

# The Luxe List: Shopping for Luxury Gifts & Gets - October 2009

By [Merilee Kern](#) Oct. 12th, 2009



**Posh Product Picks:** Finding fabulous gifts for those who seemingly have it all can be a challenge at best -- even if the gift recipient is your self. Each month I scour the luxury marketplace to uncover new, innovative and otherwise exemplary must haves -- the best-of-the-best across a range of product categories. The gift-and-get-worthy goods that make The Luxe List cut a mix of tasteful, trendy, and high quality commodities - some extravagant, some practical - that are all sure to please.

Consider this month's favorite finds:

## **Vinotemp Thermoelectric "iCellar" Wine Cooler -- \$229**

No contemporary kitchen is complete without a wine fridge, and Vinotemp offers a fantastic array of models to suit any need and lifestyle, including many that can be built-in to counters and cabinetry and decidedly large units that provide storage for as many as 188 bottles. However, if space is a concern in your home, condo or yacht, or if you prefer a unit that's extremely portable and maneuverable for use in and out of the kitchen (like your dining room, master suite, guest quarters, outdoor entertainment area or office), then Vinotemp's "iCellar" model is for you. Offered among the company's Eco Series, Vinotemp's iCellar employs environmentally-friendly thermoelectric cooling technology integrated into a sleek and sophisticated design aesthetic. Although compact and entirely movable, don't let its size fool you as this functional fridge can hold as many as 12 bottles of your favorite vino.

As mentioned, Vinotemp's iCellar utilizes reliable, eco-friendly thermoelectric technology to cool and maintain a perfect temperature of wine contained therein, with a

programmable range of 50°F-66°F. This device, which is unbelievably quiet, does not use Freon or other harmful CFCs. Its double-paned door also provide insulation and protect the wine from UV rays. Other features of the Vinotemp's iCellar include a bright blue LED display, a touch screen control panel, soft interior lighting to help you quickly locate the bottle of your choice, and pull-out chrome shelves to ease access. All of this is packaged in a modern black and stainless mirrored design that integrates nicely into nearly any décor. ([www.vinotemp.com](http://www.vinotemp.com))



### **Crystalift Resurfacing System -- \$199**

Okay all you facial fanatics out there, this one's for you. I've recently discovered the Crystalift at-home vacuum microdermabrasion device and am here to tell you it's a must if having clean, healthy, glowing skin is your thing. Created by the same team who started microderm abrasion back in the 1990s and who continue to develop commercial microdermabrasion equipment, Crystalift is a simple yet powerful tool that can be used in the comfort and privacy of your own home -- in between or instead of your regular visits to your aesthetician.

The revolutionary counter-top machine uniquely combines the benefits of micronized mineral crystal microderm abrasion technology used by professionals with the extraordinary rejuvenating effects of vacuum-lift therapy to deep clean, slough off dead skin and increase circulation, thus softening fine wrinkles, fading age spots and blemishes, reducing pore size appearance and promoting smooth, supple skin. Using Crystalift even just once a week -- in just 5-10 minutes per session -- can result in a notable difference in skin tone. I myself have used this system for a number of weeks now and I can tell you my skin has never looked or felt better. According to a company spokesperson, Katherine Heigl's personal make up artist has been seen using Crystalift on the actress daily before applying her make up. Other skin superstars like Hayden Panetierre and Jada Pinkett Smith are also purportedly fans of the machine. Thanks to Crystalift, I'm now ready for MY close up.

Each Crystalift machine comes with four crystal cartridges for a full month of treatments and Crystalift's Vitamin C Serum perfectly formulated for after treatment skin conditioning. ([www.crystalift.com](http://www.crystalift.com))



### **"Spa Massage" Vivabox -- \$160**

One of the most exciting gift ideas introduced to the American market is the Vivabox, which essentially combines a traditional themed gift from a giver with freedom of choice for the recipient, who may custom-tailor the Vivabox gift to his or her liking.

While Vivabox offers an array of themed gift options for gourmets, oneophiles and others, one of my favorites is the Spa Massage Vivabox. This gift box arrives with a multitude of EO organic body products to bring the spa experience home, including French Lavender, Grapefruit and Mint body lotions, one EO organic French Lavender shower gel, and a package of EO organic Juniper and Lemon bath salts. Best of all, this Vivabox also includes a gift card for a massage or a facial - tip included - at one of more than 4,000 participating day spas in SpaFinder.com's worldwide network. To redeem, recipients simply log on to the Vivabox Web site and enter their zip code to find a spa nearby. They'll call their favorite location directly to make the appointment, making sure to mention the Vivabox gift card. It's that simple!

This Vivabox "Spa Massage" gift is perfect for any woman or man who can use a little pampering both at home and by a pro, and who will appreciate having the option to choose which treatment to get and at what day spa location. ([www.vivaboxusa.com](http://www.vivaboxusa.com))



### **Lia Sophia Two-Tone Layered Necklace -- \$110**

Among Lia Sophia's signature Kiam Family jewelry collection is a fabulous two-tone layered necklace - an exquisite conversation piece that, indeed, each time I wear it I'm inevitably immersed in conversation about. This dramatic necklace, which measures from 16 to 19 inches in length with an adjustable silver extender chain and lobster claw clasp, has a gentle cascade of polished electroplated gold and rhodium silver metal arcs each affixed to a black leather-like rubber cord -- 5 separate tiers in total (three silver, two gold). The combination of the polished metals with the black strands makes this necklace work with both day and evening looks, and it's versatile for mixing and matching with either gold or silver earrings, rings, bracelets and other accessories.

The necklace arrives in a lovely gray velvet pouch that is also useful for storing, to help keep the metal in tip-top shape. Lia Sophia uniquely plates its jewelry with more mls than average retail stores, giving its jewelry longer life. In fact, Lia Sophia's jewelry is

guaranteed to keep its high shine. Of course, this and all of the company's gorgeous, top-quality, designer inspired fashion jewelry comes with a lifetime replacement guarantee. ([www.liasophia.com](http://www.liasophia.com))



### **Coffee Bean Direct Large TeaLovers Gift Basket --**

**\$89.95**

For the tea connoisseur or the casual tea lovers in your family or friendship circle, or even for a boss, colleague or your child's teacher or coach, consider a delightful basket of tea time goodies from Coffee Bean Direct, a leading supplier of coffee and tea to thousands of cafe's and restaurants that also sells direct-to-consumer online. With the cold weather and holiday gift-giving season just around the corner, this tasty tea basket is a delightful idea for nearly anyone on your list.

Coffee Bean Direct's Large Tea Lovers Gift basket is tops, which comes hand-crafted with six 5-ounce bags of fine Loose Leaf Tea, two boxes of T-Sacs tea filters, one 1.75-ounce jar of Lost Acres pure white clover honey, one package of tea biscuits, one box of Nikki's sugar cookies, a Coffee Bean Direct T-shirt and two Coffee Bean Direct ceramic mugs. Purchaser will select the type of teas to include in the basket: Green, Herbal & Flavored, Traditional or a combination thereof. Separately, the company also sells an unbelievably expansive array of teas by the bag, with multiple type and size selections in each of its tea categories: Black, Green, Herbal, Flavored and Wulong among them.

Operating out of their roasting facility in rural New Jersey, Coffee Bean Direct roasts and pack its coffees and teas immediately prior to shipment to ensure recipients enjoy the best brew possible, cup after cup. The company is passionate about coffee and tea, which is evident in the high quality of its product line. ([www.coffeebeandirect.com](http://www.coffeebeandirect.com))



### **Plia Designs Luxe Hardshell Case for iPhone/BlackBerry/PDA --**

**\$72.00**

Forego that boring black case that came with your iPhone or BlackBerry and opt for a stylish statement accessory that *really* protects, instead -- namely, Plia Designs' Luxe

Universal PDA Case for iPhones, BlackBerry's and other hand helds. This is no flimsy skin or cover, but rather is a fashion-forward, top-quality hardshell case that looks great while safeguarding your device from scratches, smudges and drops. Even with a slim phone inside (like the iPhone), this case actually has room to spare to store earbuds and other small essentials. And, it's certainly stylish and convenient enough to double as a compact clutch -- with or without a phone!

While a variety of case designs are available, I'm partial to the "Kit" model that features a fierce fabric animal print, decorative silver and black leather snap, and a fun purple velvet interior. Inside on the right is a mesh pocket and Velcro "seat belt" to hold the device securely, while the left side also has straps to hold other trim items in place, such as money, credit and business cards, and a driver's license. Plia Designs' Luxe Universal PDA Case is just one of many fantastic and even whimsical luxury phone accessories the company offers for "women who love their gadgets as much as their designer shoes." Guilty as charged. ([www.PliaDesigns.com](http://www.PliaDesigns.com))



**Signorello Vineyards**

**2006 Padrone -- \$110**

**2006 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon -- \$50**

Two excellent wines to consider for the upcoming holiday season are from Signorello Vineyards in Napa Valley. Its Padrone, a tribute to founding father Raymond Signorello Sr., is a sophisticated and complex wine that expresses the quality and dignity of Signorello Estate. Cultivated on its hillside vineyard along Silverado Trail, grapes used for the Padrone benefitted from a variety of exposures and a distinctive rocky terrain. The wine's aromatic bouquet consists of cranberry, blackberry, vanilla, un-burnt tobacco, and hints of licorice. The wine has a lush, full-bodied palate flavored with boysenberry, raspberry, and a touch of vanilla. The long and lingering finish is accentuated by the young integrated tannins. While you may be anxious to crack this open and enjoy, it will duly improve with age over the next twenty years.

Considered to be the vineyard's signature wine, Signorello's Estate Cabernet Sauvignon with a nose full of cassis, plums and tobacco and vanilla. Aged for twenty-one months in new Troncais, Nevers and Alliers Oak, this is a robust, full-bodied wine that pairs nicely with dark chocolate, cheese, steak, or venison. The wine has a deep, dark red color with a palate offering tastes of red berry, cedar, leather and tobacco. This wine's incredible balance and long, lingering finish is accentuated by its integrated tannins and

intense, rich flavors. The wine can be uncorked now and is recommended to be savored by 2021.

Signorello Estates makes limited quantities of premium varietals that combine classic French winemaking practices with California fruit. The winemaker strives to deliver lush, concentrated fruit flavors, and good acid balance throughout its collection. ([www.signorellovinyards.com](http://www.signorellovinyards.com))



### **Juicy Couture's "Couture Couture" Eau de Parfum**

#### **Spray -- \$65-\$85**

Having made an indelible mark on the fragrance scene with two best selling scents, *Juicy Couture* and *Viva La Juicy*, Juicy Couture is permeating the market yet again with a delightful new scent - *Couture Couture*. This 'it girl' floral fragrance is perfect for fun and flirty gals who are inevitably the life of party.

Couture Couture is sweet and playful perfume, emitting top, middle and base notes of pink grape accord, natural orange flower, mandarin, blushed plum, honeysuckle, star jasmine, creamy sandalwood, amber and rich vanilla. As would be expected from the Juicy Couture brand, the Couture Couture bottle is a standout with gold Juicy "J" and crown charms, hot pink ribbon, and a regal decanter-style gold crown top that is representative of all of Juicy Couture's flamboyant designs. The 3.4 ounce bottle runs \$85 while the 1.7 ounce bottle costs \$65. The Couture Couture fragrance collection will also feature other products, including body lotion, shower gel, body crème, sugar scrub, dusting powder, dry oil spray, and candle in a crystal goblet. ([www.juicycouture.com](http://www.juicycouture.com))



### **Hotel Chocolat**

#### **Champagne Truffles -- \$36/box**

#### **The Purist Chocolate Bars -- \$10/each**

The market is rife with boutique chocolatiers, but few quite as innovative and passionate as Hotel Chocolat. This UK-born company now sells its fine quality chocolate to devotees worldwide, holding steadfast to its "No Nasties" rule banning cheap, low quality ingredients and controlling the production process completely - from the bean to the bar. Among my favorite Hotel Chocolat selections are its [Pink Champagne Truffles](#) - Marc de Champagne ganache in a milk chocolate shell dusted in powdered strawberry, giving it a subtle fruit undertone. The elegant pink and brown gift box contains sixteen little bites of heaven that will captivate the heart, mind and mouth of the most persnickety chocolate aficionado. And with a box full, one can enjoy these on her or her own or with a lucky companion.

For those moments you want to indulge on your own, consider a 2.65-ounce Purist chocolate bar. While these come in different varieties, I've sampled [The Purist Uba Budo Plantation 72 percent Dark Chocolate bar](#) made from cocoa beans cultivated in Sao Tomé in the Agua Grande region of in the Gulf of Guinea. This bar must be savored like a fine wine, so you can experience the top notes of red fruit and the end notes of spices and wood. The finish is clean and fresh, leaving you longing for more. I've also had the distinct pleasure of sampling [The Purist Hacienda lara Plantation 62 percent Organic Milk Chocolate bar](#). Made with Ecuador's prized nacional arriba cocoa and less than half the sugar of a classic milk chocolate, this is an incredible confection experience. This bar is not too sweet and is full of cocoa flavors with just a hint of milk. Starting with a nutty bouquet, the palate is then commandeered by unmistakable flavors of malt, caramel and dried fruit. ([www.hotelchocolat.com](http://www.hotelchocolat.com))



### **HoMedics Shiatsu & Vibration Neck Massager -- \$29.99**

There's probably no better way to spend 5-15 minutes of your day than with HoMedics Shiatsu & Vibration Neck Massager -- the newest addition to the HoMedics Shiatsu family of products one officially one of my favorites. This extraordinarily effective portable device sits comfortably around the back of the neck, and delivers a deep kneading Shiatsu style and/or invigorating vibration massage either with or without soothing heat. The controls are on the unit itself so there is no cumbersome controller or wire to manage. Unique handle grips on each end of the massager allow the user to best position the massager, and to tug down and hold it in place for a deeper, more effective and satisfying massage experience.

This Shiatsu & Vibration Neck Massager is offered with a two-year limited warranty. HoMedics is the leading name in health and wellness that dominates within the massage category. The company offers an extensive assortment of personal wellness products created to help users restore balance to their life. This handy massager is one

quick and easy way to achieve a measure of well-being each and every day. ([www.homedics.com](http://www.homedics.com))

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Merilee Kern

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