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MEET THE TEAM



Resolutions are in style this time of year, and many outlets will tell you just what you should do: Quit smoking, quit drinking, quit eating, quit doing what you are bound to do. Most of us make efforts

each year to tackle one or more of these quandaries in our life, only to fall short.

In this issue of *Shore Monthly*, we are asking our readers to consider this New Year's ritual a little differently — embracing the vices you are considering letting go of.

These parts of your life you want to remove are likely there for a reason. They are things you enjoy. They are a part of who you are. Rather than focus on cutting these vices out of your life, we're asking you not only to consider keeping them in place, but improving upon them.

This issue aims to help you replace your six-pack with a glass of aged bourbon or scotch, trade your fast-food or snacking habits for a night out at one of the featured fine establishments, or swap your unused gym membership for a memorable night in the city.

If you're going to indulge, really go for the best of it, and you may surprise yourself and expand those parts of yourself you once considered a negative. Don't make yourself different, make yourself better — and have some fun while doing it.

While this month's theme is mostly tongue-in-cheek, and we hope our readers take their health seriously, we also want them to enjoy themselves and open their minds to new adventures in life.

So if you find yourself hearing whispers from your left shoulder every once in a while, don't just take the advice, try and one-up it.

Greg Mueller
Creative Director

EASY-LIVING, CASUAL ELEGANCE SHORE MONTHLY

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Bourbon

PAST HISTORY, PRESENT FLAVORS, AND FUTURE PAIRS

Story by Sarah Ensor | Photos by Pascal Bernasse

Although bourbon is a year-round favorite, in deep winter, its smokiness and spice can warm and soothe, even in a chilled glass.

Bourbon is a specific whiskey, which can only be labeled as “bourbon” if it is made in America, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. It is made from a fermented mash of at least 51 percent corn, although other grains, such as barley, wheat, and rye can comprise as much as 49 percent of the mash. During aging, bourbon must be stored at not more than 125 proof in new charred oak containers, and once completed, it must not exceed 160 proof (80 percent alcohol by volume).

“One thing I’ve learned about bourbon, you have to think about what it will not go with,” said Peter Vanags, the bartender who developed a new bourbon menu for Blue Point Provision at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort. He said bourbon goes well with many flavors. For these new concoctions, Vanags used Maker’s Mark, but any of your favorite bourbons will do.

The Blue Point bourbon menu offers the comforts of winter and a taste of spring.

Chef Chad Cantville of the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort recommended pairing these cocktails with several Blue Point Provision dishes. 🍷

One thing I’ve learned about bourbon,



you have to think about what it will not go with.

Bourbon 222:

2 ounces bourbon
2 ounces cider
2 ounces ginger beer
Shaken, chilled, served up
Swirl of caramel syrup
Garnish with apple wedge
dipped in caramel

Pairs with:

Drunken shrimp, sautéed with shallots and garlic before being deglazed with cognac. It's served with red onion, scallions, and julienned carrots in a ginger Thai chili sauce and coconut milk over a bed of basmati rice.



Bourbon Delight:

1 ounce bourbon
.75 ounces Chambord
Splash of sour mix
Top with ginger beer
Garnish with a lime and
a blackberry

Pairs with:

Crab cake dinner. The crab cakes are rich and buttery because of the use of butter crackers as the breading. They are pan seared for crispness and then finished in the broiler and served with a Cajun remoulade.





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ASK THE UNDERTAKER

The Great Gatsby Goodbye

by Ryan Helfenbein

The Great Gatsby is F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel that depicts what life might have been like for successful millionaires in the roaring 1920's. It had it all – love, lust, greed, and lavish parties. Throughout the story, one reads about the lifestyle of Jay Gatsby, known by the 'upper crust' as the life of the party, and others in the story who associated with him so that they, too, could experience all the pleasures offered by this way of living. But, at the end of the story, did Gatsby's funeral reflect the life he lived? In a word, no.

Funeral services in the 1920s were somber, morose affairs, complete with dark lighting, grim-faced funeral directors and subdued mourners dressed in black. Services during this time period were designed to be a concentration on the last days of one's life ultimately focusing on the loss. Unfortunately, that's still the image many people have when they think of a funeral service. But what if Mr. Gatsby's service was different? What if his funeral service had more of a focus on his life and less on the loss? Perhaps if the funeral scene in the book had included bright lights, loud music, fine food, fashionable cocktails and the fancy dress appropriate for a Gatsby soiree more people would have come? Better yet, would this have created a more pleasant atmosphere for his acquaintances to feel more COMFORTABLE to attend?

Today we are starting to see modern undertakers finally break the darkness of morbid funerals. They are ultimately realizing that they no longer need to play the role of the morbid lurch-like figure that welcomes people with a grim "You rang..." Rather, modern undertakers greet your guests with a smile, recognizable tunes playing in the background, favorite cocktails being served, and delicious appetizers

enjoyed, all of which themed around the lifestyle of your late friend and the times you enjoyed together. Undertakers today are realizing that with a focus on the life of the person, people are more inclined to take part in the celebration and attend the final farewell. This in turn allows mourners to hear memories of how their loved one touched others and the role they played in the lives of others. All in all, a tremendous redirection of the 1920's method of saying goodbye is finally taking hold, minimizing the focus away from the sadness of the obvious loss, to a celebration of the individual's life. Ultimately changing the words "I'm sorry for your loss" to now a welcoming "I remember when..."

With the modernization of funeral service, undertakers today can create a one of a kind experience allowing friends and relatives to journey through one's life, one last time. Enticing memories to be shared, stories be told and an overall ambiance encompassing the days enjoyed with the person they lost. Perhaps Mr. Fitzgerald words say it best "Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead". Today, undertakers can do just that by developing an experience for friends and family to focus on the life of the individuals and not the loss.

Ryan, certified preplanning counselor and licensed funeral director with Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam, assists families in creating one of a kind unique life celebrations. He can be reached at 410.758.3987 or Ryan@fhnfuneralhome.com



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SWAMP CANDY

Story by Bethany Ziegler
Photos by Henley Moore

If you walked into a Swampcandy show and turned your back on the band, you'd expect there to be a stage full of people behind you, based on the amount of sound they produce. You'd be wrong.

Actually, what you would see when you turned around is the high energy duo of Ruben Dobbs and Joey Mitchell. They describe their music as "a primitive blues-influenced style of Americana that relies heavily on primal rhythms" or, more simply, old school stomp and boogie.

Founded by Dobbs in 2007, Swampcandy went through a few iterations before Mitchell joined in 2010. Dobbs handles the duo's guitar work and sings, while Mitchell plays both upright bass and kick drum. As they say, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



STAGE LEFT



"I sing good and I play good, but I don't sing amazing and I don't play amazing. So we're kind of like an entire package when it comes to it," Dobbs said. "Everything in the band complements itself to make it better than it would be if it was ... sold separately."

Dobbs also is the band's songwriter, though he credits Mitchell with a lot of transitions and arrangement ideas. Their gigs are about 70 percent original songs, and the covers they do play are from the 1920s and '30s, and have their own Swampcandy spin.

"You'll hear a lot of songs that influenced the bands people like that you don't know," Dobbs said. "I try to write things that are too hard for me to play, so I have to learn something new."

As for their own influences, it's no surprise that they point heavily toward blues artists. Mitchell names Ray Brown, John Paul Jones, and Wes Montgomery as some of his favorites (though lately he's been into Father John Misty.) For Dobbs, it's Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Skip James, and Mississippi Fred McDowell on the blues side, and Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and Chet Atkins for their skills on guitar.

Both Dobbs, 43, and Mitchell, 32, have been playing music for awhile now. Dobbs says he started playing piano around age 5 and tried a few instruments before landing on guitar at 11 or 12. Mitchell took a little longer to develop an interest.

"I was 16 and started playing electric bass. I just really liked the sound of it," Mitchell said. "Then, music kind of took over."

He's not exaggerating about music taking over his life. Both full-time, professional musicians, Mitchell and Dobbs say it is possible to avoid starving as an artist, "you just have to do it a lot."

Swampcandy plays about five gigs a week, including every Tuesday at Rams Head Tavern in Annapolis, and just about monthly at RAR Brewing in Cambridge. Twice each year, the duo treks across the pond for a month-and-a-half-long tour of the United Kingdom, where they say the atmosphere is a little different than their standard U.S. gig.

"In the U.K., the focus is just on you. You're playing like two 45-minute sets, and everyone is sitting around and they're just watching you, and they're very polite and they clap in between songs," Mitchell



Swampcandy plays about five gigs a week, including every Tuesday at Rams Head Tavern in Annapolis, and just about monthly at RAR Brewing in Cambridge.

said. "Dancing doesn't happen that much. It depends on the time of the gig ... but usually it's a little more tame."

Playing together so often — there's usually only a two-day gap between sessions — has led to a strong bond between Dobbs and Mitchell, though they say there were a few times when they first started working together that the pair would butt heads. They cite a deeper commitment to the band and a willingness to put more of themselves into their music with resolving those issues and improving their act.

"It seems like we've got a vibe for each other," Dobbs said. "We read each other really well, so with tempo changes, (you can) look for almost, like, mind reading kind of stuff. Psychic, if you will."

What that closeness also means, is when there is a longer break between shows or practices, they can tell.

"Even getting back together after like five days, it's really noticeable. Our tightness and our cohesion fades pretty fast," Mitchell said. "(But) it comes back really fast, too. We'll do a couple gigs together and it comes right back, but we (get) so used to having it all the time."

To date, Swampcandy has put out five albums, with two more nearly finished. In fact, finishing the next one is the band's New Year's resolution, though they admit they're not very big on making those.

"I think change occurs when you're ready for it, and you can't just, like, pick a date," Dobbs said.

To find out where you can see Swampcandy play, take a look at their available albums, or just take a listen to their music, visit swampcandy.com. The band also maintains active YouTube and Facebook pages, and a mailing list. 

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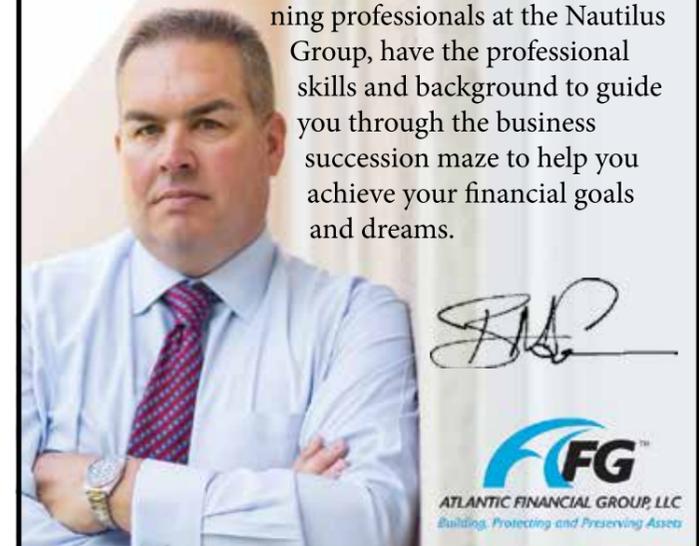
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SHRIMP GRITS

Serves 4

Shrimp and andouille:

1 ¼ pounds large or jumbo shrimp, no fewer than 16 to 20
6 Tablespoons unsalted butter
1 Tablespoon bacon grease
1 bunch scallions, white and green portions, sliced
3 andouille sausages, sliced
2 to 3 Tablespoons unbleached, all-purpose flour
1 cup cream or half-and-half
2 Tablespoons dry sherry
1 garlic clove, minced

Stone Ground Grits:

Vicky Mullaney orders a case of grits from John Martin Taylor's Hoppin' John's Company every year. They are made from heirloom dent corn, a traditional corn of the South. The corn is coarsely ground.
4 cups water
1 cup grits
2 Tablespoons salted butter
2 to 4 cups milk or half-and-half
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
4 Tablespoons butter

Instructions:

Peel and devein shrimp, cover and refrigerate. Place peels in a small stock pot with 6 cups of water. Add one medium, unpeeled onion, two stalks of celery, and four springs of fresh thyme. Bring to a low boil. Turn heat down and simmer for 30 minutes. Pour

through a strainer, reserving the broth, and discard shells and vegetables.

Sauté white parts of scallions in 4 tablespoons of butter and bacon grease for several minutes. Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of flour and cook, stirring constantly. Add sliced sausages and cook for several minutes. Add 1 cup of shrimp stock and 1 cup of cream. Stir over low heat until combined and slightly thickened. Remove from heat.

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in another sauté pan and gently sauté the garlic until soft, but not browned. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes. Pour this into the cream mixture and cook over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes to cook shrimp through. Add dry sherry and green parts of scallions. Serve over cooked grits.

For the grits:

Add water and butter to heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a boil, stir in grits, and return to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and stir occasionally until most of the water is absorbed. Add a ½ cup of milk or cream and allow to cook until the liquid is absorbed. Continue adding milk and cooking until milk is gone and grits have reached the desired consistency, at least one hour. Remove from heat and add cheeses and butter.

LOCAL FLAVORS



Chef Vicky Mullaney

Vicky Mullaney is chef, lodge manager, and co-owner of the Lodge at Black Pearl, a private hunting lodge in Dorchester County. Vicky also is a hunter herself, and can cast a fly rod and butcher a deer.

Every year, artists, athletes, writers, congressmen, ambassadors, industry leaders, and military leaders return to the lodge to enjoy a hunt and Vicky's cooking, which includes fresh game and seafood dishes.

PHOTOS BY CAROLINE J. PHILLIPS

BOWLINGLY ESTATE

Take a step back
in time at this
Queenstown manor

Story by Reen Waterman | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Nestled in the heart of the small town of Queenstown, (the original county seat of Queen Anne's County in 1707) stands the historic 18th-century Bowlingly Estate.

Originally a land patent of 200 acres granted to James Bowling by Lord Baltimore in 1658, Bowlingly was built in 1733 by the estate's fifth owner, Ernault Hawkins.

Bowlingly is a stately 10,000-square-foot,

Flemish-bond, Georgian center hall colonial. Located at the mouth of Queenstown Creek, this private residence is a splendid example of early Maryland plantation architecture.

Positioned atop a high bluff overlooking the entry to the Chester River and modeled after Dutch manor homes, Bowlingly's exterior is a masterpiece of symmetry. The perfect placement of doors and windows, along with elaborate brickwork, demonstrate this well.

Bowlingly's history and architecture position it as a significant landmark. The magnitude of this residence — one of the earliest structures dated on the central Eastern Shore — indicates the prominence of the owner. The undisputed date of building, 1733, is clearly displayed in glazed header brick in the south wall, which now serves as a benchmark against which historians can date other buildings in the area.

During the war of 1812, Queenstown was the only town in the county to be attacked by the British. Before dawn on Aug. 2, 1813, a British raiding party landed and surprised the local militia who were using it for their temporary headquarters. The troops fled, and the abandoned estate was thoroughly vandalized and badly damaged by the British. It is rumored that as a result of the attack on the estate, there are cannon balls still embedded in the home's walls.

This estate has had numerous owners. Most unusual is the Queen Anne's County Railroad Company, which acquired it in 1897 and converted it into a hotel, adding an amusement park and a race track. This was in the era when steamships plied the Bay, bringing

tourists and commerce to our shores from Baltimore. Back then, "Reaching the Beach" was a circuitous event involving taking a steamship across the Bay and then proceeding by train to the ocean.

Around 1895, Bowlingly became known as "The Ferry House," due to the influx of tourists who docked at the Queenstown Wharf and stayed in the home. It was in this time period that Bowlingly was painted completely yellow (a color much in vogue at that time). Hotel management further damaged the property by installing 220 feet of covered porch around the house.

In 1900, Bowlingly returned to private ownership. In 1953, the owner, with the aid and advice of architectural historian William Foster, disassembled the remaining sections of the hotel's porch, removed the yellow paint from the brick walls with muriatic acid, and completed other repairs to bring the home back to its former glory.

Upon entering the home, you are greeted immediately by a double staircase that ascends against the partition walls to a common spacious landing and then continues up a single flight to the second story. According to the National

"We are very selective of those to whom we choose to rent our home, and we are seeking guests who would treat our home as their very own."



The latest owners of Bowlingly Estate, Sean and Kellee Glass of Washington, D.C., bought the residence in 2014. The Glasses said they didn't realize the myriad maintenance issues hidden behind the walls when they moved in. They have modernized and updated the estate since they purchased it.

Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, the stairway is described as:

“It is an open string stair typical of the period circa 1820-40, with delicately turned newels, square balusters and a simple, continuous ramped walnut rail. The stringers are decorated with scrolled stair brackets and the area below the carriage is finished with flat recessed paneling.”

As you wander through the rooms, floors, and stairwells of Bowlingly, you can easily get lost. Comprising a main floor, second floor, finished attic, and partially finished basement, this spacious and gracious home boasts seven bedrooms, four full baths, and one half bath. Remodeled several times, it includes elements from at least five different times of construction, one example being the addition of the East-West Wing in 1830.

Rambling through this home, you can't help but admire the gorgeous wood floors and vaulted ceilings. Stepping down three steps into the formal dining room, there are brick tile floors and a view of the white picket-fenced herb garden with boxwood borders and the water. The walls are adorned with artwork dating back to the 18th century.

The ultra-modern kitchen, with commercial-grade appliances, is a gourmet's delight. On one end of the home is an in-ground pool and pool house. On the other end of the home, an attached caretaker's cottage.

The latest owners of Bowlingly, Sean and Kellee Glass of Washington, D.C., bought the residence in 2014 as a short sale.

“We were looking for a weekend place where our young children could run around safely. Living in downtown Washington, D.C., this was not possible. When we found Bowlingly, we fell in love with it,” Kellee Glass said.

When you buy a historic home, in addition to dealing with the historic foundation and its requirements, deferred maintenance can be a challenge.

“When we moved in,” Kellee said, “we didn't realize the myriad of maintenance issues hidden behind the walls. We have done a great deal of modernizing and updating ... it just is not seen in the open.”

The owners take advantage of internet sites, such as Airbnb, to rent their home during selected times during the year.

“It is really nice to share our unique place with other people. Because we have friends and neighbors we care about deeply here, we are very selective of those to whom we choose to rent our home, and we are seeking guests who would treat our home as their very own,” Kellee said. 📍

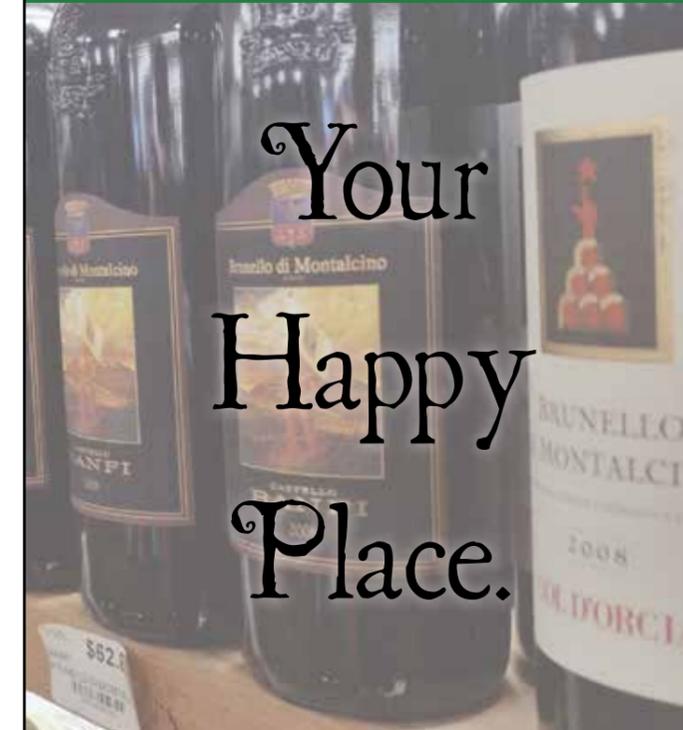


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HANGOVER Shoreman

Victory Garden Cafe offers some outlets for relief after a night of poor decisions



Story by Josh Bollinger | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Victory Garden Cafe in Easton serves breakfast and lunch from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday. Dinner is served from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.



EAT

It's about as Eastern Shore as you can get for a breakfast around town. Not only that, but after a hard night out with your friends — participating in general debauchery — you'll sure be thankful for it the next morning.

The Eastern Shore Benedict at Victory Garden Cafe, 124 S. Aurora St., Easton, features a split English muffin topped with scrapple, poached eggs, fried oysters, hollandaise sauce, and a side of house-made breakfast potatoes. It's basically a hungry, hungover Shoreman's dream. Top that with Victory Garden's bottomless Bloody Mary and mimosa bar on Saturdays and Sundays, and you've got one hell of a hair of the dog.

"It's indulgent. It's got fried, it's got runny eggs, buttery hollandaise sauce — It's perfect for a hangover," Victory Garden owner, head chef, and general manager

Angela Thomas said. "It's got all the stick-to-your-ribs kind of stuff that you need when you've been indulging all night long."

Victory Garden opened in 2014 with a creed from the get-go to provide a comfortable atmosphere no matter the age, and get some good food, made from scratch.

"That's kind of the niche we've always tried to carve," Thomas said, "is a neighborhood cafe."

Thomas started at the front of the house and found she lost some control over her business by not being in the kitchen. So that's where she since has gravitated and stayed.

Along with being a self-trained chef, Thomas learned a lot from her husband, who is trained as a professional chef. She has had a 20-year career in the restaurant business, doing just about every job there is in the front of the house.



Thomas said when Victory Garden first opened and wasn't very busy, she had a lot of time to experiment with new homemade foods. The results of that are evident looking at the Bloody Mary bar, where nearly everything on it is homemade and available to be added to the beverage; pickled baby beets, curried pickled cauliflower, prosciutto and provolone stuffed peppers, spicy pickled Brussels sprouts, pickled baby corn, just your regular run-of-the-mill pickles, and much more.

"I try to make everything as homemade as possible," Thomas said. "From day one, that's what we've always wanted to do and strived to do."

"I always tell the cooks that work with me that I have a case of cooking ADD (attention deficit disorder). I get tired of cooking the same things over and over again, so, you know, that's the fun of cooking, is coming up with new things," she said.

With the Eastern Shore Benedict, Thomas, who is an Oklahoma native but has spent the past 20 years on the Eastern Shore, said she "just took two of the

Eastern Shore people's favorite things and put them together — scrapple and oysters."

"We have tourists come every single day, and they want to know what scrapple is because they're not from around here. They want local food, and that is the epitome of local food. It's local Eastern Shore cuisine," she said.

You don't have to get up early in the day to enjoy this breakfast — another perk when you simply can't do that after being out the night before.

Victory Garden serves breakfast and lunch from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, meaning people can come early and get a burger, or come late and get an Eastern Shore Benedict, or vice versa. Dinner is served from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Editor's note: Our "Be Well" section this month is having a little fun with our theme for the January issue, and we chose Victory Garden as the best place to get breakfast when hungover to embrace that theme. ●

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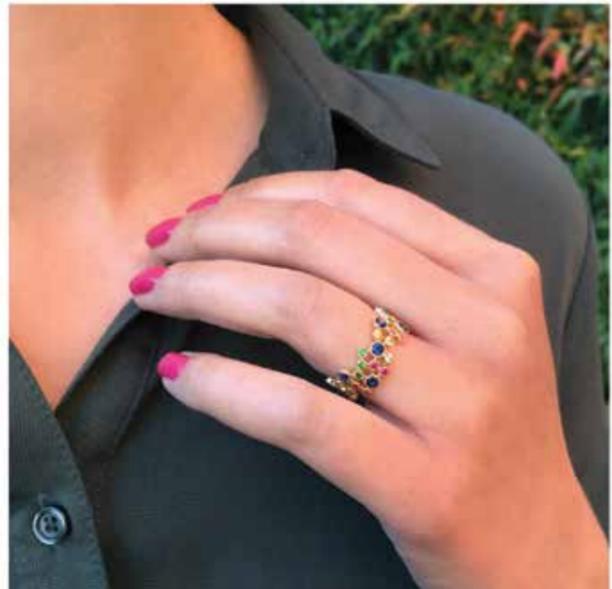
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Reservoir Bourbon & Padron 1926 No. 1 Maduro

This highly complex spirit offers notes of cinnamon and pepper on the nose, and is followed with sweet butter and caramel on the palate. The cigar is smooth and complex. Blended with the finest 5- to 10-year-old Nicaraguan tobaccos. Excellent for a celebration.

Amorik Single Malt & Montecristo Classic No. 2

The whiskey has a slightly nutty finish to go along with notes of honey, vanilla, and spice. This Dominican blend cigar contains notes of wood and earth, combined with a slightly spicy finish.

Lyon Dark Rum & Camacho Triple Maduro

This St. Michaels-based rum offers rich notes of vanilla and caramel, making it a favorite for those looking for an alternative to whiskey with their cigars. The Maduro is a big and bold Honduran blend not for the novice.

Marie Duffau & Arturo Fuente Hemingway Work of Art

This six-year aged Armagnac has notes of caramel and raisins on the nose, followed by a nutty and creamy finish. This Dominican-blend cigar is a rich, medium-bodied smoke with cedar, citrus, and cream aromas.



Jason Hubbard, manager of Easton Cigar and Smoke Shop, took over management of the establishment in 2004. The shop's humidor contains strictly handmade cigars, the majority of which are made in Honduras, Nicaragua, or the Dominican Republic.



For the January “High Spirits” feature, we’ve asked Jason Hubbard, manager of Easton Cigar and Smoke Shop, 6 Glenwood Ave., suite 1, and Joe Petro, owner of Hair O’ The Dog Wine and Spirits, 219 Marlboro Ave., Easton, for their recommendations for cigar and spirit pairings.

Easton Cigar and Smoke Shop is a premier cigar and smoke shop founded in 1998 by Robert Suder, following his retirement as an attorney in Baltimore.

Hubbard, Suder’s stepson, took over management in 2004. The shop’s humidor contains strictly handmade cigars, the majority of which are made in Honduras, Nicaragua, or the Dominican Republic. Some popular brands include Arturo Fuente, Padron, Montecristo, Ashton, and Cohiba, as well as other boutique brands.

The primary products for sale at the smoke shop are cigars, pipes, pipe tobaccos, and roll-your-own tobaccos. The shop also carries smoking accessories, including lighters, cutters, humidors, ashtrays, and pipe accessories.

Easton Cigar and Smoke Shop includes a lounge, which Hubbard expanded six years ago, with comfy classic leather chairs and sofas, and multiple TVs. The lounge is available for private and special events. The shop also offers two guitars on site for its musically inclined clients, and outside patio seating is available, as well.

Customers include men and women from all walks of life.

The smoke shop is open from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday. Hair O’ The Dog Wine and Spirits is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday.

For more information or to purchase these suggestions, call Hair O’ The Dog at 410-820-4700 or visit them at www.hair-o-the-dog.com, or call the Easton Cigar and Smoke Shop at 410-770-5084. 📞



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EASTON- Charming and well maintained home located in the Village at Cooke's Hope. 4 BRs, 3 BAs, high ceilings, hardwood floors, large rooms and separate media room and studio. Perfect turn-key house with community water access, nature trails, gym and tennis. **\$599,900**



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Itching for a night out in the city? We've got you covered with some Charm City hotspots you may have missed

Story and photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Baltimore skyline photo courtesy of Visit Baltimore

BALTIMORE NIGHTS

There is no shortage of leisurely places to enjoy a drink and indulge in local culture on the Mid-Shore. Even so, once the winter weather settles in and the summer beach traffic subsides, it's the perfect time to escape across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge into the culturally rich city of Baltimore.

Amidst the quaint, brick row homes and big lights of the city, lies a vastly different, but exciting bar and theatre scene. Baltimore is well versed in the latest trends in nightlife, and it can be overwhelming to choose what you want to do. Trying to cram it all in in one night is impossible.

We have a couple recommendations to get your night out started. First, grab a drink at Idle Hour, a bar rich in simplicity and coolness, and then laugh until you cry at Baltimore Improv Group. Or, switch the two up if you plan on staying out later.

Tucked into the Riverside neighborhood of Baltimore, Idle Hour is a dimly lit, corner community bar, and is the perfect place to settle into that local Baltimore scene. Started by business partners Brendan Finnerty and Randel Etheridge 14 years ago, Idle Hour prides itself on the best alcohol selections with no-fuss cocktails, and specializes in an impressive Chartreuse selection.

Never tried Chartreuse? No worries, your bartender has you covered. Chartreuse is a French liqueur made by Carthusian monks, dating back to the early 1700s. For your first taste, Finnerty recommends trying Chartreuse straight, poured simply into a shot glass. There are two options — and forget the fancy names — Yellow Chartreuse and Green Chartreuse.

Chartreuse is strong, with a distinct character. Choose the Green Chartreuse and you'll get notes of maple and a strong spicy aftertaste. The yellow is similar, but smoother, and is an instant favorite. With more than 120 herbs packed into each bottle, Chartreuse is both spicy and sweet, and the herbs infused within are evident in that first taste.

Once you're acquainted with the taste of Chartreuse, ask for it in one of Idle Hour's many cocktails, which are designed by the bar's owners.

Finnerty recommends the "Last Word." Made with 1 part Green Chartreuse, 1 part gin, and 1 part maraschino liqueur, the drink is topped off with fresh-squeezed lime juice and served straight up. It's the perfect cocktail to emphasize the specialties of the Chartreuse.

The Chartreuse selection is not the only thing unique to Idle Hour. The bar isn't big, but the setup is cozy and intimate. Red walls and low lighting set the tone, while the striking illuminated wall behind the bar displays the impressive collection of liquor options. The trend may be indulging in crazy new cocktails and mixology, but Idle Hour provides an extensive collection that can be mixed into any of your favorite classic cocktails.

Finnerty said the bar is grounded in good conversation. You won't be able to catch your Monday Night Football game here because the bar doesn't have TVs, but you will notice two turntables in the corner.

Monday's are DJ competition night, and locals can bring along their records to battle it out. You'll find locals enjoying each other's company, but it's easy to fit right in. It's the perfect haunt to set the scene for your night out in Baltimore.

Chartreuse is a French liqueur made by Carthusian monks, dating back to the early 1700s. There are two options, Yellow Chartreuse and Green Chartreuse. Chartreuse is strong, with a distinct character. Choose the Green Chartreuse and you'll get notes of maple and a strong spicy aftertaste. The yellow is similar, but smoother.





Located in the northern Baltimore neighborhood of Station North, the Baltimore Improv Group Theatre is a welcoming, hip venue with shows six nights a week. Each show is a little different, showcasing different “teams” of improvisors.

They say laughter is the best medicine, and at the Baltimore Improv Group you’ll get more than your daily dosage. Better known as BIG, the Baltimore Improv Group specializes in producing some of the best improv shows in the city.

Improvisational theatre, or “improv,” is a form of comedy theatre where performers collaboratively act out unscripted sketches. It’s funny, it’s active, it’s the perfect way to spend a night out.

Located in the northern Baltimore neighborhood of Station North, the BIG Theatre is a welcoming, hip venue that’s easy to navigate to by car. As you walk into the theatre, there is a lobby filled with comfy chairs and a bookshelf filled with board games — so your fun doesn’t have to end after the show.

With shows six nights a week, it’s easy to catch a show anytime you need a laugh. Each show is a little different, showcasing different “teams” of improvisors. It’s hard to say what you’ll get yourself into each night.

On Tuesday nights, the Conservatory Show is the perfect medley to get you acquainted with improv at BIG. Teams of the best improvisors in the program will ask members of the audience for either a word, location, or topic, and the entire sketch will spawn from that idea. What comes after that is an entertaining sketch made up as they go along.

Terry Withers, managing director of BIG, describes each night as made up of “raw enthusiasm.”

Even though the Baltimore Improv Group has been in business for 14 seasons, it only recently found a home in the Station North Arts and Entertainment District. Prior to its new digs, it was setting up shows in basements and wherever else its cast of characters could find a big enough space.

Even with its new home of 10,000 square feet, Withers said BIG already has plans to grow. In 2018, BIG hopes to fill its space with new additions, which include acquiring a liquor license, daily shows, and a podcast studio.

If after a night of improv you find yourself itching to test your own comedy prowess, there are a variety of classes offered at BIG. With classes and for all skill levels, there is something for everyone. And improv isn’t just a fun pastime, it’s actually a great lesson in communication and improves your ability to think on your feet. Improv clubs also are great hubs of community and support, so you’ll have a family if you find yourself living far from home.

The average show costs \$5, and an ever-changing lineup will keep you coming back for more. It’s the perfect addition to the incomparable nightlife of Baltimore that can bring an Eastern Shoreman adventuring over to the “other side.”



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ONE STEP AT A TIME

SETTING REALISTIC RESOLUTIONS MAKES THEM ATTAINABLE

Story by Amelia Blades Steward | Photos by Cecile Davis

When Jeff Maguire, bartender at J.R.'s Past-Time Pub in Chestertown, serves the last drink of 2017 and closes the bar, he will pause and take the New Year's Eve menu from the evening, turn it over, and jot down his resolutions for 2018 on the back. This is a tradition he has kept for 30 years while working as a professional bartender.

"I take the menu home that night, and it sits visible on my counter for about a week. My resolutions each year are mainly about being better with my money, losing weight, and learning something new. After that week, the menu then gets filed with the rest of the menus over the years.

I have saved them all," Maguire said.

While working on a business degree at American University in Washington, D.C., Maguire fell into the career of bartending by happenstance after filling in for someone who didn't show up to work one day. He was hooked. Maguire's career has included bartending at Quigley's and Nathans in Georgetown, McGarvey's Pub and the Boatyard Bar and Grill in Annapolis, and the former Andy's in Chestertown, to name a few.

"I loved it right away. Because I grew up in a close-knit family, meeting so many new people really expanded my life. Bartending is like



being in 50 great books all at once,” Maguire said.

The hours for bartending also have been conducive to Maguire’s life; having the daytime hours to work on his hobbies — renovating houses and cars — and then working at night.

“I feel like I am the last person up at night,” he said.

Maguire finds that, while he hears a number of resolutions in early January, most usually don’t lend themselves to lasting change. He quotes Mark Twain, who said, “New Year’s Day now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual.”

Despite this, he said, “I like setting goals and writing them down. It’s creating a contract with yourself. If you write them down, there is a higher probability of following through.”

According to history.com, the Babylonians were recorded as the first people to hold celebrations in honor of the New Year. Their New Year started in March, when the crops were planted and the celebrations were held to earn the favor of the gods. In 46 B.C., Julius Caesar established Jan. 1 as the beginning of the new year. Over the years, New Year’s resolutions evolved, and by the 1780s were more pious in nature, with people seeking to better themselves.

Today, the most common resolutions are to exercise, lose weight, eat healthier, learn a new skill, spend more time with family and friends, drink less alcohol, and quit smoking. According to Statistic Brain Research, approximately 41 percent of Americans make New Year’s resolutions, and only 9.2 percent of people feel they are successful in achieving them.

Holidays can be a free-for-all for eating — all centered around food, which makes it difficult to try and make changes. Karen Hollis, dietitian at the University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology



in Easton and the Chesapeake Woods Center in Cambridge, said, “The biggest problem with New Year’s resolutions is that people set too high of a goal — one that is unattainable in the time frame they want to do it. Small achievable goals over a realistic period of time are better.”

As a dietitian, Hollis said she finds it takes time for her patients to form new habits. She equates the process to using a seat belt — it is hard to remember to do it at first, but eventually, we do it automatically. She said the most common time for setting goals is when someone finds out they have a health issue.

“This is often when it is the most relevant, and really time to start making changes in your life. Today, people take better care of their cars than their bodies, changing the tires and oil on a regular

Right: From left are Lesa Lee, Jeff Maguire, Linda Mastro, and Krista Pettit. Each brings their own expertise to encouraging and fostering changes in behaviors or habits.





basis. This is the only body we get, so doing maintenance now can prevent real health issues developing in the first place. If you want to save your life, you do it one step at a time,” she said.

Linda Mastro, life coach with On the Way Coaching in Easton, finds that certain steps need to precede any goal-setting or resolution-making to achieve success.

“We must ask these questions of ourselves: ‘Am I ready? Am I willing? Am I able?’ Answering these questions honestly is a necessary planning step that increases our ability to be more successful in reaching our goals or holding on to our resolutions,” she said.

Mastro said assessing motivations to make changes and setting up the resources and support needed to achieve those goals are important parts of the process.

“There is no magic to January 1, or a Monday, but I have found that people who set a date and tell one other person their goal are more likely to be successful. Having a date to start something is good motivation and helps with accountability,” she said.

She said we all jump into resolutions with enthusiasm, focused on the outcomes, but often forget we are in a process that takes steps, as well as perseverance and compassion with ourselves.

Leslee Lee, clinical director with For All Seasons; consultant for Caroline County Early Head Start; and exercise instructor at YMCA of the Chesapeake and Hearthstone, said, “After the holidays and overindulging, some of us have a tendency to go into shame-inducing talk, instead of saying ‘tomorrow is a new day.’ In those moments,

Leslee Lee, clinical director with For All Seasons; consultant for Caroline County Early Head Start; and exercise instructor at YMCA of the Chesapeake and Hearthstone, said the holidays and overindulgence often can lead to shame-inducing talk, and she cautioned against listening to that type of inner dialog.

“We often set unobtainable goals because we focus on the negative aspects of ourselves ... I wonder what would happen if we focus on doing more of what we are doing positively?”



Asking for help from family members or telling a friend about your desire to change a behavior or habit can help provide you with a support system to begin working on a resolution in the New Year.

when your critic inside says something that challenges you in a negative way, try placing your hand on your heart, breathe and just notice what happens.”

As a fitness instructor, Lee sees many people on Jan. 1 with health and fitness resolutions because society views that as the day to start new habits.

“We often set unobtainable goals because we focus on the negative aspects of ourselves when setting the goals. It’s all about how we frame it. I wonder what would happen if we focus on doing more of what we are doing positively?” she said.

Lee said everyone is influenced by the

family they are born into or raised with, the society they grow up with, and the internal family in their heads — the voice that tells us we are worthwhile and can accomplish things or the one that has criticism for us.

“Those who are successful with New Year’s resolutions are more kind and compassionate toward themselves. Everyone should leave room for compassion as they work toward their resolutions,” Lee said.

Francie Thayer, director of The Retreat House at Hillsboro, echoed Lee’s comments.

“Resolutions can be lonely places. We often have a lot of interior messages that we ‘should’ do it by ourselves. By involving others, we learn how to frame our intentions more gently,” she said.

According to Thayer, there is something in American society that tells us to set goals and “go for it” — perhaps based on the rugged individualism of the 1800s.

“What I have learned is that you can’t do it all by yourself. Instead, we should ask for help from a spouse, an office mate, a sister or brother, or a friend. We can also ask help from our higher power, which helps us feel less alone in the whole resolutions endeavor,” she said.

Thayer, who helps others connect to God through her spiritual retreats, believes that, as humans, we are made for community and our best selves shine through when we are in community with one another. One way we can connect to community is by setting New Year’s resolutions that invite a deeper connection to our spiritual selves, she said. This may include finding new ways to reach out and help others, perhaps as a volunteer.

Krista Pettit, executive director of Haven Ministries Inc. in Chester, which provides hope through shelter, clothing, food, and support, said, “Make a New Year’s resolution to demonstrate love every day by helping someone. Don’t wait for the perfect timing, the perfect opportunity, or the perfect match of your

A man in a white dress shirt and dark tie is shown from the chest up, holding a glass of whiskey. He is looking out a window at a cityscape at night. The background is dark with blurred lights.

skills to do something. These things will never happen. Most people just need you to care and help them with whatever you have to offer; they need you to show love now.”

Reflecting on his job as a bartender, Maguire suggests he is an observer of human nature and a good listener.

“We all want to talk about ourselves. At the bar, I have a ‘contract for listening.’ It starts with taking the order of what a person wants to eat or drink, and moves into other issues. Over the course of history in the U.S., a lot of things were resolved in public houses and bars.”

Maguire said the bar can become a sort of family.

“The success of this career is building lasting relationships with people in the bar. A lot of people don’t have that person in their life to talk to. As a bartender, I can be that person for others,” he said. **S**

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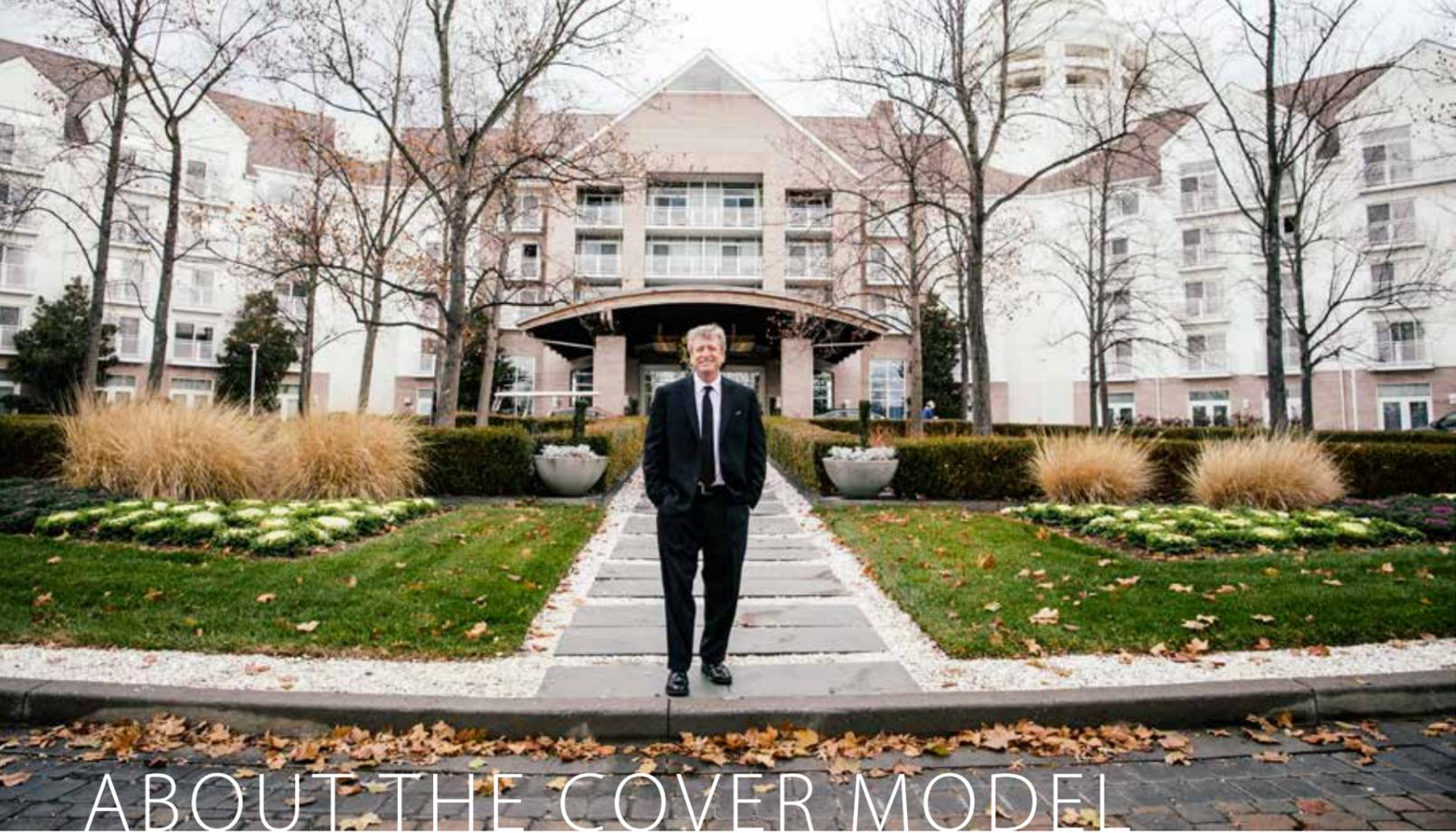
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ABOUT THE COVER MODEL

Jeff Maguire moved to Chestertown to enroll in a Master of Literature program at Washington College. Like many others, he fell in love with the college, town, and the Eastern Shore. He began bartending in 1986 while attending American University in Washington, D.C., and has been quenching the thirst of guests from Annapolis and the Eastern Shore ever since. His evenings for the past more than 30 years have been full of friends and guests celebrating a continuing narrative of life, love, and lingering libations. His philosophy is, simply, "Find out what you like in life, and drink it."

The Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina, 100 Heron Blvd., Cambridge, provided the magnificent location for our January cover shoot. The Hyatt is the premier four-diamond resort of the Chesapeake Bay. The property is nestled on 342 acres along the Choptank River, and features 400 recently renovated, luxurious guest rooms and suites. Among the Hyatt's amenities are six dining options; an award-winning, 18-hole championship golf course; the 150-slip River Marsh Marina; the Sago Spa and Salon; multi-level indoor and outdoor swimming pools; a fitness facility; and a children's recreation center. For more information, visit www.chesapeakebay.regency.hyatt.com.

Maguire's clothing was generously provided by Jos. A. Bank, 218 N. Washington St., suite 55, in the Talbot town shopping center in Easton. Jos. A. Bank is a men's clothing store that offers house-label suits, dress shirts and pants, outerwear and accessories. The store is open daily; from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. The store can be reached by calling 410-763-6895.

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