

## **America's Christmas Wish List: Modest Hopes, but for the Ferrari**

Under the tree, let's just call it a year of modest expectations.

In Traverse City, Mich., "a necktie" would be nice. "House slippers" for an older woman in Paducah, Ky. A case of beer here, a bottle of wine there. A toaster in Portland, Ore. A dart board in Dover, Del. A gift card for Applebee's (ribeye steak, \$15.99). "Hot curlers."

A Ferrari?

OK, some folks still aim high. But even with the dreamers among us, Americans' Christmas gift wish list has a decidedly more prosaic cast this recession year. Skip the sports car; "a radar detector" tops the list for a young man in San Antonio, Texas. Good reason: Fifteen mph over the limit on I-35 will get you a \$190 ticket, holiday or not.

This ABC News poll posed a simple question: What one present would you most like to have for Christmas? Eleven percent pined for a car, motorcycle or automotive accessory – down from a peak of 16 percent in 2005. (Hence the federal government's holiday smooch for the Big Three automakers.) Clothes or shoes, meanwhile, rose from 5 percent last year to 10 percent this year.

But this is a story best told on an individual level, one that reveals the richness and breadth of Americans' hopes, wants, needs and dreams this holiday season – from the inspirational to the practical, from the sublime to the simple, from "world peace" to "a Mickey Mouse race track."

Many holiday wishes, necessarily, reflect the country's economic woes. Some people hope to find a job neatly wrapped under the tree. "My mortgage paid off" would do it for a woman in Boston. "Less debt," for an older man. "To have my other credit card paid off," in Prince William County, Va. In Portland, Maine: "The ability to pay the rent."

Others think in more macroeconomic terms. "A strong recovery on the stock market" would be a lovely gift for a retirement-aged man outside Philadelphia. "The economy to be better," requests a woman in Bozeman, Mont. Santa, thy name is Bernanke.

For every Ferrari (14 mpg on the highway, if you have to know) someone else wants a Mini Cooper (32 mpg). And there are the connoisseurs, such as the gentleman outside Greenville, S.C., who'd very much like a '56 Thunderbird. (For the uninitiated: Suzanne Somers rolled by in a white '56 T-Bird in the 1973 classic "American Graffiti," leaving a

much-distracted Richard Dreyfuss in her wake. In Greenville, at least, they remember. And on E-Bay, you can grab one, unrestored, for \$11,200.)

“A house, car and a full tank of gas,” presumably in that order, would do nicely for a man in Fort Worth, Texas. For a woman in Spokane, Wash., already equipped with a house, comes the plaintive plea: “I want a more comfortable chair.”

There are other creature comforts on the list – a massage, a facial, “a new pair of false teeth.” Thinking of other creatures, a fellow outside New Orleans wants a deer feeder. Thinking of them in another way, a man outside Richland, Wash., hopes for “a moose hunt in Alaska.”

Domestic tranquility battles with domestic strife in holiday wishes. Lots of people wish simply for the gift of family and friends – “to have everybody gather in my house for Christmas dinner,” “a happy family,” “I want to take care of people close to me.”

Some drop a little hint: “I’d like my family to write to me and call me more often,” says a septuagenarian in Eugene, Ore. Others drop a big hint: “My wife not to talk to other men” would be the ideal Christmas gift for a man in Gary, Ind. In that vein, “A new husband,” says a married (at last report) woman on New York’s Long Island. Headed the other way, “I’d like to have my wife back,” says a man in Tulsa, Okla. And an older man in Cleveland, Ohio, would much appreciate “a 53-year-old blond.”

People would like better health – help with infirmity or disease, “a cure for epilepsy,” “transplant surgery,” “my mother’s breast cancer to go away.” For less pressing medical needs: “My wrinkles burned off.” (Ouch.) Others, more generally, hope for “good health and a long life,” “peace and prosperity,” “peace of mind” and, simply, “forgiveness.”

Hard-to-fill orders? “I’d like to be 25 years old again,” says a 70-year-old in Worcester, Mass. A man in Dubuque, Iowa, wants “a Republican president.” Easy to fill ones? How about a 14-inch mill file (\$7.95 online), “a King James Bible on DVD” (\$39.99), “a 16-gig flash drive,” (\$77), “a new snowboard” and not just any sweater, but “a beautiful sweater.”

The list goes on, as varied as the country itself. Some aim high, some low. In the end, it seems, there’s just one hard-and-fast rule: Keep it to the limit as you pass through San Antonio – even on Christmas. “No breaks,” says state patrol spokesman Jason Reyes. “If it was Santa Claus himself going 15 over, he’d get a ticket, too.”

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 12-16, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults. The results have a 3-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-6 previously released.

7. If you could have your choice, what one present would you most like to have for Christmas?

	2008	2007	2005	1958*
Car, motorbike, truck, car accessories	11	10	16	14
Clothes, shoes	10	5	6	12
TV, plasma TV, TV projector, etc.	5	6	4	3
Computer, laptop, printer, Blackberry	4	5	7	na
Family and friends	4	2	2	na
Health, vitamins, medicine	4	3	4	2
Money, lottery, etc.	3	6	6	5
Jewelry, diamonds, pearls	3	2	5	na
Xbox, video game	3	2	2	na
Home furnishings, home renovations	3	2	4	8
Home appliances, kitchenware	3	2	3	13
Peace, love	2	2	2	1
Gift certificate, gift card	2	1	1	na
Vacation, plane ticket	2	3	5	3
Camera, digital camera	2	1	1	1
Sporting equipment	2	1	1	na
Book	2	1	1	na
Accessories	2	*	1	na
Home, apartment	1	2	3	6
Debt, bills, mortgage paid off	1	1	1	1
Bicycle	1	*	*	na
Stereo, music, CDs, audio equipment	1	1	2	1
Tools, workshop equipment	1	1	1	2
iPod	1	1	1	na
Job, work	1	0	*	na
Personal grooming, hygiene	1	*	1	na
TIVO, DVR, DVD	1	*	1	na
Food, drink	1	*	1	na
Musical instrument	1	*	1	na
Other	8	8	8	15
Nothing	9	7	4	5
Don't know	10	24	7	5

\*1958 poll by Gallup.