

## CELEBRATE CLOVERDALE WITH... SHOPPING LOCAL

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Walking through any given store since mid-October, I've overheard the following (as I do every year, at least once):

"Christmas *already*? It's not even Halloween yet!"

Whether you like it or not, the holiday season has arrived, complete with frost-covered car windows, a long list of things to do and – of course – tackling your holiday shopping list.

As consumers, the idea of sticking our head under the covers and waiting out the whole frenzy is pretty tempting... visions of long lines and crowded malls tend to dance in our heads, with an endless sea of taillights gleaming in a row. I'm right there with you – the idea of going out shopping during the holiday season is up there with having a root canal on my list of fun-filled things to do to myself. And yes, being a self-professed computer geek, I've gone the way of shopping online, thinking it was the easy way to take care of everything while wearing my bunny slippers. But, spending hours searching for promo codes and calculating shipping, only to have to try to return it when it's not quite what you were looking for, really isn't much better than the mall frenzy.

So, what's a shopper to do? Traffic, crowds and long lines, or endless virtual shopping?

Here's an idea: how about sticking close to home to do your shopping?

While some folks who live here in Cloverdale also work here, the majority work out of town. I know that the folks who work out of town leave first thing in the morning, work all day, fight traffic to get home at a decent time to spend a couple precious hours with family, then repeat the same routine the next day... they tend to not know what's here in town simply because the majority of their time is spent *out* of town. I know this, because I too was an out-of-towner, working long hours in Santa Rosa – I didn't have the time to spend poking around town, learning about all the great things that are here.

Shopping locally during the holiday is not only good for your stress level; it's good for your community. Your locally-spent dollars help local businesses *stay* in business... that means funding local jobs. Local businesses also support sports leagues, non-profits and the schools through sponsorship funding, funding which also comes from – you guessed it – dollars you spend locally.

Now, some of you may be thinking, "Ok, ok... I get it! Shopping locally is good for everyone, but there aren't *any* places to shop in town." My response: Think again.

When I first looked to open my business in town a couple years ago, I decided to walk through several parts to get an idea of what other businesses were here, so that I could better understand who my customers were. And let me tell you, I was completely stunned. We're lucky to have so many fantastic shops throughout town, both on the south side and in the downtown district.

I challenge you to pick up your shopping list and take a good close look... I bet you could find everything you need, without setting foot out of town. Ready?

Got a tool lover on your list?

Try Ace Hardware, for other gifts as well.

Need to satisfy caffeine addicts?

Try Grapes & Grounds, Underground Café, Schat's Bakery, Hawaiian Kona Caffe or Starbucks.

What about those kids on the list?

Try Giggles Toy Co.

Shopping for a clothes fiend?

Shop at The Natural Look, or Road Tested Apparel.

Want to sizzle with jewelry?

Try Williams Jewelers or Joyeria Ruby.

Want something truly one-of-a-kind?

Try Antiques & Uniques, The finishing Touches, Joyce's Gifts & Baskets, Main Street Shops, or LeBlanc & LeBlanc.

What about the reader on your list?

Try Cover to Cover Books.

Need something great for the fishing enthusiast on your list?

Try C & T Tackle.

Want to give the gift of relaxation?

Look no further than Main Street Spa.

How about a B&B stay?

Try The Tea Garden Inn, Old Crocker Inn, Shelford House, Vintage Towers or Villa Messina.

Searching for something special for your critters?

Try Miller's Feed.

Want to give the gift of dance or music?

Try lessons from Singing Sun Music School or The Cloverdale School of Dance.

Want to work off all those holiday feasts?

Work out at Clover Fitness Center, Powerhouse Gym or Curves.

Not sure what your need but want to snoop for something great?

Browse the shelves at BargainMaxx.

And, if you're entertaining during the holidays, there are plenty of helpful faces in town to make it easier...

- Find great party trays at Rays Food Place, Cloverdale Food Center, Simply Thai, Grapes & Grounds or Eagle's Nest Deli.
- Cater your big party with Patti & Friends or Underground Café.
- Have your carpets cleaned by Imperial Services.
- Rent chairs and tables at Cloverdale Equipment Rental.
- Get great holiday decorations at Alexander's Dollar Store, or BargainMaxx.
- Put up out-of-town guests at the Best Western Cloverdale Inn, Super 8 Motel, Cloverdale Oaks Inn, Vineyard Valley Inn, Cloverdale KOA, Best Western Dry Creek Inn, or the Geyserville Inn.
- Mail your last minute items with The Mail Center or the Cloverdale Post Office.
- Treat your guests with a visit to the Cloverdale Museum, Cloverdale Arts Center, or catch a movie at Clover Cinemas.
- Let someone else handle the cooking... enjoy one (or many) of our fine local restaurants: Canton Restaurant, Simply Thai, Hawaiian Kona Caffe, Historic Owl Café, La Hacienda, Piacere Ristorante Italiano, Papa's Pizza, Ruth McGowan's Brewpub, Eagles Nest Deli & Grill, Underground Café, Grapes & Grounds, Hamburger Ranch, PK's Bar & Grill, Mary's Pizza Shack, Pick's Drive In, Peking Palace, Aztec Grill, Cloverdale McDonalds, Subway, KFC, Quiznos, Taqueria Paraiso, Star Restaurant, or Schat's Bakery.

See? I wasn't kidding. There are a ton of great places to shop *in town* this holiday season, without fighting the crowds and traffic, or surfing online for hours.

So, put down your mouse, grab your list and head down to town... stay close, enjoy a stroll through our festive downtown and **CELEBRATE CLOVERDALE!**

*Wishing you and yours the happiest of holidays and best wishes for the New Year! — tda*