

Sustainable Gifting

Together We Build, Nov 30, 2022

By Thomas Beck, AIA, NCARB

Because of our interest and investment in sustainability we are recipients of a broad range of newsletters geared to keeping us up to date on climate issues, sustainability, solar power, green energy news, the works. The newsletter from the New York Times, Climate Forward, just put out a Holiday Gift Guide, which inspires us to think about what our gifts can do to support and inspire sustainability locally. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/25/climate/climate-holiday-gift-guide.html>) The first paragraph of the newsletter captures an excellent sentiment: “Some of the best gifts I’ve ever received aren’t things. They’re cherished memories.”

Take a few minutes to think about what that looks like for you. We live in an incredible area with so many outdoor opportunities to create beautiful memories. We also have a rich variety of opportunities for personal enrichment, like art classes offered through the Art Center of Estes Park (<https://www.artcenterofestes.com/>) or a membership there providing discounts on beautiful locally made artwork. Another learning opportunity to gift is our local Inspired Artisan Market, where you can learn some fun art skills. (<https://www.inspiredartexperiences.com/>) A donation to the Estes Arts District supports visual art, music, and performing arts in our community, and if you write “Studio Tour” in the memo line your tax-deductible donation supports the annual local studio tour. (<https://www.estesartsdistrict.org/>) (Full disclosure, my wife Laura is one of the studio tour artists, and I am a sponsor.)

A membership to our local Fine Arts Guild of the Rockies provides free tickets to all of the productions. (<https://www.fineartsguild.org/>) A membership to our local history museum helps us understand that “Estes Park has one of Colorado’s longest histories as a destination community, which continues today.” (<https://estespark.colorado.gov/museum>) The Estes Valley Land Trust protects lands and open space. (<https://evlandtrust.org/>)

Support the local food and beverage industry by giving gift cards to a favorite local restaurant, winery, brewery, or distillery. Local music is often combined with great food at restaurants such as Rock Inn Mountain Tavern (<https://www.rockinnestes.com/>). One of our favorite foody spots for special occasions is Twin Owls Steakhouse, where they also feature local guitar Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and local bluegrass on Wednesday nights. (<https://taharaa.com/twin-owls-steakhouse/>) For another foody idea, how about our local Corey’s Chocolate, “Spreading Joy Through Chocolate Since 2017”. (<https://www.coreyschocolate.com/>) One more food favorite is Rocky Mountain Salsa, available from local shop Rocky Mountain Majesty, when not in season at our Estes Valley Farmer’s Market.

Another local gem to support with your sustainable gifting is American Legion Post 119, which serves both veterans and the community they live in. The food is excellent, and the music performances range from local musicians playing for the bar crowd, and karaoke nights, to groups performing from the stage to a paying intimate crowd. Circle 119 supports a wide variety of events, and your generous donations will help them continue their services to the veterans who have served us. (<https://esteslegion.org/>) One specific way you can give a special gift is to purchase a tile for the Honor Wall, “the 100-ft.-plus wall will hold 2,400 commemorative tiles honoring individuals who have unselfishly served—or are serving—our nation or the community.”

The above, incomplete list is comprised of locals we are personally familiar with and support. There are many, many more local opportunities for giving the gift of memories and experiences. Picture the ones that speak to you and give the gift of those to your friends and family this holiday season.

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