

Celebrate HOME

FALL 2012

MAGAZINE





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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A Warm Welcome to Celebrate Home Magazine

The door is open. Come in and turn the pages. Welcome to *Celebrate Home Magazine*, where we are passionate about all things home. No matter the size, style, location, temporary or permanent, our homes are intrinsic to our well-being. Don't you feel that if your home is a welcoming place, no matter if you're single or a part of a large family, you can go out and conquer the world? Or, at least just make it through the work or school day? It could be something as simple as painting a wall your favorite color, or a special recipe your family counts on at holidays. It's the ordinary things, made extraordinary, that make our homes special.



Who are we and why are we publishing this magazine?

We are the girls next door, Barbara and Cindy, and you know us. Cindy Dyer, art director and photographer and I have teamed up to bring you *Celebrate Home Magazine* where ordinary people are doing extraordinary things. If you lack confidence, we hope to inspire you. No matter your budget, your skills or the size of your space, we'll enthusiastically share experiences of those who nurture the space they call home.

Wait until you meet some of our contributors in this first issue. They are people just like you and me, doing what we love in the context of home, family and hospitality. For example, look at the photos of the mouth-watering food. No fake food was used, no glue, no props. It's all real food made in our real test kitchen and photographed by Cindy. And, at the end of the shoot, we invited real folks to eat up the real food. We present you recipes for delicious and lovely food you can make at home.

Check out our Dish Towel Diva and learn how this collector started gathering unlikely items to make her kitchen chores less daunting. Or, meet the Lady of the Lake and see how she takes family treasures and turns a lake house retreat into a home with character (and characters).

Let's inspire each other!

We want to hear about the place you call home and get to know your families. *Celebrate Home Magazine* is about family, food, entertaining, gardens, art, crafts, hobbies, personal expression, pets, decorating, communities and neighborhoods

The time has come for a magazine like this—highlighting ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Please write—we would love to hear from you.

Barbara Kelley

Barbara Kelley, Editor-in-Chief
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Celebrate Home Magazine is available as a free pdf from the following sites:

www.magcloud.com
www.issuu.com
www.barbaragarneaukelley.com
www.cindydyer.wordpress.com

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Would you like to be a contributing author or photographer? Submit a brief bio or resumé with writing and/or photography samples and links to websites with your work. E-mail us at bkelley@celebratehomemag.com. *Celebrate Home Magazine* cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of unsolicited materials.

Do you have an original recipe that you'd like to share with us? Send us your recipe and the story behind it to bkelley@celebratehomemag.com.

We can come to you! Are you having a party or special event at your home or an activity that relates to the subject of home? Contact us to discuss your idea. If it fits the editorial scope of *Celebrate Home Magazine*, we may photograph your event and write the story.

Celebrate Home Magazine offers a multitude of thanks to the contributors to our inaugural issue. We hope you enjoy our first issue!

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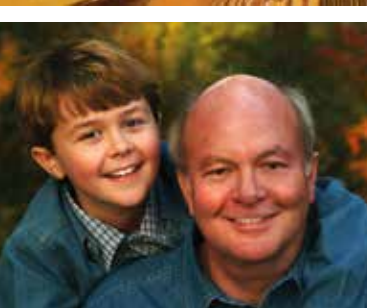
Home can mean many things. Where do you go when you click your ruby-slippered heels together?

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Candied Apple Cookies, recipe by Barbara Kelley (see page 75); photography by Cindy Dyer

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KAREN BYER-STORCH has been a package designer and illustrator, and is now a freelance designer. She collects Quimper Faience (French pottery—she is French-born), anything turtle-related, and vintage spice tins. She loves cats, books, home decorating and spending time with her daughters. She just recently ended her ten-year search for the perfect red hue for her dining room walls. Having amassed several hundred wine corks, she is now dreaming up cork craft projects. Stay tuned.



F.T. EYRE grew up, out and about as an Army brat and enjoyed time in Japan, Thailand and Germany. After some photo schooling and the Coast Guard, he worked in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as the lead medical photographer, then headed to Texas for a master's degree in photojournalism at UT-Austin. He landed his D.C. gig with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the '90s and has been shooting his way to fame and whatever since then. He loves a good imaging challenge.



MARIA GATLING, when not in search of the perfect cappuccino, on a thrift store treasure hunt, or traveling with her husband, is blissfully working on her creativity sessions. Her roles as wife, mother, and artist have taken her on a journey that has unfolded into very passionate work. As author of *Be Inspired! Create Something Every Day*, she invites you to rediscover your passions and unleash your creativity. Learn more about Maria at www.mariagatling.com.



TRACY HAVERMANN is a graduate of the University of Virginia with an education degree. She has five kids, ages 13 to 30, and two grandchildren. She has successfully launched their three oldest children into the world and is working on the launch of the two youngest. She loves to renovate, decorate, design, garden, cook, and create interesting spaces with her growing family in mind. She and Don have been married 34 years.



MARIA HUFNAGEL is a freelance writer and aspiring housewife. She recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University, where she studied English and creative writing. She enjoys cooking healthy and conscientious meals as well as unhealthy desserts. Maria currently lives and works in Northern Virginia. When not cooking or keeping house, she enjoys reading, writing, yoga, and cuddling with her cat.



BILL KELLEY is one of 11 kids who grew up in the Washington, D.C. area., so he knows about all things family. He is a graduate of the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, and is a JAG in the United States Army Reserves. He is best known for his hospitality in what he calls his Olé (outdoor living environment). During football season, you can find him grilling a pulled pork barbecue in front of the outdoor big screen. The team: Washington Redskins, of course.



BRIAN K. LOFLIN is a photographer, author, and teacher with a passion for natural science. Trained as a biologist, he has an inborn curiosity about what things look at high magnifications. (Visit his blog at www.bkloflin.wordpress.com) Four decades of experience shooting advertising, commercial, and medical images led him to teach photography at the University of Texas in Austin. A world traveller, he now enjoys kicking back in Austin with his wife, Shirley, and three cats.



MELANIE POIRIER has what she considers to be the best job in the world—wife to her wonderful husband, and proud homeschooling mother of their five terrific children, ages 12 to 20. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, baking, entertaining, and reading. You may occasionally find her walking for her morning exercise, always on the lookout for bluebirds and bunnies. She lives in the idyllic state of Virginia, surrounded by family and friends—and her cherished dish towel collection.



MICHAEL Q. POWELL considers himself to be an idealistic pragmatist, the fusion of a liberal arts education and a 20-year Army career. Blessed (or cursed) with unquenchable intellectual curiosity, his interests range from seventeenth century French literature to incredibly bad puns. He enjoys singing and tinkering with older Mac computers (often at the same time). His recently-discovered love for photography is highlighted on his blog at www.michaelqpowell.wordpress.com.



MICHAEL SCHWEHR grew up in the Cleveland, Ohio area, lived in Worms, Germany for two and a half years, and finally settled in Alexandria, Virginia. He is the president, chief PC repair technician and network engineer for JumpStart Computing, an on-site PC repair business at www.JumpStartComputing.com. He loves books, camping, photographing bugs with a macro lens, and trying new things. He owns more tools than he can possibly use, and likes to tinker with computers and recipes.



CHLOE SUTCLIFFE is a photography enthusiast from Melbourne, Australia. She likes collecting analog cameras, reading books, real estate, overseas travel, art, animals, music and DIY home renovations. In early August she opened an Etsy store, displaying fine art and landscape prints for sale. Visit her store at etsy.com/shop/ChloeSutcliffePhotog and her photography blog at www.chloephoto.com.



DEBBIE TALBERT hails from San Antonio, Texas where she works as a high school copy room lady (a job she loves). When she's not making copies, she's testing out Pinterest recipes on her family. She is a beadaholic, loyal friend, and will only eat banana pudding fresh out of the oven. In high school, she really rocked on her roller skates, impressing her younger sisters. If she doesn't answer her cell phone, then she's at the movies (again) with her best friend, Sandy.



SCOTT THOMAS is a travel, sports, nature, stock and event photographer living in upstate New York. He publishes a photoblog, www.viewsinfinity.com, where he chronicles each year in photos every week, produces photo essays, shares photography tips and challenges his readers with bimonthly photo assignments. By day, Scott is a mild-mannered computer manager for a soda bottler, which pays for his many trips to Walt Disney World with family, friends and his pal Mickey Mouse.

Feather Your Nest

Lovely finds for your lovely home



Giraffe Bookends—These whimsical bookends are handmade and designed by Knob Creek Metal Arts. Made from solid steel finished in black, they're sold in a set of two pieces. Dimensions are approximately 6-1/2" tall x 6-1/2" wide per end. **\$49.99** free U.S. shipping www.etsy.com/shop/KnobCreekMetalArts



Rustic Candle Holders—Set of 10 candle holders made from 100-year-old black walnut trees. Each holder is approximately 2" tall and 2-3" wide with a drilled hole to fit a standard size tea light candle. A seven-hour tea light candle is included for each holder. **\$29.95** www.etsy.com/shop/FamilyDriedFlowers



Ceramic Coasters Inspired by Nature—Bring home the lake house vibe with this set of four white ceramic coasters (approx. 4" x 4")—two emblazoned with a wooden dock image and two with a fish print. Clear glossy finish, sealed to be water resistant, with cork board feet to protect furniture. **\$14 set** www.etsy.com/shop/myevilfriend

Vo Studio Ceramics Modern Stoneware Tree of Life Serving Platter—These handmade stoneware serving platters feature a windy sky swirling about the branches of a giant tree. Sumptuously glazed in multiple custom studio glazes that highlight its rippled and textured surface.

Made from durable, high-fired stoneware that heats evenly and holds in hot and cold temperatures well. Microwave, oven, dishwasher, and food safe. Designed and crafted to the highest standard to be both beautiful, and usable. Measures approximately 18.5" by 12.5". The handmade art platters range **\$85 each** plus \$15 shipping in U.S. www.etsy.com/shop/VoStudioCeramics



Eco-Friendly Soy Candles—Coco & Bubbles' candles are 100% eco-friendly. Candles are hand-made with soy wax, cotton wicks and a reusable tumbler glass. The candles are packaged in a hand-stamped burlap bag. The Coco & Bubbles No. 142 Caribbean Teakwood tumbler candle is a masculine masterpiece. It's bold with a top note of leather, tobacco, amber and musk while also having a middle note of spice, black tea and pepper. The base note is aged teakwood with tones of patchouli and sandalwood. A perfect tropical escape. 13 oz. candle, burns 45-60 hours. **\$16.50** www.etsy.com/shop/CocoandBubbles

Cranberry Orange Herbal Soap—A perfect blend for fall—crisp cranberries next to bright plump oranges with a sprinkle of cranberry seeds on top. The Cranberry Orange Soap has a tart cranberry scent with a nice hint of orange. The Northwoods is one of the biggest cranberry growing regions of America, and this scent is reminiscent of the fall harvest. **\$6** www.etsy.com/shop/AllThingsHerbal



Rustic Country Table Runner—This heavy cotton table runner will add the perfect touch of country to your dining table. Washable on a gentle cycle, hang to dry. Runner measures 7' long by 17" wide. **\$40** www.etsy.com/shop/ThePinkBarnDoor



Matching Napkins—Heavy cotton napkins, 17" square, washable on a gentle cycle, hang to dry, **6 for \$50** www.etsy.com/shop/ThePinkBarnDoor



Autumn Leaves Fine Art Photograph—Nova Scotia photographer Jeff Friesen captures fall with his beautiful "Monument" image. Print size is 8.5" x 11" with 8" x 10" image area. Image is hand-signed on the back and archivally printed on luster paper. Shipped unframed. **\$20** www.etsy.com/shop/FollowTheRaven



You are My Sunshine Pillow—This 8" x 8" pillow by Caytee's Crafts is made from osnaburg natural muslin fabric, filled with a premium polyester fiberfill, and ready for your home or a gift for a dear friend. **\$14.95** www.cayteelynn.etsy.com



Vermont Harvest All Natural Pumpkin Butter
A perfect blend of pumpkin, brown sugar, honey, lemon and spices—try it for breakfast on toast, or use it as a spread for crackers or cookies. Vermont Harvest from Stowe, Vermont has produced fine jams, jellies, preserves and chutneys, since 1983. Their products contain no preservatives and are made in small batches to make sure each product gets the TLC it deserves! 8 oz. jar **\$6.19** www.foodfinds.me/pumpkinbutter

Handmade Napkin Rings—Set of eight handmade wooden napkin rings made from loose wood—great for rustic cottage chic dining. 100% eco friendly home decor. Almost 2" in diameter, 3/8" thick with 1" hole. E12.50 (approx. **\$16.21** U.S.) Sets in different amounts available. www.etsy.com/listing/99372682/wood-napkin-rings-for-rustic-home-decor



Lady of the Lake

Written by **Barbara Kelley** • Photography and Styling by **Cindy Dyer**

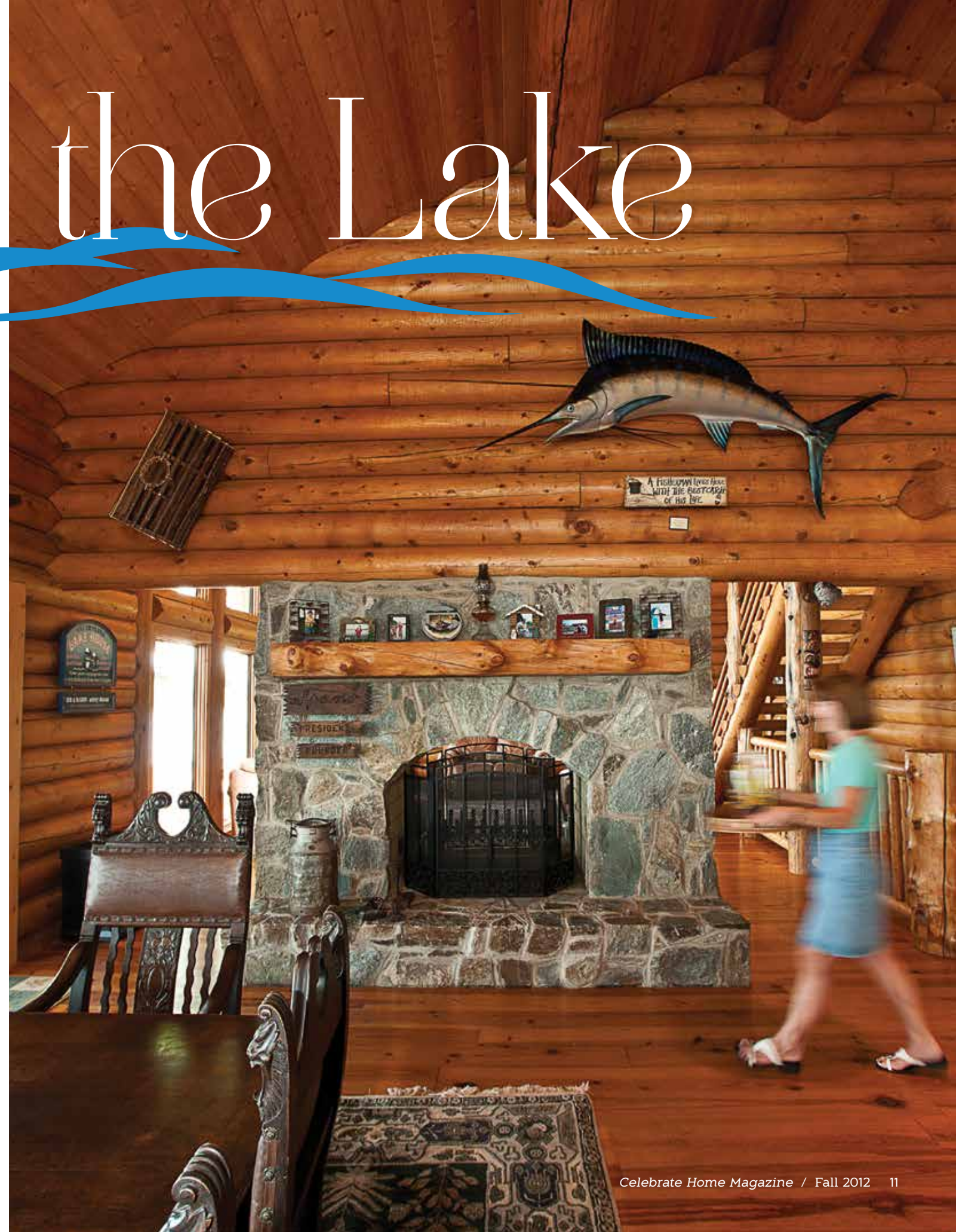
The house on the lake was Bob Fonti's dream. Being a Marine and growing up vacationing at Ocean City, he went in search of the perfect property on which to build a lakefront home. Wouldn't it be nice to escape the Washington, D.C., suburbs for some tranquility and most of all, fun?

Marion, pregnant at the time with their third child, was not as enthusiastic. She was hesitant about getting involved in a big construction project at such a busy time in their lives and had more practical concerns like the safety of living on the water with three small children. But, they made the decision together and moved ahead to build their rustic waterfront retreat.

Why a log cabin? Marion's Uncle Frank Spano gave their two boys a set of Lincoln Logs. One day when her two toddlers were playing with them, her two-year-old said, "Let's build a log cabin." This should have been a foreshadowing of what was to come. The log cabin and Marion's Uncle Frank, Aunt Ruthie and grandparents all contributed to the personality of the lake house.

There is no doubt that Bob's mark is all around the property. He's quick to coax you out on the lake for a boat ride, Jet Ski or even ride the "taco" tube pulled behind the boat if you're brave. He turns on the piped-in Jimmy Buffet music as he invites you to sit on the porch or deck and enjoy the view of the lake. Then there's the zip wire, fishing rods, fire pit, water slide, the go-Kart, and a court for family volleyball and basketball games. On the inside, Bob's mammoth catch of Blue Marlin hangs above the fireplace. This is the house that Bob built.

With an artist's eye and sentimental nature, Marion Fonti mixes family heirlooms with rustic furnishings and elements of nature to create a relaxed family retreat on the shores of Lake Anna in Virginia's Louisa County.



Lady of the Lake

But this is the house that Marion decorated. By the time construction was underway, Marion's Uncle Frank (on her father's side) and her Aunt Ruthie (on her mother's side) had passed away. There was furniture and personal belongings from both of them, some of which would be given away to local charities and some distributed among the family. Having grown up on Long Island, New York, with both of them, Marion knew the value for her was in the memories their belongings held. So they rented a U-Haul and went to New York to see what family treasures she might be able to bring back.

Built by John St. Angelo of Advantage Construction in Maryland, the house was completed in 2001. It is more than what they dreamed it would be—a destination where friends and family come to stay and play. Marion and Bob have three boys to add lots of life to the place. Come on the tour and see the beloved collection of family heirlooms that dwell among rustic furnishings with water and nature as the backdrop.

A Nod to the Past

When I first saw the interior of the Fonti's Lake Anna home, it was stunningly gorgeous with rich wood, design details and all the modern conveniences. Yet, among the new cabin walls were beautiful antiques and family heirlooms—a little disconcerting at first, but lovely nonetheless. Marion combines the old

HOME IS WHERE THE HEARTH IS

Right: The fireplace is central to both main rooms—on one side the dining area and the other side the great room. In the dining room, Aunt Ruthie's dining room table and chairs hosts family dinners and game nights. Bob's catch of Blue Marlin hangs above the fireplace. Marion decorates the mantel with family photos, souvenirs from travels and from doing things they enjoy. She mixes in old family photos, treasures, rustic and natural elements, leather furnishings, tapestries and carpets, and touches of whimsy like the pillow that reads, "I hope my ship comes in before my dock rots."

SENTIMENTAL TREASURES

Left: Aunt Ruthie's collection of crystal from Cambridge Glass Company is housed in a vintage corner curio cabinet in the dining area. *Below:* Marion and her Aunt Ruthie



Lady of the Lake

PRESERVING THE PAST

Left: "This is a copper fire extinguisher from Uncle Frank's house. I always thought this was really neat when I was a kid. I still do," said Marion. Above it hangs Uncle Frank Spano's sign from his paper company, J&F Paper Products, in Bear Creek, Pennsylvania. The tall glass windows showcase a view of the lake, which can be seen from almost every room in the house.



Above: Marion's Grandpa Spano

ROOM AT THE INN

Right: This first floor bedroom has two sets of log bunk beds. The lower level houses a spacious bedroom and bathroom suite with bunks to sleep six people with room for more on the floor.

with the new and the stunning result is a neat contrast that gives depth to their new home. It's an odd mix and I'm not sure why, but it works. I wanted to find out more.

Marion has her feet firmly planted in the present with a foot in the future; but she gives a nod to the past and to the relatives whose belongings she treasures. The ornate pieces are not just for show. Every single piece, small or large, old and new, has a story and Marion lights up when she tells you. Her fingers carefully cradle the small objects or she runs her hand along the larger pieces. Her recall about the who, what, when and where is amazing. She's sentimental for both the past and the present. The objects and the memories they evoke clearly mean a lot to her.

Marion says, "Aunt Ruthie entertained in lavish style. I remember whenever we went to her house, no matter what the occasion or time of day, she always used beautiful crystal glasses and china. It didn't matter if you were having wine or milk, she always served it elegantly. I have her collection of personal sterling silver matchboxes and ashtrays for each place setting. Aunt Ruthie, born in 1912, was just 4 feet 11 inches tall, but she stood towering in her spirit of hospitality. If you went to her house at 11 in the morning, she would pull out the champagne."

The diminutive Ruth Gardner did not have a job but spent her time entertaining and managing her stock portfolio. Marion said, "Back in those days, women didn't really trade stocks so Aunt Ruthie traded under the name of





WHAT'S THE PASSWORD?

Left: Fresh from the lake in his swimming trunks, the Fonti's youngest son likes to peer out his favorite castle-style door in the house facing the driveway coming in from the gravel road. Custom-made by Distinctive Doors in Wylie, Texas, the door is crafted with distressed Andean walnut in a mahogany frame. It's a speak-easy style with a grill, 20-inch black dummy hinges and 48 black round clavos.

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE PAST

Right: Pieces in this sentimental collection are housed in Aunt Ruthie's curio cabinet that holds vintage pieces such as her grandmother's kitchen implement used for cutting pasta, which used to be a typical wedding gift for a bride in Italy. The cabinet also holds favorite things from the boys' adventures like the bird's nest and a tortoise shell. The rattles and spoons were baby gifts. The vintage mother-of-pearl Bible is from Marion's cousin Felicia, whose family came from Italy. Marion arranged these items on the wooden bench she made from leftover wood from the mantle during construction.





Lady of the Lake

R. Gardner and often posed as a secretary doing the paperwork for her boss. Aunt Ruthie received several proposals but never married—in a way I think she was just too modern for most men.”

One of the largest pieces in the house is the dining room table and chairs that were purchased in England in the late 1880s and shipped to Garden City, Long Island, where Aunt Ruthie lived with her parents and her brother. Amazingly, the set survived the steamer ride with no warping because its five leaves were stored in a wooden crate. The table is used often at the lake for family gatherings. Marion, petite herself, recalls, “I can just picture little Aunt Ruthie sitting at the head of the table in the big, heavy, manly chair, toasting everyone with her glass.”

Marion’s Uncle Frank is another person who figures prominently in the lake house. Marion and Bob transplanted Uncle Frank’s blueberry bushes from Pennsylvania to the lake house so she could share her memory of picking and eating blueberries with her sons. “They didn’t make it,” Marion says with regret.

Marion has photos and belongings from both sets of grandparents. “The joy for me is that through the stories and memories of the pieces, my boys have come to know relatives that they never met or were too young

READING ROOM

Below: Marion relaxes in the great room where the family watches TV, chats and plays. The afghan was crocheted by her cousin Felicia. The side table with a checkboard top was Marion’s maternal grandfather’s (Yvelin Gardner) table from his dorm room at Harvard. The story goes that he told his roommate the crest carved on the side of it was Harvard’s crest. Not true, but he seemed to get a kick out of telling folks that. The small desk was Aunt Ruthie’s and since she was only 4 feet, 11 inches tall, she still used it as an adult. Marion remembers that she wore spike heels, pearls, and bright red nail polish every day.



Above: Marion’s Uncle Frank with her cousin Felicia

SOARING HEIGHTS

Left: The spacious living/family room has floor-to-ceiling windows with a view of the lake. The stairs lead to a spacious master bedroom suite.



Lady of the Lake

A FAMILY GATHERS

Right: Aunt Ruthie's dining room table is used for playing cards, Scrabble, board games and eating meals.



WELCOMING GUESTS

Below: This main floor bedroom welcomes guests with a quilt made by her youngest son's class for a school auction.



to remember. For example, we eat at 'Aunt Ruthie's table' or a shirt is in the top drawer of 'Uncle Frank's dresser.'"

A Room with the New

Marion spent 12 years teaching GRACE Art in her sons' schools, a program established in 1976 by the Greater Reston, Virginia, Arts Center to supplement and support local children's art experiences in school. The program is based on in-class presentations of art historical subjects, followed by coordinating art projects.

In her younger son's first-grade class, she introduced the students to Faith Ringgold, a modern-day African-American artist known for her story quilts. The class decided to make a quilt with the theme of "peace" to be a contribution to the school's fundraising auction. The children drew their visions of peace on fabric squares and another mom stitched them together. Bob and Marion purchased the quilt and hung it in the guestroom. Marion explained, "The theme of the quilt is peace and it goes so well since this is our peaceful retreat."



TINY TREASURES

Aunt Ruthie's salt cellars are displayed on the table Marion built from leftover wood from the construction of the mantle.

Lady of the Lake



A RUSTIC TOUCH
Above: Bob devises a way to install an oven handle made from a stick their sons found while hiking in California.

CABIN BY THE LAKE
Below: With the moderate Virginia weather, the family enjoys the cabin all year long.

The headboard in the room with carved pineapples, the symbol of welcome, is from Bob's Aunt Joanne. The lamp is from Uncle Frank's Brooklyn house and the side table is Aunt Ruthie's.

Love of Nature

The Fonti family's love for nature is evident in the carefully placed new collections—shells from the beach, pinecones from outside of Yosemite National Park, a tortoise shell, bird's nest and more. I was taken aback when I spotted a huge hornet's nest nestled under the open stairwell that led to the upstairs, especially knowing Marion was allergic to bees! Marion said it was an empty nest from their home in Northern Virginia and they thought it so extraordinary and huge that they brought it to the lake house. With an impish grin she enjoys telling the story when her parents came to visit and she pretended the nest was real. "I never in my life saw my parents move so fast out of this house!"

The Fonti's lake house is where every object has a soul, whether it's from Bob, Marion, the boys and their collections, or the souls of the beloved ancestors whose belongings have found themselves a new home on the shore of Lake Anna.

PEACEFUL RETREAT

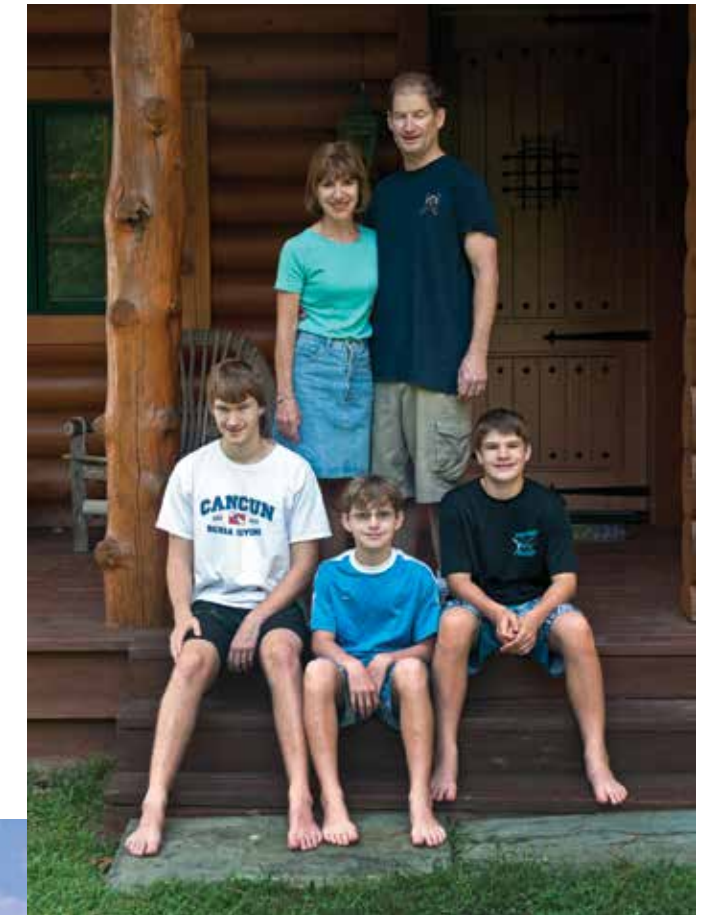
The house is more than what the Fonti family dreamed it would be—a destination where friends and family come to stay and play.

The home was designed by Rocky Mountain Log Homes in Hamilton, Montana. For information, visit www.rockymountain-homes.com.



NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Left: Riding the zip line, boats and Jet Skis—all the makings of a great summer! Photo by Barbara Kelley



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Above: The Fonti family—Marion, husband Bob, and their three sons.

THE BOYS OF SUMMER

Left: The youngest son and his friends enjoy their last weekend at the lake before school starts. Photo by Barbara Kelley



HOW-TO

Written by **Brian K. Loflin**

Photography by **Brian K. Loflin / Cindy Dyer**

F.T. Eyre / Chloe Sutcliffe / Scott Thomas

As the summer dwindles, chlorophyll, the stuff of plant photosynthesis, disappears from leafy vegetation, leaving a magical spectacle in its place. A variety of true leaf pigments briefly show themselves after the green disappears. These pigments vary with the species of tree and thus the different characteristic leaf colors.

Many hardwood trees contain carotene that causes maples, birches, and poplars to turn yellow. The brilliant reds and oranges in fall landscapes are primarily due to anthocyanin. Tannin gives oaks a distinctively brown color and is the final persistent color that leaves turn. And because these true leaf colors are water soluble, that makes the color disappear quickly after drying out.

Fall season of exciting color is only a short time away. My lifelong friend in Knoxville, Tennessee informed me that the color in the Great Smoky Mountains was underway in early September at higher elevations.

This fall spectacle fills photographers with great anticipation for one of the best times of the year for photography. The color changes that accompany the oncoming of fall provide great visual opportunities.

Some photographers are blessed to live in areas with an abundance of fall color. Others may have to do a bit of traveling. As one begins to get ready for fall photography, some research, selecting, and planning is a good idea.

Capturing

Fall

© Cindy Dyer

HOW-TO

Planning

The first step in photographing fall happens long before the camera is positioned. Obviously, the selection of time and place of the shoot is important. That sounds simple enough, but there is a bit more to it than some realize. There are three major factors that affect the location and timing that is selected: type of image desired, choice of colors and timing, and flexibility.

Type of Image Desired

The type of image desired strongly influences choice of location. When most people think of fall color, they tend to think of large expanses of intense red and orange trees commonly depicted in magazines. This type scenario is found mostly in the eastern states.

However, this is not the only choice for fall color. Other areas provide a completely different type of opportunity for fall imagery. The western mountain states display a much more sparse color, but these scenes are located among dramatic,

mountain ranges. The ability to match this color with the drama of the mountains can produce incredible images.

Choice of Colors and Timing

Different regions have different colors. New England has a nice variety of reds and gold, while the Rocky Mountains have a dominance of yellow.

Fall color tends to migrate from the northern latitudes southward. The earlier in the fall a photographer intends to shoot, the higher the elevation and the farther north they must travel. This is due to temperature and length of the daylight. Higher elevations and northern latitudes experience cool nighttime temperatures and shorter day earlier than lower elevations and more southern latitudes.

Flexibility

Often locals can give general times when fall colors in any particular area are most likely to occur. However, nobody can exactly predict the timing

of the fall colors. The timing of fall colors in an area can vary by a few weeks from one season to the next. For those photographers whose schedule is not very flexible, the length of the fall color season becomes very important.

Some areas have a color season that is as short as one week. Since this week cannot be exactly predicted, such an area would be a poor choice for one whose schedule is not flexible. Some areas have color seasons that last several weeks. For instance, Rocky Mountain National Park has a fairly long color season as the color proceeds from higher to lower elevations as the season progresses—a better choice for those that have less flexible schedules.

Many “hot spots” for fall color, like Vermont and New Hampshire, have color hot lines and Internet color reports maintained by the state highway department or chambers of commerce. These tools are an invaluable aid to the photographer who has a short window of opportunity to travel. These may provide weather forecasts as well, important in clothing choices and other preparations.

Light

After the color of the vegetation itself, the most important factor in successful fall color imagery is the quality of the light.

In general, the best light is the diffuse light of an overcast sky. This soft light brings out the colors well and is lower in contrast, relieving many harsh, dark shadows. This diffuse light can produce beautiful color images. It tends to produce pastel colors and can lend a romantic feel to an image. One advantage of this type of light is that one can often shoot all day long. A disadvantage, however, is that bald, featureless skies are boring and distracting to the image. Therefore, the skies in these images should be a very small part of the frame.



The other time for magical shooting is called the “Golden Hour,” that time about one hour after sunrise and again before sunset. When the sun is low on the horizon a directional, but very soft light is found. Because of atmospheric interference, this light is also very warm-toned. This may match the warm fall colors well. Therefore, golden hour light enhances the warm tones of the fall colors, providing saturated colors. A drawback here is underexposure which oversaturates reds, oranges and other warm colors may lead to the entire scene turning brownish and muddy.

Exposure

With today’s camera technology it’s easy to take good digital photographs, but it is increasingly difficult to master the art and craft to make great digital images. My three friends who own professional photo labs all say the single biggest mistake of photographers is failure to expose properly.

The secret is to expose areas of middle tone values of a scene, rather than dark or bright areas. When you do that the image is better exposed. By default, most digital cameras display a luminosity histogram, a graphical representation displaying the distribution of tones values captured in the image. This histogram is useful in evaluating overall exposure; however, it doesn’t always tell the whole story.



HOW-TO

When photographing vivid colors, one or more of the three individual color channels (red, green or blue) may often be lacking in detail. By faithfully using the individual RGB histograms, you can visualize if specific channels are clipped and correct as necessary. If you underexpose, you may lose a big part of the brilliant fall foliage.

The other tool of good exposure is to set white balance correctly. This setting programs the camera for the color of the light illuminating a scene. Default outdoor choices include sunny, cloudy, and shade. These lighting conditions present a different color of illumination to the scene. Overcast light produces bluish cast. Correcting for changes in light intensity and its inherent color will make for improved images of fall color.

Polarizing Filters

When shooting fall colors, it may be beneficial to consider the use of a polarizing filter. Designed to remove glare and increase the saturation of colors, the careful use of the polarizing filter may enhance fall foliage (see photo, right).

These filters are best used when the lens is pointed at right angles to the source of light. So, when used with overcast light polarizers have even little effect. A polarizer can also reduce or eliminate this glare reflected from surfaces of water. Overall it may be beneficial to check out the impact of a polarizer regardless of the type of light.



© Brian K. Loflin



© Scott Thomas



© Cindy Dyer



© Chloe Sutcliffe

© F.T. Eyre



HOW-TO

Good Composition

Composition is the art of the design of the photograph. Good image design stems from what to include in the scene, the selection of lens used and the vantage point. However, good design also occurs as a result of judging what not to include in the scene.

The biggest problem is the excitement of so much stunning color. A common mistake in fall color images is the focus on the colors to the exclusion of everything else. However, this excitement must not overrule the fact that every great image needs a clean and clear composition, a strong graphic design. Don't overlook the tenants of good composition, including light, shadows, contrast, point of view, leading lines, perspective, and all of the other factors that go into creating images with impact.

Look for good spacing between trees so that key shapes don't merge together. Consider using other trees, such as evergreens or trees that are

still green, for better color balance and contrast. And last, but not least, eliminate distracting elements that don't contribute to the main subject.

Landscapes

Landscapes can provide a great opportunity for fall color shots. The fall color in the Rockies is primarily yellow and is found as patches of color. Consequently, you don't find a lot of areas that are carpeted in color. Therefore, you have the best chance of creating strong fall color images by finding dramatic scenes and figuring out how to integrate the available color with the rest of the surrounding environment.

The scene (bottom, left) grabbed my attention due to the early morning light on the Rio Grande and the morning fog. Some patches of fall color provided an opportunity to further strengthen the image. Further, the scene was dark in the foreground but grew lighter behind leading the eye toward the mountain range.

Isolated Elements

In the preceding image, fall color was used in a large landscape. A different approach is to identify an element of fall color and isolate it from the rest of the environment. This focuses the attention on the unique element and its color. This small aspen leaf (opposite, left) was photographed up close with a macro lens (the leaf is only slightly longer than an inch). This allowed the leaf to be isolated from the background and the environment, strengthening the image.

This image (above, left) demonstrates three important factors that can be used to strengthen fall color images. First, strongly contrasting colors were used. The camera was positioned so that the dark woods were directly behind the leaf. This resulted in the vibrant yellow of the leaf standing out from the strongly contrasting background. Second, the colors in this image are saturated because magic hour light was used. In fact, this image was shot in the last one or two minutes of



© Brian K. Loflin



© Brian K. Loflin

light before the sun disappeared behind a range of mountains—resulting in a soft and saturated light. This enhanced the colors. Third, the image conveys simplicity. This causes the viewer to focus on the important components of the image (i.e., color and shape) rather than being distracted by other elements of the environment.

This partially abstract image (above, right) demonstrates one other important concept about fall color photography: a photographer doesn't have to live in an area that has a large amount of colorful woodlands in order to get good color. While this image was made of colorful leaves, it was not shot on the side of a mountain covered with expanses of fall color. Rather, this image was found in a neighbor's front yard. Interestingly, only a few spots of color were all that was needed to create the image.

Color and Contrasting Tones

One method of creating memorable, fall color images is to photograph scenes that have contrasting colors or tone values.

The contrast between the colors in the next image (page 32) helps to draw the viewer's attention. One technique that helps to further accentuate such a mixture of colors is to create a composition where the colors are set against a relatively dark background. Fortunately, the colorful tree was situated on the edge of a forest. This allowed the colorful trees to be placed against the relatively dark pines. Thus, the dark green of the pines along the top of the image helps to set off the colors of the trees. Last, the weather was used to enhance the image.

Lines, Shapes and Patterns

I stated that the most common mistake in fall color images is that many photographers focus completely on the fall colors to the exclusion of everything else. While it is true that the image at right is dominated by a single color, there is a big difference. The difference comes in the form of the tree trunks and branches.

When you look at the image of Aspen trees at on page 33, what do you see? Tree trunks?



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Sure, the eyes are drawn to the tree trunks without branches, but in reality we see an overall pattern. This scene was impossible to pass up while driving down a forest road. With a long lens the images are compressed into simple repetitive shapes or patterns. The light tree trunks contrast in both tone and color with the background. The vertical crop enhances the height of the aspen trunks into an impressive form. This image is not so much about the color. Rather, it is about the interaction of the lines, curves, and patterns of the trunks and branches.

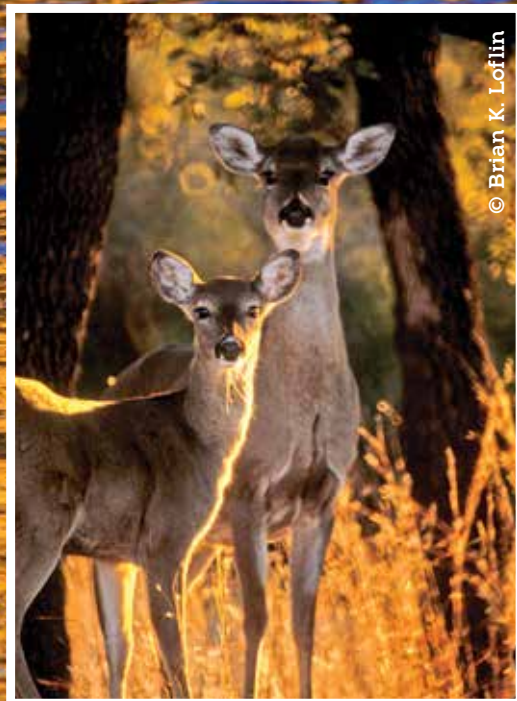
Reflections

Many subjects look dramatic when reflected in water. Shoot autumn color reflected in water to create stunning abstract fall photos. These shots work best early or late on a sunny day. Ideally, you want reflected foliage to be sunlit and the rest of the scene to be in shade. If you have yellows, oranges and reds on the trees, you'll end up with beautiful warm tones reflected in water.

The area behind the pond (right) had a group of trees with yellow fall color, but the tree reflection were more impressive. The choice was simple: use the pond to enhance the impact of the fall color through the reflections of the trees.



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With reflection photos, abstract and impressionistic images often work best, so zooming in tight on just a few details can make a difference. Experiment with focus between the surface of the water itself and the reflection of the trees. Changes in shutter speed will change the surface characteristic as well. A long shutter speed will create smoother water surfaces and abstract reflections.

Small Details

While photographing a majestic landscape is a good photographic style, there is great value in capturing the smaller details as well. Put on your close-focusing or macro lens and examine the tree trunks, moss-covered rocks and other details of nature to compliment your grand scene. Try different focal lengths and camera positions. Aim up, aim down. Don't be afraid to push the limits.

Native Wildlife

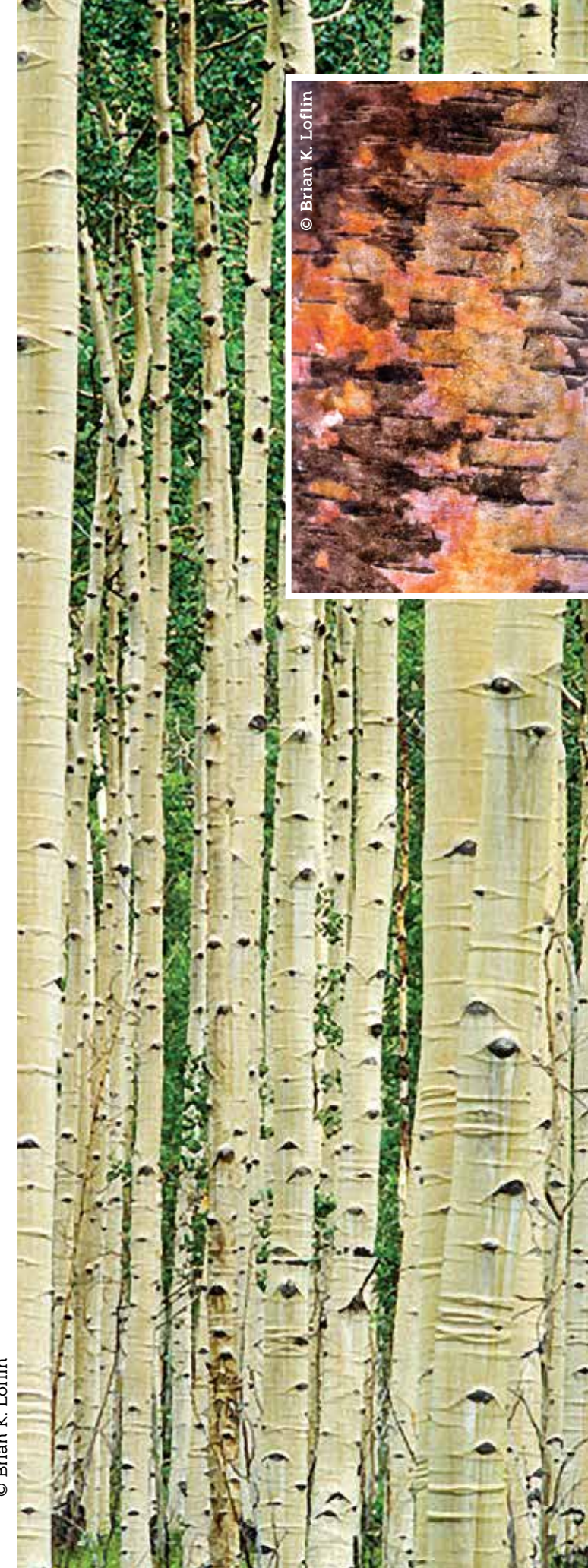
In photography it is always true that "Luck favors the prepared!" Expect the unexpected. Plan to always have your camera settings in just about the right range of ISO, aperture and shutter speed and pre-focused at a known distance so that your reaction time will not be hampered by inspecting and re-setting your camera. Be prepared, and your percentages of good fleeting moment images will increase dramatically.

Whatever you do, go out and shoot. And shoot a lot. Patience, persistence and practice will pay off. And, don't forget to have fun!

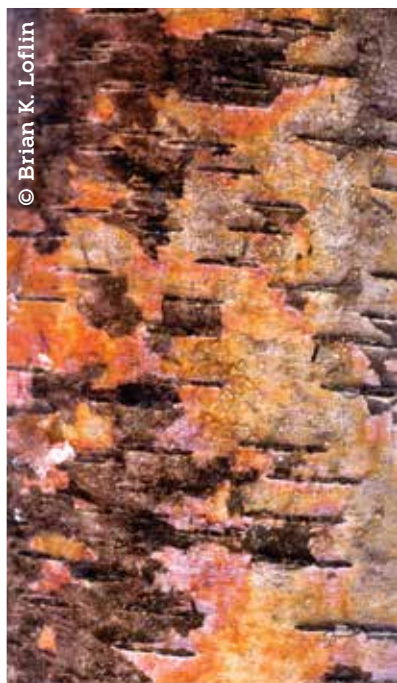
Brian K. Loflin is a seasoned photographic professional with a career that spans more than four decades in the advertising, aviation, bio-medical and publishing industry. As a graduate biologist with a background in marketing and communications, his early experience was as a medical photographer and a freelance photojournalist. He and his wife, Shirley, have photographed and authored several books, including: *Grasses of the Texas Hill Country* and *Texas Cacti*, both published by Texas A&M University Press.



© Brian K. Loflin



© Brian K. Loflin



There's More to Fall than Just Landscapes

Follow these timely tips to improve your photographs of family and friends and capture the details of the fall season.

Writing and Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

While the obvious stars of the fall show are the changing leaves, it's also a great time to photograph people. The light is warm and crisp and a backdrop of bright yellow, orange and red leaves will add an extra punch to your images.

- Shoot early in the morning for softer light; later for more intense golden light.
- Foliage is best lighted by afternoon sunlight with your subject placed in front, but the light will cast harsh shadows on faces so using the diffuser between the sunlight and the subject will soften that light. Look for the 43" reflector by Neewer that costs less than \$20. This five-in-one collapsible reflector allows you to interchange covers from silver, white, gold and black to translucent.
- Position your subject with the sun behind them and bounce the light back into your subject's face using the silver reflector. You can also try using fill flash to add more light.
- Try some shots from a low vantage point to include more foliage, positioning your subject so that you include bright color spots all around them.
- Shooting from a low point of view will also allow you to include a bright blue sky against the foliage.
- If you use an SLR camera, shoot with a longer lens. This allows you to put the focus on your subject, leaving your background soft and out of focus. This adds to the drama of the portrait, and can give you a unique look and style. One of my favorite lenses to use is a 70-200mm F2.8. Use a longer focal length (150mm – 200mm) to separate your subject from the background.
- Get action shots—if you have kids or pets, encourage them to romp in the leaves and shoot candid shots with the leaves falling.
- Fall is also a great time to shoot still lifes, too. Photograph carved pumpkins, wreaths and other fall decorations.
- When the leaves have all fallen, don't put away that camera! Stark, bare branches against the sky make for dramatic images.



MOE'S ECOMATS

Placemats, mug rugs and table runners hand woven from recycled plastic newspaper bags



- Help protect the environment by buying a product that re-uses hard-to-recycle plastic.
- Available in a variety of colors
- They make a unique gift. These placemats and mug rugs will brighten your dining room and picnic tables.
- Beautiful and durable.
- Can be wiped clean with a sponge
- Great for kids big or small

The Story Behind Moe's EcoMats

Moe relocated to Colorado from Washington, D.C., where recycling is important because of the scarcity of landfill dumps. He was surprised to see that there was little effort to recycle consumer waste in his new Denver suburban area. He noticed how many newspapers were delivered in plastic bags and how many plastic bags he would receive during shopping, so he started collecting the bags and taking them to supermarkets to be recycled. One day, his supermarket stopped accepting plastic bags! He researched recycling centers to find one that would accept them and discovered that plastic bags were only accepted at hard-to-recycle centers, which then have a very hard time finding buyers for their bundles. That's how MOE'S ECOMATS were born! MOE'S ECOMATS are a labor of love. Each bag is hand cut to make loops. Then each loop is tied together to form the plastic yarn. Each placemat removes approximately 19 newspaper bags from the landfills.

Written by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and Styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Buffalo Wing-It Dip

Tracy Havermann gives us her twist on this game-day standby. It's filling and easy so you don't have to fuss much. Make it the day before and bake it when you want it. For a variation, omit the chicken and make the dip with the remaining ingredients for a tasty dip for chicken strips.

Fall means football for a lot of people in the United States. Where game watchers gather, food follows. Here are some easy recipes—some you can prepare ahead and bake or grill when needed. If you keep a variety of these ingredients stocked in your pantry, fridge and freezer, you'll be ready to whip up some easy food on game day without spending too much time away from the big screen and the roaring crowd.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, diced
 - 2 8 oz. packages of cream cheese, softened
 - 1/2 cup Marie's blue cheese salad dressing
 - 1 cup ranch salad dressing
 - 1/2 cup blue cheese, crumbled, optional but good
 - 1 cup wing sauce (mild or hot, however you like it)
 - 4 stalks of celery, chopped
 - 4 scallions, chopped
 - 1-2 rotisserie chickens (or prepared chicken such as Purdue's Short Cuts, Southwestern Style)
 - 1 8 oz. package of shredded cheddar cheese
- Tabasco® sauce, optional

DIRECTIONS

Remove skin from rotisserie chicken and chop (or chop prepared chicken). Combine cream cheese, blue cheese and ranch dressings, blue cheese crumbles, wing sauce, celery and onions until well blended. Fold in chopped chicken.

Put cheese mixture in a 9" x 13" baking dish or a two-quart round casserole dish and sprinkle with shredded cheddar cheese and sprinkle with Tabasco sauce. Bake at 350° for about 25 minutes until hot and bubbly. Serve with tortilla chips. Make this a day ahead and keep refrigerated until ready to bake.

Get Your Game On!



CHM TIPS



Try Maytag Dairy Farm Blue Cheese, fresh from their farm in Iowa.

Babs' Bleu Burgers

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

This is our favorite combination of beef and cheese. You can substitute mozzarella, feta or Boursin, but then they wouldn't be Babs' Bleu Burgers now would they?

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/2 pound crumbled bleu cheese

DIRECTIONS

Using your hands, mix all ingredients except for the cheese and shape into four patties. They will be thick. Make a little indentation in the center of each patty and fill with cheese. Cover the hole with meat. Make ahead and freeze, thaw on game day. Grill, broil, or cook in a pan to your liking. Serve in a sturdy roll.

Sideline Slaw

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

There are a few surprise ingredients to this tasty slaw which doubles as a side salad or a topping for hot dogs, bratwursts or pulled pork.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup mayonnaise
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 2 teaspoons celery seed
 - 1/4 cup brine from jar of mild banana peppers
 - 1 navel orange, chopped
 - 1/4 cup chopped banana peppers from the jar
 - 1 bag shredded and bagged slaw mix
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Combine the first seven ingredients until smooth. Gradually add dressing to slaw and mix well, tasting as you go. Depending on your taste, use all or a portion of the dressing.



Beer 'n Brats

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

Who can resist a sizzling brat from the grill? Here we sauced up chicken sausages for the best tailgate brats. Serve with hearty mustard and some fresh, chewy rolls.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of beer
- 1 package chicken bratwursts
- Red and yellow peppers, sliced
- Red onions, sliced

DIRECTIONS

Put sausages in an aluminum foil pan suited for the grill. Pour the can of beer over the sausages. Place sliced peppers and onions on top of sausages and cover with foil. Place on grill, indirect heat, and steam for 20 minutes. Remove sausages from pan and grill for about 15 minutes. Keep peppers and onions hot in the steaming beer until ready to serve.

EASY CHOCOLATE-DIPPED PRETZELS

Why not dip some pretzels in chocolate for an easy-to-make, yet special treat? Use your favorite toppings such as crushed candies, mini M&Ms, crumbled cookies, sprinkles, or nuts. We used both white and dark chocolate and topped with crushed Oreo cookies, toffee bits, and white nonpareils.

You can dip pretzels of all shapes in white or dark chocolate, suitable for melting. We recommend Dolci frutta—hard shell chocolate found in the produce section of grocery stores—or Wilton Candy Melts.

Melt chocolate according to package directions. If dipping pretzels like the twists pictured here, dip one side in chocolate and then dip in toppings placed in a bowl. Let them cool on waxed paper. Store in airtight container until ready to serve.

Give a homemade gift! Package dipped pretzels in cellophane bags and tie with a festive ribbon.



I went on a fish taco-taste-testing spree on Pleasure Island, North Carolina, to see if I could improve upon my own recipe. Some of the toppings were mayonnaise-laden mystery sauces and some used heavy helpings of cheddar cheese which masked the fresh fish taste.

These seafood tacos with mango-avocado salsa are inspired from a memory of home in south Florida where I grew up part of my life. We had a variety of tropical fruit trees in our yard and mom would find ways to use the bounty.

Seafood Tacos with Mango-Avocado Salsa

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

Easy to make any time of the year, fish tacos add a welcome seafood option to any tailgate party.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds any kind of fresh, fleshy fish—mahhi-mahi, flounder, grouper
- 2 mangos, chopped into small chunks—everything should be tiny bite-sized
- 1/2 cup chopped green scallions
- 1-2 avocados, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Soft tortilla shells

DIRECTIONS

Make the salsa with the mangos, scallions, avocados, cilantro, lime juice, salt and pepper. Add avocados close to serving or they will turn brown, even with the lime juice as a preserver. Set aside.

Season the fish with any type of seasoning you like (this is where you improvise to your own taste buds). I've used blackened seasoning, Old Bay, salt, pepper, and cayenne. Drizzle some olive oil over the fish to get ready to cook on the grill or a stove-top pan. Cook the fish about four minutes on each side for a total of 8-10 minutes (depending on thickness, this is only a gauge). Place fish in soft tortilla and top with mango salsa. Makes 4-6 servings.





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TABLESCAPES

Written by **Barbara Kelley** • Photography and Styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Visual Feast

Set a table that says to your guests you've been waiting just for them. Your table can't be an afterthought. As Cindy Dyer, art director and photographer advises, "Just when you think you are done, throw in some more. Make it pop!" (Contrary to the accessorizing wisdom of removing one accessory before you got out the door.)

Establish a Color Palette

Traditional colors are always welcome in tablescaping, but don't be afraid to break out of that mold. When decorating your table to celebrate Christmas, try a color palette that doesn't include the traditional red and green. Be bold and mix lime green with chocolate, as seen in the tablescape on page 48. Some of the most dramatic tablescapes are built around a single color or two. Try a palette of white and silver, or mix your metals and do bronze, silver and gold. A tablecloth with a print can easily help you establish a color palette. Do a search for "color palettes" on Pinterest and you'll be inspired by a wonderful array of color combinations.

The best part of preparing for a holiday meal is taking a break from the cooking to create the table. My dad always said... "Sell the sizzle...then the steak." Make your table a feast for the eyes as well!

Build a Table around One or Two Items

Build your tablescape around a beautiful platter and fill it with candles and greenery. Look through your house to see what objects might inspire you to create something unexpected. For one Christmas Eve dinner, I built my tablescape around two gold candlesticks that a neighbor had given me that morning. Gold and green with a sprinkle of red was the result. I pulled ornaments off the tree to add a bit of flare.

It doesn't matter if it's dinner for two or twenty, if you're casual or formal, set your table with your mood and personality. Do it with a spirit of hospitality and it will show. We've included a few timely tablescaping tips to inspire you on page 48.



Tablescaping Tips

- Mix and match your plates and bowls to add more visual interest.
- Take a tray or basket, place several votive candles on or in it and accent with greens and ribbons.
- Always use candles for the Christmas meal. Place votive candles in various crystal holders at each place or randomly place them around the table.
- If your dining table is a farm-type table or more informal, use a colorful quilt to cover it. Make a centerpiece out of greens from your yard—holly, evergreen, magnolia. If you live in the tropics, use flowers and tropical greens.
- Use the gingerbread house your kids made as a centerpiece. Tie napkins with ribbon and candy canes.
- Weave beaded garland or fabric ribbon throughout the table for interest and to unify.
- Mix and match plates if you don't have enough of one pattern. Try to follow a scheme or same color palette. Use on a plain tablecloth or place mats.
- Tie napkins with ribbons and add an ornament.
- Put fresh cranberries in a vase and fill with white flowers. Use several small vases or just one big one.
- Fill a bowl with pomegranates and oranges. Stud the oranges with whole cloves.
- Drape the center of the table with a colorful silky scarf and place your Christmas baubles on top.
- Arrange a collection of nutcrackers, carolers or houses along with greens as a centerpiece.
- Fill a glass bowl with ornaments and greens, or scatter ornaments around the centerpiece.
- If you can sew a simple stitch, make a table runner.
- Choose your color palette based on the color of a plate, charger, table cloth or runner, then add something that contrasts and complements it.
- You'll find a wide array of holiday picks, candles, and garlands at craft stores. Check out the sale table after the holidays for next year's creations.
- Let your children decorate the table for a complete children's table. Have them make placecards.
- Use these same tips with a buffet table and build upon a main dish or centerpiece. Add height by elevating bowls and trays on pedestals.

Celebrate Home Magazine would love to hear about your tablescaping ideas.

E-mail your high-resolution photo and description to bkelly@celebratehomemag.com



Picture Your Skin Smoother, Brighter, Clearer

Clear Skin Line



Sensitive Skin Line

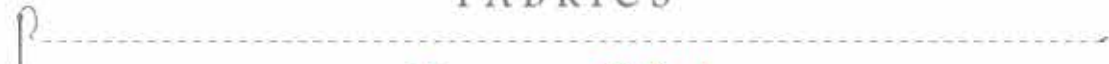
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Writing by **Maria Hufnagel** • Photography and Styling by **Cindy Dyer**
Recipes by **Michael Schwehr** and **Barbara Kelley**

Ah...autumn. Crisp leaves, smoke from wood-burning fireplaces rising from chimneys, and pumpkin pie. And pumpkin pie. And more pumpkin pie. Did I mention pumpkin pie?

Believe it or not, the pumpkin is more than a seasonal decoration and pie filling. Pumpkin, a type of squash, can easily become a nutritious addition to practically any type of food.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with the traditional methods of preparing pumpkins and other squashes. A traditional, well-crafted pumpkin pie can be a beautiful thing. Unfortunately, this tradition may not go as far back as you think: while squash was essential to the diets of Native Americans and pilgrims alike, the preferred method of preparation was less elegant.

As unsettling as it is to consider, the pumpkins and squash featured prominently in the early years of Thanksgiving did not take the form of a triangular slice of pie with graham cracker crust and a dollop of whipped cream. Rather, the early Americans roasted strips of pumpkin over fires, or they prepared the interior, replaced the top and buried the whole fruit in coals to cook. These methods of preparation may come across as barbaric to the modern domestic, but they are both easier and healthier than baking the fruit into a dessert.

Because they are so nutritionally rich, not to mention at peak harvest right now, take advantage of the natural goodness that pumpkins and other squash have to offer. Most of us think of pumpkins as the huge orange things we see caked with dirt on a stand in the supermarket around this time of year. However, the pumpkin family is much more complex. They come in a variety of colors and shapes, which can meet nearly any modern application.

Autumn

Harvest





FOOD & ENTERTAINING

While getting a ton of vitamins and minerals from nutrient-dense fruits is great for your health in any form, you can get the most out of your meal by keeping natural foods as close to their natural state as possible. Many types of squash are strong enough to stand on their own: halve the fruit, discard seeds, and bake until soft enough to skin—yummy!

The fat orange pumpkin at the supermarket is most likely the appropriately named “Jack O-Lantern” pumpkin, which has been bred specifically with flat walls and a hollow interior that make this breed optimal for carving, but less ideal for baking. Instead, use these guys as decoration to celebrate the season both indoors and out; just keep out of sunlight for best results.

Other varieties of squash are much better for cooking. The squash family includes summer squash and winter squash, the latter of which includes pumpkins. The most easily detectable difference between summer and winter squash is the skin texture: the skin of summer squash is thin and malleable, while winter squash has a tough, coarse skin. Not only are all squash in season at this time of year (and the fruit’s gorgeous shades of orange, yellow and green certainly don’t hurt), but they are also a ridiculously healthy addition to your diet.

Winter squash happen to be a magnificent source of beta-carotene, an antioxidant that aids the body in disease prevention. So consider pumpkins and other winter squash in the same category as other so-called “superfoods,” such as cranberries, pomegranates, and sweet potatoes. Plus, our bodies also turn beta-carotene into Vitamin A. Not bad for a fruit that is most often remembered as the vehicle from a fairy tale.

Summer squash, on the other hand, is a bit more complicated. Although it is also an excellent source of vitamins and beta-carotene, the summer squash consists of a larger percentage of water than the winter squash. It is therefore less nutrient-dense. However, the concentration of water in summer squash does serve a purpose: it can help keep you hydrated in—you guessed it—summer.

While getting a ton of vitamins and minerals from nutrient-dense fruits is great for your health in any form, you can get the most out of your meal by keeping natural foods as close to their natural state as possible. Many types of squash are strong enough to stand on their own: halve the fruit, discard seeds, and bake until soft enough to skin—yummy!

Spaghetti squash, such as the small wonder, is a healthy alternative to pasta. Acorn and butternut squashes are immaculate on their own, but once baked they can also be used as the base of a soup, such as the featured recipe Butternut and Acorn Squash Soup on page 58. Processed with onions, ground pepper, and cinnamon, the naturally sweet aromas of butternut and acorn squash balance out the spices.

Pumpkin seeds are high in protein, iron, and B vitamins. The kakai, a small pumpkin with orange and green striped skin, is popular for its seeds, which are ideal for snacking because they do not have a hull (shell). Other pumpkin breeds have semi-hull-less seeds, such as the Snack Jack or the Baby Bear.

Smaller varieties of winter squash, such as kabocha, cha-cha, and buttercup are sized perfectly to make a soup bowl: just cut off the top and the stem, remove the pulp and reserve for your recipe, and bake the shell just until it is

The best pumpkins for baking into pies, breads, or other desserts are small and have a fine-grained flesh. The pink banana squash and the sugar pie pumpkin, which have particularly sweet flesh, are well-suited options for use in dessert recipes.

warm. Do not overcook, as you run the risk of the shell becoming too tender. After your meal, you can toss or, better yet, compost the pumpkin shells. Not only will this sustainable practice satisfy your family, but it will also become food for your garden. And better still, no dishes to wash!

So, pumpkins and squash and their relatives can easily become a colorful side dish, or even a hearty entrée. But we can bargain. While pumpkin desserts unfortunately do not count as a serving of fruit, you can consider it a fun way to lighten up a dessert recipe. Think past the pie crust and make pumpkin muffins or cookies, such as Holiday Pumpkin Cookies (recipe on p. 57).

The best pumpkins for baking into pies, breads, or other desserts are small and have a fine-grained flesh. The pink banana squash and the sugar pie pumpkin, which have particularly sweet flesh, are well-suited options for use in dessert recipes. Another unique option is the blue hubbard, a squash with medium sweetness and fine texture, or the sweet meat.

Autumn

While winter squash flesh is frequently pureed in dessert recipes, summer squash like zucchini are usually finely grated, preferably with a box grater. Because of the water concentration in summer squash, baked goods made with zucchini can become soggy from too much moisture. To ensure a fluffy loaf or muffin, pat grated zucchini dry with a paper towel to squeeze out the moisture. [Full disclosure: I made zucchini bread this morning, and I am absolutely sure that it made my day infinitely more tolerable.]

Before I send you off to stock up and start baking, I have one final request. Instead of tossing a pumpkin into your cart at the grocery store (and kicking yourself for it as you struggle under the weight of your grocery bags), research local farmers' markets, pumpkin patches, or produce stands. You are more likely to find a wide variety of pumpkins and squashes, and because they do not have to be transported, they will be fresher. Best of all, you are helping the economy of your own community, which is not a bad excuse to pick up one of each kind.

Harvest



Butternut and Acorn Squash Soup

Recipe by **Michael Schwehr**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 butternut squash, halved and seeded
- 1 acorn squash, halved and seeded
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup chopped sweet onion
- 1 quart low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 8 oz. package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Ground cinnamon to taste (optional)
- Chives for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Place the squash halves cut side down in a baking dish. Bake 45 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat, and cool slightly. Scoop the pulp from the skins. Discard skins. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat, and saute the onion until tender.

In a blender or food processor, blend the squash pulp, onion, broth, brown sugar, cream cheese, pepper, and cinnamon until smooth. This may be done in several batches.

Transfer the soup to a pot over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until heated through. Garnish with parsley or chives and serve warm. Add a dollop of sour cream.

This soup can be made well ahead of a dinner party and can be kept refrigerated for several days. I have frozen this soup for several weeks and it still tasted great when thawed and heated. The longer the soup stands, the more fully the flavors blend.



Holiday Pumpkin Cookies

Recipe from **Barbara Kelley**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup shortening (this means Crisco®, luckily today you can buy them in pre-measured sticks)
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon orange extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup solid pack pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)

Cream the above ingredients together, then add the following:

- 1-3/4 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice (usually a mixture of cinnamon, ground cloves and allspice)

DIRECTIONS

Drop and top with pecan halves. Bake at 350° for about 15 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

THE NAME GAME

Mom made up her cookie recipes and named them with to-the-point names, most often using the words “holiday” or “Christmas” in the titles. Mom didn’t waste words and this was demonstrated even in her cookie titles. She used ingredients like Crisco and even sometimes “oleo.” Remember that word? We hope you enjoy this recipe from Lois “DeeDee” Garneau.



FOND MEMORIES

Some might call Lucille a little old lady. Little, yes. Old, hardly. I knew her years ago and she was sprightly and positive, despite having a hearing loss. She would beam a disarming smile at you and kindly ask you to repeat what you said. Her husband died when their only son was young and she decided she would raise him doing things her husband would have done with him. She taught him to fish, hike, and other things boys like. She knew she couldn't fill the shoes of a dad, but she would do her best so he wouldn't miss out. The result was an enduring and close relationship with her son, his wife and her grandchildren.

Lucille's Pumpkin Roll

Written by **Barbara Kelley** • Recipe by **Lucille Nestler**

INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 pinch ground cloves

DIRECTIONS

Grease a jelly roll pan. (10" x 15") and cover with parchment paper. Mix all of the above ingredients and pour into pan. Bake in 375° oven for 10-15 minutes until center springs back. Lay a tea towel (not terrycloth) on table and sprinkle with granulated sugar. Flip cake on towel and peel off paper. Roll pumpkin in the towel and let it cool for several hours.

INGREDIENTS FOR CREAM CHEESE FILLING

- 8 oz. softened cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup sifted powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Combine ingredients. Unroll pumpkin loaf and spread with filling. Roll up again. Wrap in wax paper and then in foil. Refrigerate. Slice when ready to serve. Freezes beautifully.



Autumn

Harvest



The Flavors of Fall

Written by **Barbara Kelley** • Photography + Styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Autumn Corn Chowder

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

This delicate but hearty soup recipe is easily doubled or tripled. Here is the six-serving version.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, diced
- 3 medium potatoes diced (2-1/2 cups)
- 1 sweet red pepper, finely chopped
- 2 cups water
- 2 cans cream style corn (15 oz. can)
- 2 cups milk (use 2 percent to make it lower in fat)
- 1/2 cup chopped dill for garnish
- Salt and pepper to taste

CHM TIPS



Do not use sweet Vidalia-type onion as they lose their flavor when cooked. The onions need to stand up and be counted in this soup. For a flavor twist, caramelize half of the onions to add a rich flavor. To make a thicker soup, add a handful of instant mashed potato flakes.

DIRECTIONS

Sauté onion in about 4 tablespoons of oil of your choice. Put potatoes, red pepper and water in stock pot to cook. When onions are soft, add them to the stock pot. Add corn, milk and spices. Cook until done. Garnish with dill sprigs. As with most soups, it gets better the second day.

Gruyere Popovers

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

Popovers are the American version of Yorkshire pudding except Yorkshire pudding is made with meat drippings instead of butter. Some of you might have memories from the 1950s of popovers served with jello or chicken salads. Here is a twist on a favorite popping batter.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup skim milk (if you use whole milk, use 1/2 cup milk and 1/2 cup water)
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup grated Gruyere cheese
- 4 tablespoons of butter

DIRECTIONS

Mix the flour and salt. Slowly blend in milk. Beat the eggs into the batter until well blended. If adding cheese, fold it in with a spatula. (You can substitute cheddar or regular Swiss cheese).

Use muffin tins or six-ounce ramekins, (need 4 to 6 cups). Put about 1-2 teaspoons of butter in each cup. Put the cups on a cookie sheet and put sheet in a 375° oven until butter melts.

Remove the sheet and cups from the oven and fill each cup either one-half or two-thirds full depending on how big you want them. Put cups and tray back in the oven and bake at 375° for 45 minutes until brown and well popped. Please don't open the oven door to peek at them. Serve immediately while hot; they dry out and do not reheat well. If not using cheese, you can serve with butter and jam.



The Flavors of Fall

Roasted Pork Loin with Swiss Cheese

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

This is comfort food...refined.

PORK LOIN INGREDIENTS

- 1 two-pound pork loin roast
- 1/2 cup of Herbs de Provence
- 1 cup water + 1/2 cup of red wine if you have it on hand
- 4-6 slices of Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
- Dijon mustard, grainy style

DIJON SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons butter
 - 3 tablespoons of Wondra® Sauce & Gravy Flour
 - 2 cups beef or chicken broth (or instant bouillon)
 - 1/2 cup milk
 - 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
 - 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Dust pork roast generously with Herbs de Provence, about one-half cup or more. Place into a roasting pan—no rack needed. Fill pan with water about one quarter of the way up the sides. Bake at 350° or until internal temperature reaches 155°. (About 1-1/2 hours; don't overcook.)

Remove from oven and let roast sit while you prepare cheese. Spread six slices of cheese by spreading them with hearty grain mustard. Cut six slits into the roast and push cheese in each slit. Return to oven and heat until cheese melts and the internal temperature of the roast is 160°. Serve with Dijon sauce.

DIJON SAUCE

Melt butter in sauce pan, whisk in flour until bubbly to make a roux. On low heat, slowly whisk in broth and milk until smooth and thickened. Stir in mustard and rosemary. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Keep warm. If it gets too thick, thin the sauce with more milk or beef broth.

CHM TIPS



Serve with tri-colored roasted potatoes on a bed of steamed spinach with caramelized onions. To caramelize onions, slice a yellow onion (not sweet) and sauté in about a quarter cup of vegetable or olive oil for about 20 minutes until soft. Turn up the heat a little and stir constantly until brown. Just before they are about to burn, take them from the stove and the onions are perfectly caramelized.





Creamy Apple Tart

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

Serve with a dollop of whipped cream on the side with a fresh berry or two.

TOPPING INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 tablespoon cinnamon
- 5 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and sliced

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the topping first so it is ready to go when you have the rest done. Mix sugar and cinnamon together and toss with apples.

CRUST INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened, not melted
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla. Blend in flour and cinnamon. Spread the soft dough in a 9-inch spring form pan (removable bottom). Use fingers to make sure dough is evenly spread on bottom and up sides, about one-quarter inch from the top.

FILLING INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. softened cream cheese
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Cream together cheese and sugar, add egg and vanilla. Mix and pour into the crust. Arrange apples over filling. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 400° and bake for 25 minutes. Cool before removing outer ring from pan.

**A MAD SCIENTIST
IN THE KITCHEN**

Bill's pecan pie is never the same. He says, "It depends on the guest list, any combination of ingredients, my mood, what's in the pantry and the liquor cabinet, and what the guests might like." He's made peanut and chocolate pecan pies, pecan-chocolate, walnut-pecan, straight pecan, rum-pecan, you name it. No matter what, his pie is always good. You either love pecan pie or you say it's too rich and you don't eat it, but everyone samples Bill's pies.

Ever-Changing Pecan Pie with a Touch of White Chocolate

Recipe by **Bill Kelley**

Eating this pie is not for wimps.

We recommend a basic flaky shortening pie crust not made with butter. A butter crust is rich and there is enough wealth in the filling to carry the day.

CRUST INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup vegetable shortening, chilled (Crisco® works well)
- 3-6 tablespoons chilled water

Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl. Cut shortening into flour with a fork or pastry blender under mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle three tablespoons of water over mixture and stir with fork. Add water until dough sticks together. Form into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and chill for at least 25 minutes. Flatten dough into a disk and roll dough on a floured surface slightly larger than the pie pan. Carefully place the crust into the pan and flute trim edges of crust.

FILLING INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup light Karo® syrup
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon bourbon
- 1-1/2 cups chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips
- Whole pecans for decoration

Melt butter. Add Karo® syrup, molasses, eggs, white and brown sugars, vanilla and bourbon. Mix well with a whisk until well blended. Add pecans and white chocolate chips and stir. Pour into unbaked pie crust and decorate with whole pecans. Bake at 350° for 55-60 minutes. Cool completely before cutting. Freezes well.



The Flavors of Fall



FOOD & ENTERTAINING

Candied Apple Cookies

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley**

These cookies combine our favorite sweet ingredients of fall.

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/3 cup unsalted butter
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 2 egg whites + 1 whole egg, slightly beaten
- 2 cups finely chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup sugar + 2 tablespoons cinnamon combined
- 35 soft caramel candies, unwrapped
- 1 Granny Smith apple, chopped finely, mixed with 1 tablespoon of sugar + 2 teaspoons of cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

In mixing bowl, beat butter until fluffy. Add flour, sugar, egg yolks and almond extract. Combine thoroughly. Cover and chill dough for about an hour. Mix walnuts with cinnamon sugar mix and set aside. Chop apples and sprinkle cinnamon sugar mix on apples and set aside.

Shape dough into two-inch balls with a cookie ball scoop. Roll in beaten egg whites and egg, and then roll in chopped walnuts. Place on parchment-lined cookie sheet. Press your thumb in the center of cookie. Bake in 350° oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and place a caramel square in the middle of each cookie. Sprinkle chopped apples mixed with cinnamon sugar on top of each cookie. Bake another 10 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on cookie sheet. Makes about 35 cookies.

COOKING WITH CANDY

Celebrate Home Magazine will feature recipes for cooking with candy. We'd like to know how you cook with candy. Send us your original recipes so our test kitchen can try them and possibly feature them in a future issue. Send your recipes to bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.

Lucile's Kitchen



Interview by **Cindy Dyer** • Illustrations by **Lucile Prache**



I discovered **Lucile Prache's artwork on etsy.com, a social commerce website featuring handmade or vintage items as well as art and craft supplies. Her illustrations are lively, sketchy, full of color, and very whimsical. Lucile is Parisian and it was such a pleasure to interview her and learn more about her creative life.**

When did you first discover your creative talents?

I have been drawing since my early childhood and found it quite natural to express myself in this way as I grew in a family with an artistic mood. I was very shy and I guess it was helpful to draw instead of talk.

Did you go to school for art?

Yes, I studied at the ESAG art school (also known as Penninghen) in Saint Germain des Prés in Paris and graduated—a long time ago.

Did you inherit your artistic talents from your parents?

Yes, I surely did. My father is an architect and my mother has always been making pottery (both are part of the flower power generation!).

When did you know that you wanted to be an artist (illustrator)?

I didn't really feel like a fine artist because at art school we learned to be illustrators. Plus, I had been working for magazines, the fashion industry, and in advertising for such long time, I didn't feel like a fine artist.

I still do these types of projects, but I love painting for my Etsy world-wide customers. Having a large audience is important for me—I don't think "real" artists need that. Knowing that someone in Japan and someone in New York is looking at my artwork at the same time just makes my day!

How long have you been working as a freelance artist and illustrator?

I have been a freelancer for almost 25 years.

I love the fresh, loose, sketchy style of your illustrations.

Did the evolution of this style come easily to you?

Thank you so much! I think I have always sketched in this style because I love travel journals (specifically Cy Twombly and Jean Michel Basquiat art). I have been very interested in Chinese calligraphy and started to learn with a Chinese teacher. He always told his French students that they never



Lucile's Kitchen

"My inspiration comes from real life—typography on labels, dirty papers on the sidewalk (yes, I am a Parisian!), kitsch postcards of Brooklyn, a vibrant green top on a girl in the street, vintage books of English china, figs at the market—almost any image can inspire me!"

—Lucile Prache

would become Chinese even after 100 years, but this could be helpful for our very Western style; I believe this is true—my work has become looser and fresher since I began studying Chinese calligraphy.

How would you describe your illustration/painting style?

I want my paintings to look carefree and happy. I have been studying ballet since my childhood, and I believe that my illustrations are just like dance pieces—everything appears to be easy. Dancers are always smiling on stage, but there is a lot of work behind the stage.

Your illustrations are unique and full of energy. Where does your inspiration come from?

My inspiration comes from real life—typography on labels, dirty papers on the sidewalk (yes, I am a Parisian!), kitsch postcards of Brooklyn, a vibrant green top on a girl in the street, vintage books of English china, figs at the market—almost any image can inspire me!

What mediums do you work in other than watercolor? Do you have a favorite brand of watercolor paint? Favorite brushes and paper?

I work a lot on my Cintiq Wacom pen tablet with Photoshop when I get jobs for fashion, magazines and advertising clients. When painting with watercolor, I love Windsor and Newton because of their amazing fresh colors. I am painting with Chinese brushes on French BFK Rives paper.

I decided to leave my Wacom tablet and my computer for a while and went back to colored pencils, gouache and watercolor again. I missed the "real taste" of different papers and pigments. The printing process means CMYK colors. Original paintings allow gold, silver, fluo paintings and this just makes my day!

Do you create still life set-ups of fruits and vegetables from which to reference? What is a typical work day like?

Sometimes I stumble upon beautiful fruits or vegetables at the market and paint them before cooking them. Most of the time I reference photos or browse online for inspiration when I don't have time to go to Chinatown and purchase Asian food for a still life set-up.

Do you do any computer illustration?

Yes, I do. It is exciting to use several devices. I work in Corel Painter, Illustrator and Photoshop on an old Mac Pro. These software programs allow me to paste labels, type and photographs into my illustrations.





"I started selling on Etsy more than two years ago and it completely changed my life! It is always very exciting to add new paintings, communicate on Facebook and blog about the process. I am absolutely thrilled to get many buyers from all around the world—mainly from the United States. It is a delight to keep in touch with so many open-minded, cool and positive people."
 —Lucile Prache

What do you like most about being an illustrator?

Illustrators have freedom—this is what I like most; but we know that we sometimes have to pay a huge price to keep this freedom.

Has illustration as a profession changed over the years?

It has. Computers and the Internet changed everything. I started my career before the Internet, and I remember I had to go to *Marie Claire* magazine and deliver my orders in person. It was quite fun because I could talk with the art director and the redaction team. We knew each other quite well. I loved to walk in Paris from my studio to my clients, but it was time-consuming, too.

We are now networking and it is completely different, but I really enjoy the friends I've met around the world because of Etsy. I am meeting them sometimes in Paris, or more recently in New York, and I love this!

How long have you been selling on Etsy? Has it been a good way to get your work out to buyers?

I started selling on Etsy more than two years ago and it completely changed my life! It is always very exciting to add new paintings, communicate on Facebook and blog about the process. I am absolutely thrilled to get many buyers from all around the world—mainly from the United States. It is a delight to keep in touch with so many open-minded, cool and positive people.

Do you pursue other creative endeavors?

I like screenprinting and can't wait to work on new designs but I need time and energy—and not to be too hungry because my screenprinting studio is my kitchen.

You are surrounded by amazing museums, which must be an inspiration to you. Tell me a little bit about life in Paris and your family. Did your children inherit your talent for art?

My children are geeks and creative ones! Please come to Paris and see how we live. After spending two weeks in New York City, Paris seems to me like a small village of farmers, But I definitely love Paris—I get inspiration from the street equally as from the museums. I plan to go and see the Gerard Richter exhibition in le Centre Pompidou tomorrow. I always forget how I can be stunned by painting in a peaceful place like a museum. I am in love with my city, but I am always dreaming of elsewhere...and I swear I will try to improve my bad English. But luckily, the language of images is international.

Lucile's Kitchen

"I am in love with my city, but I am always dreaming of elsewhere....and I swear I will try to improve my bad English. But luckily, the language of images is international!"

—Lucile Prache

I noticed on your blog that you also are an avid gardener. How does gardening influence your love of illustrating food?

My garden is located on a wet and sunny island, so I only see my garden four to six weeks a year and it doesn't take much care. I wish I had a vegetable garden and could watch it grow but it is impossible for a Parisian work addict. Too bad, because it would be very inspiring. I paint fruits, vegetables, cakes because of their beauty, but also because I enjoy cooking.

What are your influences? What artists inspire you?

I was first influenced by rock music and pop art artists such as Andy Warhol, Basquiat, Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg, French artist Hervé Télémaque, Tadanori Yokoo, Joan Mitchell—I love them all.

What are you working on now?

I just finished a collaboration with a French publisher on a cookbook about Italian food. It is a very exciting project.

I will be working for a fashion agency in late October, but currently I want to add new prints and paintings in my Etsy shop. I would love to publish my own recipe book and make it available for Christmas, but I am sure I won't have time this year.

If you weren't an artist what would you be?

I would be a (bad) dancer.

Any advice for aspiring illustrators?

Keep your eyes wide open unless you are asleep.

Describe yourself in three words.

Still always curious

No interview would be complete without this requisite question—You're stranded on a deserted island—what five things must you have?

Five cards of Raoul Dufy flowers, then find a way to make tools and do mineral painting—let's get to work!

Etsy shop: www.etsy.com/shop/lucileskitchen

Blog: luciles-kitchen.blogspot.fr/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Luciles-kitchen/197554960274042?sk=wall





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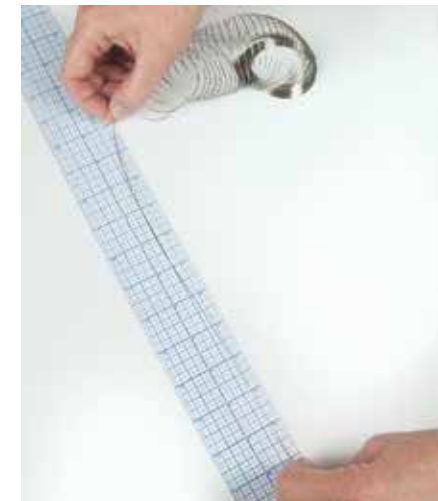
Napkin Blings

Designed by **Cindy Dyer** and **Karen Byer-Storch** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

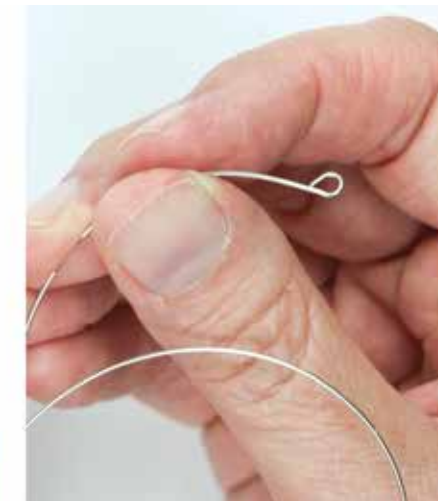
Here's an easy DIY craft project that makes a great gift. Our two-loop versions require less beads. Beads come in all shapes, sizes, colors and textures, so the creative possibilities are endless. Local craft stores carry a great selection and often have 40 percent off sales (Michael's, JoAnn's, Hobby Lobby, A.C. Moore). Look for great prices on beads on amazon.com, too. Mix inexpensive beads with nicer focal ones. Try creating a set of rings that has mismatched bead shapes and textures, but all in a similar palette. Check your local dollar store for necklaces you can take apart, such as the shell necklace used in the napkin ring on the second row in the middle. Simple, quick and impressive—how much do we love that?

SUPPLIES

- Memory wire (for bracelets)
- Wire cutter
- Ruler
- Needle-nose pliers or round-nose pliers
- Beads, 6mm and higher



Carefully cut 12" of memory wire with your wire cutters. The wire will retain its shape.



Using your needle-nose or round-nose pliers, form a small loop at one end.



String beads of various shapes, sizes, textures and colors until you are left with about 1/4" of wire.



Using your needle-nose or round-nose pliers, form a small loop, closing off the last bead on the wire.



This project forms approximately two loops, depending on the bead sizes. Longer wire = more loops.



Voila—Napkin bling! (And yes, it can most definitely double as a bracelet in a pinch!)

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ON THE ROAD
Abilene, Kansas

They Still Like Ike

Kansas, nicknamed the sunflower state, is where they're very kind to strangers from the east. They say hospitality is a quality attributed to residents of the southern region of the United States that is based on the principle of sharing resources, even when resources are limited. Kansas shows plenty of southern hospitality—Midwestern style. Years ago immigrants turned prairie into farmland and today Kansas is one of the most productive agricultural states, producing wheat, sorghum and sunflowers.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower is Abilene, Kansas' favorite son. Abilene is the boyhood home of "Ike," who served two terms as president of the United States (1953-1961). The entire town is deeply in love with the famous WWII Army general who served as supreme allied commander and later became president. A visit to the museum and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library & Museum holds a treasure of vintage history. For the man who saw Alaska and Hawaii become states, signed the 1957 Civil Rights Act, signed the bill creating NASA, and authorized the Interstate Highway system, he still was an artist and gentle man who loved children enough that he named a presidential retreat after his grandson, David (Camp David in Maryland).



© Cindy Dyer

Then, There Was Mamie

Mamie Eisenhower was born Mamie Geneva Doud in Boone, Iowa. On July 1, 1916, Ike and Mamie were married at noon in the Doud family home in Denver—the same day Ike received his first Army promotion.

A Woman of Distinction

Several of her wardrobe ensembles are on display in the museum and she had incredible taste in clothing and an eye for fashion. Her hourglass figure gave way to the "Mamie look," which was typified by her pretty one-piece dresses in lovely colors with feminine lines, cinched tightly across the waist just below the bust line. Mamie also had a bubbly personality and a heart for hospitality. Quoted from the presidential library's website, "Although she lived and traveled all over the world, Mrs. Eisenhower always remained a person who was most happy at home surrounded by her family."

The president died in 1969 and Mamie died in 1971. They were buried in the Place of Meditation at the Eisenhower Center in Abilene, Kansas beside their first son who died of scarlet fever at age four. If you ever get to Abilene, please don't miss the chance to visit the museum and library.

Find it Here**Presidential Libraries**

There are only 13 presidential libraries in the United States. Learn more about them at www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/.

More to See and Do

www.abilenecityhall.com

Find Abilene, Kansas, on Facebook



© Cindy Dyer

Mamie Eisenhower's Sugar Cookies

Recipe Courtesy of Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau and West's Country Mart

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

Mix and sift flour, baking powder and salt. Cream butter, add sugar and cream slowly until fluffy. Stir in well-beaten egg yolks and vanilla extract. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with cream. Chill for one hour, roll and cut in any desired shape. Sprinkle with sugar before baking. Bake at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes.



Dish Towel Diva

What started as a small, innocent and inexpensive pleasure, turned into an obsession of epic proportions. Ordinary dish towels make for an extraordinary collection that is both well-used and well-loved.

Written by **Melanie Poirier**

Photography and Styling
by **Cindy Dyer**

Dish Towel Diva

It all started on a cold, blustery day in November 1995.

There I was, a young mother of three, standing in the housewares section of my local Marshall's. I was about to host my very first Thanksgiving dinner, for 13 people, no less. I had never cooked a turkey before, but that didn't bother me. I had figured out where everyone would sit for dinner in our townhouse. I had enough dishes and silverware to go around. I was pretty much ready, or so I thought.

But then I spotted IT.

IT was a strikingly lovely dish towel, in the vibrant colors of fall—purple, green, gold, burgundy, orange. The damask design was of pumpkins and ears of corn still on the stalk. IT beckoned to me—“Melanie, take me home! Won't

I look beautiful in your white kitchen?” Oh yes, IT, yes you would. My husband and I had only been married for six years, and after the birth of our first child less than two years later, I had resigned from my job to stay home and care for our children. Money was tight. But the dish towel was lovely. And, so, after a bit of inner struggle, I gave in and forked over the \$2.99 (plus tax).

Thanksgiving morning, with my brand-new dish towel lying casually on my white Formica countertop, I felt ready to take on the world. And the turkey. And it all came together splendidly, that dinner. But the best part of all was that cleaning up was made so much more pleasant with my elegant, autumnal dish towel. What did I care, how many dishes I had to dry? I had my beautiful new dish towel to help me!



TRUE COLORS
Fear not, I am a patriot—
with red, white and blue
dish towels to prove it!

An Obsession was Born

In the next five years, we had two more children, we began homeschooling, and we moved to a single-family home. I realized that I spent a lot—no, make that A LOT—of time in my kitchen. I did have a dishwasher, of a sort, that gave up the ghost for good somewhere around 2001. We had already put money into repairing it once (and it wasn't new when we moved in), and just weren't ready to buy a new one because we knew we would be remodeling our kitchen some day soon and I wanted to wait and pick out all the appliances together.

“Soon” became 18 months without a dishwasher, but did I mind? No, I did not—because by then, my dish towel collection was starting to bloom. Once I realized how something so small could make such a positive impact, I began collecting beautiful dish towels. Who can complain about doing dishes when you have something good-looking to help you? Something good-looking besides my husband, of course, who incidentally is the type of husband who doesn't mind doing dishes. I chose well.

The Collection Grows

I expanded my autumn dish towel collection exponentially. I justified this by telling myself that hosting Thanksgiving every year since 1995 for between 13 and 25 people means that I need a lot of dish towels to dry all those prep

Once I realized how something so small could make such a positive impact, I began collecting beautiful dish towels. Who can complain about doing dishes when you have something so good-looking to help you?

OLÉ! OLÉ!
What's Cinco de Mayo without a little festive color?



Dish Towel Diva



Springtime brings its own delights, and its own set of delightful pastel dish towels.

dishes, serving dishes, dinner dishes, eating utensils, etc. I've branched out into sub-categories—Halloween towels, Thanksgiving towels, general fall towels.

Dish Towels of Christmas Past

And what would all the Christmas baking be without Christmas-themed dish towels? My children and I bake gingerbread houses every year with the godmother of my daughter Teresa. This requires many dish towels to clean up the (delicious) mess. We also bake about a dozen or more different kinds of Christmas cookies to give as gifts—necessitating a lot of drying of cookie sheets, cutters, cooling racks, etc. In addition, we host a Christmas party every year, as well as Christmas dinner for the grandparents, and, well, there are a lot of dishes that need to be dried on those occasions. But when I see a stack of clean, ironed (oh yes, I do iron them), colorful, seasonally-appropriate dish towels just patiently waiting to be used, the chore becomes a pleasure.

Springtime Bounty

Springtime brings its own delights, and its own set of delightful pastel dish towels. Of course I must have special Easter dish towels, as Easter is the most important holiday in our religious year. Not only are they used for drying dishes, but to line Easter baskets full of food to be blessed at our church the day before Easter.

No Holiday Left Behind

Lest you should think I have forgotten other holidays, fear not. I am a patriot; thus, I have a collection of red, white and blue dish towels to celebrate the Fourth of July. St. Valentine has his own dish towel too. I believe the only one I am missing is something for St. Patrick's Day, which really is rather irresponsible of me, considering that I have a son named Patrick. But I do have a shamrock tablecloth, so there's that.

No Occasion Needed

But what of the majority of the days in the year, which are not holidays? The truth is, most of my dish towel collection is simply colorful, interesting, attractive towels that I have chosen for no reason other than they appeal to me. And, beauty aside, they also get the job done. I only buy 100 percent cotton towels. The fuzzy ones are pretty, but I don't like drying dishes with them. They do, however, make nice hand towels in the kitchen.

When I see a stack of clean, ironed (oh yes, I do iron them) colorful, seasonally-appropriate dish towels just patiently waiting to be used, drying dishes becomes a pleasure.

Dish Towel Diva



THE GRANDE DAME
“The One That Started It All,” aged and fading, is still in use and holds a place of honor in the collection.

Tips from the Diva

If you are a budding dish towel enthusiast, I have a few tips for you. I always buy my towels at discount stores such as Marshall’s, TJ Maxx, Target, etc. You can get great deals on holiday-themed towels when they are all marked down after the holiday. For many years I bought simply gorgeous dish towels at a local Crate and Barrel Outlet Store; alas, that store closed over a year ago (and I am still in mourning). When others notice your eye-catching dish towels, if you are lucky, you may receive them as gifts. My most beautiful ones are gifts from my sweet sister-in-law who buys me extravagant towels that I would never buy myself.

The One That Started It All

You don’t need many to feel the positive effects; just a few to add a little color to your kitchen will perk things up nicely. I’ll even justify your first purchase for you: next time you want to treat yourself, skip

the over-priced latte and buy a dreamy dish towel instead. Dish towels have no calories, and they last a long time. I still have my grande dame, The One That Started It All. She may be a little faded, like an aging movie star, but she can still dry dishes like a champ. Trust me, the caffeine from that latte wouldn’t last you 17 years, although the calories from the sugar might.

Motivation and Contentment for Just \$2.99

Take it from someone who lived for several years with a leaky refrigerator, a stove that took almost half an hour to bring a pot of water to a boil, an oven that one day abruptly stopped broiling, a nonworking dishwasher, and a beat-up vinyl kitchen floor; knowing that I was getting a new kitchen one day kept me going in the long run. But in the day-to-day living, my beloved (and yes—ironed!) dish towels encouraged me to get the job done every day, with a smile. And it all began with one awe-inspiring dish towel, and the subsequent discovery that motivation and contentment could be purchased for \$2.99 (plus tax).


And what would all the Christmas baking be without Christmas-themed dish towels? My children and I bake gingerbread houses every year with the godmother of my daughter Teresa. This requires many dish towels to clean up the (delicious) mess.



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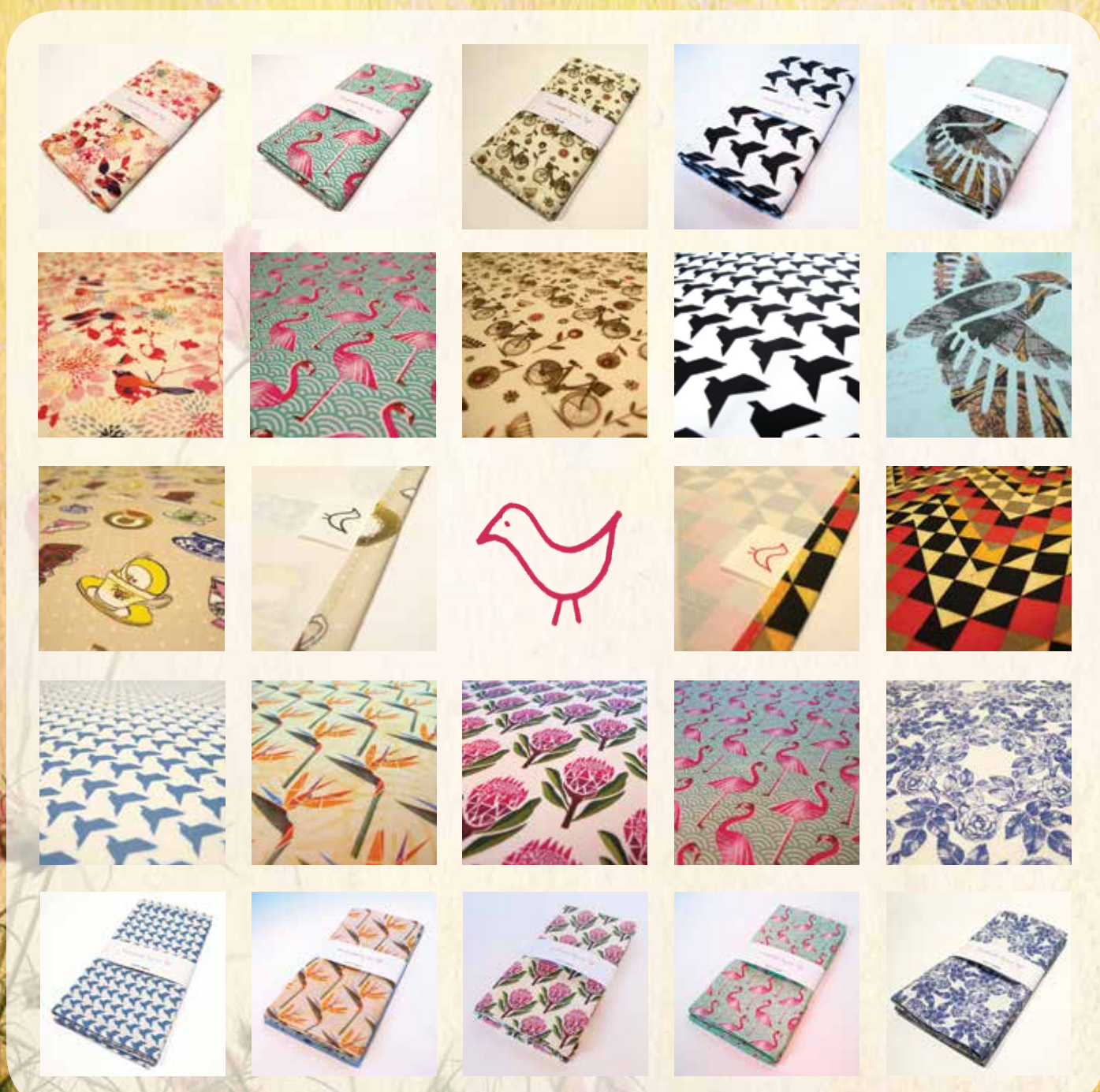
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Your Passport to Bliss

Tips for designing your own creative space

Written by **Maria Gatling**

“Art is the only way to run away without leaving home.”

—Twyla Tharp

Unless you have a full time job as a creative, chances are that you may not have a space to call your own at home. A space where you can escape to sit and write, draw, sew, or do anything creative for your own pleasure is specifically what I am talking about.

Unfortunately, most of us are guilty of designing spaces that allow space for just about anything else except a place to nurture our souls. Even the laundry seems to take priority over nurturing our creative spirit. But it's never too late to reclaim a space in your home where you can leave your supplies out and come back to them daily.

Here are four simple tips to get you on your way to designing your own creative space.

1. Dream!

All things are possible, especially when you put your intentions out there. Start collecting images from your favorite magazines or online sources. Put them out where you can see them or start a vision board for this project.

2. Design your own desk and work area.

If you could have any room and space in your home to call your own, what would that look like? Draw it out on paper as if you were presenting it to a contractor. Go to the home improvement store and select paint samples for your wall.

You may start out with a small corner, but one day you may have children who have grown up and moved out, leaving you with some extra space to claim as your own creative studio.

3. Act on it!

Even if you have to start with a small corner of a room, you are one step closer to achieving your dream space. Place a small desk in



© Maria Gatling



this space and decorate it with just as much attention as you would give to a whole room. It's helpful if you are able to leave your supplies out, but also allow for some storage and organization to keep clutter at bay.

4. Fuel your inspiration!

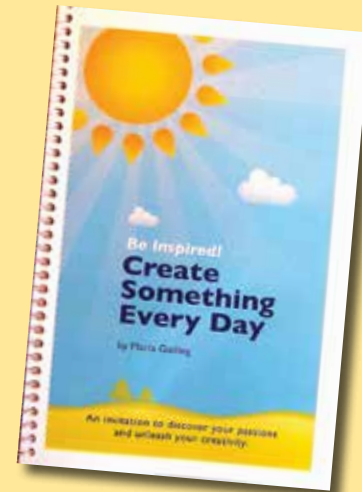
If you can paint a section of this space, choose a color that makes you feel happy. Keep a few books nearby that are a quick source of inspiration. I also find that placing a vision board on my wall inspires me to change it up regularly with different images and quotes. I am a big fan of quotes and the power of their message. I like to have several quotes printed out in large type so I can rotate them on my vision board. This space is where you will come to escape and be inspired to create, so make it fun and add some humor to keep the mood light. Let this space, small as it may be, reflect your creative spirit.

Creativity is a spice for life! Everything we do is richer when we are able to infuse our creativity into it. Our creative spirit carries over to all areas of our life, including our family and friends; it reflects how we live and love. Make creativity as important to you as your health. Until next time, be well, sleep well, love well, and create something every day!

“Creativity is not a pastime. It's an essential part of who we are, finding countless expressions in our life each day.”—Tyler Enfield

A CHEERY NOOK

Writer and blogger Lina Darnell created this colorful craft/office space in a spare closet. “It was fun to organize my supplies and it's so much easier to find things. I love the pant hanger that holds my ribbon, and the bright cheery colors of the space,” says Lina. Visit her blog at www.fancyfrugallife.blogspot.com.



Be Inspired! Create Something Every Day

This book is an invitation from me to you. It doesn't matter what you do for a living. The creative process is much like a spiritual journey. It is intuitive, non-linear, and very much experiential.

I want you to explore and discover your creative nature so that you may live a more creative life!

By going through the activities in this book, you'll begin to see the world around you in a different light. You'll have moments of bliss. Your creative journey will have begun.

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To order, visit
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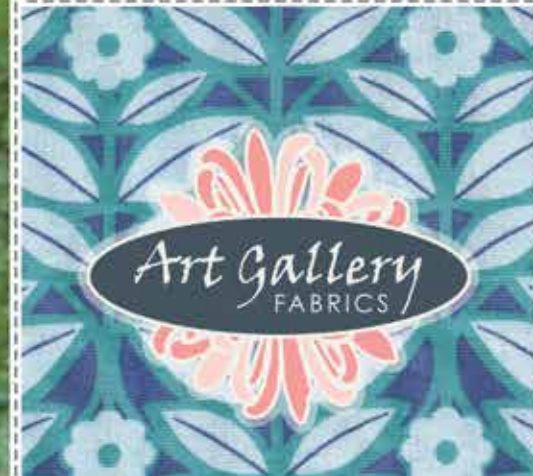
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Unmistakable

GARDENING

Written and photographed by **Cindy Dyer**

Every year I force Paperwhite bulbs and always forget about their scent. When they begin to bloom and I haven't noticed, I walk around the house and mutter "what is that smell?" I have a love/hate relationship with their really unique scent. Last year I made the mistake of moving the pot from its usual place in the kitchen (which I rarely inhabit) to a table in the living room (where you'll find me if I'm not in my studio). Despite the mild headaches they induced, I just couldn't bring myself to interrupt the blooming process—obsessive gardener that I am.

One of the easiest bulbs to force indoors, they don't require a chilling period before planting. The term 'forcing' refers to inducing a plant to grow (shoot, leaf and flower) ahead of its natural schedule and out of its natural environment. Plant Paperwhite bulbs now and you'll have beautiful indoor blooms from Thanksgiving until March—if you plant successively in batches.

If you use a 3-4 inch container without drainage holes, add one or two inches of pebbles, washed gravel or decorative stones in the bottom. Then place the bulbs on the pebbles and fill in with pebbles to hold the bulbs in place. Don't cover them—the noses of the bulbs should be showing. A crowded grouping makes for the most visual impact. Add water to bring it to just below the base of the bulbs and keep it at this level. Never let the water reach the level of the bulbs, as the bulbs may rot.

Paperwhites


(*Narcissus papyraceus*)

Paperwhite stalks can get quite leggy and often require staking. While researching how to remedy this problem, I discovered gardener and author Margaret Roach's trick to keeping them from flopping over by using gin, vodka, tequila or rubbing alcohol. She also mentions that adding a few drops of bleach might limit the strong scent (if you find the scent offensive, that is). Margaret was the first garden editor of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine. Check out her wonderful blog at www.awaytogarden.com.

Brent of Brent & Becky's Bulbs (www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com) notes that the Israeli hybrids are the ones that "stink." Most likely mine are the 'Ziva' hybrid that dominate the market for forced bulbs. They recommend one of the newer Israeli introductions, 'Inbal,' which has a nice fragrance. I'll look for that hybrid in their catalog—but it's still so convenient to get my after-Christmas-sale-deal at Target for just five bucks, complete with the pot and growing mix. Despite the stinkiness. I'll just keep them in the kitchen again next year.

BRINGING THE BEAUTY INDOORS

Plant Paperwhite bulbs now and you'll have really beautiful indoor blooms from Thanksgiving until March—if you plant successively in batches.

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**DINING OUT IN
SAN ANTONIO**

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24152 W. Interstate 10
210.678.2141
www.rudys.com

Willie's Grill & Icehouse

15801 San Pedro Avenue
210.490.9220
www.williesrestaurants.com

River Walk © Craig Stafford



ON THE ROAD

San Antonio, Texas

San Antonio, More than Just the Alamo

"Remember the Alamo" is part of the American lexicon and is often said when San Antonio is mentioned. This was the famous battle cry that later spurred on the forces of Sam Houston at San Jacinto. The Alamo is certainly worth visiting but there is much more to this charming, southwestern city to make it a destination for your next trip. San Antonio is the most visited city in Texas and here are some of the places to put on your must-see list.

The Alamo, First Stop for History Buffs

The first mission established in San Antonio, the Alamo (San Antonio de Valero) served as a way station between east Texas and Mexico. It was 100 years old when it fell in the Battle of the Alamo and became an inspiration and a motivation for liberty during the Texas Revolution.



The Alamo © Nancy H. Belcher

The River Walk

Travel and Leisure dubbed this area of San Antonio one of America's Coolest River Walks with its sentinel cypress trees lining the cobble and flagstone walks. The San Antonio River is the habitat for yellow-crowned herons, barred owls and red-eared slider turtles. Cafés serving a variety of cuisines including regional Tex-Mex dot the riverside along with specialty shops, hotels, and nightlife. Have you ever tried a prickly pear margarita? (Boudro's serves them.)

Calendar Samplings

November 2-11: Wurstfest

A unique celebration rich in German culture and full of Texas fun! During this 10-day salute to sausage, you'll find a variety of entertainment options including a polka contest, games, rides, food and drinks on the Wurstfest Grounds in Landa Park as well as special events throughout New Braunfels and Comal County. New Braunfels at Landa Park. *Admission*

November 11: San Antonio Rock 'N' Roll Marathon and Half Marathon

This one-of-a-kind marathon features more than 70 bands along the course which passes several historic missions and wraps up at the Alamodome.

November 19-January 6: Light the Way at the University of Incarnate Word

A million twinkling lights will illuminate the night sky at the University of Incarnate Word to celebrate the holiday season in style. This walking or driving experience has been going on for more than two decades and is truly a San Antonio-style holiday event. *Free*

December 3: Tamales! At Pearl—A Holiday Family Festival

The restored Pearl Brewery, the city's newest culinary star, celebrates all things tamale. Sample dozens of tamales, from traditional to dessert, plus storytellers, dancing, live music and finally, fireworks.

December 8: Art.i.copia

Locals on the lookout for creative and unusual gifts flock to the Southwest School of Art's annual shopping celebration. The setting—a centuries-old convent on the banks of the San Antonio River—will inspire a little holiday serenity.

December 29: 20th Annual Valero Alamo Bowl

Major college football comes to the Alamodome in San Antonio. The Valero Alamo Bowl is an annual post-season collegiate bowl and one of the most popular bowls in the country, producing some of the most-watched bowl games in ESPN history while selling out four of the last six years.

December 31: Celebrate San Antonio

Ring in the New Year San Antonio style! Enjoy spectacular fireworks, live music on multiple stages, food booths, family activities and more.



© Cindy Dyer

Pico de Gallo

Recipe by **Debbie Talbert**

INGREDIENTS

- 10-12 Roma tomatoes (medium firm), diced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 large bunch of cilantro, chopped
- 2 japaneno peppers, deveined/deseeded
- Coarse sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- Squeeze lemon or lime juice, optional

DIRECTIONS

Mix tomatoes, onion, cilantro and peppers. Salt and pepper to taste. Squeeze lemon or lime juice and mix. Serve with tortilla chips as a dip, or as a topping for scrambled eggs, baked potatoes, and a garnish in soup.

Mission San José © Cindy Dyer





Written by **Lauren Talbert**

When I think about the concept of home, and what it means to me, I'm thankful to say I have many places that feel like home. Looking back, home has changed and grown over the years. As a child, home was the house I grew up in, I felt safe there. I had my own space; a bed to sleep in, a closet of clothes, and shelves for my belongings. Home was my parents and brother; they loved, cared for and protected me. The houses of grandparents, family members, and family friends will always feel like home. I have so many great memories full of love and laughter in these places. If ever a time came that I needed something, I know they would open their doors to me without question or judgment. We love and support each other as family does. My home is your home.

Surprisingly, work has felt like home to me. I was a nanny for many years to a wonderful family and I felt very much at home there, every day. It can be an awkward thing, opening up your home and your family to another person. I will forever consider them my family and home, as they so generously welcomed me into theirs.

I've had a few apartments, three to be exact. I'm not really sure if the first two ever felt like home. I was struggling to keep my head above the stack of bills on the counter, struggling to maintain relationships with my roommates, and struggling to cook things other than macaroni. I suppose that because of the conflicts and heartbreak, these places did not feel like home to me. My third apartment was the first place I felt was my own home that I created for myself which is, quite honestly, a fantastic feeling. I paid for it, decorated it, took time to keep it clean. It was mine, it felt like me.

Everything I put into that apartment was a reflection of me. I was so very proud of my tiny one-bedroom apartment. I think everyone should have the opportunity to have such a place, to experience that feeling of independence, to know they can create their own home.

I now live in what I like to call a "boy home." I share this home with Chris, his eight-year-old son Chase and a male puppy named Cody. It's quite simply just very different from my girly apartment. Decorations, washing whites and darks separately, and delicious smelling hand soaps are matters these boys are indifferent to. There are fishing shows on the television, fishing magazines on the counter and fishing poles by the door. More important, though, there is lots of laughter, a sense of family, unconditional love and continuous support. Every day we learn and grow together, and there's absolutely nowhere I'd rather be. I hope that I am helping to create a sense of home for our little family in this house.

As cliché as it may sound, home truly is where my heart is. There are many places that feel like home to me, but that is because of the people in those places. Even loved ones who have passed away still feel like home. Thinking of them warms my heart, just as being at home does. When I am loved, supported and protected, I feel at home. So home is not necessarily a specific place, it is many places. Home is not just a building or an area, it can be many people. People I love, who love me, that have a special place in my heart will always be my home. And with that, I am always home. Home sweet home.

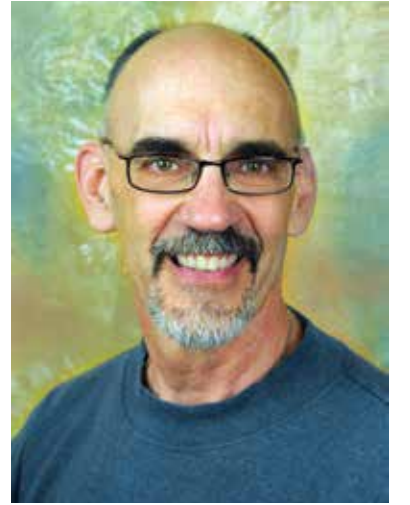
Home Sweet Home

I grew up with the movie "The Wizard of Oz." I remember so well the scene in which Dorothy clicks the heels of her ruby-slipped feet three times and repeats the words "There's no place like home." Magically she is transported back to Kansas, back to Auntie Em and Uncle Henry, back to her home. The movie ends with those same words "There's no place like home."

Times have changed in so many ways. What if I had those ruby slippers and clicked my heels and said those words? To what place would I be transported?

I left the house in Massachusetts in which I grew up almost forty years ago to attend a boarding school and never really returned. After so much time away, that's not really home. My parents retired to a house in Maine, but I never lived there, so that's not really home, particularly with the passing of both of my parents. For twenty years while I was serving in the U.S. Army I moved from place to place, leading a kind of vagabond life without a real home. In some ways my townhouse might qualify as "home" because I have lived in it for more than 19 years, but does that make it my home?

Where, then, is my home? More and more, it seems that my heel clicks would take me to a virtual place, the home page of my blog. It's a place that I have set up and arranged to reflect what's important to me, a place that lets me relax and be creative, a place where others can visit and interact and share ideas and images, hopes and aspirations. Even when I am on the road on a business trip (as I was recently), I can go "home" at the end of the day.



Written by **Michael Powell**

There's No Place Like Home

What is a home, really? I used to think that a home had to be a physical location, a place where I could be surrounded by the "stuff" or the people that were important to me. As I have gotten older, I've moved to a view that home is more a state of mind rather than location. It's a feeling of comfort and security, a sense of being where I belong, an emotional environment in which I can feel free to be myself completely.

I may have a virtual home, but I live my life in a real world. My time at home, rather than being a form of escapism, is a way for me to be relaxed, refreshed, and renewed as I face the challenges and opportunities of daily living. My home may be virtual, but it's not artificial. It's populated with real people, sharing their lives together in what is essentially a group home.

There truly is no place like home, but you have to keep in mind that others may not interpret that statement in the way that you do.

Visit Michael's blog at www.michaelcpowell.wordpress.com.

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