

# 2014 Syracuse Holiday Gift Guide: Over 100 Picks

DECEMBER 5, 2014 BY MICHAEL ROTELLA IN GURU GUIDES, TOP PICKS



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We're proud to present the 2014 edition of the Guru Holiday Gift Guide. This is the longest guide yet and definitely one of the most comprehensive you'll find in CNY. The first section contains **9 highly recommended local gift ideas—all are things we guarantee as awesome gifts.** Part two is a lineup of over 50 gifts and ideas from locally owned businesses. Finally, the third section represents all the best non-local gifts for 2014—stuff you have to order. Please share this one with your friends. My goal is to make it simple to find awesome gifts for everyone on your list. The items are listed in no particular order.

## TOP RECOMMENDED LOCAL GIFTS

### **Syracuse Stage Flex Pack**

Give the gift of theatre this year! [Syracuse Stage](#) offers holiday gift certificates and, even better, Flex Packs. Flex Packs are packages of four, six or eight tickets that can be used as you choose. Here's how they work: simply call the Box Office (315-443-3275) when you want to see a show, and the tickets will be waiting for you when you arrive. We recommend gifting the Flex 4 Pack because it's a great deal and let's your recipient conveniently pick a play of their choice. [Get it here.](#)

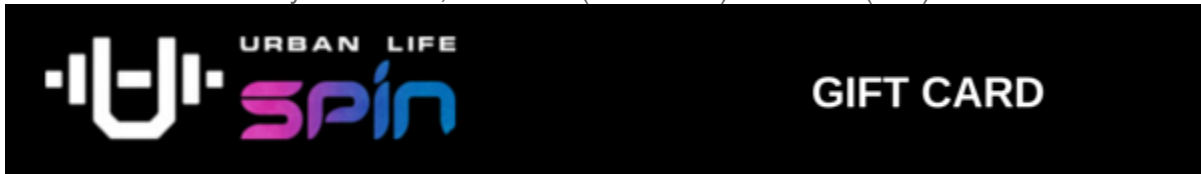
Details: 820 East Genesee Street ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 443-4008



### **Urban Life Spin Gift Cards from Urban Life Crossfit**

The [coolest Crossfit gym in town](#) now offers a unique spin class with a nightlife vibe in their repurposed warehouse space on Fayette Street. We think this is the perfect gift for the fitness minded person on your list (or anyone for that matter). Give either the Newbie Special 3 for \$30 or better yet, the 5 for \$65 special. Great stocking stuffer and the perfect self-improvement gift. [Get it here.](#)

Details: 1003 West Fayette Street, 4th Floor ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 726-3823



### **O Yoga Class Passes**

For something completely different, why not give the healthy and calming gift of yoga this year? [O Yoga](#), the excellent downtown yoga studio is open 7 days a week, offers diverse classes and training, has multiple teachers, and is ideal for beginners and advanced practitioners alike. They offer a Hip-Hop Vinyasa Flow class plus all the traditional classes. Get either a 5-class gift pass for \$65 or a 10-class gift pass at \$120. Perfect gift for wellness of mind, body and spirit. [Shop here!](#)

Details: 1003 West Fayette Street, 5th Floor ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 314-7754



### **Fleece-lined Leggings from Frankie & Faye**

This small Armory Square boutique between Pastabilities and Freedom of Espresso offers stylish women's clothing at \$49 and under. They've also got the perfect gift—fleece-lined leggings that offer warmth, comfort, and great style for the winter months. The leggings come in a number of colors and are very affordable at just \$19 a pair. Stop in and pick some up, these are always super popular.

Details: 317 South Franklin Street ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 471-1003.



### **Fashion Accessories from Etcetera**

One of the newest boutiques in Armory Square, [Etcetera](#) focuses exclusively on fashion accessories for women. This is a great locally owned store to finish up your holiday shopping if you've got a stylish woman to buy for. You'll find the full range of accessories including bags, scarves, jewelry, hats, and more at a number of price points. Doing some shopping in the Armory? Plan to stop at Etcetera!

Details: 191 Walton Street ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 399-4942.



### Free People from Bounce

**Bounce** is another excellent women's clothing store in the Armory and obviously a great holiday shopping stop. They carry just about everything stylish and on-trend for women of all ages with affordable prices. This year we highly recommend gifting a few items from the brand Free People. Free People features a contemporary, fashionable and fun aesthetic that's perfect for the chic woman on your list. Head to Bounce for this one!

Details: 124 Walton Street ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 422-4848.



### Vinomania

Syracuse's coolest, quirkiest wine, beer and liquor store is an absolute must-stop for the specialty spirit lover on your list. **Vinomania** has the knowledge and customer service oriented approach to ensure you find the perfect gift bottle, whether you're looking for rare Scotch, small batch vodka, or just about anything else. Owner Gary Decker really knows his stuff and I guarantee you'll enjoy your visit. Specifically we recommend picking up the unusual Michel Couvreur Special Vating Scotch Whisky, craft distilled Russell Henry Hawaiian White Ginger Gin, or Corsair Ryemageddon. Talk about unique!

Details: Nettleton Commons, Pearl Street ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 422-8466.



### Terra Organic Spa

Spa treatments always make a nice gift but this year try [Terra Organic Spa](#). Terra is a health spa that focuses on massage therapy and skincare with an emphasis on individualized customer service. They offer a wide range of services but tailor each to the needs and goals of the client. I recommend gifting Terra's Holiday Spa Ritual. This 80-minute package is only \$90 and includes an aromatic foot treatment and a choice of a 60-minute Swedish massage, a 60-minute reflexology massage, or a 'Pure Results' facial, which includes an herbal enzyme peel and a skin conditioning treatment. This is a well-rounded spa experience at a very reasonable price. [Stop by Terra's website here](#). [Book online here](#) or call (315) 637-0767.

Details: 105 Spring Street, Fayetteville ([Directions](#)). Contact: (315) 637-0767.



### Mr. Shop

The [best men's clothing store in Syracuse](#) has just about anything for the stylish guy with an eye for quality. The Armory Square store features handpicked, on-trend looks from the world's top brands and a full-service approach to the customer. They've got ties, cuff links, dress and

casual shirts, high-end jeans, shaving products, shoes, and even a custom suit section. Stop in and do some shopping, there's a perfect gift just waiting for you at the Mr. Shop—or there's a gift certificate. They've got a 25% off sale on fall and winter shoes until 12/9 and more to come.

Details: 259 West Fayette Street ([Directions](#)) Contact: (315) 478-3938



## THE BEST LOCAL GIFTS

### **Turkey Joints**

What gift guide would be complete without my favorite seasonal confection? Turkey Joints are basically a delicacy at this point. Small-batch made in Rome, New York since 1919, Turkey Joints are long, bone-like sugar candy shells filled with chocolate and Brazil nuts. I'm telling you right now these are probably the best chocolate-based candy ever. Ultimate gift for the sweet tooth on your list. [Order here](#) or look for them in local food retailers.

### **Resurrected Tattoo Gift Certificates**

The downtown tattoo shop is offering gift certificates for tattoo work. What's cool is that 20% goes to Helping Hounds and sponsoring a family through the Rescue Mission. Call Resurrected at (315) 882-5400 or stop in at 125 West Fayette Street ([Directions](#)).

### ***The Sherwood Inn: The Cornerstone of Skaneateles Since 1807***

A complete cookbook celebrating the iconic Skaneateles restaurant and inn by Bill Eberhardt and Denise Owen Harrigan. Looks quite interesting. [Click here](#) for more information and ordering details.

### **Don Cazentre's book *New York Breweries***

It's packed with stories and details on 89 New York State breweries. You'll learn about brewing processes and much more and it's backed up by the collected knowledge of the Post Standard's food writer. Great for beer lovers. [Order here](#).

### **Rochelle Bilow's *The Call of the Farm***

A memoir by a local author, food writer, and chef. This book chronicles Bilow's year living on a CSA farm in CNY. This is an excellent read. [Order here.](#)

### **Black Button Distilling Moonshine**

Great for the whiskey fan on your list, this is a high proof unaged corn whiskey that's smooth enough to sip. It's a New York State product based out of Rochester. They've got vodkas, citrus gin, and there's even a bourbon coming out next year. [Order here.](#)

### **Recess Coffee**

Can't go wrong with a few 1 lb bags of Recess' flavorful fair trade coffee. Select from Westcott Blend, Ethiopian Yirgacheffe, Tanzanian Peaberry, and many more. Or get a gift certificate. If you like your coffee packed with flavor, Recess has some of the area's best. Stop in at 110 Harvard Place ([Directions](#)) or [order online!](#)

### **Kubal Coffee Brewing Items**

The growing local coffee company, Café Kubal has everything you need to enjoy fresh pour-over brewed coffee at home. They've also got an excellent quality product no matter which coffee you choose. Stop in any Kubal location and ask a barista for assistance. You need a dripper and a stainless steel pour-over kettle for the perfect pour-over gift package.

### **Local Merch**

As a quick gift, why not grab some merch from local businesses, vendors, and more? We recommend a [Westcott Theater](#) hoodie, some items from [Recess Coffee](#), [Café Kubal](#), [SyracuseFirst](#), SU gear (from Manny's on Marshall Street, of course), and maybe some cool gear from Syracuse's own [The Merchery](#)! Hit the links for details on each.

### **Al's Wine & Whiskey Lounge Gift Certificate**

Besides shaking up the best cocktails around, our favorite Armory Square bar also sells gift certificates for any amount. This will have any Armory Square bar goer, wine lover, or whiskey aficionado pretty satisfied. Go for \$50. Stop in at Al's ([321 South Clinton Street](#)) to get one.

### **The Syracuse Crate**

Ideal gift for the former 'Cuse dweller on your list, the Syracuse Crate comes packed with local favorites of the edible variety. Things recently changed with this company and now there are a

bunch of crates to choose from. We recommend sticking with lower price point options—specifically The Northside Crate and the Courtsider Crate. [Get it here.](#)

### **Westcott Theater Tickets**

You can grab tickets now for just about any concert on the Westcott's lineup. Head over to their ticket page and pick a few. Right now Greensky Bluegrass, Rusted Root, Paper Diamond, and Particle are some options. [Shop here.](#)

### **Armory Massage Therapy Services**

Armory Square Massage has a number of great gift options. Choose from 30 to 120 minute sessions of hot stone massage and standard massage. You can also get packs of single sessions. It's a gift that supports a downtown business. [Shop here.](#)

### **Mirbeau Services**

If you'd like to give the ultimate spa gift, head out to Skaneateles' Mirbeau Inn & Spa. They offer [gift certificates](#) up to \$1000, individual spa treatments, day spa packages, and perhaps the best gift—the Mind, Body, and Soul Retreat. [Shop here.](#)

### **Critz Farms Hard Cider**

Critz Farms' Harvest Moon Cidery offers a long list of excellent hard ciders of all varieties. Rippleton Original, Blissful Moon, dry-hopped Heritage Hops, and Maple Moon are just a few examples. Grab a bunch and make a local cider gift basket. Critz' products are award winning and tasty. Head to the Cidery to buy it. 3232 Rippleton Rd, Cazenovia ([Directions](#)).

### **Sign Painting Artwork by Cayetano Valenzuela**

Local artist Cayetano Valenzuela specializes in amazing sign painting artwork. His stuff is extremely interesting and colorful and would look great in just about any space. I highly recommend his work and checking out his company, [Black Rabbit Studios](#) for info. Depending on size his prices are reasonable. Unique local art is definitely a great gift idea. Contact Cayetano at [theblackrabbitny@gmail.com](mailto:theblackrabbitny@gmail.com) for availability.

### **EJ Wren Homebrewer Starter Kit**

This Liverpool store has everything you need to start brewing beer at home. Stop in and pick out the perfect starter kit for the beer lover on your list. I guarantee it will be a hit. [Click here](#) for package info. Stop in at 209 Oswego Street in Liverpool to buy ([Directions](#)).



### **Eureka Crafts**

Stop in this iconic art and craft store in Armory Square for some shopping. Eureka Crafts is a very cool, locally owned retailer specializing in artist-made contemporary jewelry, ceramics, glass items, wood, metal, and fiber arts. Your chance of finding a totally unique gift (or gifts) at Eureka is very high. 210 Walton Street in Armory Square ([Directions](#)).

### **Rosamond Gifford Zoo Gift Shop**

While trying to think of some good gift ideas for younger children, the gift shop at the Zoo instantly hit me. They have what's probably the area's best (and cutest) selection of stuffed animals, puppets, animal related toys, and more. Stop in and select a bunch of stuffed animals and you just gave Santa a run for his money. Guaranteed smiles on Christmas. One Conservation Place ([Directions](#)).

### **Green Planet Grocery**

Great place to pick out a bunch of specialty food items for the perfect gift basket. They've got just about everything, from locally made products, to organics, and lots of Fair Trade items. A gift certificate is also an option. I suggest the Fairmount store on 3514 West Genesee Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Tickets to Syracuse City Ballet's *Swan Lake***

The perfect choice for the ballet lover on your list, consider picking up a pair of tickets to [Syracuse City Ballet's](#) upcoming production of the Tchaikovsky classic, *Swan Lake*. It's not until May but still a good gift option. You'll also be supporting an excellent local arts organization. [Order here!](#)

### **Hotel Skyler Stay**

For a quick vacation without leaving Syracuse, you might consider gifting a weekend stay at Hotel Skyler. This is a small, luxurious, high design hotel that's LEED Platinum Certified and completely unique in CNY. It's a nice, convenient little retreat without the travel expense. Call (315) 701-2613 or just stop in and talk with the front desk. 601 South Crouse Avenue ([Directions](#)).

### **Jefferson Clinton Hotel Stay**

Also consider gifting a weekend stay at Armory Square's Jefferson Clinton Hotel. Maybe the perfect gift for a younger couple with kids as a quick local getaway. Even better is the fact that the Presidential Suite starts at under \$200. It's luxurious and ideal for a weekend out on the

town. Call (315) 425-0500 or drop in to make the arrangement. 416 South Clinton Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Indie Kids**

An Armory Square boutique for the baby hipster or cool kid on your list. Indie Kids specializes in edgier fashion options for children and it's a great stop for holiday shopping. Skip the chain stores and shop for something a little cooler this year! Stop in soon. 264 1/2 West Jefferson Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Landmark Theatre Event Tickets**

The Landmark does not offer vouchers or gift certificates but I recommend getting a couple tickets for an upcoming show. You'll want to [click here](#) to decide on an event—new events will definitely be added over the coming weeks. Consider The Piano Guys on March 5th or John Mellencamp on May 8th. Get them at the box office Monday through Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. 362 South Salina Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Life of Reilley Distilling and Wine Co. Spirits**

New distillery in Cazenovia specializing in hand crafted small batch spirits and wines. When I say new I mean it, they opened over the summer. The first batch came out in November. Right now they're producing a line of premium vodka. You'll find LoR spirits at Liquor City and area liquor stores or you can email [ben@lifeofreilley.net](mailto:ben@lifeofreilley.net) to order.

### **Flaveur Condiments**

For a nice edible gift, go with Flaveur Condiments, a line of locally made artisan ketchups associated with the DeWitt restaurant ALFA. You can buy individual ketchup, a full size 3-pack, or a 5-pack sample. I say get the 5-pack. You get 1.5 oz. of Salty Malty, Great Lemon Caper, Hot Honey Lavender, Jamaican Jerk, and Happily Appily ketchups. Sounds pretty delicious. [Order here](#).

### **Modern Pop Culture**

Independent fashion boutique in Armory Square that specializes in hard to find vintage and custom items, mainly for women. If you're looking for a fashionable gift of the vintage variety, I highly recommend a stop here. I'm not naming any specific items because the stock is constantly changing at MPC—ask Nate for suggestions. 306 West Jefferson Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Rocky's Cigars**

For the cigar aficionado or casual smoker, stop in the iconic North Salina Street newsstand. They have the best local selection of cigars and cigar related products. Most important, the cigars are very fresh and the prices are reasonable. They also offer grab bags of discounted cigars. They may be considered a vice, but a few choice cigars can make a nice gift. Rocky's also sells cutters, cigar cases, and high end lighters. 447 North Salina Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Online Shops by Local Artists**

Here are three really cool online stores with wares from local artisans and craftspeople. You've got [The Knotty Owl](#), which makes "handmade wooden adornments" with a geometric quality. There's [Ink+Wit](#), maker of unique, beautifully designed stationary and prints. Finally we're featuring [Round Rabbit](#). There you'll find porcelain earrings and more—the portrait earrings are especially nice. Hit the links above to shop.

### **Sweet on Chocolate**

Armory Square is home to one of our favorite candy and chocolate shops in town. If you're looking for a sweet gift, I highly recommend stopping here and picking out a few things. Look for the boxed truffles and other pre-packaged sweets. Simply delicious. 208 Walton Street ([Directions](#)).

### **Lune Chocolat**

This Manlius-based artisan chocolatier specializes in highly artistic, delicious chocolates of all varieties. From classics like English butter toffee to unique creations like the edamame bar, a gift box from Lune Chocolat is an awesome idea. You can [customize a box online](#) but I'd suggest stopping at the shop. 315 Fayette Street, Manlius ([Directions](#)).

### **Roji Tea Lounge**

When it comes to unique teashops in Syracuse, Roji always tops the list. Stop by and get a gift certificate for the tea lover on your list. It's a simple gift but it's one that will definitely be appreciated. 108 E Washington St #2 ([Directions](#)).

### **Symphoria Tickets**

For fans of symphony I can't think of a better gift than a few tickets to Symphoria's upcoming shows. For a perfect musical gift, get tickets for The Promise of Hope in January, Celtic Celebration in early March, or Mozart: Light & Dark in late March. [Full season listing here](#).

### **Syracuse Crunch Tickets**

Hockey season runs through April, so a pack of tickets to upcoming games is a good gift idea. Crunch sells Mini Plan Ticket Packages, which are an extremely convenient way to go. Mini Plan ticket holders can choose a number of games to attend on their own schedule. Get the 10-game package for the win. [Shop here](#). Call (315) 473-4444 to order.

### **Syracuse Silver Knights Tickets**

Solid gift idea for indoor soccer fans. Syracuse's own Silver Knights offer a great deal—the Lucky 7-Game Flex Pack. Basically you get passes to seven games of your choice. Very convenient. Call (315) 303-7261 for ordering details.

### **Syracuse Soapworks**

This locally owned company has been producing soaps and related items for over a decade. Before you consider giving mass-produced, corporate bath products this holiday season, go for Syracuse Soapworks instead. Try handmade pink grapefruit lotion, lip balms, Adirondack Pine liquid soap, and 100% olive oil bar soap. Very high quality products—buy a few different things and make your own gift package. [Shop here](#).

### **Lockwood Lavender Farm Gifts**

Skaneateles' Lockwood Lavender Farm produces a range of lavender bath products, lotions, honey, and more. These items are of exceptional quality and made from this farm's annual harvest. Right now it's more difficult to find Lockwood's stuff but your best bet is Natur-Tyme on Erie Boulevard as well as Sherwood Inn, Rhubarb Kitchen & Garden Shop, and Patisserie, all in Skaneateles. Look for the extremely popular Heavenly Soothing Herbal Lotion, tasty lavender fudge sauce, and the farm's honey.

### **The Art Store**

If you're buying for an aspiring or established artist, The Art Store is a stop you've gotta make. They have just about anything to suit an artist's needs. Canvases, brushes, clay, pen and ink are just a few examples. I also like the idea of buying an in-store art class as a unique gift. Right now you can sign up for a 6-session watercolor class with artist Frank Sweeney. [Shop here](#). Contact Mr. Sweeney at (315) 637-8410 for more info.

### **NY Wine & Culinary Center Classes**

I can't say enough about the food classes offered by this awesome Canandaigua destination. NYWCC's purpose is to showcase Upstate NY's agriculture, viticulture, and food industries and

does so with all kinds of cooking classes, wine pairings, and dinners. Consider giving a pair of tickets to one of the Chef's Table classes, Cooking with Wine, Intro to Sushi Making, pasta making class, or pizza making class as a gift this year. Foodies, especially locavores, will love it. [Book a class](#) or better yet, [order a gift card](#). 800 South Main Street, Canandaigua ([Directions](#)).

### **Covey Theater Tickets**

For theatre fans, consider grabbing tickets for the April production of *God of Carnage* or looking way forward, *HAIR!* in July. Covey is a local theatre company that puts on new works and regional premiers in the Oncenter's tiny Bevard Studio. I saw *Lincoln's Blood* and was really amazed with the writing, direction, and acting. Covey is really a destination of the local theatre scene and tickets would make a nice present. Call (315) 420-3729 to order.

### **Famous Artists Broadway**

This company brings major Broadway shows to Syracuse and they also sell gift certificates. You can do that or you can grab a few tickets to an upcoming show. *Flashdance* comes to Crouse Hinds Theater in February and *Chicago* is coming in March, among others. [Shop here](#). Or stop in at 241 West Fayette Street ([Directions](#)) to get a gift certificate.

### **Witty Wicks Candles**

Candles are always a decent gift, so why not go for the all natural, locally made variety? Witty Wicks made the list again this year because their hand poured soy candles last a long time, burn very clean, and come in really cool scents. Try Apple Maple Bourbon, Winter's Night, or a unique layered candle for new scents as it burns. Or grab a few different candles. Nice way to add a little extra ambiance and a pleasant aroma to the home. [Shop here](#).

### **Bee Man Candles**

Another awesome local candle maker is The Bee Man Candle Company. These handmade beeswax candles became nationally known in the last few years but can be difficult to track down. They sell traditional candles but I suggest picking up some of the incredibly realistic pinecone, corn, or other natural design candles. Your best bet is to drive out for a visit and select from the Bee Man's store at 115 South Peterboro Street, Canastota ([Directions](#)).

### **High Fidelity Prints**

Seneca Falls artist and print-maker Stu Crandall creates visually striking prints of all kinds with [Hi Fi Prints](#). He does awesome Syracuse and Upstate NY themed work, event posters, and

more. His work would look great on any empty wall that needs some art. [Stop by his Etsy store and take a look!](#) If you have questions email [hifiprints@gmail.com](mailto:hifiprints@gmail.com).

### **Legends of Jazz Series Tickets**

The Legends of Jazz Series is the best local concert series for jazz fans. Hosted in Onondaga Community College's Storer Auditorium, Legends of Jazz shows are intimate and there's not a bad seat in the house. I saw Chick Corea and The Health Brothers so far this year and both experiences were amazing. This is a perfect gift for jazz lovers. Cecile McLorin Salvant is coming up in February and The Rebirth Brass Band hits the stage in March. [Get tickets online here](#) or call (315) 498-2772.

### **F Shed Concert Tickets**

For the avid concertgoer on your list consider some tickets to the great upcoming shows at the F Shed at the Market. In January the LA heavy metal band Black Label Society performs, as does Lotus and Datsik. In February the house music legends Above & Beyond also make a stop. These are some very exciting shows for Syracuse. [Click here for more info and ticket options.](#)

### **1911 Spirits by Beak & Skiff**

If you're looking for apple related liquor options as a gift, Beak & Skiff's 1911 Spirits is a good option. They have a number of tasty hard ciders, a bunch of apple wines, and a truly stellar vodka and gin. They also sell all kinds of glassware and home products to go with the 1911 Spirits brand. Head out to Beak & Skiff and you'll find all kinds of gift ideas. Stop by the tasting room to help pick out a few gift ciders. ([Directions](#)).

### **Salt Works**

Beautifully designed but pricey artisan furniture made with salvaged lumber sourced from factory renovations in Syracuse. Development and revitalization of the Near Westside created several tons of timber beams and Salt Works' furniture was one result. It's cool because the pieces are one-off, sustainable, and essentially made of Syracuse's industrial history. [Check out what they've got for sale.](#) The farmhouse coffee table is an especially gorgeous (and reasonably priced) piece.

### **Holiday Gifts by Onondaga Historical Association**

OHA has a bunch of unique items that will make perfect gifts this year. Here's a list of highlights that 'Cuse history buffs will adore. Buy online or stop at OHA's gift gallery at ([Directions](#)).

- Congress Beer Pilsner Glass – Awesome reproduction of a classic Congress Beer glass. Congress was a beer brewed in 1905 by the now defunct Haberle Congress Brewing Company, which was established here in 1857. [Buy here.](#)
- Syracuse China Floral Design Italian Wine Glasses – These glasses feature floral imagery straight from the design archives of Syracuse China. This is a set of six and each one has its own unique design. I've seen them in person and they're really something. [Shop here.](#)
- Limited Edition Syracuse China Plates – Artfully designed plates with iconic Syracuse China imagery. These rare, low production plates feature vivid scenes of the countryside. Definitely conversation pieces. [Shop here.](#)
- Historic Syracuse 2015 Calendar – Contains an historic photo from the Historical Associations collections for each month. [Buy here.](#)
- Scarves with Syracuse China Designs – Choose from three different silk scarves, each featuring a different Syracuse China design. The bird scarf is definitely the most colorful of the bunch. [Shop here.](#)

## TOP NON-LOCAL GIFT IDEAS

**Full Record/Vinyl Listening Packages** – Everything you need to enjoy the peerless sound quality of music on vinyl and start building a record collection. Turntable Lab offers several perfect packages for less than \$500. Both come with excellent speakers and are ready to go without an amp or receiver. Click the links for more info on each.

1. [Audio-Technica AT-LP120-USB Turntable Audioengine A2+ Speakers Package](#)
2. [Audio-Technica AT-LP60 Turntable Audioengine A2+ Speaker Package](#)

**Great Albums of 2014** – Music is always a great choice, especially for home stereo and vinyl enthusiasts. Here are some good releases from 2014 in no particular order. You can pick them up at Sound Garden in Armory Square or [online.](#)

- Benji by Sun Kil Moon
- Turn Blue by The Black Keys
- Salad Days by Mac DeMarco
- The Endless River by Pink Floyd
- Once More 'Round the Sun by Mastodon
- LP1 by FKA Twigs
- The Inevitable End by Royksopp
- Lazaretto by Jack White
- Ultima II Massage by Tobacco
- Clark by Clark
- Pinata by Freddie Gibbs + Madlib
- Illmatic XX by Nas
- Oxymoron by Schoolboy Q

- Government Plates by Death Grips
- In the Orbit of Ra by Sun Ra
- While(1<2) by Deadmau5
- Our Love by Caribou
- Mess by Liars

**For Readers-** Either of these Kindles will satisfy the avid reader on your list. Go with the Paperwhite for a minimal, reading only experience. [Check here for NPR's handy best books of 2014 guide.](#)

### **Kindle Paperwhite**

Still the best ereader device on the market in my opinion. The Paperwhite only offers the capability to read, which is helpful to keep you focused. Cheap too. Make sure to order the option called 'Without Special Offers.'[Get it here.](#)

### **Kindle Fire HD7**

Ultimate ereader/tablet that offers Kindle's great reading feature but also a huge list of other features. It's got a quad-core processor, 1080p video, and access to tons of games, Netflix, and more. Way cheaper than similar devices. [Get it here.](#)

## **Magazine Subscriptions**

### **New York Magazine**

One of the best magazine subscriptions you can get. They cover just about everything happening in the city but also provide great news, opinion, food, and trend pieces. A fun layout and features like the Intelligencer make it unique. [Get it here.](#)

### **Lucky Peach**

Chef David Chang's brilliant quarterly journal of food and writing. Every issue sticks to one theme and contains essays, art, photography, recipes, and more. I personally think that this is the best food culture magazine in print today. Each issue is super thick and packed with entertaining articles. [Get it here.](#)

### **Darling Magazine**

"The Art of being a Woman." This superb, well-designed quarterly is heavy on content and aims to inspire women to rethink and re-shape femininity. Sections include Hostess, Explorer, Intellectual, and more. Great gift subscription for sure. [Get it here.](#)



## **McSweeney's**

A quarterly literary journal that publishes work by the country's best writers but also unpublished writers. You'll find all sorts of writing and humor in each issue. What's really cool is that each issue is completely redesigned. [Get it here.](#)

## **Clothing**

### **Men's Herringbone and Flannel Shirts by J. Crew**

These are new for winter 2014 and feature ultra high quality fabric that washes well and feels extremely sturdy. They offer 3-button pop over style and full button-down depending on what you like. They fit true to size and come in some great colors. I know because I own several. [Shop here.](#)

### **Women's "Boyfriend" Flannels by J. Crew**

Very popular oversize button downs featuring ultra soft cotton flannel in several different colors and patterns. Good addition to any wardrobe, whether wearing them casually or dressing up with accessories. [Shop here.](#)

### **Unisex Vans® classic slip-on sneakers in metallic silver leather**

Stylish, always relevant pick for men and women, but we're focusing on the ladies for this one. Order them 1.5 sizes below the recipient's normal size. [Shop here.](#)

## **Journals, Stationary, and More**

### **Behance Action Method**

Get organized quickly with this elegantly designed line of journals, to-do lists, and notebooks. The Action Method is a goal-oriented system that helps creative people stay on task. I've got the Action Pad and I highly recommend it. [Check it out here.](#)

### **Midori Traveler's Notebook**

These Japanese designed refillable notebooks are completely customizable and provide a unique, highly organized way to keep a journal, store passports, credit cards, travel notes, and more. [Buy it here.](#) Don't forget to pick out a few refills and accessories [here!](#)

### **Midori Brass Ballpoint Pen**

Beautifully handcrafted brass pen that's made in Japan. The two-piece design (brass handle

and refillable ink holder) allows you to insert the ink holder and pen tip into the handle for safe, compact storage. Very unique and made in small quantities. [Buy it here.](#)

## **Subscription Food & Drink**

### **Stumptown Roasters Roaster's Choice 3-month Subscription**

Get Stumptown's exquisite coffee subscription service and the coffee lover on your list will get monthly deliveries from this amazing independent roaster. This is by far some of the best coffee in the country and worth the extra cash. Go for the 3-month package for starters. [Get it here.](#)

### **Mantry**

Monthly subscription based themed food crates geared towards men, but really it's good for any food lover. Each month they deliver a wooden crate filled with handpicked and hard to find edibles. Each box follows a theme. Past examples include "Campfire Cookout," "Thai Game," and "Bacon Nation." I had a 6-month subscription and I can personally say that this is an awesome product. [See it here.](#)

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Headspace App Subscription**

The ultimate stress relief app contains hundreds of hours of guided meditation sessions, each set tackling a different theme. Headspace brings true practicality to meditation so anyone can benefit from it and master the techniques. I use this on a daily basis and it's the best app I've ever downloaded. Pick up a 12-month subscription for a potentially life-changing gift—[details here.](#)

### **Triple C Meggabeat iPhone Amplifier**

This awesome little product amplifies the iPhone 5S/5/5C/4S's speakers up to four times without any batteries or wires. The egg-shaped device naturally gives your phone that extra punch. Great stocking stuffer idea. [Get it here.](#)

### **SEE Concept Paris Reading Glasses**

Unique and colorful designer reading glasses from a young company based in Paris. These are simple, high design readers that add a pop of style to a generally no frills product. [Check them out here.](#)

## **Technology and High-End Items**

### **Sony a5100 Mirrorless Camera**

This camera packs all the power of a big DSLR at just half the size. Interchangeable lens, 3-inch flip up LCD, instant smartphone sharing, and awesome 1080p video capability. Perfect for travel and all around use. [Get it here.](#)

### **Apple iPad Air 2**

The newest iPad sports the Retina display, weighs under a pound, and is ridiculously thin at just 6.1mm. The iPad Air 2 is the most powerful iPad yet, with a 40% faster processor and 10-hour battery life. Obviously a great gift. [Get it here](#) or at your nearest Apple Store.

### **27-inch Retina 5k Apple iMac**

Super-fast quad-core iMac with a true 5K display featuring 14.7 million pixels—that's four times the pixels of the standard 27-inch iMac. Ultra thin design and unbelievable detail. [Get it here](#) or at your nearest Apple Store.