

Dear Santa Claus, Please Send Me a Kegerator and a New Knife Set: Denizens of Houston's Culinary World Share Their Wish Lists

BY KAITLIN STEINBERG

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2013 AT 6 A.M.



Santa loves Houston food!

Photo by Kaitlin Steinberg

It's that time of year! Children are writing Christmas wish lists and mailing them off to Santa at the North Pole, hoping that he'll deliver what they ask for come Christmas morning. Some of that magic goes away as you get older, but there's no reason we can't keep making wish lists for the holidays, sending them off into cyberspace and hoping the gods of the Internet deliver.

We asked some of the Houston culinary scene's movers and shakers what they wanted for

WE ASKED SOME OF THE HOUSTON CULINARY SCENE'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHAT THEY WANTED FOR the holidays this year (or Hanukkah next year, since it came so early in 2013) and received some great responses. Perhaps the list will inspire you. Or perhaps putting it out there will help them get what they really want. Hint: Very few of the wished-for items are foods.

Friends, family and Santa, we hope you're reading.



Kevin Strickland could sure use another Kegerator, Santa.

Photo from Kegerator

Kevin Strickland, chef/owner of [Gratifi](#) "Another [Kegerator](#) so we can sell more of Houston's awesome craft beer on tap! And a refrigerated pastry case so I can make and display more desserts. I can't put down my rolling pin and measuring cups. I'm dying to make more stuff. Someone bring me Red Hot Candies, stat! I need them to make marshmallows to go with the Hot Chocolate with Fireball Cinnamon Whiskey."

Dutch Small, organizer of [Gastrodome Fare-A-Thon](#) at FPHNYE I want two matching outfits from [American Apparel](#) -- complete with headbands -- so that when I get on stage at [FPHNYE](#), Girl Talk and I will match! EEEEP!!! I CAN'T WAIT TO DANCE WITH GIRL TALK ON STAGE!"

James Watkins, beverage director for [Cordia Restaurants](#) "A [Fox Knives Champagne sabre](#) to celebrate the end of the hardest month in the industry. In general, December is hell, but top it off with a new restaurant? Brutal!" (Watkins is referring to the new [Churrascos in Memorial City](#), which [opened this month](#).)



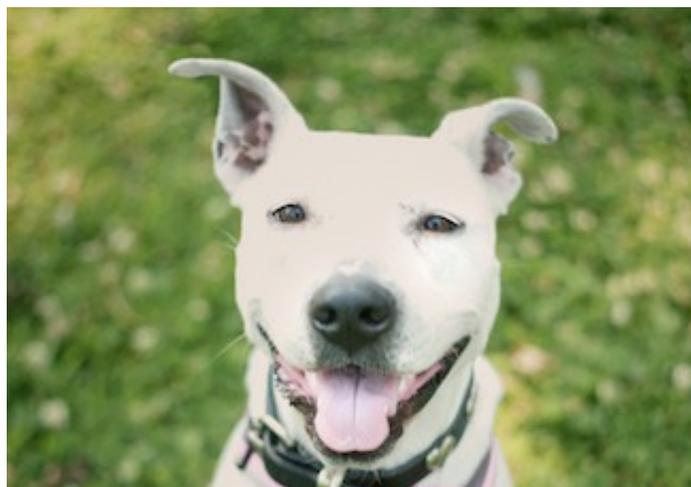


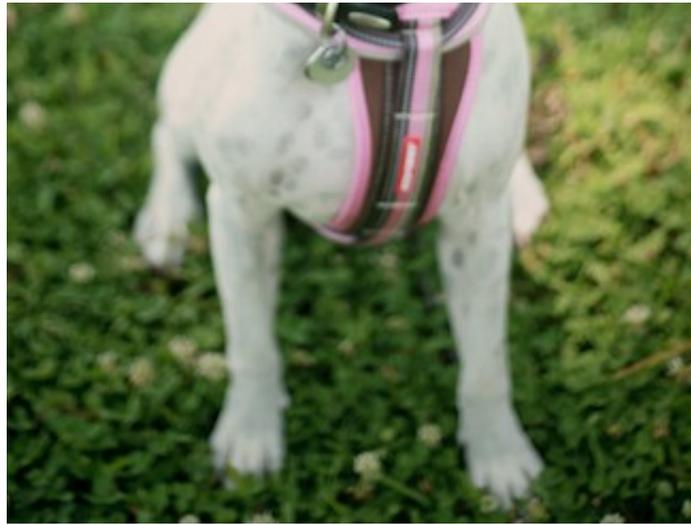
Tyler Horne wants this spiffy coat so he will stay warm in Paris.

Photo from [Billy Reid](#)

Tyler Horne, market manager, [Urban Harvest](#) "A [Billy Reid bond peacoat](#) (currently on backorder) for an upcoming trip where I'll spend two cold weeks in Paris. I don't own anything other than beat-up old jackets that I wear to work. I don't think my girlfriend wants to see me packing my insulated coveralls for this trip. Also, a [Driver's Education weekend](#) at the [Texas World Speedway](#) put on by the Lone Star Region Porsche Club, where a few of my buddies are instructors. They focus on making you a better driver. Everyone who drives a car in Houston could benefit from this type of training, plus you get to drive fast." **Brian Greene, president/CEO of [Houston Food Bank](#)** "A Congress where both sides of the aisle actually work together to solve problems."

Teresa Byrne-Dodge, editor/publisher, [My Table magazine](#) "All I want for Christmas is to finish renovating and move into our new-old family home by this time next year. We've said, 'This is our last Thanksgiving at this house' for two years now. It's become embarrassing."





Lucy, Rebecca Masson's foster dog, just wants a home for Christmas.

Photo by Rebecca Masson

Rebecca Masson, chef/owner of [Fluff Bake Bar](#) "I asked Santa for three things this year ... First, [help make Fluff Bake Bar a reality](#). I promised him a lifetime supply of cookies for him and all his elves. Second, that Lucy, my [Lucky Dog Rescue](#) foster, finds a loving forever home. Last, maybe I could get a week off to go snowboarding. I miss the snow!"

Paula Murphy of [Patterson & Murphy Public Relations](#) "A vintage typewriter for my growing collection, time to travel and a year full of great new burgers for me and the [Burger Babes](#) to try ... not necessarily in that order."

Minh Nguyen, chef/owner of [Cafe TH](#) "More safe bike lanes and conscious drivers. And a new knife set."



Goats don't ask for much for Christmas.

Photo courtesy Lisa and Christian Seger

Lisa Seger, Boss Lady at [Blue Heron Farm](#) "My big holiday wish is that people would stop eating factory-farmed proteins (meat, eggs and dairy). I would consider it good enough if they would just cut down consumption to once a week.

Goats, milk producers and lovebugs at Blue Heron Farm (as translated by Lisa) "The goats are much more reasonable -- all they really want is some granola and hugs."

John Sheely, chef/owner of [Mockingbird Bistro Wine Bar](#) and [Osteria Mazzantini](#) "I wanted to take my 5-year-old old son, Patrick, skiing, but we can't make it this year, so I'm wishing for a happy holiday and a healthy new baby come March 2014!"

Adele Corrigan, sommelier at [13 Celsius](#) and winner of [Best Sommelier 2013](#) "For Christmas, I want a [Jambox](#) or any sort of decent wireless Bluetooth speaker, a big wine fridge (like one that can hold several cases), a decent set of everyday kitchen knives for at-home use, a new computer bag, an [Express](#) gift card and fancy Champagne."



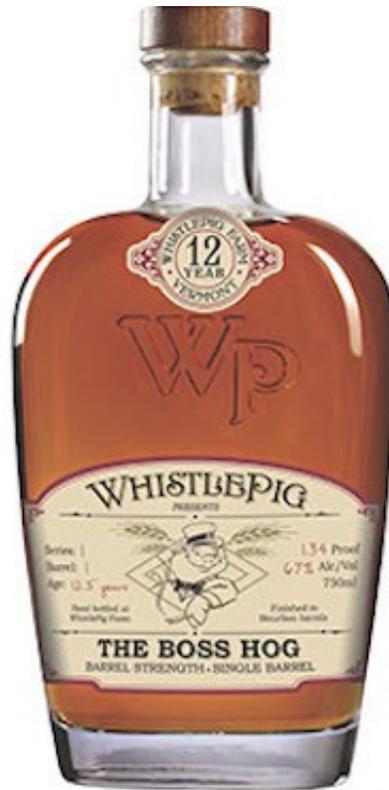
Nishta Mehra's son will soon have a deluxe kitchen made just for a child!

Photo from Amazon

Nishta Mehra, freelance writer and blogger at [Blue Jean Gourmet](#) and author of [The Pomegranate King](#) "I desperately need new baking sheets. Mine are warped and worn out from lots of use. I'd love a couple of heavy, sturdy, double-layered badass cookie sheets from Sur la Table or Williams-Sonoma. If I really wanted to treat myself, a [Besh Box subscription](#) -- I have a big ol' chef crush on him. My son loves to watch and 'help' me in the kitchen, so he's getting his own place to play for Christmas this year. We were recommended a [KidKraft Uptown Kitchen](#) and are thrilled that it's made in America.

Jeremy Parzen, wine writer, [Houston Press](#) contributor, and blogger at [Do Bianchi](#) As

cliché as it sounds, the No. 1 item on my 2013 Christmas wish list is a bottle of [2004 Bollinger La Grande Année Rosé Champagne](#). It's just so beautiful in the glass, so rich on the nose, and entirely decadent in the mouth. It just puts me in the mood ... *ahem*, I mean the holiday spirit!



Nothing says Christmas like fine whiskey, right?

Photo from Caskers

Chris Cusack, owner of [Down House](#) and [D&T Drive Inn](#) I'd love donations to [Workshop Houston](#). This is an awesome Houston-based non-profit that provides unique and useful after-school programs for kids. I think donating in a friend's or a loved one's name is a great gift. I could also use [a nice belt from Reserve Supply Company](#). I love just about everything they sell. And I'm always a fan of alcohol -- to give and receive as a gift. This year the [Whistle Pig Boss Hog Single Barrel Rye Whiskey](#) is on my list. It's super strong at 134 proof but it's very drinkable. And taxidermy. I passed up a giant taxidermied swordfish a few years ago and I've never forgiven myself. But, of course, the best gift I could get is super fast approval on permitting for our new restaurants, [Hunky Dory](#) and [Foreign Correspondents](#)!

Joshua Martinez, owner of [Goro & Gun](#) "I want to replicate my dishwasher guy 10 times, and I would then have the perfect kitchen army to take over the world."

Monica Pope, chef/owner at [Sparrow Bar + Cookshop](#) "Since I have everything in the world I could ever want or need, I'm going for [a tricked out rickshaw](#) from [Mela & Roam](#)!"

Kaitlin Steinberg, restaurant critic at the [Houston Press](#) What I ~~want~~ need this year is a gym membership. I eat too much.

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