

The Rules: Valentine

It's the thought that counts – and that means imagination, not simply remembering the date. On Wednesday, give your loved one the gift of the unexpected. By Kirsty Munro.

Illustration Wai

Bring the restaurant home

To give the traditional Valentine's dinner a personal spin, hire waiters to serve a romantic meal at home (and wash the dishes, too). You can get restaurant-quality food and staff from Simmone Logue in Sydney (www.simmonelogue.com) or Blakes Feast in Melbourne (www.blakesfeast.com.au).

Be generous

Buy a gift that helps others and you'll feel good, too. For her, try The Body Shop shea-butter products, which benefit women in Ghana, or Aveda's

For the gorgeous geek in your life, Canon's mousepad kit has two transparent sheets for printing.

Smart choice

If your partner loves crosswords, create one with romantic clues and surreptitiously paste it into the newspaper. Or write a personal message on a blank jigsaw puzzle for them to assemble. You can also have a jigsaw puzzle made out of your favourite digital photo (www.puzzleme.com.au); prices range from \$18 to \$30 and an express courier service is available.