

Ho-ho-how can we source the best gifts?

Miranda Sawyer says if you want to make friends and family happy this Christmas source their presents from Hampshire and go for quality not quantity

There have been some great Christmas presents over the years. Remember that old favourite, The Twelve Days of Christmas, sung at the top of your voice after one too many sherries?

Here is a run-down of what the singer's true love ended up with: 12 drummers drumming; 11 pipers piping; 10 lords-a-leaping; nine ladies dancing; eight maids-a-milking; seven swans-a-swimming; six geese-a-laying; five g-o-l-d rings; four colly birds; three French hens; two

turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree. Ten lords and they are leaping? Count me in.

Going overboard at Yuletide is, of course, something we are all used to, but is it quantity or quality that counts? The well chosen gift that hits the spot is worth so much and could buy you some worthwhile brownie points for the rest of the year. So do your research. A plastic snakeskin purse for the committed conservationist or a beer-making kit for a champagne-quaffing Hooray Henry will not get you very far. What you need is inspiration from your home county;

we all love where we live and a gift that is made in Hampshire, or encapsulates a little slice of the county, is sure to bring happiness.

To start you off, we have been out and about to create a gift list that will give you ideas for friends and family, not to mention yourself. It is the time of year for Big Hints, so why not leave the magazine lying open at the relevant page either in the kitchen or in the garage?

Buying locally will also be a boon to our economy so that everyone, from business people to crafts people, enjoys a happy Christmas this year.

Weather-vanes are Crocodilla's bell-wether



Crocodilla is a family business and leading manufacturer of metal garden products in the UK situated just outside Romsey, in the village of

Michelmersh. It now currently has more than 100 beautifully crafted designs of weather-vanes available in both large and small sizes and, together with their garden structures, form a large percentage of Crocodilla's work.

Fabricated at the Michelmersh workshops in a variety of designs, and powder-coated in a black finish to ensure durability, they truly complement any garden or patio area. Whether it is the Victorian-style bench seats, heavy duty steel garden gates, weather-vanes or hanging brackets that take your eye, you can be sure of a quality, locally manufactured product offering excellent value for money.

• 01794-36728
www.crocodilla.co.uk

Summerdown has two new products for this winter and a special pampering this Christmas

Profiting from the success of its range of award-winning peppermint chocolates and teas, Summerdown has recently launched two new peppermint scent diffusers: lavender & peppermint; and camomile, lavender & peppermint. Both capture the timeless essence of the English countryside.

Over the last decade, Summerdown has re-introduced pure English mint – traditional Black Mitcham peppermint – to this country, re-learning lost farming skills from America and combining them with the latest technology at its farm in the foothills of the Hampshire downs.

The resulting single estate peppermint oil, distilled on the farm, has a cooler, more intense flavour and scent than other varieties and is used to make Summerdown's delicious chocolates and teas.

Now, by combining this oil with the oils from other aromatic plants also harvested on the farm, these

two exciting new scent diffusers have been produced. Naturally, they both create a clean, fresh and captivating atmosphere in the home.

- For more information visit www.summerdownmint.com or tel 01256-780252

