

THE BELLAIRE BUZZ

PEOPLE, PRODUCTS, & SERVICES

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Custom-made for the holidays

by Angie Frederickson, staff writer

There is nothing better than receiving a personalized gift. A gift that you know someone has really spent time thinking about and has chosen with your unique tastes in mind. Instead of searching the mall this holiday season, try creating something that is truly unique. The best gifts might not come right off the shelf, but are ready to be designed with your creativity.

Custom running shoes

Shopping for a runner this year? Maybe a runner who would just love pink running shoes with purple laces? Nike allows you to build the perfect shoe by choosing color options for every section of the shoes. Create a masterpiece by piecing together colors for the toe, heel, laces, and even the Nike symbol. (www.nikeid.com)

Custom baseball gloves

Who knew there were so many variables in baseball gloves? For the true baseball aficionado, this is the perfect gift to get them ready for the spring season. Choose options on everything from player's position, size, web, welting, and lacing. Finish it off with your choice of colors and the player's name. (www.customglove.com)

Personalized children's storybooks

My Very Own Fairy Tale is a personalized book where your special little girl has her name worked into a magical story about fairies. Order the gift set that includes a fairy princess tiara and a personalized poem from the fairies. (www.iseeme.com)

Custom tote bags

Monogrammed bags are always a good option, but now you can get even more personal. LL Bean allows you to choose different colors to create a custom tote bag. Maybe a blue bag with green handles and a yellow pocket. Then you can choose a size, strap length, and zip-top or open top. (www.llbean.com)

American Girl's Just Like You dolls

While every little girl may already have dolls, giving her one that looks like her is a special treat. Customize your doll by choosing the same hair and eye color as your special little lady. You can even create a doll with freckles. Then, choose the accessories that match her interests. (www.americangirl.com)

Custom handbags

Create your own handbag by choosing from a variety of

shapes and colors. After you've created the perfect bag, you can also choose a symbol to be embroidered on the inside. Choose the symbol that best reflects the recipient's own style: star, sun, lotus, or lovebird and heart. (www.designgurubags.com)

Personalized stationery

You can create adorable stationery with sketches to reflect the look and personality of each member of the family. If Dad's a golfer and Mom's a tennis player, you can depict them on the stationery. Add little girls in dress-up and little boys with their favorite sports uniform and you've got the perfect gift. (www.ubuproducts.com)

Photos on anything

We've all seen photos on things like tote bags and calendars, but now you can create things like puzzles, wine labels, recipe cards, and much more. Exposures has some great gift ideas for how to turn a special photo into something more. (www.exposuresonline.com)

Personalized bling

The Bling Company will add a sparkle to just about anything. You can provide your own items or let them create something from scratch. Add crystals to things like shirts, hats, bags, aprons, water bottles, or just about anything else you can imagine. (www.frenzco.com)

Personal biography

Perhaps the most unique gift you will ever give is to commission a personal biography for someone. Rory Siefer, The Texan Biographer, specializes in capturing personal stories and turning them into a leather-bound,

hardback book that is sure to become a family heirloom. She conducts personal interviews and helps select personal photos and memorabilia to tell the stories of people's lives. She can put together a gift certificate and welcome package to announce this gift in time for the holidays. (www.texasbiographer.com)

This year, go beyond monogramming and create something truly unique for that special someone. Since all of these ideas are custom-made, it's a good idea to get started early so they'll arrive before the holidays. If you run out of time, many retailers offer gift certificates to give for the holidays, and your loved one can take their time and create their own masterpiece. Just think, you'll be done shopping before things get really crazy at the Galleria.



Personal biographer Rory Siefer (not pictured) creates a one-of-a-kind gift that will be treasured for generations.