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WHITE BIRCHES INN

Charming inn for a great getaway

Story by: Carolyn R. Wilson

Rich scents of breakfast foods waft up from the kitchen at White Birches Inn, practically releasing inviting aromas throughout the historic district of Abingdon.

Preparing French toast and egg dishes is just one of the finer things offered at the bed and breakfast on White's Mill Road in Abingdon.

Owners Michael and Paulette Wartella make sure their guests enjoy amenities that offer warmth and comfort in their early 20th century English country-style home, attracting what they describe as customers willing to pay for a high-end experience.

The finely-preserved home built in the early 1930s

during the Great Depression has been totally updated and renovated both inside and out while preserving its structural integrity. The inn, located just ten buildings from Main Street, offers five guest rooms set among a mixture of English and American antiques. The home has central air conditioning with individually-zoned guest rooms.

With an ambience similar to an English country home, spacious guest rooms are named in honor of famous playwrights, including Tennessee Williams, George Bernard Shaw, Noel Coward, and Robert Porterfield, the found of Abingdon's Barter Theatre. The inn has all hardwood floors, seven gas log fireplaces, built-in bookcases, and hand painted wall murals.

"I traveled everywhere in my young married life to find furnishings for our home. I have a particular interest in antique Persian rugs," said Paulette. Many of the pieces are museum-worthy, such as an eighteenth-century Norwegian upholstered chair and a nineteenth-century Biedermeier secretary, along with Picasso lithographs and Russian iconicity.

Her prize possession is a 1700s Northern England desk she discovered in Maine. The desk sits in her living room for guests to admire. "It's a museum piece in flawless condition." The inn features king-size beds, in-room



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*Percentage off original prices. Discounts cannot be combined with other offers or used on prior purchases. Excludes Tempur-Pedic and Stearns & Foster matresses. Offers may vary and be available only at certain retailers. HGTV and HGTV HOME are trademarks or registered trademarks of Scripps Networks, LLC. in the United States and/or other countries. Used under license. fireplaces, oversized whirlpool tubs, and private walk-in tiled showers---amenities, they say, are unique to the area.

Cozy, charming

The Wartellas turned their spacious 4,500-squarefoot home into a bed and breakfast in 1998, after the couple's children had left the nest and Paulette realized she wanted a job with some flexibility.

Although concerns about COVID-19 have forced the couple to temporarily close the business, they usually stay very busy, said the wife. "I'd say half of our customers are under 50 and the remainders are over 50."The back porch is what makes the inn a cozy and charming place for guests to relax.

"The porch is what people love the most. I have a



Living room entrance



Dining room corner

fabulous porch with a coy pond in the courtyard and a scenic sheep farm in the distance."

Not only do they welcome visitors year round, the husband, a Commonwealth appointed marriage officiant, performs private marriage ceremonies. "Most are local residents who are eloping," he said.

"They get their license that morning and they usually want to get married that same day," Paulette said. "With little parking spaces, we don't host wedding parties."

Eco-friendly

The owners have ushered their home into the twentyfirst century as an eco-friendly business—something that gives them great satisfaction. In addition to offering customers a luxury bed and breakfast, the Wartellas operate the inn as one of the town's first green overnight lodgings.

The inn is a Virginia Green certified lodge, implementing continuing programs to conserve natural resources, reduced waste, and minimize pollution. "We are eco-friendly. The temperature of our planet is rising, and our lakes, streams, rivers, and oceans are polluted with plastics," said Paulette.

According to the owners, guests have the opportunity to recycle during their stay. Conservation efforts have been made to minimize water for showers and toilets. They operate an optional linen service where sheets and towels are not automatically changed every day. In addition, they have conserved energy by installing motion lighting, timers, low energy bulbs and using gas fireplaces.

White Birches Inn has been featured in several publications, including the "Washington Post," "Southern Living," and "Blue Ridge Country."

Visit "White Birches Inn" on Facebook for updates on their reopening.



Dining room



Spacious kitchen area.

Home buying during the COVID-19 outbreak

Homeowners know that the process of buying a home can be both exciting and nerve-wracking. The anxiety associated with buying a home has hit new heights during the outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Historically low interest rates and limited inventory has made 2020 an especially unique time to buy a home. It's also a competitive and potentially expensive time to buy a home. While the economic consequences of COVID-19 have been severe, the Federal National Mortgage Association, also known as Fannie Mae, forecasted a significant increase in median home prices in March 2020. City dwellers have scrambled to buy homes outside of cities, where social distancing is more difficult and the risk of getting COVID-19 appears greater than it is in suburban or rural settings. That's led to a lot of competition among prospective buyers.

Prospective home buyers willing to enter the hectic fray and shop for a home during the COVID-19 outbreak may benefit from knowing what to expect as they search for their next home.

Get ready for virtual tours. Buyers might once have scoffed at the notion of buying a home they'd only seen in videos, but virtual tours have become the new normal in the wake of the pandemic. An April survey from the National Association of Realtors" found that home tours had declined sharply. While 98 percent of realtors reported taking clients on home tours as recently as February, that number had declined to 63 percent by April. As many regions pause their reopening plans, prospective home buyers should ready themselves for virtual tours as opposed to inperson home tours.

Expect limited inventory. While home prices are up, many people are holding onto their homes. The NAR reports that total housing inventory at the end of May 2020 was down nearly 19 percent from the end of May 2019. Buyers will have less inventory to choose from, so those intent on buying may need to prioritize what they need in a home and focus on finding properties that can fulfill those needs.

Expect to move quickly. Realtors have seen homes sell within days of being listed, and that has put pressure on buyers to move quickly. It also highlights the importance of finding a home inspector before your search begins as well as a lender who can handle quick closings. Ask around for recommendations, but make sure you have these two important professionals lined up before beginning your search. Doing so will give you a better chance of buying in an unusual time.

Make the best down payment you can afford. A high down payment makes buyers look better no matter the state of the economy. An offer with a high down payment looks like a stronger offer, and that can make the difference between winning and losing a potential bidding war. Buying a home during the COVID-19 outbreak presents some unique challenges to prospective buyers.





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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Holiday cooking ideas from local chefs

Story by: Carolyn R. Wilson

Most of us have fond memories of holiday foods served when we were children. You know--- the buttery mashed potatoes and the sweet apple cake.

Two local chefs tell how their childhood memories have shaped the way they cook and present food, especially during the holiday season.

Chef Charles Parker

"As a kid growing up in the south, I fell in love with food," said Charles Parker, executive chef at Harvest Table Restaurant in Meadowview.



Chef Charles Parker

"A big influence on my love affair with food was the holiday season.

"Starting two or three days before Thanksgiving,



Harvest Table Restaurant, Meadowview, Virginia

my mom, aunt, and I would convene at my grandmother's house and the four of us would spend several hours each day preparing and cooking our big family Thanksgiving meal," reminisced Parker. "We cooked enough to feed a small army."

Parkers mentioned some of his childhood favorites, many of which he continues to serve during the holidays at Harvest Table Restaurant.

Herb Roasted Turkey

"We would always roast whole turkeys---usually two whole birds--- with some fresh thyme and oregano pulled from our backyard," he said.

While he never cooked stuffing in the turkey cavity, he learned that it was important to put fresh fruit and veggies, such as apples, celery, and onions inside the bird while it roasts.

"I still do this exact method these days, but now I also brine my turkeys in apple cider before cooking."

Creamed Corn

During the summer, Parker's grandparents harvested as much as 14 tons of corn. "To make it last all year, they canned most of it.

"My favorite was my mammaw's canned corn.



Dining at the Harvest Table.

She would "sweat" the onions used in the recipe in bacon fat (which she constantly had in a big coffee cup on the stove), and she would also add turmeric. This was an amazing trick as it added depths of flavors and a nice finishing color."

Mashed Potatoes

"I'm just going to say it. If mashed potatoes aren't part of the offerings in your holiday culinary



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Outdoor dining at Rain restaurant in Abingdon, Virginia.

spread, then it's not a true Southern Thanksgiving meal," Parker said.

"My absolute favorite food during the holidays wasn't the turkeys, hams, or delectable desserts. It was the mashed potatoes. We used new red potatoes and russets from our garden, and we creamed the boiled potatoes with whole milk, butter, and buttermilk. I use this exact same recipe to this day because you can't improve perfection."

Baked Ham with Honey and Sorghum Glaze Parkers said his grandmother's ham recipe is hard to beat.

"She would stuff the ham with garlic cloves and pour a glaze made of honey and sorghum molasses on top for the last fifteen minutes of cooking. This proved to be quite amazing."

Apple Stack Cake

"Naturally we had pecan and pumpkin pies at the table, but my go-to choice for dessert was my grandmother's apple stack cake," he said.

"This was probably the most time-consuming menu item for my grandmother. So many apples had to be peeled and sliced, but it was so perfect. She also put bourbon in her batter which definitely kicked it up a notch."

Harvest Table Restaurant is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursdays (limited menu; carryout only); 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays (full dinner menu/full service, including dine in, starting at 5 p.m.; and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for Sunday Brunch (full brunch menu/full service, including dine in).

Chef Ben Carroll

Ben Carroll, owner and executive chef of Rain Restaurant & Bar in Abingdon, credits his family for teaching him a way around the kitchen.

"My great-grandmother was a traditional Swedish grandmother who passed along those skills to her family. She was a really good cook," said Carroll.

"Every year we had a big traditional spread when I was growing up. I try to duplicate those items now that I'm a chef."

Around the holidays, Carroll enjoys preparing the Swedish recipes he remembers from his childhood.

"I put things on the menu that I like a lot and I think are interesting seasonal foods," he said.

"I grew up eating pickled herring. I usually serve

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Member FDIC NMLS #449222 it with rye toast and crackers, hard boiled eggs, and lemon saffron aioli."

Other favorite dishes he prepares at the restaurant include smoked salmon and cream cheese dip with rye crackers, served with dill, capers, and radishes; Swedish Meatballs; and Stuffed Dates with bacon and maple smoked paprika.

Crab stuffed mushrooms with spicy aioli and whipped goat cheese with juniper honey and candied pecans are also some of his favorites.

"Garnishes for all of these types of dishes are pickled onions, radishes, and celery---anything crunchy for texture," said the chef.

During the fall, Carroll dazzles his customers with a Spiced Pear Martini, made with vodka, spiced pear juice, and pear simple syrup. Dehydrated pear chips float on top. His recipe for eggnog heralds the arrival of the holiday season. His version is made with a mixture of three types of liquor---Southern Comfort, rum, and bourbon. food, much of it spicy.

Not long after he enrolled in Southwest Culinary Hospitality College in Bristol, Virginia, the college shut down. Carroll began browsing through cook books and practicing recipes on his own.

After gaining experience as a chef at The Tavern and other local restaurants, the self-trained chef decided it was time for him to go into business for himself. He opened Rain Restaurant & Bar in 2010.

The restaurant, located in the heart of the historic district in downtown Abingdon, seats as many as 140 people and offers an outdoor patio.

The restaurant building is decorated with artwork from local Abingdon artists Shawn Crookshank and D.R. Mullins.

A custom made pinewood bar is accentuated by a handcarved wooden shelf sculpture that was designed and created by Abingdon native Ben Smith.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the restaurant has temporarily reduced operating hours to 5 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday through Saturday.

The art of food

Carroll grew up in Arizona where he was immersed in the Southwestern culture and the







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It's always the right time of year for fresh apple pie

Certain foods are synonymous with particular holidays or times of year. For example, few people can imagine celebrating Valentine's Day without ample supplies of chocolate on hand. And what summer barbecue is complete without grilled hot dogs and hamburgers? While these foods and others are must-haves during certain times of the year, that doesn't mean they cannot be enjoyed whenever a craving arises.

Whether yours is a seasonal or non-seasonal craving for apple pie, be sure to satisfy it with this recipe for French Apple Pie from Mollie Cox Bryans Mores. Rowe's Little Book of Southern Pies.

French Apple Pie Makes one 9-inch pie

French Apple Pie - Makes one 9-inch pie 1 recipe Plain Pie Pastry (see below)

Raisin Filling

- 2/3 cup raisins
- 6 tablespoons water
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1-1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 apples (preferably a tart variety)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch

Icing

- 1 cup confectioners/ sugar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened

To make the raisin filling, combine the raisins, water and lemon juice in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, and then lower the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally until the raisins are plump, about 15 minutes. Separately, combine the corn syrup, flour and sugar and mix well, then add to the raisins and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until thick and syrupy, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool until the mixture is just warm, about 10 to 15 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a 9-inch pie plate with 1 rolled-out crust. Peel the apples, cut them into thin wedges, and put them in a large bowl. Separately, combine the sugars, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cornstarch, then add to the apples and gently stir until evenly mixed.

Spread the apple mixture in the crust in an even layer, and then spread the raisin filling evenly over the apples. Brush the rim of the crust with water, cover with the second rolled-out crust, seal and flute or crimp the edges, and cut a steam vent in the center. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for 1 to 2 hours, until completely cool.

To make the icing, combine the sugar and water and mix well. Add the butter and mix until smooth. Brush over the top of the cooled pie before serving. Plain Pie Pastry Makes two 9-inch pie crusts

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup vegetable shortening

5 to 7 tablespoons cold milk Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Cut in the shortening with a pastry blender until it is the size of small peas. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of the milk over part of the flour mixture. Gently toss with a fork and push to the side of the bowl. Sprinkle another tablespoon of milk over another dry part, toss with a fork and push to the side of the bowl. Repeat with the remaining milk until all of the flour mixture is moistened. Press the dough together to form 2 equal balls, and then flatten into disks. Roll out the crusts right away, or wrap the dough tightly, smoothing out any little wrinkles or air pockets and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. On a lightly floured surface, roll out each ball to a thickness of 1 inch. Use a light touch and handle the dough as little as possible. *****



Slow cooker meal makes holiday entertaining a breeze

The holidays would not be complete without a delicious meal to share with family and friends. A holiday roast is often the centerpiece of festive occasions. Having a go-to recipe for this classic main course makes holiday preparations that much easier. Utilizing a slow cooker to make a beef roast reduces time spent in the kitchen, affording hosts more opportunities to mingle with their guests. That's just the idea behind this recipe for Beef Roast with Dark Rum Sauce from Crockpot" 356 Year-Round Recipes (Publications International, Ltd) by Crockpot Kitchens.

Beef Roast with Dark Rum Sauce

Makes 6 servings

- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 beef rump roast (about 3 pounds)



- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup dark rum, divided
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 whole bay leaves, broken in half
- 1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup lime juice

1. In a small bowl, combine allspice, salt, pepper, and cloves. Rub spices onto all sides of roast.

2. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat until hot. Sear beef on all sides, turning as it browns. Transfer to a slow cooker. Add 1/2 cup rum, broth, garlic, and bay leaves. Cover; cook on low 1 hour.

3. In a small bowl, combine remaining 1/2 cup rum, brown sugar and lime juice, stirring well. Pour over roast. Continue cooking on low 4 to 6 hours or until beef is fork-tender. Baste beef occasionally with sauce.

4. Remove and slice roast. Spoon sauce over beef to serve. $\mathbf{N}^{\mathbf{g}}$





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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Holiday decorating ideas

Story by: Laura J. Mondul

As the crisp wind heralds the end of summer and the onset of cooler weather, the decorations get pulled out of the closet and folks start dressing up their homes and yards.

As always, Angie Counts , owner of Lipstick and Rouge in Abingdon, Va., has some unique ideas for decorating the home. She advises that when one is shopping for decorations, to look for things that can be left out year round and then added to for the holidays. These items don't need to be Christmas oriented.

For example, Counts talks about a home she decorated for her friend Shana Carrico.

"Shana is an animal lover and has a son, so I looked for things that would be dog and kid friendly," Counts recalled. "We kind of went with the nature theme because so many things in her house are handmade, she supports the local craftsman, so that's the kind of thing she likes. Nature and animals, we kind of went with the animal thing and the woodsy theme."

Throughout the house were lovely displays of natural objects that looked like bits of the forest brought indoors. One beautiful piece she put





together was for the dining room chandelier. She found a natural pine wreath and cut it so she could fit it around the chandelier without having to take the fixture down. She then added bits and pieces to make it look more woodsy. She stuck bits of grapevine into the wreath that spilled out from the center, and natural berries added some rich color and texture. She pulled some of the wreath boughs down to hang from the piece make it look more natural.

"Because in nature things hang down and go in every which direction, they just kind of go wild so we just wanted it to look really natural which was the whole theme behind everything, was making it look like it just came out of the woods," Counts explained. "We pulled the boughs down and stuffed the grapevine and twigs in there and kind of pulled it over it."

For the mantle, Angie found a large piece of cylindrical birch bark on one of her shopping expeditions. She cut the bark into several pieces and mounted them on the fireplace mantle, holding them in place with thumbtacks so they wouldn't roll off. Then she stuffed them with greenery and lights. She also used natural cotton pods that look straight out of the cotton field. These can be ordered online, and add an unusual Page 21



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look to displays. She mingled the cotton pods in with the greenery to add texture and a touch of white. Finally, she added small animals and birds that had been made out of feathers and straw to bring the display to life.

"I bought every animal and bird I could find," Counts said. "From a chipmunk to the big owl that we put on the top of her tree -- he was probably a close to two feet tall, a huge owl made out of feathers and twine and straw."

Speaking of the Christmas tree – it was an enormous affair. Counts estimates it was 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall.

"It was absolutely the biggest tree I'd ever seen," she noted. "They had to cut it with a chainsaw to get it out of the house. Once the branches spread out and everything it was unbelievable."

Counts decorated the tree in the fashion of the other displays – focusing on woods-themed ideas. She wanted to recall the old-timey Christmas. She decorated the entire tree with small animals and birds, and topped it with the large owl. She stuck twigs and branches coming out of the top to add that wild touch and added clear lights for a classic look.

Counts also likes to use burlap in her decorations for a natural touch. She draped burlap around the





huge tree as garlands, and used burlap in many of the decorations in the house. A strip of burlap wrapped around a candle and held in place with thumbtacks adds a nice touch. She also uses burlap in large flower pots – a little stuffed in the top around the plant hides the roots and dirt, and strips wrapped around the pot dress up an outdoor display.

Moss covered vines and balls of twine are another way to add to indoor scenes – the vines can be ordered online or found in some floral stores. Counts loves hunting for unique items in floral and other accessory stores and can always find that special piece that is just right for a particular home. Using imagination, she emphasizes, is the key, as well as following inspiration.

"I just kind of pick things up and put them down in different places until it looks the way I want," she said. "I never have a plan. I just go with the muse of it. When I'm decorating, I'll put something



on a shelf or on a mantle and every time I walk in the room I'll look at it and I might move something 10 times. I might need to bring something else

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and change it out. I just go with whatever mood."

Dried flowers, grapevines, greenery, natural berries, and anything natural appeals to Counts. She does not use silk or plastic flowers – she likes things to look natural. She suggests that birch bark and crepe myrtle bark make nice woodsy decorations – sprayed with sealer these items can last for many years. If the bark does not have enough color, she recommends the spray-on colorant available at crafts stores that is used to color silk flowers.

The same kind of spray or the sealant she recommends for natural wreaths to breathe new life into them for use year after year. The sealant spray will help preserve them, or she recommends the moss green color to revitalize old wreaths. She does recommend not hanging sprayed wreaths on walls in case the color leaches out, but she loves to use them around large outdoor flower pots.

"A wreath around the top of a flowerpot, just sitting on the top of the flower pot, is a great base to decorate around," Counts offers. "You can



put a ribbon around the pot or whatever you like, and then just have stuff spilling out around it. Grapevines or whatever."

Most importantly, Counts says to have fun with your decorating and go with your personal taste.

"Just look for what you like," she said. "Look around at how other people decorate their house and kind of pull from that. Don't copy anyone else- follow your own instincts and follow your heart. If you love it, buy it."



	Key Metrics	May 2020	May 2019	+/-	YTD 2020	YTD 2019	+/-	
Bristol, TN	New Lisiting Count	43	64	-32.8%	212	258	-17.8%	
37620	Closed Sales Count	45	51	-11.8%	185	209	-11.5%	
	Median Days	77.5	52	+49%	70.66	74.84	-5.6%	
	Average Sales Price	\$154,547	\$176,193	-12.3%	\$168,541	\$154,278	+9.2%	
	Average Price per Sq Ft	\$74	\$76	-2.6%	\$77	\$73	+4.8%	
Blountville, TN	New Lisiting Count	7	16	-56.3%	58	71	-18.3%	
37617	Closed Sales Count	14	9	+55.6%	47	56	-16.1%	
	Median Days	90	59	+52.5%	87.83	86.75	+1.2%	
	Median Sales Price	\$189,250	\$185,000	+2.3%	\$187,016	\$164,241	+13.9%	
	Median Price per Sq Ft	\$79	\$76	+3.3%	\$82	\$82	+.1%	
Bluff City, TN	New Lisiting Count	6	23	-73.9%	51	59	-13.60%	
37618	Closed Sales Count	6	13	-53.8%	43	48	-10.40%	
	Median Days	114	26	+338.5%	65.35	77.9	-16.10%	
	Median Sales Price	\$191,450	\$194,985	-1.8%	\$182,981	\$173,975	+5.2%	
	Median Price per Sq Ft	\$109	\$93	+16.7%	\$89	\$86	+3.8%	
Piney Flats, TN	New Lisiting Count	8	15	-46.7%	64	81	-21%	
37686	Closed Sales Count	19	19	0	58	61	-4.9%	
	Median Days	89	82.5	+7.9%	78.59	90.07	-12.8%	
	Median Sales Price	\$226,000	\$224,000	+.9%	\$264,494	\$264,830	-0.1%	
	Median Price per Sq Ft	\$102	\$104	-1.9%	\$105	\$113	-7.4%	
Bristol, VA	New Lisiting Count	36	46	-21.7%	147	186	-21%	
24201, 24202	Closed Sales Count	28	30	-6.7%	128	142	-9.9%	
	Median Days	79	66	+19.7%	90.43	99.29	-8.9%	
	Median Sales Price	\$119,250	\$123,600	-3.5%	\$128,266	\$121,398	+5.7%	
	Median Price per Sq Ft	\$76	\$77	-1.3%	\$70	\$70	+.2%	
Abingdon, VA	New Lisiting Count	21	41	-48.8%	89	127	-29.9%	
24210, 24211	Closed Sales Count	16	18	-11.1%	74	78	-5.1%	
	Median Days	122	220	-44.5%	127.64	211.37	-39.6%	
	Median Sales Price	\$164,450	\$187,500	-12.3%	\$171,941	\$173,144	-0.7%	
	Median Price per Sq Ft	\$100	\$95	+4.7%	\$86	\$86	+.4%	

Data from REALTOR Property Resource® from the National Association of REALTORS®

JUNKIN' SHENANIGANS

Turning junk into treasures

Story by: Carolyn R. Wilson

Just about every piece of furniture in April Jacklet's artisan décor shop tells a story. "This was a broken chair. I removed the legs and turned it into a wall shelf," said the Damascus business owner, as she walked around the spacious showroom brimming with an eclectic personality. "Here, I took two parts of a table and added legs to make a bench. "She's even turned a television console into a book shelf on wheels. That's the magic of Jacklet, 43, who owns and operates Junkin' Shenanigans next door to Food City in Damascus.

She's not sure where she gets her creative energy, but transforming someone's trash into treasures---sometimes with a funky spin---is right up her alley. The artisan said she'd love to be a competitor on Flea Market Flip, a HGTV series where contestants search flea markets for





"I love taking things that most people would throw away and turning them into treasures."I like to think of my business as an artisan boutique. I like things made by hand."

second-hand items they can buy, fix and flip. "That would be cool."

The store owner also does basic upholstery jobs and she has been commissioned to repair tables, chairs, and dressers. "I repaired a dresser that was literally in pieces. The drawer fronts were off and I had to redo the whole thing. The customer couldn't believe it when she picked it up. She was very happy with it."

Her store carries gift items from throughout the country, all of which are made in America. But, it's the Appalachian flavor of artwork that inspires the business owner.

Her store features handmade dulcimers made by Keith Powers of Damascus and wooden flag signs crafted by Jim Beauchamp, a Kingsport retired police officer. Other consignment items include handmade jewelry and acrylic paintings.

"We're not a thrift shop---we're an artisan place. I represent a group of artisans that put their hearts and souls into the products we sell. I try to make things as fairly priced as possible."

Something new

Before she and her husband Chad moved to



Damascus in 2018, Jacklet was a military wife whose pastime was to find furniture in disrepair and gives them a second life---often transforming them into something unrecognizable. While living in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Jacklet and a friend would scout for their next masterpieces. "We'd get some junk and do some shenanigans. We always came up with something new that everyone wanted," she said with a laugh.

She recently converted a dresser into a table by painting it yellow and attaching an Aztec-themed fabric on the front drawer and side panels.

"The top has a walnut stain. It's one of those pop-ofcolor pieces you add to a room." Jacklet's husband helps out with merchandise in the shop. "He's like me. He doesn't like to see something go to waste," said the wife. After Jacklet and her husband moved to Southwest Virginia, the artist continued her creative journey by opening up her own business in a vacant building on Laurel Avenue in town, later moving in May to her current location for additional work space.

A portion of the showroom is used for refinishing and painting her finds.

"I just got this corner cupboard off the truck," said Jacklet, who has plans to recreate the drab piece of furniture into something eye catching.

Artisan classes

Jacklet plans to include some do-it-yourself booth spaces at her business where artists can come and work on projects away from home. She's spreading the word about her artisan hub by hosting community craft classes.

"We recently had a tea light class where we turned wine glasses upside down and painted them to look like pumpkins. We added tea lights on top of the stems." Occasionally, the business owner hosts what she calls an artist "boot camp" that allows artisans to stay for a few hours and come back the next day to finish up their projects.

"You also can rent my tools and my space for the day to work," said Jacklet. Part of her supplies includes two paint lines, Dixie Bell and Unicorn Spit, both companies created by American women. As Jacklet continues to build a local vendor business, she is focusing on becoming a go-to store for Christmas shopping this year.

"I'm working on building gift ideas. I want to keep it local and keep revenue in Damascus. If we can keep it local, it will help the town and bring others here to shop," she said. "I'd love to see Damascus be more than a five month out-of-the-year place," she said.

Junkin' Shenanigans is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday with adjustments made during the holiday season. Keep up with what's new at Junkin' Shenanigans by visiting their Facebook page.



"Chad added a piece of leftover walnut wood to an old sewing machine base. It made the cutest little desk ever."

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