

Guide to Giving

By E.T. Robbins

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Yet, with so many options out there, it can be a bit overwhelming. Not to worry. From stocking stuffers to a little bling-bling, the gift guide below will take the "daze" out of your holidays while covering everyone on your list.

FOR HIM

Does he long to bounce on his boogie board or go snowboarding down the slopes? Perhaps in-line skating is more his style. You're bound to find something for the "Sport" in your life (whatever his passion may be) at one of these stores.

Ski and Sport Shack Limited
408 Main Street
Wakefield, MA
781.245.1990

Manager Rob Leone says that the 33-year-old store sells "mainly anything you can ride," from snowboards to skate boards to surf boards. Leone recommends letting your man focus on the big products (don't worry - he'll like shopping for this type of stuff) while you focus on accessories such as high-end gloves, goggles, jackets, thermal undergarments, or socks. Leone says guys hate buying "nuisance" items such as socks, so it's a good item to consider. Socks range from \$17 to \$25. Oakley goggles range from \$57 to \$135. Burton products are popular too. Leone says, "You could get [Burton] boards anywhere from \$300 and up." Gift certificates are available.

Blades, Board, and Skate
112 Burlington Mall Road
Burlington, MA
781.272.8877

From Roces 5K Aggressive In-Line Skates to Salomon Provider Snowboards to Heely's Viper Roller Shoe

Kids, there's something for boys (and even girls) of all ages. Additional locations in Boston, Saugus, Natick, and Cambridge and a user-friendly Web site (www.blades.com) make your shopping chores that much easier and enjoyable. Procrastinators rejoice! Gift certificates are emailed to your inbox within a few hours (which means there are no shipping charges either).



FOR HER

Maybe she's a career woman, mom, wife, or all three. Whatever the case may be, we know one thing is true: she works hard and deserves a little relaxation. So what better gift than a soothing massage? Gift certificates are just a mouse-click away.

Massage Therapy of Randolph
301 N. Main Street
Randolph, MA
781.963.2901
massagetherapyrand.com



Massage Therapy of Randolph (MTR) has something for every need and budget. The \$32 "Pleasant Relief" is a half-hour massage that focuses on your choice of back, neck-shoulder, arm-hands, or scalp-face. A \$60 "Body and Soul" massage is one hour of head-to-toe pampering. Or go all out with a \$100 "Spa Special" that includes a full body massage with therapeutic paraffin wax on the hands, an herbal foot soak, and a choice between cellulite massage, aromatherapy, mini-facial, peppermint spa foot treatment, or stone therapy.

HIS & HERS

Consider giving the gift of art this holiday season. It's a lesson in culture that's sure to please men and women (and even little girls and boys).

The Ménage Gallery
135 Main Street
Gloucester, MA
978.283.6030

The Ménage Gallery represents 110 different artisans and boasts the largest selection of pottery on the North Shore. Items are displayed on owner Ed Soucy's finely crafted hardwood furniture. A self-taught carpenter who's been in business for over 30 years, Soucy creates designs that are not limited to one particular style. Around the gallery, his work is called "Functional Art." How 'bout a Keepsake Box designed by Soucy out of mixed hardwoods? The perfect gift for her, and prices range from \$100-\$700. Or perhaps an Executive Desk Box for him? Soucy uses various mixes of hardwoods along with a hand applied lacquer finish (\$850-\$1300). Custom orders are welcome, but the holiday season is a busy time - make sure you call first.



FOR THE KIDS

Relive your own childhood (or the one you wished you had) at these eclectic stores that cater to the kid in all of us.



Cloud Nine Toys
337 Boston Post Road
Sudbury MA
978.443.8886

Store manager Laura Brauer predicts a "classic Christmas." What does this mean? Wooden toys are back in style. From "Breyer" barns and stables (ranging from \$65 to \$300) to doll houses (starting at \$55), you might find yourself enjoying these toys as much as your kids. Brauer also predicts dress up clothes will be a popular purchase this holiday season. From cowboy get-ups (\$34.99) to super heroes (\$29.99), these fun items aren't just for girls or Halloween any more.

Henry Bear's Park
685 Mass Ave.
Arlington, MA
781.646.9400

(additional locations include Cambridge and Newton)

Celebrating its 28th holiday season, this toy store knows kids from tot to 'tween. The

selections are a bit more eclectic than what you might find in your traditional chains. And what are some of Santa's steals? Owner Sally Lesser recommends "Papo" castles (\$50 or \$99), adding that kids from 4-8 who are into fantasy themes will love these toys. Board games are good bets for family fun. Try "VisualEyes," a game consisting of 19 dice with different pictures on each side. Shake 'em up, jot down all the phrases and sentences you see, and hope you beat your opponents in verbal acuity. Price tag? \$25. Cost of finding the perfect balance between fun and education? Priceless.

LUXURY

Dazzle them with diamonds or charm them with bracelets. These two jewelry stores have been decorating bodies for decades.



Shreve, Crump & Low

Shreve, Crump, & Low
330 Boylston Street
Boston, MA
617.267.9100
(also in Chestnut Hill)

Nothing says elegance better than Shreve, Crump, & Low. Shreve's president and CEO, Merritt Mayher, is celebrating her first holiday season with the venerable Boston institution (she came on board in March). What better way to do it than with Shreve's new Master Cut Diamond Collection? These brilliant, square cut diamonds are sure to match the sparkle in your sweetheart's eyes. The approximate starting price for a 1/2 carat solitaire ring is \$4,250. Or check out pieces from Laura Gibson, a jewelry designer exclusive to Shreve's in New England. Her jewelry begins with handcrafted wire-wrapped 22K gold, and almost has the appearance

of rock candy. Gibson uses exotic semi-precious and precious stones, hand selecting each one. Choose necklaces, earrings, or bracelets. Prices start at \$600. And if you don't like the color scheme? No problem. Gibson will customize it for you.

BARGAINS

Want to save a buck while purchasing quality stuff and covering everyone on your list? Think it's impossible? Not at these two store.

Building #19 1/5
881 Worcester Rd (RT 9 W)
Natick, MA
508.653.1900
(fourteen additional locations including Weymouth, Lynn, & Burlington)

Would you believe that radio personality Candy O'Terry from MAGIC 106.7 shops regularly at Building #19? Yup. It's her favorite year-round haunt, but high on this year's holiday list. And O'Terry says it's not because

she's cheap. "I'm adventurous. I go to Building #19 1/5 in Natick on a regular basis just to see what they have. I buzz through the place, and I find treasures all the time!" What are some of the treasures you can expect this holiday season? Tom Dion, store manager in Natick, says you never know for sure, but that one thing is certain: the tagline of "good stuff cheap" always holds true.

New England Mobile Book Fair®
82 Needham St.
Newton, MA
617.527.5817

This place is the epitome of affordable, one-stop-shopping with its extended holiday hours and free gift-wrapping. Don't let appearances hold you back (it's warehouse-style). With 30% off New York Times hardcover bestsellers, who cares if it lacks the coffee klatch ambience of those big chain retailers?

Happy shopping everyone!

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