

Saturday Meanderings



Happy Saturday! I so look forward to catching up with you today about all things~from travel to baking. So grab a cup of coffee or tea and let's chat.

I don't know about you, but I feel like my world has gotten so small since COVID. And I didn't realize the enormity of this until our recent road trip from Phoenix to Denver and back. Hesitant about going (you know, "but I have so much to do!"), in retrospect, I am very happy that I did.

The Car Trip



Driving for 34 hours and covering 2000 miles in four days is a bit intensive. However, what a wonderful reminder that we do live in such a beautiful country. The open roads of Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico are some of the most spectacular. And everyone we encountered was nice and friendly, unlike what the news portrays. America is a gorgeous

place and often, I think we take our freedoms for granted.
Lesson learned~turn off the news!

First Stop: Vermillion Cliffs



We had the great opportunity of watching the release of the California Condors at the Vermillion Cliffs, near the Grand Canyon. Known for its vibrant colors and intriguing forms, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument is 280,000 acres up against the Arizona/Utah border. Since my husband is on the board of *The Peregrine Fund*, we spent the day with the program directors and biologists responsible for this conservation event.



It takes the dedication and tenacity of hundreds of people to bring the iconic California Condor back from the brink of extinction. In the 1980's, there were only 22 individual birds left on the planet, yet today they stand at nearly 500. To learn more about this incredible program, click [here](#).

Denver

Not only is the condor release a reason for this trip, but we are also picking up a huge set of antlers in Denver. As you know I am trying to add more Scandinavian elements to our cabin. What better way than placing a nice set of antlers over the front door?



Our friend, Sam and his antler haul

Friends of ours own a ranch and have elk, deer and bison shedding their antlers each year. Since these sheds are very big, shipping them wasn't an option. So we packed these beauties in the car and drove back to Phoenix.

COVID Hors D'ouerves



We are blessed with wonderful neighbors and make an effort to keep connected during this pandemic. With social distancing of course. When we gather, instead of making a large charcuterie tray or cheese board, I am making “couple plates” so no one is sharing food from the same dishes.

Individual vegetable cups with dip in the bottom, salted almonds, caprese sticks, cheese, salami and crackers seems to be the right amount of food to nibble with a glass or two of wine. I wonder how this pandemic will affect the ways in which we will entertain in the future.

A New Recipe



Do you ever just get a hankering for something and you must have it? I had a chocolate chip cookie moment like that this week. Trying this new recipe, which claims to be the BEST one, turns out to be a winner.



With Christmas cookie baking just around the corner, you may want to consider this recipe. Using block chocolate vs. chips, each one is filled with nooks and crannies of warm melted chocolate. Sprinkle with a flaky sea salt as the finishing touch. Click [here](#) for the recipe and review done by Kitchn.

My October Afternoon Tea



A new favorite afternoon tea for this month is Pumpkin Spice Brûlée, with a bit of Rare Hawaiian honey and a spot of milk. The tea is from Teavana, which unfortunately was acquired by Starbucks and all stores are now closed. However, you can find

several types of pumpkin spice tea brands on Amazon [here](#). And I just love this very thick honey from *Rare Hawaiian* Honey Company (I order it online). They have several flavors and I recommend them all!

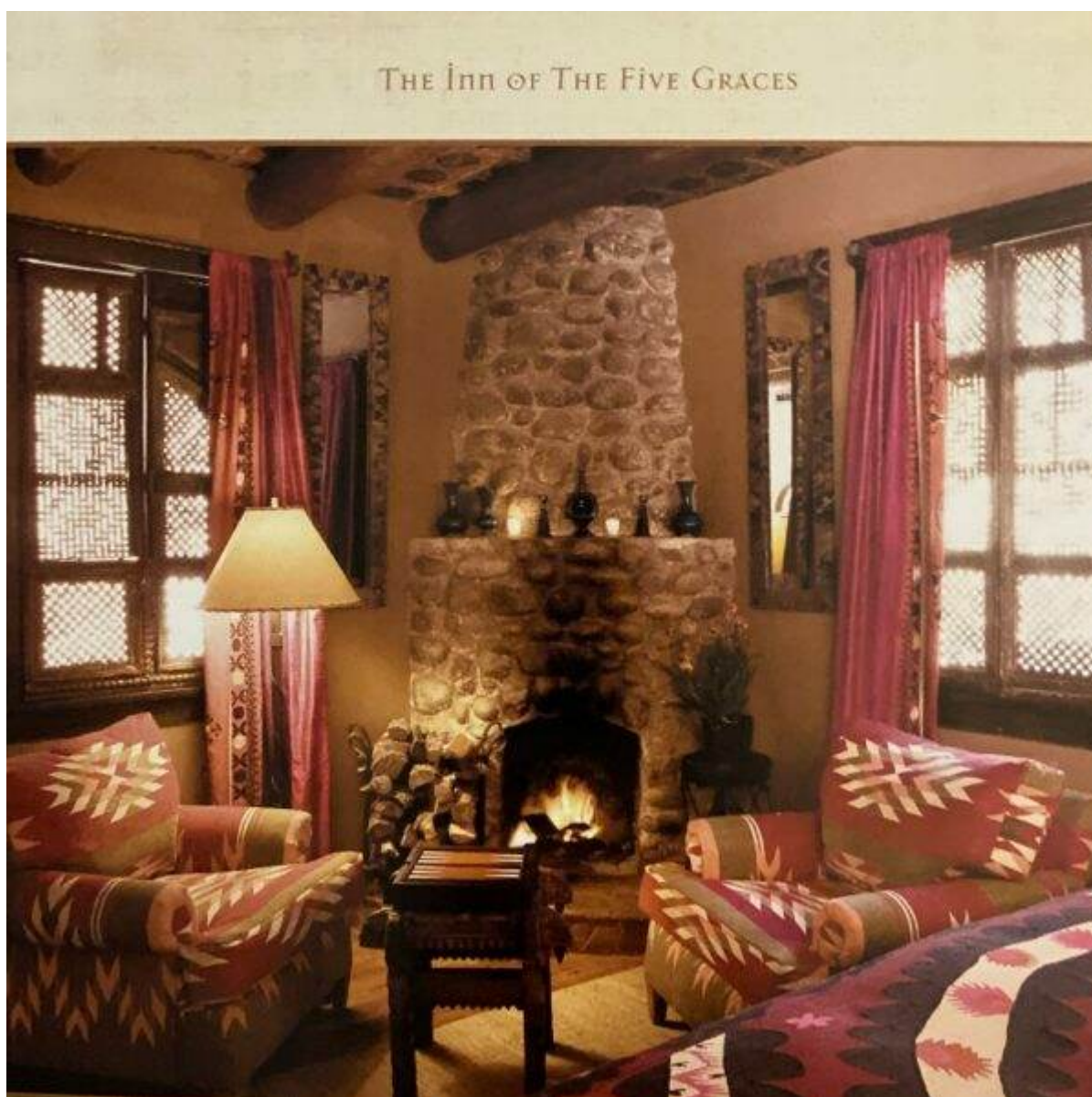
Be Careful What you Ask for

During this time of year, I sometimes complain about the lack of good pumpkins in Phoenix. All the ones in the stores are basic and have broken stems. And I have to wait to visit the pumpkin farm up in the mountains to find any that are reasonably priced and unique. So what does my husband do? He comes home with this.



Maybe the picture doesn't depict how HUGE this is, but it took two of us to carry it up the stairs on this rolling cart. It is the focal point now of the front porch. Too funny.

On my bucket list



While in Santa Fe, we toured [*The Inn of the Five Graces*](#). This stunning Relais & Chateaux property is one of a kind. Quite honestly, I have never seen anything quite like this. The rooms are so fabulously decorated and this is definitely on my bucket list.

Returned to the Yard Sale

A few weeks ago, I wrote about an ongoing yard sale to a home that may potentially be available for purchase. See that post [here](#). Well, I went back in hopes that the contents on the

inside of the house are finally revealed, but no luck. Here is what I found instead. Wouldn't these dolls be perfect for a scary Halloween party? And no, I didn't buy them.



This wooden cradle could be a potential purchase, however, it is covered in pigeon poop and I didn't want to put it in my

car in this condition. If it is still there when I go back, I may consider it again.



Strange Looking Grapes



Aren't these the strangest looking grapes? They are called Sweet Sapphire seedless grapes from Bakersfield, California. Tasty and sweet, they are currently at Safeway. I highly recommend them.

Well, that wraps up my weekly activities. If you missed any posts this week, I made a [felted wool wreath](#), organized a [hidden space](#) in my front entry and decorated the [dining room mantel](#) for Fall.

Have a wonderful weekend! Am hoping to take a quick drive to the cabin to finish the painted dresser. Can't wait to show you the finished product.

Mary

If you like Instagram, I also have an account there. Would love for you to check it out and become a follower.

https://www.instagram.com/p/CGBA9j_H8Ss/