

The Boston Globe

Dad jeans for Grandma? Not this year! Made in New England gifts, 2018 edition

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS NOVEMBER 20, 2018

Sometimes, giving the wrong gift can create a memorable moment, like the time the gift tags got switched and Diane's Grandma Chapman opened a pair of size 34W men's Levis. (A class act always, she smiled serenely and said, "Why, thank you!") Usually, though, bad gifts are just bad — which resulted in \$90 billion of holiday merchandise returns last season, according to the Wall Street Journal. That translates to 13 percent of all holiday gifts landing on the "unloved" list.

Don't let this happen to you. Our current strategy is, give something that a) puts a smile on our face, and b) is made in New England. Why not give a boost to the crafty types who live in our own backyard as opposed to some faceless conglomerate? Herewith, a look at some items we encountered this year that made us say, "Aw!" or "Yaasss!"

Let us float this unusual gift idea

Fans of Block Island, R.I., are probably familiar with the glass float project, in which glass blower Eben Horton has hidden hundreds of glass balls — similar to the glass net floats used by Japanese fishermen — along the trails and beaches of Block Island. Horton has been doing this since 1993, creating the solid glass orbs in his Wakefield, R.I., studio. Accidentally stumbling onto one of these treasures is always a thrill but (psst!) it's not the only way to obtain one. Order the ultimate Block Island souvenir from the artist online; he also sells glassware and "collection orbs." \$30. www.glassfloatproject.com



Colorful coasters that look like sailor knot bracelets from Mystic Knotwork.