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# Shop locally on Plaid Friday and Small Business Saturday

## *Metro*

What better ways to celebrate the diversity, uniqueness and creativity of independent, local businesses than by supporting them during the busiest shopping season of the year?

Plaid Friday was conceptualized in Oakland, Calif., several years ago in an effort to encourage holiday shoppers to slow down and shop locally at small businesses rather than partake in the frenzy of the traditional Black Friday rush at big box retailers. Similarly, Small Business Saturday® was founded by American Express in 2010 as a community-centric day to support local businesses. Small Business Saturday was the catalyst for the generalized Shop Small® movement, which encourages consumers to patronize small businesses.

Local businesses are at the heart of their communities. In a 2015 survey by the Urban and Land Institute, researchers found that more than half of respondents said they wanted a neighborhood where they wouldn't need a car very often. More than 40 percent specifically noted the desirability of local shopping and entertaining as main features. A neighborhood with a Main Street or thriving local shopping hub can be a big draw. Consumers make these neighborhoods a reality.

Every time they grab a coffee from a local café, purchase a piece of artwork from a neighborhood artist or dine at a family-run restaurant, shoppers are supporting local business owners and strengthening their communities. Here are some ways to make shopping small a priority this holiday season.

- Take inventory of Plaid Friday and Small Business Saturday sales by keeping up on local social media. Build holiday shopping lists around the offerings at local businesses.
- Dine out at local restaurants or shop smaller food merchants.
- Visit a local tree farm. When decorating for the holidays, support the farm or local nursery that grows Christmas trees and makes their own wreaths and garlands.
- Keep your money in your community at a local bank or credit union rather than a large national bank. Local banks may have special promotions to boost savings for holiday gifting.

The holiday season is the perfect time to support small, local businesses.



# Tips and tricks for cutting out cookies

## Metro

Baking is a holiday tradition in many households. The aroma of freshly baked cakes, pies and cookies wafts through the air of many homes this time of year, and that makes the holiday season even more special.

Cookies are a tradition passed down through the ages. In medieval Europe, small, spiced cookies were exchanged as treats, and people still bake and share gingerbread cookies today.

Cut cookies are some of the most popular cookies to make during the holiday season. Some families may have their share of favorite cookie cutter shapes and dough recipes. Certain techniques can make holiday baking sessions easier and ensure consistent results.

- Work on a lightly floured, cool sur-



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face, such as a cutting board or stone counter top. Never work on a warm surface, which can cause dough to spread and stick.

- Roll out the dough between two sheets of baking or parchment paper. Betty Crocker recommends a thickness of about 1/8 inch, unless noted in the recipe. This prevents the dough from sticking, and parchment enables you to easily transfer rolled-out dough to a refrigerator or elsewhere.
- When rolling out dough, portion it out into a few smaller amounts to roll out more easily. This will also help it to chill more readily.
- Cookies cut most easily when the dough is chilled. Refrigerate the dough for as long as possible, ideally an hour or more — even overnight. The more chilled, the firmer the dough will be.
- Rubber rolling pin rings that slip onto each side of the rolling pin can help ensure that the dough is being rolled out to a uniform thickness.
- Dip cookie cutters into flour with each cut. Work from the center and move out to the edges when cutting out your designs. Try to maximize space and avoid scraps and re-rolling.
- Some expert bakers say that metal cookie cutters cut cleaner than plastic ones. Whichever cutter you use, cut the cookie by pressing straight down; try not to twist or jiggle the cookie cutter when using it. Doughs with a high butter content can help, as the extra grease helps separate the dough from the cutters.
- If cut cookies have gotten warmer, place them in the freezer for a few minutes to firm up again and then cook. This will guarantee the cookies will not spread or distort while baking.

Extra steps may seem like they will take a lot of time. However, the extra effort and attention to detail will help produce cookies that win rave reviews.



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# Make-ahead meals for tasty holiday dinners

## *Metro*

Individuals may be presented with plenty of opportunities to cook for a crowd over the course of a typical year. But no time of year is more synonymous with large sit-down meals than the holiday season.

Certain foods, such as pasta dishes and casseroles, are ideal dishes to cook for crowds. However, for those home cooks who want to prepare in advance and then enjoy themselves on the actual holiday, it may be best to choose foods that taste better the day after the dish has been cooked. Many recipes develop deeper flavor profiles after they have been left to rest and are then reheated. Holiday hosts can explore these ideas for meals that can be cooked in advance and taste even better when reheated after a day in the refrigerator.

## **STEW**

A stew that's been simmering on the stove or in the slow cooker all day will have a winning flavor. But stew can be even more delicious the next day. The starch in the potatoes will enable the sauce of the stew — whether it's tomato-based or comprised of a mix of brown gravy and meat drippings — to thicken. The meat may continue to cook and tenderize while reheating. As a one-pot meal, stew is simple to





prepare in advance and then serve in an attractive crock for the holidays.

**MEATLOAF**

The herbs and spices in a meat loaf continue to release their flavors, and letting the loaf sit can improve the texture and the ability to slice it without it falling apart. Consider pan-frying individual slices of meatloaf until they're browned so they'll be crisp on the outside and tender in the middle.

**LASAGNA**

Lasagna is a layered pasta dish featuring flat noodle sheets, cheese, sauce, and sometimes meat like ground beef or sausage. Lasagnas that are served right out of the oven can be runny even if they taste scrumptious. Baking it and letting it sit overnight allows all of the layers to gel together, making for a much more cohesive and fortified dish the following day.

**CURRIES**

Curries are typically made with many spices that help to make the dish flavorful. A curry that is freshly made may feature intense flavor because each of its components can be tasted individually. After a night of resting in the refrigerator, those flavors meld and mellow. Furthermore, if potatoes are used in the recipe, a night in the fridge gives the potatoes an opportunity to absorb the spices, making for an even tastier meal.

Many meals can be made ahead of time for holiday dinners and will taste even better when they are served the following day.



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# Major benefits to early holiday shopping

*Metro*

Some people begin their holiday countdowns the day after the festivities have come and gone. With 365 days until the next celebration, it may seem like one has all the time in the world to complete holiday tasks. But before long, holiday crunch time arrives and some people find themselves rushing around to buy gifts and other essentials.

A 2020 Gallup poll found the average holiday shopper planned to spend \$942 on gifts in 2019. The personal finance site Mint.com from Intuit reported roughly \$729 billion was spent during the holidays in 2019 — making it the biggest holiday season to date.

Though the pandemic changed the holiday shopping landscape in 2020, a return to normalcy appears to be on the horizon for the 2021 holiday shopping season. In fact, the adage of “the early bird catches the worm” could help shoppers scoop up gifts and bargains before the holiday shopping rush begins. Individuals who start their holiday shopping early this year may discover there are many benefits to such an approach.

**SPREAD OUT SPENDING**

Those who begin shopping well before the holiday season arrives can spread their spending over several months rather than a short period of time. This can make shopping more affordable for those who may have limited financial leeway. It may be

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easier to swallow spending an extra \$100 per month throughout the year as opposed to having a \$1,000 bill at year's end.

**SHOP SALES**

A Coresight Research survey found that more than 25 percent of shoppers expected to start holiday shopping earlier than usual in 2020, when retailers offered their promotions earlier than normal to compensate for a decline in brick-and-mortar shopping. While it remains to be seen what retailers will do this year, shopping early means people are not beholden only to holiday sales promotions; they can take advantage of major sales throughout the year, including Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, back to school season, tax-free weekends (often offered in August), and even retailer-specific sales like Prime Day.

**AVOID DELAYS**

Continued pressure on shipping companies as online shopping has become so prevalent inadvertently leads to delays. Couple this with supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic, and certain items may be out of stock or on back order.


“With potential product shortages continuing, if you see something you know you want, go ahead and buy it,” said Karl Haller, retail industry expert at IBM Global Business Services.

Shopping early also assists those who have to ship gifts domestically or internationally. Shopping early ensures those presents get to their recipients on time.

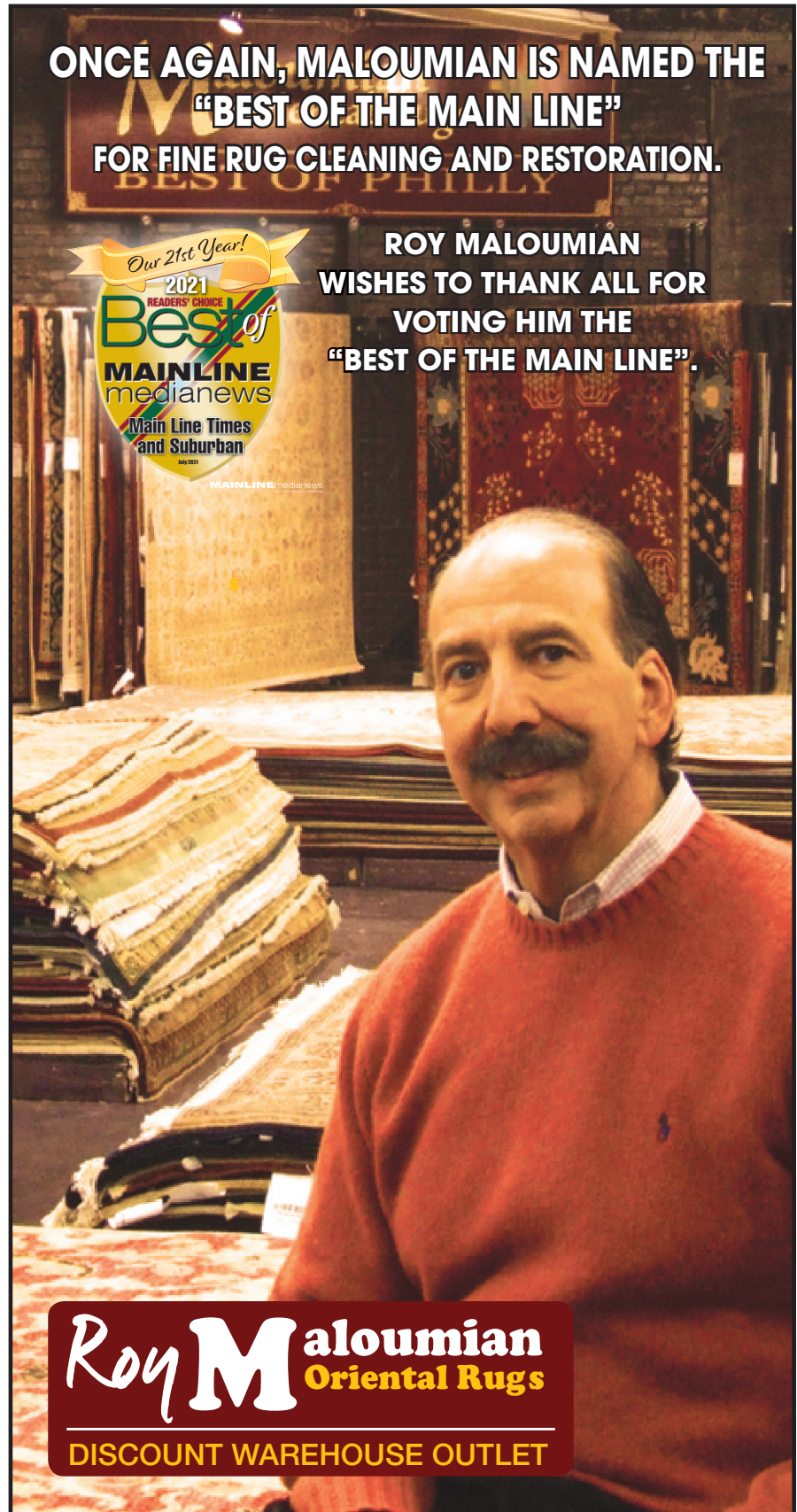
Getting a head start on holiday shopping is advantageous to shoppers who want to budget, save and ensure items are available.



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# Beat the holiday hustle with these shopping strategies

## Metro

It's beginning to look a lot like the holiday shopping season. The four- to five-week period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is one of the most frenzied times of year, especially for shoppers.

According to recent research from Needle, an advocate-powered e-commerce company, shoppers report feeling more stress from holiday shopping than they do from family obligations and holiday travel. Eighty-four percent of consumer respondents in Needle's survey stated that gift-giving caused them stress. Finding the right gifts for everyone can be particularly challenging.

While it may not be possible to remove all of the stressors

surrounding holiday shopping, these tips may help make the job more manageable.

- **OUTLINE EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST.** Santa has it right by making a list and checking it twice. Only by writing a list will you be able to ensure you do not forget anyone. Savings expert Lauren Greutman from Flipp, a Canadian savings app, suggests including teachers, coworkers and service people in addition to family and friends on the list.
- **TRACK DEALS AND COUPONS.** Sticking to a budget is easier when you utilize tools that help you save even more. Resources like Honey and Retail Me Not will automatically apply coupon codes at check-



out to make sure you are getting the lowest prices possible online. Social media, retailer websites and third-party apps also can be great places to find bargains.

• **PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION.**

The Federal Trade Commission says to protect yourself financially by shopping only on secure websites with an “https” address. Stick with retailers that tell you what they do with your data and how they keep it secure. Consider creating a separate email address and/or account password for shopping retailers to reduce identity theft and other fraud.

• **SHOP EARLY.**

Bank of America says one of the easiest ways to overspend is waiting until the last minute to shop and then having to settle for what’s available, regardless of prices. Spread out purchases and begin holiday shopping before prices increase.

• **BE WARY OF FAKE COUPONS.**

The internet has made shopping and researching easier but also more complicated at the same time. A deal that seems too good to be true may be just that. Counterfeit coupons are phishing scams that can end up compromising personal information when you click on them.

• **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WAREHOUSE STORES.**

Make the most of that membership fee by buying the bulk of your gifts at a warehouse store to save time and money. These retailers carry everything from jewelry to electronics to clothing. Also, they sell gift baskets or boxes around the holidays that can be divided into multiple gifts, saving you even more.

There are many ways to make holiday shopping easier and more affordable.

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# Classic holiday films families can enjoy together

*Metro*

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Few traditions may elicit more collective belly laughs than holiday movie night, a tradition in millions of households across the globe. Families can consider these classic holiday films as they plan family movie night this holiday season.

- **“MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET” (1947):** This classic is centered around a man named “Kris Kringle” (Edmund Gwenn) who claims to be the real Santa Claus after a successful stint as a department store Santa in midtown Manhattan. A trial to determine if Mr. Kringle is telling the truth soon follows. This version of the tale has earned a 96 percent rating on the popular film review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.
- **“A CHRISTMAS STORY” (1983):** Though it airs all day long on Christmas on the cable television network TBS, families can get a head-start on that marathon and watch the film uninterrupted whenever they choose. Families can laugh together as 9-year-old Ralphie (Peter Billingsley) hopes to unwrap his official Red Ryder BB gun on Christmas morning. The film, which boasts an 89 per-

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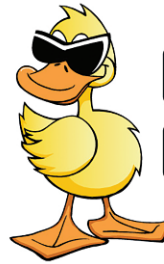
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cent on Rotten Tomatoes, includes a memorable performance by Darren McGavin, who plays Ralphie's father.

- **“BABES IN TOYLAND” (1934):** Also known as “March of the Wooden Soldiers,” this nearly century-old classic stars the legendary comedy duo Laurel and Hardy as two helpful tenants living in Mother Peep’s shoe in Toyland.
- **“HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS” (1967):** An animated version of the Dr. Seuss classic, this film has entertained scores of children since it was first released more than 50 years ago.
- **“HOLIDAY INN” (1942):** Hollywood legends Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire star in this classic that is perhaps most remembered for introducing the Irving Berlin class “White Christmas” to the masses. The film boasts a 100 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes and has something for fans of song, dance and romance.
- **“ARTHUR CHRISTMAS” (2011):** Not all Christmas films date back to the 20th century. This animated tale tells the story of Arthur (voiced by James McAvoy), Santa’s youngest son who is thrust into the Christmas Eve business of delivering presents when his father fails to deliver a present to one child out of the hundreds of millions of kids on his list.
- **“A CHRISTMAS CAROL” (1951):** Many holiday season celebrants cannot imagine letting a season go by without watching at least one adaptation of Charles Dickens’ classic tale. The 1951 version is widely considered the most faithful to Dickens’ 1843 novella that recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Alastair Sim stars as Scrooge, and many consider his performance the best of any actor to take a turn as the notorious 19th century miser.



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## How to approach hosting the holidays this year

*Metro*

To the relief of many, the upcoming holiday season figures to feel more normal than it did a year ago. The COVID-19 pandemic forced families to celebrate the 2020 holiday season in quarantine. Longtime family traditions like big gatherings might have been shelved in 2020, but the successful rollout of various vaccines has put such celebrations back in play in 2021.

Though it would be great to imagine a 2021 holiday season with COVID-19 well in the rearview mirror, the spread of potentially deadly variants of the virus and the relatively high number of eligible yet unvaccinated adults and children could make hosting the holidays a bit tricky. The following are some strategies hosts can employ to make this holiday season both special

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- **HOST SMALL CELEBRATIONS INSTEAD OF ONE LARGE ONE.** Families accustomed to gathering en masse during the holiday season may benefit by hosting a small gathering or two instead of one big one. This can be especially important if families include a lot of unvaccinated people, like small children.
- **ASK GUESTS TO WEAR A MASK IF ANYONE IS CONCERNED.** The debate about masks is ongoing. While the vast majority of mask mandates had been lifted in the spring of 2021, concerns about the Delta variant prompted government officials and public health agencies to reconsider their mask guidelines. Families need not wait for government-issued mandates to help relatives ease their anxiety about variants of the virus. Hosts can explain to family members that if anyone on the guest list expresses concerns about the virus that they will ask everyone else to wear masks while celebrating indoors. Anyone unwilling to comply can celebrate outside or stay home and visit after concerned relatives have gone home.
- **STICK TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS.** Families that gather in mild climates for the holidays can reduce the likelihood of spreading the virus by keeping celebrations outdoors. Public health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have noted the virus is considerably less likely to spread outdoors, as researchers have learned fresh air disperses and dilutes the virus. So celebrating outdoors this holiday season can provide a measure of protection for family members who are not vaccinated.

The 2021 holiday season should mark a welcome return to normalcy for many families. However, holiday hosts may still need to implement some safety measures to protect their friends and families.

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## Tips to keep your tree fresh this holiday season

*Metro*

Christmas trees are often the pièce de résistance of holiday decor. Few things draw the attention of holiday guests quite like an awe-inspiring Christmas tree, especially when that tree maintains its fresh, healthy sheen throughout December.

Many families purchase fresh trees over Thanksgiving weekend or during the first weekend of December. Though the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day may seem like a long time to keep a tree looking great, there are a handful of ways for holiday celebrants to help their trees maintain that undeniable appeal for the long haul.

- **PICK THE RIGHT TREE.** Choosing the right tree is one of the simplest ways to keep a tree looking good throughout the holiday season. A freshly cut tree that buyers choose and cut down themselves or have cut down can reassure them that the tree is likely to stay strong throughout December. Trees purchased from a tree lot may have been cut down long before they made it to the lot, which can make it harder to keep them looking good until Christmas Day.

• **CUT AN INCH OFF THE BASE OF ANY TREE THAT IS NOT FRESHLY CUT.**

MSU Extension at Michigan State University notes that all Christmas trees are conifers, which means they have resin canals in their trunks. Once a tree is cut, the resin can block the pores and make it harder for the tree to take in water. Cutting an inch off the base of a tree that was not freshly cut just before putting it in the stand can help ensure it gets the water it needs to stay healthy and firm. MSU Extension notes that this approach should be taken with any tree that was not cut within six to eight hours of being put in a stand.

• **REPLENISH THE WATER SUPPLY EVERY DAY.**

Fresh tree veterans recognize that Christmas trees can be very thirsty, especially within the first week or so of being cut and brought home. Fill the stand with water each morning and, if necessary, refill it each night before going to bed. The more water a tree gets and drinks, the more likely it is that the tree will look healthy all the way to Christmas Day. MSU Extension notes that many decorative or antique tree stands do not hold much water, so anyone with such a stand may need to replenish the water supply more than once or twice per day.

• **KEEP THE TREE AWAY FROM A HEAT SOURCE.**

For safety's sake, trees should be kept away from heating vents, fireplaces and space heaters. But keeping trees away from such heat sources, and ensuring they are not spending the daytime in direct sunlight, also decreases the chances they will dry out before Christmas Day.

A handful of simple strategies can help holiday celebrants keep their Christmas trees looking good throughout the month of December.



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Wayne is back to business and back to hosting events for the community! Coming off the great success of the Radnor Fall Festival and Wayne Trick or Treat, the Wayne Business Association is excited to welcome everyone to town to kick off the holiday season!

Once Thanksgiving is over and you have had your fill of turkey, begin the holiday season with shopping and dining locally on Small Business Saturday, November 27th. A wide array of stores- including 4 new boutiques- will be welcoming everyone with special promotions for the day. The

Wayne Business Association partners with Radnor Township to offer FREE PARKING on Saturdays from Saturday, November 27 through New Year's Day!

Christmas in Wayne sees the return of the very popular, Annual Tree Lighting and Santa's Arrival! Friday, December 3rd in Wayne has the traditional carriage rides through South Wayne Beginning at 5:30 pm. Line for the carriages begins at Runnymede and South Wayne and the ride traverses a loop of the luminary lined streets of Runnymede, Landsdowne,



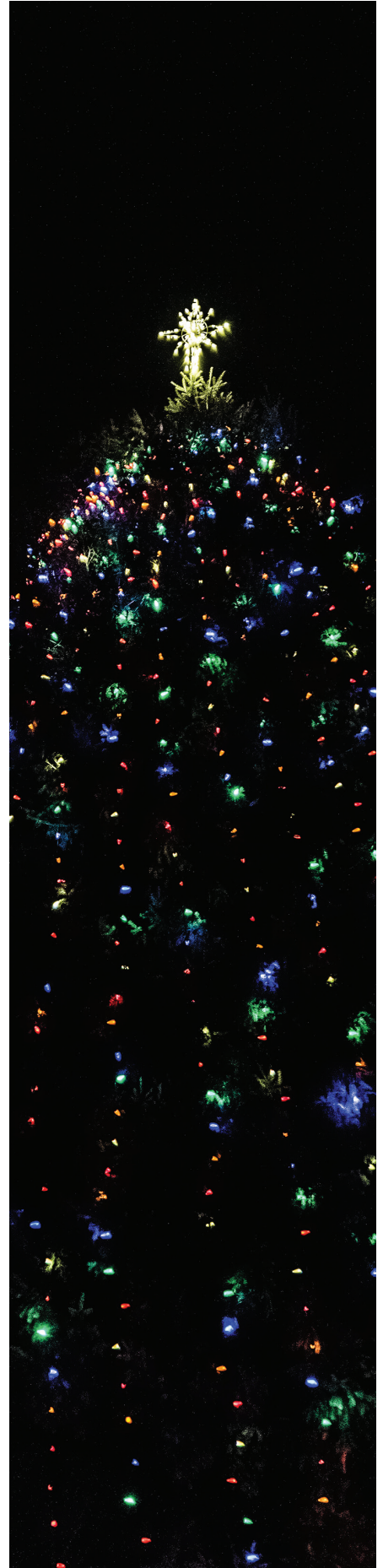


Audubon and South Wayne Avenues. Carriage Rides are free.

Stores and restaurants along North Wayne Avenue bustle with activity for everyone to enjoy while awaiting the Christmas Tree lighting and Santa's Arrival on the Radnor Fire Department Fire Truck. Make your reservation to enjoy dinner at Alessandro's, Cornerstone and the Great American Pub and watch the tree lighting from your cozy spot inside. Or just gather your family, friends and hot chocolate and take in the Holiday window displays while greeting everyone along the avenue. Carolers from local organizations will sing for everyone's entertainment before the countdown of the tree lighting and Santa's arrival takes place at 7:30 pm.

The weekend fun continues with the Radnor Memorial Library's Elves for Shelves. Radnor Memorial Library's Elves for the Shelves 5K, Fun Run and Move-A-Thon invites library supporters of all ages (furry friends too!) to move about in support of the library. Funds raised through this event support the mission of Radnor Memorial Library to be the community's destination for discovery – a place for cultural and intellectual enrichment and life-long learning. The official 5K race and Fun Run takes place on Saturday, December 4th at 8am. The start and finish line will be outside Radnor Memorial Library, 114 West Wayne Avenue, Wayne, PA. The race will be professionally timed by Bryn Mawr Race Company. Prizes for the 5K will be awarded to





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the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each age group. There is also a Fun Run (approximately 1 mile) for those who prefer to go a shorter distance! The Fun Run will begin immediately following the 5K start. Come join the fun with Santa and friends!

Continuing in the holiday spirit on Saturday, December 4th, the short parade begins at approximately 10 am with Santa on the Fire Truck. He is led east on Lancaster Avenue from Aberdeen to the center of Wayne by the Radnor High School Marching Band. He then greets children on the veranda of Rosalie Restaurant at the Wayne Hotel. Gather little ones to enjoy complimentary cookies and hot chocolate from Rosalie pastry chef and then share their wish lists with Santa and sit on his lap for pictures. This is event is free to all and families are welcome to take their own pictures. Pictures conclude at approximately 11:45 am.

Concluding the Christmas in Wayne Weekend on Sunday, December 5th, the Radnor Historical Society and the North Wayne Protection Association welcomes the community at the historic Finley House beginning at 5:30

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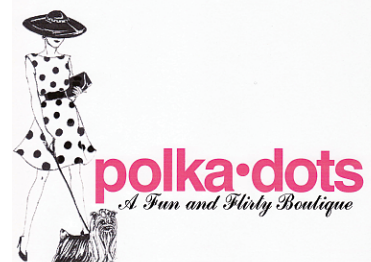


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pm. The Community Garden Club of Wayne decorated the house and grounds for all to enjoy. With carolers, hot chocolate, Santa and Tree lighting , it is a special holiday tradition with a nod to the history of Wayne and Radnor.

It is nice to see traditions coming back after last year's hiatus and the Wayne Business Association and all the Wayne businesses greatly appreciate the continued support of the community! Happy Holidays, see you in town! Make sure to follow along on Instagram- @waynepabiz and Facebook- Wayne Business as well as www.waynebusiness.com for the most up to date information.



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# Toast the season with a literary-inspired cocktail

*Metro*

Reading familiar stories and watching classic Christmas movies are part and parcel of many celebrations. For example, "A Christmas Carol," a novella by Charles Dickens that was published in 1843, is a must-read and must-see for many people each holiday season. The story is the tale of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge, who is visited by various ghosts, each of whom teaches Scrooge an important lesson about living life to its fullest. Many local theater companies put on productions of the classic Dickens tale around the holiday season.

Holiday celebrants and fans of "A Christmas Carol" can raise a toast to Charles Dickens by enjoying one of his favorite cocktails, the "Sherry Cobbler," courtesy of Margaret Kaplan's "How to Drink Like a Writer: Recipes for the Cocktails and Libations that Inspired 100 Literary Greats" (Apollo Publishing). While Dickens did not mention the Sherry Cobbler in "A Christmas Carol," the beverage does make an appearance in another of his works, "The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit."

**CHARLES DICKENS'S SHERRY COBBLER** Serves 1

- 2 orange slices
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 4 ounces amontillado sherry
- Berries (in season) for garnishing
- Maraschino cherries for garnishing
- 1 lemon wheel for garnishing

Muddle orange slices and sugar at the bottom of a cocktail shaker. Add sherry and ice and shake. Strain ingredients into a Collins glass filled with crushed ice. Garnish with seasonal berries, maraschino cherries and a lemon wheel. Serve with a generosity of spirit.

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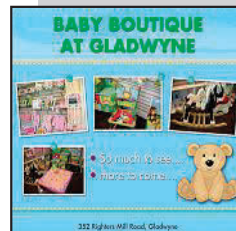
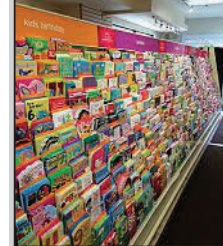
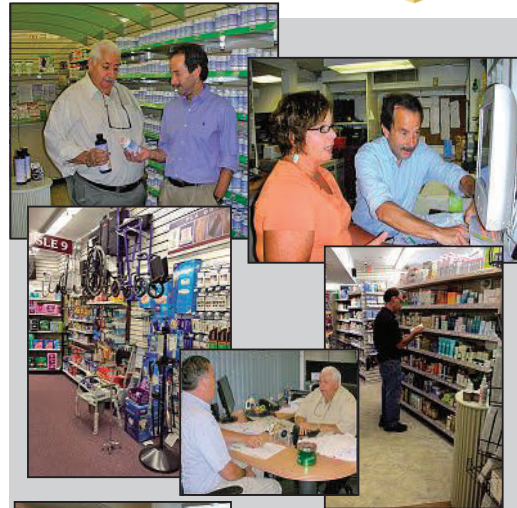
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# A guide to picking the perfect fresh Christmas tree

## Metro

Come the holiday season, perhaps no tradition evokes the warm and fuzzy “feels” more than a family outing to pick a Christmas tree. Whether it’s a trek to a live Christmas tree farm or a short drive to the nearest pre-cut tree lot, the process of selecting a tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the entire season is a great way to make lasting memories.

Selecting a tree is a yearly ritual and each person has his or her set of criteria for what makes the ideal Christmas tree. These tips can help families find the right tree.

## CHOOSE YOUR SPECIES

Do some homework on the type of tree you want prior to buying the tree. Balsam fir and Fraser fir are popular Christmas tree varieties, but there are many others, such as noble fir and Norway spruce. Balsams are known for having the most fragrant smell, but Frasers tend to keep their needles the longest. For those who prefer a Douglas fir, keep in mind that they sometimes drop their needles prematurely due to foliar diseases like needle-cast fungus.

## SPACE FOR ORNAMENTS

In addition to aroma and needle longevity, look for trees that have a desirable shape and allow for adequate space between branches, advises the home and garden resource The Spruce. Trees groomed to be lush and full will look beautiful unadorned, but once ornaments are added, full branches may cause those ornaments to hang low or even

fall off. Trees with sparse branches allow for ornaments to hang straight.

## MEASURE YOUR SPACE

Trees in the field or in a lot may look much smaller than they do when brought into the living room. Don’t make the mistake of selecting a tree that is too large for your home. The agricultural firm Ragan & Masey says to measure the room from floor to ceiling and subtract the height of the tree stand and tree topper. It’s equally important to measure the width of the area where the tree will stand and allow for ample space for foot traffic around the tree.

## PERFORM A NEEDLE CHECK

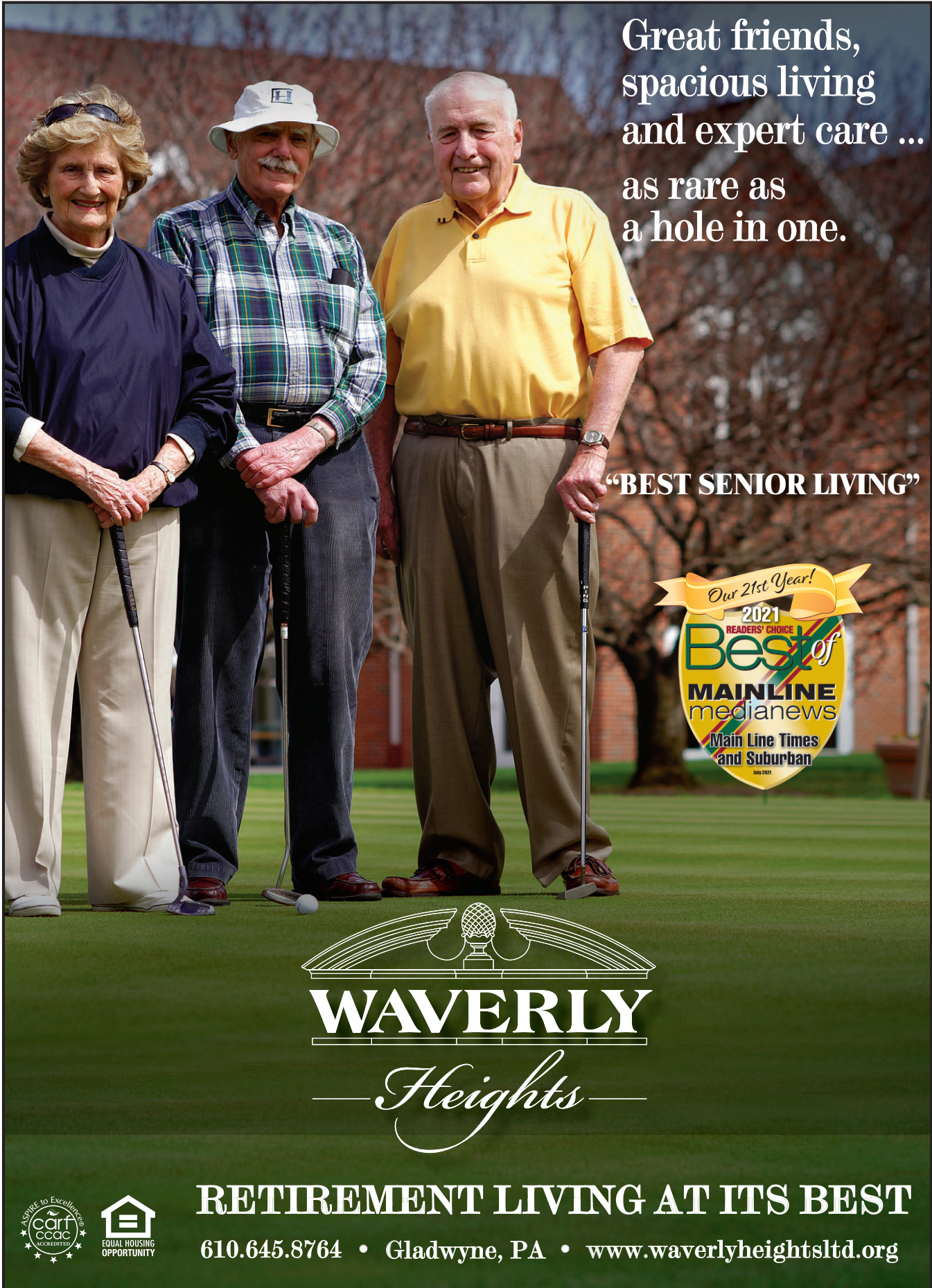
Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor tree. However, Decker’s Nursery in Greenlawn, NY says if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, the tree likely is not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk as it can impede water flow through the tree.

## HEAVIER IS BETTER

A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy.

Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible — even if that’s a bucket until the tree stand can be set up.





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# Did you know?



### Metro

Lights on a Christmas tree may seem like a relatively recent phenomenon, but people who can't wait to deck the halls each December may be surprised to learn that this beloved tradition dates all the way back to the late nineteenth century. Edward Johnson, a friend and colleague of Thomas Edison, introduced holiday light bulbs in 1882. Prior to that, candles were lit on trees and families would briefly gaze at this awe-inspiring bit of holiday decor before the candles were quickly extinguished. Johnson is credited with being the first to suggest light bulbs, which were invented by his friend Edison, be used to light trees in place of candles. While many were impressed by Johnson's eight-bulb holiday display, it remained a novelty until the 1920s, when preassembled lights became more accessible. Since then, Christmas tree lights have taken hold as a must-have piece of holiday decor in households across the globe.

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# Last-minute holiday shopping tips

### Metro

Some people thrive by doing all of their tasks early. Others seem to do their best work when faced with a time crunch. The methods individuals use to manage their time at work and play may extend to the ways they approach holiday shopping as well.

There's no right or wrong way to handle holiday shopping tasks, though Christmas Eve crowds at malls and throughout shopping districts suggest that there's more late comers than there are early birds. The following tips can help those who typically wait until the last minute to check names off their lists.

- **UTILIZE FREE SHIPPING SERVICES.** Shoppers who shop for gifts online at the last minute run the risk of gifts not arriving on time. Many online retailers charge a premium for expedited shipping. Try to stick to shopping at online retailers that offer free shipping even in the eleventh hour.
- **CREATE A BUDGET.** When rushing around from store to store, it may be easy to spend more than you want to. Make a list of how much you want to spend on each person, and stick to that limit for each person. Move on to the next store if you didn't find what you need in your price range.
- **ESTABLISH A TIME LIMIT.** Stores have strategies in place to keep shoppers in their establishments longer, hoping you'll make impulse buys. These tricks include scenting the air with inviting aromas, putting necessities at the rear of the store, failing to display the time, and putting discounted items by the registers or door to attract shoppers. Set an alarm on your watch or phone for each store so you get what you need and get out on time.

- **SUBDIVIDE BULK GIFTS.** Think about purchasing bulk gifts like gift baskets from wholesale clubs and then breaking them down into individual gifts. This way you can gift several people on one purchase and save time in the process.
- **CHOOSE ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL GIFTS.** Think about a gift that can be purchased for multiple people so you can save time shopping for individualized gifts for everyone. For example, print a personalized photo calendar for several members of your family. You also can purchase multiple subscriptions or memberships to zoos or magazines for people on your list. Streamlining gifting in this way may save money as well as time.

- **CHOOSE IN-STORE PICKUP.** Rather than scouring various aisles, you can shop a retailer's website and then pick up items in the store. You'll save on potential shipping fees but still benefit by avoiding crowds.

Some people wait until the last minute to do their holiday shopping. A few tricks of the procrastinator's trade can make last-minute shopping go smoothly.



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# The most popular gift 25 years ago

Metro

It's easy for adults to experience a little nostalgia when holiday shopping for their children. The holiday season has long been considered a special time of year, and much of that magic can be traced to the joy kids feel when unwrapping gifts from mom, dad and, of course, Santa Claus. Many parents who now have youngsters at home grew up in the 1990s. When such moms and dads are shopping for holiday gifts this season, they might wonder what was the must-have item for them back when they anxiously awaited the arrival of Christmas morning? According to Insider.com, who worked in conjunction with the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, 1996 was the year of "Tickle Me Elmo." This ticklish toy was the most sought-after item of the 1996 holiday season, and it was so popular that retailers experienced shortages. Those shortages led to some surprising sales on the secondary market, with figures that will undoubtedly drop some jaws even now, a quarter century after the Tickle Me Elmo craze erupted. Though the Tickle Me Elmo doll retailed for around \$30 in 1996, some parents intent on getting their youngsters the most in-demand gift that year reportedly spent more than \$1,000 on a single doll. To put that latter figure into perspective, data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that the average price of a new car in 1996 was \$18,525. And according to Yahoo! Finance, drivers in the market for a used car in 1996 could have purchased a 1986 four-door Oldsmobile for just over \$2,600.

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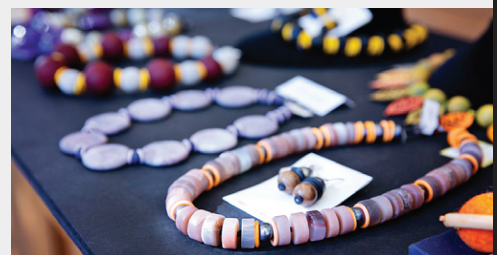
ETHEL SERGEANT CLARK SMITH GALLERY



## Holiday Shopping Weekend

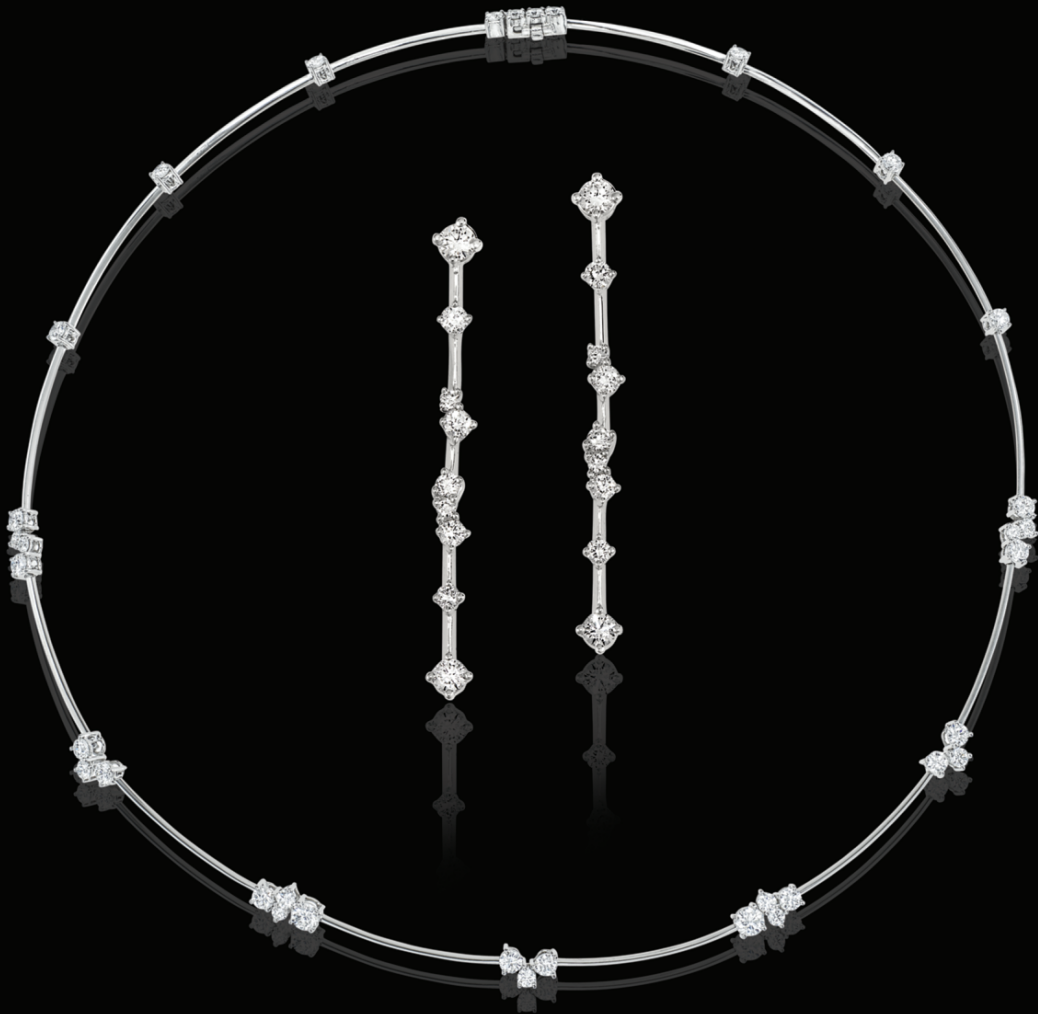
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