

The cocktail connoisseur

• **SCOTT CAMERON, 42, Logan Square**

"I've got a bottle of grappa that tastes exactly like soap, and I don't even understand why. There's a genever-style gin from Anchor Distilling Company that has been reviewed pretty well, but it's foul-tasting! So it just sits at the back of the shelf, and it's like a warning bottle." Meet Scott Cameron, software developer and cocktail obsessive, a man who claims he is "very easy to buy a gift for," yet who can tell you exactly which high-end jar of cocktail cherries *not* to buy. For the aspiring cocktail aficionado who has everything, he helps us come up with a spirited wish list.—*Julia Kramer*



Fever Tree tonics,
99 cents for a 6.8oz bottle at West Lakeview Liquors

"[They're] made with sugar instead of corn syrup."



Griottines cherries, \$15 for a two-pound jar at La Boulangerie
"Instead of those awful cherries full of red food coloring, you use these sweet, delicious Kirsch cherries in a drink."

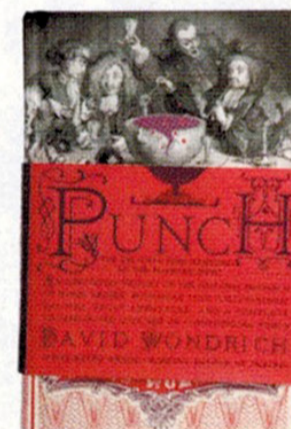


Breville Ikon die-cast steel blender,
\$200 at Sur la Table
"Definitely useful."



Punch bowl, \$32–\$500 at cocktailcottage.com for similar antique versions; \$40 for a new ten-piece set at Crate & Barrel
"When I make punch, I make gallons."

Ticket to Tales of the Cocktail, a cocktail convention in New Orleans July 21–24, 2011. Events range from free to \$50 at talesofthecocktail.com.
"You could make a cocktail-based vacation out of it."



Punch by David Wondrich,
\$24 at the Book Cellar
"I'd also recommend *Imbibe!* [by the same author]."



Yellow chartreuse,
\$55 at Lush Wine and Spirits
"You can probably assume that a guy with a bar has the basics: gin and whiskey in a couple different varieties, rum and vodka. But there are smaller things, like bottles that will probably last you half of your life because you use them in small quantities. Like a bottle of chartreuse, which is used in a couple of cocktails—a really nice old recipe."

Koval liqueurs, made in Ravenswood, \$25 at In Fine Spirits
"Sounds delicious."



My favorite budget-friendly stocking stuffer is...bitters. Former Violet Hour bartender Ira Koplowitz is behind the Bittercube line, with varieties like cherry bark-vanilla (\$9.75 at Lush). "Basically it's a lifetime supply because you only use bitters in a couple of shakes in a drink."

If you have to get a gift certificate, get it from... Drinks Over Dearborn. "Pretty much anything out of that shop would make a good gift for somebody that has a bar."

Please don't get me any more... fancy syrups. "I'm having a hard time coming up with cocktails to put them in."