

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 133



WHERE CLASSIC AND COMFORTING COMBINE

A design project that cultivates
family memories / PAGE 12

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Home Resolutions / 04

The Big Well / 48

ISSUE 133
COVER PRICE \$6.99



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Front of Tear Out Card 1



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Back of Tear Out Card 1



- 2 eggplants, about 2 lb. in total
- 1 tbsp. salt, for salting the eggplant
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, finely diced
- 1–2 red bell peppers, cut into ¾–1¼ in. dice
- 15½ oz. tinned peeled tomatoes
- 2–3 basil stalks

1. Cut the eggplant into 1¼–1½ in. chunks. Place in a large bowl and toss with the salt, rubbing it into the eggplant pieces with your fingertips. Set aside on a wire rack to drain for about 45 minutes. Rinse under running water and pat dry.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium–low heat. Saute the onion with a good pinch of salt for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic. After a minute or two, when fragrant, add the eggplant and bell pepper to heat through.
3. Add the tomatoes, breaking any larger ones into smaller pieces with a wooden spoon. Rinse the tomato tin with a few tbsp. of water and add that to the frying pan as well, along with the basil stalks.
4. Once everything is bubbling away, reduce the heat and put the lid on. Simmer for about 45 minutes, adding a splash more water if needed, or until the eggplant is cooked through but not totally collapsed. Taste for salt, especially if you omitted salting the eggplant pieces earlier; if you did salt the eggplant, you may not need any extra salt.
5. Remove the basil stalks and serve warm. Any leftovers will keep in a ceramic or glass lidded container in the fridge for up to 1 week.

SERVES 6–8 AS A SIDE

Recipes from *At Nonna's Table* by Paola Bacchia, published by Smith Street Books, 2024.



AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Bill and Judy,

Comfort is a universally sought-after feeling, whether it's found in a warm cup of cocoa or within layers of clothing on a cold winter day. This issue of American Lifestyle provides various nods to such contentment, including an interview with a designer who maximized a house for coziness, recipes that are perfect for the season, and an inside look at a coffee company that's fired up about flavor and philanthropy.

There's no place like home, especially during chillier months. You'll find inspiration for yours within the enclosed design article, in which a Virginia-based expert reveals how he made a couple's space feel both comfortable for their family and inviting to anyone walking through the front door.

Who doesn't love the welcoming embrace of a hearty dish on a cold winter's night? And one cuisine that fills this need perfectly is Italian. The family recipes in this issue, including ones for oven-roasted chicken and spinach and polenta soup, are sure to warm your body and put a smile on your face.

Finally, millions of Americans start their days with a nice cup of coffee in the morning. But even if you don't, you'll enjoy reading about Fire Department Coffee, which not only brews up amazing flavors but also gives back to first responders and fire departments across the country.

Where will you find comfort, and how will you make others feel equally cozy? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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Designed and printed in the USA.



THE WONDER OF WORD ORIGINS

Written by **Matthew Brady**
Illustration by **Getty Images**

It's estimated that we speak around 16,000 words a day, but have you ever thought about where they came from? Etymology shows that language has an amusing if not downright laugh-inducing sense of humor at times. Here are just a few examples of curious word origins.

Dude

This is a word that has certainly done a 180-degree turn: in the 1880s, instead of referring to a laid-back man, the 1880s, it described one overconcerned with his appearance.

Freelance

Credited to Sir Walter Scott's 1819 novel *Ivanhoe*, this was a name for a warrior who fought for whoever was the highest bidder (presumably using whatever free lance was available for battle).

Genius

In fourteenth-century Rome, this moniker belonged to a person's guardian spirit—a force that watched over them from birth and guided them through life.

Muscle

Musculus, the Latin word muscle comes from, literally means "little mouse," which is fitting since this tissue was thought to look like the creature moving under the skin.

Nice

Whether you look at the Latin or French origin of this word, it was certainly once intended as a slur. Among its plethora of earlier meanings: foolish, careless, clumsy, ignorant, and weak.

In contrast, "bully" began as a synonym for "sweetheart."

Nightmare

Based on fourteenth-century German and Slavic superstitions, the "night mare" was

a malevolent female spirit who caused suffocation and bad dreams during slumber.

Sahara

This name comes from the Arabic word for desert, so if you say "Sahara desert," you're literally saying "Desert desert."

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is known as a biting form of humor for a reason: one translation of its Greek origin word, *sarkazein*, is to bite or strip off flesh as an animal would.

Silly

If you were silly in the 1200s, when this term first started being used, you were likely considered to be happy or innocent, which doesn't sound very foolish.

RESOLUTIONS FOR A SAFER *and happier home*

Written by **Lauren Kim** / Photography by **Getty Images**

The new year can offer many new beginnings and opportunities, so why not focus some of that positive energy on your home? By resolving to give it some extra TLC over the next few months, you can create a much more pleasant living environment, helping to foster a sense of tranquility in your everyday life.

Declutter your spaces

Clutter can zap a good mood just as easily as it can attract dust, so make limiting yours a priority.

To help the task seem less daunting, break it into small pieces, such as by spending ten minutes a day tidying your spaces. You could use bins to corral your belongings as you work, perhaps designating separate ones for items to keep and others to get rid of, allowing you to speed up the cleanup process. As weeks pass, you'll likely see your results grow, and your spaces will look better for it. Give some of your clutter away to charity, and you'll also benefit from contributing to a good cause.

Secure your home

Your home is your castle, a place where you can relax, create memories, and recharge. But you don't need to fortify yours with a moat to make it more secure—there are several easy and relatively inexpensive tactics you can employ instead. For example, upgrading to a video doorbell would help you keep an eye on your visitors and packages, while putting up some motion-sensor exterior lights would likely deter any potential intruders. You could also add an extra layer of protection with a smart security system, such as one from SimpliSafe or Vivint, which offers security measures like cameras, a siren, additional sensors, and 24/7 professional monitoring.

Create a safe haven

Once you've taken steps to protect your home from exterior threats, turn your attention to safeguarding it from possible interior ones like house fires. Working smoke alarms can prevent costly damage and, per the National Fire Protection Association, cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 50 percent. So if



you haven't done so already, position one in each bedroom and on each level of your house. Equally dangerous is carbon monoxide, a gas you can't see or smell, making it important to place a carbon monoxide detector close to your main living spaces and bedrooms as well. Also test your home for radon, an odorless and colorless gas that's been linked to lung cancer, particularly if you have a concrete slab or a basement.

Make a cleaning plan

Once you've upgraded the safety of your home and have removed clutter, you can make it sparkle, too, by drawing up a cleaning schedule. Follow it faithfully, and your regular chores may eventually become second nature, making them seem much less taxing. For example, consider dusting on Mondays, mopping or vacuuming the floors on Wednesdays, scrubbing the bathroom on Thursdays, and straightening up your kitchen nightly after dinner. Use time-saving helpers like robotic vacuums and cordless scrub brushes to give yourself a few extra minutes of relaxation at the end of the day—a just reward for all you've accomplished.





ART SOUL

FOR THE

Interview with **Martha Spak**
 Written by **Andre Rios**
 Photography courtesy of **Martha Spak**

Celebrated visual artist **Martha Spak** shares the personal take on art therapy behind her paintings and sculptures, revealing the transformative power of art on the mind.

Tell us about your art background:

I worked in journalism for years and began painting as my family grew—both my grandmothers painted, and their love for their craft had always resonated with me. I have been creating art for over twenty-five years now and exhibit regularly throughout the country. I love the creative process.

I'm a self-taught artist, and I create paintings and sculptures to convey an uplifting feel. I'm mostly known for my ethereal landscape paintings, but I've recently shifted to doing more abstract work, including a collection of geometric abstracts in harmonious colors.

What inspires your art?

The desire to capture a positive feeling. I create art without an overt political statement or message that brings people down; I just want to lift people up and broaden their perspective. I like to think my art has a calming, nonconfrontational energy.

What is your artmaking process?

It begins with color and composition—I want to make each color sing. I plan my palette in harmonious hues, lay out acrylic paints, and get the paint on the canvas as





“ I plan my palette in harmonious hues, lay out acrylic paints, and get the paint on the canvas as quickly as possible. I then start honing the composition by strengthening the direction of the light and, oftentimes, refining the edges with a dry brush.

quickly as possible. I then start honing the composition by strengthening the direction of the light and, oftentimes, refining the edges with a dry brush. If I need to narrow the focal point, I will add a hard element, such as diagonal lines or horizon lines in a heavier paint. Toward the end, I assess my work to make final applications, perhaps adding a little spark to give it a breath of fresh air: a touch of color like turquoise, for instance.

Would you discuss art's therapeutical value?

A viewer should be able to stand in front of a work of art and identify something within it that speaks to them, such as a specific color, a familiar landscape scene, or anything else that will make them really feel at ease—and that takeaway should resonate with them long after they leave the art. For example, I'll incorporate color combinations that symbolize aspects of the seasons, a lighted path that guides the eye, or a skyscape that is bright and filled with light. I can still recall artwork from years ago that gave me an uplifting feeling; if my art can have such an impact, I think it'll have done its job.

I've carried this idea of color as a therapeutical concept into many health-care settings. About ten years ago, I had an exhibition at the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



Afterward, I came back home to Maryland and thought about how wonderful it was to bring light into those spaces and impact that audience. I also exhibited in the DC area at Sibley Memorial Hospital and at the National Institutes of Health. This colorful abstract collection was then exhibited at the University of Michigan Medical Center and at the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University.

Art can impact mental health and enhance health-care settings, but anybody could incorporate color or my visuals into their home to enjoy daily. Selections of my work are licensed and available through various retailers, including

Pottery Barn, Williams-Sonoma Home, and Perigold.

What's next for your career?

I am currently doing several site-specific projects, tailoring my art to fit seamlessly in public, private, and corporate settings. I'm also working on new surface designs for wall coverings, floors, fabric, and other merchandise. Whatever comes next, I hope to continue infusing positivity, joy, and harmony into everyday surroundings.

For more info, visit marthaspak.com and [@marthaspak](https://www.instagram.com/marthaspak)



“ Art can impact mental health and enhance health-care settings, but anybody could incorporate color or my visuals into their home to enjoy daily.

WHERE CLASSIC AND COMFORTING *combine*

Interview with **DuVäl Reynolds**
Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography by **MW Concepts**



Interior designer **DuVäl Reynolds** explains how he turned a house into a home for a family in Alexandria, Virginia.

How did your design journey begin?

I actually went to college for neurology but left school and worked in New York for a bit before moving to the DC area. I got a job at the design firm California Closets, where I discovered that I had much more of a knack and passion for design than I had realized. So, while holding a full-time job, I went back to school full-time at night to get my bachelor's degree in interior design. I opened my own firm in 2017.





Many of your clients are attorneys. How did that happen?

My firm is in the DC metro area, so it was kind of inevitable, but they also keep finding us. On our website, we talk about our process, not how the final results look, which attorneys appreciate. I also think somewhat like an attorney—I ask a thousand questions, am very detailed and streamlined about everything, and anticipate well. That’s appealing to clients, especially attorneys, who are very busy, very hands-off, and do not like having to micromanage to get the job done.

Let’s talk about the Alexandria house, which you dubbed The Meaning of Home. How did it come about?

One of the clients found us on Instagram—funnily enough, neither he nor his wife is an attorney. He said one of the things they liked about our work was that we include before photos on our website for each project, which we do to show clients the work we put in and where we can take their homes.

The primary goal for this project was to combine the couple’s aesthetics. He is very traditional, loves color,

bling, and “wow” factors, and enjoys having fun. She favors a modern farmhouse vibe that also focuses on comfort, especially for their children.

The design is stunning, right from the home’s entrance. Would you explain your ideas for this area?

In the foyer, where the pulse of the home starts, our first goal was to create effect. It needed to be high impact but also classic enough that it didn’t need to be redone in a few years. A black-and-white checkered

floor achieved just that. In addition, the stair runner is wool, which is durable yet comfortable, softens the space, and is welcoming. For the chandelier, I obviously wanted it to be impressive but gave the piece a silhouette so it wasn’t distracting.

In fact, there’s never really a star or focal point in any room I design; every element stands on its own. In this foyer, the floor is impactful, but so are the walls—which are clad with molding and heavy detail work—and, of course, the chandelier. Even the table by the banister, though it has a chaotic floral arrangement, holds its own weight rather than drawing all the attention in the room.

The adjacent office is much darker and more traditional. Tell us about your inspiration for it:

It's the husband's office, so I wanted it to feel like his space. For a masculine touch, we painted the walls a deep blue that was darker than the room's original shade of blue, added molding on every single wall right up to the built-ins, and peppered in leather tones, substantial hardware, and even whiskey glasses—in short, a classic smoking-room vibe. Since he's also an avid reader, I added a Chesterfield sofa for a scholastic touch.

Would you talk about your choice of colors in the home?

We absolutely love playing with color. Every project we do usually has a baseline of three colors that run throughout. In this one, there are mostly shades of greens, blues, and browns. One room is fully blue, while the next has accents of blue. And another room has shades of gray with green or blue touches. I wanted each space to have a major color impact but still thread the hues together in ways that aligned with our original foundational aesthetic.

As an example, the wife wanted an amazing kitchen

because she's in there so often; I leaned into comforting modern-farmhouse colors for her. But there are also a few pieces that bring in a very traditional feel for him, such as the antique-brass handles and knobs. So it was very much a blended kitchen.

Would you explain what wallpaper adds to a project such as this?

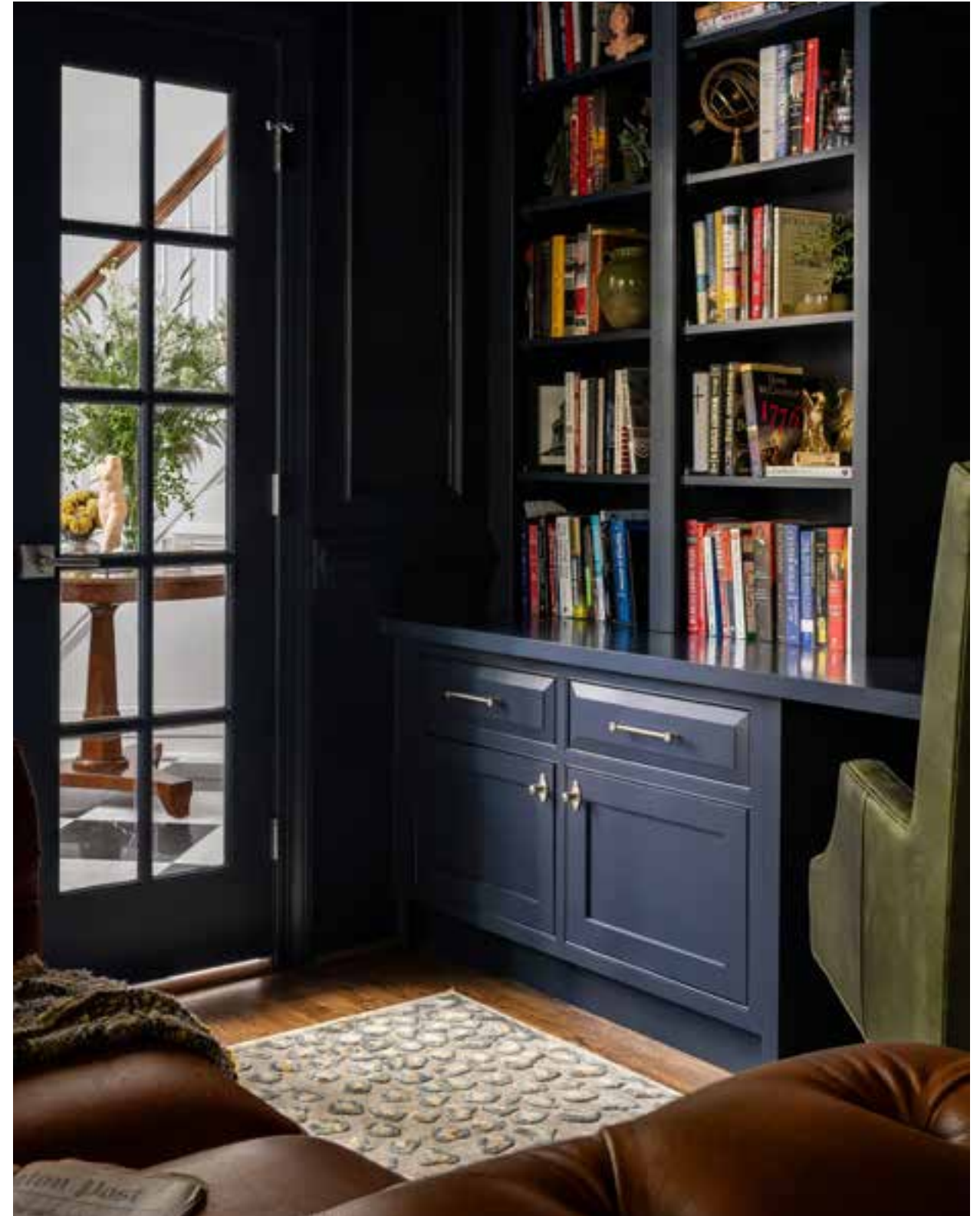
Wallpaper brings a sense of depth and movement that paint cannot. It often creates storylines that spark the imagination, immersing you in the room—you simply cannot get away from it, which I love.

What were some of the most satisfying aspects of this project?

Definitely the dining room. Because it was huge, I decided to shorten it by about four feet, despite the wife's nervousness. She wanted it to be used a lot, though, so I suggested a saloon style that feels relatable and accessible for everyone. I feel like we just nailed this room, probably more than any other one I've ever designed, because there were so many things we were trying to accomplish. Even the last window treatment I found, which features unusual cranes, felt so right.



“I feel like we just nailed [the dining room], probably more than any other one I’ve ever designed, because there were so many things we were trying to accomplish. Even the last window treatment I found, which features unusual cranes, felt so right.”





“I love the family room with its heavy traditional elements like the coffered ceilings, the gray-patterned rug, and the white fireplace we created along with the soft, rounded sofa that brings a sense of family comfort.”

The wife also said she wanted a “girl’s room,” which became the living room. When we presented the pink sofa and flowery wallpaper for the space, the husband wasn’t thrilled, but he trusted us. He then became obsessed with that room! He was shocked at how much of a masculine undertone it had, which we achieved through some of the furniture silhouettes and color profile choices mixed in

with the feminine touches that are blanketed and layered in. I’m happy it worked for both of them.

In addition, I love the family room with its heavy traditional elements like the coffered ceilings, the gray-patterned rug, and the white fireplace we created along with the soft, rounded sofa that brings a sense of family comfort.

**What’s the meaning behind the name
The Meaning of Home?**

I don’t think the clients ever liked their house or felt comfortable in it, but they were adamant about making it a place where they could build memories with their kids. So I was really trying to emphasize how in a finished home, there’s no worry about

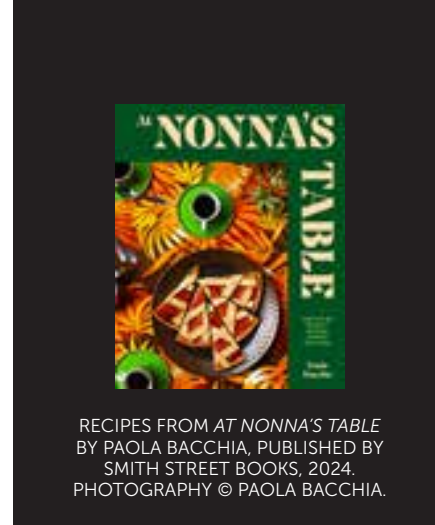
anything needing to be worked on right away—instead, you’re inviting family over and the kids are having sleepovers. This is what the meaning of home is. Home isn’t just about the pretty stuff in it; it’s about the memories that start being made as soon as the project is done and enjoying the beauty of family.

For more info, visit duvalreynolds.com



for the
LOVE
OF
italian

Recipes by **PAOLA BACCHIA**
Photography by **PAOLA BACCHIA**



RECIPES FROM *AT NONNA'S TABLE*
BY PAOLA BACCHIA. PUBLISHED BY
SMITH STREET BOOKS, 2024.
PHOTOGRAPHY © PAOLA BACCHIA.



Get the rest of
the recipes here.

PEPERONATA

with eggplant & tomato

In the past, eggplant was salted before using to remove bitterness—though most eggplants sold by greengrocers these days are not really bitter. That said, I still salt the diced eggplant for this recipe, as I find it is a great way of seasoning the dish. It does take some time, so feel free to omit this step.

This dish makes a main meal for vegetarians, a substantial side dish, and can also be used as a base for a couple of batches of pasta. It can also be halved and used in a risotto for four people.



Serves 6–8
as a side

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 eggplants, about 2 pounds in total | 1–2 red bell peppers, cut into ¾–1¼ inch dice |
| 1 tablespoon salt, for salting the eggplant | 15½ ounces tinned peeled tomatoes |
| 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil | 2–3 basil stalks |
| 1 small white onion, diced | |
| 1 garlic clove, finely diced | |

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Cut the eggplant into 1¼–1½ inch chunks. Place in a large bowl and toss with the salt, rubbing it into the eggplant pieces with your fingertips. Set aside on a wire rack to drain for about 45 minutes. Rinse under running water and pat dry.
- 2/ Warm the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium–low heat. Saute the onion with a good pinch of salt for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic. After a minute or two, when fragrant, add the eggplant and bell pepper to heat through.
- 3/ Add the tomatoes, breaking any larger ones into smaller pieces with a wooden spoon. Rinse the tomato tin with a few tablespoons of water and add that to the frying pan as well, along with the basil stalks.
- 4/ Once everything is bubbling away, reduce the heat and put the lid on. Simmer for about 45 minutes, adding a splash more water if needed, or until the eggplant is cooked through but not totally collapsed. Taste for salt, especially if you omitted salting the eggplant pieces earlier; if you did salt the eggplant, you may not need any extra salt.
- 5/ Remove the basil stalks and serve warm. Any leftovers will keep in a ceramic or glass lidded container in the fridge for up to 1 week.



cinnamon AMARETTI

I have taken the liberty of adding cinnamon to my mother's recipe. It gives these soft, chewy amaretti an additional warmth, which I just love. When I have egg whites left over from making custard, I often make a double batch and pop most of them in a sealed bag in the freezer. I take one or two out of the freezer, and after about 15 minutes at room temperature they are ready to be dunked in my mid-morning coffee.



Makes
about 18



Preheat the
oven to 320°F
fan-forced

INGREDIENTS

2 large egg whites	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of fine sea salt	½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
7 ounces almond flour	Flaked, whole or blanched almonds, for decorating
¾ cup caster (superfine) sugar	

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 320°F fan-forced. Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
- 2/ Using a hand whisk, beat the egg whites in a bowl with the salt until they just turn white and are foaming.
- 3/ Place the almond flour, sugar and cinnamon in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Carefully fold through the vanilla extract and beaten egg whites.
- 4/ Shape the dough into balls about the size of a large walnut. (If the dough is a bit too soft to roll, add a little more almond flour, or even some plain/all-purpose flour.)
- 5/ Place the dough balls on the baking tray, spaced about 1½ inches apart. Flatten the top slightly with your thumb and decorate with almonds.
- 6/ Bake for 20–22 minutes, until lightly golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.
- 7/ The amaretti will keep in a sealed container in the pantry for up to 1 week, or can be frozen for at least 1 month.



OVEN-ROASTED CHICKEN THIGHS

with mustard & leeks

We always had dijon mustard in the fridge, mainly to eat with boiled meats, pork sausages or ham. Mamma also paired it with chicken, garlic and wine in a dish she cooked in the electric frying pan. I used to think there was cream in this dish, as the sauce that was spooned over the chicken was so creamy. The leeks are my addition, and make an ideal bed for the chicken thighs as they braise in the pan juices. This dish is lovely with mashed or pan-cooked potatoes, polenta or even bread—anything that will catch the lovely sauce.



Serves 6



Preheat the oven to 320°F fan-forced

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 large leeks | 2 heaped tablespoons dijon mustard |
| 6 chicken thighs, skin on and bone in | 1 teaspoon dried thyme |
| 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil | 7 fluid ounces good-quality chicken stock |
| 1/3 cup white wine or dry white vermouth | A squeeze of lemon juice |
| 1 garlic clove, finely chopped | |
| 1/2 ounce butter | |

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 320°F fan-forced.
- 2/ Finely slice the white and pale green stem of the leeks, discarding the roots and tough darker green leaves. Soak the leek slices in a large bowl of water, massaging them briefly with your fingers to dislodge any dirt stuck in the layers. Drain and set aside.
- 3/ Wash the chicken thighs and pat dry with paper towel. Scatter on salt and freshly cracked black pepper.
- 4/ In a frying pan large enough to fit all the chicken in a single layer, warm the olive oil over medium-high heat. Place the chicken in the pan, skin side down. Fry for about 5 minutes, until the skin is golden. Carefully flip the chicken over and fry the other side for about 4 minutes, until it browns. Increase the heat, pour in the wine and allow to partially evaporate for a few minutes. Leaving the juices in the pan, lift out the chicken pieces and transfer to a large baking dish.
- 5/ Reduce the stovetop heat to medium. Add the leek slices, garlic and butter to the pan. Stir in the mustard and thyme, then pour in the stock and season with salt and pepper. Braise the leek, uncovered, for about 15 minutes, stirring now and then.
- 6/ Pour the saucy leeks over and around the chicken. Cover with a lid or foil. Transfer to the oven and bake for 45 minutes.
- 7/ Remove the lid or foil and bake for a further 20 minutes, or until the chicken is nicely roasted and cooked through.
- 8/ Allow to rest for a few minutes before serving with a squeeze of lemon.



SPINACH & polenta soup

The recipe for spinach and polenta soup is from Friuli–Venezia Giulia, the region in north-east Italy where Mamma’s family moved after they left the Veneto. It is simple but surprisingly hearty. The dish can be enhanced by crumbling in a couple of pork sausages—or even some finely chopped pancetta—at the start, and/or replacing the vegetable stock with a homemade meat stock. The addition of parmesan is not traditional, but adds a lovely creamy and salty edge, and is my preferred way to enjoy this thick, rustic soup.



Serves
6–8

INGREDIENTS

2 large bunches of English spinach,
about 1 pound 12 ounces in total
1½ ounces butter
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed or
finely chopped

54 fl. oz. warm homemade vegetable
stock or 54 fl. oz. boiling water plus a
good-quality stock (bouillon) cube
4½ ounces coarse polenta (not instant)
2–3 handfuls of grated parmesan

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/** Wash the spinach several times in plenty of water until it drains clean. Remove the roots and any damaged leaves. Place a large saucepan over medium–high heat. Add the spinach, in batches if needed, and allow to wilt, using tongs to help push the leaves down. Once wilted, remove from the heat. Drain the spinach, reserving all the liquid that drains from the pan for your stock. Chop the leaves and set aside.
- 2/** Warm the butter and olive oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over medium–low heat. When the butter has melted, add the garlic and cook for a few minutes, until fragrant. (If using sausages or pancetta, add it here and allow to start to colour slightly.)
- 3/** Stir in the drained spinach, coating it with the butter and oil. Pour in the stock and season with salt to taste. Slowly allow the mixture to come to the boil. Shower in the polenta, stirring well with a large wooden spoon so the polenta doesn’t form lumps. The mixture should simmer slowly, the polenta grains absorbing much of the stock and thickening the contents of your pan. You will need to stir frequently, not all the time, but every couple of minutes to make sure it cooks evenly and doesn’t catch on the base of the pan.
- 4/** Simmer for about 30 minutes, or until the polenta grains soften and the mixture is as thick as you would like it to be—remembering that it will continue to cook and thicken when you take it off the heat.
- 5/** Stir in the parmesan, or pass it around at the table. Serve immediately.

SUN-KISSED SERENITY

IN PALM SPRINGS

Written by **Allison Gomes**
Photos courtesy of **Visit Greater Palm Springs**

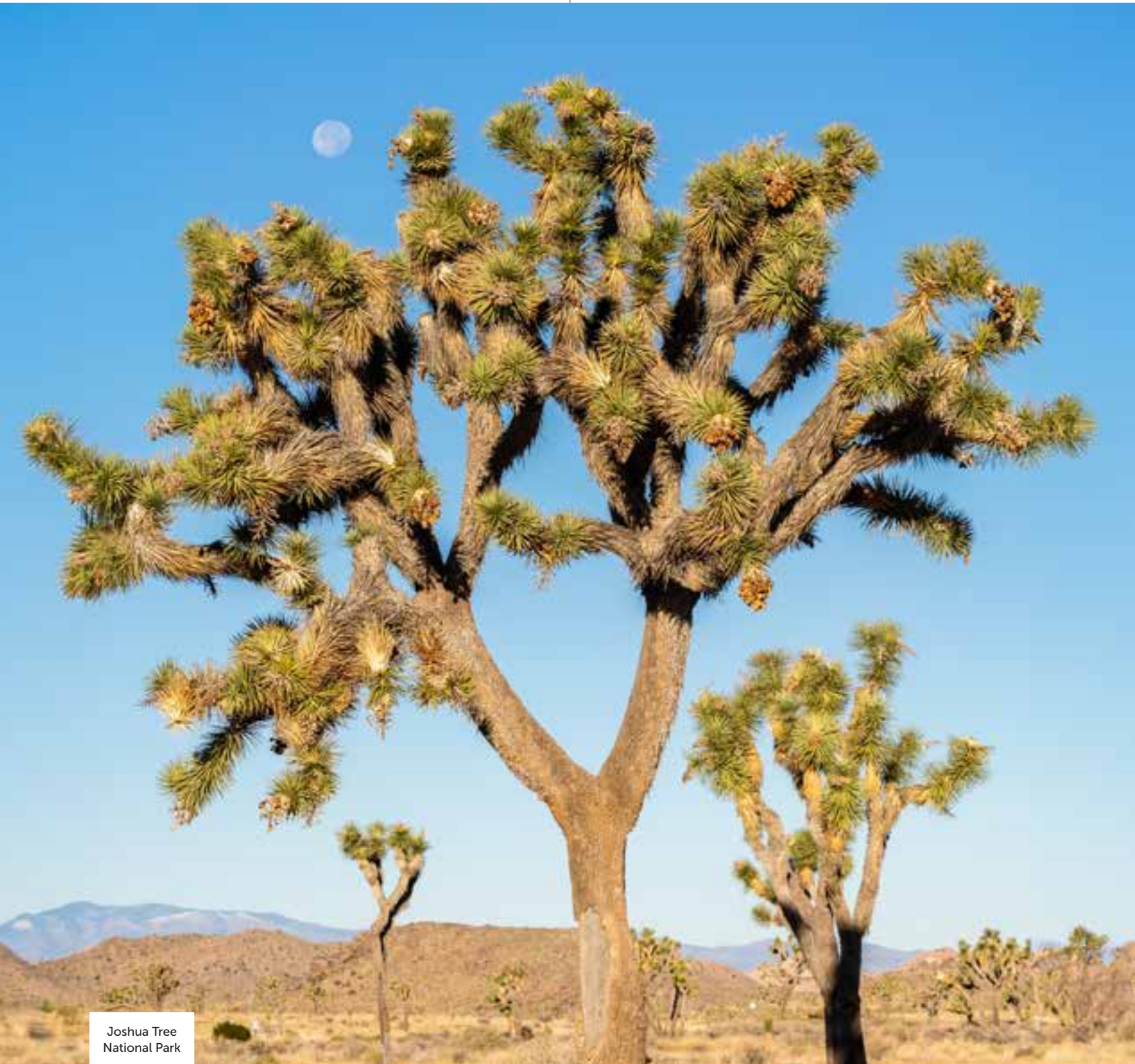
Palm Springs, California, conjures images of poolside glamour, Hollywood stars, and a bygone era. But this city is more than just its stereotypes. Whether you're an adventurer eager to explore natural beauty, an architecture enthusiast, or simply looking for a relaxing escape, it has a little something for everyone.

AN OUTDOOR OASIS

Palm Springs isn't just about lounging by the pool—although there's certainly plenty of that to be done. The surrounding Coachella Valley is a diverse landscape of mountains, canyons, and desert ecosystems waiting to be explored. For breathtaking panoramic views of the area, you'll want to ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, which transports riders through Mount San Jacinto State Park. It ascends to a height of 8,516 feet, where you then have the chance to hike through pine forests, explore

A view from the
Palm Springs
Aerial Tramway





Joshua Tree National Park

mountain meadows, or simply soak in the stunning desert vista. With over fifty miles of trails to choose from, there's bound to be an option that's perfect for you.

The area is home to numerous other outdoor activities, offering unique adventures around every corner. Put on your hiking boots and visit Tahquitz Canyon, which boasts a sixty-foot waterfall, rock art, ancient irrigation systems, and much more. There's also a variety of world-class golf courses that feature both challenging plays and stunning views. Hit the links at Escena Golf Club, a Nicklaus Design champion course that's backdropped by the San Jacinto Mountains.

Just forty miles away lies Joshua Tree National Park, a must-visit for nature lovers. Hike among the spiny trees the park is named for, climb the iconic rocks, and marvel at the star-studded night sky. For a more adventurous experience, you could even try rock climbing or horseback riding through the park. As a bonus, spring is considered an extra-special time to visit because of the often spectacular wildflower blooms that typically begin to blanket Joshua Tree in January.

ART, AIRPLANES, AND ANIMALS

The city offers a wide array of museums, galleries, and other experiences you're not going to want to miss. For instance, the Palm Springs Art Museum is a world-renowned institution that houses an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art, including works by Andy Warhol and Alexander Calder.

And, although it's not affiliated with the museum, the twenty-six-foot-tall statue of Marilyn Monroe at the entrance is bound to catch your attention. The statue, titled *Forever Marilyn*, has bounced around the country and even to Australia before finding its permanent residence in the city in 2021.

If you're more of a history buff, consider spending a few hours exploring the Palm Springs Air Museum. Established in 1996, it contains an extensive collection of aircraft from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The museum even gives visitors the chance to purchase a flight over the Coachella Valley in one of its fully restored World War II warbirds. Or get up close to nature at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, which introduces you to some of the plants

The statue, titled *Forever Marilyn*, has bounced around the country and even to Australia before finding its permanent residence in the city in 2021.



Forever Marilyn



and animals that call the desert home. The institute manages over 1,200 acres of land, eighty of which are developed to allow visitors to explore hundreds of exhibits featuring rhinos, desert bighorn sheep, mountain lions, and more. The other 1,120 acres remain as preserved and undisturbed portions of the Sonoran Desert.

A MIDCENTURY MARVEL

Palm Springs' golden age arrived in the mid-twentieth century, fueled by Hollywood's elite seeking a desert getaway. To accommodate the influx of people, architects like Richard Neutra, Hugh Kaptur, and Albert Fray got to work designing midcentury-modern homes that fit with the environment and leisurely lifestyle. The architectural style, which came to be known as "desert modernism," was characterized by clean lines, open floor plans, and a seamless blend between indoor and outdoor living.

Because the area has the largest amount of preserved midcentury-modern architecture, it's no wonder people often flock to get a closer look at this ever-popular design style. In fact, Modernism Week, which is held annually in both February and October, is



Living Desert
Zoo and Gardens



Palm Springs
Art Museum



Midcentury-modern
house in Palm Springs

Get up close to nature at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, which introduces you to some of the plants and animals that call the desert home.

a festival that features tours of private homes, lectures by renowned architects, and special events that celebrate all things midcentury modern. 2025 marks the twentieth anniversary of the event, making it the ultimate pilgrimage for architecture enthusiasts.

Even if you don't make it here for Modernism Week, a visit to Palm Springs isn't complete without immersing yourself in this unique architectural legacy. Palm Springs Art Museum's Architecture and Design Center offers a fascinating glimpse into the movement's history through its rotating exhibitions; to get the most in-depth information, take its guided tour. Or experience the designs firsthand by doing a self-guided bike tour of Palm Springs neighborhoods to see them up close. Make sure to stop by the eye-catching Tramway Gas Station, which now serves as the city's welcome center, the whimsical Kaufmann Residence, and the sleek Musicland Hotel, each of which stands as a testament to the midcentury-modern era.

PLANNING YOUR GETAWAY

While Palm Springs is a year-round destination, the early months of the year present an ideal opportunity to visit simply because of the weather. January through April generally reach highs between 70 and 80 degrees, with May only just starting to push into the 90s. The consistently sunny days and cooler nights make it a great time to explore all the area has to offer.

The city has a wide range of accommodation options to suit every taste and budget, from chic hotels to

retro motels. Whether you're seeking an indulgent resort experience or a charming midcentury-mod retreat, Palm Springs has the perfect spot for you. Luxury resorts like the Parker Palm Springs and the Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage pamper guests with world-class amenities, sprawling pools, and impeccable service while boasting a unique old-Hollywood experience and stunning desert views.

For a taste of the renowned Palm Springs living, consider booking a stay at one of the many hotels unique to the area. The Monkey Tree, for instance, is the perfect space to relax and experience the area's classic style. Designed by architect Albert Fray, the colorful adults-only hotel is a one-of-a-kind spot with sixteen distinct rooms to choose from. Meanwhile, the vibrant Saguaro, where each room includes a private balcony or patio with views of the mountains, city lights, or the hotel's pool, garden, or courtyard, is a great option for a family-friendly escape. It has a quintessential midcentury-modern aesthetic with vibrant buildings, indoor-outdoor living, and picture-worthy spots around every corner. No matter your chosen accommodation, you're guaranteed to find a comfortable and stylish base from which to explore all that makes Palm Springs so special.

Palm Springs possesses a unique blend of relaxation, adventure, and cultural exploration you won't find anywhere else. So pack your sunglasses and sense of adventure, and get ready to discover the magic of this timeless California oasis.

For more info, visit visitpalm Springs.com



COFFEE for a Cause

Interview with **Jason Patton**
Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photos courtesy of **Fire Department Coffee**



Jason Patton, vice president of Fire Department Coffee and star of the *Fire Department Chronicles* video series, discusses his company's passion for delicious, handcrafted coffee and supporting first responders.

How did Fire Department Coffee come about?

Luke Schneider, our CEO, was a shipboard firefighter in the navy, where he fell in love with coffee. After his service ended, he met his future wife, Kate, at a café, and they bonded over the drink. They began experimenting with roasting and started Fire Department Coffee in Rockford, Illinois, in 2016.

What kinds of coffee do you offer?

We have a host of light, medium, and dark roasts and espressos as well as a spirit-infused line that's incredibly popular. We also offer ready-to-drink and single-serve options. Plus, each month, subscribers to our Coffee of the Month Club get to try different single-origin blends from Africa, India, or South America; through the club, we give back a portion of sales to the farmers in those areas.

Tell us about how your company helps firefighters:

Luke and I, being in fire service, know what happens when one of our own is injured, gets sick, or has a mental health issue—a lot of times, there's no one there to help them pay bills as they recover. To support them, we started the Fire Department Coffee Charitable Foundation. Through it, we



give a portion of the proceeds from Fire Department Coffee to organizations that specifically collect and distribute funds for such situations.

As far as fire departments, our Fire Department Shirt Club and Fire Department Coffee Club subscriptions allow us to support individual FDs by selling products with their customized branding. We go to local fire departments, find something that represents them well, create their shirts and coffees, and return a percentage of the sales directly to them. For example, we were able to send \$14,000 to a fire department in Hawaii to help those who lost their homes during the 2023 Maui fires.

You sell FDC gear, stickers, and other merchandise as well. What was the impetus for it?

In addition to making high-quality coffee products for an affordable price, we wanted to be a lifestyle brand that people could emotionally connect with; that's also why we've leaned so much into social media videos. We want people to wear our gear and feel good about it because of what it represents.

What's the inspiration behind those videos? How do you balance humor with purpose?

In 2015, I created *Fire Department Chronicles* as a way to share a firefighter's life through humor. After I began working here, we started doing similar videos as a team and quickly realized that emotional connections to brands are what really drive them—there's a difference between somebody being *aware* of your brand and supporting it



relentlessly. But we wanted to provide something more to people: daily humor. So we created the FDC videos, hoping to help people laugh for a few minutes.

They've been monstrously successful. Firefighters, paramedics, and first responders immediately related to them, of course, but so many others did as well. And, as you said, they're not just for laughs. There's a small piece of educational information behind each one.



“As far as fire departments, our Fire Department Shirt Club and Fire Department Coffee Club subscriptions allow us to support individual FDs by selling products with their customized branding. We go to local fire departments, find something that represents them well, create their shirts and coffees, and return a percentage of the sales directly to them.”



Fire Department Coffee is veteran owned and made in America. What does that mean to the company?

Many veterans have it difficult. They spend long periods of time serving our country and often reenter society with few opportunities to excel outside of being firefighters or police officers. It was important,

especially to Luke, to support those who give up so much for our country. That's why we created our Shellback Espresso: as an homage to anyone who becomes a shellback in the navy.

Made in the USA is extremely important to us too. It means forgoing the cheaper way of manufacturing overseas to not only provide top-notch

products but also employ people in places like Rockford, South Carolina, and Texas.

How has the company's foray into retail gone?

We opened a small local storefront at the end of 2023 so people could visit us and buy products. But getting into Walmart in 2022 was a whole different beast. By June of



2023, we were in 1,000 stores, and last year we were in 10,000. We expect to be in 15,000 stores by the end of 2025.

What has the response been to your coffee and mission?

Overwhelmingly positive. The number one reason people purchase our coffee is that it tastes incredible. We could

come out with the coolest videos and have the best giveback mission, but if the coffee doesn't taste amazing, no one's going to buy it again. That's why we're so passionate about it.

And, as mentioned earlier, people love the videos simply because they brighten their days and teach them something. That's such a cool thing because

education and comedy should be synonymous, especially since humor helps us retain information better. So people will remember not only what they learned but also that by supporting us, they're helping to give back to those who put their lives and health on the line every day.


For more info, visit firedeptcoffee.com



RETHINKING

Your Resolutions

Written by **Allison Gomes**
Photography by **Getty Images**



This year, instead of opting for a variety of different intentions, pick a single theme, such as “Year of Adventure.” This one idea can then serve as the guiding light for all your actions throughout the coming months.

AT THE FLIP OF THE CALENDAR, you likely set high hopes for the year, establishing various milestones you wanted to reach. But as you settle into your routine and your schedule fills up, you may already be finding it harder and harder to keep up with your resolutions. Instead of becoming discouraged, however, it might be time to try some alternative approaches to traditional goal setting. With a change of mindset and strategy, your good intentions may just become a little less daunting and a little more achievable.

Establish a theme

Resolutions are all about identifying and committing to ways you can improve your life. Maybe you want to hit 10,000 steps each day and put 5 percent more toward your retirement savings than you did in 2024. With such wide-ranging goals, you may wind up feeling pulled in too many different directions, quickly becoming overwhelmed by all the things you want to do.

This year, instead of opting for a variety of different intentions, pick a single theme, such as “Year of Adventure.” This one idea can then serve as the guiding light for all your actions throughout the



Focusing on systems instead of outcomes means prioritizing the process over the end result, which can ultimately lead to more sustainable lifestyle changes and better habits.

coming months. Following the example of adventure, you might aim to save more each month for a dream trip, learn a new activity that may have otherwise seemed too daunting, or even start tackling your bucket list. By having one specific theme, you may feel more excited about what's ahead rather than stressed over trying to juggle too many specific and unrelated goals.

Try system setting

One big problem with goals is that once they're reached, people often just move on to something else. For instance, say you set a goal to lose ten pounds. To hit it, you go to the gym, eat a little healthier, and watch the number on the scale drop to your target weight. At that point, though, you may simply stop all the positive behaviors you've picked

up because they no longer have a purpose. That's where the idea of system setting comes into play. Focusing on systems instead of outcomes means prioritizing the process over the end result, which can ultimately lead to more sustainable lifestyle changes and better habits.

As an example, consider the behaviors of athletes. They all want to win each game or match. However, some aim to do so simply by preparing for the individual game itself, while others focus on preparing themselves for the challenge. So where one player may only do what their coach instructs them to every day, another may build their own regimen on top of that for studying and strategizing the game plan, conducting extra workouts, and fine-tuning their skills. Who do you think is more likely to succeed? Such habitual systems are what can help you to make real progress toward your aspirations and inspire greater changes in your day-to-day life.

Set anti-goals

"Anti-goals" offer a refreshing twist to the conventional notion of resolutions, centering on what you want to avoid versus

what you want to achieve. For instance, if you intend to spend less time scrolling on your phone, a helpful anti-goal might be to set a time limit on certain sites and apps. This strategy works backward, starting with a specific aspect of your life you don't like, to help you establish rules for preventing a worst-case scenario, such as spending five hours a day on social media. By establishing anti-goals, you can foster a better understanding of what's impeding your progress and growth and become more empowered to confront potential obstacles head-on.

This year, ditch the usual rigid resolutions and embrace these alternative strategies. Trying a new approach may allow you to transcend the limitations you've faced in the past and forge a path toward more sustainable progress and greater success.

THE DEPTHS OF PERSEVERANCE

Are you craving a unique adventure? Then head to Greensburg, Kansas, the site of the Big Well Museum. Here you'll find the United States' largest hand-dug well and an amazing testament to human fortitude.

Written by **Lauren Kim** / Photography courtesy of **Big Well Museum**

THE CITY, LOCATED APPROXIMATELY

110 miles west of Wichita, was hit by a 1.7-mile-wide tornado eighteen years ago. The twister's nearly 200 mph winds flattened most of the town, but miraculously, the midwestern city's well, which measures 32 feet wide and 109 feet deep, survived. Today, standing over the nineteenth-century well is a museum chronicling both its and Greensburg's incredible comeback.

Journey down the well's sunlit spiral staircase to the cool depths below. After making your way back up top, take in exhibits that showcase the city's history and rebirth, including a clock stopped at the exact time the disaster struck. Then enjoy bird's-eye views of the rebuilt city from the crow's nest above.

Yet another wonder here is the half-ton Space Wanderer, the world's second-largest pallasite meteorite. Composed of sparkly olivine crystals and metal, it was discovered in a nearby field by a farmer more than seventy-five years ago. You can also learn about Greensburg's many green initiatives—the community is now sustainability focused, boasting LED streetlights, electricity generated solely by wind power, and several LEED-certified public buildings, including its city hall, K-12 school, and county hospital. No matter what draws you to this little midwestern town and its big well, though, you're sure to enjoy an experience like no other.

For more info, visit bigwell.org



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Front of Tear Out Card 2



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RE/MAX

Back of Tear Out Card 2



- 2 large egg whites
- Pinch of fine sea salt
- 7 oz. almond flour
- ¾ c. caster (superfine) sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- Flaked, whole or blanched almonds, for decorating

1. Preheat the oven to 320°F fan-forced. Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
2. Using a hand whisk, beat the egg whites in a bowl with the salt until they just turn white and are foaming.
3. Place the almond flour, sugar and cinnamon in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Carefully fold through the vanilla extract and beaten egg whites.
4. Shape the dough into balls about the size of a large walnut. (If the dough is a bit too soft to roll, add a little more almond flour, or even some plain/all-purpose flour.)
5. Place the dough balls on the baking tray, spaced about 1½ in. apart. Flatten the top slightly with your thumb and decorate with almonds.
6. Bake for 20–22 minutes, until lightly golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.
7. The amaretti will keep in a sealed container in the pantry for up to 1 week, or can be frozen for at least 1 month.

MAKES ABOUT 18

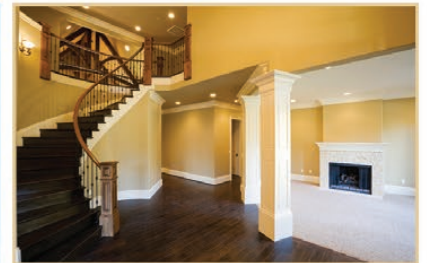
Recipes from *At Nonna's Table* by Paola Bacchia, published by Smith Street Books, 2024.

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