

NEEDS!



HOT GIFTS
Beer cozy

Have your man stick it to the ballpark beer man with The Beerbelly, a "stealth beverage system," as the company calls it, that enables the wearer to sneak in 30 ounces of liquid joy — more than a six-pack's worth — into stadiums, movie theaters or malls. A guy straps a sac-like "bladder" (their word) over his gut; sips are via a discreet tube. An insulated sling pouch keeps the brew kee-cold. But beware, gut-busters: One size accommodates only those with modest natural beer bellies — up to a 40-inch waist. It's \$29.95 on sale at Thebeerbelly.com. —*Olivia Barker*

Sparkly shave

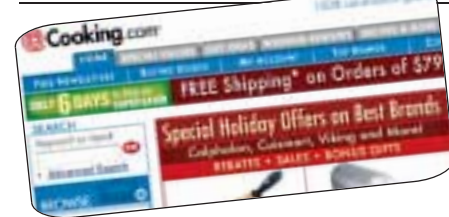
Lately, grooming trends have been about guys borrowing from their girlfriends' routines: washing their faces with something other than Irish Spring and slapping on moisturizer. Now, it seems, women are taking cues from men. Take this body brush (\$170) from Whishbody.com, meant to prime legs and other body parts for a close shave. The classic badger-hair-tufted handle has been girlyfied with pink Swarovski crystals — to ensure he doesn't steal it, of course. —*O.B.*



Chocolate chunk

There are chocolate bars, and then there are chocolate bricks, like this 10-pounder aptly dubbed Heavy Chocolate (\$47.95 at HeavyChocolate.com). Molded from San Francisco's Guittard artisanal chocolate, the brawny block comes in milk, bittersweet, dark or white. At this size, it boasts several other functions as well, including doorstop, bookend and barbell — for those who would rather adhere to than break their New Year's diet and exercise resolutions. —*O.B.*

HOT SITES



Gift fodder for foodies

What's cooking for your favorite chef this holiday? At Cooking.com, choose from goodies such as Wusthof's eight-piece cutlery set (\$287.96 on sale) or a trendy KitchenAid professional-series stand mixer in spicy colors such as licorice or steel blue (\$399.95). An added bonus: free shipping on orders of \$79 or more. —*Alison Maxwell*



Gardener's delight

Your favorite green thumb likely is counting the days until frigid temps are replaced by fertile ground. In the meantime, satisfy those horticultural urges with a gift from Gardener's.com, such as the glowing Man in the Moon bird feeder (\$29.95) or the steerable Tractor Scoot (\$69.95) that allows gardeners to navigate their greenery without sacrificing their back and knees. —*A.M.*

All I want for Christmas

24% FAST FACT
Consumers who think they won't get what they want for the holidays

- despite the fact more than two-thirds of them (69%) will provide a list. Just because you say you want a pony doesn't mean you'll get one.

—*Mary Cadden*

Source: Deloitte & Touche

In the bag

USA TODAY's one-stop holiday shopping blog guides you to the best shopping sites, the hottest deals and the coolest gifts. Look for daily updates at holidayshopping.usatoday.com

HOT TREND

Snuggle into a sweater with style

A classic cashmere crewneck sweater is a favorite holiday go-to gift, but this year consider cozying up to one of the season's trendier styles. "Sweaters are much longer than we've seen in the past. They're bigger, chunkier and have a lot of volume," says **Ashley Baker**, associate style editor at *Glamour* magazine. USA TODAY's **Cindy Clark** unravels the new knits:



Grange sweater coat by Casch Copenhagen, \$198 at Anthropologie.com

The sweater coat

"If you live in a warmer climate, a chunky sweater coat is a good alternative to a heavy coat," says Baker. Update the piece by adding a waist-cinching belt.

The sweater sleeper

This cheeky sleep set is sure to warm up a cold winter's night.



Long winter's nap Fair Isle knit cardigan, \$48, and boy shorts, \$38, by Lilka at Anthropologie.com



The sweater dress

"The long sweater is taken to the extreme with the sweater dress," says Baker. Make sure it's long enough, not "hip-grazing," she says. And don't mistake leggings for pants: They should be worn only beneath longer styles.

Actress Eva Mendes layers her camel-colored sweater dress over knee-high boots at Fashion Week in New York.



The sweater cape

This chic piece can be worn as a top or as outerwear, depending on the cut and thickness of the knit, says Baker. A general rule is thicker and longer for outerwear, vice versa for a top.

Aviva wool/cashmere cape sweater by Theory, \$375 at Neimanmarcus.com

Sweater coat, sleeper cardigan and shorts by Anthropologie.com; Mendes by Peter Kramer; Getty Images for Max Azria; cape by Neimanmarcus.com

Shopping



Doggie daybed: Any pet will feel pampered with this bed for \$249.99.

Every dog gets its day on Christmas

'Pet parents' spend \$3 billion at holiday time

By Maria Puente
USA TODAY

Americans are expected to spend \$3 billion or more on Christmas for their pets this season — that's billion with a "b." But what's really staggering is the ever-expanding variety of wacky, clever or just over-the-top stuff you can do for Fido, Fluffy and their brethren for the holidays.

As if they care it's Christmas! The thinking nowadays: If people like it, pets will too — and especially dogs. In fact, more and more, dogs are being treated as if they were four-legged children. So you can take your dog to a spa for a massage or a manicure. Get his portrait painted. Take him to see Santa at the mall. Send his photo in Christmas cards to his doggie friends. And the gifts you can get him are, well, like the gifts you get a person.

Handbags for cats. Couture for dogs. Bling for dogs. Daybeds for dogs.

Even Bob Vetere, president of the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, says he's "flabbergasted" at the flood of goodies produced for pets — or, more accurately, for people who like to think their pets know it's Christmas.

"As a large chunk of the baby boomers are reaching empty-nester stage, they're



Dog divas: Diamante coat (\$75), left, and Snow Leopard Faux Fur-trim coat (\$90).

turning to pets to fill the void," Vetere says. "They're tending not to reward pets in pet terms but in human terms — they're making themselves feel good by rewarding their pets in ways that are meaningful to them."

At PetSmart, the national chain, they call the customers — that is, the ones with the credit cards — "pet parents." Rashell Cooper, the dog fashion expert for PetSmart, says retailers are responding to consumers' desire to spoil their pets just as they would their children.

"It's not out of the norm to dress them up in bling, or carry them in a fashion carrier that matches your outfit or the outfit the dog is wearing," Cooper says. "It's a special bond, and it's more and more socially acceptable."

Which is one reason why PetSmart includes such things as a pink parka with faux-fur hood for dogs (\$19.99) and an antler hat for cats (\$4) on its list of top holiday gifts for pets this year.

Christmas spending on pets has been increasing steadily in the past decade; Vetere estimates spending this year will be up 8%, possibly more.

"Christmas is our busiest season, just like it is for regular retailers," says Carmina O'Connor, who with twin sister Charisa Antigua sells dog couture



Pooch parka: When real fur isn't enough, there's a fake fur-trimmed parka for \$19.99.



Cat in the hat: Pets get to dress up as reindeer for \$4.

Putting the kibosh on dress-up, 1D

This holiday, send them an e-card

Personalize it with your music, video



Create, share: Thousands of people are sending montages via OneTrueMedia.com.

By Maria Puente
USA TODAY

Paper Christmas cards with family photos may be traditional, but they're "old media." The new media alternative: electronic Christmas cards with video.

At photo-sharing site Webshots.com, users who have already created an online photo album can send a free e-Christmas card featuring a slide show that combines digital photos and digital video clips. At OneTrueMedia.com, users can do the same thing, and even add holiday music, graphics and stock art to fill out their video montage.

"This is the holiday season where people will be (video sharing) for the first time," says Martin Green, Webshots general manager. "We have 15 million members, and when we asked what they wanted, this is what they told us: the ability to string photos and videos together."

These services are so new that there's not much tracking data yet, but the expectation, based on the growth of online photo sharing, is that millions of people will be choosing video holiday greetings by next Christmas. Brett Gardner, marketing vice president at OneTrueMedia, says thousands of holiday montages were uploaded to that site in the past week.

Creators of the e-cards can send them by e-mail or use the free player feature on OneTrueMedia and embed the card on their blog or MySpace page. Another option: For a fee, users can burn their montage on a DVD (\$24.99 for the first disc, less for additional discs) and send it to family and friends.

Webshots even offers tips on how to make a holiday video montage, covering such things as lighting (avoid fluorescent), costumes (the campier, the better) and performance (a rousing round of *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer* will kill).

The top piece of advice: Keep it short — under three minutes is best.

WANT'S!

Sommelier's Wine Chiller



Here's to perfection! Our Sommelier's Wine Chiller brings 26 varieties of wine to their optimal serving temperature — and keeps them at exactly the right temperature for hours. For this and other gifts they'll really want, visit one of our 300 stores or go to Brookstone.com.

Brookstone
GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT.

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