

[Free download] Swell Holiday

Swell Holiday

Cynthia Rowley

*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#3573115 in Books 2003-10-21Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.52 x .61 x 4.871, #File Name: 074348214X160 pages | File size: 57.Mb

Cynthia Rowley : Swell Holiday before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Swell Holiday:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. funny.By Sheryl IsaacsArrived with the dust jacket upside down, funny.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A smorgasbord of WTFBy A. TinsleyThis book is a veritable

treasure trove of terrible ideas. The gift and wrapping ideas are merely cheesy and uncreative (I'm sort of unclear how you give a thermos of hot cocoa as a gift), it's the rest of the book that really shines. Allow me to illustrate. These are outfit ideas for holiday parties:- A business suit with nothing underneath-"cover the whole front of a dress in jingle bells"- chop a kilt into a mini skirt, replace the pin with a brooch, and call yourself "Elfie, Santa's naughty helper."- "Take a leather shoulder bag and handpaint a message: HIPPIE HOLIDAZE" Looking for some decorating ideas?- "A chair with a Santa hat, a white beard and mustache, and a polaroid camera, where guests come and pose."- "Hang a picture of Jolly Old David Letterman on the mantel and tell all your friends he's the real Santa Claus" They also recommend using spray paint on your tree MORE THAN ONCE, replacing your menorah with nine flashlights, and decorating your front door with a bundt pan that you've painted to resemble a wreath, instead of, you know, an actual wreath. Or better yet, photos of OTHER people's wreaths. Nevermind turning down the heat at your holiday movie party to "set the chilly mood". Or carving "Viva la Vida" into a watermelon. As my boyfriend put it, "What is the goal of this book? To make everyone think you're an awkward idiot?" They do hit on a few good ideas (for example, I like the idea of an all-white themed Christmas party, though I think I'll skip the "ski movies by Warren Miller on the telly") but by and large this book isn't worth it. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Slight but good enough By Customer The latest entry into the "Swell franchise" is a slight volume that captures the usual zany approach to life espoused by the authors. Although light on content, the book is a cute, fizzy read and would make a nice "add on" gift - a stocking stuffer or the like. With a couple recipes and crafty ideas thrown into the mix of offbeat Swell ideas, it may even become a reference keeper for holiday preparations and clever gift buying. Not the best of the Swell bunch, but still worth a look.

Every day's a holiday in Swellville. But December is the swellest time of all. Coauthors of the breakthrough style manuals, *Swell: A Girl's Guide to the Good Life* and *Home Swell Home: Designing Your Dream Pad*, Cynthia and Ilene now bring their signature mix of spirit and style to holiday time. So come on in, brush the snow off your boots, and knock back some chick nog. The Swell girls have been shopping for ideas all year and have their stockings full of ways to rev up the revelry, redeck the halls, and spruce up your holiday look without resorting to reindeer sweaters. No elves required! The girls wrap it all up and tie it with a loopy bow. And if you don't like it, you can always return it.

About the Author Cynthia Rowley is an acclaimed fashion designer. Ilene Rosenzweig is a former style editor for the New York Times. The two best friends have turned their Swell ideas into television projects, calendars, a monthly column in *Glamour*, and a line of products sold in Target stores nationwide. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1: Gifts The Most Memorable Gifts are Often the Least Practical 'Tis better to give than to receive -- except when you spend most of November and December spinning out of control in department stores because you have to get gifts for your brother-in-law's second cousins. The trick is to have as much fun dreaming up, collecting, and wrapping prezzies as the gettters have ripping 'em open. But how? By mixing up the store-bought and the homemade, extravagant indulgences and little mementos, gifts planned months in advance and last-minute miracles. By throwing in a few surprises: something to get a laugh, or a token sappy enough it should be wrapped with a box of Kleenex. Just so long as it doesn't feel generic. Add something personal -- even to a gift certificate. There are many ways to make a gift memorable without splurges of time or money. Just please don't be too practical! Did the Three Wise Men bring Mary and Joseph a stroller? **HOMEMADE GIFTS** If You Don't Like it, You Can't Return It Far be it for us to diss the great American consumer spirit. But there can come a soul-deadening moment when you look at all the sweater boxes and pine for a holiday that feels -- how should we say? -- a little less commercial. Put some Laura Ingalls Wilder back into the gift giving. Imagine your cabin is miles from any mall or general store, weeks from the next Pony Express delivery, but you want to come up with something great for Ma and Pa... Going old-school doesn't have to mean making lace tussie-mussies, nutshell dainties, and other dust-collectors for the whatnot that require the kind of time and sewing skills you only have when you spend long winters in a cabin on the prairie. A Swell can fill her stockings with quick and quirky homemade treasures without a glue gun or even any craft skills to speak of, because she is supercrafty. Cover a Carol Sign yourself up for your very own, very independent, record label, and record your Top Ten Holiday Hits. All you need is your trusty tape recorder and a holiday songbook. Press Record-a-Carol. When you're ready to take your act big-time, find one of those recording booths where you can make your own CD or hit the big city and set up a recording session. Lots of studios will rent time to amateurs. Bring friends for backup. Stay up late struggling over the playlist to find the right balance of sentimental ballads, carols, and funk: an a cappella rendition of "Silent Night" that will make your mother cry; your harmonica solo of "Good King Wenceslas"; a cover of Adam Sandler's "Chanukah Song"; "Joy to the World," Three Dog Night's "Jeremiah was a bullfrog" version. **Holiday Song Book** If your voice makes dogs whimper, and your talents lie more in the mute hobby of fireside scrapbooking, scour the sheet-music store for your family's favorite holiday tunes. Slice them out and mount them in an album. Dress up the cover with a sentimental family photo, or just a title: "Joy to the World and other Cooper Family Classics." And a picture of a bullfrog. **Every-Occasion Stationery Collection** Keep an eye out for a pretty box. Could be fancy, a hand-painted Venetian wooden box from the antiques store, or a cool Lucite one from a

tag sale. Even a candy box that seemed too good to throw away. Label the top "Sweet Note-things." Make your box an "every-occasion secretary" by filling it with cards of all kinds. Pick them up in souvenir shops, museums, the botanical gardens -- whenever one catches your eye. The more diverse the better. Elegant florals and arty postcards, vintage thank-you notes. Blank cards "monogrammed" with the giftee's initials on top, whipped out with a glitter pen and alphabet stencil. An envelope of stickers? Sure, that iridescent unicorn could go on a letter to your niece! Book on Tape Only you do the reading. A spy thriller, a Penguin Classic, the Guinness Book of World Records. Make it through a whole novel and this present is as extravagant an expense of time as making a quilt! The only difference: You can't duplicate a quilt and give it to everyone on your list. Done! Book a spa day! Work on your gift of words in the tub, in bed when you can't sleep. If a whole book is too much of a commitment, how about Cliffs Notes on tape, or a short story, a collection of poems, a compendium of priest and rabbi jokes. Particularly sweet for someone who -- we're not naming names, Nana -- is always complaining they never get to hear your voice. Add value by hamming it up with bad accents, maniacal laughter, deep sighs, maybe even footnotes. Heirloom Recipe Box Copy one of your family's heirloom recipes onto an index card and put it in an envelope. That's it? Well, you could... Compile the whole family treasury on index cards in a regular recipe file box, alphabetized from Uncle Al's bread pudding to your sister-in-law Wendy's wings. For the four-star version, write the recipe for Grandpa's cheesecake on one side of the card and on the other side adhere a photo of the celebrity chef looking glamorous back in his svelte heyday. You might want to laminate, so as not to stain his fedora with strawberry topping. Hollywood version: Earlier in the year, make a time when you and Aunt Sheila get together and videotape her making her famous babka. It'll be an archival keepsake if you can get her to talk about how she learned the recipe back in the old country. Keep the camera trained on her hands so you can see how much "just a handful" of flour really is. Inspiration Journal Customize a plain date book or blank diary with your own daily affirmations, inspiring quotes, country music trivia facts, popular French phrases, or vocabulary words of the week. Like apocryphal: Look it up! Photo Ops Break out of the silver-framed motif for a moment. When it comes to sentimentos, think of holiday swag: Not the laurel and pine variety, but the promotional merch for corporate America, like baseball hats, key rings and mugs, the kind you find advertised in the back of in-flight magazines. A corporate family watch with your family logo! Your own family merch can be created at pretty much any big photo developer. Order a calendar full of family snaps -- you jumping moguls for January, your permatan sister shacking out by the pool as the calendar girl for August. If Dad's obsessed with coffee, make him a basket brimming with espresso chocolates, biscotti for dipping, a bag of beans, and the centerpiece -- a collection of six "Your Family Name Here" collectible coffee mugs. Each emblazoned with an image of a different family member's photo. So Dad can switch from daughter Debra to dog Rollo, depending on who might cheer him up before his first sip of java in the morning. MIRACLES ON SEVENTH AVENUE Three Magic Holiday Words are "Send It Out" Whether it's the story of loaves and fishes or Hanukah oil that lasted eight nights that inspires you, work a few miracles on the humble resources in your fashion closet. That fur you inherited scares you every time you look in there, so hunt for a furrier who does alterations and can cut that pelt into accessories for all the foxes on your list: a collar, a muff, trim on a cashmere turtleneck's cuffs, a pair of pillows, with enough leftover for a scarf for you. See if they can dye the fur into happy holiday colors. Slice and dice a cast-off sequin skirt into party couch cushions backed with satin, or a Christmas stocking that'll turn Santa's head. And the hand-me-down a Pucci muumuu? After getting over the shock that Mother did wear this once, have a tailor cut and hem the swirly fabric into a sarong and head kerchief, paired with a copy of Valley of the Dolls. If you're really nervy you could even gift it back to Mom. Adult Entertainment "What'd you get Uncle Buzz?" "I got him a really fun sweater!" Sweaters aren't fun! Neither are ski goggles, even if Little Bro loves skiing. It's thoughtful to try to cater to someone's needs and hobbies, but how about stretching the definition of "need"? If Uncle Marty always harbored the fantasy that he could have been a novelist, get him a weekend seminar for fiction writing. While you're at it, sign up yourself. The gift will go over even bigger if it involves spending time learning to do something with you. Don't feel bound to preexisting hobbies. Introduce something new and exciting to try. Could be as simple as a day pass to Great Adventure to get back on the roller coaster. Shop in the Classifieds, where they list all kinds of stuff you never knew you always wanted to do. Singing lessons, golf lessons, an old ping-pong table -- a wok workshop. Bulletin boards at bookstores and art supply shops have lots of inspirations, too. Then all you need is something to make the intangible gift tangible -- to get the adrenaline pumping.... Twelve Play Days of Christmas On the first day of the holidays my true love gave to me a sketchbook, pencils, and an art book of Edgar Degas. On the second day of Hanukah my true love gave to me tap shoes and tix to the Savion Glover show. On the third day of Kwanzaa my true love gave to me a pair of needles, a giant ball of wool, and one free knitting lesson. On the fourth day of Noel my true love gave to me a fencing foil and a Three Musketeers bar.... On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Ice skates! And a thermos full of hot cocoa. Guitar, picks, a chord book; a bowling ball and shirt with my name on the pocket; a pool cue and case, and a video of Paul Newman's The Hustler; a radio-controlled race car and an invitation to goooo to the traaaaack. BASIC TRAINING -- HUMDRUM CONUNDRUM Necessities Are the mother of invention We admit it, loved ones need socks. And since you're out shopping anyway, this is the time to buy them. As long as you transcend the generic, to make them seem more gifty. Monograms are one way to transcend. Three little initials and suddenly you've

personalized socks, gloves, umbrellas and elevated basics to elegant gift status. For less chic and more cheek, monogram the item with some other three-letter word: DAD on the pocket of the Brooks Brothers pajamas, MOM on the breast of the terry robe. JOG on the CD walkman case. LUV on that oxford shirt pocket. ZZZ on the pillowcases. A pet collar stitched with DOG, CAT, PET. Dish towels that say DRY. Oven mitts that say HOT. Thumb through the dictionary and see what inspires you. The same place that does monograms usually can do other kinds of embroidery. A stack of handkerchiefs that say Achoo! Pranks For the Memories One more way to make practical gifts less boring is to make them a practical joke. Anything in bulk is funny. Say your brother is known for running out of underwear. Giving him one pair might elicit a snigger. You'll get a bigger laugh from a huge box filled with a month's supply: boxers, briefs, a pair of girls' panties -- how'd those get in here? -- a pair of BVDs customized with a laundry marker: "What a Bum." Old and Weird, or Cool? Vintage shops are a terrific place to pick up trinkets and accessories that are often not that expensive but are really stylish and original...or so you thought before your little cousin looks up from that Mexican peasant blouse and says, "I don't get it." It can't hurt to beef up the vintage treasure with a bit of historical context by pairing... a cute fifties' purse and a copy of Audrey Hepburn's *Sabrina*. a vintage scarf and the classic mini book *101 Ways to Tie a Herms scarf*. sixties' rain slicker and a bio of Twiggy. aviator sunglasses and a bio of Admiral Byrd. a little girl's flowered "you can't stop me I'm running away from home" suitcase, with a toothbrush and a copy of *On the Road*. Get Lit Books and booze. The old standbys are always tasteful. But these are also two great tasteful gifts that taste great together. Like the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup phenomenon: pack a bigger wallop by pairing the hard covers and the hard stuff. Wrap up a great book, say a bio of Winston Churchill, with a bottle of wine, and you transform a dry gift into a decadent evening. Inscribe the inside: "Something to pour over." A bottle of sambuca and a *Godfather* DVD. Speaking of chocolate, the Reese's concept can be applied to a bestseller and a box of Godiva's, a frothy romantic novel and a bottle of bath bubbles. A Question for the Sages Can gift certificates ever seem personal? Absolutely. Just push the envelope with a... Trip to Heaven. A getaway straight up into the clouds: skydiving, a parasailing ride over the East River, a helicopter cruise. Or a new car -- for a weekend! Give a rent-a-car certificate. Make it a convertible. Odds are any gift certificate, even for the record store or the sporting goods emporium, will seem more exciting if it's delivered in something less flat than an envelope. Put the music store certificate in an old LP case. Roll up the spa certificate and deliver it as a message in an empty shampoo bottle. Fold the tip money neatly into a change purse. Seek and Ye Shall Find: Hide the money somewhere they'll find it later. Twenty bucks on page 300 of that Jack Welch book you bought or wrapped in plastic and baked in a warm, yummy fruitcake! There in Spirit Whether it's for a relative who can't make it into town, or one who just spends the whole visit claiming, "I never see you," keep in mind...you're just a phone call away from thoughtfulness. Speed dial 1-800-Connect. A year of monthly flower deliveries. A year of prepaid long distance phone calls. A year of cable television for your mom who doesn't get HBO. There are so many food delivery services now, scrap the fruit basket and send something more symbolic: a bagels-and-lox care package for Grandpa Zucky, just like you used to have together every Sunday before he moved to Ft. Lauderdale. An annual steak and lobster dinner that you know is Dad's favorite cholesterol binge. A Tisket a Tasket, Lose the Gift Basket Even when they're filled with luxury muffins or exotic mushroom spreads, they can seem a tad impersonal. Maybe the problem isn't with the fruit, nuts, or muffins, but with the basket. Use some other kind of container, one that might, in fact, inspire the whole gift. Ice bucket stocked with a bottle of champagne and a box of Mr. Bubble. Laundry bag stuffed with thirty pairs of underwear, a box of detergent and rolls of quarters. A case of empties...and a beer-making kit. Be sure to tell 'em how you worked really hard on their present. Vintage vanity case holding soaps and bath unguents. Top hat with Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and lots of jawbreakers, gobstoppers, and circus peanuts for packing material. Straw hat filled with seeds and gardening clogs. And a bottle of tequila with a worm. Life of the Party kit: Traveling salesman suitcase with luggage tags with your name on it. Inside, a couple of good CDs, balloons, drink recipe book, deck of cards, joke book, noisemakers. Take a Chance Beauty Box: Decoupage the cover of any cardboard box with beauty images from wild fashion magazine shoots. Pick makeup your recipient would never normally get: Violet eye shadow, glitter spray for hair, bright red lipstick, fake beauty marks, false nails, rhinestones to glue on, false eyelashes... Regifts of the Magi When did regifting become a dirty word? Before *Seinfeld*, this venerable tradition was a completely respectable alternative to spending money. Here's to Old Traditions! The catch is for the regift to have meaning. You have to be giving away things you actually once wanted. Instead of going to the bookstore, dig up your old copy of *Black Beauty* and other childhood classics for your little goddaughters, one of your old rings for your sister-in-law, a bunch of favorite games for your brother's new apartment -- like that old leather backgammon board he used to beat you on. Then wrap up the dictionary and give it to your dad for old times' sake. Hostess Gifts A Swell never arrives at a party empty-handed. In December, more than ever, you have to put some spirit in the spirit bags. Make your entertaining gifts entertaining. A bottle dressed up with a good luck horseshoe, Christmas crackers, a dreidel, a hostess tiara, mistletoe tied around the neck. A game -- checkers, chess, Scrabble, Boggle and a snack -- a tin of homemade cookies, or a box covered with the word "Joy," filled with Almond Joys. A flying saucer sled loaded with Hostess Snow Balls or other treats. Bring a disposable camera, ribbon, reindeer antlers, and a Santa cap. The day after, send your hostess a gift/thank-you note: a stack of Kodak moments, guests posed as Rudy and his naughty elf, neatly wrapped with a bow. Nice and Naughty Get a jump-

start on Valentine's Day by buying your significant other an unexpectedly romantic gift. Something nice like two bone china cappuccino cups for indulgent Sunday mornings. Or naughty One Hot Night gift-with-purchase taped to a Duraflame log. Or a coupon for a make-out session folded inside a canoodling afghan, embroidered "Me" on one side, "You" on the other. Not so Silent Night-ificate: Write a letter from the North Pole to your guy, telling him you've heard he's been naughty, not nice, and you'd like to talk to him further about this, at his place, sometime after the New Year. He should pick the night. Sign it Mrs. Claus. P.S. I'll bring the toys. Be an Angel You've checked your list twice. Everyone's accounted for, you think complacently, lugging the holiday trim box back up to the attic. Then suddenly you stumble on your old copy of Little Women. Hmm, the page is open to the part where Marmee has the girls pack up baskets to take to the needy widow on Christmas morning. Jo, Beth, and Meg all decide to give up their own cream and muffins to give to the widow's children -- even selfish Amy. Gee, being so wrapped up in wrapping paper, you forgot about that more noble kind of giving. Resolve this holiday you'll try to perform some small act of saintliness. It could be as simple as a check to your favorite charity, or donating a few hours to read to children at the library. But it could also be something that doesn't require someone else's official organization. Be generous by inviting three people to your holiday party who normally you'd overlook. Add angel dust to your usual do-good routine by dropping off a fresh batch of holiday cookies at the police station or firehouse. When doing your biannual closet-edit, bring the fashion rejects to the Salvation Army. For extra wings, throw one thing onto the "don't need it" pile that you might not have been quite ready to get rid of. Then be sure to buy yourself something at the Salvation Army store. You deserve it, and it keeps their cash flow flowing. Love, Anonymous. In Sweden, they have a tradition, called the Julklapp, of wrapping a small precious gift in a huge box and leaving it on someone's doorstep. Give secretly to people in need whom you know! Rumor has it your little sister bounced a rent check recently. Maybe you wire a small mystery bonus into her checking account. Santa would approve. Saint Nicholas was really a lean and wealthy bishop who lived in Lycia in the fourth century. He developed his reputation as a legendary do-gooder for secretly giving away money to young maids in need of a dowry. Copyright 2003 by Swellco Holdings LLC