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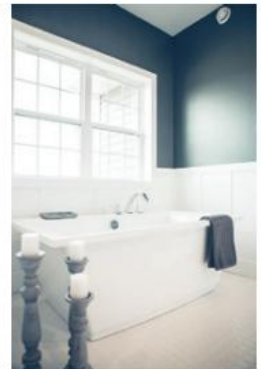
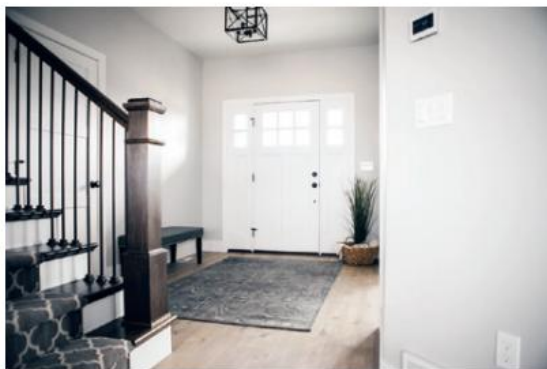
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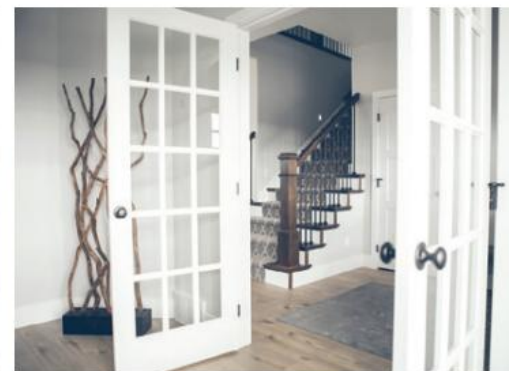
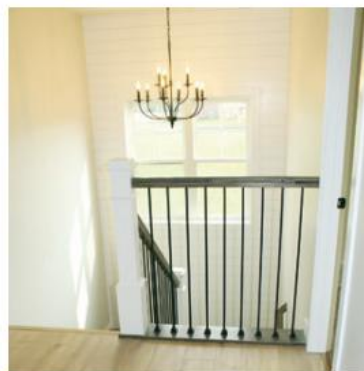


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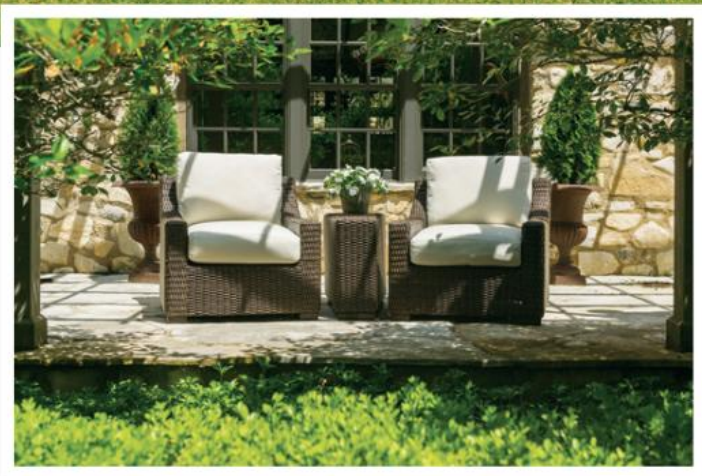
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ZACH DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

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MUSINGS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZAINAH HAIDER

I think for most of us, each season makes a personal mark on our lives. Summer brings a new crop of events — family reunions, picnics, weddings and other special gatherings that create memories for future generations. I recently spent a weekend at my parent’s farm with our grandchildren — an endless-activity-jammed affair they will always remember and never forget. Summer and its warm weather days bring vacations, new experiences and a special unfettered time we reserve for our families and friends.

Summer also brings the much anticipated, vibrant colors of our gardens and the delectable colors and flavors they produce. In this issue we celebrate the bounties of our garden and just what those vibrant hues mean for our health.

Color is not only evident in our gardening endeavors but it is a driving force in our everyday lives from architects deciding on exterior stone on plans for the design of a prospective home to the color the sun portrays in a great room flanked with windows from an eastern exposure. Color invades, protrudes and wrangles us all in one way or another. We incorporate it into every aspect our lives and it is strategically considered day in and day out in business and in our play.

We are excited in this summer issue to share our love for color in a variety of ways, from one local interior designer’s interpretation in her own home to how the power of color is used in area lives for healing and recovery.

Color — it’s undeniable; it is ever present and it matters.

Enjoy these summer days and the *Inspired Home* Color Issue!



Terri Ferragut
Associate Publisher
Editorial Director
terri.ferragut@gmail.com
terri@inspiredhomemagazine.com

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Inspired Home Associate Publisher
Terri Ferragut

Phone: 701.866.4405

Email: terri@inspiredhomemagazine.com
terri.ferragut@gmail.com

Find us on



(Inspired Home Magazine)

INSPIRED HOME

Editorial Director

Terri Ferragut

Creative

Terri Ferragut
Susan Walker
Amy Pollard

Director of Operations

Scott Drzewiecki

Contributing Photographers

Travis Beauchene
Lauren Ferragut Carlson
Zach Davis
Zainah Haider

Contributing Writers

Lauren Ferragut Carlson
Bernie Erickson
Terri Ferragut
Bailey Hovland
Ashley Ferragut Johnson
Dayna Del Val
Granville Wood

Copy Editor

Keri Guten Cohen

Social Media Director

Bailey Hovland

Production representative

FARGO & ASSOCIATES

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TERRI FERRAGUT

Every issue, we take great pride in presenting this beautiful local home and lifestyle guide we call *Inspired Home*. Truth of the matter is, without the heart and dedication of this talented and professional team, this publication would not be possible. Issue after issue, their creativity brings *Inspired Home* to your doorstep or area business. They inspire me.



Welcome to
INSPIRED HOME

Every issue we share a fresh and local approach to your home and life.

DAYNA DEL VAL

Del Val is the executive director of The Arts Partnership, where she writes a monthly column on the arts for The Forum, manages two staff members and an active board, and works to support the mission of cultivating the arts in our community through a variety of ways. In other words, she wears 27 hats! She is also a professional actor and writer. She lives in Fargo with her husband and their golden retriever, and she loves when her college-aged son is home on breaks.



WANDA PERKINS

For nearly 20 years, Perkins has creatively written stories about local, national and international people and topics. Her book, *Blessing After Blessing – Seeing God’s Blessings in All the Seasons of Life* was published in 2006. An NDSU speech communication graduate, she lives in Fargo with her intelligent rescued dog, Jake.



BERNIE ERICKSON

Specializing in helping his clients make small changes with maximum impact, Erickson is a residential real estate agent in Fargo-Moorhead.



TRAVIS BEAUCHENE

graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from NDSU and a Master of Fine Arts from The George Washington University in DC. Beauchene who has painted for 14 years and taught photography for 8, also does creative marketing for businesses. Upon returning to the F/M area, he and wife Brittany founded STUDIO THREE BEAU. Beauchene currently resides in Detroit Lakes, MN.



ASHLEY F. JOHNSON

Ashley Ferragut Johnson, formally from Oklahoma City, has found her way back into the heartland. Living once again in her beloved Fargo—with husband, and two children, she is a Registered Nurse at Sanford Medical Center and writer. She lives for her family, to travel and taste great food and wine.



GRANVILLE WOOD

Wood is an international chef who has worked in London, Stockholm, Toronto, Vancouver, Palm Beach and Houston before moving to Fargo with wife Susie, a doctor with Sanford Health. Most recently he operated The Blue Goose Café in the Plains Art Museum.



LAUREN F. CARLSON

Carlson, a Fargo native and geologist, is a research assistant at Cornell University at the New York Agricultural Experiment Station, where she conducts field work and data collection for the study of shrub willow as bio mass. She enjoys cooking, baking, running, renaissance art and writing.



BAILEY HOVLAND

As an English writing major at Concordia College, Hovland is passionate about writing and social media. "Blending my obsession for interior design with writing and scrolling through the endless feed of tweets, pins, and Instagram posts is my idea of 'living the dream,'" she says. Hovland enjoys reading, coffee shops, DIY projects and working out.



JILL OCKHARDT BLAUFUSS

Photographing people, businesses, homes and families, Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss places an emphasis on creating technically flawless images, and capturing the spirit, character and emotion of the people and places she photographs. With a background in both photojournalism and video production, Jill also enjoys documentary style video creation for businesses and families.



ANGELA DIRKES

As the only certified real estate photographer in the F/M area, I specialize in photographing homes and properties to showcase them in the best way possible! I also photograph cityscapes, landmarks or specific areas requested by companies that are looking to update their websites and indoor wall decor with unique local pieces.



ZAINAH HAIDER

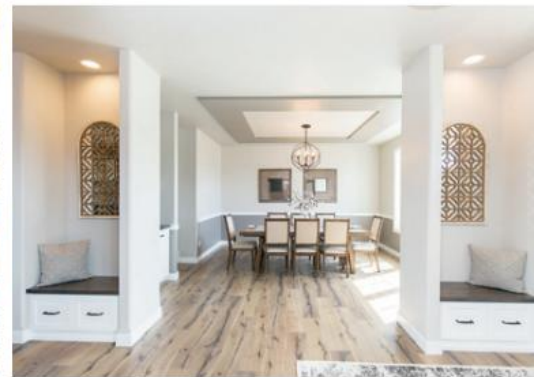
Ever since she was young, Haider remembers her parents always taking pictures. "They have inspired me to love photography. We get pretty competitive when we travel, and we see who can take the best pictures," she says. Competition or not, Haider says she will always love photography as an art form.



ZACH DAVIS

Davis loves capturing stories with his camera. He is a photographer and videographer who specializes in weddings and portraits. He has a weakness for wanderlust, feeling the urge to leave the country whenever possible. He currently curates The Open Window Exchange, a collaborative online travel journal.





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Purple Reigns

BY TERRI FERRAGUT



↑ Purple indeed reigns in this living room made cozy with multiple layers of tones and shades of violet. Neutrals offset and comfortably navigate the strength of the color.



↑ Purple accent pillows, a floor rug and wallpaper energize this colorful living room. The variety of patterns in the sofa pillows and rug add a fun and cohesive look.



↑ A rich, blue-purple rug works to ground walls and floors in this elegant entryway. Adding a pop of color to your entry makes an inviting impression on anyone who enters.

The color purple conjures up many emotions as well as opinions in the décor world. Pantone chose blue-based purple, Ultra Violet, for its 2018 Color of the Year and it is without a doubt a “lively” shade. Anyone who fears the boldness of color might initially retreat from any notion that it belongs in his or her home.

Strong impressions are created by this intriguing shade. The Pantone color is associated with mindfulness, nonconformity, power and devotion. The purple hue is often linked to creativity and imagination — and a forever-powerful tribute will be linked to Minnesota native, Prince.

It is interesting to note purple combines the chromatic mixture of the calmness of blue and the fiery energy of red. Throughout early history, it became the chosen wardrobe color of powerful kings and wealthy aristocrats. Purple, a color

not easily found occurring in nature, made it difficult to procure, resulting in the great costs necessary to create the dye. Only the wealthy could afford the precious resources needed to make the coveted shade donned by great kings such as Alexander the Great in the 15th century.

Inspired Home set out to explore the color purple to help determine ways in which even the most color timid could appreciate incorporating this most beautiful shade into their homes. Not quite sure where to begin our research of this bold color, we began by seeking an eclectic array of ideas introducing décor components from wallpaper to lighting. Here are some suggestions for introducing your home to the pleasing power of purple. ✨



↑ This bedroom design integrates many shades of purple for an energizing yet calming look. The floral headboard ties in violet shades featured throughout the rest of the colorful linens. Muted blue-based Ultra-Violet bathes the walls for a soothing backdrop.



↑ Bross, Italian maker of fine seating and stools, created this lovely in lavender chair that speaks boldly with purple personality plus. Industrial and artisan charm blend perfectly.



↑ Ultra Violet makes a major appearance in this nature-inspired room by Italian Wallpaper Fine Art Walldress. Combined with neutrals, character and elegance are achieved.



↑ This glass chandelier by Murano is exquisite Venetian glass-blowing achieved only by Italian master glass-blowers. Dramatic and vibrant, this portrays the power of purple.



↑ Still a bit color-shy? Add purple character by using violet glass doorknobs by Nostalgic Warehouse. Turn-of-the-century charm will greet every guest who enters the room.



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↑ Not quite ready for this? Incorporate pops of purple into your cooking space with back-splashes, spatulas, KitchenAid mixers or paint an isolated wall.



↑ Le Creuset cast iron, flower-shaped casserole, bluebell purple. Individually sand casted molds have been handcrafted at the original French foundry since 1925.



↑ These perky baskets will keep everything under your bathroom vanity organized with style.



↑ Make storage fun! Use purple as a surprise pop of color behind closed doors.



↑ Integrate subtle purple accents with lamps, throw-blankets or vases. These purple glass bottles add vintage charm and color to this mantel without overwhelming.



↑ Incorporate Pantone Ultra Violet by bringing bright purple flowers home. In this all-white space, rich purple hydrangeas add the perfect amount of color and natural texture to the space.

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ELEMENTS



Here comes the shade

BY ASHLEY FERRAGUT JOHNSON | IMAGES COURTESY TREASURE GARDEN

At long last, summer has arrived. It's time for lengthy warm days, ice cold drinks and hazy orange sunsets. While the heat is a welcome change from months past, it's also important to know how to stay cool when desired, and how to do it in style. For decades, Treasure Gardens has been crafting high end and unique umbrellas to cast a little shade on the warmth of the

high noon sun. *Inspired Home* reached out to Treasure Garden and spoke with National Sales Manager Candy Chase, who says that while the primary purpose of "shade products" is protection from the sun, their function does not end there.

Chase explains that umbrellas are an excellent way to divide an outdoor space creating defined areas. She also says they can add



↑ The 13' Cantilever Octagon Series offers full 360° rotation and 129 sq. ft. in shade coverage—plentiful comfort for a larger gathering. Shown: Stone Stripe

← Pictured here is the 10' Lotus Collar Tilt, Octagon series. When closing, this exclusive umbrella retracts beautifully upward like the elegant Lotus flower that it is named after.

“splashes of color and personality to a patio or poolside terrace.” A well-placed umbrella acts as would a piece of furniture in a family room or kitchen. It creates a purpose for an outdoor space and essentially designates a gathering area out of nowhere.

One of the more charming and forward-thinking attributes of Treasure Garden umbrellas is the varying styles and pieces its companies offer. The very foundation of Treasure Garden was built upon the celebration of culture around the world, so it is not a surprise that their value of worldliness is reflected in the products they handcraft day in and day out.

“We offer unique original designs like the Milan (inspired by the European fashion runways) to the ‘Stardust’ and its star-like shape drawing upon old Hollywood influences. The ‘Shanghai’ and its inverted scalloped edge and pronounced internal rib design capitalizes upon inspiration from the historic Asian culture.” Chase goes on to explain, in almost poetic detail, that the ‘Lotus’ series was named for the way the umbrella dramatically opens and closes upon itself like a flower. It also pays tribute to floral fields and the natural beauty embodied by the flower itself.

“The fact that our designers draw inspiration from our international presence and those cultures is a major part of the Treasure Garden design story,” Chase says. As if the plethora of well-thought out designs isn’t

A well-placed umbrella acts, as would a piece of furniture in a family room, or kitchen. It creates a purpose for an outdoor space and essentially designates a gathering area out of nowhere.

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While the heat is a welcome change from months past, it's also important to know how to stay cool when desired, and how to do it in style.



enough, they are also a "vertically integrated manufacturer." She explains that essentially involves a company that can produce its goods from start to finish without outsourcing a majority of its operation. By doing so, they have control over the quality of their merchandise, assuring that customers have access to the finest consumables.

The charm of these vertically integrated, well-designed outdoor parasols is not only because of their function, but also their aesthetics. Large, brightly colored pieces will draw the eye to an outdoor space,

← A sophisticated black and white designer theme is accomplished by this AKZ Plus Cantilever umbrella and coordinating outdoor furnishings by O.W. Lee.

↓ Add evening ambience to any umbrella with optional LED lighting and music from Bluetooth speakers- a perfect way to end the day.





↓ The beauty of the Shanghai Collar Tilt Round Series with umbrella in Henna, is a stunning addition for your backyard. Providing 70 sq. ft. of shady relief—a welcoming sight on hot afternoons.



↑ The 11' AG Cantilever Octagon series with a Jockey Red umbrella boasts a full 360° rotation and provides 85 sq. ft. of coverage. With graceful lines, it's a respite from the sun.

→ Light up the night with this 9' Starlight Collar Tilt Octagon Series. Shown in Cast Silver, it provides cool shade by day and illumination by night—perfect for summer entertaining.

commanding your attention to a place of refuge and an area to take shelter from the sweltering sun. Likewise, an umbrella more neutral in stature will offer pool guests and summer strollers a place to sip lemonade and hold quiet conversations while melting into the background. The style, shape and size of umbrella can become just as personal a choice as the furniture you chose to decorate the interior of your home. Whatever your style, be it contemporary, traditional or exotic and unique, there is a shade product designed with you in mind. Open your umbrella, and your backyard to the endless possibilities of summer fun. It's pretty hot outside and umbrellas have never been cooler. ✱



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TRENDS

The open floor plan is a modern must-have which maximizes space and allows areas to flow freely.

Call this place home

Nature and luxury meld at Wildstone.

BY BAILEY HOVLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY BY FOTO ART AND DESIGN



↑ Nature and the expanse of land makes this spot in the city a unique, one-of-a-kind place to call home. Brick, dormers, oversized garage and private entry all add up to perfection.

"We're looking for a home away from the high-traffic, congested areas that are still right next to the metro area. Our needs include a gorgeous tree line and luxury amenities: a fireplace, an open floor plan, plenty of natural light, oversized windows and custom cabinetry. Oh, and the price has to be less than a luxury home. Definitely under \$500,000."

This might sound like one of those out-of-touch, slightly delusional wish lists a couple recites on some house-hunting show. They want to have it all and absolutely refuse to compromise on any of their requests. But this list of requests is no fictional wish list; it exists in a new housing project called the Wildstone Development.

Nature and the expanse of land makes this spot in the city a unique, one-of-a-kind place to call home.



↑ High vaulted ceilings add drama and dimension to the rooms throughout this home, as seen here in the dining area.



↑ The stone fireplace adds charm and provides an area for guests to gather.



← Upon entering, an open floor plan provides an immediate and natural feeling of the flow and space of the home.

On Maple Loop South in Fargo, luxury twin homes are currently being built under the guidance of Mike Brekke, owner of Brekke Custom Homes. John Holland, Brekke's business partner in Wildstone Development, mentioned to Mike, "If you can find some nice lots, we should build luxury twin homes in the \$300,000 - \$350,000 price slot."

Holland laughed, explaining that he "made the mistake of telling Mike that because the following week he had found the lots." After a replat of the addition completed with the City of Fargo, Brekke was ready to make Holland's remark a reality. With the original building plan coming from friend, Tim Crary of Crary Homes & Real Estate in Grand Forks, Brekke and Holland added some features they believed the Fargo-Moorhead market wanted.

"In Fargo, people downsizing in square footage don't want to sacrifice or compromise quality," Brekke explains. "We made sure to include many of the luxury amenities buyers want like custom cabinetry, granite countertops, oversized windows, high ceilings, steel siding, a fireplace and larger garage."

Each twin home includes two bedrooms, a sunroom and plenty of custom built-in storage space. And they are gorgeous. Dark wood trim, creamy taupe walls, custom stark white cabinets and a stacked stone mantle framing the fireplace blend together effortlessly to create a feeling of comfort and elegance. These homes have truly spoken to people in the Fargo area. "All we heard when we previewed Wildstone in the HBA Spring Parade of Homes was 'Wow.' People loved the open floor plan and the quality. We got a lot of positive comments on the quality and the lots themselves," Brekke said.



← ↑ This space provides a beautiful area as a sun-room or cozy place to read your favorite book. The oversized quality windows and door off a patio area make this spot special.



← Large bedrooms, oversized windows and master bathrooms like this one help provide rest and tranquility. The walk-in shower, custom cabinetry and quality hardware provide extra elegance.

"That's the thing about Mike. He likes to go the extra mile because it's all about his clients."

John Holland, Wildstone partner



Mike Brekke

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"In Fargo, people downsizing in square footage don't want to sacrifice or compromise quality."

Mike Brekke

Holland agrees about the positive remarks they received during the Spring Parade of Homes and has high regard for Brekke's building skills. "Parade goers were impressed. There's no doubt Mike is passionate about building quality. People like him, they trust him and he doesn't cut corners. That's also pretty important stuff in choosing a business partner. Fortunately our ideas of what to build, the project locations and how we treat sub-contractors and clients align very well too."

The Wildstone Development began with a model home, one building with

two units. With some twin homes already under contract, Wildstone Development is beginning to build additional units. "I don't know where else you'll find these tree lined lots with access to West Fargo. I think they are beautiful," adds Brekke. "These homes are designed for people to enjoy. And although these homes read like a fictional house hunters checklist, they are designed to suit the needs of people—real people looking for a place to call home. *

→ Quality built-ins such as this coat rack and lower storage area are found throughout the home adding beauty and great design features.



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The colors of healing

BY BAILEY HOVLAND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRI FERRAGUT



↑ Pictured here is a typical representation of feelings that reveal isolation and hopelessness, typical of a client's initial visit.



Ashley Stielow is pictured here in her office, bathed in natural light and vibrant colors. A place where her love of art and counseling skills combine to provide a highly effective method of treatment for her clients.

"S ometimes it's easier to draw than to find the words."

Talk about mental health can be overwhelming. Whether it's the obscure jargon surrounding psychological diagnoses and treatments or the everyday issues we face, from work struggles to personal problems, mental health is not simple. When art therapist Ashley Stielow meets with her clients, she confronts the disconnect and confusion surrounding mental health directly. She gives them a paintbrush, a pencil, strips of tissue paper and directs them to create. Sometimes it is easier to wade through the depths of mental health by pouring thoughts and emotions onto a canvas than to find the words that perfectly details one's personal trials.

→ An actual drawing created by one of Stielow's clients depicts wholeness, joy and sense of well-being after art therapy





↑ Here the complexity of mental health in relationship to the client is created by a bungled mass of crayons with the open "center" of healing.

Meet Ashley Stielow, a licensed clinical counselor who specializes in art therapy, a form of psychotherapy that supports free self-expression and healing by creating art. A high school art teacher first introduced Stielow to art therapy. From that point on, she knew she was going to pursue both art and psychology in her undergraduate studies. She graduated from North Dakota State University with a double major in art and psychology and moved east to continue her education in an art therapy masters program. The East Coast has already embraced art therapy as a form of psychological treatment. "It is way more common for individuals to see an art therapist [on the East Coast]. You'll see agencies looking and job postings for art therapists," Stielow says. But back home in the Midwest, art therapy is not a widely known therapeutic. "People haven't really heard of what I do."

Stielow's move back to the Midwest brings a new form of therapy to the table for many area residents. She uses her passion to support people, giving them new outlets to express and analyze their own mental health. With a professional history of working in schools, hospitals, domestic violence shelters and now private practice, Stielow has been able to observe how art therapy can heal across gender, age and many other situations that cause mental strife every day. Her focus



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How it Works

During an initial appointment, a client may be asked to complete artwork or imagery to allow the therapist to assess the current mental health state as well as a variety of other factors. Artwork can reflect a person's feelings about the environment they are in, dynamics in relationships with significant others or family, problems with self-esteem or identity, or even reveal a history of abuse.

Art therapists trained in a variety of art assessments may ask clients to draw imagery of their favorite weather, themselves or even their family. The drawings then begin to reflect the person's "baseline" at the start of therapy. These drawings may be minimal on the page, basic in line structure or quality, or may even lack color. Art therapists are trained to analyze this work and create a working diagnosis for therapy.

We assist helping individuals understand the meaning in their artwork, which can help the person have a better understanding of themselves, their feelings and their behaviors. As treatment progresses, the client and art therapist may create new artwork that is more reflective of the current state of functioning. This artwork may look brighter, more expansive on the page and be more reflective of the growth that has occurred. Seeing this progress reflected in the imagery supports the client by seeing the progress reflected in their lives, increasing their sense of wellness. *

Ashley Stielow MS, LPCC, ATR



↑ This actual client drawing speaks to a place of wholeness, being centered, connected and totally integrated with life.



↑ This client's exuberant words of, "my light will leave scars on the sun," exclaims healing and hope for the future.



↑ Here out of darkness grows beauty, color and life — depicting this client's growing sense of healing and purpose.

→ Surrounded by beautiful tissue paper patterns randomly placed and overlapped, are the words- "Love You."

includes many areas from depression, anxiety and eating disorders to ADHD, codependency and self-esteem.

Helping adolescents and young adults, two populations that experience an abundance of change and transition, she finds to be highly rewarding work. Stielow especially appreciates the opportunity to work with individuals from the LGBTQ+ community. She believes "the work we do in art therapy is really an extension of ourselves." Often finding themselves without the support of friends and family, this treatment helps them "to work toward their personal identity through art and, in doing so, work toward their own personal healing."

Using a wide variety of mediums, Stielow encourages her clients to utilize any art task that is success oriented. She notes that working with a mandala or using a tissue paper collage process can be "incredibly relaxing for patients" and help them build to "a stage of mindfulness." In this mindfulness, clients can increase "their insight regarding their thoughts, feelings and behaviors because their artwork and therapist help them "pay attention to themes, personal strengths, and barriers" in their lives.



"All of us are on this spectrum of mental health — there are days where we're doing better and days we're not doing great," Stielow says. We all deal with personal struggles: difficult relationships, career setbacks and the ever-fluctuating state of our own mental health. Art therapy creates time to process our trials and tribulations, and creates the opportunity to begin healing. *

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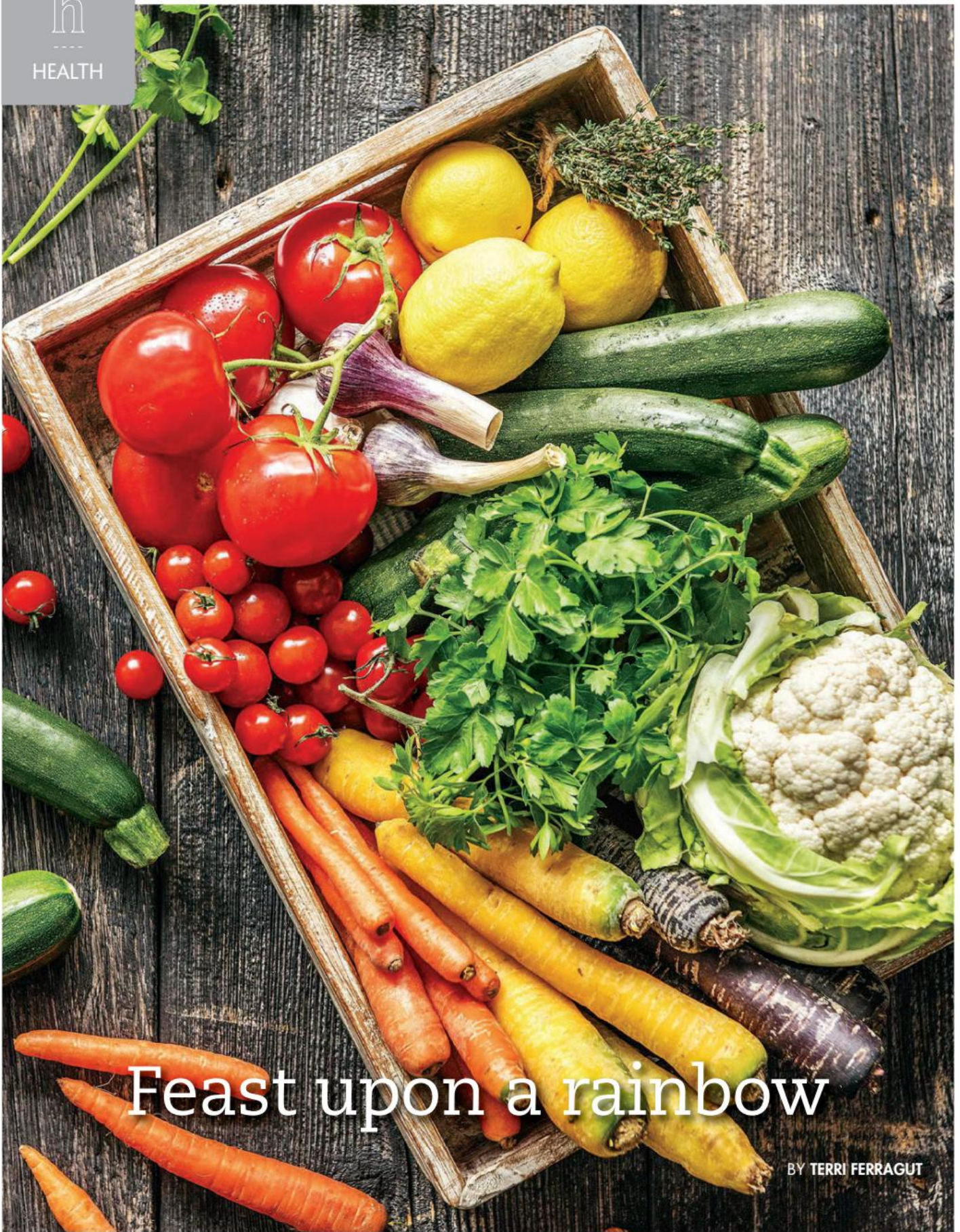
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HEALTH



Feast upon a rainbow

BY TERRI FERRAGUT

What better place to explore color in all its glory than in the beautiful bounties of a summer garden? From the deep purple-blues of the eggplant to the ripe, luscious red of a dew-kissed tomato, nature paints a kaleidoscope of vibrant hues at harvest time.

Colors in nature's food involve scientific relationships that begin in our brain creating a sensory experience by tasting. The brilliant colors in the basket of garden produce gathered at day's end are directly related to their nutritional value and our health. Our visual cue of these colors can influence our brain when it comes to our perception of how something will taste. For example, the more vibrantly colored a food is, the more intense we expect its flavor to be.

LET'S EXPLORE THE RAINBOW

1. Energy: Red and Sweet

Red is an exciting color that draws attention, such as lipstick or a traffic light. In food, we expect a red food item to be sweet. Nutritionally, both flavonoids and carotenoids are what give red-hued produce their color. Powerful antioxidants, they help protect and defend the body against free radicals, slowing the aging process and preventing disease.

Try these: Tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, apples, red peppers or raspberries.

2. Happiness: Orange, Yellow and Mildly Sweet

Yellow and orange are feel-good colors eliciting happiness, optimism and hope. Sunny days come to mind and, in foods, we perceive these colors to taste mildly sweet. Two powerful antioxidants, beta-carotene and zeaxanthin, produce the orange hue and yellow, respectively. In combination with occurring vitamins A and C, they promote strong eyes and keep our immune system healthy.

Try these: Butternut squash, oranges, carrots, mangoes or sweet potatoes.



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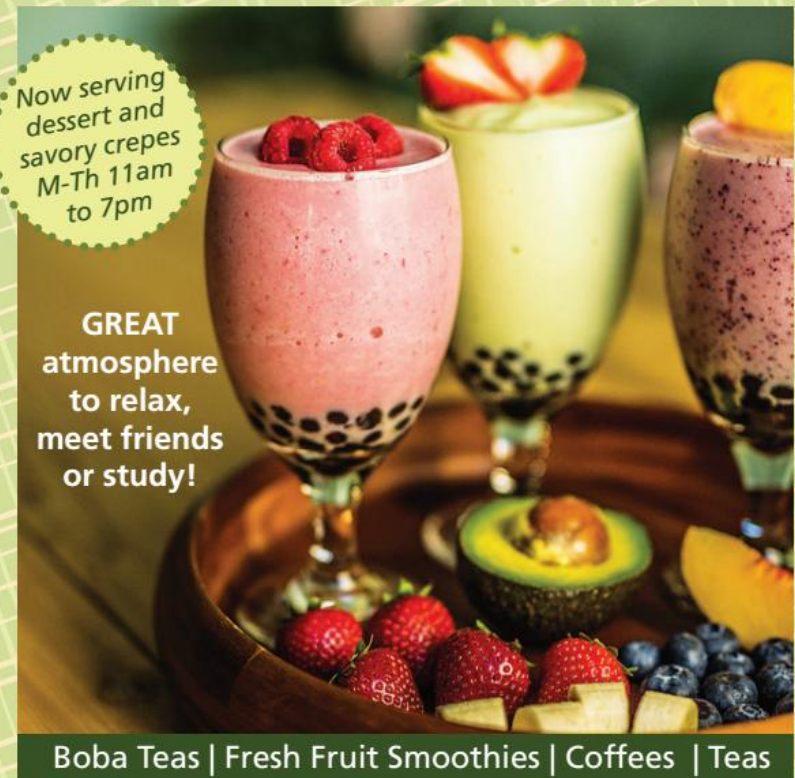


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3. Calming Energy: Think Green, Tart or Sour

Nature, health and positive growth are our perceptions of green foods. Research has shown we expect this color to taste rather tart, perhaps from an association with fruit not ripened. Carotenoids like lutein and phytochemicals (flavonols) give fruits and vegetables their rich green color, affecting brain and heart health to our eyes and skin.

Try these: Spinach, Brussel sprouts, lettuces, green bell peppers, kale, herbs or limes.

4. Relaxation: Blue, Purple and Bitter

Blue, a calming color, is difficult food to find occurring in nature, therefore it tends to be not quite as appetizing to our palette. We tend to anticipate a bitter taste, perhaps from darker food associations such as coffee or dark chocolate. Anthocyanins produce the deep blue and purples, which support healthy aging and heart health.

Inspirations: Blueberries, blackberries, eggplant, plums, purple cabbage or potatoes.

5. Calmness: White and Salty

Simplicity and peacefulness are associated with white — the opposite of stimulating our senses. Research tells us we tend to associate saltiness in food with this benign color such as popcorn or potato chips. White vegetables lack color from growth under ground but are a great source of potassium and magnesium. Garlic and onions contain phytochemicals that help lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

Try these: Jicama, onions, garlic, turnips, parsnips or mushrooms.

Tasting is a full-sensory experience that begins in the brain when we see colorful food. Food scientists and chefs both agree that to fully appreciate what you eat, the visual of food is as important as the taste.

Eating the rainbow has become a popular phrase pertaining to adopting a colorful, balanced diet to ensure that we take in a variety of nutrients. Dieticians, doctors and health and wellness advisers tell us we need to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our daily diets. So, get out there and pick your rainbow from your garden, your local grocery, food cooperative or farmer's market. Try adding color to your next meal. It will do your body good!

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The brilliant colors in the basket of garden produce gathered at day's end are directly related to their nutritional value and our health.



PURPLE SWEET POTATO SOUP

Dense and rich, and as sweet as the orange ones we've come to love, purple sweet potatoes are the perfect ingredient in this colorful lavender soup.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1½ pounds purple cabbage, cubed
- 1 28 ounce bag purple sweet potatoes
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD:

Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, 5-8 minutes.

Add cabbage and potato cubes. Cook, stirring occasionally, until cabbage begins to wilt, about 5 minutes.

Add broth and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are tender, 25-30 minutes.

Puree with an immersion blender or food processor.

Season to taste with salt and pepper.



GREEN ZUCCHINI PARSLEY SOUP

A cleansing, feel-good, green soup that tastes great.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 4 zucchinis, cut into half-moons
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 handful flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD:

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Once it shimmers, add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, 5-8 minutes.

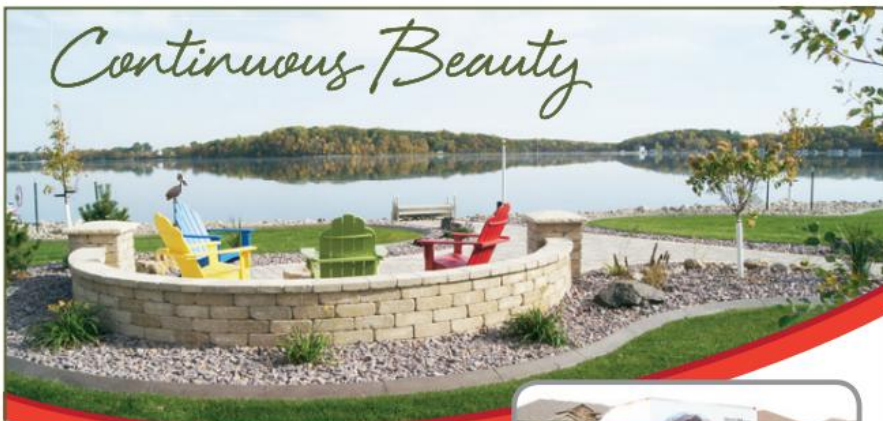
Add zucchini and cook until slightly translucent, 8-10 minutes.

Add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until zucchini is tender, about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and add parsley.

Puree with an immersion blender or food processor and season to taste with salt and pepper.

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YELLOW SQUASH CURRY SOUP

Both comforting and light, this soup incorporates butternut squash, but feel free to experiment with any summer squash.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs. curry powder
- ¼ Tsp. sea salt, plus more to taste
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into small pieces
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- ½ cup heavy cream (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Once it shimmers, add onion, garlic, curry powder, salt and butternut squash. Cook, stirring occasionally, 10-12 minutes.

Add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until squash is tender, about 20 minutes.

Puree with an immersion blender or food processor.

Stir cream (if using) into soup and season to taste with salt and pepper. *



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With a nod to the "sea" the lakeside view of the Carlson home bears an undeniable design reference to the bow of a boat. Locally designed and built Minnkota Windows bring breathtaking views year round of Pelican Lake. Quality exterior siding by Lemke Home Improvements insures comfort year round from ever changing weather patterns coming off the lake.

Through generations

Designing a home around one family's past, present, and future



A serene place for family solitude is created in this lakeside space. The rustic stone walkway area fondly reminds the Carlsons of their multiple trips to Italy. European styled chairs surrounding the table were actually salvaged from a berm during a Burger King remodel, then painted aqua by Kris.

BY BAILEY HOVLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY BY STUDIO THREE BEAU

Heading east of Fargo, the expansive farmland and grasslands gradually fade. Small groves of trees dot the plains and little ponds break the monotonous prairie landscape, eventually becoming swathes of boreal forests and vast freshwater lakes. Drive far enough and you could find yourself at Pelican Lake, a nearly 4,000-acre getaway from the bustle and business of urban life. Aside from the fishing and recreation that the local resorts boast of, Pelican Lake also holds a piece of history that runs deep through one lake property — just under 100 years of land ownership by the Carlson family.



The Carlsons have been on Pelican Lake for almost a century. Since 1920, their souls have been tied to the lake and to the land, which is exactly why Kris and Todd Carlson decided to make the family property the site of their forever home. “We knew that this would be a home that would never be for resale,” said Kris Carlson, interior designer and co-owner of Designing Women 2. “When you know a home is not your final destination, you build it with resale in mind. We knew this home was our final destination, so we

absolutely tailored it to our own style and our own taste.”

Carlson admitted it is always a bit more difficult to build a home for her own family. “In some ways, with all the details, it’s a little trickier, like is this going to be in style or am I going to like this in a year? We love doing it for our clients because they are the second opinion, but when designing your own home you second-guess yourself a lot.”

But building this home on land that held so much family tradition and history was also an

↑ Kris chose a contemporary industrial-esque approach to the design of the kitchen. Sparkles of light emitted from a trio of “gear-type” lighting fixtures require your attention. Countertops by Northern Stone, contemporary custom cabinetry, and Lucite with wood stools complete her design vision.

→ Pops of accessorized color bring the comfort of neutrals to another level. Frank Lloyd Wright would approve of the beautiful integration between Pelican Lake and the Carlson interiors — achieved by the expanse of windows.



↑ A view from the kitchen reveals a comforting living area defined by a striking focal point—the Heat-n-Glo fireplace installed by Home & Hearth. Son, Rhett Carlson of Showcase Flooring, installed the uniquely designed porcelain tile surround. Under-mitred bull nose corners reveal perfectly matched and uninterrupted tile patterns.



"We moved out to the lake because we sat down and decided to simplify life. And what don't I like about living on the lake? It is so serene, so relaxing, and it's beautiful everyday, regardless of the season or the weather."

Kris Carlson, homeowner





↑ Kris stands in the living room near a colorful rendition of the Carlson family's original, nearly 100 year-old cabin that once stood on site. The painting by Rando was a gift from Kris to her husband, Todd.

↵ The upstairs is completely plumbed and specifically designed by Kris to double as a way for sons Cole and Rhett to have separate "apartments" for the future as they raise families of their own.

← Nature's greenery collides beautifully with the interior aqua and greens to create a breathtaking blend of natural light and color. The extraordinary mid-century lighting was saved from the original cabin.

opportunity for Carlson, her husband and her sons to plan for their family's future. Lake homes are often passed down through the generations and Carlson wanted to ensure that her two sons would both be able to stay connected to the lake property.

"The main floor and the top floor have the same amenities. There's a fireplace on each floor, the same amount of bedrooms and bathrooms, and even the coffee bar

upstairs was plumbed with the idea that it could be a future kitchen for one of the boys," Carlson explained, outlining how the house could be split into two different living spaces if her sons split the house in the future.

"My husband and I, we love building together," she said, "but we all had a big part in designing our home. One of my sons surprised us and made a design of



↑ The master bathroom is comforting, clean and neutral—accented only by Mother Nature and a turquoise towel. The inset picture was a surprise for the family that son Rhett Carlson designed in a 2nd floor bathroom—a topical "map" of Pelican Lake, made of stone.

Pelican Lake in the bathroom tiles, and my other son was instrumental in the trim and the wood and the layout of the home."

The Carlson family can be seen in every element of this lake home, from lighting fixtures that were salvaged from two smaller cabins formerly on the property to the layout, designed to allow visiting family and friends to have a space of their own while they stayed with the Carlsons.

"We moved out to the lake because we sat down and decided to simplify life. And what don't I like about living on the lake? It is so serene, so relaxing and it's beautiful everyday, regardless of the season or the weather," Carlson said.

And what could be simpler than returning to your family's roots and designing a house with a clear future in mind — to create a home for generations to come? ✨

Design Thoughts



“I truly enjoy design and decorating. Doing our own home served as a great reminder how important it is to absorb all aspects of a homeowner's desires when creating their spaces. Working with Jon Anderson of Dream Builder, Inc. was a dream ...no pun intended. He was totally open to ideas and had great suggestions throughout the process.”

Kris Carlson



“It was a wonderful pleasure to design and build a very special home for Todd and Kris. They had all their ideas ready to incorporate into a lakeside retreat tailored to their specific wants and needs. As a designer, Kris was very decisive which made my job much easier. Todd was a hands on help, as well as their two sons. It was great to have the whole family work together with our company to create their dream home.”

Jon Anderson, Dream Builder, Inc.

Jon Anderson, Dream Builder, Inc.

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“One of the perks of having a general contractor, who is also an architect, is the understanding and the creative use of sun angles by positioning living spaces in the home to maximize natural light and views.”

Alan Hochhalter, Architect/Contractor,
Building Concepts

Home is where the heart is, we’ve heard it said many times before — a familiar motto that rings true. Home is where memories are made, where you arrive after a long day’s work, and where you can relax and be yourself. When the time comes to lay the foundation of your future home, it’s important to know what you desire. Owners Alan and Kim Hochhalter of Building Concepts have been building custom homes in the area for 29 years. Alan, a licensed architect is also the general contractor for the company. He began his career in commercial architecture, but always had a goal to design and build custom homes. They are a “small, hands-on company” building around six homes per year.

Kim Hochhalter, co-owner and construction manager, explains, “Our interior designer, Kristen has been working with us for three years, helping clients with all their selections. Our customers appreciate how involved we are in making sure all the details are being taken care of.”

Recently, the ambitious duo graciously opened their doors to *Inspired Home* to view one of their new builds in Rocking Horse Farm. The 4,770-square-foot home boasts four bedrooms and two and a half baths. We loved a unique and wonderfully surprising feature of the home — four flex spaces. These four large,

← The great room is airy and open, and a large rug is used to anchor the space. Furnishings were placed to give a nice conversation area without being congested. Two vases on the mantle add shape and movement, while the birch tree artwork has a soft, calming appearance. Planned simplicity encourages a person to see beautiful architectural details.

↑ A dramatic staircase provides an architectural anchor and a “forever art” piece in this home. Layered levels of sculptural railings provide the eye with an intricate and beautiful design that becomes an integral element in a home well-loved.



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↖ A clean and fresh look defines the exterior of this Building Concepts home. Dormers, stone and siding with opposing directional siding creates an overall feature of architectural beauty.

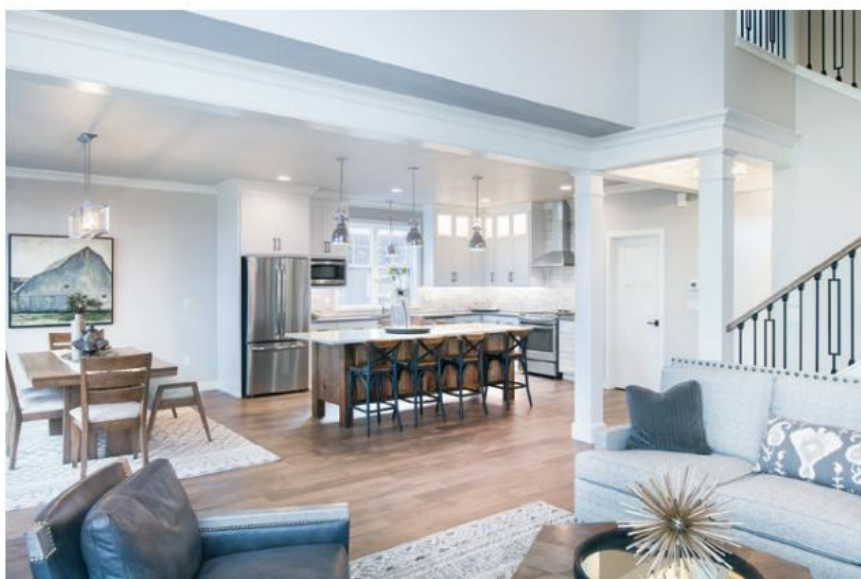
↑ The kitchen and dining area reflect a relaxed casual feel with accessories that reflect that mood. Northern Home Furnishings and Design used natural fabrics, seeded glass, metal trays, stools and rustic pottery to create airy and contemporary comfort.

→ An open and airy approach to space planning is evident here. The area presents a feeling of unobstructed comfort and a positive, easy flow of traffic for the home dwellers and guests.



comfortable rooms can be used for anything from living spaces to a teen hangout, library or crafting room. The floor plan truly allows the buyers the option of integrating their specific personalities into the square footage.

Important to note is that the Building Concepts team builds no two homes exactly alike. When we walked into the main level of the West Fargo custom home, it was obvious. The creatively designed and effective space planning was a goal achieved. Immediately upon crossing the threshold, we were greeted by natural light flooding into the home from the windows on the main level. One of the perks of having a general contractor who is also an architect is the understanding and the





↑ A well-designed kitchen island stands as a main player in this space, adding practicality as a work area and an attractive place for entertaining guests for a buffet-style event. The well-planned space promotes engaging conversations and provides close proximity to needed appliances.

creative use of angles by positioning the home to maximize light.

“The direction of the light throughout the house is an important element of the design,” Alan says. “You can see it in each room. The windows were placed for the view, light and some for privacy. For example, the windows in the master bath and closets are placed high and on the south wall. The large two-story corner windows in the main living

area give the room its dramatic feel similar to a piece of art.”

Achieving that “sunlight art” and its strategic placement Hochhalter refers to are just a few features that define this home. Impressive architectural moldings create clean, crisp lines that draw your eyes upward toward expansive ceilings and a dramatic staircase that leads you to the second level.

The home felt extravagantly beautiful,



➤ A beautifully crafted barn-style rolling door with beautiful architectural hardware adds ease of closure off the garage entry and provides an attractive way of secluding the main entrance of the home.

➔ Alan Hochhalter, Architect/Contractor;
Kim Hochhalter, Project Manager;
Kristen Ditch, Interior Design & Project
Coordinator



→ The master bedroom is designed as a personal retreat. Keeping the bedding neutral and layered creates a comfortable and inviting space. An inviting bath, custom cabinetry and a relaxing shower are exactly what is needed after a long and tiring day.

but with a complete sense of comfort and livability. Meticulously staged by Northern Home Furniture & Design, a light, clean and airy feel defined the open-concept home. The use of steely blues and grays paired with greenery and accent pieces, left the home with a refreshing Nordic feel. Kim Hochhalter explains that part of the importance of having a home properly staged in this manner is that it allows people to sense the home's personality — a moment to visualize their own pieces inside. People tend to walk a bit slower and, in turn, give more attention to the details and architectural aspects of the space.

Hochhalter explains, "One of our favorite things is when a client sits down and wants to stay for a while, you know you have a very



comfortable environment that feels like home. With all the open floor plans, it is nice to actually see with staging, for example, a large dining room table and how it not only defines an area, but also shows the possibilities for entertaining family for holiday gatherings."

Walking through the Building Concepts

project, it became apparent that beautiful can also be synonymous with comfort, practicality and elegance. Clean, bright, dramatic and completely accessible, essential elements such as maximized lighting, thoughtful design and attention to the tiniest details equal a well-lived and loved place to call home.*

Staging Success



Delrae Schefter and Summer Palmer, merchandising & marketing assistant.

// When our Northern Home design team stages a home as we did for Building Concepts, we consider the overall style of the home. All of the exterior and interior finishes and selections of trim, cabinetry, stone, counter tops, flooring and lighting are key elements in determining the process.

Once we have the furnishing layout ready for the main furniture pieces we can start selecting the accessories. The appropriate size and quantity of the accessories is very important. We keep the accessories to a minimum so the areas do not look cluttered. The furnishings, rugs, lighting and accessories should complement the architecture of the home and not overpower the rooms.

A well staged home helps people to envision the property as their future home. It also maximizes the potential of the home by giving a sense of scale and proportion. The home should look current, warm and inviting insuring a positive first impression. //

Delrae Schefter, Northern Home Furnishings and Design

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Family Reunions — What could possibly go wrong?

BY BERNIE ERICKSON

Summertime, and the livin' is easy — unless it's your turn to host the annual cousins' barbeque family reunion.

My cousins are all great, but, like every family, we have that one "particular" aunt.

Ours is Aunt Francine.

In this part of the country, we pronounce the word "aunt" so it rhymes with "want" as in "I want to go visit Aunt Francine," which is ridiculous because no one in their right mind would ever say that.

Aunt Francine insists we address her with the title "aunt," which rhymes with the word "can't" as in "Why can't Aunt Francine stop being so pretentious?"

She never married or really had a job, but always lived in a nice home and owned a decent car. No one asked how she paid the bills. It was probably best.

As a kid, visiting Aunt Francine's home was scarier than going to the dentist or sitting in the clinic waiting for a measles booster shot.

It's quite customary to remove one's shoes when entering someone else's home, which was obviously expected at Aunt Francine's home. But, in typical fashion, she had a basket of old Wonder Bread bags and '80s hair scrunchies by her front door. Everyone was to remove their shoes, cover their socks with Wonder Bread bags, held up above the calves with scrunchies.

By the end of the afternoon, your legs were numb and purple from the scrunchy on down.

Between bread bags and neuropathy, there was a good chance you'd slip or fall at some point during the visit. Her floors remained pristine.

Imagine my surprise when Aunt Francine sent an affirmative RSVP she would be attending the barbeque.

Immediately, I called cousin Vinnie.

"Vinnie, you won't believe it. Aunt Francine is coming this year!"

No response.

"Vinnie? Are you there?"

"Yeah, I'm here. I'm just trying to figure out if something suddenly just came up on that Saturday."

"Nice try, Vinnie," I said. "You and Marissa need to be here to help keep an eye on things."

I'm very much a "tidy up big-time BEFORE the party, and thoroughly CLEAN house AFTER the party" kind of guy. With 30-40 people in and out of the house during the afternoon, the guest bath is going to look like a late-night bus stop restroom in one hour.

I was going to need some discreet cousin tending the restroom every 30 minutes. Another cousin would man the buffet table to make sure the potato salad sitting in the sun wasn't going bad and to stop wasps from drowning in open bottles of soda pop.

Speaking of open bottles, someone needed to stay close to "Open Bottle Bill." Uncle Bill considered EVERY hour happy hour. After a few cold ones, he was prone to musing aloud how his sister-in-law Francine paid the bills all these years.

No one wanted to hear that.

My cousin Vinnie, bless his heart, has still never figured out I invite him here an hour early, so I can count on him being here to help a half-hour before everyone else arrives. Like clockwork, Vinnie and Marissa arrived for the 2 p.m. get-together at 1:30 sharp.

"Did you put an indoor pool in your house?" he said, walking in the door.

"Don't I wish. Why?"

"It smells like a pool in here," He said, wrinkling his nose and looking around.

"Um, I hid some open bowls of bleach behind the furniture around the house, so it smells disinfected. For Aunt Francine," I admitted.

He rolled his eyes and muttered, "Good luck with that."

Soon the house and backyard were jam-packed with a couple dozen people who

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all resembled each other, and a dozen kids playing in the pool, spraying their aunts and uncles with water cannons.

Hosting a potluck is like hosting a competitive cooking contest with everyone trying to out-do one another. Layer in the family group that grew up together for decades, and the pot-luck recipe exchange becomes as popular as Aunt Francine's disapprovals or what Open Bottle Bill might blurt out during happy hour.

The male cousins were asked to bring savories (hot dish) and female cousins sweets (fruit salads). was always Aunt Francine brought both—hot dish with Campbell's condensed soup and a Jello & Cool-Whip salad.

The recipe cards each cousin brought with the ingredients and directions for each pot-luck item tended to disappear quickly.

Cousin Vinnie showed me Aunt Francine's hot dish recipe card. "Notice anything weird about this?" he asked.

"Besides the fact it's handwritten in perfect cursive and the cards are all laminated?" I replied.

"Aunt Francine's hot dish calls for a can of Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup and a can of Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup. Don't you think she meant Campbell's Cream of Chicken Soup?"

"Of course," I replied. "Aunt Francine knew exactly what she was writing." We shared that knowing smile only cousins who have known each other a lifetime can share.

Pretty sure that before long I'll take over the role of Aunt Francine. I will fulfill my duties with the dignified curmudgeonly behavior required. I may even prank the nieces and nephews with a recipe that calls for an 8-ounce container of cottage cheese rather than an 8-ounce container of cream cheese.

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Western Products is celebrating 70 years of serving homeowners, homebuilders and commercial companies throughout the Upper Midwest. Though the business got its start as small lightning rod distributor in 1948, Western Products has now grown to become a leader in the home improvement industry through dedication to superior service, quality products, and—most importantly—building relationships with their customers and staff.

Western Products is a full-service remodeler, meaning they offer a diverse lineup of products from nationally accredited retailers. Since the 1960s, Western Products has been creating vertically integrated companies within their company, allowing them to provide extensive home improvement products to their customers. These include siding, windows, roofing, gutters, gutter protection, soffit, fascia, patio and entry doors, cabinets, window coverings, and blinds. Western Products even caters to leisure with their spas and patio furniture. No matter what service a customer needs, it is provided with expertise and tailored to make their renovation experience the best it can be.

Through the decades, Western Products has constantly evolved with the market, implementing strategies for giving loyal and new customers alike exactly what they need. Just recently Western Products



↑ A completed project in Mandan, North Dakota.

earned the rank of 75 nationally in the 2017 Remodeling Magazine, Top 500 List. They have also earned several customer service and best of the best awards. With a majority of new homes in the Fargo-Moorhead area being built in the early 2000s, Western Products anticipates the community will soon need more siding and window replacements, and roofing and interior updates focused around cabinetry. With the business' innovations, helping customers accomplish these projects



↑ Pictured above is a 1969 photo of the Western Products building.

has never been easier with Western Products' new Design and Experience Center. Opened in the fall of 2015, this service lets clients view real-life house facades that feature Western Products' handiwork and visualize how their own project will be realized. This new service is, of course, continually updated to reflect changing products.

Most importantly, Western Products is driven by people: both by customers and by employees. That's why Western Products is fully dedicated to creating positive relationships with everyone their work touches. The business is always engaging with their customers by encouraging them to review, comment, and connect online about their Western Products experience or upcoming events. Western Products also connects with customers on the jobsite by using technology like iPads to make communication between clients and the office nearly instantaneous. On the business side of things, Western Products continues to invest in its installation teams and office departments, committed to fostering a positive work culture for their employees. In fact, just last month the company held an employee picnic to honor their dedicated workers for a job well done and to help celebrate the business' 70th anniversary.

In the Fargo-Moorhead community and beyond, Western Products takes great pride in its involvement as active members in many associations. Just to name a few are the Home Builders Association, Habitat for Humanity, Make a Wish Foundation, the United Way of Cass Clay, Northern Region Association of Safety Professionals, the Fargo-Moorhead Human Resource Association, and the Better Business Bureau. These, along with numerous charities including Fargo-Moorhead's annual school supply drive, all enable Western Products and its employees the opportunity to give back and serve others. After 70 years of service, Western Products has found their personal way to make a difference. *








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Keep your cool

BY ASHLEY FERRAGUT JOHNSON



Finally, the summer months are upon us. The AC is up, the stress level is down, and everybody is outdoors from dawn until dusk. While summer brings the long-awaited sunshine, it's important to remember how to keep cool. We all encourage our loved ones to take proper precautions from the blistering sun when it's at its peak — stay hydrated, take rests in the shade and know when you've had too much.

Heatstroke can pose a threat to humans and animals alike, and it's important to be aware of the warning signs for our pets. Inspired Home reached out to our favorite doctor of all things slimy, scaly or furry, Dr. Amy Anderson at West Fargo Animal Hospital. She offered up great safety tips to keep out pets from overheating.

Dr. Anderson says that early symptoms of a dehydrated or overheated pet include tachycardia (high heart rate,) elevated respiratory rate, excessive panting with a very

Enjoy a nice walk in the cooling cover of sunset, or let your pup splash in a pool or lake — an effective way Dr. Anderson says, to ensure your dog stays cool.

wide-open mouth and a tongue that hangs out of the pet's mouth at great length. The tongue may also appear to be a dark red to bluish in color. You may notice dilated pupils and your pet may lie down and no longer wish to participate in activities they typically enjoy.


She warns, "Listen to their signals and allow them to rest. Find a good shady spot and some cool ground to lay on. Offer them a drink, but do not allow them to overdo water — small amounts frequently is a better idea." Continue to monitor your pet and make sure its condition doesn't deteriorate.

She also suggests you pay attention to the weather. These is an important indicator if your pet should be playing outside or remain indoors. A nice, dry 85-degree day might be the perfect temp to let your pet run and play, but if that 85-degree day is accompanied by 80 percent humidity, Dr. Anderson advises, **STAY INSIDE**. If it is warm enough outside to induce sweating in humans, it is too hot for pets. Dogs do not sweat and aren't able to utilize this physiological method of cooling down like their two-legged counterparts. If you want safe, quality outdoor time in the summer months just wait a bit and send your pup out to play once the sun goes down. Enjoy a nice walk in the cooling cover of sunset or let your pup splash in a pool or lake — an effective way, Dr. Anderson says, to ensure your dog stays cool.

Lastly, be aware if you own a pet that is at a higher risk for heat exhaustion. "Black dogs will absorb significantly more heat than white dogs and will suffer from heat stroke much more quickly. The animals most at risk for heatstroke also include the very young, very old, overweight and short-nosed breeds such as bulldogs and pugs."

Dr. Anderson says if there is a sudden onset of weakness, disorientation or your

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pet becomes unsteady, that is a sign of great concern. If your pet's gums appear pale or gray, you need to get your pet to the vet immediately. She cautions that seizures, permanent neurological or GI tract damage can occur and, in some cases, death. You may put your pet in a bath of tepid water, NOT COLD, and apply rubbing alcohol to the pads of your pets' feet for immediate first aid. She cautions, if you need to cool your pet down in this manner, call your vet immediately.

One last piece of advice: If you see a pet left in a hot car in a parking lot, please call the authorities. Temperatures in a car rise to dangerous levels very quickly and your phone call could save a life. If you are not comfortable calling the police, give the license plate number to the store manager so the issue can be addressed immediately.

Follow the sage advice of Dr. Anderson and you and your pet will safely enjoy the summer months we've waited so long for. Keep the water dish (and your cooler) full and stay out of the extreme heat. Trust me, it's the cool thing to do. 🐾



↑ Dr. Amy Anderson



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Green spaces for everyone

BY CHEF GRANVILLE WOOD



I was pleasantly surprised as I rolled into Fargo six years ago and saw that it was monikered “The City of Parks.” Who would have thought that the frozen tundra would yield its reputation of ice and snow to glorious green spaces? Large swathes of the rivers banks are set aside for trails, biking and walking with large areas of green, sunlit grassy areas and numerous parks.

As a kid growing up in England, we were a picnicking family. We would just pack up a lunch, jump in the good old Chevy Bellaire and head out into the country. Once we found a spot, the blanket would be spread out, my parents would go about setting up a lunch of sandwiches and salads while my brothers and I explored the local surroundings. As our parents enjoyed some quiet time and a glass of wine, we worked up voracious appetites exploring nature while expanding our appreciation of its mysteries.

Nothing says more about summer than a good picnic. We have a wonderful garden and use it endlessly throughout the summer. But there is something about going somewhere for a picnic. I have eaten many a sandwich at a roadside park or shelter as I zigzagged around the country. Food just tastes better when you are outside. There is a mystique about it. I have memories of being at a roadside shelter with freezing rain pelting down, enjoying a meaty Italian sandwich on a crusty roll thinking this is the best thing I have ever eaten.

Parks are special places, they are community centers without walls, a great escape for everyone. They support the fabric of our society without prejudice. In major urban centers where people are stacked upon each other, the best escape is the soft green grass, fresh air and trees for a picnic in the park. We have become isolationist living in our small spheres. Family gatherings in parks are especially special times with games, food and camaraderie. Throw in a diverse ethnic vibe and you have an urban park on a sunny afternoon.

Is it the smell of freshly mowed grass or the giggly laughter of children on the playground or the aromas of food cooking on the grill that make the outside so alluring? After a long white winter, green is such a beautiful sight. The shadows thrown by the lush trees

As a kid growing up in England, we were a picnicking family. We would just pack up a lunch, jump in the good old Chevy Bellaire and head out into the country.



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deepen the richness of the green grass making it, oh, so inviting. Slip off your shoes and bury your toes into the cool grass and feel the stress ebb away.

Europeans are unabashed about putting out a blanket in a nice grassy area and taking some sun. The great thing about that is, it doesn't cost anything really. The Brits have really defined the art of picnicking and, with the summer festival, "The Proms," they have closed the gap of the classes. The Proms are

a series of outdoor symphonies that take place throughout Britain in the span of a few months. With the picnickers, you will find everything from silver candelabra and Krug champagne to cucumber sandwiches and a bottle of reasonable white wine.

The Proms are for everyone. Proms being short for promenade, as guests would stand and walk, promenading during the concert. The Proms culminate at the Royal Albert Hall, one of the most pristine and honored music

venues in the world. Here, for a meager 8 pounds sterling, 1,500 hundred lovers of the symphony can stand in front of the stage and take in the concert of a lifetime. Something under normal circumstances they could never afford.

Fargo should showcase the bandstand in the middle of Island Park. It could entertain us with string quartets, jazz or even theater in the round, a series of one-act plays. Perhaps a mobile bandstand as well that could move from park to park.

While we muse over that, let's plan our picnic basket. Mine is rather straight forward. A loaf of good, crusty French bread, a selection of cured meats like Genoa salami and soppresseta. Cheese, you must have cheese. A hard Manchego or a creamy ripe Brie, aged Provolone and fruit. It's the height of summer, so tomatoes, warmed from the sun, bursting with flavor, dressed with olive oil and a spritz of vinegar and a dash of sea salt. I love cold fried chicken and cold roast chicken works just as well. Bring lots of napkins and sneak in some wet-wipes as well. Dessert, so many thoughts. If you are posh and at the Proms perhaps a Lemon Tart or Crème Brulee to go with that sparkling brut rose Champagne. We are at the park with kiddos and dogs, so a Double Fudge Chocolate Cookie suits us just fine.

Find a soft grassy park, spread out your blanket and enjoy the trees and birds. If you have children, two or more work for this, throw out a sturdy round ball and sit back and be delighted by their joy kicking it around while you enjoy that crisp Chardonnay in your hand.

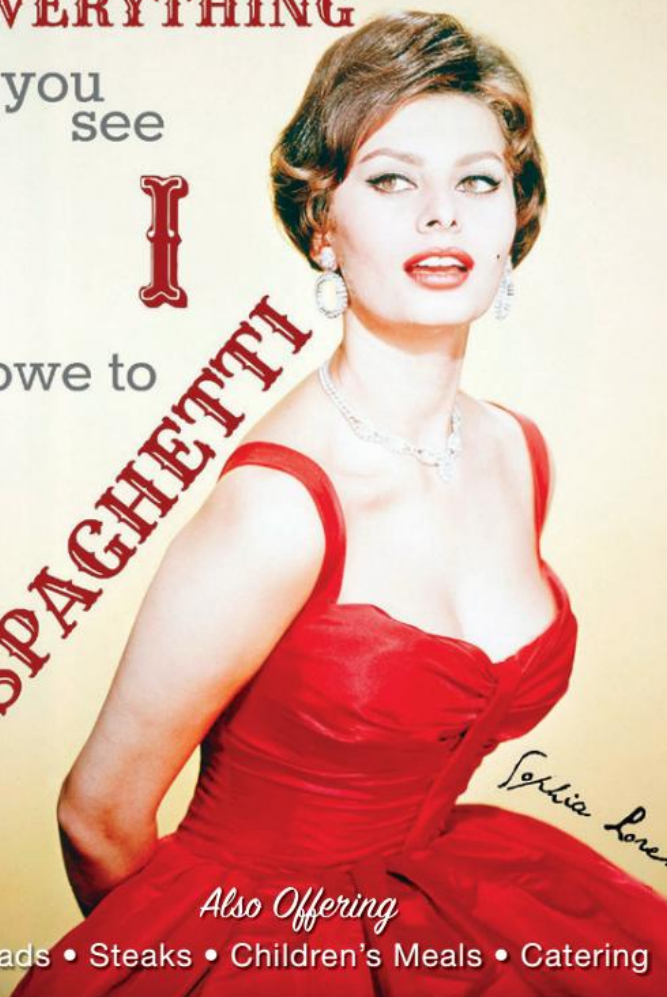
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Cucumber Sandwich Variations:

VARIATION 1

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups honeydew melon, skin off and seeded.
- 2 cups goat cheese
- 2 tbsps chopped fresh chives
- 2 tsps dill
- bread of your choice
- cucumber slices
- watercress
- salt and pepper to taste

Cucumber has an infinity for honeydew melon. Take two cups of honeydew melon, skin off and seeded. Cut into chunks, lightly salt and blitz in a food processor. Pour into fine mesh strainer. Take the solids and wring out remaining moisture in a clean kitchen towel. Put two cups of softened, good-quality goat cheese in a bowl and beat in honeydew solids with a wooden spoon. Season with 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives and 2 tsp. of dill. Season with salt and white pepper to taste. Spread generously on the bread and top with cucumber slices and some peppery watercress.

VARIATION 2

INGREDIENTS

- smoked salmon
- solid dark rye bread
- 2 cups mascarpone cheese
- zest of one lemon
- 2 tbsps chopped capers
- 2 tbsps chopped chives
- 1 tbsp chopped dill
- radish
- cucumber
- pinch of pepper

Smoked salmon deserves a place on the picnic blanket. A good, solid dark rye is the platform. Take 2 cups mascarpone cheese and gently fold in the fine zest of 1 lemon, 2 Tbsp. chopped capers, 2 Tbsp. chopped chives, 1 Tbsp. chopped dill and a generous pinch of fresh black pepper. Spread on the bread and top with smoked salmon and a julienne salad of radish and cucumber. Garnish with a sprig of dill.*

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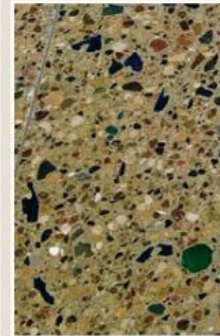
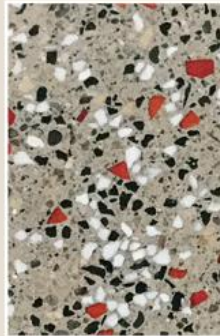
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INGREDIENTS

World's Best Cake — A Norwegian favorite



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUREN FERRAGUT CARLSON

A cake so audacious to be deemed the “World’s Best Cake” or “Verdens Beste” by Norwegians has certainly proved to fulfill its title. “World’s best anything” is quite subjective, but according to most Norwegians, they see the title as a well-deserved fit. Like most things Scandinavian, the journey for such a cake evolved in a humble manner.

Verdens Beste was born in the 1920s on the island of Hinnøya in Northern Norway. Hulda Ottestad and her sister, both from the neighboring town of Kvæfjord, opened a café called Café Alliance. It quickly became regarded as the best in the area. The two sisters became known as Norway’s café pioneers. Ten years after her opening, Hulda purchased two cake recipes from a Danish pastry chef for a large price: 200 kroner.

One recipe called “kongekake” or king cake was loaded with almonds and very expensive to make at the time. Hulda adjusted the recipe to call for less almonds, which rendered the cake not only less dense, but also more affordable to bake and to buy.

Verdens Beste also has the delicious honor of being Norway’s national cake since 2002. Previously, it had been named kvæfjordkake in association with Kvæfjord, the hometown of Hulda and her sister.

I have never had the opportunity to taste Verdens Beste, so the best way to do so was to make it myself. I was glad I did! The fact that you can make the “world’s best-anything” in one bowl makes this recipe even better.

The recipe is clever, cheap and easy. You make a simple, eggy sponge cake, whip up egg whites into an airy meringue, smear it on top of the cake batter and bake it all together. Genius. Both the cake and meringue bake simultaneously together. After the meringue has puffed to a light golden brown, remove the cake and cut it in half crosswise. For the filling, it is nothing more than whipped cream and vanilla. Over time (and depending on whose hands the recipe is in), the filling has been known to also be a rum custard or vanilla custard. The consensus seems to be whatever you like! I chose simple vanilla whipped cream.

I love this cake for many reasons. It is affordable, easy and quick. More importantly, the sooner you make it in advance, the better it tastes over time. It’s great for a summer picnic! Make it a day or two ahead of time and all the flavors mix and meld together. Be sure to garnish with fresh berries, whatever type you prefer. Bananas in the middle layer would add a nice creaminess, too! However you choose to adapt it, as Hulda did, it will be the world’s best. Happy baking!

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Like most things Scandinavian, the journey for such a cake evolved in a humble manner.



↑ Baking the cake and meringue topping at the same time makes this cake a time saver. No need to make frosting or icing—just garnish with fruit!



↑ You can be creative with the filling. I suggest adding almond, lemon, or my favorite, a few pods of fresh ground cardamom to the sweetened fresh whipped cream.



↑ I think baked goods should look homemade. That is what I love most about this cake. It lends itself to imperfection and it's adaptable—the way Hulda intended.

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WORLDS BEST CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- 10 ½ Tbsps. (1 stick plus 2 ½ Tbsps.)
butter, softened
- 1 ⅔ cups granulated sugar, separated
- 1 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 5 large eggs, separated
- ⅓ cup whole milk
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ vanilla bean

METHOD:

Preheat the oven to 350°F, with a rack in the middle position. Line an 8- by 12-inch baking pan with parchment paper. I recommend not using glass pans, use metal.

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Beat the butter and ⅔ cup of the sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer until light and creamy, about 3 minutes.

Add the flour and baking powder and mix well on low speed.

Mix in the egg yolks and milk.

Scrape the batter into the baking pan.

In a large clean bowl, beat the egg whites and the remaining 1 cup sugar to soft peaks. Spread on top of the cake layer. Sprinkle with the almond slices.

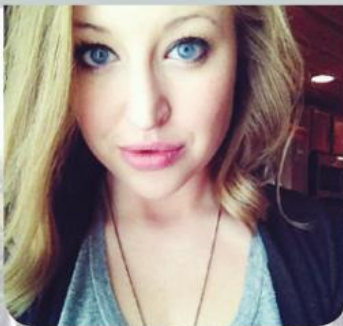
Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the meringue is golden brown and puffed. Cool on a wire rack in the pan. Transfer to a cutting board.

When the cake is cool, put the cream in a medium bowl and scrape in the vanilla seeds. Discard the vanilla pod. Beat to soft peaks with an electric mixer, about 3 minutes.

Cut the cake in half crosswise with a serrated knife. Place one half of the cake on a serving tray and cover with the cream. Place the other half, meringue side up, on top.

Let the cake sit for 1 hour in the fridge before serving.*

Wine Wisdom



Chelsey Malstrom, Seven Sisters Spirits,
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Borne of Fire

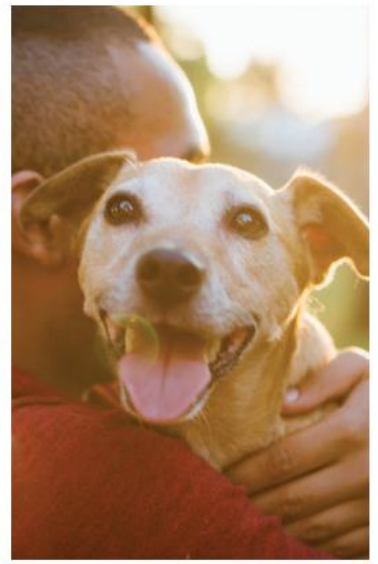
This Cabernet Sauvignon is from a brand new AVA (American Viticultural Area) in Washington State, The Burn. Blended with 10% Malbec, this Cabernet brings a subtle smoky influence. Big bursts of blackberries and figs jump out of the glass. The delectable fruity balance of this wine pairs well with all your favorite summer grilled meats.

Domaine Haut Fresne Muscadet

Looking for a perfect summer white? I'd highly recommend this Muscadet! It's light, yet it can handle rich food pairings. Since it has low residual sugar, this wine has bright, fresh acidity with notes of under ripe melon. A classic pairing would be oyster in the half shell, but don't be afraid to pour it alongside fresh pan fish with a side of mac & cheese.

Cheers!
Chelsey Malstrom





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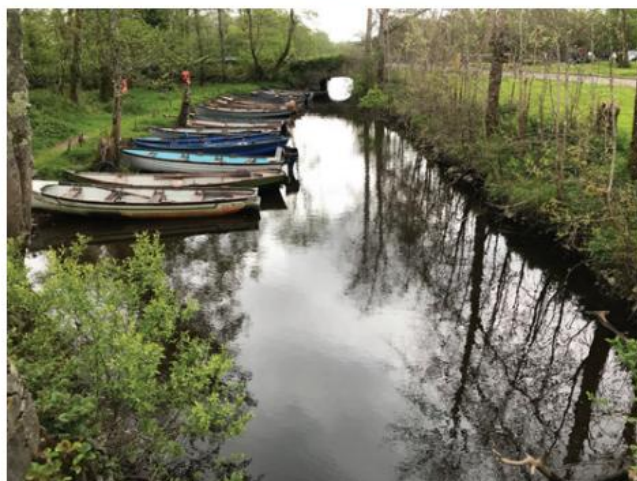
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the Luck of the IRISH

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAYNA DEL VAL

In May, I took a dream vacation with my husband, son and his girlfriend to Ireland. My husband is Irish, and I mean that in the literal sense, not in the “he enjoys St. Patrick’s Day and his great-great grandparents came over from there” sense. I mean he has an Irish passport and the accent, and yes, that’s dreamy, too.

But I digress.

We have been together almost 17 years, but I hadn’t been to Ireland with him because his immediate family lives in England.

But this year, we finally found the time and good ticket prices to make our way to the Emerald Isle. For two glorious weeks, I was pretty often overcome with the scenery, the history, the beauty and the hospitality of Ireland.

Every bend in the corner of the unfeasibly narrow roads offered a new, breathtaking vista.

Each pasture filled with cows and sheep was more idyllic than the last. Every thatched roof, painted door, crumbling building and Irish jig that spilled out of the pubs only further confirmed that, for two weeks, I was living in a movie set.

Except this is real life for approximately 4.8 million people. They wake up every day to the greenest greens you have ever imagined; they enjoy seemingly endless cups of tea and biscuits. They live the charmed life we all imagine the Irish to live every single day.

So, while I was reveling in the beauty, I was also aware of how bland home was going to feel. How flat, how colorless, how short on charm and magic. And a part of me was sad to think about going home at all.

But my husband and I took our dog for a very early morning walk the first day we were back (one of the blessings and curses

of international travel is the jet lag!), and as the sun came up over the trees down by the river, I was struck by the incredible beauty that is in my own neighborhood. We walked back toward our house, and I saw it with a new set of eyes. It has its own sweet charm and, with the lilacs, iris and peonies in bloom, our little yard has an enchantment that rivals Ireland.

And then let’s not forget that I have my very own Irishman, too!

Travel is good because it opens our eyes to new people and places, but I think it’s also good because it helps us see our every day in a new light. This trip to Ireland will live in my memory as a magical time, but my little life in my pretty little house in my beautiful little neighborhood lives there, too, and I’m grateful for the reminder of their charm and beauty. ✨



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