

Charcuterie Craze Captivates Milford

In the beginning days of the pandemic, Milford's Veronique Stocks began making charcuterie boards. "It was fun making something beautiful during such a crazy time. And I love snacking, so charcuterie boards were a perfect fit for me," she says. Stocks snapped photos of a few of her boards showed them to her best friend, Carlos Pabon. He was really impressed by her creativity and encouraged her to make more. Fast forward two years and Stocks and Pabon are now business partners in Captivating Charcuteries, an artisanal charcuterie business that produces everything from personal charcuterie picnic boxes to large scale grazing tables. "The response from the Milford community has been amazing," says Stocks.

Charcuterie's evolution from a necessity in 15th-century France—when meat was cured so that families could eat every last bit of it—to a modern day social media darling is truly incredible. Today, eye-catching charcuterie photos dominate Pinterest and Instagram, and videos of people making their own charcuterie boards captivate TikTok audiences.

"All the marketing I've done has been through social media," says Stocks. "I started

by posting photos of some of my boards to the Milford Moms Facebook page. Kate Hostetler, Nicole Classy Wilhelm, and Danielle Valenzano, the ladies who run the Facebook page, have been so supportive. I started getting requests for charcuterie boards immediately." Her most popular social media platform is Instagram, where Captivating Charcuteries' videos are seen by thousands of viewers. One recent video was viewed nearly 10,000 times.



CAPTIVATING CHARCUTERIES, LLC

For longtime Milford resident Kim Dolan, charcuterie boards were a way to get her daughters to finish their meals. "When my girls were in elementary school, they were very picky eaters and they were also vegetarians," Dolan recalls. "They weren't really into sandwiches, so charcuterie boards always worked well. I'd incorporate fruit, vegetables, nuts, and cheeses—really, just any items that together would make a balanced lunch." About a year ago, Dolan started making charcuterie boards for friends and family. She, too, shares photos of her picture-perfect boards on Instagram. "I hope to grow All Aboard Charcuterie Co. into a larger business," says Dolan. "I'm actively reaching out to commissary kitchens and other local businesses to explore partnerships."



ALL ABOARD CHARCUTERIE CO.



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Like a beautiful French pastry, or expertly balanced sashimi platter, charcuterie is the perfect fusion of food and art. Pleasing to the eye and palate, modern day charcuterie boards offer way more than just meats and cheeses. Dolan recently made an ice cream charcuterie board, which included different types of ice cream, toppings, waffle cones, and bowls. She's also made brunch boards which boast scones and other baked goods, fresh fruit, and yogurt in addition to the standard meats and cheeses. "You can really make anything into a charcuterie board," says Dolan.

Stocks, who also makes a variety of themed boards, says one of the things her Milford

customers love most about her boards is the surprise element. "My customers say my boards are like a treasure hunt. They love picking through the board and finding surprises like different candies and jams. They end up trying things they wouldn't buy themselves but end up loving."

While creating expert charcuterie boards like Stocks' and Dolan's may not come easy to all, a few things can be done to create fun, eye-catching charcuterie boards at home. "Start small," says Stocks. "Get a tiny board and choose one thing you're going to focus on, like color or texture. Don't try to incorporate

too many different elements, just choose one thing and take it from there." Dolan is a fan of moving things around and confesses to doing it often when she's creating her boards. "Place something on the board and if you don't like it, move it," she shares. "Especially with garnishes like flowers, moving something even a little bit can make a big impact. Most of all, have fun with it!"

—Amanda Duff

YOU CAN FOLLOW Milford's charcuterie makers on Instagram at [captivating_charcuteries](#) and [allaboardcharcuterieco](#)

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