



# ASK SUNSET

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE IN THE WEST? WE HAVE THE ANSWERS.

**Q: I love sugar cookies, but all the sprinkles and frosting on top make them too sweet for me.**

**Are there other ways to decorate them? —K.C., PHOENIX**

**DEAR K.C.** No sprinkles?! You can easily add texture and festive designs to your sugar cookies by using cooking tools such as canelé molds, diamond-shape cookie cutters, and five-hole zesters.



**Q: What fun destination can we take the kids to on break that won't be overrun with other vacationing families?**

**—CAROL BLAKE, HOLLISTER, CA**

**DEAR CAROL** There are definitely desirable destinations that won't make you feel like CGI extras in *The Lord of the Rings*. Many of the stars of the national park system, packed like sardine tins during the summer, have a more relaxed vibe in December. The Oregon Coast, Phoenix, and Monterey are all worth considering too. But our favorite at the moment is San Diego: The winters are mild, and you'll have the city's famed beaches pretty much to yourself. At most hotels, room rates are down and availability is up. The lines of summer have disappeared at the San Diego Zoo and its Safari Park, SeaWorld, and nearby Legoland. Need a round of holiday cheer? See *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at The Old Globe theater in Balboa Park (Dr. Seuss was a local). Or check out the ice-skating rink—on the beach—at the Hotel del Coronado (for more on this, see page 20).



*Over the holidays, San Diego's Mission Beach is blissfully uncrowded.*

**Q: What are the best options for replacing large glass windows in a midcentury home? —D.O., GREENBRAE, CA**

**DEAR D.O.** Midcentury homes often have windows with narrow stiles (the vertical sides of the sash), making them tricky to replace with current offerings. For energy efficiency, single-thickness glass can be replaced with "low-e" glazing, says J. Gordon Turnbull, principal at the historic preservation architectural firm Page & Turnbull. If total replacement is a must, suppliers like Hope's ([hopeswindows.com](http://hopeswindows.com)) have steel and bronze framing with proper dimensions to fit.



**Q: What do you make of the many restaurants now serving glasses of wine poured from a keg? —JEFF MILLER, DENVER**

**DEAR JEFF** We say, Bottoms up. Kegged wine solves a problem with ordering bottled wines by the glass—not knowing how many days the bottle has been sitting around open. Too often, it's too many, and your wine comes to the table slightly oxidized. Putting wine in kegs also shrinks the carbon footprint of your drink. Napa-based Free Flow Wines, the largest company "kegging" in the country, says each reusable stainless steel keg it circulates will, on average, reduce the carbon footprint of the wine poured from it by 96 percent and avoid 2,340 pounds of landfill. It's a wine win-win. 🍷

Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to [asksunset@sunset.com](mailto:asksunset@sunset.com).