

Home
Festive decor

Food
Side dish simplicity

Gifts
25 gifts of Christmas

Shoals
WOMAN

November 2017

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goodness!

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Ringelstein's
home
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NIBBLE


*Appetizers for
New Year's Eve bash*





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ON the COVER



The weather outside is not as frightful when there are cozy lights, a warm fire and a furry friend to share it with

Photo by Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture

This holiday issue of Shoals Woman is filled with all things beautiful and delicious – and where to find them.

The Christmas gift ideas inside these pages are sure to please several on your list. We always shop local or near local, so these gifts can be found right here in the Shoals. One of our favorites is to give the gift of a getaway in the area's new boutique hotel, the GunRunner, on Tennessee Street in Florence. It's a gift you'll want to keep for yourself when you see the stunning rooms to choose from – even the bathrooms are a draw to book a couple of nights and just relax. The craftsmanship and attention to detail are exquisite.

As always, the holidays – Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve – can be the best dining times of the year, but there's the annual question from those who work long hours, whether at employment or taking care of loved ones: Where do I find the time to cook?

Fortunately, there are plenty of restaurants, cafes and bakeries in the Shoals with staff more than willing to do the cooking for you. Miranda Bell, of Alabama Bliss, even offers to prepare the food in your own dish. All you have to do is take it home, cook it, if it's uncooked, or just heat it, if it's cooked and frozen. Imagine the ohs and ahs from your guests when you bring piping hot, beautifully prepared food to the table in your own dish. You'll probably need to start practicing now on perfecting your bashful look from all the accolades.

On New Year's Eve, you can always go out and celebrate. Wildwood Tavern shared a few cocktails that have nothing to do with Champagne but are more than worthy to clink glasses and ring in 2018.

In this issue there are plenty of decorating ideas to borrow from Martha Ringelstein's festive and elegant home. She was gracious in allowing us – and you – a peek inside.

And we want you to meet the important people who make this issue look so beautiful: Cecilia Brumley, who coordinated the food and gifts, and who shared delicious pies with us; Heather Sherrill, of Create Portraiture, for her fantastic photography work; and Amanda Hollander, of Haven256, who shared her keen eye for design and did our food staging.

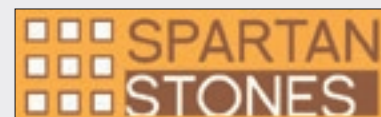
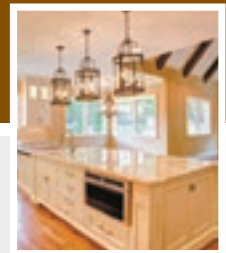
Like the holidays, this issue is one that brought people together, and we hope you enjoy it and have the happiest of times with the people in your life.



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It's the details
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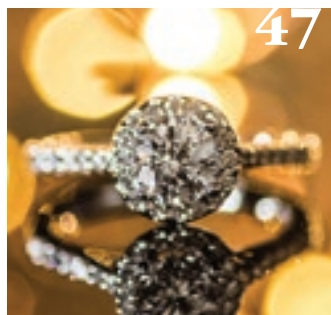
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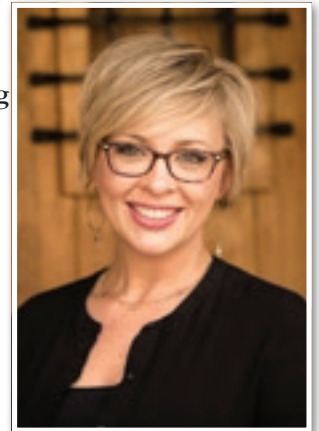
HEATHER SHERRILL

Heather Sherrill is the owner of Create Portraiture located in Historic Downtown Courtland. She has been a professional photographer for 10 years and specializes in wedding portraiture. Heather's creative talent, adaptability, and attention to detail make her one of the most successful photographers in northwest Alabama and have earned her the 2017 TimesDaily Reader's Choice Wedding Photographer Award. We have had the honor of working with Heather on this Shoals Woman Magazine as well as the past two. Heather has brought our ideas to life through her photography, capturing the spirit of both the people and holidays featured each season. Furthermore, she is an absolute delight to work with. Check out more of Heather's work at createportraiture.com.



Amanda Hollander is a lifelong resident of the Shoals. She has taken her love of art and design to a new level as the owner of Haven256 Home Designs, LLC. Her business specializes in new construction consulting, remodeling and interior decorating. We have been honored that Amanda has been a part of photo staging and cover design for this holiday edition of Shoals Woman magazine. Amanda is a pure talent and a joy to work with. Invite her into to your home to create anything from the picture perfect holiday tablescape to the early stages of home building and renovations. For more information on Amanda's work, check out Haven256 on Facebook.

AMANDA HOLLANDER



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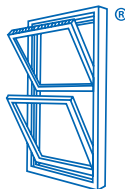
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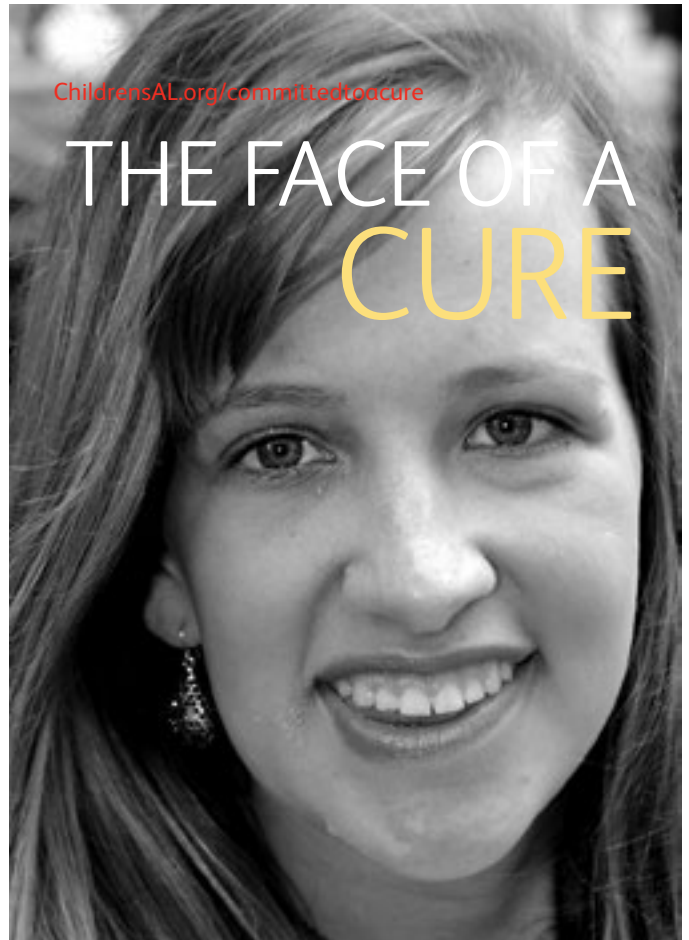
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FESTIVE DECOR

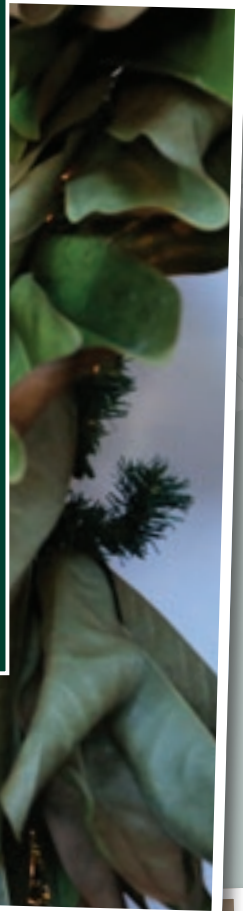
It's the details
that make
**Martha
Ringelstein's**
home
gracious and inviting.

Photos by ALLISON CARTER



SIMPLE ELEGANCE

Ringelstein's home in Lauderdale County features the green and brown hues of magnolia leaves that were woven into a magnificent mantel garland (see facing page). Colorful touches like the Christmas-red candles on an occasional table nestled in pine greenery make a simple yet elegant focal piece.



INVITING HUB

Guests and family naturally gravitate to the kitchen and Ringelstein has added Christmas reds and greens that repeated throughout her home. The Christmas china, whimsical mugs and cookie jar and uninterrupted view of the main tree sets the mood for holiday entertaining.





GRACIOUS HOSTESS

Martha Ringelstein sits in front of her fireplace that features a cascading garland of magnolia leaves.



TREE OF MEMORIES

The main Christmas tree is in the dining room at a front window. It features cherished ornaments that have been in the family for years.

MUST HAVES

Among the treasured ornaments each year are the crystal prism from a sister and shoeless baby sailor indicative of her son when he was a baby.



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FULL EFFECT

The overall scape of the sitting area is refined coziness.

MERRY TOUCHES

Here and there ornamental items are placed to catch the eye and open conversations, whether it's the memories invoked in this collection under glass or the children at the tree.



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TABLE SCAPE

The coffee table in the living room is large enough to display tall candleholders and a trio of trees, one of which is simply adorned with a diminutive string of lights, and seashells at its base.



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FRAGRANT FRUIT

The dining table is restrained grandeur – and not a flower in sight. Pine greenery is adorned with holly berries that spread the length of table. The colors tie together nicely in a centerpiece of apples crowned with a simple pineapple.

HOLIDAY NIBBLES

Ringelstein's kitchen has ample counters where she showcases Christmas treats to invite a nibble here and there.



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oh
PIE

goodness!



sweet potato



pecan



Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE
Staging and hand-lettering by AMANDA HOLLANDER



There is no better way to start the holiday season off than baking. I was raised with some wonderful cooks in my family, and they have done their best to pass that down to me. Holidays at our home were not filled with store-bought pies and pastries for dessert – they were our family favorites made by my mother and grandmother. Anyone can pick a recipe from a cookbook or get their hands on the top trending mix on Pinterest, but my favorite recipes come from right out my back door. Here are a few recipes from my family and friends that I am sure you and your family will love.

- Cecilia Brumley



french coconut pie

Celista Davis, Lexington

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 eggs
- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 stick butter

Mix ingredients together. Pour in unbaked pie shell. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes.



chocolate pie – Ann McGee, Lexington

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3 egg yolks (beaten)
- 2 ½ tablespoons cocoa
- 3 cup milk=1 large can evaporated milk, finish with reg milk
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 9-inch pie shell

Combine dry ingredients together in sauce pan. Gradually stir in milk and egg yolks. Cook over medium heat until thick. Remove from heat, add vanilla and butter. Pour in baked pie shell. Top with meringue.

Meringue: 3 egg whites, 6 tablespoons. sugar, ¼ teaspoon cream of tarter. Cook in a double broiler until peaks form.





apple pie — Liz Shirey, Muscle Shoals

INGREDIENTS:

Deep Dish Pie Shell
5-6 Cooking Apples
2 tablespoons Lemon Juice
1/2 teaspoon Nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon Cinnamon
2 tablespoons Flour
1/2 cup Sugar

INGREDIENTS FOR TOPPINGS:

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup pecans
1 stick butter

Peel and slice apples and place in bowl. Add lemon juice to apples. Mix flour, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Pour mixture over apples. Let sit about 10 minutes. Then stir and pour apples into pie shell. In another small bowl, mix flour, sugar and pecans for topping. Spoon mixture over apples in pie shell. Cut butter into thin slices and place all over top of pie. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.



pecan pie — Doris Wright, Rogersville

CRUST (FOR 9-INCH PIE):

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup shortening
5 to 7 tablespoons cold water

Transfer pastry to pie plate. Fit loosely onto bottom and sides. Trim 1/2 to 1 inch beyond edge: fold under and flute.

PIE FILLING:

3 eggs
2/3 cup sugar
1 cup corn syrup (1/2 cup light and 1/2 cup dark)
1/3 cup melted butter or margarine
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup pecans
1 9-inch uncooked pie crust

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together all pie filling ingredients. Pour into unbaked shell. Bake 50 minutes or until set.

sweet potato pie

Cecilia Brumley, Rogersville

INGREDIENTS:

3 to 4 cups mashed sweet potatoes
2 cups sugar
1 tablespoons white syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 small can of evaporated milk
6 eggs
8 ounces cream cheese
2 tablespoons Margarine

Mix ingredients together. Pour mixture into unbaked pie shell. Bake at 350 until firm, 35 to 45 minutes.



side dish

simplicity





Broccoli and cheese casserole.

by SHERHONDA ALLEN
Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE
Staging and Design by AMANDA HOLLANDER

Sometimes simple is better for those who don't want to groan from a too-full stomach after a Thanksgiving meal.

The staff at Sweet Basil Café, 1627 Darby Drive, Florence, kept these offerings homey and tasty. Calling ahead (256-764-5991) and ordering one of their many side dishes takes most of the work out of your kitchen. All you have to do is heat and serve.

Sweet Basil's broccoli and cheese casserole is perfect as a side dish to your roasted turkey and



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steamed asparagus. A risotto and your favorite deviled egg recipe is all that's needed to make this a satisfying Thanksgiving meal that leaves plenty of room for dessert.

And what to do if you're entertaining family or friends who will have a full Thanksgiving meal somewhere else later the same day? A zesty tomato and chicken soup served with a corn muffin, and a salad dressed in vinaigrette will satiate without bloat and even leave room for a slice of your best pie. Perfect!



Risotto



Deviled eggs



Salad dressed in vinaigrette.



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**Alabama Bliss
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by SHERHONDA ALLEN
Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE
Staging and Design by AMANDA HOLLANDER

Be honest. How many times have you brought a homemade dish to a holiday brunch, only to bring that same, filled dish back home again? Maybe there's one serving missing, which somehow underlines the fact that the whispered warning as to the taste

of your culinary creation swept through the room like a silent alarm.

Alabama Bliss at 1202 Woodward Ave. in Muscle Shoals is a food rescue waiting just for you. Christmas morning brunch fills the gap tidily for intimate entertaining or hosting

one set of family mid-morning before becoming a guest for another set of family mid-afternoon.

Miranda Bell and the skilled staff at Bliss shared one take on this traditional feast.

Among Southern food delights are homemade

biscuits and chocolate gravy. Worried about people "crunching" through your gravy that barely resembles chocolate syrup? Don't worry. This gravy is smooth sweetness just waiting for you to heat and pour over hot buttered biscuits.



Homemade biscuits and chocolate gravy



Cinnamon bake




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Bacon quiche is perfect to heat, slice and serve with homemade churros filled with flavored cream cheese. You can order an entire brunch meal.

“Brunch food is great to feed a crowd,” Bell said. “It’s typical to have brunch at 10, 11, or 12 o’clock. You can even serve chicken salad, not just breakfast food. A lot of the brunch dishes can be made ahead of time. All you have to do is just warm it up.”

Bliss will take holiday food orders through mid-November. No one has to know it was Bliss in the kitchen – if you bring your own dish, they will prepare the food, pack it in your dish and you can take it home to cook or heat and serve.

Their specialties include full meals with sides, breads and dessert. Go to their website at AlabamaBliss.com or come in person. Like brunch, you can order entire meals packages, easy peasy.

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Staff at Alabama Bliss prepare food to go.

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Left to right: Mary Margaret, Ella Grace, Lawson, Anna, and Claire

Raise your glass

Holiday cocktails more
than nog and cider

by THE CULINARY
INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

Cold-weather cocktails aren't limited to eggnogs and mulled ciders. In fact, the flavors of fall and winter can be just as exciting, and even as refreshing, as those beachy concoctions we sip during the summer. And there's an ingredient you may not have considered that is definitely worth adding to your repertoire — scotch.

In this Spiced Orchard Pear recipe from The Culinary Institute of America, scotch is the unexpected star. The drink highlights the best of the fall season, with notes of citrus to help you ease into the snowy winter.

CIA instructor Rory Brown says, "The flavor from the orange liqueur and the lemon juice balance the cocktail and act as a transition into winter."

Of course, it wouldn't be a fall cocktail without the familiar flavors of juicy pear and the warmth of spices, and while you may be less accustomed to using scotch in cocktails, this recipe may change your mind. Though its name may conjure up images of men's clubs and leather-bound books, a new generation is helping to move it into the mainstream.

Scotch is basically the embodiment of fall, with its caramel flavors perfectly complimenting the aroma from your neighbor's fireplace. While many think of scotch as whisky's

smoky cousin, not all Scotch is smoky.

Widely regarded for its long history, Scotch is a whisky — much like those produced in the U.S. — made in Scotland under specific requirements. Part of the historical process is to toast and dry the malt before processing. Peat, a sort of spongy, mossy material that is abundant in the earth of Ireland and Scotland, remains a popular fuel source in Scotland. When burned, peat gives off an unmistakably fragrant smoke, and when used to dry the malt, it imparts a strong flavor that carries through to the finished product.

The scotches produced on the island of Islay are known to be among the smokiest (or, the peatiest), but overall, scotches run the gamut in color, flavor, and aroma, and certainly not all are created equal. Experiment with producers, regions, and blends to find your favorite.

By now, you should be checking to see if it's cocktail hour. But don't rush it, because you have a few things to do first. The best cocktails don't come easy — except for gin and tonics, which are easy and perfect, but not seasonally appropriate — but luckily, this one

is pretty close.

You can find pear puree in the freezer section of some grocery stores, but if not, just put 3 to 4 peeled and cored pears in a saucepan with about 1/4 cup of water. Cook until the pears are soft, then blend them to a smooth puree. Cool them before using, and keep in the refrigerator for a week or so. While it's cooling, make your simple syrup.

Simple syrups are an equal mix of sugar and water, boiled to dissolve the sugar. We often add flavorings like vanilla, fruit essence, or spices. Make your simple syrup weeks ahead, if you like. And use any leftover syrup in other cocktails (it screams fall sangria), to sweeten iced tea, or even tossed with apples for your apple pie.

We know that not everyone is on the prowl for a good cocktail, so if you would prefer a nonalcoholic version, combine the pear puree, lemon juice, and simple syrup with a splash of club soda, seltzer, or good quality ginger beer. You can torch the end of the cinnamon stick (we give a quick how-to in the recipe) for a smoky garnish that is just like the real deal.



Spiced Orchard Pear

Servings: 1

Start to finish: 25 minutes (Active time: 5 minutes)

2 ounces blended Scotch

3/4 ounce pear puree

1/2 ounce orange liqueur

1/4 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/4 ounce Winter Syrup (recipe follows)

1 cinnamon stick, for garnish (see note)

In a cocktail shaker, combine the Scotch, pear puree, orange liqueur, lemon juice, and syrup. Add ice, then shake until well-combined. Strain into a rocks glass, over fresh ice, and garnish with the cinnamon stick. Chef's Note: If desired, lightly burn one end of the cinnamon stick with a torch. Invert the rocks glass over the cinnamon stick on a heat-safe surface or plate while you prepare the cocktail.

Winter Syrup

Makes about 3 cups syrup

2 cups water

2 cups sugar

The peel of 1 orange, white pith removed

1 star anise

3 whole cloves

2 cinnamon sticks

5 cardamom pods

Combine water, sugar, orange peel, anise, cloves, cinnamon, and cardamom in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook until the mixture is simmering and the sugar has dissolved.

Set aside until cool, then strain. Refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.

Nutrition information per serving: 211 calories; 0 calories from fat; 0 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 7 mg sodium; 13 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 10 g sugar; 0 g protein.

This article was provided to The Associated Press by The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.



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Champagne is not the only drink to sip on New Year's Eve

by SHERHONDA ALLEN

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL
of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Staging and Design by AMANDA HOLLANDER

Sure, it's a New Year's tradition to kiss at midnight, clink glasses and sip Champagne from fluted crystal. But why not expand from tradition and try a couple of mixed drinks that can be ordered at a party in popular Shoals spots like Wildwood Tavern, Florence's happening, funky, eclectic pub on East Mobile Street downtown.

Heather Raye
Rickman at
Wildwood Tavern



Barista Heather Raye Rickman has mixed and served drinks at a variety of places during her 15-year career. She shares three beverages that are sure to be crowd pleasers. Order them at Wildwood or try your hand at mixing the Fall Sangria at your home party.

Coquito

The taste of coconut is not just for those gorgeous three- and four-layer cakes that are popular this time of year.

Coquito, also called Puerto Rican eggnog because it is a traditional holiday drink in Puerto Rico, is infused with a creamy coconut taste that is as delicious as the traditional eggnog. Coconut milk and sweet condensed milk is mixed with white rum with a little vanilla and cinnamon stirred in for tasty interest. It's served ice cold.



Midnight Kiss

Appropriately named for New Year's Eve parties, Midnight Kiss, mixes gin, raspberry liqueur, St. Germain, which is a liqueur made from elderflower, and a splash of club soda to give it a muted fizziness.

Fall Sangria

Fall Sangria is a good drink for your at-home New Year's Eve party. It can be made in large batches and is simple. Rickman's recipe includes red wine (Rickman uses a Chardonnay), cranberry juice, a splash of orange juice and club soda. If you'd like a sweeter Sangria, Rickman suggests using a clear soda like Sprite.



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New Year's Eve



TRIVIA

Ever wonder how other countries celebrate New Year's Eve?

Here are 10 interesting celebratory/good luck traditions observed by our world neighbors.

- In Spain, it's traditional to eat 12 grapes – one for each stroke of midnight. If you do it successfully, you'll have a year of prosperity.
- Scotland celebrates for three days, starting Dec. 30 and continuing to Jan. 1. Revelers traditionally will carry torchlights as they walk the streets of the capital. On New Year's Eve, there's a social gathering featuring music and traditional dancing. The next day's celebration is a cold plunge into the Firth of Forth – while in costumes.
- Denmark is a place to keep all those cracked and useless dishes all year because on New Year's Eve night it has been tradition to throw those cracked crockery against the front doors of the homes of friends and family. The more broken dishes on your doorstep, the more friends you'll have in the new year.
- In Rio de Janeiro, jumping seven waves is said to bring good luck in the coming year.
- In Turkey, it's popular to wear red underwear under your party clothes to bring luck to your loved ones.
- In Talca, Chile, the mayor opens the cemetery after late-night Mass so thousands can sit there with candles while listening to music.
- Venice has a kiss-in at St. Mark's Square.
- In London, thousands gather along the banks of the Thames for a fireworks show as Big Ben strikes 12, much like our dropping of the ball in Times Square.
- St. Basil's Day on Jan. 1 is important in Greece, so families get together to celebrate and must bring a special bread with a coin hidden in the dough. The coin is believed to bring good luck.
- Germans will drop molten lead into cold water to see what shape it takes. Different shapes represent different symbols of life, such as love and prosperity.



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take a nibble

Appetizers
are not out of season for a
New Year's Eve bash

by SHERHONDA ALLEN

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of CREATE PORTRAITURE

Staging and Design by AMANDA HOLLANDER



April Davis of
Southern Skillet

We don't call them hors d'oeuvres much these days (probably out of fear that someone will ask us to spell it) but however way you refer to them, they can be the perfect fare for your New Year's Eve party.

April Davis and her staff at Southern Skillet in Muscle Shoals can create party nibbles that will make you a hostess star. The overall effect of these tasty morsels will look stunning on your buffet.

(A) These mini cheeseballs feature cream cheese, cheddar cheese and Gouda, bite-size, rolled in parsley or cranberries or pecans, and speared with pretzels to not only add another layer of flavor, but makes them the perfect finger food.

(B) Don't be fooled by the simplicity of these red pepper jelly crisps. The cream cheese topped with pepper jelly is a burst of flavor that's perfect with a sip of sparkling wine or Champagne.

(C) Anything with shrimp is a party pleaser, but these shrimp and tomato pastries are beautiful to look at and delicious to bite into. The shrimp adheres nicely to a pipping of herb infused cream cheese.

Davis and her staff are taking calls for holiday bookings: Southern Skillet, 2707 Second St., Muscle Shoals; 256-443-1444




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New Year's Eve party appetizers from April Davis and her staff at Southern Skillet.



April Davis of Southern Skillet





25 gifts of Christmas

Photos by HEATHER SHERRILL of
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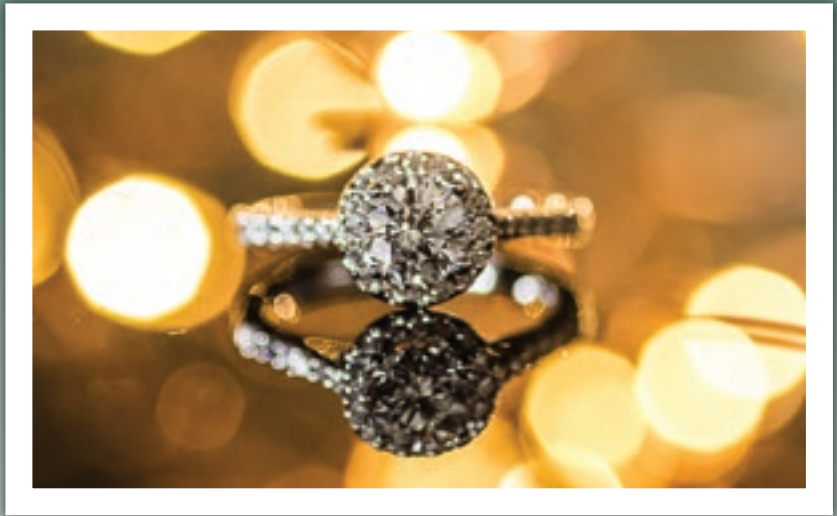
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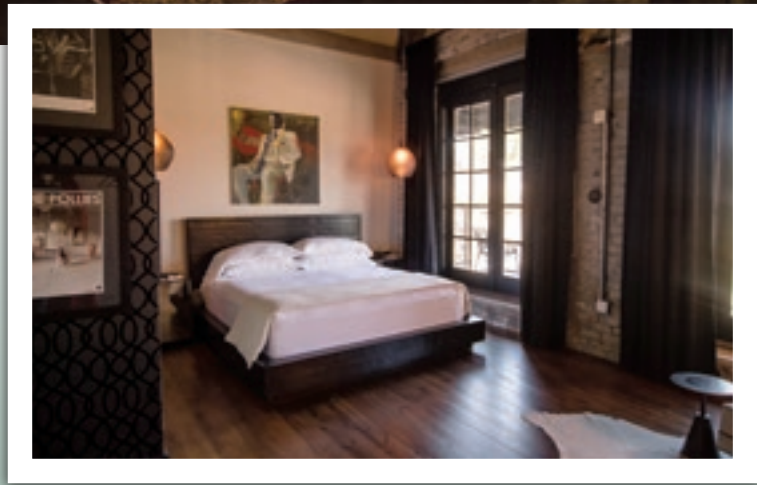
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Levi Terry looks at a Christmas light display after the Christmas Tree lighting at Wilson Park in Florence.

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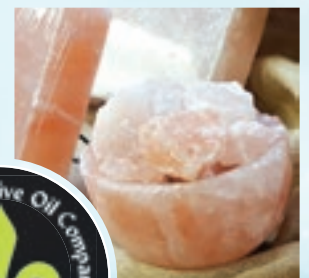
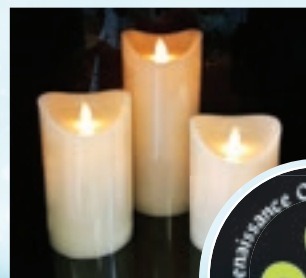
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Garland decorates the staircase at Ivy Green in Tuscumbia.



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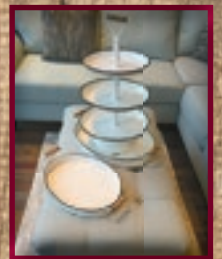
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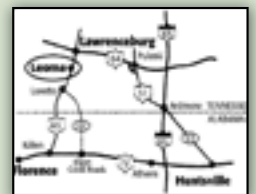
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