



Silent Nights
Festive-wear suggestions for a season without parties **D3**

OFF DUTY

Stay Warm This Winter
A delicious, spicy take on chicken-noodle stew **D13**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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That's the Way The Cookie

This cookie—like a snickerdoodle but sturdier—is a great shipper.

Ordinary baker's twine just happens to have a festive color scheme.

These chewy almond cookies make a good gluten- and dairy-free option.

A chocolate option is key. These fudge cookies really deliver.

A clever method gives this colorful cookie a delightful texture.

This cute caviar tin works equally well for conveying cookies.

Once the cookies are gone, this tin could store coffee, sugar or flour.

These pretty pinwheels are surprisingly simple to make.

Doesn't Crumble

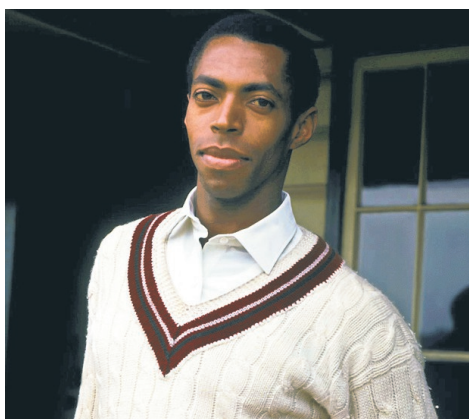
By GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

THIS SEASON, many of us are scaling back our holiday celebrations. But even if you can't gather with everyone you love, you can still feed them. Spread holiday cheer—remotely—by baking and mailing packages of comforting cookies. Sharing cookies is a longstanding holiday ritual.

If there were ever a year to ship our loved ones cookie tins brimming with cheer, this is it. With these top techniques from pro bakers, festive treats arrive fresh, intact and full of sparkle

This time of year, kitchens turn into production facilities to supply cookie swaps, tree-trimming parties and holiday open houses. Even in normal times, some of those cookies would travel by mail. But in 2020, shipping cookies takes on new resonance. "I don't know of a better gift than to bake for someone," said Kelly Fields, author of "The Good Book of Southern Baking" (Lorena Jones Books) and owner *Please turn to page D12*

Inside



CRICKET CHIC

The inscrutable sport's cable-knits and woolly whites are trending stateside **D2**

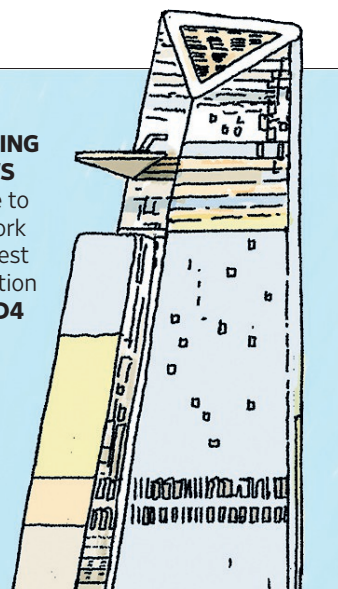


LAW OF THE GARLAND

Holiday decorating dos and don'ts, care of 'seen it all' design pros **D9**

TOWERING VIEWS

A guide to New York City's best observation decks **D4**



PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Dan Neil on the impressive, but problematic, Land Rover Defender **D11**

DESIGN & DECORATING



HANG LOOSE
Washington, D.C., artist
Josh Young festooned
with simple, real garland.

ERROR, ERROR ON THE WALL

Bough Wow

How to avoid the five holiday-decorating goofs the pros see most often—and deck a superior hall

By Rachel Wolfe

IN THIS HISTORICALLY strange holiday season, we’re counting on tinsel’s historically documented ability to inspire cheer. Fine artist Josh Young, whose photos of his tastefully decorated Washington, D.C., townhome have earned him a loyal Instagram following, believes that, in 2020, when “we aren’t with loved ones, we aren’t with friends,” it’s especially important to “spruce up and create that holiday environment.”

A huge tree can ‘swallow up all the Christmas cheer in the room.’ Just as when buying furniture, measure first.

That said, he’s over the over-the-top approach. “Holiday decorating should accent and complement the rest of your décor and not overpower and compete with it,” said Mr. Young, who added fresh greenery to every room this year but skipped ribbons and lights. The focal point: his larger-than-normal tree adorned with vintage ornaments. Reckless festooning is just one of the common Yuletide décor gaffes that make design pros cringe. We asked our panel to share must-avoid errors and the decorating strategies that are their preferred alternatives.

Knickknack Attack
Too many cute snowmen or winging seraphim get tacky fast, warned Ashley Moore, founder of Moore House Interiors, in Tomball, Texas. **Instead** It’s OK to showcase the Nativity scene passed down from Mom, said Miami designer Constanza Collarte. “The key is to use figurines meaningfully.” When it comes to her own treasured items, she keeps kitsch in check by layering them into a centerpiece and laying the table with modern Murano stemware and vintage monochrome-patterned Staffordshire plates. No holly motifs.

Ill-fitting Tannenbaums
Miami designer Phyllis Taylor often sees trees so gargantuan they

“swallow up all the Christmas cheer in the room,” or tabletop varieties so dinky they “provide a holiday atmosphere...for one.” **Instead** Measure beforehand as you would when buying furniture. If you have high ceilings but can’t fit a wide berth, “pick a slender tree so that it’s properly scaled for visual impact, the taller the better,” suggested Ms. Taylor. Group tabletop trees together so they don’t look lonely, she added.

Gross Faux Greenery
“There’s a lot of bad garland on the market at a tempting price point,” warned Toronto designer Tiffany Leigh Piotrowski, who dislikes synthetic boughs’ suspiciously dark green coloring and telltale smell. Even worse, said New Rochelle, N.Y., designer Joy Moyler, are pink or silver trees that try, and fail, to make a virtue of looking fake. **Instead** Buy the real deal. Alternatively, Billy Ceglia, a designer in Sandy Hook, Conn., attaches live magnolia leaves or holly berries to artificial garlands to “add interesting texture...fill in bald spots and increase believability.”

Overcompensating for Kids
Households with babies or destructive pets often leave bottom tree branches bare for safety. For Los Angeles designer Rydhima Brar of R/terior Studio, that move “makes it look like you’re half-assing the tree.” Allison Spampanato, head of design for Pottery Barn Kids, notes that parents often think “plastic fantastic” decorations are the only safe option. **Instead** For that lower half, “look for unexpected fabrications that are timeless, cozy and festive,” said Ms. Spampanato. She suggests ribbons of alternating colors, origami-paper ornaments or shatterproof acrylic “that looks just like mercury glass.”

Ye Olde Green, Red and Gold
Pledging allegiance to the classic color scheme can make your home look like it’s about to play host to a mall Santa or serve as the set for a crazy-making Hallmark Christmas movie. **Instead** Melissa Morgan of San Antonio’s M Interiors leans on simple greenery with lots of lights to evoke “a dreamy Scandinavian forest.” She also likes to nestle red or white amaryllis, poinsettia or paperwhites in blue-and-white pots. Alternatively, tweak the traditional hues and rely on pink and pale green.

LEAVE GNOMES ALONE / THE WORST YULETIDE DÉCOR GAFFES OUR PROS HAVE WITNESSED

I have a client who loves gnomes—potentially charming in small doses, but they have many. I’ve had dreams of those gnomes coming alive at night, they are so creepy. —Phillip Thomas, designer, New York

I’m seeing holiday trees in rooms around the house with individual themes—like safari, country-western/cowboy, teddy bears—or ones that honor a sports team.” —Melissa Morgan, designer, San Antonio

A childhood friend’s parents thought it was a great idea to hang two small, live bunny rabbits in cages on the tree. They kept nibbling on the branches, finally tipping the tree over, narrowly escaping the lit fireplace.” —Joy Moyler, designer, New Rochelle, New York

I saw a Christmas tree completely covered with real candles. It was beautiful in theory, but holy smoke!” —Madeline Stuart, designer, Los Angeles



NOT YOUR GRANDMOTHER’S...



Everlasting
Peppercorn
Wreath, \$138,
bloomist.com

Ring in the New

2020’s wreaths embrace nonconformity

AS WE LIMP toward the finish line of this year, a traditional wreath—that perfect circle of evergreens with a big red velvet bow—seems out-of-keeping with the turbulence of 2020. Flocked pine cones and glittery globes are positively tone deaf. “In this historic year, we’ve noticed in ourselves and our clients a renewed appreciation for simple, natural treasures,” said Kelsey Ter Meer, principal designer at Heart & Soil Flowers, in Newburgh, N.Y. Limited ingredients charac-

terize this season’s crop. Pottery Barn’s Dried Wheat Wreath, for example, comprises a sheaf-like circle of stalks, symbolizing prosperity and good fortune. Bloomist’s halo of pink peppercorns, above, adorned only with a cluster of off-center pine cones, discreetly brings color, and Terrain’s strangely beautiful Shelf Mushroom and Moss Wreath, made of sponge mushrooms and velvety greenery, conjures nature in its most primitive form. —Aleksandra Crapanzano

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