

Where to shop



Holiday Gift Guide

LA ROG JEWELERS
539 S.W. Broadway
503-223-5051

With the holiday season comes the task of checking who's been naughty and nice on your gift-giving list. Some of those naughtiest may be deserving of something quite special this year, no?

La Rog Jewelers in bustling downtown Portland has some wonderful shiny baubles to consider as gifts for your nearest and dearest this year. A visit with store manager James Giardina (also president of the Portland Area Business Association) is almost gift enough.

La Rog opened 94 years ago. They now boast a store in Southeast Portland and one in Washington Square. In-house designer Carla Toole won the 2001 Oregon State Design of the Year award. Two years ago, La Rog opened Diamonds on Broadway, a shop dedicated to bridal jewelry and diamonds.

James notes he goes one step further by carrying a huge and stunning collection of commitment bands for same-sex couples. He also takes pride in his staff, who make gay men and lesbians feel completely comfortable in selecting rings for their momentous occasion.

James says the main difference between commitment bands and traditional marriage sets is mostly in design. "Oftentimes there is more attention to detail, script work, eternity style, something that may be a bit more unusual."

Here are a few featured items James would like you to know about this season:



All that glitters is available from James Giardina at La Rog Jewelers

- Fourteen-karat gold freeform-style cross or heart pave set diamond pendant, which comes in white or yellow gold. Simple and classic with a subtle sexiness. Very popular for the holidays, and comes in a lovely cherry keepsake box. Price: \$99.

- The "Past, Present, Future" ring. This white or yellow gold ring showcases three inlaid diamonds that glisten in a spectrum of color and light. La Rog's design goes one step further, adding three smaller diamonds on both sides, so you can see three from any angle. Price: \$299 and up.

- From Los Angeles-based designer Michael Landau, a ladies custom neck piece with an intricate floral design in 18-karat gold encrusted with canary diamonds. It also includes white diamonds that dazzle the eyes in contrast and has a vintage look. Made by hand, this rarity is brilliantly soft and feminine and can be available within two weeks. Price: \$8,995.

—TJ Norris



Larry Whitacre (left) and Steve Pickering have made Wild Life into an eye candy paradise

WILD LIFE
3962-B S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.
503-236-3862

The global village is alive and well at Wild Life, a charming gay-owned gift and home furnishings shop in the Liberty Building of Hawthorne Boulevard. What better way to express your discontent with the United States' increasingly dismal performance on the world stage than by making the holiday international? Wild Life has plenty of cool gifts from the far corners of the globe (along with some fun domestic goodies) to appeal to just about any budget and taste.

For those never-ending Japanese-themed parties, owners/partners Steve Pickering and Larry Whitacre suggest the gorgeously glazed Kotobuki dinnerware, ranging from \$4 for

small individual sushi plates to \$37.50 for a nicely boxed set of four with plates, sauce dishes and decorative chopsticks.

From the Zimbabwe Artists Project come enchanting hand-painted pillows (\$48) and wood paintings (\$55). These are guilt-free gifts, as the artists are paid directly at a much higher rate than the norm.

Another worthy buy in the fair trade mode are colorful papier-mâché bowls made by South African women with AIDS (\$18 to \$32). Also available are high-quality but surprisingly affordable items from Morocco, Egypt, Nepal, Tibet, Ireland, Poland and other centers of ornamental and practical wares.

Of course, the holiday season demands camp relief, and there are a number of worthy

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