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Small Appliances

Gifts For a Homemaker

by Barbara Parsons

HOMEMAKERS want small appliances for Christmas gifts more than anything else this year, says October's *Retail Memo* and there, Iowa State students, is your cue. If Mom, as usual, is the hardest member in your family to select a gift for, take heed, to the *Retail's* suggestion.

What else could make Mom's eyes light up more than a shiny new electric iron or pressure saucepan? And believe it or not, they are still within a price range that a college student's pocketbook can stand. Or, if yours has gotten extremely low, most any Dad or brother will welcome the chance to chip in with you. They seem to dread having to think up gift ideas for themselves.

Time-Savers . . .

"They're time savers," you remember hearing her say. So, with your mind made up, you're off to buy a pressure saucepan. Soon, however, you discover it's no easy chore. You've surveyed at least a half-dozen kinds with gadgets for this and gadgets for that—all of which leaves you slightly less than bewildered. "Just which one shall I buy" you query, looking more dismayed than ever.

First of all, choose a saucepan made by a reliable company. Then ask to see a guarantee and instruction book. Proceed from there with assurance that you are buying a saucepan that has been "tried and tested."

Select Proper Size . . .

You're going to have to do some figuring to find out just what size is best suited for your family needs. Pressure saucepans are on the market in sizes as small as 1 quart. A family of five usually will find the 4 quart size about right.

As for the material, saucepans are made from cast aluminum alloy, drawn aluminum, stainless steel and copper clad stainless steel. Take your choice but be sure a rack is included. Stainless steel tends to develop hotspots—uneven distribution of heat—and aluminum may cause food to stick if there is not enough moisture without a rack on the bottom of the pan.

Whatever saucepan you select, make certain it has a pressure regulator valve and an emergency release plug. There are two kinds of regulator valves. Both are adjusted to jiggle as pressure develops inside the pan. The weighted valve, which is merely a rather heavy piece of metal, allows the steam to escape as

the desired pressure is reached. This weighted regulator has no breakable parts. The indicating type of regulator has sensitive parts which may be damaged by dropping.

Emergency plugs, used as safety devices, allow steam to escape if a homemaker absentmindedly forgets to regulate her heat and too large a pressure develops. Fusible plugs of metal which melt under high pressures are more reliable than rubber or neoprene plugs.



New pressure saucepans are easy to operate, safe and speedy. The domed lid of this pan clamps into place with a slight twist of the handles.

If you choose a saucepan with a pressure indicator, be sure that it can be easily removed for accuracy checks. The scale readings should spread out over a range of not less than 45 degrees and preferably 90 degrees.

For successful results with a saucepan, the lid must make a tight seal with the pan. In nearly every saucepan on the market, this is done with a rubber gasket. Your best choice would be a removable gasket which fits in either the lid or pan. One type, which is generally unsatisfactory, has the gasket molded on. When it wears out from use, the lid must be sent to

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Flaming Beauty

A lovely poinsettia plant, gaily wrapped and be-ribboned in seasonal colors is a perfect holiday gift.



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the factory for repair. With the removable gasket, you can slip in a new one in a matter of seconds.

And while you're weighing the advantages of this saucepan against the advantages of that one, remember, a simple pan with no trick devices is both easier to care for and less dangerous to use. The more buttons, handles and levers you have to operate, the more likely you are to forget one of them and cause an accident.

Much-needed Iron

That same advice holds true, if you've decided to purchase a much-needed new iron. Added features on an iron are fine but too many can cause accidents due to forgetfulness just as with pressure saucepans.

An important item to consider when buying an iron is the temperature dial. Some dials are marked only for high, medium and low heats. A better buy are those which designate the fabrics—cotton, rayon linen and silk. This eliminates any guess work because unless you're quite experienced you're not going to know whether or not the dial should be set on low or medium for the kind of material you're ironing. In order that you won't have to put the plug in an out of the outlet each time you want to stop ironing for a few minutes, select an iron which has the temperature dial marked with "on" and "off" readings.

Smooth Handle

The handles on your iron should be smooth and should fit comfortably in your hand. A sloping handle is less strenuous on the arm and wrist than a straight handle. Watch also to see if the handle is properly insulated and is not so close that your hands will become hot while ironing. Some models have thumb rests but whether or not you will want one is up to you.

A permanently attached cord at the side of the iron eliminates repairs and prevents wear and tear on the cord. One which is attached at the back of an iron tends to get in the way as you iron.

The heavier the iron, the better, used to be the popular belief. Manufacturers are now producing light weight irons which will successfully do the job for you. Recently, several light weight irons of aluminum have been put on the market. The main disadvantage to these is that the soleplate can be scratched. Chromium plated models may be heavier but will not scratch.

Well-Balanced Iron

Irons should be well balanced whether they rest on the heel or the side. They should also have well rounded edges and a point for ironing around buttons and gathers. One model introduced on the counters recently has points at both ends of the iron. If Mom's a "left-hander," she'll find this iron particularly handy.

Last of all, be sure you can get repair replacements easily for the iron you are buying. Most models are tagged with such information and guaranteed.

It's easier buying when you know what you're looking for so check over these points before the final, "I'll wrap it for you," and you can bet that Mom will say, "I couldn't have made a better buy myself."