

Forbes Woman

Valentine's Day 2010

Valentine's Gifts For Less-Than-Gushy Guys

[Meghan Casserly](#), 01.15.10, 01:25 PM EST

A guide to choosing great gifts for the reluctant romantic.

In Pictures: 12 Guys' Valentine's Gifts At Every Price Point



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I've got a romantically stunted boyfriend. Last Valentine's Day we shared a pizza and a pitcher of beer at a local Italian joint we frequent at least three times a month.

He played his part: he brought flowers, paid compliments, made a toast. And I played mine: I gave him a record, which has since become a regular on our must-play list, and a sentimental, sort-of-sexy card, which caused him to turn an uncomfortable shade of red and which we haven't mentioned since.

It's not that he doesn't love being loved--trust me, he does--it's just that over-the-top displays of affection, even in the privacy of our own home, trigger an immediate, let's call it *allergic*, reaction. His cheeks get red, his palms get sweaty, he *squirms*.

Over the course of our relationship, he's gotten over his discomfort enough to make me happy--he holds my hand in public and doesn't even get itchy anymore!--but when it comes to my showering him with compliments and kisses, it's strictly no-go. So I shouldn't have been surprised when my attempt at romance, even in Hallmark form, last Valentine's Day went over like a peanut at a nut-free lunch table.

I know he's not alone. Truth is, Valentine's Day has a less-than-desirable effect on many men, from new boyfriends to the silver-anniversary set. For them, there's more squirming in their seats than squealing with delight. Meanwhile, the ladies are sharing with girlfriends and coworkers their all-too-high expectations of what he'll surprise us with--chocolates, love poems, a candlelit dinner, enormous bouquets sent to the office. Or, as Jay Leno once quipped, "Valentine's Day--or, as men like to call it, Extortion Day!"

To be sure, for every sarcastic boyfriend out there, there must be at least one or two who look forward to buying plush teddy bears every February. A girlfriend of mine recounted that she and her boyfriend of a year had, hilari-

ously, adorably, *both bought the same Valentine's Beanie Baby! It was tooooooo cute!*

But for the man in your life who isn't having chocolate-covered, rose-festooned dreams as Valentine's Day approaches, we've identified 12 gifts with price tags from pittance to luxe that we'll bet you can hand over nearly 100% squirm-free.

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