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Holiday Guide



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Oh, what FUN!

Oh, what fun it is to explore Mississippi's historic downtowns! Special shopping hours, holiday celebrations, and unique experiences are happening across the state. Make your holiday plans, and be there with bells on.



COLUMBUS Christmas Open House

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1&2 / 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 / 1 - 5 P.M. | DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS

Retail businesses showcase holiday items and specials to kick off the holiday season. Come shop and enjoy grand door prizes worth hundreds of dollars each, food samplings, Miz Claus.

COLUMBUSMAINSTREET.COM



CORINTH Holiday Open House

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1-3 | DOWNTOWN CORINTH

Shop, dine and play in Downtown Corinth this holiday season. Join Main Street Corinth for Holiday Open House in downtown stores on November 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and check off your Christmas shopping list!

FACEBOOK.COM/MAINSTREETCORINTH



BOONEVILLE Holiday Open House

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 / 9 A.M. - 4 P.M. | DOWNTOWN BOONEVILLE

Join us for the City of Booneville's annual Holiday Open House shopping extravaganza. Enjoy our charming downtown and unique specialty shops as you explore downtown and around. Shoppers can take advantage of holiday discounts, free gift wrapping, refreshments, and drawings for gift certificates. Plan your gal-pal holiday road trip and meet us in Booneville!

VISITBOONEVILLE.COM



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MSMAINSTREET.COM

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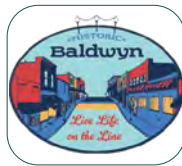


RIPLEY Holiday Open House

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 / 11 A.M. - 4 P.M. | DOWNTOWN RIPLEY & AROUND TOWN

On Sunday, November 3rd, the shops in Downtown Ripley and around town will be decked out for the holidays. Stop by for appetizers and hot chocolate while listening to Christmas music and shopping for the holidays. Pop-up shops will be in the historic downtown district, offering a unique variety of arts and crafts!

RIPLEYMAINSTREET.COM



BALDWYN "Knomebody knows Christmas like Baldwin"

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7 / 4 - 8 P.M. | DOWNTOWN BALDWYN

Come to downtown Baldwin for "Knomebody knows Christmas like Baldwin" on November 7th! There will be a performance by dance group 38829 at Blue August, visits with Santa Claus, horse-drawn carriage rides, an ice cart rink, and of course discounts and door prizes at downtown boutiques. Downtown restaurants will be open, too!

FACEBOOK.COM/BALDWYNMAINSTREETCHAMBER



MERIDIAN Downtown Meridian Open House

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7 / 5 P.M. - 8 P.M. | DOWNTOWN MERIDIAN

Downtown Meridian Retail Open House on Thursday, November 7th. From trendy boutiques to established stores, discover the diverse range of shops that make downtown Meridian special. Many stores will offer exclusive discounts, sales, and giveaways to celebrate the Open House. Get a jumpstart on your holiday shopping with a festive atmosphere, music, and refreshments!

DOWNTOWNMERIDIAN.ORG



COLUMBIA Holiday Open House

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8 / 10 A.M. - 9 P.M. & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 / 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M. | DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA

Experience the magic of Columbia's Holiday Open House! Stroll through the "City of Charm," discovering unique shops along the historic Main Street District and beyond. It's the perfect way to jumpstart your holiday shopping and lift your festive spirit!

VISITCOLUMBIAMS.COM



LOUISVILLE Jingle Bell Jubilee Christmas Open House

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 & 9 | DOWNTOWN LOUISVILLE

Shop for everyone on your Christmas List in downtown Louisville on Friday, November 8th and Saturday, November 9th! Register for door prizes and enjoy holiday refreshments in all our beautiful shops. Customers will receive a complimentary Louisville Main Street Shopping bag to fill up with lots of unique gifts!

FACEBOOK.COM/WINSTONCOUNTYCHAMBER

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HERNANDO Christmas Open House and the City's Dickens of A Christmas

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 / 9 A.M.- 5:00 P.M. | DOWNTOWN HERNANDO

The Hernando Christmas Open House and the City's Dickens of A Christmas event kicks off the holiday season! Our Square is turned into a Victorian era adorned with all things Christmas. Our shops and restaurants downtown and around town will be alive with the Christmas spirit beginning Saturday, November 9th, featuring a wonderland of holiday sights, sounds, carriage rides, and shopping galore and we can't leave out - visits with Santa.

HERNANDOMS.ORG



CLEVELAND Christmas Open House

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9 & 10 | DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

Cleveland Main Street's Christmas Open House and annual tree lighting kick off the 50 Nights of Lights celebration. Enjoy extended shopping hours, festive deals, and family fun downtown. Join us for the magical tree lighting ceremony as we illuminate the season with sparkling lights and holiday cheer!

50NIGHTSOFLIGHTS.COM



PHILADELPHIA Holiday Open House

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 / 1 - 5 P.M. | DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA

Come join us in Downtown Philadelphia for our Holiday Open House on Sunday, November 10th. Our stores have all your Christmas needs. Shop local and shop downtown!

NESHOPA.ORG



TUNICA Holiday Shopping Social

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 / 4 - 6 P.M. | DOWNTOWN TUNICA

Enjoy the shopping and holiday décor of historic Downtown Tunica! We will also kick off our Holiday Shopping Spree on this night!

TUNICAMAINSTREET.COM



HATTIESBURG Holiday Open House

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 / ALL DAY | DOWNTOWN HATTIESBURG

Sip, shop, dine, stroll, and celebrate in Downtown Hattiesburg as we kick off the holiday season at Holiday Open House! Enjoy Santa Pics, Festive Tours, Golf Cart Rentals Available, Art Exhibits, Extended Shopping Hours, Exclusive Sales and Pop-up Markets.

DOWNTOWNHATTIESBURG.COM



STARKVILLE 52nd Annual Holiday Bazaar Presented by BankPlus

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20 & 21 / 10 A.M. - 7 P.M. | THE MILL AT MSU

Shop 80+ vendors and find specialty & handmade holiday gifts this Christmas season. The event is \$8 for admission and runs 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. each day.

STARKVILLEHOLIDAYBAZAAR.COM

LEARN MORE ABOUT MISSISSIPPI'S DOWNTOWNS AT MSMAINSTREET.COM





VICKSBURG 28th Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Open House

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28 / 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. | DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG

The 28th Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Open House promises to be a joyous occasion for the whole family. We look forward to celebrating the holiday season with you in the heart of Downtown Vicksburg. Make sure to bring your camera, your holiday spirit, and your loved ones for an unforgettable day of festive fun! Santa Claus himself will be enjoying the festivities from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. during the Old Fashioned Christmas Open House.

VICKSBURGMAINSTREET.COM



CLINTON 12th Annual Santa Claus Crawl

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 / 5:30 - 9:00 P.M. | OLDE TOWNE CLINTON

Get your Santa Claus event mug and tee shirt. Have photos made with Santa, register for great door prizes, sip cider from local businesses, enjoy live music, and ride through Olde Towne on Turner the Train.

MAINSTREETCLINTONMS.ORG/EVENTS



PASCAGOULA Downtown for the Holidays

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 / 5 - 8 P.M. | DOWNTOWN PASCAGOULA

Experience the enchantment of Downtown for the Holidays in Downtown Pascagoula. This festive extravaganza transforms the heart of our Flagship city into a winter wonderland, featuring our annual Christmas parade, joyful carolers and performers, a snow village, photos with Santa, and more!

MAINSTREETPASCAGOULA.COM



PICAYUNE Shop by Candlelight & Christmas on the Rails

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 / 5:30 - 8:30 P.M. | DOWNTOWN PICAYUNE

Experience the magic of the 20th Annual Shop by Candlelight event in Downtown Picayune. Enjoy snow, luminaries, and festively decorated shops and bring the family to Santa's Workshop from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on East Canal. Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive by Fire Truck.

PICAYUNEMAINSTREET.COM



OCEAN SPRINGS Holiday Open House

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6&7 / 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. | DOWNTOWN OCEAN SPRINGS

Shops, restaurants, and galleries come alive with holiday cheer offering specials on clothing, jewelry, holiday décor, and more for the Holiday Open House. Start your fun by visiting the Ocean Springs Visitors Center located at 1000 Washington Avenue for hot chocolate and grab a holiday shopping guide. Spend \$200 during the two-day event and bring your receipts to the Visitors Center for a chance to win prizes valued at over \$500! Free to attend!

OCEANSPRINGSCHAMBER.COM



GREENWOOD A Delta Dickens Christmas

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 / 10:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | DOWNTOWN GREENWOOD

Come stroll Howard Street as a Victorian Christmas comes to life! Characters from Dickens' A Christmas Carol will mix and mingle with the crowd, carolers will entertain, and photo ops will abound! There will be real life snow and carriage rides, hot chocolate and hot cider, a Victorian story-time for the kids and so much more. Shop and enjoy the magic of Christmas in downtown Greenwood. Presented by the Bank of Commerce.

GREENWOODMSCHAMBER.COM



COCOA

Christmas

Decadent Dutch cocoa makes the holiday a bit sweeter.

I have always believed that Dutch cocoa powder was made in the Netherlands by lots of Dutch people who wore wooden shoes and grew beautiful tulips on the side. It took a deep dive into the subject to realize how little I knew.

Coenraad Johannes van Houten, a Dutch scientist from an affluent chocolate-making family, invented the process in the 1800s. It involved treating the cocoa beans with an alkali solution, resulting in a gorgeously dark color and a richer, smoother, and more mellow flavor. That is the mini version of his science project, and we are forever grateful for his efforts.

Chocolate is always good, but if you use Dutch-process cocoa powder, you will knock it out of the park! Brownies are shiny, frostings and glazes glisten, and hot chocolate made with Dutch cocoa powder is heavenly due to its super solubility and absorption qualities, which are far superior to those of natural dried cocoa.

When it comes to using cocoa powder, always stick to the recipe's instructions. If it specifies Dutch-process, then head to the store and pick up a box. There are several brands available locally and online, including Hershey's, Ghirardelli, Guittard Cocoa Rouge, and Valrhona, which is a top-quality option but comes with a higher price tag. Remember, following the recipe is key to achieving the best results.

All chocolate is not created equal. If you are making a divine chocolate recipe, then use the divine Dutch-process cocoa. Merry Christmas, y'all! *M*

COCOA COLA BUNDT CAKE

Vegetable oil spray	1 tablespoon baking soda
5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped, divided	$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup canola oil	1 cup Coca-Cola, divided
1 cup sugar	1 cup buttermilk, divided
1 large egg	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup heavy cream
2 cups flour	$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon corn syrup
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Dutch process cocoa powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon butter
	Sweetened whipped cream and Amarena cherries (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 12-cup Bundt pan with vegetable oil spray. In a small saucepan over low heat, melt 2 ounces chopped chocolate, stirring constantly. Do not burn. Scrape chocolate into a medium bowl, and let cool slightly. Whisk in oil and sugar until smooth, then whisk in egg. In a small bowl, whisk flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Add half of dry ingredients to chocolate mixture along with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Coca-Cola and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttermilk; whisk until smooth. Add remaining dry ingredients and remaining Coca-Cola and buttermilk, and whisk again until smooth. Pour batter into a prepared pan, and bake in lower third of oven for about 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out with a few moist crumbs attached. Cool on a rack for 10 minutes, then turn out on a serving plate, and let cool completely. In a small saucepan, bring cream to a boil. In a heat-proof bowl, combine remaining 3 ounces chopped chocolate with corn syrup and butter. Pour hot cream over chocolate, and let stand until melted, about 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth. Let ganache glaze cool until thick but still pourable, about 5 minutes. Pour ganache over cooled cake, and let stand until set, about 30 minutes. Serve with sweetened whipped cream and cherries if desired.

Yield: 10-12 servings



IT'S THE
PERFECT TWIST
 ON AN OLD FAVORITE.



COCOA CRINKLE COOKIES

<i>½ cup chocolate chips</i>	<i>¾ cups confectioners' sugar, divided use</i>
<i>¼ cup canola oil</i>	
<i>½ cup brown sugar</i>	<i>½ cup Dutch process cocoa powder</i>
<i>2 eggs</i>	<i>1 teaspoon baking powder</i>
<i>1 teaspoon vanilla</i>	<i>¼ teaspoon salt</i>
<i>1 cup flour</i>	

In a double boiler over low heat, melt chocolate with oil. In a bowl, whisk sugar, eggs, and vanilla until combined. Add melted chocolate, and combine well. Add flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup confectioners' sugar, cocoa, baking powder, and salt, stirring well to combine. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and chill for at least an hour. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, and line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar in a bowl. Divide dough in half, and pinch off a piece of dough. Roll dough between palms of your hand to form 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch balls. Roll balls in powdered sugar, and place on baking sheet. Place pans in oven, and bake cookies for 8 to 10 minutes or until edges begin to crisp. Remove pans, and cool on racks for 5 minutes.

Yield: 2 dozen cookies

COCOA AND SALTED CARAMEL RICE KRISPIE TREATS

SALTED CARAMEL:

½ cup sugar *½ cup heavy cream,*
¼ cup light corn syrup *room temperature*
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, *¼ teaspoon salt*
room temperature *½ teaspoon vanilla*

TREATS:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter *½ teaspoon flaky salt*
16 ounces jet-puffed *Salted Caramel (from above)*
marshmallows *5 cups Rice Krispies cereal*
1 teaspoon vanilla

TOPPING:

6 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons Dutch process cocoa powder
Smoked sea salt

For Salted Caramel, spray sides of an 8-inch square baking pan with nonstick spray, and line pan with parchment paper. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, without stirring, cook sugar and corn syrup. Swirl pan as needed, but do not stir. Continue cooking until mixture is a light caramel color, about 2 minutes more. Remove pan from heat, and add butter, heavy cream, salt, and vanilla. Return pan to heat, and whisk vigorously for 1 minute more or until smooth. Pour into a glass bowl, and let cool slightly.

For Treats, in a large, heavy-bottom saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Once melted, add marshmallows, and stir with a spatula until gooey and completely melted. Stir in vanilla and salt until combined. Remove saucepan from heat, and fold in Salted Caramel. Add cereal, and fold until completely incorporated and mixture is gooey. Add mixture to prepared pan, and press into an even layer with a metal spatula.

For Topping, in bowl of a double boiler over low heat, melt chocolate with cocoa powder, stirring occasionally until smooth and glossy. Pour melted chocolate over Rice Krispies layer, and smooth with an offset spatula. Sprinkle lightly with smoked sea salt. Let set for 20 minutes on counter, then 20 minutes in refrigerator or until chocolate is set. Lift parchment paper, and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into squares with a sharp knife.
Yield: 16 bars



BROWN BUTTER BROWNIE BITES

¾ cup flour *½ cup lightly packed brown sugar*
¼ cup Dutch process unsweetened cocoa *2 whole eggs plus 1 egg yolk, room*
powder, sifted *temperature*
¼ teaspoon salt *1½ teaspoons vanilla*
6 ounces chocolate, finely chopped *1 cup semisweet chocolate chips*
½ cup unsalted butter, browned *½ cup cocoa powder (for dusting)*
½ cup sugar *½ cup confectioners' sugar (for dusting)*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x13-inch baking pan with parchment paper, and spray with vegetable oil. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, and salt. In a medium glass bowl, place chopped chocolate. In a saucepan over medium heat, melt butter, stirring constantly until it foams. Lower heat, and continue cooking until butter begins to turn medium brown, about 5 minutes. Do not burn. Pour browned butter over chocolate, and let stand for 1 minute, then stir until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Gradually whisk in sugars until smooth. Whisk in eggs and egg yolk 1 at a time, until combined. Whisk in vanilla. Add flour mixture, and fold in just until no streaks remain. Fold in chocolate chips. Pour into prepared pan, and smooth top. Gently tap pan once to remove air bubbles. Batter will be a thin layer before baking. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until top is set. Remove from oven, and place on a wire rack to cool completely. Using a round 2-inch cutter, cut brownies into circles. Dust half in cocoa powder and half in confectioners' sugar.
Yield: 12-16 brownies



THIS DRY COCOA MIX IS VERY
RICH AND DELICIOUS!
 IT MAKES A GREAT GIFT PACKED IN
 JARS AND DECORATED HOLIDAY STYLE.

-Emily Black

DUTCH CHOCOLATE THIN MINT COOKIES

2½ cups flour	1 cup sugar
½ cup Dutch process unsweetened cocoa powder	1 large egg, room temperature
¾ teaspoon baking powder	1 teaspoon vanilla
½ teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon pure peppermint extract, divided
1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature	20 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt. In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar until creamy. Add egg, vanilla, and ½ teaspoon peppermint extract, beating until just incorporated. Reduce speed to low, and gradually add flour mixture; beat just until incorporated and dough comes together in large pieces. Dough will be soft and easy to shape. Divide dough in half, and wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, and line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove 1 piece of dough, and roll out on a lightly floured bowl. Using a lightly floured 2-inch cutter, cut circles. Gather scraps, reroll dough, and cut until all dough is used. Bake cookies for 9 to 10 minutes, rotating pans halfway through, until tops and edges are set. Remove pans from oven, and place on wire racks until completely cool. Remove cookies from pans.

In a heat-proof bowl over barely simmering water, place chopped chocolate and peppermint extract. Slowly melt chocolate, stirring occasionally, until glossy and smooth. Reduce heat to very low, and dip baked cookies in melted chocolate using a fork. Knock off excess chocolate, and place dipped cookies on parchment-lined sheets. Let chocolate set, and decorate cookies with crushed peppermint if desired.

Yield: 3 dozen cookies

COCOA SURPRISE MERINGUE COOKIES

2 egg whites, room temperature	½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon cream of tartar	½ cup Dutch process cocoa powder, plus more for dusting
1 teaspoon vanilla	1 cup chopped pecans
Pinch salt	

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. In a mixing bowl using a whisk attachment, whip egg whites until they hold shape, then add the cream of tartar, vanilla, and salt. Continue whisking while gradually adding sugar and cocoa until mixture is very thick and glossy. Remove bowl from mixer and gently fold in chopped pecans. Drop by spoonful (or use a large piping bag with a large tip) onto prepared baking sheets. Bake for 1 hour or until cookies are dry. Turn off oven, and leave pans in oven until cool and dry. Remove cookies from pan, and dust with additional cocoa. Store in an airtight tin until ready to serve.

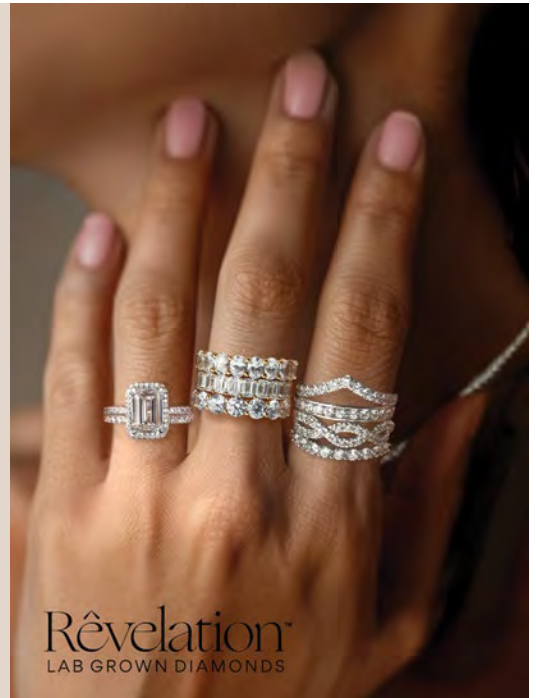
Yield: about 3 dozen

HOMEMADE HOT COCOA MIX

2 cups confectioners' sugar	2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 cup Dutch process cocoa powder	1 teaspoon kosher salt
2½ cups powdered milk	Miniature marshmallows for garnish

In a large mixing bowl, add sugar, cocoa powder, powdered milk, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk together to combine. Store in an airtight container up to a year. To make a cup of hot cocoa, spoon ¼ cup mixture into a cup, and toss in a few marshmallows. Pour 1 cup hot milk or water over mix, and stir. Use more or less according to taste.

Yield: about 18 cups cocoa



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Christmas Photos
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To order, email us at info@tonytamales.com



BIGGER, BOLDER, *and* BEAUTIFUL

A FRESH TAKE ON HOLIDAY TABLESCAPES

writer ANNIE D. STUTLEY | photographer KASI BECK



John Mark Sharpe's signature maximalist style comes to life this holiday season with layers of color, texture, and sparkle, proving that in the world of décor, there's no such thing as too much when creating a truly magical experience. The height of John Mark's designs is intentional, drawing the eyes upward. Vases filled with rose- and lime-colored leaves hint at traditional Christmas red and green but still leave something unexpected.



Growing up, John Mark Sharpe's weekends and summers were spent in Sardis under the careful guidance of his Gran, who introduced him to the idea of freshening things up. **"IT'S WHERE MY LOVE OF COLOR, GARDENS, AND FLOWERS CAME FROM.** I couldn't wait to visit Gran's on the weekends, where she always had a new project for us to start on," he reminisces. This hands-on approach to design laid the foundation for what would eventually become Sharpe's career. As a high-schooler, he began to see these creative ventures as a business opportunity, little knowing they would not only help put him through college but would also shape his future.

Those early days with Gran provided him the foundation for what would later become John Mark Enterprises (JME). Established in 2009, Sharpe's business offers full-service floral arrangements for weddings and special events, holiday décor for homes and businesses, and a wide selection of home accessories at his retail store in Germantown, Tennessee. "The Lord has been so kind and gracious as He has had His hand in every detail of this business," he remarks. Brides trust him to bring their floral dreams to life on their big day, and holiday clients count on his eye for detail to turn their homes into festive wonderlands. Customers at his retail store seek out his advice for everything from seasonal décor to year-round home accents.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Vintage-inspired china paired with contemporary amber glassware and bold linens create a harmonious balance between classic elegance and fresh, modern touches. Bright gift bags dangle from the chairs, tying in the spirit of giving into the design and embodying the joy of the season. John Mark's signature use of bold colors transforms a space into a vibrant canvas, proving that holiday décor is an opportunity to embrace creativity and make a striking statement. OPPOSITE, TOP AND BOTTOM: A vibrant, layered setting with bright citrus tones and delicate florals brings a 'sugar plum fairy' vibe to the table, blending playful charm with timeless holiday elements. The reindeer figures stand amidst a cascade of vibrant hanging gumballs, adding a whimsical, unexpected twist to a colorful and lively Christmas fantasy tablescape.



Sharpe describes his style as maximalist. “I **ALWAYS SAY MORE IS MORE,**” he says with a smile, remarking on his love for layering with a variety of colors, textures, and movement. From candlelight and fresh florals to touches of sparkle or glitter, you can spot the distinctive aesthetic of a John Mark design. “Color plays a major role,” he explains. “I either choose different colors or select one and use all its various shades.”

TOP AND BOTTOM: At the heart of the Thanksgiving table, a striking peacock blue vase anchors the setting with fresh florals, blending rich hues and textures that celebrate both tradition and elegance. Antique tableware mixes effortlessly with modern glass and pottery, creating a Thanksgiving tablescape that honors family heirlooms while embracing contemporary flair. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Tom Turkey takes center stage, surrounded by lush purple delphinium, peach roses, and velvet pumpkins, adding a vibrant twist to Thanksgiving tradition on this elegant kitchen island. John Mark’s designs turn any space into a vibrant masterpiece, layered with elegance and imagination.

When tasked with a Thanksgiving and Christmas tablescape at the home of Wendy and Rusty Phillips, he selected a palette of citrus, incorporating various shades to create a vibrant and cohesive look. He focused on bright and jeweled tones, evoking a playful and warm atmosphere. “For this Christmas tablescape, I wanted to do citrus colors without actually including fruit,” he remarks on the various lemon, mandarin, and grapefruit pieces that allure guests.

Nothing succeeds like excess, and Sharpe’s success stems from his deep-rooted passion for celebration—particularly time-honored traditions like holidays and weddings. His ability to transform spaces with an artistic, whimsical touch cascades into a fanfare. His designs stray from the ordinary; rather, his approach fascinates, pairing hues of purple for Thanksgiving and pinks and oranges for Christmas. “Don’t be afraid to mix old with new,” he says. **“INCORPORATE PIECES THAT TELL A STORY, WHETHER IT’S A FAMILY HEIRLOOM OR SOMETHING YOU FOUND AT A LOCAL MARKET. IT’S THOSE PERSONAL TOUCHES THAT MAKE A HOME TRULY SPECIAL.”**

This credo seamlessly delivers décor and arrangements so thoughtfully layered it inspires: a pink lemonade and gold reindeer poised at the center of the dining table is tucked behind blush and buttercream blossoms, with pastel glass ornaments strung from satin ribbons dangling above antique table settings that balance the old and the new. Sharpe’s signature elevates the holidays beyond the conventional, blending imaginative details that turn every space into a personal, enchanting narrative—far more than just red and green or Santa salt and pepper shakers.

When Sharpe leaves his calling card, no space is overlooked. Eyes travel up to stately vases adorned with vibrant reeds, giving a room a taller, grander stature. Even the kitchen island works double duty: Thanksgiving prep on one side, and on the other, Tom Turkey gets an upgrade, adorned with purple delphinium, peach roses, and plush violet pumpkins. When dinner is served, guests can’t help but be thankful as they feast on passed-down recipes at a table that blends rustic simplicity with elegant upgrades like amber glass and pottery pieces appointed with peacock blue. At his Christmas table, guests are charmed with a sugar plum fairy vibe, and florals are arranged to create a meadow-like appearance, with hanging “gumballs” that beckon joy. A design by JME is not without risk, but like a fairytale with twists and turns that ends in a happily ever after, his vision brings fantasy to life.

Yet, his technique is also practical. He focused on a middle focal point with a break in the chairs for his Christmas setting. “Our tall centerpieces, which were the deer, served as our divider. This is a great way to break up your guests, such as children and adults, to different sides of the table,” he explains. There are finite details, too, that lead to the bigger picture in his designs. For example, colorful goodie bags hang from the dining chairs to create a whole holiday experience. “Nothing is too small or too extra when it comes to decorating.” Sharpe refers to this principle as his Mississippi-bred “bigger is better” Southern mentality.



Sharpe's Mississippi roots remain an essential part of his story. "THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE WAY PEOPLE IN MISSISSIPPI VALUE FAMILY, TRADITION, AND HOME," he explains. "It's part of who I am, and it's reflected in everything I do." While he acknowledges that "a good designer knows when to stop," he playfully admits, "I must not be a good designer because I always think you can go bigger. Southerners just do it better." M

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Soul of the Home by Tara Shaw, \$50 (signed upon request); Tara Shaw Design-Antiques-Maison, New Orleans, Louisiana, 504.525.1131 or tarashaw.com

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Vintage brown-quilted caviar leather with top handle shoulder bag by Chanel (Fall 2012 collection), \$1,900; Private Collection, 101 Village Blvd., Madison, 601.607.6004

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Candles (105 to 155 hours of burn time), \$29.95; Designers' Gallery LLC, 201 MS-12, Starkville, 662.324.3224 or designersgalleryllc.com



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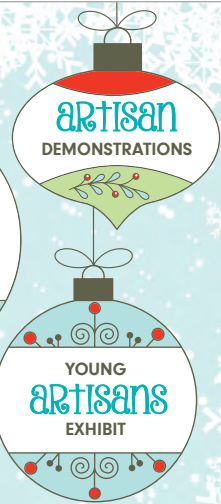
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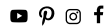
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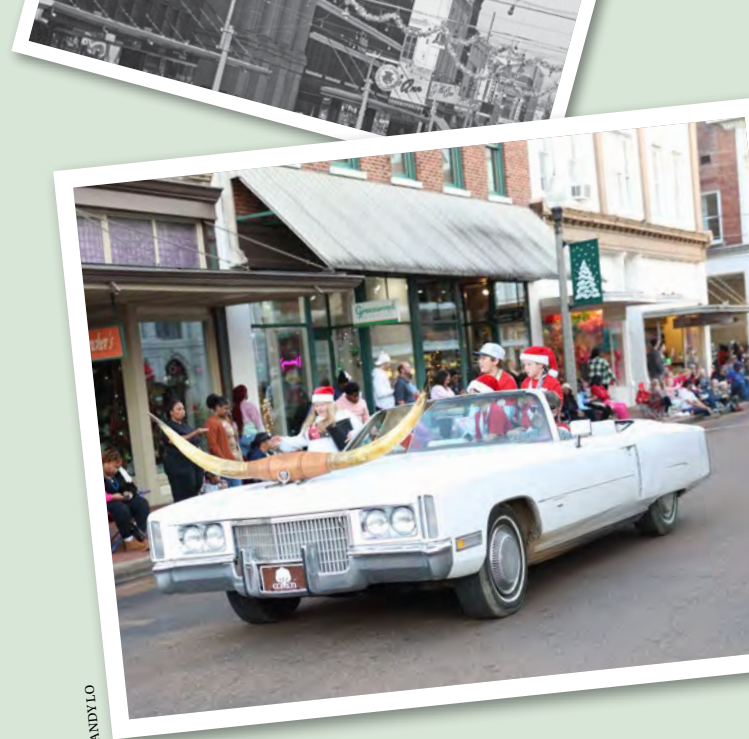
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Dashing through the
DELTA

writer KELLI BOZEMAN



GREENWOOD'S GRAND BOULEVARD BECOMES CANDY CANE LANE EACH DECEMBER AS THE CITY HOSTS THE OLDEST CHRISTMAS PARADE IN MISSISSIPPI



ANDY LO

Ask nearly any child of the Delta about the Greenwood Christmas parade and they'll regale you with memories of cheering from a downtown sidewalk, or marching with a trombone in hand, or watching a rainbow of fireworks cast its reflection on the Yazoo River. **THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF A TRADITION 89 YEARS STRONG.**

Beth Stevens grew up in Grenada, but her family always looked forward to making the 33-mile drive to see the parade. When she grew up and moved to Greenwood in the early 1990s, she covered the parade for the local newspaper—with her own young children in tow. "I was literally trying to take pictures and write stories and hold onto my kids all at the same time while the parade was happening," Stevens recalls. "I remember how excited they were to see Santa Claus and all the floats."

Today, Stevens serves as executive director of the Greenwood-Leflore County Chamber of Commerce, and her parade-going perspective has gone from spectator to reporter to head of the organization that puts on this annual Southern spectacle. It's a mighty task and one that requires a host of volunteers and community members to execute.

ABOVE: Parade entrants have often reflected pop culture, like this homage to "The Dukes of Hazzard" from the early 1980s. LEFT: Crowds gather to watch marching bands from around the South pass through downtown in the 1950s.



MERRY MUSIC FROM MARCHING BANDS HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PARADE THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Baton twirlers lead a band in the 1970s. The current route passes through a tree-shaded residential area. Local organizations decorate elaborate parade floats. Marching bands are still an important part of the festivities.

ANDY LO



ANDY LO

Community was at the heart of the very first parade back in 1935. The middle of the Great Depression might not seem like a logical time for such a celebration, but it was then that Greenwood merchants banded together to launch a winter carnival complete with an evening parade of festive floats. The following year, Greenwood High School band director Roy Martin created a morning musical element that would help to grow and build band programs in area schools, and the combined event was dubbed the Delta Band Festival and Winter Carnival, according to a book about the parade produced by the Chamber's Leadership Greenwood class in 2010.

Merry music from marching bands has been an integral part of the parade throughout its history, with high school and college groups traveling to Greenwood from all around Mississippi and neighboring states to participate. **THE NUMBER OF BANDS WALKING IN THE PARADE SWELLED TO MORE THAN 100 BY 1969, WITH TROMBONE PLAYERS AND DRUMMERS MARCHING ALONG THE DOWNTOWN PARADE ROUTE FOR SEVERAL HOURS.** It was then that the planning committee decided that limiting the number of participating bands to 66—still a staggering count—was in order.

COMMUNITY WAS AT THE HEART OF THE VERY FIRST PARADE IN 1935.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Chamber's Santa Claus float is a fan favorite. Larger-than-life holiday characters mingle with the parade-goers. Support from local businesses helps the parade continue year after year. Regional "royalty" ride in the parade.

But hard times arose just a decade or so later. "Our downtown area was facing a little bit of a decline, just as a lot of other downtown areas in small towns were," Stevens says. "And as the downtown area declined, the parade started to decline a bit, and band participation slacked off. It became a very short parade, like 15 minutes."

The Chamber's Leadership class was asked to study the parade's challenges and to make recommendations to revive it. Bobby Fisher Jr., another child of the Delta with his own fond memories of the event, stepped in as parade committee chairman in 1991. "THE FIRST THING WE DID WAS

CHANGE THE ROUTE," says Fisher, noting that the original winding downtown route was straightened and expanded to start in the heart of downtown and then go across the bridge and along Grand Boulevard through a residential area filled with beautiful historic homes. "That created quite a stir. It was kind of a firestorm, but then once it was approved, it went really well."

Fisher also reached out to many bands from outside the local area, offering travel grants to entice them to rejoin the festivities. Once again, music was filling the city streets on the traditional first Friday in December.



The modern-day parade is named in honor of Roy Martin and has been tweaked over the years to meet the times. The morning band festival was eventually eliminated because of the challenges in having students miss a full day of school, but the bands still march on in the afternoon parade, their booming songs buffered by parade floats elaborately decorated by local groups. Large balloons akin to those that are part of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City were also added to the Greenwood parade lineup a decade ago. Today, many of the owners of the homes along Grand Boulevard host parade parties, with the revelry from the street spilling over onto their front lawns.

"It's become a big, fun social thing," Stevens says. "That's all part of the new tradition for the parade. Even though the parade has evolved over the decades, there's still something magical in the air on parade day in Greenwood."

Stevens says attendees at the 2024 parade, which is set for December 6 at 4 p.m., should keep an eye out for a new and improved version of the Chamber's Santa Claus float. The grand finale of the event, as always, will be a fireworks display over the Yazoo River, capping off a day of creating more memories for the youngest generation of Delta residents and visitors.

"Back when I started, my oldest son was a toddler on my shoulders when we were lining up the bands," Fisher says. "I always told him I was making him a parade. My children grew up with it just like I did, which is what I wanted, because it was a really good thing for the Delta and I'M SO GLAD WE WERE ABLE TO BREATHE LIFE BACK INTO IT. And now I enjoy sitting and watching it with my grandkids." M

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Salvation Army float features local riders. Boy Scouts march between floats and bands. The parade committee selects a local person to honor as parade marshal each year. The Greenwood-Leflore County Chamber was formed in 1917 and celebrated its centennial birthday a few years ago. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A horse-drawn carriage parades through town. Santa waves to good boys and girls. A fireworks display is the evening's grand finale. Families on the parade route hold parties on their front lawns.

GREENWOOD



“It’s become a
BIG, FUN SOCIAL THING.

THAT’S ALL PART OF THE NEW TRADITION FOR THE PARADE.
EVEN THOUGH THE PARADE HAS EVOLVED OVER THE
DECADES, THERE’S STILL SOMETHING MAGICAL IN THE AIR
ON PARADE DAY IN GREENWOOD.”

- Beth Stevens

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NOVEMBER 1-2

COLUMBUS: Christmas Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

FULTON: Open House begins at 9 a.m.

NOVEMBER 1-3

CORINTH: Holiday Open House

FULTON: Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2

BOONEVILLE: Holiday Open House, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

JACKSON: Wolfe Studio Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SENATOBIA: Open House, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

TUPELO: Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

MADISON: Madison Marketplace, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

NOVEMBER 3

COLUMBUS: Holiday Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

JACKSON: Green Oak Christmas Open House, 12:30 to 4 p.m.

LAUREL: Open House, 12 to 5 p.m.

TUPELO: Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

RIPLEY: Holiday Open House, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

HATTIESBURG: Southeast Ace Open House, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

MERIDIAN: Southeast Ace Open House, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 4

BALDWIN: "Knomebody Knows Christmas Like Baldwin," 4 to 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER 7-9

SOUTHAVEN: Silo Square Christmas Open House

NOVEMBER 7

MERIDIAN: Downtown Meridian Open House, 5 to 8 p.m.

SOUTHAVEN: Magnolia House, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER 8-9

BRANDON: Heart of the South Open House

LOUISVILLE: Jingle Bell Jubilee Christmas Open House

PASCAGOULA: Open House

NOVEMBER 8

COLUMBIA: Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

SOUTHAVEN: Magnolia House, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

NOVEMBER 9-10

CLEVELAND: Christmas Open House

NOVEMBER 9

BROOKHAVEN: Christmas Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COLUMBIA: Open House, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

HERNANDO: Christmas Open House and the city's Dickens of a Christmas, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SOUTHAVEN: Magnolia House, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 10

CARTHAGE: Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

CARTHAGE: Circa61 Modern Open House

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CLINTON: Lovely Open House

LEAKE COUNTY: Main Street Chamber of Leake Co. Christmas Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

NATCHEZ: Open House, 2 to 6 p.m.

NEW ALBANY: Open House, 12 to 5 p.m.

OXFORD: Open House, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PHILADELPHIA: Holiday Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

STARKVILLE: Designers' Gallery, The Collective, Montgomery's Jewelry, Two Flamingos Open House, Medora, and Whittington Gifts & Décor Open House

STARKVILLE: Downtown Open House

NOVEMBER 14

JACKSON: The Finery Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

TUNICA: Holiday Shopping Social, 4 to 6 p.m.

NOVEMBER 16

BAY SPRINGS: Open House, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

HATTIESBURG: Downtown Holiday Open House

HATTIESBURG: McKenzie's on Main Open House, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

MAGEE: Holiday Sip & Shop, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

NOVEMBER 20-21

STARKVILLE: 52nd Annual Holiday Bazaar presented by BankPlus, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER 21

SOUTHAVEN: Delta Phoenix Christmas Open House, 12 to 6 p.m.

NOVEMBER 24

PONTOTOC: Open House begins at 1 p.m.

RIDGELAND: The Renaissance at Colony Park Christmas Open House, 2 to 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 28

VICKSBURG: Downtown 28th Annual Old-Fashioned Christmas Open House, 1 to 5 p.m.

NOVEMBER 29-30

CANTON: Merchant's Open House from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

NOVEMBER 29

CITY: Traditional Jewelers from 2 to 5 p.m.

DECEMBER 1

CANTON: Merchants' Open House, 5 to 9 p.m.

VICKSBURG: The Turquoise Chandelier Open House, 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 5

CARTHAGE: Christmas Open House, 4 to 8 p.m.

CLINTON: 12th annual Santa Claus Crawl, 5:30 to 9 p.m.

HAZLEHURST: Open House, 3 to 6 p.m.

RIDGELAND: Mississippi Center for Plastic Surgery Open House

DECEMBER 6-7

OCEAN SPRINGS: Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

OCEAN SPRINGS: The Pink Rooster

DECEMBER 6

CRYSTAL SPRINGS: Open House begins at 6 p.m.

OCEAN SPRINGS: Open House, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

OXFORD: Delta Phoenix Christmas Open House, 12 to 6 p.m.

PASCAGOULA: Downtown for the Holidays, 5 to 8 p.m.

PICAYUNE: Shop by Candlelight & Christmas on the Rails, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 7

BALDWIN: Delta Phoenix Christmas Open House, 12 to 6 p.m.

GULFPORT: Mistletoe and Main Street, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

OCEAN SPRINGS: "Get Merry with Mimi" at Mimi Reinke Design, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DECEMBER 8

COMO: Christmas in Como, 1-5 p.m.

OCEAN SPRINGS: Open house starting at 10 a.m.

DECEMBER 12

SOUTHAVEN: Chamber Christmas Open House, 4 to 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 13

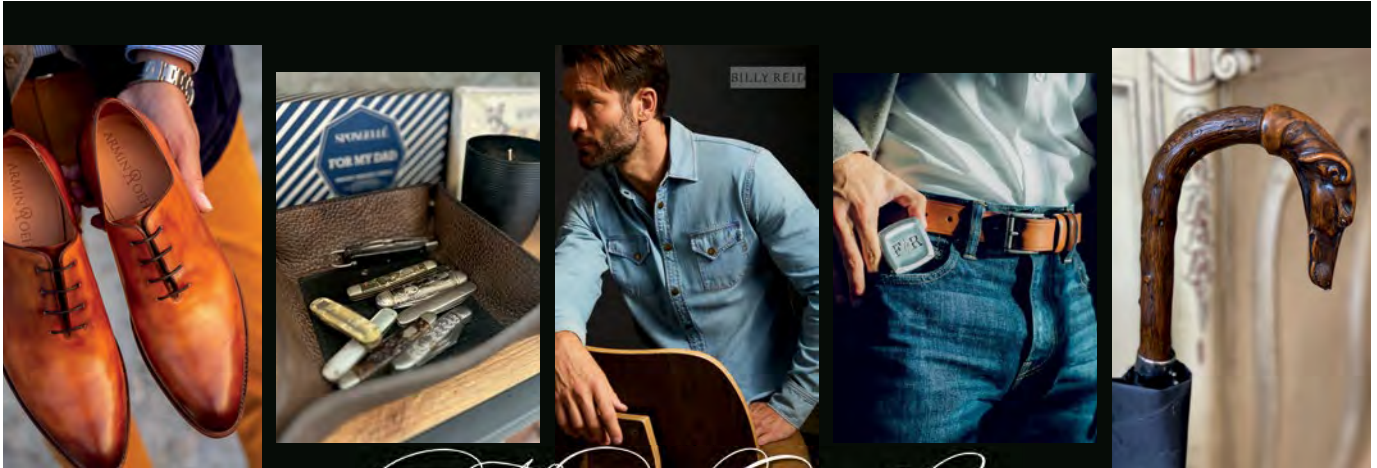
FLOWOOD: Highlands Christmas Party

DECEMBER 14

GREENWOOD: A Delta Dickens Christmas, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

unWRAPPED *Holiday Guide*

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The image displays a variety of holiday-themed items. On the left is a long-sleeved red dress with pink lace trim and a matching belt. In the center is a white tote bag. To the right are several sweaters: a pink one with candy cane patterns, a green one with a Santa Claus face, and a white one with red bows. Below these are two sets of pajamas, one with Santa Claus faces and another with polka dots. At the bottom left are two mugs, one with Santa Claus faces and another with nutcracker figures. In the center are two nutcracker ornaments and a pair of gold earrings. Small cards with the 'smitten gift boutique' logo are placed near the jewelry.

concealing capone

In 1699, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville sailed through the Gulf of Mexico, landing on Ship Island before establishing a colony near present-day Biloxi. There, he built Fort Maurepas, which became the first capital of French Louisiana. This strategic location, with easy access to the Gulf, has always attracted a variety of colorful characters, including pirates and adventurers, drawn to the untamed beauty of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

I had the privilege of living in Ocean Springs for three years in a small subdivision surrounded by salt marshes and crisscrossed by narrow inlets that fed into the Sound. Our neighborhood of new houses was sprinkled among much older homes, whose residents had lived there for decades if not generations. As I settled into the community, I gradually made connections with some of my older neighbors. One, in particular, lived alone in what had once been an exquisite home, surrounded by ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss. His property sloped down to a marshy area near Davis Bayou.

This neighbor caught my attention because of the vintage cars scattered around his yard, relics from the 1950s and '60s. As a car enthusiast, I couldn't resist the allure of these classic vehicles. One fall Saturday, I decided to introduce myself, bringing my three-year-old son along as an icebreaker. We approached as the man was working on an old Cadillac, grumbling to himself. He looked up, startled, but softened when he saw my son. I offered to help with the car, noticing the engine was in need of more than a simple fix. After a bit of persuasion, he accepted my offer to drive him into town for parts.

Over the next couple of hours, we crisscrossed Ocean Springs, running his errands and chatting about life. He told me about his family's history in the area and how they had come from Chicago generations ago and settled into the house where he now lived. As we talked, he revealed a remarkable connection to the area's history: Al Capone.

According to my neighbor, Capone had once owned a property just down the bayou from where we stood. His family had taken care of Capone's estate and ran errands



for him during his visits from Chicago. At first, I was skeptical, but he assured me it was true, pointing out the remains of a boathouse and pier that once hid a secret escape route. Capone, he said, had a speedboat ready to whisk him away through a tunnel that led from his house to the water.

Intrigued, I listened as the old man described how his father and grandfather had been involved in Capone's operations during Prohibition, smuggling goods along the Coast. We never managed to visit the old Capone estate, as it had passed through many owners by then, and my neighbor had lost touch with the people who might grant us access. **STILL, THE IDEA OF SUCH A NOTORIOUS FIGURE LIVING JUST DOWN THE ROAD ADDED A LAYER OF MYSTERY TO THE QUIET MARSHLAND.**

As we worked on the Cadillac that weekend, the old man became a friend, sharing stories of the Coast's past that I never would have learned otherwise. His family's ties to Capone gave me a glimpse into the area's rich and sometimes shadowy history, where pirates and mobsters once made their mark.

A few years later, I was transferred by the Air Force, and I left Ocean Springs behind. The old Capone property, now called "Del Castle," had fallen into disrepair, much like the vintage cars in my neighbor's yard. By the time I returned for a visit, both the house and Del Castle had been torn down, replaced by newer, grander estates.

Though the physical traces of Capone's presence are gone, the stories linger. For those who know where to look, the Mississippi Gulf Coast remains a place where the past feels ever-present, where the ghosts of its colorful history continue to haunt the landscape. *M*

writer STEVEN CORNELIUS | illustrator SAM BEIBERS

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