

FALL IS BEACH TIME
in Galveston

PUMPKINS, SQUASH & GOURDS:
Oh My!

NEED AN EXCUSE
to Spruce?

bayou city

Experience it!

Taking a Bow

From the audience to the stage, find your place in H-Town's performing arts.

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The Little BLACK Dress

Celebrate the LBD and find one to love. > PAGE 46



Find Gifting Bliss

Shop with our simple guide to extraordinary gift giving.

BY BETSY DENSON

Nothing is more satisfying than finding the perfect gift. As we enter this holiday season, elevate your gift-giving image with enticing gifts for family, friends and colleagues. We've curated five perfect gift types that will do just that.

1 ANYTHING...WRAPPED AND DELIVERED

Let's face it, no gift selection is more comprehensive than that of the world wide web. And, there's no arguing you can cover a lot of ground on your computer with the added benefit of staying in bed.

Biscuit (1435 Westheimer Road, biscuit-home.com/store) is just the ticket for comfy, fashionable bedding as well as stationery, kids' items and more. Although they have a lot of tools, **Berings** (6102 Westheimer, 3900 Bissonnet, berings.com) also has plenty else that you might not expect, including unique collectibles and

must-have wine accessories.

Veteran shopper and fashionista Lisa Buss clicks on **KB Kasuals** (2015 W. Gray St., kbkasuals.com) for "great designer duds at reasonable prices." Another don't miss is **The Little Bird** (1735 Post Oak Blvd., thelittlebirdinc.com), where high-end consignment is the name of the game.

2 THE BEST AT A BARGAIN

When can you buy the best of luxury and lifestyle brands from Disney to diamonds, all on sale? Black Friday, of course. And, no one does Black Friday like The

Galleria, with its 400 stores. Check their Black Friday web page to get the skinny on the earliest you can head over. There will also be complimentary package check and valet parking at five Galleria locations. For more local fun, Heights on 19th Street will host a "Not So Black Friday" event. Stroll, browse and buy along this happening street.

M Penner (1180-06 Uptown Park Blvd.) in Uptown Park incorporates a philanthropic approach to Black Friday with its fourth annual "Show Your Hearts Friday," where 10 percent of the day's purchases benefit the Houston Food Bank. If you are a closet comic book fan, or know one, let the **Pop Culture Company** (11313 Katy Freeway) be your hookup. Other mom and pop shops really roll out the red carpet on Small Business Saturday. Check out **Hello, Lucky** (1025 Studewood St.).

3 EXQUISITE TASTES

If you are a foodie with foodie friends, the perfect gift is anything that tastes amazing. While you are picking up a few dozen homemade pork or chicken tamales for friends

from Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen (12637 Westheimer Road #140), go ahead and grab some for yourself. They're only \$15 per dozen but need to be pre-ordered. Sylvia Casares will also be passing on her tamale talents at several classes in November and December.

In November and December at **Adair Kitchen** (5161 San Felipe, Ste. 390), they're serving up their homemade Pecan Pumpkin Pie, \$29.95 plus tax, boxed and ready to give (or ready to eat yourself). If dairy is your weakness, **Houston Dairymaids** (2201 Airline Dr.) has a cheese of the month club featuring two handmade Dairymaid cheeses plus one selected accompaniment every month, available in 3- or 6-month subscriptions. Along the same vein, **Spec's** (2410 Smith St.) offers several options including a monthly or bimonthly wine of the month club as well as a one-time wine appreciation kit.

4 OUT OF THE BOX

If you are a doer, no doubt you have a lot of ideas about experience-based gifts. If you need a little help, browse the



offerings at Cloud 9 Living (cloud9living.com) and Excitations (excitations.com) which both offer a variety of options in and around the Houston area, including flight time in an actual fighter plane and breakfast on the bayou for 12. At the Four Seasons Hotel (1300 Lamar St.), they make it easy to combine a staycation with some local adventures. They're partnering with the Houston Museum of Fine Arts for a Monet package and have an ongoing Little Astronaut family package with Space Center Houston.

Your honey may never join the PGA or LPGA, but that doesn't mean he or she can't work on their game. At Swanson Golf Center (6224 Theall Road), you can sign someone up for a single lesson, or ongoing instruction at "the best practice facility" for golf, according to the *Houston Chronicle*. Gourmands would salivate over a Houston Culinary Tour (houstonculinary-tours.com), which even offers a Walking Food Tour so you don't have to count as many calories. For the thrill seeker, a skydiving excursion at Skydive Spaceland (16111 FM 521, Rosharon) could be just the ticket.

5 ONE OF A KIND If the thought of giving a duplicate gift saps your holiday cheer, make a beeline for the First Saturday Arts Market (548 W 19th St.), which is held, yes, the first Saturday of each month and features scores of local artists with original work. It's a fun scene, too. Score more one-of-a-kind art, jewelry and clothing at the Winter Holiday Art Market, hosted by Fresh Arts at Winter Street Studios (2101 Winter St.).

If you can't find the perfect gift at Kuhl-Linscomb (2424 W Alabama St.), then you're not looking hard enough. With five buildings and 70,000 square feet of merchandise, believe me, you're set. For baby goods, jewelry and really fun gift wrapping, visit Impromptu (2358 Bissonnet). At **Sparrow and the Nest** (1020 Studewood), Stephanie Lienhard and husband Andrew represent local artists working in a variety of mediums. Lienhard's home-made soaps, monster dish towels and mini creature gardens are as charming as they are unique. ❖



scan this page with Layar to find these spots and get these great gifts.



get the gear

gracious gifts

Need even more inspiration to shop 'till you drop? Get this gear to give...or keep.

DRESS YOUR BED

If Laura Ingalls Wilder had this on her bed, she'd have been one happy prairie dweller. Biscuit's hand-quilted Tabitha Quilts, which come in blue and green, are reversible and timeless. Put them on a bed or sofa, or display one on the wall. They're that pretty.

\$225-\$250. 1435 Westheimer. biscuit-home.com/store



CHEESE ME, PLEASE

Houston Dairymaids offers the Domestic Bliss package—"the perfect cheese course with delicious accompaniments"—with Brie, Gouda, Cheddar, sour cherry preserves and more. Everything is packaged in a wooden cheese box, made in Texas of course.

\$110 without extras. 2201 Airline Dr. houstondairymaids.com

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

Reserve a tandem skydive for an adventurous friend (tandem means an instructor will dive with them) at Skydive Spaceland.

Father Clint Ressler, the Houston Texans chaplain, recently took the plunge and said that there was plenty of attention to safety and adrenaline to spare.

\$315 with a base video. 16111 FM 521, Rosharon. houston.skydivespaceland.com



OPERATION GLAM

Want to give a gorgeous gal-pal (or yourself) something glam for holiday parties? Try this canary yellow Christian Dior Halter Dress? Tweet tweet.

\$895. 1735 Post Oak Blvd. thelittlebirdinc.com



TEXAS PROUD

Artist and Hello, Lucky owner Teresa O'Connor is proud to be from Texas and to support local artists. Give a pal with H-town pride this "You Are Here, Houston, Texas" unisex tank top. When buying for ladies, go down a size to get the best fit.

\$32. 1025 Studewood. hello-lucky.myshopify.com

