

Keep Martin Beautiful's 2010 Top Ten Local Holiday Gifts on the Treasure Coast

Jennifer Whiting

Posted December 15, 2010 at 10:12 a.m., updated December 15, 2010 at 10:13 a.m.



1



2



3



5



6



4



8



9



7

STUART — The holiday season is upon us! Shop local, shop sustainable, and shop for unique gifts by choosing 'green' products produced right here on the Treasure Coast. This year, Keep Martin Beautiful put together a Top Ten List of sustainable products to get your ideas flowing, because there are probably dozens more just like them. Enjoy!

1. Thunderbird Wind Chimes – These wind chimes are known for their unique treated copper, which produces a beautiful blue patina. In 1993, Jeff Hinkley, the creator of Thunderbird Chimes, wanted to offer a better wind chime to the public. His plan was threefold: they would have beautiful tones, be very attractive, and be very durable. Their solid wood ball clappers use the heavy copper tubes produce soft, mellow tones, which creates a wind chime that can be listened to for much longer periods of time than many others. Best of all, the chimes are hand made in a small shop in Stuart, FL.



10

KMB's Top Ten Sustainable Gifts for 2010

(PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LOCAL BUSINESSES)

Each is crafted with quality materials to withstand all kinds of weather, and we even found them to be comparably priced with other chimes.

What we liked best: Manatee Wind Chime

Price: \$28

Available for purchase at: www.thunderbirdchimes.com

2. Turtle River Soap – We were fascinated by the origins of this sustainable item. The idea for these soaps was born on the Loxahatchee River in Hobe Sound, Florida while one of the founders, Randy Porch, was kayaking the river during the summer. To repel the swarms of mosquitoes that would attack him, Randy and his mother Debbie made a batch of soap using peppermint, clove, lemongrass and other oils known to be unappealing to insects but pleasant to humans. As environmentalists, the fact that the soap could be made using only natural ingredients and with no animal fats was especially appealing. Since then, other homemade soaps have been added to the line using olive oil, shea butter, and other natural ingredients. The seed of an idea that began on the River of Turtles, more commonly known by its Native American name, the “Loxahatchee River,” is now known as the Turtle River Soap Company.

What we liked best: Turtle Tracks, a deliciously aromatic cinnamon and clove soap

Price: \$6 per bar

Available for purchase at: www.turtleriversoap.com

3. Bamboo Groove Light Fixtures – Using ecologically harvested bamboo grown in local groves, "Groove Tubes" are beautifully artistic luminary sculptures perfect for indoor or outdoor display. Every piece -- ranging in size from short, tabletop lamps to 8-foot-long statements -- is hand crafted and one-of-a-kind. Since each Groove Tube and other products are made at the time of order, they welcome custom designs! Based in Stuart, the Bamboo Groove specializes in these unique bamboo lights as well as other home accents and art. Founder Jamie Powell is an eco-artist with a background in environmental work including habitat restoration.

What we liked best: 1ft. Bamboo Groove Tube, designed to your loved one's liking.

Price: \$38

Available for purchase at: www.thebamboogroove.com

4. CordoBags – Not only are these purses quite eye-catching, they have a unique story behind them. The journey began when one of the three founding women, Alexandra Ardila Davenport traveled to Colombia with her family during the summer and returned with a few handbags for her sisters as a gift. The endless compliments on the purses opened her eyes, and along with the other co-owners - Sandra Gomez and Paola Ardila-Riley - CordoBags was born. With an adage of “Combining our love affair with bags and the love for our native Colombia and its people,” the purses are purchased directly from the Zenu tribe in Colombia. Most of their collections of eco-friendly purses are made from Caa Flecha, (a type of palm leaf) which the natives grow without fertilizer. The leaves are dyed with fruits, vegetables, and plants. Natives then use a technique of braiding the palm that has been passed down from generation to generation.

What we liked best: the Miranda Collection

Price: \$48-68; smaller purses start at \$18.50

Available for purchase at: www.cordobags.com

5. 2011 Florida Ranches Calendar – A calendar is a classic holiday gift and a great way to start off the New Year. One of our favorites is produced right here on the Treasure Coast. Created six years ago, the Florida Ranches calendar showcases the striking beauty of Florida's ranch lands, and celebrates the generations of rich cultural heritage and environmental stewardship of these special places. The calendar's articles discuss sustainability, cutting-edge conservation efforts and agricultural initiatives of Florida's oldest and largest industry. We find it to be a truly breathtaking way to keep track of the days in 2011.

What we liked best: Carton Ward's gorgeous photographs

Price: \$15

Available for purchase at: www.fireflyforyou.com

6. Make-your-own gift basket – Pick out an organic wine or two, some Fair-trade organic chocolate, or even chocolate-covered nuts or cranberries! Arrange them in a basket and send with love. We chose items from Peggy's Natural Foods, which has been a part of the Treasure Coast for 27 years. Founder Peggy Ranger told us the idea for the store began when she was a public school teacher for children with learning disabilities and realized that their nutrition had quite a bit to do with their behavior. The store has grown into not only a retail store, but a resource for health information, the latest news on natural products, and lifestyle assistance.

What we liked best: Stellar Organics Cabernet Sauvignon (\$10.49) and Heaven On Earth sweet wine (\$14.99), both of South African origin. We also chose Himalania dark chocolate-covered goji berries (\$9.59), and Théo organic fair rich dark chocolate (\$3.79).

Available for purchase at: Peggy's Natural Foods store on Cove Road in Stuart. Visit www.peggysnaturalfoods.com

7. Blue Flame Candles – Ever noticed the power of a simple candle to create a sense of tranquility? You can be even more serene knowing that your candles are made from natural, earth friendly soy rather than traditional paraffin which is a synthetic petrochemical. Founder Lonee Cataldo makes Blue Flame Candles in Stuart, Florida using a custom soy-blend wax that is wonderfully fragrant, long burning, and creates no tunneling or left over wax. A 10oz large candle burns up to 90 hours, and a 2oz. votive burns an average of 20 hours.

What we liked best: 10 oz large candle

Price: \$18

Available for purchase at: Ft. Pierce Jazz Market on Saturdays, Ohana Surf Shop on Hutchinson Island, or The Water's Edge Gallery in downtown Stuart.

8. Akaimai Accents – We are thoroughly enchanted by these one-of-a-kind living works of art. Using a variety of air plants, orchids, cactus and bromeliads, founder John Meyerhoffer carefully grows them in unique pieces of

driftwood and grapewood. Far from run-of-the-mill specimens, his plants are well known among attendees to the Treasure Coast's green markets because of their beauty and minimal need for care. What could be a better combination for a living gift of nature?

What we liked best: A collection of air plants nestled in grapewood.

Price: \$19

Available for purchase at: Ft. Pierce, Vero Beach, and Stuart Green Markets. Visit <http://stuartgreenmarket.org/akamai-a...>

9. Rare Earth Gallery – For over 35 years, Rare Earth Gallery has been a staple in downtown Stuart, specializing in custom designed pottery crafted on premises. In addition, owners Becky and Steve Binder are passionate about supporting local art, filling the store with hand-made fine crafts made by over 60 local and regional artists. Visiting the store is always a different experience, as pieces are regularly rotated to reflect their newest works in clay, wood, blown & stained glass, gourd, jewelry, original paintings, prints, stones, and photography. The best part? They so enjoy creating custom-made, personalized pieces that if you ask, they often do a simple custom touch for free.

What we liked best: We picked one lower-end and one higher-end item. Pictured are hand-crafted mugs (\$15 each) and a hand-crafted platter with carved seashells, by artists Leo and Karin Villaroman out of Naples, Florida (\$56).

Available for purchase at: Rare Earth Gallery in downtown Stuart or www.rareearthgallery.com.

10. Make a Sustainable Difference – One of the ultimate sustainable gifts is to donate money to a worthy charitable organization right in your community in honor of a loved one. There are so many worthy causes right here on the Treasure Coast. Our favorite picks are the United Way, the Boys & Girls Clubs in Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River Counties. For a more environmental focus, donate to Keep Martin Beautiful, Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful or Keep Indian River Beautiful.

What we liked best: How about all of the above?

This story is contributed by a member of the Treasure Coast community and is neither endorsed by nor affiliated with this site.

