

# The Rambler

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October and thus Halloween have come to an end. With the shedding of Halloween's masks comes the shedding of another calendar page, leaving fall's first month behind to make way for a month defined by giving thanks. Because sometimes Thanksgiving seems more like a stressful day of travel and gluttonous over-eating, it's easy to forget to make a mental note of just what makes us thankful in our quotidian existence. Sometimes, however, it just takes an unplanned escape to one of the west side's loveliest locales to make that mental note more apparent.

Playing hooky from a potentially excruciatingly boring luncheon I was dreading since it crept its way onto my calendar, I drove westward for some coffee on my favorite patio at The Brentwood Country Mart. Languidly sipping a City Bakery soy latte – and desperately hoping no one even remotely related to the luncheon I was skipping saw me hiding behind my James Perse fleece hoodie – I found myself thinking about 27 November's impending dinner.

Undoubtedly, at the annual traditional potluck gathering of friends in honor of Pilgrims, Indians, and black Friday discount shopping, we go 'round the table, revealing that for which we are most thankful. Rather than stuttering through my cranberry sauce and giving a silly answer like "caffeine" or "not having to drive a standard car in LA traffic" I thought it best to prepare an answer ahead of time this year. Surely, there are the usual responses: my family, my health, my abilities. And though, the luster of these blessings doesn't lack as days go by, the ability for my cohorts to see me as a creative personality will begin to wane if I recycle the same organic answer every year. So maybe it was time for a little variation...Deep in my sweet potato casserole thoughts, I realized I was still scared of being spotted playing hooky and thought mobility would hide me best. Grabbing the swiftly parting soy and pulling the hood further over my head I began making my rounds of The Mart.

Flash-forward two hours later, I'm on the patio again, starting my second latte – and my first cupcake from Mrs. Beasley's – and surveying what the perfect purveyors of the Mart have just sold me. Looking through the bags I realized I'd just unintentionally purchased a gift for

each member of my family. A variety of perfumes ranging from earthy to floral from Marie Mason, a handmade blanket from Turpan, an adorable little Lucy Sykes dress from Poppy Store three mothers and I eagerly reached for at the same time, and darling wrapping paper from Sugar Paper for it all. Then it occurred to me, apart from the near and dear recipients of the luxury items wrapped in the shopping bags at my feet, I knew that for which I would say I was thankful when I found myself encircled by friends at Thanksgiving dinner. I'll say I'm thankful for the convenience and ease of my favorite ever-evolving vendors in one locale, thankful for the delight of said locale to be so accommodating that I finish my gift shopping well in advance of the throngs of last-minute crowds, and definitely thankful for deftly avoiding the claustrophobic nightmare of ne'er-well-organized parking garages during the holiday season.

Clutching my wares as I walked to the car, I knew I'd have to find not only another doomed luncheon to skip but also another disguise (new sunglasses maybe?) so I can head back to the Mart and gleefully stumble upon some gifts for my friends.