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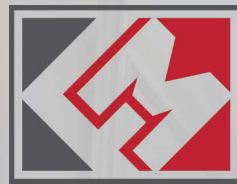
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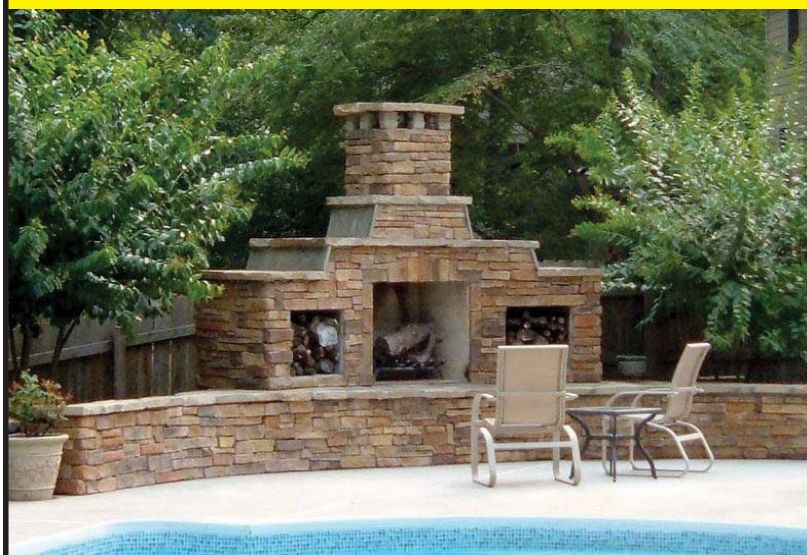
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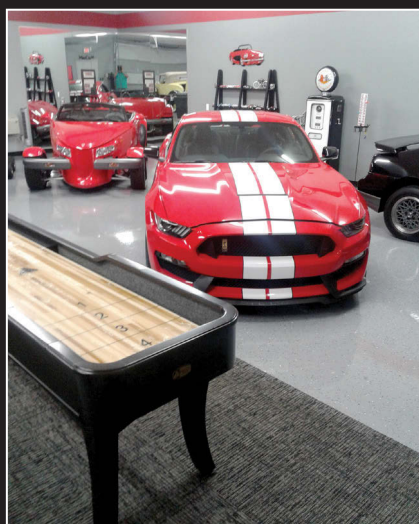
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december contents

Happy Holidays

trending

landscape

winter landscaping

13

organization

storage solutions for your garage

14

celebrations

butterscotch fudge with marshmallow and nutella

15

at home

16

event calendar

17

book nook

18

company spotlight

Rockfield Realty, Cassidy Stier

community

06

trends

farmhouse décor

07

plant this

indoor herb gardens

08

décor & more

holiday décor & lighting

features

HOME room

music room

09

main feature

the BIG reason for tiny houses

10

how-to

butler's pantries and wine rooms

12



THE CHRISTMAS STATION

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welcome! from the editor

Hello December

What does December mean to you? For me, it means lots of family time, decorating the house for the holidays, festive music, twinkle lights, fresh clean snow and cozy fires in the fireplace. While fall is my favorite season, I do love waking up to a winter wonderland... especially if I don't have to go out in it!

Since becoming a mom, the holidays have taken on new magic. Witnessing the joy of the season through my daughter's eyes has been the greatest gift. And holiday traditions mean that much more. One of my favorites is changing out the decorations for the season. I wait until the Friday after Thanksgiving and make a day of it. I prepare mugs of hot cocoa and listen to Christmas carols. My parents, who typically are visiting from out of town, pitch in too, and my daughter is old enough this year to help, as well. It's fun for the entire family.

What are some of your favorite holiday traditions? I'd love to hear about them. Email me anytime at ambouthot@the-papers.com... bonus points if you include photos!



Amber Bouthot

Speaking of photos! Starting in January, we are adding a Reader DIY feature. Every month, we will highlight reader-submitted photos of projects they've completed. We know you put a lot of time and effort into your home—whether you own or rent. We want to see your projects and share them within the pages of our magazine. If you've recently completed a project, we want to hear from you. It can be something as simple as a craft project or as large as a home addition. If you did it yourself,

it can be featured. Shout out to Monica Davis and her husband who built this amazing playhouse inspired by a Pinterest post. Check out our January issue to see more photos and learn about their process.

While the hustle and bustle of this season can be stressful, I hope you have a chance to slow down and enjoy some of it. After all, 'tis the season for making memories and spending time with loved ones.



Happy Holidays *Amber*



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www.homeindooroutdoorliving.com

Publisher Ron Baumgartner
rbaumgartner@the-papers.com

Publications Manager Bill Hays
bhays@the-papers.com

Executive Editor Amber Bouthot
ambouthot@the-papers.com

Editor-in-Chief Jeri Seely
jseely@the-papers.com

Director of Marketing Kip Schumm
kschumm@the-papers.com

Account Executive Rebecca Boone
rboone@the-papers.com

Business Manager Collette Knepp
cknepp@the-papers.com

Director of Circulation Jerry Straka
jstraka@the-papers.com

Graphic Designer Mary Lester
mlester@the-papers.com

Marketing Assistants

Darlene Eichelberger, Tamera Sims

Contributing Writers

Ray Balogh, Erin Dozois, Lauren Caggiano, Deborah C. Gerbers, Kara Hackett, Steve Penhollow, Cathy Shouse, Barb Sieminski, Julie Young

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Thank you for reading and we look forward to hearing from you soon. We warmly welcome you **HOME**.

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Photo provided by Wabash Lighting

Open any home design magazine and you'll notice the farmhouse look is having a moment. This is the perfect trend for homeowners looking to marry tradition with modern sensibilities. Here's what you need to know about hitting the mark, according to local experts.

By Lauren Caggiano

Light meets dark

Form and function are both important considerations. Lighting is one way to set the tone from the outset.

"There are ways to make a statement with unique pieces, such as with a windmill fan, distressed wood, antique finishes and Edison bulbs (just to name a few)," said Chesney Boyer with Wabash Lighting. "We are also seeing an increase in darker finishes (blacks, irons, dark bronze), as well as an increase in antique brass finishes."

Consistency is key

While it may be tempting to get enamored with trends, homeowners need to look at the bigger picture.

"When thinking about the farmhouse style, it is important to consider the entire aesthetic of the space to be sure your fixtures coordinate with the rest of your décor and furnishings," Boyer said. "And with any light fixture, it is very important to consider the correct scale and size of your fixture."

Classic reigns

Lisa Schaefer with House of Furniture in Fort Wayne is a purveyor of classic home design. In her words, "it is important to choose Farmhouse trends that will stand the test of time."

To that end, she recommended apron front sinks in deep porcelain, which can be described as country yet elegant. Cast iron, fireclay, copper and enameled steel are other options.

Win with white

Schaefer recommended incorporating elements to add charm in all directions. "Whitewashing floorboards, brick fireplaces, exterior brick, cabinets and furniture give a Farmhouse home a fresh, white, crisp flair," she said.

Go big or go home

Texture is another way to infuse some charm into the mix.

"Fabric selections for furniture to achieve the farmhouse look are breezy, cotton, woven and grain sack," said Schaefer.

Rugs, pillows and throws can never be too big because they play off the muted and subdued look of other elements.

"Using abaca, jute, sisal, seagrass and natural woven rugs are excellent choices to create warm texture to any room," she said. "Pillows braided and woven, tufted, cable knit and faux fur are some excellent choices. Throws including wool, fleece, chunky knits, tartan tweeds, lamb's wool, plaids and stripes are essential for comfort and coziness." 🏠

House of Furniture, Fort Wayne, 260.466.7447, house-of-furniture.com
Wabash Lighting, Fort Wayne, 260.483.8820, wabashlighting.com



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Indoor Herb Gardens

By Erin Dozois

Want to flavor up your otherwise bland winter months? Indoor herb gardens are a perfect way to exercise your green thumb and your culinary skills during this frigid time of year.



5 TIPS FOR GROWING INDOOR HERBS

- 1. Pick a sunny spot.** This area should receive at least six hours of sun daily. Windows facing south or southwest are your best bet, although some east- or west-facing windows might also do. Avoid north-facing windows.
- 2. Supply adequate drainage.** Root rot is perhaps the easiest way to ruin most herbs. Select a glazed or plastic container with drainage holes to ensure soil stays moist but not waterlogged. Place a saucer or drain pan under the pot to protect the surface underneath.
- 3. Keep at the ideal temperature.** Luckily, most herbs prefer to live in the same conditions as we do. Simply keep your thermostat between 60 and 70 degrees for happy herbs.
- 4. Select the right soil.** Indoor herbs require a potting mix that provides extra drainage. The package should indicate that it is suitable for indoor garden plants.
Note: Make sure to choose potting mix instead of potting soil.
- 5. Feed with the right fertilizer.** Seaweed- or fish-based fertilizer is best for growing herbs. Both have a higher concentration of nitrogen, which promotes strong leafy growth.



10 BEST HERBS TO GROW INDOORS

BASIL only lasts so many weeks before the stems grow woody. To ensure a steady supply, plant a new batch of seeds every few weeks.

BAY does very well in a potted, indoor environment. Take care not to let the plant suffocate: bay needs air circulation to stay healthy.

CHERVIL must be planted in deep pots to give their taproots growing room. Replant every few weeks to keep plenty on hand.

CHIVES can be harvested by using scissors to snip off individual leaves or by giving the entire plant a sort of crew cut to keep it tidy.

MINT usually grows rampantly, making its trailing, fragrant stems attractive houseplants. Most varieties are perennials and can survive in temperatures as low as 30 degrees.

OREGANO can be grown similarly to mint. Its leaves can be snipped from stems when needed either for immediate cooking or drying for later use.

PARSLEY requires a deep pot with rich, organic potting soil to grow to its fullest potential. Harvest individual leaves by pinching off stems near the base of the plant.

ROSEMARY can tolerate extreme heat and dryness in summer, but prefers cooler temperatures in winter. Grow in an area receiving strong light.

SAGE can be grown indoors by taking a cut from an outdoor plant. It tolerates dry indoor air, but needs strong sunlight from a south-facing window.

THYME needs a fast-draining soil mix and a warm, sunny window. Water when the surface soil is dry and before the plant has a chance to wilt. 🌱

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Holiday Décor and Lighting

By Cathy Shouse

One joy of the season is having an excuse to decorate your home for the holidays. Nothing compares to being enveloped in the glow of your tree's lights amid your own beautiful decor. So we've gathered the latest tips for creating your unique winter wonderland, including how to mix it up and keep it fresh.

Jeanne Baker Dick of Baker Dick Designs is a 40-year veteran designer and also works with Fairfield Galleries and Windsor Homes. In the past, she has gone to peoples' homes and helped them decorate.

"One of the things I ran into was the difficulty in convincing clients to purge the old tired stuff and refresh their decor items," Baker Dick said. "This is where memories disallow us to modernize!"

However, she puts her late grandmother's garland strands on her tree every year and sings a song and says a prayer in her memory.

"But if we can just add some new, simple things to our collections of decor items, they don't get so tired," Baker Dick said.

Jeanne's Dos & Don'ts

Let go of:

- Candles slightly melted from the attic
- Dusty, bent-out-of-shape faux garland
- Faux Christmas trees.

She said, "There is much better stuff today!"

Mini lights — white is classy, under some fresh garland is nice

Glass, colored balls — especially placed in a glass bowl with a sprig or two of fresh evergreen.

Wire-edged ribbon — with fresh greens or twirling through mini lights and glass balls to finish the mantel

Candles — the popular battery-operated are safe, but sadly are scentless

The Biggest Bang for the buck item: (but definitely not the least!)

FRESH GREENS! The smell, the authenticity, the availability. Just a sprig, lying on a table under a scented candle, or atop a couple of ornaments tied together with ribbon can be all you need for the space on a bath vanity.



Heidi Anderson, owner of Dogwoods Home Décor, said that adding a few exceptional items, artfully placed, could light up your rooms — literally.

"This year, I definitely think people are drawn to things that light up, especially LED that is natural and devoid of color," she said.

"They're looking for décor they can leave out all winter."

Heidi's Tips:

- Trees decorated with your home's colors
- LED Christmas churches & homes
- Sugared Santas
- Hester & Cook beautiful paper versions of table runners
- Simon Pearce glass trees
- Mercury glass trees with LED lights inside
- Unique tabletop trees: small, medium and large
- Lori Mitchell collectibles 🏠

Resources:

Baker Dick Design, Fort Wayne, 260-417-1731, Facebook: bakerdickdesign

Dogwoods Home Décor, Fort Wayne, 260-459-2110, dogwoodshome.com

Fairfield Galleries, Fort Wayne, 260-489-5526, fairfieldgalleries.com




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By Amber Bouthot

Do you have a budding musician in your family? Have you been thinking of establishing a dedicated space in your home to create music? We talked to our friends at Sweetwater about the basics needed to set up a home recording studio and/or music room.

Kody Sparks, sales engineer at the Sweetwater Music Store, said that a quality basic home recording studio could be set up for around \$3,000. Here's what you'll need:

1-Acoustic treatment- This is not necessarily sound proofing, rather sound enhancing. It will stop the echo and reverb and eliminates the overtone. It is essential for quality sound recording. You can pick up an acoustic treatment kit for around \$250, which consists of foam corner pieces and 1 x 1 squares.

2-Studio desk- This is where you will spend most of your time, so it's important that it can support a keyboard, studio monitors, your audio interface, etc. Sparks recommended the brand RAB, which has a few different models from which to choose.

3-A comfy chair- Since you potentially will be spending a lot of time in your studio at your desk, it's important to pick a comfy chair—one that supports your back properly.

4-Computer and software- The computer is the brains of the operation and a MacBook Pro is your best bet. Most sound recording software is designed for the iOS platform. Sparks recommended Pro Tools or Ableton as two great music recording software options to get you started.

5-Studio Monitors- You want to hear what you're recording, right? You'll need a set of studio monitors, which are loudspeakers specifically designed for audio production. Sparks recommended the JBL 306P MkII (\$169) and said to get two for maximum results.

6-Audio Interface- This is a piece of hardware that communicates with your computer to expand and improve sound capabilities. It gives you the ability to connect professional microphones, instruments and other kinds of signals to your computer. Sparks recommended the Scarlett 2i4, which starts at \$219.

7-Headphones- You'll need headphones for your studio, as well. Sparks recommended the Sennheiser HD 280 Pro headphones (\$99), which are basic, but high quality, and will provide the isolation and accuracy needed for any project.

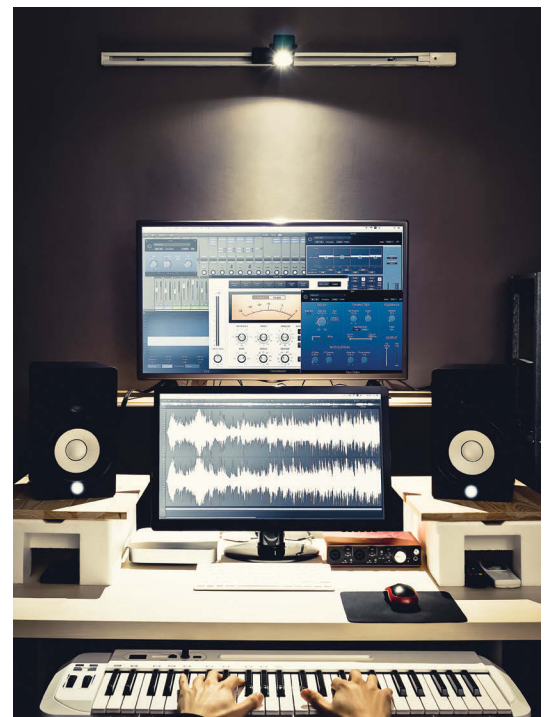
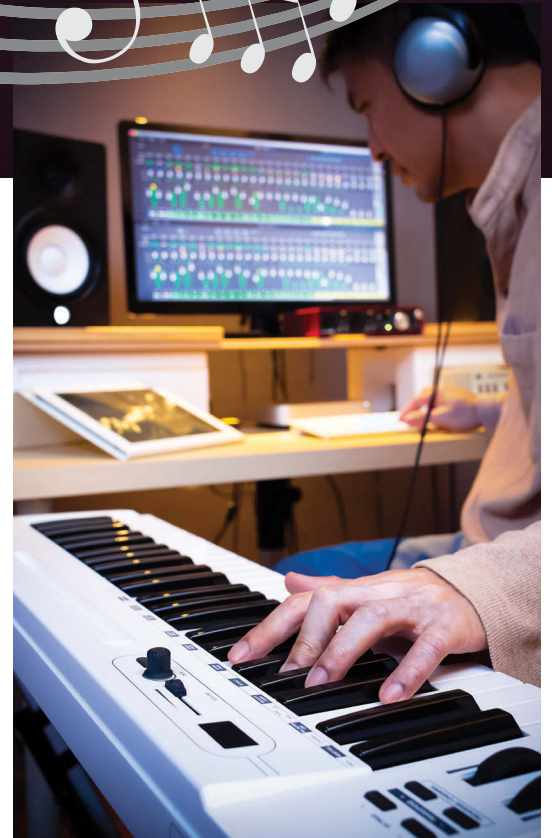
8-Microphone- Any basic recording studio needs a mic. Sparks recommended the Shure SM7B Vocal Microphone (\$399), which is a compact mic perfect for a home recording studio.

9-Keyboard- All aspiring song-writers need a keyboard. Sparks recommended the Yamaha P-125 Digital Piano (\$599), which features full-scale keys, giving it a real keyboard feel.

10-Guitar- The best, and most affordable acoustic guitar, according to Sparks, is the Taylor 214ce (\$999). It's a workhorse guitar for anyone at home and comes with a hard shell case.

The best place for a home recording studio is the basement, but any room will do as long as you set up the acoustic treatment to enhance the sound.

Don't have space for a full-blown recording studio, or simply want a place to play or practice some music? Sparks said that with a simple acoustic treatment kit, you could turn any space or corner into a place to play music. 🏠



Resource:

Sweetwater Music Store, Fort Wayne,
800.222.4700, sweetwater.com



The BIG Reason for Tiny Houses

Article by Kara Hackett, Input Fort Wayne

While the so-called “tiny house movement” has been sweeping the nation for the last several years, it’s still a challenge to finance, build or renovate small houses in Allen County because building and zoning regulations haven’t been updated to allow for them.

According to innovative housing expert Marianne Cusato, while many believe that tiny houses are the wave of the future for millennials, few people actually want to live like that.

Instead, as an associate professor at the Notre Dame School of Architecture, Cusato helps communities across the country build houses on a slightly larger scale that are more appealing to mainstream homebuyers.

While the average American house is roughly 2,600 square feet and tiny houses are between 100 to 400 square feet, the houses Cusato designs are roughly between 400-1,200-square feet. Big enough to live comfortably, no ladders required.

She believes these “just big enough” houses are the true future of the housing industry, and getting them into the market starts with asking a few critical questions.

“It’s essentially saying what do we really need to live in?” she explained. “Do you need a 2,000 square foot home? How do we design a home around what we really need to live?”

As a research assistant at Brightpoint, Andrew Applegate came across Cusato’s work in his search for a way to help low-income residents in northeast Indiana break into the housing market. While Fort Wayne’s housing is among the most affordable in the nation, houses are often still out of the question for low-income residents, so Applegate was researching ways rent-to-own tiny houses could help these residents build equity.

The problem is, under Allen County’s current building and zoning regulations, you can’t build a new single-family home with fewer than 950-square-feet or on a lot smaller than 50 feet. Even if you purchase an existing structure, most tiny houses are too cheap to qualify for bank loans, so you have to pay out of pocket or go through a nontraditional lender.

To start the conversations needed to change these codes, Brightpoint hosted northeast Indiana’s first Tiny House Showcase in October 2017, bringing a few Tiny Houses on Wheels, also known as THOWs, to downtown Fort Wayne for residents to tour.

Applegate expected millennials and other ambitious homeowners to come out for the event. Instead, he said some of the people most interested in tiny houses were the elderly who wanted ways to age independently.

But while he was surprised by this turnout, Cusato was not. She explained that tiny houses aren’t just for low-income residents or millennials. They actually have a broader appeal than you might think.

“What Brightpoint is doing is not a fad,” she said. “They’re looking at their community, and saying where are the gaps? The thing that I love



about the tiny house movement is it opens the door to this conversation, which is the real conversation we need to be having.”

Allen County Building Commissioner John Caywood grew up in a house of fewer than 900-square-feet near Franke Park, and he recalled how it influenced his family’s lifestyle.

“I remember the increased importance of being organized and sharing everything,” he said. “Coincidentally, living near public parks or public areas for recreational opportunities made all the difference in how we lived.”

Today, Caywood thinks making tiny houses an option in Allen County could make a difference here, and not just for the community-building factors, but also for the county’s land use.

For instance, the Allen County Zoning Ordinance requires lot sizes to be at least 50-feet for a primary residence. However, the Allen County Community Development Corporation (ACCDC) currently has acquired hundreds of lots available for purchase, many of which are small urban lots only 35-feet wide.

“This makes these urban lots attractive only to neighboring properties looking to expand their yard space,” Caywood said. “My opinion, not policy, is that there is potential with smaller urban lots being able to accommodate a smaller house without squeezing between existing houses.”

It’s focusing on building smarter, not bigger, said Cusato, and she believes this type of mixed-use development is what cities need—whether they realize it or not. When many people hear the term tiny house, they immediately think “affordable housing,” and they immediately say, “no.”

But while the communities she’s working with have been initially resistant to mixed housing, she finds that this reaction is largely rooted in the failures of the current housing system.

“Recent history shows that when you make changes in communities, in many cases, the negative side wins out,” Cusato said. “But this is actually the argument for building like this because the previous equation didn’t work. When you look at a more diverse range of housing options, your whole community grows.”

This article was adapted from an article originally published in the online magazine Input Fort Wayne. Visit InputFortWayne.com for weekly regional stories about what’s next for northeast Indiana. 🏠

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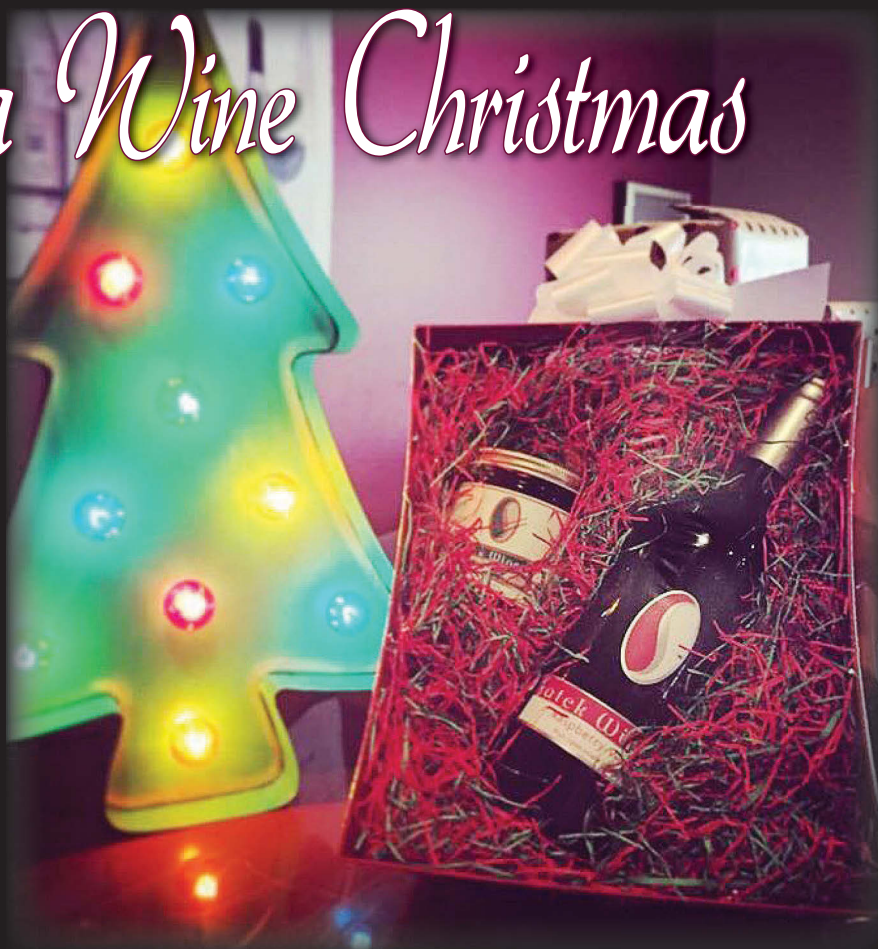
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By Julie Young

Part prep kitchen, part clean-up station and part storage space, the butler's pantry or wine room is a utility area steeped in history that is making a comeback. It is an extension of the food larder or kitchen area where beverage mixes are stocked, stemware and serving pieces are stored, and drinks are prepared for presentation. The only thing missing is a uniformed steward who appears at the ring of a bell.

"I'm not sure what percentage of our homeowners include a butler's pantry or wine room in their home, but I would say it's at least half," said Anita Martin with Country Mill Cabinets. "It's really becoming a must have for a lot of people who want that additional prep space."

Martin said that the space might be as simple or elaborate as one's budget will allow. While some choose to convert the small desk space in their kitchen to a dry bar, others may require a 10-by-10-foot room for their cabinetry and fixture needs. A butler's pantry can be strictly functional and slightly shut off from the rest of the house, or it can be partially decorative and open for guests to see. Some of the more elaborate spaces may have custom wine racks, chillers and stemware storage, while others may be largely used to house small appliances and serving pieces that are not used every day.

"It's important that a homeowner know how they plan to use the butler's pantry so that we know how to give them what they want," Martin said. "If they have ideas, we can take it from there!"

Start Wining

Once you have your butler's pantry or wine room completed, it is time to stock it with spirits.

Jason Satek, owner of Satek Winery, said 90 percent of wines are intended to be consumed quickly after opening them and only a small percentage actually age well.

"There is a one year rule on rose, a two to three year rule on whites and three to five years on reds," he said. "There are some wines that get better with time, but they are made with specific types of grapes to help preserve its flavor."

That doesn't mean a homeowner cannot enjoy collecting their favorite vintages, it simply means that you need to know each wine's shelf life.

Satek said he knows some homeowners who collect wines based on places they have visited, blends they enjoy or labels that have a personal meaning to them. There is no right or wrong way to stock your butler's pantry or wine room provided that you have plenty of variety and stick with blends you know you like.

"There is a difference between collecting wine and having a well-stocked bar, but that depends largely on how much you like to drink and how much you entertain. If you have more than 100 bottles, then you may be a true collector but it's all relative. The point is, don't save your wine for a special occasion. Every day is a good day to open something and celebrate life," he said. 🏠

Resources:

Country Mill Cabinets, LaOtto, 260.693.9289, countrymillcabinet.com
Satek Winery, Fremont, 260.495.9463, satekwinery.com



Winter Landscaping

Tips and Tricks for Adding Color



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Evergreens

Evergreens are named for their ability to withstand most any climate and retain their green color. Popular varieties include Blue Spruce, Japanese Yew, Hemlock, Fir and Cypress. Try putting smaller ones in decorative pots on the porch and front steps, adding decorative red ribbons once the holidays get closer. Once these grow larger, you can place the pots around the garden and landscaping or along the front walk. Older, larger trees can be planted in the yard and enjoyed for years to come.

If you choose to have a live Christmas tree with a root ball, keep it watered while indoors and then plant the tree in your yard to be a forever reminder of that year! (Just be sure to plan ahead and dig a hole large enough early on, before the ground freezes.)

Arbor Farms Nursery has experts with extensive knowledge about which plants and trees work best in different climates, soils and seasons. They offer a large selection of evergreens for planting, such as Concolor Fir, Norway Spruce, White Spruce, White Pine and Aborvitae—which grow tall and narrow and are great grown in rows for privacy.

Boxwood Hedge

Boxwood hedge is a popular choice among designers and homeowners. It needs lots of sun to grow, so it's best to place these on a porch or steps that see full sun. Another variety is Winter Gem Boxwood, which will turn a warm shade of golden brown in the winter before becoming bright green again in the spring. English Boxwood has distinct yellow-green colored leaves and needs full sun like most shrubs.

Bruce Ewing Landscaping has a wide variety of trees, shrubs and evergreens perfect for adding color to your winter landscaping.

Bridge Indoors + Outdoors

By having potted plants outdoors on the porch and perhaps decorative holiday lights strung on trees and shrubs, the outdoors becomes more homey and cozy during the harsh winter. Evergreen garlands and wreaths can be used indoors as well as out, and not just during the holidays. Consider draping greenery along your railings and porch throughout the winter to add color. Bruce Ewing offers a full line of design and decorating services for every season. For example, they can add a centerpiece of evergreen and berries with tall white pillar candles atop an outdoor table. Pinecones are also good throughout the season—have the kids collect them on walks and while playing outdoors. Then add them to a cluster of multi-level candles on a colorful platter or tile and place on a porch table.

Winter may be dreary at times, especially after the holidays are over, but by keeping up decorative greenery and little touches of color, it won't seem so bad while waiting for spring! 🏠

By Deborah C. Gerbers

Once the vibrant fall mums are gone, the colorful autumn colors have faded and all the pretty leaves have fallen, it's official—winter is upon us. It's easy to think that we won't see colorful blooms for months during the dormant winter season, but there are several ways to still incorporate greenery and plants to brighten up your landscaping and home.



Resources:

Arbor Farms Nursery, Fort Wayne, 260.637.5816, arborfarmsnursery.com

Bruce Ewing Landscaping, Fort Wayne, 260.432.2785, bruceewinglandscaping.com



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Storage Solutions for your Garage

By Steve Penhollow

Inspired Closets of Fort Wayne doesn't just help homeowners create and renovate closet space. The staff also spiffs up garages.

According to designer Kelsey Duggan, the cabinets that the company installs in garages are different from the cabinets that they install in houses.

"They are actually a little bit thicker and a little more durable," she said.

Duggan said everybody's garage needs are a little bit, or a lot, different. Some homeowners have workshops in their garages. Some have pieces of exercise equipment that are actually being used. Some households have two cars. Some have no cars. Some have many busy bicycles.

One trait that most garages have in common is disarray. Items that can be stored nowhere else in the house often end up in the garage.

"Typically, I go out and meet with homeowners just so I can see how their garage is functioning now," Duggan said. "I look for where they park their cars and what they want

access to the most. We'll measure each area, and even measure items, so we can make sure that the cabinets will fit the items they want stored away and out of sight."

Inspired Closets builds systems around homeowners' needs. It offers cabinets of varying depths, Duggan said, which are designed to conform to the uses and limitations of each space.

"We have hook systems, as well, for all your rakes and hoses, even bikes," she said, "to get those off the floor too." Bikes can also be stored near the ceiling via a pulley system, Duggan said.

Older garage storage systems, such as they were, were pretty rigid.

"You can't adjust shelves," Duggan said. "So it's not very functional in that regard. Where our shelves are all adjustable. And we can always order more shelves for you down the road if you decide to use the cabinets for something else."

Inspired Closets' garage storage shelves are designed to hold a lot more weight than their predecessors or their indoor closet counterparts.

"Our shelves can hold 75 pounds each," she said.

The company even has a special caddy designed to store things that tend to have no



Photos provided by Inspired Closets

fixed home inside any garage: Namely, all the kids' sports balls.

Homeowners with a little more money to spend can have a sort of platform elevator installed that lifts items from the garage floor directly into the attic. A less expensive alternative is a "wire system" that allows homeowners to store tubs that don't need to be regularly accessed near the ceiling.

"Inspired Closets also offers garage floor sealing," Duggan said, which means it can shepherd many garage makeover projects from start to finish. 🏠

Resources:

Inspired Closets, Fort Wayne, 260.444.2459



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Butterscotch Fudge with Marshmallow and Nutella

By Amber Bouthot

Looking for something different to take to your holiday carry in? This recipe screams, "MAKE ME, PLEASE!" If you are looking for something that is incredibly easy to make to wow your co-workers, family and friends, this is it. It looks harder to make than it is, I promise. The result? A rich, flavor-packed treat that is sure to please the pickiest of eaters. I mean, really, who doesn't like Nutella, or marshmallows for that matter?

Ingredients:

- 3 cups butterscotch chips
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 cup Nutella
- 1/4 cup marshmallow cream

Preparation:

Place butterscotch chips in a medium saucepan and pour sweetened condensed milk over them. Over low heat, melt the butterscotch and condensed milk together, stirring constantly until smooth and pulling away from the edges of the pot. Pour into a wax paper lined 8x8 baking dish. Use zip top baggies to pipe the Nutella and marshmallow cream over the top of the fudge. Swirl in with a knife. Chill in the refrigerator to set for at least an hour.

**Place the Nutella and marshmallow cream in the baggies before you begin heating the butterscotch and milk. I discovered that putting the baggie in a cup made it easier to get the Nutella and marshmallow cream into it. Cut a small hole in the bottom corner of each baggie in order to do the piping. 🏠*



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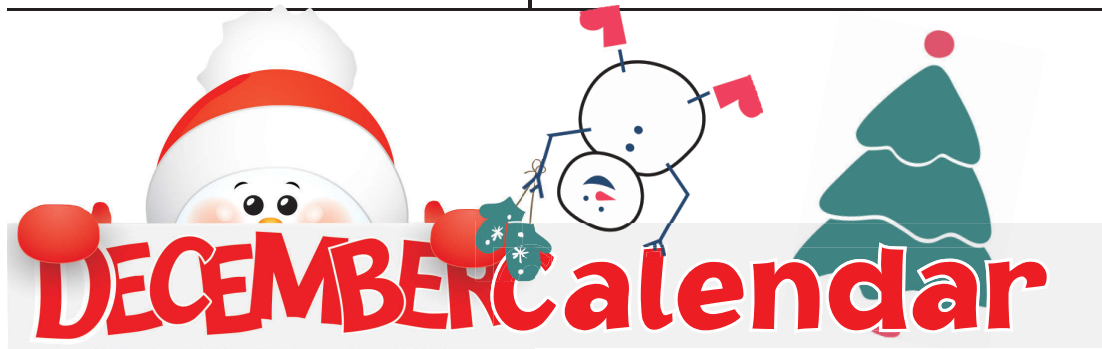
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By Ray Balogh

1 GRABILL: Third Annual Christmas Giveaway

Gifts every 30 minutes; \$100 gift certificate drawing; free tote to first 20 customers; more than 100 local vendors in rustic, vintage, farmhouse, handmade, Christmas decor; refreshments. Free admission. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, The Country Shops, 13756 State St.

facebook.com/thecountryshops.

1 MONROEVILLE: 11th Annual Monroeville Holiday Magic

Trolley rides, visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, craft shows, cookie walk, kids' activities table. Sponsored by Monroeville Chamber of Commerce. Free admission. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, various downtown venues. 260.413.0366

monroevillein.com.

1 FORT WAYNE: Christmas Open House at the Farm

Receive 10% off your greenery purchase. Wreaths, Roping, Swags, Decorative Stems, Christmas Accessories and more. 12515 Coldwater Road, 260-637-5816

arborfarmsnursery.com

1-9 FORT WAYNE: Festival of Gingerbread

More than 100 handmade gingerbread houses and designs, made by artists of all ages. \$6 adults; \$4 seniors (65+) and youth (3-17); children 2 and under and History Center members free. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday, The History Center, 302 E. Berry St. 260.426.2882

fwhistorycenter.com.



2 DECATUR: Flea Market

Nearly 100 indoor vendors, hot food available. Sponsored by the Adams County Coin Club. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, Riverside Center, 231 E. Monroe St. (Highway 224 East). Contact Carla at 260.517.8182

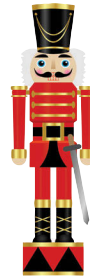
facebook.com/decaturingianafleamarket.



4 FORT WAYNE: Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker

World class Russian artists, hand-painted sets, Christmas ballet to delight all ages. \$48/\$38/\$28. 7 p.m. Tuesday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

fwembassytheatre.org.



7 AUBURN: First Friday

Late night shopping, live entertainment, local culinary delights, locally crafted beverages, more. Free admission. 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday, downtown Auburn. 260.333.0883.

7 WABASH: First Friday

Live entertainment, food, kid's activities, shopping, evening specials and more. Free admission. 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Friday, downtown. 260.563.0975

wabashmarketplace.org.

7, 8, 15 FORT WAYNE: Fort Wayne Philharmonic: Holiday Pops

Orchestral selections accompanied by scenic splendor, exquisite dancing, special appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus, Fort Wayne Children's Choir, carol sing-along, and "Hallelujah Chorus." \$21.75 to \$80. 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

fwembassytheatre.org.

8 DECATUR: Artisan Craft Market

Handmade crafts, jewelry, candles, soaps, baked goods, home decor, clothing and accessories, purses, wood and metal items, paintings and prints. Breakfast and lunch available. Free admission. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Riverside Center, 231 E. Monroe St., Decatur

chscherry@gmail.com.

9 WABASH: Rent: 20th Anniversary Tour

Energetic musical celebrates two decades on tour. \$58/\$46. 3 p.m. Sunday, Ford Theater, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

honeywellcenter.org.

13 WABASH: Under the Streetlamp: "Hip to the Holidays"

Quartet featuring former leading cast members of Jersey Boys. \$55/\$45/\$35. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Ford Theater, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

honeywellcenter.org.

Shutterstock.com

15 WABASH: Christmas with Selah

Christian vocal trio with special guest Geoffrey Andrews, featuring Oakbrook Worship. \$55/\$35/\$25. 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Ford Theater, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

honeywellcenter.org.

17 FORT WAYNE: Christmas Wonderland Holiday Spectacular

Santa and his merry helpers take you on an unforgettable nostalgic journey, featuring glittering costumes, dazzling cast, high-kicking chorus line. \$60/\$45/\$35. 7:30 p.m. Monday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

fwembassytheatre.org.



18 FORT WAYNE: Sing! An Irish Christmas

Celebrate the true story of Christmas with a fusion of Celtic, bluegrass, Americana, modern and classical music, cultural dance and the choral sounds of the holiday. \$49/\$39/\$19. 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

fwembassytheatre.org.

19 WABASH: Fort Wayne Philharmonic Holiday Pops

Directed by Caleb Young, northern Indiana's premiere orchestra will perform holiday favorites and sing-alongs. \$18. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Ford Theater, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

honeywellcenter.org.

23 FORT WAYNE: Drifters, Coasters, Platters Holiday Show

Three chart-topping '50s and '60s groups present holiday classics. \$60/\$45/\$35. 3 p.m. Sunday, Fort Wayne Embassy Theatre, 125 W. Jefferson Blvd. 800.745.3000

fwembassytheatre.org.

27 WABASH: Ann Wilson

Frontwoman for Heart on solo tour. \$100/\$59/\$49. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Ford Theater, Honeywell Center, 275 W. Market St. 260.563.1102

honeywellcenter.org.

27-28 SHIPSHEWANA: Shipshewana Ice Festival

Ice carving competition, chili cook-off, other winter family activities. \$5 to enter cook-off. Times vary Thursday and Friday, various venues downtown. 866.631.9675

shipshewana.com.



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December Books

By Steve Penhollow

December is a time for holiday preparations, holiday decorations, gift buying and gift giving. Here are two books that should enrich your holiday season, whether you give them away or keep them for yourself.

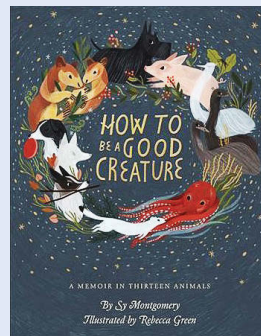
How to Be a Good Creature: A Memoir in Thirteen Animals

by Sy Montgomery

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt **\$20**

ISBN-10: 9780544938328

ISBN-13: 978-0544938328



This is surely one of the more unusual memoirs you are likely to encounter. Unusual yet unusually satisfying. Montgomery is an author, naturalist and documentarian who decided to tell her life story by writing about 13 animals she

has loved.

It is easy to love dogs, of course, and Montgomery wrote about those. But Montgomery also loved a pig, a tarantula, a weasel and an octopus. Each one of these critters has taught Montgomery something about how life should be lived.

This book isn't all sweetness and light. Montgomery had a difficult childhood and she takes the inevitable deaths of these animals very hard. But the book is not a downer either. It is a celebration of life—life that is made infinitely richer by the animals we encounter and grow to love.



The LEGO Christmas Ornaments Book, Volume 2: 16 Designs to Spread Holiday Cheer!

by Chris McVeigh

No Starch Press **\$19.95**

ISBN-10: 9781593279400

ISBN-13: 978-1593279400

Chris McVeigh has carved out quite a career for himself creating rogue LEGO building guides and building kits. These are designs that The LEGO Group never dreamed of: models of early computers, vintage kitchens and Japanese gardens.

Two years ago, McVeigh released a book of LEGO Christmas ornament ideas. It was a big hit, so he recently released a follow-up. "The LEGO Christmas Ornaments Book, Volume 2: 16 Designs to Spread Holiday Cheer!" shows readers how to make a number of holiday-affiliated objects and personae, including a LEGO Santa, a snowman, a poinsettia, a wreath, a snowman and a reindeer. This is one way of putting that giant box of underutilized LEGOs in your house to good use this holiday season. 🏠

Rockfield Realty

Cassidy Stier

By Barb Sieminski

From a Granby Ranch ski lift operator in Colorado to assistant to her family's real estate business in the summer, Cassidy Stier, who has been in Fort Wayne for only three years, has thrived in her new position.

"I moved here to live with my cousin," explained Stier, a Real Estate Broker/Agent who hails from Winter Park, CO. "I attended Ivy Tech for two years to get my associate's degree in business administration. When I moved to Fort Wayne, I worked as a bank teller and then started working at Rockfield Realty Group in Leo as an office administrator and assistant to Tamra Stier."

When she first started working in the RRG office, helping Tamra with her clients, Stier loved the challenge and variety that came with the job. Following that, she decided to get her real estate license after taking classes with Tucker School of Real Estate.

What has been your greatest career thrill so far?

Seeing my clients' excitement when we are closing is incredible. I absolutely love this industry. I am also passionate about social marketing and creating a strong image for myself and the company for which I work.

Why is Rockford Realty such a good fit for you?

It's a good fit because it is a family business, and I love our real estate team!

What do you find most challenging about your current job?

Having to give my clients (especially close friends) bad news about a house they were in love with, such as telling them that another offer was accepted.



Photo provided

Serendipity stepped in when you met your future husband – how did that happen?

I met him through a mutual friend and that is how I started working with Tamra, who is my mother-in-law. We have a wonderful two-year-old daughter, Moraya – and an 8-year-old bullmastiff named Titan. Tamra has been my mentor and has taught me almost everything about real estate, from how to handle different personalities to negotiating.

Can you share an inspirational anecdote related to your career that our readers would enjoy?

One of my buyers was looking outside the Fort Wayne area so we drove a LOT to go see houses. She and her husband were so

grateful for my time that they gifted me a gas card. That is never expected with my career so I was completely shocked. It was so sweet of them.

What words are you inspired by in getting your daily energy?

Keep moving forward! Life has many obstacles and setbacks and sometimes it's hard to push through, but in most cases, right when it's getting hard, there is a reward just around the corner. 🏠

Rockfield Realty Group

Cassidy Stier, Fort Wayne, 260.515.0447,
rockfieldrealtygroup.com



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