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PHILADELPHIA STORY IDEAS FOR DECEMBER 2019 & BEYOND

Looking for a story to tell? Philadelphia has plenty of them. Here are some of the people, places and events on our radar. These stories are perfect for sharing today, next week, this season or next:

PROFILE: DAVID SILVER & WILL TOMS, REC PHILLY

For **David Silver** and **Will Toms**, best friends make the best business partners. The **REC Philly** co-founders — BFFs since their days at William Tennent High School — are set to debut their incubator for musicians, photographers, videographers, podcasters and other creative entrepreneurs in **Fashion District Philadelphia**. As up-and-coming concert promoters and talent agents, Toms and Silver saw the need. “How many Philly artists go to NY or LA?” asked Silver, “What has been missing is a space for people to collaborate and convene, and a collection of resources that’s accessible to these artists.” The original REC Philly, in a warehouse at 9th and Dauphin streets, will remain open. The new, 10,000-square-foot Center City venue will serve both 600 current members and **400 more**. It will also have a mall-side shop and cafe to sell products made onsite and **Rival Bros.** coffee, 14 members-only studios and a 250-person concert venue sponsored by Live Nation. N. 9th Street between Market & Filbert Streets

HOTEL NEWS: ODETTE’S IN SPRING

New Hope’s long wait for the return of Chez Odette is nearly over. This spring, the site of the famed cabaret becomes **The River House at Odette’s**, a 38-room luxury boutique hotel—New Hope’s first—overlooking the Delaware River. (Last year, the 1784 stone inn and tavern that housed Odette’s was painstakingly relocated to Main and New Streets to become a Delaware Canal State Park interpretive center.) The site’s newer owners Reeds Resorts—the same group behind Stone Harbor, New Jersey’s The Reeds at Shelter Haven—promise to keep founder Odette Myrtil’s legacy alive by showcasing items preserved from the previous location — a chandelier, menus, art — plus a resurrected Odette’s bar, serving whiskey cocktails and all. 274 S. River Road, New Hope, (215) 682-2022

PHILADANCO: THE PARTY CONTINUES

The dance company founded and led still by Joan Meyers Brown isn’t done feting its 50th anniversary. **PHILADANCO** hosts the 32nd **International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance** at the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ Merriam Theater and SEI Innovation Studio, as well as the DoubleTree Philadelphia, Cambria Hotel Philadelphia and The University of the Arts (**January 14-19, 2020**). After that, they’ll return to the **Kimmel** (300 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999) to debut *Fast-Forward*, a look at the future of choreography in a co-commission with Toronto’s Dance Immersion, Vietnam’s Thang Dao, Broadway’s Ray Mercer and choreographer Kathy Smith. **April 17-19, 2020**. Their *Xmas Philes* return to the **Annenberg Center** from **December 12-14, 2019**. 3680 Walnut Street, (215) 898-3900

FOOD WE LOVE: PANISSE AT FORSYTHIA

When chef Christopher Kearsse swapped out his charming East Passyunk Will BYOB for a grander French affair in Old City, we knew we were going to fall in love. We weren’t wrong. Not only does simply elegant, dinner-only **Forsythia** have a glorious liquor license and loads more space, but somehow,
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Kearse's ever-beautiful, flavorful, French-influenced cuisine tastes even better here. Some of our indulgent favorite dishes, so far: foie gras with buckwheat brioche; Rohan duck with Bing cherries, black trumpet mushrooms and cashews; and airy, melty Provençal chickpea fries — *panisse* — made with *raclette* (melting cheese from the Swiss Alps), cornichons and onion ash. *Mon dieu*. 233 Chestnut Street, (215) 644-9395

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS:

- **Through December 31, [Holiday Garden Railway](#):** Morris Arboretum presents G-scale model trains running along a verdant, Philadelphia-theme quarter-mile track — a magical scene for big and lovers of railroads and Philly.
- **December 6, [Feliz Navidad](#):** The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Consulate of Mexico and the Mexican Cultural Center present the ultimate holiday fiesta, live music and all.
- **December 6-31, [George Balanchine's The Nutcracker](#)**[®]: The Pennsylvania Ballet reprises a holiday classic at the Academy of Music, this year, with a newly refurbished magically growing tree.
- **December 7, [Deck the Alley](#):** The residents of Elfreth's Alley, the nation's oldest continuously occupied residential street, open their houses to the public for the holidays.
- **December 8, [Dianne Reeves: Christmas Time is Here](#):** The Grammy[®] Award-winning jazz singer brings her renditions of holiday favorites to the Annenberg Center.
- **December 8 & 25, [Washington Crossing the Delaware River](#):** Holiday lovers meet historic reenactment buffs when General Washington leads a surprise attack on the British and holiday fun ensues, at Washington Crossing Historic Park.
- **December 12-14, [PHILADANCO: Xmas Philes](#):** The beloved Philadelphia Dance Company returns to the Annenberg Center for only-in-Philly performances.
- **December 26-30, [Kwanzaa Celebrations at AAMP](#):** The African American Museum in Philadelphia hails the winter harvest by lighting the *kinara* and honoring the seven principles.
- **December 31, [Rivers Casino New Year's Eve Fireworks on the Delaware River Waterfront](#):** Two pyrotechnic extravaganzas over the Delaware River ring in the New Year at 6 p.m. and midnight.

LOOKING AHEAD:

- **February 1-16, 2020, [Getaway at the Greenhouse](#):** The Fairmount Park Horticultural Center celebrates summer in winter, setting up a giant sandbox, live music, food trucks and [Gaia, The Traveling Artwork](#), British artist Luke Jerram's spectacular giant globe of the Earth featuring detailed NASA photography.
- **February 1 - June 14, 2020, [Witness to History: Selma Photography of Stephen Somerstein](#):** The Brandywine Museum of Art exhibits a photographic documentation of the historic 54-mile march for civil rights from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.
- **March 1 - September 2020, [Seat at the Table](#):** A free, seven-day-a-week, interactive art exhibition by Dome Collective at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts invites the public to experience women's representation in places of power (seats at tables) through 3D infographic furniture, while a wall of interactive screens introduces pioneers in women's history.
- **March 5-7, 2020, [Porgy and Bess](#):** The Met isn't the only renowned institution reprising George Gershwin's opera: Marin Alsop leads The Philadelphia Orchestra and a cast that includes soprano Angel Blue, baritone Lester Lynch and the Morgan State University Choir in highlights from the American classic.

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- **March 29 - May 3, 2020, *Spring Blooms*:** Longwood Gardens offers the sights and smells of a long-awaited season via 240,000 tulips, azaleas, dogwoods and more.
- **May 1-9, 2020, *Philly Tech Week*:** More than 100 techie events celebrate emerging trends and innovations among savvy Philadelphians.

NEW & UPDATED PRESS RELEASES:

- ***New Events & Openings in 2020***
- ***The Mummers: Tradition, Parade & Performances***
- ***South Street Neighborhood Guide***
- ***14 New Breweries—and 16 Coming Soon to Philly***
- ***Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy & Germantown Neighborhood Guide***
- ***Events Calendar for Philadelphia & The Countryside***

ESSENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHY:

- ***6abc Dunkin' Thanksgiving Day Parade***
- ***Kwanzaa at The African American Museum in Philadelphia***
- ***Washington Crossing the Delaware***
- ***PHILADANCO: The Xmas Philes***
- ***Mummers Parade***
- ***Cost of Revolution: The Life and Death of an Irish Solider, Museum of the American Revolution***
- ***Dianne Reeves: Christmas Time is Here***
- ***Sesame Place: A Very Furry Christmas***
- ***Adventure Aquarium***
- ***K'Far Cafe***
- ***Video: City Hall at Sunrise***
- ***Video: Skyline from Delaware River***

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Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.