

LIFE, LAND, CARE, & GATHERING

4R™ JOURNAL

ISSUE NO. 01 · WINTER 2026

THE WINTER EDIT

from our corner of Montana

WILLIE'S DISTILLERY
A Spirit Made Here

RANGE MARKET
Winter Gatherings, Direct from the Ranch

OUR CANCER STORIES
The Gift of Being There

MADISON COUNTY CATTLEWOMEN
Beyond the Snow

THE WINTER GIFT GUIDE
Give Thoughtfully Gift Beautifully

PURE MONTANA SPIRIT

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Photograph © 2026 Bailey Jo Mill. Supplied by Willie's Distillery.

FROM 4R FARM

A letter from 4R Farm

The first issue of a seasonal Journal about life, land, care and gathering.



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WORK

Very little of lasting value exists on its own.

As winter settles over Montana, our work shifts with it. The season carries a particular kind of beauty - a season filled with faith, gratitude, generosity, and the quiet warmth of gathering with the people we love.

At 4R, winter brings together the things we care most about making well: botanical care, home and ranch stewardship, provisions shaped by the land, and heirloom pieces created for meaningful giving. Each is guided by the same commitment to provenance, craftsmanship and stewardship.

But 4R Journal was created to make room for more than what we make. It is a place for the people, knowledge and stories that shape life in our corner of Montana - from healing and hospitality to land, food, art and the work of the season.

Our lives are shaped by the people we work beside, the businesses we return to, the tables where we gather and the makers, growers, caregivers and craftspeople whose knowledge we trust.

Their stories show that provenance is more than a point of origin. It is a living network of place, purpose, responsibility and care - the fuller understanding of value this Journal was created to hold.

Throughout this first issue, you will meet contributors and makers whose work brings something meaningful to the rituals of care, gathering, tending and giving. Their voices are here because we admire not only what they create, but the care they instill in their work.

We hope the Winter Edit offers a thoughtful pause - something to read slowly, return to, and carry with you through the months ahead. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your season, and for helping us begin this new chapter of 4R Journal.

WITH GRATITUDE,

Karl + Jennifer Renne

www.4R.farm

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PROVENANCE

From our corner of Montana

PLACE, PEOPLE + THE WORK OF THE SEASON

Provenance is often understood as a record of origin - where something came from, who made it and how it arrived in our hands. But to us, it means something more.

It is the relationship between a thing and the place that shaped it. It is the knowledge held by the person who made it, the materials chosen with care and the reason the work was worth doing in the first place. Provenance gives an object context, but it also gives our lives a deeper sense of connection. It reminds us that very little of lasting value exists on its own.

Here in our corner of Montana, the seasons make those connections difficult to overlook. Winter reveals what has been tended well. It asks us to notice what provides shelter, nourishment, comfort and strength. It draws our attention to the work that continues quietly: animals cared for before daylight, meals made from what was stored away, homes prepared for gathering and people finding thoughtful ways to care for one another.



Provenance is not simply where something began. It is the relationship between place, people, purpose and care.

PEOPLE OF THE WINTER EDIT

Contributors and Makers

People, organizations and makers whose work shapes the Winter Edit.

01

Willie Blazer
Willie's Distillery

Montana spirits, festive cocktails and gathering traditions.



Photo © 2026 Bailey Jo Mill; supplied by Willie's Distillery.

02

Cassi Hammerness and Lindsey Anson
Range Market

Farm-direct food, seasonal recipes and thoughtful gifting.



Photo courtesy of Range Market.

03

Rebekah Clark
Madison County CattleWomen

Agricultural education, beef advocacy and rural community.



Photo courtesy of Rebekah Clark.

04

Alexys Bacon
Wildflower Massage + Wellness

Restorative bodywork and intentional care in Ennis and Whitehall.



Photo provided by Alexys Bacon.

05

Beth Blythe
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Practical, dignified support through healing and recovery.



Photo provided by Beth Blythe.

06

Rebekah Clark
Writer and Poet

Writing, agriculture and rural Montana life.



Photo by Carson Clark.

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Haley Miller
Essayist

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Photo provided by Haley Miller

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Stratford Tree Service

Tree care through every Madison Valley season.

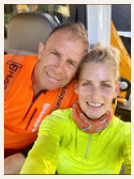


Photo courtesy of Stratford Tree.

PEOPLE OF THE WINTER EDIT

Contributors and Makers, continued

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Jaime Edmundson
Keller Williams Montana Realty

Finding a Montana home that works in winter.



Photo courtesy of Jaime Edmundson.

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Heidi Longwith
Sapphire Dance Theatre

Movement, community and seasonal tradition.



Stock photograph by 3805504 via Pixabay.

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Barbara Romerio
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Expressive leather goods made to gather character.



Portrait courtesy of Bacci Roots.

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Polya Genova
Our Cancer Stories

Research and real-life stories helping people understand cancer and find support.



Photo provided by Our Cancer Stories.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WINTER EDIT

Made by neighbors. Rooted in place.

This inaugural issue brings together writers, makers, farms, ranches and community organizations whose work gives winter in our corner of Montana its character.

4R™ MADISON COUNTY MONTANA

The Work of This Place

Land, family, craftsmanship, and the story behind 4R Farm

By 4R Journal

At the foot of Montana's Tobacco Root Mountains, the seasons have a way of reminding everyone that nature keeps its own calendar.

Spring rarely arrives when expected. Summer is beautiful and far too brief. By the time autumn settles across Madison County, the work has already turned toward harvesting the last herbs, preparing for the first hard frost, and readying the farm for winter.

For Jennifer and Karl Renne, 4R Farm is both a family home and the foundation of a growing Montana heritage brand. What began as a new chapter for their family has evolved into something neither initially set out to create—a business that brings together botanical wellness, heritage care, provisions, and thoughtfully crafted gifting.

The farm itself remains central to that story. Gardens and herbs grow alongside the daily activity of chickens, pigs, honeybees, and two ever-present dogs. Ponds, a creek, and the surrounding mountains provide a landscape that changes dramatically with the seasons, while the demands of caring for the property give structure to daily life.

But 4R Farm is about more than the land it occupies. It reflects the Renne family's belief in the value of meaningful work, careful stewardship, and craftsmanship rooted in purpose and place.

Where Purpose Took Root

The first botanical balms made at 4R Farm were never intended for sale.



4R Farm in winter. Photograph supplied by 4R Farm.

After nearly two decades serving as a CIA Operations Officer, much of that time spent overseas in demanding environments, Jennifer was ready for a different chapter. Karl, a former Marine Corps officer and retired CIA Paramilitary Operations Officer, brought his own extensive background in service and operations. Together, they established a life in Montana centered on their three daughters, faith, family, and the work of building something of their own.

Personal health challenges brought unexpected meaning to that transition. Following a traumatic brain injury, a melanoma diagnosis, and prophylactic bilateral mastectomies, Jennifer became increasingly discerning about the ingredients and products she used.

Her interest in botanical preparations developed into a practice of studying, formulating, and refining balms crafted with whole-plant herbal infusions, traditional fats, and Montana beeswax.

What began as a response to her own needs gradually became something she wanted to share with others.

At the same time, Karl was helping shape the practical foundations of the farm and its emerging business. His work spans the operational, technical, and production systems that support 4R Farm, as well as the custom-gifting and design capabilities that have become an important part of its identity.

Together, they have built a business where provenance, stewardship, and craftsmanship are not merely ideals, but guiding principles reflected in the work itself.



MEND · GENTLE Care
Images supplied by 4R Farm.



SAVON · Goat milk soaps
Images supplied by 4R Farm.

From the Land

The rhythm of 4R Farm is closely tied to the botanicals grown or responsibly foraged on the property.

Calendula, chamomile, lemon balm, yarrow, sage, and other herbs are tended through the growing season, harvested at appropriate times, and carefully dried or infused for use in botanical preparations.

Knowing an ingredient from its earliest growth through its final use brings a particular understanding of its value. There is a meaningful difference between purchasing a finished extract and watching a plant weather a late Montana frost, harvesting it by hand, and preparing it for the months ahead.

That relationship between origin, process, and finished product is carried throughout the 4R collections.

Botanical Wellness offers intentional care for skin, body, and daily ritual, crafted with whole-plant infusions, traditional ingredients, and a deep respect for season and place. The Signature Collection serves everyday skincare, body care, and grooming; GENTLE Care considers the needs of sensitive skin and recovery seasons; and the PRO Line provides botanical preparations developed for professional practitioners.

IRON R | Heritage Home & Ranch Care extends the philosophy of stewardship to the materials that furnish and sustain daily life. Formulated for the care of leather, wood, metal, and stone, the collection reflects an appreciation for useful things and the craftsmanship behind them. Whether maintaining a well-worn leather piece, protecting a wood surface, or caring for the materials of home and ranch, IRON R is rooted in preservation, utility, and respect for what has been made to last.

PROVISIONS | SAVON + BAR R brings that same attention to the everyday rituals of home and table.

SAVON, the farm's artisan goat milk soap collection, marks the first release in what is envisioned as a growing collection of treasured bathing rituals. The five inaugural soaps offer distinctive botanical and aromatic experiences, bringing thoughtful ingredients and a sense of occasion to a familiar part of daily life.

Alongside SAVON, BAR R celebrates the culinary side of the farm. Harvest finishing salts bring together carefully selected ingredients, including farm-grown garlic and herbs, while the distinctive Distillery Salts developed in collaboration with Willie's Distillery in Ennis reflect a shared appreciation for Montana provenance, craftsmanship, and the pleasures of gathering around the table.



CROSS R · Walnut keepsakes and considered pairings.
Image supplied by 4R Farm.

Together, SAVON and BAR R represent an expanding vision for provisions: familiar essentials thoughtfully crafted to bring care, character, and a sense of place into everyday living.

CROSS R | Curated Gifting represents another important expression of the farm's heritage philosophy—and a growing part of its future.

Centered on heirloom walnut goods, personalized craftsmanship, and intentional botanical balm pairings, CROSS R was developed around the belief that a meaningful gift should reflect both the occasion and the person receiving it.

Each engraved walnut keepsake box offers an opportunity to create something personal. Designs may reflect a family name, a meaningful place, a significant milestone, or the identity of a business wishing to recognize clients and colleagues. Within the boxes, curated botanical selections bring together the care and craftsmanship of 4R's wellness collections.

The approach brings personal and corporate gifting into a shared tradition: recognizing people and occasions through objects chosen with purpose.

For Jennifer and Karl, CROSS R also reflects the complementary nature of their work. Jennifer's understanding of botanical care and thoughtful presentation meets Karl's technical skill and custom-design capabilities, allowing each project to be approached with attention to the recipient, the materials, and the story behind the gift.

As the collection develops, its guiding emphasis remains on provenance, individual expression, and heirloom craftsmanship. The walnut box is not merely packaging but part of the gift itself—something intended to be kept, used, and remembered long after its original contents have been enjoyed.

Across Botanical Wellness, IRON R, Provisions, and CROSS R, **provenance, stewardship, and craftsmanship remain the common thread**—rooting each collection in the materials, traditions, and sense of place that define 4R Farm.

A Season for What Matters

As winter settles across Madison County, life at 4R Farm moves into another rhythm.

The gardens rest beneath the snow. The bees gather within their hives. Work turns toward the animals, the workshop, and the preparations that will carry the family through the colder months.

Inside, botanical formulations continue to take shape, artisan soaps are prepared, walnut keepsakes are engraved, and the work of growing a business carries on alongside the familiar routines of family and farm life.

The work is never entirely finished. There is always another season to prepare for, another idea to explore, another project waiting its turn.

Yet that ongoing work is also part of what gives the place its character.

For Jennifer and Karl, 4R Farm represents a life built around **faith, family, and purpose**—and a shared commitment to building something that honors the land, the people, and the traditions that have shaped their journey.

It is a story still unfolding, guided by the seasons and grounded in the belief that provenance, stewardship, and craftsmanship are worth carrying forward.

Explore 4R at www.4R.farm.

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Madison County Catholic Community

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Diocese of Helena

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Mass Schedule - Nov - April

WEEKEND MASS

St. Theresa - Whitehall	**Saturday 5:00 p.m.**
St. Mary's - Laurin	**Sunday 8:00 a.m.**
St. Patrick's - Ennis	**Sunday 10:00 a.m.**

WEEKDAY MASS

Tuesdays & Thursdays - 7:30 a.m.
St. Joseph's - Sheridan

Wednesday - 9:00 a.m.
St. Patrick's - Ennis

First Fridays - 9:00 a.m.
St. Patrick's - Ennis

Reconciliation by appointment or before Mass.

(406) 842-5588

Madcocathcomm@gmail.com

HOME + GATHERING | ENNIS, MONTANA

A Spirit Made Here

Willie's Distillery with 4R Journal



Photograph © 2026 Bailey Jo Mill. Supplied by Willie's Distillery.

In Ennis, Willie's Distillery turns grain, mountain weather and a deeply rooted family history into spirits that carry the character of the place.

At Willie's Distillery in Ennis, the sense of gathering is closely connected to the work itself. The bottles on the back bar may travel far beyond the Madison Valley, but their story begins here—with grain, water, weather, skilled hands and an independent Montana spirit.



Willie Blazer, CEO/Founder

Join us in the Tasting Room
Monday - Sunday
9am - 9pm
Ennis, Montana

Photograph © 2026 Bailey Jo Mill.
Supplied by Willie's Distillery.

Willie's was founded in 2012 by Willie and Robin Blazer with the intention of creating spirits that reflected the authenticity of the American West while supporting the people and economy around them. Their respective histories gave the distillery both its character and its foundation.

Willie came to the work after serving as an Army Ranger, Special Forces Medic, Hotshot Wildland Firefighter and Smokejumper. Robin was raised on a grain farm in southwest Montana and brought both her agricultural knowledge and her experience in business development and marketing. Together, they built something that felt inseparable from its setting: a small-town distillery with a distinctly Montana point of view.

From Grain to Glass, by Hand

That sense of place is present throughout the production process.

Corn, barley, oats and rye are milled, mashed, fermented and distilled on site. Other spirits draw flavor from ingredients such as honey, cream and locally gathered chokecherries. A custom copper pot still anchors the work, but much of what defines the finished bottle comes down to judgment: tasting each batch, selecting the heart of the spirit and knowing when a barrel has reached the right point in its aging.

Montana participates in that process, too. Shifts in temperature, dry mountain air and elevation influence the interaction between whiskey and wood. No two barrels pass through those conditions in exactly the same way. Blending them requires attention rather than a formula—a willingness to listen to what the spirit has become.

Even as Willie's has grown, much of the work remains deliberately hands-on. The spirits are still produced, bottled, labeled, corked and packed by hand in Ennis. That commitment gives the operation a kind of intimacy. Each bottle has passed through a series of decisions and through the hands of people who know the work firsthand.

Willie's is a production space, but it is also part of the social life of Ennis. Its Main Street tasting room hosts live music and gatherings as varied as dance lessons, yoga, comedy and collaborative community events.

In winter, that role feels particularly important. When the days grow shorter and the distances between towns feel a little longer, the places that invite people inside become part of how a community keeps itself connected.

A bottle brought to the table can do something similar. It can mark a celebration, welcome someone home or turn an ordinary evening into a reason to stay awhile. It might be bourbon poured over ice, a warm drink passed around after dinner or a Montana liqueur shared with someone who has never tasted a chokecherry.

The value is not simply in what is poured. It is in knowing something of the grain, the barrel, the family history and the hands behind it.

That is what provenance offers: not a claim that something is precious because it is rare, but an understanding of why it belongs to its place.

At Willie's, that place is Ennis. It is the Madison Valley and the surrounding mountains. It is agricultural knowledge carried forward, work still completed by hand and a tasting room with the lights on as evening settles over Main Street.

And in winter, when we gather a little closer and stay at the table a little longer, that story feels especially worth pouring.

Willie's Distillery

Small-batch spirits, made and bottled by hand in Ennis, Montana.

312 E Main Street Ennis, MT

(406) 682-4117

WILLIESDISTILLERY.COM

WARM UP WITH WILLIE'S



Hot Toddy

2 oz Willie's Honey Moonshine
2 tsp honey
2 tsp lemon juice
¾ cup hot water
Optional tea bag

Add Honey Moonshine, lemon juice, and honey to a mug; pour hot water over top. Throw in a tea bag if desired.

Western Coffee

1.5 oz Willie's Bighorn Bourbon
1 oz Willie's Coffee Cream Liqueur
4-6 oz brewed coffee

Pour all ingredients into a warm mug and warm up with Willie's. Cheers!

Berry White

2 oz Willie's Huckleberry Cream Liqueur
1 packet white hot chocolate
1 cup hot water

Make the white hot chocolate according to directions and pour in Willie's Huckleberry Cream Liqueur. Top with whipped cream and enjoy the taste of winter!

Caramel Russian

2 oz Willie's Snowcrest Vodka
1 oz Willie's Salted Caramel Cream Liqueur
1 oz heavy cream
Ice

Place ice in a glass, pour Vodka, Caramel Liqueur, then cream over top. Stir gently and enjoy.

(Substitute Willie's Huckleberry Cream Liqueur for a Purple Russian)

Mocha Mint

1.5 oz Willie's Coffee Cream Liqueur
1 oz creme de menthe
1 packet hot chocolate
1 cup hot water

Stir together until a smooth paste.
Top with hot water and mix.
Add an optional whipped cream garnish.

Stockman's Cider

1.5 oz Willie's Stockman's Whiskey
1 packet hot apple cider
1 cup hot water

Make apple cider with hot water and add Stockman's Whiskey for a classic cozy drink.

Salted Caramel White Hot Chocolate

2 oz Salted Caramel Cream Liqueur
1 packet white hot chocolate
1 cup hot water

Stir ingredients together until smooth. Top with hot water, mix, and add whipped cream. Enjoy the perfect sweet winter cocktail!

WILLIE'S DISTILLERY
ENNIS, MONTANA

Garlic & Steak Crostini with Creamy, Chive Horseradish Sauce



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANGE MARKET

RANGE MARKET

Created by @shelikesmilk in partnership with Range Market (www.rangemarket.com)

A sophisticated appetizer for this holiday season that is simple to make & doesn't break the bank using strip steaks from Montana's Hagerman Ranch (found at www.rangemarket.com) & only a few ingredients that you likely have on hand.

These elevated apps are sure to please a crowd & feed many this Christmas and holiday season!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb of NY strip steak
- S&P
- 3 tbsp cold butter
- 1 french baguette
- 1-2 tbsp truffle oil (can substitute for olive oil)
- 1-2 whole cloves of garlic
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- Fresh chives to garnish

FOR THE HORSERADISH CREAM SAUCE:

- 3/4 cup sour cream
- Horseradish— start with 1 Tsp and add more to taste
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 1.5 tsp cracked black pepper
- 1.5 tsp garlic powder
- 1.5 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- Fresh chives, minced

METHOD

01 Begin by patting your steaks dry with a paper towel and seasoning with salt and pepper generously on both sides.

02 Add 3 tbsp butter to a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat until melted and frothy, the skillet should get very hot but not smoking. Add steaks to skillet and cook on each side for 4-5 mins each. Remove from skillet and allow them to rest while you prepare the baguette.

03 Slice the baguette in about 1" thick pieces. Drizzle with oil and toast in oven or toaster oven until lightly golden and crispy. Rub garlic clove on the face of each individual baguette slice.

04 Slice your steak across the grain into thin slices and arrange on top of each toasted baguette slice.

05 Combine all ingredients for horseradish sauce and dollop a tsp at a time onto each crostini. Garnish with fresh chives.

A holiday appetizer made to feed a crowd.



Photo courtesy of Range Market

From empty grocery shelves to farm-direct Christmas gifts

THE RANGE MARKET STORY

How a graduate school idea became a marketplace connecting American farmers and ranchers with families across the country—and why we think farm-direct food makes one of the best Christmas gifts.

HOW RANGE MARKET GOT ITS START

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every aspect of our daily lives, something strange was happening in the meat industry.

Grocery store meat shelves were sitting empty. Consumers were struggling to find beef and other meat products. Meanwhile, major meatpacking companies were reporting record profits, and many independent livestock producers weren't seeing those same financial benefits.

For those of us involved in agriculture, it was a frustrating situation to watch. At the time, I (Cassi) was attending graduate school at Colorado State University, working toward my MBA. I had grown up in the ranching industry and spent my career in agriculture, so I understood both the challenges facing livestock producers and the opportunities that were emerging.

Consumers wanted a more direct connection to their food. They wanted to know where their meat came from and who raised it. And plenty of farmers and ranchers wanted to sell their products directly to consumers. But there was a problem.

Selling meat directly isn't as simple as raising a great animal. It requires a website, marketing, customer service, payment processing, shipping logistics, and a whole lot of time. Many producers had the desire to sell directly but lacked the knowledge, resources, or time to build an entire e-commerce business on their own.

That's when the idea for Range Market was born.

What if we could create one online marketplace where independent farmers and ranchers could sell their products directly to consumers without having to build and manage everything themselves?

And what if consumers could shop products from multiple farms and ranches, learn about the people raising their food, and have high-quality meat shipped right to their door?

In 2021, Range Market officially launched.

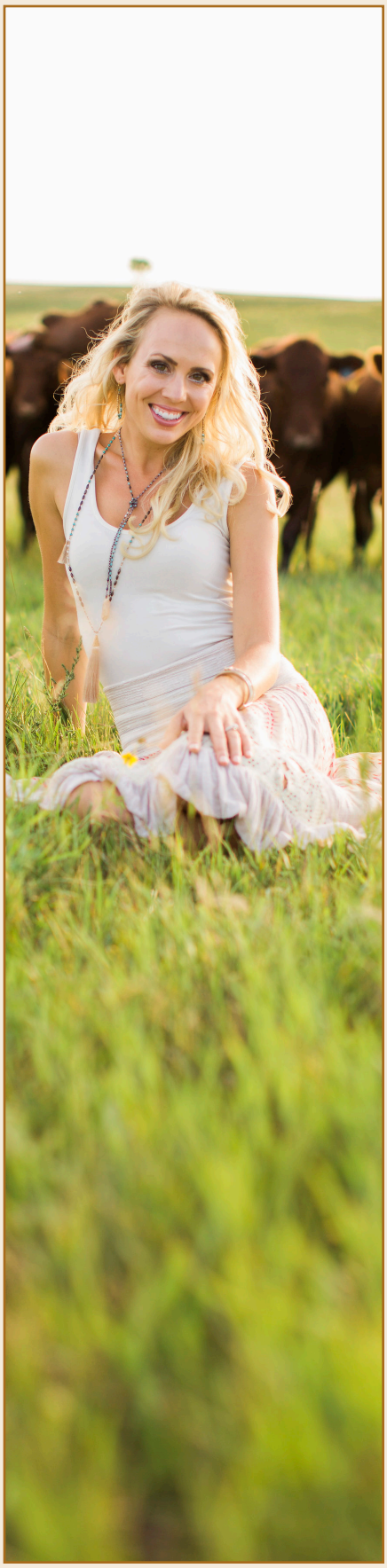


Photo courtesy of Range Market

A marketplace built around connection

“Every purchase supports a real farm or ranch family.”

Not long after launching the business, I became a mom. And, as any working mom knows, there are only so many hours in the day! Between a full-time career, a growing family, and a new business, I quickly realized I needed some help.

That's when I asked Lindsey, one of our Range Market producers and a fellow mom, to join me on the Range Market journey.

Together, we've continued building Range Market while balancing careers, motherhood, and everything else life throws our way.

We certainly haven't figured it all out, but we've remained committed to the same mission that inspired Range Market in the first place: helping independent farmers and ranchers reach more customers while making it easier for consumers to purchase food directly from the people who raise it.

Today, Range Market is home to a growing collection of independent producers offering premium beef, pork, and other farm-direct products. And one of the things we're most proud of is that every purchase supports a real farm or ranch family.

WHY WE LOVE GIVING MEAT FOR CHRISTMAS

Now, let's talk about Christmas shopping.

We all have those people on our lists who are impossible to buy for. The parents who insist they don't need anything. The grandparents who already have everything. The husband who doesn't want another shirt. Or the friends and family who live far away.

Our solution? Send them something delicious!

We happen to think a box of premium, farm-direct meat is one of the best gifts you can give. It's practical, thoughtful, and something the whole family can enjoy. Whether it's beautiful steaks for a special dinner, bacon and sausage for Christmas morning, or a selection of favorite cuts to fill the freezer, it's a gift that won't end up collecting dust in a closet.

And the best part? Your gift supports an independent American farm or ranch.

WINTER GIFTING | FOOD WITH A STORY

We can help you make it personal

But there's something else that makes giving a Range Market gift especially meaningful.

One of the things we love most about working with independent producers is that they're real people who genuinely care about their customers. And that means there's often a lot more flexibility than you'd find ordering from a big-box retailer. Our producers are happy to work with customers to create thoughtful, customized gifts. We've had customers who wanted to include artwork from their children in a meat box being shipped to grandparents. Others have wanted to add a special food item, a favorite seasoning, or something personal to make the gift extra meaningful. Those are the kinds of requests we love!

If you have something special in mind, reach out to us or directly to one of our producers. We'll do our best to help you put together the perfect gift.

Our recommendation is to reach out in early December if you're interested in a customized Christmas order. That gives everyone time to coordinate the details and make sure your gift is just right.

We have gifts for the steak lover, the family who has everything (but can always use more staples for weeknight dinners), and someone who takes their grilling and smoking meats seriously.

A box of meat (or cheese!) is a thoughtful and practical gift, especially for busy families who appreciate having good food around. A box from Range Market is perfect for the person who insists they don't need anything. It's also a great option for friends, neighbors, employees, and clients.

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING: RANGE MARKET MEAT SUBSCRIPTIONS

One of our favorite Christmas gift ideas is a Range Market meat subscription. Imagine it's the middle of February. It's cold, the holidays are long over, and suddenly a box of premium farm-direct meat shows up on your doorstep.

Now that's a pretty great surprise! Our subscriptions can be customized to fit your gift-giving needs. You can choose a delivery every other month (six boxes throughout the year), or you can give a subscription for just a few months.

And because we work with our subscription customers to customize their boxes, we can help make sure recipients receive products they'll actually use and enjoy.

It's a Christmas gift that brings a little happiness long after the decorations have been put away.

HOW TO ORDER CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM RANGE MARKET

We've tried to make ordering as simple as possible, but here are a few tips to help make your Christmas shopping a success.

1. Start by browsing Range Market and reach out for any special requests.

Visit www.rangemarket.com to explore our selection of beef, pork, and other farm-direct products from independent American farmers and ranchers. Several producers have gift bundles already created.

If you're interested in creating a customized gift, we encourage you to contact us or one of our producers in early December.

2. Consider a subscription.

If you want to give something that lasts beyond Christmas, ask us about setting up a subscription for your recipient. We'll help you customize the number of deliveries and the products included.

3. Place your Christmas order by December 20!

To ensure your gift arrives in time for Christmas, all Christmas orders need to be placed by December 20, 2026.

We always recommend ordering earlier when possible, especially for customized gifts.



Photo courtesy of Range Market



Photo courtesy of Range Market

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE A GIFT WITH A STORY

When I started Range Market in 2021, the goal was never simply to sell meat online.

It was to create more opportunities for independent farmers and ranchers and to make it easier for consumers to support them. Five years later, that mission is still at the heart of everything we do.

Every order placed through Range Market represents a connection between a family who raises food and a family who enjoys it. And we think that's something pretty special.

So this Christmas, whether you're sending steaks to your parents, a box of bacon and sausage to a friend, or a few months of meat deliveries to someone you love, know that your purchase means more than just what's inside the box.

You're giving a thoughtful gift, supporting an independent farm or ranch, and helping keep the connection between producers and consumers alive.

From our families to yours, thank you for supporting Range Market and the hardworking farmers and ranchers who make it possible.

"Every order represents a connection between a family who raises food and a family who enjoys it."

Merry Christmas!

— CASSI + LINDSEY

Thank you for supporting Range Market and the hardworking farmers and ranchers who make it possible.

RANGE MARKET
EST 2021

Cassi Hammerness and Lindsey Anson

Connecting families with independent American farmers and ranchers through thoughtfully sourced, farm-direct food.

RANGEMARKET.COM

CHRISTMAS ORDERS BY DECEMBER 20, 2026

HOME + GATHERING | WINTER AT HOME

Beyond the View

What Makes a Montana Home Work in Winter

WORDS BY JAIME EDMUNDSON

A mountain view can stop you in your tracks. Winter is when you find out how well the rest of the house works.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAIME EDMUNDSON

A few years ago, I helped a family buy a home tucked into the trees and rocks. They fell in love with the privacy, the yard, and the big family room. When I checked in with them later, they told me something I've thought about ever since. The spaces they loved in summer weren't where they spent their winters. Their favorite spot turned out to be the south-facing dining room, where they started most mornings catching up over coffee with the sun pouring in.

Most homes I show in the area have something beautiful going for them: a mountain range out the kitchen window, a creek at the back of the property, breathtaking farmland, a whole lot of sky. That's what gets people in the door. What makes them love a place for years is how it feels on an ordinary January morning. Coffee in a sunny kitchen, an easy drive to town, and a warm spot to drop the boots.

Here's what I look for when I'm helping someone find that.

FOLLOW THE WINTER SUN

On a clear Montana winter day, the sun on the snow is stunning. A room that catches it can become everyone's favorite place in the house. When you tour a home, notice which rooms are bright in the morning, and which get the afternoon light. Trees, hills, and outbuildings all shape how the light falls, so if you're visiting in summer, ask the sellers where the sun shows up in winter. They usually love telling you.

If you already own your home, notice where everyone ends up on a sunny February afternoon. Moving a reading chair or a desk closer to that window is one of the easiest upgrades there is and helps you get some much-needed Vitamin D on your face during that cold February season.

MAKE THE DRIVE EASY

A good driveway, an easy road, and a reliable plow plan are a big part of what makes winter feel easy. When you're looking at a property, picture it after a fresh snowfall and ask a few simple questions. Who plows the road? Where does the snow go? If it's a private or shared road, is there a written maintenance agreement, and what does it cost? Then drive the whole route to work, school, or the grocery store. Yes, we get lots of snow (most years) in the area, but each road has a different plowing schedule with the county, are you ok to stay at home a bit longer on our big snow days while roads are plowed, or do you need to be out at six in the morning to make it to work?

In town, notice sidewalks, steps, and the walk to the front door. A sunny, south-facing entry is a quiet luxury in January.

GIVE THE BOOTS SOMEWHERE TO GO

A good entryway makes coming home feel good. It doesn't need to be a big mudroom. A bench, a few hooks you can reach, a boot tray, and a basket for gloves will do. If you have kids like I do, you've probably come home with an armful of groceries to find the entryway buried under boots, hats, gloves, and snow gear. A well-organized entry, even a small one, gives all that winter gear somewhere to go. And it gives you a clear path to the kitchen.

GET TO KNOW THE HEAT

There's nothing like a warm house on a cold night. When you tour a home, walk through every room, not just the one with the thermostat, and notice how evenly it holds the heat. Basements, additions, and rooms over the garage are worth a second look.

If you're buying, ask about the heating system's age, service history, fuel source (propane, natural gas, electric, or wood), and past utility bills. Your own costs will depend on how you live, but the records give you a good starting point, and your inspector can tell you more.

If you're staying put, winter is the perfect time to notice which rooms feel coziest and which could use a little help. Make a note now and you'll have a clear list when you talk with a contractor. There are so many ways to improve heat retention in cooler rooms so it's worth noting where you might be losing heat.

CHOOSE THE WINTER YOU WANT

One of the best things about this part of Montana is how many ways there are to live here. Some people love acreage, with a shop, a barn, and morning chores under a sky full of stars. Others want to walk to coffee and spend their weekends skiing instead of plowing. One client dreamed of acreage on the river. Once she saw how much winter upkeep it would take, she chose a home closer to town with river views instead. She kept the scenery and lost most of the chores.

There's no wrong answer. The goal is a home that gives you the winter you're hoping for.

Winter shows you how a home really works, and it often shows you what you love most about it. Notice the sunny corners, the easy routines, and the spots where everyone gathers. That's useful to know whether you're buying, selling, or just making your current place a little cozier.

So, keep the view on your list. Just make room for a sunny kitchen, an easy drive, and a good spot to kick off your boots.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

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Jaime Edmundson is a real estate agent serving buyers and sellers across Madison, Jefferson, Broadwater and Gallatin Counties. She's known for straight answers, practical advice, and helping people find a place that fits the way they actually live.

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HOME + GATHERING | FOOD + TABLE

What's your cut?

REBEKAH CLARK | PRESIDENT, MADISON COUNTY CATTLEWOMEN

A practical guide to choosing the right beef for every holiday table

The holiday season is a time for gathering around the table, sharing stories and enjoying a good meal with the people who matter most. When planning your holiday meal, consider making beef the centerpiece of your table. Whether you are hosting an elegant dinner, gathering a crowd or preparing a cozy winter meal, there are a variety of beef cuts to fit your menu, budget and cooking style.

With so many cuts available at the meat counter, choosing the right one can feel overwhelming. The good news is that there is a cut of beef for nearly every holiday table, from impressive roasts to slow-cooked favorites that make the house smell wonderful all afternoon.

PRIME RIB

When it comes to a traditional holiday dinner, prime rib is hard to beat. Known for its rich flavor, tenderness and beautiful presentation, this roast is a favorite for holiday celebrations and special family gatherings. Prime rib comes from the rib section of the animal, where the meat's marbling helps create a juicy, flavorful result.

For the best results, season the roast generously, use a meat thermometer and allow it to rest before carving. Serve it with roasted potatoes, seasonal vegetables and a flavorful pan sauce or horseradish sauce for a meal worthy of a special occasion.

BEST FOR | Traditional holiday dinners, special occasions and feeding a group.



Holiday beef serving inspiration (stock image)
Photo: Nicu Cobasnean / Pexels

BEEF TENDERLOIN

If tenderness is your top priority, beef tenderloin is an excellent choice. This cut comes from a muscle that does relatively little work, making it exceptionally tender. Its mild flavor and refined presentation make it popular for formal dinners and smaller holiday gatherings.

Tenderloin is naturally leaner than many other premium cuts, so careful cooking is important to prevent it from drying out. Roast it whole for a beautiful centerpiece or cut it into individual filet mignon steaks. A garlic-herb crust, mushroom sauce or red wine reduction pairs wonderfully with its delicate flavor. Tenderloin generally costs more per pound, but its tenderness and special-occasion appeal can make it worth the splurge for a memorable holiday meal.

BEST FOR | Elegant dinners, smaller gatherings and special celebrations.

Cuts for every kind of gathering

CHUCK ROAST

Not every holiday meal needs to be fancy. A chuck roast is an excellent option for families who want a hearty, comforting meal without the price tag of premium roasts. Because chuck roast comes from the shoulder, a well-used muscle, it is best cooked low and slow to break down the connective tissue and create tender, flavorful beef.

Braising a chuck roast with beef broth, onions, garlic, carrots and potatoes transforms it into a satisfying meal with a flavorful gravy. Once the roast is in the oven or slow cooker, it requires relatively little attention - leaving more time for visiting with family and friends.

BEST FOR | Casual holiday gatherings, Sunday dinners and cozy winter meals.

STRIP LOIN OR TOP SIRLOIN ROAST

Looking for something special without choosing the most expensive cut at the meat counter? A strip loin roast or top sirloin roast can be a wonderful alternative. These cuts offer classic beef flavor and a great presentation, making them well suited to holiday meals.

Strip loin is known for its tenderness and rich flavor, while top sirloin offers a satisfying beefy taste and can be a good value for a larger gathering. Both work well with a simple seasoning of salt, pepper, garlic and herbs. Roast until the desired doneness is reached, let the meat rest and slice against the grain for the best eating experience.

BEST FOR | A traditional roast with a balance of flavor, tenderness and value.

BEEF BRISKET AND SHORT RIBS

If you are looking to switch things up this holiday season, brisket and beef short ribs offer flavorful alternatives to the traditional holiday roast. These cuts are known for their rich, beefy taste and can turn an ordinary winter dinner into something special.

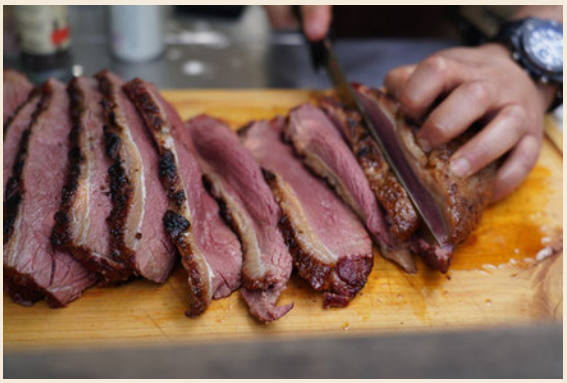


Photo: Gil Goldman / Pexels (stock image)

Brisket can be smoked, braised or roasted in the oven, making it a great option for a holiday gathering or New Year's dinner. Beef short ribs offer a hearty, restaurant-quality meal when cooked with onions, garlic, herbs and broth until the meat is tender and full of flavor. Serve them over mashed potatoes or creamy polenta for a comforting winter dish. While both cuts require some extra time, their deep flavor and variety of cooking options make them well worth considering.

BEST FOR | Winter gatherings, make-ahead meals and anyone ready to try something new.

HOME + GATHERING | AT THE WINTER TABLE

A few practices for a successful roast

CHOOSE FOR THE METHOD

Tender cuts such as rib roast and tenderloin are suited to oven roasting, while chuck, brisket and short ribs benefit from low, slow cooking.

PLAN AHEAD

Ask your local butcher about availability and order specialty roasts early, particularly during the holiday season.

USE A THERMOMETER

Cooking times vary. Whole beef roasts should reach a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F, followed by a rest of at least three minutes. Ground beef should reach 160 degrees F.

ALLOW THE MEAT TO REST

Resting helps the juices redistribute before carving and makes serving easier.

USE THE LEFTOVERS

Leftover roast beef can become sandwiches, beef stew, breakfast hash or a hearty beef-and-vegetable soup.

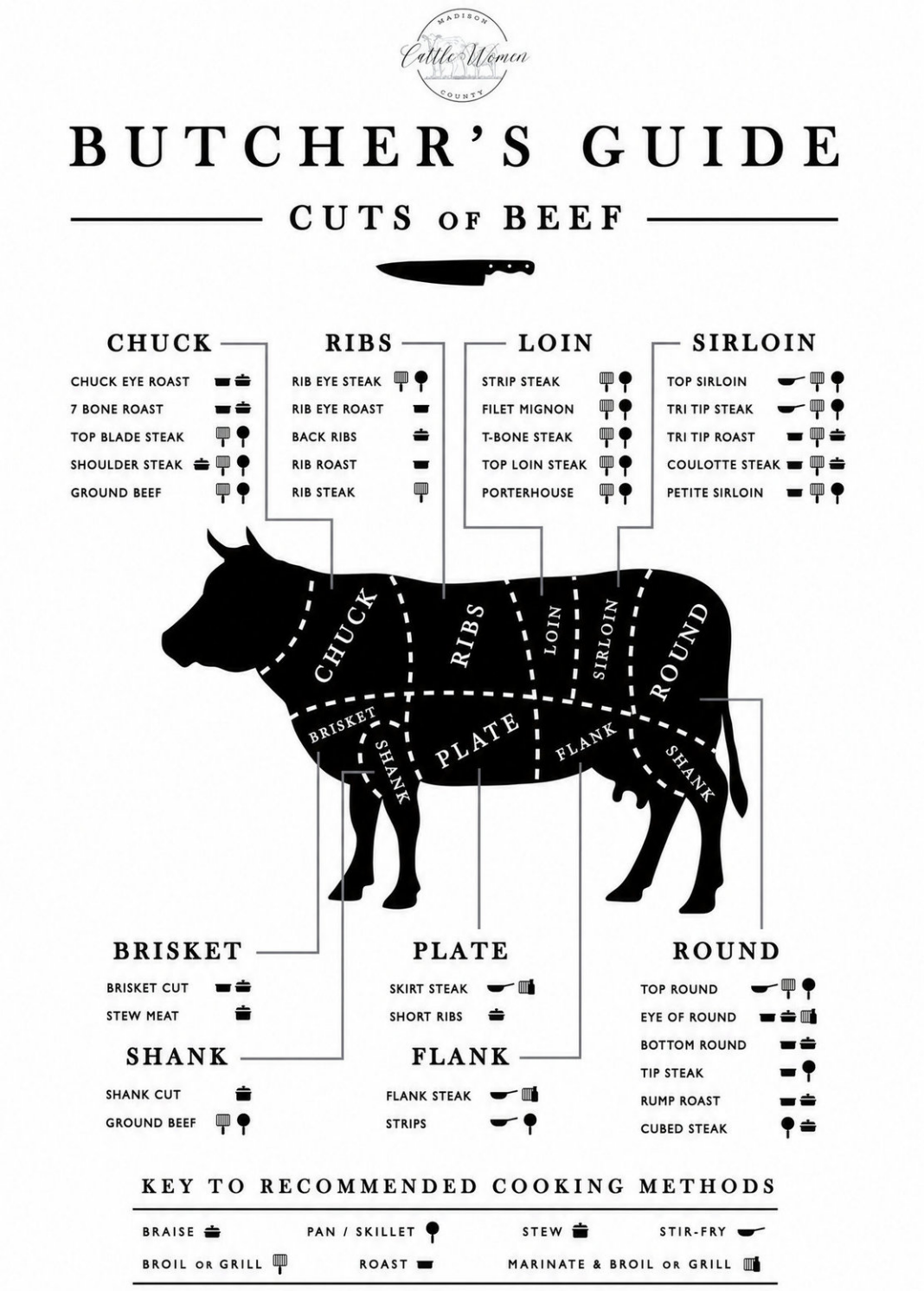
BRINGING BEEF TO THE HOLIDAY TABLE

Here in Madison County, cattle are an important part of our agricultural heritage, our rural communities and the livelihoods of many local families. Choosing beef for a holiday meal is one way to bring a versatile, nutritious protein to the table while celebrating the work that goes into raising and caring for cattle.

Whether your family gathers around a prime rib roast, enjoys a slow-cooked chuck roast after a day outdoors or tries a new recipe with short ribs, there is no single right way to make beef part of the holidays. The best cut is the one that fits your gathering, your budget and the traditions you want to carry forward.

HOME + GATHERING | MADISON COUNTY CATTLEWOMEN

A butcher's guide to beef cuts



LAND + WINTER IN MONTANA | RANCH LIFE

Beyond the snow on a Montana ranch

REBEKAH CLARK | PRESIDENT, MADISON COUNTY CATTLEWOMEN

When winter arrives in Montana, snow-covered pastures, freezing temperatures, and shorter days become part of everyday life. For many people, winter means spending more time indoors, enjoying the holidays, and settling in until spring. But for cattle ranchers, the work continues regardless of the weather. While the landscape may look quiet beneath a blanket of snow, winter is one of the busiest times of year for those who care for livestock. Raising cattle doesn't follow a traditional work schedule, and winter brings its own set of challenges. From feeding cattle in freezing temperatures to keeping water available and monitoring herd health, ranchers spend much of the season making sure their animals have what they need to stay healthy.



CLARK CATTLE RANCH | PHOTO COURTESY OF REBEKAH CLARK

What the herd needs

One of the biggest parts of winter ranch life is making sure cattle have enough to eat. During warmer months, cattle graze on pasture, but winter weather quickly changes how easily they access that forage. In areas where the wind blows, cattle can keep grazing through winter months, but in places where the snow piles up, ranchers rely on stockpiled feed for their cattle, often in the form of hay harvested during the spring and summer. Producing and storing enough hay for winter requires planning well in advance. Ranchers must estimate how much feed their herd will need, account for the length and severity of winter, and make sure they have enough supplies to last until cattle can return to pasture. Depending on the operation, feeding may involve hauling round bales into pastures, flaking hay off of a truck for cattle, or delivering feed using tractors and other equipment, such as mixers.

Nutrition is about more than simply keeping cattle full. Cows need adequate energy, protein, fat, minerals, and other nutrients to maintain body condition and support their stage of production. Cold weather can increase their energy requirements, particularly when temperatures drop, wind picks up, or cattle have to contend with wet conditions. Ranchers pay attention to the condition of their animals and adjust feeding programs as needed throughout the season. All of this work takes place regardless of the forecast. Even on the coldest days, the herd depends on someone showing up.

Feed is only one part of winter cattle care. Access to clean water is equally important, and freezing temperatures can make it a daily challenge. Ranchers regularly check water tanks and watering systems to ensure cattle can drink throughout the day. Cattle also need protection from harsh conditions. With adequate nutrition, a winter coat, and protection from severe wind and wet weather, healthy cattle are generally well equipped to handle the cold. However, prolonged storms and extreme temperatures can create additional stress.

Winter weather can also make everyday ranch work more difficult. Ranchers watch forecasts closely and prepare for incoming storms by checking fences, making sure feed is accessible, and ensuring water systems are working properly. Snowdrifts can cover gates and make familiar roads difficult to travel, turning routine chores into longer, more demanding tasks. Consistency is essential, but ranchers must also be ready to adjust their plans as conditions change.

Winter on a cattle ranch often means early mornings and long hours outside. Ranchers balance feeding and checking cattle with maintaining equipment, repairing fences, and preparing for changing weather. Unlike many jobs, these responsibilities cannot simply be postponed when conditions become unpleasant. Ranch families organize their days around the needs of their livestock, often adjusting their schedules to ensure their animals receive consistent care.

LAND + WINTER IN MONTANA | THROUGH EVERY FORECAST

The daily commitment

Winter is also a time to prepare for the seasons ahead. Ranchers may plan breeding programs, maintain machinery, and get ready for calving season. For operations with winter or early-spring calving, the colder months can bring additional responsibilities as ranchers prepare facilities, monitor pregnant cows, and gather supplies for newborn calves. Even for those who calve later in the year, winter remains an important time to manage the herd and plan for the coming grazing season. Despite the challenges, there is satisfaction in seeing cattle healthy and well cared for through the cold months, knowing that the work done now helps prepare the herd for spring.

For those who don't live or work around cattle, a snow-covered ranch may appear peaceful and still. Behind that scenery is a daily commitment to planning, hard work, and caring for animals through every season. Raising cattle in Montana means adapting to the weather and making sure the herd's needs are met, no matter the conditions. The next time a winter storm rolls across the Montana landscape, remember that ranchers are still out there delivering hay, checking water, watching their herds, and preparing for spring. It's a side of winter that often goes unseen, but it remains an essential part of Montana's agricultural communities.

CONTRIBUTOR + ORGANIZATION

Madison County CattleWomen

ARTICLE BY REBEKAH CLARK | PRESIDENT

Madison County CattleWomen promotes the beef industry through agricultural education, scholarships, community programs and support for local farms and ranches. Its members connect consumers with the people, care and daily work behind Montana beef.

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WINTER TREE CARE

Getting Madison Valley Trees Through Winter

A practical guide for homeowners and landowners

WORDS BY SIMON STRATFORD

If you've spent a winter in the Madison Valley, you know it rarely makes up its mind. One week the thermometer sits at 30 below and the wind drifts snow over the fence posts. The next, a chinook blows through and it's 45 degrees and dripping by noon. Heavy, wet snow can arrive in September and again in May, and the bright sun reflecting off a snowfield can feel like July on a south-facing slope.

We can handle those swings with a good coat and a warm truck. Our trees can't.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STRATFORD TREE

BEFORE THE FIRST SNOW

Most winter damage shows up in spring, long after its cause has passed.

Working with trees and soil here every day, most winter damage shows up in spring, long after its cause has passed. The good news is that much of it can be prevented, and the work starts well before the first snow. Local nurseries supply many of the hardy trees that do well in this USDA zone 4b-5b landscape. The most common include Colorado blue and Black Hills spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole, ponderosa and Scotch pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, quaking aspen, cottonwood, green ash, Amur and Tatarian maple, Canada red chokecherry, crabapple, and willow.

When Winter Care Begins

Winter tree care really begins in August. That's when heavy pruning should stop as it pushes out tender new growth that won't harden off before the first hard freeze. Trees need the late-summer slowdown to toughen their tissues for winter. Fall is for water. After a dry summer, our trees often go into winter thirsty, so give them a slow, deep soaking every couple of weeks from September until the ground freezes, usually sometime between late October and November. Water out at the drip line, where the feeder roots are, not just at the trunk. Then spread organic compost over the root zone, keeping it a hand's width away from the bark. Newly planted trees especially benefit from consistent moisture; a practical guide is about ten gallons per inch of trunk diameter during establishment periods.

Trunk guards and wraps go on in November and come off in April. Through an open, dry winter, water once a month on a day above 40 degrees when the ground isn't frozen, and do it at midday so the water soaks in before nightfall. Late winter, from January into March, is the time to prune deciduous trees while they're dormant and you can see their structure clearly.

THE WINTER CARE CALENDAR

A steady seasonal rhythm helps trees harden off, hold moisture and enter spring with less preventable damage.

AUGUST

Stop heavy pruning so tender new growth has time to harden before the first freeze.

SEPTEMBER TO FREEZE-UP

Water slowly and deeply at the drip line every couple of weeks.

NOVEMBER

Add light-colored trunk guards and wraps; keep compost away from the bark.

MILD WINTER DAYS

If the ground is open and the day is above 40 degrees, water at midday.

JANUARY TO MARCH

Prune dormant deciduous trees; leave evergreen pruning until spring except for broken limbs.

Evergreens: Spruce, Fir, Pine and Juniper

The evergreens we plant most here keep their needles all winter and therefore keep losing water all winter too. On a sunny, windy day with the roots locked in frozen ground, the needles can't be resupplied, and they brown on the south and windward sides. That's winter burn, and the best defense is the deep fall watering and organic compost described above. Spruce, with its shallow roots, benefits most from winter watering on mild days. For young or highly exposed trees, temporary burlap screens on the windward or sunny side offer additional protection. Snow is the other evergreen hazard. When heavy, wet snow piles on, brush it off gently with a broom, sweeping upward. Never shake or knock limbs that are frozen, because they snap like glass. Upright junipers and arborvitae can be loosely tied with soft cloth in fall to keep them from splaying open. Save evergreen pruning for broken limbs until spring.



Heavy snow should be brushed gently upward from evergreen limbs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF 4R FARM

> *Never shake or knock limbs that are frozen, because they snap like glass.*
>
> **EVERGREEN CARE**

Deciduous Trees: Aspen, Cottonwood and Friends

Our most common deciduous trees face a different primary threat: sunscald. Low winter sun warms the south and southwest side of a thin-barked trunk during the day, the bark cells wake up, and a hard freeze after sunset kills them. The result is cracked, peeling bark that invites disease. Young aspen, maples, crabapples, and ash are most at risk. Light-colored tree wrap or a plastic guard on the lower trunk from November to April reflects sunlight and prevents most damage. Late winter is pruning season. Remove dead, crossing, and broken branches while the tree is dormant. That timing matters most for chokecherry, where black knot galls should be cut out six to eight inches below the swelling, and for crabapple, where winter pruning helps avoid spreading fire blight. With aspen, keep wounds to a minimum, because every cut is an open door for canker.

Sharing Trees With Winter Wildlife

In winter, our trees become shelter for a lot more than us. Chickadees and nuthatches ride out storms in dense spruce, deer and elk bed down in the lee of shelterbelts, and moose browse the willow bottoms. That habitat is part of what makes living here special. It also means our trees become a winter food source. Deer and elk nip buds and twigs from anything within reach, and bucks and bulls rub saplings raw in the fall rut. Moose strip aspen bark with their teeth. For young trees, an eight-foot fence or a sturdy wire cage around each tree is the only protection that holds up through a hungry February. Repellents help, but rarely once animals are truly hungry.

Some of the worst damage happens where you can't see it. Voles tunnel under the snow and chew a ring around the base of a trunk, girdling the tree by spring. Wrap the lower trunk with hardware cloth set a couple of inches into the soil. Rabbits and snowshoe hares feed from the top of the snowpack, so guards need to extend above your usual snow depth. Porcupines climb pines and strip bark high in the crown, so check your pines after a snowfall for fresh tracks.

THIN BARK + WINTER SUN

Guard against sunscald

Warm afternoons followed by hard freezes can split the southwest face of a young trunk.

Wrap young aspen, maples, crabapples and ash from November to April. Choose a light-colored tree wrap or plastic guard, remove it in spring, and inspect the bark beneath it for damage.

BROWSE + BARK DAMAGE

Protect the first years

Young trees are most vulnerable when forage is scarce and snow raises the height animals can reach.

- Circle saplings with a sturdy wire cage or eight-foot fence against deer and elk.
- Set hardware cloth a few inches into the soil to discourage voles.
- Extend guards above the usual snow depth for rabbits and hares.
- After snowfall, check pines for fresh tracks and bark damage higher in the crown.

Come Spring

When the snow pulls back in April, take a slow walk around your trees. Pull off the wraps, look for chewed bark at the base, browned needles and split trunks, and give everything a deep drink as the ground thaws. The hardy species commonly available from local nurseries are resilient once established, especially on well-drained sites with some wind protection. The first two or three years after planting remain the most critical window. A little care in fall and winter means you'll spend spring enjoying your trees instead of replacing them.

WINTER GIFTING — STRATFORD CONSULTATION, PAGE 57

A little care in fall and winter means you'll spend spring enjoying your trees instead of replacing them.

SIMON STRATFORD / STRATFORD TREE



SIMON + KARRE STRATFORD

PHOTO COURTESY OF STRATFORD TREE

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SIMON

Simon Stratford is a UK-qualified tree surgeon and ISA Certified Arborist with a science degree in arboriculture and forestry management. He brings more than 30 years of experience in urban, utility and silvicultural forestry.

KARRE

Karre Stratford is an ISA Certified Arborist specializing in soil health and landscape design and installation. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Management in Natural Resources and Agriculture.

ABOUT STRATFORD TREE

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WINTER WELLNESS

Winter Care for Mind + Body



PHOTO: ALEXYS BACON

Winter naturally asks us to slow down, but it can also bring shorter days, tighter muscles, lower energy, and added stress. Taking care of yourself during this season means supporting both your mind and your body.

Alexys Bacon

WILDFLOWER MASSAGE AND WELLNESS

RESTORATIVE CARE
ENNIS / WHITEHALL

A GENTLER WINTER RHYTHM

Simple habits can make a meaningful difference: gentle movement to keep your body from feeling stiff, plenty of water, nourishing foods, fresh air and natural light when you can get it and giving yourself permission to truly rest.

Massage therapy can also be a valuable part of a winter wellness routine. Regular massage can help ease muscle tension, encourage relaxation, and create intentional time to disconnect from the demands of everyday life. Sometimes an hour spent slowing down and reconnecting with your body is exactly what you need during a busy or stressful season.

Winter care doesn't have to be complicated. Listen to what your body is asking for, create small moments of calm, and remember that rest is an important part of taking care of yourself - not something you have to earn.

Rest is an important part of taking care of yourself - not something you have to earn.

SEE WINTER GIFTING | THE GIFT OF CHOICE



A quiet treatment room at Wildflower Massage and Wellness.
PHOTO: ALEXYS BACON

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GENTLE CARE | HEALING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

The Quiet Work of Care

What The Pink Tent reminds us about showing up for someone in a healing season

The Pink Tent with 4R Journal



IN-STORE DETAIL | PHOTO PROVIDED BY BETH BLYTHE

There is a particular kind of care that begins not with fixing, but with noticing. Noticing what has changed. What feels harder now. What someone may be too tired, overwhelmed, or vulnerable to explain.

That kind of attention sits at the heart of The Pink Tent in Bozeman, founded by Beth Blythe after her own breast cancer diagnosis in 2014. During that season, Blythe found comfort not only in family and friends, but also in women she barely knew who understood something of what she was walking through. Years later, that experience helped shape a place built around support, dignity, and practical care for people navigating breast cancer surgery and lymphedema.

The work is highly specific: customized fittings for mastectomy bras, breast prosthetics, post-surgical garments, compression wear, and other pieces designed to help the body feel supported again. The Pink Tent is an accredited durable medical equipment provider, and Blythe is a BOC-certified fitter. Yet the technical side tells only part of the story. What stands out is the human work beneath it: listening carefully, honoring privacy, and helping someone feel more at home in a body that may suddenly feel unfamiliar.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BETH BLYTHE

PERSONALIZED FITTING + RESTORED BALANCE

Breast forms are available in a range of shapes and sizes to help restore a natural appearance.

Eligible mastectomy products may be billed to insurance; coverage varies by plan.

THE PINK TENT | BOZEMAN, MONTANA

There is something worth carrying from that into the holidays.

For someone in a healing season, care may look less like creating the perfect celebration and more like protecting their energy. It may mean offering a quiet afternoon instead of another gathering, bringing food without expecting a visit, helping with errands, or asking what would make getting dressed, resting, traveling, or simply moving through the day more comfortable.

The most meaningful gift may be the one that restores a little agency. Ask before assuming. Make room for changing plans. Choose useful things with sensitivity rather than urgency. Let “no” be easy. Let rest count as participation.

The Pink Tent takes its name from the idea of a place where women gather for support and protection—a space made gentler because no one has to carry everything alone. That may be one of the better definitions of holiday care, too: not insisting that someone return to the season as it once was, but meeting them where they are now—and helping make that place feel a little more held.

CONNECT WITH THE PINK TENT



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BETH BLYTHE

BETH BLYTHE | FOUNDER + OWNER

After her own breast cancer diagnosis, Beth founded The Pink Tent in Bozeman, where she offers customized fittings and practical support grounded in dignity, privacy and care.

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The Gift of Being There

Five ways to support a loved one through difficult times this holiday season

WORDS BY POLYA GENOVA | OUR CANCER STORIES

Our Cancer Stories

The holiday season is one of those times when excitement, stress, and high expectations all come together. Between the picture-perfect holidays we see in the media and the pressure to make the most of the season, it can be easy to feel that this time of year should look a certain way. For those navigating difficult moments such as illness, loss, cancer, or another hardship, the holidays can bring an extra layer of pain and grief into an already challenging time.

We all have loved ones going through difficult periods, and sometimes, despite how different their circumstances may be, the support they need looks surprisingly similar. A little understanding, a willingness to listen, or help with everyday tasks can make a real difference. At the same time, knowing how to show up for someone is not always easy. You might worry about saying the wrong thing or making someone feel uncomfortable. But you don't need to know exactly what to say or how to help. Often, the most important thing you can do is simply be there, making it clear that your loved one can talk to you or tell you when they need something different. Here are five ways to do that during the holidays and beyond.

1. Make space for them to talk about what they're going through

The holidays often come with an unspoken expectation that everyone should be happy. When someone is dealing with a diagnosis, grieving a loss, or facing uncertainty in their life, that expectation can make a difficult time feel isolating. You might hesitate to ask how someone really is, but avoiding the subject altogether can leave them feeling as though their struggles need to be kept private.

Check in with your loved one and give them the opportunity to talk about what's on their mind. You don't need the perfect words or to offer a solution. Try to listen without interrupting, comparing their experience to someone else's, or trying to find a positive side to what they're going through. These reactions often come from a natural discomfort with seeing someone in pain, but trying to make someone's pain feel more manageable can unintentionally leave them feeling misunderstood. Allowing someone to be honest about what they're going through, without trying to manage their feelings, is one of the most meaningful forms of support you can offer.

2. Ask what they need

When someone we care about is struggling, it is natural to want to help. But support that feels comforting to one person might feel overwhelming to another. Some people appreciate having someone accompany them to appointments or family gatherings. Others need more time alone, fewer social commitments, or the freedom to change their plans without having to explain themselves. You could ask, "Would it help to have some company, or would you prefer some time to yourself?" or "Is there anything I can take off your plate this week?"

Remember that what someone needs can change from day to day. A person who wants to attend a family gathering might feel differently when the day arrives. Someone who usually enjoys hosting might not have the energy to do it this year. Try to make it easy for them to be honest about what they can manage.

3. Take some of the everyday tasks off their hands

When someone is dealing with illness, grief, or another major life challenge, everyday responsibilities can become harder to manage. Cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning, looking after children, and preparing for the holidays can quickly become overwhelming. Someone undergoing cancer treatment, for example, may experience side effects such as fatigue that make everyday activities more difficult. Offering practical help can be a meaningful way to show your love. You could

Often, the most important thing you can do is simply be there.

prepare a meal, pick up groceries, help with decorations, take care of a pet, or offer to look after the children for an afternoon.

Try to make your offer specific. Saying "Let me know if you need anything" is well-intentioned, but it leaves the other person to figure out what to ask for and when. It can also be difficult to ask for help in the first place, especially if they're worried about being a burden or feel uncomfortable relying on others. At the same time, offering something concrete makes it easier for them to say yes or no, without feeling guilty if they decline.

You could say, "I'm going to the supermarket tomorrow. Can I pick anything up for you?" or "I'd be happy to host dinner this year so you don't have to worry about cooking."

4. Be flexible with holiday plans and traditions

Traditions can bring comfort and a sense of continuity, especially during difficult times. But they can also become a source of pressure when someone's circumstances have changed. Perhaps a loved one is too exhausted to attend a large family gathering, is spending the holidays in hospital, or finds it painful to celebrate after their world changed overnight. They might not have the energy to cook the usual meal, decorate the house, or participate in activities they have always enjoyed.

Since their world may already look very different, understand that the holidays may look different too. That could look like a shorter visit, a smaller gathering, a video call, or a quiet meal at home. Offer flexible plans that are easy to change or cancel without anyone feeling guilty. Making room for different needs and emotions can help everyone feel less pressured to meet expectations that no longer fit their reality.

5. Remember that support doesn't end when the holidays are over

During the holiday season, people often make an extra effort to check in, send thoughtful messages, or offer help. But when the celebrations end and everyday life resumes, someone dealing with illness or grief will still be facing the same challenges, but with less company around them.

Keep checking in after the holidays. Send a message, arrange a visit, invite them for a meal, or ask how they're doing a few weeks later. You don't need a special occasion or a particular reason to reach out.

Redefining what a meaningful holiday looks like

When someone we love is going through a difficult time, it can be tempting to focus on how to make the holidays feel normal again. But meaningful moments don't always look the way we expect them to. This holiday season, consider giving yourself and your loved ones permission to do things differently. Make room for rest alongside celebration, sadness alongside joy, and connection that doesn't depend on everyone feeling their best. After all, the greatest gift you can give someone going through a difficult time is being there for them.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY OUR CANCER STORIES

ABOUT OUR CANCER STORIES

Polya Genova contributes to Our Cancer Stories, which shares research and real-life stories from people affected by cancer. Our Cancer Stories is a research project funded by National University of Singapore Initiative to Improve Health in Asia (NIHA) under the management of the Global Asia Institute (GAI).

Our Cancer Stories

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Photo: Until the ashes

On a Winter Day Somewhere in Montana

A REFLECTION ON LAND, LABOR AND THE QUIET LIFE

Words by Haley Miller



PHOTO COURTESY OF HALEY MILLER

Darkness envelops the land as I make my way out of our warm bed. Wool socks first, then chore boots. An excited dog nudges my hand with a wet nose as I layer on my overcoat. Apparently, I am not moving as quickly as I should.

The bite of the morning air nips at the tip of my nose and my fingers. I exhale into the quiet, tendrils of steam clouding my view. There is nothing quite like the quiet of the country, where the beating of a heart and the whisper of wind through dry grass converge into a subtle orchestra. The stillness, the solitude, the beauty - it fills my heart with gratitude.

I make my way to the barn, frozen grasses crunching beneath my feet. The sun begins its ascent, and the heavens slowly open. The view is staggering: wide-open and glorious, with colors dancing across the sky.

The hens cluck their approval as I open their coop and greet them in the new light. A quick check of food and water assures me they have everything they need for the day. I can feel the impatient stare of our mule mare as she paws the ground. I suppose mules wait for no one. I turn the horses and mule out to their breakfast, receiving a gentle nip on my shoulder in thanks as they stroll past.



THE SEASON'S PROVISION

A blanket of snow covers our once-industrious garden, the earth taking a well-deserved rest after a season of beauty and growth. That garden was a source of incredible provision, the result of a labor of love shared by a handful of women with a common goal: growing healthy food for our families.

As I gaze out over the rows, I still can hardly believe all that garden gave us. Food, yes, but so much more: friendship, kinship, knowledge and wisdom shared, belly laughs and tears, sorrow and joy.

We planted. We weeded. We prayed. We weeded again. We harvested. We canned. We preserved. We grew in spirit, body, and mind. We gave our hard work, our time, and our effort to the land, and the land transformed those offerings into an abundance of good food, stored away for the long winter ahead.

I once came across a quote that stirred something deep within me:

Our grandparents lived lives that were hard on the body but comfortable for the soul. We live lives that are easy on the body but heavy on the soul.

Those words sparked something in me all those years ago: a soul-deep longing for a simpler, quieter, more fulfilling life. What that looks like is different for everyone, but for me, it meant working with my hands, raising animals, growing food, cooking from scratch, and homeschooling my children. It meant living in rhythm with the seasons and spending my days in the wide-open spaces of this place. It meant pushing myself to learn the skills of self-sufficiency while building a small but mighty community to fill the gaps where I could not do it all alone.

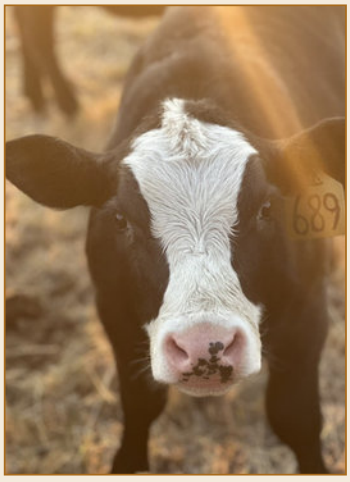
I came from a big city, a place where sound and light converge in a near-constant thrum, so different from this place. Back then, I couldn't have imagined the life that awaited me here. I didn't know I would build miles of fence alongside my husband or wake to the bellow of cows ready for breakfast. I didn't know I would sit in an old pickup with a three-hour-old calf in my lap, warming her after an unexpected April snowstorm. I didn't know I would come to relish the harvest of an elk and the work of processing and storing the meat for the months ahead.

I didn't know then that my soul was weary, calling me toward a different way of life.

But I know now. My soul has found its home in the quiet beauty of this place. At the end of the day, I may be exhausted in body, but my soul knows the comfort of a day well spent.



PHOTO: LAUNA PENZA PHOTOGRAPHY | LAUNAPENZAPHOTOGRAPHY.COM





ANIMAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HALEY MILLER

FROM THE ESSAY

Small moments, remembered

A newborn calf warmed after an April storm. The mule waiting at the gate. Ordinary details that make a life feel rooted.

It is time to head back to the house, but I pause to lift my face toward the sun, to feel its warmth even in the midst of winter's slumber. Soon it will be time to feed the cows and begin crossing things off the never-ending list of ranch chores. There is always more work to be done, another task waiting, another need to tend to.

But for now, I take a moment to fill my heart with gratitude for the day ahead and the work entrusted to my hands. I look out over this land we are privileged to steward: the rolling foothills, the breathtaking timber, the vast expanse of plains stretching toward the horizon.

And I pray that, for all the days of my life, I will always be somewhere in Montana.

And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11-12



PHOTO: LAUNA PENZA PHOTOGRAPHY | LAUNAPENZAPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

CONTRIBUTOR

Haley Miller

Haley writes about motherhood, growing food, self-sufficiency and the quiet rhythms of rural Montana. Her days are shaped by family, animals and the work of stewarding the land.

ARTS + CULTURE + REFLECTION | MAKER PROFILE

Makers Profile: Bacci Roots

HANDMADE IN THE TOBACCO ROOT MOUNTAINS

Bacci Roots is a small Montana company shaped by the landscape of the Tobacco Root Mountains. Working primarily in leather and fur, the maker brings together tactile materials with distinctive stitching, beads, stones, antler findings and other elements drawn from nature.

The work moves easily between vintage, bohemian and Western influences, but its character comes from individuality: each piece is made by hand, built for a rugged life and intended to become more personal with use. The hope behind the work is simple - that someone finds the piece that rings true to them.

SEE WINTER GIFTING | BACCI ROOTS



PORTRAIT COURTESY OF BACCI ROOTS

Bacci Roots

One of a kind, and built to endure a rugged life.

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ARTS + CULTURE + REFLECTION | PERSONAL POETRY

the between

A POEM BY REBEKAH CLARK

i watch as the trees dance,
the limbs bending and swaying,
as if the wind might pull them from the earth
and carry them away to forgotten places

i find my solace in papered palms,
between words inked on pages,
and if i listen closely, i can hear the wind whisper
what it once knew of these stories

i wonder if the wind might be able
to cradle a dreamer's soul such as mine,
and sweep me away to those leather-bound worlds,
to root me in a strange kind of magic

i can feel the snow skitter across my skin,
the cold wrapping me in a gentle winter's embrace
and softening the edges of reality until the turning page
and the wind become one and the same.

rebekah clark

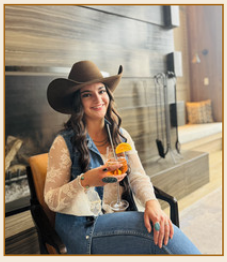


PHOTO: CARSON CLARK

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Rebekah Clark

A published author and Animal Science M.S. student at Montana State University, Rebekah brings together writing, agriculture and life in rural Montana.

REBEKAHCLARKWRITING.COM

ARTS + CULTURE + REFLECTION | MOVEMENT

Dance lessons are life lessons

SAPPHIRE DANCE THEATRE | ENNIS, MONTANA

From first movement to the stage, dance becomes a practice for life.



Stock photograph by Daria Nekipelova via Pexels.

Sapphire Dance Theatre, located in Ennis, Montana, is a small private dance studio that offers a wide variety of lessons to children and adults. On any given afternoon at Madison Square, located at 5 Sunrise Loop, you will see tiny dancers bouncing across the parking lot holding their parent's hand going to dance class. With a spring in their step as they enter the door these children are all smiles as they prepare for dance class. Giggly-wiggly dancers arrive in proper dance attire with their hair up ready for their lessons. But the excitement doesn't stop there! With their teacher they explore movement and music that inspire them to leap, spin, and wiggle to the beat. With props like coloured dots, ribbon dancers, tambourines, bells, and wings, dance comes alive for the youngest of dancers at Sapphire Dance Theatre. At three years of age dance students may begin their studies with Creative Movement. From ages four to six, Ballet based lessons in Kinderdance and Preballet follow.

The next group entering the dance scene at Madison Square are slightly older, perhaps a bit more focused, but nonetheless charged with enthusiasm to learn! Eight-year-old budding dancers head to the barre to learn proper beginning Ballet technique. Dancers learn the language of dance with correct definitions for the new French terminology they are continuously exposed to by maintaining a dance journal. Leaping now becomes a grand jeté, spinning is now called pirouette. Pony gallops become chassé and rise on your tiptoes is now called relevé. The real excitement culminates when you, beaming with pride, see them perform by themselves on stage in their beautiful costumes. The makings of a well-trained beginning dancer are all there before you in the spotlight. We individually nurture their dance talent as you watch them grow and blossom through the season.

From the barre to the spotlight



Stock photograph by 3938030 via Pixabay.

As dancers mature physically they begin pointe work. Nothing is more exciting than the first pointe shoe fitting and finding the right shoe for your dancer's foot! Dancers must be physically and mentally ready for the discipline that pointe work requires. The first year of pointe work is mostly spent at the barre and dancers do not perform on pointe. Beginning the second year of pointe work, dancers maintain their regular pointe class as well as two other ballet lessons. One of these ballet lessons is taken in pointe shoes so dancers begin to coordinate their barre and centre work. At the end of the season dancers will perform their first dance on pointe in the spring. Is there anything more beautiful and satisfying than seeing that giggly-wiggly girl who bounced across parking lot holding your hand to attend those first dance lessons become the beautiful ballerina floating across the stage?

Dance lessons are life lessons. Not everyone who dances becomes a professional dancer. But from Creative Movement to Ballet V dancers will learn more than just how to dance. They learn cognitive flexibility, problem solving skills and sustained focus. Resilience and perseverance, a solid work ethic, and receptiveness to feedback are all part of the soft skills instilled in the dancers at Sapphire Dance Theatre. For their emotional and physical well-being dancers experience body positivity and confidence and find dance as a stress relief all the while instilling poise and posture. By attending class dancers develop social and teamwork skills, accountability to others and themselves, develop empathy, experience collaboration and cultural awareness. These are skills your children will take with them and use for the rest of their lives. They learn to live as their word. Many become patrons of the arts out of a great love for dance.

Sapphire Dance Theatre offers lessons in ballet and jazz for dancers ages three through adult. Classes that rotate through the schedule upon demand are Floor-Barre and Silver Swans. Floor-Barre is a ballet class done on the floor while lying on the back, side or stomach to eliminate stressing the knees, hips, and spine. Silver Swans, created and certified by the Royal Academy of Dance, is a ballet class that includes barre and centre work modified for those who are fifty-five and older or anyone who needs modifications in ballet technique.

Sapphire Dance Theatre offers two performance opportunities annually, one in December and one in the Spring for all students who wish to participate. The next performance, The Snowflake Gala, is December 12th at 2:00 at the Madison Theatre in Ennis. Original choreography and dances from the Nutcracker are part of this magical winter performance. In the springtime The Mice of Brambly Hedge will be performed with dances representing each of the books in the children's literary series by Jill Barklem. Past performances include Mimi and the Madison Dragon and Peter Pan. For inquiries concerning tickets or to register for dance classes please email: sapphiredancetheatre@gmail.com.

SAPPHIRE
DANCE THEATRE

ABOUT SAPPHIRE DANCE THEATRE

A private studio in Ennis offering ballet and jazz for dancers ages three through adult, with seasonal performances and rotating Floor-Barre and Silver Swans classes.

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