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**Lend a Hand**



Helping Hand Rewards brings together gift companies that employ artisans, especially women, from the developing world. Recipients get a card that lets them choose a gift; choices include a spa basket, a decorative bowl or an edible treat, in one of two price ranges: \$18-\$37 or \$32-\$60. (773) 890-5900, x3387; [helpinghandrewards.com](http://helpinghandrewards.com)



**Report Card**



By the nature of the business -- feeding hundreds with food that might sit under a warmer -- hotels need to keep their kitchens immaculate and their practices stringent. Just in case, though, check out the hotel's scores from its most recent health department inspection. [Everyblock.com](http://Everyblock.com) posts inspection reports in a number of major cities.

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**Avoid the Landfill**



For a Habitat for Humanity gala, Chef Pascal Coudouy at the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa in Beaver Creek, Colo. ([beavercreek.hyatt.com](http://beavercreek.hyatt.com)), devised a special menu that would be easily compostable. All the food waste -- 80 gallons of it -- was sent to a nearby composting facility. For planners looking to do the same, check out [findacomposter.com](http://findacomposter.com) for a listing of facilities in your area. Note that meat is more difficult to compost than vegetables, and the smaller the bones, the better.

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**Doing Their Bidding**



The latest trend in auctions is electronic bidding. Guests each get a handheld device to place bids, and the highest bid at any moment is projected onto a screen. Anecdotally, this method seems to raise more money than a traditional silent auction. Companies that can create this setup are IML (212-805-7331; [imlaudience.com](http://imlaudience.com)) and BidPal (317-816-8842; [bidpalnetwork.com](http://bidpalnetwork.com)). Because the technology costs \$5,000 to \$15,000 to implement, it's best-suited to events that can raise many times that sum.

**MOST READ   MOST EMAILED**

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**Glow the Brand**



These 100-percent soy candles get personal with custom packaging and your organization's logo in a wax emblem. Cost: \$11.95 each for a minimum order of 100. (630) 355-5877; [wayfarercandles.com](http://wayfarercandles.com)

### Vintage Keg



This budget-friendly barrel of Californian red wine can be set up at a self-serve station, picnic table, barbecue, etc. Cost: \$29.99 per 3-liter barrel. (707) 933-2640; [redtruckwine.com](http://redtruckwine.com)

### Sassy Seating



Liven up an event with funky Fusion chairs. These stackable seats, available for rental from Cort Event Furnishings, come in red, green and clear. Cost: from \$30 each. (888) 710-2525; [cortevents.com](http://cortevents.com)

### White on White



A mix of snow-hued blossoms add an elegant touch to tables -- and work with any type of décor. Price for arrangement shown, by Blade Floral and Event Designs, approximately \$175. (917) 723-3577; [bladenyc.com](http://bladenyc.com)

### Case Closed



Tote your laptop in colorful style with these vibrant covers from Kena Kai. Available in three sizes; cost: \$25-\$35. (714) 782-7387; [kenakai.com](http://kenakai.com)

### Pure Plates



Stylish Verterra dinnerware adds an earthy touch to any table. It's also one of the greenest products around: Plates and bowls are crafted from fallen palm leaves and pressurized steam alone. Cost: \$4.99-\$6.49 per package of eight. (718) 383-3333; [vertterra.com](http://vertterra.com)

### Saks of Goodies



Saks Fifth Avenue is still a place for luxury goods, but this year especially, the store has lower-priced gifts mixed in for those on a budget. For example, this attractive set of 100 monogrammed coasters (top left) costs just \$50, and a brightly colored personalized leather luggage tag (bottom left) costs \$35. If money is less of an object, check out this brilliantly complex wine-tasting kit (bottom right) perfect for aspiring experts, for \$200. (877) 551-7257; [saks.com](http://saks.com)



### Pop Culture



Set up a lollipop bar featuring Lollyphile's newest variety -- White Russian, flavored with vodka, cream and coffee liqueur -- along with established favorites like absinthe and bourbon. Price per pack of 36 pops, \$52. (415) 690-5198; [lollyphile.com](http://lollyphile.com)

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