

# Gifts for the man in your life: Clothes, tools, wine and more

By **BOB CHIODINI**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

The Christmas shopping countdown can be nerve-racking, especially if you're stumped for ideas. One of the more frequent holiday dilemmas is "What am I going to get him for Christmas?"

Many shoppers need gift ideas for their men. But the guy often needs some coaxing.

What is the "right" gift for the husband, son, father, boyfriend, or significant other?

Categorize the suggestions: Does your guy enjoy wearing it, working with it or consuming it? Perhaps all of the above.

Wayne Schmidt, Traverse City's Captain's Quarters' store manager, explained that as a full-service men's wear store, the staff not only answers but anticipates most gift-for-guys inquiries.

"Our advantage is that we know our customers," Schmidt said. "We have repeat local and downstate clientele. We remember sizes, styles, colors and for those reasons we can better serve (any) customer request."

Schmidt added, "We offer classic wear but are not bound by it. We have the more updated looks, if wanted."

What happens if the woman cannot find just what she wants for her man? Try the gift certificate as the last resort, Schmidt suggested.

But, man does not live by shirt, sweater or trousers alone. The "right gift" journey often leads to a hardware store if the guy in question is a handyman.

Chris Petroskey, floor manager at Northern Lumber in Suttons Bay, explained that guys want the latest inventions in tools. Innovative hand tools are good but, by far, the most popular choices are cordless power tools.

"The more powerful the tools, the better. Battery operated tools are up to 24 volts now. This is the big thing," said Petroskey. "A guy may have a truckload of tools for his business or for his personal use at home, but he still wants what is currently advertised. Some guys are never satisfied."

Petroskey said that many shoppers have no idea of what they are buying for guys when it comes to tools and suggests finding out the name and model number for any particular item.

If the guy loves the great outdoors, you might seek out gifts for the hunting, fishing or camping enthusiast at Gander Mountain, located in the Outlet Mall in Traverse City.

Aaron Patrzik, the store's operations manager, said that most shoppers are usually well-informed regarding this type of merchandise.

"We get a lot of people who come here with shopping lists. They ask what is new for this year and want to buy the latest things," he said.

Gander Mountain offers bows, guns, tree stands and gun safes as well as camping equipment such as sleeping bags, tents and camp clothing. Ice fishermen may use the ice shanties, power augers, ice fishing electronics and even underwater ice fishing cameras.

"We sell a GPS, global positioning system. It's a super high-tech compass to use anywhere when you don't want to get lost," said Patrick.

He said that a line of outdoor cooking items are available. Your guy can enjoy camp stoves, cookers for processing meat and turkey deep fryers to prepare the holiday meal. He added that the store also carries knick knacks, deer-antler lamps and racks of Christmas cards; all with outdoor and sport themes.

Another aspect of "guy" shopping includes pleasing the male palate.

Brian Jackowski, wine buyer and manager for Traverse City's Blue Goat wine shop, begins by asking basic questions about men's wine preferences.

"I find out if they like red or white and do they prefer imported, California or others. Then, I find out the price range the customer desires. Some spend \$15-\$20 a bottle or others may be interested in a \$70-\$90 range," he said. "I try to get the customer to go from the general to the specific."

Additionally, Jackowski, a professionally trained chef, inquires about what foods that person enjoys eating. With this information, he can suggest a more personal wine selection and provide it in individual bottles, a gift 6-pack or even a mixed case. The customer can choose gift baskets filled with wine, cheeses and wine accessories. Custom baskets are available upon request.

**Bob Chiodini is a local freelance writer.**



Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

Gifts both big and small are available at Traverse City's Gander Mountain. Above is a large camouflage deerblind and right is a GPS global positioning system, a high-tech compass to use anywhere.

Look for the last in the gift guide series  
Thursday, Dec. 12  
in the Record-Eagle

## Yet even more gift ideas for men

By **STACIE CARLSON**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

From the tried and true to the trendy, finding the right gift can be an adventure — and finding gifts for men sometimes makes the adventure even more challenging. Area retailers have gift ideas for everyone from grandpa to junior.

For boys and men who crave toys, technological advances have made entertaining much more enjoyable.

"Plasma and liquid crystal screens are the newest trend in computer monitors and televisions," said Derek Pahl, manager at Circuit City. "The screens are thinner than traditional models and they offer a brighter, crisper picture. It's really the new rage, and prices have been driven down over the past few years so items are more affordable."

Along with computer monitors and televisions, digital cameras remain popular gifts.

"Now, people can get a 4.1 mega-pixel digital camera for \$500 or less, whereas two years ago the same camera ran for \$2,500 and now cameras with two mega-pixels start at \$150," said Pahl. "Digital cameras are a real no-brainer. They save people the cost of developing film and pictures can be reprinted with the same crystal clarity 10 years from now."

Also, as has been a constant for several years now, game systems still rate highly on everyone's to-get list.

"We see men ages 40 to 50 years old playing their X Boxes, Game Cubes and Playstation 2," said Pahl. "Vice City for Playstation2 and Xbox is a really popular game that's based on Grand Theft Auto. It's been out for a few weeks and we sell quite a few copies a day. By far, game systems remain hot sellers for the holidays."

In addition to electronic innovations, hobbyists can look forward to some great new additions.

"Our Milwaukee Jobsite Radio offers the best sound system around," said Jason Gothard, store manager at Ace Hardware in Traverse City. "The radios are powered by four Rockford Fosgate speakers, so the clarity is excellent."

In terms of tools, Gothard also points to the Tool Dock Modular Workshop which is a system of modular, mobile and multi-function workstations; Arbortech Wood Carving tools; stud extractors to remove stripped studs, bolts or nuts; and five Delta Power tools under \$99, including Miter Saws, Drill Presses, Band Saws, Scroll Saws and Table Saws.

"Also, Fein has some great new items, including a Turbo Vacuum that is quieter and more powerful higher end version of a wet/dry vac and a Multimaster Tool that detail sands, power scrapes and can be used as an oscillating saw," added Gothard.

For men whose need to tinker takes them into the kitchen, there are several items that appeal to their masculine side.

"Our Microplane grater is great," said Kathy Ziegler of Mary's Kitchen Port in Traverse City. "Originally, the company started out making woodworking tools, so the grater actually looks like it's a wood plane. Because it looks like a tool, men are drawn to it and the grater is razor sharp."

More and more, men are recognizing the need for good cook and grill ware.

"Our Weber gas and charcoal grills and accessories, and our turkey deep fryers are very popular with men," said Ace's Gothard. "They've been great gifts for several years now."

According to Ziegler, as far as tastes go, men are drawn to stain-

less steel, copper or black cookware and kitchen accessories.

"Men enjoy the heft of our heavy duty, professional cookware," added Ziegler. "Because the trend is for men to cook more, they're recognizing the importance of good tools. Along with pots and pans, we also have digital thermometers that allow the chef to place a probe into the meat with a cord that runs to a digital countertop thermometer. That way, the chef doesn't have to continually open the oven or grill to check the temperature. Also, our Oxo turkey lifter is a great companion to turkey fryers."

Along with menus tastes for electronics, tools and kitchen ware, increasingly, men are heading to area spas for a little rest and relaxation.

"Men need to take care of themselves as much as anyone else," said David McWhinney, spa director at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Acme. "In fact, men need to look closely in the mirror at themselves. Their skin is actually really in need of regular care. Facials, in combination with Swedish massage, pedicures and manicures, are being geared more and more toward men and they're gaining in popularity."

Typically, men's products focus on sloughing off dead skin and moisturizing irritated areas.

"Oftentimes, men's skin takes a real beating," added McWhinney. "Our services feel good and they're good for people. Plus, our gift certificates can be specialized just for men. Whether it's a 50-minute pedicure for those who are on their feet all day, a cherry honey glow body exfoliation followed with a Vichy shower, or a Swedish massage that focuses on those favorite areas, men enjoy being catered to."

**Stacie Carlson is a local freelance writer.**

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