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The Holiday Issue

RUSH HOUR

Our no-panic guide will have you making last-minute magic

We asked, they answered: Designers, chefs and famous folk share their no-fail ideas for holiday foods, decorations and gifts

FAVORITE
THINGS

Summer Thornton
interior designer

Gift: "I oftentimes will give a few vintage ornaments. I buy them all year round at estate sales and flea markets. They're just beautiful, festive, and always unexpected!"

Jacques Pepin
culinary legend

Gift: "Make candied orange or lemon peel, which can then be dipped in melted chocolate." There's a recipe in his newest cookbook: "Essential Pepin: More than 700 All-Time Favorites from My Life in Food."

Alton Brown
Food Network star

Gift: "No one doesn't like getting cookies. Get one you're really good at and make it into your signature cookie and you'll be welcomed everywhere. I have a new cookie that is from a dark chocolate special — so dark they can absorb surrounding light. Chocopalypse cookie."

Mitchell Gold
co-owner of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams furniture company

Decoration: "Wreaths, because they're not just for holidays and they're appropriate for everyone."

Martha Stewart

Decoration: "Decorate an outdoor tree, just one of your trees outside. But get the right lights — use LEDs so if one goes out the whole string doesn't go."



Heather Sperling
Chicago editor of Tastingtable.com

Gift: "My go-to is a jar of local jam. One of the country's premier masters of preserves, Elizabeth Madden of Rare Bird Jam, works out of Oak Park — I guarantee that anyone would be excited to receive a jar of her plum-apple-hibiscus jam or blackberry-lime curd (each \$10)."



Shax Riegler
author and features editor,
House Beautiful

Gift: "Scented Library Candles from Paddywax. I love the Henry David Thoreau (cedar, moss, and juniper), which smells like a late-summer day, and the Jane Austen, which smells a lush, lovingly tended English garden."



Art Smith
chef

Food: "I love a chocolate soufflé, delicious, decadent and loved by all. Just eggs, fine chocolate." For Art's, and other chocolate soufflé recipes, go to chicagotribune.com/souffles.

JC Brooks
frontman of Chicago group JC Brooks and the Uptown Sound

Gift: "I tend to give the best book I've read in the past year — this year's pick is 'John Dies at the End,' which might be too intense for aunts and grandmas, in which case I'd give them something else that I dug like 'A New Earth' or 'Outliers.'"

Peter Sagal
host of National Public Radio's "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me" quiz show

Food: "Garlic roasted brussels sprouts. You cut the sprouts in half, brown them cut side down in an oven-proof pan with a LOT of olive oil, garlic, and kosher salt, and then you roast 'em in the oven till soft. Brussels sprouts! Who knew?"



Jam and ornament: Bill Hogue/Tribune photos; Smith, Brian Cassella/Tribune photos; Thornton, photo by Josh Thornton; soufflé, Jeff Lee/Getty; Magnolia wreath from themagnoliacompany.com