Warming Up



FOR THE COOLDOWN

Seasonal touches for your home
and the best places to find them in West Chester

by Kate Chadwick

Design and fashion icon Coco Chanel opined, "An interior is the natural projection of the soul." And as we dress ourselves, so we dress our homes. Indeed, since the time of our cave-dwelling ancestors, humans have enhanced their spaces according to their tastes—and the weather.

Some of us pick up a pumpkin at Highland Orchards, stick it on the porch, and call it "fall décor." Others pack up so many Halloween decorations that we require a dedicated section of a large basement to store them all. And still others know that there are plenty of places in West Chester where you can find the perfect touches for figuratively warming up your home when the temperature drops down. We checked in with some of your favorite spots for their ideas.

PINE & QUILL

23 N. Walnut Street

Pine & Quill manages to feel sunny and warm no matter the weather outside, thanks in large part to owner Dianna DiStefano's upbeat attitude. One of her favorite ways to get the cozy vibes going is through fall-scented candles. "I carry tons of them and it's so hard to choose, but the Woodfire scent is by far my favorite now," she says. Aside from Woodfire, Maple Chai—which is hand poured in West Chester -- is one that really invokes all the senses. "I also love switching things out to richer colors, especially deep browns and oranges, with little pops of cream. I put out an assortment of velvet and boucle pumpkins and fall colors—also mushrooms! I have cute felt mushrooms that add something different. Also, a cozy blanket in amazing plush fabric - I have cream and a rusty orange. You can't help but cozy up to it!" Her enthusiasm is contagious; on a recent visit we overheard her say to a customer "I'm so glad you picked this—I'm obsessed with it."

At home, Dianna clusters pumpkins on her countertop in a contrasting color, and tree bristles during the winter holidays. "We forget about our countertops a lot of times," she sighs. "But areas where you have plants, you can add a little pumpkin in the pot to make it feel warm and fall-ish." She likes to add organic elements such as feathers and handmade dahlias and lotus flowers in neutral tones to add a special texture to a room. Two words: feather flowers.



ONE OF PINE + QUILL OWNER DIANNA DISTEFANO'S FAVORITE WAYS TO GET THE COZY VIBES GOING IS THROUGH FALL-SCENTED CANDLES. "I CARRY TONS OF THEM AND IT'S SO HARD TO CHOOSE." SHE SAYS, "BUT THE WOODFIRE SCENT IS BY FAR MY FAVORITE NOW."

And whatever you do, don't forget to stay warm, figuratively and literally. "Cozy blankets in rich hues are easy to throw over your lap when you're drinking your morning coffee." And maybe jot a few things down in the cool new journal you bought at Pine & Quill.

THE 5 SENSES

133 W. Market Street

"Color, texture, lighting, and scent are the ways I add warmth to my home," says Michelle Guida of The 5 Senses, adding how she switches to a warmer and deeper color palette in the autumn. "Think teal and navy instead of turquoise and sky blue, plum instead of lavender, burgundy instead of bright red, rust instead of orange." She then adds heavier textured items, like a velvet duvet on the bed to replace the cotton quilt she uses in the spring and summer



and switches out decorative pillows and throw blankets to something velvety or faux fur.

Michelle identifies lighting as a prime opportunity to warm up a space. "I like to make sure all my light bulbs are warm or soft white, and I light candles a lot more," she says. She also switches the scent of her candles, reed diffusers, and soaps from light and citrusy fragrances to something more amber or woody.

The Barrick brand of candles stocked at The 5 Senses come in a rainbow of colors, making them easy to switch out for a deeper color palette suitable for the colder months. Michelle also likes to pair their Northern Lights taper candles with wrought iron candlesticks, such as the ones they carry from Blackthorne Forge or Sekoya Originals. "Penn Candles and Rescued Wine Candles offer many cozy scent options," she adds. "Pottery and glass vases, many from local artists like Bob Deane and Suzanne Kent, are perfect for fall flowers." She loves to freshen up a space by hanging a new piece of wall art, like a rustic iron piece from Elizabeth Keith, or a hand-felted framed art from Shades of Nature to add warmth and texture to walls.

"Kitchens are often overlooked," she notes. "Changing the scent of the soap by the sink, burning a gourmand scented candle that smells like you just baked something delicious, switching out plain hand towels for something fun and seasonal, displaying wooden cutting boards for texture and a rustic pottery vase with fall flowers are all easy ways to add warmth to what can be a very cold and utilitarian space."

MODERN MERCHANT AT MELANGELL

1133 Pottstown Pike

"Herringbones, tartans, plaids." So sayeth Lena Glover of Modern Merchant at Melangell when we asked about her fall vibe home suggestions. "Golds, terra cottas, browns, dark greens—rich colors. And what's really in right now is moodier colors." This can be achieved either by painting a whole room in a richer, darker color, or using moodier accents.

KITCHENS ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED. MICHELLE GUIDA OF THE 5 SENSES SUGGESTS ADDING SOME WARMTH TO AN OTHERWISE UTILITARIAN SPACE.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. If you haven't visited Melangell, please remedy that. This magnificent former hunting lodge is tucked back from the road on Pottstown Pike at the outskirts of the borough. It's a rambling stone building brimming with a mix of old and new treasures for your home, antique and modern pieces of furniture and home décor that is, in a word, dazzling. Co-owner Laura DePrisco is the mastermind of the layout here, which manages to burst with merchandise without feeling cluttered. Oversized ornate gilt-framed mirrors coexist with simple taper candles, glassware, record albums, and flatware. A bust of Shakespeare sits on a stack of books across from a smoked glass barware vignette. Laura's husband and co-owner Sal, handles the rest. "I just do what she tells me," Sal said when we remarked on a festive overhead light fixture. "She told me what she wanted, and I built it."

MODERN MERCHANT'S LENA GLOVER'S SPACE AT MELANGELL "LEANS TOWARDS THE MASCULINE." YOU'LL SEE A LOT OF HORSE HUNTS, ANTLERS, SKETCHES AND PRINTS OF WOLVES, FOXES, LIONS, AND OWLS. "YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CATCH ME WEARING PINK," SHE SAYS.

Note: plan to spend some time here. There are several rooms over a couple of floors. Lena recently moved her own Modern Merchant wares into a space on the shop's second floor. "I love to use natural elements," she said. "I swap out lighter, warmer-weather things in my vases for pheasant feathers. It's replacing fresh and light textures with warmer and darker ones. It's cozy."

Her own space at Melangell "leans towards the masculine. You're not going to catch me wearing pink." [Editor's note: girl, same.] The room has tartans from Scotland, candles from England, and leatherbound books.

"You can even swap out your lampshades," Lena suggests, "from a summery creamy linen to black, which looks amazing on a brass lamp." She gestures towards a celery-green chair. "You can warm this up by throwing on a dark pillow that maybe has this shade running through it, toss a blanket over the arm, and you're immediately snug." Lena says you can store your seasonal swap items like you do your winter and summer clothes.

The store's space—upstairs and down—is peppered with seasonal vignettes that offer lots of inspiration. "I love to use natural elements because nature doesn't go away in fall and winter. It just changes colors." Just like us, changing our clothes.



WOMAN'S EXCHANGE

10 S. Church Street

If you read our feature about Woman's Exchange, *This Woman's Work*, you know the deal (and if you haven't, head to our website and read it in our Winter 2023 issue). In a nutshell, this is a volunteer-run operation with deep roots both in the community and nationally. Counting 15 shops across 10 states, Woman's Exchange was founded in 1832 as a place for women to sell items they either made or no longer needed to earn money during a time when women working outside the home was socially frowned upon. Call it a thrift shop with a mission.

Today, having marked 80 years at this location, Woman's Exchange West Chester is staffed entirely by volunteers. Further, all the money made from the sale of the donated merchandise that fills the two-story shop (first floor and basement) is put right back into the community in the form of donations to local charities. The trick here is donated, not curated. Or you can consign your items for a 50/50 split.

On our most recent trip, the window offered a glimpse of the cool weather finds we were looking for: a wool blanket with a graphic print in fall colors, a decorative basket bursting with pinecones and faux pumpkins, and a bold wall hanging in a pumpkin colored paisley print.

You'll find some real...well, finds here. The windows are always charmingly decorated, and there are sweet vignettes of seasonal merchandise as you would find in any other retail store. The difference is in the price tags, where items range from a couple of bucks to $100 or so. You'll find china to tchotchkes here;

framed prints to dog sweaters—you just really never know. This is the kind of place to go without an agenda; something almost invariably will jump out at you that you didn't even know you needed. We found a four-piece set of festive gold, green, and red Ludwigsburg wine glasses marked down to four dollars—perfect for a holiday table. Cheers to that.

GIUNTA'S FURNITURE

513 E. Gay Street

"A fun way to refresh for fall is with color," says Jenna Forte, manager of Giunta's Furniture. "When we are filling up our carts looking ahead to the season, we think of a warmer color scheme and bring in a little of both fall neutrals and some muted shades of autumn. Simply changing out your tabletop accessories, like adding faux foliage and a sweet velvet pumpkin here and there, will completely rejuvenate your space for the season."

Giunta's has been a furniture go-to in the borough for years, but it's not just a cavernous space filled with couches and end tables. There's lighting, tablescapes, vases, artwork and wall hangings, pillows, and other home décor that give the space more of a boutique-like vibe than a furniture store feel.

For fall, Jenna suggests simple changes like layering pillows for texture to add warmth to your space. For the winter, they add not only holiday décor, but unique accessories and distinctive gifts. "We carry Capri Blue candles, both the popular Volcano year-round scent along with seasonal scents like Pumpkin Spice and Apple Cinnamon," Jenna said. "We also carry West Chester-specific gifts, like unique locally crafted pottery along with coasters and other accessories."

Kitchens and family rooms tend to be the first rooms that people tackle when bringing in the fall décor, according to Jenna. A sweet vase with faux foliage and a Pumpkin Spice candle would be a simple switch in the powder room or any bathroom. "Add a gorgeous fall tea towel and you're done!" she says. "In the dining room, we are always excited to

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help our customers restyle their tablescapes with runners, placemats, and of course, centerpieces."

Their latest retail foray is clothing; warm yourself up as you would your house. "We consider Giunta's West Chester the perfect spot for not only custom furniture but for uncommon gifts, accessories, and now your 'outfit of the day' with our gorgeous new boutique," Jenna said. "We offer the complete package. We're proud to sell gorgeous Marinella Jewelry, a local West Chester artist. We are carrying Risen Jeans, Kut from the Kloth, Susan Shaw jewelry, and much more." Can't forget the Eagles gear. "We have Eagles sweaters, sweatshirts, and the hats are a big seller. Phillies hats and bracelets are big hits as well."

Whether it's for your house or yourself, Giunta's is a one-stop shop. "Our staff is always willing to help you put something together whether it's your Friday night outfit, a housewarming gift, or completely restyling your family room."

PAINTED PLATE

104 Market Street

"We are in our 24th year, and we are still amazed at some people's creativity," says Painted Plate owner Chet Reber.

If you're not familiar with this paint your own pottery spot, it is a go-to hub for creatives, girls' night gatherings, and unofficial Kids' Birthday Party Central within the borough. You can choose from over 100 different ceramic items to personalize with over 60 different colors of paint. It can be as simple as a cat that I painted to look like my own (it's close, but no cigar), or you can DIY platters and plates for your dining room décor. But things really ratchet up when the temps go down here. "The couple of weeks leading up to Halloween are easily our busiest time of the year," said Maddie Cunningham, who has worked at Painted Plate for two years.

"The colder months are definitely busier than the warmer months overall," Chet agreed. "I think we get busy at the end of October because the weather is changing, and people are looking to do more indoor activities. They are finally over all the distractions of summer and are getting back into some of their regular routines." Chet says that from the middle of October until the end of December, they are very busy. "Christmas is by far our biggest holiday, and we sell a whole bunch of Christmas themed pottery starting in mid-October." Oh, to be organized enough to be thinking ahead to Christmas décor prior to Halloween!

As for those Halloween themed items, "I would say that it is a pretty even split between 'spooky' and 'cute' items," Chet said. "And it's pretty cool to observe; people can get very creative with their Halloween projects." You can go as benign as painting your own pumpkins and gourds, to ghosts, goblins and skulls to bring that Halloween charm into your space. But there's something else at play here.



AS FOR THOSE HALLOWEEN THEMED ITEMS. "I WOULD SAY THAT IT IS A PRETTY EVEN SPLIT BETWEEN 'SPOOKY' AND 'CUTE' ITEMS." SAID THE PAINTED PLATE OWNER CHET REBER.

"I do think there's a certain warmth dimension that comes from the fact that people are painting these home décor objects themselves," Chet said. "I think our customers feel a bit more connected and more attached to something that they have created from their imagination." Make sure you bring yours to Painted Plate, by the way. There are no rules here. Have you always wanted a purple speckled pumpkin but can't find it at the farmstand? Create your own here—and added bonus: it won't go bad.

You can make a reservation, or they gladly take walk-ins here. Their prices, according to their website, range from $6 to $95, and once your autumn masterpiece is complete, they will fire and glaze it for you.

"Over the next couple of months there will be handprints painted into turkeys, and baby's footprints painted into Christmas trees and reindeer," Chet said. "This time of year, especially, a hand-painted piece of pottery on your kitchen counter or you mantle definitely brings a special kind of warmth into your home!"