

Loose Change

CHECK OUT

Make the Yuletide Gay

Queer Eye's clotheshorse, Carson Kressley, turns sassy Santa at T.J. Maxx.

You'd think that after having shot two seasons of his Emmy-winning show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, man-handling fashionista Carson Kressley might be a little bored with shopping. Yet the self-proclaimed "fairy god-stylist" considers the notion sacrilege. "That would be like being sick of sex...or air," he says. And although price is never an object when he's on assignment for *Queer Eye*, the label hound gleefully accepted a measly \$100 limit when we sent him on a buying trip to one of his favorite spots, Manhattan's T.J. Maxx. Boasting that he often buys housewares at the store, Kressley opted during this outing to drop some cash on the holiday gifts below—one for each of his fellow Fab Fivers, plus (of course) a treat for himself. The retail pro, who didn't go a penny over budget, recently compiled his hard-won know-how in *Off the Cuff: The Essential Style Guide for Men and the Women Who Love Them* (\$25, Dutton). One straight guy who Kressley believes could use the book's sartorial savvy: jolly old Saint Nick. "I mean, red velvet—are you kidding me? That went out with the gaucho," he says of the less-than-stylish icon. "But at least he doesn't wear pleated pants!" —GREGORY GARRY



FOR TED Kressley coveted these \$8 plates for himself but wound up tagging them for foodie pal Ted Allen, saying, "Red is festive for Christmas, but you can use 'em all year."



FOR HIMSELF

Apparently, Carson's been a very good boy. He made merry with this velvet animal-print stocking by slipping it onto his foot and trilling, "Don we now our gay apparel...."



FOR JAI This crystal Snoopy ornament will go to *Queer Eye* culture czar, Jai Rodriguez, who Kressley called "an animal fiend: He has two dogs, three birds, and two mice."



FOR THOM "He's very traditional at heart," said Kressley of decor doctor Thom Filicia, who'll find this toasty Fair Isle-inspired sweater under the tree. "For all his modern interiors, he's probably preppier than I am, which is frightening."



FOR KYAN Even as he was gathering this \$6 sugar scrub, \$4 body cream, and \$4 soap trio for the show's grooming guru, Kyan Douglas, Kressley said, "He doesn't need these. He gets free product sent to him like crazy!"

THE RECEIPT

Plates	\$16
Christmas tree ornament	\$10
Stocking	\$20
Sweater	\$40
Bath products	\$14
TOTAL	\$100

(tax not included)

BUDGET LIVING'S LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF STEALS AND DEALS

Bargain Basement

On the Cover

Brooke Walls spreads good cheer in Stop Staring's \$106 red satin dress (stopstaringclothing.com), a \$4 Santa hat (orientaltrading.com), \$50 Yochi Design earrings (888-666-6420), and faux pearls by A.V. Max, \$40 (212-216-0600). Makeup artist Timothy Johnson warmed up our gal with Sonia Kashuk's Creme Duo Blush in Color My World, \$9 (target.com for stores), then layered Wet 'n' Wild's Glassy Gloss Lip Gel in Reflection, \$3, over Maybelline's \$8 Flame lip color (both at drugstores nationwide). Shot on location at Kate's Lazy Meadow Motel in Mount Tremper, New York.

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Formal Notice

During *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*'s two-season run, couture coach Carson Kressley has reinvented dozens of lucky schlubs right before America's eyes. And now, in *Off the Cuff* (Dutton, \$25), he dishes out page after page of smart style advice to the rest of the unmanicured male masses. When it comes to festive December-time attire, Kressley shoots down Santa suspenders and reindeer ties: "Turkeys and hams should dress for the holidays. People shouldn't." So how, pray tell, does one achieve seasonally chic look? Here's what the maven has to say about it in his manual: ■ Buy yourself a classic black tuxedo with a peaked lapel jacket. Nothing makes you look more like a movie star. If renting a tux is all your budget can bear, stick with basic black and white. Don't let anyone talk you into the lavender cummerbund and bow tie, or before you know it, you'll be into show tunes. ■ Your shirt should be white with a simple point collar. Do I even need to say it shouldn't have ruffles? ■ Opt for a black grosgrain bow tie that you've knotted yourself. A pretied one only reveals your secret desire to be a catering waiter. ■ The perfect pants are flat-front with satin or grosgrain stripes down the sides that match the trim on your lapels; the shoes are patent leather lace-ups. ■ Cuff links and studs should coordinate. They can be sterling silver, onyx, or inexpensive silk knots. Or you could get nutty and choose more conspicuous styles, like horseshoes. Anything but cartoon characters. ■ Yes, the black silk dress socks will feel like women's party hose. You'll pretend not to like them, but secretly, you will!

