

the list

JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, HERE'S STUFF WE THINK IS JUST GREAT—gifts to live or play with, put on or spray on, devour and empower. Plus: smart shopping strategies, do-it-yourself ideas, stellar Web sites, and the gift certificates everyone wants.



Break Open the Bubbly

WHO IT'S FOR: Your one true love. No, wait—the guy doesn't like pink, and whenever he's tipsy he starts looking at you funny. Give this to the new neighbor you want to befriend instead.
WHY SHE'LL LOVE IT: Because if she's smart, she'll invite you over to drink this elegant sparkling American rosé with her.
WHERE TO BUY IT: Domaine Carneros by Taittinger Cuvée de la Pompadour, \$36, major wine stores; domainecarneros.com. ▶

Attention, Shoppers!

Color Box Key

 **GREEN GIFTS**
(The environment will thank you)

 **CAN'T GO WRONG**
(Presents anyone would love)

 **GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK**
(A portion of the proceeds goes to charity)

Under
\$25



For Black-Tie Nights

WHO COULD USE IT: Your 20-something daughter who borrows your evening bags when she has a dressy event. **WHY SHE'LL STOP SWIPING YOUR STUFF:** Satiny black purse is just the right size for keys, credit cards, phone; festive snowflake ornament means there's no need to bother with lots of jewelry. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** New York & Company, \$20; nyandcompany.com.



Scarlet Letters

■ **WHO IT'S FOR:** Anybody who loved the witty, altruistic T-shirts from Gap's (Product) Red. **WHY IT WILL TOUCH THEM:** Hallmark (Product) Red Collection cards with from-the-heart words—and, in some cases, music—raise money and awareness in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** Kind(red) and Inc(red)ible cards, \$13 for 12 cards, and Inspi(red) birthday card with "What a Wonderful World," by Louis Armstrong, \$5 each; hallmark.com for stores.



Some Like It Hothouse

WHO IT'S FOR: Your flower-mad Anglophile friend who channels Vita Sackville-West. **WHY SHE'LL DRINK IT UP:** Floral thermoses from London's Victoria & Albert Museum are based on the designs of Arts and Crafts genius William Morris. Suitable for picnics on the grass or English Breakfast during the daily commute. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** \$24 each; patinastores.com.

► SMART SHOPPER STRATEGIES

CHECK OUT COUPON WEB SITES before making a purchase online or at a retail store. Try currentcodes.com, couponchief.com, or dealsea.com.

LET SOMEONE ELSE DO THE WRAPPING. Across the country, Papyrus stationers (papyrusonline.com) wrap goods—purchased there or elsewhere—with rich flocked papers, colorful ribbons, and seasonal toppers like snowflakes or Santas. Turnaround time is just a few hours. Kate's Paperie stores (katespaperie.com) in New York and Connecticut do custom jobs inspired by tsutsumi, the Japanese art of pleated wrapping. Stop by or mail in your packages for decorating and UPS shipping. It's a Wrap (itsawrapdallas.com) in Dallas uses high-end papers to cover boxes topped with elaborate handmade bows. If you don't live nearby, you can still ship your gifts there; they can send them directly to the recipient.

HIRE A PERSONAL SHOPPER to help you polish off your buying list. Various department stores like Nordstrom, Macy's, and Saks Fifth Avenue provide free experts—just describe your giftees, and they'll set aside goods for your approval. Gift wrap is generally complimentary. If all your needs can't be met in one store, hire a freelance shopper to buy, wrap, and send your presents (try yourshopper.com or livepersonalshoppers.com).



School for Spools

WHO IT'S FOR: Your crafty aunt—her gifts are so pretty, you almost hate to open them. **WHY SHE'LL BE LESS PRESENT-TENSE:** Ribbons are like socks; look away for a minute and they're tangled up in the drawer. Martha Stewart's ingenious fabric-covered slotted organizer (ribbon not included) lets you pull out the right length and just cut. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** \$17, Michaels; michaels.com for stores.



\$25
to
\$50



Have a Ball

WHO IT'S NOT FOR: The person who's stuck on snowmen, angels, popcorn, and other traditional trimmings.

WHY THEY'LL INHALE IT: This ornament is imbued with lavender (filled with the herb's dried buds and constructed of stems woven with ribbon)—to soothe preholiday nerves, then use in a lingerie drawer after New Year's.

WHERE TO BUY IT: Charlotte Moss, \$40; 212-308-3888.



Little Feet

WHO'LL THINK THEY'RE NEAT: Any kid with friends both visible and invisible. **WHY THEY'LL LOVE THE DRAMA:** There's a whole Christmas pageant happening on these seasonally themed Garnet Hill slipper boots—polar bears, angels, snowmen, and sugarplum fairies. German-made of boiled wool, just like grown-ups' après-ski slippers. **WHERE TO BUY THEM:** \$38 a pair; garnethill.com.

Palette Pleasers

WHO THEY'RE FOR: Your cousin the art teacher, who swoons over beautiful food. **WHY SHE'LL LOVE THEM:** Crafted by a painter turned chocolatemaker, these flavored truffles are as pleasing to the eye as to the mouth. **WHERE TO BUY THEM:** Christopher Norman Chocolates Mosaic Tile Box, \$28 for 12; christophernormanchocolates.com.



Hear, Hear

■ WHOSE WORLD IT WILL ROCK: A teenager who's permanently connected to her iPod and leery of hats. **WHY SHE'LL SING YOUR PRAISES:** Fleece-covered Lobz ear-warmer headphones fend off the deep freeze. A portion of sales (pink only) goes to the Young Survival Coalition, an organization focused on women under 40 with breast cancer. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** \$30 each; gordini.com for stores.



► WEB GIFT-O-RAMA

GIFTS.COM/FINDER: Answer a few questions to determine the recipient's personality profile; the resulting suggestions range from clothes and accessories to books and activity packages. To buy, the site redirects you to online retailers.

GALISON.COM: This stationer goes beyond note cards to floral file folders, contemporary fabric-covered journals, kitschy recipe binders, and charmingly old-fashioned letter-writing sets.

VIVATERRA.COM: Artisans from around the world handcraft this collection of elegant, eco-conscious clothing, baubles, and furniture. Most items have been made from sustainable materials like bamboo and recycled glass, giving the wares an organic—but not crunchy—sensibility.

AEDES.COM: The embossed black gift box, topped with fresh flowers, is almost too gorgeous to open. To fill, choose from a mix of luxurious imported fragrances, fine candles, and spa-worthy bath products from cult brands like Santa Maria Novella.

GREENERGRASSDESIGN.COM: Founded to highlight great design in a sea of mass production, this site displays modern, architectural housewares (like unique porcelain dishes), jewelry (loads of sleek silver), and textiles (pillows, rugs, and duvets).

WILDPOMEGRANATE.COM: This specialty purveyor matches traditional kosher products to upcoming Jewish holidays. A small, rotating selection of delectable food and entertaining products—organic olive oil, butter cookies, gourmet popcorn—would all make for welcome take-alongs this Hanukkah.

\$50
to
\$100



Ho-Ho-Hold Everything

WHO IT'S FOR: The environmentally minded friend whose reusable canvas bag is looking pretty grungy. **WHY IT'S SO (FUL)FILLING:** Glossy gumdrop colors and bold black-and-white-print lining almost outshine the functional design features (lots of capacity; long handles to sling over the shoulder).

WHERE TO BUY IT: Style & Co. totes, \$78 each, select Macy's stores; 800-343-0121.

► HELP IS ON THE WAY

PLUMCHOICE.COM TECH SUPPORT: Give your tech-challenged friends the gift of 24/7 assistance. Virtual operators (you can go online or call them) can help set up iTunes, explain how your digital camera works, or install a wireless network. Packages start at \$25.

PICWASH.COM: Who couldn't use a little airbrushing? Send away shots of family and friends for natural-looking cosmetic retouching. Pic-wash editors can cover blemishes, tone down shiny skin, reduce red-eye, and whiten teeth for \$7 per shot. Frame-worthy results are ready within 48 hours.

SCANCAFÉ: Mail those overflowing boxes of photos, slides, and negatives to this site. They digitize and restore them; you pay for a disc of the shots you want. Help a camera-happy new mother or an older relative organize and preserve a lifetime of memories. From 27 cents per printed photo.

There Is Nothing Like a Frame

■ **WHO LOVES YOU, BABY:** The grandmother who has basically turned over her grand piano to pictures of you at all ages. **WHY IT'S ANOTHER REASON TO BRAG:** Modern and elegant, this silver and turquoise enamel octagon is proof of your amazing taste—inherited from her. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** Oscar de la Renta Home for Lunt, \$95, Saks Fifth Avenue; 877-612-7257.



Christmas Cookies

■ **WHO THEY'RE FOR:** Everyone you like but don't know well enough to buy socks for. **WHY THEY'LL LOVE THEM:** Three Tarts cookies taste exactly—the way perfect homemade Christmas cookies should taste: buttery, tender, crisp, sweet. The hammered-silver-plate box contains nine different kinds, from mixed-berry Linzer cookies to almond-chocolate “yum balls,” and can be reused all year. **WHERE TO BUY THEM:** \$65 for a box of 26; 212-462-4392. ▶



\$100
to
\$300



Luxury Housing

WHO'S THE LUCKY PERSON: Your well-connected iPhone-owning gal pal in Silicon Valley. **WHY SHE'LL OOH-LA-LA:** A Louis Vuitton case that positively reeks of elite fashion history is the perfect cover for Apple's latest invention. The iconic monogrammed canvas version is instantly recognizable, but the red textured leather one is easier to find in your purse. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** Monogram, \$225, Epi Red, \$260; 866-VUITTON.

Treasure Box

WHO IT'S FOR: Your grandmother—who still makes the best meatloaf in the world. **WHY SHE'LL LOVE IT:** In an era of Internet recipes and culinary pop stars, this gift tells her you know the best dishes are passed down through generations. **WHERE TO BUY IT:** Charles Fradin Home recipe box with 105 letterpress cards and dividers, \$119, Williams-Sonoma; 800-541-2233 for stores.



► DO-IT-YOURSELF

CHARITY PLUS. Pair a donation in the recipient's name with an inexpensive gift for her: a loaf of freshly made bread coupled with a pledge to a hunger relief organization, a beautiful notebook paired with a contribution to a literacy program, or colorful seed packets matched to an agricultural nonprofit.

THE ULTIMATE GOODY BAG. Put together personalized gift baskets: An "All-Time Favorite Movie" assortment might include a DVD of a film along with related paraphernalia (for a *Sideways* buff, for instance, a bottle of Pinot Noir, a corkscrew, a wedge of California smoked Cheddar, and some grapes; or for a *Dreamgirls* fan, a CD of Motown hits, a glitzy piece of costume jewelry, and a disco ball ornament).

Just Enough Cuff

WHO IT'S FOR: Strong execs with no patience for jewelry that clanks and jangles. **WHY IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST:** One bracelet is enough when the colors and texture are this interesting (the material is exotic shagreen, the pebbled skin of a stingray). **WHERE TO BUY IT:** Charlotte Moss, \$150 each; 212-308-3888.



Cookie Jar

WHO IT'S FOR: The old friend who just started a new job. **WHY SHE'LL LOVE IT:** It's eye-catching (her new office mates can't miss it), intriguing (they'll ask her about it), and filled with foil-wrapped, chocolate-dipped Oreos (she'll have instant friends). **WHERE TO BUY IT:** RedEnvelope Large Oreo Canister, \$103 with gift box; redenvelope.com. ►



Over
the
Top



Queen of
the Kitchen

■ **WHO IT'S FOR:** You.
HOW TO CONVINCE YOUR HUSBAND TO BUY IT: "Hey, honey? Remember that amazing chocolate mousse we had in Provence? Well, I was thinking...we could actually save *lots* of money if I made it at home, but I just need this *one little appliance....*"
WHERE TO BUY IT: Cuisinart 7-Quart Stand Mixer, \$449; chefscatalog.com.

Lipstick Lust

WHO IT'S FOR: Your intrepid friend Eva, who has never shied away from expressing her personal style, with her ultrafashionable dress or her sometimes vivid and always wildly unpredictable lipcolor.
WHY SHE'LL LOVE IT: The sleek black lacquer box holds ten lipsticks and five glosses, from neutral nudes to deep, rich reds, all delicately scented with fig. The pigments are radiant and long-lasting.
WHERE TO BUY IT: Edward Bess Lip Wardrobe, \$350, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 800-218-4918.



Croc Star

WHO WILL TREASURE IT: The bright young thing (male or female) who hasn't been the same since reading F. Scott Fitzgerald. **WHY THEY'LL LOVE IT:** Croc-textured sterling case has that Jazz Age elegance—it will give them a shot of pleasure every time they reach for it. (If you really want to be extravagant, fill it with custom-printed business cards.)
WHERE TO BUY IT: Christofle, \$400; 877-728-4556 for stores. **O**

► THE GIFT CERTIFICATES EVERYONE WANTS

SUPERCERTIFICATES: Can't remember which stores your 12-year-old niece thinks are cool? These blanket certificates can be exchanged online for a gift card to the retailer of her choice. (giftcertificates.com)

EMUSIC: One of the largest online music stores operates like a subscription service. For \$9.99 a month, you get to download any 30 songs. Three-, six-, and 12-month gift plans available. (emusic.com)

GIFTSRIPTIONS: Instead of a flimsy subscription card for a year's worth of a magazine you picked arbitrarily, these cards—which come in an attractive box—let the recipient decide from among 50 titles (including *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*). (giftscriptions.com)

AUDIBLE: The intellectual in your life will relish the chance to download audiobooks, radio programs, language lessons, and spoken versions of magazines and newspapers. (audible.com)

SPAFINDER: These universal gift certificates (in denominations of \$50 to \$5,000) are accepted at over 4,000 spas around the world. Last-minute shoppers may appreciate the e-card notification, which announces that a gift is on the way. (spafinder.com)

BUY LESSONS FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS ALWAYS WANTED TO...

...learn an instrument (find local instructors at learningmusician.com)

...pick up a new language (try the Alliance Française at afusa.org)

...improve her cooking skills (check out the Institute of Culinary Education at iceculinary.com)

...talk like a wine expert (find classes at internationalwinecenter.com)

...tango like a pro (try arthurmurray.com, or find a studio at learntodance.com)

