

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

# AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 143

## DID YOU KNOW:

The magazine is typically displayed in the home for 3-4 weeks per issue. Half of recipients rank it as the most valuable branded product they receive from businesses.

HISTORIC  
HOME,  
CONTEMPORARY  
COOL



Stacey Shanner  
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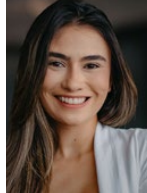
WHAT'S YOUR HOME  
REALLY WORTH?

SCAN TO SEE  
YOUR ESTIMATED  
HOME VALUE!



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REALTY

## Front of Tear Out Card 1



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57 percent of readers save these tear out cards to reference recipes and other helpful tips and pass along your contact info to referrals.

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## Back of Tear Out Card 1

SERVES  
4

### CREAMY LEMON GARLIC CHICKEN *with gnocchi*

SARA HAVEN | @SARA.HAVEN

#### INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz. to 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, halved lengthwise to make cutlets
- 1 tsp. lemon pepper seasoning
- ¾ tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil or unsalted butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ c. low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, plus more if needed
- Juice of ½ medium lemon (1 tbsp.)
- 1 c. heavy cream (or plant-based cream)
- 1 lb. potato gnocchi
- ¼ c. grated Parmesan
- 3 c. fresh baby spinach
- Lemon slices, for garnish

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/** Season both sides of the chicken cutlets with the lemon pepper seasoning and garlic powder.
- 2/** Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Put the chicken in the skillet and cook until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a plate.
- 3/** Add the broth and lemon juice to the skillet and stir. Stir in the cream and gnocchi, making sure the gnocchi are covered in sauce; if necessary, add more broth to cover. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened and the gnocchi are cooked, 5 to 7 minutes.
- 4/** Remove the pan from the heat and add the cheese and spinach. Toss until the spinach is wilted. Return the chicken cutlets to the skillet and give everything a stir. Let the chicken warm up for 1 to 2 minutes, then garnish with lemon slices and serve.

Recipe from *The Phone Eats First* by Allyson Reedy. Rizzoli International 2025.  
Photography by Chelsea Chorpennig.



## AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Bill and Judy,

A chill in the air beckons us to break out our sweaters. Leaves crunch under our boots. Mother Nature transforms into a kaleidoscope of colors. All are signs that autumn is back, a time that ushers in familiar comforts like no other. This issue of American Lifestyle helps you embrace this feeling with fall-friendly recipes, profiles of pet nonprofits, a visit to a Halloween-focused Midwest city, and more.

Nothing makes people feel quite as cozy as a homemade dish. The recipes inside can help you prepare meals and desserts that are as tasty as they are timely, including French Onion Soup Bites, Pumpkin Pie Chia Pudding, and Caramel Apple Bark.

Another source of contentment this season is through our four-legged friends. Enclosed, you'll find features on pets both big and small: one on an organization that welcomes elderly horses and another that pairs service dogs with veterans and first responders.

Halloween will be here before you know it, bringing communities together for some frightfully fun experiences. If you love this time of year, check out the feature on Anoka, Minnesota, which considers itself the Halloween Capital of the World. Discover how it earned this moniker and the celebrations it offers all October long.

How will you foster heartwarming experiences? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

**Stacey Shanner**



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# SMART HOME TECH PET OWNERS WILL LOVE

Written by **Allison Gomes**

Our pets may not keep up with the latest tech gadgets, but that doesn't mean they can't benefit from a few smart upgrades. Whether you're looking to keep them comfortable, entertained, or safe while you're away, these innovations can make caring for your four-legged friend easier than ever.



## SIMPLIFY MEALTIME

Gone are the days of rushing home to refill food and water bowls. Smart feeders and fountains can keep your pet's meals and hydration on schedule, whether you program them in advance or control them from your phone. Some models even track how much your pet is eating or drinking, providing valuable insights into their health.



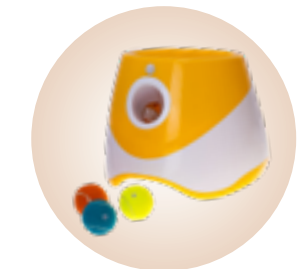
## STAY CONNECTED

Pet-specific smart cameras go far beyond basic monitoring. Many offer two-way audio so you can speak to your pet and hear their response, helping to soothe them when you're away. Certain options also include sound and motion detection, night vision, and treat-tossing capabilities. It's a comforting way to stay connected and reduce separation anxiety for both you and your pet.



## CREATE A TIDIER LIVING SPACE

A self-cleaning litter box can be a game-changer for cat owners. Such a device automatically scoops waste, reduces odors, and tracks your cat's bathroom habits, which can help alert you to potential health issues like dehydration and infection. Meanwhile, a smart pet door adds convenience and security for your cat or dog. Using a microchip or collar sensor, it allows your pet to let themselves out while preventing strays and wild animals from entering your home.



## MAINTAIN PLAY

Items like spring toys and automatic ball launchers can keep your pet active and engaged throughout the day. A little entertainment goes a long way in supporting your pet's physical and emotional well-being, and when your pet feels happy and cared for, your home feels better for everyone.

FEEDER: PEXELS/MERILSDAYOFF; LITTER ROBOT



# *THE MAGIC OF* **WALL MILLWORK**

Written by **Andre Rios**

The walls of your home are more than just structural dividers. They're canvases that are just asking to depict your family's character. The opportunities for design go well beyond framed art and patterned wallpaper, though. Decorative wall paneling has seen a revival in recent years, and this variety of millwork offers you nearly endless ways to add architectural texture and personality to your interiors, even with a budget-friendly DIY approach.





### NICKEL GAP

Although shiplap is a well-known darling of rustic design, this welcome alternative offers a more modern twist. Nickel gap features a uniform, nickel-width space between boards, providing clean, defined shadow lines that suit many home styles. Because of its prominent texture, it's especially effective for adding interest to minimalist environments that focus on simplicity over heavy decorating.

- BEST FOR** Accent walls, especially behind a fireplace or bed, or entire rooms for a cozy vibe.
- TIP** When installed horizontally, nickel gap can make a room appear wider.



### BEADBOARD

This is nickel gap's more elaborate sibling, consisting of narrow vertical planks separated by small, raised ridges: the beading. Its traditional appeal makes it suitable for cottage and country styles, but painting it a deep color like hunter green or navy blue gives it a modern edge. Best of all, it is often sold in affordable sheets that you can easily install yourself.

- BEST FOR** Wainscoting, especially in dining areas and bathrooms.
- TIP** Beadboard's long, thin lines subtly draw the eye upward, making ceilings appear higher.



### BOARD AND BATTEN

For a high-end beachy look, consider this paneling style that uses bold trim and molding to craft statement-making patterns. Board-and-batten millwork adds graphic depth using alternating wide boards and narrow vertical strips, called battens, placed over the seams. It's bold yet simple and perfect for crafting the ever-popular Cape Cod aesthetic. However, it's also versatile enough to fit most design schemes.

- BEST FOR** Entryways, staircases, and tall walls. You can choose to install it as wainscoting or run it floor-to-ceiling for striking drama.
- TIP** Paint the board and batten the same color as the rest of the wall to ensure that the texture remains the star.



### RAISED-PANEL MOLDING

If you crave a classic, luxurious look reminiscent of historic Parisian flats, here is your answer. This style involves applying rectangular frames using thin trim directly onto the wall alongside intricate floral detailing. Because it's more old-fashioned and elaborate than simple board and batten, you'll need to design it with restraint for a custom, character-forward look without creating clutter.

- BEST FOR** Formal dining rooms, primary bedrooms, and dens.
- TIP** For a more modern spin, use thin, flat panels and ditch the ornate, raised trim.



### WOODEN SLATS

To lean into minimalist design, such as Scandinavian, try this paneling style that focuses on dimension and alluring texture. Take, for instance, sleek and narrow wooden slats, which are often backed by sound-dampening felt. Among the hottest trends, this feature provides visual interest while subtly nodding to nature.

- BEST FOR** Home offices, media walls, or behind a sofa in a living room.
- TIP** Due to their thin, long, vertical lines, these panels can make a wall appear much larger.



### 3D MDF PANELING

For a truly unique focal point, consider using prefabricated 3D panels made from medium-density fiberboard (MDF). These panels offer striking geometric or wave patterns that pop off the wall, transforming it into art. They're easy to install and affordable compared to other options, such as wooden paneling or wallpaper.

- BEST FOR** Living rooms, powder rooms, and entryways.
- TIP** Since these panels are so eye-catching, you can apply MDF just about anywhere you would hang art.

Millwork varieties like these don't just add personality to your home; they also make an affordable, value-adding impact. With the right style, you can go beyond simple paint jobs and transform just about any ordinary room with a rich architectural soul that's perfectly suited to your family.



# HISTORIC HOME, CONTEMPORARY COOL

Interview with **Chris Goddard** / Written by **Andre Rios** / Photography **as noted**



When interior designer **Chris Goddard** was tasked with designing a country house for the second time, he reinvented its refined spaces to take on a youthful, more creative vigor.

## **Would you tell us about your background in the industry?**

This is my thirty-ninth year as an interior designer. I'm based in northwest Arkansas, but I work all over the world. Some braggy stuff: I've been named one of the top 100 designers in the world, and I was named International Designer of the Year by the Royal Academy in London in 2021.

## **How do you typically approach your work?**

I work in all different styles—everything from ultramodern to French chateau—but I'm a firm believer in never creating the same thing twice. So my firm is known for individuality, especially with materials, paint colors, and products. This reflects more of the client than us. The best compliment I can get as a designer is that it looks like I was never there; it looks like the homeowner's own choices.



**BEFORE**

MARK ROSKAMS (BEFORE); MARK JACKSON/CHROMA (AFTER); RETT PEEK (HEADSHOT)



**On your website, you describe your work as “quality over trend.” Would you elaborate?**

It’s best to invest in quality items that will stand the test of time instead of buying a lot of things that have no meaning. So I’m big on investing in timeless goods, not necessarily expensive ones. Whether something is \$300 or \$300,000, quality is about how it is made and what it means to *you*. And that’s why so many people make the mistake of furnishing a house with meaningless decor. When you enter these spaces, they have no soul because they’ve been packed so quickly, not curated over time.

**How did the client approach you for this project?**

This project is really special to me because it’s one of the few times that I’ve done a house twice. It’s a stone structure that was originally built in the 1890s. Throughout the years, the house was added on to by different families, and about ten years ago, a couple approached me to redo the home with an English country motif. The result was completely based on an equestrian theme, and it was very light and airy.

After the couple parted ways, the husband stayed in the house and asked me to reinvent it. This was a bit intimidating because I was

changing the way someone lives and helping him start the next chapter of his life.

To implement this, I refreshed the home to reflect his personal style. I took a whole different spin on it, going from a very traditional English country interior to more of a modern, edgier vibe. It was a rare journey that few interior designers get to take—transforming a project largely from one extreme to the other.

**Did you have to replace the traditional elements of the architecture?**

The structure had to dictate the interior style, so I did leave behind a lot of the really traditional elements, including heavy moldings and antique floors. The bones of the house reflected more of a country home, but I updated these features by using higher-gloss finishes and lacquering while adding a lot more layering and texture. I also used color saturation, applying the same color on the trim and walls for an instantly modern feel.

**How much freedom did the client give you to go wild with the design?**

This was our ninth project together. I’ve done all of his commercial work and other homes, so we have a really great, trusting relationship.

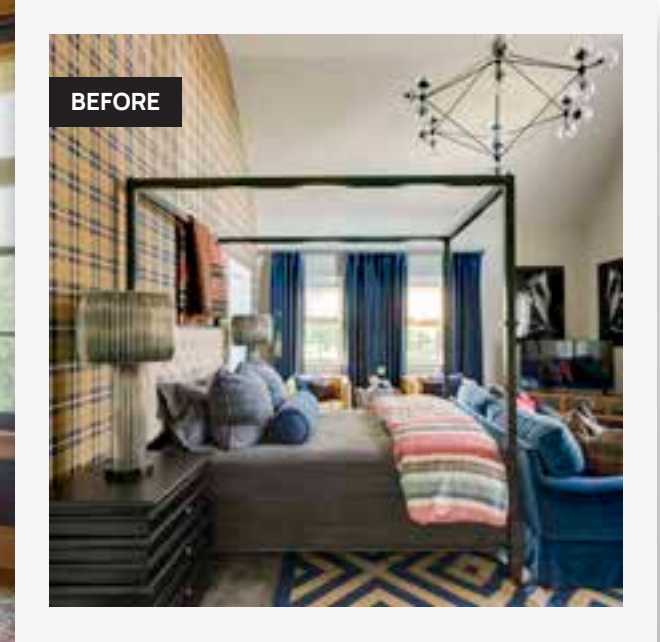


MARK ROSKAMS

MARK ROSKAMS



I wanted to highlight the art with color and contemporary furniture. But I also layered in some antiques that give their surroundings a sense of history.



He basically sent me some images of rooms he liked and then let me go for it. Another main thing that he brought to the table was his huge collection of work by famous artists like Damien Hirst and Yves Klein, as well as some notable street art, all of which is kind of cool, edgy, and fun.

I wanted to highlight the art with color and contemporary furniture. But I also layered in some antiques that give their surroundings a sense of history because I think a modern ambience gets very cold unless you pepper in some interesting textures

and funky antiques. Traditional touches help give interiors a sense of history, so you'll notice that every room has something old-fashioned in it.

**Why did you decide to make the library lean more traditional?**

That's the one area that still looks like an English country room, so it feels cozy and old-world. I wanted to create a retreat that, at the end of the day, could be a refuge where he could go have a drink, lie on the giant sectional, and watch TV.

He could also get work done here in this hypermasculine but comfortable space.

To bridge its different uses, I split the room in two. One side has the antique desk and bookcases, while the other has a custom sectional that's so big, I had to have a crane deliver it through a window. But at the same time, some butterfly paintings by Damien Hirst help modernize the room so it doesn't feel stuffy. I also sandblasted the bookshelves to give them an unexpected driftwood texture.

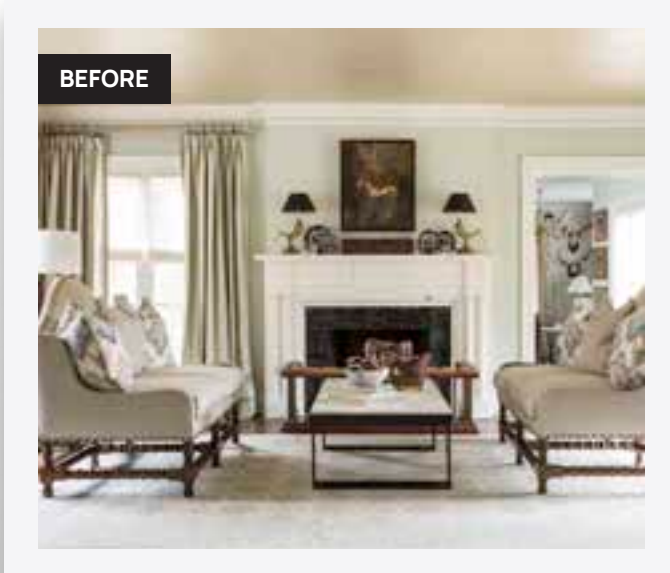
I did something similar in the smoking room, which is my favorite space. That room encompasses the ultimate lounge to me with its fireplace and club chairs surrounded by edgy contemporary art and sharp color contrast.

**How did you approach his bedroom?**

I'm not a big fan of TVs (or much technology at all) in bedrooms. Every day, we're bombarded with so much info, but these spaces should be free of distractions. Instead, layered textures like the upholstered headboard in this one make these spaces feel cozy and warm, which is perfect for an escape.

MARK ROSKAMS

BEFORE: RETT PEEK



A lot of people ask me how I make colorful rooms feel cohesive. I use nature as inspiration, pulling in the views from outside—in this case, his giant windows. I essentially combine all the colors of all the seasons because, if Mother Nature can mix them together and make it work, why can't we? Many of my clients come to me to break the rules and push boundaries. Like I say, if it's done well and you love it, then it works!

**Is there another established design rule that you don't believe in?**

We all have gotten so focused on social media and what everybody else likes. I always say to

people, "Why do you want what your neighbor has? What is it that *you* want? Because your friends don't live here—you do." So I'm big into pushing my clients to really find out what makes them happy and comfortable, whether it's places they've traveled to, hotels they stayed in, stores they've browsed, etc. It's essential to see past what you're bombarded with every day and discover how your home can be fine-tuned to fit you perfectly.

For more info, visit [goddarddesigngroup.com](http://goddarddesigngroup.com)



MARL ROSKAMS (BEFORE); RETT PEEK (AFTER)

MARL ROSKAMS (BEFORE); RETT PEEK (AFTER)

# A TEXAS-SIZED *treasure hunt*

Written by **Allison Gomes**  
Photography by **Andrew Disney**

**In the rolling hills of Central Texas, the tiny town of Round Top may not seem like a major destination.**

After all, even though it sits halfway between Austin and Houston, it's home to only ninety residents or so. However, three times a year it transforms into a lively epicenter for one of the most celebrated antique events in the country: the Round Top Antiques Fair. Known affectionately as "the Show," this beloved tradition began in 1968 and now spans over eleven miles along Highway 237, drawing collectors, designers, and treasure hunters from near and far.

## **The Round Top experience**

What started as a modest market has grown into an expansive experience where history and design intersect. During the spring, fall, and winter shows, visitors can explore goods from thousands of vendors offering a diverse range of items, from nineteenth-century sideboards and vintage textiles to midcentury artwork and repurposed industrial finds. Two of the fair's signature destinations, the Big Red Barn and the Continental Tent, anchor the event with curated collections, but the true appeal lies in the unexpected. Every barn, tent, and field setup holds the potential for a remarkable discovery.





As you explore the fair, expect to see thoughtfully arranged booths that showcase antiques in home-like settings, making it easier to envision how each piece might fit into your own space. Some vendors also specialize in a particular style, like French country, farmhouse, or midcentury modern, so whether you're furnishing a room or searching for finishing touches, there's something for every aesthetic. However, the event is as much about the atmosphere as it is about the chance for an antique shopping spree. Each booth tells a story, as do the people you meet along the way.

### Planning your visit

A little preparation can make your visit even more enjoyable. Accommodations in Round Top and the surrounding area book quickly, so it's a good idea to reserve your stay, whether it's at a boutique inn, a cozy bed-and-breakfast, or a vacation rental,

well in advance of show weeks. Also, be sure to wear comfortable shoes, bring a measuring tape to size up potential purchases, and have cash on hand since not every vendor accepts credit and debit cards. And if something catches your eye, act fast because it may not be there if you decide to circle back later.

As you're exploring the fair, many locations will have food trucks or restaurants on the property for a midday meal, so you won't have to travel far to fuel up for your browsing. When you're done shopping, you can check out a local dining favorite like Royers Round Top Cafe, which serves hearty, homemade meals and pies worth writing home about, peruse local art galleries, visit its historical center, and more.

The Round Top Antiques Fair is more than a place to buy antiques. It's a celebration of craftsmanship, community, and



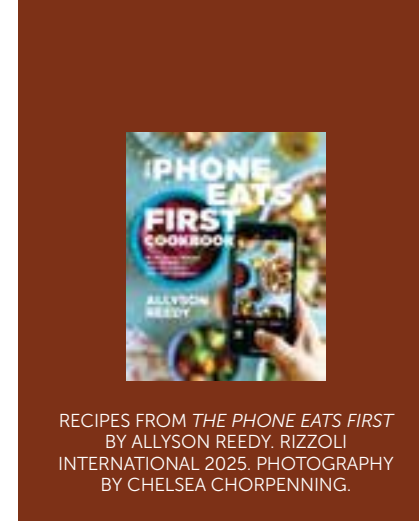
the stories that objects carry. It invites visitors to reconnect with a slower, more intentional way of life, so whether you leave with a century-old armoire or simply a new perspective, Round Top stays with you.

For more info, visit [roundtoptexasantiques.com](http://roundtoptexasantiques.com)



# SOCIAL FOOD

Recipes by **ALLYSON REEDY** / Photography by **CHELSEA CHORPENNING**



RECIPES FROM *THE PHONE EATS FIRST*  
BY ALLYSON REEDY. RIZZOLI  
INTERNATIONAL 2025. PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY CHELSEA CHORPENNING.



SCAN THE QR CODE  
for the full cookbook.

## PUMPKIN PIE *chia pudding*

KRISTI ROEDER | @AVOCADO\_SKILLET (AVOCADOSKILLET.COM)

Chia seeds existed long before camera phones and even before Chia Pets! They were an Aztec superfood, but for some reason the Aztecs didn't take pictures of their chia smoothies and cereals, so most of us didn't realize we could consume them until much later. A tasty way to eat chia seeds is in this dessert-for-breakfast pumpkin pie pudding. (It might be a little borderline on the virtuousness, but since chia seeds are loaded with antioxidants, fiber, omega-3s, and vitamin B, we're going with it.) More than a decade after starting to make the social media rounds, chia seeds are still trending, with chia-related recipes on TikTok racking up a couple hundred million views and counting.



Serves 1

### INGREDIENTS

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 3 tablespoons chia seeds     | ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract   |
| 3 tablespoons pumpkin puree  | ¾ cup milk of choice   |
| 1 tablespoon maple syrup     | Whipped cream, pecans, ground cinnamon,<br>and cinnamon sticks for topping |
| ½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice |  |

**1/** Mix the chia seeds, pumpkin puree, syrup, pumpkin pie spice, vanilla extract, and milk in a serving glass or a mason jar until fully combined. Cover and refrigerate. After 10 minutes, stir to prevent clumping. Refrigerate until the chia seeds absorb the liquid and take on a gel-like texture, at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

**2/** Top with whipped cream, pecans, and ground cinnamon. Add a cinnamon stick, and relish the fact that you're eating pudding for breakfast.



# *caramel* APPLE BARK

GARIANNE SHERIDAN | @GARIANNESTABLE (GARIANNESTABLE.COM)

@gariannestable's caramel apple bark went viral in 2022, and not just because all of us basic Bs jump at any excuse to screech, "It's fall, y'all!" Eating this salty (thanks to the pretzels), chocolatey, caramelly, appley treat in a flat version is way easier than losing a filling biting into an actual caramel apple. You can use any type of apple you'd like, but squeeze a little lemon juice over the pieces to prevent them from browning.



Makes 1  
(10 by 12-inch)  
sheet of bark;  
Serves 4 to 6

## INGREDIENTS

1 to 2 Granny Smith or other apples  
Juice of ½ medium lemon (1 tablespoon)  
6 ounces milk chocolate chips  
(dark and white chocolate also work)

2 cups small-size salted pretzels, or  
enough to cover the chocolate surface  
1 cup caramel sauce

**1/** Core and chop the apples (but leave the peel on). Place the pieces in a large bowl and sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent browning.

**2/** Line a rimmed baking sheet at least 10 by 12 inches with parchment paper. Melt the chocolate chips in a small saucepan over low heat on the stovetop, or in a microwave-safe bowl at 30-second intervals in the microwave. Spread all but about 1 tablespoon of the melted chocolate over the parchment into a 10 by 12-inch rectangle.

**3/** Scatter pretzels in an even layer on the surface of the chocolate.

**4/** Place the caramel sauce in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave for about 20 seconds, then spread all but about 1 tablespoon over the pretzels.

**5/** Top with the apple pieces. Drizzle the reserved chocolate and caramel over the bark. Freeze until hardened, at least 2 hours. To serve, break with a clean hammer (fun way) or chef's knife (more normal way). Store leftovers in an airtight container in the freezer.



# CREAMY LEMON GARLIC CHICKEN

## *with gnocchi*

SARA HAVEN | @SARA.HAVEN

You've probably heard of Marry Me Chicken—how could you not, as the creamy, sautéed chicken dish was Google's most searched recipe in 2022. But have you heard of what I'm dubbing Just Hang Out and Be Respectful and Leave at a Reasonable Time Chicken? Because that might be even better than that ball-and-chain bird, especially since this chicken involves kicky lemon pepper seasoning, lemon juice, and gnocchi. Sure, @sara.haven's chicken dish could inspire someone to put a ring on it (if that's what you're looking for), but it's also great as a just-for-some-companionship meal while we get through this weird time, you know?



Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

12 ounces to 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, halved lengthwise to make cutlets

1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or unsalted butter

3 cloves garlic, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, plus more if needed

Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  medium lemon (1 tablespoon)

1 cup heavy cream (or plant-based cream)

1 pound potato gnocchi

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup grated Parmesan

3 cups fresh baby spinach

Lemon slices, for garnish

**1/** Season both sides of the chicken cutlets with the lemon pepper seasoning and garlic powder.

**2/** Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Put the chicken in the skillet and cook until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a plate.

**3/** Add the broth and lemon juice to the skillet and stir. Stir in the cream and gnocchi, making sure the gnocchi are covered in sauce; if necessary, add more broth to cover. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened and the gnocchi are cooked, 5 to 7 minutes.

**4/** Remove the pan from the heat and add the cheese and spinach. Toss until the spinach is wilted. Return the chicken cutlets to the skillet and give everything a stir. Let the chicken warm up for 1 to 2 minutes, then garnish with lemon slices and serve.



# FRENCH ONION *soup bites*

STALEY LANE | @SAUCEDUPFOODS (SAUCEDUPFOODS.COM)

There are two things social media loves: a good mash-up and French onion soup (just make it into something other than soup). You've surely heard of the viral French onion pasta (worth the hype), but have you tried French onion soup toasts? If so, TikTok thanks you for giving them all your data, but if you haven't, @saucedupfoods has your new favorite way of eating caramelized alliums.

Besides being an impressive, delicious appetizer, this recipe [. . .] takes all of those sweet, silky flavors from slowly simmered onions and thrusts them upon beautifully crunchy bread. It could very well be the future of French onion anything-but-soup.



Makes  
12 toasts;  
Serves 4

## INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons salted butter,  
plus 2 tablespoons softened

1 large white onion, thinly sliced

2 teaspoons sugar

Leaves of 3 sprigs thyme, chopped,  
plus more for garnish

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

¼ cup low-sodium beef stock,  
plus more as needed

1 baguette

¾ cup grated Gruyère

**1/** Melt the 2 tablespoons unsoftened butter in a medium skillet over medium heat and sauté the onion until fragrant, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the sugar and chopped thyme.

**2/** When the onion begins to brown, about 10 additional minutes, add the balsamic vinegar and stock. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are caramelized and most of the liquid has evaporated, 15 to 20 minutes. If the liquid cooks off completely before the onions are caramelized, add beef broth 1 tablespoon at a time to keep the onions from sticking to the pan.

**3/** Preheat the oven to 500°F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Slice the baguette into twelve ¾-inch-thick pieces. Slather both sides of each piece with the softened butter. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and toast the bread slices, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

**4/** Put the toasted bread on the prepared baking sheet. Top each with some of the caramelized onions and cheese. Bake until the cheese is golden brown and melted, about 6 minutes. Top each with thyme leaves and devour!

# A HORSE HAVEN

Interview with **Samuel Griffin**  
Written by **Matthew Brady**  
Photography courtesy of **Ryerss Farm for Aged Equines**



**Samuel Griffin**, president of Ryerss Farm for Aged Equines in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, discusses what it takes to run his organization, the country's first horse rescue and retirement farm and the oldest nonprofit horse sanctuary in America.

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#### **How big is Ryerss, and how many equines do you have?**

We own around four hundred acres and eighty stalls. At any given time, we have from seventy-nine to eighty-five equines living here—not only horses but also mules and donkeys. We've housed just about every equine other than zebras.

When we settled into our current location, we preserved the land for agricultural use only to support as many animals as we could. We now have a huge main stable, several other buildings, and some other structures. We even grow our own hay, straw, and corn.

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#### **Do you accept horses from all over the country?**

We do; a couple of them even arrived from Alaska last year. However, the majority come from the East Coast, especially the Philadelphia tristate area. We also get a wide variety of horses, including thoroughbreds, racehorses, polo ponies, show jumpers, and trail horses. The equines must be at least twenty years old to stay at the farm, and around 12 percent are rescues.





doing so much of the overall work. But it's also handled by a few other full-time employees, including an on-site, live-in veterinarian, and around one hundred volunteers. It's basically like running a retirement home for horses. However, none of the people who do it would say it's work because they all love caring for the animals. That's why we have almost no turnover.

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**Would you share some of the biggest challenges?**

You'd probably get a different answer from every person here. For me, it's financial because I wake up every morning thinking about how we're going to make ends meet. For others, the biggest challenge is keeping the farm in order. In addition to caring for our animals, we have a lot of buildings with a lot of roofs and plumbing, for example, and it's always a roll of the dice every year determining what crops to sow and where—all the worries of a farmer. Cory's an excellent one, and he approaches it very intelligently.

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**Do volunteers and employees alike get attached to the horses?**

Yes. And that's the sad part of what we do because we're here to let them live out the remainder of their days. It's inevitable, but everyone understands our purpose: to give our four-legged friends their best possible life. Frankly, the horses don't know they're old; they just feel a little achier, like to lie down more often than usual, and can't always feed themselves.

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**Are you open year-round?**

365 days a year from 10:00 to 4:00, with free admission. We'll sometimes close for a holiday, although people have been known to just show up to see the horses on Christmas morning.

---

**What's it like to run a year-round organization that cares for dozens of equines?**

There's a huge amount of work involved. Our farm manager, Cory Mowrer, takes care of all the farm operations,



We'll sometimes close for a holiday, although people have been known to just show up to see the horses on Christmas morning.

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Equines work most of their lives for us: they learn how to carry us, how to jump for us, and so forth. I think we should return the favor, which is why Ryerss exists.

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**How do people react when they visit the farm?**

The overwhelming sense I get from visitors is that it's a wonderful place for them to find contentment. Many aren't country folks, so they're here to feel some solitude and let their kids experience the open country and see big animals.

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**What does Ryerss mean to its community?**

That's a good question. This part of Chester County is becoming suburbanized, but Ryerss will always be evergreen. People here know we're never going to move, which provides a sense of stability in changing times. And, of course, because of the influx of visitors we get, it's great for the community as a whole.

---

**What's the best part of this venture for you?**

I grew up with horses; my grandparents and parents had them. I was a rider from a young age, which I enjoyed immensely, and I was always very attached to our horses. In fact, I was retired when some friends of mine on the board here asked if I'd like to join them, which was a no-brainer. I do this because I love the farm and its residents.

After all, equines work most of their lives for us: they learn how to carry us, how to jump for us, and so forth. I think we should return the favor, which is why Ryerss exists. Once they arrive, they will never be worked or sold again. We make sure that their shoes are off for good—they get to just live like a horse, barefoot and out in the fields. It's a nice way of saying thank you for everything they've done.

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For more info, visit [ryerssfarm.org](http://ryerssfarm.org)





# HELPFUL HOUNDS *for heroes*

Interview with **Kendle Frank**  
Written by **Andre Rios**  
Photography courtesy of **Freedom Service Dogs of America**

**K**endle Frank, content coordinator at Freedom Service Dogs of America, shares the paw-some story of the Colorado nonprofit's work matching assistance dogs with service members and others in need.

## **Would you share the origins of your organization and its purpose?**

Freedom Service Dogs of America was founded in 1987 by PJ and Michael Roche, and since then, we've grown from a two-person effort to one of the country's largest assistance dog organizations. We are accredited by Assistance Dogs International, a worldwide accreditation coalition that sets high standards for care, health, and training of assistance dogs all over the world.

Our mission is to custom-train and purpose-breed service, professional therapy, facility, and skilled companion dogs for veterans and first responders with PTSD or traumatic brain injuries. We also serve adults with autism or mobility challenges, as well as professionals providing mental health and crisis-support services. Recipients get their own assistance dogs and lifetime support services at no cost to them, thanks to our community of supporters.

## **How and where do the service animals undergo training?**

Most of our service dogs-in-training—Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, and mixes of the two—are a result of our in-house purpose breeding program here in Colorado. They are born on-site and spend their first few weeks of life in our nursery, where they undergo socialization and enrichment from our staff and volunteers.





“

**Our PTSD assist dogs can also be trained to do things like recognize and interrupt anxious behaviors and flashbacks and awaken veterans and first responders from nightmares.**

They then receive their first formal training with our prison puppy-training program partners before being matched with a volunteer puppy raiser, who provides ongoing socialization and basic training until they reach adulthood. During that time, FSD covers the cost of their veterinary care, food, and supplies.

At about fourteen months old, our dogs return to the FSD facility for formal training, where they start working on advanced service dog cues and begin their custom training process. Our dogs learn to perform up to forty unique tasks that are directly related to an individual's particular needs. For example, if someone living with mobility challenges has a hard time bending over, we can train a dog to do tasks such as pressing automatic door buttons and pulling laundry out of the dryer.

When we have a dog who we believe may be a candidate for someone on our wait list based on their skills and temperament, the individual comes to our facility to make sure the dog is a good fit. Once a match is made, the person returns for a two-week placement class, where they practice the custom cues their dog learned and go on outings with our trainers and the other teams to learn how to navigate public spaces.

At the end of the placement class, we hold a graduation celebration for the team and they officially begin their life together. They'll continue receiving ongoing support services, including additional training and guidance. When an assistance dog retires at around age eight or nine, the recipient will have the opportunity to receive a successor dog to fill their place.

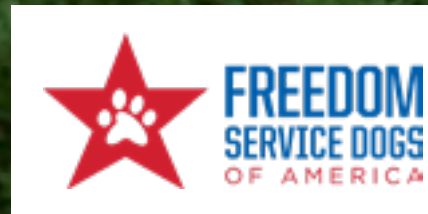
**Would you break down the types of service dogs you offer?**

Our service dogs can learn to perform life-changing tasks such as creating space in crowds, retrieving dropped items or medication, performing deep-pressure therapy, and more. Our PTSD assist dogs can also be trained to do things like recognize and interrupt anxious behaviors and flashbacks and awaken veterans and first responders from nightmares.

In addition, our professional therapy dogs and facility dogs are placed with professionals who provide mental

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We take great care to ensure that each dog in our program is placed with the person or situation where they'll have the greatest impact.



health or crisis support services, including clinical therapists and members of law enforcement. Their main role is to provide joy, comfort, and stress relief to the public and specific populations, such as those within hospitals, schools, fire stations, and police departments.

Finally, our skilled companion dogs are partnered with first responders, veterans, active-duty military members and their families, and Gold Star families. While these pups aren't trained to perform specialized tasks and don't have public access rights like service dogs, they are skilled at providing loving comfort, and their main purpose is to bring joy to service members and their families.

**What kind of impact does Freedom Service Dogs of America make?**

We take great care to ensure that each dog in our program is placed with the person or situation where they'll have the greatest impact. If a dog is not meeting our high standards of health or temperament required to graduate as an assistance dog, they may find an alternative career as an FSD skilled companion dog or be placed as a pet with a loving member of our community.

Our work is truly life-changing for both humans and dogs alike. Our dogs love their roles as assistance animals. We like to say our dogs wag while they work. And with an FSD dog by their side, individuals can go from being isolated to living a life filled with joy, hope, and independence.

For more info, [freedom servicedogs.org](https://freedom servicedogs.org)

# AUTUMN MAGIC

# IN ANOKA

Written by **Allison Gomes**  
Photography **as noted**

If you're looking for a getaway that blends small-town charm with spirited seasonal fun, point your compass toward Anoka, Minnesota. Located around twenty minutes north of Minneapolis, this riverfront city proudly calls itself the Halloween Capital of the World—and it has the heritage to back it up. In 1920, Anoka hosted what's believed to be the United States' first citywide Halloween celebration and parade as a way to keep mischievous kids out of trouble.



COURTESY OF EXPLORE MINNESOTA



COURTESY OF EXPLORE MINNESOTA

Today, that playful legacy has evolved into a monthlong celebration, making it a festive fall destination unlike any other. But while Halloween put Anoka on the map, there's far more to the city than just jack-o'-lanterns and parades. With its historic downtown, scenic trails, and friendly community spirit, it's the perfect spot for an autumnal escape.

**STEP INTO A SEASON OF CELEBRATION**

Anoka might be peaceful and quiet for much of the year, but come September, the anticipation builds as it gradually transforms with pumpkin-filled storefronts, playful decorations, and hints of the festivities to come. By early October, the celebration is in full swing. Visitors can enjoy everything from children's pumpkin-carving and costume contests to a haunted house and ghost tours. On a Saturday evening in mid-October, it hosts its annual Light Up the Night parade, where the Main Street lights turn down low so spectators can enjoy the colorfully lit floats. The event concludes with the annual bonfire, a tradition dating back to 1920.

But the main event, as it has been for over a century, is the Grande Day Parade. Preceded by a military flyover, it winds for one and a half miles through Anoka's historic downtown and features colorful floats, costumed performers, marching bands, and elaborate displays that draw spectators from all around.

**SOAK IN QUAINNESS**

Beyond its spirited seasonal celebrations, Anoka offers a

downtown area filled with character and locally owned gems that make wandering its streets a pleasure. The city's nineteenth-century architecture adds a nostalgic backdrop to an afternoon of exploring, whether you're browsing its boutiques or settling in at a cozy café. Start with a stroll along Main Street, where you'll find spots like Sassy Squirrel, a unique boutique shop, and Avant Garden, an independently owned bookstore and coffee bar beloved for its curated selection of new and used titles. Antique lovers can easily spend hours in the city's several antique shops, including Amoré Antiques, a two-level business brimming with vintage finds, home decor, and collectibles.

History buffs will also appreciate a visit to the Anoka County Historical Society, where the exhibits tell the

The main event, as it has been for over a century, is the Grande Day Parade. Preceded by a military flyover, it winds for one and a half miles through Anoka's historic downtown.



ANDREW PARKS

story of the area's settlement, industry, and, of course, Halloween legacy origins. And you never know what may be playing at Lyric Arts, the local professional theater with an annual calendar of musicals and plays. However you choose to spend your time, a day in the downtown area is sure to delight.

### ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

While Anoka shines throughout the year, the changing leaves make it a wonderful destination in late summer and early fall. Situated at the meeting point of the Rum and Mississippi Rivers, the city offers plenty of options for soaking up the beautiful scenery. Head to Akin Riverside Park, one of Anoka's most beloved green spaces, where paved walking trails hug the riverbank and shaded picnic areas provide a peaceful spot to relax. You can also watch the water flow from a bench or bring lunch from a local restaurant to enjoy under the trees. If you prefer getting out on the water, the calm stretches of the Rum River are also ideal for kayaking and canoeing. Head over to Rum River South County Park, and prepare to spend a few hours paddling through quiet channels lined with golden leaves.

### SAVOR LOCAL FLAVORS

After a day of exploring downtown or taking up river activities, Anoka's dining scene offers plenty of inviting spots to unwind. For a memorable

After a day of exploring downtown or taking up river activities, Anoka's dining scene offers plenty of inviting spots to unwind.

meal in a historic setting, book a table at the Mad Hatter Tea House, which sits inside a beautifully restored 1850s home along the Rum River. Its cozy, Victorian-inspired dining rooms and weekend afternoon teas make it an especially charming choice during the fall season.

If you're craving a more casual ambience, head to Serum's Good Time Emporium, a local landmark known for its wings, vintage saloon atmosphere, and regular live music. Just a short walk away, Casa Rio Tex Mex serves favorites for both kids and adults, making it an ideal place for a relaxed lunch or dinner. Craft beer lovers will enjoy stopping at 10K Brewing, a small-batch brewery in the heart of downtown with a selection of ales, lagers, and



ANDREW PARKS





COURTESY OF ANOKA COUNTY PARKS

seasonal brews. Grab a flight and settle into the welcoming taproom, or check the calendar for live music nights. For a delightful treat to end your day, swing by Sweet River Candy Company, a nostalgic candy shop offering everything from hand-dipped chocolates to retro rock candy.

Anoka is a place where tradition and community spirit run deep and where fall is more than just a season—it's a citywide celebration. From pumpkin-lined streets and festive parades to scenic river views and locally owned shops, this Minnesota gem offers an autumn escape filled with warmth, whimsy, and spook-tacular character. Whether you're cheering along the Grande Day Parade, sipping a warm drink at a local coffee shop, or wandering peaceful trails as the leaves begin to turn, Anoka delivers the magic of fall in a way that's uniquely its own.

For more info, visit [discoveranoka.com](http://discoveranoka.com)



JARED LAABS



COURTESY OF ANOKA COUNTY PARKS

Whether you're cheering along the Grande Day Parade, sipping a warm drink at a local coffee shop, or wandering peaceful trails as the leaves begin to turn, Anoka delivers the magic of fall in a way that's uniquely its own.

# TURN OVER A NEW LEAF CROSSWORD

Before you know it, the cool, crisp days of autumn will be here in full force. Let this crossword inspire you to indulge even more this cozy season, make new memories, and look forward to heartfelt family gatherings.

Written by **Andre Rios**

## ACROSS

- 1 Back-to-\_\_\_\_\_ shopping
- 2 Confection of brown sugar and butter
- 4 Confection of melted sugar
- 5 Holiday considered summer's end
- 6 Great gourds
- 11 Syrup's tree origin
- 12 Go nuts for this pie ingredient
- 14 An intelligent herb?
- 15 Autumn's crunch



The inclusion of useful tips is one of the top reasons 58 percent of recipients have referred the professional who sent them the magazine in the past 12 months.

## DOWN

- 1 Cardigan or cable-knit
- 3 Spice made from tree bark
- 7 Higher-learning institution
- 8 Viewing changing leaves
- 9 Student's luggage
- 10 Seasonal dress-up affair
- 13 Spice that isn't really a nut

**ANSWERS**  
**Across:** 1. School, 2. Butterscotch, 4. Caramel, 5. Labor Day, 6. Pumpkins, 11. Maple, 12. Pecan, 14. Sage, 15. Leaves  
**Down:** 1. Sweater, 3. Cinnamon, 7. University, 8. Peeping, 9. Backpack, 10. Halloween, 13. Nutmeg

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1

# PUMPKIN PIE CHIA PUDDING

KRISTI ROEDER | @AVOCADO\_SKILLET | [AVOCADOSKILLET.COM](https://www.avocadoskillet.com)

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3 tbsp. chia seeds
- 3 tbsp. pumpkin puree
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¾ c. milk of choice
- Whipped cream, pecans, ground cinnamon, and cinnamon sticks for topping

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1/ Mix the chia seeds, pumpkin puree, syrup, pumpkin pie spice, vanilla extract, and milk in a serving glass or a mason jar until fully combined. Cover and refrigerate. After 10 minutes, stir to prevent clumping. Refrigerate until the chia seeds absorb the liquid and take on a gel-like texture, at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
- 2/ Top with whipped cream, pecans, and ground cinnamon. Add a cinnamon stick, and relish the fact that you're eating pudding for breakfast.

Recipe from *The Phone Eats First* by Allyson Reedy. Rizzoli International 2025. Photography by Chelsea Chorpensing.

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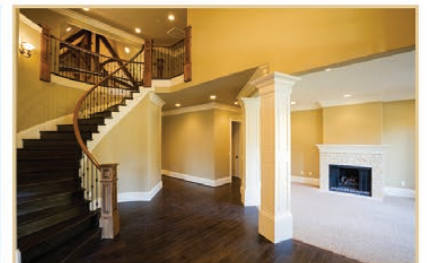
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