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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to winter 2026. The snowy season, to me, has always been a polarizing one. Whether you love it or hate it, winter won't last forever, so enjoy the things you can—like skiing or cozying up to the fire, glass of wine in hand; while making the things you don't—ahem, shoveling—a little more tolerable (with warm winter sweaters, perhaps?).

This issue of *Elegant Lifestyles* encourages you to get the best out of the lingering season. So, take things one day at a time because before you know it, the weather will shift once more. In the words of writer Hal Borland, “No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.”

First, February 28th is National Pancake Day—and who doesn't love pancakes? Our guide to local breakfast spots will have you itching to pile up a short stack.

This month's fashion feature offer tips on how to create a capsule wardrobe, while our spotlight on décor focuses on styling suggestions for a chic home office.

When winter wanderlust sets in, look to “Winter Weekends Near and (Not So) Far” for destinations to either escape the cold or relish in it. Our winter wellness and beauty write-ups tackle all things health and hydration—for hair, skin, and beyond.

Last but not least, our “Winter Wines” article is all about big, bold pours—perfect for the cozy season.

Stay warm and see you in the spring!

Kara Sibilía, *Editor*

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How to Create a Capsule Wardrobe

By Isabella Bickenbach

In an era dominated by fast fashion and impulse buying, sustainable clothing practices are often overlooked. One way you can contribute to a more sustainable future is by creating a capsule wardrobe. A capsule wardrobe encourages smart and intentional consumerism, raising awareness on the impact our clothing has on the environment. But first, what exactly is a capsule wardrobe?

What is a capsule wardrobe?

A capsule wardrobe is a minimalist collection of clothes that can be arranged in different ways to cover a variety of outfits and occasions. The goal is to maximize what you have.

How to create a capsule wardrobe:

To begin, assess the clothes you have in your closet. Before you run out and purchase new capsule items, look to see if you already have any that could work. Do you have any out of season clothes? Any pieces you never wear? Properly store anything you aren't currently using. Remember, the objective is to have as few items in your wardrobe as possible.

When selecting capsule pieces, make sure that all your items can go together. For example, can those trousers go with all of your tops? If so, you're on the right track. Pro tip, select many neutrals to ensure

all your pieces can match. Lastly, focus on quality over quantity. You want to have these items for years, not for one wash.

Number of items to pick:

Below is a guide for a target number of items to include. However, this is just a suggestion. More items are welcome as long as you frequently wear them.

- Four tops
- Four bottoms
- One dress/jumpsuit
- Two jackets/blazers
- Two pairs of shoes
- Accessories



rag & bone Ankle Straight Leg Jeans

Items to include in your capsule:

Straight-Leg Jean:

There are numerous ways to style jeans, anywhere from bootcut, flared, high-waisted, low-waisted, distressed, cargo, jeggings, mom, dad, boyfriend, the list goes on. However, the straight-leg jean is a must have for your capsule. The straight-leg jean is classy and

professional, timeless and flattering. You can dress them up with a blazer and heels or dress down with sneakers and a casual shirt. rag & bone offers several stylish looks with their Miramar Shea Straight jeans or their Ankle-Length ones. Madewell's The Perfect Vintage Wide-Leg Jean or Mother's The Mid Rise Rambler are made of high quality denim that will last you years. 7 for All Mankind's Luxe Vintage Alexa, AG's Brinely, Levi's '90s, and Frame's Palazzo are also great options.

Pleated Trouser:

The pleated trouser offers a classic and elegant look. They look professional and flattering while remaining the most comfortable dress pants — the pleats create extra fabric allowing for greater movement. Similar to jeans, trousers can be dressed up or down. Surprisingly, Lululemon's Daydrift trousers are some of my favorites. The brand designs their trousers with lightweight material and removes any zippers or buttons so they are easy to slip into. Also recommended are Ralph Lauren's Wool-Blend Bacall Pant, Artizia's The Effortless Pant, and Vince's Italian Wool-Blend Pleated Wide-Leg Trouser.



Lululemon Pleated Trousers

Blazer:

Paired with a pair of jeans, trousers, or (my favorite) leather shorts — a blazer instantly elevates your look and boosts you with confidence. It reads “boss”. For a classic cut blazer, try Zara’s Fitted Button Blazer or Artizia’s Etiquette Blazer. Revolve’s Curve Jacket or Boss’s Pinstripe Blazer offer a wide lapel, boxy shoulder look. If you want something neutral and elegant, J. Crew’s École Wool Blend, Open Edit’s Hourglass Blazer, or Theory’s Etienne in Good Wool, are all must haves. For something spicy, try Anthropologie’s Derek Lam 10 Crosby Walter Linen Blazer or Avec Les Filles Leather Blazer.



Simple Tees and Tank Tops:

Tees and tanks in black, white, or solid colors provide the foundation for your capsule wardrobe. They are perfect for a capsule closet as they go with almost anything — perfect for a quick mix and match. Want to know a secret? They never go out of fashion. They act as a blank canvas that you can paint with jewelry, scarves, jackets, or a splash of color. However, when shopping for these essentials it is important to invest in high quality shirts so that you can wear them again and again while looking brand new. Uniqlo is great for these simple basics, such as their Mini T-Shirt, Cashmere Blend T-Shirt, or Ribbed High Neck T-Shirt. Artizia

Banana Republic Soft Luxe Draped Top

has many basics varying in necklines and colors, including their Contour Longsleeve, Crew Longsleeve, or Flourish Longsleeve. Also recommended are Banana Republic’s Soft Luxe Draped Top, Express’ Boat Neck Tank, or Abercrombie & Fitch’s Everyday Tee.

Plain Shoes:

Complete your fit with a simple pair of flats, heels, or fashion sneakers. Sam Edelman has an endless collection of classic flats and loafers in a variety of textures and colors. Their Michaela Mary Jane Flat and Lea Platform Loafer are good options to start. Tory Burch, Anthropologie, and Quince have stylish ballet flats. For a simple heel, check out Stuart Weitzman’s black or tan Power 85’s, Steve Madden’s Noir Black Leather heels, or Veronica Beard’s Rita Suede Pumps. If you’re on the move, Vince and Adidas offer comfortable fashion sneakers.



Sam Edelman Flats



Steve Madden Noir Heels

Simple Dress:

A simple dress offers maximum versatility with minimal effort. You can change up the look with different shoes, jackets, sweaters, and statement jewelry. For the coming cold months, you can layer with tights, sweaters, cardigans, and scarfs. Artizia offers several classic dresses, including their Revive Poplin, Satin Halter, and Moore dresses. Additionally, Nordstrom’s Ruched Funnel Dress, Tommy Bahama’s Sheath Dress, or Kate Spade’s Denim Trapunto Shirtdress can be worn timelessly.



Tote Bag Longchamp's



Moore Dress Artizia



Kate Spade's Denim Trapunto Shirtdress

It’s helpful to include one smaller purse and one larger one that you can quickly grab before heading out. For a larger purse, Longchamp’s famed tote bag offers style yet practicality. Might you also check out Coach’s Brooklyn Shoulder Bag or Tory Burch’s Ella Tote. If you’re looking for something smaller, Kate Spade’s 454 Mini Crossbody, Ralph Lauren’s Crosshatch Leather Bag, and Lululemon’s City Shoulder Bag are great finds.

Go-to Bag:

When selecting what bags to include in your capsule, choose the ones that you use the most.

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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)

Contact me for a consultation:

908-358-5452 neatbynatalienj@gmail.com

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Staple Sweater:

Sweaters are a must have for the cold months. Fill your capsule with a variety of sweaters in different colors and textures such as wool, cashmere, or cotton. For cashmere, try J.Crew's high v-neck sweater, L.L. Bean's Turtle-neck, Vineyard Vines' Heritage Cardigan, or Alex Mill's Marias sweater. For wool, check out Arizia's Knit Merino Wool Zip, The Irish Store's Aran Tunic Sweater, or Brooks Brothers' Mock Neck Sweater. Ralph Lauren's Cable-Knit Crewneck, Altar'd State's Savannah Dolman Sweater, Anthropologie's Cardigan Sweater, or Natural Life's Cable Knit Sweater will keep you warm and cozy.



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STYLING TIPS for a Chic *home* Office

By Naomi Gruer

Working remotely is here to stay, and that makes creating a home office more important than ever. Before setting up a new workspace or updating one that already exists, consider three main elements—location, furniture, and style. Figuring out where to work, furnishing it with pieces that are comfortable and functional, and determining which style imbues positive energy are the keys to getting down to business.

Location

Deciding where to WFH depends on what it's being used for. High traffic flow and interruptions may not distract from paying bills and organizing a schedule, but if you're running a business, attending virtual meetings and conferences, taking on-line classes, or pursuing creative endeavors, a location tucked away from a busy household is ideal. If you're meeting clients, pick a place that's easy to access and includes extra seating.

Lighting is crucial to working productively, and a fresh update means "layering lighting." Combine light from a window, an overhead light source, and desk lamps to reduce eye strain and vibe with the room's aesthetic,



Photo courtesy of *Architectural Digest*



HGTV.com, Genevieve Garruppo

and outfit lamps with warm-toned LED bulbs.

Though windows offer natural light and a place outside for eyes to rest, views are still possible in windowless spaces such as attics, basements, converted closets, and even large laundry rooms. Create a focal point by hanging a gallery wall of art or inspirational objects. Add interest by backing a bookshelf with wallpaper. Bring the outdoors in with a mural, or by adhering a faux window, beach, mountain, or forest scene, such as Wayfair's Coastal Beachy Peel & Stick Clear Border wallpaper.

Furniture

Appropriate furniture feels comfortable and promotes productivity. Sit pretty and comfy in a chair with lumbar support and adjustable heights. Extend move-around-the-room options with sit-to-stand desks, standing desk converters, and actual standing desks. Getting around a room matters, too. If refreshing an existing space, why not change the flow of furniture for a new perspective? Angle a desk to face the door, or re-position a desk and add a chair to establish a double-sided workspace.

Creating an elegant office is more compelling than ever given the desire for tasteful meeting back-

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Chic Home Office

Cont. from page 12

grounds. Furniture behind a desk is a place to show-not-tell. A bookshelf, mantel, or floating shelves hold books, decorative items, photos, and awards. Offices do more than support immediate work; they're the place where filing cabinets, equipment and supplies live. For a thoughtful redesign, utilize built-in's, re-fit cabinet and desk drawers to hold hanging files, and store folders in fabric desktop files.

Increase the chic by introducing a lounge area. Arrange a chair and ottoman, small couch, or reading nook. Convert a spare countertop to a coffee station and store healthy snacks in glass or ceramic jars.

Style

Designers of home offices seem to divide into two camps: minimalist or maximalist. Some suggest removing anything extraneous, while others like an office to include vision boards, stacks of books and magazines, colorful stationery, and interesting visuals. Weighing whether less is more, more is more, or a balance between the two fits the bill is a personal choice. There's no right or wrong as long as the dedicated space feels inspiring and motivating.

Opinions also differ when it comes to color. Some designers advise painting rooms in neutral palettes while others prefer bold hues. Though light colors make a small space look larger, saturated deep shades pack a punch. Either way, a modern look is achieved by painting the whole room, including ceiling, window molding and bookshelves, in one color. Textural elements like wood, metal, leather, glass and acrylic are



Photo courtesy of *Architectural Digest*



Amazon, Plantsio Planter



Amazon, Creative Pebble Desktop Speakers

tasteful enhancements no matter the color scheme.

If painting or papering a home office isn't an option, add pops of color in other ways. Change the rug, use colorful desk accessories, hang a piece of artwork, and cart a few potted plants into the area. Finish a home office with final touches that give off good energy. Selecting décor, framed photos, a mini collection, or prints which feel positive and personal is something to get worked up about.

Seven Tech Tips for a Modern Work From Home Office

Appear clear in video conferences and meetings by using a webcam.

Get a good angle when Zooming with the help of an adjustable laptop stand.

Give your hands a break by typing and clicking with an ergonomic mouse and keyboard.

Consolidate cords and charge all in one place with a dedicated docking station or USB hub.

Create ambience and hear every word with the help of small desktop speakers.

Transfer notes digitally by writing on a paper tablet.

Breathe better and improve air quality with a smart pet planter or hydroponics indoor garden.

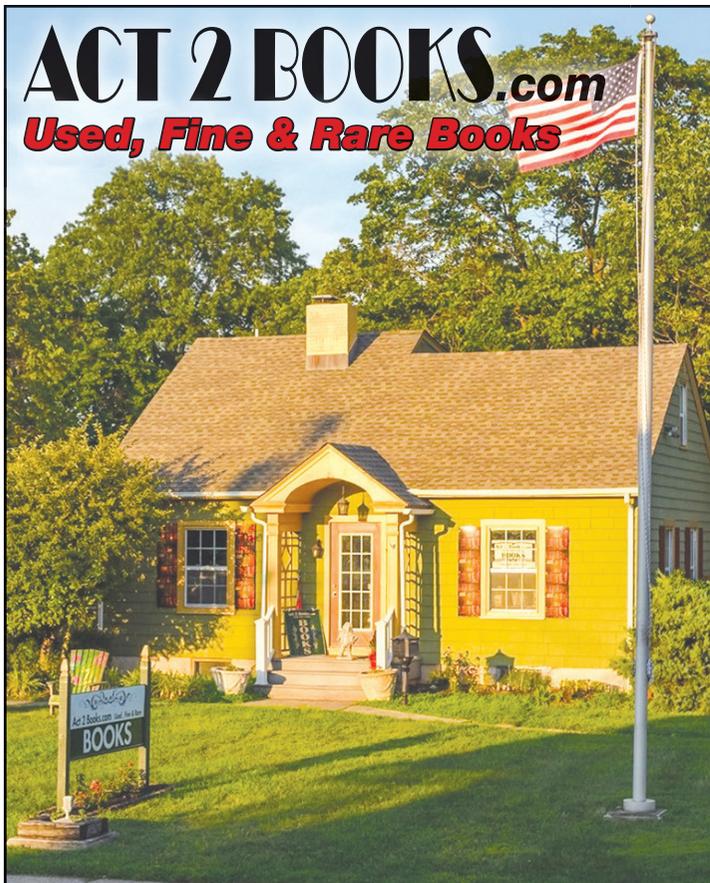
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When winter blues set in, set off for a long weekend adventure. Nothing beats time in the sun, combined with good food and great atmosphere. Whether you choose a close-by winter destination, or hop a short flight to warmer weather, slather on the sunscreen and head outdoors.

Driving Distance

In just an hour or two door-to-door, New Jerseyans have their choice of winter wonderlands. Resorts include ranges of activities: skiing, snowboarding, tubing, and tobogganing, indoor water parks, outdoor hot tubs, full-service spas, gourmet meals, and world-class entertainment.



Crystal Springs Resort

Crystal Springs

Offering two hotels, two spas, and ten dining choices, Hamburg's Crystal Springs lures outdoor enthusiasts with ice skating, snowshoeing, and their favorite Olympic sport—curling! Crystal Springs offers many other activities: indoor pools, wine tastings, rock climbing, yoga, meditation, axe throwing; workshops in painting, jewelry-making, cake decorating, and more. Kids activities include Lego challenges, clay sculpting, and scavenger hunts. Guests staying

Winter Weekends Near and (Not So) Far

By Judy Palermo

at the Grand Cascades Lodge can swim in the 10,000 square foot Biosphere pool complex, featuring lush foliage and a retractable roof that allows nearly 100% light transmission—even when closed. Kids will beg to go down the water slide one more time and name their favorite fish in the aquarium. All guests will enjoy the family friendly entertainment that ends each day.

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Great Wolf Lodge



Wynwood, Florida

geous vistas, explore the Biltmore Estate, shop the eclectic downtown, enjoy happy hour at local breweries or rooftop bars. Asheville offers lodging options ranging from lovely bed and breakfasts to upscale resorts. Once you've been to Asheville, you always want to return.

Great Wolf Lodge

Family fun is what Great Wolf Lodge in the Poconos is all about. The 120,000 square-foot waterpark is the resort's main attraction, boasting twenty aquatic activities and rides to keep every member of the family occupied and happy. From the Crooked Creek Lazy River to the Double Barrel Drop, toddlers through adults will spend a happy day in the comfortable 84-degree water. Families who want to spend just part of their days in the waterpark can add attraction packages with bowling, arcades, mini-golf, mirror maze, and more. Dining options are family friendly fare, burgers, pizza, and family style dishes. Suites can accommodate large families.

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A Short Plane Ride Away

When only warmth will shake those winter blues, great options are just a short plane ride away. Newark Airport offers the greatest number of flight options, but don't forget to check out small regional airports in Atlantic City, Trenton, and Allentown.

Miami, Florida

After three hours in the air, step off the plane and into a land of stunning beaches, vibrant culture, and culinary artistry. From the iconic art deco of South Beach to the historic hotels of Miami Beach's north end, to the pure luxury of Bal Harbor, you'll find no shortage of fun in the sun. Move off the barrier island for food tours and street festivals in Little Havana, the historical charm of Miami Springs, or vibrant street murals and top restaurants in Wynwood.



Charleston, South Carolina



Asheville, North Carolina

Charleston, South Carolina

It's just two hours and fifteen minutes by plane from Newark to Charleston—a lovely city filled with gorgeous architecture, historic landmarks, and thriving cultural, arts, and dining scenes. Whether you choose to stay in town and focus on historic grandeur, or head to the beach—either Charleston's own beaches or nearby ones, such as Kiawah Island or Seabrook Island—Charleston never disappoints.

Asheville, North Carolina

Almost fully recovered from Hurricane Helene, Asheville is open, welcoming, and just two hours away by plane. Set in the spectacular Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville has an exciting arts scene—fine arts, music, and theatre thrive there. Sample farm-to-table dining, hike gor-



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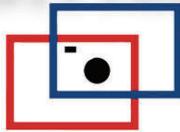


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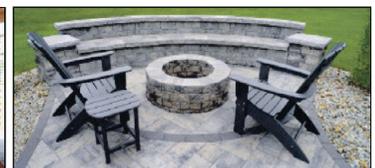
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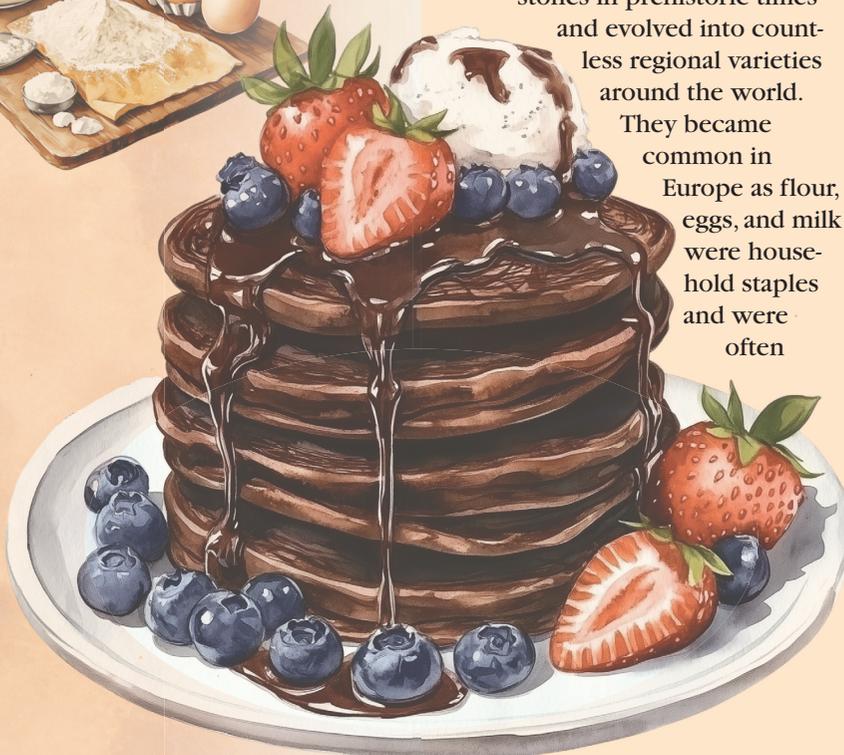
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A Guide to Local *Pancake* Spots

By Patricia Lombardo



The month of February is winter's halfway mark. A time for icicles, valentines, snowy angels, and ... pancakes! That's right, February 28th is National Pancake Day—and that is certainly a day to celebrate.

What Is a Pancake?

A pancake is a flat, round cake made from a pourable batter of flour, eggs, milk, and a leavening agent, cooked on a hot griddle or pan. Pancakes are usually thin to medium-thick, soft inside, lightly browned outside, and commonly served for breakfast or brunch, often topped with butter, syrup, fruit, or sugar. But, both sweet (add fruits, honey, chocolate, and vanilla) and savory (add cheese, vegetables, and herbs directly into the batter or as toppings) varieties exist!

Brief History of Pancakes

Pancakes are one of the oldest prepared foods in human history. Archaeological evidence suggests pancakes began as simple grain-and-water cakes cooked on hot stones in prehistoric times and evolved into countless regional varieties around the world.

They became common in Europe as flour, eggs, and milk were household staples and were often

eaten as breakfast and spread widely through England and colonial America as the recipes evolved with regional ingredients. These delicious, little cakes have stood the test of time as they have simple ingredients, use minimal equipment, and are adaptable to your liking with a variety of flavors.

Looking to mix up your own batter? Alstede Farms, in Chester, sells their own pancake mixes, like a classic blend with local flour and a chocolate chip version, which you prepare by adding ingredients, or you can use their specific recipes for homemade batter, with ingredients like local buttermilk, eggs, and butter. They focus on simple, wholesome ingredients, and their mixes make it easy to create their signature pancakes at home for a farm-fresh breakfast, often served with their own maple syrup.

Looking to head out and find a great pancake house? Here's a local by-town list of pancake and breakfast spots focused on places known for pancakes or diners/cafés that will likely have pancakes, if not a pancake-only menu.

Bernardsville

- **Bernards Café** - Classic breakfast & brunch (pancakes often featured).
- **The Coffee Shop** - Breakfast & coffee place with pancakes/stack options.
- **Blue Café (Basking Ridge)** - Highly rated breakfast spot near Bernardsville.

Chatham / Madison

- **Sorriso Kitchen (Chatham)** - Breakfast/brunch café with pancake-friendly brunch.
- **Toastique (Chatham)** - Breakfast/healthy café (pancake alternatives).

Local Pancake Spots

- **Butter & Jam (Madison)** – Breakfast & brunch (pancakes likely available).

Morristown / Morris Plains

- **The Committed Pig** – Brunch & pancake favorites.
- **Turning Point of Morris Township** – Popular brunch spot with pancakes.
- **Ridgedale Lunch** – Well-reviewed brunch breakfast.
- **Morristown Diner** – Classic diner pancakes.
- **First Watch (Morris Plains)** – Chain breakfast with pancakes.
- **The Plaza Café and Diner (Morris Plains)** – Breakfast & brunch diner.

Cedar Knolls

- **IHOP (Cedar Knolls)** – The classic pancake chain option.

Roxbury

- **Roxbury Diner** – Breakfast diner with pancakes & brunch classics.
- **Rose's Luncheonette (Kenvil)** – Local breakfast & pancakes.
- **Altoque Café (Kenvil)** – Columbian coffeehouse and bakery (good crêpes & breakfast).

Chester / Mendham

- **Bill's Luncheonette (Chester Twp)** – Breakfast luncheonette with a great pancake vibe.

People love pancakes so much this time of year. They bring back memories of snow days, holiday mornings, ski trips, or family breakfasts when school was canceled. With winter naturally slowing things down, they're pure comfort food and feel indulgent. Pancakes are not a rushed food and are meant to be enjoyed, often on weekends, in pajamas, with coffee or juice. And toppings like maple syrup, butter, fruit compotes, cinnamon apples, or chocolate chips taste better when everything is heated and melting.

When winter days get repetitive, these delectable stacks make breakfast feel special like a small, fluffy celebration.



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Winter Skin & Hair Hydration

By Patricia Lombardo



The cold and frosty days can seem never-ending this time of year. Not only can this weather keep you a little less spry, but it can take its toll on your beauty regimen. To beat the winter blues, try keeping your spirits up while keeping pace with your glowing skin and shiny hair!

With frigid temperatures, and blustering winds, the damage can be surprisingly destructive, weakening your natural protective barriers and causing deterioration. Here's how it happens.

Winter Skin

Cold winter air holds very little moisture, and when combined with indoor heating, it pulls water out of your skin, leading to dehydration. Because your skin's outer layer depends on natural oils to protect and seal in hydration, winter conditions reduce these oils, causing a breakdown in the skin barrier

and making it more vulnerable to irritation, redness, and cracking. Think of your hands alone during this time of year.

As a result, skin becomes increasingly sensitive and reacts more easily to wind, cold, and harsh products, often triggering itching, inflammation, and flare-ups of conditions like rosacea and eczema. Sadly, this dehydration can also accelerate visible signs of aging, making fine lines more noticeable and slowing the skin's natural repair process, which leaves skin looking dull and tired!

Winter Hair

Dry winter air is (once again!) the main culprit when it comes to hair damage. In low humidity, hair loses hydration, becoming brittle and more prone to breakage. The lack of moisture also increases static electricity, leading to frizz and flyaways, especially when wearing

hats and scarves. Cold air and wind can lift the hair cuticle, making strands feel rougher and more susceptible to splitting.

At the same time, reduced moisture affects the scalp, causing dryness, flaking, itchiness, and irritation, all of which can interfere with healthy hair growth.

Here's the help: Skin Hydration

Start by cleansing your skin gently. Switch to a creamy or oil-based cleanser, if needed. And as harsh as sounds, using cooler water to rinse is a better option for your skin. Hot water can strip your natural oils. Pat dry and start layering hydrating products to damp skin. Using a hydrating serum (hyaluronic acid, glycerin) with a richer moisturizer (ceramides, shea butter,

Skin & Hair Hydration

squalane) is best to seal in that replenished glow. On a weekly basis, add your favorite hydrating mask for an at-home spa treatment!

And don't forget everywhere else ... skin care is body care. After showering, immediately apply a thick body cream or body butters. And, of course, never skip sunscreen! The winter sun and any snow reflection still cause damage. Choose a moisturizing SPF and lather up from head to toe.

Hair Hydration

The journey to luscious locks starts with the easiest of tasks: wash your hair less often, maybe 2-3 times a week if possible. Use a sulfate-free, moisturizing shampoo when washing and make

sure you apply conditioner every time focusing on mid-lengths to your ends. You can also lock in that moisture with leave-in conditioners or hair oil on damp hair. Argan oil, jojoba oil, and glycerin are best.

Now, the most important part to keeping your silky tresses flowing all winter long is to limit the direct heat and air-dry when you can. And if you're using a dryer, curling iron or straightener, always use heat protectant!

Bottom Line

For extra hydration run a humidifier at night, drink water consistently (it really does show), and take your Omega-3s (salmon, walnuts) daily. It helps the skin and scalp from the inside out.

Replenishing moisture helps maintain elasticity, protect against damage, and keep both skin and hair healthy through the season!



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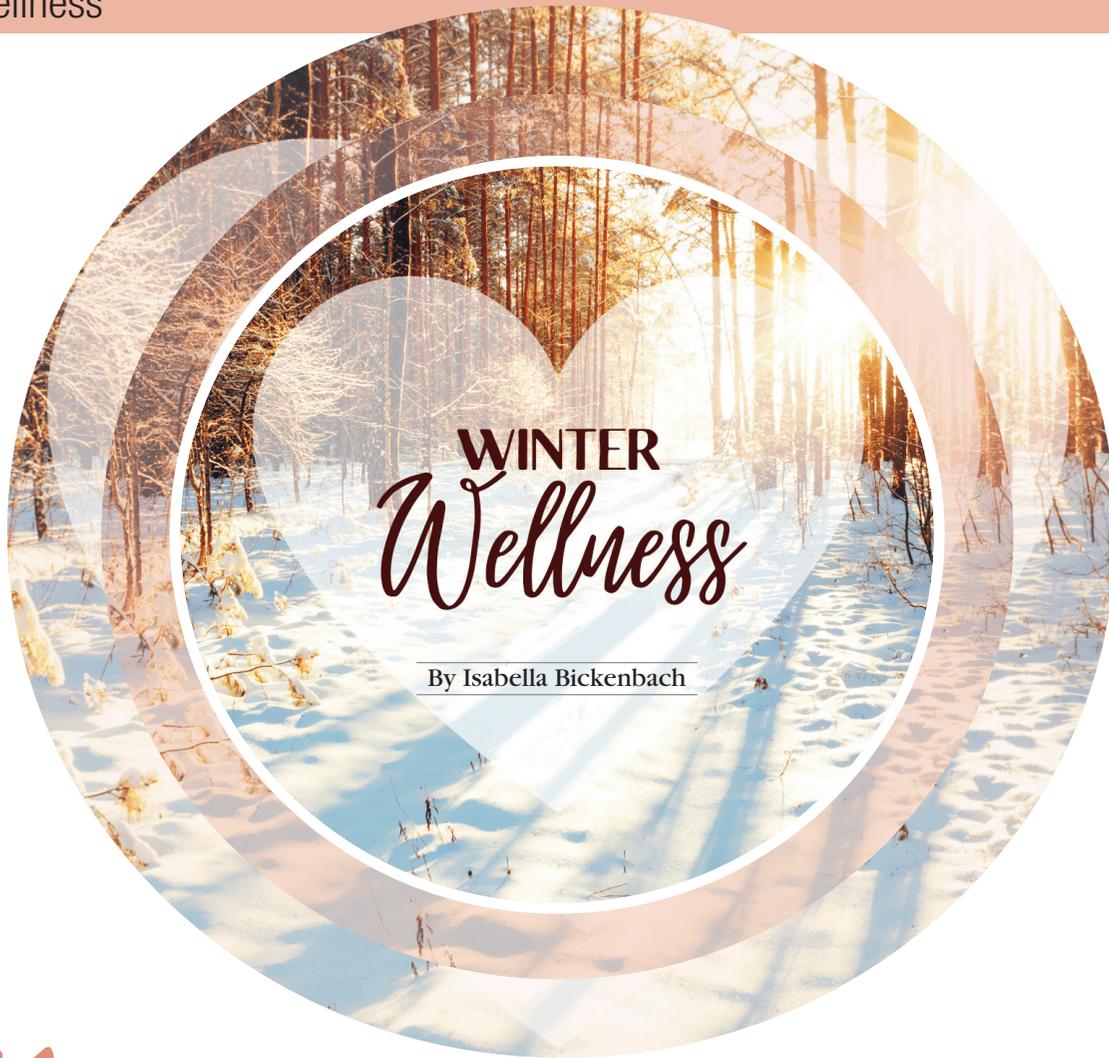


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Maintaining a positive spirit during the cold season is quite difficult. Once the exciting rush of the holidays is over, there's not much left to look forward to except another long, New Jersey winter. However, it is crucial to remain optimistic during this grueling time. In doing so, you can avoid the winter blues and discover all the hidden joys there are in the coming months.

Exercise:

Are you still holding up that New Year's promise of remaining active? Getting plenty of physical activity is a great way to stay healthy and positive during the winter. Doing so will increase mood and energy, improve sleep, strengthen bones and muscles, reduce stress and anxiety, and enhance focus and memory. If you're having trouble remaining active, try designing a workout routine that works for you. Create attainable goals, such as setting aside a reasonable amount of workout time each week. Consider joining your local gym, as it provides equipment and an indoor space.

Most importantly, do the type of exercise that you enjoy. Whether that's a winter sport such as ice skating or skiing, a walk with friends, or a group workout class.

Winter Skincare:

The cold weather can often leave your skin dry and cracked, making it necessary for frequent hydration. Use plenty of moisturizers and lip treatments to ensure glowing and healthy skin. Some of my favorite creams are the Kiehl's Ultra Facial Moisturizer, Summer Fridays Summer Silk Nourishing Body Lotion, Glossier Priming Moisturizer, Tatcha The Indigo Calming Cream, and La Roche-Posay Toleriane Double Repair Facial Moisturizer with SPFA's for lip treatments, highly recommended are Burt's Bees Ultra Conditioning Lip Care, Dior Lip Glow, L'occitane Shea Ultra Rich Lip Balm, and Summer Fridays Lip Butter. Additionally, remember to drink lots of water and use sunscreen when going outdoors (yes, even in the winter). Also consider purchasing a humidifier.

Boost Your Immune System:

As we all know, the winter is one of the most common times to catch a cold. Colder temperatures, lower humidity, and more time spent indoors are all potential factors. This winter, take extra caution to prevent illness by frequently disinfecting surfaces and furniture and washing your hands. And don't overtax yourself. Know when you need to rest. Additionally, boost your immune system to ward off those colds. Eat plenty of healthy fruits and vegetables filled with vitamins C and D, zinc, and iron. Berries, oranges, kiwis, and avocados are high in antioxidants and fiber. Try squash and hearty root vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, beets, and parsnips for a healthy immune system.

Stay Social:

One of the most important ways to keep up spirits is connecting with friends and family. Plan frequent outings such as participating in winter activities like ice skating,

skiing, or hiking. Or you can go out for a warm meal and drink, host a game night, and bake winter goodies. The movie theater is a great activity safe from the snow. Keep your eye out for upcoming movies *The Drama*, *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Even ringing a friend or family member for a quick phone call can boost your mood and feelings of connection.

Get Plenty of Rest:

With a busy schedule, getting adequate and quality rest is no easy task. However, accomplishing quality rest is a key player in winter wellness. Try going to bed and getting up at the same time.

It's also recommended to keep a slightly cool room temperature through the night, anywhere between 60 - 68 degrees Fahrenheit for smooth sleep. Lastly, avoid overconsumption of caffeine and get plenty of exercise, fresh air and sunlight.



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BIG WINES for Little Temperatures ~ Great Wines for the Winter Season



By Christopher Cree, MW, Cree Wine Company

When the temperature dips and we settle into the long slog between the holiday season and the first hints of spring, my palate starts gravitating to bigger, full-bodied reds, with a dram or two of whisky or Port by the fire afterwards.

That said, there are still plenty of favorite winter dishes that demand lighter, crisp whites or rounder and complex white Burgundies. Oysters on the half shell or all kinds of sushi, crudo, or ceviche dishes are perfect with the cool, crisp minerality of French Chablis.

Domaine Christophe Chablis 2024 (\$32.99) is a personal favorite, a beautiful white wine from a small, family owned domaine crafting lovely mineral, crisp, clean, and focused Chardonnay grown in the cool climate and Kimmeridgian limestone of the region.

For fuller, meatier fish such as scallops, lobster, or halibut, you can't beat the incredible wines from Burgundy's Cote d'Or—Chassagne Montrachet, Puligny Montrachet, and Meursault. Trouble is the prices have skyrocketed. But there are some great alternatives, and Remi Jobard's Bourgogne Blanc 2023 Vieilles Vignes (\$60) is like a "baby Meursault". Medium to fullish, creamy, ripe, with hints of vanilla, apple, pear, and lovely minerality and focus, it's

a dead ringer for a much pricier Meursault (Jobard's Meursaults can set you back \$150-\$200+ per bottle!).

For main courses, I look to the classic regions of the world to pair with winter's heartier fare. Roasts, braised meats and stews, game, lamb, lasagna, and pasta with bolognese sauces are typical, and they call for solid reds to match.

Italy's exceptional 2019, 2021, and 2023 vintages had produced a wealth of wines from Piedmont and Tuscany. Sangiovese based Brunello delivers deep, dark, earth-tinged notes while Nebbiolo based Barolo and Barbaresco are typically brighter, with more tension, nerve, and savory dried red fruits. Two affordable alternatives to these classics are Rosso di Toscana 2023 from Scopetone (\$24.99), or Poderi Colla Nebbiolo d'Alba 2023, (\$34.99), with both providing ready to drink versions of their bigger (and more expensive) counterparts.

Bordeaux is deservedly known for its world class blends of primarily Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot, offering hundreds of quintessential winter reds, but can be expensive. If you are looking for classic Bordeaux character that won't break the bank you can't do better that



Château Carignan Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux 2020 (\$24.99), a right banker from a centuries old historic property that is loaded with deep, dark, earth-tinged fruit—plum, cassis, black tea—with moderate tannins and a long finish.

The Southern Rhône is another great source for winter reds, with grenache based Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes 2022 from Domaine De La Charbonnière—the perfect winter red (\$74.99). It's a superb expression of the grenache grape grown in the warm, sunny Mediterranean climate and rocky alluvial soils. Côtes du Rhône Villages Terre d'Argile 2022 from Janasse, is a dead ringer for Châteauneuf, at \$35



Photos Courtesy of Cree Wine Company

per bottle.

The Northern Rhône, with its slightly cooler climate, granitic, schistous soils, and steep terraced vineyards, is where the Syrah grape reigns supreme. Domaine Remiziere's Crozes-Hermitage Origine 2023 brings deep, dark cassis tinge fruit, hints of black pepper, black olive, and subtle floral/violet overtones to the table, and is a bargain at \$30.

And if we're talking big red wine, we can't skip Cabernet Sauvignon from California's Napa Valley, and further afield in Paso Robles as well! Robert Foley's Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2018, a wine kept back at the winery by winemaker Bob Foley until it hits best

window for drinking the 2018, is deep, dark, plush, concentrated and layered Cab with resolved tannins and an incredible presence from start to long, lingering finish (\$80). For sheer value Treana's Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon 2023 (\$30) over-delivers for the price, with solid dense fruit, lovely oak accents—full bodied, rich, and delicious!

After dinner you can't beat a dram or two of whiskey, whether Bourbon, Scotch, Rye or grape based spirits from Cognac and Armagnac. Soul warming Port from the Duero Valley of Portugal is perfect for cold winter nights, a good book, and a roaring fire.

Match it up with Stilton cheese, dried fruits, and crusty baguette! Kopke 20 Year Tawny Port (\$70) is the perfect pick, a tawny brick hue, sweet, rich, kirsch red fruits that will put a smile on your lips. Once opened, Tawny Ports hold for months so you can enjoy a glass or two and keep the rest for another time!

Bourbon has been hot lately, although the craze seems to have subsided some, but I tend to go to my Scottish roots. Jacoulot's Highland Single Malt 13 Ans d'Age is aged 13 years and finished in Burgundian Brandy Barrels. It is an absolutely seductive, amazing, soul-searching bottle of whisky, with sweet oak hints, lovely caramel hue, warm, layered, complex flavors - smooth and elegant. A bit of a splurge at \$150, but worth every penny!

Cheers and enjoy the season!

Christopher Cree, MW
 Founder Cree Wine Company
 Restaurant, Retail, Event Space,
 Wine School

Christopher Cree is New Jersey's only Master of Wine (MW) and one of just 56 in the U.S. With over 40 years in the wine industry, his experience spans retail, wholesale, importing, education, and consulting. He has been a featured lecturer and educator, a guest on MSNBC, Martha Stewart Radio, and more.

*In 2021, Christopher opened Cree Wine Company at the historic Perryville Inn, bringing his passion and deep wine expertise to the community through curated experiences and world-class selections. Cree Wine Company has a Wine Spectator award-winning wine program, and is a unique combination of wine retail (on premise and online), a full restaurant and wine bar, wine school, and event space that's perfect for all kinds of gatherings.
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