

# Vancouver Sun

Buying gifts at the last minute? These options will help you wrap it up; Here are some gift-card ideas tailored to each of those special persons, and major stores to hit for surefire results

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Illustrations: Colour Photo: Stuart Davis, Vancouver Sun / Before you brave the Christmas shopping crowds, make a gift list for all the people you need to buy for and don't stray from it. And stay calm amidst all the confusion.

Somehow you've ended up here. It's the end of December and you haven't bought one thing; not a bar of soap for your mother-in-law or a bottle of aftershave for your beau.

And now you're sitting there paralyzed by the thought of heading out to the mall, wrestling your way through the crowds of single-minded shoppers and trying to find something decent amongst the detritus of rejected gifts.

Never fear! There is still hope. There are some never-fail standards that stores don't run out of and that you can easily get your mitts on with minimal fuss.

## THE TRUSTED GIFT CARD

I am 100-per-cent in favour of giving people gift cards, for a number of reasons. First, it gives them the chance to buy something themselves instead of you having to figure out what they need or want, or what size they are. Second, with sales starting two weeks from now, they'll probably get more bang for their buck buying after Christmas. The gift card enables that purchase during a time when most people are feeling a little pinched.

The major watch-out for buying gift cards is to make sure you buy from the right store.

Don't buy an HBC gift card for a die-hard Holts girl, or a Starbucks card for a Tim Horton's aficionado. That is, don't abandon sense altogether -- you still need to think about your recipient and what they like or want.

## GIFT CARD IDEAS

For everybody: Chapters, Amazon.ca, Starbucks.

For him: Home Depot, Canadian Tire, Best Buy/Future Shop.

For her: Holt Renfrew, her favourite spa.

For a teenage girl: Aritzia, Amazon.ca, Roots.

For a teenage boy: Mountain Equipment Co-op, iTunes Store (online).

## E-MAIL GIFT CARDS

The quickest, most-efficient rescue is the e-mail gift card. This is delivered to your recipient's e-mail account with surefire efficiency. It's not the same as having something under the tree, but it's better than nothing.

## LAST-MINUTE GIFTS

Plan to hit three major stores to stock up. A bookshop or music store will yield results for everybody in the form of DVDs, CDs and books.

A department store will have lotions, potions and scented candles for women, swanky shaving cream, socks and jocks for men. And finally, an upscale grocery store or wine shop will get you tasty treats and booze to round off the selection (see In Good Spirits on page D23 for more drink-related gift ideas).

Before you do brave the crowds, make a shopping list of all the people you need to buy for and what you're going to get them. Don't stray from your list. Be single-minded. Don't let the other shoppers get to you: Be an island of Zen calm amidst all the confusion.

And finally, don't forget everything you'll need to wrap the gifts!