

Holiday Shopping Made Simple: Finding the Perfect Gift in Niagara



How do you feel about holiday shopping? I know I'd rather clean toilets. That's why I bill myself as a shopping ninja: I'll plan a shopping excursion for the item I need, power walk with purpose into that store, snap up the coveted item, and triumphantly exit that store faster than the clerks can ask if I'd like to pay for the extended warranty. It's no wonder I've always loved convenience stores. They're a convenient way to grab those random items... or in my case, they're a convenient way to grab those holiday gifts I put off and forget to buy. Yup. That happened.

Cast your mind back to last December 1st. Picture me: sipping some nog on my cozy sofa and thinking about the holiday meals I'd soon enjoy. I'd just asked my friends and family what gifts they'd like. Everything seemed as cheery as a Michael Buble Christmas album in my world. I was way ahead of the game. Fast forward a few weeks later to the sound of a record scratch and my world crashing down.

It was the eve of my work party and I realized I hadn't bought a thing. Now picture me madly rushing out on my lunch to the nearest convenience store; whipping open the door and seeing the light -- as if it was shining straight from heaven -- onto that rack of gift cards. Can you hear me laughing like a mad man? I'm sure that lady working the counter won't soon forget. I thought I was in the clear: this store still had the prized LCBO gift cards! To my delight, my coworkers happily

traded and vied for that card at our gift exchange that night. I was a star! A shooting star as it turned out. How do you think that same gift card went over with my wife on Christmas morning? Let me save you the guesswork: NOT well.

And so, here I am a changed man. It's a new year and I've made a promise to my wife and family to do better. This year I'm not stressing over holiday shopping, though. It is the beginning of December and I have my list. Better yet, I have a plan. I'm going to support local vendors and find the gifts to make my family love me again (Not to worry, they never read my social media posts anyway, so I'm not giving away my gift giving secrets by sharing this info!):



My dad is your quintessential outdoorsman. I found the perfect hat for him at the [Moore House Fine Alpacas](#) booth at the [Pelham Outdoor Christmas Market](#). It'll keep him warm and toasty while he's puttering around the yard or garage this season. I think I'll also buy him a sturdy, metal water bottle from [Craft Arts Market](#) – he can use it to wet his whistle on his hunting trips or throw it really hard if he needs to run away in a hurry.

\$15 FLAT RATE SHIPPING ACROSS ONTARIO

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My mom is quite the foodie, with a penchant for game meat (refer to my dad's favourite hobby), so I'm headed out to [Lake Land Meats](#) to pick up a gift certificate for a unique food she'll love. Then I'll swing by [Della Terra](#) to grab her a delicious olive oil and balsamic vinegar to work her magic on her favourite side dishes. I wonder what goes well with quail eggs and kangaroo?

My brother is a growing foodie who loves a good gizmo. I think I'll grab him some kitchen gadgets at [Canalside's Kitchen Store](#) – and maybe have them throw together a gift basket full of gourmet sauces and soups if he stops making fun of me for more than 20 minutes.

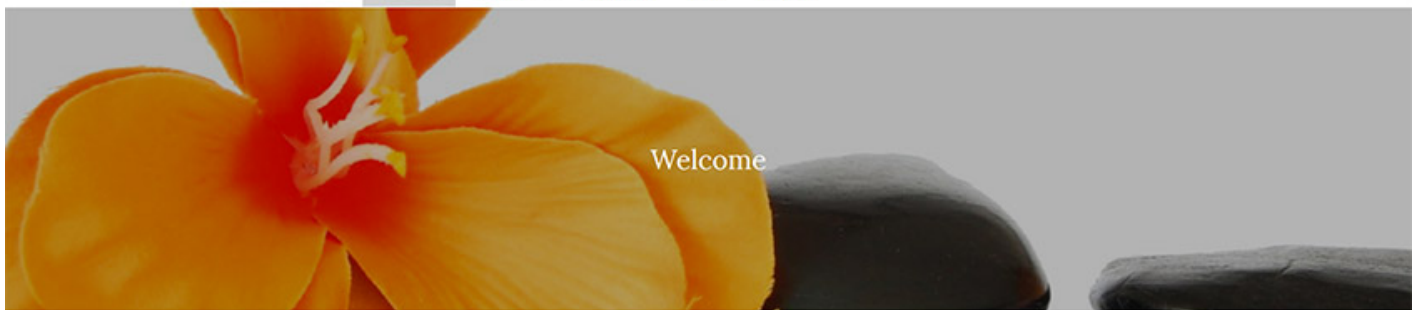


My friend, and fellow PenFinancial employee, Matt Price loves music and a good record. His collection of Beatles albums is legendary – or at least his stories about it are -- so I'm going to see what unique vinyl I can find for him at [Mindbomb Records](#). Fingers crossed he won't already have that record and he'll invite me along to rock out to something awesome this year.



ATRIUM SPA

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Welcome

Established in 1998, Atrium Spa has distinguished itself as one of Niagara's premier full service day spas.

Parkway and just 5km from the Peace Bridge. We are a 2300 square foot day spa with six private treatment rooms, a full make-up station, multi service room to accommodate group manicures and pedicures and a quiet lounge area with beverage bar for a place to breathe deep and relax.

Whether you can just spare an hour or devote an entire day our professional spa therapists are committed to promoting wellness & beauty in an environment of highest standards, premium services & finest quality products

My wife loves me... despite my screw up last year. So this year, I'm going all out to win her over. I plan to find her the perfect pendant at [Willow Den](#). Then I'm going to get her a day at the [Atrium Spa](#). I'll round that out with some treats from Chocolate Expressions that I picked up at that [Pelham Outdoor Christmas Market](#) and a gift certificate for a delicious meal at [Tide and Vine Oyster House](#). With any luck, I'll be allowed to move out of the doghouse by Christmas dinner.

No matter where you find your gifts this holiday season, remember that it's the thought that counts. If you take a minute to think of the joy you'll bring your loved ones – and the local vendors you support – you'll be as full of holiday cheer as I am full of eggnog on any given night in December. Happy shopping, my friends!