

# HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

 **23** SHOPPING DAYS LEFT

## WHAT TO BUY THE HARD TO SHOP FOR

**W**hat to do for that person who is so hard to shop for? They're either so particular that the options are narrowed to a select-few stores, or their tastes are so broad that finding the perfect gift can overwhelm even the most seasoned shopper. Here are some suggestions for that hard-to-shop-for member of your circle.

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**Arcade game.** For the husband who still brags about his Pac-Man high school score at the neighborhood pizza shop. The sister who was a Meteor maniac as a kid. And the cousin who considered Donkey Kong his personal arch nemesis. This is a pricey gift, but imagine the shock your favorite arcade aficionado will get when he or she finds that favorite game in the garage. Most of the classics have been re-created for modern, home-specific consoles, but there's nothing like the old-school, big-box arcade games. Local stores, such as **"Dr. Scott's" Pinball Store and Champion Amusements**, sell the real deal, along with pinball machines, jukeboxes, and other relics of the 20th Century. Prices vary, but the machines won't come cheap. A refurbished 1980 Centipede goes for **\$1595** at "Dr. Scott's."



**Christmas flower arrangement.** Flowers are always appreciated, though they might work best as a complement to a centerpiece gift. Just like candles, adding a seasonal theme can turn a run-of-the-mill gift into something special. **Hirzel Brothers Greenhouse** in East Toledo sells a variety of Christmas-themed flower arrangements, including winter green wrapped candles, large red poinsettias, holiday wreaths, and even a Christmas cactus. Prices depend on the display. The standard Holiday Splendor display will cost about **\$45**, including tax and the delivery charge.



**Butt pack.** Bigger than the fanny pack, butt packs are a versatile kit that helps to avoid the frumpiness of its civilian cousin. Pick one up at **Woodville Surplus** in Oregon for hikers and campers. Woodville sells the packs in black, olive drab, and woodland camo for **\$12.95**.



**Gift card.** It's a last-ditch effort, but honestly, a gift card can be one of the more appreciated items received during the holidays. Let's be honest: most people who are hard to shop for are so because we don't know them as well as we should or thought we did. This is probably not appropriate for a spouse — even if they say "Just get me a gift card" — but works fine for nearly everyone else. A gift card to **The Andersons** keeps your shopping local, but still gives the recipients a pretty wide variety of items to shop for. The company's Web site has cards for **\$50** and **\$100**.



**Toledo Walleye jerseys** for the hockey fans in the family. The Walleye season is in full swing, so now's the time to buy a replica jersey. Sure, the team's off to a slow start, but hockey jerseys last, and are reasonably versatile, at least in the winter months. Buy one for those who love local hockey, or those who just need something to wear during pickup games. A replica jersey goes for **\$105** at the **Swamp Shop**.



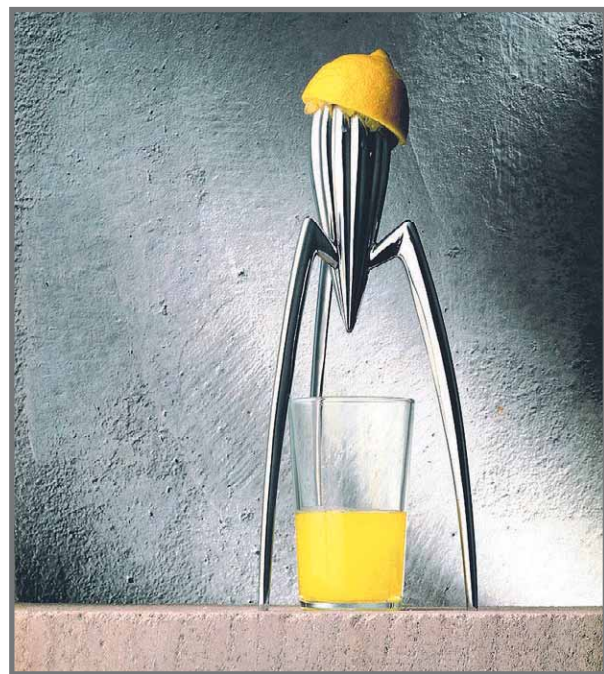
**Holiday vintage jar candles.** A ubiquitous "what-do-I-buy-her" gift, candles always can serve as a last-ditch effort to please your fragrant favoring loved one. But just because candles are common doesn't mean they have to be plain or make it seem like you didn't try. Spruce up the standard candle with a holiday theme and a vintage flair. **Swan Creek Candle** sells holiday-themed vintage jar candles, with winter flavors and seasonal decorations. The 12-ounce candles burn for 75 hours. There's peppermint twist, with a candy cane snowman design, and mistletoe kiss with the same jar; or switch things up with the warm cinnamon bun-flavored candle and a baking santa jar. Jars sell for **\$12.50**.



**Toledo Museum of Art glass gazelle ornament.** Not your typical museum gift shop item, these glass figurines were designed by local artist Gideon Rockwood and are handcrafted by artists at the Toledo Museum of Art Glass Pavilion. Small and uniform enough that they're inexpensive, but unique enough that they go beyond the typical ornament, the gazelles are perfect for those who never tire of finding a new Christmas tree decoration. And the proceeds support the museum. Each costs **\$35**.



**Libbey glassware.** For the friends who say they'll visit but never do, former Toledoans who are looking for a piece of home, or for those in town who want to drink locally, little else says Toledo like Libbey glass. And the extra benefit is that Libbey makes so many pieces that there's nearly something for everyone. Wine glasses, dinner plates, jar glasses, or mugs, it's all available online or at the downtown Libbey outlet store. Keep it extra local with coffee mugs decorated with the Toledo skyline. Or go big but basic with a six-piece set of 22.5 ounce giant beer glasses, which sell for about **\$19**.



**Alessi Juicy Salif, Miniature Citrus Squeezer.** **The Paula Brown Shop** in downtown Toledo has an array of unique collectibles among its selections, including this fruit squeezer from Italian designer kitchen utensil company Alessi. The squeezer, designed by Philippe Starck, is practical enough for kitchen use, but with just the right amount of uniqueness to make it a memorable gift. According to Alessi, the squeezer "was sketched in its essentials by Starck during a holiday by the sea in Italy, on a pizzeria napkin." Costs **\$45**.