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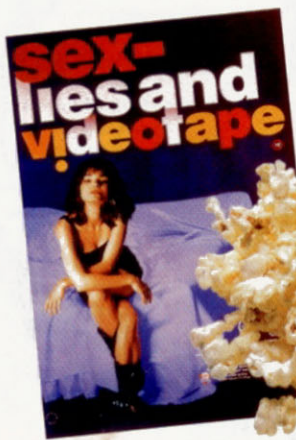
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PARTY AT YOUR PLACE

What's better than a room full of friends? Eight experts in the art of fun share fresh excuses for getting the gang together

REGIFTING PARTY

What to do with that unwanted foot massager you just got from Aunt Millie? If you're designer Cynthia Rowley, you might wrap it up in snazzy paper and unload it at a gift-swap party. The drink: orphaned bottles of holiday cheer. Vote on the worst gift—and bring it back next year!



INDIE FILM FETE

To mark the 25th birthday of Sundance, event planner Jeffrey Best says mail ticket-stub invites (\$27/20; paperstyle.com), serve popcorn and screen the modern classic *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, which will be celebrated at this year's festival.



SOUK SOIREE

Get a hit of Casablanca, says designer Zac Posen, with pillows, rugs and a steaming tagine. Take festivities outdoors with a tent and space heater. "It's an urban nomadic experience in your backyard," he says. **Pillows, Madeline Weinrib, \$300 each; madelineweinrib.com for stores.**



USHER IN THE OX

This Chinese New Year celebrates the sign of the strong, silent types—and they could use a little loosening up. Interior designer Amy Lau suggests serving your favorite takeout and accessorizing with red cloths, lanterns and decorative tassels. **Fortune cookie, Z Gallerie, \$15; zgallerie.com.**



The best essentials and splurges—all \$200 or less



ULTA T3 Bespoke Labs Feather-weight Dryer A fast-drying powerhouse that's oh-so-easy on the arms. (\$200; ulta.com)



VICTORIA'S SECRET Very Sexy Babydoll Break away from the basics—hello, Valentine's Day! (\$58; victoriasecret.com)



WEST ELM Zig Zag Rug Transform the entire feel of your room with just this one, wildly affordable addition. (\$89; westelm.com)

THE FINE-PRINT 411

- Give the store receipt with the card—if the card is lost or stolen, the receipt guarantees you a replacement. Did you receive a card with no receipt? Register it at the store's Web site for the same protection.
- Make note of any expiration date and fees.
- Visit sharing sites like swapagift.com, certificateswap.com or leveragecard.com to trade an unwanted card for one to a store you'd prefer.