

# The Marvel of Christmas Markets

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Holiday Open House at Jones Farm in Cornwall, N.Y., on Nov. 12, 2023. The farm has been owned by the same family since 1914 and offers homegrown vegetables, local produce, a cafe, homemade baked goods, a gift shop, and a frame shop. Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times



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12/2/2024 Updated: 12/2/2024

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*Commentary*

Standing around the table of some lamb farmers from whom I bought a remarkable shoulder only two months ago, I noted that they now had throws, shawls, and scarfs made from the same animals. They were absolutely gorgeous, all with their natural color, loomed in their own homes and now for sale at a stunning Christmas market in an old New England estate.

The older lady next to me, a customer, said in the course of conversation, “I’ve not used the loom in my basement in years.”



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was stunned.



You have a loom in your basement?”



Yes, my grandmother used it and I did too but not in years.”



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Like the fool I am, I asked what in the world she does with a loom. She said that one looms with a loom. Good point but still, I have absolutely no recall of a time when people made their own clothing. At least I never encountered it, much less working hand looms to weave wool from one’s own farm.

To be sure, I’m good with a needle and thread with clothing repairs generally. But making them? That’s next level.

And yet here we are. The hand-loom scarves were just the beginning. The candy maker was there, and the man who somehow turns pieces of wood into remarkable salad bowls, and the young man barely old enough to be shaving who has taken to carving wood into old-fashioned safety razors. Lots of men were looking at his products and talking about where to buy the old-world safety razors to fit in them.

There seems to be a whole world out there of people who make all the things we love but by hand in their own workshops. There are bakers, candlemakers, jewelry makers, and one lady who makes shoes on order. She had a number of samples right there for everyone to admire.

Each of these merchants seemed to be doing excellent business this season, and they were obviously thrilled. Yes, the prices were rather up there by any standard, but the thing you get is also of dazzling quality.

I was drawn to some beeswax candles that seemed like they would fit in my candle holders but I simply did not know the case for using them. I've usually bought just whatever candles will fit, and probably they are something industrial. Maybe they are unhealthy or bad or something, I don't know. The lady explained that the beeswax candles are selling extremely well.

“These days, people are really trying to find foundational things, real things, getting back to who we were, discovering the truth at the root of things,” she explained.

Is this really a trend? I've suspected so but been careful not to announce it. What if this new foundationalism is just the indulgence of the rich, a vanity thing that is fashionable among those who can afford it? This is why I've been reluctant to say it represents something important.

However, I'm starting to think there is more going on. The bakers at this event were a true marvel, selling all sorts of scones and pies. They could talk your ear off about the ingredients and processes involved. There is something just magical about visiting with the merchant who actually made the thing. They bear full responsibility.

I did end up with a wonderful bottle of elderberry juice. What for? Cocktails, obviously. But someone around that particular table also explained that it is a wonderful tonic for healing a winter cough. It's an old cure that everyone in past ages knew but somehow it went away during the period in which people became convinced that all cures come from pharmaceuticals rather than nature itself.

I'm woefully naive about plants and things but it's fine because it allows me to ask about the difference between elderflower and

elderberry. Essentially one is a flower and the other is a berry—same plant. Good to know!

It's all quite romantic, and I was truly startled that the lady who makes clothing of flax (linen) recognized me immediately from my many obsessive articles on The Epoch Times about linen sheets and towels. They thrilled her and yes she clipped them all and gives them to her customers. She made me out to be the expert that I am not, which was extremely kind.

So there we go: hand-loomed linen clothing! Astounding.

There's a deeper history behind this interesting shift toward artisanal everything. The last few years have been disastrous for the expert class. Their advice was faulty. The media said things daily for years that were simply untrue. The doctors went along. The tech titans misled us and commodified our private lives and sold them. Big business has shown incredible disregard for human concerns. Governments did unspeakable things.

We all know this now. Word has spread. The loss of faith in everything is showing up in elections all throughout the world, not just in the United States. A paradigm has collapsed, and people are clamoring for exactly what the lady said: we simply want to know what's true. We want to live in truth. With our limited resources, we want to buy what's true.

This impulse, this new shift, is revealing itself in Christmas markets all over the United States today. To be able to look at the merchant in the eyes is a fantastic luxury, the very person who made the shoes, baked the cake, wove the wool, carved the salad bowl, and painted the jewelry.

We can all live with less, but make that which we consume more real, more close to home, more an extension of authentic human volition rather than some subsidized machine out there built by someone else.

I know you feel this. Just look at the romance now associated with the Amish and Mennonites and their way of life. I'm hardly alone in quietly thinking that perhaps they had it right all along. We don't need to go all the way in that direction to know that their beautiful way of life offers for all of us something from which to learn.

I fully expect this holiday season to be more magical than any we've experienced in many years. None of us can forget that only a few years ago, the ruling class advised us against gathering for the holidays and even forbidding the unvaccinated among us from joining in our gatherings. Crazy times. They are fortunately over.

Why must we experience such pain to feel the deep urge to build with the determination to feel joy again in what is real and true? It's a mystery. I can only feel gratitude for all those who made it through the hardest times and can now see the dawn. Have you ever been so excited for the holidays?

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