

Selecting A Perfect Gift Requires Thought, Planning

Gift giving is a combination of art and science that requires careful thought and planning.

Searching for the perfect gift is fun for some, but for others it can be frustrating.

These tips will make your holiday gift giving more enjoyable and less of a chore:

- During the year, think about the types of gifts your family and friends want and need.

Keep a master shopping file or notebook as a resource for information on gift recipients, including clothing sizes, hobbies, personal tastes and preferences.

The earlier you shop, the better.

When you see the perfect gift on sale, buy it on the spot.

If it's a bargain, it will most likely be gone. Sales also help you budget your money and keep down your credit card bills.

If you wait until the last minute, you'll have to settle for what's available.

Remember, the most popular products, sizes and colors often sell out.

- Maintain a gift closet to keep last-minute gifts and assorted greeting cards.

- Take advantage of services offered for free or for a nominal fee, like personalization, personal shop-

pers, gift certificates, gift registries and gift-wrapping.

- Sentimental and personal gifts are always special and will be cherished for years.

Write your family history or recipes in a decorative bound book, or restore old family photos and mementos and place them in frames or an album with dates and captions.

- Give a gift that gives back. Shop in museum stores and from retailers who pledge a percentage of their profits to a charity.

You might also make a contribution to a nonprofit organization in someone's name.

- For a do-it-yourself touch, buy decorative baskets or tins and fill them with soaps, lotions, body gels, potpourri, candles, candy or homemade cookies. Make a specially prepared meal hosted at your home.

- In a small but visible way, something as simple and elegant as a person's name or initials sets them apart from everyone else and makes a statement about their individuality.

A personalized gift shows you took extra time and care in your choice.

There are personalized gifts to suit every personality, interest and age. Personalization takes extra time, so shop early.

- If you are unsure what to buy, a gift certificate is always a practical choice.

Gift certificates can be purchased for stores, restaurants, movie theaters, malls, mail order catalogs and online retailers.

You can buy most gift certificates online to save time. Wrap them in a gift box so they will be even more of a surprise.

- Always check the retailer's return policy. Some offer an unconditional money-back guarantee with no time restriction — perfect if you shop far in advance.

After making your purchase, save your receipt, packaging and shipping box in case you have to return the gift.

- Wrap gifts as soon as you buy

them. You'll wrap more carefully and have more time to enjoy the holiday.

Dress up your gift-wrapping with a personalized ornament, a candy cane, bells or holly berries. For a gift that won't fit under a tree, like a bicycle or an appliance, put a picture into a card or gift box.

Once you know how to plan and

shop for gifts, you can put these skills to good use all year long!

Holiday Shopping Fact:

Nearly one in four Americans completes their gift shopping during the last week of Christmas, according to the 2002 American Express Retail Index.

Chamber Parade Of Lights December 12

The annual holiday parade sponsored by the Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce is going around the world this year and we hope you are, too!

This year's parade will be held Saturday, December 12th. Whether you decide to join us by celebrating the traditional way or celebrate the season by taking a trip around the world, it's time to start preparing for exciting holiday festivities.

You as an individual, your business, a group of your friends, etc. can have a float, walk or march in our parade. You don't have to take a trip around the world; you can come as you are.

This can be a team-building project for your employees or a fun project for you and your friends.

This year's parade is going to be bigger and better than ever! We are getting an early start so you can be thinking of the great float you are going to enter.

Remember, lighting your entry is a must and you cannot include a live Santa or Mrs. Clause on your float. For safety reasons candy or other items cannot be thrown.

Judges will award prizes in the following categories: Annual Chamber President's Award (Grand Prize), Judge's Special Award (2nd), Grand Marshall's Award (3rd), 2009 Theme Award (Christmas Around the World), Traditional Christmas Award, Best Lights, Most Spirited, Most

Original/Unique Entry and Best Musical Entry.

Judging will be between 5:30 and 6:45. Late entries will not be judged. Awards will be announced as entries pass the announcement stand.

Please return the entry form to the Chamber of Commerce at the above address, fax or email by Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Placement in the parade is on a first-come, first serve basis, so hurry and enter.

A parade route map, the line-up and all other pertinent information will be forwarded to you soon after the December 1st deadline.

We hope you will join us in this fun-filled event. Please remember to encourage others to enter our parade.

The Chamber will also be hosting a Christmas Mall on Saturday from 10AM – 9PM in the Chamber building. Snacks and holiday gifts will be available.

Feel free to call the Chamber at 979-234-2780 or email events@VisitEagleLake.com if you have any questions or need additional entry forms. Information and entry forms are also available at www.VisitEagleLake.com.



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Just the Thing for the Hard-To-Buy-For or Last Minute...

Gift Certificates!

TO AUSTIN'S BBQ

Purchase \$100 worth of Gift Certificates now through Dec. 31, 2009, and get

**\$15-
Worth
FREE!**

You may buy the \$100 in any way you'd like... four \$25 certificates, ten \$10 certificates... whatever! But, they must all be purchased at the same time.

Happy Holidays
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Canaris Nursery

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Christmas Trees
and
Poinsettias**




