

Compliments of Chris Holcomb

# AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 134



NEW BEGINNINGS  
*in bloom*

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## AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Reader,

Springtime is nature's wake-up call, inspiring us to get up and go. This issue of American Lifestyle adds extra fuel to your seasonal fire with timely unpacking tips, a fascinating travel destination, fresh cooking ideas, and more.

Spring is prime buying and selling season, and perhaps the most rewarding part of the process is moving your belongings into your new home. Inside, a professional mover shares his secrets for making this time stress-free.

The odds are that you're planning for upcoming adventures in the great outdoors. If a warm-weather vacation is on your agenda, you should read up on the Outer Banks, a southeastern coastal paradise replete with beaches, lighthouses, and even wild horses.

Fresh produce becomes abundant again this time of year from farmers markets to grocery stores, and the enclosed piece on produce can help you discover how to maximize its flavors and freshness.

We are looking forward to our upcoming webinar on May 13, where we will discuss building your wealth while navigating important life transitions. Please see the back inside cover of this magazine for more information. We hope you can join us!

### Chris Holcomb



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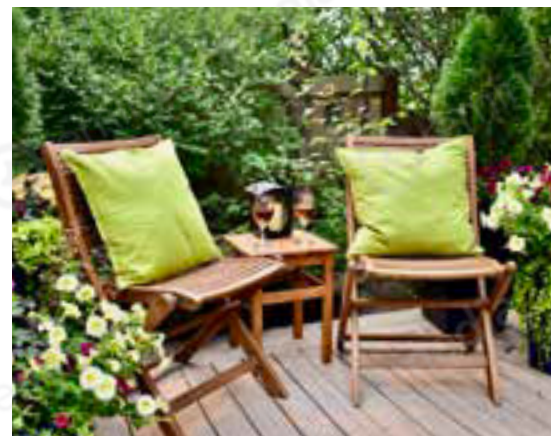
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# FRESHEN UP YOUR PATIO OR DECK FOR SPRING

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



As the days grow longer and warmer, you may be eager to get out and enjoy your deck or patio. Consider decorating the area with these items to transform it into a peaceful outside haven.

### Comfortable seating

Your space's dimensions might determine whether a small outdoor sofa or large sectional for lounging will work best for seating. Bring in a stylish coffee or bistro table, and you'll have a beautiful spot to enjoy warm, sunny mornings or entertain family and friends.

### Cozy decor

Colorful pillows, an outdoor rug, and perhaps a warm blanket for

those lingering cool nights can boost the personality and comfort of your outdoor area.

those lingering cool nights can boost the personality and comfort of your outdoor area. Fill a large planter with water, plus some shells or stones, and insert a solar fountain to give your new hangout spot a soothing ambience. Flowering plants can also provide extra interest and beauty.

### Cool shade

Provide yourself some protection from the elements by installing a pergola, retractable awning, or outdoor curtains so you can enjoy your newly outfitted space even on hotter or rainy days. A statement piece—like a large, cantilevered umbrella in a primary color or a sophisticated linen-colored shade sail—will allow you to match your coverage with your personality.

### Mood lighting

Make your deck or patio magical after the sun sets by illuminating it with traditional string lights, lanterns, or a battery-operated chandelier. Another possibility: stick whimsical stakes of solar lights that can sway in the breeze around the edges of your new oasis.

Whether you wish to spend blissful afternoons or cool evenings outside, you can make those dreams a reality by creatively furnishing your deck or patio.



# THE PROPER WAY TO UNPACK

Interview with **Dan McLaughlin**  
Written by **Andre Rios**  
Photography by **Two Men and a Truck/  
Geoff Shirley**



After the physical and emotional toll of packing up your belongings and moving them into a new house, it may seem daunting to

tackle the ensuing steps of unpacking. But if you're systematic with your approach, you can make sense of your belongings and feel right at home in no time. Just follow this practical advice from **Dan McLaughlin**, senior director of sales and business development for **TWO MEN AND A TRUCK®** of Twin Cities and Western Wisconsin.

## **What can people do before moving to make unpacking easier?**

Make sure to mark all your boxes with important details, including which room each one was packed in, what furniture items came from (dressers, hutches, curio cabinets, and so on), and whether there's anything fragile. Also, if you have something that you are going to need immediately, label the box as such and pack it last so you can unload it first.

## **What might you want to pack in such a box?**

Toiletries will be necessary right away. Bedding is also essential; moving day will be exhausting, and you'll want to make sure your bed is ready for that first night. And don't forget about your internet. You'll need to know where the modem, router, and power cables are located to assist the internet technician.

## **What are the most common mistakes people make when moving?**

Many customers overlook their driveways during moves. For instance, if the house is brand-new, the concrete is sometimes also new and only able to support cars, not moving trucks. We've trained our teams of movers to ask about the curing time before we arrive.



### What other tips would you like to share?

Do not overload boxes. Most have a maximum weight limit, so be careful not to exceed it; for instance, bigger boxes should be used for large but light items, such as pillows and decorative goods. You should be able to move your boxes around as needed, especially if you're unpacking by yourself. If you would struggle to move one across a room, it may be too heavy.

“**If you have something that you are going to need immediately, label the box as such and pack it last so you can unload it first.**”

Finally, moving is a great opportunity to start fresh. Take this time to clean house! If you haven't used some items for over a year, get rid of them. Use a haul-away service—such as our sister company, Two Men and a Junk Truck—for assistance. Doing so prior to the move will prevent you from having to spend time packing them beforehand and then throwing them away afterward.

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



Also, customers often don't have a full understanding of their new place's layout. There may be a steep driveway, difficult entryways, or sharp turns. Additionally, the layout is typically different from the prior home, so some furniture may not fit into each room the way they hoped.

### How do you tackle unpacking a larger home?

The first step is to stack all boxes that belong to a certain room within that room when unloading. Having items accessible in the right place will make the unpacking process go by much faster and smoother. Do not overcrowd the room, though; make sure to leave yourself a workable area. You should also establish one space for all empty boxes to be accumulated, such as the garage or the living room. This makes it easier to get them out of your house when you're finished.



# A Colorado Interior Design Collaboration

Interview with **Roxann Lloyd**  
Written by **Matthew Brady**  
Photography by **Susie Brenner Photography**

**R**oxann Lloyd of Red Chair Designs discusses her circuitous route to founding her firm along with a transformative project she did for a Denver-based couple.

## Have you always been creative?

Yes, from way back. In elementary school, I would rearrange the living room furniture whenever I had to stay home because of my asthma. One time when I was five, my parents did so without me, so I ran away. But they always encouraged my artistry.

## Was your design career straightforward?

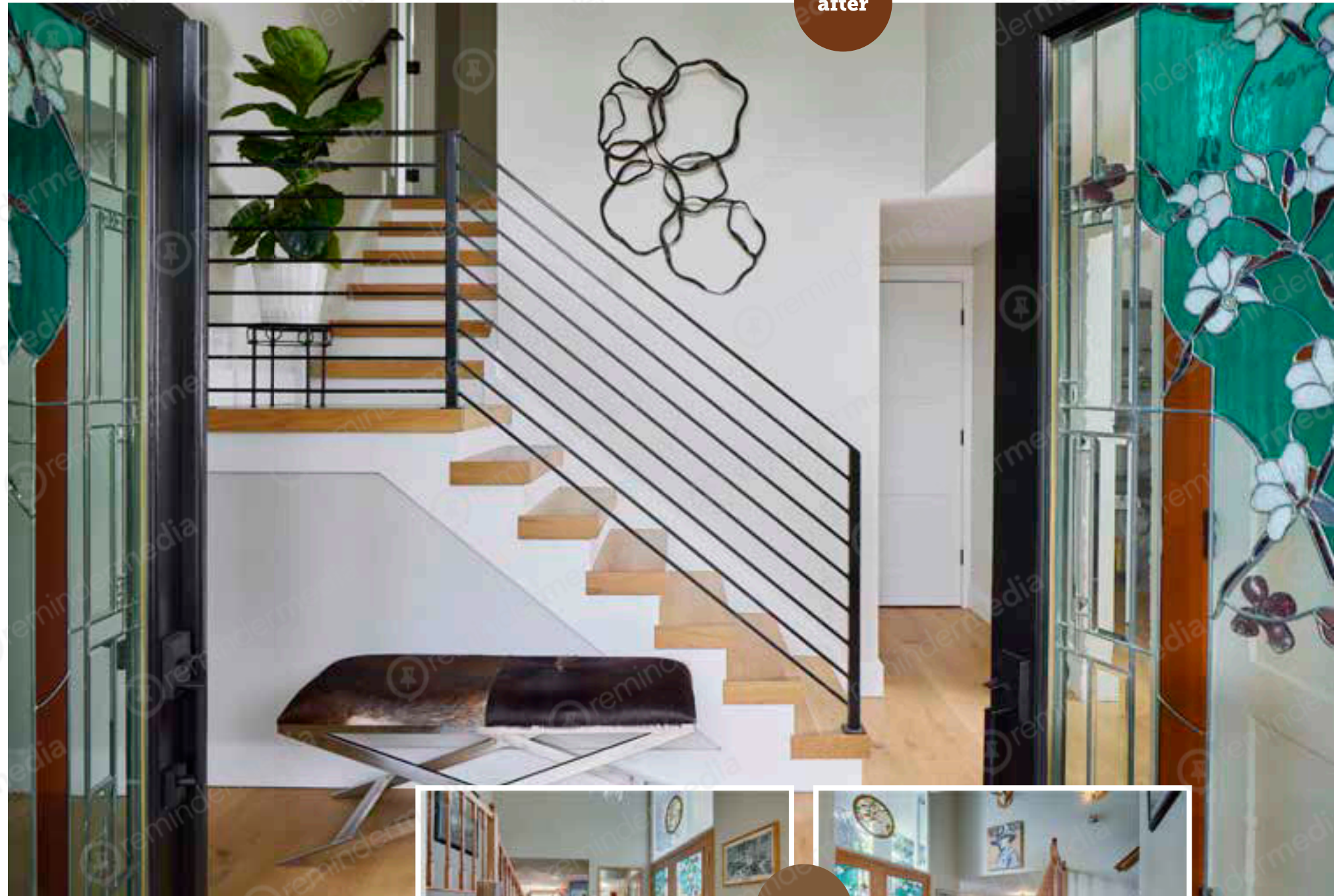
Not at all! Within a few years of getting my degree, I wanted out because I hated what I was doing in commercial design: just “Dilbertizing” the world by putting everybody in cubicles. I literally

threw my portfolio away and went into marketing. I then became a kitchen-and-bath project manager and worked at the *Rocky Mountain News*; I also had a side gig doing residential work for my friends and friends of my friends. When I was going to be laid off from the newspaper, I decided to venture out on my own and start Red Chair Designs.

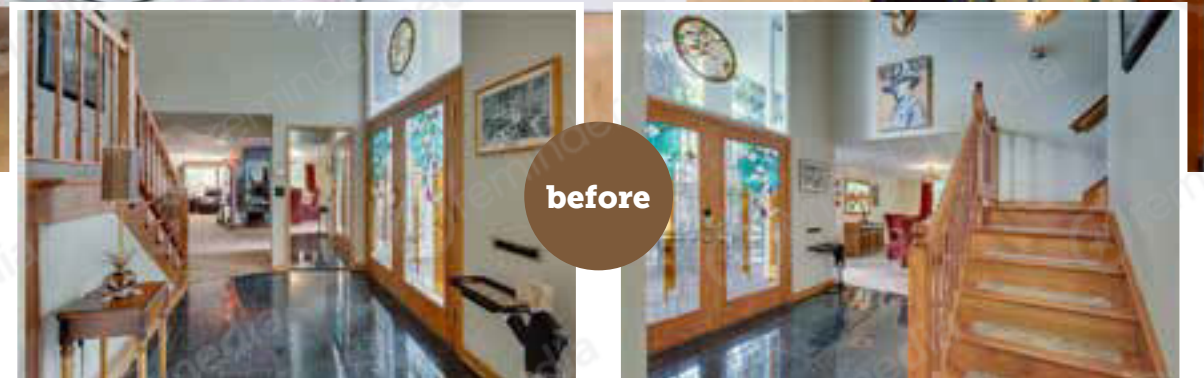
## What’s your philosophy on client relationships?

I call myself a collaborative designer. I’m empathic by nature, pay attention to people’s subtleties, and connect with them through humor. I am authentic, and so are my clients, who aren’t necessarily focused on trends but on their own value systems. In addition, if it’s a couple, I have to speak both their languages; I sometimes feel like a design therapist (which at one point made me consider becoming an actual therapist).

after



before



Over the years, I've developed a process for getting to know my clients. I ask questions about their family and history and do design-psychology exercises to help draw out who they are so their renovated home supports and resonates with them. I'll even straight-up ask if they're interested in paying for a brand name or willing to hold off and get something that's truly right for them. When friends and family enter, I want them to say "This is so you" as opposed to "Your designer did an amazing job." I'd rather be behind the curtain, leading them down their own paths. That's also why I never have a big reveal like you see on TV.

**You also stage houses. What percentage of your business is commercial design, residential design, and staging?**

One-third each, which I never would have imagined. I originally didn't want to do staging because, frankly, I was a snob when I started. Some friends who launched a real estate company at the same time I founded Red Chair asked me to stage their properties. My response? "I don't do that. I'm a *designer*." But I said yes anyway to help them and market my services. In the last five years or so, people have been calling me specifically to stage their homes.

That said, staging is completely the opposite of designing. When I do the former, I tell clients that I'm not their designer—my job is to make their presence invisible so potential buyers can see themselves living in the home. I feel like I'm an instant help.

after



**The Foothill Drive project is quite a transformation. Was it an entire home renovation?**

The owners, Kate and AJ, bought the house because it is very clean-lined and has amazing views of downtown Denver. The layout was weird, but they loved it and had a vision for it, some of which they wanted to create themselves. Because of that, they hired us hourly and not just with a flat fee—but then AJ's business took off, so they both focused more on that.

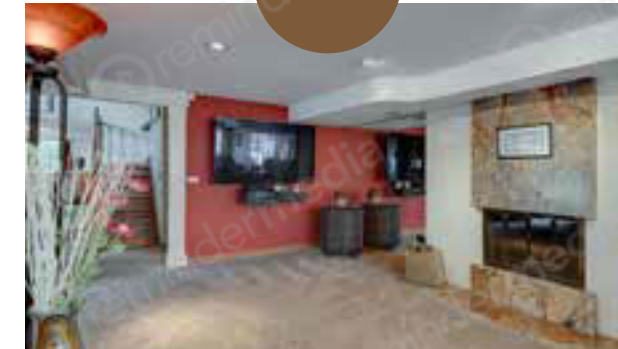
As a result, we took over more of the project, which involved renovating almost the entire house: the kitchen, dining room, living room, powder room, upstairs bathroom, and master bathroom. We also oversaw the work they did in other areas—the flooring, stairway renovation, etc.—to make sure everything tied together.

**How would you describe the original vibe?**

The rooms were chopped up into sixties, seventies, and eighties design, as if each previous owner had represented a different time. Interestingly, the prior one stopped by right after we'd finished all the remodeling and asked to see it. She was so happy! She said it was what she and her husband had wanted to do with the house but weren't able to. Kate specifically told me how grateful she was to hear that.



before



after



**Walk us through how you made the main living area more functional:**

This couple likes to have guests over and prefers a more casual entertainment style, so they wanted to take down the walls to the studs and start over because of the choppy galley layout. To highlight the get-together-focused vibe, we opened the entire space by completely redoing the kitchen, making the dining room an eating area with a skylight, and relocating the living room, which is now a self-contained space on the other side of the entry door.

The kitchen's new cabinets were built by a custom cabinetmaker to fit perfectly in the space, as was the huge, uniquely shaped island, which has its own sink and items like bowls and chopping boards so they can whip up a taco bar or sundae bar for company. We made the kitchen space light, bright, and airy, primarily for AJ: he doesn't like chaos, so he was adamant that the surfaces had to have a clean look. For instance, the backsplash is colorless herringbone glass and the countertop is a white quartz that lends a quiet ambience.

Plus, the fireplace originally had a slab of exotic granite that was ugly as sin. Kate and AJ hated it, so we put in a new insert that is more modern and added chairs that swivel for easy conversation. Next to that area, we made the sliding door entryway—the main entrance of the home—more welcoming.



after



before

“

The kitchen's new cabinets were built by a custom cabinetmaker to fit perfectly in the space, as was the huge, uniquely shaped island, which has its own sink and items like bowls and chopping boards so they can whip up a taco bar or sundae bar for company.



before

after



after



**How did you improve the primary bathroom?**

Originally, the room had a cavernous, dark, and creepy vibe. Kate and AJ loved the shower’s glass block, though, which they thought was meant for the house. So we kept it but took the carpet out (yes, carpet), then added a luxurious shower, a bench where they can sit as the room fills with steam, and a light that emits a relaxing, warming glow. Now it feels just like a spa.

**What was their reaction when you finished your work on the house?**

They loved it. Kate told me that every day she comes downstairs, looks at the kitchen, and thinks, “I can’t believe this is mine.” *That’s* why I do this work. From childhood, I have been keenly aware of how my surroundings impact me, and I want to help others enjoy theirs. So when she said that, it just made my day.

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



before



“

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# CREATING A HEALTHIER HOME

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

**A sparkling and comfortable house isn't just about aesthetics—it can also dramatically improve how healthy you feel. The way you furnish and maintain it can refresh and rejuvenate you or make you feel tired and worn down. Here are some tips to help you create the healthy home makeover you deserve.**

### **Carefully select home goods**

Did you know that according to the EPA, the air inside a home can be up to five times dirtier than it is outside? While this statistic might be concerning, there are simple ways you can mitigate airborne pollutants in yours. For example, be mindful when buying new furnishings, which may off-gas chemicals used to manufacture them, such as formaldehyde. To prevent these from getting into your home's air, you could allow your furniture to sit in a garage or well-ventilated room for at least a week or leave the windows open for a few hours. (In fact, you may want to leave your windows ajar for at least a few minutes daily to let in fresh air.)

Another alternative is to opt for goods made from natural materials like organic cotton and solid wood, although they may cost you more. Or you can avoid releasing additional chemicals into your home *and* save money by shopping secondhand since these items will likely have already off-gassed much of their VOCs.

### **Check and clear your air**

Having your home's HVAC system serviced once or twice a year is also an effective way to ensure clean air since it can prevent rust and other contaminants from being circulated. Replace your furnace filter at least once every three months as well. And for extra filtration, consider running a portable air purifier, especially after activities that may increase indoor air pollutants, such as cooking and working with VOC-containing craft supplies like glues and markers.

Two highly dangerous pollutants to be on alert for are carbon monoxide, which can be emitted from your gas oven and other sources, and radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can seep into your home through your foundation. Install carbon monoxide monitors on every floor of your residence so you can be alerted promptly to the gas's presence and take steps to protect your family. Additionally, it's a good idea to test for radon when buying a home, after renovations, or if you use your basement frequently. If an unhealthy level of radon is found to be in your home, hire a licensed professional to mitigate it.



### Keep it clean

Some cleaning products, such as bleach and ammonia, can also contain VOCs, so choose ones that are friendly to your lungs instead. You could buy all-natural cleansers like Aunt Fannie's Cleaning Vinegar or Bon Ami or make your own all-purpose cleanser by mixing two cups of distilled water, two tablespoons of lemon juice, a half teaspoon of dishwashing liquid, and one tablespoon of baking soda.

Besides posing a tripping hazard, clutter can attract dust, dander, and other irritants and make it hard for you to effectively remove them. So, first and foremost, aim to keep your spaces tidy by picking up stray items daily and getting rid of or donating no-longer-needed possessions. Then dust regularly



and fit your vacuum with a HEPA filter, which can trap dust and irritants, going over your floors at least once a week. Just be sure to protect your hardwood floors by setting your vacuum to the hard-surface setting.

Furthermore, disinfect surfaces you touch frequently, including doorknobs, cabinet pulls, and TV remotes, especially if someone in your household has a contagious illness like a cold. As for your bathroom, you can prevent mold from forming by running its exhaust fan or keeping a nearby window ajar and wiping its walls clean of any moisture after using the shower.

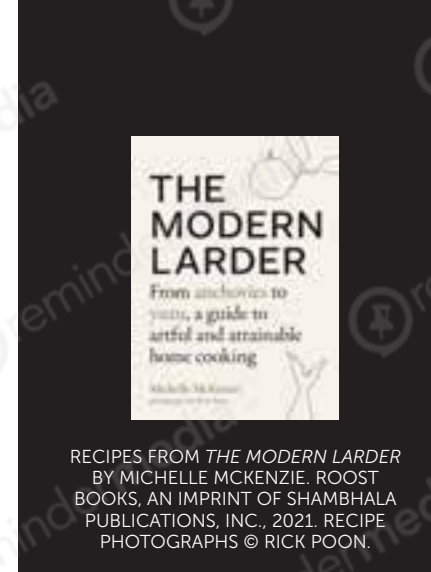
### Create a sleep oasis

Converting your bedroom into a sleep sanctuary can also boost your health. A good way to start is to eliminate distractions by minimizing notifications on your mobile device, hanging room-darkening curtains, or using a white-noise machine while you sleep. Further, aim to keep your bedroom cool, between approximately 65–68 degrees, so you can blissfully drift off to sleep.

By taking control of your home environment through mindful maintenance and product selection, you can significantly boost your well-being.

# *fresh takes on* **CLASSIC PANTRY RECIPES**

Recipes by **MICHELLE MCKENZIE**  
Photography by **RICK POON**



Get the rest of  
the recipes here.

RECIPES FROM *THE MODERN LARDER*  
BY MICHELLE MCKENZIE. ROOST  
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PHOTOGRAPHS © RICK POON.

## **CHARRED CUCUMBER** *and shiso quick pickles*

Charring cucumbers may seem like an odd move, but it is a quick way to make the familiar interesting again. They retain their refreshing quality—with additional brightness from the vinegar—but they become a shade darker, more savory in flavor, and almost meaty in texture.



4 to 6 servings  
(as a side dish)

### INGREDIENTS

1 to 1¼ pounds Persian cucumbers  
(approximately 5 small)  
1 to 2 tablespoons neutral vegetable  
oil (such as cold-pressed rice bran oil  
or grapeseed oil)

Fine sea salt

1 tablespoon vinegar (rice wine, white  
wine, champagne, or red wine)

½ cup (loosely packed) shiso sprouts, or  
6–8 shiso leaves cut into 1-inch squares

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1/** Halve the cucumbers lengthwise and then again, crosswise. Set a 12- or 14-inch heavy-bottomed skillet, preferably cast iron, over high heat and add the oil. Swirl the oil around the pan until no bald spots remain. Place the cucumbers in the skillet cut side down and char 4 to 5 minutes (you may have to do this in batches so as to not overcrowd your skillet; add more oil between batches if the skillet seems dry). Transfer the cucumbers to a rimmed plate or baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and vinegar. Let cool to room temperature. Taste, and add more salt, if needed. Toss gently and then shower on shiso sprouts or shiso leaves. Stack in small serving bowls.



# PAN-SEARED RIB EYE

## *with black garlic ghee*

I believe two things separate a mediocre steak from a great one: quality of meat and technique. And my technique is always the same: dry brine, temper, pan sear, baste with ghee, then rest with more ghee. I do occasionally, however, vary the basting mix. Here, black garlic steps in, its molasses-like sweetness and subtle tang accentuating that intensely savory beefy flavor of the choice rib eye.



2 to 3 servings

### INGREDIENTS

One 1¾-inch-thick bone-in rib eye (approximately 1½ pounds)

Fine sea salt

4 black garlic cloves

½ teaspoon fine sea salt, plus more for seasoning the rib eye

3 tablespoons ghee or unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 teaspoon olive oil

Flaky sea salt

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1/** Season the steak generously with salt. Place on a rack set over a pan or plate and refrigerate overnight.

**2/** Put the black garlic in a small bowl; add a pinch of salt and use a fork to smash it into a paste. Add the ghee and use a spoon to mix thoroughly.

**3/** Pull the steak from the fridge 45 to 60 minutes before you plan to cook. Rub oil on the steak. Heat a 10- to 12-inch heavy-bottomed skillet, preferably cast iron, over medium-high heat for 1 full minute (it should be scorching hot). Cook the steak, turning every 3 minutes or so, until a dark brown crust forms on both sides and the internal temperature is a few degrees below your favored doneness (120 to 125°F for medium-rare), about 10 minutes.

**4/** Turn down the heat to medium and wait for about 30 seconds before adding 2 tablespoons black garlic ghee to skillet. Tilt the pan toward you so that the ghee pools on one side, and use a large spoon to continually baste the steak with ghee for about 1 minute. Transfer the steak to a rimmed plate or large shallow bowl and top with the remaining black garlic ghee. Let the steak rest 6 to 10 minutes.

**5/** Transfer the steak to a cutting board, reserving any buttery juices on the plate. Use a sharp knife to cut 1-inch slices of steak—always slicing against the grain. Pour the melted black garlic ghee from the rimmed plate over the steak and sprinkle with flaky sea salt.



Be sure to leave 24 hours for brining the steak.



# POPCORN

## *with nori, citrus, and rosemary*

Popcorn is a snack that somehow seems light and indulgent at the same time. It is welcome at any time and for every occasion. Buttered and salted, popcorn is very good. But it is made remarkable when showered with a striking mix of nori, citrus zest, and fresh rosemary. Make more of this seasoning than you need and sprinkle it on fried eggs, cold soba noodles, green salads, grilled vegetables, or fish.



8 cups;  
4 to 6 servings

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup nori powder, store-bought or homemade

Zest of 1 orange or yuzu (use a Microplane for best results)

½ chile de arbol, thinly sliced

1 sprig rosemary, leaves finely chopped

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

8 cups (½ cup kernels) freshly popped popcorn

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1/** Place all the ingredients (except the popped popcorn) in a spice grinder and pulse until well combined. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week. Add ¼ cup seasoning to freshly popped popcorn and toss lightly to combine.



# WHOLE ROASTED EGGPLANT

## *with tahini, crispy chickpeas, and sumac*

Eggplant is one of my favorite vegetables—I could fill an entire book with recipes singing its praises, and I don't see why it can't be the star of the show rather than just a supporting act. In this large-format dish, whole eggplants cook until slightly charred on the outside and meltingly tender within. Tahini adds much-needed richness and creaminess, crispy chickpeas add texture (and protein), and lemon and sumac bring brightness. I consider this a lovely vegetarian main course, but it could also serve as a side dish for chicken, lamb, or fish. Any leftovers can be blitzed into a fine eggplant dip in the food processor (add an ice cube for the smoothest result) and refrigerated for up to 3 days.



4 servings

### INGREDIENTS

4 medium eggplants (each approximately 12 ounces)—Listada or similar egg-shaped variety such as Globe

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup olive oil, plus more to serve

Fine sea salt

3 cups cooked chickpeas, homemade or canned, drained and patted dry with paper towels

1 tablespoon sumac

$\frac{1}{2}$  lemon

2 cups tahini sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1/** Preheat oven to 475°F and line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper (make sure the parchment fits inside the pan; at this high temperature, any overhang could burn). Peel the eggplants, leaving stems attached; on each, poke the center of the base a few times with a fork or cake tester and divide between the 2 pans. Toss each eggplant with 2 tablespoons olive oil and a pinch of salt, massaging the salt into the flesh a little as you work. Create space between the 2 eggplants on each pan and roast for 40 to 50 minutes, turning the eggplants every 10 to 15 minutes to get even browning on all sides. Remove from oven and set aside.

**2/** Meanwhile, heat a 12- to 14-inch sauté pan over medium-high heat and add the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil. Once the oil is shimmering, add the chickpeas and a pinch of salt. Pan-fry the chickpeas, stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes, or until crispy (as they crisp up, a few may pop out of the pan like popcorn). Lower the heat slightly, add the sumac, and cook just 1 minute more. Taste and add more salt, as needed.

**3/** Season each eggplant with a squeeze of lemon. Place on warmed plates or in shallow bowls and top the center of the base of each eggplant with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup tahini sauce. Top the tahini sauce with a heaping  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sumac-coated, crispy chickpeas. Drizzle a little olive oil around the sides of the eggplant and top the olive oil with a sprinkling of chopped parsley. Serve at once.



3D chalk artist **Jan Riggins** discusses how she was introduced to the medium, the unique challenges it poses, and why it has been special to collaborate on it with her teenage daughter.

#### WHAT LED YOU TO CHALK ART?

In high school and college, I was a clarinetist. A big part of recitals is creating posters, which I loved to do. I eventually realized that I enjoyed art more but still earned my music degree. After graduating, I got a job at a staffing service, where I've been working for twenty-five years.

My mom had always painted with watercolors, which I dabbled in growing up. But I really grew interested in them when I was given my grandmother's art supplies; it was like getting an entire store. A short time later, I entered the amateur division of a local chalk-art festival in Fort Worth. I won honorable mention, and I was hooked. The next year, after I won first place and people's choice, they asked me to return as a professional. I was *shocked* that I could get paid for it.

In 2020, I was planning to do six festivals throughout the country, but COVID shut everything down. Instead, I continued drawing on my driveway and sidewalk. My daughter, Olivia, thought it looked like fun and asked if we could do one together; our first was a butterfly, which I posted in our Facebook Neighborhoods group. Many people there loved it and started requesting their own artwork. A local news station then did a piece on us, and before we knew it, we were being featured in places like BuzzFeed and on the *Kelly Clarkson Show*.

# TAKING 3D ART TO NEW DEPTHS

Interview with **Jan Riggins**  
Written by **Matthew Brady**  
Photography courtesy of **Jan Riggins**

### HOW DID 3D ART COME INTO THE PICTURE?

Those news sources touted us as a mother-and-daughter duo doing amazing 3D chalk art—but the thing was, I knew it wasn't actually three-dimensional. I started feeling the pressure to figure out that type of chalk art, so I worked at it until I did. It snowballed from there: I was being commissioned by companies and festivals and even started doing art internationally.

### LIVING IN TEXAS, HOW DOES THE HEAT AFFECT YOU AND THE MATERIALS YOU'RE USING?

Frankly, I usually don't do much artwork here at all during summer because it gets way too hot—by afternoon, I can't touch anything or even stand on blacktop and paint dries as soon as I put it down. I generally like figuring out how to make such challenges work, though.

### DOES OLIVIA STILL WORK WITH YOU TODAY? DOES SHE WANT TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?

We created a ton of art during COVID, which played a big part in helping us get through the pandemic. Being in high school now, Olivia has a very busy life, so we just collaborate for events that she has enjoyed in the past, such as a festival in Kansas City and one in Florida. It's awesome that she still enjoys creating with me, even though it's few and far between nowadays. She has mentioned this being a great thing to do right out of high school for a little bit, but she has also been very adamant that this is my activity, not hers.



### HOW DO PEOPLE REACT TO YOUR ART?

It's usually an "aha" reaction. When people first walk up to the art, it looks strange because it's distorted. I tell them it's 3D and that if they look at it through their camera, they'll see what the image really looks like. I always stop and watch the moment it clicks for them, which never gets old. It's also an excellent way to know if my 3D rendering works: I'm receiving immediate feedback that I wouldn't get from painting something that's destined for a gallery. I'll often hear parents say to their kids, "If you keep practicing, you can do this too." It's true, and I like that I'm encouraging art and patience. I also like working on my craft in front of people, much like I did with music.

“

I usually don't do much artwork here at all during summer because it gets way too hot—by afternoon, I can't touch anything or even stand on blacktop and paint dries as soon as I put it down.



### DO YOU PLAN TO DO THIS FULL-TIME?

Yes. In 2023, I discussed this with my boss, who let me continue working from home part-time three days a week so I'd still have a salary. I like this arrangement, especially as I plan the business part of my art career, but I don't think it's going to last too much longer. I'm closer to fifty than forty, and I feel like my window's closing—how much longer will my body allow me to do this type of art? Also, I just can't fit everything into my schedule; I have too many projects that require an entire week off. It is a good problem to have, though. I love my boss and company, but I think I'll love being a full-time artist even more. I feel like the luckiest person in the world.

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

“

When people first walk up to the art, it looks strange because it's distorted. I tell them it's 3D and that if they look at it through their camera, they'll see what the image really looks like.



COROLLA  
WILD  
HORSES



CAROVA

# FIND INNER PEACE AT THE OUTER BANKS

Written by **LJ Ramos**  
Photography by **Getty Images**



CURRITUCK  
SOUND

**IT ALL STARTED WITH** perhaps America's greatest unsolved mystery ever. John White, leader of what was meant to be England's first permanent settlement in the New World, left over one hundred fellow colonists on Roanoke Island in 1587 as he set off to their homeland for supplies—but when he returned, every single one of them had vanished.

Though the Lost Colony was never found, the region has since recovered and then some, growing into one of the most fascinating places to visit in the country: the Outer Banks (or OBX). Rich in both history and endless outdoor adventures, this two-hundred-mile stretch of awe-inspiring barrier islands off the North Carolina coast has something for everyone to enjoy.

## **The Northern Beaches**

Begin your journey at the OBX's quaint northernmost beach towns: Carova and Corolla, a twenty-mile expanse that offers so much to do and see, you could spend days exploring it. The soft, white sands and ocean access beckon both families and water-sport enthusiasts, and at either town you can witness—from your car or through various tours—the famed majestic Corolla wild

horses, the state's official horse, whose lineage is believed to date back to the sixteenth century.

Carova Beach is the more private of the two, eschewing paved roads for 4x4 beach adventures. While this makes it the perfect seaside escape, it also means that recreation is somewhat limited. If you're looking for a more packed itinerary, consider Corolla, which has everything from shopping at its historic village to fascinating exhibits at the Currituck Maritime Museum to hiking via its many trails. On the westernmost part of town overlooking Currituck Sound, you'll find Historic Corolla Park, a 39-acre haven featuring numerous engaging sites, most notably the Currituck Beach Lighthouse and its magnificent 360-degree view of the OBX and Whalehead, a lavish, restored century-old mansion.

Kill Devil Hills and Kitty Hawk are a must, of course, simply because of their place in US history, thanks to Orville and Wilbur Wright. Here you can wander the very spaces from which they took off and landed and feel like you're part of aviation lore. The former is home to the Wright Brothers National Memorial, complete with a replica of

their hangar and plane, and the latter is more of a tourist-focused town that features plenty of shopping, watersport-friendly beaches, and restaurants; it even has an 1,800-acre maritime forest preserve to explore.

Head over to the 1,000-foot-long Jennette's Pier to relax; it provides a stellar fishing location, a plethora of indoor and outdoor exhibits, an aquarium, and more.

Then there's the ever-popular Nags Head, sitting at the bottom of the Northern Beaches and flanked by Cape Hatteras National Seashore to the south and Roanoke Sound to the west. Make sure to scale the mighty sand dunes at Jockey's Ridge State Park—the tallest on the entire Atlantic coast—which reward your effort with amazing views. Then head over to the 1,000-foot-long Jennette's Pier to relax; it provides a stellar fishing location, a plethora of indoor and outdoor exhibits, an aquarium, and more. Also make plans to visit the Bodie Island Lighthouse (or Light Station), a staple of Nags Head itineraries. Built in the 1870s, this piece of OBX history is available for touring from the third weekend in April through Columbus Day.



KITTY HAWK



JENNETTE'S PIER



BODIE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

### A western diversion

If you veer west on Route 64 after leaving Nags Head, you'll discover where it all began: Roanoke Island, whose center of activity, Manteo, combines small-town waterfront ambience with education and entertainment. Popular attractions here include the North Carolina Aquarium with its 2,000-plus creatures as well as Roanoke Island Festival Park, which features sixteenth-century attractions such as a re-creation of a circa-1585 ship. Fort Raleigh National Historic Site also takes you

back in time, recounting the story of the original colonists; it even has the Elizabethan Gardens, a lush, serene, ten-acre "living memorial" of its history. To truly see the tale come alive, add the Tony-honored *The Lost Colony*—an outdoor drama that has been reenacting the story of its namesake since 1937—to your to-do list.

### Hatteras Island

Near the bottom of the OBX lies this popular fifty-mile island. With all it has to offer on its beaches and in its seven villages, it's not difficult to see why so many love it. For families, Salvo Beach is a wonderful repose: relatively uncrowded for Hatteras and chock-full of picnic possibilities. Frisco Beach is likewise quiet and clean, offers great shell-collecting opportunities, and, as a bonus, tends to have even warmer waters than those of Cape Hatteras.

CAPE  
HATTERAS  
NATIONAL  
SEASHORE



If you prefer being in the water rather than viewing it from above, you'll find the largest portion of Cape Hatteras National Seashore here.

Hatteras Island is also known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic. Between it being a key nautical battleground in both the Civil War and World War II and having notorious shifting sandbars known as the Diamond Shoals, hundreds of boats have been sunk along this coast. (If you're an experienced diver, you can even venture down to see some of them.) The famed Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in Buxton, built to aid vessels past the area's risky waters, is the tallest brick one in the country; however, it is currently closed for renovations and can only be experienced via virtual tour or webcam.

If you prefer being in the water rather than viewing it from above, you'll find the largest portion of Cape Hatteras National Seashore here. The nation's first national seashore is a world mecca for water sports, a place where swimming, surfing, windsurfing, and kiteboarding enthusiasts unite. (Just be wary of the dangerous rip currents.) It also offers calmer, drier activities: fishing is abundant, there are several

hiking trails to explore, and off-roading is permissible in certain locations. It's also a wondrous place for nature lovers—over twenty types of marine wildlife can be found on and off these beaches, including seals, dolphins, whales, and several species of sea turtles as well as more than 360 bird species.

### Ocracoke

Finally, slow-paced Ocracoke, located on the southern tip of the OBX, allows you to truly get away from it all—in fact, you need to take a car ferry to access it. Once you do, though, you'll feel like you have your own piece of paradise, where sixteen miles of undeveloped beaches, locally owned shops, restaurants, amenities, and more await on the easily bikeable island. While there, be sure to visit Ocracoke Lighthouse, the second-oldest operating beacon in America.

The Outer Banks is a southeastern coastal paradise that will keep you enthralled for a day, a week, or even longer. With a plethora of sights to see, adventures to be had, and history to explore, it's no mystery why this region will beckon you back again and again.

For more info, visit [outerbanks.org](https://www.outerbanks.org)



OCRACOKE LIGHTHOUSE



# HOW TO SAVOR

*the flavors of spring*

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

In addition to more daylight and vibrant colors, spring offers a bounty of fresh, tasty ingredients—from tender vegetables to fragrant herbs—that are just waiting to be explored. By utilizing the foods that are at their peak this time of year, you can create light, healthy dishes that celebrate the best the season has to offer.

#### Shop at the farmers market

A farmers market is a treasure trove of locally grown produce, making it the ideal stop for your spring ingredients. You can not only learn what's in season but also possibly discover a wider, more unique variety of fruits and vegetables than you would at a grocery store. While perusing, don't be afraid to strike up conversations with vendors to learn more about their offerings and businesses and get inspiration for how to use their foods in your cooking. These experts have a wealth of knowledge and ideas and are likely happy to share that information with you.

#### Get versatile with seasonal produce

When shopping, you'll see plenty of produce like asparagus, apples, radishes, strawberries, collard greens, and rhubarb. Because there's so much to choose from, it's a good idea to get creative and see how you can utilize these items in

your weekly meals. For instance, if you find a bundle of asparagus, you can grill or roast it for a quick yet delicious side or add it to your favorite salad or pasta dish for an additional crunch and buttery flavor. Apples, strawberries, and rhubarb are perfect for desserts like pies, tarts, and crumbles, so consider what sweet treats you can make that star these ingredients.

And don't limit your use of seasonal produce to lunch and dinner. Spring fruits and vegetables can instantly make your breakfast more exciting and nutritious. Simply add berries to your yogurt or pancakes, blend greens into smoothies, or top your toast with radishes for a vibrant and healthy start to your day. There are countless ways to enhance your favorite meals when you have the freshest options available, so get creative and see what you can come up with.

#### Embrace fresh herbs

Besides produce, this time of year brings an abundance of herbs like mint, basil, and parsley, which provide easy ways to brighten and enhance the flavor of your dishes. For example, mint is the perfect addition to salads, drinks, and desserts alike because of its sharp, refreshing tang. You can make



**A farmers market is a treasure trove of locally grown produce, making it the ideal stop for your spring ingredients.**

homemade pesto using several basil leaves or chop up a few pieces to mix with pasta or add to the top of a grilled pizza. And parsley's peppery taste makes it a great ingredient to toss into any soup or stew you may crave on a cooler spring night.

Worried about excess herbs going to waste? If you take the time to store them properly, you can keep them in your fridge for up to three weeks. Take tender herbs like parsley, cilantro, and mint, for instance. After thoroughly washing them, cut off the base of the stems and place them in



limp and brown after being defrosted, so you won't want to use them as garnishes.

#### Try new cooking methods

While embracing the flavors of spring, aim to raise your cooking game by giving new methods a try. Grilling is a go-to option for the warmer months, but it doesn't just have to be reserved for meats—try grilling your produce as well to give it a wonderful smoky taste. Or take a crack at blanching, a quick-cooking method that involves immersing vegetables in a pot of boiling salt water before moving them to a bowl of ice water. This can be a great choice for items like asparagus and peas since it not only retains the produce's color but also its crisp texture.

a sealable jar with about an inch of water. This should keep them green longer and allow you to continue using them for various meals. And if you still have leftover pieces after two or three weeks, you can freeze the stems and leaves for later use in cooked dishes. However, they'll likely be a little

Take advantage of the wide variety of foods that spring brings by letting your culinary creativity blossom. The possibilities are endless, so savor the planning and cooking processes and get ready to make the most of this beautiful time of year.



# THE KENTUCKY CASTLE

Written by **Matthew Brady** / Photography by **Alice K Elliott**

**Kentucky is known for** many things, including bourbon, basketball, bluegrass, and horses, but it may surprise you to know that a mere ten miles east of Lexington, you'll also find a welcoming 110-acre estate aptly called The Kentucky Castle.

## A LONG JOURNEY

For a relatively modern castle, this place has quite a history. It's the brainchild of Rex Martin and Caroline Bogaert Martin, a married couple who sought to mimic ones they saw in Europe. Construction began in 1969 but was halted several years later when they split, leaving the property abandoned for almost three decades.

It was eventually bought in 2003 by a Kentucky-born lawyer; despite the structure burning down almost completely the following

year, he successfully turned it into an exclusive bed-and-breakfast. New proprietors purchased it in 2017, opened the farm-to-table restaurant and spa, expanded event offerings, and developed a working garden. In 2023, the current owners took over; they plan to continue the tradition of Kentucky hospitality the castle is known for.

## TAKE IT ALL IN

The perfect way to see all the castle has to offer is through a guided tour. Select the castle-only option, or take the combined castle-and-farm tour; you can also add a luncheon to either. Other offerings include yoga sessions on the castle roof, tea parties, and murder-mystery dinners at its farm-to-table restaurant. After a busy day, you can kick back and pamper yourself at the venue's luxury spa.

## STAY OVER

There's a king's ransom of accommodations to choose from, both within and outside the castle walls. Inside, you'll find welcoming standard rooms and suites, while at the farm, options include a glamping site, cabin, farmhouse, and tiny houses. For the ultimate in luxury, you can even call one of the castle's four towers home.

Whether you visit or stay over, you'll discover that The Kentucky Castle earns its self-imposed moniker: the best-kept secret in central Kentucky.

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



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