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Travel to Texas ★ Bordeaux wine ★ Costco Monopoly

# **COSTCO** Connection<sup>®</sup>

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS



## Plush life

Whimsical, lovable, cuddly and unassuming, Squishmallows have taken over the toy world



OCTOBER 2023



### FOR YOUR HOME

Supplier spotlight: iRobot

Gourmia FoodStation

Supplier spotlight:  
GreenPan

Buyers' picks



# **COSTCO** Connection *October*

October 2023 | Volume 38 | Number 10

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by Mark Cardwell



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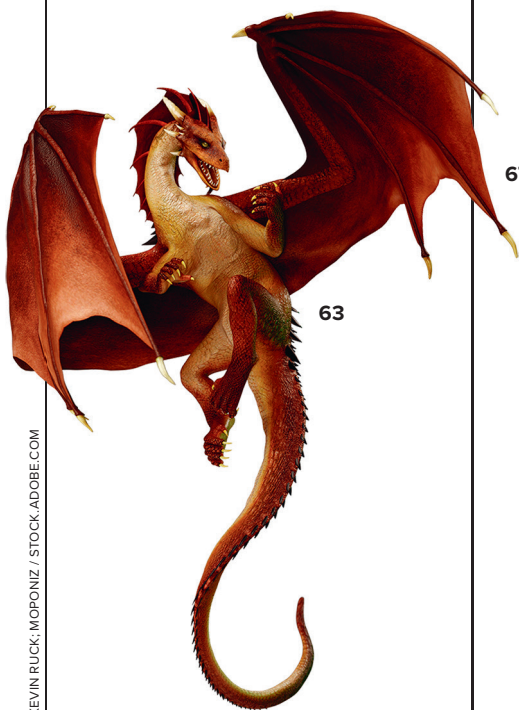
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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

# Passion is key

One of the pleasures of working for Costco is doing business with our innovative and creative suppliers.

Their backstories are often inspirational. They are, almost without exception, hardworking and passionate about the products they create and services they provide. Our suppliers are entrepreneurs who meet people's needs, solve problems and sometimes make life more fun.

Jazwares, the company behind Squishmallows, the popular line of plush toys, is making life fun for millions, and not just children. Our cover story details the genesis and growth of this company, whose founder Judd Zebersky left his job at a law office in 1997 to follow his dream of building a toy company.

You'll also find a story about the robotic vacuum company iRobot. The company's products feature sophisticated technology that was developed for NASA and other high-profile agencies.

Love advanced science? Turn to our story on the Embr Wave wristband. Developed by Embr Labs, this product uses cutting-edge science to help provide relief for women and men who suffer from hot flashes (yes, men can get them too).

Working with passionate, innovative suppliers enables us to offer you, our members, high-quality products (and services) that fit your lifestyles. I sincerely hope you enjoy this issue and find gift ideas as we head toward the holiday season. ■



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**Sandy Torrey** is Senior Vice President, Corporate Membership, Marketing and Publisher, *Costco Connection*.

**Coming next issue**  
Our cover story will take a look at fun, alternative ideas for holiday entertaining.

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## MEMBER COMMENTS



### On Costco going global

"Expanding frontiers," your September cover story on the genesis and growth of Costco, was a joy to read. I especially liked perusing its timeline from '83 to present. My husband and I married in 1983, lived in Southern California and shopped at Costco often. Everything we've ever purchased at Costco has been excellent quality and wonderfully priced. Thank you for 40 years of service. And thank you for the hundreds of \$1.50 dogs we've wolfed down. Keep up the good work!

*Bettina Whippie, via email*

### Love of learning

Thank you for the September article "A sweet new year," on Rosh Hashana. I have no Jewish heritage or connections, but learning about other cultures builds understanding and civility, and I found the story interesting and enjoyable.

*Gordon Down  
Kamloops, British Columbia*

### A moving letter

Thank you for running "Move it to use it" in your August issue. It was written by a licensed psychologist who promotes exercise for children's mental health. My husband and I used to be wildland fire-

fighters and our favorite saying was, and still is, "Move it or lose it."

It doesn't matter what age, being outdoors, exercising and connecting with nature is the best prescription anyone could ask for—and it's free.

*Kristi Sullivan, Chino Valley, Arizona*

### In praise of Costco's funeral supplies

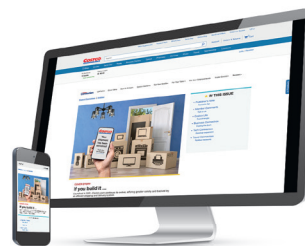
When my sister passed away, her funeral was very expensive. Thank goodness for Costco ["Honoring memories," August 2023]. We saved \$1,500 on a casket, and we were able to choose one in her favorite color, blue. Costco delivered in many ways, and it also gave us peace.

*Pat Dolen, Denver*



### SHARE WITH US

If you have enjoyed a special trip through Costco Travel, we want to hear your story for possible inclusion in an upcoming feature. Please send an email (and photos) that briefly describes your trip to [wfifield@costco.com](mailto:wfifield@costco.com). Please put "Travel story" in the subject line.



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## Digital edition

Access the magazine online each month at Costco.com (search "Costco Connection").

## Talk to us

Do you have a comment about something you read in the *Connection*? Please send a note, including your full name, phone number and address, to:

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## Celebrate, your way

A traditional Halloween celebration might include spooky costumes, trick-or-treating and more, but there are many other fun ways to celebrate the day. No matter how you observe it, Costco warehouses and Costco.com have what you need to make the day special.



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### Fun times for all

**MANY PEOPLE** celebrate Halloween with a fall harvest festival, complete with jack-o'-lantern carving, dancing, singing and bobbing for apples. Others enjoy meeting friends and family at a parking lot and allowing kids to trunk or treat from decorated cars.

You might celebrate the day with a Halloween decorating contest, where children judge and award the best decorated house on the block. A costume contest can also be a hit.

These are just a few family fun ideas you can explore this Halloween.



With October being Fire Prevention Month, now is a good time to make sure your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are in working order with fresh batteries.

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## COSTCO OPTICAL

## Donation program

Your old glasses can help someone in need see clearer. Costco and Assist International, a nonprofit organization, offer an eyeglasses donation program. Look for a donation box in the optical center at your local warehouse. Costco sends your used eyewear to Assist International, and the nonprofit works with a team of volunteers and partner organizations to sort and distribute the donations to those in need, both locally and internationally. Members can donate prescription eyeglasses, prescription sunglasses and readers.



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## TRAVELING COSTCO FANS

## Where has your card been?

If you are a Costco fan who has taken photographs or selfies with your membership card at world-famous landmarks or more secluded international spots, we'd love to hear from you. Send an email to [daniel.jones@costco.com](mailto:daniel.jones@costco.com) with your photos and the story behind them. Please put "Costco traveler" in the subject line.



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## COZY COOKING

## Spinach Lasagna Roll Ups

**8 lasagna noodles, cooked and drained according to package directions**  
**1¾ cups ricotta**  
**2 cups cottage cheese**  
**2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded and divided**  
**1 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded and divided**  
**3 cups fresh baby spinach, chopped**  
**4 garlic cloves, minced**  
**Kosher salt**  
**Fresh cracked pepper**  
**3 cups spaghetti sauce, divided**  
**Fresh parsley, chopped**

Preheat oven to 350 F. Gently place noodles on parchment or foil in a single layer to cool. In a large bowl, combine ricotta, cottage cheese, ¾ of the Monterey Jack cheese, ½ of the Parmesan, the spinach, the garlic and a couple large pinches of salt and pepper.

Spread ½ of the sauce into the bottom of a 9-inch broiler-safe baking dish.

Spread filling mixture evenly onto each noodle. Gently roll up each noodle lengthwise and place seam side down in the baking dish. Drizzle roll ups with remaining sauce and top with remaining cheese. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove foil and broil for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the cheese is dark golden brown. Garnish with fresh parsley. Makes 8 servings.

*Recipe and photo courtesy of Kylie Lato (midwestfoodieblog.com)*





# Power up

Tips to be sure that you have the right chargers for your devices



HUGH BURDEN

**Andy Penfold** is a Bristol, England-based freelance technology writer whose work has appeared in *Macworld*, *Q*, *The Big Issue* and many other national publications.



## COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find a selection of various types of chargers in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.



by ANDY PENFOLD

**K**eeping your devices full of juice used to be a simple affair—you simply plugged your laptop or phone into an electrical outlet using the cable and plug supplied in the box.

These days, devices don't always come with chargers, as manufacturers seek to reduce their environmental impact through the reduction of plastic waste. And some companies say that most people already have several chargers. If they're sold separately, you need to get the right one. Add to that the rise of fast or wireless charging, and keeping your battery level up can be confusing and complicated.

Here's a look at today's landscape to help you buy the most efficient chargers for your devices.

### Watts the matter?

Before you buy a charger, it's important to know the power needs of the device you will be charging. Phones need between 18- and 120-watt chargers, though most will require those

that are between 20 and 30 watts. Tablets tend to be similar, while laptop chargers will generally need to be at least 30 watts (more to be able to charge while you're using it). This information is usually listed on a device's specification sheet or in its manual.

### Standards

You'll also need to know the charging standard your device supports. Most will support the power delivery standard (usually marketed as PD). If a device doesn't support PD, you'll need to buy a charger directly from the manufacturer. If it does support PD, you'll have a range of third-party options to pick from. Choose a charger that matches both the wattage and the charging standard of your device, otherwise it will charge very slowly.

### Fast charging and wireless charging demystified

USB PD is the universal standard for fast charging. Fast charging usually works best when the battery is closer to empty. As you get to 50% full, charging will slow down.

While wireless charging generally takes longer, that may not matter to you if you're charging a device overnight. And you'll be glad for the lack of cables cluttering up your bedside table! The standard to look for in wireless chargers is called Qi (pronounced "chee"). Most phones work with this standard.

It's a bit tricky to figure out what's best for your situation, but with this information, you won't get caught with a flat battery just when you need your device the most. ■

## Portable power

A portable battery pack is a smart investment for peace of mind when you're out and about. These range from simple pocket-size

power banks that store energy to solar-powered battery packs and even portable power stations, which cost thousands of dollars and provide more than 2,000 watts. The latter

category can be bought in rugged designs and feature full wall-style plug ports—ideal for camping trips and parties.—AP

# Tale of two cities

Austin and San Antonio  
are Texas gems well  
worth exploring

by PETER GREENBERG



From left: Congress Avenue  
Bridge; the Alamo.



HANDE BAYAR

**Peter Greenberg**  
has won multiple  
Emmy Awards as  
the travel editor for  
CBS News and is  
host of *The Travel  
Detective* on public  
television ([peter  
greenberg.com](http://petergreenberg.com)).



**T**hey are two Texas cities, less than 80 miles apart. But Austin and San Antonio are two wonderfully distinct experiences.

## Austin

“Keep Austin Weird” has long been the unofficial motto for a city that prizes its freewheeling reputation, while its nickname of “Silicon Hills” is a nod to the mecca the sprawling state capital has become for technology companies.

Home to the University of Texas, a campus of 52,000 students, Austin has a youthful energy, which can be experienced by ambling through its pedestrian-friendly blocks of bars and hundreds of music venues.

Austin’s official city slogan is “The Live Music Capital of the World.” It offers everything from honky-tonks to electronic dance clubs, and South by Southwest (SXSW), an annual international event that originated in Austin and celebrates the convergence of tech, film, music, education and culture.

And the food? You’ll find everything from high-end sushi to artisanal barbecue to every taco variation imaginable.

Austin is home of the state’s largest outdoor restaurant, The Oasis on Lake Travis, with seating for 3,000 between its multilevel patio and indoor dining areas, and spectacular views throughout the day and evening.

Another great spot for sunset views (and bats; see “Batty bridge habitat”) is the Congress Avenue Bridge, which spans Lady Bird Lake downtown, while the city’s skyline is dominated by the 307-foot tower on the University of Texas campus and by the dome of the state Capitol, which is larger than the U.S. Capitol.

With several lakes in the Austin area, kayaking is available almost everywhere. Or rent an inner tube to gently float down one of the region’s rivers.

For indoor pursuits, the university campus has two outstanding libraries, the LBJ Presidential Library, named for the Texas native, and the Harry Ransom Center, where one of only 20 Gutenberg





Bibles is on display, along with film and literary collections and artwork.

### San Antonio

Just an hour-and-a-half drive away is the 300-year-old city of San Antonio. A truly historic place, it received a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation in 2022 for its five Franciscan missions, the most famous of which is the Alamo, the site of a 13-day standoff during the Texas War of Independence in 1836.

You can walk or bike the out-and-back-trail to the missions, situated roughly 2.5 miles apart. Or book a guided kayak tour as the trail follows the path of the San Antonio River.



FROM LEFT: ©E1PHOTO; DEIKAR / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

From the Alamo, it's an easy walk to the downtown River Walk, a promenade lined with restaurants, shops and public art installations.

Two-thirds of the population in San Antonio is Hispanic; the city lays claim to the largest Mexican market in the United States (of course—Texas), El Mercado, also known as Market Square. It offers everything from handmade crafts and clothing to authentic Tex-Mex food.

The city also takes pride in its German heritage. The King William neighborhood boasts architecturally elaborate homes built by prominent German merchants in the late 1880s.

Adding to the city's international flavor are a number of restaurants with kitchens helmed by graduates of the Culinary Institute of America, which has one of its three locations here. The school itself offers several food options, including a bakery/café and its high-end Savor restaurant, which remains reasonably priced. ■

### COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Travel offers Austin and San Antonio vacation packages, as well as cruises, vacation packages, rental cars and hotel-only options for destinations in the United States and around the world. To learn more, visit [CostcoTravel.com](https://CostcoTravel.com) or call 1-877-849-2730.

### Batty bridge habitat

When the Texas Department of Transportation remodeled the Congress Avenue Bridge, located in the heart of downtown Austin, it left deep,

narrow crevices between the beams that turned out to be the perfect bat habitat. As a result, for several months each year, more than a million bats live under the bridge. It is the world's largest urban bat

colony. Just before sunset each evening during "bat season" (yes, it's a thing), the bats blanket the sky as they head out to forage for food. It has become one of Austin's most popular attractions!—PG



# What do you look forward to every autumn?

Costco members respond to our poll, posted to Costco's Facebook page

I look forward to crisp days, the beautiful smell of autumn, the changing of the leaves into an array of amazing colors, hot apple cider and everything pumpkin spice.

*Christine Dodaro*

Football season, cooler weather, fall decor, pumpkin spice, holidays and family traditions!

*Jill Dinkel*

I love the cool, early nights. I just feel like it's such a nice time to be at home and relax with no pressure or worries.

*Jennifer Peto DeVincentis*

I love baking and the way the house smells. Fall is the start of baking season.

*Jessica Weismiller*

Hiking in the beautiful mountains with perfect temperatures!

*Melissa Tomsik*

Sweater weather and warm apple cider.

*Corey Rippey*

Next summer.

*Tanya Wilcox*

Hockey season and hoodie season.

*Petra Erlewein*

It's not fall until I see Costco's pumpkin pie.

*Nancy Fasan*



## Passionate about pumpkins

According to PBS.org, the oldest domesticated pumpkin seeds were found in Mexico, in the Oaxaca Highlands.

According to the University of California, there are more than 45 pumpkin varieties, including Hooligan, Cotton Candy and Orange Smoothie pumpkins.

Jack-o'-lanterns originated in Ireland and Scotland and were originally made from turnips and potatoes, according to History.com. These were swapped with pumpkins when people immigrated to North America.

CHRIS A. RUSNAK



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Watch for the poll at [Facebook.com/Costco](https://www.facebook.com/Costco). Or weigh in at [connection@costco.com](mailto:connection@costco.com), with subject line "Poll."





COVER  
STORY

PHOTO COURTESY OF © JAZWARES

# Soft sell

*Only time will tell if Squishmallows make it to infinity and beyond. But as toy stories go, the marshmallow-like plush toy's meteoric rise to the top of the \$100 billion global toy market is one for the ages.*

by **Mark Cardwell**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24





Part of Squishmallows' appeal is the variety of personalities and sizes.





## COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of Squishmallows items are available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Toys mean the world to Herb Mitschele. A father of four young daughters and a toy industry expert who has worked for such iconic companies as Mattel and Playmates Toys, he's spent the past two decades helping make and market objects that educate and entertain kids of all ages.

As executive vice president with Jazwares, the Florida-based company that makes Squishmallows, Mitschele now leads a team that is tasked with expanding the global reach of the world's best-selling toy. "I've never been involved with anything like this; it's a once-in-a-career thing," he says. "Toy brands come and go. But Squishmallows are here to stay."

### Toys with personality

Launched in 2017 by Kellytoy, an American toymaker acquired by Jazwares, Squishmallows are plush toys that range from 2 to 24 inches.

Made with super-soft fabrics and stuffed with squishy proprietary materials, the colorful plush toys sport cartoon faces of whimsical styles like Cam the Cat, or licensed movie favorites such as Dumbo and Buzz Lightyear.

There are now more than 2,000 styles, each with a unique personality and design. More than 100 million Squishmallows have been sold in more than 55 countries, earning the plush toy a variety of international industry awards, including Top Selling Toy of the Year.

"The next stage is 200 million—and we will cross that mark very soon," says Mitschele, who leads Jazwares' global sales and planning division. "And we still have lots of opportunity to grow and expand in existing and new markets."



He credits the brand's lovable styles and personalities—each of them designed and created in a collaborative process that includes illustrators, designers, and production and brand team members working both remotely and at 20 offices worldwide, including Jazwares' headquarters in Sunrise, Florida—for driving its popularity as a toy and collectible item across all age groups.

"It's rare to see a toy with such multi-generational appeal," says Mitschele. "Finding, buying and sharing Squishmallows has become a way for friends and family members to connect. It's a huge social phenomenon."

### Squishy success

If their squishy softness and cute personalities have helped make Squishmallows a runaway success, social media has helped to fuel its rocket ride to the top of the toy world.

According to Mitschele, Squishmallows videos have been viewed more than 11 billion



ALL SQUISHMALLOWS IMAGES COURTESY OF © JAZWARES

There's at least one Squishmallows character for everyone.

times on TikTok and fans have posted more than 1 million times on Instagram.

In addition to announcing new character releases, the company uses that online reach to promote live Squishmallows events like the five-stop 2022 U.S. East Coast Squish Tour and the arcade-like "human claw machine" at the annual 2022 VidCon convention in Anaheim, California, where people waited up to four hours for a 20-second chance to grab all the Squishmallows they could while suspended from a crane.

"We have many rabid fans who absolutely love the brand," says Mitschele. "It's amazing to see people's reactions online and at events."

The brand received a huge boost on social media in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Kim Kardashian published messages and photos of their Squishmallows collections that went viral on TikTok.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



From left: Gideon the Guacamole, Adila the Antelope, Yara the Rainbow Yeti

## CUDDLY COLLECTIBLES

Of the 2,000 Squishmallows that have been created since 2017, Cam the Cat is one of the oldest personalities. But in terms of collectibility, Jack

the Black Cat—the 500th Squishmallows character to be created—is the brand's meow.

Only 500 units of the 16-inch toy were made when it was released in 2020. It is one of the rarest and most sought-after Squishmallows, fetching

thousands in online auctions.

Other rare Squishmallows—like ones with holographic, golden and silver tags—are also being resold for astronomical prices.—MC





Super fan Melanie Schroeder at VidCon in Anaheim, California.

### Squishmallows mania

With stories like Schroeder's, it's easy to see why toy industry analyst and consultant Chris Byrne—aka The Toy Guy—says the Squishmallows craze has taken the normally staid plush or stuffed toy category by storm.

"They have been the hottest thing in the industry for the past couple of years," says Byrne, who compares "Squish" mania to the frenzy over Care Bears and Beanie Babies. "Like them, Squishmallows are affordable and their selling point is sweetness. They're very tactile and comforting for both kids and adults coming out of the pandemic."

Unlike faddy toys that come and go, Byrne thinks Squishmallows has legs. "They're very trendy now and that cycle will pass," he says. "But like Care Bears or even Barbie, I think they'll remain a classic toy."

### Fandom fun

Melanie Schroeder, a Squishmallows super fan, didn't think many people would watch the amateur 10-second video she made and posted on TikTok about her hunt for Squishmallows at a local store in 2021.

"But right away things went crazy," recalls Schroeder, a doctoral student in audiology at Pacific University in Oregon. "It ended up getting 11 million views."

Since then, she has become a social media influencer with a Squishmallows-loving audience of almost 200,000 followers on TikTok and 15,000 on Instagram. She is now an official brand ambassador.

"It's a real honor for me because I absolutely love Squishmallows," says Schroeder, who has collected 800 of the plush toys since she bought her first one—a peach named Phyllis.

"I started out with the fruits, but now I like the animals like cows and frogs—oh, and mushrooms," she says. "I also like the newer [styles] like Pokémon and SpongeBob."

Schroeder keeps her collection on a bunk bed in her off-campus apartment and posts photos and videos of them online. She also shares other people's posts about squish hunting or squish meets, when people get together in parks or parking lots to display or trade their toys.

"Squishmallows are just so cute," says Schroeder. "I love the vibrant colors and them all looking at me. They're like my own personal rainbow."





that Jazwares will be able to renew each year thanks to the [styles].”

Mitschele says Jazwares’ roughly 1,400 employees—who playfully refer to themselves as “Jazmanians”—are working hard to keep Squishmallows on top. “Our team has done a fantastic job laying out licensed partnerships and creating collaborative consumer programs with more than 60 best-in-class partners around the world,” he says.

In addition to developing new video games and products for people and pets, Jazwares teamed with McDonald’s and Universal Music Group to launch McDonald’s Happy Meal Squishmallows in June 2023.

“We’re continuing to innovate to enhance and evolve the Squishmallows fan experience. The sky’s the limit,” says Mitschele. ■

Mark Cardwell is a writer and kid at heart in Saint-Ferréol-Les-Neiges, Quebec.



Jazwares Founder and CEO  
Judd Zebersky and  
President Laura Zebersky

COURTESY OF © JAZWARES

## A dream fulfilled

In 1997, Florida lawyer Judd Zebersky decided to leave the law office where he worked with his wife, Laura, to found a toy company that would make safe, high-quality products for kids young and old.

Fast-forward 25 years and Judd and Laura, who joined her husband in 2005, are hands-on owners of Jazwares (the “Jaz” being Judd’s initials), a \$1 billion business (40% from sales of Squishmallows).

“I have loved pop culture since I was a kid [and] I was into comic books and toys,” Zebersky told Reuters recently. “I looked at my wife, and said, ‘I want to make toys.’ She said, ‘Follow your dreams,’ and that’s what I did.”—MC



A variety of  
Squishmallows  
sizes and styles  
is available.





# Clean sweep

From sci-fi to reality, iRobot is on a mission to change how we clean

by ERIN SILVER



## COSTCO CONNECTION

Find the iRobot Roomba j8+ (above: Item 8877550) in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com. The iRobot Braava Jet m6CB (Item 4555275) is available at Costco.com only.

**C**olin Angle loves having a clean home, but there's a caveat. "I have a great appreciation for cleanliness, but I'd rather design a solution than do it myself," says the chairman, CEO and co-founder of iRobot, the Bedford, Massachusetts, company that's been making robot vacuums for household use since 2002. "Perhaps it's inevitable I'd use my fascination with robots and my coding skills to make it easier for millions of people to clean their homes."

### A man with a vision

His journey from tech savant to CEO began after a summer internship at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab. Angle helped design the behavior-controlled rovers for NASA that would eventually become Sojourner, NASA's first miniature space exploration rover that actually probed Mars.

Equipped with this knowledge, in 1990 Angle left his doctoral program at MIT to establish iRobot, along with co-founders Helen Greiner and Rodney Brooks.

In addition to sending robots into space, they developed a robot that helped assist with search-and-rescue missions after 9/11. Another roving robot enabled the U.S. military to search and dispose of explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan. IRobot also had robots on the ground in 2011 to help avert a complete nuclear meltdown in Japan after the earthquake and nuclear accident.

### Making a daily difference

Having developed the technology to make a difference in the world, Angle and his team looked ahead to what was next.

"We really wanted to build a robot that would touch people's lives on a daily basis," Angle says. "We realized



PHOTO COURTESY OF IROBOT

that many of the algorithms used by our mine-sweeping robots to cover a certain area could also be used by a robot vacuum to search for dirt, so we continued on a 12-year journey to simplify people's home lives before we got to Roomba [robots that vacuum and mop]."

During that period, the team had to overcome many challenges before it could bring a mass-market, robotic vacuum into households. "We had to solve effective cleaning," says Angle. "We had to solve floor coverage and navigation. We had to get the price point right. We accomplished this through our partnerships and research and development."

### The future is robot-friendly

Now, the company has produced about 10 generations of Roomba robot vacuums at different price points that can effectively and efficiently clean floors. The addition of smart-home technology has enabled users to decide when, where and how their home should be cleaned by talking to a device or pressing a button on a phone.

With six active robots in his house, Angle tests all the prototypes himself. His goal is to create robots that are less of a high-tech tool and more of a partner, so people can interact with them the way they would interact with other members in the household to convey what they want to happen.

Robots that can vacuum are just the beginning, says Angle. "It's exciting that after so many decades of promise we can start pointing to robots in our lives as being valuable additions and not science fiction." ■

Erin Silver is an award-winning children's author and freelance writer in Toronto.



© GIRAFCHEK / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

### A PASSION FOR EDUCATION

iRobot helped establish National Robotics Week, which takes place starting the first Saturday in April every year. Since 2010, this celebration has been sharing innovations and inspiration with children.

The company also created a museum at its headquarters that hosts more than 300 tours a year, giving students from elementary school to master's programs the potential to be excited about robots.

"Over the years it became clear that nothing we could do would have as powerful an impact as sharing robots with children," says Colin Angle, chairman, CEO and co-founder of iRobot.

—ES

### The mission ahead

iRobot has had to solve many challenges, like making sure their robots didn't accidentally mop a customer's carpet.

Their work paid off. So far,

iRobot has sold more than 40 million Roombas worldwide, and more innovation is ahead. "Going forward, it's about the intelligence of the robot, ensuring you don't have to tidy your home before

Roomba cleans," says Colin Angle, chairman, CEO and co-founder of iRobot. "We want our robots to know what to clean and to adjust how it cleans based on what it's learned about your home."—ES





# Smokeless simplicity

Gourmia FoodStation provides six cooking features in one compact package

by ERIK J. MARTIN



COURTESY OF GOURMIA

## COSTCO CONNECTION

The Gourmia FoodStation (above; Item 3333005) is available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Selecting appliances that occupy minimal counter space in your kitchen has been a struggle, until now. The Gourmia FoodStation—a smokeless grill, griddle and air fryer that also bakes, roasts and dehydrates—is an all-in-one compact product that takes the place of six appliances.

Exclusive to Costco, this appliance improves upon the original FoodStation launched two years ago, according to Heshy Biegeleisen, CEO of SteelStone Group, LLC, makers of the Gourmia product line.

Home chefs can enjoy smokeless indoor grilling with a direct bottom-heated grate that grills up to 510 F thanks to a powerful heating element. It offers direct-to-grill grate contact. This doesn't mimic grilling with top heat but actually replicates the traditional outdoor grilling experience.

Gourmia's air-frying technology circulates heated air from every direction, giving foods an authentic crispy fried texture with up to 80% less fat. A removable, diner-style griddle, with a surface area free of hot spots, is ideal for anything from bacon and egg breakfasts to burgers and pancakes.

And a user-friendly control panel offers one-touch functions and displays for temperature and cook time. An integrated probe monitors the internal temperature of food and automatically shuts off the FoodStation when the desired cooking temperature is reached.

Two features that collectively make the FoodStation unique are its see-through glass lid, which allows you to watch food cook with clear visibility, and technology that enables you to grill indoors with virtually zero smoke, even if the lid is open.

"It's all of the sizzle with none of the smoke," says Costco buyer Elisha Jensen, who notes other included dishwasher-safe accessories, such as an air-fry basket, grill grate and drip tray/cover. "These two innovations help keep your kitchen much cleaner and the temperature consistent for cooking. Plus, the extra-large and easy-to-clean cooking surfaces save time, avoiding the need to cook in multiple batches."

So make more room on your kitchen counter with this space-saving solution. ■

Erik J. Martin is a Chicago-based freelancer.

## Recipe for success

The Gourmia FoodStation includes a recipe book for preparing 19 dishes—including grilled steak,

coconut shrimp, fried pickles, sweet potato and kale hash, grilled strawberry cake and cornmeal buttermilk pancakes.

"My favorite recipe is the Tangy and Sweet Grilled Salmon Bowl," says Costco buyer Elisha Jensen.—EJM



# Quality coating

GreenPan is making clean cooking easier

by MICHELE WOJCIECHOWSKI



© THE COOKWARE COMPANY

**W**im De Veirman invited his business partner and chairman, Jan Helskens, to dinner to celebrate the co-founding of their new venture, The Cookware Company, in 2005.

“While I was cooking dinner, Jan showed me an article in the local newspaper. It had a big picture of a nonstick frying pan. The title said, ‘Questions about traditional nonstick products,’” says De Veirman, CEO of The Cookware Company, a Costco supplier. “We both looked at the pan on my stovetop. Oops!”

Instead of regretting that they started the business, they saw an opportunity to change how cookware was made.

The Cookware Company worked with its sister company, Thermolon, based in South Korea, to develop a proprietary ceramic nonstick coating for cookware that was free of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). In 2006, the Thermolon coating was ready for production. But none of the brands they made cookware for were interested. “The only way to do it was to launch our own brand,” De Veirman says.

In 2007, the co-founders launched GreenPan in the U.S. on a TV home shopping network. In just four hours, it sold 25,000 sets. The Cookware Company now sells more than 30

million pans a year. It employs about 3,000 people in 12 global sales offices and four factories—located in Italy, Germany, China and South Korea.

“Today, we have more than 60 different collections,” says De Veirman. The company has also launched a collection of small electronic appliances coated with a special PFAS-free nonstick formulation.

In addition to patents for the original ceramic nonstick, the company has more than 150 other patents, including a stainless steel treatment that prevents discoloration. “We love bringing disruptive technology to the market,” De Veirman says.

The company’s mission remains to create a better, environmentally conscious product. “We are focused on sustainable manufacturing,” De Veirman says. He says that it uses a minimum of 65% recycled materials in its aluminum pan bodies and that in 2022, 18% of its factories’ electricity was generated by roof-top solar panels.

“By eliminating PFAS in all our products and production, we can create tools that are better for customers and the environment,” De Veirman adds. “I am truly convinced our products make a difference.” ■

Michele Wojciechowski is a Baltimore-based freelancer.

## SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

GreenPan’s approach reflects an ethos that values sustainability and the well-being of consumers and the planet by prioritizing PFAS-free production methods, sustainable materials and reduced environmental impact. “We’re focused on making quality products while educating our customers on the benefits of cooking PFAS-free,” says Wim De Veirman, CEO of The Cookware Company.—*MW*

## COSTCO CONNECTION

GreenPan cookware can be found in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.





# Buyers' picks

Product selections from  
Costco's buying team



Cole Hovland

Michelle Rado

Chase Guempel

## Calphalon Premier Stainless Steel Pots and Pans, 12-Piece Cookware Set

This three-layer clad metal cookware set features superior even heating and ergonomic handles that are easy to grip. The set includes 8-inch, 10-inch and 12-inch frying pans; 1.5-quart and 2.5-quart saucepans; a 3-quart sauté pan; and a 6-quart stock pot, plus five lids. The cookware is oven-safe up to 450 F and dishwasher-safe. Item 1736513. Warehouses/Costco.com.—*Cole Hovland*



## Beast Blender Deluxe

The blender's 1,000-watt motor blends the ultimate smoothies, drinks, sauces and dips. It consistently adjusts the speed and torque of the blade and monitors the internal temperature to prevent overheating. With a blade that spins at 18,000 rpm, there's a reason why it's called the Beast. The blender bundle includes three storage containers with lids, two drinking lids and two handled carry caps. Colors: black (Item 3333007; Costco.com only); white (Item 3333008; Warehouses/Costco.com).—*Michelle Rado*



## Berkshire Life Heated Throw

This reversible heated throw features a faux fur side and a velvet plush side that comes in tan, gray or teal. The plush throw measures 50 inches x 60 inches and has four heat settings. The EZ touch button allows you to select the best temperature for your comfort, and after four hours the throw automatically turns itself off. This cozy throw is machine washable. Warehouse (Item 1727175)/Costco.com (various item numbers).—*Chase Guempel*

# Keeping your cool

Embr Labs' Wave wearable device helps you regulate how you feel temperature

by ROSIE WOLF WILLIAMS



## COSTCO CONNECTION

The Embr Wave Wristband (Item 1010027) is available at Costco.com.

**A**fter coming in from a blustery fall day, my home seems toasty warm. But after a few minutes, my body adjusts to the indoor temperature—and I start thinking about turning up the thermostat.

Your body perceives temperature changes caused from things like coming inside on a cold day, hot flashes, anxiety and stress as individual reactions. Those reactions may be relieved with the Embr Wave Wristband, a wearable device that warms or cools the wrist and affects thermoreception—the sense of heat or cold in the brain.

### Lab experiments lead to success

In 2013, MIT students were conducting experiments in an air-conditioned lab. Despite the fact that it was summer, they resorted to wearing jackets and hoodies to manage the temperature.

“They said to each other, ‘This is crazy. Why are we still controlling temperature

from the wall thermostat?’ ” says Embr CEO Elizabeth Gazda. Inspired, they created a team to enter MIT’s MADMEC, a materials-science design competition.

While researching and developing the technology, a group of students consisting of Michael Gibson, Matt Smith, Sam Shames and David Cohen-Tanugi found that human skin is sensitive to small changes in temperature. Using the wrist as the contact area, the students discovered that heating or cooling the area alone can make the entire body feel warmer or cooler by several degrees. The team won the competition, landing a \$10,000 prize that allowed them to continue their work.

“MIT put out a news article ... and they started getting emails asking when the device would be available. The majority of the interest was from women in menopause, asking how this can help with hot flashes,” says Gazda.





PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMBR LABS

**Left:** The Embr Wave targets thermoreceptors to influence the perception of temperatures. **Above:** The Embr Wave is worn on the wrist and can be fine-tuned with a companion app.

Gibson, Smith, Shames and Cohen-Tanugi built and tested prototypes, and in 2016 came up with a wearable product design that could be mass-produced. They launched the first-generation Wave in 2017 through a Kickstarter campaign, raising approximately \$700,000, and the first consumer product was available in 2018. Although Gibson and Cohen-Tanugi moved on, Shames remains as COO of Embr Labs, with Smith as CTO of the Boston-based company. Gazda, who has a background in technology and startups, came on board in 2018 as CEO.

#### The science behind the Wave

When the skin feels cold or hot, the brain perceives that the entire body is experiencing that temperature. The Embr Wave delivers temperature sensations in waveforms (think of an ocean wave rolling in and out).

“The thermoreceptors in your body are stimulated by temperature change,” Gazda says. “The real breakthrough was that if we used waveforms rather than consistent temperature sensations, we keep those receptors firing and continue to get the full brain and body response.”

Women with perimenopause or menopause symptoms typically experience hot flashes when hormonal changes in the body cause the brain to send a signal that the body is overheating. The Embr Wave can activate a cooling sensation at the wrist to send a different signal to the brain. The new message can help stop the hot flash.

Embr Labs is currently developing new technologies to take the power of temperature even further. “I think temperature is a new science, and it is not well understood,” says Gazda. “Understanding temperature and the human experience is very new, and this is a breakthrough way of bringing health and wellness to people by having them leverage their body’s own systems.” ■

Rosie Wolf Williams writes about science, health and business, and lives in the beautiful state of Vermont.

#### NOT JUST FOR WOMEN

The Embr Wave has potential in other categories besides menopause, such as those suffering from anxiety, Raynaud’s syndrome and more. The company ran a clinical study overseen by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Dr. Alicia Morgans on men undergoing prostate cancer treatment. The results, presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology, supported the feasibility of the use of the Embr Wave for “management of bothersome hot flashes in prostate cancer survivors.”—RWW

# Lights, camera, eat

Gabriel Guilbeau's cookbook shares recipes inspired by the show *Yellowstone*

by DAN JONES



## COSTCO CONNECTION

Gabriel Guilbeau's cookbook *Yellowstone: The Official Dutton Ranch Family Cookbook* (Item 1767459; 9/12) will be available in most Costco warehouses.



© DANNO NELL / PARAMOUNT NETWORK

As his title might suggest, cooking is not a problem for chef Gabriel “Gator” Guilbeau. But two other recent additions to his résumé—actor and author—proved equal parts challenging and rewarding.

The 32-year-old Costco member was hand-picked to cook and lead craft services for the television hit *Yellowstone* since filming began in 2017. No sweat there, as he’s been in kitchens since he was a teenager. But Guilbeau found himself in a whole new ballgame when his real-life role developed into a minor character as a cook in the modern-day Western series, which portrays the saga of the Dutton family and the Yellowstone Dutton Ranch. “It was unexpected and terrifying at first,” he says of his initial reaction to acting.

An equally formidable test for Guilbeau was squeezing out recipes he’s been storing in his head to create *Yellowstone: The Official Dutton Ranch Family Cookbook*. But after many requests from friends, family and fans for him to share his culinary creations, Guilbeau says he knew it was time to write.

“For me it was super hard,” he recalls. “Because for the better part of my life I just wasn’t a recipe guy. I cooked by feel and by sense. It was a big change for me to actually put pen to paper.”

The book features Guilbeau’s Western-style “cowboy” cuisine, with recipes that include Kickin’ Chicken Tenders with Pickled Jalapeño Sauce, Glazed Venison Meatballs, Golden Squash Casserole and Sweet Potato Bourbon Pie. The recipes reflect foods Guilbeau is known for, meals he’s made for the cast and crew, and even dishes featured in the series.

With three generations of Louisiana chefs in his lineage, Guilbeau honed his craft growing up in Los Angeles, and eventually built a reputation in Hollywood as a go-to for food. And though he’s done more than just cooking since receiving a call from a *Yellowstone* spokesperson asking for his immediate services, Guilbeau says making people happy with his food brings him the greatest joy.

“Seeing people truly enjoy a dish I made,” he says. “That’s everything to me.” ■





## Beth's Coffee Vodka Martini

**4 oz vodka**  
**2 oz very strong coffee or espresso, chilled**  
**2 oz coffee liqueur**  
**2 lemon twists**  
**Simple syrup, to sweeten (optional)**

In a cocktail shaker, combine the vodka, coffee and coffee liqueur. Fill the shaker with ice. Cover and shake gently until combined. Taste and sweeten to taste with simple syrup, if desired.

Strain the cocktail into 2 martini glasses, dividing evenly. Garnish each with a lemon twist and serve.

**Note:** To make simple syrup, add equal parts water and sugar to a small saucepan, bring to a boil, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Let cool completely, and then transfer to a jar and refrigerate until chilled. The simple syrup can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.

FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY BY © WATERBURY PUBLICATIONS INC.

## Rodeo Cowboy Caviar

### VINAIGRETTE

**1/3 cup olive oil**  
**1/4 cup red wine vinegar**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 tsp sugar**  
**1/2 tsp kosher salt**  
**1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper**  
**1 can (15 oz) black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed**  
**1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed**  
**1 cup fresh corn kernels (from 2 ears) or frozen, thawed**

**2 large plum tomatoes, cored, seeded and diced**  
**1/2 small red onion, finely chopped**  
**1 red bell pepper seeded and finely chopped**  
**1 jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped**  
**1/2 cup cilantro, chopped, plus extra for garnish**  
**2 scallions, sliced, white and green parts**  
**Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**Tortilla chips**

Prepare the vinaigrette: In a jar with a tight-fitting lid combine the oil, vinegar, garlic, sugar, salt and pepper. Cover and shake vigorously until emulsified.

In a large bowl toss the black-eyed peas, black beans, corn, tomatoes, onion, bell pepper and jalapeño. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or up to overnight.

When ready to serve, add the cilantro and scallions and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Top with additional cilantro and serve with tortilla chips for scooping. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

*Recipes courtesy of Yellowstone: The Official Dutton Ranch Family Cookbook*



# Picking a winner

Costco supplier Rao's Homemade uses Italian tomatoes

by OWEN ROBERTS



© REMOARCARO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



## COSTCO CONNECTION

A two-pack of Rao's Homemade Marinara Sauce (Item 1234826) is available in Costco warehouses and for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.

COURTESY OF RAO'S

Some cooks say it's their choice of tomatoes, or a secret ingredient, that makes their signature sauces stand out. Farmers say it's the climate, the landscape and the soil—known as the *terroir*—that impacts flavor.

The truth is, they're both right.

Costco tomato sauce supplier Rao's Homemade and its current parent company Sovos Brands believe their San Marzano-style tomatoes are hard to beat. They're a special variety developed exclusively by their supplier and grown in Italy's volcanic soils, in the footprint of the legendary and still active Mount Vesuvius.

And for these tomatoes, volcanic soils are among the best. Imagine soils rich in potassium, phosphorus, sulfur, organic matter, trace minerals and ash, which is a natural fertilizer.

"It's a perfect situation for growing tomatoes," says Sovos Brands chief growth officer Yuri Hermida.

For tomato sauces, San Marzano tomatoes have become a top choice for discerning chefs. These tomatoes have it all: sweet taste, thin skin, not many

seeds, meaty texture and low moisture content. That makes them perfect for thick, fragrant, mouthwatering sauces that cling effortlessly to pasta.

After being harvested, washed and steam-peeled, the tomatoes are simmered in open kettles at a southern Italy processing plant. Additional ingredients are minimal. For example, the company's popular marinara sauce features just olive oil, whole leaf basil, fresh onions and garlic, and other spices.

Better yet, the ingredients are all grown by a nearby multigenerational family-farming operation.

Hermida, a Costco member, says Rao's Homemade is now targeting \$1 billion in sales. He bases that goal on consumer interest in quality retail, and on the authentic roots of Rao's sauce (see "Restaurant quality").

Says Hermida: "We call it Rao's Homemade for a reason." ■

Owen Roberts is a Champaign, Illinois-based agricultural journalist.

## Restaurant quality

Besides a taxi, one of the hardest things to find in New York City is a table at the legendary Rao's. After the restaurant was awarded three stars by an influential *New*

*York Times* restaurant critic in 1977, reservations for Rao's southern Italian food became hard to get. To cope, the restaurant abandoned reservations altogether, and instituted assigned seating instead—for lucky regulars and

their friends. The restaurant went on to develop its own retail brand, Rao's Specialty Foods, and Sovos Brands bought it in 2017. So now, you can jump the line and head to your own kitchen for an authentic Rao's culinary experience.—OR



# Growing green

Good things are happening at wineries in Bordeaux, France

by CHRISSY EDROZO

Claire Lurton, owner of Château Haut Bages Liberal



COURTESY OF CHÂTEAU HAUT BAGES LIBERAL



© COSTCO PHOTO STUDIO

**Chrissy Edrozo** is a wine buyer in the San Diego region.



## COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find wines from Bordeaux in select Costco warehouses.

**S**ustainable wine growing practices not only benefit the environment, but they also often improve the product winemakers sell. I recently talked to three wine industry professionals in Bordeaux, France, about their commitment to sustainability, conserving energy and water, and looking after their employees. Here's a look:

"From a social and societal point of view, we are one of the few *crus classés* in Bordeaux to be awarded a corporate social responsibility label," says Caroline Decoster, sales, marketing and communications director of Château Fleur Cardinale. The label brings together businesses across Bordeaux's wine industry to create best practices in looking after their staff and their communities.

"Our concern for biodiversity has led us to use the BEE FRIENDLY label," Decoster says. "Created by associations of beekeepers and naturalists, the label certifies that we practice responsible agriculture that benefits pollinating insects."

"The life of the soil is crucial. It is the future of viticulture," says Claire Lurton,

third-generation family owner of Château Haut Bages Liberal. Her château has been certified organic since 2019 and biodiversity is at the heart of all of its viticulture practices. Lurton's vineyards, for example, are surrounded by hedges of peach, apple and maple trees and has grass-covered soils. These natural features promote biodiversity by keeping the soils fertile and aerated. Her vineyards are also planted with cover crops, which promote soil health and prevent erosion.

"Setting an example is essential, in terms of the quality of the wine, its ability to age well, biodiversity, carbon footprint and human well-being," says Veronique Sanders, third-generation owner and current CEO of the Sanders family of Château Haut-Bailly. Her vineyard's recently completed remodel incorporates rainwater collection and recycling, and uses thermal inertia, which lowers energy consumption.

What these winemakers have in common is that they are committed to making great wine, being great leaders and looking after the environment. ■

## Bordeaux wines

The 2020 vintage of Bordeaux is superb, despite significant weather challenges: heavy rain,

frost and untimely heat. Many winemakers and experts praise the wines for their richness, concentration and balance. The wines were marked by

ripe fruit flavors, well-structured tannins and good acidity, indicating that they have the potential for long-term aging.—CE

# Here be dragons

Tui T. Sutherland offers a deep dive into her fantasy series

by HOPE KATZ GIBBS



Tui T. Sutherland

JUDITH SARGENT

**F**ans of Tui T. Sutherland's *Wings of Fire* fantasy series can dive into the backstories of the 10 dragon tribes in *A Guide to the Dragon World*.

Readers learn the dragons of Pyrrhia and Pantala are on a mission to develop a definitive guide to the lives and history of each tribe told by the dragons themselves.

"It's sort of hilarious because I was thinking of this book as the nonfiction one," laughs Sutherland while talking to the *Costco Connection* from her home near Boston. "Clearly, it's still fiction, like a little map with letters, interviews and journal entries that expose old myths and reveal dark secrets."

Having sold more than 14 million copies and been translated into a dozen languages, the 15-book *Wings of Fire* series has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for years. There are also

two stand-alone titles, two companion books, four short stories and six graphic novel adaptations.

How did the woman, named after a noisy New Zealand bird, dream up this alternative universe?

"When I was a little kid we lived in Caracas, Venezuela; Paraguay; Miami; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, before moving to New Jersey for high school, and everywhere I went, I'd make up stories, read stories and imagine myself in new worlds. After graduating from college, I went into publishing because I wanted to know how books are made. By then, I had written several fiction books of my own, but it was writing about a world based on pure fantasy that interested me most," says Sutherland.

When her first son was born in 2010, Sutherland wanted to take him on a hero's quest. "So, I created a series about destiny and what's written for you versus what you choose for yourself. You can save the world no matter what kind of dragon you are—the fierce bossy one or the tiny optimistic one with no powers. They all have their way of making their world a better place." ■

Hope Katz Gibbs is a Rehoboth Beach, Delaware-based freelance writer.



*Wings of Fire: A Guide to the Dragon World* (Item 1754122) will be available in early October in most Costco warehouses.

## KIDS' PICK

**BOOK** *Fantastic Puzzle Pages* assortment

**PUBLISHER** Bendon

Read and build! Children ages 3 and up can read stories and build puzzles to match the adventure scenes in these Disney board books.

Each spread features an easy-to-assemble jigsaw puzzle with large pieces for small hands. Puzzles store on the pages so children can put them together again and again.

Titles include *Mickey, Minnie and Princess*.

—Stephanie E. Ponder



## COSTCO CONNECTION

The *Fantastic Puzzle Pages* assortment (Item 1665973) is available now in most Costco warehouses.





# Power play

A revised board game celebrates all things Costco

## COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Monopoly (Item 1601313) is available in most Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

**W**hat happens when you mix a beloved board game and your favorite shopping destination?

You get Costco Monopoly.

This version of the perennial family favorite was created to share fun facts about Costco's international locations and coincides with the company's 40th anniversary. It features the following:

- Custom illustrations that include international warehouses
- Game pieces that include a shopping cart, pallet jack, hot dog and soda, pizza slice, giant teddy bear and gold name badge

- Ancillary businesses such as the Bakery and Gas Station replace utilities and railroads

- Executive Membership and Gold Star Membership cards replace Chance and Community Chest cards

- Costco warehouse "hotels" and Food Court table "houses"

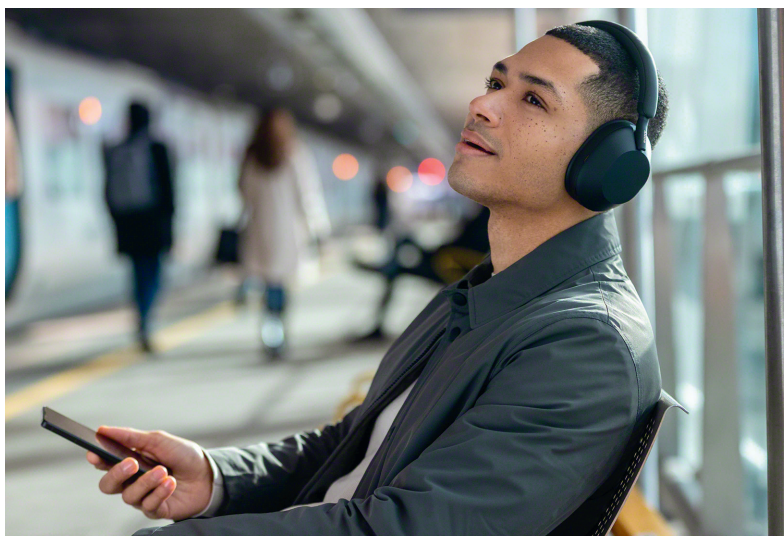
- Custom-designed money and more

Just pick up those dice and advance to hours of fun.—Stephanie E. Ponder

## Sony WH-1000XM5/B Wireless Noise Canceling Headphones

The WH-1000XM5 headphones rewrite the rules for distraction-free listening. Two processors control eight microphones for unprecedented noise canceling and exceptional call quality. Item 7143010.

[Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses/costco.com).



## The latest Costco finds



## Holiday Pillow Assortment

These holiday pillows feature applique, jute and embroidery details available in four options: snowman, snowflake, plaid and wintry green holiday trees. Selection varies by location. Item 1341300. **Warehouses only.**

## Ladies' Fireside by Dearfoams Sydney Genuine Shearling Scuff Slipper

These comfortable slippers are made with 100% Australian shearling lining and are moisture-wicking and regulate temperature. Super-soft cushioning cradles your feet alongside a durable indoor/outdoor outsole.

**CostcoNext.com only.**



**COSTCO** | NEXT  
WHOLESALE

## Pantene 10-in-1 The Multi-Tasker Shampoo or Conditioner

Made with keratin, vitamin E, coconut oil and Pro-vitamin B5 to deliver 10 essential benefits: detangles, moisturizes, strengthens, smooths frizz, protects color, softens strands, protects bonds, improves shine, repairs damage and heat protects. Item 1744700 (shampoo), 1744701 (conditioner).

**Warehouses/Costco.com.**







### Berkshire Life Pleated Wave 3-Piece Comforter Set

The textured style gives your space a stylish focal point while the microfiber fabric is soft, durable and comfortable for year-round use. The three-piece set includes a comforter and two shams. Available in king or queen. Item 1756422 (king), 1756424 (queen). **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

### Andrew Marc Ladies' Jacket

This beautiful walker jacket with an inside zip bib features velboa plush trim, two side pockets and a five-button snap closure. Sizes: XS-XXL. Colors: barley, black, terra rose and navy. Sizes and colors vary by location. Item 1695062.

**Warehouses/Costco.com.**



### My Arcade Atari Gamestation Pro

This retro video game system features over 200 built-in Atari® games. Connect it to your TV and use the wireless joysticks inspired by the original Atari design to enjoy games such as PONG® and Missile Command®. Arriving early October. Item 1757619. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

### Shark Matrix Pro AE Robot Vacuum

The Shark Matrix Pro features incredible suction power and precision home mapping that quickly and accurately maps your home. With Matrix Clean, the robot cleans using a precision grid taking multiple passes over dirt and debris for cleaning coverage and then empties itself into a bagless, self-emptying base that holds up to 30 days of dirt and debris. Item 6412360. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**



### Jessica Simpson Ladies' Sweater

Perfect for fall, this cozy sweater can be worn by itself or layered for chillier days and nights. Sizes: XS-XXL. Colors: tan, dark red and pond green. Sizes and colors vary by location. Item 1614696. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

SPONSORED CONTENT

# A sense of security

Protective Life insurance can help you plan ahead

by SHANA MCNALLY



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**H**aving a life insurance policy is a key part in caring for your loved ones. Should something happen to you, a policy can protect them from added financial concerns, including income replacement, home mortgage payment, children's college tuition, care for elderly parents and payment of debt. Life insurance funds go directly to your beneficiaries to cover these concerns.

You can help protect your family by investing in a life insurance policy from Costco Services provider Protective Life, which offers 10-, 20- and now 30-year level term policies.

"Our goal is to always provide the value members expect from Costco," says Dave Sheridan, head of independent life distribution for Protective Life.

## Just in case

Prudent times to purchase life insurance include when you take on a 30-year mortgage where the death benefit would cover the mortgage, when you get married or become new parents.

Coverage ranges from \$100,000 to \$5 million. Rates are among the most competitive in the industry (subject to meeting underwriting requirements). All members save on a quality life insurance product; however, Executive Members may receive additional savings.

Members can convert to a permanent policy during a specific period of the contract and can decrease the benefit after the third policy year as needs change. Premiums can be paid by credit card monthly, quarterly, semiannually or annually for the duration of the term.

Protective term life insurance products feature a lower premium in the first five years, then a moderate increase at year six through the duration of the term. Cancel anytime at no charge.

"We offer members a quick and convenient online application process with the potential for no medical exam for members that meet certain risk and eligibility requirements," Sheridan says. ■



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## COSTCO CONNECTION

For a free, no-obligation quote, follow the online application process at [Protective.com/memberquote](https://Protective.com/memberquote). For other Costco services, visit [Costco.com](https://Costco.com) and click "Services."

*Member Advantage Life® (ICC20-TL21R/TL-21R) is a term life insurance policy issued exclusively to Costco members by Protective Life Insurance Company (PLIC), Nashville, TN. Not available in New York. Savings is based on first year annual premium comparisons between Protective's Classic Choice term product and the Member Advantage Life® term product. The guaranteed premium will increase in policy year 6 and then remain level for the remaining level period (5, 15 or 25 more years) and after the full level period (10, 20 or 30 years) the premiums will increase annually immediately following the full level period. See [Protective.com/Costco](https://Protective.com/Costco) for additional terms and conditions. In California, the license for Protective is 07726 and the license for Costco Insurance Agency, Inc. is 0D08407.*



# Precious resource

We can all play a role in being water-wise

by SHERI FLIES



© ROMOLO TAVANI / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



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**Sheri Flies** is Costco senior vice president of global sustainability and compliance.



**C**lean, readily available water is essential to our lives, and to our planet. At Costco, we are doing our part to manage water in our operations as efficiently as possible.

First, we want to make sure we are using only what we need in our warehouses. We address this critical area through our STAR program (Sustainability Technical Assistance Review), which outlines specific steps to manage water effectively. For example, advanced monitoring systems can help detect if we're wasting any water, and respond immediately if any abnormally high usage is detected. We also have processes to improve the quality of our wastewater and stormwater discharges. And in the landscaping around our warehouses, we're using drought-resistant plants and landscaping where possible.

We can all be involved in managing this precious resource. I'd like to share these water-saving household tips from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Start in the bathroom, where more than half of all water use in a house takes place. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, and use water-saving showerheads,

toilets and faucets. The EPA recommends using products with the WaterSense label, indicating that they've met specifications for water efficiency and performance. (These can also help reduce your energy bills and, in turn, reduce carbon emissions.)

- In the kitchen, use a wash basin or plug the sink if you're doing dishes by hand, keep a pitcher of water in the fridge instead of running water to make it cold, and make sure the dishwasher is full when you run it.

- Find any plumbing leaks in your home or yard. Common culprits include worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets and leaking valves.

Even the smallest changes can add up to make a real impact. For example, the EPA calculates that using an Energy Star washer instead of a standard machine can save more than 3,000 gallons of water a year. As water prices continue to increase year after year, this also saves you money. And by fixing that leaky faucet, dripping at the rate of one drip per second, you can save more than 3,000 gallons per year.

You can find more information at [Epa.gov/watersense/our-water](https://Epa.gov/watersense/our-water). ■

## Success stories

Tell us what steps you're taking to be water-smart. Email a brief overview of your water-saving actions

to [ttalevich@costco.com](mailto:ttalevich@costco.com) and note "Water saving" in the subject line. We may share some of your tips.

For more details on Costco's water manage-

ment efforts, visit our Sustainability Commitment at [Costco.com](https://Costco.com). Search "Sustainability," then select "Operations," then "Managing Water."—SF

## FOR SCHEDULES & DESCRIPTIONS

Go to [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com) or download the Costco mobile app from the App Store or Google Play. Click “Shop” and find “Special Events” to view the online items and events schedules.



### HexClad Gourmet Cookware

HexClad’s patented cookware technology uses a triple layer of magnetic stainless steel, aluminum and another layer of magnetic stainless steel, followed by a unique laser etching process, for improved heat distribution.



### Traeger Pellet Grills

Fueled by all-natural hardwood pellets, Traeger pellet grills offer epic wood-fired flavor, endless cooking possibilities and the next-level convenience of WiFIRE® Wi-Fi control in select models.

# A limited-time showcase of exciting products



### Human Touch Massage Chairs

For over 40 years Human Touch has been a leading provider of high-performance massage chairs that help rejuvenate the mind and body.

## WAREHOUSE HOURS

Monday–Friday 10 a.m.–8:30 p.m.  
Saturday 9:30 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Sunday 10 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Pharmacy closed Sunday  
**Costco.com 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week**





PHOTOS: © CHRISTOPHER MORTENSON

## PET CARE WITH A PURPOSE

Dr. Kwane Stewart, a CNN Hero honoree, created Project Street Vet to care for the pets of homeless people in his area of Los Angeles.

The organization now has sponsorship, which has allowed Project Street Vet to expand into other cities around the country, including Atlanta; New York; Orlando, Florida; San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose, California; and Washington D.C.

Stewart says unhoused pet parents automatically qualify for financial assistance.

—SC



## The ulti-mutt pet provider

A few evenings a month you can find Dr. Kwane Stewart walking the streets of Los Angeles tending to patients—the furry, four-legged kind.

In 2020, the 20-year career veterinarian launched Project Street Vet ([projectstreetvet.org](http://projectstreetvet.org)) to care for pets of unhoused people. The organization is supported by

donations, and the funds allow Stewart to diagnose and treat pets free of charge.

Stewart administers direct vet-to-pet exams for wellness care and prevention and provides vaccines. “I go to skid row two to three times a month just because I have so many pets there and a lot of follow-ups and rechecks,” he says. “I love it. I love the interaction. I love helping a pet that would not otherwise ever receive care.” —*Shelley Crenshaw*

**Above:** Veterinarian Kwane Stewart tends to cats and dogs on the streets of Los Angeles.