

2014

# Celebrating the Holiday Spirit

*Gifts to  
create lasting  
memories*

*By Renee Brincks*

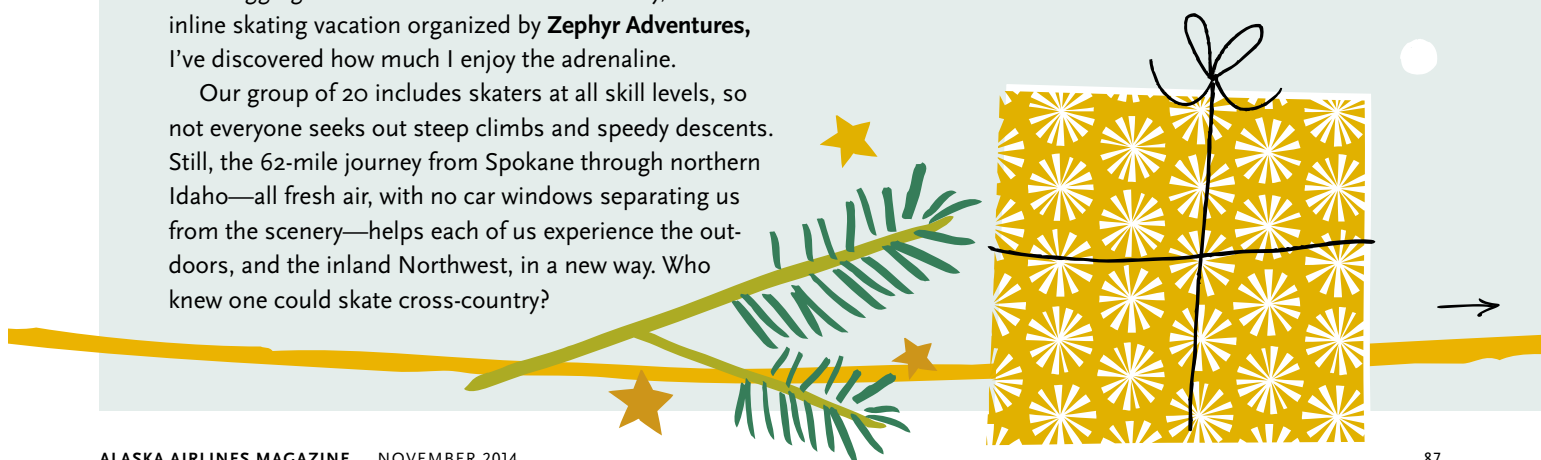
**Afternoon sun slants** through the trees as I stop to catch my breath along a trail outside Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. A few miles back, a steel bridge crossed a sparkling stretch of water at the base of these hills, and the flat terrain made for a speedy ride. Now, the paved trail narrows and twists its way out of the valley through pine groves that grow denser as I climb.

After a few drinks of water, I snap some photos and then adjust my helmet. It's time to head back down the hill, and I'm ready to roll as fast as my eight wheels will go. After logging more than 100 miles on a five-day, escorted inline skating vacation organized by **Zephyr Adventures**, I've discovered how much I enjoy the adrenaline.

Our group of 20 includes skaters at all skill levels, so not everyone seeks out steep climbs and speedy descents. Still, the 62-mile journey from Spokane through northern Idaho—all fresh air, with no car windows separating us from the scenery—helps each of us experience the outdoors, and the inland Northwest, in a new way. Who knew one could skate cross-country?

And new experiences are the essence of a new sort of gift giving.

During the 2013 holiday season, for example, experiences accounted for six of every 10 gifts purchased through the website **LivingSocial**: painting classes, wine tasting excursions, waterpark tickets and dining certificates. Even many popular gift items, such as photo blankets and photo albums, include an experiential component. Research has long indicated that just planning and anticipating trips, events and experiences produces positive feelings.





*National Geographic Expedition's Alaska Family Voyage.*

**IN EXPLORING** consumer decisions and happiness, psychology professor Ryan T. Howell's research team at San Francisco State University found that experiential gifts create memories that have tangible characteristics similar to physical items—good wine, say.

"Good memories tend to get rosier over time. They never decay, and they're always accessible to reflect on," says Howell.

This year there are memorable experiences for every interest and budget. Consider short outings, such as the [San Francisco Architecture Walking Tour](#) (\$40; [architecturesf.com](#)); or Juneau's [Alaskan Food Tours](#) (\$99; [alaskan-foodtours.com](#)), which boost understanding of Alaska's marvelous seafood. Hike Maui creates a quintessential island adventure with a full-day [Hana waterfall walk](#) (\$189; [hike-maui.com](#)).

For an extended-stay experience, schedule [beekeeping outings](#),

[wine experiences, trail riding or treetop spa treatments](#) at sunny Carmel Valley Ranch just south of Monterey, California (prices vary; [carmelvalleyranch.com](#)). Montana-based Zephyr Adventures offers [guided trekking, cycling and inline skating journeys, plus food, wine and beer tours](#), around the world (\$1,950 and up; [zephyr-adventures.com](#)).

In Mexico, the upscale [Ultimate Tequila Tour](#) from the Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita includes a private helicopter ride

to the Jose Cuervo distillery and a tequila-making tour (\$20,000 for two; [fourseasons.com/puntamita](#)).

To spot bears, birds, sea lions and humpback whales, book the [Alaska Family Voyage](#) from National Geographic Expeditions (\$5,790 and up; [national-geographic-expeditions.com](#)).

For those with musical ambitions, [Lessonface](#) provides lessons on more than 40 instruments via live videoconference (prices vary; [lessonface.com](#)).

A gift membership

at Seattle's [Museum of Flight](#) provides both entertainment, education and inspiration for kids and adults (\$55 and up; [museum-offlight.org](#)).

[Alaska Airlines Vacations packages](#) offer adventures across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Relaxing on golden beaches, enjoying the great outdoors or exploring American history, these journeys are memorable gifts (prices vary; [alaskaair.com/vacations](#)).

*Gift Ideas  
2014*

## Engaging Experiences



*Museum of Flight.*



*Beekeeping outings.*



*Zephyr Adventures inline skating.*



*Ultimate Tequila Tour from the Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita.*

Sparkles & Adornments

Na Hoku's koa inlay jewelry.



**Blue Nile** led the creation of online gem buying in the 1990s, and remains the Internet's largest diamond retailer. Numerous other items are available, from sapphires to men's cobalt rings (prices vary; bluenile.com).

Hawaiians have considered koa trees sacred for centuries; the beautiful, amber-toned wood is wedded with silver in **Na Hoku's koa inlay** jewelry (\$70 and up; nahoku.com).

**Hawaii Titanium Ring Co.** also uses tropical woods, along with precious and semiprecious stones such as turquoise and ruby, in its wide array of rings (\$110 and up; hawaiiititaniumrings.com). **Honolulu Jewelry Company** specializes in rings and pendants with island themes such as plumeria (prices vary; honolulujewelrycompany.com).

Hawaii Titanium Ring Co.



Exquisite presentations, such as this jeweled leopard-topped bottle of Emerald Reign from House of Sillage, enhance **Parfumerie Nasreen's** deluxe fragrances, including selections for men (prices vary; parfumerienasreen.com).

Citizen's Chrono Time A-T watch.



*Holiday bling can be useful and high-tech as well as attractive.*

Citizen's **Chrono Time A-T** is synced to atomic clocks for the ultimate in accuracy (\$695 and up; citizenwatch.com). Seiko's **Astron Solar Chronograph** relies on solar power to provide precise time zone information worldwide (available at many outlets from \$1,400 and up; seiko-astron.com).







Feeding America.

CHOICE.



A contribution to **Center for Humanitarian Outreach and Inter-Cultural Exchange (CHOICE)** helps individuals in countries that face extreme poverty ([choicehumanitarian.org](http://choicehumanitarian.org)). Closer to home, **Feeding America** will serve 46.5 million Americans this year. Each \$1 donation helps the nationwide food bank network distribute up to 10 meals ([feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org)).



Gustavus Forelands Preserve.

The **Nature Conservancy** is one of the world's oldest, largest and most respected conservation organizations, and uses its money to preserve land in the simplest way—it buys it ([nature.org](http://nature.org)). **Living Lands & Waters** works to protect and restore major U.S. watersheds. Gifts support community clean-ups, educational events and adopt-a-river programming ([livinglandsandwaters.org](http://livinglandsandwaters.org)).

As the snow starts to fall, **CherryT Knit & Co.'s cable mittens** keep hands warm with soft wool and plush fleece linings (\$79; [cherrytco.com](http://cherrytco.com)). Plus, for each pair sold, the company donates mittens to children in need.



Young Steve Hopson of Barrow flew to Disneyland on Alaska Airlines with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.



COURTESY: MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION / ALASKA AIRLINES

MILES FOR GOOD

An **Alaska Airlines Charity Miles** donation is one easy way to give back this year. **Dream Foundation**, **Angel Flight West** and **Make-A-Wish Foundation** use miles to transport seriously ill individuals and their families. Miles given to **Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center** help patients and scientists travel. **Fisher House Foundation's Hero Miles** program connects wounded, injured and ill military members with loved ones. Charity Miles also support disaster relief, environmental causes and more ([alaskaair.com](http://alaskaair.com)).

SCOT PROCTOR, COURTESY: CHOICE; SEAN NEILSON / TNC; FRANZISKA RUSSO, COURTESY: LITTLE SUN SOLAR LAMP



Sales of the **Little Sun solar lamp**, a rechargeable LED light for home and outdoor use, fund distribution of lamps in off-the-grid areas of Africa. The company also creates jobs in those remote areas (\$30; [eartheasy.com](http://eartheasy.com)).



Working with Trout Unlimited, 1% for the Planet and others, Sonoma County's **Steelhead Vineyards** supports fisheries with a portion of its profits—and that makes the producer's tangy Merlot even more toast-worthy (\$15; store listings at [steelheadvineyards.com](http://steelheadvineyards.com)).

Ryan T. Howell, who studies the money-happiness connection as an associate professor of psychology at San Francisco State University and founder of Beyond the Purchase, says the happiness quotient is high for experiential gifts. **"Usually, we are with other people when 'consuming' experiences. As social beings, that tends to make us happier."**

For most givers—and recipients—tangible items remain a key part of holiday buying, too. And when you're buying material gifts, Howell advises focusing on the recipient's personality and interests.

**"When gifts bring people closer to friends and family and are an expression of who someone is as an individual, those are received as the best,"** Howell says.



Just as charcoal particles filter water, recycled coffee grounds help fabric wick moisture and reduce odor, making them the perfect addition to **Ex Officio's Javatech** garments, such as tunics and pullovers (\$60 and up; [exofficio.com](http://exofficio.com)).



The **Grid-It! organizer** corrals cables, pens, headsets and

gadgets with elastic bands attached to a sturdy zippered pouch or laptop sleeve (\$10 and up; [cocoon-innovations.com](http://cocoon-innovations.com)).

The **PureProject Henley** shirt from Seattle's Brooks Running Company is suitcase-friendly and practical, made with soft, double-knit thermal fabric and design details that look good on long runs or casual outings (\$70–\$80; [brooksrunning.com](http://brooksrunning.com)).



For a big-ticket travel gift, the sophisticated **Quatermaster luggage system** from Ebby Rane puts a 10-piece packing module and luxurious leather clutch in an elegant (and sturdy) polycarbonate carry-on. Sets come in three chic color combinations (\$1,145; [ebbyrane.com](http://ebbyrane.com)).



Thoughtful travel basics always make good gifts, and the **Eagle Creek Docking Duffel** works like two presents in one. The carry-on comes with a zip-off shoulder bag that accommodates a tablet and day-trip accessories (\$155; [shop.eaglecreek.com](http://shop.eaglecreek.com)).

**Clothing Arts Pick-Pocket Proof Pants** do double duty. The lightweight, stain-resistant trousers hide smartphones, passports and money in secure pockets, without looking bulky (\$100 and up; [clothingarts.com](http://clothingarts.com)).

The **Grayl filtration** cup works like a French press to furnish clean, good-tasting water anywhere (\$70; [thegrayl.com](http://thegrayl.com)).

Frequent travelers can assure themselves good coffee everywhere with the **Blue Bottle Coffee-Timbuk2 travel kit**. The hand grinder, enamelware mugs, filters and fresh beans come packaged in a compact waxed canvas and leather bag (\$179; [timbuk2.com](http://timbuk2.com)).



Top Tech &  
Office Gear



Faber-Castell's **Ondoro Oak Wood Fountain Pen** makes a refined and useful keepsake (\$165; [fahrneypens.com](http://fahrneypens.com)). And, the Hawaii-made **Koa Puck desk clock** by Martin & MacArthur adds island elegance to any office (\$89; [martinandmacarthur.com](http://martinandmacarthur.com)).



Also big on features is the **Sony SRS-X5 portable speaker**, a rechargeable, Bluetooth-connected box that amplifies sound for up to eight hours (\$199; [store.sony.com](http://store.sony.com)). The **Goal Zero Guide 10 Plus solar kit**, a rugged, travel-friendly solar charger, keeps devices powered up while users are on the go (\$110; [goalzero.com](http://goalzero.com)).



Two-in-one computers are making headlines this year, and the **Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga 2 Pro** goes from laptop to tablet with a simple screen flip. At just three pounds, it packs a fourth-generation Intel Core Processor and nine-hour battery life (\$1,050 and up; [lenovo.com](http://lenovo.com)).



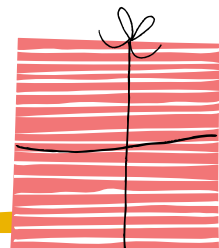
Snap impressive underwater photos with the thoughtfully designed **SeaLife sealed camera**. Each compact, waterproof, permanently sealed model has an LCD screen, internal battery and up to 32 gigabytes of internal storage (\$400–\$900; [sealife-cameras.com](http://sealife-cameras.com)).



For those who prefer classic simplicity, the **Saddleback Leather iPad Mini case** comes in four rich shades and functions as a case or a stand (\$88; [saddleback-leather.com](http://saddleback-leather.com)).



For gamers, **Xbox One** has released several console bundles that include limited edition games such as **Madden NFL 15** and **Sunset Overdrive** (\$399; [xbox.com](http://xbox.com)).







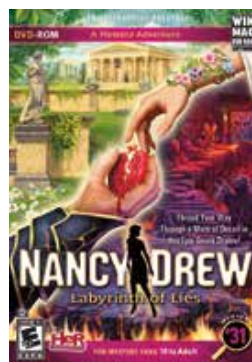
The **Chillafish Bunzi** bike grows with toddlers 1 to 3 years old as they learn to ride, switching from three wheels to two with no tools required (\$50; chillafish.com).



For older speedsters, **modular cars by Modarri** have sturdy suspension systems and interchangeable parts that let children customize their toys (\$20, or \$50 for a three-pack; modarri.com).



Travel-friendly **Modern-twist placemats** are reusable, BPA-free table mats that children can color with dry erase markers. They're available in several designs (\$18; modern-twist.com).



The favorite girls' heroine of yesteryear returns in 21st century form, solving mysteries in **Her Interactive's Nancy Drew** games (\$20; herinteractive.com).

Budding artists and scientists will love **The Happy Trunk**, a subscription service that delivers creativity kits geared to ages 3 to 7 and 8 to 11 (prices vary; thehappytrunk.com).

The **BMXie** is a lightweight balance bike for 3- to 5-year-olds with adjustable seating and a removable footrest (\$116; chillafish.com).

To spark creativity in older children, try the book **642 Things to Write About: Young Writer's Edition** (\$17; chronicle-books.com).



Encouraging youngsters to learn Spanish, French, Italian or English is easy with **KLOO language board games and cards**. Users can play 16 different games with each card deck, and adult cards are also available (\$11-\$40; kloogame.com).



Gift Ideas  
2014

## On the Home Front



Rosanna Inc. stackable  
Stockholm bowls.



Martha Stewart Pets  
canine cocktail vest.

If you're shopping for a coffee lover, this year's splurge-worthy gift is the new **Keurig 2.0 K550 brewing system**. The updated model brews single- or four-cup batches of beverages from 40 brands (\$180; [keurig.com](http://keurig.com)). Another cozy option is a made-in-the-U.S.A. **wool blanket from Faribault Woolen Mill**, available in fun flannel or zigzag patterns (\$95 and up; [faribaultmill.com](http://faribaultmill.com)).

For recipients who love to entertain, choose **housewares from Seattle's Rosanna Inc.** The stackable Stockholm bowls (\$48 for four; [rosannainc.com](http://rosannainc.com)) feature bold black-and-white patterns for the contemporary kitchen, while the classic white and lace-patterned Filigree Infinity tray suits more traditional tastes (\$21). **Makrbox Pacific Northwest gifts** range from carved maple spoons to San Juan Island sea salt (\$29 and up for gift boxes; [makrbox.com](http://makrbox.com)).

Backyard chefs will appreciate the adjustable **Weber Elevations Tiered Cooking System grill rack and skewer set** (\$55; [weber.com](http://weber.com)).

For our furry companions, try the **spiked Bret Michaels Pets Rock dog collar** (\$30) or select a sophisticated herringbone **Martha Stewart Pets canine vest** (\$25 and up; [www.petsmart.com](http://www.petsmart.com)). For a closer look at pet emotions, see **Animal Madness: How Anxious Dogs, Compulsive Parrots and Elephants in Recovery Help Us Understand Ourselves** (\$28; [animalmadness.com](http://animalmadness.com)).



Makrbox  
sauté  
spoon.



Keurig 2.0 K550  
brewing system.

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Gift Ideas  
2014

Food  
For Thought



Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery  
Pacific Coast sea salt caramel sauce.



Tribella wine aerator.



Fran's Chocolates.



Quinn popcorn.

Beer enthusiasts can craft their own ales with **Northern Brewer's small batch starter kit**. The 1-gallon kit comes with gear and instructions for the homemade beer of your choice (\$50; [northernbrewer.com](http://northernbrewer.com)).

Thrill wine lovers with the **Tribella wine aerator**. The device frees a vintage's flavor by channeling red wines into three pretty streams poured directly into the glass (\$40; [tribellawine.com](http://tribellawine.com)).

Cookbooks are always popular with gourmands. New titles include **The Pizza Bible** by 11-time World Pizza Champion winner Tony Gemignani (\$30; [www.tonygemignani.com](http://www.tonygemignani.com)), while there's always room for classics such as **Tom Douglas' Seattle Kitchen** (\$32.50; [tomdouglas.com](http://tomdouglas.com)).

Hickory smoked cheddar, Vermont maple syrup and sea salt are among crave-worthy flavors from **Quinn popcorn**, whose preservative-free kernels pop in chemical-free bags (\$5 per two-bag box; [quinnpopcorn.com](http://quinnpopcorn.com)). Mendocino County's **Stella Cadente olive oil** presents several 200-milliliter bottles of your choice, (\$30; [stellacadente.com](http://stellacadente.com)).

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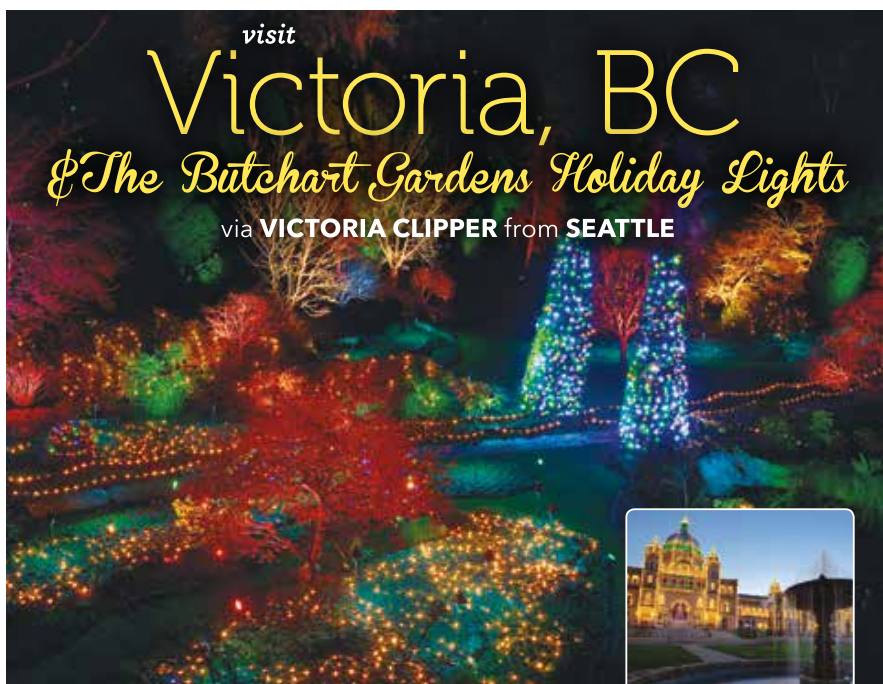
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SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

For something sweeter, Seattle's **Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery** sells smoked chocolate chips (\$15) and Pacific Coast sea salt caramel sauce (\$10; [getyourhotcakes.com](http://getyourhotcakes.com)). **Kahiltna Birchworks** bottles velvety, certified organic birch syrup from Alaska's Susitna Valley (\$8 and up; [alaskabirch-syrup.com](http://alaskabirch-syrup.com))—the taste is noticeably different from maple. And the Great Land's many marvelous berries are the basis for **Alaska Wild Berry Products'** jams and jellies, chocolate, syrups, honey and more (\$3 and up; [alaskawildberryproducts.com](http://alaskawildberryproducts.com)).



Stella Cadente olive oil.



Honolulu Cookie Company's holiday peppermint collection.

Though **Fran's Chocolates** offers dozens of confections these days, the company's original Gold Bar remains a favorite among thousands of holiday buyers; a coconut version joins almond and macadamia gift boxes this year (\$20 and up; [franschocolates.com](http://franschocolates.com)).

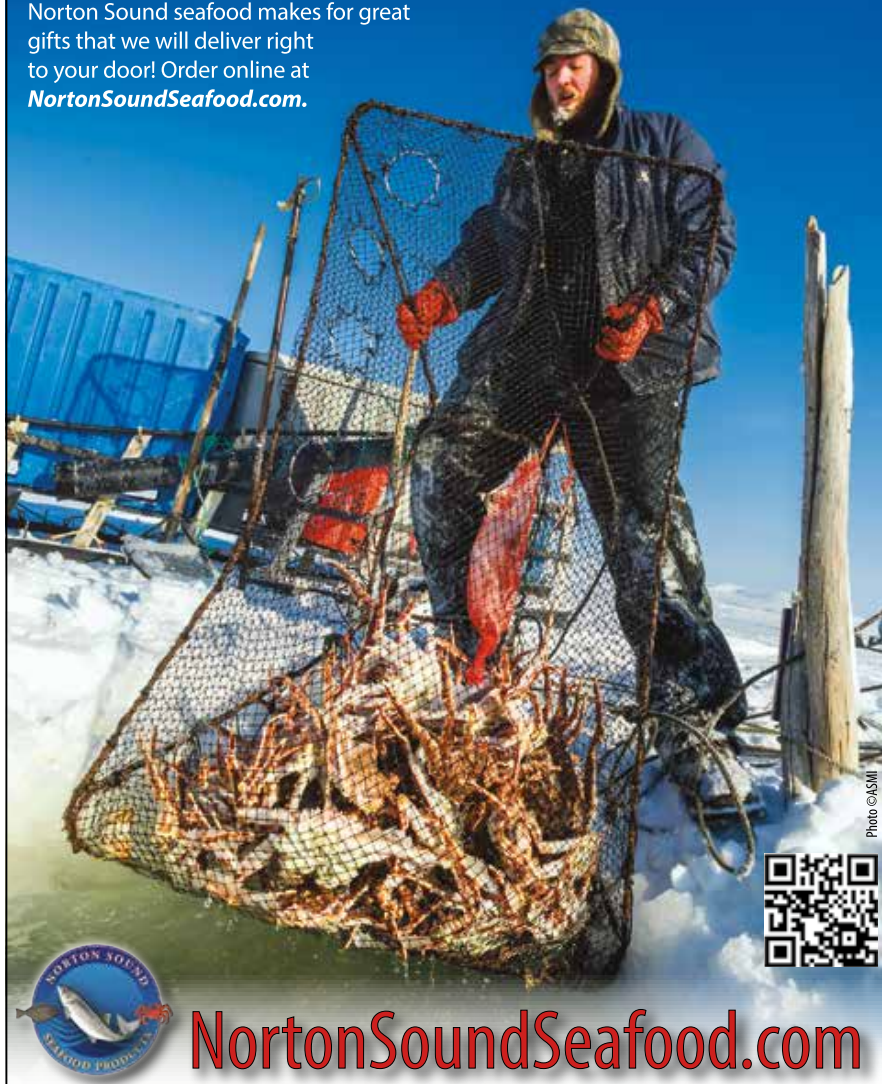
And **Honolulu Cookie Company's holiday peppermint collection** packages classic favorites and new seasonal flavors, such as dark chocolate peppermint and ginger spice, in a Hawaiian quilt design (\$18 and up; [honolulucookie.com](http://honolulucookie.com)).



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*Gift Ideas*  
2014

### Athletic Endeavors



*SkiA Sweetspot ski trainer.*

The **NFL Collection** from Seattle-based Tommy Bahama offers fun options for football fans, including the new men's Scrimshaw Button Mock-Neck Sweatshirt with embroidered logo and the men's and women's NFL Half-Zip Sweatshirts (\$148; [tommybahama.com](http://tommybahama.com)).



*Goji Play controllers.*

With reinforced seams and panels, **Osloh Bicycle Jeans** look good even on long commutes (\$178 and up; [osloh.com](http://osloh.com)). Cyclists will also find a strong, lightweight option in the new **Mafia Discover Pack**, a backpack crafted from recycled kite cloth (\$110; [mafiabags.com](http://mafiabags.com)).



*RG850 LED flashlight.*

Equip your favorite outdoor enthusiast with a rugged, waterproof **RG850 LED flashlight** from Olympia (\$90; [olympiaproducts.com](http://olympiaproducts.com)).

It has a micro-USB charging port and five light settings. For photographers, the **XShot Pro Ultimate extender pole** aids GoPro and digital camera shots from any angle (\$75; [xshot.com](http://xshot.com)).



*Mafia Discover Pack.*



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B)



C)

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- Outfit youngsters with playful, purposefully mismatched pairs from **Kids vs. Socks** (\$9–\$15; [shop.vsstuff.com](http://shop.vsstuff.com)).

- Sweeten the holidays with **The Chocolate Tasting Kit** by Eaganie Yuh (\$25; [chroniclebooks.com](http://chroniclebooks.com)).

- Perk up someone's morning routine with the five-piece **Java Jr.** set by CB2 (\$24; [cb2.com](http://cb2.com)).

- Equip loved ones with the Resqme vehicle emergency tool (\$10; [resqme.com](http://resqme.com)).

- Add a touch of warmth to winter with the **Essential Beanie** by Brooks (\$20; [brooksrunning.com](http://brooksrunning.com)).

- Customize your look with the edgy leather **Mobius cuff** from Fosterweld (\$19; [fosterweld.com](http://fosterweld.com)).

- Go whimsical with Ancesserie's state letterpress **coaster sets** (\$14; [ancesserie.com](http://ancesserie.com)).

- Say cheers with bold **faceted whiskey glasses** (\$25 for four; [shop.coolmaterial.com](http://shop.coolmaterial.com)).

Move recreation inside with **Goji Play controllers** that attach to conventional cardio equipment and turn workouts into games (\$99; [bluegoji.com](http://bluegoji.com)). The **SkiA Sweetspot ski trainer** is a light-weight boot attachment that helps skiers at all levels build balance and strength during indoor workouts (\$70; [skia.com](http://skia.com)).

Renee Brincks is based in San Francisco.