

# GIFT & SOUVENIR

## *Trend Report*

### *What's new, popular from a memorable day out*

By Sam Ujvary, Assistant Editor

On any given Saturday morning, bleary-eyed children climb into the family van and parents pack up their car with all the essentials for a fun-filled (and potentially educational) day at the zoo, theme park or museum. Tickets are torn, exhibits are observed and animals are enthusiastically spectated for hours on end.

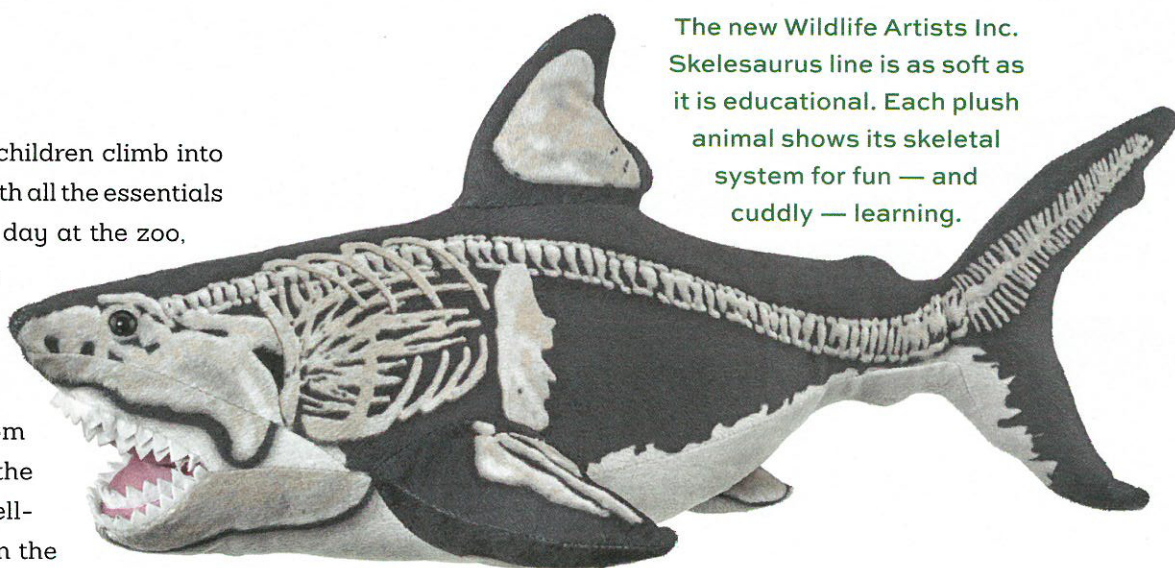
For workers, it's another day of running an entertainment venue that appeals to the masses. From tour guides to food court and gift shop employees, the behind-the-scenes workings come together like a well-oiled machine. They're so much more than just cogs in the machine — their fervor for the new visiting exhibit and love of working in the reptile house show on their glowing faces and are infectious to the hundreds or thousands of visitors they'll encounter during operating hours. But for that family who only has a short day to take in as much science, animal or history education as possible, finding the perfect souvenir that embodies their memory of the visit is the cherry on top of a good weekend.

With the help of featured exhibits, employee input and the most recent Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show, your shop can continue to offer the latest and greatest in memory-enhancing accouterment.

#### *Where have you been?*

For vacation-goers and millennials who caught the travel bug, everyday items like mugs, candles, towels and t-shirts that highlight a recently visited city are a big hit. "Products that have a little personality to them (are popular)," said Annemarie Kelley, marketing associate for Seattle-based Design Imports. "(And any) that contain special sayings or phrases." The company's new collection of Cityscape Dishtowels feature is just that. Recently debuted at Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show in September, the dishtowels feature city-specific highlights — think Space Needle, Millennium Park and the Empire State Building — and are available in 12 options: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington D.C.

Along for the cityscape rode, Yuthica's Road Trip Collection of candles feature top notes of amber, cinnamon, sandalwood, vanilla, patchouli and musk and is offered in six destination cities: Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta and Miami. Each is made of 100 percent soy wax and will garner memories of trips taken with the light of the wick.



The new Wildlife Artists Inc. Skelesaurus line is as soft as it is educational. Each plush animal shows its skeletal system for fun — and cuddly — learning.



An easy way to remember a recently visited city with a vibrant alchemy scent, Yuthica's Road Trip candles feature city skylines.

#### *Museums and zoos and aquariums, oh my!*

Whether patrons take in a 3D show about the Jurassic period, interactively learn the interworkings of the ocean's food chain, or just enjoy the simple pleasures of seeing how primates live on a day-to-day basis, taking home a little piece of memorabilia is like taking home a little tidbit of new knowledge. For coffee aficionados, The Unemployed Philosophers Guild offers a line of informative mugs. Whether it be the effects of global warming, what constellations look like or what an eons-old Tyrannosaurus Rex looks like postmortem, these mugs changes scenes when liquid is poured in.



## We asked the experts...

## WHAT ARE YOUR BESTSELLERS?

"Our exhibits play a huge role in depicting what is our most popular item. We have a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle exhibit right now and I cannot get the product in quick enough. This exhibit has cross-generational appeal, so we carry everything from action figures to wall clocks and adult bathrobes."

— Carol Toth, *The Children's Museum of Indianapolis*

“We are fortunate to have very impactful temporary exhibits within our Museum and have had the pleasure of running temporary shops focused specifically on related product pertaining to the exhibit. Some of our bestsellers (are the) mythic glass mini figurines, Magical Fairy Essences necklaces and plush animals, while our more traditional bestsellers include rock pendants, as well as the bulk rocks. It’s just really hard to resist a good rock!”

— Susan Kirchoff, Denver Museum of Nature and Science

“We want to help our guests understand the history of the Texas Panhandle far beyond the walls of PPHM. Our top selling departments are books and apparel.”

—Heather Knowles, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum

## WHAT WILL 2016 BRING?

"I think 2016 will see more app interactive toys, but on the other side I see crafts taking over in a big way. We are also always looking for exhibit-related items, so next year we have a pirate and princess-based exhibit. It will be a great platform for us."

— *Toth*

“Our shelves will be stocked with product which supports our temporary exhibits, a strong presence of our best selling items, as well as lots of rocks, of course!”

—Kirchoff

"We have a pop culture exhibit opening, as well as the greatly anticipated completion of our renovated petroleum exhibit. This will give the store a unique opportunity to incorporate these themes into our product selection."

— Knowles

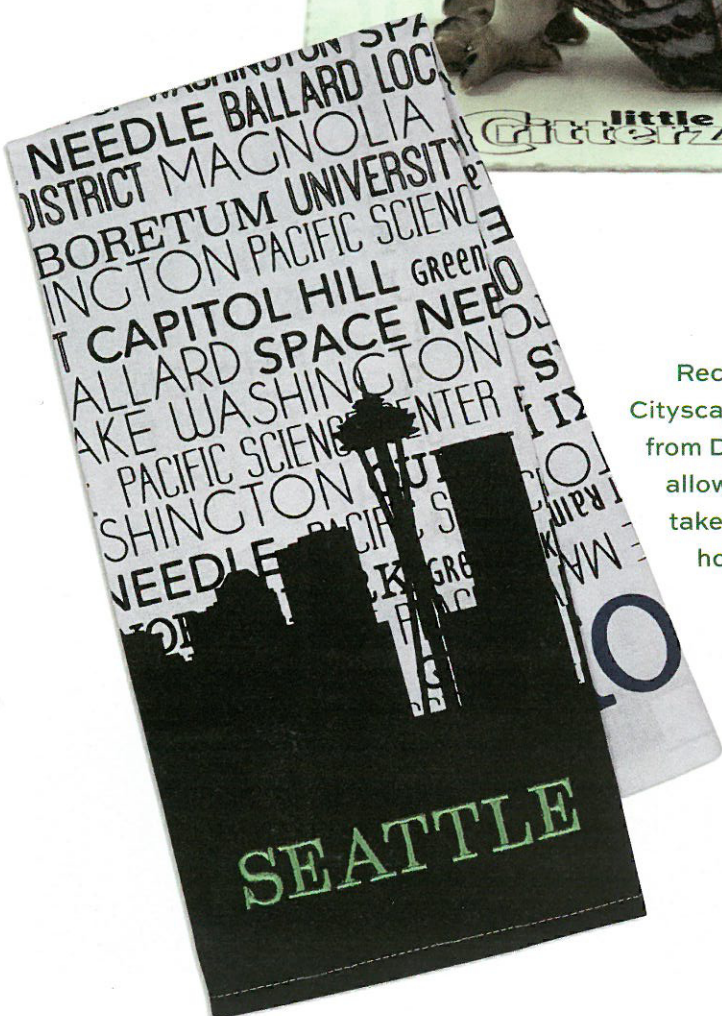


Watch dinosaurs become extinct right before your eyes. The Disappearing Dinosaurs Mug from The Unemployed Philosophers Guild starts out with the Jurassic period thriving, but add hot liquid and watch T-Rex transform into a fossil.

The Great Gray Owl is a precision bird known as the Phantom of the North, and is the world's longest owl. Little Critterz's porcelain version stands just over one inch tall.



Recently released  
Cityscape Dishtowels  
from Design Imports  
allow customers to  
take their vacation  
home with them.



Offering a new teaching technique on an old favorite, Wildlife Artists, Inc. — the company that brought us the original hanging monkeys, snakes and mermaids — has introduced a new breed of plush toys, Skelesaurus, to the market. The wildlife-inspired collection features realistic fossil skeletons from dinosaurs to sharks, undoubtedly piquing the interest of even the youngest of paleontologists. More than your average plush pals purchased at gift shops, the Skelesaurus creatures provide an educational component that makes them stand out from other dinosaur pals.

Ideal for zoo, aviary and conservatory gift shops alike, the porcelain earrings, pendants and figurines from Little Critterz are hand-fired and hand-painted by artists with a keen eye for detail. With more than 1,200 skus available in the collection of figurines—from giraffes, sloths and pheasants to butterflies, flowers and even a saxophone-playing penguin—there's quite literally something for everyone.

Depending on the type of establishment you have, the items you choose to make available in your store will perpetually change, but somehow stay the same. Zoos will always feature endearing animal friends of some kind; dinosaurs, whether on mugs, t-shirts or in the form of skeletal system-showing plush animals will always be present on museum shelves; and you'll find a unique product that you're certain your store just can't live without. With the turn of every corner, inspiration strikes, and we're really excited to see what you've got for visitors this upcoming year. *M*