

for the romantic

By Marjie Killeen



MAKE IT BETTER READER, **AMY WEILAND**, OF METTAWA, OWNER, THEVELVETSNOOT.COM

As owner of an online luxury pet boutique and part-time day trader, Amy Weiland is single, successful and fulfilled. She loves biking, gardening, horses and dogs and has created a beautiful home that includes her two Shar Pei pooches, Ming and MooShu. Amy has all the "stuff" she needs; when it comes to gifts, it's the thought she appreciates.

When a former boyfriend handed her an unwrapped oxford shirt with the price tag still on it, the birthday gift felt so impersonal it was hard for Amy to get over it. Here's what she has to say about these romantic gifts, designed to delight both the recipient and the giver.

1. COUPLE'S MASSAGE Soothe away holiday stress, sip a glass of bubbly and enjoy a 30-minute aromatherapy foot bath followed by a one-hour massage, performed for both of you in the same room. "Love it!" enthuses Amy. "This would make a great date night." **\$160 for two, Renu Day Spa, 617 Central Ave., Deerfield, 847-940-9727, renudayspa.com**



2. PICTURE GORGEOUS, GLAMOROUS YOU Enamour photos capture a woman's unique beauty and sensuality. As a gift to a woman, it's an empowering, pampering experience. For a man, he'll treasure private photos of his partner. "Every guy wants a great picture of his girlfriend," says Amy. Prices vary based on package. **Enamour, Highland Park, 847-748-7800, enamourphotography.com**



★ Mention Make It Better for a 25% discount on the "Get Cozy" package when booked before 1/31/11

3. BICYCLE BUILT FOR TWO An avid cyclist, Amy appreciates the sentiment of this high performance tandem, and its practicality too. "It's really sweet," she says, "because he'd be telling me he wants to ride together, but doesn't want me to do much of the work!" **Trek T900 Comfort Tandem, \$1130, Trek Highland Park, 1925 Skokie Highway, Highland Park, 847-433-8735, trekhp.com**



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SEX AND THE SUBURBS

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4. NIFTY NEGLIGEE SLEEPWEAR that feels great on the skin is a pleasure for both bedtime buddies. Amy sleeps in the buff, but loves to hang out in something pretty and sexy. This buttery soft, lacy chemise comes from Italy and is flattering without being skimpy. **\$116, Adrienne Clarisse, 531 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville, 847-573-8905, adrienneclarisse.com**

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5. BLOOMING ORCHID Cut flowers fade, but orchid plants bloom gloriously for months and can live for years. Amy babies her Cattleya orchids all year and is rewarded annually with big, showy blossoms. Send a signal that your love is here to stay with an orchid from the experts, **Hausserman of Villa Park. Prices range from \$17 - \$47, plus delivery, 2N134 Addison Rd, Villa Park, 630-543-6855, orchidsbyhaussermann.com**



6. LOVE LETTERS Texts and emails are efficient, but hardly romantic. Delight your sweetie with a heartfelt note or keep a journal together to record tender moments. "I love the idea of love notes," sighs Amy. "It's been so long since I've received one." For inspiration, check out the book "Other People's Love Letters" by Bill Shapiro, **\$15, Amazon.com, Recycled leather notebook, \$19 and Heart notes (8), \$12, at Paper Source, Chicago, Evanston, Highland Park, 888-727-3711, papersource.com**



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