



Color & Comfort Highlight Walmart Holiday Preview

By MIKE DUFF
Senior Editor

NEW YORK— Walmart anticipates a robust holiday season where consumers emphasize color, comfort and personal connections, even while embracing technology as a way to have more fun at home.

In introducing product features at a holiday preview event last month, Holly Bauer, Walmart senior buyer/home décor, suggested gift givers will help make the holiday last by giving frames and other products that display photos, which even can function as holiday décor when mounted with seasonal images.

Frames were prominent among the products Walmart offered as potential gift-giving favorites, which have the virtue of supporting the seasonal spirit at relatively low prices.

But value also coincided with satisfaction. Some other prominent home items included gaming chairs, at \$79

and \$129, and even an electric fireplace. In its home presentation for the event, prices ranged from \$1.97 for mini photo frames to \$299 for a Twin-Star media fireplace. Clearly, many preview products were not intended solely as potential presents but as self gifts or to help with staging holiday activities, so items on offer included Shark and Hoover vacuums, including the Hoover Air Cordless for \$258.96 and, in a price contrast, a Rubbermaid Deviled Egg Tray at \$3.97.

Products in seasonal colors have the virtue of contributing to the holiday mood. Walmart offered the Keurig K40 coffee maker, at \$109, in white and red. Similarly, Walmart offered a Rachael Ray 16-piece dinner set, at \$39.92, and Guy Fieri cookware set, at \$79, in a seasonally correct red, although the retailer made more traditional color choices available.

The preview mixed licensed products, private labels and name brands including a range of products from Fieri ranging from knives to cutting boards, spatulas, bag clips and a couple of novelty frying pans, at \$9.88 each, that offered graphic messages such as Love, Peace and Taco Grease.

Private label items included a Better Homes and Gardens fillable lamp at \$27.97 and BHG mirror three pack at \$14.97. Name brand items, displayed in a mix of standard and holiday colors, included a \$98.84 Igloo ice maker and Hamilton Beach's double breakfast sandwich maker, at \$39.92, and Big Party Popper, at \$79, as well as a Cooking with Calphalon hard anodized non-stick 10-piece cookware set, at \$199, 8-inch and 10-inch omelet pan set, at \$39.98, a 7-quart Dutch oven, at \$49.98 and a Philips Norelco Shave 4100, at \$59.97.

Beauty and personal care products, both in consumable and durable form, played a substantial part in the Walmart holiday preview and also included Remington Silk hair styling tools and various skin care and make-up products delivered individually and in sets.

Walmart also expects "Frozen" to be the big kids movie license of the upcoming holidays, and it plans to offer everything from bedding to a lap desk to an Eva lamp, at \$13.97, in the season. **HWB**

FROM TOP: Walmart highlighted seasonal tabletop and décor at its holiday preview.

A media and electric fireplace from **Twin-Star**, as well as assorted gaming chairs.

Colorful Guy Fieri cookware and kitchenware assortment in a festive red.

Keurig's K40 single-serve coffee maker in rhubarb red.

Picture frames and assorted home décor gift items.

Holiday preparation items included trash cans and vacuums from Shark and Hoover.