter them around the table as decorations. They can add a pop of color and festive charm.

If you have any holiday-themed dishes,



ribbon or piece of twine around the jar for a simple and rustic centerpiece. Fruit decor is much easier than you think: arrange a bowl of red and green apples, pomegranates, or oranges in the center of the table. It adds color

and can be a healthy dessert option, if needed. If you have any greenery or branches (real or artificial) on hand, place them down the center of the table as a natural and beautiful centerpiece, and you can tuck in some small Christmas ornaments or fairy lights.

Incorporate burlap or plaid fabric as table accents, such as placemats or tablecloth overlays, to create a rustic and cozy look and put candy canes at each place setting or use them as napkin rings for a sweet and whimsical touch.

If you're looking for some extra pizzazz, now is your time to decorate with glittery items and use plenty of metallics like gold and silver. Sprinkle some glitter or use shimmering placemats to add a touch of sparkle to your dinner table. Collect pinecones and brush the tips with glue. Sprinkle glitter on them

use them to set the table. Fun, seasonal glasses, mugs or plates can instantly add a festive touch. If none are available to you, by all means, use your everyday dishes. Just add a touch of your holiday by folding cloth napkins in a festive way, or by placing a sprig of holly on each plate.

Do it yourself (DIY) place cards are a fantastic way to create a unique touch to your table. Simply use blank note cards or paper and decoratively write the names of your guests and add a small seasonal sticker or drawing for decoration. And if you have string lights, drape them around the table or place them in a glass vase for a warm and cozy atmosphere.

For centerpieces, filling mason jars with water and adding a few sprigs of evergreen or holly is a lovely idea. Tie a

for a beautiful natural yet sparkly decoration.

Again, the more lights you have, the better. Dip the bottoms of candles in glue and then roll them in glitter. They'll create a gorgeous glimmer when lit. Add edible glitter or dust (yep, that's a thing!) to your holiday desserts like cupcakes, cookies, or even hot chocolate for an extra bright and festive touch. Strings and fairy lights in abundance is only the beginning of a party for your eyes. Add your favorite carols or holiday music in the background and light some scented candles with holiday fragrances like cinnamon, pine, or gingerbread. With a chilled bottle of champagne or sparkling cider on hand? Your beautiful evening is about to begin!

Remember, the key to a beautiful tablescape and creating holiday ambiance is not how much you spend, but how well you can incorporate the festive spirit into your table décor and to make it a fun and memorable experience for everyone involved. Use what you have available and get creative to make your holiday table special, even in a pinch.



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Holiday Gift Guide

By Kara Sibia

Tis the season for twinkle lights, tinsel, and tackling the gift list. Whether you have a large network of family and friends to treat, or a select few that are notoriously hard to buy for, gift shopping can be daunting. However, procuring unique presents for everyone on your list doesn't mean you have to drive yourself to exhaustion. No matter if you are a planner or last-minute gift-giver, below is a succinct selection to shop, so you can check the gifting off of your list, and get back to enjoying those twinkle lights.

Gifts to Keep Cozy

For the friend or family member that is always cold, gifts that warm the hands, head, or pretty much the whole body, are a must.

Outside:

Cold-weather repelling accessories including Polar Fleece hats, gloves,



Luxury candles and gift sets from Voluspa®, found at The Pretty Pink Rooster



and mittens; insulated and wind-resistant outerwear; and comfy and waterproof footwear can be found locally at REI in East Hanover or Pelican Shops in Morris Plains and Whitehouse Station.

Inside:

Splurge on an infrared sauna blanket from HigherDOSE. Products with infrared heat have a host of wellness benefits ranging from deep relaxation, improved circulation, and faster post-workout muscle recovery. According to higherdose.com, their #1 sauna blanket offers far infrared rays which helps to promote detoxification and glowing skin.

The Pretty Pink Rooster in Bernardsville carries a large selection of snuggly and chic loungewear from brands like PJ Salvage, Barefoot Dreams, and Bed Head Pajamas. The boutique also offers luxury candles and gift sets from Voluspa® to add cozy ambience to any room in your home.

Cont. on page 18

Great Brook Gallery

17 Village Road, New Vernon

www.greatbrookgallery.com



Central Park Aglo

Enjoy ongoing show



Cont. from page 17

For high-tech tea or coffee, try the Ember Mug. Available locally at Williams-Sonoma or online at ember.com, the mug allows you to set an exact drinking temperature, keeping your favorite beverage at that “just right” warmth.



Ember Mug
ember.com

purchased to use towards art workshops, like their upcoming Plein Air ‘Paint the Town!’” and/or the purchase of artwork.

Gifts For the Experience

Give the clutter-averse people in your life gifts to experience, rather than trinkets to sit on a shelf. Foodie friends can enjoy cooking classes at Natirar in Peapack-Gladstone, Classic Thyme in Westfield, or Healthy Italia in Madison.

For the puzzle-solvers, area escape rooms can be a good option. All In Adventures in Rockaway offers eight different types of escape rooms AND a ‘Game Show Room,’ ensuring fun for the whole family. Trap Door in Morristown offers immersive experiences for adults and kids alike. Amazing Escape Room (multiple sites) allows you to purchase gift cards by location.

Thrill-seekers may delight in axe throwing! Both Stumpy’s Hatchet House and Bury the Hatchet offer gift cards for several locations throughout New Jersey.

Art lovers will appreciate one-of-a-kind experiences from Great Brook Gallery in New Vernon. Gift cards can be



Hand painted pillows from Tine Graham found at Great Brook Gallery

Gifts for the Young and Young at Heart

Whether you’re buying for a 6-year-old, or 60-year-old, LEGO is sure to have something for everyone on your list. Derived from the two Danish words “leg godt” which translates to “play well,” LEGO designs items for all ages. Little ones will rejoice at receiving one of the ‘it’ gifts this season from popular lines such as Harry Potter™, Disney™, and Star Wars™; while adults can enjoy a bit of nostalgia with sets from the LEGO “Adults Welcome” theme. Broken

down into different collections like “Botanical” or groups like “Travel & History;” building sets offer models of the Eiffel Tower, the Titanic, and even a wildflower bouquet. LEGO products can be found locally at Jabberwocky in Chatham and Tons of Toys in Madison Bernardsville, or online at lego.com.



Wildflower Bouquet
lego.com

Indulge in “artwork for all” at Great Brook Gallery. Owner, Justine Kovacs, is excited for their new show “Near and Beyond,” which highlights the work of John C. Traynor, as well as their “Tiny Treasures” exhibit, which includes hand painted pillows from Tine Graham. Both events will run concurrently this month. Kovacs notes,



“We will have a very wide selection of items as well as paintings that will make great gifts. There is bound to be something for everyone - young, young at heart, and serious collectors.” When it comes to gifting art, Great Brook Gallery can manage the logistics, from wrapping smaller items, to delivery and installation of larger pieces at no charge.

Gifts For the Last-Minute Shopper

Just because you're shopping last-minute doesn't mean your gift isn't thoughtful. Gift cards from online retailer Framebridge lets your recipient custom frame photos or artwork of their choosing, while a ClassPass online membership offers thousands of fitness classes in your area to choose from (and you are not limited to just one type of exercise studio).

If you're not sure what to give and are up against a holiday deadline, The Pretty Pink Rooster can help. “[Our] team works great in a pinch [and] will help make your selection easy, comfortable, and fast!” says founder, Alexandra Daras. With a wide selection of jewelry and clothing items at affordable prices, you'll check the gifts off your list in no time. And if you need a little guidance, Daras notes, “The Pretty Pink Rooster Team has an eye for gifts that are perfect for Whatever Your Holiday Brings!”

Gifts that Keep on Giving

Who says the gifting has to end on New Year's Eve? Monthly subscription gift boxes can keep the joy going all year long.

Cont. on page 20

The Pretty Pink Rooster
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Cont. from page 19

For the book lover in your life, a subscription to Book of the Month lets readers choose what (and how many) books to receive a month, plus added bonuses like early releases and curated titles. For something a little more niche, Food52 offers a Fuego Box Small-Batch Hot Sauce subscription as well as a Raaka Organic Chocolate subscription.

And don't forget the pets! BarkBox has e-cards or monthly gift subscriptions for your precious pup, while KitNipBox offers subscriptions for your favorite feline ranging from 1-12 months.



Gifting Fatigue



It happens to the best of us: your season starts out well-intentioned, creating a curated gift list for each loved one, and then all of a sudden, you're burnt out and frazzled and the presents need to be wrapped and ready by TOMORROW! You need not fret. Look to online platforms such as taskrabbit.com, thumbtack.com, or airtasker.com to find professional gift wrappers, personal shoppers, and even toy assembly services near you; some with same-day availability.



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Mendham Twp. resident opens decor shop in Harding

HARDING TWP. - Photo stylist Susan Brierly Bush of Mendham Township has opened a home décor shop along the Country Mile on Mount Kemble Avenue.

The former Bayberry Antiques is now the Big Green Barn, which features a trove of vintage and antique décor, all curated by Bush, who is the home and garden editor of New Jersey Monthly magazine.

“I’ve been flirting with the idea of opening my own shop for several years,” Bush says. “After writing and styling for the magazine for more than a decade, working for Sotheby’s fine art auction house and studying at the New York School of Interior Design, I took the plunge to open a local retail location with encouragement from my husband Robert, who is originally from Bernardsville.”

Harding Township’s shopping district is experiencing a revitalization as several new businesses are opening their doors along the stretch of Mount Kemble Avenue/Route 202, known for decades as the “Old Country Mile” shopping district.

“My new store is located at 912 Mount Kemble Ave., inside the JS Audio Video building, directly across the street from the brand new Cafe Sapori restaurant,” Bush said. “It’s a perfect location, convenient to shoppers from New Vernon, Morristown, Mendham, Chatham, Basking Ridge and Bernardsville.”

Bush added that “The Harding shop is stocked with vintage lamps, mirrors, artwork, ceramics and furniture.”

The Big Green Barn’s shoppers include interior designers, magazine style editors, home décor enthusiasts and film studio set designers.

“The shop has been well received because people appreciate a personal shopping experience and also enjoy sustainable shopping that helps keep vintage decor out of landfills,” she said.

The Big Green Barn, a part-time business for Bush, is open several days a week. Bush also hosts occasional seasonal sales out of her Morris County barn.

Sales are announced on Instagram @susanbrierlybush or call 973-271-9127 for more information.



Mendham Township’s Susan Brierly Bush has opened the “Big Green Barn” on Mount Kemble Avenue in Harding Township.



Make the Holidays Safe for Your Pet... *Ideas for a Festive and Stress-Free Space*

The holiday season is all about family, including furry family members. Pets need some special attention over the holidays to ensure their health and safety. Help your pets enjoy this special time of year by taking a few simple precautions:

• **Holiday Décor:** When decorating, prevent accidents and illness by placing potentially harmful objects out of reach. Decorations made of glass and ceramic should be placed where they can't be knocked over, leaving shards and breaks that could cut delicate paws. Trees should be securely anchored, with regular sweeps for pine needles. Prevent your pet from drinking stagnant water left at the base of the tree, as it could contain harmful bacteria. Dr. Lisa Fiorenza of Longevity Veterinary Care,

located in Whippany, NJ notes that some holiday decorations can be toxic when chewed or swallowed. "Tinsel is a big problem for cats – they tend to like strings and may swallow them, often requiring surgery to fix any issues. Many plants can also be toxic, especially to cats. One of the most dangerous are lilies (*Lilium* species), but many others like poinsettias, can cause stomach upset."

• **Holiday Lights:** Additional lights mean additional extension cords, another chewing hazard for some pets.

To keep pets safe from electrical shock, secure or cover all cords, purchase pet-proof extension cords, or apply anti-chew sprays.

• **When Guests Arrive:** Make sure your pets can't bolt through an open door, but also make sure they are wearing an ID tag with contact information. Keep guests' purses out of the reach of curious furry friends and don't let your guests feed them from the table. "Holiday foods can be too rich, or even toxic, for family pets," notes Dr. Fiorenza.

• **Santa Dogs and Elfish Cats:** Pets may look adorable in costumes, but dressing them up isn't necessarily a good idea. If you do put your pet in a costume, don't tie anything around

their neck that could choke or strangle them, and make sure your pet can move around freely and with ease.

• **For Anxious Pets:** If anxiety is an issue, Dr. Fiorenza recommends that you talk to your vet about herbs and nutraceuticals and/or medications, if needed. This can help reduce the stress and anxiety some pets feel with the hustle and bustle of the holidays.

• **A Gift of a New Puppy or Kitten:** “You can gift a pet to your children if you're happy to take on the responsibility of their care yourself (both time and financial costs!), but I don't recommend gifting a live animal to someone outside of your household,” said Dr. Fiorenza. “Pets can be burdensome, and their wellbeing



Photos courtesy of Longevity Veterinary Center

shouldn't be left to chance. Be careful with where you're getting your pet as well. Pet stores may source their pets from puppy mills, keeping the parents and babies in terrible conditions. You should also carefully vet websites to ensure your pet comes from healthy parents with good genetics, and that the parents and babies are well-cared for and well-socialized.”

• **Pet Gifts:** A new bed, a new toy, and special treats are all good holiday gifts, but just like people, pets enjoy a great experience and special attention. Take your dog on a long hike on a new trail with lots of new smells. Relax with your kitty, listening to good music and giving lots patting, petting, and belly rubs.

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Cook. Bake. Celebrate!

Quick Hors D'oeuvres for the Holidays

By Patricia Lombardo



Looking to host some holiday fun? We've got you covered with quick and delicious hors d'oeuvres to impress your guests.

If you're thinking of serving cold/room temperature fare, skewers are always great and the combinations are endless. Caprese skewers with cherry tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, basil leaves, and a drizzle of balsamic are simple and delicious. Or meat and cheese skewers are great by just threading salami, prosciutto, and cubes of cheese together with some olives and cherry tomatoes.

A cheese and fruit plate is welcome at any gathering as well as the classic chips and dip - think spinach and artichoke, Greek yogurt (recipe below), or whipped ricotta with lemon. A crudité platter is easy: just arrange a variety of colorful, raw vegetables with hummus for dipping.

A chilled shrimp cocktail is a hit served with a classic cocktail sauce. Deviled eggs are a treat that seem to disappear quickly. Or cucumber rounds topped with cream cheese, smoked salmon, and a dill garnish. Quick and gorgeous.

Firing up the oven for some warm, festive nibbles? Stuffed mushrooms are a favorite nosh (recipe below). Stuffed dates are divine with goat cheese and wrapped in bacon. Or top a wheel of Brie cheese with honey and dried fruit, then bake until gooey. Appetizer-sized, delectable meatballs (recipe below) are a staple to any soiree. And don't forget mini quiches: simply put together with pre-made pastry shells and bake with your choice of fillings.

Greek Yogurt Dip

(By Kat Boytsova for Delish.com)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole milk Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder



- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Directions:

Mix ingredients in a medium bowl and season with salt and pepper. Chill until ready to serve with crackers and crudité.

Photo credit: Parker Feierbach

Stuffed Mushrooms

(By Karen Rankin for EatingWell.com)

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 1 ½ pounds fresh button mushrooms, cleaned
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons panko – divided
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (about ¼ cup), divided

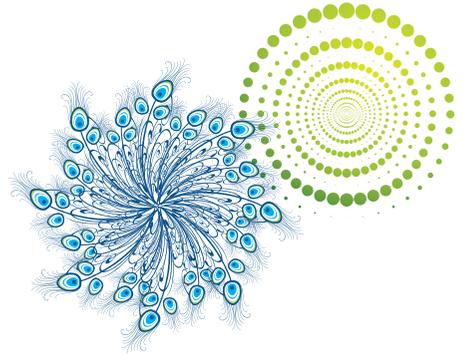
Directions:

Lightly coat a large, rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Remove stems from mushrooms, reserve. Arrange mushroom caps, stemmed sides up, on a prepared



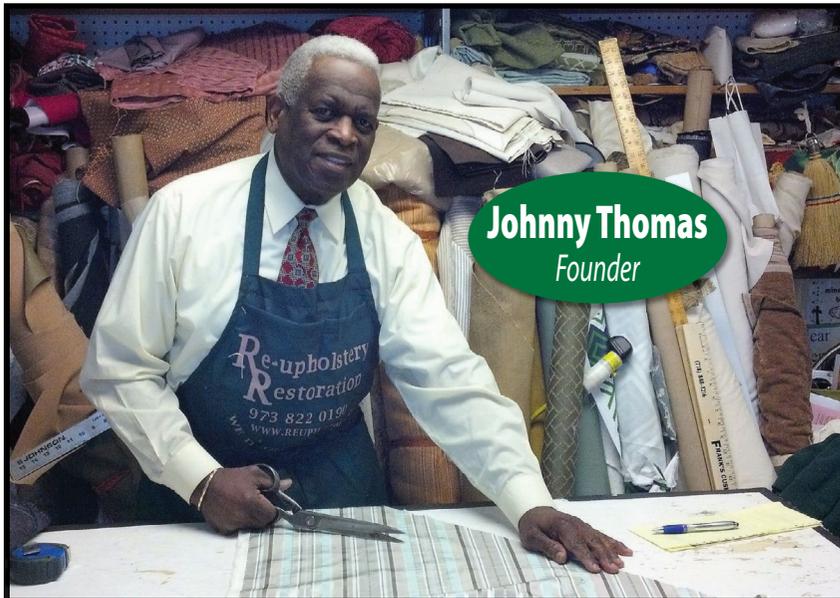
Photo credit: EatingWell

baking sheet. Chop stems. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add chopped mushroom stems, garlic, salt and pepper; cook, stirring often, until



mushrooms soften and turn golden brown, about 6 minutes. Add ¼ cup of the panko; stirring often, about 1 minute. Add cream cheese, parsley, thyme and 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan; remove from heat and stir until combined. Spoon 1 teaspoon mushroom mixture into each mushroom cap. Stir together remaining 3 tablespoons panko and 2 tablespoons Parmesan in a small bowl. Gently dip the stuffed tip of each mushroom cap in panko-Parmesan mixture to lightly coat; return to the baking sheet. Lightly coat tops of stuffed mushrooms with cooking spray. Bake in the oven at 400°F for 20 to 22 minutes.

Cont. on page 26



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Cont. from page 25

Holiday Appetizer Meatballs

By TasteofHome.com



Photo credit: Taste of Home

Ingredients:

- 1 egg - lightly beaten
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 pound ground beef

Sauce:

- ½ cup ketchup,
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Directions:

In a bowl, combine the first 6 ingredients. Crumble beef over mixture and mix well. Shape into 1” balls. In a skillet over medium heat, brown meatballs; drain. Place in a 2-1/2-qt. baking dish. Combine the sauce ingredients. Pour over meatballs. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 50-60 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through.

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Holiday Happenings

By Naomi Gruer

Greet this holiday season by taking time to enjoy the festive mood that comes from joining friends and neighbors at town events. Whether singing along with carolers, lighting a menorah, watching a Christmas parade, shopping at a winter market, attending a show, welcoming Santa to town, or helping those in need, celebrating together is a path to peace on earth.



Santa is Coming to Town

Basking Ridge

When: Saturday, December 2, 5:45 - 6:45 pm
Where: Ridge Family Dentistry, 44A S. Finley Ave.
Details: brbanj.org

Chatham

When: Saturday, December 2, 5 pm
Where: Reasoner Park, Fairmount Avenue & Railroad Plaza (off Main Street)
Details: chathamborough.org

Clinton

When: Sunday, Dec. 17, 1 - 3 pm
Where: The Guild of Clinton, 56 Main Street
Details: visitclintonnj.com

Madison

When: Through December 23
Where: Madison Train Station (Kings Road)
Details: rosenet.org

Festival of Lights Menorah Lighting

Chatham

When: Sunday, December 3, 7 pm
Where: Reasoner Park, Fairmount Avenue & Railroad Plaza (off Main Street)
Details: chathamborough.org

Madison

When: Sunday, December 10, 5 pm
Where: Madison Train Station (Kings Road)
Details: chabadcares.com

Get in the Holiday Spirit

Bernardsville

BHS Madrigals Holiday Music Performance - Listen to the Bernardsville High School top choir sing traditional holiday songs. No registration required.

When: Wednesday, Dec 13, 3:30 pm
Where: Bernardsville Public Library, 1 Anderson Hill Road
Details: bernardsvillelibrary.org

Clinton

Christmas Parade - Join spectators for the 37th Annual Guild of Clinton Christmas Parade.

When: Friday, Dec 1, 7 - 9 pm
Where: Downtown Clinton
Details: theclintonchristmasparade.com

Hackettstown

The Nutcracker - Attend this classic show, performed by the New Jersey Civic Youth Ballet featuring young dancers from NJCYB and professional dancers from around the world.

When: Friday, December 15 to Sunday, December 17, show times vary
Where: The Lackland Performing Arts Center, Sitnik Theatre, 715 Grand Ave.
Details/Tickets: centenarystageco.org

Madison

"The Snow Queen" - Watch a staged reading of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale.

When: Saturday, December 16, 11 am
Where: The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, 36 Madison Ave.
Details/Tickets: shakespearenj.org

Morristown

Christmas Festival at the Morristown Green - Visit Santa's house, listen to holiday music, watch ice sculpture demonstrations, and more at the family friendly festival presented by the Morristown Partnership. \$15 photos with Santa, other activities free.

When: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays throughout month of December, ending Sunday, December 17
Where: Downtown Morristown
Details: morristown-nj.org

Merry Markets

Basking Ridge

10th Annual Winter Market & Christmas Tree Lighting - Discover holiday wares and gifts from local vendors and artisans as well as Christmas trees and wreaths.

When: Saturday, December 2, 12 - 7 pm
Where: Bishop Janes United Methodist Church, 22 S. Finley Ave.
Details: brbanj.org

Flemington

Christmas Craft Fair - Shop for handmade jewelry, woodcrafts, ceramics, ornaments, candles, home décor, pet items, and more. Free admission and food available.

When: Saturday, December 2, 10 am - 3 pm
Where: Indoors at St. Magdalen de Pazzi Church, 105 Mine Street
Details: stmagdalen.org

Trim the Tree

Madison

The Giving Tree Annual Holiday Bazaar/Toy Drive - Help those in need by purchasing ornaments from "The Giving Tree" and donating toys at Bethel Madison AME's annual holiday bazaar. Soul food dinners available for purchase. Free event, door prices, giveaways, and music.

When: Sunday, December 3, 1 - 6 pm
Where: Madison Community House, 25 Cook Ave.
Details: For info contact Allen at (609) 963-5844

Santa's Little Helpers

Volunteer by providing pet therapy, gardening at a public park, bagging at a food pantry, playing BINGO with seniors, and more.
Details: jerseycares.org

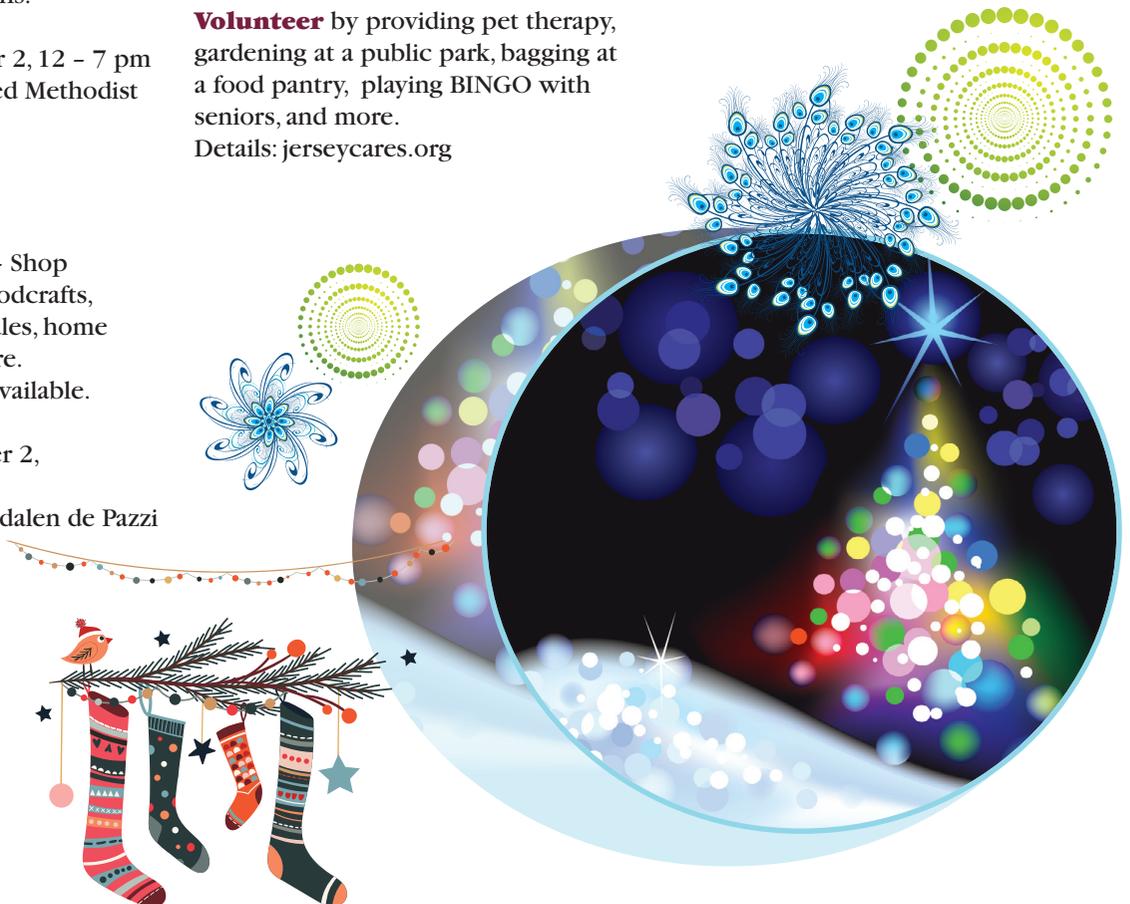
Ring in the New Year

Morristown

First Night Morris County - Celebrate the new year by attending a variety of films, shows, children's programs, fireworks and more at one of New Jersey's largest First Nights. Complimentary parking, free shuttles, additional on-demand access through 4 pm on January 1st. Tickets (Buttons) Start at \$30.

When: Sunday, December 31, starting at 4:45 pm
Where: Downtown Morristown,
Details/Tickets: firstnightmorris.org

*Some events are weather permitting. Please check websites for updates on (including date/time/schedule changes.)

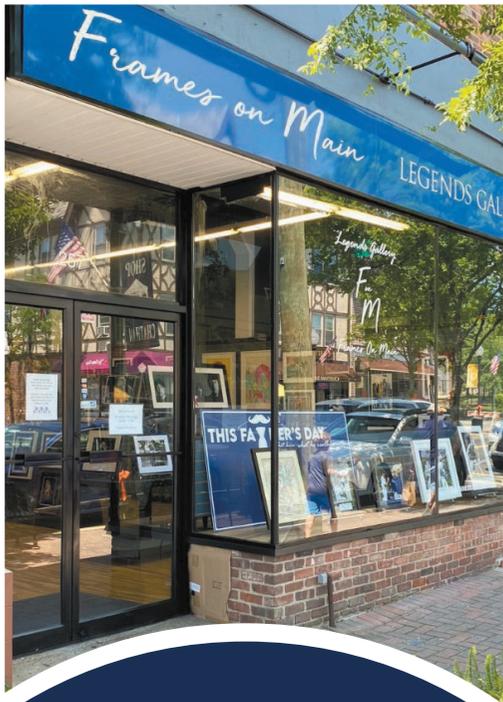


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