



home for the holidays

By Laura Tiebert

MAKE IT BETTER READER: **CHRIS CASTINO**, PRESIDENT, CASTINO PAINTING AND HOME SERVICES IN NORTHFIELD

Despite Chris' connection to the home decorating and repair field, she pleads ignorance regarding stucco or molding. However, as a self-proclaimed Queen of Knick Knacks, Chris is equally at home in gift shops and flea markets. She's had a passion for collecting since she fell in love with pet rocks as a child, and today enjoys giving ordinary objects an unusual twist. Chris turns antique tennis rackets into earring hangers, a vintage child's ironing board into a plant stand, and most recently constructed a Scrabble end table from odd parts, using the Scrabble letters to spell a personalized message.

1. CABLEKNIT CASHMERE THROW, PILLOW, AND HOT WATER BOTTLE AND COVER Want to lock in your position as #1 daughter-in-law? Chris says that no matter how big the family tree is, giving these cashmere goodies to your in-laws will propel you to the top of the list. *Throw, \$379; Pillow, \$129; Hot Water Bottle and Cover, \$49. Restoration Hardware, Deer Park Town Center, Renaissance Center in Highland Park, Old Orchard Center in Skokie, 800-910-9836, restorationhardware.com*



2. KITCHEN FAUCET Kitchen in need of a facelift before holiday entertaining? Swap out your old faucet for a killer model from ROHL. This Perrin & Rowe traditional four-hole kitchen faucet has solid brass insulated hand spray, spout and handles. *\$1,880, Chicago Brass, 220 W. Kinzie, Chicago, 312-245-0200, chicagobrass.com*



3. CUSTOM SILHOUETTE PORTRAIT BY CARTER KUSTERA Chris found this personal, one-of-a-kind gift for the family member who has everything. The silhouette portrait is destined to become a family heirloom. Pick a color, write your tagline, and submit your photos, all online. *\$750, Jonathan Adler, 676 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, 312-274-9920, jonathanadler.com*



4. BRUNSWICK KICKER FOOSBALL TABLE Home is where the fun is! A game table is a guaranteed magnet for the teen set—and if you don't embarrass them (no Mom jeans!), maybe they'll let you join in, says Chris. *\$449.99, The Great Escape in Edens Plaza, Wilmette, 847-853-1900, shopthegreatescape.com*



Home For The Holidays



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45



5



6



7



8



9



10

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5. GEORG JENSEN STEEL FLATWARE BY ARNE JACOBSEN For the couple who wants to give each other the gift of making their table look completely new by using something old, this stainless steel flatware was designed in 1957 and is still cutting edge. **\$95 for a 5-piece boxed set, Georg Jensen, 959 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312-642-9160, georgjensenstore.com**

6. DELUXE HALL PHOTO GALLERY FRAME Chris not only found this great gift, she has step-by-step instructions for you. Step one: Pick an afternoon and hire a professional photographer to take your family photos, both together and individually. Step two: Order the goes-anywhere Hall Gallery Frame Set from Red Envelope. Step three: When the proofs show up, each child picks their favorite of themselves, and the family votes on the group shot. Step four: Pop the photos into the frames, and you have created your own family photo wall. **\$89.95, Red Envelope, 877-733-3683, redenvelope.com**

7. AREA RUG WARMER For the person who always complains of cold feet, pick up this clever invention: the area rug warmer, made by Warmly Yours, a Long Grove-based radiant heating company. **\$199.95, Warmly Yours, 1-800-875-5285, warmlyyours.com**

8. LITTALA AALTO CANDLEHOLDER Chris' twist is to fill this votive candleholder with a pound of gourmet coffee, packets of bubble bath, or marbles for that Baby Boomer friend who keeps claiming to have lost hers! A humorous note explaining your choice will make it all the more memorable. **\$10.95, Crate & Barrel, crateandbarrel.com**

9. ROWE POTTERY WORKS CUSTOM TWO-GALLON CROCK Next time you visit your parents, snap a photo of their house. Then, email the photo to Rowe Pottery in Cambridge, Wisconsin. Within weeks, your parents will be the owners of a handsome, hand-made and hand-decorated 2-gallon salt-glazed crock. **\$179.95, (smaller sizes available starting at \$42.95), Rowe Pottery Works, Cambridge, Wisconsin, 800-356-7687, rowepottery.com**

10. "HONEY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO LIST" GIFT CERTIFICATE Your husband is sitting on the couch, feet up, football on TV, popcorn bowl in lap and beer on side table. You: "Honey, could you possibly change the batteries in the smoke detectors/move the bookshelves/rewire the ceiling fan?" Him: (Smiling smugly as he hands you a gift certificate). "Honey, call a handyman instead. It's already paid for." **Castino Painting & Home Services of Northfield is offering this gift certificate for \$300 in services to Make It Better readers for only \$200. 847-729-3200, castinopainting.com** *Make sure to say you're calling for the Make It Better special!

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