



## A Gift Certificate with a Personal Side

Monday, December 15th, 2008

If you're anything like me, there are always one or two people on your gift giving list that end up with a big fat question mark next to their names. Unfortunately, those people always seem to be among the most important on your list. You end up waiting until the last minute hoping inspiration will hit; spending fruitless (and panic-filled) hours at the mall; and then ending up with a generic candle/necktie/necklace that despite all your efforts, looks like your made no efforts at all.

This year I'm left in a bind for what I'd term the "in-betweens" on my list—the friends whom I know well but aren't quite sure of their size, or tricky non-family members (but still important recipients) like my boyfriend's sister.

And so last week, I practically wept with happiness when I discovered the ultimate in personalized gifts—a [Vivabox](#). Here's how it works: You choose the theme—from gourmet tea to dinner for two to coffee, wine, fragrance or even barbeque— that suits the recipient. She gets a box filled samples to use now, as well as a Vivabox credit card that's redeemable for a personalized gift of the recipient's choice. Prices range from \$45-\$160.

To redeem the gifts, all recipients have to do is log into the secure Web site and select their "gift" from a menu of choices related to the particular theme. I knew my boyfriend's sis would love a massage, but didn't have intimate knowledge of her favorite salon in her North Carolina hometown. Voila—a [spa Vivabox](#). Instead of a plain old SpaFinder gift card, she'll be receiving an all-in-one spa box, with a present for now and one for later. She'll receive "use now" presents like organic body lotion, shower gel and bath salts, plus a gift card for an hour-long massage available anywhere SpaFinder cards are accepted (\$160).

For my grilling-obsessed boss, some of my staffers and I are going in on the [Barbecue package](#), which includes "use now" spice rubs and a menu of offerings her can order when he wants them, like Omaha steaks and spice infusion / marinade kits (\$45). My best friend and her husband just bought a new place, and they're all about nesting. Problem is, they hate to cook. I'm giving them the [Gourmet to your door Vivabox](#), a box filled with elegant napkins and napkin rings that will wet their palate for the six course gourmet meal to come. They can choose their favorite cuisine (New Orleans Favorites would be my pick, but I bet she chooses the Mediterranean Feast) and the meal will be prepared by expert chefs and delivered to their door (\$115).