

*Seasons of the Holidays*

Presented by:



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# LOCAL MATTERS

## Home for the Holidays



### YOUR GUIDE TO LOCAL HOLIDAY SHOPPING

The Press Democrat

PETALUMA  
ARGUS-COURIER

The Sonoma Index-Tribune

# When communities thrive - the people, their businesses, and their dreams grow even bigger.

Thank you for supporting dreams by shopping and dining locally this holiday season.



## Dear Readers,

This publication features over 50 incredible local businesses and is part of our ongoing effort to encourage North Bay residents to shop locally. As you gear up for the holiday season, remember that every dollar you spend here directly fuels our local economy.

Did you know that when you shop local, you're keeping 68% of your hard-earned money circulating within our community, compared to just 43% with national chains? That's nearly 50% more support for our local economy when you choose to buy from our amazing local businesses instead of online mega-retailers.

But it's not just about dollars and cents. Our small businesses are the backbone of our community, providing the most jobs for North Bay residents. Plus, they're contributing to local causes at double the rate of national chains. We have an abundance of fantastic nonprofits right here in the North Bay, and our local businesses are right there with open hearts to support them.

Join us in the movement to shop local. Let's celebrate the business owners in our community who are not just entrepreneurs, but also our neighbors, family, and friends. Browse through this early holiday guide to uncover local shopping ideas and exciting events to enjoy with your loved ones.

Stay safe, be well, and enjoy the joy of shopping local!

Warm regards,

Karleen Arnink-Pate  
Chief Revenue Officer, Sonoma Media Investments

Adam Bush  
Chief Revenue Strategist, Sonoma Media Investments

Source: American Express 2022 Small Business Economic Impact Study

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Cash advance transactions and balance transfers are excluded from earning points. All rates, terms and special offers subject to change. Certain restrictions apply.



## Keep Your Money Safe While Holiday Shopping

With the busy holiday season in full swing, we want to help you keep your hard-earned money safe from fraud. When doing your shopping online it's important to keep these five tips in mind before making a purchase.

### **Pay with your mobile wallet.**

For greater security and convenience, add your credit or debit card to your mobile wallet account and pay easily with your device. Enjoy access to your cards through your mobile device with ease and peace of mind.

### **Shop on secure websites only.**

There should be a padlock in the address bar next to the website url and it should have an "s" after "http." Click the padlock symbol and you should get a message telling you the connection is secure. If you get a warning, avoid the website.

### **Verify sellers before purchase.**

If you see an item you want to buy but you don't know the seller, research them online to make sure they're legitimate. Find reviews on Amazon or type the name of the company plus the word "reviews" into a search field.

### **Use only secure networks.**

If you're in a coffee shop or place that offers free Wi-Fi, don't use it for shopping. Public Wi-Fi is often unsecure, which means any information you send while connected to these networks can be accessed by fraudsters. Instead, use your own mobile data.

### **Pay attention to the returns policy.**

If there is no returns policy, that's a red flag. And knowing what the policy is will help you if something isn't delivered or arrives broken, even if the seller wasn't trying to scam you.

Sometimes issues arise even when we've followed all security best practices. If that's the case for you and you're a Redwood Credit Union member, you have zero liability for fraudulent charges, which means if you didn't authorize it, you don't pay. For more information, visit [redwoodcu.org/security](https://redwoodcu.org/security).

Don't have an RCU Visa® credit card? It's easy to apply at [redwoodcu.org/visa](https://redwoodcu.org/visa).

On behalf of Redwood Credit Union, have a safe and happy holiday season.



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Visit us at Sebastopol Hardware Center and find the perfect gifts and decor to celebrate the season!



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Excludes: Already discounted items.  
Limit 1 per customer. Not able to be stacked with Ace Rewards or any other coupons.  
Must fit in a standard-sized stocking.  
Expires: November 30, 2024

## 25% Off One Box of Holiday Lights

Excludes: Already discounted items.  
Limit 1 per customer. Not able to be stacked with Ace Rewards or any other coupons.  
Must fit in a standard-sized stocking.  
Expires: November 30, 2024

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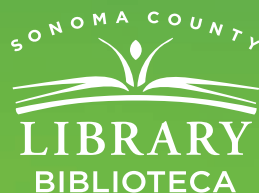
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# EVENTS

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29

### Bright Nights at Cuvaision

Celebrate the holiday season at Cuvaision with an evening of wine and festive cheer. From 5 pm to 7 pm, our estate will sparkle with thousands of lights, creating a magical setting. 5 p.m.- Jan. 4, 7 p.m. Tickets \$85. Cuvaision Winery, 1221 Duhig Road, Napa. 707-942-2455.

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30-10 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

### Tibetan Monks' Holiday Market

As a part of Gaden Shartse Monastery Sacred Earth and Healing Arts of Tibet Tour, Tibetan monks will visit Sebastopol. 11 a.m.- Dec. 1, 3 p.m. Soft Medicine Sanctuary, 186 N. Main St., Sebastopol.

### Winter Lights Tree Lighting Celebration - 4:00 - 7:00pm

Come kick off the holiday season in Santa Rosa with Winter Lights and the 41st Annual Tree Lighting Celebration! It all starts the day after Thanksgiving in Downtown Santa Rosa's Old Courthouse Square. Join us for FREE family-friendly activities, live entertainment, delicious holiday drinks and treats, photos with Santa, and of course the official lighting of the Courthouse Square tree!

<https://www.downtownsantarosa.org/events/annual-downtown-events/winterlights/>

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30

### Everlasting Holiday Centrepieces

Create stunning holiday centrepieces that endure throughout the season. 2-3:30 p.m. Tickets \$65. Sonoma Botanical Garden, 12841 Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen. 707-996-3166.

### Hike After Thanksgiving

Short post-holiday hike starting at the Vallejo Home. 12-1:30 p.m. Vallejo Home State Park, Sonoma.

### Holiday Celebration & Marketplace

Holiday Celebration & Marketplace. 12-4:30 p.m. Tickets \$40. Dry Creek Vineyard, 3770 Lambert Bridge Road, Healdsburg. 707-433-1000.

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30-10 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

### Mistletoe and Merlot History Walk

Explore the rich history of our charming town before stopping to enjoy a beverage at the beautiful Hotel Petaluma. 3-4:30 p.m. Tickets \$25. 313 B St.. 25 Fourth St.. Petaluma. 707-971-0677.

### Santa's Riverboat Arrival & Small Business Saturday

Santa and Mrs. Claus are coming to town on November 30, the Saturday after Thanksgiving! 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. River Plaza, East Washington Street, Petaluma. 707-762-9348.

### Windrush Farm Holiday Art Faire

Arts and Craft Holiday Faire. 10 a.m.- Dec. 1, 3 p.m. Windrush Farm Fiber Arts, 2263 Chileno Valley Road, Petaluma. 707-775-3390.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 2-4:30 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

### 3rd Annual Holiday Gift Fair

A holiday marketplace that supports local craft workers and a great charity! Find Wood Working, Pottery, Paintings, Kitchen Ware, Spices, Jewellery, & Much More All Hand Crafted & Locally Made!. 3-7:30 p.m. Tickets \$5. Hotel Petaluma, 205 Kentucky St., Petaluma.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

### A Candlelight Christmas

Cantiamo Sonoma presents a Christmas concert of both familiar and rarely heard seasonal pieces from a variety of Renaissance and contemporary composers. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tickets \$30-\$45. St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Cathedral, 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa. 707-582-0722.

### Christmas Tree Lighting and Meet Santa!

Join Santa and Ms. Claus as we celebrate the holidays and light up our enormous Christmas tree! 5:30-7 p.m. Providence Queen of the Valley Medical Center, 1000 Trancas St., Napa.

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30-10 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

### A Candlelight Christmas

Cantiamo Sonoma presents a Christmas concert of both familiar and rarely heard seasonal pieces from a variety of Renaissance and contemporary composers. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tickets \$30-\$45. St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Cathedral, 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa. 707-582-0722.

# EVENTS

## **Deborah Winters: Winters Wonderland**

Deborah Winters annual holiday concert, this year with a big band! A Bay Area native, smooth and versatile vocalist Deborah Winters is a long time favorite among jazz-savvy San Franciscans. According to internationally acclaimed Jazz historian Herb Wong, "Deborah's singing reflects the seductive logic and artistry of jazz. Deborah personifies her stories with inward feeling and jazz attitude." A true believer in her immense talents, Christopher Loudon quotes in JazzTimes magazine, "Ms. Winters is about as polished as jazz vocalists come with a refreshingly free interpretation that is superbly polished and elegant." From straight-ahead jazz to inspirational to folk and rock, Deborah continues to dazzle and uplift her audiences at music festivals, concert halls, churches and house concerts. 8 p.m.- Dec. 7, 12 a.m. 142 Throckmorton Theatre, 142 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley.

## **Holiday Marketplace Sip & Shop at Sugarloaf**

Browse holiday gifts at our Artisan Marketplace and Sip & Shop. Arts, crafts, wine tasting, raffle, jewellery, gifts, artisan foods and much more. 4-7 p.m. Sugarloaf Wine Co., 6705 Cristo Lane, Santa Rosa. 707-244-4890.

## **Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical**

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30-10 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

## **Petaluma Tree Lighting Celebration**

Join an evening of fun and welcome in the Holidays with the Theater Square tree lighting event!. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Theatre Square Apartments, 101 Second St., Petaluma. 707-762-9348.

## **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7**

### **Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade**

The Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade is an amazing event that brings over 10,000 visitors to Calistoga. Don't miss this enchanting night filled with holiday cheer and community spirit!. 7-8 p.m. Calistoga. 707-942-6333.

### **Cotati Shop and stroll**

local made good holiday marketplace along Old Redwood Hwy between E Cotati and Charles Street featuring local artisans, farmers and entertainment. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Cotati Downtown Plaza (California Historical Landmark #879), 8167 La Plaza, Cotati. 415-999-5635.

### **Ehlers Estate Holiday Open Estate**

Kick off the holiday season at Ehlers Estate!. 1-4 p.m. Free. 3222 Ehlers Lane, 3222 Ehlers Lane, St. Helena. 707-908-8910.

### **Holiday Open House**

Holiday Open House with the Home decorated, free cookies and cider, visits with Kris Kringle and special gift items. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Luther Burbank Home & Gardens, 204 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa. 707-524-5445.

## **Holiday at the Weaving Studio**

Holiday Sale -- handwoven scarves, hats, capes, throws and more!. 11 a.m.- Dec. 8, 5 p.m. The Weaving Studio, 343 Florence Ave., Sebastopol. (707)280-2607.

## **Imagery Winter Wreath Making**

Join us for a fun afternoon as you learn the art of wreath making while sipping unique Imagery, with this hands-on workshop. All materials and first glass of wine included. 12-2 p.m. Tickets \$60. Imagery Estate Winery, 14335 Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen. 707-935-3000.

## **Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical**

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30-10 p.m. Tickets \$29-\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707-523-4185.

## **Korbel Holiday Market**

Korbel would like to wish you a happy holiday by inviting you to our annual Holiday Market. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 13250 River Road, 13250 River Road, Guerneville. 707-824-7000.

## **Lighted Boat Parade**

Join us at the Petaluma Basin and enjoy the Lighted Boat parade hosted by the Petaluma Yacht Club. 6-7 p.m. Turning Basin, 12 C St., Petaluma. 707-762-9348.

## **Mercatini di Natale:**

### **Italian Christmas Market at Orsi Family Vineyards**

Join us in embracing the festive spirit at Orsi Family Vineyards for our annual Mercatini di Natale!. 11 a.m.- Dec. 8, 3 p.m. Orsi Family Vineyards, 2306 Magnolia Drive, Healdsburg.

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8**

### **25th Annual SANTA PAWS! Holiday Event**

Take your pet and family's photo with Santa and festive holiday backgrounds!. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Western Farm Center, 21 W. Seventh St., Santa Rosa. 707-210-6670.

## **Holiday Celebration at Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards**

Start your holiday season off right with the perfect afternoon and the perfect wine for the season! Join us in the Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards' tasting room on Sunday, December 8th from 12:00pm to 4:00pm. 12-4 p.m. Free. Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, 4401 Slusser Road, Windsor. 707-237-3489.

### **Holiday Open House**

Holiday Open House with the Home decorated, free cookies and cider, visits with Kris Kringle and special gift items. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Luther Burbank Home & Gardens, 204 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa. 707-524-5445.

# EVENTS

## Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 2–4:30 p.m. Tickets \$29–\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. (707) 523–4185.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

### Candlelight: Holiday Special Featuring "The Nutcracker" & More

Candlelight concerts bring the magic of a live, multi-sensory musical experience to awe-inspiring locations like never seen before in Sonoma. Get your tickets now to discover the music of Holiday Special Featuring "The Nutcracker" and more at Sebastiani Theatre under the gentle glow of candlelight. Consider treating your friends and family to a Candlelight experience with our gift card! Check it out here (<https://feverup.com/m/134239>) General Info Venue: Sebastiani Theatre Dates and times: select your dates/times directly in the ticket selector Duration: 65 minutes (doors open 60 mins prior to the start time and late entry is not permitted) Age requirement: 8 years old or older. Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult Accessibility: this venue is ADA compliant View the FAQs for this event here ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cbz0vdBqn3W4GbFhDNks723hTv0PotZLQIVM\\_h6fZCk/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cbz0vdBqn3W4GbFhDNks723hTv0PotZLQIVM_h6fZCk/pub)) 7–8:15 p.m. Tickets \$40. Sebastiani Theatre, 476 First St. E., Sonoma.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

### Kith

Inside at 1030 Main St. | Food & Drinks Available Founded by the late John Kelley of St. Helena, Kith and in Ireland for more than 30 years. In addition to jigs and reels and Irish favorites like Fields of Athenry, Black Velvet Band and Rising of the Moon, the group adds its own original material. Join band members Kathi Brotemarkle, Ron Brunswick, Ann Gilleran, Linda Howard and shanachie Michael Waterson at Blue Note Napa, for the bands Celtic holiday-themed program, Winter Measures. BLUE NOTE NAPA is on the 1st floor of the historic Napa Valley Opera House and is an intimate 180-seated live music club and restaurant. World-class and local Bay Area artists perform here. Before and during the show, we offer a sophisticated dinner menu and a wide selection of wines and cocktails to order. Please contact our Box Office with any inquiries or special needs requests. 1030 Main Street, Napa CA 94559 Box Office: [boxoffice@bluenotenapa.com](mailto:boxoffice@bluenotenapa.com) or 707.880.2300. 7:30–11:30 p.m. Blue Note Napa, 1030 Main St., Napa.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

### Candlelight: Holiday Special Featuring "The Nutcracker" & More

Candlelight concerts bring the magic of a live, multi-sensory musical experience to awe-inspiring locations like never seen before in Santa Rosa. Get your tickets now to discover music inspired by the winter and the holiday spirit at Steele Lane Community Center under the gentle glow of candlelight. General Info Venue: Steele Lane Community Center Dates and times: select your dates/times directly in the ticket selector Duration: 60 minutes (doors open 45 mins prior to the start time and late entry is not permitted) Age requirement: 8 years old or older. Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult Accessibility: this venue is ADA

compliant View the FAQs for this event here (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UHrw6-EYN5fNxHAqgxd1Mm1t4dkzhOaW36FzrMNF5Vk/pub>) 6:30–7:45 p.m. Tickets \$36. Steele Lane Community Center, 415 Steele Lane, Santa Rosa.

## Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 7:30–10 p.m. Tickets \$29–\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. 707–523–4185.

## Pasquale Esposito: An Italian Christmas

After a sold-out show in 2023, Pasquale returns to Sonoma for his annual Christmas Concert, celebrating the most wonderful time of the year. Backed by his stellar band and special guests, Pasquale will set the stage for the season of giving. Enjoy traditional holiday favorites and Pasquale's storytelling of their experience of Christmas in Italy and the US. 7:30–11:30 p.m. Sebastiani Theatre, 476 First St. E., Sonoma.

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

### Contessi Ballet School presents Clara's Enchanted Dream, The Land of Sweets

Contessi Ballet School proudly presents this beautiful reimagining of The Nutcracker for audiences young and old! 2 p.m. – Dec. 15, 2 p.m. Tickets \$15. Lawrence E. Jones Middle School, 5154 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park. 707-477-0378.

## Downtown Holiday Market & Shopping Stroll

Gather your friends and family, and head to Downtown Petaluma to celebrate the holiday season! 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Historic Downtown Petaluma, 100 Petaluma Blvd. N., Petaluma. 707-762-9348.

## Holiday Comedy Fun in the Cave!

Launch your holidays with big laughs in the wine cave at Deerfield Ranch Winery! 7–8:30 p.m. Tickets \$35. Deerfield Ranch Winery, 10200 Sonoma Highway, Kenwood.

## Holiday Concert for the Coast -

### Ernest Bloch Bell Ringers and CoastSing

Holiday Concert for the Coast Presented by the Ernest Bloch Bell Ringers and CoastSing Holiday Concert Saturday, December 14 at 3 pm Gualala Arts Center Tickets are \$25 in advance, +\$5 day of, available at Gualala Arts, the Dolphin Gallery and online at [GualalaArts.org](http://GualalaArts.org) The Ernest Bloch Bell Ringers, under the direction by Jeanne Jackson, will present their annual Holiday Concert for the Coast on December 14 at 3 p.m. This year's concert will feature a collaboration with the singers of CoastSing, directed by Sue Bohlin. Refreshments will be available, and while Santa hats are optional, festive spirit is expected. Advance tickets are \$25, with a \$5 increase on the day of the event, and can be purchased at Gualala Arts, the Dolphin Gallery, or online. Children accompanied by an adult ticket holder may attend for free. 3–5 p.m. Tickets \$25. Gualala Arts Center, 46501 Old State Highway, Gualala.

# EVENTS

## Holiday Home Tour

Step into the holiday spirit with Napa County Landmarks' 33rd Annual Holiday Home Tour! Step into the holiday spirit with Napa County Landmarks' 33rd Annual Holiday Home Tour! Join us on December 14th, 2024, from noon to 4 pm in the charming Downtown Napa St. John's Historic District (Main, Brown, and Hayes streets between 1st Street and Lincoln), where festivity meets history. Stroll through beautiful holiday homes, enjoy live music, admire vintage cars, and shop unique treasures from local vendors. This exclusive experience offers a rare glimpse into the architecture and seasonal decor of some of Napa's most beloved residences—making it a perfect way to celebrate the season and Napa's rich heritage. We encourage you to purchase your tickets in advance to guarantee your spot. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door on the day of the event—don't miss out! Pro-Tip: Skip the wait and pick up your tour—entry stickers and brochures ahead of time at Napa County Landmarks headquarters, 1416 Brown Street, Napa. Early pickup times are available on December 12th (Thursday) and December 13th (Friday) from 3–5:30 pm. If you're getting them on event day, stop by starting at 11:30 am on December 14th—just in time for the homes to open at noon and stay open until 4 pm. Don't miss this chance to start your tour with ease! Thank You to Our Sponsors! 12–4 p.m. Tickets \$37–\$48. Napa County Landmarks Office, 1416 Brown St., Napa.

## Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 2–4:30 p.m. Tickets \$29–\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. (707) 523-4185.

## Merry Marketplace

Wrap up the year with our final market of the season! Pick up last-minute holiday gifts, indulge in wintertime goodies, and connect with local makers. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. 5400 Old Redwood Highway N., 5400 Old Redwood Highway N., Petaluma.

## Santa's Helpers Holiday Market

Terrific Shopping Awaits! 10 a.m.– Dec. 15, 5 p.m. Napa Valley Expo, 575 Third St., Napa. 707-225-4911.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

### Angels and Minstrels: The Old World Carolers in concert

Medieval and Renaissance midwinter carols from Old Europe, with singalong at end. 3–4 p.m. Sebastopol United Methodist, 500 N. Main St., Sebastopol. 707-823-7971.

### Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical

"A holiday extravaganza that captures the spirit of the season in every way." —The New York Times. 2–4:30 p.m. Tickets \$29–\$55.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. (707) 523-4185.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

### It's A Wonderful Life, New Musical Workshop

INew Musical Workshop. 7 a.m.– Dec. 18, 9:15 p.m. Tickets \$27.95. Sixth St. Playhouse, 52 W. Sixth St., Santa Rosa. (707) 523-4185.

### The Klezmatics "Toward the light" Hanukkah tour

The Klezmatics "Toward the light" Hanukkah concert in Healdsburg New York's own Klezmatics return to the road this December for Toward the Light, this year's celebration of Hanukkah centered around the marriage of their soulful and ebullient melodies to American folk icon Woody Guthrie's playful and poignant lyrics. More about the tour and the band <https://www.klezomatics.com/> <https://linkpages.pro/klezomatics> Sponsored by U.S. Bank 7:30–11:30 p.m. Raven Theater, 115 N. St., Healdsburg.

To be included in future Shop SoCo Gift Guides, please visit the site below and enter your information. <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/events/> (not guaranteed)

*Editor's Note: Although several organizations and businesses posted events occurring on these specific dates and times, we suggest you confirm that the event has not changed.*

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NOV 29TH - DEC 29TH

# How communities benefit when consumers shop local



Ideas about shopping are never set in stone, and the pandemic illustrated just how quickly consumer trends and opinions can change. Many individuals are now reevaluating how they spend their hard-earned money, particularly since inflation has affected just how far a dollar can be stretched. When consumers think about which stores to patronize, locally owned businesses may be the smartest option for a number of reasons — not the least of which is the way such enterprises benefit the communities they call home.

- More money kept in the community: Shopping locally means that more money will stay in the community. According to recent research from Civic Economics, local eateries return nearly 79 percent of revenue to the community, compared to just over 30 percent for chain restaurants. Overall, for every \$100 spent at a local business, around \$73 remains in the community, versus roughly \$43 when shopping at a non-locally owned business.
- Get a personal touch: Local business owners typically are inclined to go the extra mile for their customers and are personally invested in the services and products they are selling. As a result, shopping locally tends to be a personalized experience. Furthermore, a local business owner may be more amenable to ordering products for specific clientele. Such personalized service is typically not accessible when shopping big box stores or other shops where owners are off-site.
- Support nonprofits: Local businesses often support good work in the community, such as nonprofit groups. These can include schools and sports teams, among other groups. According to Dr. Sue Lynn Sasser, professor of economics at the University of Central Oklahoma, studies indicate nonprofits “receive 250 percent more support from small businesses than larger ones.”

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# A festive guide to caroling



**C**hristmas caroling is a joyful tradition that has endured for centuries. Christmas caroling can be traced to the fourth century in Rome. Latin hymns were written to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Historians believe that even before the emergence of Christianity midwinter songs existed to lift people's spirits through the bleak weather and extended hours of darkness.

- Christmas caroling continues to unite communities and spread holiday cheer through song. It is time to inspire a resurgence of caroling by planning to gather friends, family, or neighbors for a caroling session. This guide can help anyone plan a memorable caroling event.
- Gather your group: Begin by assembling a group of singers. No one needs to be an expert singer, as enthusiasm goes a long way. Reach out to friends, family, coworkers, and/or local community members. Try to get a diverse group of people together whose main goal is to have fun.
- Find the right time and date: Typically evening hours after work or during weekends are when you can reach the greatest number of people. The goal is to enable participants to relax and enjoy the experience.
- Map out a caroling route: Carefully identify neighborhoods or locations that are known for being festive. While the organizer may choose to carol around his or her own neighborhood, it may be possible to engage more of the community in other

settings. Look at local nursing homes or even community centers as caroling locations. Contact businesses along Main Street to see if caroling in the center of town to coincide with holiday shopping may be a good idea.

- Compile a list of classics: Most people will want to hear the carols and other songs they know and love. Make a list of classic Christmas songs that aren't overly complicated and singers will already know how to sing, such as "Jingle Bells," "Deck the Halls," "Frosty the Snowman," and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." If a particularly accomplished singer is in the group, he or she might do a featured solo. Be sure to have printed copies of the lyrics and sheet music for all participants.
- Enlist some musicians: Although caroling is traditionally done a capella, having someone who plays an instrument, like a guitar or violin, can ensure everyone is on the right note and can keep the pace of each song.
- Plan to rest: Singing can be joyful, but also tiring. Bring along refreshments so the carolers can rest their voices and stop to grab a drink or snack. Tea, coffee and cocoa can warm up participants on chilly days. Perhaps make one of the caroling stops in front of a local coffee shop and pop in after a set.
- Coordinate attire: Although everyone does not have to dress alike, a similar element, such as a red scarf or green mittens, can unite the group.

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# How to Host a Christmas Party Like an Event-Planning Pro



Photo: Kamil Macniak

**F**rom family get-togethers to office parties to themed Christmas parties, the holidays are about spending time with the ones you love most. Should you become the host or hostess of said party, you may need a few pointers to get you through it.

- Choose a theme. Streamline your party planning by choosing a Christmas party theme. Deciding on a theme will not only help guide your menu, activities (such as games, crafts, a photo booth, etc.), and decorations, but it'll show your guests just how much thought and effort you put into planning the event. Potential traditional holiday party themes include Ugly Christmas Sweater Party, Christmas Character Party, or a Gatsby Christmas. If you're throwing an online Christmas party, you may want to choose something that's more interactive, like online holiday bingo or virtual Christmas trivia.
- Set a date. There are only four Saturdays in the holiday season, which makes choosing the perfect date for your Christmas party a bit tough. If there are kids on the guest list, you may need to pick a time that's early enough that they'll be tucked in by bedtime. Before you decide on a date, take your guests, their priorities, and your vision for the party (such as casual cocktails, office party, family-friendly affair, etc.) into account.
- Decide on a location. Throwing a house party is convenient and affordable. However, if you plan on inviting a large number of guests, you may want to consider renting an event space. If

you're on a tight budget and hosting the party at home isn't an option, look for a free location (such as a local park, community center, or library). To help you decide on a location, think about the number of guests, the food you'll serve, whether or not there will be alcohol at the party, and the overall atmosphere you'd like to create. If you're hosting a virtual Christmas party, you'll need to decide on a "virtual venue." A few options include Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Group FaceTime.

- Plan the menu and set a budget. After you've nailed down the theme, date, and location, you'll need to plan a menu. If money is tight, consider making the party a potluck or opt for snacks and appetizers instead of a full-on meal. If you're going the remote route, you could ask everyone to have a packet of cocoa on hand, or you could send out goodie bags ahead of time.
- Send an evite. Once you've figured out the who, what, when, and where, send out email invites. This way, you'll be able to bypass the stress of purchasing and mailing customized invitations. Just be sure to give your guests plenty of notice!
- Create a Christmas party playlist. A party just isn't a party without music. If you're having a hard time choosing songs for your playlist, online streaming services like Spotify and Pandora have hundreds of pre-made holiday playlists available. Just pick one, and you're finished!

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# Simple In-Season Ingredients for Healthy Holiday Meals



Photo: Milos Stankovic

**W**hile many associate summer with an abundant harvest of fruits and vegetables, plenty of delicious ingredients are best enjoyed in the early weeks of winter.

- Using in-season ingredients in your holiday meals is a great way to ensure your food has the richest flavors and is full of nutrients. As a bonus, in-season produce is less expensive, so your expansive holiday menu won't break the bank! Here are six of the best in-season fruits and vegetables to include on your holiday table this year.
- Brussels Sprouts: Winter is a wonderful time to harvest brussels sprouts, so look for them in your local markets—in abundance! Low in carbohydrates but high in fiber, this vegetable has made a popular resurgence lately due to its nutty flavor and versatility. Fresh brussels sprouts taste far superior to their frozen counterparts, so take advantage and include them in your holiday meals. As a side dish, this vegetable can be roasted or shredded raw, so you can include it in various forms on your holiday table.
- Leeks: An often-overlooked vegetable in the same family as onions and garlic, leeks are a delicious and nutritious winter crop that can add a surprising twist to your holiday meals. Because they're high in fiber, vitamin A, and antioxidants,

leeks are an excellent choice for soups and side dishes that would otherwise be composed mainly of carbohydrates and refined ingredients. For example, this Leek Gratin recipe has all the flavors of the traditional potato dish but packs a better nutritional punch. If you like to serve a simple vegetable appetizer during the holidays, try this Parmesan Roasted Leek recipe for inspiration.

- Apples are a staple in holiday cooking, so it's a bonus that you should be able to find a wide variety of types readily available this time of year. Full of flavonoids (a type of antioxidant) and fiber, apples can add sweetness to a dish without contributing to a sugar crash later. Use apples as a dessert ingredient (like in this low-calorie Cider-Sweetened Apple Pie) or harness their complex flavor in a savory dish like this vegetarian Apple Quinoa Spoon Bread that could replace a typical holiday stuffing recipe.
- Cauliflower is a popular vegetable choice these days, and for good reason. Its high nutrient content (including vitamins C, E, and K, folate, fiber, lutein) and antioxidants make it a great choice for adding something healthy to a meal. This holiday season, use in-season cauliflower as a substitute for popular dishes like mashed potatoes and cheesy sides. You'll get a similar texture and flavor profile with far more nutrients and fewer carbohydrates.

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AREA RAIL TRANSIT



# Gifts for music lovers



**D**anish author Hans Christian Andersen once said, “Where words fail, music speaks.” Music is a universal language that can bridge cultures and unite people from all over the world in compelling ways. Is it any wonder that so many people are inspired, soothed and encouraged by music?

No two music fans are the same, so it’s not always easy to find the right gift for the budding rock star or audiophile on a holiday shopping list. Tuning into these individuals’ love for music is a great way to grab gifts they are sure to enjoy.

- **Go vinyl:** Vinyl albums predate cassettes, compact discs and digital music. But there are still some artists who release on vinyl, and many music fans say nothing beats the sound of a record playing on a turntable. Find an artist the recipient loves, and visit a local music shop to track down a vinyl version of one of their albums.
- **Purchase an instrument:** Has a budding musician had his or her eye on an instrument upgrade? Sweep in and be the holiday hero by purchasing a brand new one according to the specs desired.
- **Photo history book:** Browse a local bookstore and you will find a range of books that are geared toward music fans. From biographies of famous artists to compilations of album cover art throughout the years to songbooks for aspiring musicians,

there’s no shortage of options at a local bookseller.

- **Custom-molded earplugs:** Hearing loss is nothing to take lightly, and music fans who frequently play or attend concerts need to prioritize protecting their hearing. Custom-molded earplugs will conform to the wearer’s ear shape, offering ultimate protection.
- **Luxury headphones:** A luxury set of headphones can provide amazing audio for the best listening experiences.
- **Audio interface:** A loved one who wants to start making their own recordings will need an audio interface. This device connects a computer to music instruments and other audio equipment allowing one to play, record and process sound.
- **Approved fanny pack:** Stadiums are cracking down on the types of bags concert-goers can bring in. Therefore, a stadium-approved clear fanny pack can be a great gift for someone who is frequently watching live music.
- **Masterclass membership:** Sometimes there’s no better tutor than the professionals who have been there. With a Masterclass subscription, a music lover can learn how to write songs, sing or even play music from well-known music stars.

Gifts geared toward music enthusiasts will hit all the right notes this holiday season.

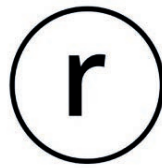
# WINDSOR

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Photo: Barbara Bourne Photography



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# DIY Décor Ideas for Your Holiday Home



Photo: Sonja Chv

So much of the joy from the holiday season comes from entertaining. Whether you're throwing a big bash for the neighborhood or hosting a more intimate gathering of close family and friends, filling your home with exciting and colorful decorations is a must.

- Rather than buying everything pre-made, consider rounding out your décor collection with some DIY items that highlight your style and use items you may already have at home! Your guests will be impressed, and your home will have a unique and memorable look. Here are a few ideas to inspire your homemade decoration dreams.
- Festive Garlands: One of the easiest ways to brighten up your home for the holiday season is to use garlands in every room. With so many different styles to choose from, your garland selection can highlight your personal style and give your guests something interesting to admire.
- This paint chip garland idea is an easy and inexpensive way to incorporate bright colors into your decorations. Cut the paint chips into whatever shapes you'd like before you string them together! For a different aesthetic, highlighting citrus fruits as part of your décor is a great way to incorporate cozy holiday smells into your decorating. This dried fruit garland is a wonderful weekend project and uses ingredients you likely already have in the pantry.
- Snowflakes and Snowmen: If you'd like a winter theme full of wonder and whimsy, opt for decorations that include lots of snowflakes, snowmen, and white/blue/silver combinations. These fun snowmen are a great decoration for anywhere the kids are likely to congregate. Since they use clear glass balls and Mason jars as the base, you can easily make several from dollar store items. Cluster a few together and vary their scarves for a fun snowperson family! As a more neutral decoration, painted snowflake jars are perfect for adorning shelves, countertops, and coffee tables. Pair these jars with winter décors, such as cozy pillows and throws, to make your home a winter wonderland.
- Elegant and Bold Centerpieces: If you want to get your guests' attention, then focus on a memorable centerpiece for your holiday table. Pull out all the stops with these gold glittered vases made from Mason jars. You can use gold as suggested or opt for silver or champagne to match a different décor scheme. Filling the jars is half the fun, too—evergreen and flower stems are beautiful, while candy canes and lollipops signal a fun-filled party! If you'd like to put water in the jars and then top with floating cranberries, leave the top half of the jars unpainted (or frost with a light dusting of glitter). For a fun alternative, make a snowman hat centerpiece that uses an upcycled coffee can as the base. You can decorate the hat with faux or real flowers to match the rest of your décor.



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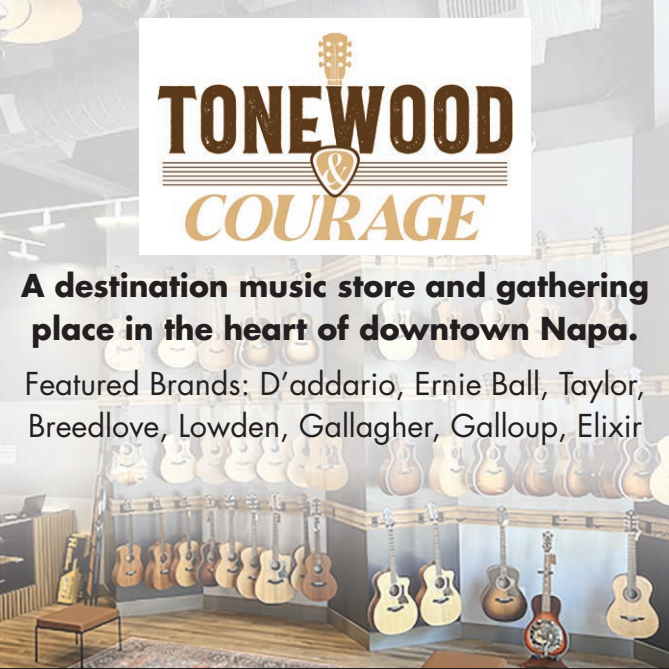
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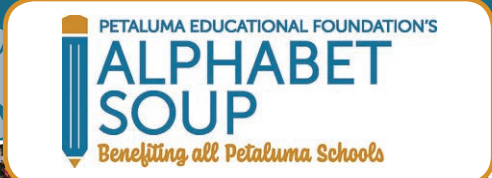


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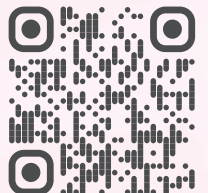


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# Tips to pick the perfect Christmas tree



Christmas trees are among the most recognizable symbols of the holiday season, and the popularity of trees is undeniable. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States each year. Christmas trees also are big business in Canada, where Statistics Canada notes cash receipts from Canadian Christmas tree producers totaled nearly \$163.5 million in 2022..

- Annual spending on Christmas trees underscores how important they are to holiday decor. Christmas trees serve as the centerpiece in millions of holiday home decor schemes, so it's important to pick a tree that can shine in that role. This holiday season, celebrants can consider these tips as they look for the perfect Christmas tree.
- Measure the area where the tree will be placed. A large tree can be awe-inspiring, but also can stick out like a sore thumb if it takes up too much space. There should be enough room around the tree for families and their guests to sit around it. The home interior experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend leaving a minimum of six inches between the top of the tree and the ceiling. If a tree topper will be added, make sure the top of the tree is at least 12 inches from the ceiling. Measure the area before leaving to buy a tree so it can fit nicely into the room and the surrounding decor.
- Try the shake test. Anyone who has purchased a fresh-cut Christmas tree is undoubtedly familiar with the shake test,

which remains an effective way to measure the dryness of the tree. A slight shake will produce some fallen needles. If the needles are brown and few and far between, then the tree likely is not overly dry. However, a lot of falling green needles indicates the tree is already drying out, which means it could shed quite a bit and lose its looks before Christmas Day.

- Pick a tree with a symmetrical look. Trees are living things, so it's unlikely that buyers will find a perfectly symmetrical tree. However, a tree that's misshapen or already has some sagging branches won't make for an awe-inspiring addition to a home decor scheme.
- Find the trunk (if you can). A trunk that's visible through the branches indicates the tree does not have dense branches, which will be necessary if homeowners want to dress the tree with ornaments. If it's hard to find the trunk because of all the thick branches and green needles, then the tree is likely pretty healthy.
- Test the needles. The home improvement experts at Lowes note that needles should be flexible but still snap when bent sharply. Avoid trees with needles that are already losing their color and can easily be pulled off.
- A Christmas tree garners a lot of attention come the holiday season, which only underscores the significance of finding a tree worthy of being the centerpiece of holiday decor.

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