

THE ART OF GIFTING

Personal assistant and gift concierge Katie Shapley goes in search of the perfect presents at Bicester Village

Katie Shapley is a gifting fairy godmother. As managing director of The Organisers, she is regularly called upon to tackle the jobs the super rich don't have time for, from securing that elusive school place and project managing property builds to finding the perfect gift for her clients and their loved ones. Shapley's experience means that she is confident in preventing what she terms "the face" – that fleeting expression that reveals a purchase wasn't exactly what the recipient was hoping for.

At Bicester Village, the designer outlet shopping destination in leafy Oxfordshire, Shapley comes into her own. Faced with a plethora of boutiques (the Village recently

added more than 30 new stores to expand its already impressive roster of brands) and armed with a client's brief, Shapley is immediately able to hone in on the labels that best fit the bill, efficiently curating a selection of gifts that are personally tailored to the client.

TREATS FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Shapley begins in Polo Ralph Lauren and makes a beeline for a butter-soft quilted gilet. "It's the perfect understated piece," she says, "ideal for a man who likes discreet logos." She teams this with a slim-fit check shirt, classic black jeans and hardwearing Chelsea boots for the ideal country look. For teenage



boys – "the style leaders not the followers" Shapley notes – it's all about the panelled puffer jacket-style hoodies and items that will satisfy their logo-loving natures, such as sport caps and mid-top sneakers.

For her, it is Bamford and Villeroy & Boch that come up trumps. In Bamford, the textural sumptuousness that carries through from its homeware to fashion lines ensures there are plenty of suitable gift options. Shapley selects a stylish loungewear outfit in white and grey tones declaring that "this will remain a timeless wardrobe staple". The cashmere eye mask selected to finish off the look is the icing on the cake. At Villeroy & Boch, meanwhile, the quality of the tableware shines through, and a statement Amazonia oval bowl – "elevated by its striking pattern and flecks of gold," says Shapley – is deemed the prized piece.

The gifting guru makes a stop at Zadig & Voltaire to pull together the perfect party outfit for a teenage girl – the leather-fringed Jaliz skirt and studded Mods Defile boots feeling suitably on-trend. And at Hunter, the ideal sporting look for girls who love to ride is uncovered – the purple insulated bomber jacket and backstrap Wellington boots in Martian Red ticking all the boxes.

The final destination is L'Atelier, home to the finest watches and jewellery, to select a classic Parmigiani dual time-zone timepiece and a funky blue Tateossian Gulliver sports watch, as well as some pretty gold and pavé diamond hoop earrings by Georg Jensen. "You can't very well buy these watches for the boys and come away without a little treat for her," Shapley smiles, knowingly. "My job is about ensuring everyone is happy."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: KATIE SHAPLEY IN JOSEPH; PARMIGIANI FLEURIER TIMEPIECE AT L'ATELIER; AMAZONIA OVAL BOWL AT VILLEROY & BOCH; HOMEWARE AT BAMFORD; STUDDED BOOTS AT ZADIG & VOLTAIRE; LOUNGEWEAR AT BAMFORD; AN OUTFIT STYLED BY KATIE SHAPLEY AT ZADIG & VOLTAIRE; GEORG JENSEN EARRINGS AT L'ATELIER. ALL IMAGES © HOLLY FARRIER (WWW.HOLLYFARRIER.COM)

Bicester Village, 50 Pingle Drive, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 6WD. 01869 366 266. www.bicestervillage.com
The Organisers, Greater London, KT5 8LS. 020 7078 7554. www.theorganisers.com