

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 142

AN UNMATCHED PALM BEACH BEAUTY



Stacey Shanner
REALTOR®

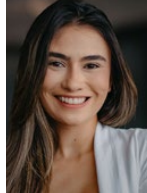
WHAT'S YOUR HOME
REALLY WORTH?



SCAN TO SEE
YOUR ESTIMATED
HOME VALUE!



Front of Tear Out Card 1



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Back of Tear Out Card 1

SERVES
4

HEIRLOOM TOMATO TOASTS

INGREDIENTS:

4 to 5 heirloom slicer tomatoes, sliced ¼ in. thick	1 tbsp. granulated sugar
1 shallot, minced	4 or 5 garlic cloves, smashed
1 c. blueberries, blackberries, or cherries (or mixture of all three)	1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature
1 to 2 tsp. salt	1 to 2 baguettes, cut in half lengthwise
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper	1 lb. burrata or good-quality mozzarella
¼ c. sherry vinegar	Fresh herbs of choice (basil, dill, tarragon)
½ c. extra-virgin olive oil	Sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1/** In a large bowl, toss the tomatoes, shallot, and berries together with the salt, pepper, vinegar, oil, and sugar. Let sit until the tomatoes have released their liquid and the shallots are softened, 20 to 30 minutes. Taste for seasoning.
- 2/** In a small bowl, combine the garlic and butter; set aside. Grill or toast the baguette pieces for 1 to 2 minutes, until lightly browned. Spread generously with the garlic butter and grill for about 30 seconds (you can also do this under a broiler).
- 3/** Spread the burrata onto the warm bread and top with the marinated tomato-berry mixture. Drizzle the remaining juice from tomato-berry mixture over the top and garnish with fresh herbs and sea salt.

Recipes from *Brunch Season: A Year of Delicious Mornings from the Buttermilk Kitchen*
by Suzanne Vizethann. Gibbs Smith, 2025. Photography by Kelly Berry.



AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Bill and Judy,

With its bright mornings and long, leisurely evenings, summer may naturally motivate you to seek out color, relaxing ambiances, and fresh experiences. This issue of American Lifestyle embraces that spirit, gathering inspirational ideas that encourage you to refresh your home, reconnect with nature, and make the most of these vibrant weeks ahead.

If you're looking to bring more of summer's energy indoors, you'll find inspiration in the enclosed guide to seasonal shades. From sunny yellows to soft ocean blues, discover how small pops of color can brighten your rooms, lift your mood, and give your home a refresh.

To explore beautiful shades in the great outdoors, discover all there is to do at Big Cedar Lodge, a serene retreat tucked in the Ozark Mountains. This breathtaking property blends rustic charm with modern comfort, offering everything from lake adventures to peaceful nature trails that allow you to unwind, reset, and enjoy its landscapes.

And if summertime calls you toward family fun and excitement, look no further than the Wisconsin Dells feature inside. Known as the Waterpark Capital of the World, this destination delivers thrills, natural beauty, and small-town charm in equal measure, granting visitors of all ages an unforgettable summer getaway.

Here's to a season of color and memorable moments! As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Stacey Shanner



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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE CONTENTS

ISSUE 142

02

Small Morning
Rituals for
Big Daily Joy

04

Double Days:
A Celebration
of Twins

08

Step Up
Your Style

12

An Unmatched
Palm Beach
Beauty

20

Embrace
the Shades
of Summer

24

A Summer
Brunch Bonanza

32

A Retreat to
the Wilderness

36

Soaking up
Summer at
Wisconsin Dells

44

Reviving Dude
Ranches

48

Don't
Toss That!

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SMALL MORNING RITUALS FOR BIG DAILY JOY

Written by **Allison Gomes**

Between work, family, and everything else vying for your attention, your days can quickly blur together. The good news is you can take control by starting at the top: of your day, that is. By adopting a few simple daily habits, you can create a sense of calm before jumping into the morning.

Journal briefly

When you first wake up, take five minutes to write freely. You might jot down a dream from the night before, a goal for the week, or something your child said that made you laugh. This brief pause allows you to reflect, reset, and refocus your thoughts before tackling your to-do list.

Enjoy your favorite drink

Savoring your favorite morning beverage might seem like a small thing, but it can help start your day on the right foot. So instead of gulping it down while doing other tasks, give yourself time to sit and enjoy the sweetness of your latte or the soothing warmth of your tea.

Light a candle

You can set a cozy atmosphere for your morning by simply striking

a match or turning on your candle warmer. Either way, a lit flame can bring a soft glow and calming scent that can make your tasks a little more enjoyable.

Welcome the sunlight

Sunlight brings a host of benefits, so open the blinds or step outside for a few minutes each day. Embrace the natural light as you breathe deeply or stretch your body. Even just a moment in the sun can lift your mood and help you feel more awake.

When you embrace simple rituals, you'll soon realize that joy can be found even in life's quiet, intentional moments.

LILARTSY/PEXELS



Having children is often called the “miracle of birth.” Not surprisingly, it has also been said that sometimes miracles come in pairs—twins. Much has been studied about these closer-than-usual siblings over the years, but outside of an occasional gum commercial or Schwarzenegger comedy, not as much has been *celebrated* about them.

A glorious exception is the Twins Days Festival, a beloved tradition that’s been held for the past fifty years in northern Ohio. Every August, pairs and other multiples from around the country descend onto the city of Twinsburg for the event, which encourages participants to connect with their brethren, share experiences, and celebrate the unique bond that are twins.

Today, the festival reportedly holds the official title of the largest annual gathering of twins in the world per Guinness World Records. What began in 1976 as a mere add-on to a local bicentennial celebration has welcomed over 88,000 sets of identical twins, fraternal twins, and other multiples, including an estimated 2,560 last year.

THE HISTORY

The roots of Twinsburg began, appropriately, in 1818. Connecticut-based identical twins Moses and Aaron Wilcox bought 4,000 acres of land in Ohio that year and then began divvying it out to settlers at bargain prices. In one such transaction with Millsville, a town to which they had relocated, the brothers threw in six acres for a public square and some cash with one condition: that the town change its name to Twinsburg.

“Many of the twins who have been coming for a long time really look at the festival as more of a family reunion—an opportunity to meet up with other twins they have developed friendships over the years,” says Twins Days Inc. executive director Andy Miller. “It’s a place to celebrate their twinship. They often tell us, ‘Twins Days is the only place where we don’t feel out of place.’”

THE FESTIVAL

This celebration takes place at Glen Chamberlin Park during

DOUBLE DAYS: A CELEBRATION OF TWINS

Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography courtesy of **Twins Day, Inc.**, unless noted

What began in 1976 as a mere add-on to a local bicentennial celebration has welcomed over 88,000 sets of identical twins, fraternal twins, and other multiples, including an estimated 2,560 last year.



the first full weekend of August, which falls on August 7–9 this year. To add to the fun, themes were introduced to the festival beginning in 1994, with last year’s being “Cheers to 50 Years!” Attendees can enjoy activities such as bingo games, volleyball, golfing, a 5K run and fun walk, and cornhole as well as music, food, photo ops, fireworks, and a twin-focused parade.

The weekend’s centerpiece is the Double Take Parade, held on Saturday morning. The procession travels from Twinsburg’s town square to the park and features floats, vehicles, and, of course, the stars of the show: twins and multiples wearing themed or matching outfits to show off their sibling spirit.

The festival is also a boon for the local economy, generating millions of dollars for the area. In addition, its organizers give back, having awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships in total. “Having organized this festival for fifty years, the Twins Days Committee is thrilled that the event not only brings a financial benefit to the Twinsburg community but also provides fundraising dollars and opportunities to local school and nonprofit groups,” Miller shares. “To see and hear the happiness it brings to so many makes all of the hard work worth it.”

But perhaps the greatest gift is the experience itself. For five decades, the Twins Days Festival has brought together people from around the world to create memories and celebrate the joy, camaraderie, and identity that come with being a twin.

For more info, visit twinsdays.org

BOTTOM: PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA FITZPATRICK

STEP UP *your style*

Written by **Allison Gomes**



A staircase isn't just a means of moving between floors—it's also one of the most underused design opportunities in a home. Because it naturally draws the eye, a staircase can act as a bold focal point, a reflection of your personality, or even a storytelling feature. Whether you're looking to make small updates or go all-in on a transformation, here are a few creative ideas for turning a merely practical piece into a standout element.

Highlight the risers

Adding a fresh coat of paint to the risers (the vertical part of each step) is one of the easiest and most affordable ways to infuse more personality into your staircase. Depending on your home's style, you can go classic with crisp white against natural wood treads or bold with a bright, unexpected color. Want something more artistic? Try an ombre effect that gradually shifts shades as you climb or a hand-painted pattern using stencils or stripes for extra charm.

Go bold with wallpaper

Wallpaper has made a comeback in recent years, and your staircase might be the perfect spot to experiment with these wallcoverings. Whether you choose floral, geometric, or abstract prints, covering your risers or stairwell can add instant character and turn the space into a focal point. If you're afraid of making a major commitment, consider a peel-and-stick option so you can easily change its look without causing damage.



Peel-and-stick LED light strips under the treads can lend a sleek, modern glow.

ELEONORA-FONT/PEXELS

HEYHO/PEXELS

Lay down a runner

Securely adding a runner to a staircase can not only increase your comfort and safety when traversing the area but also give it a more elevated look. Opt for a durable material in a style that matches your home's aesthetic, whether that's a patterned vintage wool or a solid modern synthetic like nylon or polyester. You can enhance it even more by adding stair rods, which are both functional and decorative, along the back of every tread. Dust corners are another viable addition. These small, triangular pieces of metal add a touch of vintage elegance while also making cleaning those tricky spots easier.

Create a gallery wall

The wall alongside your staircase is ideal for showcasing family photos, art, or keepsakes. And a gallery here turns each trek between floors into a personal journey. To keep it cohesive, stick with a unifying element, such as matching frames or a shared color palette, and consider adding sconces or track lights to highlight the collection. For an easy way to plan your layout, trace each frame onto kraft paper, cut out the shapes, and tape them to the wall. This will let you experiment with spacing and arrangement before committing to nails.

Play with lighting

Lighting can completely change how your staircase feels, and it's especially important if the area is closed in and lacks natural light. Peel-and-stick LED light strips under the treads can lend a sleek, modern glow, while a statement pendant or chandelier above the stairwell adds elegance. Even small touches, like wall sconces, help to enhance the overall function and mood of the space.



As you explore style options, remember that your staircase doesn't have to be purely functional. With a few thoughtful updates, it can become one of your home's most impressive and unique design features. After all, every step is another chance to express your style.

The wall alongside your staircase is ideal for showcasing family photos, art, or keepsakes. And a gallery here turns each trek between floors into a personal journey.

AN UNMATCHED PALM BEACH BEAUTY

Interview with **Enda Donagher**
Written by **Andre Rios**
Photography by **Mark Roskams**



Architect **Enda Donagher** was tasked with invigorating a traditional Florida vacation home with contemporary elegance. The result: a refined ambience perfect for the clients' first-rate art collection and lively gatherings.

How did you enter the architecture industry?

I grew up in Ireland and studied architecture at University College Dublin. After graduating, I decided to move to New York because I loved its energy whenever I visited and thought the opportunities were terrific. Some friends helped me get my first real jobs in the industry here.

From there, I worked with some of the best residential architecture firms in the United States, including Thierry Despont. After living here for about fifteen years, I started working with interior designer Elizabeth Martell. We've been collaborating frequently but not exclusively since 2005, focusing on luxury residential work.

How would you define your design approach?

This project is fairly emblematic of my firm's style. We're minimalist but with informed classicism and rich materials and finishes. We think out every detail carefully and take on a small volume of work so I can be individually involved in every job from beginning to end—a level of attention that we've always prided ourselves on.

As for my personal approach, I'm influenced by the existing conditions of a building and spend some time soaking rooms in; certain ones might have great ceilings or other distinct architecture. Then I reflect on what initially jumps out at me and start wondering what kind of potential the spaces can achieve.



I then get into schematics with my team and start developing a very methodical plan for improving flow, views, symmetry, etc. Clients will give us a brief with pragmatic requirements for the number of bedrooms and their basic preferences. But every project is an exercise in building a shared vision between the client and designer, and that steers the creative process and important decisions.

To maintain this vision, we create detailed initial design images and share them with the client to make sure they look great and achieve balance. Even if new ideas come along, this early perspective will be our guiding light.

What was that specific guiding light for this project?

The whole project was a collaboration between me and Elizabeth Martell; I handled the architecture while she handled the decorating. We had worked together for these clients before, but this was their summer house and their tastes had clearly evolved by the time they reached out to us.

The home was originally built in the Regency style in the 1980s and was developed by Robert Gottfried—he's very well-known in the area and developed what we now call Palm Beach Regency homes. They were actually spec houses, meaning they were all built in a similar layout: a big formal living room in the middle flanked by a kitchen and living room wing on one side and a bedroom wing on the other, as well as openings from the entryway



to the landscaping out back. They all end up having terrific scenery.

However, because this was a spec home with a lot of white, it needed more customization. Our clients wanted more personality and larger, more gracious entertaining spaces that could accommodate lots of foot traffic. Additionally, the home was intended to function like an art gallery. These clients have a world-class collection of antique furniture and art to display, so ultimately, making space for art and entertaining were the key priorities.



We also opened up rooms to create good sight lines of the windows and art from virtually any location. We had to get really creative to pull off all these requests.

How did you execute this vision?

One thing we did was place an enormous amount of seating so the clients could host huge gatherings like fundraisers. The dining room, for example, now holds up to twenty people without having to pull in

additional chairs. Meanwhile, adding ample seating to the living room required breaking it up into several distinct conversation areas without making any of them feel closed off. We had to get creative about maximizing not just the use of space but also good flow throughout.

Our firm handled all the interior architecture, making renovations and basically designing everything that you see here besides the landscaping, right down to the furniture and placement of art.

How did you bridge the clients' very contemporary art with classic architecture and decor?

That's never an issue for us—contrast is always great! In a room that has more traditional architecture, modern art always looks terrific, as does traditional furniture in a more contemporary setting. It's all about mixing and balance, allowing elements to complement each other.

On that note, the kitchen is very distinct from its surroundings. Was this intentional?

Indeed, it was. Part of the brief was extending the kitchen and family wing and adding features like the staircase. Our clients love contemporary kitchens (and bathrooms) in each of their homes, so we made the decision that this entire wing would lean contemporary. That allowed us to incorporate clean lines and huge picture windows that bridge the gap between the indoors and the exterior landscaping.

The yard is striking as well. How did you approach it?

As we worked on the interior, it became obvious that the exterior experience needed to evolve in parallel—you can see it from every room. Formerly, it was pleasant but not to the level of what we needed. So we worked with a noted Palm Beach landscape designer named Mario Nievara. He helped redesign these spaces to feel more composed and intentional, such as the front door area, where limestone pavers are interrupted by grass, deftly formalizing the first impression.

This landscaping, which includes palm trees, small plants, and twenty-foot-high hedging, flows perfectly to the pool behind

There's an excitement when you enter this space that sets up your expectations perfectly for what follows: tall ceilings, grand views, and a gallery of gorgeous art.

the house. Also, when we installed the very bright marble on the main floor of the central spaces, Nievara installed a matching pale limestone to create a seamless transition inside and out. He did a great job creating a secondary outdoor experience.

What is your favorite space in this project?

One of my favorites is the dining room, which has a honeydew high-class lacquer on the walls. It holds a work by Picasso and a pedestal with a beautiful vase. I also love the entry hall; we restored some arched iron front doors and installed curvature in the foyer's corners to soften them. There's an excitement when you enter this space that sets up your expectations perfectly for what follows: tall ceilings, grand views, and a gallery of gorgeous art. Its detailing, like the trim, is classical in nature, but it's updated with a minimalist take—and this tone of the entire home becomes immediately clear in the entryway.

For more info, visit endadonagher.com



EMBRACE THE SHADES OF SUMMER

Written by **Allison Gomes**



LONGER SUMMER DAYS BRING A fresh sense of possibility, encouraging small shifts in our routines—and in our homes. One of the simplest ways to capture this seasonal energy is through your use of color. By incorporating certain hues into your decor, you can brighten your spaces, give your home a stylish summer reset, and lift your mood.

The psychology of summer shades

Colors are powerful mood setters, and hues apparent throughout nature in summer tap into emotions we often crave this time of year. Warm shades like yellow and orange naturally evoke joy, optimism, and energy. They mimic sunshine and fresh blooms, making them perfect for spaces where you want to feel lively and connected. On the other hand, cooler shades, such as blues and greens, promote calm and restoration, echoing the serenity of ocean waves and a grassy hill. By thoughtfully introducing these tones into your home's design, you can match each room to the vibe you want to create, whether that's energetic activity or peaceful retreat.

In your living room

This space is likely where you spend your time relaxing with loved ones or gathering with friends, making it the ideal spot to experiment with more cheerful colors. For example, add pillows, throws, or an accent rug in bold red or sunny yellow to energize

the space. If you prefer something subtler, swap in blue-toned vases, a colorful art print, or even fresh flowers arranged in shades of orange and pink. These touches can invite conversation and make the room feel more open, lighthearted, and welcoming.

In your kitchen

Summer meals are all about freshness and fun, so your kitchen decor should capture that spirit. A bowl of fresh citrus can instantly brighten the counter or table, while colorful dish towels, patterned table runners, or ceramic mugs in different hues can make mealtimes feel more playful. For a bigger refresh,

consider lining any open shelves with a peel-and-stick wallpaper in a cheerful pattern, which you can easily remove and swap out later. These small changes can help keep the space feeling lively and inspiring while you cook for your family or entertain guests.

In your bedroom

While some rooms thrive on energy, your bedroom can benefit from a calmer palette to help you relax and recharge. For your fabrics, think soft sky blues, aquas, and light greens to create a spa-like atmosphere that's ideal for unwinding. Lightweight linen or cotton bedding and gauzy curtains can keep things airy, while even



CURTIS/PEXELS



TARYN-ELLIOTT/PEXELS

BRIGHT COLORS LIKE CORAL AND YELLOW ACCENTS CAN BRING MORE ENERGY TO ANY GATHERINGS YOU MAY HAVE, WHILE TEAL AND WHITE WOULD CREATE A LAID-BACK COASTAL FEEL.

modest additions, like artwork in ocean tones or a potted plant on the nightstand, can contribute to creating a restful retreat from hectic days.

In your outdoor spaces

Since the shades of summer are inspired by the outdoors, your porch, patio, or sunroom is a natural canvas for seasonal swaps. Bright colors like coral and yellow accents can bring more energy to any gatherings you may have, while teal and white would create a laid-back coastal feel. By adding a patterned outdoor rug, cushions, and painted planters in your chosen color scheme, you can instantly transform your space into an outdoor oasis for you and any visitors to enjoy all season long.

Refreshing your home with color is about more than aesthetics—it's about embracing summer as a chance to reset. Just as you trade winter layers for sundresses or heavy meals for fresh produce, your spaces can reflect the season's lighter, more joyful rhythm.



A SUMMER BRUNCH BONANZA

Recipes by **SUZANNE VIZETHANN** / Photography by **KELLY BERRY**



RECIPES FROM *BRUNCH SEASON: A YEAR OF DELICIOUS MORNINGS FROM THE BUTTERMILK KITCHEN* BY SUZANNE VIZETHANN, GIBBS SMITH, 2025. PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLY BERRY.



SCAN THE QR CODE
for the full cookbook.

SUMMER SQUASH OMELET *with ricotta*

This is the kind of dish you make for yourself and feel really good about it. It's light, and is an easy way to make an omelet thanks to a little help from the oven.



Serves 4

KITCHEN NOTE:

The trick to good eggs is getting the pan to the right temperature. This takes a bit of practice, but the butter will let you know immediately if the pan is too hot. Practice a few times by putting cold butter in a preheated skillet.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 eggs | Freshly ground black pepper |
| 1/3 cup heavy cream | 1 red chile, seeds removed, minced |
| 1 tablespoon unsalted butter | 1/2 cup mixed fresh herbs, such as basil, chives, and parsley |
| 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided | 1 lemon, zested and juiced |
| 2 summer squash, shaved with a peeler | Freshly grated Parmesan cheese |
| Sea salt | |
| 1/2 cup fresh ricotta | |

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2/ Place the eggs and cream in a small bowl. Use a fork to break up the eggs and stir until the eggs are completely liquid.
- 3/ Preheat an 8-inch nonstick, oven-safe skillet over medium heat for about 30 seconds. Add the butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil. The butter should start to sizzle but not brown. If butter starts to brown, the pan is too hot, and you will need to start over. If the butter barely melts, then the pan is too cold.
- 4/ Add the shaved squash and then the egg mixture. Add salt to taste and place the omelet pan in the oven for 3 to 4 minutes or until the eggs are just set.
- 5/ Remove from the oven and add the ricotta to the center. Season with more salt and the pepper, then, using a rubber spatula, lift under the omelet and fold in half and slide onto a plate.
- 6/ Toss the minced chile, herbs, lemon zest and juice, and remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in a small bowl to combine. Pour over the finished omelet and sprinkle with plenty of Parmesan cheese.



heirloom TOMATO TOASTS

Summer tomatoes are just the best, and these toasts are a perfect way to celebrate them. We don't often think of tomatoes as a fruit, but they are, and the acidity and sweetness of the marinated berries play beautifully with them.



Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

4 to 5 heirloom slicer tomatoes, sliced ¼ inch thick

1 shallot, minced

1 cup blueberries, blackberries, or cherries (or mixture of all three)

1 to 2 teaspoons salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup sherry vinegar

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

4 or 5 garlic cloves, smashed

1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature

1 to 2 baguettes, cut in half lengthwise

1 pound burrata or good-quality mozzarella

Fresh herbs of choice (basil, dill, tarragon)

Sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ In a large bowl, toss the tomatoes, shallot, and berries together with the salt, pepper, vinegar, oil, and sugar. Let sit until the tomatoes have released their liquid and the shallots are softened, 20 to 30 minutes. Taste for seasoning.

2/ In a small bowl, combine the garlic and butter; set aside. Grill or toast the baguette pieces for 1 to 2 minutes, until lightly browned. Spread generously with the garlic butter and grill for about 30 seconds (you can also do this under a broiler).

3/ Spread the burrata onto the warm bread and top with the marinated tomato-berry mixture. Drizzle the remaining juice from tomato-berry mixture over the top and garnish with fresh herbs and sea salt.



BABY VIDALIA CASSEROLE

with bacon

This is a dish we always had on the table growing up, most commonly paired with a steak my dad would grill. This also goes great with eggs. You can use regular Vidalia onions if you can't find baby Vidalias.



INGREDIENTS

¼ pound (about 1 cup) bacon, sliced	Salt
2 pounds baby Vidalia onions, green tops cut off and reserved	Freshly ground black pepper
¼ stick unsalted butter	1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
4 to 5 sprigs whole thyme, plus more for garnish	36 whole wheat Ritz crackers, blended in a food processor
3 tablespoons heavy cream	

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2/ Cook the bacon in a large sauté pan over medium-low heat until it renders and is crispy. Drain the bacon on paper towels and then crumble.
- 3/ Slice the baby Vidalias in half lengthwise and slice into half-moons. Place in the pan with the bacon fat, add the butter, thyme, and cream, and sauté until limp, but not brown. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove thyme sprigs and discard.
- 4/ In a casserole dish, layer half of the onions, crumbled bacon, cheese, and the cracker crumbs. Repeat layers. Bake for 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Garnish with sliced reserved green tops and fresh thyme sprigs.



chocolate-hazelnut **STICKY CAKE**

This is a version of the Swedish sticky cake called kladdkaka, which is very similar to a brownie. The key here is to not cook it too long.



Makes
6 to 8
Slices

INGREDIENTS

1 stick unsalted butter, melted, plus more butter for greasing the pan	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups granulated sugar	1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs	Powdered sugar, for serving
1 teaspoon hazelnut extract	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup toasted hazelnuts, lightly chopped, for serving
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocoa powder, sifted	

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9-inch round cake pan with butter.

2/ In a medium bowl, whisk the butter, sugar, eggs, and hazelnut extract until the mixture is fully combined. Whisk in the cocoa powder, flour, and salt.

3/ Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and smooth out into an even layer. The batter will be thick.

4/ Bake for 20 minutes or until the top has hardened and has started to crack. The center should still be soft and gooey, but it will harden as it cools.

5/ Serve with a dusting of powdered sugar and toasted hazelnuts.

KITCHEN NOTE:

This also pairs well with [the cookbook's] homemade Whipped Cream.

A RETREAT TO THE WILDERNESS

Written by **Andre Rios**
Photography courtesy of **Big Cedar Lodge**

If you hunger to check out from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, check in to a peaceful escape—one that marries the best of modern amenities with the immediate reset of getting outdoors. Spreading over 4,600 acres of Missouri's Ozark Mountains, **Big Cedar Lodge** is a veritable tribute to nature, and it could just become your favorite place to kick back.

What began as a passion project of Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris now invites worldwide guests to reconnect with the great outdoors in a breathtaking American outback. Since opening to the public in 1988, this wilderness beauty has earned a reputation as “America's Premier Wilderness Resort.” And this title is supported by numerous accolades, including being named the number one resort in the Midwest by *Travel + Leisure* readers for three consecutive years.





Relax and unwind

The 262 guest rooms across ten lodges, cottages, and cabins at Big Cedar Lodge nestle visitors in comfortable rustic atmospheres, including traditional hotel rooms in the Falls, Spring View, and Valley View Lodges and private log cabins and cozy cottages tucked into the woods or situated on Table Rock Lake. Each option provides numerous amenities, which may include a fireplace, whirlpool bath, fully equipped kitchen, and/or lake views—so you can design your idea of a comfortable yet secluded stay.

For seamless comfort that will leave you forgetting all about the world outside these forests, enjoy a wellness session on the property. Services here range from a massage therapy

hour and a relaxing hot tub plunge to fitness classes like yoga flows held on a gorgeous summit overlook.

Dining at Big Cedar Lodge is an extra indulgence, as the property offers a variety of heartland cuisine served amid historic scenery. For example, the Devil’s Pool restaurant, housed in an original 1920s landowner’s home, offers Southern home-style dishes like hickory-smoked prime rib and trout. For a more casual meal, the Buzzard Bar provides a selection of eats like indulgent sandwiches and fresh salads with nightly live entertainment.

Challenge and explore

While residing at Big Cedar Lodge may inspire deep rest, adventure

awaits thrill-seeking travelers at every turn; in fact, a wide range of land and water activities is included with your stay. For one, splash into Table Rock Lake via the Bent Hook Marina, which rents out boats, kayaks, and fishing equipment to guests. For those who prefer to keep their feet on land, the resort offers picturesque hiking trails, as well as Fun Mountain, a 50,000-square-foot indoor adventure wonderland with bowling, a ropes course, and go-karts.

The resort also hosts world-class golfing on courses designed by legendary names like Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods. Some of the property’s most famous courses, such as the breathtakingly scenic



Payne’s Valley, challenge casual and competitive golfers alike with grandiose layouts peppered across the hilly landscape.

The Top of the Rock, meanwhile, is consistently mentioned as a must-see attraction. This popular setting within reach of the resort boasts panoramic views from the Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail, a signature par 3 golf course, tours of the Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum, a stunning dining experience at the Osage Restaurant, and more.

Locating the retreat

While Big Cedar Lodge feels remote, it is conveniently located in Ridgedale, Missouri, which is about ten miles from Branson and an hour from Springfield-Branson National Airport. If you’d prefer to drive in, the resort is a mere three-to-four-hour trek from St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, each route offering up-close views of the rolling Ozark Mountains.

Once you arrive at Big Cedar Lodge, modern comforts and wild adventures alike await you. However you design your stay, though, remember to take time to lie back, take a breath, and savor what might just be your new paradise away from home.

For more info, visit bigcedar.com



SOAKING UP SUMMER

at Wisconsin Dells

Written by **Allison Gomes**
Photography courtesy of **Wisconsin Dells
Visitor & Convention Bureau and Kalahari
Resorts & Conventions**

Whether you're a thrill seeker or simply looking for a new destination for your next family getaway, you can never go wrong with hitting a water park. And perhaps no place captures the spirit of summer like Wisconsin Dells. Tucked along the Wisconsin River, this city is known as the "Waterpark Capital of the World!®"—and for good reason. Even though it's only twenty square miles, it's home to over two hundred waterslides and welcomes over five million visitors annually. But this summer playground is far more than just a place to slip and slide, as the nickname suggests. Equal parts natural wonder, family-friendly fun, and small-town charm, this Midwest gem is a destination that delivers excitement at every turn.



Dive into the fun

When it comes to summer fun by the pool, the choices in the Dells are truly unmatched. Take Noah's Ark Waterpark, for instance. It's the largest in the country and features over seventy acres of attractions, including more than fifty slides, two giant wave pools, and kid-friendly areas designed to keep families entertained all day long. Its signature rides, like the Scorpion's Tail, Black Anaconda, and Raja (the world's largest king cobra slide), are guaranteed to thrill even the boldest adventurers.

Then you have places like the Kalahari Resorts & Conventions and the Wilderness Resorts, which push the experience even further. Both offer indoor and outdoor water parks, so the fun continues no matter the weather. Between lazy rivers, surf

simulators, hot tubs, and sprawling play zones, there's no shortage of offerings for visitors both young and old. And because these resorts also feature additional amenities like arcades, spas, and on-site dining, they're destinations in themselves—perfect for those who want convenience paired with endless activity. Whether you're racing down slides or lounging poolside, the water park scene here truly defines summer in the Midwest.

Cruise the Wisconsin River

Beyond the chlorinated activities, Wisconsin Dells is known for its natural beauty, particularly the dramatic sandstone cliffs carved thousands of years ago by glacial meltwater. Today, boat tours are the best way to experience the grand formations up close, while scenic



sunset cruises take visitors along quiet stretches of the Wisconsin River, gliding past towering cliffs like Stand Rock and Witches Gulch. These spots are steeped in history—Stand Rock, for instance, became iconic after Henry Hamilton Bennett captured his son taking a daring leap across its gap in the 1800s, an image that helped put the Dells on the map as a tourist destination.

For those craving more adrenaline, jet boat rides add speed, spins, and plenty of splashes to the journey. Or attempt a more daring event and book a Ghost Boat excursion, which is touted as the Dells' "scariest and most intense attraction." Embark on an after-dark water ride before stepping into the long-abandoned Cold Water Canyon. Newly installed sounds, lights, and storytelling make this an immersive experience that's guaranteed to get your heart racing.

Adventure on land

While water is a major draw, Wisconsin Dells' surrounding landscapes invite plenty of exploration on dry ground. Just a short drive away is Devil's Lake State Park, one of the state's most beloved outdoor escapes. Its rugged quartzite bluffs rise nearly 500 feet above a 360-acre lake, making the hiking trails here some of the most scenic in the Midwest. Visitors can also relax on sandy beaches, picnic beneath oaks and pines, and more.

Back in the Dells, you can trade in your hiking boots for many different

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kinds of adventures. Timbavati Wildlife Park gives you the chance to encounter giraffes, kangaroos, and other exotic animals, while attractions like Tom Foolerys Adventure Park and BigFoot Zipline let your inner child escape. There's a seemingly endless supply of other offerings, including mini golf, go-kart tracks, and outdoor amusement parks, scattered throughout the area, ensuring that there's always something to do when the sun is shining.

And after a day packed with activity, downtown Wisconsin Dells offers a more leisurely pace. The streets are lined with shops, restaurants, and attractions that capture the quirky, family-friendly spirit of the town. As you walk the area, snack on homemade fudge and browse souvenir shops before stepping into an escape room or taking a family picture at Capone's Original Old Time Picture Studio. There are numerous entertainment options as well, from the sleight-of-hand brilliance at the Rick Wilcox Magic Theater to the interactive science exhibits at the Tommy Bartlett Exploratory, a must-see that has delighted visitors for decades.

Indulge in delicious cuisine

No trip to the Dells is complete without indulging in its culinary staples. This is Wisconsin, after all, so expect cheese curds on menus across the city. Pair them with a crisp craft beer from a local brewery, and you've got



a true taste of the region. For a quintessential Midwestern experience, book a table at one of the area's supper clubs, including Ishanala and House of Embers. Picture eating prime rib and drinking the state's signature cocktail, a brandy old-fashioned, in a setting that feels equal parts nostalgic and inviting.

For more casual dining experiences, diners, taverns, and food stands scattered across town serve everything from burgers to fried fish to pizza and so much more, ensuring that there's no shortage of hearty options for hungry travelers. Many of the resorts also feature on-site restaurants, making them the perfect choice for families who don't want to stray too

far after a full day of activity. But if you're up for venturing into the city, you'll have the opportunity to sample both local favorites and hidden gems.

At its heart, Wisconsin Dells is a place of contrasts that's equal parts kitschy and breathtaking and adrenaline-fueled and laid-back. One day you might be racing down a waterslide, the next quietly watching the sunset paint the river cliffs in golden hues. That balance of modern thrills and timeless beauty is what has kept people returning year after year.

For more info, visit wisdells.com



REVIVING DUDE RANCHES

Written by **Mark Bedor**
Photography by **Mark Bedor**

There's nothing quite like a week at an American dude ranch. Located in some of the most beautiful and pristine parts of the American West, this type of destination offers the opportunity to not only experience our country's cowboy culture, western lifestyle, and horsemanship but also truly disconnect in a way few other places offer.

Compared to Disneyland or an ocean cruise, a dude ranch vacation is a truly rare experience. Sonja Gerrard, a guest at California's Hunewill Ranch, sums it up best. "I like the horseback riding for sure," she says. "But for me, it's more of a complete break from day-to-day reality. There's no working, and I go on a media-free diet. It's a time to just mentally take leave of your life."

That's precisely the mindset that inspired two Arizona men to help such places not only survive but thrive, culminating in the True Ranch Collection of properties.

From the ashes

Dude ranching began in the late 1800s, with working ranches taking

in guests from the eastern United States who wanted a taste of the disappearing Old West. In 1926, the Dude Ranchers' Association (DRA) was founded to support the industry. Yet even as the association celebrates its centennial this year, many of those early dude ranches have disappeared. There are still about ninety DRA member ranches, and while the industry remains alive and well throughout the West, it is a fraction of what it was. For example, Arizona was once home to dozens of dude ranches but has a mere ten official DRA sites in 2026.

Russell True has seen that decline firsthand. When his family bought Tucson's White Stallion Ranch in 1965, there were about two dozen such places in the area. Today, only two continue—yet there would be even fewer if not for the True Ranch Collection. Founded by True and his business partner, Jaye Wells, the company is committed to preserving, restoring, and operating historic dude ranches.

A true mission

Most of the properties in the nationally recognized True Ranch Collection had either been shut down or were in foreclosure but have since been brought back to life. In Arizona, its growing list of ranches includes Tombstone Monument Ranch, Rancho de la Osa, the White Stallion, and Kay El Bar. (The state's first dude ranch, Kay El Bar is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) In addition,



Russell True (left), Jaye Wells (right)



True Ranch owns Montana's Circle Bar Guest Ranch and Wyoming's Blackwater Creek Lodge & Guest Ranch, which is based near Yellowstone National Park.

Each location offers not only unique accommodations and dining but also outdoor adventures such as horseback riding, archery, and sport shooting. Not sure where to begin? One of True Ranch's experts can help you plan the ideal ranch getaway for you and your family.

No matter where you stay or what you do, though, the heart of every experience is hospitality, history, and authenticity. "Russell's a lifetime dude rancher, and he's been out on White Stallion since he was five years old, and the

architecture of the old historic buildings is my bailiwick," states Wells, an architectural preservationist. "So the two of us have really complemented one another and enhanced our ability to get the properties not only looking right but also functioning right."

And visitors to the True Ranch Collection of dude ranches are the beneficiaries, getting to experience these beautiful hideaways in the American West that otherwise might have been lost forever. "I go to our places and see them thriving and people enjoying them," concludes True. "For me, that's plenty reward."

For more info, visit trueranchcollection.com

DON'T TOSS THAT!

Written by **Andre Rios**



Repurposing goods isn't just eco-friendly; it's also a fantastic way to inject unique personality into your home without breaking the bank. Unleash your inner upcycler by trying these four satisfying projects that put your household odds and ends to good use.

Antique storage

When old furniture has too much intrinsic value to be thrown away, don't just leave it unused in your attic or garage. Even an old, damaged piece can take on new life. Dust off a table, cabinet, or dresser, ensure that it's stable, then slide it into your pantry or a closet for holding all kinds of goods. And because it will stay out of sight, there's no need for the potentially pricey work of restoring it to top shape.

Clothing-scrap mats

Don't banish old fabrics to the landfill. Instead, cut them into strips and learn the simple art of

rag-rug making, or weaving the strips into a snug lattice. Creating these unique floor features will add a cozy, eclectic touch to any room—plus, they will feel soft underfoot and can be customized by color to match any decorative scheme.

Electrical cord macramé

If you're still feeling artistic, try reinventing old, unused electrical cords as unique macramé creations. Unlike traditional twine, these crafts will offer a modern, industrial twist to your spaces as future plant hangers, wall art, or sturdy baskets. Cut the ends off thin, flexible cords (think old phone chargers and USB

connectors), follow a macramé knotting tutorial, then add the sleek art piece to any space.

Plastic bottle planters

Waste products like soda bottles, milk jugs, and shampoo containers can become charming, green-friendly homes for your herbs or small houseplants. Carefully cut washed-out ones in half, add drainage holes at the bottom, then finish them with paint. Whether you hang your new planters, stand them on windowsills, or nuzzle them onto a bookshelf, they would be perfect for nurturing your green thumb while also reducing waste.

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 **SHANNER
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Front of Tear Out Card 2



chocolate-hazelnut
STICKY CAKE




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Back of Tear Out Card 2

chocolate-hazelnut
STICKY CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted, plus more butter for greasing the pan
- 1½ c. granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. hazelnut extract
- ½ c. cocoa powder, sifted
- ⅔ c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- Powdered sugar, for serving
- ¼ c. toasted hazelnuts, lightly chopped, for serving

KITCHEN NOTE:
This also pairs well with [the cookbook's] homemade Whipped Cream.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 350°. Grease a 9-inch round cake pan with butter.
- 2/ In a medium bowl, whisk the butter, sugar, eggs, and hazelnut extract until the mixture is fully combined. Whisk in the cocoa powder, flour, and salt.
- 3/ Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and smooth out into an even layer. The batter will be thick.
- 4/ Bake for 20 minutes or until the top has hardened and has started to crack. The center should still be soft and gooey, but it will harden as it cools.
- 5/ Serve with a dusting of powdered sugar and toasted hazelnuts.

MAKES 6 TO 8 SLICES

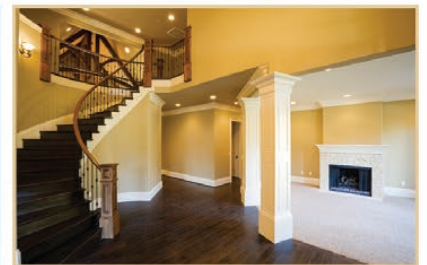
Recipes from *Brunch Season: A Year of Delicious Mornings from the Buttermilk Kitchen* by Suzanne Vizethann. Gibbs Smith, 2025. Photography by Kelly Berry.

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