

Food

More culinary gift wishes for the holidays

If you happened upon last week's column, then you know what's been on my mind: foodie gift wish lists. I confessed what I was lusting after, elegant table linens in shades of taupe, cream, and ecru. After putting that in print, guess what? A lovely woman contacted me at the paper to say she was selling scads of beautiful old linen, in case I was interested in stopping by and checking it out. Someone else suggested I frequent yard sales, another good idea.

So with the gift-giving season smack upon us, it occurred to me to reach out to my wide circle of friends and business associates to ask what they were yearning for. As ever, I got back brilliant replies.

As I wrote last time, some people think big, like my great friend and PR mentor, Peggy Tagliarino. "I saw an ad for a new type of Cuisinart (from KitchenAid)," she wrote in an email. "It does everything the old ones did, but [has] new things; i.e., you can choose how thin or thickly you want it to slice your cucumbers, using the slicing blade. Frankly, my Cuisinart has seen better days. It works just fine, but I could go for an updated, spiffier model with more bells and whistles. I do think that it is the greatest tool in my kitchen as far as being a time saver."

BTW, Peggy is an incredibly talented cook and host, so I'm inclined to agree with whatever she says in that regard. But wait, there's more: "I could also go for a grill pan that stretches across two burners that I could make pancakes and grilled cheeses on (two guilty pleasures). I see them in Walmart all the time and tell myself that I don't need that thing, [just] use my frying pan. I'd also like a new waffle maker. My old one still works, but I'd like a professional one that makes several at once."

What else is on Peggy's wish list? Try "a hand juicer with a lever that you pull down (not electric), which I hear is really the best, and yes, the peer pressure to buy a Keurig is fierce. I am the only one I know without one." Don't worry, Peggy, you're not alone. I haven't succumbed either.

Some people think small: "My



CHOICE CUTS
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writer and photographer. "A hand mixer and a Farberware coffee pot for four cups that works as well as my large Farberware pot."

Coffee was on a lot of people's minds (and wish lists): "I would love a nice coffee maker with the grinder attached. I've been doing the French press thing for a while but am missing that great coffee smell in my house." That came from Jee Won Park, a Manhattan-based friend and marketing communications pro.

What is Georgette Gilmore hoping for this holiday season? "A Vitamix blender." She's editor-in-chief of BaristaKids (kids.baristanet.com). "I haven't had the nerve to splurge on one," she reported, "so instead I purchase a decent blender for around \$100. They last for about a year and burn out. I'm only making breakfast smoothies and margaritas (occasionally). I've gone through three already. I should have just bought a Vitamix!"

Speaking of blenders, guess what's on Karen Crawford's wish list: "That new Vitamix blender is very sweet. Saw it used in a Williams-Sonoma demo a few weeks ago and was really impressed with what it can do. It is really pricey, though, so maybe it will be an after-Christmas gift."

What else appeals to Karen? "How about some yummy food-stuffs like Dufour hors d'oeuvres, truffle paté, foie gras, triple-creme cheeses, a Bûche de Noël, caviar, and a bottle of Dom Perignon! Oh, yes, not sure if it's available, but a CD version of Julia Child's, 'Mastering the Art of French Cooking' would be great." Now that's a woman who knows how to celebrate. Check out Karen's terrific food blog at <http://emptynester-gourmet.blogspot.com>.

Hold on, did someone say "Vitamix?" Oh, that's right —

motions director at New Jersey Monthly, New Jersey Bride, and Park Place magazine.

"A Vitamix blender. My current blender is from the year one. True story: back in the '80s, banks used to give gifts with deposits, and my great aunt got a blender/food processor combo. The food processor bit the dust long ago and was replaced by a Cuisinart, but the darn blender refuses to die. And I am just too cheap to a) buy a new blender when I have one that works, and b) spend that much for a blender."

What else is Beth hoping for? "White hot chocolate mix or Kcups. My kids spend way too much of my money on white hot chocolate. I'd love a mix or Kcups (for the new Keurig I picked up because everyone has one but us), so they can make it at home." She'd also gladly receive a "Tazo tea assortment"; yum. Last, [she] "would love the Norman Love chocolate assortment that was mentioned in Consumer Reports. It is only \$49" and she'll gladly supply her address if anyone wants to send it over!

Heads up to my good friend and favorite confectioner, Nicky Messiah. Her name came up in someone else's wish list! Here's what another friend, Cynthia, told me: "Lately, I've been craving Nicky Messiah's toffee. I've been working way too much and I'm holding out the toffee as my reward for making it through the end of the year. I plan on buying some boxes as Xmas gifts for people at work. And one for me. I also aim to find good, thick, terry dish towels in cobalt blue in 2012. The dish towels I have are bordering on the ancient."

Carolann Darcangelo, a teacher in Rhode Island (and a former New Yorker), offered up this sweet note: "My NYC friends bring me Jacques Torres hot chocolate. It's so good it brings tears to my eyes — not kidding."

I hope Santa and the Hanukkah gods are good and generous to all. Merry, merry and peace be with you. Lots more in two weeks!

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