

# Success in the kitchen: having the right tools

by Larry Janes

If you're like the national average, more than 62 percent of your holiday shopping will be done the week of Dec. 20.

Too bad.

If only you had known that the ultimate in kitchen sophistication and all-around bon vivant is the new Gaggenau kitchen system. So what if you can write a check for \$9,325 on the spot. The wonder stove to beat all stoves probably wouldn't be available until way past Mother's Day. Anyway, how would you fit it under the tree?

Something a little smaller? Come now. You mean you're still interested in Jenn-Aire ranges made into a center island complete with Zero-King vacuum refrigeration system? Hey, dudes and dudettes, that was last year's biggie. Anyway, at a total cost of a little under \$7,000 (includes installation), we didn't want to look cheap now, did we?

Something a little more utilitarian? Once again this year, Cuisinart is going for the competition's jugular vein by reintroducing yet another version of what has proven to be the best food processor in the strata. Bigger. Quieter. More options.

**IF YOU'RE THE** type of person who just purchased a Cabbage Patch doll and finally made it to Club Med, then you probably just purchased a food processor. Even if you don't use it, it's an awesome must for every Coriam-clad counter.

Be sure the label says Cuisinart. By the way, write a check for the \$140 unless you want all the added toys that you'll never be able to figure out how to use. Then make the check for a little over \$375.

As far as cookware is concerned, you can still buy Teflon just about anywhere but if you want something that really shows you've made it, choose Cuisinart. Solid, heavy duty stainless that looks about as pretty as it cooks. I know people who've cooked Budget Gourmet TV dinners, then transferred them into gleaming Cuisinart cookware, brought them to the table to hear nothing but raves. It's true, good things do come in bigger, shinier packages.

**OF COURSE, IF YOU'RE** still one of those people who continue to wear white after Labor Day, then you'll probably be overjoyed to hear that ice cream makers are expected to be hot this gift-giving season.

If the bucks are tight, check out the Don-viere model for about \$39.95. If you're looking for the traditional best, look for the White Mountain brand. Hand-crank models start at about \$50 while the electric models will fetch about \$75. Want the absolute best? If money is no object and you want to really impress the friends, the Symac Ice Cream Maker not only makes the best and fastest ice cream but also is numero uno in gelato, sorbets and ices. At about \$395, it should be. My opinion? You can but a lot of Dove Bars for that kinda dough.

Once again this year, as in the past, coffee makers seem to be the rage.

Great Euro-styling in addition to great pricing at \$60-90 makes Krups and Bunn two of the hottest brewers on the market.

**TRUE COFFEE** aficionados, however, still go in for the Chemex system. The Chemex Carafe with its unique hour-glass shape and design not only looks good, it makes the best cup of java, in my book. You can't beat the \$25 price tag either.

Rumor has it that those under-the-cabinet models that seem to be the rage are more bother than their worth. Contrary to popular belief, unless you have four feet of clearance between counter and upper cabinet, your usable space is still limited and the steam generated from the brewing units is questionable to cabinet fronts and shelves.

Probably the hottest gadget to surface this year is an electric knife sharpener put out by Chef's Choice Electric Knife Sharpener. At \$79.95, it was one of the hottest raves at this year's houseware's show.

Sources informed me that the sharpener has special magnets that hold your knife in place and includes diamond grinding heads, which will not excessively damage the blade and composition of the metal. Trust me on this one, folks, I've seen and I've tried. It works. A definite must for the serious gourmet who is in constant need of a good, sharp knife.

Speaking of knives, I'm sure I don't have to tell you that you get what you pay for. Do you still have the "incredible Ginsu" that you paid \$19.95 for a few years back? I rest my case. Good Solidgen stainless knives like those made by Wustoph, Trident or Henckles top the quality lists. And rightfully so, especially when the smallest of the paring knives will set you back almost \$20. A good starter set con-

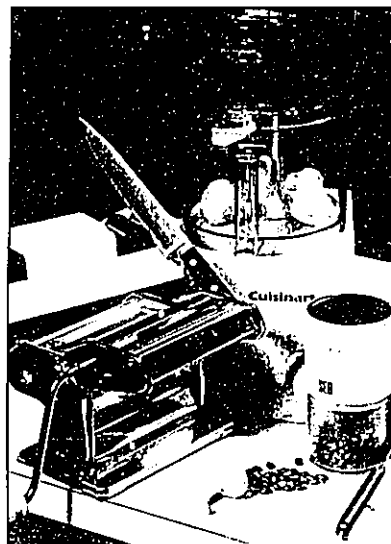


photo by BILL BRESLER

**You can make your culinary capers fun with kitchen gadgets that make the job easier.**

sisting of a parer, medium slicer and French chopping knife will tally up to almost \$95. But again, you're buying the best and they will last — and last — and last.

**IF YOU'RE LOOKING** for something to give mom (or dad) for the holidays but you need to gas up the BMW, check out the new silverstone broiler pans. A word of caution here, however, there are many imitators out on the market that call themselves Silverstone-lined. But look for the trademark seal. Broiler pans simply rinse off — I love mine and at about \$20, it's useful, timesaving and won't get returned like a scarf or tie.

Popular again this year are the raclette pans and pasta makers, woks and electric frypans. You know what I'm talking about, the things that take up so much space in the cabinet that you only use them once to twice a year and after three years as \$50 dust catchers, you finally end up putting them in the garage sale to help finance your cruise to Tahiti.

(By the way, Tahiti is this year's IN vacation spot.)

Have a cookbook freak for a friend? This year's **MUST** books to leave out on your countertops deal with Indian cooking (Madhur Jaffrey's is the best) and something trendies call Spanish Tapas. We're still feeling the effects of Thai and fashionable Far Eastern cuisine but the word from the west coast is to begin retreating to a more subtle vein and let the basic food make the statement. Use your herbs in ways to compliment, not mask the flavor of your food.