### MAGAZINE MAGAZINE

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N | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

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Warm Up With Glenn's Lobster Mac & Cheese p10

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### From the Publisher

2016 will be remembered as the year of the presidential election and the loss of many of our favorite celebrities. But in spite of the chaos and sadness of last year, I still feel hopeful for 2017.

Some of you will recognize this quote about hope from the *Shawshank Redemption*, spoken by the character Red while on a bus to find his friend Andy somewhere in Mexico: "I find I'm so excited, I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free man can feel, a free man at the start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain. I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope."

And this from Alfred, Lord Tennyson: "Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'it will be happier'..."

Here's wishing you a happy new year of great adventure, personal growth, and love.

David

# eatured this mont

BUYING & SELLING UNIQUE **TREASURES** GLENN'S LOBSTER MAC DECORATING FOR WINTER







GARDEN STYLE FUN FOOD HAPPENINGS

### on the cover



On this month's cover is Deanna Stallings with Ace Estate Solutions. Her company helps families and individuals in transition, and discovers some remarkable treasures along the way. See related story page 6, Cover photo by Rick Haithcox, cover graphic design by David James.

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## ACE ESTATE SOLUTIONS PROVIDES FULL SERVICE ESTATE By David Hamrick



### GA: How did you get the idea to start an estate liquidation business?

**Deanna:** My mom and I had often discussed starting a business when she retired as a teacher. My parents helped down-size our Aunt Kathryn from a large historic home to a small independent living apartment, and six years later from that apartment to half a room in a memory care facility. This heart-wrenching, time consuming task inspired the idea for our business. We didn't know what or how to deal with all of that stuff... so, in June of 2014, we decided to offer solutions for other people having to deal with "that stuff".

### GA: What is an estate sale-Is it an auction?

**Deanna:** An estate sale is NOT an auction, but more like an incredible door-buster sale. We set up the contents in the home for a sale, advertise the sale, research and price all the items individually. Shoppers come in as if it were a store, and select their purchases. There is no waiting for an item to bid on; if a shopper wants an item, they can buy it right then.

### GA: How Do I find out about upcoming estate sales?

**Deanna:** You can sign up on our website, or check out our Facebook or Instagram pages.



instagram.com/aceestatesolutions

### GA: What is a buyout?

**Deanna:** A year later, in June 2015, people were selling their houses in a few days or less and we were booked out for 2 months with estate sales. That's when the crazy idea arose for providing a quick and convenient solution outside of the traditional mold of estate sales – We Pack It. We Move It. Our client gets the check! The idea caught on, and we've done more buyouts than estate sales in 2016.

### GA: You also do Trash-Outs...what is that?

**Deanna:** A Trash-Out is just that – We haul off all the trash, charging labor. If there are enough sell-able items, we can shave the Buyout price off of the total labor cost.

### GA: In estate sales, what kinds of items are most often for sale?

Deanna: Anything our clients leave behind for us to sell! From furniture to household items, everyday practical items and tools to unique, one-of-a-kind treasures. We have sources who buy firearms, gold and jewelry as well.

### GA: What are the advantages of using Ace Estate Solutions?

Deanna: We are a full-service estate liquidation company. We are turnkey, and can combine any or all of our services to create a customized package for our clients. We strive to live up to our name - ACE - Accountable. Compassionate. Efficient. Estate liquidation is time-consuming, and often emotionally draining, and we understand that. ACE provides the expertise and experience to help people with different situations.



### GA: What are some of the more unusual items you have had for sale?

Deanna: Well, that list can get pretty long! Original vintage movie posters, antique tools, old metal signs. A tiki bar! Catawba Valley pottery. Military items from WWII. Antique toys – from cars to farm equipment! We even had an estate sale that had items from an old retail store, including a hat display and Lucite signage.

### GA: You also have a Showroom where you have estate items for sale, correct?

**Deanna:** Correct. Our Showroom stays full of the items we acquire from our Buyouts. We have aisles in the middle where customers can fill up a shopping basket for \$5!! We also get in

unique furniture and unusual pieces, while still keeping the everyday, practical items in stock.

### GA: Who needs ACE's services?

Deanna: The definition of "estate liquidation" has evolved over time. With more and more people downsizing, our services aren't limited to actual estates – when someone passes away. That means, when someone is moving, we can usually help. That might be a move to a Senior Living Community, across country, or to a smaller house. We even recently cleaned out a business! Any situation that involves a lot of stuff to be sold or removed is an opportunity for ACE to help.

### GA: What do potential ACE clients need to know?

**Deanna:** First and foremost – Please do not donate anything or throw anything away before talking to us! The only thing our clients have to do is remove any items that are not for sale. We deal in volume, and don't typically buy one or two pieces. It is better to have us come out sooner rather than later!







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## ZISTOVISIT THE USE SUSSITIVE SUSSITI

### The Scenic White Beaches and Sparkling Bays

The white sandy beaches in the US virgin islands is one reason to vacation there. The water is crystal clear and the water temperatures warm all years round. Each island has many beaches to choose from with swimming, snorkeling, boating, scuba diving and sun bathing. Many beaches have restaurants, bars and stands to stop and eat. St. Thomas has Magens Bay, and Coki Beach. St. John has the Virgin Island National Park, Caneel Bay and Trunk Bay. St Croix has many beautiful beaches, diving, water sports, fishing, snorkeling, and windsurfing.

### **Shopping**

St. Thomas and St. Croix are known for duty free shopping. There are many small shops, malls, and even hotels with stores. They sell a wide variety of products like china, jewelry, crystal, art, clothing, watches, art, sculpture, pottery, books, postcards, perfume, tobacco and food. The main streets to shop on in ST. Croix are Christiansted and Frederickstead. Many shop are located in historic buildings. They sell hand painted shirts, jewelry with island themes, clothing, water sport products, and local crafts.

### **No Passport or Money Conversion**

You don't need to go to the trouble of getting a passport to visit the US Virgin Islands. Planning US virgin islands vacations is easy all you need is a driver's license and birth certificate. The fact that they use US dollars means no worries about converting money.

### **Less Expensive Air Line Flights**

The truth is that for an exotic location, the airline flights are cheaper. Look for off season times of the year to get some great deals on round trip tickets. Holidays as always will be more expensive because companies take advantage of the season. The best season to travel there is April to June and December to March.

### **Kid Friendly Activities**

There are many resorts and hotels that offer activities for children. It is a great location to bring the family. Hotels and resorts often offer discounts on meal and tickets to tourist attractions. Swimming, snorkeling, biking, horseback riding, zip lining, and the many attractions are good reasons to vacation with children.

### **Hotels and Resorts**

Many US virgin islands vacations hotels and resorts offer special deals. The provide discounts on rooms rented for more than two days. Some travel plans include airfare and lodging. Many resort and hotels offer many activities and amenities to travelers.

### Dining

There are many restaurants and cafes in the US Virgin Islands that make dining a pleasure. They serve tropical fruits, mangoes, star fruit, passion fruit guava and fig bananas. Fresh vegetables, seafood, steak, veal, and goat, are very popular in main entrees. Side dishes often have potatoes rice and beans. Wine, beer and tropical drinks with rum are served regularly.

### **Unique Attractions**

Most adults like to stop at the Cruzan Rum Distillery in St Croix to see how the rum is made. After the tour the guides will serve you some great drinks. Coral World Ocean Park is an indoor outdoor aquarium with baby sharks, sting rays and starfish. Visit Buck Island Reef Monument in St. Croix with hiking and diving for kids and adults. Walk your way through history at the Heritage trail with over 72 miles of exploration.

### **Over Fifty Islands to Explore**

The US Virgin Islands have over 50 different islands. The main islands are St. Thomas, St. John, and St Croix. This gives you plenty of variety and options to explore.

### **Transportation**

On US virgin islands vacations you can rent an American car but must learn to drive on left side of the road. Other means of transportation are ferries or a seaplane which is quicker and you can arrange multiple flights.

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### LOBSTER MAC AND CHEESE

### Ring in the New Year

I know I enjoyed my mild Christmas but as winter finally comes to the Carolina's the order of the day is warm comfort food. Many of us have resolved to lose a few pounds after our holiday indulgences but there are just some days we need to have comfort, in our warm homes, in our friends and family and in our food.

Why are we comforted by food? Is it a familiar favorite, a childhood memory or something about the food itself? Well scientific research has actually linked certain foods to positive impulses in the brain. In studies they bypassed the eating by injecting food compounds directly into the stomach. This helped them isolate it was not the pleasurable process of eating but the actual food compounds tested which stimulated the brain in a positive manner.

Now I would not recommend bypassing the pleasure of sitting down to a meal, enjoying conversation and lingering over a nice red wine (also found to be healthful). But if you are trying to shrink your waist I find small portions of delicious foods can be a nice break from the greens, juicing, shakes and poached chicken breast. Not that poached chicken can't be made in interesting fresh ways or that a great salad can't be satisfying, but neither of these could ever fall to the category of a comforting meal.

So that brings us to one of my favorite comfort foods and one often requested from my kitchen.

- ½ 1b Langostines (Frozen or if fresh tails shelled and poached in butter)
- 1 box Pasta (Cavatappi or Campanelle as they really hold the cheese sauce)
- 3 cups Cheese (I blend smoked Gouda and Asiago)
- 4 oz Velveeta (It's not cheese but it's what Momma uses so it's got to be in there)
  • 2 TBS Flour (I use Wondra)

- 1 tsp Smoked Paprika (Spanish Pimenton preferred)
- 1/2 tsp Salt, • 1/2 tsp White Pepper
- Pinch Cayenne Pepper
- 3 cups Half and Half (or Milk)
- cup Panko bread crumbs
- 1 tsp Old Bay Seasoning
- 4 TBS Butter

### Method:

Grate your cheese and mix with the flour, paprika, salt and peppers, in a sauce pan melt cheese mixture and cubed Velveeta in the half and half; heating till everything is melted and starts to thicken. Add the langostines. There will seem to be quite a bit of cheese sauce, but cheesier is better in my books and as you bake the mac and cheese it thickens more and soaks into the pasta. (too little sauce and it gets dry)

Boil your choice of pasta until al dente (don't overcook), drain well and put in a baking dish 3-4 inches deep. Pour the cheese sauce with langostines over the pasta and mix well. Melt the butter and add to the Panko and Old Bay, sprinkle over the top of the mac and cheese bake till the top is lightly browned.

Some options depending on your family; add Jalapenos or chipotles, substitute shrimp for the langostines, use real lobster tails poached in butter, add bacon bits to the breadcrumb and use the drippings to replace butter. Mac and Cheese is a great vehicle for lots of variation.

As we huddle warm in our homes, remember there are many even here in our little corner of North Carolina who don't have enough to eat, a warm bed to stay in or family to surround them. Let's all resolve to help one another in 2017, it is easy to be someone else's blessing and in return be blessed.

OBSTER BY ANY



So what's a langostine? It depends on where in the world you are. In Europe, it's actually a small lobster mostly found in the North Sea off the coast of Europe also called a Dublin Bay Prawn or Norway Lobster. In Italy and Spain it is called a langostino and appears more like a giant prawn. Traditionally used for Scampi. In the Americas it is primarily found in South America and is also known as a Squat Lobster which is more related to a crab. Here in the South its closest cousin is the crawfish. The texture and taste of langostine make it an everyday version of lobster.

Follow me on Facebook to continue the culinary adventure.





# DECORATE FOR WINTER COZINESS

By Nan Bridgeman

anuary and February are wonderful months to slow down and savor the quiet. The holiday rush is over, and we have time to regroup and reflect. It is a great time to sip a steaming cup of tea or cocoa, sit by a crackling fire and snuggle in from winter's chill. We can catch up on our reading, daydream what we will plant in our gardens in a few months or take a well-deserved nap. During these months we usually gravitate to our den. And like the name suggests, it is a great place to hibernate during winter.



Here are a few suggestions to add comfort and coziness to your den or sitting room. This room should have a sense of enclosure so we feel snuggly and protected.

Select a color palette of rich warm tones that envelope us rather than light and airy colors which work better in sunrooms and porches. Nature's fall colors do the trick easily, with golds, olives, russets, and browns. My husband's favorite spot in the shop is the brown study. The walls have been painted a rich chocolate brown with cream trim. Over time we have paired the brown with accent colors ranging from russet

red to mustardy gold, to khaki, to soft gray blue, then olive green and now burnt orange, as we would add a new rug, or upholstery. Every time, brown did its job of playing off the other color and adding warmth. In fact, I think of brown as the warmer version of black, the

classic neutral. I love to add another color to create interest, as brown on brown can easily feel blah, if we are not careful.

Another aspect to consider is texture. Grass cloth walls, nubby linens, soft chenilles and corduroys and rich velvets add texture to give depth and up the snuggly factor in your





room. Leather is another good choice for a cozy den, whether used on a sofa, or ottoman or as we used it here as a floorcovering. We just tossed a cow hair hide on top of a seagrass rug to create another layer of texture to this sitting room.

Your choice of pattern can also contribute to your den's coziness. I love to use plaids and paisleys in dens and studys. These patterns came from cold misty Scotland whose weavers knew instinctively how to visually warm up their home. In fact, the name paisley came from the town of Paisley, a textile center is Scotland known for its reproduction of the exotic Persian fig shape in its textiles. English men's clubs adopted these patterns for their lounges I suspect because these patterns convey a sense of comfort and masculinity. If you have a solid sofa, then pile on plump pillows in plaids and or paisleys or have an ottoman upholstered in a texture rich fabric. Have a soft throw at hand to chase away chills.



From cavemen times, we have always loved sitting close to a crackling fire. It provides warmth and light and creates a sense of

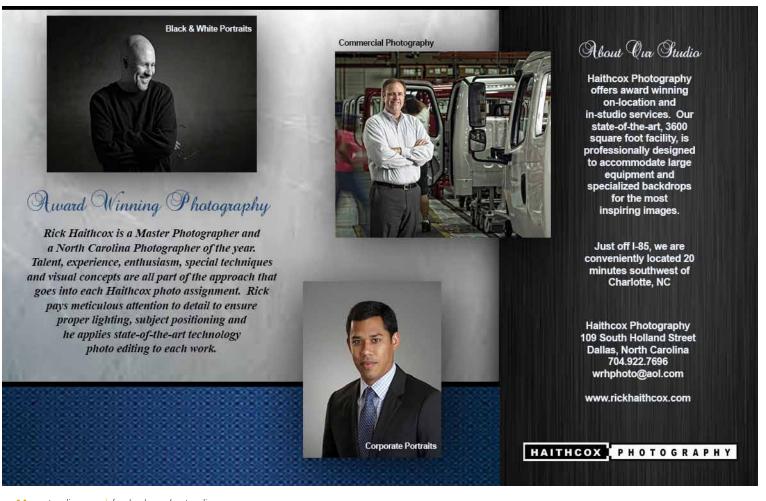
well-being during the dark winter months. Some say the TV has taken the place of a fire as a gathering spot but if you are fortunate to have a fireplace, enjoy it during these months. Pull up some comfy seats near the fire and have a hearthside supper for friends and family. Stews, chili and jambalaya are a one bowl meal that do not require cutting and can be easily eaten away from the table. Toast marshmallows and make s'mores with your children or grandchildren. Or create a romantic table for two dinner by the fire to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Each season has its palette and its purpose. Enjoy nesting in your cozy home and savor the quiet, being close with loved ones and recharging mentally. The tumultuousness of spring will be here before we know it!

Nan Bridgeman retired as an educator at a local museum, and owns Blythe Gallery, an interiors shop in Belmont. She enjoys helping customers create their own personal "happy place".

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