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DECEMBER 22, 2021

The art of wrapping gifts

Tips from pro-wrapper Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody



Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody and Mike at Good Morning Texas mug for the camera. Cody is a professional gift wrapper who's rocking Texas now with her gift-wrapping skills. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

It's the holidays once more and you know what that means—gifts, gifts, and even more gifts—either in the form of stuff, service, words, or sweet little things that could make our loved ones' happy.

If you opted to gift things and haven't wrapped them yet, we have this little guide for you, as shared by Saipan-born and -raised Sierra Lei Kileleman Cody, a professional gift wrapper who's rocking Texas now with her gift-wrapping skills.

Cody worked over a decade at the upscale stationery boutique, Papyrus—even becoming the most well-known gift wrapper in the company, with people paying her up to \$150 to wrap one gift for Christmas. Not only that, she has done radio and TV interviews, including a segment for Good Morning Texas.

Moving back to Saipan in 2019, Cody wrapped gifts for Pena House Boutique for Christmas 2020 and Valentine's 2021, eventually partnering with the boutique to create



Supplies:

Double stick tape, single-sided tape, scissors, wrapping paper, gift box (can be reusable)

“pre-wrapped gifts” products that people can just purchase, until she left for Dallas just last April this year.

Cody has a YouTube channel, an Instagram account, and a public Facebook group, *Wrap City Gifts*, where she freely posts tutorials and other information on gift wrapping.

“Gift giving makes people happy,” Cody said. “Gift wrapping is the luxury art form of

gift giving that people want to master when it comes to giving their mothers or loved ones gifts. I am not going to charge anyone who wants to impress their mothers with a beautifully wrapped gift.”

Cody also has one rule for Saipan residents: *Do not ever take flat rate boxes from the post office to use as gift boxes.*

“If you think you are doing something

harmless, you are wrong. Ask stores for their shipment boxes, buy your own gift boxes, use your old shoe boxes, but never take brand new shipment boxes from the post office,” she said.

Now, let's take advantage of this quick and free tutorial from Cody and learn to wrap gifts this holiday!

See THE ART on Page 3

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STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4A



STEP 4B



STEP 4C

THE ART from Page 2

How to gift wrap

- 1** Make sure to have enough paper to cover the entire box. Cover it all the way and make sure to snip out any excess.
- 2** Bring the paper all the way to the edge, crease the corners, and tape the piece down using a piece of single sided tape.
- 3** Put double stick tape on the edge of the paper. You can put either a few small pieces or a long strip going across. This gives a clean, seamless look when taping the paper to the edge of the box.
- 4** For the flaps, fold and tape the long flap down first, and then fold and tape the sides in. Next, in folding the long flap up, fold the edge a little first, put double sided tape, and then fold up. Repeat on the other side.



How to make a simple bow

- 1** Wrap the ribbon around the box to do a quick measure, including loops and tails. Snip the ribbon once you get your preferred size.
- 2** Place left strip of ribbon over the right, then over and under. Secure the bow with your finger, then make loops to form your bow.
- 3** When using a printed ribbon, twist, pull, and tug to make sure the print is showing over. Cut to your preferred length.

- Aside from the tutorial, Cody also has these tips for the community:
- When Joeten Susupe has a discount off their ribbon by the yard, it's one of the cheapest prices that you will find, if not the cheapest.
 - You don't need ribbon to make bows. You can make paper bows using any type of paper, plus it's a fun craft activity for children. [Check Cody's YouTube channel to learn how to make paper bows]
 - Tape is tape, you don't need Scotch brand tape. Cody said she has tested all brands and types of tape on Saipan and that they're all good—except the BAZIC double-sided tape.
 - You can make gift tags out of wrapping paper. If the wrapping paper is too thin for you, you can glue stick it to Xerox paper or construction paper. No one ever really needs actual gift tags.
 - Don't ever shop/gift over your budget. No one ever needs to overspend for Christmas—it's not the point of the holidays. We're in a pandemic, no one should ever be ashamed to say that they can't afford gifts. That's not the point of Christmas.
 - Shop online throughout the year. Victoria's Secret, Bath & Body Works and a bunch of stores run two semi-annual sales (January and June) and ship to Saipan, except products with alcohol. Macy's runs their lowest prices of the year sale in September/October and many of their products ship to Saipan. Old Navy honors their free shipping promos to Saipan ("free shipping with \$25 purchase"). If you're patient and you shop sales throughout the year online, you will save a lot of money.
 - Don't overlook buying/giving Christmas cards. The simple gesture of hand writing a Christmas card goes a long way in this tech world now. And, don't just sign your name—tell your loved one why you are thankful for them.

For more of Cody's tutorials, check out Wrap City Gifts on YouTube, and @wrap_city_gifts on Instagram.

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Happy Holidays

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The gift that grows
Perfect presents for plant parents

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Looking to give something to family or friends who love plants?

More and more of our loved ones have developed a thumb for gardening during this pandemic and what best way to show love to them than to fuel their passion and give them that one perfect gift that grows.

For Dhez Javier, owner of Kiara's Garden, gifting plants this Christmas is a way of telling someone that you care. According to her, plants not only brighten up your surroundings, but can also lift your mood and studies have shown that an environment with plants creates a feeling of well-being.

"Gardening is therapeutic and an excellent stress buster," Javier said. "It is a relaxing recreational activity that can provide great personal reward. When gardening, you make things grow. Gardening provides a sense of pride that you can grow healthy and beautiful plants."

Kiara's Garden's best sellers are

its indoor plants, orchids, bromeliads and succulents, and cacti. They also have precious plant varieties of monstera, begonia, orchids, bromeliad, philodendron, calathea, aglaonema, hoyo, peperomia, and more.

We asked members of CNMI's plant lovers community, Sprout & About, on what would be the best gift for plant parents like them—and the short answer? Know what plants they like.

According to Hanaivy Babauta, "gifting plants is difficult because to find the right plant, you really have to know what plants they already own, otherwise you might just duplicate the responsibility of caring for the same plant."

Nhorleen Bitco-Lilles additionally advised that in gifting plants, "it would help if you know what kinds of plants your friend(s) are into, plants she doesn't have yet and the ones she would like. If not sure about plants [but] pots are always a nice alternative."

What other gifts would be perfect for plant parents? Here's the basic top three:

See **GROWS** on Page 5

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GROWS from Page 4

1. Combo cuttings/starting plants in a propagating jar

Javier said the best plants as gifts for beginners are pothos, spider plants, snake plants, dracaena species, bromeliads and lucky bamboo [to name a few]. However, for pro gardeners, she said the best plants to give are anthuriums, orchids, succulents and cacti, calatheas, begonias, and other plants that require high maintenance.

Where to buy: Kiara's Garden | Wireless Ridge | Wasana's Garden | Saturday Street Market



2. Pots and planters

You got your plants now, so what's next? Pots, of course. Pots are perfect because plants grow, so you can always get a bigger pot as a gift. Your plant loving family or friend most likely would also have lots of plants to propagate so pots can and will always be useful. Also, be mindful to get ones with good drainage!

Where to buy: Sprout & About members swear by pots bought from Wasana's Garden, Pop Up, and Lucky De Market.



3. Garden tools and a watering can

The basics would be hand tools, which would include a planting and a digging trowel, and a cultivator hand rake. The gardening trowels are very useful when digging small holes for planting smaller plants, and also for digging up weeds. Then watering can, of course, to water the plants! If you are feeling extra generous, it would be best to also throw in a pair of gardening gloves, fertilizer, plant markers, some plant swags, and well, even a bag or two of soil.

Where to buy: Ace Hardware

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All I want for Christmas is...

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

What does your heart want this holiday season? We ask business owners and community leaders and members for their biggest wish is, and they all chorused with better health, and more love and happiness for all. Happy holidays, everyone!



“As difficult as this time in everyone’s life may be...I wish our people will become stronger with patience and hope, and focus on our strengths, not our weaknesses. I hope God gives us our inner strengths and fills our hearts with love and laughter. Let’s look forward to happiness in 2022, Embrace safe holidays everyone.”

—Steve Jang,
Plumeria and Ete’ Cafe



“I wholeheartedly hope the spread of the virus stops so that families, friends, and colleagues can share Christmas joy. I sincerely wish all the anxiety and fear to go away and to be replaced by hopes and comforts. Also, as a person in the hospitality industry, hopefully we’ll be having more tourists visit the CNMI in year 2022 :)”

—Lindsay Ahn, E-Land Corp.



“My wish for Christmas is a new boat. ...Santa, do you hear that?!”

—Kelsey McClellan,
JAMS Foundation



“My wish for this Christmas is for all local people and tourists to enjoy Coral Ocean Resort. Coral Ocean Resort will open this Dec. 29, and will be the first relaxing content Beach Club, with Spanish tapas cuisine and the best sushi and seafood buffet in Saipan.”

—Calvin Park,
Coral Ocean Park



“During this Christmas season, I pray for everyone’s health, safety, and God’s blessings. I continue to hope and pray that this pandemic will end soon and that we will be able to return to our normal life again.”

—David M. Apatang,
mayor of Saipan



“I wish for the pandemic to end.”

—Jill Liske-Clark,
Tanapag



Happy

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2022

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“This Christmas, I’m wishing for a more prosperous 2022 and a CNMI that can return to its roots as a community that embraces *inafa’maolek*, *tipiyeew*, and *kapwa*. The last several years have been hard due to the typhoons and the global pandemic, and it has placed an unfortunate physical and mental strain on our community. My wish is for my family and friends to be safe and healthy, while also wishing for our community to come back together as one Marianas.

—Kevin Bautista, press secretary



“I wish for a bicycle—I live in Marpi and see people on bicycles enjoying our beautiful outdoors every day. I want to experience that too! The feeling of determination to make it up to Suicide Cliff while surrounded by the lush greenery and fresh air would be an awesome Christmas gift. [I also wish for] independence for the Marianas—the ability to make decisions on our own and fully control our immigration, our natural resources, and all things that impact our economy and quality of life. I have faith in our ability to govern ourselves.

“I wish for all parties who create large emissions to take responsibility for their impact on Mother Earth and begin the healing process. I wish for every person in the Marianas to look within, do the work required to heal and grow, find work they love, and create meaningful, lasting relationships; [and] I wish for my parents, Diego and Dolorina Babauta, to travel the world and live life to the fullest!”

—Rep. Sheila Babauta



“Christmas has always been special for me. It fills me with hope for the future when I see how much people can care for each other, even for strangers. My greatest Christmas wish is for all of my family to be happy, healthy, and safe no matter where they are. As a Saipan business owner, I wish for a safe return of our

main resource, tourism. Merry Christmas!”

—Rhea McDoulett, Green Flash Drive

“I wish for everyone’s happiness and well-being during this Christmas season and I hope to have a safe delivery next year!”

—Youki Kishimoto, Student Exchange Program



“Good health for everyone. We wish you a Merry Christmas! May [the holidays bring] joy to your heart and happiness to your home.”

—Rep. Richard Lizama

“My biggest wish this Christmas would be for our loved ones near and far to find comfort in their homes, their health (both physical and mental), and their hearts during this pandemic. Our community has dealt with so much these last few years with Soudelor, Mangkhut, Yutu, and the ongoing pandemic that I hope we can all just take a deep breath and find that hint of joy and relaxation before the new year.

“Although I wish my entire family were home this Christmas, I am hopeful that time will come soon but regardless, I am blessed to have loved ones to spend the holidays with right here at home. Lastly, I want to wish my students and colleagues at the Northern Marianas College, as well as, our hard-working team at SHEFA a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!”

—Kaelani Demapan, Northern Marianas College



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Easy-to-make holiday dishes with Chef John

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

If there is one delicious thing that brings everyone together during the holidays, it's food. Christmas is a time for cooking and sharing meals with our families and friends, exchanging stories and laughter gathered around the dining table at home [or at a picnic table in one of the island's *palapala*].

Christmas is about food too. After all, food, they say, is the quickest way to someone's heart. This holiday, *Saipan Tribune* sat down with John Imperial, head chef of Plumeria Steakhouse, to talk about the importance of gathering for Christmas, and of course, to give a couple of easy-to-make delicious holiday dishes that we can try to replicate and serve in our homes.

Chef John has been in the CNMI for decades, 29 years of which he spent working in the kitchen, and learning the art and joy of cooking from his many mentor chefs that helped him through the years. For Chef John, the secret to great delicious food is "cooking from the heart" and in "serving food with love."

"Christmas is about loving, giving and forgiving, and sharing," Chef John said. "Sharing blessings, no matter how small, and gathering as a family is a Christmas tradition that is proof that your family is strong. There, you can see the love of a child for the parent, and the love of a parent for the child. That love and respect, to me, is the meaning of Christmas."

Chef John also stressed the importance of prayers and humility, and how treating others kindly goes a long way. This Christmas, his only wish is for his family to be well and healthy.

Ready to express love to your family too? Let's try two of Chef John's recipes:



Chef John Imperial shares two quick and easy-to-make recipes, perfect for sharing with families and friends this holiday season

Holiday Ham

- ham
- lemon
- orange
- pineapple juice
- honey
- apple
- rosemary
- brown sugar

Step 1. Marinade overnight then boil ham in mixture of lemon, orange, pineapple juice, honey, apple, rosemary, and brown sugar. Make sure to prick the ham while boiling to get the flavor in.

Step 2. Bake ham the next morning for 35 to 40 minutes, in 375 degrees temperature.

Step 3. Remove ham from oven. Pour sauce on ham and top with pineapple slices. Ready to serve!

See CHEF JOHN on Page 9

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Top 10 popular liquors during X'mas

By GABRIELA MIRANDA
USA TODAY

As Christmas draws closer, you may be stocking up on your favorite liquors for holiday cocktails.

Alexis Doctolero, vice president of Liquor.com, said her team has noticed an uptick in sales and trends around Christmas cocktails, like the Hot Toddy and Mulled Wine. The main ingredient for most of these drinks? Popular liquors such as Glenfiddich's malt scotches and Don Julio tequila.

"People tend to fall back on nostalgia and what feels more like home during the holidays, so we often see the same trends and interest in liquors during this season," Doctolero said.

Andrew DeMount, spokesperson for Altria Group, a Virginia-

based liquor company, echoed Doctolero in that Christmas liquor favorites tend to stay the same each year. Adults lean toward warm or hot-tempered cocktails and spiced rums or malt scotches.

Based on predictions and current liquors trends, here are the top 10 brands to grab before they sell out at your local liquor store.

1. Wild Turkey 101
2. Captain Morgan Black Spiced Rum
3. Bacardi Silver
4. Cruzan Aged Dark Rum
5. Baileys Irish Cream
6. Hennessy Black
7. The Singleton Malt Scotch Whiskey
8. El Jimador Silver
9. Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge Orange Liqueur
10. Don Q Rum Reserva 7

CHEF JOHN from Page 8

Seafood Pasta

- lobster
- crab
- pasta [preferably fettuccine]
- garlic
- onion
- mushroom
- fresh tomato [4 pieces]
- red sauce [marinara]
- whipped cream
- fresh basil
- fresh oregano
- salt and pepper
- butter

in garlic, onion, mushroom, and fresh tomatoes.

Step 2. Pour in whipped cream and red sauce. Wait to boil.

Step 3. Cook pasta according to package directions, then add to sautéed mixture.

Step 4. Add salt and pepper to taste, also chopped fresh basil and oregano.

Step 5. Add butter. Ready to serve!

To taste more of Chef John Imperial's cooking, visit Plumeria Steakhouse along Beach Road in Garapan, next to Ete' Cafe.

Step 1. Sauté lobster and crab



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Enjoy all the traditional holiday displays at the Christmas village in Susupe.



Have a photo opportunity with Santa Claus at the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.



The Christmas display on the grounds of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs on Capital Hill features the national flower of the CNMI, the plumeria.

Follow the lights this Christmas

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

PHOTOS BY BEA CABRERA



Hyatt Regency Saipan's 20-foot Christmas tree is once again on display, commemorating Christmas and the hotel's 41st anniversary on Saipan.

Unlike last year, when there were still a lot of uncertainties about the pandemic, Christmas is shiny and bright in the CNMI this year, with several Christmas light shows and displays around Saipan. The pretty and mesmerizing lights are drawing family and friends together for photographs and keepsakes of future fond memories. Every Christmas light display from Susupe to Capital Hill feature different themes, so every stop is different from the last.

This year, government agencies, business establishments and even residents all made an effort to share the joy with colored lights on gigantic cutouts and wire meshes that depict Christmas trees, snowmen, candy sticks, and Santa Clause on a sleigh, as if saying Christmas is here and this wonderful time of the year will happen no matter what.

A great way to have great fun without leaving the island is to have an early dinner and then set off to follow the lights around Saipan from 6:30pm onwards.

Start at the center of Saipan, specifically Susupe, where the annual Christmas Village can be found at the lawn of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. The Christmas Village is a project of the First Lady Diann Torres Foundation and has been going on for five years now. In a recent message to the community, Torres said that growing up and seeing Christmas displays would lift up her spirit. "For the past five years, the annual Christmas Village is a way our family can give our people the chance to be merry and bright, uplift their spirits, find peace and comfort, and put a smile on their faces. It is especially important during this holiday season as we continue to battle the pandemic," she said.

Next, drive north on Beach Road and make a stop at the San Jose and Atkins Kroll intersection where Christmas lights are lit under the flag poles that bear the countries the CNMI has close ties with. Find the arch and have a photo taken there. You will also see a memorial that honors the lives of soldiers and civilians that devoted their lives to serving their country during World War II. Atkin Krolls itself has huge sign that says "Happy Holidays" in red lights to add cheer in that area.

Next up: The Christmas light displays in Garapan, where you can indulge yourself with more displays. The Garapan Fishing Base has an array of Christmas displays on the pathway as high as the acacia and ironwood trees that stand

there. Look across and see the Christmas crèche that's lit with gold lights at the entrance of the Gualo Rai Church.

Head on to the grounds of the CNMI Museum of History and Culture and en-

and Kiara's Garden in Koberville, made sure she participated in this activity and got one booth for each of her business.

"Daycare centers volunteered to decorate the booths of the museum. This

demic has hit us hard, it doesn't mean we should give up in celebrating this season and safety rules should still be considered for the good of everyone," she said.

Next stop is the TSL Foundation Christ-

mas lights are not only on the grounds but also festoon the building itself.

Head on to Micro Beach Road and turn left to Hyatt Regency Saipan to see their magnificent 20-foot Christmas tree. Hyatt Regency general manager Nick Nishikawa said they will never get tired putting up this giant tree every year. "We always love to see the people with smiling faces, enjoying and gathering around the tree to have their photo taken. ...Hyatt is here for the community through all the seasons of every year."

After Garapan, start the ascent to Capital Hill. Drop by the office of the Department of Cultural and Community Affairs to see the display outside their office that showcases a lighted plumeria tree, candy sticks standing on the ground and Santa Claus waving.

Across the street is the Board of Education office where a cutout of a CNMI Public School System Polar Express bus is on display. Children will have a fun time jumping into the bus and sticking out their heads out the window for a photo opportunity. The delightful IT&E Christmas pergola is also on display beside the bus.

Final stop for the night would be to the enormous lights display at the lawn of the Juan Atalig Sablan Memorial Building where a tall latte stone stands, covered with a thousand lights, symbolizing Chamorro strength and integrity.

Maricel Ajacoscos brought her family to the site to unwind and enjoy the display. "Christmas is a good reminder to be thankful that we are healthy, blessed, and to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ," she said.

The lights display also features other Christmas decorations where you can have a picture taken with a Santa Claus standee in an arch of white lights, have a seat on Surf Club's giant Adirondack chair, snowmen made of car tires, be in the scene with Santa Claus with his reindeers and enjoy the Christmas house that honor the men and women of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

As you drive to these places, be on the lookout for houses where owners made an effort to decorate and spread the Christmas cheer.

You can direct your own course in visiting the Christmas light displays on island and be sure that you also practice the 3 W's and be grateful that, despite of the pandemic, we are still able to these things. The best part about the Christmas light displays? They are all for free!



Maricel Ajacoscos with her family enjoy the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.



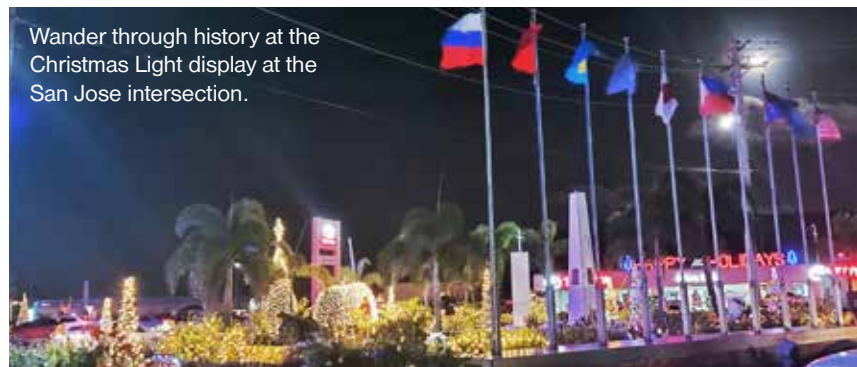
The CNMI Museum of History and Culture invited Daycare Centers to showcase Christmas displays for everyone to enjoy this year.



The annual Tan Siu Lin Foundation Christmas display is always a crowd drawer both for residents and tourists.



Wander through history at the Christmas Light display at the San Jose intersection.



The traditional latte stone is all lit up at the Christmas in Paradise display on Capital Hill.

joy a variety of colorful Christmas booths prepared by different daycare centers on Saipan and are meant to "wow" both young and old. Dhez Javier, the owner of Loving Hands Kindergarten in San Antonio

simple effort intends to share this tradition with the community. We hope that this will bring joy to all, most especially the children. ...Christmas is a very special time of the year. Although the pan-

mas display at the TSL Center that never fails to share the Christmas cheer every year with their colorful lights display of reindeers and Christmas trees with matching Christmas carols to boot. The Christ-