

SEVEN EXPERIENCES THAT TAKE THE GIFT OUT OF THE BOX

No. 1 Give your favorite beer nerd a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the suds-making process during a **free weekend tour of the Brooklyn Brewery**. While the brew house is under expansion, the walks are abbreviated to ten minutes. When the larger space opens in January, longer sessions will resume, allowing visitors to see the fermenter tanks and brewing systems. All tours end in the Tasting Room, where you can treat your pal to a few drinks (one beer \$4, six for \$20). 79 North 11th St between Berry St and Wythe Ave, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-486-7422, brooklynbrewery.com). Sat 1–5pm, Sun 1–4pm; tours start on the hour. ☘

No. 2 Your giftee can **create a signature scent at Fragrance Shop New York** from more than 300 natural oils—including sandalwood, vanilla and jasmine. Browse the store's bottles with the help of a patient staff member, who will help select top, middle and base notes to achieve a balanced perfume. Once drops of the chosen oils are blended in a glass bottle (the process takes 15 to 60 minutes), the finished formula is named and cataloged for easy reordering. 21 E 7th St between Second and Third Aves (212-254-8950, fragranceshopnewyork.com). Small bottle \$19, large \$48.



No. 3 Toast the holidays with your significant other—or impress your visiting parents—with a glass of bubbly on the **Sail NYC Champagne City Lights cruise**. Board the 1920s-style yacht *Manhattan* and bask in the twinkling skyline views as you munch on cheese and fruit and relax inside the heated, glass-enclosed back cabin. *Departs from Chelsea Piers, Pier 62, W 22nd St at the Hudson River (212-627-1825, sail-nyc.com). Schedule varies; \$50.*

No. 4 Doodling on a bar napkin while sipping a crappy happy-hour cocktail is a fine midweek stress reliever, but we've got something more creative—and just as boozy—to keep your spirits up. Grab a companion, clear both of your schedules on an upcoming Wednesday night and register for a two-and-a-half-hour **Drink 'n' Draw session at 3rd Ward**. You'll need to bring the paper and pencils (or other drawing tools of your choice), but the live model and Colt 45s are on the house. If you're not feeling artistically inclined, you can also spring for a gift certificate and let your pal go solo. 195 Morgan Ave between Meadow and Stagg Sts, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-715-4961, 3rdward.com). Dec 1, 8, 15 at 8pm; \$15, with a friend \$10.

No. 5 Encourage your loved ones to hone their baking skills with a **cupcake class at Butter Lane**. After arming participants with an apron, tools and ingredients, the bakery's confectioners cover how to make two types of cake bases and two accompanying frostings, plus how to ice like a pro. The best part is the treats they'll bring home for you to taste. 123 E 7th St between First Ave and Ave A (212-677-2880, butterlane.com). Mon–Fri 4, 7pm; \$50.

No. 6 Friends who need a dose of self-confidence can learn to embrace their inner Gypsy Rose Lee in the Essential Burlesque **dance series at the New York School of Burlesque**. Headmistress Jo Weldon teaches classic striptease moves, including shimmies, tassel twirls and chair dances. "We [also] teach the psychology of flirtation and irresistible movement, so women have new knowledge to use in social or performance settings," says Weldon. 440 Studios, 440 Lafayette St between Astor Pl and E 4th St, studio 4C (212-561-1456, schoolofburlesque.com). Sun 1–3pm; four-week series \$95.

No. 7 Exercise buffs and '90s enthusiasts can get svelte while **working out one-on-one with former American Gladiator** Jamie Reed Kovac (stage name Fury)—sans the body-hugging metallic spandex outfits. Recipients may not learn to Hang Tough or navigate the Gauntlet, but they'll get fitness and nutrition tips as they tackle a rigorous two-hour conditioning routine at Printing House health club in Greenwich Village. We're sweating just thinking about it. *Book appointments at newyorkfirst.com. \$395.—Sarah Bruning*

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