

Valentine Gift Guide 2009

By Marika Flatt, www.prbythebook.com

For Mom:



The eco friendly/green movement is the hottest trend in Austin. Even when it comes to beautiful fashion, you can still be environmentally friendly. Check out Bottled Up Designs, a new line of jewelry made from antique glass and bottles reclaimed from bottle dumps throughout natural wooded habitats and rural farmlands. Each piece is handmade from this antique glass and comes with "The Story of the Glass" detailing what the glass was originally and the age of the piece. What a cool, unique gift for

Mom- Who needs ruby red slippers when you can have a ruby red necklace that comes from an antique bottle of Schlitz beer? (\$66 on a 16" sterling chain, www.bottledupdesigns.com)



In Austin's schizophrenic weather, we all have bad hair days. If you are looking for great hair products that you can customize to your own hair type (in a hurry), *Profound Beauty* is a celebrity hairstylist's best-kept secret. With *Profound Beauty's* "Find Your Routine" approach, moms can figure out which assortment of products is best for their personal hair needs. You simply log onto the website and go through a quick

form to choose your hair specifics, and then it tells you exactly which products are the best fit for you. (Products range in price from \$14.00-\$40.00, www.profoundbeauty.com and select salons nationwide)

For that last-minute shopper, make a quick run to CVS Pharmacy and pick up a basket of goodies for your sweetie. Some favorites include: For the fitness guru or the one making a New Year's Resolution to exercise more, a Life Fitness Dual Watch & Heart Rate Monitor (\$59.99) or choose one of the three Life Fitness Pedometers (\$16.99 - \$39.99).

Another great choice: the Vickery & Clarke Healing hand cream is very practical for Texans in the winter. Loaded with shea butter, it's the perfect remedy for all those dry, cracked hands. You can put together a wonderful basket for Mom, and it just takes a trip to the corner CVS, easy!





Let mom relax and unwind in the tub or spa with the soft honeycomb bath pillow from Supracor. Perforations in the honeycomb cells on the Stimulite Bath Pillow circulate air and evaporate moisture so you stay cool and comfortable. Two suction cups adhere to the side of the tub, keeping the pillow in place. Water flows through the perforated cells, allowing the Bath Pillow to dry quickly and resists mildew. Available in lavender/white, gold/white or blue/white (\$80, <http://store.supracor.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=BATHPILLOW>)



A new CD with music focused on motherhood by top artists such as Celine Dion, Norah Jones and The Dixie Chicks celebrates moms, as well as offers inspiration, and provides a soothing refuge for mom or sleeping music for the kids. Created to benefit local chapters of the March of Dimes, this CD compilation, "Stork Tunes" was originally designed to encourage and soothe moms in the delivery room hence its full title of "Stork Tunes: Songs for A Happy Birth Day", but the resulting CD is one that all moms and their children can enjoy. It's great for the car when (mom and) the kiddos need some "downtime" music. (\$13, www.StorkTunes.com)

For Dad:

For all those dads with a home office, the Artisan 700 All-in-One Printer is designed for creative households, photo enthusiasts and professionals who either work from home or bring work home. It offers Wi-Fi and Ethernet networking capability, Automatic Photo Correction and Ultra



Hi-Definition Claria ink for photos that are smudge, scratch and water resistant. Other great features include turning plain paper into college-ruled, wide-ruled and graph school paper, and creating photo layouts with various size photos on a single sheet of paper. Dads can even print and copy images directly onto ink jet printable CDs and DVDs. These features make it an ideal tool for the photo-loving mom, as well as the Wi-Fi loving Dad! It allows them to make personalized gifts for each other or for the kids this Valentine's Day. (\$149.99 after \$50 instant rebate, http://www.epson.com/cgi-bin/Store/consumer/consDetail.jsp?BV_UseBVCookie=yes&oid=63075470)



cmarchuska, a new eco-friendly clothing line, has the most amazing scarf for the man in your life! Made from an organic blend of modal and silk, the hunter scarf is so soft you will want one for yourself! (Or, you might choose to borrow his!) It is the perfect finishing touch for any outfit. It's a great way

to entice your man to “up” his style points. It’s ideal to wear with jeans and a sweater or even dressed up in a suit. (\$50, www.cmarchuska.com)



Headphones have become a daily necessity, plugging into everything from your iPod to cell phone. The V-MODA Vibe Duo are earphones with a microphone that combines a uniquely aesthetic design, superior sound quality and a comfortable fit. The Vibe Duo was designed with this concept in mind, in three colors (Nero, Chrome, and Gun Metal Rouge). The Vibe Duo was launched in tandem with the Apple iPhone and is universally compatible with all smart phones containing a 3.5 mm jack. (\$99, the Apple Store or www.v-moda.com)



Kim Overton of Austin is the creator of the new SPIbelt (small personal items- BELT). The SPIbelt has a 7/8-inch-wide elastic strap with a snap buckle closure with a reflective zippered pouch sewn into the belt which is made from a lightweight, super-stretchy material. When it's empty, it's only 7 inches long and 1 inch wide, but can hold an iPod, phone, credit card, id, key, and other small personal items, and comes in 23 different colors. It’s perfect for working out (especially, running a race like the Cap 10K), sight-seeing on vacation, or taking the kids on an outing like an amusement park or the zoo. They also come in kids’ sizes. (\$19.95 at www.spibelt.com)

For the Kids:



Lil’ Bettie Beachwear is a great gift for your little girl to get ready for the swim season. Lil’ Bettie consists of one-pieces, bikinis, tankinis, rash guards and cover-ups for girls. *Lil’ Bettie is available in sizes 6 months to tween 18, perfect for the beach, pool or family vacations.* The Dreamy Tankini has an adorable print and carefree fit. The bottom is a pull on hipster and the top ties behind the neck and in back.

(\$30-\$50, www.lilbettiebeach.com)

Girls can learn the essentials of baking with Girl Gourmet Cupcake Maker. Now kids can get in on the fun and whip up their own homemade cupcakes in 30 seconds. Then, simply remove the cupcake and place directly onto the stand of the Cupcake Froster to perfectly frost each cupcake. A simple push on the handle makes the cupcake twirl and creates the perfect swirl. Add the colorful sprinkles included in the set for a perfectly finished cupcake. You can also use “real” cake mix and frosting (such as Betty Crocker). (Ages 8+, \$29.99, Wal-Mart, Kmart, Toys R Us)



It’s a book, a video game and a learning tool all in one--from Current Energy. Smart Lab’s award-winning challenge book series is packed with 1,000 trivia questions covering educational topics made specifically for kids. Smart Lab electronic challenge book is a video game/book hybrid that kids use to answer randomly chosen questions, and the automatic score-keeping function shows who knows the most about the topic at hand. Topics include the “Amazing Animal Challenge” and “Science and Nature”. Excellent for the car or traveling in general. (\$20, Ages 8+, www.currentenergy.com)



Knowledge Adventure’s *JumpStart® 3D Virtual World My First Adventure* is a computer game that gets kids learning pre-reading, early math, social studies, art, music, computer skills and critical thinking skills. The first 3D virtual world adventure for pre-schoolers will get them comfortable on the computer and will keep their attention. (\$20, Target, Best Buy, ToysRUs, Wal-Mart, Costco, Office Depot)

Hand Picked Pumpkin has tailored a line of clothing and a creative shopping experience that allows you to play fashion designer and create a one-of-a-kind outfit for the fashionable baby or toddler in your life.

Each order is customizable in three easy steps: select a garment, select a size, and then customize from a vast range of super soft prints. Hand Picked Pumpkin has made a commitment to reducing its environmental impact in as many ways as possible. One substantial step includes forgoing fanciful gift packaging. Other green efforts include contracting with local seamstresses, purchasing domestic materials, recycling, using non-toxic cleaning products and incorporating energy efficiencies in the design studio. (prices vary, www.handpickedpumpkin.com)





Move over Webkinz. Skoodlez is a new interactive and educational stuffed animal that incorporates online and offline play. They're a smart choice for parents looking to get their kids an educationally-rich toy. Each Skoodlez plush doll comes with an access code where children can log-on to skoodlez.com to write and read stories about their Skoodlez. The idea is that children are spending so much time online; why not leverage it for learning? Skoodlez encourages creativity and imagination—online and offline. (ages

4-12, \$14.99, www.skoodlez.com)



All aboard! The Melody Express™ Musical Train is a melody-building train set that invites children to play composer and conductor at the same time. Lay down the note tiles and let the electronic engine read them, creating a traveling song. No reading required-- just match the colors in the songbook to play 7 children's songs and learn Melody Express the C scale. Or, improvise your own tunes! (ages 3+, \$42.95, www.learningresources.com)

Crispy Cat's candy bars are at least 70% organic, depending on which bar, and covered in delectable organic dark chocolate with crispy rice. With flavors like Mint Coconut, Toasted Almond, or Roasted Peanut, Crispy Cat is working to reform society to eat healthy with their line of tree-hugging, "power snack" candy bars which are all natural with no preservatives, dairy free, gluten free, non-GMO, vegan, and kosher...and tasty. As children, we always wished that candy was good for you, and now Crispy Cat has made that dream come true. (\$3, www.crispycatcandybars.com)

