

# London Evening Standard

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## Gifts to keep for yourself...

By Nina Caplan, Metro Last updated at 00:00am on 16.12.04

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The worst thing about Christmas is all that forced shopping; the best thing is there are at least two days where quitting your pyjamas is a lifestyle choice.

So in between worrying about everybody else, put in some quality time debating what you most want to see under the tree - then drop a hint, leave this page lying around or, if push comes to shove, get yourself a gift. Why not? You deserve it. And here, to help with planning a truly luxurious holiday weekend, are our fave Christmas treats - each one far more practical than any partridge in a pear tree...

- **Enchanted Sphere**

An excellent idea: a wooden tree-bauble filled with La Maison Du Chocolat's lovely ganache, judiciously mixed with Les Caves Taillevent champagne. Just don't tell anyone what's inside it, and your sweetie store is safe. *Price: £21, La Maison Du Chocolat, 45-46 Piccadilly W1, Tel: 020 7287 8500.*

- **Fortnum & Mason Plum Pudding**

This 900g baby needs love and affection - and at least two hours worth of steaming. Unashamedly substantial, it's made to a traditional recipe (with plums rather than those nasty glacé cherries), comes in a china bowl and is positively swimming in sherry, brandy, rum and cider. Yum. *Price: £25, Fortnum & Mason, 181 Piccadilly W1, Tel: 020 7734 8040.*

- **Nobu Now by Nobu Matsuhisa**

This is no time to visit posh restaurants - they're heaving with drunken office parties anyway. Stock up and try something adventurous yet healthy from the glitterati's favourite Japanese chef: scallop and Brussels sprouts with Jalapeno salsa, perhaps, or watercress and white asparagus salad with watercress dressing. *Price: £25, Quadrille, most bookshops.*

- **Tequila 4 Two**

If Pop for one seems too selfish, try this ingenious way to share a tippie: Tequila Porfidio Anejo in a clever hollow bottle that fits two shot glasses, each with a dinky glass cactus inside. It's seriously good tequila - distilled from 100 per cent Blue Ageva from the Guadalajara region of Mexico - and little cacti have to be an improvement on the more traditional drowned worm. *Price: £55.25, Caviar House, 161 Piccadilly W1, Tel: 020 7409 0445. www.caviar-house.com*

- **Achille Gaggia**

Yes, all right... this one'll stretch the credit card a bit, but espresso lovers will find it a bargain at the price. Named after the company's founder, Gaggia's latest not only looks gorgeous, it allows non-stop espresso manufacture without the need to refill the water. It's a bit daunting and takes a couple of tries at first, but there's space for one cup or two (and a cup-warmer) and, if you use good coffee, the result is bliss. *Price: £699. For stockists, Tel: 0870 442 0300. www.gaggia.uk.com*

- **Pommery Pop**

Sick of being convivial, or just arguing over what to open? Sulk in a (comfy) corner with an individual bottle of Pommery Pop. Just stick in a straw and off you go - all the advantages of an alco-pop with none of the disadvantages, such as the horrible taste or evil hangover - Pommery is, after all, a decent champagne label. And with a bottle this size, there's no way your bubbly will end up flat. *Price: £7, Harvey Nichols, 109-125 Knightsbridge SW1, Tel: 020 7235 5000. www.harveynichols.com*

- **Galette Des Rois**

A gorgeous cake - light yet buttery, deceptively simple to look at, yet horribly more-ish to eat - from one of London's best French bakers. And they're open on Christmas Eve until 6pm - so, if you buy it late enough in the day, you might just about manage to keep it whole until Christmas Day. *Price: £8, £9.90, £12, Paul, 29-30 Bedford Street WC2, Tel: 020 7836 3304. www.paul.fr*

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