

THE GIFT OF GRANDEUR



THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING. Choose from these *one-of-a-kind* gifts for the person who has everything. By Matt Alderton

The holiday spirit is all about giving. But what does one give the man or woman who has it all?

Every year, this question vexes eager-to-please shoppers, who engage in a veritable hunt for the perfect gift. Another boring necktie, Rolex or ring simply won't do. It's got to be unique. It's got to be special. And it's got to be spectacular.

Rather than guessing what your certain someone desires, instead, go straight for the "wow" factor.

Consider, for instance, Nieman Marcus' annual *Christmas Book*, which always includes a selection of extravagant "fantasy gifts" for the hard-to-please. Last year's 100th Anniversary Edition included a "Classical Superstars Fantasy Concert" hosted by Regis Philbin for \$1.59 million, a diamond-studded cell phone for \$73,000, a submarine for \$1.44 million, and a 100-foot

dragon topiary with golden claws, teeth, horns and fins for \$35,000.

Although yard art and classical music aren't for everyone, the following gift ideas are sure to impress most anyone on your list.

1. A Trip to Outer Space

When you're shopping for someone you love, you should shoot for the moon. And thanks to Virgin Galactic, you can—literally. That's because Sir Richard Branson's space tourism venture, which debuted in 2004, plans to offer its suborbital spaceflights to the general public for an initial downpayment of \$20,000 and an eventual price tag of just \$200,000. The once-weekly flights will take off from the Mojave Desert in California and will last approximately 2-1/2 hours, during which time six

passengers and two pilots will climb to a height of about 360,000 feet (roughly 68 miles) and experience up to six minutes of weightlessness before returning to Earth.

For more information: www.virgingalactic.com

2. Race Car Camp

If you know a car enthusiast, check out Fort Worth, Texas-based Texas Driving Experience, which offers a three-day, four-night “Be a Race Car Driver” camp. For between \$30,000 and \$150,000 per person, you’ll drive on three separate tracks at the Texas Motor Speedway, the second-largest sporting venue in the United States. You’ll be trained by professional drivers, drive NASCARs and race-prepared Corvettes, and housed at the Penthouse Condos, overlooking the speedway.

For more information: www.texasdrivingexperience.com

3. Exclusive Wheels

If you’re looking for a toy you can drive at home, consider the 2009 Rolls-Royce Phantom Coupé. At a cost of \$400,000 each, fewer than 200 will make their way from the United Kingdom to the United States beginning in November 2008.

For more information: www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

4. Champagne Wishes

If you’ve “been there, done that” with Napa, consider a trip to Champagne, France, with Perrier-Jouet. For \$75,000, you’ll receive one of only 100 packages that are available of Perrier-Jouet’s BY and FOR Champagne. What’s more, you’ll travel to France and meet with Herve DeChamps—Champagne winemaker—to tailor your champagne to your liking.

For more information: www.perrier-jouet.com

5. A Private Paradise

You’ve already got a vacation home. But do you have a vacation *destination*? For as little as \$3 million or as much as \$70 million or more, you can buy the title to your own private island. Islands off the Central American coast in Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras and Costa Rica are often larger than a dozen acres; many feature pre-built estates and all come with plenty of private, beach-laden coastline.

For more information: www.privateislandsonline.com

6. A Fairy Tale Ending

Because the best gifts end happily ever after, consider gifting a European castle. From \$7 million to upward of \$60



©Joerg Lehmann/StockFood Creative/Getty

million—which is what Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie paid recently for their own French castle, Chateau Miraval—you can be king or queen of your own domain. Engel & Völkers, a luxury real estate firm based in Hamburg, Germany, has dozens of castles in its portfolio of properties. Located across Europe in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France and Italy, they offer a piece of history that’s at once modern and medieval.

For more information: www.engelvoelkers.com **YL**

Matt Alderton is a Chicago-based writer and editor.

WELLS FARGO CHARITABLE MANAGEMENT GROUP

If your desire for giving extends to charities and helping others, the Wells Fargo Charitable Management Group can help you design a structured giving program based on your specific philanthropic and wealth management goals. The dedicated specialists of our Charitable Management Group work closely with other Wells Fargo trust, investment and banking professionals—and with your personal attorney, accountant or other advisers—to integrate charitable giving strategies into your overall financial approach. We also maintain close ties with the philanthropic community, and can help you evaluate options and identify opportunities for using your wealth to achieve the greatest benefits. For more information on Wells Fargo Charitable Management Group, contact your Wells Fargo Private Bank Relationship Manager.