

Heart to Heart

This Season's Hottest Valentine's Gifts

by Emily Liebert



Sweetie:
Godiva
chocolate

It's that time of year again: V-Day, which may feel more like D-Day when you're trying to select the perfect gift for your partner. If you're stuck on the old standbys—flowers, jewelry, chocolates, and lingerie—opt for a chic and unique twist or, think outside the proverbial box and choose something unusual. After all, isn't the thrill of getting it just right the best part?

Feeling present pressure? You're not alone. "Valentine's Day is especially difficult in our culture because receiving a gift on February 14th has the added weight of proclaiming that one has arrived and will not be alone," says Shelly Goldklank, Ph.D., couples therapist and clinical psychologist at the William Alanson White Institute. "If we remember that we all want to please, have some insecurities about pleasing, and that these items represent a little part of ourselves, then gifts can be taken as the vulnerable and thoughtful bridges between people that they are meant to be."

Still unsure? There's nothing wrong with playing it safe.

"The old standbys are as popular as ever," confirms

Anne Keating, senior VP of public relations at Bloomingdale's. "Some of the hottest pieces this year are camisole-and-thong

sets, rings with pink stones, platinum bracelets, and perfume."

She adds, "For the less traditional,



Silly:
Doodle
Card

A Rose of a Different Color?

First things first: If you're banking on a V-Day delivery of roses, order immediately! Waiting until the 12th or—dare we consider—the 13th or 14th will increase the likelihood of florists being sold out. Here are some facts, figures, and alternatives to the traditional "dozen red."



- According to the International Cut Flower Growers Association, roses of varying colors possess special meanings.
 - Red:** love, respect, courage
 - White:** reverence, humility, innocence, purity, secrecy, silence
 - Pink:** grace, gentility (deep pink: gratitude, appreciation; light pink: admiration, sympathy)
 - Yellow:** joy, gladness
 - Coral or Orange:** enthusiasm, desire
 - Deep Burgundy:** unconscious beauty
 - Red & Yellow Blend:** jovial, happy
 - Red & White Blend (or white with red edges):** unity
 - Pale Colors:** sociability, friendship
- As stem length increases, so does your bottom line.
- Be mindful of delivery costs, which average around \$15, depending on distance.
- As of Feb. 1st, "all flowers increase in price by 75-100%," says Blue Water Flowers' co-owner Lawrence Handal.
- For an alternative to roses, "A jewel-toned bouquet in a silver-finished, glazed pot is stunning," says Andrea Ancel, owner of Wild Poppy. "Orchids, poppies, and French tulips in colored modern glass vases are other wonderful choices."
- Looking to turn the tables on your guy? Opt for darker, richer hues or blues and greens (with a few roses thrown in).

Michael Stars makes a great pink cupid-heart tee with tiny cap sleeves. Baccarat's red loving doves are also very special."

Perhaps your sweetie has a sweet tooth. Forgo the standard box of confections by adding hope. In honor of Valentine's Day and Godiva's 80th anniversary, one lucky grand prize winner will have the rare opportunity to choose \$80,000 worth of jewels from H.Stern. Certificates can be found inside eligible boxes \$23 or higher of Godiva's Valentine's Day 2006 Collection (available through February 28th).



Splashy: Mimi So Ring

Of course, if you're in the market for some bling, there are a variety of trendy trinkets. Surprise her with a gemstone of passion. "They are believed to hold special mystical powers," says Amanda Gizzi, spokeswoman for the Jewelry Information Center. "Ruby represents desire; amethyst symbolizes sincerity, security, and peace of mind; emerald brings wisdom; peridot attracts love; and rubellite increases fertility." She adds, "You can also put a portion of a love note or cloth from your wife's wedding dress in an updated lock-et. It will become an instant heirloom."

If you're looking to break free from the tried and true and add a little spice to your life, options abound. Head to Agent Provocateur for their signature perfume.



Sexy: Agent Provocateur

Swing over to the Museum of Sex Store for *The Kama Sutra Deck: 50 ways to love your lover*; or, for the playful pair: *The Striptease Kit*.

"It's everything you need to take it off," says buyer and retail manager Mark Snyder. Lest we forget the men in our lives, Only Hearts carries a wide variety of heart-shaped items such as wine stoppers, corkscrews, bookmarks, and clocks. For something a little more original, store

manager Andriette Flemings suggests "boxer shorts with romantic motifs, a 'soul mate' glass paper-weight, or, on the racier side... body frosting!" Jason Paul, vice president of Tracy Paul & Company, Inc., recommends Links of London's sterling silver, pocket-sized Doodle Card, which can be engraved and comes with its own leather wallet. For the frequent business-tripper, Paul says, "the silver plate Traveller Alarm Clock is ideal." You'll be his first thought every morning. **ml**



Sleepy: Traveller Alarm Clock

Agent Provocateur

133 Mercer St. btw. Prince & Spring Sts., 212-965-0229
www.agentprovocateur.com

Bloomingdale's

1000 3rd Ave. btw. 59th & 60th Sts., 212-705-2000; 504 Broadway btw. Spring & Broome Sts., 212-729-5900
www.bloomingdales.com

Blue Water Flowers

265 Lafayette St. btw. Prince & Spring Sts., 212-226-0587
Closed Sat. & Sun.

Godiva Chocolatier

800-9-GODIVA
www.godiva.com

Links of London

535 Madison Ave. btw. 54th & 55th Sts., 212-588-1177; 402 W. Broadway btw. Spring & Broome Sts., 212-343-8024; 200 Park Ave. (MetLife Building), 212-867-0258
www.linksoflondon.com

Museum of Sex

233 Fifth Avenue at 27th St., 212-689-6337
www.museumofsex.com

Only Hearts

386 Columbus Ave. btw. 78th & 79th Sts., 212-724-5608; 230 Mott St. btw. Prince & Spring Sts., 212-431-3694
www.onlyhearts.com

Wild Poppy

159 E. 92nd St. btw. Lexington & Third Aves., 212-717-5757
Closed Sun.