



Crafty Gifts

Indigenous, A Handcrafted Gallery

2010 Madison Rd., O'Bryonville, (513) 321-3750

The list of gift-giving occasions on your calendar gets longer every year, and while gift cards are nice, the urge to pick a particular present remains. A trip through Indigenous, A Handcrafted Gallery should satisfy that urge nicely. The shop stocks works by more than 100 local and not-so-local artists; if it reminds you of A Show of Hands, it's because owner Diane Christian Budd used to run that Kenwood Towne Centre shop. Pick up one of Joyce Kaufman's wild mosaic clocks, a bright Susan Mahan block print (we like the one with 16 dogs), beaded memory-wire bracelets from Anne Straus, and cross some holiday shopping off your list.

Veggie Sandwich

What's For Dinner?

3009 O'Bryon St., O'Bryonville, (513) 321-4404

Inventors of vegetarian fare either try too hard to dazzle or slap something on the menu as a "vegetarian" afterthought. The result either overpowers what's supposed to be naturally succulent or the unseasoned/unloved ingredients limp along, left to their own bland devices. However, the roasted eggplant sandwich at What's For Dinner? strikes a perfect balance between delicate and spicy, soft and crunchy, creamy and crisp. So successfully, in fact, that it will leave other area cooks wondering why they didn't think of this first: sautéed peppers and onions in perfect ratio, eggplant coins showered in Parmesan cheese then grilled until encrusted and piled on a bed of fresh baby spinach. Place all of the above on a grilled bun that's slathered with creamy goat cheese on one half and spicy mayo on the other. No need for a side—this here's your meal. Now eat your vegetables.

Hip Baby Gifts

MiCA Contemporary Craft

2039 Madison Rd. O'Bryonville 1201 Vine St. Over-the-Rhine, (513) 421-3500, www.shopmica.com

Shopping for a baby gift at MiCA is like ordering off the menu at your favorite restaurant. The O'Bryonville shop is full of unique treasures and whimsical twists on the usual baby shower fare. Check out the modern onesies and caps from Lotta Jansdotter, soft woven blankets by Karen Kurak, clever graphic T-shirts from Ohio's own Wire & Twine, and striped knit hats by Adachi Etsuko. MiCA also carries stitched pillows and bags by Shelly Klein's k studio, contemporary silver spoons by Mantra flatware, and limited edition, phantasmagorical melamine plates from Poketo + PCP. You can also make your own gift through artist Laura Zeck's "Short Stories" series. Choose from 300 of Zeck's etchings to create a one-of-a-kind fine art print.

Graffiti Artist

Benjamin Thomas

www.natiyouthcenter.org

A part-time art instructor at Elementz Hip Hop Youth Arts Center, Benjamin Thomas teaches inner-city kids to tap into their creativity through graffiti. Meaning, he gets paid to tag. Thomas did a few pieces for Kings Island's Halloween Haunt, and you can also check out his work at Tri-County Assembly of God in Fairfield. "You see urban-style artwork all over the place now," he says. That's a good thing.