



# CHESTER COUNTY CUISINE & NIGHTLIFE

DECEMBER 14  
2011

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PAGE: 3  
SUNDAYS  
WITH EVAN

PAGE: 6  
HOLIDAY  
FOODIE  
GIFT GUIDE

PAGE: 11  
HE SHOPS  
SHE SHOPS



## Nutcracker Tea – Page 9

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE: 4	<b>Gingerbread Boys</b>
PAGE: 4	<b>Sundays with Evan</b>
PAGE: 5	<b>Christmas Parade</b>
PAGE: 6	<b>Foodie Gift Guide</b>
PAGE: 7	<b>Health and Wellness</b>
PAGE: 8	<b>Perfect Cheese Board</b>
PAGE: 8	<b>Breakfast with Santa</b>
PAGE: 9	<b>Nutcracker Tea</b>
PAGE: 9	<b>Classifieds</b>
PAGE: 10	<b>Art and Restaurants</b>
PAGE: 11	<b>He Said She Said</b>



DECEMBER 14, 2011 / PAGE 3

**MAGAZINE**  
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## COMMENTS:

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## MARY'S MESSAGE:

From local business owners and artists, to home bakers and chefs, people are dishing this month in Chester County Cuisine & Nightlife. Curious what they're serving up this holiday season?

In this Christmas edition, we present on a perfect platter all the details you need to know to successfully—and deliciously—get through the holidays. Whether you're on the hunt for the best gifts for the foodies in your life, you want to craft gingerbread cookies for your sweet treat, you need party planning assistance, or you wish to keep your waistline in check—we are here to help!

Plus, since Chester County is brimming with holiday cheer, we were sure to share with you scenes from our favorite recent events, including the Mars drinks' Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade, Brandywine Ballet's Nutcracker Tea, and West Chester Parks & Recreation's Breakfast with Santa.

So, relax, enjoy and savor the season! Thank you for sharing another year of food and fun with us. Everyone at Chester County Cuisine and Nightlife wishes you a happy, healthy (and delicious) holiday season.



## Cheers!

Mary Bigham  
Contributing Editor  
www.wcdish.com



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DAILY LOCAL NEWS



# Gram's Gingerbread Boys

By Laura Koster  
wcdish.com

There's one thing that causes a festive stir at our calm family Christmas celebrations each year: Gram's gingerbread cookies. A huge batch of these will silently disappear from their "secret" hiding place Christmas Day. My brother will – and has – happily eaten dozens of these instead of dinner.

Gram began making these gingerbread boys circa the 1940s. She'd present a round tin of the gingerbread boys, each decorated with cinnamon red hots for eyes, nose and buttons, and packaged in a plastic baggie with a red yarn bow. The following original recipe comes from Miller Cookie Cutter Company, and was distributed with their gingerbread boy cookie cutter, now an heirloom in our family.

My mom, who has taken over the tradition of making these,

has every right to be protective over her cookie supply. These gingerbread boys (angels, reindeer, snowmen, Santas – whatever you want to make) take time and effort, from dough prep and chill time to rolling, baking and icing (a new tradition).

Time-intensive they may be, but you can't buy anything like these cookies. This year, my mom came over and we made them together one afternoon, aprons on, hands covered in flour, catching up on the latest news. Cookies like these are a reminder of how to savor the holiday season – by reconnecting to annual traditions, slowing down and spending quality time with family.

## Gram's Gingerbread Boys

### Ingredients

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup molasses (look for Grandma's brand)

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. vinegar
- 7 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. ginger
- 4 tsp. cinnamon

### Directions

Cream shortening, add sugar gradually and cream thoroughly. Blend in molasses. Sift 2.5 cups flour with soda, spices, and salt and stir into syrup mixture. Add vinegar and remaining flour, alternating with buttermilk. Chill dough well. Roll out .25 inch thick on a lightly floured board and cut out into shapes. Roll the

cookie dough thicker for soft gingerbread and thinner for crisper cookies. Red hot cinnamon dots are used for buttons, eyes and decor. Press red hots in for buttons and eyes before baking. Bake 10 to 15 minutes at 375 degrees.

**Icing:** Mix together 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tsp., 4 tsp. hot milk and 1 tsp. vanilla. Dye color of choice. Icing is not overdone, merely used for trimming and accents.

For replica of the original "jolly gingerbread boy" cookie cutter, visit [cookiecutters.com/Set3.html](http://cookiecutters.com/Set3.html).



## Seeger Fever

Few things in this world bring me to tears. Disney's The Fox and The Hound, pass me the box of tissues; when Chaz Bono was voted off Dancing with the Stars, I kicked the television and wailed for hours; a Crave Case of White Castle cheeseburgers at 3am . . . lord have mercy on my sobbing soul. But one person . . . one timeless and classic voice can render me incapacitated with swollen eyes and torn vocal chords. His lyrics talk to the soul, speaking poetically of tales of love, blue collar woes, and personal discovery on the open road. His voice is raw, yet comforting. Somber verses allow you to walk along in his shoes, yet somehow that mellow road you walk crescendos into brilliant choruses of pure rock and roll. That man is Bob Seger, and he climbed the summit of my emotional mountain during his

two-hour performance Saturday night at the Wells Fargo Center. And as I swayed along to Night Moves, double-fisting Miller High Lives while a 50-something woman humped my thigh in front of her husband, I knew I was no longer a lonely mid-western boy.

From my earliest recollections to today, Seger has been intertwined with my life. When children are born in Detroit, they are assigned a Seger song before a name (Against the Wind). Seger been on constant rotation with every car I've owned. He completes numbers 1-6 on my OK Cupid profile's "six things I can't live without". I've made love while his 1976 "Live Bullet: Cobo Hall" vinyl record spun in the back-ground, and on multiple occasions have witnessed my Dad crying to Like a Rock. And yet, Seger's

live show has as always alluded me. Until this past Saturday when, with a fellow Michigander friend, Seger and I gloriously united.

It was 6 p.m. and I'd been drinking for roughly four hours. I was slumped into a booth at the Draught Horse over on Temple University's campus. The afternoon had been spent watching our alma mater (Central Michigan) fall to Temple basketball 86-47; now all I could think about was the rotgut burgers this place was slinging, and the cache of 5 Hour Energy that sat just beyond the glowing CVS sign. My Michigan buddy lost his drivers license, and the events of the day were starting to eat at my enthusiasm. But 7 p.m. came along quickly, and it was time to stumble to the Broad Street line.

I walked into the Wells Fargo center at roughly fifteen minutes before eight and the sounds of the warm-up band reverberated throughout the concourse. The space was filled with a gaggle of folks that looked all too strangely like my parents. I'd have to think the typical Seger fan is somewhere in their early 50's and mid-western. They understand how a dollar is earned. Nothing makes a ripper venue for people watching, than a demographic reliving their own rock star yesteryears.

With the men: 1 in 5 sport a ponytail, 3 in 5 have a jacket of the leather or denim variety, and 4 in 5 had crotch hugging skinny jeans that don't sit well on a middle aged beer gut physique.

With the women: 3 in 5 wore a Seger shirt from shows passed (If

years of cigarette smoking didn't show their age, a Seger Fever Tour '71 shirt does), 2 in 5 tossed on that mothballed teenage outfit from their "rockin' days" (combined with the right woman, and you had a killer cougar combo on your hands), and 5 of 5 where very visibly intoxicated and loving it.

It wasn't long after we settled into our seats that the stage lights dimmed, and the rock and roll Jesus himself entered stage left. And with a strum of his bitch'n guitar and a primal yowl into the microphone, the sold out arena rose to its feet. Seger's raspy voice dominated; he put his blood, sweat, and tears into every classic tune. But he doesn't bleed the blood of humans like you or I. Oh no, Seger's heart pumps out pure electric sex and soul, it sifts

through his veins, and blasts out his vocal chords and fingertips. Every Miller High Life, every hit song, . . . drowned my sorrow and exhaustion away. I danced in the aisle (a series of violent hip thrusts), with hands in the air, while eye screwing every middle aged woman that couldn't help but be fixated by sexy gyrations. By the time the second encore went down (true rock stars have two encores), I had wholeheartedly believed I was Bob Seger, and the lyrics were born from the life I lived. If you would have sat me down at 3am; with a Crave Case and Chaz Bono (after his loss) to watch a Fox and Hound marathon . . . I still wouldn't have been as emotionally drained after this evening. I had the fever, and the only prescription . . . was more Seger.

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## The MARS drinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade

Friday, December 2, 2011 • West Chester

Photos by Matthew Werth, Werth Photography





# 2011 Chester County Holiday Foodie GIFT GUIDE

When it comes to holiday shopping, you don't have to skip out on Thanksgiving dinner to snag the perfect gift. Surprise the foodie in your life with one of these gifts and you will be on the nice list all year.

## Not Your Average Host/Hostess Gift

### Not So Cheesy Avalon Cheese Board

Avalon Restaurant is no stranger to serving artisan cheeses that will knock your socks off. Their cheese boards are available in three sizes and are really two gifts in one. Enjoy the amazing cheeses and pairings now and keep the hand-made wood cutting board to serve dishes later! For \$75, the gift recipient receives three cheeses with jellies, Sherry Plumped Apricots and Marcona Almonds. The medium cheese board has five cheeses and jellies, apricots, almonds and a jar of imported Truffle honey for \$100. The large cheese board has seven cheeses on a larger cutting board, Sherry Plumped Apricots, Marcona Almonds, a jar of imported Truffle Honey, a jar of Saba and a jar of Watermelon Mostardo for \$150. These cheese boards are popular, so be sure to call and reserve yours early! For Avalon West Chester pickups call 610-436-4100 and for Avalon Pasta Bistro in Downingtown call 610-873-4200.



### Prosperity Cakes from Full Spirited Flavours

The recipient of a "prosperity cake" from Full Spirited Flavours will be in high spirits after one bite of their Amaretto Liqueur Cake, Chocolate Razz Liqueur Cake, Limoncello Liqueur Cake or Mango Coconut Rum Cake. These rich, moist cakes are chock full of flavor and each cake is infused with a liqueur and topped with a liqueur glaze. Since alcohol is a natural preservative, these flavorful cakes have an unrefrigerated shelf life of two months or can be frozen for up to three months. Their cakes come in a junior size (serves 2 to 4 people) for \$14.95, large (10 to 15 people) for \$34.95 or a prosperity petites pack of eight mini cakes for \$24.95. Shop online at fullspiritedflavours.com or visit a local retailer for this sweet gift.



### A Taste of Global Flavors

Whether you are looking for a present that is savory or sweet, you can find it at Taste of Olive. They have two locations, 26 S. High Street in West Chester and 22 W. Lancaster Avenue in Ardmore. Taste of Olive carries a variety of gourmet foods, dips, gorgeous dishware and over 50 extra virgin olive oils, whole fruit and herb fused olive oils, vinegars and balsamic vinegars from se-

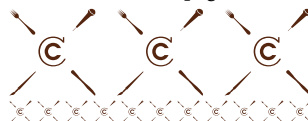
lect global artisans. Before shoppers fill up their 375 or 750 ml bottles, they can sample oils straight from the stainless steel containers. While there, ask to sample fig balsamic vinegar, blood orange olive oil and the black currant balsamic vinegar. Taste of Olive was voted best "Hostess Gift" in 2009 by Main Line Today and their knowledgeable staff is on hand to help design the perfect gift.

### A Different Way to Wine and Dine

### Taste of Phoenixville Tickets

The 10th Annual "Taste of Phoenixville" will be Thursday, January 19 from 6 to 10 p.m. at Franklin Commons, 400 Franklin Blvd, Phoenixville. Sample the best hors d'oeuvres, mini-entrees, desserts and cocktails from your favorite local restaurants and breweries. In between bites, guests can dance the night away to live music. Hurry, tickets are \$65 until November 30, \$75 as of December 1, and \$85 at the door. Tickets can be purchased here and proceeds benefit the Good Samaritan Shelter.

That's not the only way to support the Good Samaritan Shelter this holiday season. Every time you make a purchase through Amazon, 4 percent of your purchase will go towards Good Samaritan's mission. There is no additional charge for this donation; all you have to do is buy your purchases through their established Amazon page.



### A New Kind of Staycation

You don't have to go far for a relaxing getaway. Enjoy a five-star experience in your own backyard with a night out at The Desmond, One Liberty Blvd., Malvern. From now until December 31st, The Desmond is offering two \$50 gift cards for just \$79, which can be picked up at their front desk or Costco. Guests can use the gift cards for a quiet stay in one of their 194 beautiful guest rooms or in one of their three award-winning restaurants (please note the Sunset Grille is only open during the summer). The Hunt Room offers the best in American Regional Cuisine in a comfortable atmosphere that feels like home. The Fox and Hounds adds a modern twist on one of England's most renowned watering holes with a huge selection of beer, wine, live music, tapas and light fare.

### A Whole World of Wines In Your Own Backyard

What's better than giving your loved ones a bottle of wine this season? How about an all access pass to try sample the Brandywine Wine Trail's seven wineries? The Barrels on the Brandywine Passports offer wine lovers a chance to learn about the wine making process, explore the



wine cellars, take in live music, attend special events and snag exclusive deals every weekend in March. The passports are valid until April 30, 2012. Passports are only \$30 and can be purchased online at bvwinetrail.com.

### All of Downtown West Chester at Your Fingertips

With so many dining opportunities in downtown West Chester, choosing one place to dine can be a tough decision, but at least who covers the check can be easy. Instead of giving a gift card to just one restaurant, give a West Chester MasterCard that is accepted at most of West Chester's downtown shops and restaurants. The West Chester BID offers gift cards that can be sold in increments from \$10-\$500 with a \$1.95 fee per card. Gift cards can be purchased from Fox Chase Bank (137 North High St at Chestnut St) on Monday-Thursday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. or online at westchesterbid.com.

### The Gift of Fresh Foods

Every week, CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) members pick up their share of seasonal vegetables straight from the farm throughout the spring and summer. Aside from choosing the freshest foods possible, families visit the farm and get to know the person that grows their food and is introduced to new recipes, foods and friends. CSAs are as unique as your loved ones: they come in two sizes (1/2 share or full share), some seasons are

between 12-18 weeks, some offer more than just veggies. You can get additional fruit and dairy shares and some require work on the farm. Support your local farmer and find the perfect CSA for your loved ones by visiting localharvest.org.

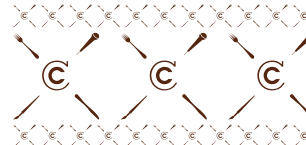
### Cook Up Some Fun

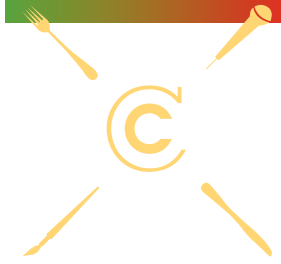
Carlino's Specialty Foods and Catering hosts cooking classes for chefs of all ages. After adult students watch regional chefs prepare pastas, traditional Mediterranean fare, pizzas and more, students test their skills with hands-on cooking. The adult classes are held once a month, are BYOB and cost \$65 per participant. Throughout the spring and summer, Chef Angela Carlino prepares budding chefs for the ultimate culinary adventures.

Can't make it to the monthly classes? Bring a taste of Carlino's to your kitchen with their newest culinary endeavor, "Wanna Taste?" The recently released book celebrates the life and cherished recipes of Mama Carlino. Books can be ordered by contacting Nick Carlino at nick@carlinosmarket.com or picked up at 128 W. Market Street in West Chester or at 2616 E. County Line Road in Ardmore.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 →





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

## All Kinds of Brews for Your Crew

Iron Hill Brewery wants to make your holiday shopping as easy as pie. For unique gifts, opt for their FE 15 Anniversary Ale pack with a 750ml of their limited release anniversary ale and two etched Rastal glasses imported from Germany for \$40. Their Winter Wheat Ale Gift Package will keep you plenty warm this winter and comes with two 18 oz etched glasses for \$30. Bring the Best of Belgium home with their Belgian Abbey Package—Abbey Dubbel, Belgian Triple and Belgian Quadrupel—for \$50. Take home a winner with the Gold Medal Package—The Cannibal, Russian Imperial Stout, Saison and Wee Heavy—goes for \$65.

If someone on your shopping list is often spotted on a bar stool at Iron Hill, consider giving them a Mug Club membership. These glowing orange cards offer more than bigger beers with every visit, mug club members are invited to exclusive events, receive a signature mug and earn free \$25 gift cards for every 300 points they earn (\$1 is one point and you start off with 200 points). Pick up your holiday goods from the West Chester location at 3 West Gay Street or Phoenixville's brewery at 130 E. Bridge Street.



# How to: Survive the HOLIDAY PARTY CIRCUIT without Tipping the Scale



Deck the halls with boughs of holly... and let your mouth water for every yummy morsel in sight. Along with caroling, gift giving and seasonal cheer, the holidays also usually come with a delightful array of delicious treats spread out in tempting displays that can make even those with great willpower waiver.

There are, however, ways to enjoy the party – and some goodies – without tipping the scale. Hang tight, we aren't going to tell you to only drink water and eat salad, although that would be ideal for your waist size. There are some simple ways that you can still savor the festivities while remaining sensible in this most decadent holiday season.

**1) Bring an item that you enjoy to the party – and make it healthy.** The thing about holiday party food is that you have no idea what is in each item served. The tendency of the host is to offer their guests the tastiest foods possible – sacrificing nutrition and calories in hopes of pleasing the crowds. By bringing an item to the party, you are not only being a considerate

guest, but you are assuring that you have something healthy to eat.

## 2) Try eating before you go to the party.

That way you get in a healthy and nutritious meal and won't arrive wanting to eat everything in sight. Also, those who tend to make healthy choices earlier in the day are more likely to continue making healthier choices as the day goes on. You can still enjoy a few treats, but this way you can be calculated about your choices.

## 3) Be wise about the booze.

Many people don't count what they drink when they are thinking about calories. Alcoholic beverages, sodas and juice are filled with massive amounts of sugar, which means lots of calories. If you still think that it won't be a true party without alcohol, then, opt for a glass of wine (better yet, a spritzer) or a light beer. If you are more the mixed drink type, opt for club soda over tonic and use a lime to sweeten it up a bit. See the beverage calorie breakdown below.

## 4) Don't hang out by the food table.

The tendency at any party is to congregate in the kitchen where there is food. Parties are about people, people. Get out into the living room, mingle, and you will find that you will eat a lot less.

## 5) Put your food on a plate and sit down to eat.

If you hover over the food table and pick at the food, you will have no idea the quantity or portions of food that you are eating – which can add up. By thoughtfully arranging a plate of food, you can make sure that you are eating the right things and in appropriate quantities. Try adding to your plate first the healthier vegetables and salads (this is where the dish that you brought comes in handy) but still save room for some of your favorites, but in moderation if it is not healthy. Sit down and enjoy what you're eating. By consciously tasting every bite, you will eat less, slow down, and enjoy the moment. If it is not spectacular food, then let it be – don't eat something for the simple fact that it is offered to you.

## 6) Plan ahead. If you know that you are going to be tempted

with an array of tasty treats that evening, then make sure that you exercise for an extra 10 or so minutes that day. Taking a long walk or jog, or hitting the treadmill that day may even give you motivation to behave at the party.

We would be remiss if we didn't touch ever so slightly on safety during the holidays as well. If you are drinking, don't drive. Clear as that. Work it out with a buddy or spouse ahead of time and decide who will be the designated driver and stick to it.

## Beverage Calorie Breakdown

Beverage	Serving	Calories
SPARKLING WATER WITH LIME	8oz	0
DIET SODA	8oz	1
NON-ALCOHOLIC WINE	4oz	8
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEER	12oz	32
WINE	4oz	80
CHAMPAGNE	4oz	84
COCKTAIL	2.5oz	133
BEER	12oz	146
REGULAR SODA	8oz	157
EGGNOG (WITH ALCOHOL)	8oz	407

The Chester County Hospital wishes you and yours a safe and festive holiday season.





# Holiday Party Planning 101:

## How To Build a Perfect Cheese Board

By Sarah Reese  
kennettsquaredish.com

As a cheesemonger at Talula's Table, I spend most of my days playing with cheese – wrapping, cutting, selling, and my favorite – making cheese boards! Your own local cheese shop is skilled in crafting the boards you want, but with a little knowledge, you can create your own beautiful spread on your own. Creativity, along with some delicious, ripe cheeses, can take you far in the world of entertaining – keep reading for a simple how-to!

### What You Need

● **A platter, board, slate, or slab** – as long as it's large enough to comfortably display your fromage! I love larger, decorative plates or the classic slates from Brooklyn Slate Co.

● **4 or 5 different cheeses**: You can never have too much, especially with larger parties! Pick a variety – different milks, textures, colors and shapes. We eat as much with our eyes as we do our mouths, and contrasting choices can easily draw your friends in. Fresh, citrusy goat cheeses, silky cow's milk Camemberts, sticky and pungent washed-rind beauties, piquant and bold sheep's milk blues, crumbly chunks of cloth-bound Cheddars – they all have a home on your soon-to-be cheese board. Think around 1 ounce per cheese, per person, and add a few all around, just in case.

● **Accoutrements**: Don't forget about all of the

extra little fixings – a lot of things you can find in your pantry or fridge at home! Salty mixed nuts, sweet dried fruits, fresh seasonal fruits, crusty breads and crisp crackers, and honey are always great, simple pairings for most any cheese. There's always the classic pairings to follow – cheddar and apples, blue cheese and figs, fresh Chevre and honey, Manchego and Membrillo, etc. It's fun to be creative and take the traditional pairings a bit further. Right now, my favorite go-to snack is a little hunk of St. Agur, a dreamboat of a blue. It's a French cow's milk delight – creamy, lightly peppery, and super dense. I've been pairing it with my new favorite cracker – Effie's Oatcakes, in Pecan. The sweetness of the cracker tones down the blue just a hint, and follows the idea of the traditional blue & sweet pairing. Another recent favorite are these amazing, mini jars of jam from Quince & Apple – they are perfectly sized for a board and come in a million different flavors! The Pear with Honey and Ginger? To DIE for.

### What You Do

● **Take stock of your cheese-making inventory**. Arrange your cheeses from left to right, or clock-

wise, depending on your board, from mildest to strongest. Your palate will thank you! I like leaving the smaller, individual size cheeses whole, while slicing down the cut-to-order Cheddars to more manageable bites. Add your extras and put a few different knives – little butter knives for the soft wheels, triangular shaped knives for the more firm Cheddars. I love putting jam and honey into little teeny jars and sticking a small wooden spoon into it – your guests and friends will appreciate the extra touches.

● **Play around with it** – I am always surprised with how many fun things I have in my kitchen that can turn a few pieces of cheese into something beautiful and friendly!

Talula's Table is located at 102 West State Street, Kennett Square, PA. Check them out at [talulastable.com](http://talulastable.com).



## ON THE TOWN

West Chester Parks and Recreation Dept. hosted their

### Annual Breakfast with Santa

celebration on **Sat., Dec. 3** at the Chester County Historical Society (225 North High Street, West Chester). Local families packed two breakfast seatings, enjoying a satisfying Mizuna Catering spread—all while mingling and posing with Saint Nick. Many more photographs of the holiday event are available on [WCDish.com](http://WCDish.com).

*Photos by Amy Strauss*





Brandywine Ballet's popular family-friendly event, **The Nutcracker Tea**, returned this holiday season, as part of their annual production of The Nutcracker. Debuting on **Sat., Dec. 10** in the Philips Memorial Library (upstairs from Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester), mothers and daughters flooded the festive event, mingling with the production's characters—everyone from Clara and the Sugar Plum Fairy, to the Snow Queen, the Nutcracker and the Mouse King—while enjoying an attractive spread of tea sandwiches and cakes.

One more Nutcracker Tea will unfold this holiday season, on Sat., Dec. 17 at 2:30 pm. More information is available by visiting [brandywineballet.com](http://brandywineballet.com).

Photos by Amy Strauss



## Classified

call 610-696-7000 to place an ad

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# ART & RESTAURANTS

## Talking with Darcie Goldberg

BY JEFF SCHALLER • WCDISH.COM

I sat in the booth at Teca perusing the extensive wine list and wondered if we were going to order a bottle or order by the glass.

*"Red or White?"*

I was waiting for Darcie Goldberg, photographer and Executive Director of the Chester County Art Association. She entered Teca, and I saw her blonde hair that framed her blue eyes. Her golden tan was interrupted only by her bright smile. She waved to a few acquaintances and made her way to the booth. I was greeted with a gracious hello, the excitement of the interview in the air. There was so much to catch up on, and so many intriguing questions to be answered.

The waitress stopped by to fill the need for libations. I asked Darcie, "Red or White?" Then it happened, the most dreaded part of the interview. I thought the world had stopped like in a fancy commercial where the camera pans to show the actors and everything has come to a stand still... Darcie replied, "Oh no thank you, I have to work." All the surrounding items that have been suspended in mid air crashed down. The action resumed and I thought, "We are artists, I'm actually working right now!"

It was inevitable; it had to happen sooner or later. Not to worry. The interview was filled with inspiration, murder, intrigue, and foreign travel to exotic lands. Darcie is just as fascinating as James Bond. She seems to be at the right place at the right time capturing it all on a 30 year old Hasselblad camera and the final result is a beautiful 24 x 24 inch photograph captured on a 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 negative.



### **Can you describe your work in general for the readers?**

I think its very traditional ... black and white photography from film to the dark room. I have a photojournalist approach to my subjects and I only use available light. I feel those are the keys to my approach.

### **How did you get started in photography?**

I always knew I'd be in the arts. I didn't know how but I always knew I would. After graduating as a dental hygienist, I worked for a dentist then went back to school for photography and decided that was the route I wanted to go.

### **Did you receive any formal art training?**

I went to the Art Institute in Pittsburgh. I worked as a photographer for UPI. That was my first official job outside of weddings of course. I went back, I wanted to get into art therapy. All along the way I'd been doing photography, but I wanted to just do the arts in a different way. I got into Hanuman and finished my masters with a degree in Creative Arts and a specialty in Art Therapy.

### **Have you embraced the digital era or are you a "purist"?**

I try. I have a digital camera that I travel with and use as a back up. I know it's the future. I am having more and more trouble getting film. I'm having more and more trouble getting through customs with my equipment. I have a really good printer in New York that prints my photographs. It's expensive but its sweet.

### **How do you do choose your subject matter?**

I like people. I watch. Sometimes I just sit and watch for a minute

and look for the perfect light.

### **What are your thoughts on the perfect photograph?**

Oh, ok. Lighting, composition, subject matter, I think they all go together but when you take that perfect photograph you know it. You take thousands of photographs a year. I was just in Cambodia and Vietnam and I took thousands of photographs. Out of the thousands I think you will get two really good photographs. It has to do with being in the right place at the right time.

### **How do you focus on a 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 inch view of the world, with the busyness of it going on around you?**

Concentration. That's when you have to really zone everything out. You have to realize when your taking that photo that that person is allowing you to take that photo and in one click you have to take that photo and in a second its gone.

### **Who has been the biggest influence on your life?**

Oh gosh. My husband. He's very good at supporting me.

### **What inspires you?**

An adventure. We do so much traveling.

### **What was your favorite location to photograph?**

Uh, the Himalayas, wait, India.

### **Where would you like to go next?**

I am doing a base camp in Everest in April.

### **What tip do you have for amateur photographers?**

Oh, oh. Always travel with your camera.

### **What are you eating right now?**

Tuna. Italian tuna on lettuce. It's

really good.

### **What is your favorite food?**

Chili

### **What does home mean to you?**

Comfort. Family.

### **Your proudest moment?**

When my daughter graduated from medical school. I cried.

### **What was your mother right about?**

I have to think about that one. That's a tough one. I can see where the wine can help. ... She said that I have gypsy blood.

### **Money is OK, but it isn't what life is about.**

It's about family. It's about happiness and it's about health. And art, art is in there. The Arts give us a soul.

### **Where did you grow up?**

Lake Erie.

### **How did you meet your husband?**

I met my husband at a murder trial. I was a photographer for UPI and he was a lawyer.

### **What is the last book you read?**

I read "The Troubled Man" by Henning Mankell.

### **You collect?**

Paintings.

### **Your strangest possession?**

Strangest possession... Maybe I should be drinking. Hmmm, my African charm bracelet amulets from ancients.

### **At your best, you are most like this famous person?**

Margaret Bourke White. She was a photojournalist years ago for Life Magazine.

In between my questions and Darcie's fascinating stories, our waitress brought us treats from Tuscany. One of the "must haves" at Teca are the Olives Ascolane. These are best described as "little fried salt bombs." Darcie ordered her favorite, the Insalata Teca: Tonnata, which is a generous helping of salad with a heap of Italian tuna placed on the top. I chose a spicier creation, the Diablo. This is a spicy salaminio, capocollo, hot cherry peppers, with scamorza cheese pressed on a warm ciabatta.

I had some insider information on this woman of mystery. During her graduate studies she wrote her case study on a female graffiti artist. Her interview led Darcie on night adventures through the dark train yards of New York City as her case study worked her trade. This was my opportunity to see if the statute of limitations was up on Darcie and what property she had defaced. What would her "tag" name be... something like "Blonde Razor?" Is she really Banksy? She smiled and said with a little bit of dissatisfaction, "I couldn't. It would have jeopardized my research." I wanted to dig a little deeper but the

conversation was interrupted by our Chocolate Tartufo; three scrumptious balls of gelato with crème filled centers. This Italian dessert would stop any wise guy from squealing in the heat of interrogation.

As with all Italian meals, we finished with an espresso. Darcie drank the rest of her iced tea and I drank the last remnants of my red wine. She returned to work and I meandered back to the studio. I'm sure Darcie wasn't thinking about work and the expansion of CCAA. She was probably thinking of her next photographic adventure at the base of Mount Everest scheduled for next year.

Don't forget to check out the video of speed round questions on my blog <http://jeff-schaller.blogspot.com/>

Find Teca at 38 East Gay Street in West Chester or online at [tecawc.com](http://tecawc.com).





# HE SHOPS, SHE SHOPS / A CHESTER COUNTY COUPLES HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

BY:  
AMY  
STRAUSS  
THETOWNDISH.COM

DECEMBER 14, 2011 / PAGE 11

We hand-picked five Chester County couples—from West Chester, Kennett Square and Phoenixville, to Downingtown and Exton—and asked them to reveal their gift-shopping secrets, including what they intend to gift their other half and what they think the other is dying to see under the Christmas tree.

Whether you're looking for gift-gifting inspiration or you simply want to see if our males and females successfully hand-picked this year's perfect presents, than this gift guide is surely for you. But, don't delay: Christmas is only a few weeks away, so you better start your local shopping today!



## West Chester Couple

**Male:** **Kevin Finn**, President, Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant

**Female:** **Susan Finn**, Finn Design

**How long have you been together?** 20+ years

**THE GIFTS- What do they really want? What gift do you know your main squeeze would go gaga over and why?**

**His response:** Susan wants a MacBook Pro.

**Her response:** For years, Kevin has said he wants two things: A motorcycle and a hot tub. I'm not even sure he really wants either one of them, it's just become his stock answer!

**What gift will they get? What is it, why will they love it?**

**His response:** She will get a new wide screen TV. She needs this and really wants it,

but it is a more practical gift than the laptop since she already has an iMac desktop that is very cool, but not mobile.

**Her response:** Kevin prefers doing things rather than getting things, so I may pick a destination and surprise him with reservations someplace we haven't been before. He loves history, beautiful scenery and good beer, so I will try to pick someplace that has all three.

**Favorite Chester County Spot to Gift Shop—and why?**

**His response:** I am not sure I have a favorite. I help organize Men's Night Out in West Chester in December and usually visit a few retailers. I usually buy her something from Jane Chalfont, a small piece of jewelry from Sunset Hill or Kaplan's, and a candle or a Christmas ornament from Penwick.

**Her response:** I absolutely love shopping at Carlino's, especially during the holidays. They help take the edge off of having to entertain and cook for a large group of people. We love their antipasto tray, green beans almondine, roasted vegetables, miniature pastries, and of course, "Mama" Carlino's lasagna. Find Carlino's West Chester location at 128 West Market Street.

**Ultimate Chester County Gift Find—and why.**

**His response:** I am more into experiences than gifts because those are the things you remember, so I think a great gift is a trip to Longwood Garden's (1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square) to see the lights. We usually take our twin daughters every year and it is a great way to start off the holidays. Of course, I think the ultimate gift is one of Iron Hill's reserve bottle beer packages (get the Fer15 and save it for at least one year).

**Her response:** One of my many favorite shops in West Chester is Acorn Cottage (14 West Gay Street). I can always

find a unique gift at a variety of different price points. Everything from candles, linens, pillows, mirrors and one-of-a-kind furniture. I also just love going in there and seeing what's new or if I can find something for myself!



## Kennett Square Couple

**Male:** **Ian Collins**, 26, Merchant Marine

**Female:** **Sarah Reese**, 27, Cheesemonger

**How long have you been together?** 2 1/2 years

**THE GIFTS- What do they really want? What gift do you know your main squeeze would go gaga over and why?**

**His response:** Sarah never shows up to a friend's house empty-handed, especially during the holidays. She's always bringing a new favorite cheese to share, so I think that she would really love to have a beautiful, classic way of displaying them. A cheese dome, made by local glass company Simon Pearce, would be perfect. Available at Terrain, 914 Baltimore Pike, Glen Mills.

**Her response:** Ian and I love beer, and he's always talking about one day making the perfect brew. Chadds Ford's homebrew shop, Wine & Beer Emporium (100 Ridge Rd., Suite #27), has all of the bits and pieces of equipment he needs to get his own stout started!

**What gift will they get? What is it, why will they love it?**

**His response:** Sarah has always been into vintage stuff, and our house is a collection of both new and old things—furni-

ture, decoration, all of it. She's easy to buy for in that, if it's old and rusty, she'll love it. Antique store signs and grocery pieces are a good bet (like those from Fresh Vintage, a locally-based company that has space in Brandywine View Antiques, and also an online store). She could use them for anything—she likes the process as much as the finished product!

**Her response:** Honestly, I might go rogue with Ian this year and make him a handmade coupon—for tickets to next year's Kennett Brewfest! It feels a little silly to be planning so far in advance, but every year we talk about how we want to go to the special Connoisseur Tasting. It starts a few hours earlier than the big event, and craft brewers from all over bring special beers for the higher-end tasting. It sells out so fast though, that by the time we remember, we've already missed out! Next year will be our fourth year going, and if I want to get it right, I'm going to have to act now! More info at kennettbrewfest.com.

**Favorite Chester County Spot to Gift Shop—and why?**

**His response:** I have always had good luck with gift cards. Last year, we got my mother a gift card to The Whip Tavern (1383 North Chatham Road, West Marlborough), one of our favorite places to eat in Chester County. Every time we have friends in town, we take them there and they immediately dig it. The short drive out there is pretty, and the food is great. They always have great local beer on tap and it's a good way to share a bit of Kennett Square with friends and family.

**Her response:** Thank GOD we have an Anthropologie within ten minutes. It has been a dream when it comes to finding gifts for people! I have found perfect little things on the super-affordable side, like beautiful embroidered dishtowels and matching pot holders, to the more expensive-but-worth-it ceramic platters.

Their color schemes are always gorgeous and mix and match well. Let's just say that when I go there to find a present for a friend, Ian is wondering what I'll find for myself while I'm at it!

**Ultimate Chester County Gift Find—and why.**

**His response:** Kennett Square is so close to Delaware—I grew up within walking distance of the state line. One of the best gifts I can think of locally would be a day-trip to Twin Lakes Brewing Company, a local craft beer mecca for those in Kennett! It's literally minutes down the road in Greenville, Delaware. You can get growlers, take tours, lend a hand. It's a great gift for anyone who enjoys an experience more than something material, too. More info at twinlakesbrewing-company.com.

**Her response:** Disclaimer: I work at Talula's Table! I'm lucky to be constantly surrounded by amazing gifts and food every day, and have to remind myself to not take advantage of it! We do these great farm-table dinners, and have a private chef's table in the back (booked by invitation only, shh!). A really thoughtful gift is a date to the chef's table—a true foodie enjoys nothing more than being smack in the center of a kitchen, watching great food being prepared. We have a really beautiful collection of gifts too, especially for the holidays, including delicious gift baskets are so easy and always a hit. My favorite thing right now though are the understated and simple Cake Vintage recipe cards—a perfect little addition to any food-lovers cupboard! More info at talulastable.com.



## Phoenixville Couple

**Male:** **Lance Castle**, 43, Winemaker and Partner – Black Walnut Winery, President of the Brandywine Valley Wine Trail, Director of Managed Care and Physician Billing – The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

**Female:** **Valerie Castle**, 55, Partner and CFO – Black Walnut Winery

**How long have you been together?** 18 years

**THE GIFTS- What do they really want? What gift do you know your main squeeze would go gaga over and why?**

**His response:** A Viking gas range. Val loves to cook almost as much as she loves to eat (and she really likes to eat!).

**Her response:** A 1958-1962 black Corvette with silver inserts or a Harley Fatboy. I just need to win the lottery a few times. Honestly, he'd be thrilled if I got him a shed!

**What gift will they get? What is it, why will they love it?**

**His response:** In a word, snowmen—stuffed, metal, glass, stone/on plates, on plaques, lighted in the yard—she's a snowman junkie. She would also love any piece of furniture from Country Charm Furnishings (28 South Main Street, Phoenixville).

**Her response:** Definitely something gargoyle- or gnome-related or something with skulls on it. He can't get enough of this stuff. Lance also loves fine glassware, so beverage vessels are always a great gift for him. I have my eye on a few items at the Diving Cat Studio (246 Bridge Street, Phoenixville).

**Favorite Chester County Spot to Gift Shop—and why?**

**His response:** It really

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 →



depends on who you are shopping for in this scenario. If it is someone who likes beautiful items, then the Diving Cat Studio or Charmed Spirits have so many items, you can not leave without finding something someone would want. However, if the person is more into experiences, then how could you go wrong with getting them a gift card or better yet, a "Mug Club" membership, at Iron Hill Brewery (130 E. Bridge St., Phoenixville)? It's the gift that can keep giving all year long.

**Her response:** Bridge Street Chocolates—I especially adore the almond butter crunch, sea salt caramels and caramel pecan truffles—but it is all fabulous! Gail Warner, the owner, defines customer service. I love to buy gifts here because a box of gourmet chocolates is the gift that delights every time, you can find a gift to fit any budget and the packaging is spectacular! Find the chocolate shop at 158 Bridge Street in Phoenixville.

### Ultimate Chester County Gift Find—and why.

**His response:** Black Walnut Winery... who does not enjoy the gift of wine! (But, enough of that shameless self-promotion.) I would have to say that everyone enjoys a great meal, so I would look to give a gift certificate at any one of the BYOB restaurants in our town so they could experience the eclectic styles of cooking. A gift of dinner at Daddy Mims, Majolica, Thai L'Elephant, Marly's or Amani's (105 E. Lancaster Ave. in Downingtown) represent five completely different dining experiences that would impress anyone who enjoys eating (and they would not even need to enjoy eating as much as my wife).

**Her response:** Downtown Phoenixville is a foodie's paradise. I love to eat, so I delight in being able to give the gift of great food. I believe that a gift certificate from any of the outstanding restaurants in town—Marly's, Daddy Mims, Thai L'Elephant or Majolica—is the ultimate gift! And, since they are all BYOB restaurants, I can round out the gift with a

bottle of Black Walnut wine!



### Downingtown Couple

**Male:** **Jonathan Wright**, 30, Insurance Agent/Owner of The Wright Agency (1142 Horseshoe Pike, Downingtown)

**Female:** **Maria Maldonado**, 29, Marketing Analyst at a food company

**How long have you been together?** On and off for 6 years.

### THE GIFTS- What do they really want? What gift do you know your main squeeze would go gaga over and why?

**His response:** She would want a trip to Barcelona, Spain for about a week or so filled with nice meals, sight-seeing, and shopping.

**Her response:** He would really enjoy a trip, too. But one to Ecuador, where I am from, and meet some of my friends and family. Plus, for him to try the amazing food we have down there.

**What gift will they get? What is it, why will they love it?**

**His response:** Nice hand bag to replace the one she has used for over 5 years. And, most likely, an outfit or two to go with it.

**Her response:** I like my bag! Ha. Dinner out to celebrate Christmas and the new year to come. Probably somewhere around where we live in Downingtown.

**Favorite Chester County Spot to Gift Shop—and why?**

**His response:** Locally, I get her things to cook with/ snacks/spices/etc. from Blue

Moon Florist in Downingtown (1107 Horseshoe Pike). They have cool gourmet items and the owners there are very helpful when I am there shopping for her because they know I have no clue what to get and point me in the right direction.

**Her response:** Carlino's in West Chester (128 West Market Street) is a great spot to get some cheeses, olives and charcuterie. He likes when I set up a nice tray of his favorites.

### Ultimate Chester County Gift Find—and why.

**His response:** For us – dining out is one of our favorite things to do, so a great gift for her would be lots of meals out. We love the local places around Chester County such as Blue Café in Downingtown (breakfast), The Whip Tavern in Coatesville (lunch and a beer), and Four Dogs Tavern in Marshalton (the cheese plate is our go-to item). Find Blue Café at 150 East Pennsylvania Ave., Whip Tavern at 1383 North Chatham Road and Four Dogs Tavern at 1300 West Strasburg Rd.

**Her response:** Definitely picking up a case of beer from Victory Brewing Company (420 Acorn Lane, Downingtown) is a favorite. The seasonal beers are great. They have yummy beer and they are local!



### Exton Couple

**Male:** **Brad Weinstein**, 35, Restaurateur

**Female:** **Deb Weinstein**, mid 30's, Service Director

**How long have you been together?** Married 7 years, together 12 years

### THE GIFTS- What do they really want? What gift do you know your main squeeze would

### go gaga over and why?

**His response:** Nothing makes a woman go gaga more than a nice piece of jewelry—in my wife's case a Michele watch from Benari (299 Main Street, Exton).

**Her response:** Brad would go gaga over would be a new HDTV for our family room. He is a little spoiled with the TVs he is around all day while working at Appetites on Main (86 Main Street, Exton)!

**What gift will they get? What is it, why will they love it?**

**His response:** My wife has two full-time jobs, her job at SEI and full-time mother and wife, so I know she would love a day at the Avante Spa (98 Main Street, Exton) for the relaxation package which includes Paraffin Hand Dip, Anti Stress Massage, Express Facial and Soothing Foot Bath. In her busy life, nothing better than a day of being pampered and no husband or kids to worry about (at least for a few hours).

**Her response:** One of the gifts Brad will be getting for the

holidays is a gift certificate to Shaving Grace (269 Main Street, Exton) so get can get pampered with either a massage or having his head shaved with the warm lather. He works long hours some days so it will be nice for him to sit back and relax.

### Favorite Chester County Spot to Gift Shop—and why?

**His response:** I am a huge sports fan and I love collecting sports memorabilia, so I go to the Exton Square Mall (260 Exton Square Parkway) to BC Sports where I can get autographed items, jerseys of my favorite players, valuable baseball cards and more.

**Her response:** My favorite place to gift shop right now is Target, with both our kids and all the birthday parties for friends and family, we always seem to need a children's gift. They has a great toy selection for all ages. I love the convenience of all the variety of items they sale, so they usually have what I am looking for on any given trip to Target. In addition to children's items, they have a great selection of

house-hold items—from storage bins starting at \$10 to organize the kids toys to a small kitchen appliances starting at \$25, to clothes/shoes for any budget.

### Ultimate Chester County Gift Find—and why.

**His response:** I love to go out to eat and Chester County has so many great restaurants, so I love getting gift certificates from some of my favorites to go out with my family—like Victory Brewing Company, Roccas for their great brick-oven pizza and a decent beer selection, or Nudy's Cafe if its breakfast/ lunch time. Find Victory at 420 Acorn Lane, Downingtown; Roccas at 605 North Pottstown Pike, Exton; and Nudy's Exton location at 20 West Lincoln Highway.

**Her response:** Anything from Springboard Media (290 Main St., Exton), they specialize in Apple products and you do not need to go to the King of Prussia Mall for Apple expertise. After shopping, there are plenty of restaurants in the shopping center to get a bite to eat or a drink.

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