

Gift Ideas

Sharpening Your Gift Giving Skills

(NAPSA)—If you're having trouble cooking up great gift ideas, you may want to try looking in your kitchen. Many people—whether they're culinary connoisseurs or baking beginners—don't have all the cooking utensils they need, or the ones they want.

For example, a set of knives can be a useful, practical, long-lasting and thoughtful gift. Knives can be a sharp way to mark holidays such as Father's Day, or special events including housewarmings and weddings—and they can make great hostess and birthday gifts as well.

Try these knife-buying tips from J. A. Henckels, a knife maker that has been in business for almost 270 years:

- **Choose For Comfort**—Decide on a design that best fits your hand and feels most comfortable.

- **Feel For Balance**—The handle should be properly balanced, mated to the blade and constructed to give maximum amount of control. If the knife is well balanced, it is easier to control and will be less tiresome to use.

- **Look For A Full Tang**—On a quality knife, the tang (end of blade that extends through the handle) will extend the full length and width of the handle, providing extra strength and balance to the knife. On molded polypropylene handled knives, the tang should extend at least 60 percent of the way through the handle.

- **Handle Design**—On higher-quality cutlery such as J. A. Henckels's, the handle scales are usually attached to the tang with three no-stain rivets to assure it does not loosen from the blade. Quality knives often use brass or nickel rivets. Polypropylene handles should be bonded to the tang without seams or gaps. Stainless Steel handles should be smooth and also permanently bonded without gaps.

- **Open Stock Or Set?**—Knives are usually more affordable if they're purchased as a set. In



Quality kitchen utensils can make practical and thoughtful gifts.

addition, a set of knives usually includes the key knives needed to form the base of a good collection.

- **Fine Edge Or Never Needs Sharpening?**—Fine-edge knives are usually the choice of professionals because they have a good weight and feel and provide a more precise cut. Never-needs-sharpening knives tend to give users a tearing action, rather than fine cut. However they also tend to be less expensive as they are all machine made.

In 1976 J. A. Henckels introduced its Four Star series. The series features blades that are precision-honed to stay sharper, longer. In addition, the knives are made with the Friodur method for maximum no-stain properties and higher blade-strength. The knives are dishwasher safe (although the manufacturer does not recommend putting any quality knife in the dishwasher) and can be sanitized. The series includes a selection of block sets and smaller gift sets. They can help people be more certain the next gift they give will make the cut.

For more information, visit www.j-a-henckels.com.