

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

# AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 127



## UPDATING *your* KITCHEN CABINETS *on a Budget*

Try these affordable solutions

**PAGE 42**

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A House among the Trees / **04**

Paradise in the Poconos / **12**

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# Front of Tear Out Card 1







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# Back of Tear Out Card 1

MAKES  
12  
TAPAS

# PAN CON TOMATE

*spanish tapas*

■ **INGREDIENTS**

2 ripe, juicy tomatoes

About 12 small slices day-old bread (such as a baguette)

2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved

Extra-virgin olive oil

*Fleur de sel*

Freshly ground pepper

■ **INSTRUCTIONS**

**1/** Wash and dry the tomatoes and cut them in half crosswise. Lightly toast the slices of bread.

**2/** Rub the bread with the cut side of the garlic, then rub it with the tomato halves, cut-side down. Press down firmly to help release the juices and some of the pulp.

**3/** Drizzle generously with olive oil, sprinkle with *fleur de sel*, and add a few grinds of fresh pepper.

**4/** Serve right away.

Recipe excerpted from © *Upper Crust: Homemade Bread the French Way* by Marie-Laure Fréchet. Flammarion, 2021. Photography by Valérie Lhomme.





AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Bill and Judy,

Dreaming of spring? As the doldrums of winter begin to give way to a lively new season, this issue of American Lifestyle is here with refreshing ideas to inspire you, including a visit to a nature-lover’s paradise in Pennsylvania, the story of one man’s magical journey to stardom, and a how-to on upgrading your kitchen cabinets on a budget.

Tucked in the woods of Pennsylvania, only a short drive from both New York and New Jersey, lies Bushkill Falls, a three-hundred-acre haven for hikers and waterfall enthusiasts. Inside you’ll learn about the park’s eight impressive falls and many other spectacular offerings.

Kostya Kimlat is a world-renowned magician and public speaker with an incredible story to tell. He discusses his family’s immigration to the United States from Ukraine, how he found magic, and what it means to him to be living the American dream.

If you’re itching to refresh your home for spring, be sure to read the tips for giving your kitchen cabinets a face-lift. From new hardware to a fresh coat of paint, you’d be surprised by how much this easy DIY project can transform the heart of your home.

How will you embrace the exciting possibilities of spring? As always, it’s a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Stacey Shanner



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# Release Clutter, GAIN PEACE

Written by **Shelley Goldstein** / Photography by **Getty Images**

Wendell Berry once wrote, “Don’t own so much clutter that you will be relieved to see your house catch fire.” Being in a clean and organized space can feel so good that it might even elicit a relieved sigh. However, getting rid of stuff offers more health benefits than just simple satisfaction. Here are some of the many positive effects of decluttering.

## Reduced stress

There is often an uncanny parallel between the state of our minds and the state of our spaces. It’s almost as if releasing material items also releases stale emotions and patterns that no longer serve us. Decluttering can create a sense of order and calm, reducing stress levels and boosting well-being.

## Improved focus and productivity

Clutter can be very visually overstimulating, creating a distracting environment. Some people may even experience sensory overload if they are in spaces that are disorganized and crowded with physical objects. When the mess is reduced, the stimulation lessens, allowing room for focus and concentration.

## Better sleep

There’s nothing like crawling into a bed that’s been made with freshly washed sheets and surveying a clean and tidy

bedroom. Clutter can disrupt sleep by making it difficult to relax your mind, but clearing it encourages a peaceful night’s slumber.

## Reduced allergy symptoms

Unsurprisingly, messy spaces can harbor dust, mold, and other allergens. If you are sensitive to them, a good decluttering and cleaning can make a world of difference by helping you breathe better. After all, the less stuff you have, the fewer surfaces there are for dust to settle on and nooks for mold to grow in.

If you are experiencing the negative effects of clutter, make a pact with yourself to start letting go of the physical noise by filling up and removing a bag of it every other week. By embracing this practice, you can lower your stress, boost your focus, enjoy better sleep, and literally breathe easier.



# *a house among* **THE TREES**

Interview with **Allison Hogue**  
Written by **Shelley Goldstein**  
Photography by **Rafael Soldi**



**Allison Hogue**, cofounder of Floisand Studio Architects, and her team created a cohesive and inviting living space for her clients that integrates a midcentury home with its surrounding environment in Mercer Island, Washington.

## **Tell us about Floisand Studio Architects:**

My partner, Richard Floisand, and I founded our company in 1999 as a full-service architecture and design practice. Since then, we have been crafting residential and commercial projects at all scales around the Pacific Northwest. Now a team of five, we are driven by a shared passion for creating architecture that transcends any single aesthetic. Our approach is centered on crafting sustainable and culturally sensitive solutions

that appeal to modernists and traditionalists alike.

## **Which projects do you enjoy most?**

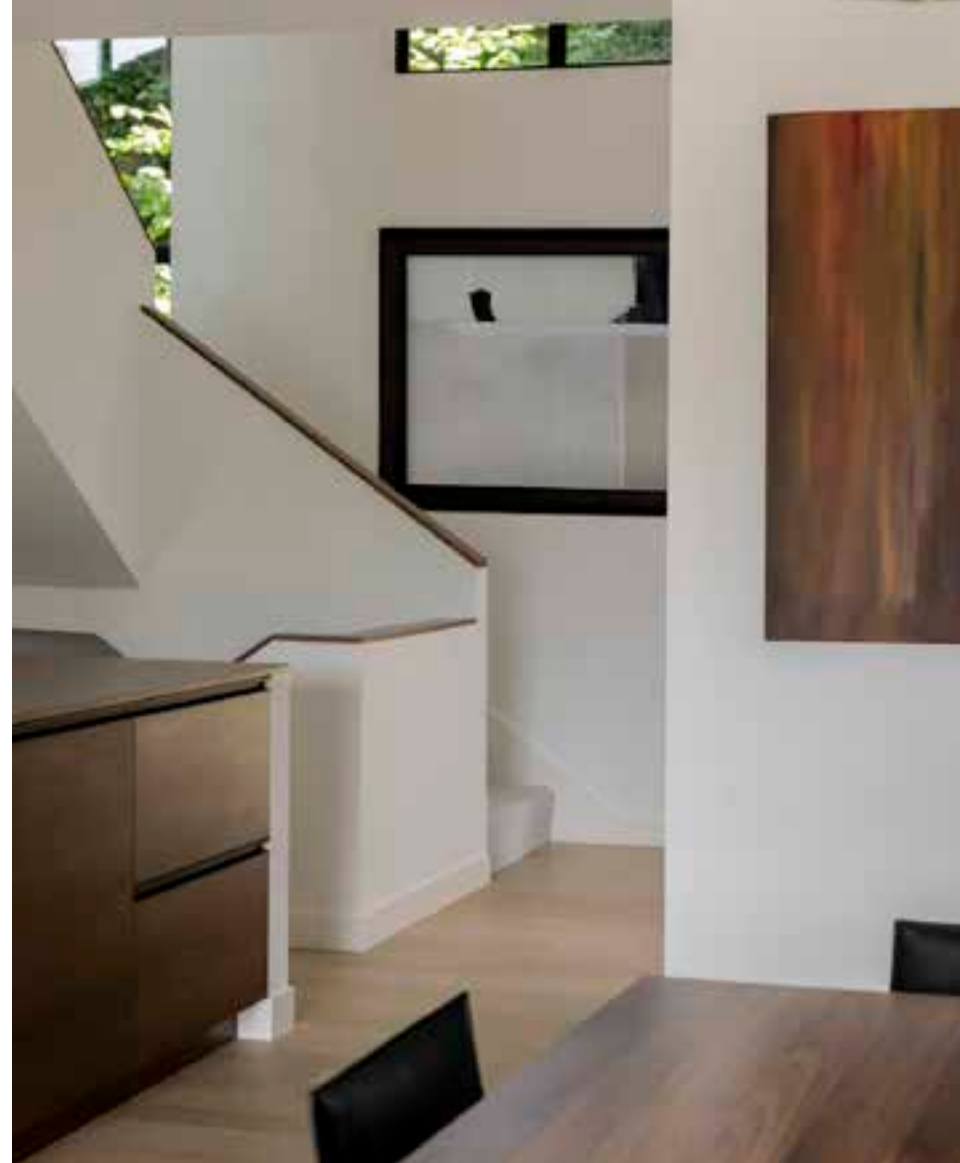
I'm drawn to collaborative projects where there is great communication, innovative thought, and mutual trust between me and my clients. I love working with forward-thinking clients who are open to creative solutions and willing to take risks to make something truly special.

## **What drew the owners to their house on Mercer Island?**

Our clients, who purchased the home in 2010, were attracted to the quiet neighborhood, the home's midcentury feel and large, west-facing windows, and the surrounding landscape of cedar, maple, and pine trees.

"Our clients, who purchased the home in 2010, were attracted to the quiet neighborhood, the home's midcentury feel and large, west-facing windows, and the surrounding landscape of cedar, maple, and pine trees."





### **Who originally designed the house?**

Renowned local developer Black and Caldwell built the home in the 1970s and remodeled it several times prior to our clients purchasing it. They understand that the house was designed by Ralph D. Anderson, a prolific twentieth-century architect and preservationist from Seattle.

### **What were some of the owners' gripes about the house?**

Despite the home's ample size, our clients rarely used the dining room, living room, and main entry. They spent most of the daylight hours in the combination kitchen/family room in the southern third of the main floor because it received the most light.

They didn't need more space, just a more efficient layout.

Also, you couldn't find the main entry from the street because it was, and still is, tucked along the side yard near the main stairs—one of the home's farthest points from the street. Guests would mistake the kitchen side doors for the front entry, which the kids used as a primary point of

access. And because there was no closet or mudroom nearby, stuff was forever accumulating in the middle of the kitchen—an annoyance to our clients. It was less than ideal.

Another frustration was that in the '90s, a previous owner had filled in what appears to have been a covered porch and plopped a small primary bath

addition overtop. Despite its south-facing orientation, the room was dark and not very inviting. Additionally, it sat awkwardly on the corner of the low roof right at the nexus of a cantilevered upper-level porch that may or may not have been original to the home.

**How does the new plan solve these problems?**

Starting at the entry, new hardscaping, steel planters, and angled landscape walls now guide guests through the tree-filled property to where the new raised concrete porch marks the formerly hard-to-find entrance. A steel-and-wood canopy houses lighting that illuminates the front door

and serves as protection from the rain. Intentionally placed landscaping areas buffer the home and offer privacy to the indoor spaces.

Inside, the main floor was gutted and remodeled to create more functional space for the clients’ family of four. The underused living room was restructured to better connect to the dining room and kitchen, and the unnecessary family room was reimagined into a much-needed home office and larger kitchen. The walls that separated the dining room and kitchen were removed, while the entry foyer, powder room, and closets were relocated and reconfigured to maximize flow and reorient the living spaces toward the outdoors. New



windows and sliding doors also connect the inside and outside spaces and lead out onto the refreshed decks.

**Did any obstacles cause you to tweak the plan?**

There was, and is, an HVAC duct chase that runs from the mechanical room in the basement to the upper floor. This chase sits near the entry and could not be moved. It turned out to be quite the puzzle piece.

The budget was also a challenge; it took larger-scale changes to the building shape and layout off the table. With the home perched on a steep slope surrounded by established trees, rebuilding would have been costly and fraught with site-development issues. To stay within their budget, our clients settled on keeping the building footprint, roof shape, and framing as is.

**What other original parts of the house were left?**

We preserved the lower-level walk-out basement, the home’s cantilevered central-stair structure, and its exterior shell. Otherwise, the exterior walls of the main and upper floors were stripped down to the wood studs, the interior walls were removed, the interior spaces were rearranged, and the windows and doors were relocated.

Perhaps one of the most recognizable details of the original 1970s design is the “pork chop” roof eave. Aesthetically controversial, the pork chop is the result of connecting the end wall to the angle of the roof overhang. Many see the resulting jutting triangular shape as a home detail to be avoided at all costs. Since the clients didn’t really need more space—just *better* space—when we committed to keeping the building shell, we committed to keeping the original roofline and its pork chop eaves.

**What design elements keep this house cohesive?**

Consistent use of natural materials can be found throughout, including quartzite, white oak, and walnut, which are warm yet highly durable. The cabinets are detailed with blackened aluminum J-pulls to keep the casework hardware unobtrusive but easy to use.



**What design decision made the biggest impact?**

We enhanced the home's indoor-outdoor connection by orienting the rooms to a specific exterior view, garden, or deck. For instance, we relocated the steps down into the living room so that the space could be furnished with a sofa that would face the fireplace, the TV, and the view all at once. The addition of new energy-efficient

skylights, windows, and large sliding doors also maximizes the natural light.

**What was your favorite part of working on this house?**

I really enjoyed creating the architectural moments and details that tie the interior and exterior experiences together. I like to consider how people are drawn into a space and interact with it.

Duality plays a substantial role in creating intriguing design, whether it's hard and soft finishes, darks and lights, or filtered and direct light. All of these give us options for how to use a space. And by layering them in a thoughtfully considered way, they can make a space both intriguing and peaceful.

For more info, visit [floisandstudio.com](https://floisandstudio.com)







Photo from Getty Images  
The Main Falls at  
Bushkill Falls

# PARADISE *IN THE* POCONOS

Written by **Matthew Brady** / Photography **As Noted**

**AS PEOPLE HAVE REDISCOVERED** en masse in recent years, there’s nothing quite like immersing yourself in nature—and, for many, water is at the heart of it all. Whether you’re relaxing by the lapping water of a lake, wading through the crashing waves of an ocean, or navigating a roaring river in a kayak or canoe, you can find a certain oneness with nature simply by being on or near water.

One of the most majestic places to experience such tranquility is at a waterfall. And tucked within Pennsylvania’s Pocono Mountains—a convenient thirty miles from New York State and a stone’s throw from New Jersey—you’ll find a true treasure that embodies this phenomenon: Bushkill Falls. With eight waterfalls spread across three hundred acres, this privately owned utopia will dazzle you with its natural beauty.

### Get immersed in history

Bushkill Falls has been delighting visitors for over a century, all thanks to the vision of one man. Charles E. Peters, whose family owned the land near the village of Bushkill, wanted to share this Shangri-la with the world, so he cleared a path and created a single-plank swinging bridge for nature lovers above the largest waterfall. Dubbing the area “the Niagara of Pennsylvania,” he opened it to the public in 1904. Today, the land is the property of the Peters estate, and an admission fee is charged to help maintain this beautiful stretch of wilderness—but it’s well worth the price to feel like you’re getting a semiprivate, curated tour of nature.

When you visit, take the opportunity to delve deeper into the area’s history before stepping foot into

the woods. Near the entrance, you’ll find a pair of exhibitions that will transport you back in time: the Native American Exhibit, a life-sized replica of a longhouse where Indigenous people would have dwelled; and the Story of Bushkill Falls Exhibit, which features black-and-white photos, heirlooms, and products that help bring the story to life. And if you’d like to learn more about the Poconos’ wildlife, from chipmunks to bobcats, check out the Pennsylvania Wildlife Exhibit for presentations and displays.

### Choose your path

Bushkill Falls offers not only serenity and communes with nature but also an adventure. Be sure to prepare properly for your visit by bringing water and snacks and dressing appropriately for the hike and time of year—the attraction is open from April through



the day before Thanksgiving, weather permitting. You're also allowed to bring your dog with you on your journey; they just need to remain leashed. For an added challenge, consider doing the Trail Map Adventure Program, which provides a special map that helps you find twenty marked points along the trails of Bushkill Falls.

Before starting your trek through the property, you'll have to select your trail. There are four color-coded options based on difficulty, so choose wisely. The simplest is the green trail, a mere fifteen-minute jaunt that gives you a firsthand look at the main attraction, the majestic 100-foot Main Falls.

If you travel the yellow trail—the most popular choice—expect to triple your time but also see much more. Along this path, you'll enjoy two views of the Main Falls and a view of the Lower Gorge Falls; you'll also ascend to the Laurel Glen and Upper Canyon overlooks above Little Bushkill Creek, one of two crystal-clear tributaries that feed the falls.

**For the whole kit and caboodle, dare to trek the red trail, also known as the Bridal Veil Falls Trail. A true hiker's paradise, it's approximately two miles long, includes steps galore, and takes you to all eight waterfalls.**



Photos courtesy of Matthew Brady

Top:  
Bottom:  
Right:

(Don't be concerned about the water turning brown in spots. That's just tannin from the ample number of trees.) If you want a somewhat bigger challenge, try the blue trail, a more remote walk through the center of the woods that leads you to both the scenic Peter's Corner loop and Pennell Falls.

For the whole kit and caboodle, dare to trek the red trail, also known as the Bridal Veil Falls Trail. A true hiker's paradise, it's approximately two miles long, includes steps galore (1,267 in all, many of which are uphill), and takes you to all eight waterfalls. Expect to spend around two hours on this excursion, which is half paved with wooden walkways and half woods filled with endless rocks and roots to navigate. When you finally complete the journey, treat yourself to an



"I Survived the Red Trail" T-shirt from the Main Stand gift shop afterward—you will have earned it.

No matter which path you take, however, be sure to savor each moment. The cascading waterfalls and ample rustic walkways and bridges, complete with hand-hewn log railings, provide a unique, magical experience you won't find anywhere else.

**Enjoy other activities**

Speaking of the gift shop, it is one of several stores to peruse before or after your walk in the woods. From various rocks and minerals to hiking apparel, you'll find something to take home as a memento, and you'll certainly appreciate the variety of food and drink options after your invigorating excursion.



You can grab a sandwich, pizza, popcorn, and more at the Bushkill Falls Snack Bar or pack your own meal to enjoy in the picnic areas on either side of the parking lot—the northmost picnic area even has grills for public use. Whichever way you choose to dine, be sure to follow it up with a trip to the Sugar Mountain Sweet Shop for treats such as fudge, ice cream, and ice-cream sodas.

There are plenty of family-friendly activities on the grounds to enjoy as well, including miniature golf. You can also bring your bait and tackle to fish in the Twin Lakes on both sides of the main road and—as a nod to Pennsylvania’s rich mining history—mine for genuine gemstones. The newest attraction, the Bushkill Falls Mining Company Maze, is arguably an even more exciting way to honor mining since it’s a competitive maze with prizes for those who find the letters *g*, *o*, *l*, and *d* the quickest.

When it comes to experiencing the paradise of nature, nothing provides a sense of awe like the mighty waterfall. When you’re in the Northeast, be sure to set aside a day for trekking through the Poconos’ Bushkill Falls. Let its pristine paths envelop you as they lead you through peaceful, breathtaking beauty that entices you to leave the world behind.

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For more info, visit [bushkillfalls.org](http://bushkillfalls.org)



Photos from Getty Images

*Top:* Mining for gemstones

*Bottom:* Fishing at Twin Lakes

*Right:* One of many bridges along the trails





# THE SEARCH *for hidden* ARTWORKS

Interview with **Courtney Senior** / Written by **Allison Gomes** / Photography **As Noted**



Photo courtesy of Jason Misurka



Photo courtesy of Courtney Senior



Photo courtesy of Courtney Senior



Photo courtesy of Deborah Czernecky

**C**ourtney Senior, a Canadian-based abstract artist, shares what led her to start International Art and Found Day, an annual event where artists from around the world hide works of art for their neighbors to find.

#### **Tell us about yourself:**

I am a self-taught abstract artist located in Toronto. When I was little, I would immerse myself in creative activities, from coloring and drawing to painting and writing, but this passion for the arts took a back seat to sports as I got older. However, while I was in university, I experienced several years of severe anxiety, which led me back to art—the only thing that could seemingly ease my angst and return my mind to serenity. As my anxiety subsided and I pursued my career in marketing, painting was pushed

to the sideline again until my late twenties, when I lost my father in a sudden accident. From that moment on, I've spent virtually every free minute painting.

#### **Where did you get the idea for Art and Found Day?**

In 2015, I wasn't yet ready to sell my art, but I knew someone would appreciate it, so I decided to find loving homes for my work by giving it away for free. I would package my original pieces and leave them around different neighborhoods in Toronto for people to find. I knew that to instill trust and entice people to pick up a strange package, the project needed a name or something to tie it all together. So I created the hashtag #ArtandFound and left a note on the outside of each piece that read, "Hello! I'm an original abstract painting in need of a loving home!"





Photo courtesy of Jodi Lindsay

FREE ART #ArtandFound.” I also included my social media information in case they wanted to reach out.

Over the years, and after I started my art business, my reason for doing Art and Found changed. Now I give away my art because it brings people happiness. It also makes art more accessible, encourages art appreciation, and gives people a story to tell for years to come.

#### Do you ever hear from the people who find your artwork?

Yes! I have probably heard from half of them. The feedback is always positive, often coming with a statement about how it made their day. I have been told that it’s

people’s first piece of art and that they will treasure it forever. I also once received a note from someone who had recently moved to Toronto and was disappointed with the city’s lack of friendliness. He said that when he found my painting, it changed his mind.

#### How did Art and Found Day become an international event?

I really had no expectations when I began leaving my paintings around the city. But anytime I posted about it on social media, I would receive enthusiastic responses from other artists. And I’d seen the impact this project had on the local community. So in January 2021, at the peak of the pandemic, I decided to do something bigger with Art



Photo courtesy of Rachel Silva

and Found to help bring a little joy during such a strenuous time. That’s how International Art and Found Day was born.

My goal was to get fifty other artists to do it that first year, but once I created the website and announced the event, the count escalated to 478 participants in thirty-nine countries. In 2022, that number more than doubled

“ I really had no expectations when I began leaving my paintings around the city. But anytime I posted about it on social media, I would receive enthusiastic responses from other artists.



Photo courtesy of Joanna Nowicki



Photo courtesy of Debi Selib Haig





to over 1,200 participants in thirty-eight countries. And in 2023, we had 1,434 artists in fifty-one countries.

### **Tell us how Art and Found Day works:**

Artists choose one or more of their artworks, whether they're paintings, photographs, drawings, handmade items, or music albums, package them up safely, and clearly mark them with the hashtag #ArtandFoundDay. Anyone interested in looking for pieces can find participating artists in their area on our interactive online map. Many of the artists also use social media to leave hints for their followers on where their art will be hidden, so we encourage people to follow them on social media for clues. Artworks are then dropped off within the artists' communities on March 12, usually in high-traffic areas and within plain sight.

### **Why did you choose March 12?**

My dad's birthday was March 12. He was such a big supporter of my work. When I first started painting, I thought all my work was terrible, but my dad loved it. Every time I came home to visit my parents, I saw another one of my paintings hung on the wall. He even had photos of them set as screen savers on his computer. It meant so much to me, especially since they weren't very good. It showed me that he was not only proud of me but also supportive of my creative endeavors. That encouraged me to continue doing it. After he passed

away, I put all the emotions I couldn't express verbally into painting, which helped me grieve and ultimately heal.

### **Can artists participate on other days?**

Artists can certainly do this outside of March 12. If they post using the hashtag, we will reshare it on our social media account to help spread the word. Most artists who do it are very good at letting their followers know when it will happen, and they often give clues as to where.

### **How has the day changed now that it's grown so much?**

We're seeing a variety of creators join the movement. At first, it was mostly painters, but now there are ceramic artists, clothing and jewelry designers, poets, and writers. We're also seeing a lot of support from big art brands such as Liquitex, Princeton Brush, DeSerres, and Smartist. Artists themselves have also been very keen to spread the word through the media, such as a local newspaper or radio station. The support has been incredible.

### **What should people do if they find a piece in their city?**

We encourage people to let the artist know they found the piece, either in a private message or through social media. If they're comfortable sharing on social media, they can use the hashtag.



Photo courtesy of Susan Friedman

### **What's your favorite thing about this event?**

I love seeing how happy it makes everyone. It's clear how gratifying it is for both the artists and the people who find the pieces. I also love the recognition some of the artists get from local newspapers covering the event and the serendipitous stories of how people find art. It's amazing to hear about what it means to them.

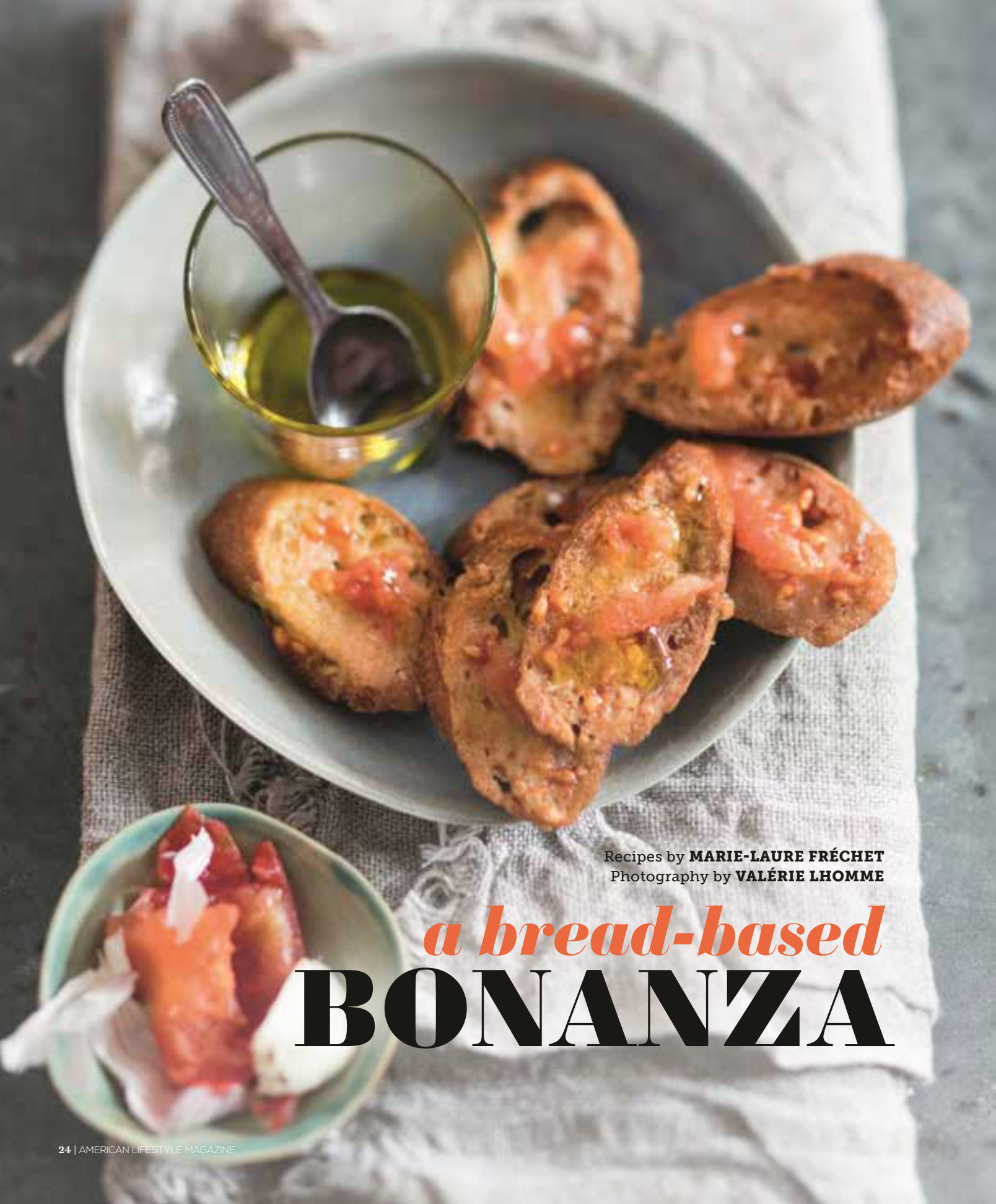
### **What impact do you think Art and Found Day has had over the years?**

I think the project has helped artists gain confidence in sharing

their work with the world and brought attention to the vast array of hidden talent in local communities, igniting art appreciation. It's also made art more accessible and highlighted the power of art in bringing people together, from artists supporting artists to family and friends going on an adventure together to find art. Overall, it brings pure joy to everyone who participates, and what's better than that?

For more info, visit [artandfoundday.com](https://artandfoundday.com)





Recipes by **MARIE-LAURE FRÉCHET**  
Photography by **VALÉRIE LHOMME**

# *a bread-based* **BONANZA**



RECIPES EXCERPTED FROM  
© *UPPER CRUST: HOMEMADE BREAD  
THE FRENCH WAY* BY MARIE-LAURE  
FRÉCHET, FLAMMARION, 2021.  
PHOTOGRAPHS © VALÉRIE LHOMME.

## **PAN CON TOMATE** *spanish tapas*



Makes 12 tapas

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ripe, juicy tomatoes
- About 12 small slices day-old bread (such as a baguette)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Fleur de sel*
- Freshly ground pepper

- 1/ Wash and dry the tomatoes and cut them in half crosswise. Lightly toast the slices of bread.
- 2/ Rub the bread with the cut side of the garlic, then rub it with the tomato halves, cut-side down. Press down firmly to help release the juices and some of the pulp.
- 3/ Drizzle generously with olive oil, sprinkle with *fleur de sel*, and add a few grinds of fresh pepper.
- 4/ Serve right away.





Serves 8



Preheat oven  
to 350°F



Sauté over  
medium heat

# MEATLOAF

## INGREDIENTS

### MEATLOAF

Vegetable oil  
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
5.25 ounces dry bread  
Scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup whole milk  
Scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup beef or chicken stock  
2 eggs, beaten

$1\frac{3}{4}$  pounds ground beef  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

### GLAZE

Scant  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup ketchup  
1 tablespoon mustard  
1 tablespoon brown sugar

**1/ Prepare the meatloaf:** Preheat the oven to 350°F and line the loaf pan with parchment paper.

**2/** Drizzle a little vegetable oil into a large skillet and add the onion and thyme. Sauté over medium heat until the onion is softened and lightly golden, stirring often. Remove from the heat and let cool.

**3/** Break up the bread into small pieces and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the milk and stock. Soak for about 10 minutes to soften the bread.

**4/** Add the onion and eggs and stir to combine.

**5/** Place the ground beef in a separate large mixing bowl and gradually incorporate the bread mixture with your hands until well combined and moist. Add the Worcestershire sauce and season with salt and pepper. Transfer to the prepared loaf pan and pat down into an even layer.

**6/ Prepare the glaze:** Whisk together the ketchup, mustard, and brown sugar in a bowl. Brush some of the glaze over the meatloaf in an even layer, reserving the rest.

**7/ Bake the meatloaf:** Bake for 30 minutes, then remove from the oven and brush with the remaining glaze. Return to the oven for 15–20 minutes, until nicely browned.

**8/** Let cool for 10–15 minutes before slicing and serving.

### LA BONNE IDÉE

- Serve thickly sliced with barbecue sauce on the side.
- You can swap out the ground beef for ground chicken and serve the meatloaf chilled with an herb mayonnaise.





# BREAD PUDDING



Serves 6



Preheat oven  
to 350°F

## INGREDIENTS

1 pound, 2 ounces stale bread, broken into pieces  
4 cups whole milk + more if necessary  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup + 1 tablespoon amber rum  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup raisins  
Butter, for the pan  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar  
3 eggs, beaten  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1–2 teaspoons all-purpose flour, if necessary  
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

**1/** Place the bread in a large bowl and pour in the milk—the bread should be completely covered. Let soak until the bread is fully saturated and soft (about 1 hour).

**2/** Meanwhile, warm the rum and pour it over the raisins in a bowl. Let soak until the raisins are softened and plump.

**3/** Preheat the oven to 350°F and generously grease a Pyrex bowl or loaf pan with butter.

**4/** Roughly mash the bread in the milk using a fork, then add the sugar, eggs, and cinnamon. Drain the rum-soaked raisins and add them to the bowl. Stir until well combined. The batter should be semi-thick—neither runny nor dense. If necessary, add 1–2 teaspoons flour or a little more milk.

**5/** Pour the batter into the prepared dish and bake for 40 minutes, or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

**6/** As soon as you remove the pudding from the oven, run a spatula or knife around the edge to release the pudding from the bowl. Let the pudding cool slightly or completely in the dish before turning it out onto a serving plate.

**7/** Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.

## LA BONNE IDÉE

- You can swap out raisins for pitted prunes or very thinly sliced apples.





Getty Images

Written by **Andre Rios** / Photography **As Noted**

# BUTTERFLY REFUGE *in Key West*



Getty Images

**A**mong the unsightly creatures of the insect world are some beloved bright spots—chief among them butterflies. These members of the *Papilionoidea* family are as beneficial for pollinating plant life as they are mesmerizing. While the occasional chance encounter with a butterfly may steal your attention, one American site devoted to these skyborne jewels can offer a truly captivating experience: the Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory.

Key West occupies the southernmost tip of the Florida Keys, a breathtaking chain of islets extending from the Florida mainland across the Gulf of Mexico. Its warm climate and humid air tease tropical flora into full bloom, making it the perfect capital city for the conservatory’s international populace of insects. Venture to this tropical horizon to observe butterflies flourishing freely in a dedicated habitat and learn how its team of conservationists makes an impact on fragile *Papilionoidea* worldwide.





### A welcome neighbor

Stroll down Duval Street's palm-lined promenade of colorful Caribbean homes, and you'll encounter what appears to be a pale-yellow house with a proud balustrade and curated landscaping. But while you might at first glance expect this site to host a tasteful teatime, it is in fact the home of the Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory.

When you pass through its white-trimmed doorway, you are greeted with a veritable menagerie of butterfly-themed crafts in its gift shop and gallery. Its colorful provisions, including painted china and themed candles, have a homey allure, but that's not all it has to offer. Don't begin your tour or end your visit without first perusing the gallery wall exhibiting artist Sam Trophia's *Wings of Imagination*. Here you can browse, or even take home, a selection of bygone butterflies suspended in acrylic shadow boxes. These works of art are more than souvenirs, however; they are also picturesque samplings of the beauty that awaits you in the central habitat ahead.

### A biodome of butterflies

Next, step into the sunlit expanse beyond the shop to enter the titular conservatory. It's easy to lose yourself here; the proud rainforest trees, glass-paneled walls, and magnanimous glass dome high overhead create the illusion that you are in the butterflies' realm and not an enclosed exhibit. In this astoundingly lush biodome, the residents live their lives undisturbed, flitting from plant to plant in unbelievable numbers. The Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory boasts some fifty to sixty unique species of "flowers of the sky," numbering hundreds of individuals at play.

From there, wander the trails that weave through the tropical foliage and across gently flowing water features to take it all in. The butterflies in the institution's main exhibit have been imported from sites across the world, ranging from Indonesia to Peru, affording you views of far-traveled species you may never otherwise see, such as the emerald



Photos courtesy of Bonnie Joffe

*Papilio paris* or the sapphire-blue *Morpho aurora*. Even among these worldwide species, however, you may very well encounter American natives like the monarch too.

To make sense of this diversity and variety, traverse the garden with a Butterfly Identification Guide in hand. You may find yourself darting your eyes between the list and your surroundings to identify the insects before you or seeking out specific occupants like paparazzi in search of a star. With fortune and keen eyes, you may be able to cross each type off your list. If you're especially lucky, butterflies may even land on you to examine you in return.

### Other delightful discoveries

Proceed to feed your intellectual curiosity at the Learning Center's educational displays outlining butterflies' role in the natural world. Its maps, placards, and live displays reveal everything you could hope to know about these insects. Recall forgotten facts from your childhood like the life cycle of the butterfly, learn startling factoids about how they are central to preserving various plant species, and discover how the destruction of certain ecosystems makes their populations as fragile as their winged little bodies appear. Finally, you can see how this institution supports butterfly farmers across the world raising and preserving endangered species.







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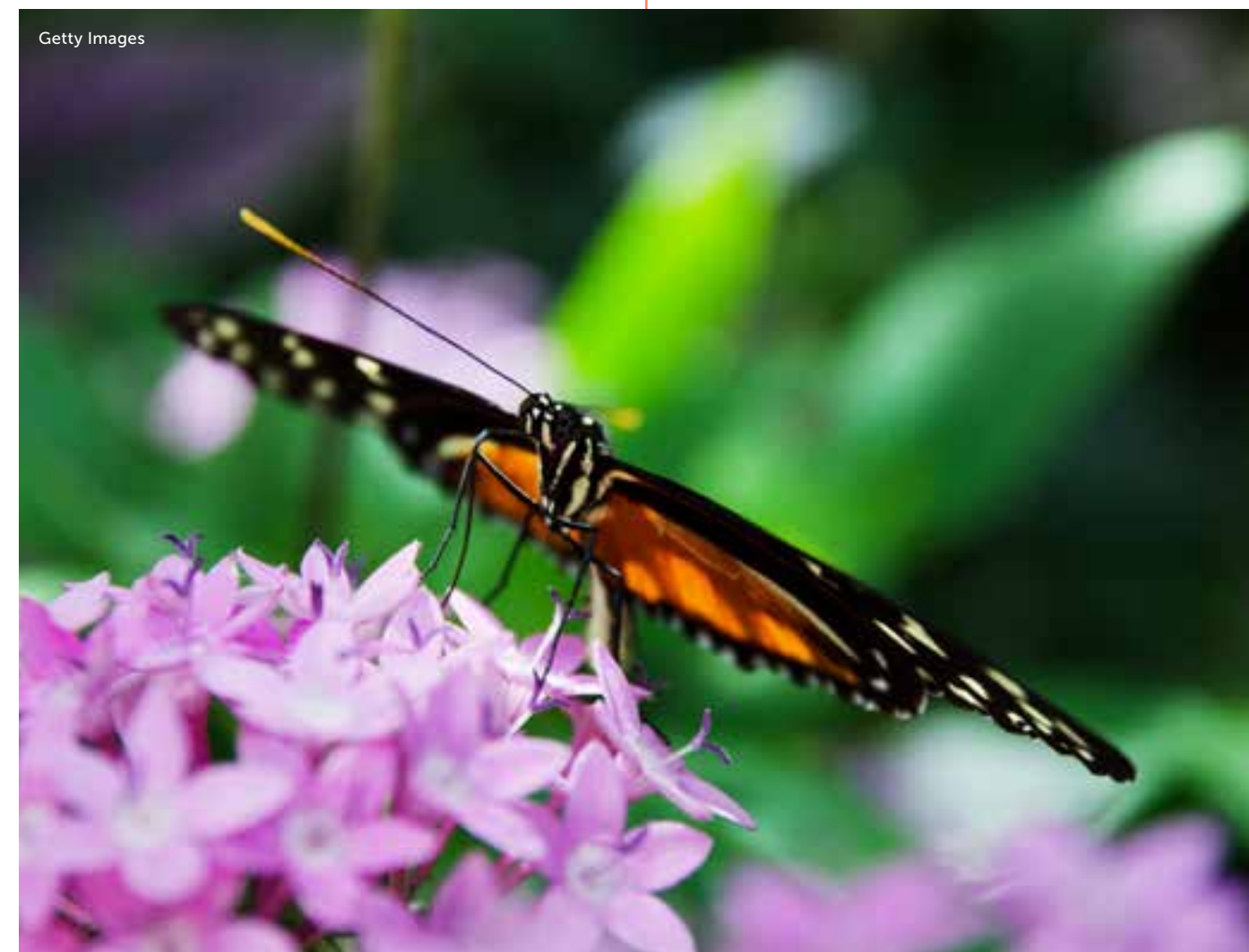


Photo courtesy of Bonnie Joffe

But there is more to behold beyond butterflies. While the winged insects alone deserve a dedicated visit, other conservatory inhabitants will clamor for your attention, including tropical birds like flamingoes and Gouldian finches and intricate flowers inviting close inspection. It's no wonder that this venue also hosts special occasions like weddings under its ornate gazebo, the vibrant residents serving as both the backdrop and unwitting guests.

#### Visitor information

Exploring the conservatory's grounds only takes about an hour, but some visitors have reported adoring the site so much that they returned for a follow-up tour before departing Key West. The fares are reasonable enough to merit a second helping: general admission is only \$15, and there



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are discounts for members of the armed services, seniors, and children. (Youths three years old and younger are free.) Best of all, each ticket purchase allows visitors to explore the grounds as many times as they wish before the center closes for the day. Perhaps take after some guests who retreat to the interior gardens when they need a repose from Key West's relentless sun.

In addition, the conservatory offers several membership programs for devoted visitors, ranging from the Frequent Flutter Pass to the Monarch and Morpho levels. Each of these tiers includes discounted admissions and savings at the gift shop.

Purchasing a membership may also inspire you to attend the institution's series of special events, including twilight tours of the grounds, up-close meetings with the flamingos, and behind-the-scenes tours of the center's work to preserve its colorful inhabitants. Any contributions you make to the conservatory will not only help populate its skies but also aid in underscoring the value of preserving ecosystems for all butterflies beyond the island.

For more info, visit [keywestbutterfly.com](http://keywestbutterfly.com)



# A MAGICAL JOURNEY

Interview with **Kostya Kimlat** / Written by **Matthew Brady** / Photography **As Noted**

**World-renowned** magician and speaker Kostya Kimlat discusses immigrating to America as a child, how he discovered his craft, and the thrill of dazzling an audience.

"With twenty-five years of experience, I know the exact moment when someone is going to be surprised or astonished. I anticipate it with glee and strive to maximize it."





**You moved to the United States at age nine. Tell us about that experience:**

I was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, when it was part of the Soviet Union. I lived there long enough to experience the harsh realities of Soviet rule, such as standing in line to get bread and milk rations. My grandfather was unjustly imprisoned for a period, as so many men were, and my parents had to barter to procure basic necessities. In school, I wore a red star pin on my lapel with an image of Vladimir Lenin in the center. On top of all that, the Chernobyl disaster happened only an hour away from our home—that was the final straw that pushed my parents to flee as refugees.

So in 1992, they moved our family to America for a better life. Going from that bleak reality to the open arms of the United States, I was immediately struck by all the abundance and freedom here. I've always felt that it's an amazing country.



**Was the transition challenging?**

Mostly for my parents, who, in their forties, started a brand-new life in a foreign country—where they had to master a whole new language—for the sake of their children. We could only bring two pieces of luggage and \$50 per person, so we came to America with \$250, all our clothes and photos, and as many books as we could bring with us. In the Soviet Union, both my parents had master's degrees and worked for years in engineering; they had to drop all that here. My mom learned to become an aesthetician, while my dad worked from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for two years in a steel factory until they could afford to put a down payment on a house. Their ability to restart their lives and embrace change was the greatest life lesson I could receive.

**As a child, how did you adapt?**

Being only nine years old, I was lucky. The older you are, the trickier it is to adapt, so I am sure it was harder for my fourteen-year-old sister to leave her friends. I was set if I just had cartoons. *[Laughs]*

Thankfully, as I got older, magic allowed me to fit in everywhere. At the same time, though, I never *truly* felt like I fit in because I was treated like an outsider, like a joker in a deck of cards. For example, in high school, magic allowed me to connect to every social group, but I was never really part of any of them. However, it did teach me to be confident and pursue my passion for magic and later helped me become a solopreneur. That's the advantage of being an immigrant: you have an immense drive to take advantage of what you know is a rare opportunity to live a better life.

**Who helped you integrate into American life?**

Along with the schools I went to, the Jewish community that sponsored my family helped me learn to read and write English. They really welcomed us and taught us all the fundamentals of American living, from writing a check to learning to drive. Their support was amazing.

I also had a little 10-inch TV in my room, so I'd secretly watch David Letterman every night on mute but with closed-captioning on.



Within months, I was speaking and spelling English as well as my fourth-grade classmates.

### **What fostered your love of magic?**

At age twelve, I recorded a TV special, *World's Greatest Magic*, on VHS tape. I watched it dozens of times in slow motion, and that got me hooked.

As an avid reader, I loved learning magic from books too. Knowing this, my dad took me to a magic shop to buy the first book of an eight-volume series on magic—and ended up buying all of them for \$160. We'd been living in America for only four years, and to invest that much money in my passion was a *huge* deal. So I devoured those books, continued to buy more myself, and absorbed all I could.

Magicians also need mentorship, and I got it in spades at the local magic club and from visiting magicians, who passed on wisdom from previous generations of legendary performers, such as Dai Vernon and Edward Marlo.

### **How did you build your reputation as a magician?**

I started performing professionally at age fifteen, coming up with my own tricks. Three years later, I wrote a book of my own magic and, with persistence, got myself booked at local magic clubs across the United States. I also bought an unlimited Greyhound travel pass and went from city to city performing and lecturing, slowly building my reputation in the small underground world of sleight-of-hand magic.

After that, I continued doing magic shows and lectures: first all over America and then abroad. It was wild—I spent my twenties traveling the world, balancing tours in places like France, Italy, Norway, Japan, Peru, and Australia with going to college, performing in America, and growing my business as a corporate magician in my hometown of Orlando.

**"My family were refugees welcomed by individuals who helped strangers start a new life. America invested in us and supported us, and my family reciprocates by contributing to society and helping others."**

### **Being an in-person performer, how were you affected by COVID-19?**

When COVID started, all my business stopped. I was resigned that my wife—who had just found out she was pregnant with our second child—and I would live off our savings and was looking forward to solely focusing on my family. But before the end of March 2020, I got a request for my first virtual magic show. After a lot of work and trial and error, this new offering ended up blowing up for me. People needed connection and entertainment more than ever, and it was fulfilling to be a bright spot for many of them during an otherwise dark time.

After two years of performing exclusively online, though, I realized how much I missed performing in-person magic, so I'm thrilled to be back performing and speaking from the stage in addition to holding virtual magic shows. Today, 80 percent of my business is keynote speaking and 20 percent entertainment events.

### **How does it feel to astound people?**

With twenty-five years of experience, I know the exact moment when someone is going to be surprised or astonished. I anticipate it with glee and strive to maximize it. Often, they're just frozen with their mouths open and eyes wide, not sure what to say because their brains are still processing what just happened.



As a speaker, I look forward to when people tell me they learned something new that has changed the way they see their world. That's why I speak to groups about thinking like a magician—so they can learn to apply the principles of perception in their professional and personal lives.

### **You also fooled Penn and Teller on their TV show. How was that experience?**

The effect I performed for them is decades old, and most magicians know it. However, I combined proprietary technique with the right audience management and psychological subtleties to create a new version that would fool magicians. It took me years to master the trick. Still, I was very nervous about performing it on national TV for two of the greatest magicians in the world. I never could have predicted that Penn's wild reaction at being completely fooled would make the clip go viral and become one of the series' highlights. The prize was closing their Vegas show, which was an amazing experience.

I thank Penn and Teller every chance I get for their generosity and support because they are the kindest, most helpful, and most thoughtful individuals and gave me a chance. The experience transformed my business and my life.

### **Do you feel like you're living the American dream?**

Absolutely. I feel so grateful every day. My family were refugees welcomed by individuals who helped strangers start a new life. America invested in us and supported us, and my family reciprocates by contributing to society and helping others. I am immensely lucky and grateful to my parents and community for making our immigration possible.

This is where my eternal optimism comes from—because I know things could have been so different. I love my life here. Americans should take advantage of their quality of life and appreciate how much abundance and opportunity they have at their fingertips every day. It's truly amazing what's possible; you just have to see it.

For more info, visit [kostyakimlat.com](http://kostyakimlat.com)



# Updating Your Kitchen Cabinets

## ON A BUDGET

Written by **Bonnie Joffe** / Photography by **Getty Images**

**Y**our cabinets are one of the most important features of your kitchen, providing storage, functionality, and style. But if yours are old, they can make your kitchen look tired and outdated. Fortunately, there are several ways you can give them a fresh, updated appearance, and the good news is that you don't have to spend a fortune to get the look you want. Use these suggestions to help decide which option works best for you and your budget.

### Resurface/reface

Resurfacing, also called refacing, is a great way to update the look of your kitchen without having to take on the cost and inconvenience of a total renovation. Though the doors, drawer faces, and side panels are typically replaced, the existing cabinet boxes remain. Because this technique is usually a long-term investment, selecting high-quality materials is important. There are three types of resurfacing materials: laminate, rigid thermofoil, and wood veneers.

- **Laminate:** A hard and durable material, laminate is perfect for simple, box-style cabinets. It comes in a variety of finish colors, and you can purchase it in precoated, self-stick adhesive sheets, making installation simple.
- **Rigid thermofoil (RTF):** This option is made with durable vinyl, which looks and feels much like wood doors. RTF is more flexible than laminate, making it easier to install for cabinets that have tricky corners, arches, and elaborate door designs. It's also easy to clean and scratch resistant, and it won't chip or peel like painted cabinets can.
- **Wood veneers:** Veneers are made from thin sheets of real wood that are applied to the surface of your cabinets. You can choose either self-adhesive or preglued veneers; however, the preglued ones tend to last longer.





### Paint or stain wood cabinets

Painting or staining your kitchen cabinets is an easy and affordable way to transform a tired-looking kitchen into a brand-new one. Both upgrades have advantages depending on the type of style you prefer. Painting is your best bet if a modern, crisp look is your intended vibe; however, staining your cabinets may be a better option if you're more of a traditionalist. Whichever application you choose, you'll need to prepare properly if you do the work yourself.

- **Cabinet material:** Professional painters do not recommend painting over laminate or RTF because paint doesn't adhere well to those types of surfaces. Painting over wood cabinets generally garners the best results, particularly if you want to hide the appearance of the wood grain, since it absorbs paint better than some other surfaces. Conversely, if you prefer to highlight the wood grain, stain will allow you to showcase all the surface's natural imperfections. The shelf life of both techniques is good—painted cabinets usually last up to ten years, while stain can last between twenty and thirty years when a wood sealant is applied.
- **Condition:** You'll need to assess your kitchen cabinets' condition before painting them. For example, check for any cracks or evidence of water damage, such as warping, peeling, or staining, which can cause the doors to weaken and the hinges to break. If the integrity of your cabinets seems compromised in any way, you may need to replace them rather than simply paint over their damaged surfaces.
- **Paint type:** In general, hybrid enamel paint is the best choice for kitchen cabinets because you get the best of both worlds: the durability of oil-based paint and the ease of water-based paint. Hybrid enamel paint also has lower VOCs than traditional alkyd enamel paints, making it a more environmentally friendly option, is easy to clean, and requires less prep work than other types of paint. For the finish, semigloss, gloss, and satin are all good choices since they are durable and cleanable and can give your cabinets a modern look.







### Replace the hardware

Finally, complete the look of your newly painted, stained, or resurfaced cabinets by adding new hardware to the doors and drawers. This is a great way to update your kitchen without making a major investment. Here are some factors to consider.

- **Style:** There's something for everyone when it comes to updating your space. If modern is your vibe, opt for sleek and simple shapes. For something more traditional, consider knobs with ornate curves and scrollwork made from wood, brass, or wrought iron.

- **Finish:** The hardware you decide on for your kitchen will depend on the look and style of your cabinets. For instance, black hardware against white cabinets would create a striking contrast, while gray cabinets paired with silver hardware would give off an eclectic feel. You can even mix and match finishes—a popular trend in kitchen cabinet hardware that creates a modern and unique look.

- **Size:** When choosing hardware, make sure to select pieces that are in proportion with the size of your cabinets. To do this, go with the one-third rule: the knobs and pulls should be one-third the width of the cabinet door or drawer. It may be best to go with a bigger size if you are between the two. Furthermore, pick hardware that is made of a durable material, such as brass, stainless steel, chrome, or nickel. Each of these can be easily cleaned and is very resistant to wear and tear.

Before you start your kitchen cabinet project, it's important to do research and get estimates from multiple suppliers. With some planning, effort, and a little creativity, you can update your cabinets on a budget and create a kitchen you will love for years to come.



# How to **DECORATE** a Coffee Table

Written by **Andre Rios** / Photography by **Getty Images**

An attractive coffee table can unify a seating room, introduce visual contrast, and add the final decorative touches to the space. But a bare table alone won't do the trick. Try these simple tips for adorning your coffee table to elevate it to a pleasing focal point.



## **The components**

The essentials of coffee table design include:

- One tall centerpiece, such as a vase of flowers
- Contrasting wide objects, such as books stacked into tiers
- Conversation pieces, such as souvenirs or handicrafts

Before you shop for or assemble these elements, scan the surrounding room. Your coffee table should reflect the same colors and shades represented throughout the space.

Because good style balances distinct materials and textures, you should also consider which

materials are unrepresented in the room. For example, if your space is full of plush upholstered seating, embellish your coffee table with hard materials like stone and metal for contrast.

Then prioritize your personal interests. This is your coffee table, so compile possessions that express your individuality.

## **Arranging**

Place objects on your coffee table according to its shape and these time-tested principles.

## **Square surface**

Imagine a four-part grid within its perimeter, then set down objects to fill each space, keeping them equidistant from one another.

## **Rectangular surface**

Place tall decor in the center of the table, then two objects (or stacks of objects) on either side of it.

## **Round or oval surface**

Arrange decor in a circle with even spacing.

## **What to avoid**

Don't overfill your coffee table—leave space for setting down a beverage or book. Don't obscure sightlines either. While oversized vase dressings are popular contemporary decor, going overboard will only obstruct views. Finally, don't be afraid to revamp and experiment often. Coffee table decor is simple to place and replace, so redecorate seasonally or as upcoming trends capture your interest.

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## Front of Tear Out Card 2



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## Back of Tear Out Card 2

SERVES 6

# BREAD PUDDING

### ■ INGREDIENTS

1 lb., 2 oz. stale bread, broken into pieces  
4 c. whole milk + more if necessary  
¾ c. + 1 tbsp. amber rum  
½ c. raisins  
Butter, for the pan  
½ c. sugar  
3 eggs, beaten  
½ tsp. ground cinnamon  
1–2 tsp. all-purpose flour, if necessary  
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

### ■ INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/** Place the bread in a large bowl and pour in the milk—the bread should be completely covered. Let soak until the bread is fully saturated and soft (about 1 hour).
- 2/** Meanwhile, warm the rum and pour it over the raisins in a bowl. Let soak until the raisins are softened and plump.
- 3/** Preheat the oven to 350°F and generously grease a Pyrex bowl or loaf pan with butter.
- 4/** Roughly mash the bread in the milk using a fork, then add the sugar, eggs, and cinnamon. Drain the rum-soaked raisins and add them to the bowl. Stir until well combined. The batter should be semi-thick—neither runny nor dense. If necessary, add 1–2 teaspoons flour or a little more milk.
- 5/** Pour the batter into the prepared dish and bake for 40 minutes, or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean.
- 6/** As soon as you remove the pudding from the oven, run a spatula or knife around the edge to release the pudding from the bowl. Let the pudding cool slightly or completely in the dish before turning it out onto a serving plate.
- 7/** Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.

### LA BONNE IDÉE

- You can swap out raisins for pitted prunes or very thinly sliced apples.

Recipe excerpted from © *Upper Crust: Homemade Bread the French Way* by Marie-Laure Fréchet. Flammarion, 2021. Photography by Valérie Lhomme.



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Stacey is truly a very impressive person. She works fast, efficiently, and effectively. Her services are top of the line and we were very satisfied with her work. We love Stacey!



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