

Celebrate HOME

WINTER 2013

MAGAZINE



THE ARTIST
Gladys Roldan-de-Moras

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My name is Barbara and I have an addiction... to lamps.

I never saw my penchant for lamps as an addiction or even an obsession, but after purchasing my umpteenth lamp to get the right feel in our redecorated den, I finally can say I *might* be addicted to lamps.

It started innocuously when I moved into my first apartment in New York City. The place was small, old, and the fluorescent light in the kitchen left me feeling distant from my new surroundings. Not only was the feeling cold, there wasn't a hint of home. My first purchase was a small ginger jar lamp with blue, yellow and white brushes of color from Conan's in Manhattan. I set it on the counter between the galley kitchen and the eating area and together with a 75-watt bulb, it glowed with warmth. With a push of the switch, I had the beginnings of a home.

Years later and early in our marriage, Bill noticed that lamps would appear in various places around the house. And, the lamps would change often. He commented lightheartedly and I shrugged my shoulders, not knowing how to explain it. Especially in the dark, long days of winter, I covet my lamps. Although I appreciate the architecture in grand homes, for my personal space I'm not a fan of high ceilings and huge spaces. I feel at sea. I crave lower ceilings and nooks and crannies. Lamps bring the light closer to me and make me feel cozy, even secure.

Three-way bulbs and dimmer switches are my friends. I'm a sucker in the lamp department or for a friend who is giving a lamp away. I'm the go-to girl. My neighbor asked if she could borrow a lamp for her guest room because a friend was coming to stay. How did she know I had a variety in my storage room from which she could choose?

The Winter Thaw

Lamps run the gamut in styles and prices. But, for a little bit of money and some imagination, a lamp or even a new shade can thaw the long days of winter. Spring will be coming soon and I may change up the lighting again. Conran's in Manhattan has closed and the little gem that started it all has long been gone. But I learned a lot about making a city apartment a home.

What do you have in your home that makes it extraordinary? It might be something as ordinary as a lamp. That's what *Celebrate Home Magazine* is all about—making the ordinary extraordinary. And remember, we are all just ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Read the rest of this issue and you will see what I mean.

I'd love to hear from you about the place you call home and your ideas. Get in touch with me at bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.

Barbara Kelley, Editor-in-Chief





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Do you have an original recipe you'd like to share? E-mail bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.

We can come to you! Are you having a party or special event at your home or an activity that relates to the subject of home? Contact us to discuss your idea. If it fits the editorial scope of *Celebrate Home Magazine*, we may photograph your event and write the story.

Celebrate Home Magazine offers a multitude of thanks to our contributors.

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BARBARA KELLEY is editor-in-chief of *Celebrate Home Magazine* and owner of Kelley Hospitality. She has 25 years of publishing experience and is also editor-in-chief of *Hearing Loss Magazine*. Barbara, “a sneeze guard heiress,” is one of five kids whose dad invented the sneeze guard. She is an Army wife to Bill, although he says when it comes to their home, she is the commanding officer. One of her favorite jobs is being a mom. She blogs at www.barbaragarneaukelley.com.



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H.M. DYER, aka The King of Texas, is a military retiree and a U.S. Customs Service retiree. He bestows kingly dispensations without compensation from his castle in San Antonio. Holder of bachelor degrees from Nebraska and Texas, the King relates, rambles, and rebukes incessantly with his biographical postings and cogent articles on city, state, national and world events and education—especially grammar. He serves as copy editor of *Celebrate Home Magazine*. Visit his blog at www.thekingoftexas.com.



MARGARET BARKER grew up on a farm in Miami, Ohio, where she fed calves by hand. She moved to New Mexico to practice law. A partner in her own law firm, she gave it all up to pursue her passion of teaching adults to read. She lives in Albuquerque with her husband Clark and her Jack Russell Terrier, Lucy. Her favorite things to do in Albuquerque are to eat chile and gaze at the beautiful Sandia Mountains.



CASSANDRA BIROCCO is a photographer and co-owner of K9 Connection in Warwick, Rhode Island. Her business is Zen Dog Pet Portraits (www.zendog-portraits.com) and she was voted the #3 Pet Photographer in New England. She is also owner of CB Group specializing in catalog photography (www.cbirocco-group.com). She has a passion for cooking and eating wonderful food. One of her specialties is her family's Italian recipe for Bagna Cauda, a seasoned, hot oil dip for fresh vegetables. It's so good and it's a secret.



JENNY BRADFORD is a part-time Lagree Fitness instructor and blogger who lives in Dallas, with her husband, two toddlers, and two backyard chickens. Check out her main blog about green living, ConscientiousConfusion.com. Jenny is also a founding member of The Green Sisterhood, a coalition of green bloggers. Her other blogging gigs include DallasMomsBlog.org and [CottonBabies cloth diaper blog](http://CottonBabiesclothdiaperblog.com). With all that blogging, tweeting, and Instagramming, she has been known to try to add hashtags to text messages and even handwritten lists.



KAREN BYER-STORCH has been a package designer and illustrator, and is now a freelance designer in Springfield, Virginia. She collects Quimper Faience (French-born), anything turtle-related, and vintage spice tins. She loves cats, books, home decorating and spending time with her daughters. She just recently ended her ten-year search for the perfect red hue for her dining room walls. Having amassed several hundred wine corks, she is now dreaming up cork craft projects. Stay tuned.



PAULA DANKO studied music in college, sang for her supper, and raised two smart children with her husband, Ken, a rocket-scientist kinda guy. She worked as a paralegal for many years, then left the legal field for graphic design and publishing and is now a marketing manager for a high-tech firm in Northern Virginia. When not designing ads, writing copy or reading about search engine optimization, she makes jewelry and dreams of her next home decorating project. She loves to cook and does an impressive impersonation of Julia Child.



TERI DESROSIERS is co-owner of the K9 Connection in Warwick, Rhode Island, and has been training dogs since 1991. Her Belgian Malinois “Tory” has earned breed and obedience championships, ranking #1 numerous times. They have been invited to the Eukanuba National Obedience Invitational for the past three years, ranking number one and two for in the U.S. Teri is a certified K9 Massage Therapist and Canine Good Citizen Evaluator. Visit www.K-9Connection.net for information.



JEFFERSON EVANS grew up in Memphis and came to Northern Virginia to become a cog in the great Patent & Trademark Office machine, and happily so as the flexibility afforded him allows him to wander wonderful distant places, especially Europe, to see cool stuff, take pictures of said stuff, and drink great beer. You can read his articles on occasion in the *Mid-Atlantic Brewing News* and see his images at www.evansimagesandart.com. He also chases storms, or they chase him. We're still figuring it out.



ANNA FERRON is a middle school special education teacher from Gahanna, Ohio. This past Christmas Eve, she added a wonderful new job to her resume—mommy to her adorable six-week-old son, Brennan Jackson. In addition to Brennan, she takes care of her best friend and husband of five years, Sean, and their very chubby Puggle, Chewbacca. When she's not doting on her family she loves to try and sometimes finish Pinterest projects and relax with family and friends.



BETTY FERGUSON, a retired 30-year federal employee, lives in Waco, Texas. She is happiest indulging her grandsons, writing grants, organizing women's ministry activities, studying the Bible, and exercising at Curves. Her mantra is “I'll try anything once, I don't want to miss something fun.” Since retiring she's traveled to Paris, France, and 18 states, been ziplining, and is headed to the Holy Land in June with her beloved husband. She says “this retirement gig is the best thing ever.”



ROBERT GARNEAU, known as “Bobby G,” is an IT account executive in the Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, area. When he's not creating IT solutions for his customers, he's nurturing and feeding his two teenage kids, one still at home and one in college. He says that in North Carolina the word “barbeque” is a noun not a verb so he has his own custom-built pig cooker. He makes his secret Eastern Carolina-style sauce and distributes it locally to anyone who wants it.



MARIA GATLING, when not in search of the perfect cappuccino, on a thrift store treasure hunt, or traveling with her husband, is blissfully working on her creativity sessions in Austin, Texas. Her roles as wife, mother, and artist have taken her on a journey that has unfolded into very passionate work. As author of *Be Inspired! Create Something Every Day*, her work is a simple invitation to rediscover your passions and unleash your creativity. Learn more about Maria at www.mariagatling.com.



TINA BACAS GIBSON lives in Fairfax, Virginia. She's been an editor and graphic designer for 35 years, many of those spent writing witty headlines for *Louis Rukeyser's Wall Street*. She and her husband, Doug, have two kids she is trying to kick out of the nest, to no avail. She spends a lot of time online, is part of a long-time community, and has traveled from Calgary to Miami to meet her imaginary friends in person. Her kids argue over who will inherit her ridiculously large collection of 1950s ceramic lamps and double and triple lampshades.



CAMILLA HOUGHTON thrives in sunny Siesta Key, Florida, with husband Jim, son Nolan, twins Ellie and Claire, and a little dog named Stella. When she's not wearing her graphic designer hat, Cam pursues her passion for landscape and abstract painting, moves furniture around the house on a whim, and hunts for the next funky ring to add to her collection. She works from her home studio where she can see manatees in the canal by her patio. She loves browsing art galleries and museums for inspiration for her next creative piece.



CHRISTINE HOWARD lives in Washington, D.C., and during working hours she is a federal government employee. During non-government working hours, she is with the man of her dreams (husband Matt), and their two wonderful children, Matthew, 5, and Audrey, 3, whom she adores. Although she lives in D.C, she is a New Yorker at heart having been born and raised on Long Island. She admits, "I have to say at times my New York accent gets the better of me."



TOM AND HOLLY HEDSTROM live in Arlington, Virginia, with their dog Bailey. They enjoy cross-country trips, and hiking and camping in the Rockies. Holly works for the American Psychological Association, where she oversees activities that support her fellow employees. She is a yoga instructor and reiki master. Tom worked many years for the federal government, but is enjoying retirement immensely. Both feel their lives are blessed, but they admit to a certain amount of perplexity as to how their dog got to be so spoiled.



RANDE JENUS is owner of The Wine Cabinet in Northpoint Village in Reston, Virginia. He describes himself as "a lover of wine and people." He retired from Marriott International in 2003 after 20 years of traveling extensively with Marriott. He always dreamed of opening a service-oriented fine wine shop in the Reston community. He also enjoys time with his two children, family and friends. Visit www.thewinecabinet.com to learn more about The Wine Cabinet.



VIRGINIA JOHNSON, Web content librarian at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, was described by her someday-boss as a library child, always surrounded by books and at the library. She worked with children, young adults, and adults, answering questions and telling stories, but writing has come to take center stage. She is the author of *Virginia Horse Racing: Triumphs of the Turf*. Virginia is the mother to two kids with hearing loss, Autumn and Ben, and the wife of a high school teacher/stand up comic.



MARY ELLEN RYALL is the author of *My Name is Butterfly* and *The Monarch Butterfly Coloring Book*, and is currently working on a *Field Guide to the Butterfly Habitat*. She was awarded a Scenic Beauty Award for implementing a Monarch Butterfly Habitat in Shell Lake, Wisconsin. An avid gardener, researcher and photographer, she is creating a private wild butterfly habitat on family land in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Visit www.butterflywomanpublishing.com. She blogs at www.butterfly-woman-publishing.com



MICHAEL SCHWEHR grew up in the Cleveland, Ohio area, lived in Worms, Germany, for two and a half years, and finally settled in Alexandria, Virginia. He is the president, chief PC repair technician and network engineer for JumpStart Computing, an on-site PC repair business at www.JumpStartComputing.com. He loves books, camping, photographing bugs with a macro lens, and trying new things. He owns more tools than he can possibly use, and likes to tinker with computers and recipes.



KAREN SHEPARD WYATT traded in number crunching to become a Master Esthetician at Karen Wyatt Skin Care in Burke, Virginia, www.karenwyattskincare.com. She never met a chair she didn't like (last count was more than 40), is mom to two ragdolls (Layla and Louie) and when she's not making people beautiful, she's lounging in a hammock at the lake. She is hopelessly addicted to *Law & Order* re-runs (crushing on Vince D'Onofrio) and her mantras are "if not now, when?" and "I plan to be spontaneous tomorrow."



GAY WHITE, a Californian by birth, an Arkansan by choice, is a retired travel agent. Gay and her late husband, former Arkansas Governor Frank White, traveled extensively throughout England, Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and the good old U.S. of A.! Gay loves the outdoors and her dog, Harry, and cat, Thelma!



WENDI KAST lives west of Chicago, and has filled her empty nest with four cats and a hedgehog. She and her husband, Dave, make scented wax tarts for their online business, Contemporary Candles. When she isn't covered in wax and fragrance oil, she scours thrift stores for furniture to adopt and refinish. She's also become adept at convincing her husband to incorporate startling colors into their home. She writes on life and hearing loss at www.suddensilence.wordpress.com.



BRIAN K. LOFLIN is a photographer, author, and teacher with a passion for natural science. Trained as a biologist, he has an inborn curiosity about what things look at high magnifications. (Visit his blog at www.bkloflin.wordpress.com) Four decades of experience shooting advertising, commercial, and medical images led him to teach photography at the University of Texas in Austin. A world traveller, he now enjoys kicking back in Austin with his wife, Shirley, and three cats.



GLADYS ROLDAN-DE-MORAS is an impressionist painter in San Antonio. During the summer months and holidays she travels to Mexico—her native land—and other countries, where she works on paintings, teaches workshops, and searches for new ideas. She is a full-time artist constantly researching books and visiting museums. Gladys collects and studies turn-of-the-century art instruction books. Her painting, *Escaramuza in San Antonio*, recently received the award for "Best in Show" 2012 by the American Impressionist Society National Juried Exhibition.



MELISSA RUTH, wife, mother and overachiever in eastern Washington, who recently completed her MBA, and works full time as a software project manager, volunteers as board president of a local not-for-profit, is active in her church and embracing yet another master's degree program all while mothering her three children and living life with her husband (David) of 16 years. She also has a nail technician license and enjoys playing online games when time allows (HA!).



L. JAGI LAMPLIGHTER WRIGHT is the author of *Prospero Lost*, *Prospero In Hell* and *Prospero Regained*. When not writing, she reverts to her secret identity as an at-home mother in Centerville, Virginia, where she lives with her husband, author John C. Wright, and their four children, Orville, Ping-Ping, Roland Wilbur, and Justinian Oberon. Visit her website at www.ljagilamplighter.com and her blog at www.arhyalon.livejournal.com.

Celebrate HOME

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E-mail bkelly@celebratehomemag.com for submission guidelines.

Feather Your Nest

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HOME

Interview with **Holly Siprelle Hedstrom** by **Cindy Dyer** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Tom and Holly Hedstrom's house in north Arlington is a visual treat—very open and filled with light. I've visited the house several times, but this was the first chance I've had to look at it through my lens. I knew that the house had "good bones," but even I was surprised at just how beautiful it is in photographs. It is a hard house to leave! Holly shares their love of the house with Celebrate Home Magazine.

When you were house hunting, were there specific things you were looking for in a home?

We wanted to be in north Arlington, Virginia, to make it easier to commute into Washington, D.C., and to be closer to some of our friends. We were wide open on what style we wanted which really helped us consider different homes.

How would you describe your house style?

Open, contemporary, split foyer

How many houses did you tour before you found this gem?

Between the two of us, more than 35 homes!

What was your first impression of the house?

There was little curb appeal because it needed landscaping, but when we found ourselves inside the home, there was this burst of pleasure in how it was laid out and the stunning living room view.

Says Tom, "It all started as the typical compromise of trying to get close to Holly's job to minimize commuting time and yet being in an attractive neighborhood that was within our price range.

We had seen many homes in the general area, but none had inspired us enough to make an offer.

When we first drove up to the house, its low front profile and meager landscaping almost caused us to not go in, but as soon as we entered the front door and walked up the split foyer and saw the view from the living room over the heavily wooded horizon, we were very impressed. The rest of the house was also nicely done or else could easily have been improved—such as the 1960s vintage rec room and formica bar. It also helped that it was on a cul-de-sac, yet close enough to several main roads into Washington. As time has passed, we have gained an appreciation for the community-spirited neighbors and the progressive, well-managed services provided by Arlington county."

Did you immediately see how you were going to make it your own or did the process evolve over the four years you've lived in the house?

The process evolved. When we first saw the house, we agreed it was way too big for us, and we definitely didn't need an elevator! We just never saw anything else we liked as much as this house. And, since we were merging two households into one, we wound up being able to use a lot of what we already had without losing the overall feel we wanted of something open, clean, and uncluttered. We had some original ideas about how to make it our own, but things really evolved over time.

continued

Delicious Pops of COLOR





SPLIT DECISION

Left: Holly loves that this split foyer house mimics one of her favorite childhood homes. The flow of the house allows privacy for guests in the lower level but without feeling so separated. The open floor plan also means more light in every room.



HAVE A SEAT

Right: The banquette allows extra seating without obstructing the beautiful view from the living room.

HOME

I'm glad we did some things right away (landscaping, new portico and walkway, new windows), and glad we waited to do others.

What changes have you made to the home?

One of the first things we did was the front yard and entrance to the house. We used a fabulous firm called Landscapes for You (www.landscapesforyou.net). Lynn Koch helped us achieve our goal of making the front yard more inviting, and she designed a deer-resistant garden that transformed the look of the house from the front. We now have interesting shapes and colors all year round.

Tell me about the landscaping challenges.

When we moved in, Tom immediately began to tackle the bamboo that had grown out of control in

the back yard (in fact it had begun to take over the back yard). He cleared and removed about eight pickup truckloads of bamboo, and reclaimed the back yard. The back yard is fenced so it's safe to let Bailey out back. In fact, she has become a favorite with our next door neighbors, so now she feels like her back yard, her front yard, and the neighbor's front yard, are all hers.

Any future plans for remodeling or decorating?

Most of the walls had been painted in neutral tones and we wanted to start introducing pops of color in the kitchen/dining room and my bedroom, so that was done fairly quickly. We have replaced lighting fixtures, repaired all the gas fireplaces, installed some wonderful artwork by photographer Cindy Dyer, and most recently we upgraded two



have found it very useful from time to time. Children who visit think they're in an amusement park!

How many families have called this place home?

We are the third owner, although the second owner stayed only long enough to upgrade the kitchen. The original owner was a doctor who was socially involved in the neighborhood and very well liked. Neighbors have told us Dr. Hosney welcomed them to the neighborhood with a party whenever someone moved in, and we are using some of the same service companies who remember him fondly as well. He passed away a few years ago, but in some ways we feel like we know him. He did the big expansion to add the elevator, new master bedroom, downstairs sunroom, and the addition to the living room to bring in more light. It was his work that made the house really something special.

What is your neighborhood like?

We love our neighborhood because it's the best of both worlds! It's close to Washington, D.C., but

continued



bathrooms and a downstairs bar area. I'd like to redesign the dining room. We love the new carpet, but we would like to have the dining room furniture and bar stools resemble the millwork in the kitchen since those two rooms are so connected. I would also like to redesign the back yard.

Does Tom get involved with design decisions?

We work really well together. He has definite ideas about what he does and doesn't like, and that helps keep me grounded. We have had our disagreements, but with both of our input, we have been very happy with all the outcomes. We are both really pleased with the bathrooms/bar project that was completed this past summer.

Tell me about the elevator.

The elevator was installed by a previous owner who wanted to age in place. We laughed about it when we discovered it, but both of us (and the dog)





TREE HOUSE VIEW
The living room is Tom and Holly's favorite room.



SPIRITS WATCHING OVER US
The Hindu statues, purchased during a trip to the West Coast, remind Holly of the transformative power of introspection, spirituality, yoga and meditation.



HOME

because of all of the wooded spaces and nature center nearby, it's very easy to take a walk in the woods with the dog. To our surprise and delight, we discovered a great dog park nearby also, so there are plenty of opportunities for Bailey to romp and play with other dogs or in the woods.

We're close to great restaurants and shopping, a beautiful community nature center and walking trails by the Potomac River.

What is your favorite room in the house?

The living room is our favorite place, near the windows. When we entertain we prefer to have folks for brunch because the house really shines in the daytime. We also like the downstairs rec room now that the old bar is gone and we have reclaimed that room. It has turned into my "girl cave" for needlepoint and meditation.

What inspires you?

I'm inspired by the outdoors, clean lines, open spaces; things that suggest serenity and peacefulness, both inner and outer journeys.

How would you describe your personal style?

Fun, not fussy. Neither Tom nor I ever felt like having a living room as an unused museum quality space that would seldom be used. We are both informal people and we like our space to reflect our personal styles.

What type of architecture are you drawn to?

I love contemporary architecture. The only house I really loved that my family owned as I was growing up was a somewhat contemporary split foyer. I think it's pretty hilarious that this is what we live in now, but I love the flow of it. The two floors aren't so distinctly separate, although the folks in the guest room in the lower level can feel like they have their own space if they need it.

It's clear that you embrace color. What is your approach to your color palettes?

In the public areas, I'm really looking for warmth and fun. What is going to make people feel

comfortable, how can I add some whimsy, and most of all, how can we and our guests feel most at home. If there is a method involved to choosing color, it revolves around these elements.

Your bedroom colors are more spa-like and restful. I'm assuming that was intentional.

Although the whole home should feel like a sanctuary of sorts, it's important that the sleeping rooms are places of peace and serenity. Televisions aren't a part of the bedroom, for instance. I have some small buddhas in the bedroom as well as a favorite stone that says "Begin Again"—a reminder to be in the moment, a promise of renewal, and the ability we all have to start all over whenever we want. I love the fireplace, and although gas fireplaces aren't for everyone, I love being able to turn it on remotely before I get out of bed in the winter months. It makes me feel like a member of the family on Downton Abbey!

Do you have "go to" paint colors?

Tom would proudly say that this is the first home I have had in a while that doesn't have any lavender (yet)! That has been a "go to" color in the past, but we are both drawn to softer colors in the sleeping rooms, and more dramatic colors in the main areas. Tom helped me pick out the aqua color in my bedroom, and I have been very happy with it.

I see a lot of punches of red in your home—what about this color are you drawn to?

My mosaic pieces that were made by Sophie Bethune were primarily red. They quickly found a place in the living room and helped brighten the color there since we found ourselves with a large brown sectional sofa. We decided to play off the red by getting two red chairs from Crate & Barrel, and we carried that color into the polka dot fabric we used to re-cover the bench and sunroom chairs. As time went on, we seemed to gather more redness to our home, and we both enjoy the cheerfulness and warmth of this color.

continued



DRAWN TO THE LIGHT

Left: This room leads to an inviting light-filled sun porch that opens to the tree-lined back yard (otherwise known as Bailey's domain).



THE GIRL CAVE

Right: Tom and Holly enjoy the downstairs rec room now that the old bar is gone and they have reclaimed the room. It has turned into Holly's "girl cave" for needlepoint and meditation. Generous punches of red warm up this basement room.

HOME

Your love for original art is apparent.

Many of the pieces we have are prints, but we have been fortunate to discover some wonderful artists that we both really love. Cindy Dyer's photographs were purchased last summer and they were all garden images. We fell in love with many of them, and we now have her images throughout our home. The beautiful splashes of color make us feel like we're in a garden even on the coldest of winter days. Both of the new bathrooms contain her work, and we consider them the crowning glory of those projects. I also have a few mosaic pieces that I love that I bought from a co-worker, artist Sophie Bethune. The pieces are fun and eclectic!

Tell me about the glass objects on the mantel.

I began collecting glass orbs (as Tom calls them) decades ago. I fell in love with them at a Sugarloaf Craft Festival and bought my first one. As friends discover that I collect them, I have received several as gifts. When my grandmother began to downsize several years ago, she gave me a few of hers, so it has become a special collection that intermingles family, friends, and my own pieces.

Tell me about the statues that flank the fireplace in the living room.

I was trained at an ashram to teach hatha yoga in the Hindu tradition. That experience was a transformative one for me, and when Tom and I found these Hindu statues in La Jolla during a trip to the West Coast, we decided to have them shipped to our home. They have a central place in the living room to remind me that there are many spirits watching over us, and they also remind me of the transformative power of introspection, spirituality, yoga and meditation.

Do you entertain a lot in the house?

We love to entertain here. I threw Tom's 60th birthday party here and we used the entire house. We have thrown other parties as well; a colleague's retirement, family birthday parties, and brunches/dinners for friends and family. The flow of this house is perfect for any size of party, and there

are plenty of spaces for people to gather. I like the kitchen's openness and, since guests always wind up there anyway, Tom and I feel like we can be part of the party even if we are working in the kitchen getting things ready.

Do you shop for decor online or in stores?

We are drawn to clean designs, so Crate & Barrel is one of the stores we have used. I got really interested in modern carpets and found an incredible shop that sells them. Neither of us are particularly drawn to more traditional oriental carpets, but the modern designs available now can help you create an exciting and artistic feel to your home.

Have you applied the principles of feng shui to this house?

I have become a Reiki master practitioner over the past 10 years, and I have found that the use of crystals can amplify the power of a Reiki session. (Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation as well as to promote healing.)

I incorporate crystals in our home to amplify certain energies as well. A carnelian crystal placed near the entrance of the home invites positive energy into the home. A rose quartz at the south-east corner of the home attracts and sustains positive, loving relationships, and a citrine in the opposite corner (the wealth corner) attracts and retains financial abundance.

I am not an expert on feng shui, but I know that there are certain places that mirrors should and should not be placed; i.e. never above the bed, never opposite the entrance to the home, etc.

Another primary element of feng shui suggests that clutter does not allow the free flow of energy in the home. Keeping a home clean and uncluttered encourages a positive flow of energy throughout the home, as does the quality of light and air. In fact, some people have mentioned that applying feng shui principles to a cluttered home is like putting expensive makeup on a dirty face.

Because I am an energy worker, I also did a thorough energetic clearing of the home shortly

continued





HOME

after we moved in to remove the residual energy left by previous occupants, and to create a strong and clear energy foundation for our lives.

Tell me about your career.

I have worked for The American Psychological Association for 24 years. Since 2004 I have been in charge of staff initiatives, a small office involved with staff recognition, community involvement, volunteer activities, health and wellness, and internal communications. We are proud to offer, in the health and wellness area alone, seated upper body massage, yoga, Pilates, meditation, dance aerobics, resistance bands, and metabolic acceleration classes. I love what I do, and feel very blessed to be able to provide this kind of support to my co-workers.

Are you closer to work?

The move from south Arlington to north Arlington has made a huge difference. Even though the number of miles difference isn't that huge, the missed traffic and congestion by moving six miles from work has made a difference in my commute. And it's much prettier driving across Chain Bridge or driving on the George Washington Parkway than it is driving down I-395 in stop-and-go traffic.

No kitchen is complete without...

our dog, Bailey, in the middle of it all!

Tom says, "We got Bailey by accident but she has been such a pleasure. Holly had two cats over the years but they eventually died. Holly did not impulsively replace them but about two years later she began thinking she really would like another cat. I was quite happy with no pet and hoped she might change her mind.

One day we visited friends who rescue Golden Retrievers. They had what they thought was a Golden mixed breed who seemed like a very good dog. We decided to adopt her and within a few weeks we were approved. We took her into our home and soon she entered our hearts. We have had such a good time with her. We like to joke with each other that Bailey is the result of us compromising between getting a cat or having no pet at all!" **CHM**



Written by **Christine Howard**

*Living the
Fairy Tale...*

*To Quit
or Not
to Quit?*

**Our author, wife
and mother of two
children, ages three
and five, finds herself
struggling with the
rigors of being a
working mom.**



On a daily basis, as a full-time or part-time working mom, do you ask yourself should I quit my job? It is a question I ask myself every morning when I wake up and every night before I go to bed. It is then followed by a series of questions I ask myself if I were to stay at home: Would my kids be better off if I was home with them full-time? How would we pay our bills or put money in the college fund? Would we have to change our lifestyle? Could I assimilate to being a full-time mom?

Then comes the biggest one of all: Can a working mom and her family have it all?

What I Hear from Other Moms

These days, the idea that the working mom can have it all seems to be a topic of discussion around the water cooler. When was the last time you heard a working mom say, "I have it all and things are great." Instead, you normally hear, "I am exhausted, work is crazy, my house is so disorganized, and I need help."

In June 2012, Ann-Marie Slaughter, the first woman director of policy planning at the U.S. Department of State brought this issue to light when she gave a personal account of her struggle to balance a high-profile and high stress career. She concluded that not only was she struggling but her family was too. Her story made me realize I am not alone. I continue my quest to find the perfect answer to the question: what would happen if I quit? I wish there was an easy answer, but I find it to be the most difficult dilemma I've faced in my life.

The stay-at-home moms tell me they can't imagine working and managing the play dates, practices, schoolwork, and their household.

But they quickly acknowledge that the lack of a second income puts stress on the family. They follow the conversation commenting on how much they miss being in the working world leading them to wonder if they could they balance it all if they went back to work and are they still relevant in the career they left behind?

The working moms talk about the daily juggling act between taking care of their families and taking care of their careers. Two opposite ends of the spectrum that have collided in their lives. At work they are not only trying to earn a paycheck but work hard to remain relevant and competitive. While at home, they spend every second trying to spend quality time to make up for the guilt they feel for leaving their children each day. Then there is more stress feeling always wondering if this juggling act is insidiously hurting her family in any way.

A surprising, yet common, theme I hear from working moms is, "if I stayed home I don't believe I would take as much advantage of the time I get to spend with my children. I think I would just take them for granted." There are days I believe this is true while other days I believe it is just something us working moms tell ourselves to make us feel better about the situation, at least for a little while.

Searching for Answers

Where is the line? What do our children truly need from us? Is it a stay-at-home mom or the benefits of what an additional income provides such as private school and vacations to Disney World?

How much easier I think each day would be if the internal struggle I have about this decision

continued

FAMILY

would go away. But after talking to both stay-at-home and working moms, it appears both sides of the fence have an internal struggle they deal with on a daily basis. The stay-at-home mom who is struggling with the idea of going back to work and the working mom who is struggling with the idea of quitting. Why is there not an easier answer to a question that seems so simple?

After five years of internalizing this struggle, I am resolved to believe that the conflict will never go away no matter my decision. When

I was single, looking for the love of my life, I would never in a million years have believed that such a struggle could exist or that answering such simple questions about a family or finances could be so difficult with so many factors to consider. My life then seemed so simple and planned out: establish a career, find the love of my life, get married, and have a family. It was to be a fairy tale come true.

I am living my fairy tale except in my story my fairy godmother is just as confused as I am. **CHM**

Work is What We Do, Not Where We Are

According to Forrester Research, we have about 34 million Americans working at least occasionally from home. That is expected to rise to 63 million by 2016. On December 9, 2010, the federal government passed the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 in order to “improve continuity of operations and ensure that essential federal functions are maintained during emergency situations; to promote management effectiveness when telework is used to achieve reductions in organizational and transit costs and environmental impacts; and to enhance the work-life balance of workers.”

With the advent of telecommunications, working from home is possible. But all jobs and employees are not suited for telework. Forrester Research says that it is actually upper-level managers and high-influence employees that work from home.

I will be forever grateful to bosses who have allowed me either to telecommute full or part-time over the past 13 years while raising our son. It also helps that I’ve had a job that has measurable outcomes. It is only fair to your employer that you show productivity. I can say from personal experience that working full time from home with an occasional trip to the office is not for wimps! It requires discipline and the ability to be a self starter. You also have to feel content being at home without the camaraderie of coworkers. It also means that if you have a baby or a toddler, you will be working all the time. There may be no more nine to five and you have to be ready to put in five or six hours after your baby goes to bed. It also helped that my husband pitched in enormously and, on many nights, put dinner on the table, and still does. I’ve also relied on the generosity of neighbors, friends and an occasional “mother’s helper”—a younger girl not of babysitting age who comes in and just plays with your baby while you work.

Telecommuting worked for me and the sacrifice was worth it. Looking back on those years, I feel so blessed to have had supportive executive directors who valued the product I delivered. I have to admit my favorite job (I really should call it a vocation) is being a mother. Time is already passing too quickly. Whether you are home with your child or work outside the home, cherish every moment with your children. You can’t get the time with them back. **CHM**

Barbara Kelley
Editor-in-Chief

Your Advice

CHM posed the question on Facebook “What advice do you have for moms who hold jobs outside the home?”

Sharon says: *For older kids, I think having a consistent set time, at least an hour, together when moms and kids talk. It the quality that we spend with our kids that is important. A lot of love can be shared in that hour but you have to be committed to that time. It's their time.*

Karen says: *I have a friend at work and she has four kids and works her fanny off. She has a great husband who supports her.*

Laura says: *It's pretty simple really. You get yourself a husband who is useful and helpful, a nanny you can trust, a boss who knows your family comes first, and then yes, you add wine.*

Megan says: *Yes, lots of wine.*

We would love to hear any and all thoughts on this topic. We would also welcome personal experiences with stay-at-home moms. Send your comments to Barbara Kelley at **bkelley@celebratehomemag.com**.

FAMILY

Celebrate Home Magazine asked working mothers to share their experiences. All offer different experiences and solutions—from how a part-time job not only kept them in the workforce but also enriched their children's lives to how they relieved stress in a busy household to assessing the financial rewards of a job versus the expenses of keeping that job.

The Best of Both Worlds by Tina Bacas Gibson

I was fortunate to have great part-time work in my chosen career while my kids were growing up. Of course, I also was incredibly fortunate to have my parents nearby to watch the kids while I worked. That said, I think I had the best of both worlds:

I looked forward to my days at work, fulfilled and happy with the work I was doing and being with my grown-up friends, and delighted to spend the other days staying at home with my kids. I think working part-time brought a lot to my kids’ lives, and the people I met and brought into our family circle of friends did a lot to contribute to my children’s upbringing—people in demographics they wouldn’t have likely met at the time in our quiet suburban life. And they saw a happy, productive mother who also had a lot of time for them.

So my advice to young mothers: if you can find part-time work (and good daycare) that you like, go for it. I’m so glad I did. It also meant that when the kids were gone, I was able to hop right back into my full-time career with all those years of work adding to my experience and making me valuable to employers. **CHM**

A Wealth of Support by Virginia Johnson

I went to work and stayed at work through my children’s early years for a couple of reasons. I loved my job, which engaged both my brain and my heart, and I was the one with good health insurance and retirement benefits. After my graduation, my husband and I had decided to settle and raise our kids in my small and historic hometown, which brought another unforeseen benefit: a grandmother who enjoyed babysitting and would do so at the drop of a hat. “I’ll be right over!” was always her answer to my 6 a.m. discovery that someone did not feel well enough to go to school today. And when the children, in turn and at an early age, developed hearing loss, she was part of that journey to other towns, doctors, and hospitals looking for answers, seeking help and sometimes treating us to Strawberries Romanoff at La Madeleine.

Besides my mother’s support, my workplace—run by working mothers—understood that there were certain things which must be pursued. Schedules were flexed to accommodate doctors’ appointments. My loving husband was available, both emotionally and for changing diapers and washing dishes as a matter of course. An assortment of pets kept stress levels down during those quiet, exhausted nights when everyone just needed some reassurance that things were going as they should. And then there was God. When the days and nights were pushing me beyond the limits of what seemed possible, I prayed for strength and wisdom. But I knew I had been answered already with the blessings I’ve just recounted. **CHM**

The Challenges of Being a Working Mom

When it comes to the “mommy wars” about working versus staying home, I have a hard time promoting a single viewpoint for everyone because I have seen both sides of the issue. About 2.5 months after my first child was born, I was already back to work a few days a week. By the time he was four months old, I was doing four 10-hour shifts per week in exchange for one precious weekday off to do what all my friends did every single day—hang out with my baby! To be honest with you, I was never much of a career woman even before I became pregnant. My job as a programmer let me work from home and, although the hours were sometimes long and irregular, it was somewhat flexible. We had a nanny who came to our house to watch Little Sir while I worked. She even took him to activities, parks, and the mall—exactly the things I’d be doing if I were “staying home” with him. When she left for the day, my husband was home to put my son to bed at night.

The hardest part of being a working mom (at least, for me—I can’t speak for all working moms) was not the physical work, but the constant, nagging internal conflict. Guilt that I was not balancing work, spouse, and kids, the stress of that balancing act, and more guilt that I wasn’t giving my kids the advantages that the kids of SAHM’s (stay-at-home moms) are getting.

The Guilt of Balancing

For a working mom, there is not a lot of wiggle room for creative play or just relaxing, especially in the evenings. Sure, that’s when I got to play with the kid(s), but those same hours are also filled with preparing dinner, feeding everyone, cleaning up from dinner, and baths. As soon as the kids go to bed, the race is on to prepare for the next day! Fix lunches, wash clothing/diapers, do whatever cleaning I can fit in, and pre-prepare the family’s meal for the next day. Lay out clothing, pay bills online, answer personal emails... I usually had one to two hours to accomplish all of this before it was time to go to bed. It left little time for my husband, and even less

time for me. If I spent even one evening out with a friend or at a Bible study, it put me so far behind in household tasks that I couldn’t catch up. It is absolutely true that the most “me” time I had was the eight to ten hours I was at my full-time job every day. As we all know, that time was not truly “mine,” but belonged to my employer.

The Burden of Stress

My employer, however, was also a source of guilt. At work I often felt guilty that I wasn’t doing my best due to my choice to become a parent. Since my son never did sleep through the night, I was writing code in a fast-turnaround environment on several two or three-hour chunks of sleep per night.

Seven months after my son was born, I was pregnant again and added the first-trimester pregnancy exhaustion to the lack of sleep. I admire women who are able to function and excel at their jobs under those circumstances. All I was able to do was feel guilty and helpless when my job performance suffered. I don’t think I’m alone in feeling like I had to choose between my home and work life. Recent Pew Research Center studies have confirmed the stress factor of the working mother:

When asked in general how they feel about their time, 40% of working moms said they always feel rushed. This compares with 24% of the general public and 26% of stay-at-home moms.

The Guilt of Comparison

I know that it’s wrong to compare myself to others. You know it, I know it... but it happens. Maybe it’s just Dallas, or maybe it’s my particular community within Dallas. Whatever the reason, out of my giant network of local and online mothers (probably 50 local, and another 50 online at least), I did not know even one other mother who was also working full time. I was completely weird and alone. My Facebook and Twitter feeds were full of my peers’ pictures of playdates, mornings at the museum, days at the park, and mommy-baby time. I was surrounded by the message that the best place for a mother is in the home with her young children, not at work, and that I was weird for working. And it wasn’t just my personal viewpoint, the

Now that I am staying home with my kids instead of working full time, it’s a whole different kind of hard work.... But to me, it’s not nearly as hard as dealing with the emotional and mental difficulties presented by the balancing act and the constant fight not to feel guilty.

Pew Research study also backs this particular impression:

Most working mothers (62%) say that they would prefer to work part time, and only 37% say they prefer full-time work. By contrast, most working fathers (79%) would prefer to work full time, while only 21% say they would prefer working part time. The reality for today’s working moms does not reflect their preferences: 74% work full time while only 26% work part time. Only about one-in-ten moms (12%) say having a mother who works full time is the ideal situation for a child.

I can tell you that I have a background of overachieving and attempting to do too much

Keeping My Sanity *by Wendi Kast*

I spent a few years as a single mom, starting when my kids were two and six. I had no choice but to work, and a few things really helped me keep my sanity during that period.

- You’ve heard of pick your battles? This was key for me. I learned that some things just weren’t worth fighting over with my kids.
- Organization saved my sanity. Lists, chore charts, setting out clothes the night before. Big bins and boxes to toss toys into; I let them slide a bit on having perfectly neat bedrooms (a battle that wasn’t worth it to me) but when they did clean up, I made it as easy as possible for them.
- Those neatly laid-out clothes didn’t always go on little bodies in an expeditious manner in

and to do everything too perfectly. The constant, impossible balancing act of working full-time is what got to me, in the end. The life of a working mom is constant re-prioritization, and an ongoing feeling that your kids might be at an emotional or educational disadvantage if you get the balancing act wrong.

Now that I am staying home with my kids instead of working full time, it’s a whole different kind of hard work. Staying home is physically difficult, emotionally challenging, and very draining sometimes. But to me, it’s not nearly as hard as dealing with the emotional and mental difficulties presented by the balancing act and the constant fight not to feel guilty. Having done both, I have to say that for me, no matter how difficult staying at home gets (and it’s been difficult with two high-needs babies not-quite 16 months apart), it’s still not as difficult as being a working mom. **CHM**

Written by Jenny Bradford. Reprinted with permission by Lauren Kimmell, co-founder of Dallas Moms Blog: www.dallasmomsblog.com.

the morning. Instead of getting frustrated and screaming at the kids (which sometimes I really wanted to do), I made a game out of it. This especially worked when we were pressed for time. “I bet you can’t get your shirt on before I count to ten!” Joking around helped; when things would start getting heated, I’d do or say something unexpected to throw them a bit off-kilter. We’d all laugh, the air would clear, and we’d get on with our day.

- Time for myself. It didn’t have to be much—just 15 minutes before everyone woke up, or 30 minutes in the evening after the kids were in bed—but I made sure I had some time to read, write, quilt, or even just take a shower in peace. It recharged my batteries and gave me the strength to face the day with a smile. **CHM**

Everything that was exciting before children—the travel, the camaraderie, the late-night group projects, meeting for drinks—all that was oh so unwelcome now. All I really wanted to do was spend time with my kids.

Home for Dinner *by Paula Danko*

The decision to be a stay-at-home mom or a working-outside-the-home mom is not an easy one. You face the constant tug at the heartstrings to be home with your children, the immediate financial consequences of leaving the workplace and the long term career consequences of staying out of the workplace. And, then there is the guilt. Oy vey, the guilt!

No matter what your decision, it doesn't feel right. Well, rest assured, if you follow your heart and use your head, in the end you will indeed make the right decision.

But how do you sort things out to get to that point? Way back in the 1980s, I was working in downtown Washington, D.C., for MCI Communications Corporation. The commute was one hour and 15 minutes each way, the work was exciting, but stressful, and I had to travel. I would leave the house at 7:17 a.m. and get home at 7:30 p.m. on a good day. In the 1980s Washington, D.C., had one of the highest per capita rates of working mothers in the country and the fewest daycare options.

My kids were one and three—the most wonderful kids in the world, just like I am sure yours are. They were in daycare. I am sure they were fine, but I was a mess. I would cry, no, I would bawl my eyes out all the way to the Metro parking lot. Before I got out of the car, I would dry my eyes, fix my mascara and convince myself everything was fine as I rode the subway to work. This went on for quite a while.

I came home from work one day just before 7 p.m. As I walked in the door, my kids jumped up from the dinner table and yelled, "Mommy's home, mommy's home!" Something was really wrong with this picture. Having mommy home for dinner shouldn't be a surprise. And I was miserable.

Everything that was exciting before children—the travel, the camaraderie, the late night group projects, meeting for drinks—all that was oh so unwelcome now. All I really wanted to do was spend time with my kids.

I told my husband I wanted to quit my job. He was exhausted from the crazy routine too, but he kept saying we couldn't afford it. It seemed to me that most of my paycheck went to pay for childcare, but I couldn't afford to stay home? Hmm. This just didn't seem right.

An older colleague suggested I run the numbers. Chances were that I was working to pay for childcare, which was fine, if that was what I wanted so I could continue my career path. But, I was a paralegal. And even though I was a really good one, I was never going to "graduate" to attorney. Nor did I want to become the department supervisor. Her stress level was even worse. What I wanted to do was spend more time with my kids.

So I did what any good, analytical paralegal would do. I ran the numbers. I prepared two sets of 1040s: one with two incomes and one with one income. I figured out what it was costing to work. I added the cost of parking and Metro fares, dry cleaning, takeout (lots of takeout) and childcare. And guess what? Yep, when all was said and done, I could afford to stay home.

I gave my notice and became a stay-at-home mom. We still paid all the bills and could still go on family vacations. I was happy; my family was happy. And best of all, mommy was home for dinner. Twenty-plus years later, my only regret was not deciding to quit my job sooner. (Later, I did go back to work part-time.) So follow your heart and use your head and you will make the right decision for you and your family too. **CHM**

Learning as I Go *by Melissa Ruth*

I have been blessed with having experienced a myriad of situations in our marriage. At one time, I worked jobs in order to provide financially to the family while my husband struggled—either due to his career or due to his health.

At another time, I stayed home and experienced life having a choice with what I did with my time. Still yet another, I worked in businesses doing home parties allowing me to be home during the day and still help with the family finances. At one point, I even homeschooled my children.

Now, I find myself, fully engulfed in my career, working and volunteering and admittedly overcommitted while still being a mom to three school-aged children.

Each of these times had their positives and their negatives. When I worked outside the home as a young mom, I was conflicted. At church, I would hear how mothers needed to embrace the opportunity and invest in their children at a young age. Yet, life did not afford me that opportunity at that time.

When I was able to be a stay-at-home mom, I loved being able to invest in my kids yet I felt a bit disjointed, unsure what to do with myself. I also loved the freedom of a freer schedule. I honestly found though that I did not get as much done.

Now, in my current career, I find myself overcommitted yet again. I have learned however, that being a mother and wife does not mean I need to do everything. Just as I am a good manager in the office, I must delegate and train others to do the things as I want them done.

For example, I broke down and hired a housecleaner. I enlisted the help of still others to help me in other areas as well.

I have learned I am good at doing what the Lord has blessed me with and where I am not good at doing, He has provided someone who is.

I have also learned that, by assigning responsibilities to my children, they will learn to be self-sufficient and responsible. **CHM**

My Epiphany *by L. Jagi Lamplighter Wright*

When I first started staying home with my children, after my second son was born, I would explain that I was a writer. This always led to an awkward conversation about the state of my then yet-unpublished books. However, I found such conversations less embarrassing than explaining I was a "stay-at-home mom." Then, one day, I had an epiphany.

I had taken the children out for a mid-morning walk. Puffy clouds danced across a pure blue sky. The warm spring breeze smelled of honeysuckle. The little one slept in the stroller. The two older boys played Pooh Sticks, dropping twigs in the creek and running to the other side of the bridge to see them float out again.

As I stood with the sun on my face, glorying in the brightness of the day, I realized something.

I had hated the jobs I had before I started staying home with the children. I had dragged myself through my days, weary and miserable. I had hated getting up in the morning. I had hated doing work that didn't matter to me. I had hated having my time stolen by pointless drudgery.

Am I crazy? I thought, as the children laughed. I was living the life my younger self had only dreamed of! Why was I embarrassed?

Nowadays, even though three of my novels have finally been published, when I am asked what I do, I reply with pride: *I am a stay-at-home mother!* **CHM**

Stats & Resources

It seems that the debate over a mother's decision to work outside the home rages on now much more than our mothers' generation. According to the Pew Research Center, U.S. Bureau of Labor, *Harvard Business Review* (September 2012), 61 percent of mothers in the U.S. work outside the home.

Working Mother Research Institute workingmother.com

CHM recommends this site for great information, resources, and help for working moms. There's even advice for pregnant moms and how to make it through morning sickness and fatigue.

Recipe by **Gay White** • Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

White Chicken Chili

This savory soup is light but filling.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 9-ounce cans shoe peg corn
- 2 4-ounce cans chopped green chiles
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 15-ounce cans Great Northern beans

Pepper to taste
Shredded Monterrey Jack Cheese
Green Salsa

INSTRUCTIONS

Rinse chicken. Bring chicken, chicken broth, lemon pepper and one teaspoon of cumin to boil in large pan. Simmer, covered over low heat for 25-30 minutes. Remove chicken and cut into one-inch pieces. Return to broth. Sauté garlic in small skillet with a little olive oil for one minute. Add to chicken and broth. Add onion (and a little more olive oil if needed) to skillet, cook until tender; add to chicken and broth. Add corn, green chiles, the rest of the cumin, lime juice and red pepper to taste. Bring to boil; add undrained beans. Cook until heated through. To serve, ladle into bowls, top with cheese, green salsa and crushed tortilla chips.



What is as fine as a bowl of soup
In a tureen, carried hot to the table,
Or a beef stew simmered with veggies and meat,
As wondrous as an old Aesop fable;
I love noodle soup or a tomato bisque,
My chili falls into this category,
French onion soup with melted cheese,
Russian Borscht served in its beet-red glory.
Mushroom soup! PepperPot!
Or a Consomme!
Won Ton soup! Morel soup!
Cream of Pea and crackers on a tray!
Black Bean soup! Cabbage soup!
Or a pot of New England Chowder!
(Not for me Manhattan style—
for that I'd take a powder!)
Perhaps some Mulligatawny Soup,
Or some Minestrone!
I'd even eat some Bouillabaisse,
As long as it's not boney!
Bring me a bowl of Orleans gumbo,
Or any soup that's bold,
Or let us have gazpacho that's
Always served up cold.

Bowls of Comfort

Serve me cream of celery soup!
Carrot soup with Curry!
Bring me soups that cook all day
But dish up in a hurry;
Serve me spicy peanut soup
Or turkey soup with rice—
I'd gladly eat green lentil soup
But meatball soup is also nice.
Soup for breakfast! Soup for lunch!
Soup for a late night supper;
Let me have a cup of soup,
For a pick-me-upper.
Let me have War Won-Ton soup,
Or Tortilla soup that's spicy,
Let me have a cockle soup
Or lobster bisque that's pricey!
Serve me cock-a-leekie soup
Or Egg Drop soup from China,
Serve it fancy, serve it plain,
I'm never going to mind-a,
Soups can be hearty or else light—
Feed one or feed a troop—
I'll never tire or get enough
Of delicious homemade soup.

—Sandra Lee Smith (reprinted with permission)
www.sandychatter.wordpress.com

Recipe by **Michael Schwehr** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

This hearty soup is a family favorite, especially in winter. Sometimes I'll vary the recipe depending on what ingredients I have on hand. I've made it with turkey and often add additional corn. Instead of noodles, try adding cooked rice to dish after it's done.

If you like more heat, try adding some Sriracha sauce.

Everything-But-the-Kitchen-Sink-Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium red potatoes, in 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 16-ounce bag of frozen vegetable mix
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 cup beans from 15-bean variety bean soup mix
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1/2 cup barley (optional)
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 6-pound roasting chicken or two bone-in chicken breasts and two bone-in chicken thighs
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 2 cups wide egg noodles

DIRECTIONS

Use an 8-quart pressure cooker. Add potatoes, mixed vegetables, onions, beans, celery and carrots to the pot and mix together.

Add barley if desired. It will rehydrate in the pressure cooker and texture to the soup.

Add the bay leaves around the perimeter of the pot.

Cut up the roaster chicken after removing any pop-up thermometer and any organs and neck bone from the cavity. Strip the skin away to cut down on fat and add the chicken parts with bones to the pot. A faster alternative is to add two bone-in chicken breasts and two bone-in chicken thighs instead.

Set the pressure cooker at its highest setting and cook for 40 minutes. While that is cooking, boil the two cups of egg noodles for six minutes and drain when done. Noodles should not be added to the soup until it is finished or the pressure would disintegrate the noodles.

Be careful opening the pressure cooker after the pressure is released. Remove the chicken pieces and strip the meat off the bones. Remove the Bay leaves.

Add the noodles and chicken meat back into the soup. Stir and serve.





Recipe by **Karen Byer-Storch** • Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

CHM TIPS



To add an interesting fluted edge to the straws, try using a fluted pastry wheel to cut the dough.

A good soup needs a little crunchy something on the side or to dunk in the soup. Here are two winners that also make great party appetizers.

Zesty Cheese Straws

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 1 pound sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1-1/2 cups flour, sifted
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 300°F. Beat the butter in a mixing bowl until creamy. Add the cheese, flour, baking powder, minced garlic, Tabasco sauce, cayenne pepper, salt and black pepper. Knead the dough and roll it out to a 1/4-inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut the dough into 1/2-inch strips of varying lengths. Place the strips on a nonstick baking sheet. Bake for approximately 30 minutes or until golden brown. Makes three to four dozen straws.

Parmesan-Basil-Tomato-Cheddar Bars

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/4 cups sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 3/4 cup flour, sifted
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, softened
- 1-1/2 tablespoons half-and-half
- 1-1/2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil
- 1-1/2 tablespoons finely chopped sun-dried tomato
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325°F. Beat the butter, Cheddar cheese, half-and-half and salt in a mixing bowl. Add the flour, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, basil and sun-dried tomato to the mixture until combined. Knead the dough and roll it out to 1/8-inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut the dough into 1-inch x 3-inch strips. Place the strips on a nonstick baking sheet. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Makes approximately 30 bars.

CHM TIPS

Keep in mind that soup is always better the next day after refrigerated, which allows the flavors to come out better.

Bobby G's Chicken Noodle Soup

Recipe by **Robert Garneau** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

When Bobby G. cooks, it's never short of excellent. Follow this recipe exactly and you won't be disappointed—especially where the chicken stock recipe instructs you to cool the broth and skim off the fat.

INGREDIENTS

- 4.5 pound chicken fryer, cooked and chopped
(Make chicken with stock. See recipe on page 43.)
- 3 quarts chicken stock (See recipe on page 43.)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 6 stalks celery, mix both chopped and sliced
- 3 cups of big chopped carrots (if skinny carrots, slice thinly)
- 1 fennel bulb, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh minced thyme
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 medium-big garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt (more to taste)
- 2 teaspoons of Better than Bouillon® chicken bouillon
- 1 12-ounce bag of wide egg noodles

DIRECTIONS

In a large stock pot, add olive oil, onions, celery, carrots, fennel, and garlic. Season with 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper. Stir and cook over medium heat until vegetables are colored a bit and a little cooked (5-10 minutes). Add the thyme, bay leaves, rosemary, and stir.

Add the chicken stock slowly and turn up the heat until close to boiling, then turn the heat down and cover. Add a couple heaping teaspoons of Better than Bouillon® brand chicken bouillon and a teaspoon of kosher salt. Let simmer/low boil for an hour or so until the vegetables are tender.

Add noodles and cook uncovered for 10 minutes. If too thick, add a couple cups of water and chicken bouillon to desired consistency. Add cut-up chicken and return to low boil, then turn the heat off. Let cool a bit and eat.

Chicken Stock Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 4 carrots, cut into thirds
- 1-2 fennel bulbs, cut in halves
- 1 large onion, quartered
- 1 teaspoon peppercorns
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 4 bay leaves
- 3 cloves garlic, no need to peel

DIRECTIONS

In a large stock pot, carrots, fennel, onion, peppercorns, thyme sprigs, rosemary sprigs, bay leaves, and garlic. Put chicken fryer in the pot and add 4 quarts of water. Cover; bring to boil, then lower to a low simmer/boil. Cook for a full hour then remove chicken. Allow to cool a bit then pull all the meat off the chicken and discard the fat and skin. Set the meat aside.

Put the chicken carcass back in the stock pot and cook/slow boil, covered for another two hours. Pour broth through strainer; keep the broth and discard the rest. Refrigerate overnight or put in the freezer long enough for the fat to form at the top (few hours). Remove the fat layer then stock is ready.



Photography and Styling by **Cindy Dyer** · Wine pairing by **Rande Jenus** · Writing and Recipes by **Barbara Kelley**

A cup of coffee, a sip of wine and a sweet bite is enough for your friends to venture out for an intimate get together.

Gather friends for an intimate, mid-winter's night dessert party. This is one of the easiest parties to host by keeping it small and limiting the menu. Hold it late enough so people will have eaten dinner and will look forward to stopping in for a sweet treat to close out the evening. If you serve some interesting wines, it can also be time to learn a little bit about dessert wines as you sip and chat.



Tonight's Menu

Salted Caramel and Pistachio Macarons

The Parisian macarons, one salted caramel and one pistachio, were made by Michel Giaon, owner of Michel Patisserie. Michel now resides in Northern Virginia but once baked these at the world-renowned Ladurée in Paris where the double-decker macaron was created. Michel's macarons can be purchased at www.michelpatisserie.com.

Wine pairing: Moscato D'Asti

Serve the lightest wines first. The Moscato D'Asti is a sparkling wine with a lower alcohol content. It freshens the palate for what's to come. This bubbly wine is served in a champagne flute.

Petite Chocolate Bundts with Mixed Berries and Cream

Recipe on page 50

Wine pairing: Elysium

The Elysium is medium in weight and refreshing. The cherry flavor goes well with fruit and chocolate but it's not so overbearing that it overtakes the last course. The Elysium is served in a four-ounce wine glass.

Creamy Cheesecake with Nectarines

Recipe on page 53

Wine pairing: Gray Ghost Vineyard's Adieu

Serve the heaviest and most potent wines last. Gray Ghost Adieu is a late-harvest Vidal with lots of peach and apricot flavors. Since its viscosity is heavy, only serve about two ounces of the Adieu in a four-ounce wine glass. The creaminess of the wine plus the honey with the concentrated fruit flavors blend into the cheesecake. *continued*

Baby, it's cold outside



A Wintertime
Dessert
Party

OUR WINTER-INSPIRED TABLESCAPE

Beginning with a palette of winter white, soft gold and silvery gray, our snowflake-like patterned tablecloth sets the stage. On top of that, a cream-colored flocked table runner with a woodgrain pattern serves as a base for our cozy lighting—two branch candleholders with gold and white tapers. Silver birds hold-crisp white linen napkins with metallic gold edges. Each dessert course was served on a different style of plate, beginning with the macarons on white dessert plates with a tree ring pattern. The petite chocolate-bundt cakes were served on a white plate encircled with silver branches and birds.

Setting the Table

Create atmosphere with the tablescape. Use candles and accessories with wintry colors. We chose a silver, gold and white palette to reflect the colder climate in the East. Dress your table to parallel your climate. If you live in warmer climates, use some greens in season from your yard. For example, in south Florida the Calamondin oranges are in bloom. Pick some branches with the small colorful fruits for your table.

Create the mood you want. Keep the number of guests to how many can sit around your table. Use candles, low lights, icy colors or warm colors mixed with whatever whimsy you are in the mood for. Set the table with small plates, dessert forks and a spoon. Use glasses for water and wine. If you don't set the places with coffee cups, have them ready.

Variations on a Theme

Don't let the thought of baking something elaborate stop you from having a small mid-winter get together. As Vintner Rande Jenus reminds us, "You're feeding them, not fattening them." No need to put out a smorgasbord-style dessert buffet. Here are some tips to make it your own and keep it simple.

- Buy a stellar cheesecake, torte, pie or the like from a bakery or warehouse store and serve it as your main attraction. For our party, we purchased the Parisian macarons. Serve the main confection on a dessert plate at each place, then have bite-size cookies and pastries to pass around the table.
- Buy rich, chocolate cookies, arrange them on a platter, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar and punctuate with red berries.
- Arrange pears and grapes with soft cheese on a tray.
- Serve berries and cream
- Make sure at least one of the offerings is chocolate.
- Serve wine, coffee and tea

Get the look!

Floral cotton tablecloth (Home Goods); flocked woodgrain table runner (Target); brand candleholder (World Market); candles (Target and Michaels)



1. Gold star plate, Pottery Barn
2. White hemstitched linen napkin, Pottery Barn
3. Woodgrain pattern sterling silverware, Pfaltzgraff
4. White trunk ring plate, "Nature's Nest Collection, Roscher
5. Bird on branches plate, "Olseau" by Circo, Home Goods

Ask the Expert

Rande Jenus, a Lover of Wine and People

Rande Jenus, owner of The Wine Cabinet in Reston, Virginia, selected the wines for A Wintertime Dessert Party. We asked him to give us some tips for pairing wines with desserts.

CHM: Some people might not have access to a wine expert. What suggestions do you have for people who want to have a dessert pairing but might be buying their wine at the grocery store or alcohol beverage distributor? Also, what do you suggest that won't break the bank?

Rande: I suggest serving two of the most readily-available dessert wines. The first one is a Moscato D'Asti or any Spumante. These are lower in alcohol, sweet, and go well with cheesecake, yellow cake, peach cobbler, apple pie, or something along those lines.

The second could be a Ruby Port wine—any wine department will have one. Just like it sounds, it's ruby in color and will look like Red Still wine and will have lots of fruit flavor. Pair it with something chocolate. Be sure not to get a Tawny Port, it is brownish in color as the name implies and has been oxidized. It is best paired with an end-of-meal cheese course and it doesn't pair well with chocolate.

If the wine department is extensive you could choose from a selection of dessert wines. Some examples are: ice wine (Canadian or German Eiswein, resulting from grapes that have been frozen while still on the vine); Sauternes (a French Bordeaux wine region); or a TBA (Troockenbeerenauslese) meaning "dried berries." The latter two are late-harvest wines or Botrytis—the "Noble Rot"—meaning the grape is allowed to be shriveled resulting in a higher sugar content.

CHM: Please tell us how to serve the wines you suggest.

Rande: Serve all of them chilled in clear stemware with a five-ounce-or-less bowl. Serve two to three ounces of dessert wine. Always use the stem without putting your fingers on the bowl at any point. You want to be able to not only enjoy the taste, but the color and the viscosity of the wine. The sparkling wines such as the Moscato D'Asti can be served in champagne flutes, but pour only four ounces. **CHM**



Rande is holding his favorite rosé champagne, a magnum of Billecart-Salmon. Photo by Barbara Kelley

RANDE JENUS is owner of The Wine Cabinet in Northpoint Village in Reston, Virginia. He describes himself as "a lover of wine and people." He retired from Marriott International in 2003 after 20 years of traveling extensively with Marriott while enjoying unique and fine dining experiences. He always dreamed of opening a service-oriented fine wine shop in the Reston community. He also enjoys time with his two children, family and friends. Yes, he really publishes his cell phone number on Thanksgiving in case one of his neighbors has a "wine emergency." Visit www.thewinecabinet.com to contact Rande, learn about their selection, or subscribe to their newsletter.



Petite Chocolate Bundts

These pretty little bundt cakes made with American-made chocolate are rich and gooey, especially served warm with berries and whipped cream.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 ounces Ghirardelli semi-sweet chocolate (1-1/2 four-ounce bars, use 12 squares)
 - 4 ounces Hershey's milk chocolate (seven-ounce bar, use 10 rectangles)
 - 1/4 cup boiling water
 - 1 tablespoon instant coffee power
 - 1 cup unsalted butter, softened at room temperature
 - 2 cups granulated sugar
 - 4 eggs, room temperature
 - 1/4 cup boiling water
 - 1 tablespoon instant coffee power
 - 2-1/4 cups flour
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 cup buttermilk
 - 1 cup semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips
- Confectioners sugar for dusting

INSTRUCTIONS

Melt chocolates together in a double boiler (or use a small saucepan, placed in a large saucepan with boiling water). Set aside. Dissolve instant coffee in one-quarter cup of boiling water. Set aside.

Cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time beating after each addition. Blend in melted chocolates, vanilla and coffee. Sift together the flour, salt and soda and add alternately with the buttermilk to the chocolate mixture. Mix until well blended. Fold in chocolate chips.

Prepare mini bundt cake pans according to the bakeware instructions (some do not require greasing the pan). Bake in 325°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes and turn out and cool on rack.

When ready to serve, reheat for a few minutes in the microwave if you want them warm. Sprinkle with sifted confectioners sugar. If serving with whipped cream, flavor the cream with only a little sugar and vanilla if at all, so as not to compete with the other flavors. Can make ahead and freeze. Wrap cakes in plastic wrap then in foil to freeze.

This cake can also be baked in a regular bundt cake pan at 350°F for one hour and 20 minutes or until wooden skewer comes out only with a few crumbs on it.



Creamy Cheesecake with Nectarines

This cheesecake is extra creamy and much different than a New York-style cheesecake. A unique crust and a topping of fresh nectarines gives it a unique tang.

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 cups vanilla cream cookies (Golden Oreos or Vienna Fingers)
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 eight-ounce packages of cream cheese (do not use low-fat), room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup butter, melted and slightly cooled
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon lemon rind, grated finely
- 5 nectarines, peeled and cut into large chunks
- 1 heaping tablespoon of apricot Polaner All-Fruit, high fiber

INSTRUCTIONS

Crust: Grind cookies into a medium crumb consistency in a food processor (similar to graham cracker crumbs). Mix crumbs with melted butter and sugar. Press mixture into a nine-inch ungreased spring form pan.

Filling: Beat together cream cheese, and sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Blend in butter, vanilla and lemon rind.

Topping: Put nectarines and apricot All-Fruit in food processor and coarsely chop to spreadable consistency.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Put creamy mixture into spring form pan. Bake 15-20 minutes until slightly browned around edges. Refrigerate overnight, at least for 12 hours.

When ready to serve, remove sides of the pan and top with nectarine topping. Garnish with a few slices of nectarine and mint. You can also use fresh apricots when in season.



Green Chicken

Creating a Family Heirloom Cookbook

Written by **Margaret Barker** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Every family has a food story that with the retelling becomes the stuff of legend.



In my family, it was the legend of the green chicken. When I was five, my brother offered me a nickel to add green food coloring to my mother's creamed chicken. Giddy with the excitement of misbehaving, I poured one-half of a large bottle of food coloring into the pot. As he stirred the food coloring into the creamed chicken, his face went from that look that said, "This will be a great joke" to "Are we in trouble!"

The chicken turned the harshest shade of kelly green. To make matters worse, my mother had already started cooking the vegetable—peas. We had a completely green meal. When my father came home from the second milking of the day (he was a dairy farmer) and sat down at the dining room table, my mother handed him a plate of green chicken on biscuits along with the green peas. He stared at his dinner. Then he looked up at my mother and said, "What the heck?" Even our family dog Sam wouldn't eat the green leftovers.

Don't Let the Memories Fade

Some years ago, I was spurred on by the musings of my mother to create a family heirloom cookbook. She and I were sitting in her kitchen (in the home where she was born and raised), drinking coffee and chatting. She said, "I look at this room and remember my mother peeling potatoes. During the Depression she fed nine people every night and in the summer six more when cousins came to stay."

She told me about Thanksgiving dinners, yearly gatherings of neighboring farmers that required two full days of cooking beforehand, a Christmas when she played an angel at the church pageant and threw up traditional oyster stew on the baby Jesus, and everyday meals. She recalled her family's food legend: a batch of my grandmother's biscuits were so hard that the family

dog buried one in the yard as if it were a bone. I thought to myself, I can't let these memories fade away.

So I Got to Work

I looked through recipe boxes. I talked to my aunts and my parents. I sifted through family picture albums and found old letters in the attic. I read my great grandfather's farming journal and learned about yields on his fruit farm. I boned up on the family tree so I knew the relationships between the characters in the stories my parents told me. This was no doubt one of the most enjoyable projects I ever did. In the end, I had a lovely cookbook to give to my parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Depression Memories and Recipes

My parents were born in 1924. When I asked them questions about food and their childhood, their memories were vivid and clearly influenced by the Depression. My mother recalled butchering time on the farm—and how her little sister terrorized her with a pig's eye she kept in a box for weeks. She told me about how hobos came to

continued



The author (baby in arms) with her grandparents, Marietta and Raymond Brown, with her brother David (the one who turned the chicken green).

FOOD & ENTERTAINING

her grandmother's home and she fed them—boiling their tin plates after they left. My father talked about his mother making soap. They told me about what it was like to cook on a wood burning stove.

My favorite story was about my maternal grandmother's cakes. My grandmother, her sister-and-law and a friend sold cakes, pies, cookies and fresh fruit at a little stand my grandfather built near his brother's farm. They set up on Friday and Saturday mornings. My grandmother also paid the family's doctor bills with angel food cakes. For years, she baked an angel food cake each week and took it to the family physician as payment.

So here I share some of my family's recipes with you. I hope you are inspired to sit down with your mother in her kitchen with a cup of coffee and talk about food. **CHM**

Creating the Family Cookbook: How-To

You too can preserve your family memories, food legends and recipes. Here are the steps to creating a family heirloom cookbook.

- Gather those written recipe cards and scraps of paper on which cooks jotted down recipes.
- Send out an e-mail to all your relatives asking for memories and recipes.
- Phone those older relatives who don't e-mail—they would love to hear from you.
- Interview as many people who will talk to you. Your family will often think details are uninteresting or unimportant. It's the day-to-day stuff that's fascinating.
- Ask questions about how foods were prepared—favorites—cooking failures like green chicken or exploding pressure cookers—traditions.
- Collect photographs to add to the cookbook.
- Look at unexpected sources like diaries or letters. You may discover surprising insights into your family and food.



Miriam and Marshall Barker, Christmas 1950

Thanksgiving 1919

In fall 1919, my grandfather was living in Troy, New York, where he was enrolled at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. My grandmother was living in New York City. Both of them were far from their families in Ohio. He wrote this letter to her on Thanksgiving Day:

*Miriam Dearest,
Today has been very uneventful, though restful, and full of thoughts of you, so I am satisfied. We had a quite a good Thanksgiving dinner this noon, with turkey, squash, cauliflower, potatoes, dressing, celery, cranberry sauce, salt crackers, soup, ice cream and pie, all fit for a king. It was about as good food as would be had at home, unless my taste is becoming educated to what we always have here. Please do not get homesick during this weekend dear, but remember our love is just getting bigger and better all the time, at least if the increase in the number of times you bring pleasant thoughts to me is any indication of how much I love you. Goodnight dear, and may God bless you and us.*

*Your very dear boy,
Marshall*

Potato Rolls

This recipe is a good way to use leftover mashed potatoes.

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup scalded milk
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1 cup mashed potatoes
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1 package dry yeast
- 5-6 cups flour

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the butter, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Add the hot milk and eggs. Fold in the mashed potatoes. Let cool to lukewarm. In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast in the 1/2 cup warm water. Add the dissolved yeast and 3 cups of flour to the mixture in the large bowl. Beat until blended. Turn the dough out onto a floured board. Knead for a minute or two. Let rest for 10 minutes. Then knead in enough of the remaining flour so the dough is not sticky; the dough should be smooth and elastic. Put the dough in a large greased bowl. Cover. Let rise in a warm spot until double in bulk. Punch down and shape into rolls. Grandmother made clover rolls.

Grease muffin tins. Roll dough into small balls. Place three balls in each muffin tin. Cover rolls. Let rise double in bulk, about 1-1/2 hours. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake rolls for 15 to 20 minutes. While still hot, brush rolls with melted butter.



**CHM TIPS**

We know it's not popular advice, but don't let your kids lick the mixing bowl like we used to do when we were kids! After a 2009 outbreak of food-borne illness in the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that raw eggs in cookie dough could contain *Salmonella* and raw flour could contain traces of *E. coli* bacteria.

Mother's Double-Decker Cookies

This is Margaret's great grandmother's recipe. When she baked cookies, she used to "test" the recipe by dropping spoonfuls of batter on the top of her cast iron stove. She flipped the cookies like pancakes and gave them to her adoring granddaughters for approval.

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup butter
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup molasses
- 4 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon soda

INSTRUCTIONS

Cream the butter and sugar until smooth. Add the egg and molasses. Beat until light and fluffy. Stir together the flour, salt, ginger and soda. Add to the first mixture and beat until completely blended. Wrap the cookie dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate. Can be made the day before.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. On a lightly-floured surface roll dough to 1/8-inch thick. Cut dough with round cookie cutter. On half of the cookies, cut out a smaller shape in the middle. These cookies will be the top of the double-decker.

Bake cookies on a parchment lined baking sheet for 5 to 8 minutes. Remove cookies to wire rack to cool. When cookies are cool, construct the double-deckers.

FILLING

- 1 tablespoon butter softened
- 2 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger
- 1 tablespoon hot boiling water

Beat butter with a fork. Add confectioners' sugar, salt and ginger. Add the boiling water. Beat with the fork. Add more water if needed for desired consistency. Spread the filling on the bottom cookies. Place the remaining cookies on top and press lightly.

Esther's Spice Cake

This was one of the cakes the author's grandmother sold at her cake stand during the Depression. The mocha icing probably made it a best-seller.

INGREDIENTS

- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon mace
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup molasses

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour two 8-inch round cake pans. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder, cinnamon, mace, and cloves. Sift together and set aside.

Put the butter, sugar and eggs in a large mixing bowl. Cream the butter, sugar and eggs until smooth and well blended.

Stir the buttermilk and molasses together in a bowl. Add the milk-molasses mixture into the creamed butter mixture in two stages alternately with the flour mixture. Beat until the batter is well blended and smooth after each addition.

Divide the batter between the prepared cake pans.

Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cake comes out clean. Cool for five minutes. Turn out the cakes from the pans onto a cooling rack. Cool completely.

Mocha Icing

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup butter softened
- 3-1/2 teaspoon cocoa
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 cups confectioners sugar
- 1/3 cup coffee

INSTRUCTIONS

Beat the butter until light and creamy. Stir in the cocoa, salt, and vanilla. Stir in 3-1/2 cups confectioner sugar. Beat in coffee. Beat in remaining 1/2 cup confectioners sugar if needed to make proper smooth consistency.

Notes from the CHM Test Kitchen

When we made the original recipe Margaret submitted, the cake was dry and its texture was a little off. We adjusted the cake ingredients to perfect it to what we have here. One adjustment was adding more fat in the form of more eggs and butter. Another adjustment was using buttermilk instead of regular milk. Then, we added baking soda to complement the addition of buttermilk.

Margaret said, "These cooks were farmers' wives and they had plenty of butter and eggs and milk during the Depression so I don't think they skimmed on those ingredients. I think a logical explanation for the measurements being off is that these women knew how to cook without written recipes. I suspect they jotted down ingredients to remember what was in the recipe but then adjusted amounts as they cooked. That's why many of the original recipes I had did not have measurements, just ingredients. I also wondered if the fact that these cooks used wood-burning stoves made a difference. We'll never really know."



Baked Pumpkin Custard

INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon cloves
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1-1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 1 cup scalded milk

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter eight custard cups or a one-quart baking dish. Set in a shallow pan large enough to hold the custard cups or baking dish. Beat the eggs. Stir in the sugar, salt, nutmeg, cloves, butter and pumpkin puree.

Slowly add the scalded milk, stirring constantly. Fill the shallow pan with one to two inches of hot water. Divide the custard mixture among the custard cups or pour into the baking dish. Bake for 40 minutes. The custard is set when a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean.



Miriam Barker with Buster



The author's aunts: Marjorie (her mother), Virginia, Barbara, and Linda Brown

Ham Loaf

Makes three loaves to serve 12 people. Leftovers make great sandwiches. Use a meat grinder to grind the ham or ask your butcher to grind it for you.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground ham
- 3 pounds ground pork
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups saltine cracker crumbs
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 cup parsley leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all ingredients well. Form into three loaves. Preheat oven to 350°F. While you are waiting for the oven preheat, make this glaze. Cover the loaves with the glaze while cooking:

GLAZE FOR HAM LOAVES

- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dried mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves

Bake for 90 minutes.

Soap

No, we don't expect you to make your own soap! Margaret's family cookbook was filled with recipes for wall cleaners, floor stains, tar salve, and cold and cough remedies. Her father remembered saving all fat from cooking to make the soap. Just look at the ingredients—it is harsh stuff. Her father said they used the soap for all cleaning—laundry, floors and faces.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of Red Seal lye
- 3 pints water
- 5-1/2 pounds fat of any kind
- 1/3 cup ammonia
- 1/2 cup Sol soda (sodium carbonate/washing soda)
- 1/2 cup borax
- 1/2 cup kerosene

INSTRUCTIONS

Add water to the lye and cool. Melt the fat. Add fat to the lye and stir. Add other ingredients and stir for 10 minutes. Pour into box. Makes about 350 square inches of soap.

Scalded Milk?

The CHM cooks noticed an ingredient called "scalded milk" in a few of the recipes. This means heating the milk to a temperature of 180°F (or just to the boiling point) to kill bacteria. In the old days, this was the way milk was pasteurized, but thanks to Louis Pasteur we don't have to do this. Still today, some baked good recipes call for scalded milk to make yeast breads light, cakes springy, and to enhance flavors. It's easy to scald milk. Put milk in a heavy pan on the stove top, stirring constantly to prevent scorching until bubbles form. Remove from heat and let it cool to about 110°F.



The Evolution of Margaret Barker

Margaret Barker was raised on a family farm in Ohio. Those were the days before corporate farming when three generations lived and worked together. Margaret fed calves by hand, and the cows pastured in the summer. That kind of childhood seems as removed from today as Huck Finn was to her generation. There is a glimpse of that dairy farm childhood in her article in this issue of *Celebrate Home*.

Although Margaret loved growing up on a farm, she was destined for other things. She moved to New Mexico in 1985 and started to practice law. When she moved to New Mexico, she thought she might return to the east in one or two years. Within the first six months there, she knew New Mexico was where she belonged.

In 2000 she left the law biz and has since become devoted to her passion—adult literacy. She is the founder of Reading Works, a community-based adult literacy program. Frank Laubach, a pioneer in the field of adult literacy, said, "The greatest thrill I have ever had is to see the joy in a person's face when he first learns to read. I would rather see that than eat."

Margaret knows there are few things she would rather do than eat, but she does concede the point to Frank Laubach—watching an adult realize he can read is a thrilling thing.

Written by **Jefferson Evans**

The Many Seasons of Beer



In the world of gastronomy, the seasons have always had an intrinsic impact on what we eat, both on a pragmatic level and on a cultural level where the newest trend plays itself out—whether at home or at the new hip restaurant around the block. Ancient man ate berries that happened to be growing at a particular time. Modern man incorporates them into fancy tortes. This reality does not limit itself to food.

One of the first seasonal beer styles to develop was in Germany named Bockbier, also known as starkbier (German for “strong beer”), which began as a strong ale brewed starting in the 13th century in the Hanseatic League town of Einbeck. The Dukes of Bavaria became so fond of the strong dark ale that the leaders of Bavaria, in a bid to prevent Bavarian money from going north, managed to entice an Einbeck brewer to come to Munich and brew a beer that eventually morphed into the strong dark lager that bockbier is today.

Winter Beer and Lent

Bockbier generally is associated with the fall and winter as a beer to celebrate the new harvest of hops and grains which in the past allowed brewers to begin a new season of brewing. Bockbier gained its greatest popularity thanks to religion and the Catholic Church.

Monastic communities were required to go through periods of fasting when no solid food could be consumed, with the longest period being Lent, the 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. The monks began turning some of their grain into beer instead of bread, finding that the resulting “liquid bread” helped getting through those periods of fasting a little bit easier...and merrier.

Lenten strong beer was first brewed by Paulaner monks from Italy at cloister Neudeck ob der Au in Munich. The monks soon became concerned that perhaps their liquid bread was a little too delightful to be appropriate for consumption during Lent. It was decided that a special dispensation from the Pope would be required for them to continue brewing without a guilty conscience, and so a cask of bockbier was sent to Rome. But as it happens, the rough trip across the Alps followed by the exposure to the hot sun of Italy soured the beer and by the time the Holy Father tasted the brew, it had become quite vile, and was given the Pope’s blessing. If deliberate suffering served to show one’s dedication to the church, then drinking such an unpleasant liquid would no doubt be good for the soul.

And then there is beer, oh yes beer, where the yearly calendar is a wonderful progression of seasonal brews from barley wines in January, to Doppelbocks in April to Hefeweizen July, to Oktoberfest beer in October, to Winter Warmers in December.

The beer gained in strength until it became the doppelbock (“double bock”) known today, with perhaps the best known example being Paulaner Salvator, which the monks had named after their Savior.

Spring through Christmas

Another style of seasonal bockbier that evolved is the maibock (“May Bock”), also known as Helles Bock—a strong golden lager served in May to celebrate the spring transition from winter to summer. The darker version served no later than the beginning of Advent, four weeks before Christmas, is the Weihnachtsbier (“Christmas Beer”), and is closer to the original darker form of bockbier.

The Story of Oktoberfest

The most famous expression of seasonal beer is no doubt Oktoberfest, when people the world over celebrate German culture and beer, with the epicenter being Munich’s Oktoberfest which is a 16-day celebration which runs from late September to the first weekend of October.

In 2012, 6.4 million people attended and consumed 6.9 million litres of Oktoberfest beer and untold number of sausages. As a side note, 4,500 items were handed into the lost and found office, including two wedding rings, a hearing aid, two French horns, and almost 500 cellular phones. But in a change from recent history, the list did not include any false teeth, normally a fixture of the inventory of lost items.

Oktoberfest began when Crown Prince Ludwig married Princess Therese on October 12, 1810. The people of Munich were invited to attend the celebration held on fields before the city gates, fields that came to be known as the Theresienwiese, or “Theresa’s Meadow.” The early celebrations focused more on horse racing than beer, but by the late 19th century the brewers had become much more directly involved with the festivities. Events included the *Entry of the Oktoberfest Staff and Breweries* when richly decorated horse teams and bands from the participating breweries enter the festival grounds.

When Oktoberfest celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1910, the amount of beer served had increased to 120,000 litres. The beer served at the Munich Oktoberfest must be brewed within the city of Munich and is of the Maerzen style, indicating that the beer was historically brewed in March. In the days before refrigeration, brewing during the summer was problematic due to heat and increased risk of bacterial infection, such that beers were brewed by the coming of spring, at an increased alcohol percentage to help the beer keep, and then placed in cold storage until fall.

End-of-Year Holidays

The holiday season is a wonderful time for lovers of seasonal brews. Such beers are generally dark with deep fruity notes suggesting figs or raisins, and often incorporate spices such as ginger, nutmeg or cloves. Closer to Thanksgiving, pumpkin and cinnamon are popular additions.

In Belgium, Christmas beers are known as Noëls, while in Scandinavia the designation Jule Ol is common. In the United Kingdom, the more general term Winter Warmer came into use, and like many holiday beers, Winter Warmers are often dark, tend to accent malt more than hops, and are often stronger in alcohol than beers available the rest of the year.

Many American brewers produce holiday seasonals, with one of the earliest of the modern craft beer movement being the *Our Special Ale Christmas Ale* from Anchor Brewing of San Francisco. First brewed in 1975, the recipe is

changed every year by adding new spices and/or changing which spice notes are accentuated. Even the label changes each year, with each new one featuring a different type of tree. The 2012 label featuring a Norfolk Island Pine.

The Mad Scientists of Brewing

Brewers are known for having fine senses of humor. You see this in beer names such as: *McQuire’s I’ll Have What the Gentleman on the Floor is Having* barley wine; *Wasatch* (of Utah) *Polygamy Porter* (with the tagline “why have just one”); *Full Sail’s Wreck the Halls Winter Warmer*; and, *Lagunitas’ Hairy Eyeball Ale*.

Then there is the English brewery Ridgeway with their amusing line of Christmas beers that will induce laughter with both their titles and labels. These beers begin with *Bad Elf* at 6% alcohol by volume (abv), *Very Bad Elf*, *Seriously Bad Elf*, *Criminally Bad Elf*, and finally, *Insanely Bad Elf*, which tops out at 11.2% abv.

Embrace the world of seasonal beers. It will lead to a journey that is rich, varied, and never boring. And that I guarantee. Prost!

The range of seasonal beers available in the modern age is huge, and features beers that include almost every ingredient known to man, ranging from mustard ale from Belgium’s Brewery Smisje to *Mbege Ale* brewed with sorghum, millet and banana juice from Sprecher Brewing of Glendale, Wisconsin. *Naughty Girl Stout* is brewed with mint from Right Brain Brewery of Traverse City, Michigan. And the unusual *El Mole Ocho Ale* is brewed with chili peppers and chocolate from New Holland Brewing of Holland, Michigan.

The mad scientists of brewing are always stretching the boundaries, with Dogfish Head of Milton, Delaware, being early pioneers. They also brew market beers based on ancient recipes such as their *Ta Henket* which is brewed with an ancient form of wheat and flavored with chamomile, doum-palm fruit and Middle Eastern herbs. Embrace the world of seasonal beers. It will lead to a journey that is rich, varied, and never boring. And that I guarantee. Prost! **CHM**



Merry Mischief (Samuel Adams); *Very Bad Elf*, *Seriously Bad Elf* and *Criminally Bad Elf* (Ridgeway) and *Tidings* (Port City)

THE ARTIST

Interview with **Gladys-Roldan-de-Moras** by **Cindy Dyer** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Gladys Roldan-de-Moras

Impressionist Painter

Always proud of her Colombian and Mexican roots, Gladys Roldan-de-Moras' passion for art is reflected in her colorful work. I had the good fortune to cross paths with her through an introduction by my sister, Debbie, who shared "band mom" duties when both of their eldest children were still in high school. Gladys invited me to her studio in San Antonio in January, and to say that I was inspired is an understatement. As a fellow painter, I soaked in her advice for hours, surrounded by her paintings, art supplies and props, and enough books to keep this fellow biblioholic happy! She was a wealth of information and shared her life's work with Celebrate Home Magazine.

IN THE BEGINNING...

When did you start drawing and creating, and when did you first consider yourself an artist?

I guess I always knew I was an artist. My fondest and youngest memories were always related to art. I remember seeing beautiful Impressionists prints my dad had bought. I studied them carefully in complete awe. I remember very vividly the portrait my grandmother had commissioned of my grandfather and trying to figure out how the artist created it. I took art classes as often as possible.

What is your formal educational background?

You mentioned you began as a medical student.

Can you tell me a little about that and how you switched to art?

I always wanted to study art but it was highly discouraged by my parents, who said art was not for the intellectual mind and the Lord had given me one. I was born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico, and there I entered the highly prestigious medical

school at the TEC of Monterrey, Mexico. I decided to go into medicine, with the intent to specialize in plastic surgery. After five-and-a-half years of medical school, I married my husband, Rafael, who was finishing his Ph.D. in the United States. I joined him in Austin and graduated alongside him with a bachelors degree in biology and minor in art, still thinking I would continue with medicine. Years later, our son, Rafael Jr., was born. He had very serious health issues. I did not feel the calling to be a physician anymore. I could not take the suffering of people, and this time it was me on the other side. There and then, my husband encouraged me to do what I had always wanted to do, with his full support.

What artists have you studied under?

I have studied under many great artists, and I would hate to forget to mention one, but I credit the years of studying with Dan Gerhartz and his sincere willingness to share with me and teach me for opening my eyes to true art. For this, I will be forever grateful.

You mentioned your love of Sorolla's work.

What attracts you to his work?

I love Sorolla's work, and he is my favorite old master artist, with his beautiful brushstrokes, to the beautiful rendering of sunshine and movement, and his varied subjects. I also admire what a strong man of faith and family he was.

continued



The Good Book Oil/Belgian Linen 30x24 2013 Texas Masters Invitational at InSight Gallery in Fredericksburg, Texas



Guadalupe Oil on Belgian Linen 24x36

“Learn everything about your materials, techniques, basic concepts and then, once you have mastered that, be true to yourself, paint what you love, paint what your own eyes see, what attracts you and work hard. ”

THE ARTIST

What other famous artists have influenced you, and how?

Now that is a very hard question, because I am in constant awe of new artists that I discover. Aside from all the contemporary artists that I have been so fortunate to study with like Dan Gerhartz, Scott Burdick, Quang Ho, Kevin MacPherson, Jeffrey Watts, Laura Robb and others. There are also the Impressionists and all the Spanish Masters of the Romantic School—Sorolla, Pradilla, Fechin and Serov.

Which art movements have you been influenced by?

I am influenced by World Impressionism, the Romantics, the Pre-Raphaelites, the American Impressionist Painters, the Boston School, the Spanish Romantics, and so many more.

What was your first painting?

What I consider was my first artwork was a profile pencil drawing I did of my sister Carolyn when I was about 11 years old. Unfortunately, I lost that drawing.

Share the story about that artist who said you were the most attentive model he had ever hired—and then he found out why you were paying so close attention.

It was around 1995 and Scott Burdick had come to teach a workshop at the Coppini Academy of Fine Arts in San Antonio. I did not get a place in the workshop, but the coordinator, Janice Hindes, was looking for models and she knew that I collected handmade Mexican dresses. She asked me to model for the workshop and I chose a China Poblana dress that was hand-embroidered by my grandmother when she was a teenager in the early 1920s.

I remember just posing very still and paying so much attention to what Scott was saying. During my break, I would write down notes. Then Scott mentioned that he had never had a model who was so interested in what he was saying. Then he found out that I was an artist, too! I was fortunate to take several workshops with him later.

THE ARTIST

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF ART...

Has trying to develop your artwork into a means of earning a living changed either your work or your process?

I think it has given me more responsibility to try and paint the best I could and hopefully find a home for the painting, so I could pay bills and continue to take workshops.

I wanted to take more classes and workshops and that is expensive. So I decided to teach a beginning oil painting class at the Coppini Academy, in San Antonio. I always knew that I loved to teach, and this confirmed it. I taught for almost 18 years, and I can't tell you how much I learned from the students.

I took local classes with Janice Yow Hindes and at the same time taught my own class. She is a beloved teacher in San Antonio. One day she came into class and shared with us that she had to quit teaching in order to get the health benefits of a regular job. We were all devastated. And we asked, who is going to take your place? To my total surprise, she said, "There is only one person that I feel can do this. And that person is Gladys."

I was shocked, but I accepted the challenge. I still remember the first day I came into class—which was composed of more than 15 students, and only two students showed up. I clearly remember these two artists. This, by far, was one of the hardest things I had ever done—walk in someone else's shoes, knowing that they were too big for me. This made me work even harder. Now I had my regular beginners class as well as Janice's class. I am happy to say that some students started rejoining and I had a waiting list for my classes. I thank Janice for believing in me and trusting in me.

How do you handle business of being an artist?

I have always had wonderful artist friends for advice, plus the loving support of my husband and family. This is not my favorite part of the business.

You taught painting for years. Do you enjoy teaching?

I absolutely love teaching. I just wish I had more time. I have taught at the Coppini and abroad.

What galleries represent your work?

InSight Gallery in Fredericksburg, Texas
Greenberg Fine Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Legacy Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona

THE PROCESS...

Tell me about your typical start-to-finish workflow on a painting.

I have several ways that I do this. First comes the inspiration, which most of the time comes from listening to a particular piece of music. It might be something I literally "saw." It might be a color harmony that I really liked, or it might just be an idea that popped into my head.

I start with pencil designs. I start sketching, imagining the possibilities. Then I might have a model come in and pose for me. I do quick pencil sketches and make color notes. Then I take a lot of photo references. I have a lot of fun looking for props, outfits and locations. My studio is so full of fabrics, dresses, and props that sometimes I think it looks like a thrift shop!

I do more studies, and then many times ask my model to come back and we start on the painting. Usually I do the face using the model, and afterward I use my lifesize mannequin who serves in the model's place.

Painting from life is my favorite way of working. Nothing compares to it, but sometimes I might use photographs, especially for the subjects that are in movement. For example, in the Jarocha collection (folkloric dancers of the state of Veracruz), I will go to the cafe where they are performing and do sketching and color studies and take photographs. I later develop them into paintings. I do the same thing for my escaramuzas and charros.

I am a slow painter. I paint every day, but not all paintings make it out of my studio.

I definitely see the influence of impressionism in your work. How would you define your style?

My style has evolved after many years of study, teaching and lots and lots of brush mileage. It was artist Quang Ho who helped me to not be afraid and to just let go.

continued

THE ARTIST

What inspires you?

The beauty of God's creation; anything beautiful I can see and for which I am thankful. I try to paint paintings that will leave the viewer with a smile on their face. So much to paint, so little time!

I know you love to listen to music while you paint. What type of music do you prefer?

Mostly classical, but not solely. I have a very eclectic taste. Since my life is surrounded by music, I find that beautiful music lifts up my soul. I try and capture that in my own paintings. Many times, I will hand write on the back of each canvas the precise music (with the artist name and recording) I was listening to as I painted that piece. Many times it is easier for me to remember the name of the music I was listening to while painting than the actual title I gave the painting! I also enjoy listening to art lectures while I paint. There are some fabulous websites like the Smithsonian Institution lecture series.

You have a large library of art books. What books do you like to reference most often when working?

Oh, I have tons of books—some I consider my treasures. Most of my favorite ones are out of print and highly sought—the Emile Gruppe books, the *Figure in the Landscape* by Sadakichi Hartmann is one of my absolute favorites; all the Andrew Loomis books; all the artists library books from the turn of the century; all the Sorolla books, Fechin, Sargent, Zorn, Impressionists... way too many to fully list! My most prized book is one of only 200 signed and numbered editions of Cecelia Beau's autobiography.

Why do you prefer studying the masters rather than more contemporary publications?

I find so much inspiration by studying forgotten or obscure painters, and I keep finding more.



“My style has evolved after many years of study, teaching, and lots and lots of brush mileage.”

THE ARTIST

How do you like to work? In big blocks of time? Finishing a work in one session?

I try and work every day. My routine is usually from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a lunch break. I usually have a routine. I go up to my studio, start putting out paint, setting out everything I need, and putting everything in place while I start my daily prayers. I have a series of daily meditations that I go through. I will listen to music or some kind of art of spiritual lecture. I listen to things that will leave me with some knowledge, as well as uplift me.

Unless I have a big deadline, I will paint at night, but I prefer to work with natural light. At night, I start with some music and a nice cup of coffee. I get out some art books, and simply study,

study and study. Or, I'll take my iPad to bed and start visiting virtual collections online.

I have learned lately that the more time I spend designing and problem-solving on a painting, the less probable it will be a disaster. But not all paintings leave my studio. I am usually working on several paintings at the same time. If I get tired of a particular work, I will let it rest for a couple of days and come back to it with fresh eyes.

Recently, I have been posting my paintings on Facebook as I am working on them. People seem to enjoy that, and I like to share whatever knowledge I have. I love to keep in contact with so many friends on Facebook. Also, I try to attend open life model sessions on Wednesdays at the Coppini.

Pastorale Oil on Belgian Linen 11x14



Escaramuza Charra Oil on Belgian Linen 24x30

How does working with others—in workshops or when you teach—shape your work and how does it differ from being alone in your studio?

I believe that an artist should not be isolated. I am thankful that we now live in the era of Facebook and Skype. I love to check in with other artist friends and see what everybody is up to. I also love to travel and meet with other artists to paint.

When does color come into the work? Do you often know this will be a “warm” painting from the start, for example?

I don't always work in the same manner. I like to try different ways. But many times when I am attracted to a particular color harmony, I will try and visualize it in my head. Also, many times I feel

like painting sunlight because I love the sun, but I also find it intriguing to create a higher key painting that involves all colors and shades of grays. Sometimes I know that there is a particular color that I want to bring out, and other times I am constantly remembering that I need to tone down my colors. Kevin MacPherson taught me years ago, “If everybody is shouting, then no one is being heard.”

Will you shift colors a lot? Will a green sofa become blue for instance, as you work on a piece? Or are there subtler shifts as you paint?

I try to work out these problems in preliminary sketches, but it doesn't mean I won't change something later on. I try to keep my initial idea in mind.

continued

THE ARTIST

You work your way up to the canvas utilizing pencil sketches and small oil studies to determine composition and color blocking. Have you always worked this way?

I guess as I have matured in my art, I have come to realize how important it is for me to do so. I find that I am more secure of what I want to accomplish—plus it is fun to draw on paper again.

When you are finished with a work, are you sentimental about it?

Sometimes I wish I had kept some, but with three kids in college, bills are first. I take my art very seriously and I am so grateful to those collectors that have included and continue to include my art in their private collections. I feel it is an honor.

What materials do you like to work with? You mentioned that you tried acrylic and water-mixable oils but that your preference is oil.

I try and work with some of the finest products available. I take my art seriously and the archival-ry of my paintings is important to me. I love to use bristol and sable brushes. I love Grand Prix, Royal Sable, Robert Simmons and Rosemary brushes in all shapes and size, but mostly use filberts—extra long filberts and squares.

I use several brands of professional grade paints—Rembrandt, Utrecht, LeFranc, Gamblin. I currently only use a little of Gamsol, and only poppyseed oil as my medium. Although I have painted in watercolors, pastels, conté pencils, and acrylics over the years, I have solely been using oil paint for over the last 15 years.

What is that metal plaque that you put on your easel ledge before you begin painting?

It reads, "Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace." That is one of the most beautiful prayers written by St. Francis of Assisi. Assisi is one of my favorite places in the world, and this prayer describes exactly the way I strive to live my life.

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.*

What is the relationship that exists between your artwork and your cultural heritage?

Interestingly, I have been noticing more and more that my Latin and Spanish cultures keeps showing through my paintings. I don't set out to paint a Spanish/Latin theme—I simply set out to paint what I consider beautiful. Sometimes it involves me traveling and working in other places of the world, and I guess it simply seeps through. I believe that the places in which you were brought up, your life, and your tastes all show through in your work, and I guess that is something that will never disappear from my paintings.

I know you often paint from models and that your daughter is also a frequent model.

My dear daughter Analucia (Annie) has been posing for me since she was a baby. I remember one incident where she came to me and ask me if we could go to Disney World for the holidays. I asked her if she would pose for me and then we could sell some paintings. She posed for me for several paintings, and they they all found homes. We had a great time at Disney World!

Annie and my niece are my favorite models because they know exactly what I am looking for.

When Annie found out that I paid my profes-

continued



Charreada Fiesta Oil on Belgian Linen 24x48



Mission San José Oil on Belgian Linen 18x24

THE ARTIST

was a “professional” model, and then she would eagerly pose for me. She continues to model for me and I know she is only a phone call away. I also have other models from the Coppini Academy as well as friends and their children.

You love to collect props—dresses, still life elements, etc. Tell me about your collection.

I started collecting when I was very young. My grandmother had gifted me some old dresses which thought were so beautiful. It was when she gave me the “China Poblana” dress that I started seriously collecting.

Now I find it so fun not only to work on designs and compositions, but also to hunt for props, dresses, and locations. The hunt is part of the excitement. If I am painting themes like the escaramuzas (term for Mexican cowgirls, the national female sport of Mexico), I buy professional dresses that I put on my life-size mannequin.

How does traveling and seeing art across the world influence your own work? Do you have a favorite place to visit, paint, and see galleries?

I believe our whole life experience is what makes each of us unique. Nobody has walked in our shoes, gone to the places we have gone or done the things that we have done. All of that, for some reason, will show up and penetrate our work. I can tell a lot about an artist by looking at their work. It is like a window into their soul.

I love to paint in Italy and Mexico, aside from all the beautiful places in the U.S. I am not a big landscape painter. I prefer intimate figures and still life scenes. I love to travel to places, collect props, paint the country and somehow absorb the environment. There are so many beautiful places I am looking forward to visit. I also find that I am more attracted to sunny places.

Escaramuza in San Antonio Oil on Belgian Linen 20x36
Winner “Best in Show” 2012 American Impressionist Society National Juried Exhibition



Song from a Secret Garden Oil on Belgian Linen 22x28

What has given you the most satisfaction in your career?

Every time someone acquires one of my paintings, I am grateful. Just recently one of my paintings received the 2012 American Impressionist Society Best in Show Award, which was quite an honor!

What is the best advice you were ever given?

Paint from life.

What advice would you give to an artist?

Paint from life! Learn everything about your materials, techniques, basic concepts and then, once you have mastered that, be true to yourself, paint what you love, paint what your own eyes

see, what attracts you and work hard. Study, paint, study, paint and if you are able, share your knowledge with others. We learn so much more from our students. Look for the best teacher you can find, one who is willing to really share with you and help you grow as an artist. Master the basics and give your brushes lots of mileage. In every painting you do, strive to do your best.

Visit museums, website and expose yourself to the best art you can find. In doing this you will learn to appreciate great art and, little by little, it will start to show up in your work. Follow your dream. Believe in yourself and never give up. And don't forget to enjoy the ride. This is a lifelong learning road.

continued

THE ARTIST

How do you maintain a balance between the demands and desires of being a mom and a wife and being an artist?

I am grateful to my husband who has always believed in me and supported me. Our children grew up always seeing their mom working in a studio. They learned to respect my time in the studio when other adults never did and took my profession very seriously.

Everywhere I went I would have a book with me, or I would be listening to a tape or sketching. Every single moment I could find, whether waiting for them after school in the car, I would be immersed in studying. I love my immediate family because they always supported me and believed in me.

I know that your entire family is creative. Can you tell us more about each of their creative endeavors and how they support yours?

On my side of the family, there are artists, fashion designers, singers, graphic artists. On my husband's side there are also poets, writers, and singers. My husband is an engineering professor, but he is also a talented poet and musician. He composes mostly religious music and sets the music to religious plays that my mother-in-law has written. I am very proud of him.

Our oldest son, Rafael, is an emerging opera singer; our middle son, David, is a ceramic artist; and our daughter Annie is a psychology/music major. David started out studying business management and then made the switch to a BFA and he will soon complete his degree.

It is interesting to note that I have never taught any of our kids art, but they were all innately very gifted in art. Of course, David has chosen this career and I wish I was half as talented as he is when I was his age. I can't wait to see what beautiful works come out of his studio. He is so talented.

Since I was never supported by my parents in my art career, we have always supported and encouraged each of our children in their interests.

NETWORKING...

Does having an "audience" via your blog and Facebook page affect your work or how you think about your work?

Facebook has been important in my work as an artist. I recently learned that some important people have been following my page, and for that, I am very grateful. I love to be in communication with people, especially other artists. Right now, I am not teaching a weekly class, so it can get lonely in the studio. Having a network of friends and artists out there gives my work another dimension.

In what ways do you think the Internet affects your art in today's world or in the future?

I think that we have only seen the tip of the iceberg of how the Internet helps us. I am in awe of the contacts and sales I have because of people who see what I am working on in my studio, plus they like to learn more about my family.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...

What is your most important dream as an artist that is yet to be fulfilled?

My dream would be to one day have a show with my son, David. That would be my dream. Other than that, I just try and paint the best paintings possible and hope that the next one will be better. I just want to paint beautiful paintings, that's all—and leave something beautiful behind.

Do you have any upcoming projects?

I have a one-woman show scheduled for spring of 2014 that will portray my Spanish heritage with paintings of mostly Spanish and Mexican women. **CHM**

See more of Gladys' work on her website at www.roldandemoras.com. She can be reached at gladysroldandemoras@gmail.com. Follow her on Facebook at [whats-on-my-easel](#).

Poet Rafael Moras, Sr.: www.luxdomini.com
Tenor Rafael Moras, Jr.: www.rafaelmoras.com
Ceramic artist David Moras: www.davidmoras.com

THE ARTIST

Taped to the top of Gladys' easel is a letter from her artist friend, Quang Ho. I was inspired by his letter to her and wanted to share it with my fellow artists. —Cindy Dyer

To have fear means that you are hanging onto something that you've decided is valuable, isn't it? Most of the time, we never realize the true nature of fear—which is just made up and has no basis on reality at all. What's the worst that can happen? Maybe paint a painting or two that don't turn out the way you expected. You'll learn more from those (with an open heart and mind) than the next 30 of the same old ways!

I've found that the "tightness" that you are talking about in your painting has little to do with painting using "looser" brushwork. It has more to do with getting beyond the first level (subject bound) and seeing the painting more on a big picture relationship between shapes, values, colors, edges (second level). When you are firstly thinking about the big flow of structural shapes and value relationships and not bogged down by what the individual subject should look like, you are more likely to allow the flow between areas that create a sense of the painting being alive, loose, and expressive.

The nice thing is that you already have the skill to do it. Have fun. Focus on the abstract arrangements and let the things you are painting drop in where you think it's needed (this is the artistic part). **CHM**



Before beginning a painting, Gladys does preliminary pencil sketches and small oil studies to determine composition and color blocking.



The best advice I received from my inspiring afternoon with Gladys...

Load up, loosen up, and constantly squint!

Winter Photography Indoors

HOW-TO

Writing and photography by **Brian K. Loflin**

As winter chills our environment we still have the pressing urge to make photographs. In some locations winter brings on longer hours of darkness and intolerable temperatures with nasty weather outside. But we still have the need, don't we?

So why don't we move out of the snow and ice and miserable temperatures and go inside where it's warm and cozy? Inside we can even stay in our flannel jammies to make some excellent images.

The solution is to buy some of your favorite fresh cut flowers from your nearby florist or food market. (Okay, maybe the jammies won't work here!) Look for flowers that are young, fresh and unblemished. Select flowers in various stages of maturity. Include full blossoms, but also include new buds and those just about to open, too. And get a few stems with perfect leaves as well.

Set the Scene

Before buying your flowers, you need to set up your studio. Select a place to shoot in your home with some nice window light. Remember, the classical painters and photographers made their masterpieces by using only the light from a single window.

You don't have to move into the direct sun or sunbeam—nice warm light from a north window will work very well. And don't worry—light coming from overcast skies is nice and renders colors well. The big studio photographers spend lots of money on equipment trying to duplicate this type of beautiful lighting.

Now you need to create a pleasing background. Curtains or draperies may work well, especially if they are solid colors or only slightly patterned. You can also make yourself a variety of reusable backgrounds from solid color fabric yardage. Go to a fabric store and look through the remnant tables and pick up something great for only a couple of bucks.

More natural backgrounds may be made from a mounted photographic print of an out-of-focus nature scene or a full frame of softly-patterned foliage. Set up this print or the fabric background on an easel or hang it behind your floral subjects.

Remember that you will want to render your backgrounds out of focus through the careful use of depth of field. Simply assure the background is a foot or more behind your floral subject.

Equipment

Now you need to select your equipment. I like to use a medium focal length lens in the 75 to 105 mm range. A zoom lens works nicely. Some photographers like to use prime lenses of fixed focal length with wide maximum apertures. These prime lenses can easily render the subject sharp and the background soft with a pleasing bokeh. (Bokeh is a Japanese term that refers to a soft, dreamy background with many rounded patterns of light.) Regardless of your lens choice, you can accomplish the same task if you are careful.

I believe that you should really use a tripod. In photography a tripod serves several purposes. First, it provides a stable platform for your camera. In this type of set-up you may have shutter speeds that may be very slow. A tripod will eliminate movement from your image and render your flowers sharp. A tripod will also allow you to make small, yet planned changes in your composition. You can make camera adjustments until we get a pleasing arrangement that is just right. And you can repeat the image many times with variations in your composition.

Flower Arranging

It's time to make some dynamic arrangements of the flowers. Think about the spatial arrangement and variety of content. Arrange the main stem or flower from a lower corner upward and diagonally through the frame. Avoid arranging everything on a vertical center line.

continued

HOW-TO

Use fully-opened blossoms and buds for variety. Use some leaves too, but keep the arrangement simple. Here the old axiom of "less is more" is very wisely taken. Also don't forget to use a simple, unobtrusive vase or container if it will show.

Keep the major plane of your arrangement parallel to the back of the camera to maximize the effect of depth of field. Try to arrange the materials in a simple, flat plane rather than a large, rounded bouquet. As you build the arrangement you might add a single flower or bud at a time.

Look through the lens from time to time to see how the arrangement is coming. Fill the negative space with a bud or leaf. The negative space is that empty, blank area frequently found in the corners. Think about how the subject would appear in nature. Strive for variety, yet simplicity in the arrangement. Let the flowers speak for themselves. They are the "heros" of your composition. After a while, your compositions will get better.

Now comes the time of making the exposure. Plan to separate the flowers from the background. Good photography does this in four ways. First, separate the flowers from the background physically, through distance—a foot or more is a good starting place.

Second, separate them photographically through depth of field. The flowers should be sharply focused and background soft. Wider apertures (smaller F numbers like F 4.0 and F 5.6 may be ideal) will do this, but enough depth of field is required to render sharp detail in the flowers. Experiment here based upon distance from flowers to the background, distance between camera and flowers, and focal length of the lens, too.

Third, separate your arrangement from the background through tone values. Use darker flowers against lighter backgrounds and vice-versa. Last, separate your flowers from the background in terms of colors. Use naturally occurring complementary colors of nature. Yellows against blues and magentas against greens are some of those color pairs that occur naturally. And if you consider the color wheel, they lie opposite each other, providing maximum color contrast.

Now for the final task; modify the light for best results. Use a diffuser to soften the light that

Right: After the "beauty shots" spend some time exploring the details. Move in close and capture the miniature beauty of the flower structure.



Below: A macro lens provides an in-depth look at the heart of the flower. Smaller structures provide interest and an often never seen miniature vista. Use big F numbers for ample of depth of field.



falls on your subject and use a reflector when required to bounce light back into those deeper shadows that result from directional, one sided light. Both of these techniques will bring out so much more detail in your photography.

You can make both of these light modifiers at home. The diffuser is best made with a large embroidery hoop from the sewing or craft store. Stretch sheer white window fabric across the hoop. Do not use colored fabric as it will affect the color of your image. A reflector is simply a piece of white craft or foam core board also found at the craft store. You can make both of these for under \$10.

Now when the photography is finished you may enjoy the cut flowers for a little while around your home. But, if you print, mount and frame your photograph, you can proudly hang the masterpiece long after the flowers were tossed. **CHM**

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Each specimen is delivered matted, mounted on backing boards and packaged in transparent plastic envelopes.



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How much is that doggie in the window?

Choosing the Family Pup

Written by **Teri Desrosiers**

Photography by
Cassandra Birocco



Lucas

PETS

Your family thinks it's time to get a dog—a beloved addition to your family. You're not alone, 39 percent of U.S. households own at least one dog. You have children who can't wait to get the new puppy, name him, hold him and play with him. But you either didn't grow up with a dog or it's been a long time since you've had a four-legged buddy. You want to make a good choice for your family and your home.

Consider the following questions carefully. This will help you determine if you are ready for a dog and what kind of dog might best suit your family. Do your research, talk to friends and experts, then add some luck and you'll have a good shot at making a good choice.

Why do you want a pet?

Do you want a dog because your children are begging for one? Do you have an only child and you think your son or daughter should have a canine friend? Do you think it is the perfect addition to round out your family life? Do you want the dog for protection?

Ask yourself these questions and be honest about why you want a pet. Having a pet is a commitment that can't be taken lightly. Your family is responsible for the caring, feeding and giving love to your furry friend.

What activities will you partake in with your pet?

Your activities will help determine a breed. Do you want a lap dog or a designer dog you can take almost anywhere unobtrusively? Do you want a dog for daily walks and hikes? If so, look at ones that need and enjoy a lot of attention and exercise. Are you a senior and are less active? Ask about dogs best suited to low activity and one that is small enough not to overpower or knock you over.

What is your living situation?

Do you have a yard, a small apartment or single family home? Do you live in the city or rural area? This will determine a size of breed that works for you. For example, Great Danes are wonderful dogs and one of the most gentlest and protective of children. But big dogs need big spaces to run and walk and they don't fare well in hot climates where they need to be outside to free stretch their long limbs.

I show my pups so that requires training at multiple locations. I also have to include fun activities to balance out all the work—running, tossing a ball and a good walk will do that.

Find out what ordinances your city has or if your homeowner's association allow dogs and what the rules are. If you're renting, find out about pets. Seniors living alone often find companionship with smaller dogs. Find out if senior living residences will permit dogs and what size.

continued



Bruno

"To err is human, to forgive, canine." —Unknown

PETS

All public places must accept service or therapy dogs under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Above all, be practical. Consider when you add up all the people in your family and rooms in your home, is there space for an extra "body?"

What is your work schedule? Do you travel?

If there is no one home during the day, decide how you will housebreak and train the puppy. Crate training creates a safe haven for your dog when you're not there. Make sure you have time to exercise and play with your pet. Have a plan for care when you travel.

What kinds of dogs do you like?

Is your favorite breed child-friendly?

When picking out a puppy it's best to see and meet its parent. If the parent is good with you and your children, chances are the puppies will be good as well. If you see a bad temperament in a dog, run!

I personally like a dog that loves to be on the go. I also prefer a dog that loves to work and can develop a strong bond with me. Dogs that like to work and be active are from the herding, working or sporting group. I've also come across many mixed breeds that step up to the plate. All of these dogs can work well in a family setting. There are some dogs that are naturally good family dogs, like Beagles. We all love Snoopy, right? Realize that your favorite dog may need a lot of attention and outdoor play. Be ready for that. Ask friends about their experiences. Ask the experts too.

Can you afford a dog?

Just like for people, there are pet health insurance companies to cover the inevitable visits to the veterinarian and possible surgery or special treatment. Talk to a vet about typical and atypical expenses, then decide whether you will self insure or buy a policy. Ask the vet for recommendations for insurance and what he or she accepts. Talk to friends who have dogs to see what they have experienced.

Are you prepared to puppy proof your home and make a few adjustments?

Know what plants, chemicals or foods are poisonous to dogs and put them away. Did you know that chocolate is potentially fatal to dogs? The darker the chocolate the more toxic it is. Think about potential choking or physical hazards. Learn ways to keep your puppy safe and eliminate destruction to your home.

Are your children ready to welcome a dog?

Children need to learn how to interact with the dog. Have an orientation session about showing respect, approaching and feeding the dog. Talk about not teasing or pulling the dog's tail. An adult should supervise the interaction with the puppy until the pet is integrated into your home.

We all know the stories about the child who begs for a puppy and the parents end up walking, feeding and cleaning up after the dog. Consider the age of your children and if they want the dog, then decide whether or not they are up to the responsibility.

Talk to your children about stepping up to the plate and make a list of the specific duties they will take on daily with the dog. Don't be ambiguous about it and make the tasks age appropriate. Make a check-off chart to be sure care of the dog gets done, don't assume it is. This is a great way for children to take responsibility and build leadership skills.

Be realistic as well. Children have homework and outside activities and may not always be able to care for the dog every day. Realize when you have to step in. Children get busier as they get into high school. It could end up that the caring of your dog will fall upon you. That's okay if you are ready and willing to accept the responsibility.

Where do you get a puppy?

There are so many rescue shelters, so that's a great way to go! If you want a full-bred pup, look for a reputable breeder with documents. Generally, pet shops are not a good choice. They are extremely expensive and the puppies are hard to

housebreak because of their crating situation in the store and their unknown mixed breeds. However, it's easy to be drawn in by those adorable faces in the window. Go in and talk to the staff about dogs. The more you learn, the better choice you can make. When looking for a rescue dog, talk with the foster parents or shelter worker and find out why they were put up for adoption and go from there.

Welcome home!

You have done your homework, you chose the perfect puppy (or did the puppy choose you?) and you have welcomed him or her into your home. There is a lot of thought and work that goes into having a family dog, but the payoff is great. **CHM**

Resources

Rescue Dogs

www.petfinder.com has a list of more than 14,000 animal shelters to help you find the right breed.

The Dog Channel

www.dogchannel.com expands on the topics in this article from dog breeds to care and training.

Service and Therapy Dogs

Service dogs are specially-trained dogs to assist people with disabilities in everyday tasks. These assistance dogs help people with hearing loss, those who are blind, and who have mobility disabilities. Dogs can be trained to assist people with oxygen tanks, those who have seizures, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and other illnesses or disabilities where dogs can help with tasks and/or boost the morale of the person with the illness. www.petpartners.com is a resource where you can learn more about these specially-trained dogs.



Every Picture Tells a Story

Five Tips For Decorating Your Walls With Original Art

Writing and photography by **Maria Gatling**

"We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon."
—Konrad Adenauer

Your home is a reflection of who you are. While following decorators do's and don'ts, first follow your hearts desires and passions so that your walls will truly reflect your style. Every piece hanging on your wall should have a story waiting to be told. Here are five simple tips to get your walls talking.

1. Begin by displaying cherished family and vacation photos that make you feel good every time you see them. Don't worry about the color of the frames. Your collection is a reflection of you. Whether you like a uniform look or an eclectic look is not as important as the photos inside the frames.

2. If you have children, then there's a good chance you have a collection of original art at your fingertips. When my son was in first grade, he came home with a piece of art that I fell in love with. I had it framed and it's been a favorite among our guests who initially think I purchased it. If you don't have children, commission a child to do some artwork for you.



3. Hang a unique piece that makes a statement. We all have a taste for some art that may be a little bit out of our comfort zone. Go for it. I first saw this piece (left) at an artist's reception and secretly fell in love with it. I met the artist/photographer and liked it even more. It was a great feeling to purchase it and it is certainly a conversation piece.

4. Create your own art. Unless you are an artist who paints, you might find it a little challenging to do a painting on a canvas. But creating your art doesn't have to involve painting. Here are some simple ideas for creating your own art.

Wine Cork Art: If you happen to collect wine corks like I do, this is a simple project. You'll need a canvas (size depends on how many corks you have), hot glue gun, and wine corks. I chose to paint my canvas black before starting.



It's just a matter of preference. You simply glue the corks one at a time, allowing them to lean on each other. This is simple but be aware that the larger the piece, the more time consuming.

Handwriting Art: I love quotes! Pick your favorite quote, words, or excerpt from a book and hand write it in cursive, covering the whole piece of paper. You will need artists charcoal to write with and good drawing paper such as Strathmore 80 lb., 18" x 24". You'll want to loosen up and just practice so you get comfortable and relaxed with this technique. If you buy a whole pad of drawing paper, you'll have plenty of sheets to do this. Now frame it and hang it.



Photography Art: Take one of your favorite photographs and have it printed on gallery-wrapped canvas. You don't have to be a professional photographer to take a good photo but make sure the resolution is good enough.



5. Attend an art gallery opening or artist reception. Meet the artist or artists as you decide on a piece that you'd like to purchase or commission an artist to paint an original for you. Meeting the artist will always make your decision to purchase an original piece of art easier. Their story behind their work is what connects you to their art. The artist has put a lot of love, life and energy into the piece of art which will in turn hang on your wall. Their story is an important piece of the puzzle.

Your home is your art gallery. Don't feel as if you have to hang every piece of art you own at one time. Find a closet where you can safely store any extra art you own. This will allow you to change it up whenever you feel like viewing something different. Your friends and family will think you have new art next time they visit. Rotating art is a good way to freshen the look of your walls as well as tell a new story.



Until next time, be well, sleep well, love well, and create something every day! **CHM**



THE COLLECTOR

Interview with **Camilla Houghton** by **Cindy Dyer** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Bejeweled

Camilla Houghton's Unique Ring Collection

What started as a gag gift from one sister to another has evolved into the much-anticipated annual "ugly ring gift exchange."

Graphic designer and artist **Camilla Houghton** gives us a fun peek into her growing collection of rings that began as a simple gift exchange with her sister, **Cathy**, nearly 30 years ago.

Have you always loved collecting and wearing rings? (even before the "ugly ring" exchange came into being?) I like jewelry in general. I like handmade artisan pieces and vintage ones, so the rings are a natural thing to collect..

Take us back to the beginning. I found the first ring at an old drive-in theater flea market in Florida almost 30 years ago. It cost 25 cents. It's a thin gold-tone band with a large clear green glass ball glued to it. The ball is well over an inch in diameter. I gave it to my sister for Christmas as a joke, along with her real gift. She loved it!

A few years later I received one from her. We began giving them to each other more frequently until it was a happening every year. We realized we looked forward to the ring much more than our "real" gift, so we decided to give each other a ring each year and eliminate the "real" gifts.

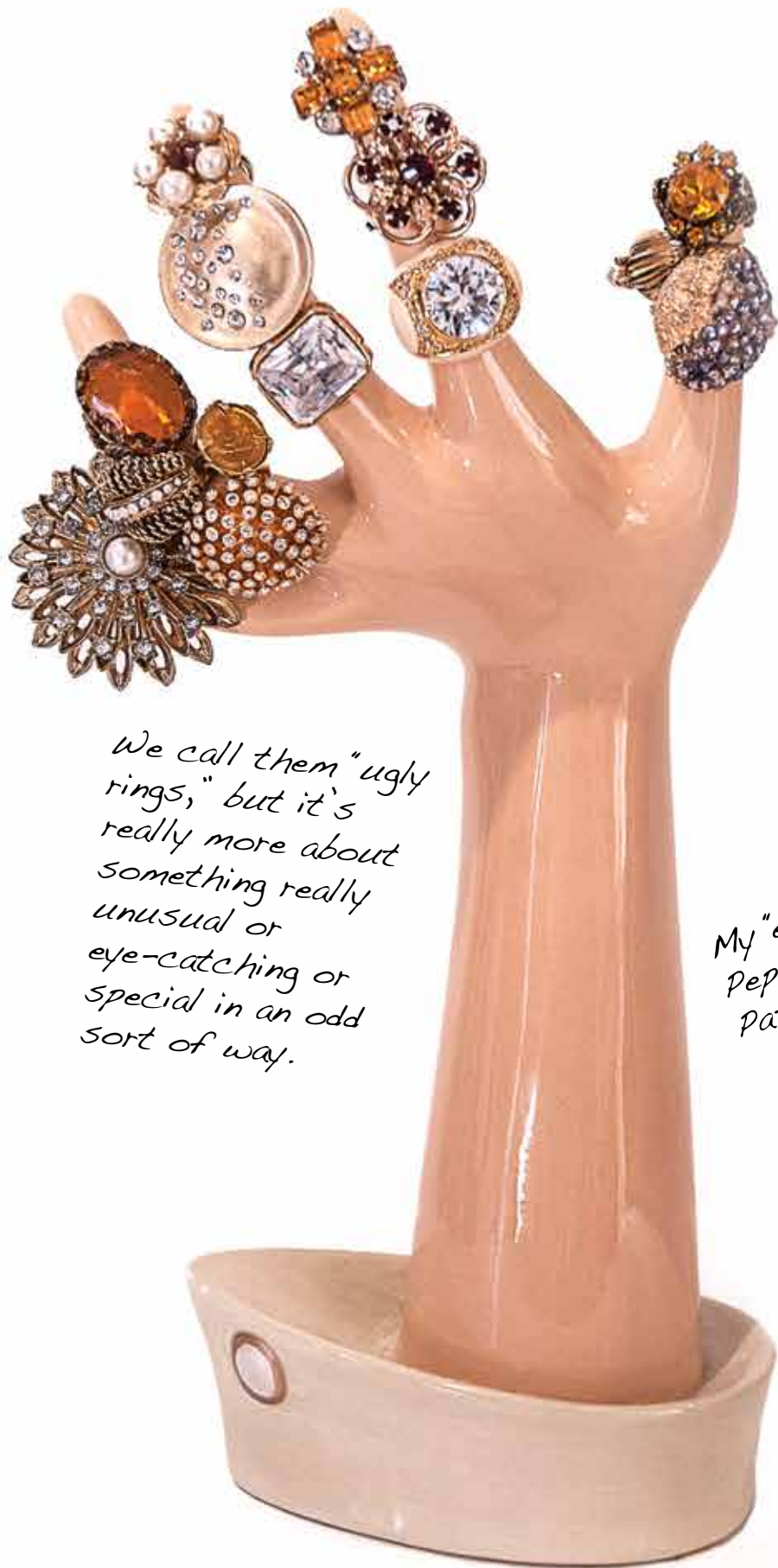
The giving has evolved over the years, but there really are no rules. We try to go for adjustable, antique costume or one-of-a-kind finds.

Was there a prize for the person who gave the ugliest ring each year?

The rings are prize enough in themselves. We call them "ugly rings," but it's really more about something really unusual or eye-catching or special in an odd sort of way. "Short bus rings." Ha! They started out as antiques, which at the time was the only way to find big, unusual rings. They just didn't exist in stores.



continued



We call them "ugly rings," but it's really more about something really unusual or eye-catching or special in an odd sort of way.

Since you're an artist, have you ever crafted them yourself as part of the ring exchange? I haven't made any, however, my sister Angie was recovering from surgery a couple of years ago and made some during her holiday break. She was unable to go foraging for rings, so she decided to create her own. Huge globs of seashells sewn on to a button, then to elastic that slides around the finger. Mine sits at least an inch high. They're awesome. Bulky and heavy.

She and I also have a sisterly inside thing for York Peppermint Patties. We traded nibbles on one small patty during a road trip years ago. Ever since, they have been a theme that pops up here and there. She made me an "emergency Peppermint Patty ring." It's a real patty attached to a band. I wore it to an event this summer. I received lots of comments, mostly women asking if it was real, and loving the idea of a candy stash right there on my hand.

My "emergency Peppermint Patty" ring



Did you usually both agree that they were ugly when you exchanged them or did you sometimes say, "you know, this one is kind of cool now that I look at it"? There are very few that are so "off" that you can't or wouldn't wear them. I have some that are sharp or too big to wear comfortably, but they're all "cool." They're fun to display and have in my collection.

Where is the strangest place you've purchased a ring? My "truck stop ring" was given to me by my sister, Cathy. She found it in a truck stop along the interstate. It's a bright gold-toned filigree setting with a purple synthetic flower encased in lucite. Classic! I wore that one to Bunko once...it matched what I was wearing. The other players didn't know what to make of it. It's very tacky. They didn't know if I was serious or not. Very funny. Sophisticated women not knowing what to say—they really couldn't pretend they hadn't seen it. They would glance at it out of the corner of their eye, then look away. I finally had to say something for their comfort, and told them about our ring exchange. We had a good laugh! That type of reaction is exactly what we're going for—an eyebrow-raising effect!



My truck stop ring

I've noticed that the trend over the last few years has been large, showy costume jewelry rings, so when did you realize that some of the rings you were exchanging weren't so ugly after all, but actually in keeping with current trends? When that trend first started, we bought a few of the new, large, flashy rings. When we realized this really was a full-blown trend, we decided to go back to vintage and antique, only unless it was a one-of-a-kind handmade ring. We want our rings to be different and challenging to find. They aren't supposed to blend in with everyone else's!

continued



We want our rings to be different, and challenging to find. They aren't supposed to blend in with everyone else's!

THE COLLECTOR

Describe the ugliest ring in your collection.

Ugly is always subjective. Right now, I think my ugliest ring is an artisan-made, melted rubbery plastic thing. It's silver and blue amorphous globs of some unknown material that wrap and melt around each other, then wraps around the finger. And, it's HUGE. Really big, really ugly. It's so ugly, I haven't even worn it yet! Cathy gave it to me two years ago. I think I'll give it a try this week. It's bound to rouse a smile.

Describe the ugliest ring you have given to Cathy to date.

I gave her a vintage ring that looks like three ribbons attached at the base, then brought together in a sweeping curve that meets at the top in a point. It reminds me of an unopened flower bud with a circus feel. It's gold-tone and black (I painted to touch it up). The slits in the sides between the ribbons hold round "gems." The gems are multi-colored with pearls in every other slot, with a pearl on top. Very noticeable and strange.

Where do you find your rings? I love consignment shops, junk stores, antique shops. The thrill of the hunt is a big part of the fun for me, so I haven't purchased online.

Does price factor into your decision when adding to the collection?

We used to try to spend no more than a couple of dollars. Seriously, sometimes we would come across a great stash at an antique or junk store. I'd buy them all—25-50

cents apiece. Now we're up to \$20 or more for a great gift ring.

Is there a certain color palette you're especially drawn to?

I tend to wear neutral rings most, but it's fun to match them to your outfit. I have so many now, in every color of the rainbow, that it's easy. A big jolt of color can be a mood lifter.

Do you have favorites? My absolute favorite is one of my oldest. It is the second or third one Cathy ever gave me. It has a rock star vibe. Tough but flashy at the same time. It's big (of course). Metal. Dull. Shiny. Handmade. How someone gave it up, I'll never know. I have friends who covet it. Never! It's awesome.

Angie gave me my runner-up fave. It's also handmade, but this one is brownish-toned metal, soldered by some creative sprite into a makeshift three-dimensional flower. It's heavy and doesn't bend. Almost seems made of steel. The petals are sort of squared off on the ends, so it's big, bulky and gets knocked around when I wear it, but it's made to last. Also awesome!

Tell me about your collection of rings brought back from other countries.

I have a gorgeous white and yellow gold florentine style ring from Italy. It doesn't really fit in the ugly category, just lovely. My husband Jim travels all over the world for work, and has brought me numerous rings. The craziest ones are from Brazil. They are one-of-a-kind, crafted of plastic, but in a very controlled,

THE COLLECTOR

artistic way. One of them looks like a sunset. It's about two inches across, with layers of poured opaque matte color, then sanded into the softest curved shape. It drapes on the hand over three fingers. The other is a large inverted pyramid shape. It's translucent purple with multi-colored spots that float within and on the surface. You can feel them.

He brought me wool rings from Peru—one is a blue orb, and the other is a thick swirled disk of olive green and plum. He also brought a massive, lime green, emerald-cut cubic zirconia set in scrolled silver from Hong Kong. Gorgeous!

Was there a ring that "got away?" I hate regrets, so if at all possible, I acquire. If a ring is too expensive, no problem. Not meant to be in my collection anyway.

However, there is a situation that I always find difficult. Shopping antiques and junk stores *with* my sisters. "I saw it first!" "It looks better on me!" "It doesn't even fit you!" "It's not your color!" (like that matters) We want to shout like young bratty children. We don't. Instead we say, "Are you going to try that on?" We act very adult, trying to keep our emotions hidden, as we watch her try on the "find of the day." It's huge, vintage, goes with everything, has that great patina we all crave. She buys it. She wears it for

the rest of the day. At lunch, it sparkles as she brings her sandwich up to her lips. Walking down the street, it's a head turner. It's still sparkling as she drives off, taking the find of the day with her. Bummer. Wahhhh.

Ever lose a ring? I've almost lost rings... left them in rest rooms while washing my hands. I was in a museum many years ago wearing my newest ring—a pale pink polished rock wrapped in silver wire—when I realized it was gone! I couldn't believe it. I checked with security for a lost and found, but turned up nothing. Then I remembered using the ladies room almost an hour earlier. I was afraid to hope it might still be there, but ran back to the rest room, and there it was on the sink! I guess it was so ugly, no one wanted it. Ha! That little episode taught me to put the ring in my pocket or bag when washing.

There was another ring I didn't lose, but lost it anyway. It was fabulous metallic copper, gold and black glass on a clear glass band. I talk with my hands and during an especially exciting story, I pounded my hand on the table for emphasis. Not a good idea. The top of the ring popped off and the band broke in pieces. I tried, but it couldn't be repaired. I learned not to wear glass during heated conversations!

continued

These are a few of

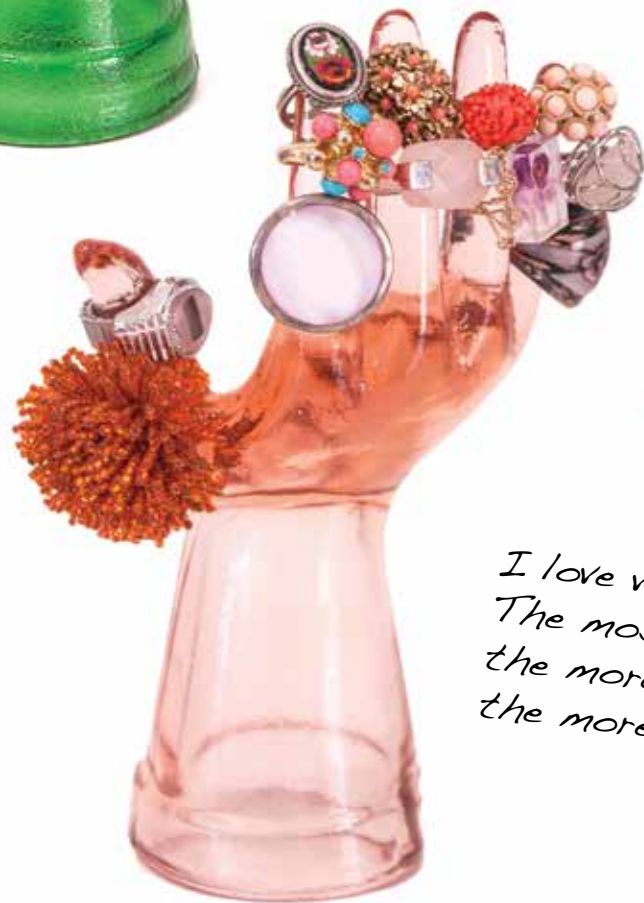


my favorite rings...



THE COLLECTOR

I love consignment shops, junk stores, antique shops. The thrill of the hunt is a big part of the fun for me, so I haven't purchased online.



I love vintage and antique rings! The most fun to hunt down, the more well-loved they are, the more patina, the better.

THE COLLECTOR

Tell me about your antique ring collection.

I love vintage and antique rings! The most fun to hunt down, the more well-loved they are, the more patina, the better. Missing stones are sometimes okay—they can be replaced. Angie's first ring from me was a huge piece of imitation coral with a gold tone coral reef growing up the sides. It has small sparkly gems embedded in the reef. The part that goes around your finger is worn. No gold left there. Well-loved, for sure. I can imagine the cruises that ring has been on!

You also have a beautiful collection of hands.

Where do you find these?

After many years of giving and receiving and collecting ugly rings, we realized we had to have a great way to display them. After all, they're as much fun to look at as they are to wear!

I discovered a glass display hand at an antique store. Perfect! The quest was on for more and different hands. We have shiny black ceramic, cobalt, emerald, pink, milky blue and green glass, delicate lady-like ceramic, funky plastic two-handed models, retro green 1960s with daisy tray, tiny metal hands. All different shapes and sizes. All fantastic! We load 'em up with color-coordinated beauties or separate antiques and handmade, everyday faves and special occasion—whatever the current whim.

Sometimes I like to pile them all into a large, clear glass, slant-topped case. It keeps them dust-free, and they look like sparkly treasures. Now that's eye candy! **CHM**



Ugly is always subjective. Right now, I think my ugliest ring is an artisan-made, melted rubbery plastic thing.



My newest ring from Cathy



Ring Bling Box



SUPPLIES

- Photo storage box
- X-ACTO® knife
- Ruler or straight edge
- Marker or pencil
- Hot glue gun/glue sticks
- Stretchy fabric
- Densified batting (we used Hancock brand poly-fil NU-Foam)
- Ribbon/embellishments
- Craft glue



Here's an easy DIY craft project for a great way to store your rings. For our featured ring holder, we used a cardboard photo storage box. We used a stretchy panne velour, but any fabric could be used. For our alternate version, we used a sheet of patterned felt, which was a bit trickier to use than the stretchy fabric. The frame for the alternate version was purchased in the unfinished wood section at Michaels for less than \$7. We painted the frame an accent color, then hot-glued it to our base. We crafted a custom-sized cardboard box for the alternate version. The alternate version requires a bit more work, but we wanted to show how easily this project can be customized. **CHM**

Designed by **Cindy Dyer** and **Karen Byer-Storch** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**



Start with a cardboard photo storage box, available on sale for about \$2 at most craft stores. Choose a box with a lid pattern that you like best, keeping in mind that a portion will be cut away.



Remove the label holder on the base with a pair of tweezers. Don't worry about the holes as this part of the box will be covered by the lid when you're finished with the project.



Put the lid on the bottom of the box. This will allow you to draw a line where the edge of the lid meets the box bottom.



Using a pen, marker or pencil, draw a line where the lid edge meets the box. This will create a guide for you to follow to cut the box base down to size.



Using a sharp X-ACTO® or utility knife and a straight edge or ruler, follow the line and cut the box base so that it is the same height as the lid.



Take your lid and measure about 1" to 1.25" in on all four sides (depending on how much design you want to show on the edge). Draw your guidelines, then cut your "window" out with your knife.



Flip the lid over and using craft glue, cover the rough edges of your "window" with trim. We used 1/8" satin ribbon. Any ribbon or trim that complements your color palette will work.



Cover the ends where the ribbon meets with some embellishments. We used tiny fabric flowers, but you could also use rhinestones buttons, shells or flat beads.



Measure the length and width of your box base. This will determine the size of the densified batting you'll need to cut to fit inside.

CRAFTS



Measure the short end of your batting and make a mark at the halfway point. Draw a line for cutting. Measure to draw another line about 1.25" away from the center line on either side.



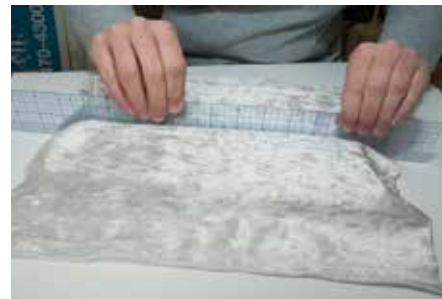
Cut a piece of thin cardboard slightly smaller than the inside of your base. You will glue your batting strips to the cardboard line, side by side, in their original order.



Using a sharp X-ACTO® knife, cut on the lines you marked on your foam, creating four separate strips. Glue these batting strips to your cardboard base, side by side, in their original order.



Squeeze a line of glue down the center gutter of the batting base. This will help adhere your fabric when you tuck it into the gaps of each strip.



Cut your stretchy fabric (we used a panne velour) about 2" wider than your base all the way around. Center it over the batting and using a ruler, press the fabric into the center gutter. Hold the fabric in place for a few minutes until the glue has set.



Repeat the glue-and-tuck process with the remaining two gutters, making sure to smooth the fabric as you go along. You will be creating three rows to store your rings.



Flip the base over, fold over the excess fabric and using your hot glue gun, affix the fabric to the cardboard. Use "hospital corners" to keep each end smooth.



Insert your fabric-covered piece into the box base. Pop on the cover and you're almost done!



Tuck in your favorite little jewels. Your ring box can be placed flat on your dresser or you can attach a picture hook to the back and hang it on the wall like a piece of art!

My home is your home • Home is anywhere you hang your hat •

Home means sacred space to me, a place where I can tune into my inner self and fill space around me with beauty and love. I have always been intrigued by small habitats. As a child, I wanted to live in a tree house; I still do. I marvel at small spaces and am attracted to Japanese small apartment designs. Home means I am sustainably living a greener life. A smaller space—360 sq. ft.—requires less energy. My building is located in a park.

The park has a community garden for residents. This year I will have my very own raised bed to maintain. Gardens testify to green living. I will be raising pollinator flowers for butterfly and native bees and culinary herbs. Home means that I will make the world around me a better place for pollinators and health. The medicine is in the herbs.

Home means having adequate workspace for a computer, printer and copier for my home office. Home means having abundant natural light and open space for Tai chi and Yoga practice. There is a small area for resting/sleeping and viewing TV. I don't do well with lounging. I chose a small woman's wing back chair and accompanying oak straight back chair, with room enough to practice floor exercises.

My ninth floor suite has large eight-foot windows, facing west. The windows provide a spectacular changing four season landscape. Home means I can touch the sky and stars, even though I am inside. Outside the window, mighty oaks keep me company with their seasonal foliage changes. At long last, I am free. I am home and finally living in my tree house.

—Mary Ellen Ryall

Two years ago we retired and bought a new house along with a house full of new furniture... gone was the mismatched stuff... gone was the beloved recliner chair... gone was a ton of the stuff that 33 years of a life together had amassed. I quickly learned that the new house and the new furniture did not make a home.. I couldn't sleep one night so I wandered around feeling a little like I was staying in a borrowed house. I looked around and nothing was familiar and the sounds and colors were strange. What this house needed was memories! I set about planning a "Blessing of the House" ceremony. I invited all my new friends and church family and soon the house was bursting with laughter and joy. Today I look around and every room has a memory of friends entertained and children and grand-children loved. Love this house! —Betty Ferguson

When I was a junior in high school my dad received a promotion that would move my family 140 miles away from my home, my extended family, my friends I had known my whole life and the town that I knew like the back of my hand. Fortunately, I did not have to move right away with the family and I was able to stay "home" for the first semester of my junior year so I could travel to Paris, France with the marching band. I thought those few short months would be amazing; hang out with my friends, have no parents to tell me what to do and be an independent young woman, at home. In reality, those months were the worst. I felt disconnected, as if a huge part of what made me was missing. I found myself secretly counting the days until I could see my parents, my brother and my dog—until I could be home again. I realized that home was not a location for me; it was the people in my life that made me complete as a person—my family.

Ten years after high school graduation, my husband and I own our own house, we have a loveable dog and our first child, Brendan Jackson Ferron, was born on December 24, 2012. I still feel connected to my parents through pictures and family traditions that my husband and I have adopted as our own. We are now a family of three, and I am anxious and excited to incorporate my feelings of home into our new family traditions for our son. My hope is that when my children are my age, they will always know that home is about the people who surround you, who love you and will do anything for you, regardless of physical location. I know as long as I have my loved ones in my life I will always feel at home. —Anna Ferron

The best feeling of home to me is that time of day when darkness arrives. That point in the earth's revolution when the sky is still pink from the sun after it has slipped beyond the horizon. The day time has ended and the evening is just beginning. In colder months, I love turning on the lights knowing that it creates what I call a friendly feeling for those passing by seeing a lamp light in the window. I appreciate a crackling fire nearby as I prepare dinner with my honey. In warmer months, an outdoor grill is most welcome and creates a similar feeling. If the grass has been cut that same day and the fragrance still lingers in the air then it fills me with nostalgia of long ago summer days and a tremendous feeling of home. This can really be anywhere... at my city home, at my lake home, at my aunt's family home or in a rented cottage. It's a feeling at days' end when I feel all is right and my world feels cozy. —Karen Shepard Wyatt

• Make yourself at home • Down home • Hearth and home •

Coming home Homegrown • There's no place like home • So good to be back home

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