

WINTERTHUR



Winterthur Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Nardone

mnardone@winterthur.org

302.888.4803

Yuletide at Winterthur Presents a Spectacular Holiday Showcase

H. F. du Pont's magnificent mansion is decorated for the holidays

Winterthur, DE, September 21, 2018—One of the Brandywine Valley's most beloved holiday traditions, Yuletide at Winterthur, returns on November 17, 2018, and runs until January 6, 2019. Visitors will experience the warmth and festivity of the season on the 2018 Yuletide Tour of the magnificent du Pont mansion decked out for the holidays.

Each delightful room tells a story reflecting the ways in which Americans have celebrated the winter holiday season from the 1800s, when it was referred to as the social season, to the present. Other decorations and displays recall Henry Francis du Pont's family traditions during Christmas and New Year's at Winterthur.

From the history of the holidays to the beauty of the breathtaking dried-flower tree to the magical dollhouse mansion along with opportunities to shop, dine, and create new memories at special programs and events, Yuletide at Winterthur is a festive celebration not to be missed. Visitors can make Winterthur their first stop before visiting Longwood Gardens for its iconic display, *A Longwood Christmas*.

With a nod to the outdoor exhibition *Follies: Architectural Whimsy in the Garden*, the first display of the tour includes a specially built bandstand in a re-creation of a Christmas tree lighting in early 20th-century small-town America, when electricity was a dazzling novelty.

Several displays are inspired by Winterthur's gallery exhibition, *Dining by Design: Nature Displayed on the Dinner Table*, which celebrates flora and fauna on tableware and hospitality. A variety of holiday meal tablescapes show the evolving tastes and customs over time. Visitors will see tables of the colonial era heavily laden with food and desserts juxtaposed with a lavish Victorian-era setting that focuses on the glittering tree and a table arrayed with towers of beautifully wrapped gifts at each place setting.

Formal displays reflective of the 1800s include French porcelain, cut flowers, and fruit—the kind of elegant table that might have been attended to by footmen. There the emphasis was more on quality over quantity. “Food preparations were exquisite,” said Debbie Harper, senior curator of education and coordinator of the Yuletide Tour. “The look, the freshness, and the beauty made a different kind of first impression.”

The traditions of H. F. du Pont’s own family at Winterthur in the 1930s and ’40s are depicted, including the family Christmas tree, glittering with glass ornaments and complemented by baskets brimming with gifts, one for each family member. The tour will also depict the long-held annual du Pont family tradition of New Year’s Calling, although in a thoroughly contemporary way. Since the early 1800s, du Pont women have gathered in family homes to await the men, who spend the day visiting several homes, giving small gifts in exchange for the hospitality the ladies offered in punch cups and wine glasses. This year’s depiction shows the creative and amusing gifts family members exchange today, personalized tokens of their shared story.

Other highlights include: a magical Christmas tree inspired by Winterthur’s Enchanted Woods children’s garden; more stunning trees celebrating the season throughout the mansion; a remarkable 18-room dollhouse mansion filled with nearly 1,000 miniatures and fully decorated for Christmas; and a display of antique Santas and figures of the mischievous Belsnickel, a gift giver from German folklore who is closely related to ol’ Saint Nick.

Winterthur’s two Museum Stores offer a selection of wonderful gifts, from specialty chocolates and other foods, plants, and jewelry to seasonal décor and scarves inspired by the Winterthur collections in the museum, garden, and library. Store hours are 10:00 am–5:30 pm, with extended hours on select evenings during Yuletide.

Special holiday programs throughout the season include the weekly Yuletide Jazz and Wine series, which features favorite holiday music ensembles on Wednesday evenings; live one-man performances of *A Christmas Carol* featuring Gerald Charles Dickens, the great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens; and the popular Yuletide Brunch with Santa. Check winterthur.org/yuletide for a list of these and other events to make your season special.

Timed tickets for the Yuletide Tour are available [online](#) or by calling 800.448.3883. Tickets are free for Members, \$22 for nonmembers, \$20 for seniors and students, \$6 for children, and free for infants. During Yuletide, Winterthur is open seven days per week, 10:00 am–5:00 pm, and closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—

offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and Enchanted Woods children's garden. \$20 adults; \$18 students and seniors; \$6 ages 2–11.

###

[Please click for high-resolution images with accompanying photo credit captions.](#)