

THE CRICKET OUT & ABOUT

On Cape Ann | Holidays 2024

It's Time To
Celebrate The
Holidays!



Hand Made With Love on Cape Ann

Local Shopping | Gift Guide

New Year's to Valentine's : Eating Right

Nov - Feb 2025

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By Kris McGinn

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THE CRICKET

Editor Letter



Gratitude ... and Love

When it came out in 2003, the holiday moving *Love, Actually* was an instant classic. That opening scene with loved ones greeting each other at the airport; it's the best. It sets up the end of the story ... when everyone comes to understand the holidays are about connections, and, yes, love.

This is our fourth Holiday Book, and the first one that's regional to Cape Ann, covering local holiday items right through Valentine's Day in Rockport, Gloucester, Manchester and Essex.

We kick it off with a piece by Kris McGinn, "Made with Love," that explores four very different stories of local people finding unique ways to show and share love. From the many hands that bring together the beautiful painted buoys of Gloucester's lobster trap holiday tree to Manchester's Clem Courcy and his rowing team who turned an old fence into beautiful hand painted toys for children in need. Oh yes, and there's an artist couple in Rockport making handmade art prints. And Essex's Kristina Crestin, who shares two of her favorite ways to spend holiday time with friends, baking and crafting from nature.

Then, Jen Coles, our home design writer, shares her love of holiday ornaments as a timeline of her life and family in her moving essay, "Ornamental Tales." Hannah Harlow of The Book Shop of Beverly Farms offers ideas for holiday reading and gift giving. Gloucester's Paige Ferrell turns us onto holiday wines to help us slow down and appreciate all they have to offer.

Then fasten your seatbelt, because it's a six-week ride from New Year's to Valentine's Day with tons of yummy stops along the way! We have gathered together all manner of suggestions for all of your food moods. From where to sparkle and shine on New Year's to where to curl up and just enjoy a simple bowl of fish chowder in your sweats, it's all here and it's all local.

Which brings us back to love. No one lives on Cape Ann because they have to. We live here because we love it. It's where we're from. So let's enjoy all we can this time of year—enjoy each other, shop and love our local stores, and appreciate our shared connection to each other and this special place.

Happy Holidays.

Erika Brown

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Brown".

Editor, The Cricket

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Made With Love

It's the secret ingredient in all great food. It's the answer. It makes the world go around. It is patient, kind, and blind. It is also what the holiday season needs more than anything. More than ever. Here are four local stories to remind us how we can find, share, and remember this holiday season – love.

- By Kris McGinn



to frost them, and then an evening to watercolor them. You may want to look at it as a way to also try three different holiday cocktails?)

Kristina holds that most, if not all, things are way more fun to do in a group, so she gathered friends together and made, en masse, a ton of sugar cookies. Sugar cookie recipes are pretty simple and straightforward, so find one you love. Kristina is partial to ones that add almond or lemon extract. Get a cookie form you like—she chose stars and houses. Then make a ton. Give them a day or two to cool. Then, roll up your sleeves and maybe check out a few YouTube videos because next is making royal icing and “floating” it across the cookies. This leaves each cookie with a perfectly flat layer of white icing on the top. Let them rest and set for at least a day.

Next, bring on the creativity! To get the best possible colors, Kristina recommends going to a craft store for the food dye. Then begins the fine tuning—cutting the dye with the vodka to get the right amount of translucence to give the watercolor effect. Kristina found it handy and fun to use an artist’s plastic pallet with art brushes and just let loose. She noted that she loved the way in which everyone made their own individual little works of art.

As you can see, the finished products were unique and gorgeous. We have started calling them simply, “Kristina Cookies.”

Cookies that shine. Painted buoys for the Gloucester Lobster Trap Tree. Delightful toys made by hand from a fence in Manchester. Screen prints from the heart of Rockport. The stories behind familiar traditions, and maybe not so familiar, are just the thing to warm our spirits this holiday season.

Three Nights and a Paintbrush

... made with love

Kristina Crestin is the real deal. As in, she is actually as upbeat and funny in real life as she is on her television show, *Farmhouse Fixer* with Jonathan Knight. She is also, as you might

have guessed, insanely creative with her design eye permeating every corner of her life, to include her approach to the winter months. And while you may expect that this would involve home design, it turns out that, when the holidays hit, Kristina has all manner of talents. For instance, cookies. Kristina shared that she actually doesn’t really enjoy baking, and, in truth, finds most holiday cookies to be a bit run of the mill. So, when asked to take part in the holiday stroll in downtown Manchester, she wanted to put out something

yummy for visitors to nibble on. The obvious choice was a holiday cookie, and she tackled the cookie situation in much the same way she does design projects on her show—with unbridled enthusiasm. From this came killer holiday cookies that are gorgeously unique and a blast to make!

Kristina’s Watercolor Cookies

(Note that this is a three-session cookie event: a night to make the cookies, a night

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Kristina Crestin, host of HGTV's *Farmhouse Fixer* and a resident of Essex, started a holiday tradition with friends to forage local woods for natural decorations that are from the heart. (Courtesy photo)

A Plastic Bin and a Warm Winter Cocktail

... made with love

When Kristina and company are not gathered around the kitchen table crafting cookies (see page 9.) they may be found out in the woods foraging. Another holiday tradition Kristina keeps is foraging with friends for earthy additions to the holiday greenery to put around her front door, or make wreaths and garland. She buys inexpensive greenery and a bunch of wreaths and floats out a date to friends to take to the woods for a day of holiday fun. She admits that she does head out a day or two

in advance to scout good spots to collect the best natural wonders: rosehips in early winter for a beautiful deep red, winter berries, various pines for texture, interesting ends of tree branches, and so on. Friends arrive in rain boots, grab a plastic tub to put it all in, and quite possibly a warm winter cocktail or tea, and head out. They tromp through the woods, with little gardening clippers, an assorted gaggle of dogs, and load up the bin with all manner of lovely items. Once they have a wonderfully wintry assortment of goodies, they head back inside to warm up and begin. Kristina spreads wreaths and garland out on a big table, along with a little floral wire to help things stay put. The group of friends spend hours just weaving into the greenery all of the wonderfully organic bits they collected from the woods. The result is enchanting.

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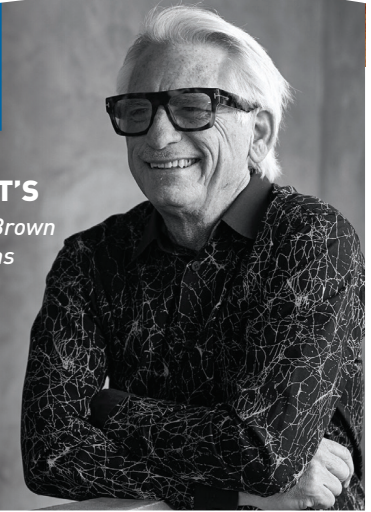
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Gloucester's own Lobster Trap Tree, decorated with hand-painted buoys. The tradition began in 2014 and continues with the help of Art Haven, the local nonprofit that supports art programs for local youth. (Courtesy photo)

Buoys, and Lots and Lots of Paint

... made with love

Traci Thayne Corbett and her daughter Schuyilar are looking at a history of buoys. There are ten, beginning in 2014 when Schuyilar was just six years old, the first year her mom began volunteering at Art Haven, a community art education resource that aims to ensure access to art education for kids. Now Schuyilar is 16 and the two of them are looking at ten painted buoys and reflecting on how the project has evolved over the years.

Most people on Cape Ann are familiar with the Gloucester Lobster Trap tree that miraculously appears each holiday season (and is always just a little bit bigger than expected). It turns out that this big crazy tradition sprang as an idea from a local shop owner, Janice Lufkin Shea, and was executed by Jeff Worthley, who kept it going for ten years before handing it off to David Brooks, the founder of Cape Ann Art Haven in 2008. David left Art Haven in 2017, passing the organization, and the buoy painting project, off to the new full time director, Traci Thayne Corbett. Now each year, as a team of dedicated volunteers puts up the tree, Traci and her team are ready with the beloved, hand painted buoys.

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Traci Thayne Corbett, executive director of Art Haven, and her daughter Schuyilar in front of some of their buoys at their home in Gloucester.



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PHOTOS: KRIS MCGINN

Beginning around Thanksgiving, the folks at Art Haven prime, rope, and prepare the buoys. Then, for three weeks, all kids on Cape Ann are invited to join in the annual painting of the buoys. Art Haven hosts multiple free sessions to accommodate as many kids as possible and leverages their mobile collaborations to bring buoys out into the community, removing the barriers of cost and transportation so all can join in. Traci notes that she has learned a few things over time, such as needing to keep an eye on the little ones who get so excited and mesmerized by the painting process that they swirl and mix colors so long their work disappears into that mauvey brown that happens when mixing paint colors just a little too long. She has also become more efficient at priming and prepping the buoys before they are painted, from beginning to end, the project is a serious undertaking. Once the buoys are painted the Lobster Trap team assembles the tree—more than 30 feet high, with over 400 traps! Then, they string the lights and hang every one of the painted buoys at once before the final tree lighting,

which takes place each year during the Gloucester Middle Street Walk, an event you do not want to miss.

When the holidays are over there is yet another event mid-January where families come to pick up the buoys painted by their children. Each buoy has a number (thank you Traci) so that the buoys all find their painters. Families take the painted buoys home and collect them, like Traci and Schuyler, to see their history of time spent doing something special. For Schuyler, this history began while tagging along with her mom while she volunteered and evolved to painting her own buoys with the other kids. Eventually, she became a summer counselor at Art Haven herself—a history of good will, hard work, and love.

Note: *Pauline Bresnihan, proprietor of Pauline's Gifts on Essex Avenue in Gloucester, commissioned a tree ornament (left) for the Gloucester's Lobster Trap and Buoy Tree. Buy one of these beautiful, perforated gold metal ornaments, and a nice portion of the sale is donated to the tree's charity.*

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Ingrid and Rusty Kinnunen, at work in their printmaking shop on Dock's Square in Rockport. (Photos: Kris McGinn)

Prints From the Heart of Rockport

... made with love

There is something inherently alluring about the idea of an artist couple. One imagines how each morning over coffee they bat back and forth ideas for exciting designs and intriguing colors while their wild artsy kids rollick about in their groovy home. This is what I imagined, anyway, when I first heard of Ingrid and Rusty Kinnunen, and, I was right! Rusty and Ingrid are, indeed, a wonderfully talented couple who create meaningful handmade screen prints together in their home and studio, all while raising their three marvelous children in Rockport, the town they love and have made their muse.

Rusty and Ingrid's story begins at Mass Art Boston where the two met, both studying fine art painting. And continues today in their little shop on Dock Square in Rockport where you can find their art. And them. Their gallery is also their studio where you can watch them at work taking the screens they have drawn and cut by hand and using them to print, by hand, each color, layering one on top of the other, to make a finished print. Together they have perfected a distinct style, which

includes a very specific and consistent color palette, that they custom blend to achieve the exact hues and tints that have become something of their signature.

Nearly all of the prints they make are vignettes of Cape Ann or the greater northeast, such as clam diggers, loons, whales, Thacher Island, Fenway, the Boston Public Garden, as well ski scenes, beaches, and sailboats. These prints are sold unframed or framed in their own handmade frames.

Their shop in Rockport is the product of twelve years of learning how to sell handmade art at a price point that most people can afford, something Ingrid and Rusty are dedicated to doing. Years of loading art and kids into a van and traveling to weekend art shows where they sold their prints while their young children played under their folding table inform every aspect of their art and business. From the beginning they were determined to figure out a way to make a living as artists. And they have. Rusty explains that he believes having each other gave them the strength they needed to not give up. They are stronger together.

It shows. You see it in their shop, their work, and their faces—a love of the place where they live, the art they make, and of each other.

Rusty & Ingrid, 15 Dock Square, Rockport. Be sure to stop by the studio to see them, their work, and take part in some hands-on printing at the December 14 Art Walk in downtown Rockport.



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Manchester's Clem Courcy stands with a little helper, the larger team, and all the hand-made toys that started as a cedar fence in this front yard, and will end up as donated gifts to area children. (Photos: Kris McGinn)

A Fence and a Rowing Team ... made with love

It began with a fence. In the fall of 2023 Clem Courcy decided to take down his cedar post and rail fence that lines the front yard of his home on School Street in Manchester and replace it with a new one, something, he notes, that took way longer due to the number of folks who would stop to chat while he was outside working (one of the delightful perks of living in a small town). Eventually the fence did come down, and Clem erected a new one in its place. As you might imagine, there was quite a lot of old cedar left over. Most of us would have likely begun thinking of how to dispose of it, but Clem, instead, thought about how he might utilize it and decided that it was just perfect for making small wooden toys. He sent a note out to his friends and fellow rowers from the Gloucester Gig Rowers to see if they might be up for helping him out.

And this is how the image you see, a group of radiant faces standing behind exactly 100 beautifully crafted wooden toys, came to be.

Once the Gig Rowers had signed on, Clem set to work creating toy designs that would be enchanting for kids and yet doable for the crew. His overarching criteria was that each toy had to be simple enough to be made in three hours time, or less. He settled on pull/push toys for younger kids. He set the goal of 100 toys in ten styles - four styles for kids who are crawling and six styles for kids who are walking. Clem's ten designs include ducks, puppies, cars, tractors, train engines, whales, bunnies, dachshunds, and squirrels. Clem, the Gloucester Gig Rowers, and Clem's wife Eileen became a team of amazing toy making elves. They cut out and assembled everything in Clem and Eileen's garage on School Street, which they aptly called the Toy Shop. Elves would take home their share of the toys to paint on their own time in their own style, leading to some fun color combinations such as pink whales and blue squirrels.

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And they did it! They completed 100 toys well in time for the holidays. The toy math looked something like this: each toy is comprised of a minimum of 11 pieces, some as many as 20. Thus, with an average of 15 pieces per toy times 100 plus toys, cutout painting and assembly represent interacting with 1,500 components.

All complete, these marvelous toys will be given to Gloucester's Wellspring House, Pathways for Children and the Kennedy Center in Boston. While small children this holiday season will be delighted by

these special handmade toys, what they will also have in their hands is the spirit of a team of rowing elves, a thoughtful and generous woodworker and his wife, and an old fence that turned out to be so much more.

Note: The Gloucester Gig Rowers are affiliated with Maritime Gloucester, a nonprofit organization in Gloucester serving many children in the Gloucester area. Maritime Gloucester generously made available some tools that were used in creating these toys.



Ornament Tales



By Jen Coles

My kids are older now, and recently, when I was straightening up my attic, I lingered over my box of Christmas ornaments, wondering if it were time to pass some of them along to my adult kids. I mean, I still host Christmas, but not in the same all-in fashion that I used to. The dynamics of the whole family has shifted with time. I'm not sad

about that: it's the natural order of things, but I am nostalgic and reflective for sure. Especially that day in the attic where I was flooded with so many memories. Being "present" in the moment is such a buzzy thing these days, but up there, I just needed to be present with my past.

I still have some of the drug-store ornaments from my first trees. We decorated them with friends in our cramped apartment walk-ups. One of us was pro-tinsel

and another one was not, and you could tell we were all just trying to decorate that tree like our families did. They were, of course, just poor imitations, with our quickly purchased ornament sets and the perpetually dropping needles. That sacrificial tree got absolutely no water. Eventually some comedian would hang up a pack of rolling papers or a crushed beer can, but no one cared. And none of us knew that those early trees were actually

us cutting our teeth for our future ones.

Those future trees came more quickly than I had anticipated with a marriage and a gaggle of babies. During those years, all our ornaments were packed up onto the top two-thirds of the tree. There were just too many little hands at the lower level. Our ornaments had to be sturdy and took on the form of a beloved book character or a Hot Wheels car or a tiny teddy bear.
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...Continued on page 15

My daughter would tiptoe into the kitchen and drag over a chair to carefully remove these sparkly new friends so that they could join with her other dollhouse characters. I'd find them in the oddest places months after the holidays. It was her passion, and she an equal opportunity employer. All were welcome.

The very best part of those years were the ornaments that the kids made. Oh, and to be sure they were, for the most part, gaudy and awful. I still have a few of the sturdy ones, but in general they were just so delicate. With each passing year, the construction paper would fade, the paste would crack, and the glitter would become sparser and sparser. At the same time, with each passing year, my kids would become less and less interested in seeing that ornament on the tree. My one daughter exclaimed, "Mom, it looks like a baby did that!", which, of course, was the point. But it occurs to me now that those ornaments were just as fleeting as the time I got with them as children.

I'm a collector by nature, and I've curated a healthy collection of vintage ornaments. I love the way even just simple

balls look when they get old with their imperfections and patina. I put them on the tree, but also in large hurricane vases or dotting my runner on Christmas Eve. If you're lucky enough to find a whole set at a rummage sale, they come in the best thin cardboard boxes with silk screened promotions on top. They are just so much fun to take out every year. My favorite vintage ornament was given to me by a close friend. It was her grandmother's, whom she adored; it really just felt as if she were sharing with me a piece of her heart.

I have a few ornaments that mark a place or time. I picked up a glass ball with ears at Disneyworld and display a beautiful pinecone I found in Arizona. In 2020 I bought two dozen Santa-in-a-mask ornaments to leave on my friend's doorsteps. It marks a year many of us would like to forget, but there were silver linings there, too. I do think fondly of creating "pods" with brave friends, having far-flung children come home to roost for a while, and hosting some raucous Zoom happy hours with my sister and her kids. There are always silver linings. Sometimes it just takes time to be able to see them.

My one daughter exclaimed, "Mom, it looks like a baby did that!", which, of course, was the point. But it occurs to me now that those ornaments were just as fleeting as the time I got with them as children.

One year our basement flooded, and we lost a bunch of ornaments with it. We lost a lot of other stuff, too, but the ornaments were the only thing I cared about. It came in a year which just seemed swollen with challenges, and I took that loss very hard. It symbolized something I just found unbearable. Fortunately, I had this friend with angel wings, and she organized a potluck dinner where everyone came with a dish to share and an ornament for me as a surprise. I still choke up when I unwrap them. I wrote the initials of the person who

gave it to me teeny-tiny on the bottom so that I would always remember. During that time, I had a friend tell me, "Life doesn't get easier, we just get better at hard." That really rang true, and I think we do that with the help of our friends.

So there I was, in the attic, surrounded by ornaments and their memories. What did I do? Was it time to pass some of them along? Could I bare to part with some of those sentiments? The answer is, I don't know. I left them in tidy little piles. I'll see my kids at Thanksgiving and can ask them what they think. It's complicated because, if I distribute them too early, they will feel like I'm abandoning their memories. If I do it too late, my children will already have a full tree of their own. Me? I've thought about it a lot. And I think I can pass most of them along, whenever they're ready. Because I'm not getting rid of the memories.

I'll pack those up carefully in tissue paper and tuck them deep into my heart. They'll be with me whenever I need them.

Jennifer Coles is a local interior designer who writes a monthly column on home, living and design.



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Finding the Perfect Tree

Finding the Perfect Holiday Tree

Nothing says the holidays are right here like facing the annual holiday tree search. But heading out to find the perfect tree is a cherished tradition. Whether it's venturing to a live tree farm or visiting a local lot with pre-cut selections (and there are

many options on Cape Ann), this activity is a great way to create warm memories with family and friends. To ensure you pick the best tree for your home, follow these helpful tips.

Choose Your Species

Research the type of tree you'd like before heading out to buy. Balsam fir and Fraser fir are popular choices, each with unique qualities. Balsam firs are known for their signature fragrance, which can fill your home with a rich holiday scent. Fraser firs, on the other hand, have excellent needle retention, which means less mess and a

longer-lasting tree. Other options, such as the noble fir and Norway spruce, can offer unique shapes and textures. If you prefer a Douglas fir, be aware that they may be susceptible to premature needle drop due to conditions like needle-cast fungus.

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fall, the tree is likely not fresh. Additionally, inspect the trunk for any visible defects that could block water absorption, as this could shorten the tree's lifespan.

Heavier is Better

When choosing a pre-cut tree, keep in mind that a fresh tree will feel heavy, as it's still full of water. If a tree is light and easy to lift, it may be dried out and past its prime. Once you've made your selection and brought it home, be sure to trim a bit off the trunk and place it in water right away, even if only in a temporary bucket.

WHERE TO BUY A HOLIDAY TREE ON CAPE ANN ...

If you're looking for a tree in the Cape Ann area, here are some local places to consider:

Wolf Hill Garden Center (Gloucester, Ipswich): Known for a great selection of pre-cut trees, not to mention the 2,500-sf holiday showroom in Ipswich. Worth the drive for holiday trees and decor.

Russell Orchards (Ipswich): A bit outside of Cape Ann but offers a wonderful selection of fresh-cut trees.

Utopia Farms (Manchester): At the very beginning of Atwater Avenue and School Street, this seasonal farm stand opens for great holiday tree (and greenery) options.

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Space for Ornaments

Consider not only the tree's aroma and needle retention but also its shape and branch spacing. According to The Spruce, trees with more space between branches are ideal for hanging ornaments evenly, ensuring they don't tilt or fall. While lush, full trees may be visually appealing on their own, they might cause ornaments to hang at awkward angles once decorated.

Measure Your Space

Remember that trees can appear smaller in outdoor lots than they will inside your living room. To avoid surprises, measure your space carefully. Start by measuring the height from the floor to the ceiling, and don't forget to subtract the combined height of the tree stand and any tree topper. Width is also important to measure, ensuring there's enough room for movement around the tree without it feeling cramped.

Perform a Needle Check

A good tree will lose a few needles, but it should still retain the majority of its foliage. Gently run your hand down a few branches - if more than half of the needles



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seaviewfarmrockport.com

...Continued on page 20



“This year there’s precious few weeks between Thanksgiving and the holidays. Get a jump now on holiday trees, and how to pick one that shines.”

Seaview Farm (Rockport): No trees here, but lots of holiday wreaths as well as holiday decorations. (And you can pick up a seasonal meat CSA and wine while you’re there!)

Also check out Cape Ann’s local church lots and school fundraisers as well as Scouts (like Troop 3 in Manchester). Information can be had at community boards and Facebook pages that support local groups.



Come Celebrate the Holidays with us at Chapman’s!

Out Shopping, Right Now: The Holidays!

Welcome to *The Cricket's* annual Holiday Gift Guide. This year we've discovered so many amazing finds. For animal lovers, the kiddos, outdoorsy types, homebodies, jewelry lovers, and entertainers. As usual, our shopping guide takes us all over, from Rockport to Essex, Ipswich, Gloucester, and Manchester. All local on Cape Ann, all good.

One-of-a-kind 18k yellow gold bezel-set mixed cut blue and green tourmaline fringe necklace on beaded chain, by designer Lauren K (\$8,360). Solid 18k yellow gold elongated hoop earrings with brushed finish, by designer Hannah Blount, in three sizes (\$1,130 to \$2,560). Hexagonal malachite box (\$80). All at **GLADSTONE**, 36 1/2 Union St., Manchester | gladstonejewelry.com.



Roger & Gallet dates back to 1693, and the company's fans have strong ideas of which among its vast family of colognes and soaps are "the best." Neroli. Lavender. Ginger. Grapefruit. Rose. Whichever you prefer, La Provence in Rockport probably carries it. Perusing their shelves will make you feel as if you've stepped into a Parisian apothecary. Go ahead and grab some traditional French linens while you're there. \$48, at **La Provence**, 4 Main St., Rockport | (978) 546-5868



Le Silk, Le Pretty

This vintage 1930s silk cocktail purse from France, perfect in chocolate brown with a brass ribbed handle, will bring a sense of elegance to anyone's holiday season. Diminutive, and lovely. \$30 at **Bananas**, 78 Main St., Gloucester | (978) 283-8806



Tree Me

Pauline Bresnahan of Pauline's Gifts is a giver. She tirelessly gives to local veterans, and she loves to support other small businesses like hers. Oh yes, and she's got an award-winning gift shop with all sorts of goodies. Right now, and until she closes for the season on December 23, it's holiday, holiday, holiday! Check out these decorative holiday tree figurines and ornaments in glass and composite, from \$14 to \$40 at **Pauline's Gifts** | 512 Essex Ave., Gloucester-Essex line | (978) 281-5558

I Made This!

More than 500,000 people have learned crochet with The Woobles. Children 12+ love these easy learn-to-crochet kits, and this one will bring Sebastian the Lion to life. Fierce? Maybe. Cuddly? Definitely. \$29.99 at **Tooteloos!**, 142 Main St, Gloucester | (978) 281-2011

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Turn on the Slinky Jazz

As the proprietor of Bananas, Richard Leonard is the “OG” of the Gloucester vintage shop scene. Bananas has been going strong for more than 40 years, and while the selection of clothing and home design items is huge, it’s the costume jewelry and accessories that are legendary (and always reasonable). These sparklers will set any gal right for the holidays. Purse (\$8), spiral earrings (\$18), crystal three-strand cocktail necklace (\$30), and rhinestone pin (\$18), at **Bananas**, 78 Main St., Gloucester | (978) 283-8806



Scrimshaw Ostrich Egg

This exquisite, signed scrimshaw ostrich egg is hand-engraved around the circumference with maritime whaling scenes, sailing vessels, and a compass palm leaf design around the hole at the top. Approximately 9” high, with decorative metal and wooden stand. \$950 at **Gray House Antiques**, 38 Union St, Manchester | grayhouseantiques.com



Even Snowmen and Reindeer ...

.. can wear fur. At least with this upscale holiday figurine set curated by Karen Juel. Just the right amount of sparkle, and fur. Spiffy snowman (\$32) and glamor reindeer (\$48) at **Juel and Company**, located in Chapman’s Greenhouse, 58 Hart St., Beverly | (978) 927-0153

Whippet Good

For those who know it, Staffordshire vintage glazed earthenware figurines from England are beloved by many collectors, and you can head to The Barn at Todd Farm in Rowley to see this one of a proud and beautiful whippet greyhound dog. \$34 at **The Barn at Todd Farm** | 275 Main St., Rowley | (978) 948-5111



Mixing it Up

Mixed metals in jewelry a great way to go for those who swing between gold and silver. And this Large Ball and Cage ring from Betsy Frost Design comes in matte or high polish finish, and the ball inside can be customized in sterling silver, gold fill, or pearl. From \$124, at **Betsy Frost Jewelry & Design** | 4 Market St., Ipswich | (978) 356-4040

Gilted Lover

Women are loving this Cannes Stone Statement Hinge Bangle a luxurious and substantial, luxe 24K-plate, gilded wide bangle featuring pear shape gemstones and freshwater pearl from Julie Vos. \$365 at **Juel and Company**, located in Chapman’s Greenhouse, 58 Hart St., Beverly | (978) 927-0153



...Continued on page 26

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Rugged Bow

Made in the USA, this six-panel cap from Pendleton is crafted of super durable wool, with soft faux fur-lined ear flaps that secure under your chin with a leather strap, which can be tied on top when not in use. Curved brim. 100% pure virgin wool; polyester faux fur; leather trim. \$75 at **John Tarr Store**, 49 Main St., Rockport | (978) 546-6524



Throw Down

An-all wool throw that's perfectly sized for napping on the couch or keeping warm at the stadium. Called steamer rugs during the early 20th century, these blankets were a warm, welcome companion for trips by car, train or boat. And includes carrier for easy portability. 52" x 66" plus 3" self-fringe. \$120 at **John Tarr Store**, 49 Main St., Rockport | (978) 546-6524



Stand and Deliver

You're going all out for the stand-up paddle boarder in your life if you get this 8'7" Starboard Pro from Surfari. The fine rails and sharp squash tail hold well in the bigger surf, allowing you to feel more in control to push harder on your bottom turns. Not a pro? There are plenty of options at all price points. As seen, \$1,549 at **Surfari**, 88 Bass Ave, Gloucester (978) 283-7873 or surfcapeann.com



Say it With Color

Ah, the drama! First, turquoise and red are an elegant classic when combined, and these carefully crafted brass earrings are layered with hand-painted washes of pigment in these lush, tropical statement-makers. 4.25" in length, with sterling silver posts and nickel and lead free. \$375 at **We Dream in Color**, 166 Main St, Essex | (978) 594-1425



Ship Shape

This Waverly Bracelet in ivory, navy and gold with a decorative anchor toggle is essential for any nautical lover. Made in the USA, and available in four sizes. \$30 at **Denim Blanket Co.** | 4 Dock Sq., Rockport | (978) 999-5016



It's a Bird! It's a ... Bottle Opener

"Nambu Tekki" is the Japanese technique of cast iron dating back thousands of years that produces pieces that are rust-resistant and last forever. This heavy-duty bottle opener in the shape of a standing crow will stand the test of time, and really stay put (even on a sailboat). \$38 at **Good Linens Studio**, 130 Main St., Gloucester | goodlinensstudio.com.

...Continued on page 27

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This gorgeous jute reindeer is crafted by hand and paired here with two pillar birch candles made with 100% bleach free cotton wicks for even, long-burning candles from Zodax. Because of the natural variations in the natural birch bark wrapped around the wax pillar candles, no two birch candles are exactly the same. Candle in small (\$28) and large (\$40). Jute reindeer \$16) at **Juel and Company**, located in Chapman's Greenhouse, 58 Hart St., Beverly | (978) 927-0153



Oh, Grow Up!

This avocado vase in Lapis Blue by Ilex is beautiful and useful. For the avocado lovers in your life, give them a great way to grow one of the heartiest and most handsome house plants around! A pure and simple design that's both timelessness and functional. \$58 at **Good Linens Studio**, 130 Main St., Gloucester | goodlinensstudio.com.



Tool it Up

This Milwaukee M18 cordless lithium-ion two-tool combo kit is an amazing, all around set up for the builder in your life. It's cordless, uses patented technology, and the motor design and superior ergonomics provide users with the most efficient blend of power, weight and performance. \$199 for the whole set up, at **Ace Manchester Hardware**, 35 Beach St., St. Manchester | (978) 526-4000



Smell the Slopes

Featuring festive fragrance notes of juniper, amber, and woodsmoke, each triple wick, 12oz. hand-poured candle designed by artist Kim Hovell is made with renewable wax and burns for 50-70 hours. Our fragrances are created with essential oils to elevate your everyday. \$48 at **Juel and Company**, located in Chapman's Greenhouse, 58 Hart St., Beverly | (978) 927-0153



Turn it Up

JBL Flip 6 BT Speaker in Black is a hard worker. It's waterproof and dustproof, so you can bring it anywhere, rechargeable, and big-sounding yet portable. Its "PartyBoost" function allows you to pair two JBL-compatible speakers together for stereo sound and you can connect wirelessly to two smartphones or tablets. \$129, at **Ace Manchester Hardware**, 35 Beach St., St. Manchester | (978) 526-4000

Cribbage, Local Style



Pauline from Pauline's Gifts is an award-winning gift shop on Essex Street that is seasonal, but the good news is she's open until December 23. Here, a special cribbage board designed in resin in the scrimshaw styles of the collectible decorative with designs that are usually associated with sailing and nautical themes. This board measures 9 inches in length and 3 1/2 inches wide. \$54.95 at **Pauline's Gifts** | 512 Essex Ave., Gloucester-Essex line | (978) 281-5558



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Holiday windows, The Stock Exchange, Manchester

Out & About

Holiday Highlights 2024

Our round-up of holiday happenings this year around Cape Ann. Remember to check individual groups and communities to confirm dates and times, as they may shift.

IPSWICH & MANCHESTER

Sat, Nov. 30 and Sunday, Dec. 1

Cape Ann Symphony Holiday Pops 2024

The annual Holiday Pops is a musical celebration of the season. The Cape Ann Symphony Chorus now under the direction of Brittany Betts will join the orchestra for a Holiday Pops series for the whole family. The ever-popular audience sing-along concludes the performance. Three performances. One on Sat. Nov. 30, 2 p.m., Ipswich High School. Then next two take place at Manchester Essex Regional High School-Sat., Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m. and Sun., Dec. 1 at 2 p.m. Tickets \$50 with discounts for seniors, youth. Info at Capeannsmyphony.org

ROCKPORT

Christmas In Rockport

Starting November 22

Rockport has really pulled together a robust series of holiday-themed events, starting with holiday shopping nights and going right through New Year's Eve. First up, shopping. On Nov. 22 and running through the end of the year, it's **Mistletoe Madness**, a retailer promotion where shopping local gets you entered to win \$100. There's also a monthlong kids scavenger hunt, **Sammy the Seagull Hide & Seek**, with prizes so you can make heading to Rockport a family affair.

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Then, the cherished Rockport tradition of **Santa's Arrival by Boat** at T-Wharf on Rockport Harbor takes place on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 1 p.m. following his brisk lobster boat ride across Sandy Bay. Then Santa will ascend the platform with Mrs. Claus to greet the crowd and kick off the Tree Lighting festivities, before they climb onto the fire truck to begin their return journey to the North Pole. The **Tree Lighting Ceremony** gets underway at 4 p.m. welcoming Santa and the public at the tree in Dock Square.

After Santa and the tree lighting kicks off the season, the program continues. On Sat. Dec. 14 from 5 to 8 p.m. it's the **Second Saturday Art Walk**. One week later, on Saturday, Dec. 21 the **North Shore Christian Men's Choir** at Rockport Baptist Church (2:30 p.m.) and the **78th Annual Live Christmas Pageant** (5 p.m.). Finally, on Sat. and Sun, Dec. 21 and 22 it's **Last-Minute Stocking Stuffer Weekend**. Finally, on Thursday, December 26 (6 p.m.) it's the **Menorah Lighting** at Barletta Park. For all details—and there are many!—check out rockportusa.com/Christmas-in-rockport.

...Continued on page 33

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GLOUCESTER

The holiday season in Gloucester begins On Sunday, Dec. 1, it's the **Gloucester Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting**. This annual parade kicks off at the State Fish Pier, winds through Main Street and finishes at Kent Circle for the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Parade participants line up at 2pm on the State Fish Pier, Parade Starts at the State Fish Pier at 3 p.m., tree lighting at Kent Circle around 4:15 p.m.

There are two community shopping events, including the **50th Annual "Ladies Night" All Day** on Thursday, December 5 (all day!) with shops on Main Street and beyond offering a fun, holiday stroll experience. Then, on Sat. and Sun, Dec. 7 & 8 head over for the **Second Glance Holiday Market** (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.)

On Sunday, Dec. 8 starting at 9 a.m., it's the **Happy Holidays Half MerryThon & 5k Race** at Good Harbor Beach.

On Saturday, December 14 it's the 26th annual **The Middle Street Walk** celebrates Middle Street kicks off in the historic center of Gloucester with coordinated events from a wide variety of organizations. Look for fun activities (like a Gingerbread House contest!) and

programs from the Sawyer Free Library, Cape Ann Museum and the Judith Sargent Murray House.

On Sunday, Dec 15, it's the **Santa at Sea Beauport Cruise**. First sail is 11 a.m. to 12:30 and the second is from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Kiddos can take pictures with Santa, enjoy holiday tunes and treats and pitch in on the annual toy drive for Cape Ann kids.

ESSEX

A Very Essex Christmas Celebration

Tuesday, Dec. 3 to Sat., Dec. 7

Technically, "A Very Essex Christmas Celebration" begins Friday, Dec. 6 but since it's sponsored by the Essex Shipbuilding Museum, we're pulling in the Shipbuilding Museum's annual (and very popular) wreath-making event into it, since it takes place the same week. So, first up, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 3 & 4, there's the **Wreath Decorating Workshop** with Susie Talbot. This annual event is back this year for two days. At the Essex Shipbuilding Museum at 28 Main Street in Essex, 5 to 7 p.m. (*Tickets \$70*).

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...Continued from page 33



Then, on Friday, December 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Essex Shipbuilding Museum, it's the **Essex Christmas Celebration**, featuring Santa and Mrs. Claus who will arrive by boat to the Shipbuilding Museum (they arrive around 5 p.m.). Be sure to arrive at the museum earlier for snacks, music and fun for all. Then, on Saturday, December 7 the fun keeps going. Head to the Essex Shipbuilding Museum for its annual **Holiday Market at the Shipyard** sale by craftspeople and more from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

MANCHESTER

Friday, Dec. 6 to Sunday, Dec. 8

Christmas by the Sea

The **Manchester by the Sea Holiday Stroll** (and other local events) kicks off Friday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. opens the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce's weekend-long holiday program. Downtown Manchester shops open their doors to shoppers from far and wide. Come on down and enjoy the charming, walkable harborside downtown with its holiday lights and cheer. The next day, it's **Santa's Arrival in Manchester-by-the-Sea**, and other fun, local events on Sat. Dec. 7. **Holiday Open House at Man-**

chester-by-the-Sea Museum: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Ornament crafting. Museum Holiday Cards on sale at the Museum. **Lindsey & Her Puppets: 10:30 a.m. | Parish Hall, Lindsey & Her Puppet Pals** is a funny, fast-paced interactive show to delight the young and the young at heart! Following the show, visit the Manchester Library for treats. *Sponsored by Friends of the Manchester Public Library.* **Jingle Bell Walk: 1 - 3 p.m. | Masconomo Park:** Santa will arrive at Masconomo Park by boat and lead the children in a parade around the park and then be available for pictures. There will also be a petting zoo, crafts, face painting, a candy cane hunt, refreshments and a visit from Mrs. Claus. Finally, the Spaulding Education Trust's **Night of Stars Talent Show: 4 p.m.** at the Manchester Essex Regional Middle High School. Finally, on Sun., Dec. 8 it's the **Friendship Tree Lighting in Manchester-by-the-Sea 2024** is a long-running, cherished tradition at the Town Common (starting 3:30 p.m.), hosted by the Manchester Women's Club with community hot cocoa provided by the Manchester Masons. The outdoor program this year will include a concert by the ME High School Band and the Memorial School Chorus. More info at the capeannchamber.org

Romantic Igloos, Easy Eating in January, and a Sparkling New Year's

Six Weeks of yummy eating around Cape Ann


The new igloos at Mile Marker One's "Igloo Village" winter outdoor concept blends private dining with toasty domes on the waterfront this year.

Photo: Kirkham Williamson



New Year's Eve punctuates the holiday season before taking it easy in January. Then, before you know it, it's Valentine's Day. Here are some great ideas for delicious food whether it's party down time, low-key nights, or adventures in romance. Here we go ...

By Erika Brown



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Blast Off Into 2025 ...

From elegant fine dining to straight-up celebrating, there is no shortage of options for Cape Ann locals to ring in the New Year. The Beauport Hotel's **1606 Restaurant & Bar** is a Gloucester standby as the big party venue for New Year's on the Gloucester Harbor waterfront. As it does every year, the restaurant will feature a New Year's Eve menu that won't disappoint with locally sourced seafood dishes, prime cuts, and desserts. Pair your meal with the bar's crafted cocktails from 1606's Adam Witfield, or a glass of sparkling wine.

For music fans, Soul Rebel Project will return home to Gloucester as New Year's Eve headliners at **The Cut** on Main Street. Expect an unforgettable celebration infused with vibrant energy and reggae-infused rock grooves, along with a sweet celebratory menu starting at 7 p.m. at The Cut's epic restaurant and bar. In Magnolia, the **Hammond Castle Museum's** Great Hall will transform into "the ultimate New Year's Eve destination" with its **Club Castle at the Hammond Castle Museum** gala to ring in the new year with dancing, gourmet treats, and a special viewing of some



of the castle's unique chambers.

Finally, if you're itching for a true day-into-night extravaganza, look no further than the **Rockport New Year's Eve** which promises live music as the centerpiece, with bands of all genres (big band, jazz (regular and New Orleans), 60s rock, seafaring, folk, reggae) along with poetry

Continued on page 36


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readings, food, face-painting, puppeteers, story tellers, face painters, dancers, psychic readers, and telescope stargazing, all running up to the midnight ball drop in Dock Square. Yes, it's not technically eating out on New Year's but the food scene at local restaurants promises to be great. Check out **Fleur Cuisine**, **Feather & Wedge**, or **My Place by the Sea**.

Give Yourself a Break ...

Thanksgiving arrives this year at the tippy end of November, so holiday entertaining will feel like you're barreling down a mountain, fast. The good news is January can be a great month to get out of the house and explore options that are delicious, low key, and don't break the bank.

Let's start with cozy pubs, perfect for winding down. **The Stone Pub** on Main Street in Gloucester is a favorite with locals looking for a laid-back vibe, legendary burgers and great selection of beer on tap. If you're looking for a harbor view, a friendly bar, and a fireplace, another great burger can be had at the **Gloucester House** (although don't pass over than incredible seafood Mac 'N Cheese). **The James** in Essex, at the site of the former Village Restaurant, may have opened just last year but it's already a local favorite with its Irish pub fare like Short Rib & Ale Pie or Bangers & Mash. It's also got what may be the longest bar on Cape Ann, with on-tap beer and ale options galore (including alcohol-free Guinness). Also in Essex, **CK Pearl's** "Surf and Turf" burger with brie cheese and buttered lobster will set you right. And **Machaca** on Rogers Street in Gloucester may not technically be a pub, but this Mexican eatery is welcoming and full of family. Sidle up to the bar and enjoy a Mexican lager on tap with the Chile Rellenos (so good). Or just get the Pozole (a.k.a., love in a bowl.) Then roll home.

Feeling like seafood? For all you fried clam boat fans, get to **Woodman's of Essex** right after New Year's for your fried fix or the award winning chowder. **The Causeway** in Gloucester (Rte. 133/Essex St.) and its signature seafood chowder is also great, packed with clams, shrimp, and fish in a rich, creamy broth. The portions are huge: the baked haddock or lobster pie are hard for one person to finish. (Just remember it's BYOB so walk in with a six-pack or a bottle of wine.) Another shout out to **Gloucester House**, that also makes a mean baked haddock, fisherman's stew, and their famous clam pie—all at reasonable prices.



Rolling onto the last low-key-but-delicious options, there's elevated pizza. Two spots offer specialness without the formality of a "big" night out. First, in Manchester, there's **Bravo by the Sea**, which last year added a dining room and bar to its Neapolitan-style wood-fired pizzas, pastas, and salads. Cocktails are amazing, and there's plenty of Italian wines to go with pizzas that include Margherita, Sage & Pear, Sausage and Meatball. It's off the hook. Then, on Main Street in Gloucester, **Short & Main** is as cozy as it gets. Ditto on the craft cocktails, and pizzas, plus you can get oysters too.

One last suggestion is to check out something new. **Drift** on Main Street has carved a big place out for itself for cocktails, music, and nightlife, all from its expansive perch overlooking Gloucester Harbor. What you

may not know is that in December, Drift is launching a fresh new kitchen concept called Wave Kitchen with a globally inspired menu that combines Asian flavors, a tropical twist, and South American influences. The menu was crafted by Thiago Paixão, who trained at Sushi Sang Lee.

It's clear: when it comes to the January "do nothing" weeks, there is plenty to do and with options that don't break the bank, there's no excuse not to give yourself a break from the kitchen. Tasty. Easy. And all local.

Onto the Love ...

For a lovely adventure and romantic night out, head over to the **Mile Marker One** restaurant overlooking the Annisquam River

in Gloucester for an intimate Valentine's Day dinner in one of the restaurant's snug, heated waterfront "igloos." You'll nosh on hearty winter menu items, enjoying cocktails and wine, all in a private-dining style service while looking out on the quiet docks of the Cape Ann Marina.

The idea began three years ago when owners and siblings Tobin and Drew Dominick transformed the outdoor summer deck into "**Igloo Village**" with about a dozen igloos designed and built by Drew's team, all featuring panoramic windows. The igloo concept took off, going viral with food and travel bloggers and culinary adventurers.

This year the Dominick siblings upped the ante with a new, upgraded generation of igloos. The transparent, dome-shaped pods with soft lighting and rugs for dining in an intimate setting. Heated and weatherproof, these structures provide stunning views of the Mile Marker One's docks, all from a toasty private bubble-like space.

It's creative, delicious, and beautiful—not to mention fun. Honestly, it's like dining in a snow globe, under the stars. Perfect for more adventurous Valentine's diners.

Of course, there are many other options for great, memorable fine dining around Cape Ann. Head to the award-winning **My Place by the Sea** in Rockport, which will open its second-floor dining room for Valentine's Day. Or at **Vita Bella** in Essex, as the former location of Windward Grill, make a reservation at a table near one of the restaurant's five colonial fireplaces and enjoy the lovely menu of contemporary Italian fare. Vita Bella's rustic ambiance is quiet, warm and lovely. Looking for another fireplace option for Valentine's Day? Make a reservation for Tables 41 or 52 at **Tonno** in Gloucester, which are fireside and let the House Made Spinach Lasagna or the Halibut a la Plancha ooze the romance. Other options? **The Franklin** on Main Street in Gloucester, **35 Beach** in Manchester, or **Feather & Wedge** in Rockport. For any of these, reserve early because seats are limited.



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It's Always Wine Season ...

By Paige Farrell

Artist Georgia O'Keeffe wrote, “*Nobody sees a flower - really - it is so small it takes time - we haven't time - and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.*”

Early on in my career working with wine, I came to see wine as so much more than just a beverage. I consider wine art, and for me, a portal to my love of the poetics of language, and a gateway to communicate creatively the essence of wine. Art of any medium asks that we slow our pace and listen to what we see, hear, feel, and in the case of wine, taste.

Ever more today, we need to find the time to take pause and appreciate what we *have*. Our world, our way of living,

is chock full of urgencies. Wine, with its mysterious charm, asks that we slow our pace, and appreciate. While I smile at the elusive reputation wine has cultivated for itself, in its truth, it is anything but. It is a simple pleasure and discovery, something to be savored and shared. For me, the essence of wine is akin to the Scandinavian concept of Hygge.

Hygge (pronounced “*hyoo-guh*”), is a Danish word that, for Scandinavians, is simply a part of their everyday life, so ingrained in their culture, that it is just a part of who they are. It's about being present, content, slowing down, spending time with people you enjoy, and finding little moments of time for warmth, gathering, gratitude and comfort.

November begins autumn's moody

beauty. The evening's cusp closes in on our light, cozying up to the holiday season. This is the time we could all do well to take pause, cherish the little moments of joy, and simply connect with good folk, good food, and, certainly, good wine.

And so, from my palate to yours, as conversation starters with your favorite wine retailer on Cape Ann, I hope you won't be shy about seeking out synonyms to my suggestions, my favorite way to broaden one's wine horizon.

The Wines:

Sparkling:

True Champagne must be made in the Méthode Champenoise and come only from

the Champagne region of France. Simply put, the wines of Champagne take more time, due to aging regulations, and the imperative that the secondary fermentation take place in the bottle. Champagne is a true luxury, when it comes to wine, but that shouldn't leave out more affordable options, such as:

Domaine Saint Hilaire, in the southwest of France, boasts a blend of Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, and offers subtle complexities, hints of citrus, brioche, with a lively effervescence. It is made in the traditional method, but not made in Champagne.

I Clivi sparkling Friulano from Friuli Venezia-Giulia in northeastern Italy is taut and complex, with an ease of grace and



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1 Sparkling wine from **Domaine Saint Hilaire** isn't technically "champagne" although it's made in southwest of France using traditional methods with a blend of Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc.

2 Maz Caz wines make for easy drinking, especially delicious wines in Costières de Nîmes in the Southern Rhone in France. It's a perfect blend of Roussanne and Grenache Blanc.

3 Greek varietal **Xinomavro** bares an uncanny resemblance to a young, earthy **Nebbiolo** from Italy. This one from **Vaeni** is excellent.

4 Some of the best non-alcoholic wines are made at **Weingut Leitz**, available in many wine varieties. They are made in the Loire Valley, and then de-alcoholized.

purity. Likewise, made in the traditional method, but from Italy.

For a classic Champagne, **Diebolt-Vallois** makes a traditional blend-robust, yeasty, rich-made of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier, and a more elegant and refined Blanc de Blancs-all Chardonnay-which offers a certain elegance.

White:

Maz Caz wines are the creation of the lovely Michele D'Aprix, who makes easy drinking, delicious wines in Costières de Nîmes in the Southern Rhone in France. Her white is a perfect blend of Roussanne and Grenache Blanc, with subtle spice, citrus and just enough weight to please the Chardonnay lover.

Coste Al Vento, from Sicily in Italy, is a gentle, skin contact slight orange hue wine made with thick skinned, white varietal Grillo. There is grip, tannin, and a savory complexity which gives it the flexibility to present, from a palate perspective, as both a white or red wine

Weingut Leitz in the Germany's Rheingau region boasts a cornucopia of Riesling's enviable versatility, a grape which, if I am asked, is the ultimate holiday pairing wine. From racy dry to succulent sweet, Leitz delivers. **Eins Zwei Dry** is a drier

style, still with a fruit forwardness, and **Dragonstone** offers a touch more residual sugar.

To Note: Some of the best non-alcoholic wines are made at **Weingut Leitz**: Sparkling Riesling, Sparkling Rosé, still Riesling, still Chardonnay, still Pinot Noir, and new to the fleet, a nonalcoholic Muscadet, made to its completion in the Loire Valley, and de-alcoholized at Weingut Leitz.

Red:

Indigenous Greek varietal **Xinomavro** bares an uncanny resemblance to a young, earthy **Nebbiolo** from Italy. Winery **Vaeni** is located in Naoussa within Macedonia, and the result here is a wine lithe of color, dry, with well-integrated tannins, rustic, red fruit aromatics, with a hint of spice.

Portuguese wines are becoming more readily available and refined, and **Gota Wines** 'Prunus' red blend of Jaen and Tinto Roriz, is a lovely pleaser from the Dão region. It is a wine both fresh and complex, with hints of ruby, dark fruits, and beautiful aromatics.

Babylonstoren "Babel" red blend of Syrah, Pinotage, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, from the Western Cape in South Africa, offers a bold yet refined take on what could be an overwhelmingly powerful wine. It has all the complexities to

make one take pause, yet retains a marvelous acidity, balance and freshness.

Where to shop for wines on Cape Ann:

Seaview Farm and Farmstand, Rockport for the unique setting, impeccable, affordable, and creatively curated selections
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seaviewfarmrockport.com

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for the intimacy of the choices, never overwhelming, always lovely and accessible
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Shop Thoughts 2024 Holiday Book Season!

The Holidays are my favorite time of the year. I love all the celebrations, and the friends and family and food. But it's also the time of year when traffic in bookstores doubles, even triples, so I get to do another one of my favorite pastimes: talking about books. Here's my list of gift ideas this year.



By Hannah Harlow

For the Cook

Cookbooks make great gifts, not just for the chefs in your life, but also for hosts and hostesses and for that person who you're not sure what they like to read. It's a banner year for cookbooks, so hold onto your hats. London chef and bestselling cook-

book author Yotam Ottolenghi has a new cookbook out focused on comfort food. *Ottolenghi Comfort* has over 100 recipes that are both comfortable to eat and cook. Julia Turshen tries to take the guesswork out of everyday meals with *What Goes with What: 100 Recipes, 20 Charts, Endless Possibilities*, an interactive approach to cooking that helps you understand the alchemy of a meal - and then offers countless iterations. Two favorite celebrities get

in on the action with *Good Lookin' Cookin': A Year of Meals - A Lifetime of Family, Friends, and Food* by Dolly Parton and her sister Rachel Parton George and *Does This Taste Funny?: Recipes Our Family Loves* by Stephen Colbert and his wife Evie McGee Colbert. For bakers, there's *The King Arthur Baking Company Big Book of Bread* (125 recipes for bread!), *Milk Street Bakes* (200 sweet and savory recipes!), and *Cookie Swap!*, whether you're partici-



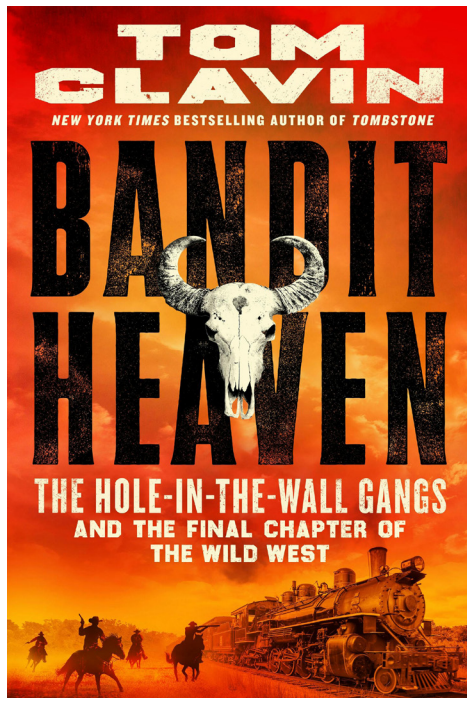
pating in your own cookie swap or know someone who is.

For History Readers

Living where we do by the sea, nautical history is a popular genre for gift-giving. This year, we're recommending *The Wide, Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact and the Fateful Final Voyage of Captain James Cook* by Hampton Sides, about Captain Cook's thrilling final journey and the complexities and consequences of the Age of Exploration; and *Left for Dead: Shipwreck, Treachery, and Survival at the Edge of the World* by North Shore author Eric Jay Dolin, the true story of a wild and fateful encounter between an American sealing vessel, a shipwrecked British brig, and a British warship in the Falkland archipelago during the War of 1812.

For American history readers, H. W. Brand's *America First: Roosevelt vs. Lindbergh in the Shadow of War* scratches that World War II itch. *Bandit Heaven: The Hole-in-the-Wall Gangs and the Final Chapter of the Wild West* by Tom Clavin takes readers back to the Old West and the last of the outlaws and the lawmen that hunted them down.

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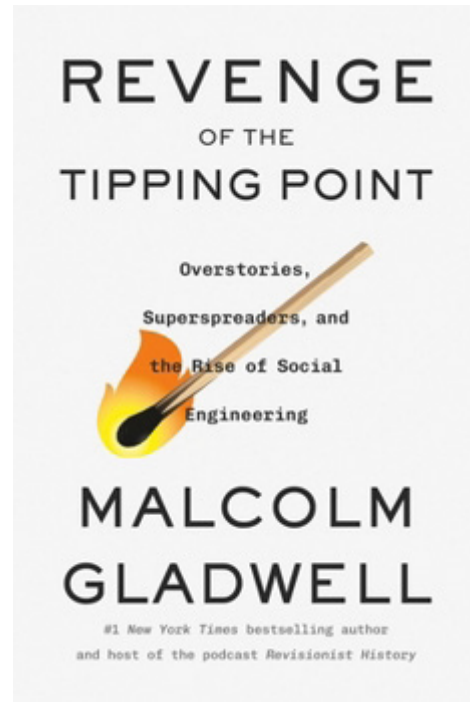


Continued from page 44

The Barn: The Secret History of a Murder in Mississippi by Wright Thompson is more than a story about Emmett Till's death; it's serious history about Mississippi and the South. Doris Kearns Goodwin's *An Unfinished History: A Personal History of the 1960s* is the perfect blend of biography, memoir, and history and a great choice for lifelong students of politics. The stunning *1619 Project: The Visual Experience* by Nikole Hannah-Jones makes a great gift; it takes seven chapters from the original book and pairs them with gorgeous and engaging photographs to illustrate the stories of slavery and resistance in the larger story of America's founding.

Other Nonfiction Favorites:

- *Be Ready When the Luck Happens: A Memoir* by Ina Garten
- *A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon* by Kevin Fedarko
- *Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *The Backyard Bird Chronicles* by Amy Tan
- *Heartbreak is a National Anthem: How Taylor Swift Reinvented Pop Music* by Rob Sheffield
- *The Boston Globe Story of the Celtics: 1946-Present: The Inside Stories and Acclaimed Reporting on the NBA's Banner Franchise* edited by Chad Finn

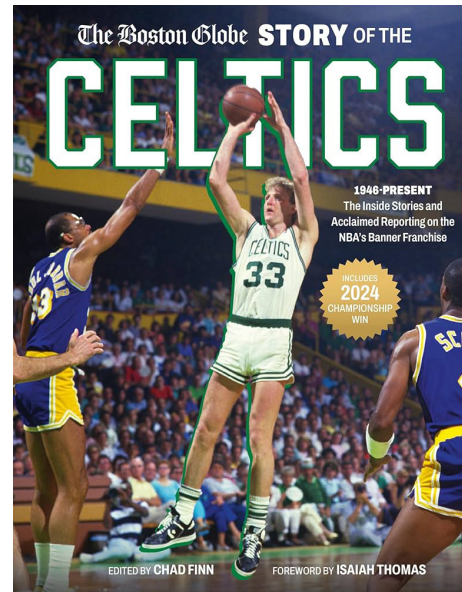


For Young Readers and the Young at Heart

My favorite read in the children's genre this year was *Impossible Creatures* by Katherine Rundell. It owes more than a little to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis: written like a classic, it is full of magic and tells the story of a boy who steps through a doorway into a world in which all the creatures of legend actually exist, a land of islands populated by griffins and sphinxes and dragons and so much more. There he meets a girl and together they must save all the impossible creatures and the land they live in. It is exceptionally good and a book the whole family can enjoy together.

If you're looking for new holiday stories for the kids, Mac Barnett is back, teaming up with Sydney Smith to bring us *Santa's First Christmas*, in which Santa's elves help him experience the magic of Christmas for himself. I loved Lane Smith's *Stickler*, about a woodland creature who sees the wonder in even the smallest of things, and now Smith has given us *A Stickler Christmas*. Stickler has picked out the perfect stick to give all of his friends, but what if one of his friends doesn't like being the center of attention, how will Stickler give his present then? And then, of course, there's Bluey, the gift that keeps on giving. This year there's a Bluey advent calendar of books, a holiday-themed search-and-find, a new picture book about Bartlebee's first Christmas, and more.

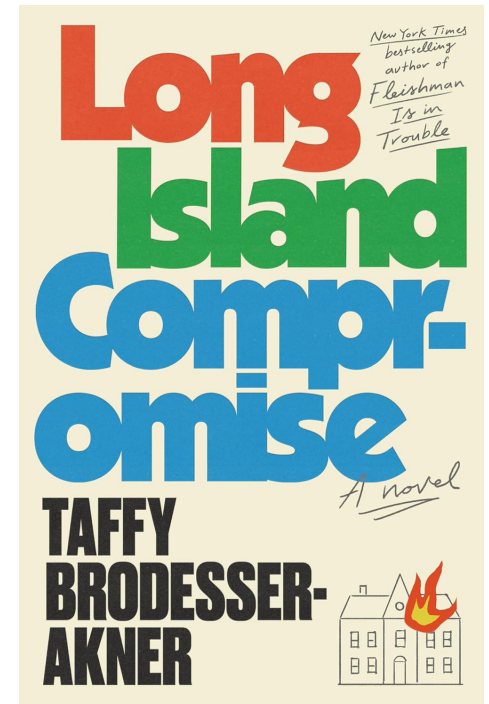
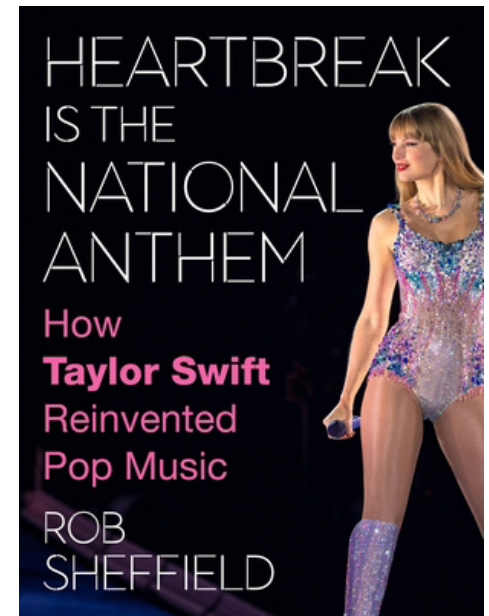
More Kids Favorites:



- *Where to Hide a Star* by Oliver Jeffers
- *Orris and Timble* by Kate DiCamillo
- *The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science* by Kate McKinnon
- *The Dragon on Mars* by Scott Reintgen
- *Let It Glow* by Marissa Meyer and Joanne Levy
- *Cows and Holly* by Sandra Boynton
- *Knight Owl and Early Bird* by Christopher Denise
- *The Hunger Games: Illustrated Edition* by Suzanne Collins

Fiction

Fourth quarter in the book business, we're



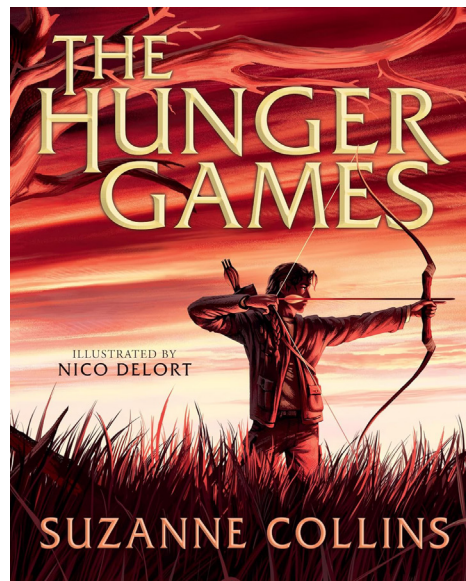
all just waiting to see which books will win the big awards – the Booker Prize, the National Book Award, and the Pulitzer – or get the designation of one of the 10 Best Books of the Year from the *New York Times* because those are the books that are going to sell sell sell, especially when it comes to fiction. It's nearly impossible to predict, but I feel pretty good about *James* by Percival Everett being somewhere on one or more of those lists. This Huck Finn retelling is more than deserving: it has something important to say about our cultural identity; it's smart and well written, and it's a good story. Everyone should read it.

Continued on page 46



Continued from page 45

But say you want a novel full of the spirit of the holidays. For the past two years, I've been handing out Claire Keegan's *Small Things Like These* like candy on Halloween. This year, I have a new one for you: *Brightly Shining* by Ingvild Rishøi. Like *Small Things Like These*, it's a short, small-format book set during the holiday season, in this case in Norway. It's told through a child's narration, full of charm and innocence and hope. The novel is about sisterhood, but also the gifts of others and how neighbors step in to help.



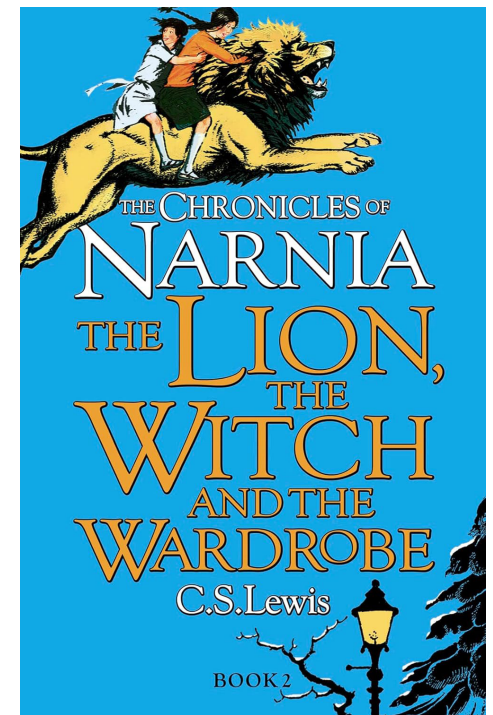
Since its release in 2020, *This is Happiness* by Niall Williams, the story of a small town in Ireland on the brink of change, has been a steady seller for us and has acquired ardent fans. This November, Williams returns to that same town in *Time of the Child*, with a holiday story that is full of wonder and grace. You do not need to have read *This is Happiness* to enjoy it—or to give it to everyone you know.

More fiction favorites:

- *The Women* by Kristin Hannah



- *Long Island Compromise* by Taffy Brodesser-Akner
- *The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley
- *Fire Exit* by Morgan Talty
- *The Safekeep* by Yael van der Wouden
- *By Any Other Name* by Jodi Picoult
- *The Most* by Jessica Anthony
- *The Wedding People* by Allison Espach
- *Playground* by Richard Powers
- *The Book of Love* by Kelly Link



Hannah Harlow is owner of *The Book Shop*, an independent bookstore in Beverly Farms. Harlow writes biweekly recommendations in her column "Shop Thoughts" in the *Manchester Cricket*. See more of her reading recommendations at thecricket.com. And be sure to support all local independent book shops like Hannah's.

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Continued on page 47



Continued from page 46

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