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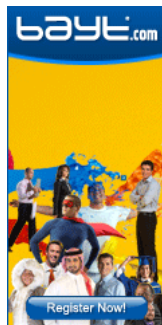
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CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING IN CAIRO

By Heba Elkayal / Daily News Egypt
First Published: December 11, 2009

Although Cairo's not the easiest city to find Christmas gifts, I've managed to come across a few good items in town that could please some friends.

Chocolate

The Four Seasons Nile Plaza, as always, can be counted upon when it comes to great food but only now can you take something home with you. Their executive pastry chef Yehia Ahmed is responsible for Beymen's latest offering: an entire display of mouth watering delicacies.

Chef Ahmed makes all his chocolates by hand in a kitchen dedicated solely and exclusively to this craft. He works exclusively with French Valrhona chocolate, one of the most highly respected chocolatiers.

Over 27 varieties of chocolate for sale are made with fillings such as passion fruit, Morello cherry, apple puree, lemon and praline. White, dark and milk chocolate are available with a myriad of delicious gooey insides.

Prices start at LE 197 for a pink box weighing 225 grams, LE 357 for a box weighing 445 grams, and LE 739 for a box weighing 925 grams. Yes, it's pricey but this is chocolate for that special someone.

Stocking Stuffers

For girls who seem to have it all, stocking stuffers from the Pink Powder Room would be the perfect gift. Not only is the Pink Powder Room known for hip and trendy lounge wear, it's the little things like their now famous compartmentalized "Wear me/Wash me" laundry bag that are both adorable and useful.

Another stocking stuffer possibility is their hot water bottle slip-on cover to give Granny's old rubber hot water bottle a cooler look. With a big kaf print embroidered on it, it's hard not to envision Christmas in Bethlehem.

*Pink Powder Room: 26 Shagaret El Dor Street, Zamalek.
Tel: 010-1919-219*

Christmas baskets

Unlike the traditional Christmas hamper filled with luxury food items and bonbons, the interiors store Eklego has assembled a variety of gift baskets, perfect for party hosts and people who appreciate fine household accessories.

Ranging in prices from LE 250 to LE 425, the baskets are themed to suit various recipients.

A Coffee Lovers basket contains a porcelain coffee percolator from Italian brand Seletti, as well as mugs, espresso cups in glass and porcelain, a milk jug, coffee stirrers and other coffee related paraphernalia, all from the same brand. And coffee has also been generously provided in the basket.

Kitchen Fanatics and Entertain are also other basket themes, tailored with local produce such as home made pasta from Gourmet Egypt. Eklego's signature funky and hip household goods are the focus of the baskets of course.

The baskets are brilliantly personal and useful gifts, not to mention festively decorated. Perfect as a housewarming gift or to give to



Chocolate boxes from the Four Seasons Nile Plaza are a treat.

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friends hosting you throughout the season.

*Eklego: 8 El Sheikh El Marsafy Square (above Beanos)
1st floor, apt. 4, Zamalek.
Tel: 2273-6353*

Winter Snuggling

Angelly, a loungewear and luxury nightwear brand produced locally from the finest of Egyptian cotton, makes for the perfect gift that bears the concept of great value for money in mind.

Angela Armsby and Madeleine Thomassen, two expats with a background in the textile industry, were inspired to produce something with local fabrics and Angelly came to life. Their items are selling like hotcakes at open days held around town. People are falling in love with their classic loungewear and sleepwear styles.

There is something nostalgic about their style. No skimpy camis or short shorts here. Unlike overpriced and ill fitting sleepwear in the prevalent brand stores, Angelly products are really made to be worn to live comfortably in.

Nightshirts fit loosely and comfortably in bright striped fuchsia and purple stripes, thick fleecy night shirts and American style loungewear set ensembles of cotton pants and Henley tops are gorgeously tailored.

A nightshirt sells for LE 290 whereas a fleecy sort of Henley nightshirt for winter sells for LE 190. Abroad, particularly in the UK where the brand is experiencing much success and demand, the price for a nightshirt is £59. It pays to buy local goods of course at wholesale prices.

The old fashioned attention to detail is absolutely charming. A cotton loop on the back so as to hang your nightshirt after wear, the brand's lily icon embroidered so delicately and shirt gussets by the side just go to show that ultimately, these women are really on to something. "Made with love and care," says their tags.

www.angelly.com
Tel: 010-231-8279

For that Special Friend

Patrycja Niemyjska designs enamel jewelry set in silver frames. A graduate from the Art Institute of Chicago with a degree in fine arts and studio arts, Niemyjska's creations are beautiful intricate pieces of art that one can wear.

Moving to Egypt with her Egyptian husband, she took some courses and studied Islamic art history at the American University in Cairo, and continued with her interests of art and metal work throughout a year and a half stint at the established jeweler Vartun, downtown.

"Jewelry making is a man's world and in a sense, it's not really appreciated as a craft, you're not working in nice conditions." Today, she juggles both her art and family by working at home.

"It takes a bit of understanding to know what goes into it, it's not just some sketches and going to your mom's goldsmith [to execute your design]," says Niemyjska.

It is a labor intensive process, one that requires a good eye for planning the multiple layers of the enamel, and the silver cloisonné wires which help to delineate the design on the metal base and make the piece physically stronger. Enamel dates to Grecian times, and is essentially the art of ground up glass that melts in the fiery kiln to produce beautiful glassy effects. Pieces of gold and silver foil are also used, "for depth of color," explains Niemyjska.

"It's a lot of playing," she explains. "There's an element of discovery of course [when making each piece] but the piece can also take on a life of its own."

Her rings, pendants, cufflinks and bracelets have motifs of butterflies, lotuses, hand prints of Fatma's Kaf or interestingly enough, images of thick luscious trees and birds singing in the tree tops.

What is interesting is to see how an established art form most popular abroad such as enamel can be produced so skillfully with locally inspired motifs. Mandela flower patterns, blue eyes hoping to ward off the evil eye, and the like have a very refreshing aesthetic to them under Niemyjska's interpretation.



Delicate work is done by Chef Ahmed.



Angelly nightshirts are perfect gifts to give and receive.



Angelly's loungewear pants.



Laundry bag.



Perfect cover for your winter hot water bottle.

After three years in the business, her work sells in various boutiques across town such Mounaya and Loolies in Zamalek, and at open days around the city.

Prices start from LE 550 and goes up to LE 2,500.

www.pn-enamel-jewelry.com

Tel: 012-390-9008

Angelly and Patrycja Niemyjska Jewelry will be sold during an open day in Maadi on Dec. 15 and 16 from 10 am to 5 pm at 18 Road 9, first floor, Maadi.



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