

It's beginning to look a

So here's Gabriella Le Breton's round-up of seasonal offerings - from stocking fillers to credit-card busting largesse



The big one

ABS rucksack

From £589



The ultimate Christmas gift is the gift of life: if somebody you love regularly skis or rides off-piste, giving them an ABS rucksack will be worth every penny if it improves their chances of survival in an avalanche. All airbag system packs work in a similar way: the rucksack contains a refillable compressed gas container and one or two airbags. Should the wearer be caught in an avalanche, he/she pulls the activation handle on the bag's shoulder strap, which releases the gas to inflate the airbags. Thanks to the added volume the filled airbags create, the wearer remains horizontal and on, or close to, the surface of the avalanche snow structure, rather than being sucked under it. Having an ABS rucksack is not a guarantee of survival in the case of avalanche but statistics show that using one can increase your chances (of 262 people whose ABS® avalanche airbag was activated, 97% survived, 84% remained uninjured and 3% died). The industry-leading ABS® Vario line incorporates a number of twin packs, which feature a base unit containing a TwinBag ABS system and a Vario Zip-on bag, which vary in size from eight to 55 litres. The ABS® Vario Silverline base unit (£589) paired with the 18l ABS® Ultra Vario Zip-on (£63) offers exceptional comfort and impressive detailing. www.snowandrock.com; 0845 100 1000

The stocking fillers

£5

'Monty goes skiing'



Written by a Ski Club member and BASI qualified ski instructor, Richard Liddle, this illustrated children's book is a fun way to introduce little ones to the

world of skiing. By following the snowy adventures of Monty the Marmot, children learn terms and phrases they will come across during their early forays on the slopes and in ski school, and develop an affinity for the mountains. www.montythemarmot.co.uk

£13.23



Underwear

The New Zealand brand Mons Royale somehow manages to make its warm and breathable merino wool underwear look sexy, thanks to its vibrant colour schemes, hip T-shirts, racer-back vests and cheeky-boy leg briefs. For really chilly days, or for snuggling up after a day on the hill, go for head-to-toe merino comfort with a 'Monsie'. www.snowmoment.co.uk

£164.99



£17.95



Bootlaces

As Icelandic professional snowboarding brothers, Eiki and Halldor Helguson will tell you a rider can never have enough belts or bootlaces. The siblings' funky accessories brand SevenNine13 (the Icelandic equivalent of 'touch wood' for good luck) comprises bootlaces, belts made out of bootlaces, braces and wallets in bold colours and graphic prints: look closely and you'll spot them being worn by the hardcore snowboarding and freestyle ski fraternity. www.sevennine13.com; 020 7226 8787



Not like Christmas!



For him

Skis

Armada is an international family of some of the world's greatest skiers, athletes, designers and engineers who push the boundaries of ski design and performance. After a decade of remaining largely unchanged, Armada's original all-mountain ski, the ARVti, has been redesigned for 2013/14. It's got a wider platform, new AR Nose Rocker profile and a double layer of Titanal to help cope with variable snow conditions by keeping the ski stable and improve on-piste performance. Tell your man it's just like him: a trendy, good-looking on-piste charger that can hold its own, and its edge when the going gets bumpy.

www.altimusonline.co.uk; 020 7937 7177

£520



£200

Jacket

The Canadian brand Arc'teryx knows a thing or two about keeping people warm and has invested all its expertise into perfecting the durable, lightweight and versatile Thorium down jacket. Best worn as a warm mid-layer or on its own on dry days, the 750 fill goose down core gives maximum warmth and breathability while synthetic insulation is used in areas where moisture tends to build up. Technical features such as moisture and wind-resistant outer fabric, an adjustable hem drawcord and an integrated stuff sack make this a terrific winter wardrobe staple. www.arcteryx.com; 020 7078 3546



£140

Hip flask

As any self-respecting St Bernard will confirm, a sip of brandy works a treat to warm you up on the top of a blustery mountain or on a chilly chairlift. Ettinger, a British brand, crafts calf leather-bound 4oz (£94) and 6oz (£106) stainless-steel hip flasks, which fit perfectly into a ski jacket pocket. Splash out on one of two exclusive designs created by Saira Hunja, a renowned tattoo artist, based on the British countryside's most ubiquitous animals: the dashing fox and splendid pheasant. www.ettinger.co.uk; 020 8877 1616



£825

Watch

Created by the outdoor watch specialists Linde Werdelin, the 'Rock' is a lightweight watch attachment, which features advanced hardware and software functions for protection and guidance in high-altitude mountain sports. The clever piece of kit incorporates an altimeter, thermometer (which alerts the user when temperatures drop below -12° Celsius), a 3-axis compass, chronograph, inclination sensor with avalanche warnings, and also shows weather trends with the barometer function. Not only an invaluable resource for when your man is up on the mountain, the Rock records data such as his daily vertical ascent and drop on its logbook, which he can download to his computer at the end of the day. Just don't say we didn't warn you when he starts bragging about his vital stats over dinner... www.lindewerdelin.com; 020 7727 6577

Gift voucher

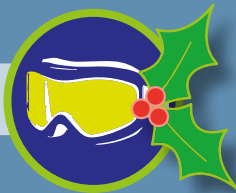
For the man who has everything, this is a gift voucher with a difference. The Canada Heli & Cat Ski Powder Dream Gift Card enables you to load credit onto it (in \$500/£310 increments) to put towards the cost of a holiday in a choice of six different heli-ski lodges and two cat-ski lodges in British Columbia. It's a great way to pay towards a heli/board-ski holiday without footing the whole bill, and card holders are rewarded with special perks, such as credits for spending in the lodges. Finally, it's guaranteed to earn you a lifetime of Brownie points. www.canadaheliandcatski.com; 001 416 483 7884 ▶



Canada Heli & Cat Ski Co.

From £310

The latest ski gear (for your Christmas list)



£300

For her

Snowboard

If the girl of your dreams is an adventurous, fun-loving snowboarder, make her Christmas by popping a brand new Burton "Social" board into her stocking. The Social is a great all-rounder, with the added float and playful qualities of V-Rocker™ shaping, which creates catch-free friskiness, and a twin design for maximum agility. Overbite Frostbite edges enhance the power and grip, making this a great board for women who enjoy a loose and forgiving feel on the slopes. www.snowboard-asylum.com; 0844 499 1414

Climbing skins

Based in British Columbia, G3 (Genuine Guide Gear) has some 20 years' experience in designing and making innovative, reliable equipment for backcountry skiers and riders, from avalanche probes and climbing skins to skis and splitboards. G3's Alpinist climbing skins (available for skis and splitboards) offer exceptionally secure tail-clip attachments and laminated tip connectors with low-profile, self-aligning stainless steel hands. For the female backcountry lover in your life, G3 climbing skins are not only the lightest, fastest gliding and most secure in the business, they are also, quite simply, the prettiest ones. www.snowandrock.com; 0845 100 1000



From £136

From £21



Skincare

Reveal your softer side by acknowledging that being in the mountains takes its toll on your lady's skin and create an Aesop skincare package for her. Aesop's Perfect Facial Hydrating Cream (£81) delivers a potent dose of Vitamin C for everyday winter use, while Damascan Rose Facial Treatment (£51) is a concentrated nourishing serum, which she can add to her moisturiser for a rewarding boost after a day in the mountains. Finally, keep her lips luscious with the hydrating Kuberose Lip Heal (£21), a fragrant oil which can even double up as a perfume. www.aesop.com



£450

Jacket

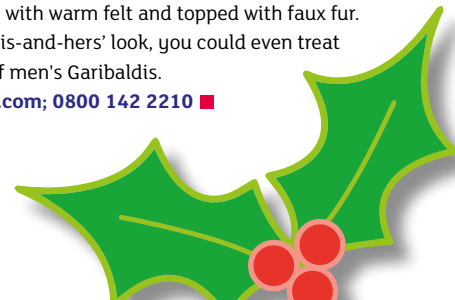
Show off your fashion credentials by surprising your lady friend with a Peak Performance Heli Chilkat jacket. In vibrant pink and orange, the stylish Chilkat will keep her warm, dry, comfortable and visible on the hill. It's packed with all the technical details we've come to expect from Peak Performance: new two-layer HiPe Ace fabric for freedom of movement and breathability, Thermo°Cool® padding to create a comfortable micro-climate, a snap-in snow skirt, Recco® System tagging, water-resistant zippers, multiple pockets and a helmet-compatible hood. www.peakperformance.com; 0161 3327066

Boots

The Norwegian brand Helly Hansen has come a long way since Captain Helly Juell Hansen and his wife starting making oilskins for local sailors in 1877. I'm sure the Captain's missus would approve of Helly Hansen's brand new, hard-wearing Garibaldi D-Ring winter boots, which feature a solid rubber grip for snowy walks, a fully waterproof rubber midsole, and leather upper lined with warm felt and topped with faux fur. If you're into the 'his-and-hers' look, you could even treat yourself to a pair of men's Garibaldis. www.hellyhansen.com; 0800 142 2210 ■



£130



The Ski Club offers members great discounts on clothing with Ellis Brigham and Snow+Rock. Visit skiclub.co.uk/discounts