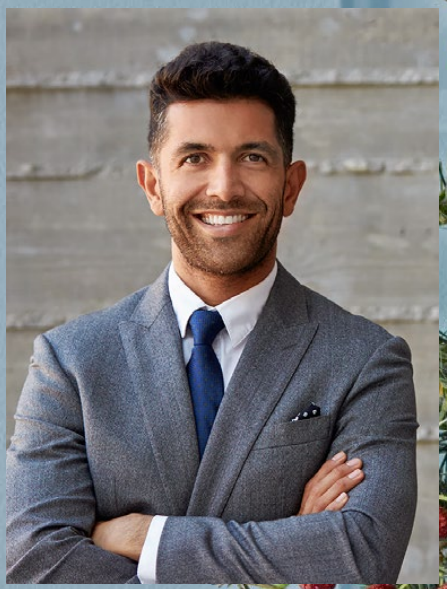
Compliments of Paul Sanders

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 112



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HOME FOR THE *holidays*

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Front of Tear Out Card 1

pretzel
TOFFEE BARK

6 oz. semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

6 oz. milk chocolate, coarsely chopped

6 oz. white chocolate, coarsely chopped

1½ c. pretzels

½ c. toffee bits

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57 percent of readers save these tear out cards to reference recipes and other helpful tips and pass along your contact info to referrals.

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Back of Tear Out Card 1

1. Line a quarter-sheet rimmed pan or 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment and set aside.
2. In a double boiler, heat water to just a simmer in bottom pan. Water should not touch top pan. Place semisweet and milk chocolate in top pan, taking care to not spill any water into the chocolate. Stir chocolate with a rubber spatula until melted. Remove top pan and wipe away any water that may have condensed there with a towel. Pour into prepared pan and spread evenly.
3. Repeat melting process with white chocolate. Take care to ensure top pan is completely dry before adding chocolate. Pour melted white chocolate on top of semisweet chocolate and spread as evenly as possible. Marble the two chocolates with a butter knife. Evenly top chocolate with pretzels, pressing lightly on each pretzel so it is at least halfway pressed into chocolate. Sprinkle toffee bits over chocolate.
4. Place tray in refrigerator for about 1 hour. Once the chocolate has set completely, remove from pan and break bark into chunks. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Excerpted from ***Christmas Baking: Festive Cookies, Candies, Cakes, Breads, and Snacks to Bring Comfort and Joy to Your Holiday***. © 2020 by Joyce and Laura Klynstra. Photography by Laura Klynstra. Used with permission of Good Books, an imprint of Skyhorse Publishing. All rights reserved.

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Dear Bill and Judy,

Creating holiday joy and ambience at home has become more important than ever, and this issue of American Lifestyle magazine has you covered. It's filled with holiday inspiration, including seasonal decor tips, creative gift-wrap ideas to try, and tasty recipes to suit any gathering.

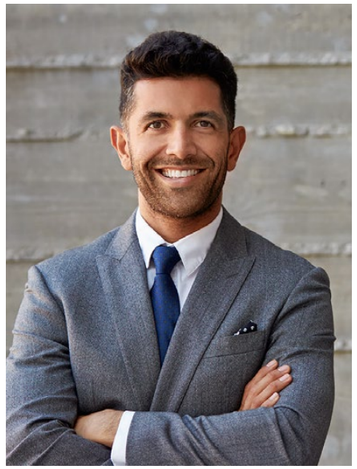
Utilizing home decor is a great way to turn your space into a festive and welcoming oasis. Whether you are someone who prefers to keep it low-key with some candles and a few strands of lights or a traditionalist who will not stop until the whole house is decked out, the article inside on dos and don'ts of holiday decor has something for everyone.

The presents you give deserve to be as special on the outside as they are on the inside, so if your wrapping style could use a little spicing up, you've come to the right place. There's room for the neat, monochromatic types and the elaborate wrapping artists alike. Discover countless ways to create personalized paper for your holiday celebration.

Finally, nothing brings people together quite like holiday baking. From cookies to toffee bark to Christmas Day breakfast skillets, this issue's recipes will feed all your favorite people and keep your kitchen stocked with goodies. Plus, get a bonus recipe for potato latkes, a delicious Hanukkah tradition.

When your home looks and smells this good, you'll wish the holiday season would last the whole winter. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Paul Sanders



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Add a personal letter to the front inside cover that speaks to your connections. This personalization leads 77 percent of recipients to better appreciate the sender.

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Each issue is filled with feel-good content that engages your audience and makes 80 percent of recipients more likely to do business with you.

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Designed and printed in the USA.

If you have a Jewish friend, you might have been lucky enough to sample the lightly crispy goodness of latkes. Traditionally made during Hanukkah, these heavenly spud pancakes are delicious all year round.

LATKE LOVE

written by **shelley goldstein**
photography by **rose wonder studio**

Ingredients:
1½ pounds baking potatoes (about 4)
1 yellow onion, peeled
2 eggs, beaten
6 tablespoons gluten-free or regular flour
2 teaspoons salt (to taste)
¼ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ cup canola oil (or any oil with a high smoke point)

Makes 18–20 latkes

Instructions:

1. Scrub and rinse potatoes (and peel if you prefer). Grate potatoes and onion by hand or with a food-processor shredder attachment. Place potato-and-onion mixture in a mixing bowl, and cover with cold water. Once the mixture is fully rinsed, drain in a colander.

2. Drape cheesecloth over an empty bowl, and spoon the mixture into the center. Wrap the cheesecloth around the mixture, and twist tightly while squeezing until the liquid has been strained out. Discard liquid.

3. Return the potato-and-onion mixture to its original bowl, and add beaten eggs, gluten-free flour, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Stir to combine.

4. Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed pan (like a Dutch oven or cast-iron pan) over medium heat. Test oil by adding a drop of batter to the pan. If it sizzles but doesn't pop, your oil is ready.

5. Drop two tablespoons of batter into the pan, and flatten them slightly with the back of the spoon. When the edges look brown and crispy (3–5 minutes), flip the latkes, and cook until golden brown. Transfer the latkes to a paper-towel-lined baking sheet or layer paper towels on top of a paper grocery bag to soak up the oil. Repeat until all the batter is used. Add more oil as needed.

6. Serve the latkes warm with applesauce or sour cream.

interview with **jean alexander** | written by **matthew brady** | photography by **joshua alexander, unless noted**

Shining a Light on Creativity

Californian Jean Alexander gave up a successful law career to follow her calling to be a full-time stained-glass artist. After studying under influential glass artists, she forged her own path as a talented multimedium craftsperson.

© Lenka Sluneckova

How did you become interested in glass art? Who were your influences?

Being an artist has always been a part of who I am. I love mosaics and stained-glass paintings because they are ancient, enduring arts that can be adapted to modern techniques and subjects. I was making stained-glass mosaics when a friend sent me a photo of a grisaille (monochrome) glass painting done by Evon Zerbetz for the State Library in Juneau, Alaska. I was so intrigued that I sought out one of the world's best glass painters, Sylvia Laks, and signed up to study with her for a week in Costa Rica. I came home, set up my own studio, and haven't stopped painting since.

Kathy Jordan has probably had the biggest influence on my painting. She not only taught me the basics of painting human faces but also how to gain the control to advance on my own. I also studied with Narcissus Quagliata and Tim Carey, who created *The Resurrection Window* in Leawood, Kansas, the largest stained-glass window in the world. They combine glass painting with glass fusing, where cut-glass pieces and handmade pieces are fused together in a kiln set at 1,490 degrees to create a melded image. In pieces like *Sankofa*, I have experimented

ART IS NOT A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE ARTIST AND THE AUDIENCE. THE ARTIST SPEAKS; THE VIEWER LISTENS AND IS SOMEHOW TOUCHED OR, FAILING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE ARTIST HAS SAID, WALKS AWAY. GOOD, INTERESTING ART LEAVES THE VIEWER WITH AN OPPORTUNITY AND A DESIRE TO CREATE A STORY FOR HIMSELF OR HERSELF.

includes a lot of hard work. However, making art fulfills my need for creative self-expression in a way that lawyering did not.

Where do you get your materials and do your work?

I get my materials from local studios and from all over the world. Thanks to the internet, artists today have access to the finest glass, brushes, and paints online. There are certain glass manufacturers in Germany and France, for example, that are renowned for the beauty and clarity of their glass. Quality products are also made in America; the standard glass paint used worldwide is made in Colorado.

I generally work at home, where I have a small studio and a kiln. I can do almost everything there. I sometimes wake up with an idea, go straight to the studio in my pj's, and start working. Occasionally, I use local studios to grind, cut, polish, or sandblast the glass using large-scale equipment.

with combining their techniques with traditional glass painting to create a style of my own.

You used to be lawyer. How is that job similar to being an artist?

I created art during my entire career as a lawyer, but now I'm fortunate to be a full-time artist. In both art and law, you use a combination of research, technical skills, and intuition to solve a problem or achieve a certain result. I practiced state and local tax law for many years. Sometimes I had to come up with creative, even artistic, ideas to solve a problem. People tend to think of art as mostly intuitive, but I find that it

How do you decide which technique and materials you'll use for a given work?

The design really dictates the materials. Once I have a design in mind, I select the materials and the tools that will allow me to create it. Some glass is made specifically for fusing and is compatible with glass having the same coefficient of expansion (or COE). Therefore, I can create a design with components that will be fused together. Some glass, called flashed glass, has a layer of one color on top of clear glass or another color. I can create designs with that glass by etching or sandblasting the top-colored layer away.

Your work is intricate, so does it take a long time to complete a project? Do you have a tried-and-true process that you use for each method?

Patience and attention to detail are essential skills for a glass painter. I also don't like deadlines and schedules—I've spent too much of my life rushing from one thing to another. I spend whatever time the piece requires.

To make a grisaille painting, I hand-paint the design onto colored glass in four or five thin coats. Depending on the amount of detail in the design, painting each layer can take several hours or several days. It's then fired onto the glass, which takes about twelve hours on average. The paint becomes a permanent part of the glass once fired, so if I make a mistake, I have to start again from the beginning. Once every piece is cut and painted, the pieces are connected with either lead came [rods] or copper foil, which is soldered together to unite the pieces of the design. This isn't a process that can be rushed.

Making mosaics is also time-consuming, depending on the size of the glass shards being used, but for me there is a zen quality about it. I try to cut all the glass pieces before I begin, and then I simply let the picture develop as I lay pieces down. I can't really make a mistake because I can always move the pieces around until I'm satisfied. Then I grout it, and it becomes permanent.

You have done work in homes, including your own. What does stained glass add to a home?

Stained glass adds majesty, warmth, and interest to any space. During medieval times, stained glass was found mainly in churches and public buildings, although some wealthy homes also had stained glass work. It was designed to awe and inspire people. It also told biblical stories to churchgoers that were largely illiterate.

Do you believe that every picture tells a story?

Yes, but it might be a story about the artist, the creation of the artwork, or the person viewing the artwork. Art is not a conversation between the artist and the audience. The artist speaks; the viewer listens and is somehow touched or, failing to understand what the artist has said, walks away. Good, interesting art leaves the viewer with an opportunity and a desire to create a story for himself or herself.

How do you choose your subjects?

I look for faces that I can relate to. Female faces tend to have a unique combination of strength and vulnerability. I paint my family a lot, especially my granddaughter, who I call Mini-Muse. My son, Joshua, is a professional photographer. Together they provide me with lots of inspiration.

How do you make your art so lifelike?

In many art forms, light is everything. Kathy Jordan taught me that the key to painting lifelike forms is capturing where the light falls on the face. By finding the brightest highlights and the darkest shadows, you give the flat form three-dimensional depth. Locating exactly where light is reflected in an eye can capture a person's spirit, and finding where it is absorbed into the valleys of the face can create a unique skin texture. I love bringing life to human

faces painted in glass. Portraiture excites me—it's like magic.

What does this vocation mean to you?

My passion for art has allowed me to connect with some brilliant and creative people. Personally, it's been a great source of joy and peace. It is my escape. It has strengthened my self-confidence and given me a feeling of freedom.

For more info, visit **jeanalexanderglass.com**

MAKING MUSIC CITY MEMORIES

written by **matthew brady** | photography **as noted**

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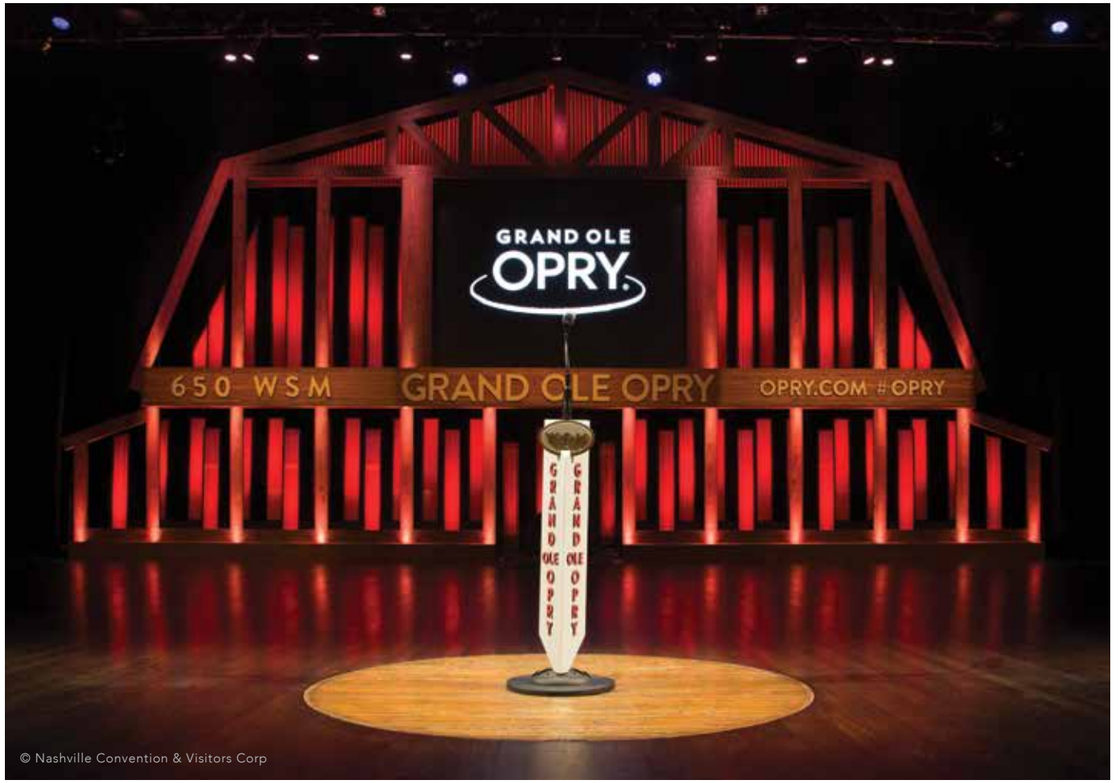

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BACK IN 1983, SINGER AMY GRANT served up something quite different for holiday music lovers at the time: an unimposing little acoustic song called "Tennessee Christmas," which wistfully recalls the seasonal wonders found in her hometown of Nashville.

The holidays … in Nashville? As it turns out, Music City has long been a place where you can find plenty to do and cherish during the holiday season—and today that's truer than ever.

TIMELESS CLASSICS

Let's start with the obvious: Nashville's music venues and events must clearly be a part of your plans here during the holidays.

If you're a music fan, then you've undoubtedly heard of the legendary Ryman Auditorium on Fifth Avenue. First conceived in 1885, it's the place where bluegrass was born and was the long-time home of the Grand Ole Opry. Known as the "Carnegie of the South," it has hosted performers from John Philip Sousa to Elvis Presley and from Patsy Cline to B.B. King.

Today, there are a host of things you can do at the Ryman during the holidays, including visiting Santa onstage, enjoying Christmas carols, creating your own ornament, and even recording your own Christmas carol in a real studio. And, of course, there's live music, with annual Christmas shows held here in its intimate setting.

The Grand Ole Opry itself is also a place to stop by, even if just to experience the awe of its music history. Even the Country Music Hall of Fame gets into the holiday spirit with *Deck the Hall*, a program that features performances, crafts, and music lessons. For a classical holiday music experience, the Nashville Symphony fits the bill for any tastes. Recent performances have ranged from

© Ed Houk | Belmont Mansion

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© Sandra Brandon

Pictured Clockwise: Belmont Mansion, live music in Nashville, *Zoolumination: Chinese Festival of Lights*, and a reindeer float in the Nashville Christmas Parade.

Kellie Pickler to Handel's *Messiah* to *Home Alone in Concert*.

Speaking of historic buildings, the Nashville area is chock-full of centuries-old homes—and many are dressed up for the holidays and awaiting your visit. Two of the most prominent are right in the heart of the city. The Hermitage, a Greek Revival mansion and museum, was once owned by Andrew Jackson and now features carols and bonfires among its many yuletide activities. In addition, Belmont Mansion, a nineteenth-century Italian villa-style dwelling, transforms into Victorian holiday splendor during the season.

And what's the holiday season without a parade? The Nashville Christmas Parade has been a holiday staple since 1927, making it one of the oldest of its kind in the country. The parade itself, which struts down Music Mile, is held on the first Saturday in December, syndicated across the country, and seen by over fourteen million people. Past performers have included LeAnn Rimes, the Oak Ridge Boys, and Dolly Parton, and the parade's grand marshals have included the likes of Kelly Clarkson, Emmylou Harris, Charlie Daniels, and Wilma Rudolph. Whether you go to the parade, watch it from your hotel room, or catch it from the comfort of home, it's a must-see Nashville holiday experience.

© Karri Freeman

ZOOLUMINATION

While you're in town, make sure to take in the many new events that have raised the bar on holiday fun in recent years. You can find an exciting example of this at the Nashville Zoo, which has an itinerary that includes the magical Zoolumination: Chinese Festival of Lights. Introduced in 2019, this event—

© Caitlin Harris | Cheekwood Holiday LIGHTS

the largest Chinese lantern festival in the country—features hundreds of lanterns and displays, food, entertainment, and a North Pole Village.

In addition, you can step back in time when you tour the Grassmere Historic Home on the zoo's grounds. Built in 1810 and listed in the National Register of Historic Homes, Grassmere is decked out in nineteenth-century decor during the holidays and has a Santa's village for children.

A CHEEKWOOD CHRISTMAS

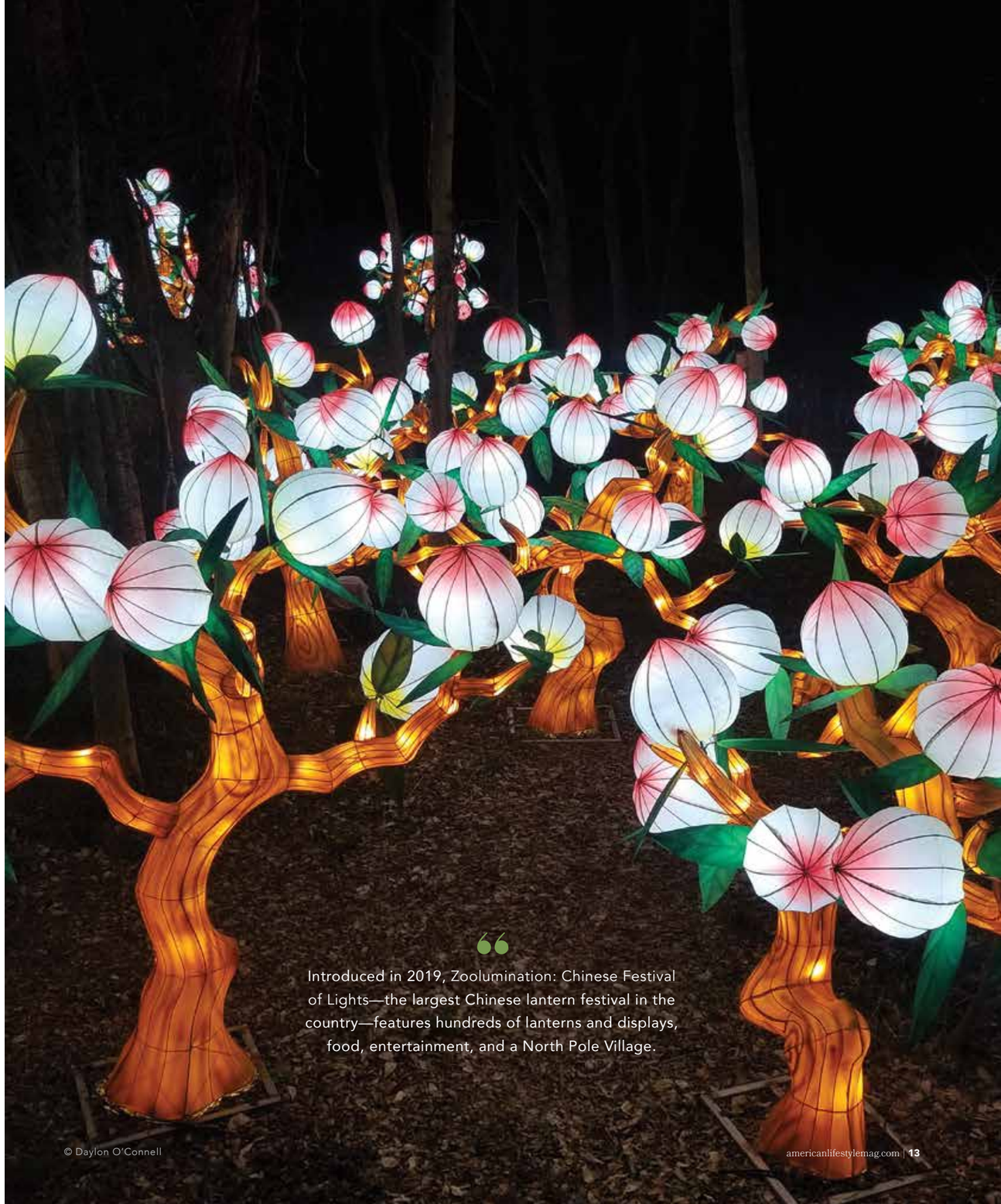
Cheekwood is a fifty-five-acre botanical garden and art museum located just southwest of downtown Nashville on the historic Cheek Estate and Gardens. Even though it was built in 1929 and exudes country charm, Cheekwood's primary attraction during the holidays is an event that's less than ten years old.

Holiday LIGHTS at Cheekwood is, as you probably guessed, a lights-filled spectacular. You can stroll through a mile of lights—over a million in all—strewn across the gardens. Combine that with experiences like meeting real reindeer and making s'mores over firepits, all at one of the country's top botanical gardens, and you've got the makings of a special holiday outing.

GO BIG AT GAYLORD

However, if there's one Nashville attraction you must visit during the holidays, it's Gaylord Opryland's A Country Christmas. Set at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, the event will make you feel like a kid as you romp through its nine acres of indoor garden space.

This place's motto is "So. Much. Christmas." And they're not kidding—there's endless joy to be had at this Disney-like locale. For example, if you're a thrill-seeker, you can go ice-tubing or visit the four-acre SoundWaves Water Experience waterpark. For a more



“Introduced in 2019, Zoolumination: Chinese Festival of Lights—the largest Chinese lantern festival in the country—features hundreds of lanterns and displays, food, entertainment, and a North Pole Village.

© Daylon O'Connell

© Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp

tranquil, slower-paced day, options include ice-skating, a Delta Riverboat Christmas Cruise, and a horse-drawn carriage ride. Other popular attractions include the carved-ice exhibit ICE!, which features life-sized versions of popular movies, and Reindeer Encounters, where you can meet real reindeer and learn some trivia.

Top it off with over twenty restaurants on-site, a forty-eight-foot Christmas tree, a forty-four-foot cascading waterfall, and over three million twinkling lights, and Gaylord Opryland is just the kind of all-in-one place you'll never want to leave.

© Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp

FESTIVE FRANKLIN

Once you do leave it, though, you'll soon realize that you don't have to stay within the city limits to experience holiday cheer. For example, historic Franklin, Tennessee (founded in 1799), is located a little over twenty miles south of Nashville. For over thirty-five years, this quaint suburb has held its annual Dickens of a Christmas spectacular, Middle Tennessee's largest outdoor Christmas festival. During this free weekend event, downtown Franklin is transformed into Victorian England, with old-time music, dancing, and Dickens characters accentuating the city's renowned Victorian architecture.

If you go for the Dickens, stay for the lights. Franklin's Festival of Lights is a spectacular mile-long illuminated light show featuring over two hundred displays that the family is sure to love, and it's just another example of how the Nashville area perfectly marries holiday traditions with modern events.

LEBANON LIGHTS

Speaking of lighting up the holidays, a quick jaunt to Lebanon, Tennessee, may also be worth your time. Located around a half hour due east of Nashville, Lebanon is a popular stop during this time of year because of its festive displays and holiday spirit.

One such place is Chad's Winter Wonderland, a Nashville-area tradition that's been held for over twenty-five years and boasts over two million twinkling lights that light up the night sky. Upping the ante even more is the Dancing Lights of Christmas Display, which bills itself as the largest drive-thru

© Visit Franklin

© Visit Franklin

lights and music show in the entire state. Held at the James E. Ward Agriculture Center, this annual show also features two million-plus lights, as well as a Santa's village and a Christmas train among its offerings.

In her classic holiday ode to Nashville, Amy Grant sings that "a tender Tennessee Christmas is the only Christmas for me." With its combination of nostalgia, jaw-dropping events, and Southern charm, you'll likely find yourself feeling the exact same way when you make holiday memories in Music City.

For more info, go to **visitmusiccity.com**

Editor's Note: Some Nashville holiday events may be impacted by COVID-19.

FESTIVE FAMILY FARE

recipes by **joyce and laura klynstra**
photography by **laura klynstra**

Excerpted from *Christmas Baking: Festive Cookies, Candies, Cakes, Breads, and Snacks to Bring Comfort and Joy to Your Holiday.* © 2020 by Joyce and Laura Klynstra. Photography by Laura Klynstra.
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A twist on the salty-sweet goodness of chocolate-covered pretzels—this pretty bark is easy and delicious.

pretzel toffee bark

Serves 20

6 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

6 ounces milk chocolate, coarsely chopped

6 ounces white chocolate, coarsely chopped

1½ cups pretzels

½ cup toffee bits

1. Line a quarter-sheet rimmed pan or 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment and set aside.

2. In a double boiler, heat water to just a simmer in bottom pan. Water should not touch top pan. Place semisweet and milk chocolate in top pan, taking care to not spill any water into the chocolate. Stir chocolate with a rubber spatula until melted. Remove top pan and wipe away any water that may have condensed there with a towel. Pour into prepared pan and spread evenly.

3. Repeat melting process with white chocolate. Take care to ensure top pan is completely dry before adding chocolate. Pour melted white chocolate on top of semisweet chocolate and spread as evenly as possible. Marble the two chocolates with a butter knife. Evenly top chocolate with pretzels, pressing lightly on each pretzel so it is at least halfway pressed into chocolate. Sprinkle toffee bits over chocolate.

4. Place tray in refrigerator for about 1 hour. Once the chocolate has set completely, remove from pan and break bark into chunks. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

These are the first cookies I remember watching my mom mix up when I was a kid. They were favorites of mine, and now my son loves them. They are the perfect combination of chewy and crispy; they're great with chocolate chips, too. — L.K.

cereal m&m cookies

Makes 48

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
1 egg, room temperature
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3½ cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup old-fashioned oatmeal
1 cup cornflakes
3 cups M&M's

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. In a medium mixing bowl, beat butter and sugars with a mixer for 3 minutes. Add oil, egg, and vanilla and beat until combined.

3. In a small mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, and baking soda. Add to the butter mixture and beat until combined.

4. Using a rubber spatula, stir in oatmeal, cornflakes, and M&M's.

5. Scoop dough onto cookie sheet with a cookie scoop, leaving 2 inches of space around each dough scoop. Bake until light brown, about 15 minutes. Allow cookies to cool on the pan for about 5 minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack.

6. Store in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

Tip: These cookies freeze nicely, and they taste great right out of the freezer.

These flaky cream cheese and jam cookies are traditionally made in Poland for the holidays. You can replace the raspberry jam with any jam you prefer or use different flavors for a variety of cookies.

kolaczki

Makes 46

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1½ cups butter, softened
¼ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon almond extract
3 cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup raspberry jam

Confectioners' sugar for dusting

1. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, butter, sugar, vanilla, and almond extract for 3 to 4 minutes, until light and fluffy.

2. In a small bowl, combine flour and salt. Add to cream cheese mixture and beat until combined.

3. Divide dough in half. Flatten each portion into a disk. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 1 hour or up to 12 hours.

4. When ready to roll out the dough, preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment or a baking mat and set aside.

5. Roll out dough to ¼-inch thick. Cut out 2½-inch squares. Place squares on baking sheet. Spread about 2 teaspoons jam on each square. Fold two opposite corners over and press together. Bake 12 to 16 minutes. Allow cookies to cool on the pan for about 5 minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack. Dust with confectioners' sugar, if using.

6. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Here's a delicious way to eat a rainbow of vegetables. This skillet of goodness is a fitting breakfast when hosting overnight guests. Serve with toast or muffins for a great start to Christmas Day.

vegetable and egg skillet

Serves 6

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons butter
3 cups shredded potatoes
1 medium red onion, peeled and chopped
2 bell peppers, cored and chopped
1 cup spinach, chopped
1 cup grape tomatoes, sliced
Salt and pepper, to taste
7 eggs
2 scallions, sliced
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. Heat oil and butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add shredded potatoes and cook for 5 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pan to keep them from sticking. Reduce to medium heat and add onion and peppers. Cook for another 4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in spinach, tomatoes, salt, and pepper.

3. Make 7 wells in the vegetable mixture. Crack one egg in each well. Sprinkle a little more salt on each egg. Using hot pads, place skillet in oven. Bake 14 minutes for soft yolks or 18 minutes for hard yolks. Top with scallions and cilantro, if using, and serve immediately.

written by **shelley goldstein** | photography by **rose wonder studio**

THAT'S A WRAP

discovering your gift-wrapping style

I come from a family of dedicated wrappers. *My mom's priority was to use up whatever vaguely Hanukkahesque paper was left in the house as well as scrounge up any big scraps she had salvaged from other gifts. Bows were recycled year after year, their little feet layered with pieces of tape like the tree rings on the trunk of a Douglas fir. She'd buy one of those value packs of clear tape, with each container dispensing approximately seven inches of utility. It was controlled creative chaos, and I lived for it.*

My dad, on the other hand, relished the beauty of a monochromatic color scheme. For years, he bought only blue paper. Solid blue. I would sit on the floor of his den and watch enthralled as he made crisp folds, pulling the paper taut in a methodical (and slow) process. He had a weighted tape dispenser with a luxuriously reliable amount of tape in it. He'd tear off each piece with real purpose. His gifts were carefully tucked inside tissue paper and well-maintained boxes. He was very particular about "his" boxes, storing them carefully so they retained their perfect boxlike structure.

My parents' signature styles of wrapping have become embedded in my memories, and I now appreciate these quirks as much as the gifts inside the paper.

Here are some signature styles to try on for size:

A

"The Minimalist"

You read my description of my dad and thought, "That's me!" For a more eco-friendly twist on the solid color approach, try kraft paper. You can also add a geometric touch by using a piece of washi tape, which is paper-based and recyclable.

B

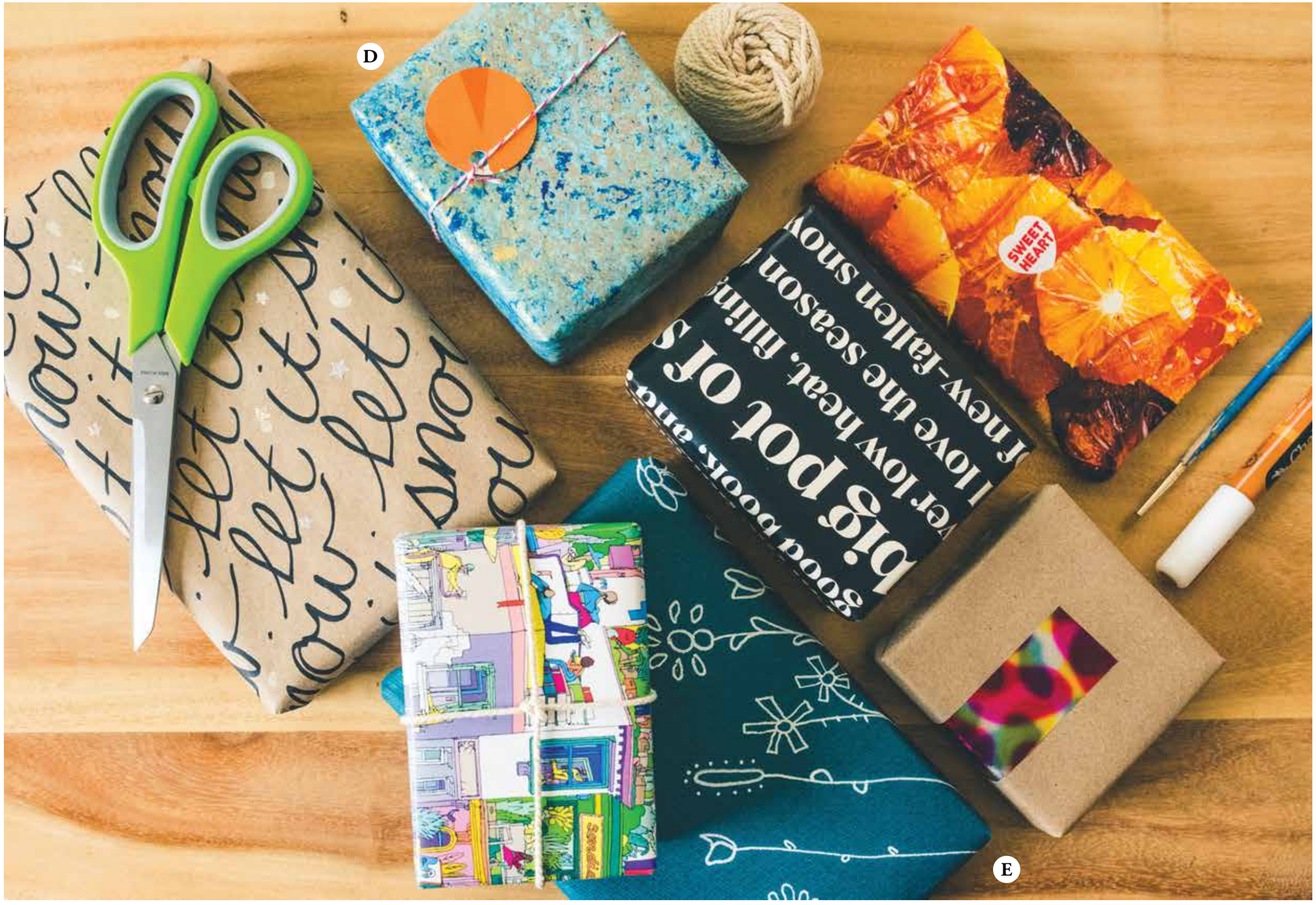
"The Magazine Designer"

Do you have magazines from three years ago that you've been saving for just the right art project? Magazine pages make great wrapping paper, as both text and images can bring your gift to life. Check out the recipe section for large, colorful images. Or go with a finance magazine and let the columns of text shine. A contrasting sticker can add a pop of personality.

C

"Script Superhero"

This one requires a journey back in time to when you learned cursive writing in school. You could also invent your own script font. Choose a phrase like "Let It Snow" or "Happy Holidays," and start your lettering in the top left corner of blank kraft paper, writing it on the diagonal. If you run out of room on one line, finish the phrase on the next line. Try to keep your letters consistent. Embellish with a white chalk marker or dots of white acrylic paint.



D

"Plastic Wrap Genius"

Choose two to three colors of acrylic paint, and squeeze them onto a paper plate or piece of waxed paper. Ball up a piece of plastic wrap, and dip it into your paint, dabbing and stamping some kraft paper with different layers of color.

E

"Whimsical Gardener"

Scrapbook paper works best for the base of this DIY wrapping method because it folds more easily than construction paper. Grab a white chalk marker, and draw simple flower doodles in a horizontal line across the page. When it's time to wrap, turn your paper on the diagonal so the flowers will wrap around your gift. Alternatively, keep your paper perpendicular if you want your flowers to wrap in a straight line.

When it comes to DIY wrapping, the possibilities are limitless. Stamps are a great way to personalize a sheet of kraft paper and can be made with crumpled up plastic wrap, potatoes, or a sponge cut into shapes. If you have a bundle of twine, experiment by tying pieces of it around your wrapped gift to create a gridlike pattern. Try a sheet of colored paper as your base layer. The comics section of the Sunday newspaper would also make a clever and colorful presentation.

Whatever you choose, your recipient will appreciate the creativity and personalization that goes into DIY wrapping. And you'll finally have a reason to use that chalk marker you bought to label your jar of rice with. Happy wrapping! ■

designing for a generation

interview with **keith stanton**
written by **alexa bricker**
photography by **thoma-holec**

When it comes to assisted-living communities, it's rare for the perfect balance to be struck between adequate care and safety, and luxury and comfort. However, the Arizona-based firm Thoma-Holec Design is committed to just that. Keith Stanton, Thoma-Holec's director of design development, discusses the company's keen eye for creating gorgeous senior living spaces that have raised the bar within the industry.

How did Thoma-Holec Design get its start?
Our founder, LuAnn Thoma-Holec, started her own firm in 2006, but prior to that she worked at a firm that was involved in all areas of design. She really gravitated toward the senior living projects, and she spent time talking to some of the clients to see what it would take to start her own business. Eventually, she decided to go out on her own and founded Thoma-Holec as we know it today.

What is the process like for designing a new senior living community? Do you often remodel or rework existing structures?
We do three different types of projects: new construction, renovations, and renovations of projects to update them as they age. For new projects, we ask to start in the initial phases, as they're laying out the building, so we can bring in our expertise and control the rooms and the layout of amenities and adjacencies.

Our renovations vary by client. We do designs for a lot of mom-and-pop operators as well as larger operators doing acquisitions. They are usually affected by some local competition, so we try to update their buildings as best we can.

For existing buildings that we've previously designed, we already know the finishes that we originally put in, so we update them as they age. We'll

THEY WANT THE RESIDENTS INTEGRATED INTO THE COMMUNITY, BUT IF THE RESIDENTS DON'T NECESSARILY FEEL LIKE USING THE AMENITIES IN-HOUSE, THEY CAN WALK TO THE SHOPPING MALL. THIS ALSO ALLOWS THEM TO GO TO STORES AND GET THEIR OWN GROCERIES, IF THEY SO CHOOSE.

have discussions about what the client wants to spend in future years and then draw up one-year to five-year plans to develop strategies so they can keep the building fresh while maintaining occupancy levels.

What are some of the most important elements you need to keep in mind while designing for senior living?
The number one concern for us is the residents' safety. We won't try any sort of creative concept that could potentially endanger a resident. That being said, we try to create a hospitality feel as much as possible.

We also try to bring in elements from their homes, specifically the technology, like the Amazon Echo, to help minimize changes to their lifestyles.

How do you elevate aesthetics of design without sacrificing the residents' comfort?
It's all about the furnishings we choose. We use the same hospitality-grade furniture that you'll see in resorts, hotels, and restaurants. We focus on the materials that they're made of as well. We make sure that the chairs have arms, so our residents don't have any trouble getting up—which you wouldn't necessarily see in a multifamily

"The sculpture depicts a young boy reading a book and imagining he's flying on a paper airplane. LivGenerations wants the residents to know that they can still soar through life and having it in the foyer of each community connects them together.

community or a hotel, for that matter. We're conscious of the dimensions of the furniture, too, so the seniors don't feel like they are falling into them, and we often custom-design these pieces.

Would you talk about how you were able to achieve this balance with the LivGenerations Pinnacle Peak project in Scottsdale?
The Pinnacle Peak project is the third in a series of projects we did for LivGenerations, a multihousing developer that owns a number of upscale senior living developments. The concept for Pinnacle Peak is based on creating a walkable experience for residents.

They demolished an old office building to create a land site for this community, and it's adjacent to a shopping mall. That's where the walkability and the variety come into play. They want the residents integrated into the community, but if the residents don't necessarily feel like using the amenities in-house, they can walk to the shopping mall. This also allows them to go to stores and get their own groceries, if they so choose. It's independent-living-focused but has an assisted-living licensure.

You chose to include a lot of modern art and sculptural work throughout this project, which you don't typically see in senior living communities. What do you think that does for the environment there?
The sculpture at the entrance has become a signature piece for LivGenerations, and it's by Utah-based artist Gary Lee Price. It's a statement piece designed to foster imagination within the residents. The sculpture depicts a young boy reading a book and imagining he's flying on a paper airplane. LivGenerations wants the

residents to know that they can still soar through life, and having it in the foyer of each community connects them together.

We always try to include historical photos and imagery from the local community in the wing of the building dedicated to residents with dementia or other cognitive impairments. We go to the local historical society and ask them for pictures we can license—black-and-white photos from the area that residents who grew up there might recognize. So, for Pinnacle Peak, we have photos of the Pinnacle Peak Patio, a local restaurant that residents who grew up around Scottsdale would recognize. We also have a photo of the large cowboy statue that welcomes you into town.

There are also a lot of themed rooms and amenities for residents to enjoy. Can you talk about how you plan for and create those areas?
We ask the client what they are comfortable having in the community and what they can staff for, and we study trends within the industry. Wellness is a huge component, so we often create large, vibrant fitness spaces.

Pinnacle Peak, in particular, has a tearoom that residents can rent out to have tea with their families. It also has Barley's Bourbon Bar, one of five dining venues, that's a saloon-style room with rustic treatments and a copper bar top to give it an Old West feel. It has a combination of barstools for our independent residents and lower tables to accommodate wheelchairs. We like to create destination locations, and we have discussions with the developers to decide what destinations would best reflect the local flavor of the surrounding area. It's of utmost importance to provide residents with variety and great experiences.

Do you have a favorite room or element of this project that stands out?
It would have to be Barley's Bourbon Bar. We actually purchased individual sets of cowboy boots to create a decorative boot wall, which really helped in giving the space a local feel. There's a jukebox in that space as well. You can tell how much detail was put into the design of that bar.

Another one of my favorites is the piano lounge. It can be used as a social room for gatherings, and it can be a quiet lounge when there's no music being played. There are a lot of ceiling details in the room and on the furniture that mirror the piano.

What is the most rewarding part about creating senior living spaces of this caliber?
What touches us the most is when we watch the residents move in and see the smiles on their faces. At a lot of the pre-COVID ribbon-cutting events, the residents were crying tears of joy. They really love these communities, and some people tell us they never thought they could live in places this size. Being able to make that kind of difference is truly the best part.

For more info, visit **thoma-holecdesign.com**

the Dos & Don'ts of holiday decor

No matter where you live, or in what type of home, there's an excitement about decking the halls for the holiday season. And, even though you may or may not choose boughs of holly as part of your home's holiday decor, there are many things you can do—and should avoid doing—to achieve the look you want.

written by **matthew brady** | photography by **getty images, unless noted**

Do:

PLAN AHEAD.
Get a jumpstart on planning your holiday decor by starting the process in late October or early November. Otherwise, you may quickly find that items or colors you want are long out of stock. Begin planning at least a month earlier, and jot down notes as you go.

BRING THE OUTSIDE IN.
Use twigs, pine cones, and even wood as accessory pieces in spaces like your living room or dining room to weave a thread between inside and outside. If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, this theme will work even better.

MAKE SCENTS OF IT.
Speaking of the outdoors, the smell of pine—usually from a real tree—often elicits thoughts of the holidays, as do other classic scents like cranberry, vanilla, and peppermint. Perhaps no other time of year is so associated with the olfactory senses, so use that to your advantage.

WALK THE FINE LINE BETWEEN TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE.
Can anything really be too much during the holiday season? Uh, yeah. And it's usually easy to spot: for example, if there are more inflatables than lawn showing in your yard. On the opposite end of the

bring the outside in
© Priscilla Du Preez

spectrum, going for a minimalist vibe can look quite classy, but it can also look quite empty. To prevent the museum look, choose three or four decorative pieces per room.

CHOOSE A THEME AND STICK TO IT.
This doesn't mean that the theme must be the same every year. In my house, for example, we have a history of alternating multicolored lights and white lights on the tree and then expanding that theme through the rest of the room. Likewise, you can choose to run the theme or color palette throughout your home, or you can choose a different one for each room or each floor. Keep in mind, however, that if you choose to decorate room by room, it will be better if the rooms are separated rather than having an open-plan layout.

TRANSITION YOUR FURNISHINGS.
You don't need a complete overhaul for the holidays (other than perhaps rearranging your furniture); adding touches of the holiday will do the trick. For example, you can add some throw pillows in textured fabric to your living room couch that match your overall holiday decor or swap out the neutral duvet on your bed for a cozy, plaid flannel one.

FOCUS ON TREE SPACING.
There are two different spacing considerations if you have a tree. First, don't crowd your tree by placing it too close to furniture or the fireplace (especially if it's real, since you'll need to water it). Also, make sure it's in a prominent place, such as in a corner or by the main wall, and you'll get bonus design points if you can also see it from the outside.

When it comes to what wraps the tree, the garland and the lights, take your time to ensure they are balanced from top to bottom. The dreaded "tree gaps"—seemingly cavernous holes where there are no decorations and no lights—are real.

And then there are the ornaments and other trinkets, which, if not spaced properly, can look like a hot mess. If you are going minimal with one to three colors, such as gold and red ornaments with white lights, separating the reds and golds is easy to do. If your ornaments have a wide array of colors, your primary focus should be making sure that like colors, hues, and styles are distanced.

© Alisa Anton

© Taisiia Shestopal

> You don't need a complete overhaul for the holidays (other than perhaps rearranging your furniture); adding touches of the holiday will do the trick.

© Libby Penner

Don't:

OVERDO SCENTS.
The downside of aromas is that, depending on what you use, they can be downright overwhelming. Even one peppermint candle can soon overpower your senses and your home. If possible, put natural items, such as the aforementioned pine cones or peppermint leaves in a bowl or jar, or create a DIY potpourri of your own liking.

LIMIT YOUR COLOR PALETTE.
Which two colors make you think of Christmas? If you answered "red and green," congratulations—you and just about everyone else answered the same. (The same would apply to the expected colors of Hanukkah.) It's all right if you love classic holiday color combos; they're awesome. Just don't hesitate to add a splash of another complementary color here and there, or, if you're feeling daring, go for a completely different color scheme, like a monochrome pink or purple palette. If you can dream it, you can create it.

> If you're feeling daring, go for a completely different color scheme, like a monochrome pink or purple palette. If you can dream it, you can create it.

LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR OWN TASTES.
It's tempting to buy decor when you're out shopping, and it's obviously OK to do so. However, to emphasize your style, consider personalizing your overall aesthetic by adding a DIY craft, such as homemade garland, here and there to display your own personal touch. Here's a fun way to take personalization to the max: purchase a meaningful ornament every year at a vacation destination. Your tree will become a scrapbook of memories.

FORGET ABOUT DOORWAYS.
What's one of the first things that people see when they walk into your home? A doorway leading from one room into another, often through a hallway. Make your first impression eye-catching by framing such doorways with lights or cards attached to a green garland. If you choose the former, make sure it matches the rest of your surrounding decor.

LEAVE EVERYTHING UP TOO LONG.
For many people, the holiday look will get as stale as old fruitcake after several weeks. The natural cutoff for Christmas is usually after the New Year (new beginnings, after all), although it may vary based on your family or faith tradition. Keeping any winter holiday going until late January will definitely make your home look tired—and make you look like you're desperate to cling to the holidays.

The holiday season is one of the best times of year to transform your home, both inside and out. By following these few simple principles, you can achieve a cohesive, memorable look that everybody will love and create inspiration for years to come. ■

interview with **kristen tomlan** | written by **shelley goldstein** | photography by **DŌ, unless noted**

COOKIE DOUGH REVOLUTION

© Jason Leung

In a moment of revelation, business owner Kristen Tomlan solved the age-old dilemma between the deliciousness of raw cookie dough and the fear of salmonella. Her creation, DŌ, Cookie Dough Confections, is safe to eat raw and can also be baked, so everyone is free to eat their cookie dough any way they want it.

What are the roots of your love for baking? How does baking make you feel?

My mom is a chef, so being in the kitchen with her and learning all the ins and outs of baking and cooking was something that started for me at a very young age. Baking has always been a source of happiness and comfort, as well as a form of therapy at times. I love the process of baking—turning simple ingredients into magically delicious confections. It's a creative outlet in many ways. Best of all, baking is about sharing. We bake for occasions, for celebrations, and for friends and family. For me, it has always been about spreading that joy.

Were you allowed to eat raw cookie dough growing up? What is your favorite thing to bake?

I was allowed to eat unbaked cookie dough, at least in moderation. My favorite thing to bake was always cookies so that I could have some of that dough. It was a special treat in my household. Anytime I would make cookies, I had to set aside some of the cookie dough for my dad when he got home from work.

What was the impetus for creating DŌ? Were there other names considered?

My "aha!" moment happened during a girls' trip to Philadelphia. We happened upon this cute cookie shop, but instead of purchasing any of the freshly baked cookies, we bought a frozen tub of cookie dough that was meant to be baked at home. We sat in the car and were passing the tub around when the idea came to me: "Why is this not a thing?" I wanted a place to go eat cookie dough exactly how I wanted it—straight from the mixing bowl, fresh from the oven, or mixed into ice cream. From the earliest stages of development, I was

calling it “DOUGH,” because it was all about the cookie dough. But I didn’t want to spell it the usual way, which is how I landed on DŌ.

How daunting was the idea of starting your own business?
The idea was incredibly daunting. I didn’t really know what I was doing. I had no experience starting or running a business, nor did I have any experience in the food industry. I trusted my gut, leaned on my husband and a handful of good friends and advisors, and didn’t let my doubt slow me down.

In what ways did your previous career in experience design help you with DŌ?
My previous career helped me immensely. I was designing customer and retail experiences and environments and coming up with innovative new concepts and initiatives for my clients. It taught me to think about every single moment in the customer journey and to think about what memorable moments will keep customers coming back. So doing it for myself and for a vision I was passionate about was actually much easier than doing it for others.

What was your thought process when establishing branding for DŌ?
I wanted it to be bright, colorful, and happy; after all, eating cookie dough is an experience that takes you back to your childhood. From there, I knew I wanted to incorporate circles in some way since everything cookie-related—the cookies, cookie scoop, mixing bowl, and measuring cups—is circular.

Were you surprised by the success of DŌ?
I thought that DŌ could be a huge hit, but I was blown away by the response.

© Evan Sung

“

It’s all about spreading joy, and the best part about my job is when I see the joy that my business brings to others.

We opened to four-hour-long lines. The reaction exceeded my expectations! I was so happy to know that so many other people shared my obsession with cookie dough.

What is it like having a business in New York City? Why did you choose Greenwich Village?

I love New York City so much. We chose Greenwich Village because of its central, downtown location, easy access to public transportation, and proximity to Washington Square Park. It’s in the heart of NYU’s campus and sandwiched between trendy SoHo and busy Union Square. While New York is amazing, it comes with a lot of challenges, too. Most notably, it’s expensive, which makes it difficult to be a first-time business owner.

What keeps you excited about running a business?

I’m incredibly creative, so constantly coming up with new ideas, launching products, and testing new flavors is forever fun to me. It’s all about spreading joy, and the best part about my job is when I see the joy that my business brings to others.

What is your best seller? Where do you find inspiration for seasonal flavors?

Our Signature Chocolate Chip—the first recipe I ever came up with—is hands down our best seller. It has warm and cozy vibes in the most nostalgic way. We make sure we hit all the classic cookie flavors, but we also love playing up seasonality and relevant cultural moments. We find inspiration for these seasonal flavors wherever we go. Some are inspired by our favorite desserts, childhood sweets, or travel destinations. We also take flavor suggestions on our website and in-store.

Was it difficult to create a cookie dough that was safe to eat raw but could also be baked?

It took a lot of trial and error, a ton of experimentation, and so much taste testing. But once I cracked the code, it was easy to replicate across other cookie recipe types. We use pasteurized eggs and heat-treated flour to ensure safety.

What age group enjoys DŌ the most?

Honestly, it’s such a huge range. Kids absolutely love our sweet treats, but adults find themselves acting like kids again when they are sitting down to eat some cookie dough. We like to think there is something for everyone, including gluten-free and vegan options.

In what ways have you expanded the business? Any future plans?

The business started as direct-to-consumer online. Since inception, we have opened multiple retail locations and pop-ups, launched a line of baking mixes and flour, started our baking (now virtual) AcaDŌmy, and launched dozens of new products, and I also wrote a cookbook: *Hello, Cookie Dough!*

How would your friends describe you?

Funny, thoughtful, determined, and strong.

What advice would you give to first-time business owners?

Trust your gut. Only you know your business. You are the one with the vision, so make it happen.

For more info, visit **cookiedonyc.com**

TREE HUGGING ACROSS THE MILES

written by **matthew brady** | photography by **christmas spirit foundation**

AS PART OF THEIR SACRIFICE FOR OUR country, military members and their families are often separated on special occasions that most of us take for granted, including holidays. In addition, the families themselves are often living far away from their active

One program that's been helping to bring the holidays closer for both soldiers and military families is Trees for Troops. Since 2005, the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation has teamed up with FedEx to deliver Christmas trees to dozens of military bases across the United States and abroad through Trees for Troops.

The inclusion of useful tips is one of the top reasons 58 percent of recipients have referred the professional who sent them the magazine in the past 12 months.

Here are just some of the ways this heart-warming holiday program makes a difference:

- Fresh-cut Christmas trees are donated by farms **across two dozen states**, as well as by retailers and citizens.
- Trees for Troops has sent approximately **two hundred trees a year** to military members stationed overseas.
- Since its inception, Trees for Troops has provided **262,265 trees** to troops and military families.
- Despite COVID-19, the organization delivered 16,073 trees to **seventy-nine bases and installations** in 2020.
- **Trees for Troops Weekend**, usually held during the first weekend of December, is an annual event where donations and donated trees are gathered.

It's been said that there's no place like home for the holidays. When this isn't possible for military families, Trees for Troops steps in to bolster the spirit of the season, one tree at a time.

For more info, visit **treesfortroops.org**

RISK REVIEW

Having a "heads-up" for all of life's potential risks would be ideal... but since the unexpected is, well, just that—proper risk provisions are **key to protecting your wealth.**

WHEN THE SKY IS CLEAR, CARRY AN UMBRELLA.

For All of Life's Potential Risks, Carry Ample Provisions.

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Paul Sanders, Private Wealth Advisor

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Front of Tear Out Card 2

vegetable and egg SKILLET

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. butter
- 3 c. shredded potatoes
- 1 medium red onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 bell peppers, cored and chopped
- 1 c. spinach, chopped
- 1 c. grape tomatoes, sliced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 7 eggs
- 2 scallions, sliced
- 1 tbsp. chopped cilantro, optional

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Back of Tear Out Card 2

SERVES 6

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Heat oil and butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add shredded potatoes and cook for 5 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pan to keep them from sticking. Reduce to medium heat and add onion and peppers. Cook for another 4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in spinach, tomatoes, salt, and pepper.
3. Make 7 wells in the vegetable mixture. Crack one egg in each well. Sprinkle a little more salt on each egg. Using hot pads, place skillet in oven. Bake 14 minutes for soft yolks or 18 minutes for hard yolks. Top with scallions and cilantro, if using, and serve immediately.

Excerpted from ***Christmas Baking: Festive Cookies, Candies, Cakes, Breads, and Snacks to Bring Comfort and Joy to Your Holiday***. © 2020 by Joyce and Laura Klynstra. Photography by Laura Klynstra. Used with permission of Good Books, an imprint of Skyhorse Publishing. All rights reserved.

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