

# Glamorous Escapes

by Ashley Trent

*Luxurious candles and personal-care products transport consumers to destinations near and far*



Unscented floating candles from **Creative Candles** (800/237-9711 or [www.creativecandles.com](http://www.creativecandles.com)) create a spa-like setting when placed in pretty glass vessels. The hand-finished candles come in 20 elegant colors. Suggested retail: \$3 small, \$5 medium.

There is something intrinsically calming about lighting a candle, soaking in a bath or spritzing oneself with eau de toilette. We find ourselves refreshed by the ambiance of flickering flames, the softness of delicate bubbles and the aromatherapeutic properties of natural ingredients in our go-to perfumes and lotions. The relaxing powers and sensory experiences held within candles and spa goods are what make them a continuous top seller for retailers.

It's wise (and fun) to explore this ever-growing category, and resources for fabulous products are not hard to find. Here we share stories of companies with offerings that inspire, indulge and provide an element of escape.

## WELCOME TO MIAMI

Retailers who carry personal-care collections have a common goal of creating an at-home spa experience for their customers. Aiming to provide an inexpensive, multipurpose product, Maggie Maceiras and Georgette Hoyo of Soy Delicious ([www.soy-delicious.com](http://www.soy-delicious.com)) reinterpreted the elements of a coastal spa getaway and packed them neatly into a jar.

Soy Delicious offers soy candles that double as moisturizers as they melt; they come in an array of tropical scents, such as Havana Nights and Tahitian Orchid, inspired by Maggie and Georgette's hometown of Miami. "It definitely has been a plus, for us and the consumer, that the candle is a two-for-one product," says Maggie. "It's something that is eco-friendly and made of quality, pure ingredients — completely safe for the body. And it's at an attractive price point, which is so important for consumers and businesses today."

But the success of Soy Delicious was hazy at the start. Longtime friends Maggie and Georgette were

teachers before they entered the candle business. Both women expressed interest in a career change that would allow them to spend more time with their young children. Maggie stumbled upon an idea while on vacation in the summer of 2006. "The idea got its start because of my personal love for candles," she says. "I was on vacation and wanted to buy a candle to bring home. The one I liked smelled so wonderful and was really elegant, but it was more than \$70, and I thought it was outrageous."

Maggie immediately started thinking about the necessity of bringing affordable luxury candles to the market. "I passed the idea onto Georgette and



**New Hope Soap's** (877/258-4541 or [www.newhope-soap.com](http://www.newhope-soap.com)) triple-milled soap bars are made in the USA. Shown are the company's Massage Bars, which come in Honey Almond, Cedarwood, Pear and Lavender Ginger scents. The company offers monograms and logos in a variety of fonts. Suggested retail: \$16 each.

said, "What do you think about making candles?" I honestly have to tell you that she had no response at first. She seemed very unsure at the time, which is pretty characteristic of us; I usually have all the crazy ideas, and Georgette is calmer and thinks things through carefully."

Willing to take a chance, Georgette jumped on board. The friends started experimenting with candle recipes in their own kitchens. "We wanted to make it so that people could use every part of the candle: You can burn it, use it as a moisturizer and then use the glass as a drinking glass afterward," says Maggie. The team's eco-friendly concept emerged onto the Miami scene at just the right time; Maggie says the city is "finally catching on to the green movement, and the candles are a fun way to embrace it."

There was still one problem, however: Maggie and Georgette had yet to name their company.

"We didn't even have a label for the candles," says Maggie. "So we started bouncing ideas around. I was listening to the radio one night, and the song "Fergalicious" by Fergie came on. It's such a catchy tune, and I absolutely loved the beat — and then the idea came to me right away. I called Georgette at about 11 p.m. and asked her what she thought about naming the company Soy Delicious. I thought it was special because of the way we could use the name to play off the Spanish language — the word "soy" communicates our Miami Latina backgrounds and our greenness, too. We could let women express themselves through the candles and empower them in a way, too."

Maggie and Georgette's hard work has paid off; Soy Delicious was a finalist in the Natural/Organic category of the Ex-Tracts Best New Product competition at this summer's New York International Gift Fair.

## FROM THE LAND DOWN UNDER

Across the globe is another team of manufacturers who drew inspiration from their surroundings. Leanne Haining and Scott Kelly, founders of Australia-based Urban Rituelle ([www.rituelle.com](http://www.rituelle.com)), have taken concepts from their travels and applied them to the company's exquisite collections.

"Scott and I met in 1993 while traveling in southern Turkey, where the ceremony of the Turkish bath



WoodWick Spill-Proof Home Fragrance Diffusers from **Virginia Candle Company** (800/827-2231 or [www.virginiacandle.com](http://www.virginiacandle.com)) come in 15 scents, including Applewood. Unlike traditional reed diffusers, they require no reed-flipping. Suggested retail: \$19.95.

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Cheerfully Green Soy Candles come in 16 fragrances and four sizes. Adults with special needs complete the company's entire wicking process. From **A Cheerful Giver**; 856/358-7750 or [www.acheerfulgiver.com](http://www.acheerfulgiver.com). Suggested retail: \$9-\$22.

played an important role in the local culture, serving as places of social gathering and ritual cleansing," says Leanne. "We spent time exploring the fragrant, filled bazaars of the Middle East and later traveled extensively throughout India and Asia. These experiences were translated into a desire to create a range of bath-and-body products that celebrate life's simple pleasures and enhance our everyday rituals."

Urban Rituelle's lineup has a distinct, international flair; each item offers a veritable escape by blending elements from a fusion of cultures. From extraordinary yet appealing scents, such as Manuka Honey, White Kimono and Coconut & Kukui, to

the packaging colors and patterns reflective of history and continental ethos, the bath products are poetic, romantic and reverent all at once.

In addition to her and Scott's travel experiences, Leanne uses her personal eye for design when creating the intricate boxes, bottles and jars for Urban Rituelle's products. "I draw my visual inspiration for our product range from my love of art, fashion and textile design, as well as architecture and interior design," says Leanne, who has a Bachelor of Visual Arts degree from the University of Sydney, where she studied under Japanese ceramicist Mitsuo Shoji. "I am continually inspired by my everyday surroundings, taking inspiration from everything I see, including cushions, handbags, jewelry and fashion. When we are designing, we choose colors and patterns that we personally love — you know as soon as you see them if they are right. The right color combination and use of pattern will bring an instant smile to your face. After 10 years in the industry, I also have a strong understanding of the market and have a feel for the colors that work well at a commercial level and therefore attract repeat sales for our retail customers."

Leanne and Scott also put a lot of thought into the development of their logo, which communicates the company's mission statement and reflects traditions that span the ages. "The spiral used in our logo is a widespread symbol and is rich in meaning," explains Leanne. "The Celtic triskel of three spirals represents the theme of mind, body, spirit and the cycle of eternal life. The ancient spiral is used throughout many cultures and symbolizes the cycle of the ritual. While studying for my degree, I spent three years learning about the importance of rituals, particularly in Japanese culture. The artwork I created during this time was made using the throwing



**Upper Canada Soap's** (800/548-4097 or [www.uppercanadasoap.com](http://www.uppercanadasoap.com)) Body Truffles collection comes in Fudge Brownie, Chocolate Strawberry and Cocoa Mango. Made with rich butters and oils, the line includes the Melting Body Bar, Warming Fondue Body Scrub, Bath Truffle Fizzie, Foaming Bath Powder, Lip Butter, Bubble Bath, Body Crème, Body Soufflé and Romantic Candle. Suggested retail: \$5-\$20.

wheel, a technique used in Japan where the ritual of 'making' is actually more valued than the end product. I was deeply engrained in these studies when we came up with the business name and logo."

Because the collections are so personal, it's no wonder that Leanne feels attached to each and every one of Urban Rituelle's products. "They are like my children, and I love them all for different reasons," she says. But one collection holds particularly special meaning, and it isn't tied to faraway lands; rather, Leanne and Scott got the idea for it right at home. The couple was married in 2004 and soon had two little girls, by whom the company's Mumma & Bubba collection was inspired. "My 2-year-old daughter just loves the Nursery Mist and gets me to spray her pillow every night before bed," says Leanne. "And my 4-year-old daughter will only let me apply the Massage Oil to her dry skin — nothing else, no matter what!"



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Stylish cosmetic cases from **Kate & Sara** (772/287-9555 or [www.kateandsara.com](http://www.kateandsara.com)) are perfect for stashing away makeup, beauty products and hair accessories. The bags are made of quilted cotton and have a waterproof lining for easy cleaning. Shown is the Petite Giraffe pattern; other classic, tropical and colorful designs are available. Suggested retail: \$18.

## SWEET HOME CHICAGO

Sometimes one only needs to wander a few blocks to find an escape. Although it may be seemingly unassuming to passersby, The Enterprising Kitchen ([www.theenterprisingkitchen.org](http://www.theenterprisingkitchen.org)) in Chicago's Ravenswood neighborhood is a destination offering a whole new world to the women working inside.

Founded in 1996, The Enterprising Kitchen is a non-profit social enterprise providing career opportunities for women starting a new life for themselves. The women in the program work as a team to manufacture spa products that are a new take on what it means to be glamorous.

"It was important for us to start this social enter-



**Kat Burki's** (888/881-7677 or [www.katburkihome.com](http://www.katburkihome.com)) soy candles are made in the USA and come in six scents. Tuberose (shown), Lavender Lightly, Freesia & Pink Grapefruit and White Tea come in 11-oz. glass tumblers and are packed in colorful gift boxes. New for Christmas 2009 are Hot Toddy and Sugar Plum, which come in 6.8-oz. glass tumblers. Suggested retail: \$52, 11-oz candle.

prise because, although there are and always have been a number of programs across the city that deal with helping people get back into the workforce, very few deal particularly with women," explains Lynne Cunningham, executive director of The Enterprising Kitchen. "Even fewer programs deal with the challenging backgrounds that these women might come from. So many women were really looking for ways to change and improve their future. But they also needed something basic, which was to be able to put food on the table, because many of these

women are the breadwinners of their families.

"Our organization is different from other training programs in the city that involve classroom learning, which women don't receive pay for," continues Lynne. "Many women have to choose between training or going to work to make money and take care of their kids. With our program, they don't have to make that choice; they get all three benefits."

Women in the program participate for six months. From there, a select few become Team Builders and stay an additional six months; in this supervisory position, they assume managerial responsibilities such as training new participants and working on problem-solving issues with the staff.

Not only does the program pave the way toward independent financial stability, but it also immerses participants into a close-knit setting that builds character, ignites self-respect, deters crime and drug use, heals emotional wounds and unveils opportunities. A key factor to The Enterprising Kitchen's success is its all-women environment, which encourages the women to open up more than they would in comparable programs. Moreover, participants take pride in creating products that allow themselves and others the right to feel beautiful.

"I think it's much like what you find in single-sex education — a non-competitive environment allows these women to shine, achieve goals and thrive," says Lynne. "Participants who were victims of domestic violence don't have to worry about male intimidation. We provide a nurturing environment that helps women emerge from their cocoons."

The Enterprising Kitchen's line of products is named, fittingly, Choices. Made with natural ingredients, the collection redefines what makes beauty products beautiful. "The name Choices is really twofold," notes Lynne. "It reflects the choices our participants are making here; they are going a different direction than they have before. Whether they have dealt with substance abuse leading to financial problems or losing custody of their children, by the time they come to us, they've distinctly made the decision that they're making a new life for themselves. They are making the choice to escape abuse, to be self-sufficient and to reunite their families."

The second meaning of the Choices line involves the consumer; namely, that individuals from any background can choose to support a worthy cause. ✂



**Thompson's Candle Co.'s** (814/641-7490 or [www.thompsonscandle.com](http://www.thompsonscandle.com)) Fragrant Sentiments collection of handmade melts and candles come in an array of scents to complement multiple moods. Shown is Balance, featuring notes of frankincense and sandalwood; other options include Awaken, Focus, Grow, Imagine, Quiet Time, Spice It Up and Unwind. Suggested retail: \$6-\$15.



Women seeking independence and stability proudly manufacture natural soaps and spa products in a program developed by **The Enterprising Kitchen** (800/818-6158 or [www.theenterprisingkitchen.org](http://www.theenterprisingkitchen.org)). Call for pricing.

## THE STARS OF EX-TRACTS

Associate Editor Ashley Trent represented Giftware News at the summer New York International Gift Fair, where she served as a judge for the Ex-TRACTS Best New Products Awards. The competition saw more than 140 entries. Below are the finalists and winners of this coveted prize.

### Best of Show

DayNa Decker – Botanika Collection

### Bath/Body

Winner: Earthworks Products – Soap wrapper

Finalist: Flora Napa Valley – Olivina Meyer  
Lemon body butter

Finalist: Seda France Candles – Classic Toile  
hand lotion

### Beauty Accessory

Winner: Warren Tricomi Haircare –  
Green Walnut Masque

Finalist: DayNa Decker – Le Petite Parfum  
Finalist: Aglow Soy Candle Co. – Recycled  
glass vase

### Cosmetic/Fragrance

Winner: Fragonard Parfumeur – Cette Nuit La  
Finalist: Floris London – Floris No. 89

eau de toilette  
Finalist: Fruits & Passion – Electric fragrance  
diffuser

### Natural/Organic

Winner: La Compagnie de Provence –  
Ylang Noir Dry Oil

Finalist: DayNa Decker – Essence Buffer  
Finalist: Soy Delicious – Moisturizing candle

### Packaging

Winner: Tatine – Garden & Forest Infusions

Finalist: Earthworks Products – Soaps  
Finalist: Berjang USA – Jacadi Paris

The next edition of Ex-TRACTS takes place January 30-February 4, 2010. Visit [www.extractsnyc.com](http://www.extractsnyc.com) for more information.



**TokyoMilk's** (888/65-TOKYO or [www.tokyo-milk.com](http://www.tokyo-milk.com)) Bubbling Baths come in collectible, vintage-looking bottles decorated with artist Margot Elena's nostalgic illustrations. Available in six scents inspired by the company's Parfumerie Curiosity collection, the mixes contain Japanese green tea extract, avocado and olive oils, and vitamin E. Shown is French Kiss #15, fragranced with mandarin, tuberose, gardenia and vetiver. Suggested retail: \$22 small, \$36 large.



The Perfumeria House of Gal in Madrid, Spain, has been creating fragranced lip balms since 1898. Each tin features colorful European art deco and art nouveau artwork. Scents include Red Currant, Peach, Violet, Orange, Strawberry and Vanilla. This holiday season, for no additional charge, the company will package each balm in a gift bag complete with a holiday tag. From **Kalastyle**; 800/755-KALA or [www.kalastyle.com](http://www.kalastyle.com). Suggested retail: \$6.



Lip Balms from **Twist & Pout** (800/717-8976 or [www.twist-and-pout.com](http://www.twist-and-pout.com)), formerly Ballmania, come in fashionably decorated spheres. The company launches a new collection of eight colorful designs three times a year. Shown is Balmy Belize, part of the World Tour collection. The petroleum-free moisturizers offer SPF 20 protection and are made in the USA. Suggested retail: \$7.



**Agraria's** (800/824-3632 or [www.agrariahome.com](http://www.agrariahome.com)) elegant Gift Suites include a Luxury Bath Bar, PetiteEssence reed diffuser, and TasselAire, a scented, decorative tassel that can be hung from a piece of furniture or used as a tie for curtains. Fragrances include Bitter Orange, Lemon Verbena, Golden Pomegranate and Mediterranean Jasmine. The San Francisco-based company has been creating luxury products since the 1970s. Suggested retail: \$95.

# Around The World

*Products inspired by European cities,  
Central American hot spots  
and beyond*



The Scents of Style collection from Australia-based **Urban Rituelle** (310/782-9915 or [www.urbanrituelle.com](http://www.urbanrituelle.com)) brings luxurious fragrance to the home and body. Scents include Pomegranate (shown), White Orchid & Lotus, Ginger, Green Tea and Coconut & Kukui. Suggested retail: \$8-\$30.



Amourelle Paris perfumed candles in Bakelite jars are a treat for any Francophile. Made with essential oils, the candles come in six scents: Royal Tuberose (shown), Black Orchid, Fig Patchouli, Bergamot, Pink Lilac and Gardenia. From **BTC Distinguished French Gifts Inc.**; 904/277-7834 or [www.btcfrenchgifts.com](http://www.btcfrenchgifts.com). Suggested retail: \$48.



**Modern Alchemy's** (213/624-9777 or [www.modernalchemycy.com](http://www.modernalchemycy.com)) Historical Collection abounds with creativity. These scented candles are inspired by events, concepts and themes throughout history. The line includes Boston Tea Party, Salem, Opium Den, Tincture of Winchester, Ex Libris, Dia De Los Muertos, Speak Easy, Cake Walk, Secret Society (shown) and Brothel. Suggested retail: \$45.



The jewel tones of the Stellar collection are inspired by couture collections that **illume's** (888/245-5863 or [www.illumecandles.com](http://www.illumecandles.com)) product-development team viewed on a trip to Paris. Scents in the line include Brilliance, with notes of cardamom, lemon and wood; Desire, featuring jasmine, tuberose and neroli; Midnight, scented with cedar, amber and bergamot; Stellar, featuring sugar, vanilla and white chocolate; and Sultry, with notes of cassis, coconut and tiger lily. Suggested retail: \$16 fashion tin, \$25 boxed glass candle, \$36 diffuser.