

# this week in home décor

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Hello. The Chicago Market: Living and Giving begins Thursday, Jan. 17 and runs through Wednesday, Jan. 23 (with the Temporaries, including Beckman's Handcrafted Gift Show, open from Jan. 19 to 22. It's at the Merchandise Mart.

Here are some events and activities you should know about.

Make no little plans;

Organize your schedule online

The Chicago Market: Living and Giving has developed an online market-planning tool to help buyers organize their buying schedules and build a custom walking map of the Mart. The tool, called Plan Chicago, is at the gift show's website.

From the comfort of your home, you can:

Search showrooms, exhibitors and lines on Floors 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15.

Browse and organize resources by category, location or company name.

Take advantage of special offers and incentives, including discounts on orders, free gifts and free freight.

Print a saved list of favorite companies, including a walking map and floor plans.

Speaking of making plans, Chicagoans like to quote urban planner Daniel Burnham, who said, "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized."

## The "new" and green Merchandise Mart

Mart owner and gift-show organizer Merchandise Mart Properties, has been reconfiguring the floors and showrooms of the Mart. If you were at the summer show, you saw the launch of Market Square Chicago. This 15th floor area spans 200,000 square feet. Retailers and designers will find a diverse selection of upholstery, lighting, wall décor, furniture, home accessories, textiles, floor coverings, bedding, drapery, mirrors, entertaining, antiques, tabletop and indoor and outdoor furniture.

After all the shopping (or before), head to the Library, an open-everyday lounge for designers and retailers only. Here you can work or entertain clients. The lounge includes Wi-Fi, docking workstations, coat and baggage check, a full catering kitchen, a selection of industry books and the capabilities to host seminars and parties throughout the year.

In November, the Mart was awarded the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver certification for existing buildings. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification is the nationally accepted benchmark for design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. See the lobby display of green showrooms. And be sure to recycle appropriate materials while you are in the Mart. Containers are everywhere.



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## Seminars and special events

Sunday, Jan. 20, 2 to 3 p.m. Meet Alpana Singh, author of "Alpana Pours: About Being a Woman, Loving Wine, and Having Great Relationships." Singh is the youngest woman to be a member of the exclusive Court of Master Sommeliers. She hosts a popular restaurant review show on Chicago's public television station.

Monday, Jan. 21, 2 to 3 p.m. Meet Bill Kurtis, broadcast journalist and author of Prairie Table Cookbook. This history and cookbook gives readers a look into the world of cowboys, and it discusses the Tallgrass Beef movement (healthier and better-tasting ranching method of raising grass-fed cattle).

The following Power Lunch seminars are free, but reservations are required. Email or call 312-527-7885.)

Sunday, Jan. 20, 12 to 1 p.m. "Turning your Store into a Lifestyle Destination." Mary Carol Garrity, owner of Nell Hill's in Atchison, Kan., will share the inside story of how she turned her small store into one of America's favorite shopping destinations. She will discuss what it takes to make any retail store a nationwide success.

Monday, Jan. 21, 12 to 1 p.m. "How to Build Your Business through Handcrafted Product." Learn the fine art of handcrafted, artisan work and how it can truly impact your business.

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 12 to 1 p.m. "Cozy up with Lake Living." Susan Fredman, owner of At Home with Nature in Michigan's Harbor Country region, will show buyers how to maximize their store's potential by tapping into the lake trend.

## Lake living in the lobby

My favorite display at any gift market (and I go to a lot of them) is MMPI's Lake House, now in its third go-round. The Lake House is a stylized cottage with three or four rooms and furnished with "lake-y" and "lodge-y" products from gift show exhibitors. This winter's theme is decorating for the holidays. Look for it in the building's north lobby. This idea—a theme or concept house showing products in use—is one that all market buildings should implement. It's a buyer service, and it helps exhibitors.

## Meet garden designer P. Allen Smith

P. Allen Smith, the award-winning garden designer and television personality, talks about how to add comfort and style to outdoor settings. He'll appear on Saturday, Jan. 19 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the 8th floor Club Room. Also on the 8th floor, check out the "Illuminated Garden" display in Booth 8-9036. It is inspired by Smith's designs.

## The Big Night Party

On Monday evening, Jan. 21, funny-man and Second City alum Richard Laible emcees the market's signature Big Night Party in the north lobby. This time around it's karaoke to a live band. Hmm. This could be interesting. If Wham! is on the playlist, you better wake me up before you go-go. (You know what I always say: What happens in the north lobby, stays in the north lobby.)

## Show endorses online community

The Chicago Market: Living and Giving has endorsed RetailSpeaks, an online networking community for independent gift and stationery retailers. The online forum is said to help independent retailers from across the nation "come together in a world filled with multi-outlet and online stores." Membership is open only to those owning three or fewer brick-and-mortar stores (no franchises or chains), and members are required to do their own buying.

That's it for today. I'll be back on Friday with a regular edition of "this week in home décor."  
Buy-Buy.

Jim Carper  
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Home Décor Buyer