

# 17 Gifts, Gadgets and Goodies for 2016

by Karen Anderson



From splurge-worthy investments to goof-proof gadgets and stocking stuffer goodies, these are the gifts any food lover would be happy to give or receive.



## For the Birds

...or at least the bird lovers. These **Chirpy Top wine pourers** aerate your wine and add cheery chirping to every pour. Designer Matt Ellison likes to add good cheer to his designs. He spawned those now famous fish that gurgle for his Gurgle Pots. I'm secretly hoping he's working on a bee-shaped honey pot that buzzes as his next project.

**Chirpy Top Wine Pourer, \$30, Britannia Kitchen and Home**



## TIFFIN TIDINGS

These old-school **Indian Tiffin lunch boxes** are likely to gain popularity as we all do our bit to decrease the amount of plastic in the world. Not just for Indian food, they're useful to keep all sorts of foods separate so you can graze your way through a long day at the office. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they arrived at your desk filled with delicious Indian food like they do in Mumbai? Don't know what I'm talking about? Watch the movie *The Lunchbox* and see what happens when a Mumbai Tiffin lunch box goes astray.

**Onyx 2 & 3 layer Tiffin lunch boxes, \$24-28, Community Natural Foods**



## Sushi Italia

Even the most modest of take-out sushi inspires the setting of an elegant table. Bamboo placemats, decorative chopsticks, matching Japanese pottery plates and teacups elevate the offering at most of our homes. Then there's the case of Italian design giant Alessi. When Alessi designer Stefano Giovannoni got inspired by ancient Chinese ceramics, he produced a thoroughly modern sushi set of incredible beauty while still paying heed to form meets functional expression. Buy this **Lily Pond sushi set** and suddenly you and your takeout are transported to a place where you're sitting under a cherry tree by a lily pond in Japan. Seems worth the price.

**Alessi Lily Pond sushi set, \$126/set, Reid's**

## Let There be (Tea) Light

Reworks Upcycle Shop owner Solita Work makes these **vintage teacup candles**. The shop (which is a kiosk cart at the Calgary Farmers' Market) specializes in one-of-a-kind objects that artists from the United States and Canada have cleverly repurposed and saved from the landfill. Give one of these to your favourite tea drinker and you'll be considered charming as well as eco-friendly.

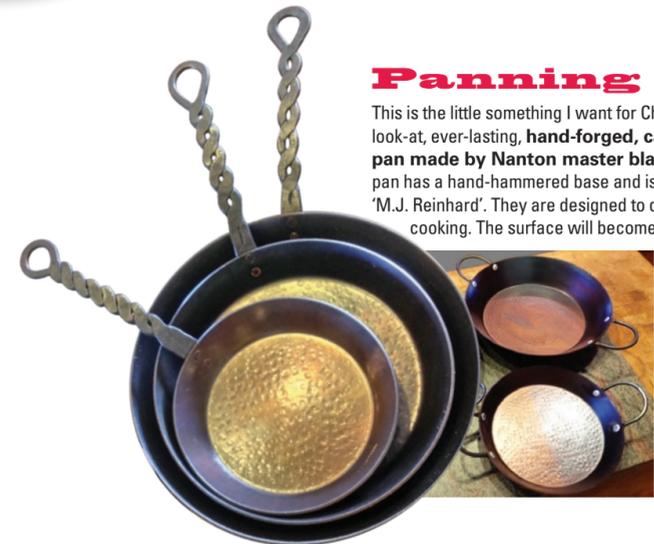
**Cup of Tea light, \$25, Reworks Upcycle Shop in the Calgary Farmers' Market**



## Panning for Gold

This is the little something I want for Christmas this year. It's a beautiful-to-look-at, ever-lasting, **hand-forged, carbon steel fry pan and paella pan made by Nanton master blacksmith Martin Reinhard**. Each pan has a hand-hammered base and is stamped with a maple leaf and 'M.J. Reinhard'. They are designed to deliver fast heat uptake and even cooking. The surface will become non-stick with time and proper care. This is a gift serious cooks (and me) will love. It's like panning for gold and coming up with the mother lode. Tip: For the perfect paella recipe, flip to Geoff Last's column on page 26.

**Martin Reinhard 8.5- to 12-inch hand-forged pans, \$150-\$200, Willow Creek Forge Store, 2112-21 St., Nanton, willowcreekforge.com**



## The Spice Clause

It's the spice clause in Santa's contract. He never leaves the North Pole without this nifty little **Camp Backcountry Spice Kit** clipped to his sleigh. His elves at The Silk Road Spice Merchant and Camp Brand Goods carefully selected Apple Pie Spice, Driftwood Texas BBQ Rub, Scarborough Fair (yes, a mix of parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme), Inca Fire Salt, and Bow River Fish Blend so that Santa, or anyone with only a pack on their back, can stop by a campfire and cook up a delicious meal to fuel their journey. Whether you're heading into Alberta's backcountry or on a whirlwind round the world adventure, you can use the clever carabiner to clip and carry this waterproof spice goody bag along.

**Camp Backcountry Spice Kit, \$65, The Silk Road Spice Merchant or campbrandgoods.com**



## FARM IN YOUR FRIDGE

This **urban cultivator** unit will allow you to grow grass to your heart's content. Wheat grass, that is. It will also grow every kind of micro green your crunchy granola heart yearns for. No more picking through soggy brown-edged herbs at your grocer, with this unit you can grow them organically and pick them seconds before adding them to your dishes. Choose from Urban Cultivator's seed bank of organic non-GMO seeds made for the unit, choose the corresponding settings and grow, grow, grow... in your kitchen cum urban farm.

**Trail Appliances, Inglewood Gallery \$2699**

**Gifts for giving and getting!**

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for 2016**  
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**Spooning**

The price of these pretty Chinese soup spoons will allow you to give (or get for yourself) a gaggle of them. Use them to present your favourite bite-size appetizers at holiday parties. Seared scallops with a bit of birch syrup glaze, curried prawns with pineapple and cilantro, tiny rounds of polenta topped with corn salsa or cod fritters in a spicy aioli will all do well in these spoons. You and your guests can take a bite and keep on visiting.

**Chinese soup spoons, \$1.09 each, Hong Kong International Market**

**YYC FOR THEE**

I collect tea towels from my travels. London, Paris, Barcelona, Melbourne and Maui are depicted in linens that help me daydream while I dry my dishes. Now I can take tea towels as gifts when I travel with these **YYC towels** depicting our landmark architecture and public art. The colour is red and white, as in our home team Stampede, Flames and infamous Red Mile. They're a classy collaboration between local companies, Fine Mesh printing and Lemermeyer illustration and design. The 75% linen and 25% cotton blend is way lighter in my suitcase than books or maple syrup and they help me share my love of our beautiful city with the world.

**YYC tea towels, \$24, Stealing Home**



**Whey too Good**

This **Poorboy caramel sauce** should come with a warning. It tastes way too good to prevent most human beings from polishing off the whole jar immediately upon opening. What's the secret ingredient that makes it so addictively good? Turns out its whey – the liquid that's left when cheese curds form in milk. The Poorboy Candy makers get their whey from a farmer down the road. They say it gives the caramel a bit of a citrus flavour. Citrus must be a code word for liquid Nirvana. Try the sauce over fresh fruit, on your baked brie with nuts, or with apple pie and ice cream. Consider yourself warned.



**Caramel Sauce from Poorboy Candy, \$20/295g., Inspirati Linens and Home Essentials**



**One Enchanted Eating**

Sabre Paris founders Francis and Pascale Gelb want to enchant your daily life. They use their 20 years of design expertise to play with colour, form and materials with delightfully audacious results like these **serving utensils** that you'll find at Inspirati Fine Linens and Home Essentials. Hint: check out the full rainbow of colours and Sabre Paris cutlery too.

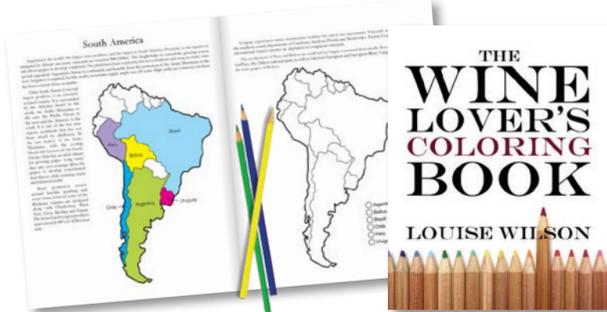
**Sabre Paris Utensils, \$10 - \$42, Inspirati Fine Linens and Home Essentials**



**Cake on a Pedestal**

Cheery cherry is the colour of this **cake stand from Le Creuset**. Give it to your friend whose specialty of the house is cakes. Tip: All cakes belong on a pedestal but the Coconut Cake from Decadent Brûlée makes a fabulous holiday dessert and looks smashing on this red background topped with fresh holly or seasonal greens..

**Le Creuset "Cherry" Cake Stand, \$60, Le Creuset, Chinook Centre**



**RED, WHITE AND EVERY PLACE NICE**

Learn the wine regions of the world with this **colouring book** designed by author Louise Wilson to make wine education more fun. While there's enough information here for a sommelier to pass exams, the book will also appeal to the casual wine drinker. Pour a glass of your favourite colour of wine and colour on.

**The Wine Lover's Coloring Book, \$25, J.Webb Wine Merchant**

**Blaze of Glory**

It's good to dream big. As far as outdoor grills go, this big dreamy **Hestan grill** is the new gold standard for design and innovation. It has tubular burners with 25,000 BTUs, ceramic infrared sear burners, motion-activated Stadium-under-hood lighting plus a lid that you can lift with your pinky that will stay in place at any level. As if that's not enough, the "cheese" on this "burger" is the 12 cool colours available, including citra orange, Bora Bora blue, matador red, sol yellow and stealth black. Even traditional stainless steel. All parts come with a lifetime warranty from the California manufacturer where each unit is hand built. At this price they should guarantee our weather too! Let your grill-crazy inner chef go down in a blaze of glory.

**Hestan 36-inch grill, \$12,550, Barbecues Galore**



**Bowled Over**

These pretty **dessert bowls** from Nachtmann add elegance to any table setting in any season of the year. Fresh berries in summer, a cobbler in fall, lemon snow pudding for Christmas, citrus salads to get you through to spring's rhubarb compote. You'll be bowled over by how useful these little beauties will be.

**Nachtmann Bossa Nova dessert bowls, \$10 each, Zest Kitchenware**



**GOT YOU COVERED**

Once you've bought a Japanese kitchen knife from Knifewear, there's no going back. Thankfully, these **protective knife covers** allow you to transport your knives safely when you travel and cook in other people's kitchens. Enough said. Get them. You need them.

**Protective knife covers, \$5 - \$13, Knifewear Inglewood and The Calgary Farmers' Market**



**FOOD, FUN AND ADVENTURE**

When your favourite food lover has goodies and gadgets galore, then get them out the door to explore more of our burgeoning food scene with **Alberta Food Tours**. These three hour walking tours in Calgary, Canmore and Edmonton are filled with tastings that add up to more than a meal. They also have an extra helping of stories of the history, art and culture of each area. Details for each are online. Bonus: They're easy to wrap. Just press send!

**Alberta Food Tours gift certificates, \$45 and up, calgaryfoodtours.com, canmorefoodtours.com or edmontonfoodtours.com**



*All prices are approximate.  
Karen Anderson has top secret meetings with Santa each year to decide this list. Ho Ho Ho!*