

Jupiter Artland: a Christmas Fair in the country

Jupiter Artland's Christmas Fair got the festive spirit off to a cracking start this weekend, with carols, cakes, crafts – and Jupiter's very own donkeys.

Children enjoyed visits to Santa's Grotto and the Elves' Workshop, while the grown-ups browsed a huge range of locally made gifts and produce (and tried the famous Jupiter mulled wine, perfect for keeping the cold outside where it belongs.)



Food and drink make excellent presents, all the more welcome if they are locally sourced. Gullane-based Spice Pots was started just five years ago by Melanie Auld; its beautifully

designed tins (all hand-filled here in Scotland) contain ready mixed spices for you to create your own curries, salads, burgers – even ice creams! The mixes are all gluten-free and contain no sugar or salt. As well as individual pots (£3.95 each) there are special collections, including the fabulous Luxury Gift Tin containing five Spice Pots, the genius Odour Busting Candle, and Spice Pots' very own cookbook. This year Spice Pots' Goan Mix won a Scotland Food & Drink Award – not bad for a company that started at Melanie's kitchen table. More information [here](#).



Rum from Livingston? Who knew? Well we do now and very delicious it is too. Matugga describes itself as 'British Rum, African Soul.' Top quality East African sugar cane molasses are fermented for seven days before being triple-distilled in 200-litre copper pot stills and finished in English oak casks to produce Matugga Golden Rum – or if you like something a little more spicy, the Spiced Rum is embellished with a blend of black tea, ginger, cloves, vanilla, cardamom and cinnamon. Each rum comes in 20cl and 70cl bottles, priced at £19.99 and £39.99. Drink it neat or use it as the base for daiquiris – or maybe the exotically named *Clandestino* (for recipes see www.mattugarum.com).



If you'd like something a little more concrete – literally – Tessa Findlay has the gift for you. Edinburgh-based Tessa makes homewares from mixer waste concrete; stunning plant pots, table mats, bowls, incense holders, platters and even tiny Buddhas. She uses mainly Snowcrete, a white Portland cement, sometimes running a dye through it for special effects. Each item is hand crafted so no piece is exactly the same. Tessa also uses T-shirt yarn or rattail cord to make macramé pot holders – remember them? Tessa's [Concrete Sweet](#) products can be found in Edinburgh at 181 Delicatessen, Century General Store, Elk & Wolf and Red Door Gallery.

This summer Fiona Dean moved from Edinburgh to the East Lothian village of Stenton. Her new location is, she says, not only a wonderfully friendly place but also a fantastic base for her work as a taxidermist, artist and jewellery maker. Central St Martin's-trained Fiona uses mainly found objects – pheasant feathers, animal bones, skulls, claws, roadkill, wishbones from roast chickens – to create beautiful

sculptures, necklaces, bracelets, brooches and paperweights, some in silver and silver plate. Her taxidermy includes both traditional (owls, pheasants, ravens, magpies) and conceptual pieces. She is currently exhibiting in the Fine Art Society, Dundas Street. For more information visit Fiona's website [here](#).



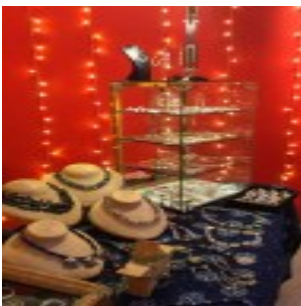
The countryside of Angus and of Donegal inspires Georgie Sampson's ceramics. She throws mainly in earthenware, using slip glazes; the swirling blues, greens, whites and yellows of her bowls, cups and vases are exquisite, and would make great gifts for any occasion. You can find out more [here](#).

For the person who already has everything, an 'experience' is always a good idea. Award-winning candlemaker Kerrylyn Bell offers candle making workshops in the village of Temple, south of Edinburgh. There you will gain the skills to create your own scented container candle from 100% soya wax, and the price of £45 includes all materials, coffee and cake. If you'd prefer to give the finished product, Kerrylyn's business, [Can to Candle](#), offers a wide selection of her wonderful scented candles; these can be gift-wrapped and posted direct, saving you that long queue at the post office.



A charity gift is another popular alternative to the traditional Christmas present. The [RSPB](#) is now the largest nature conservation charity in the UK – membership supports its vital work *and* gives you access to 170 reserves throughout the UK, such as Loch Leven, Baron’s Haugh in Motherwell and the Black Devon Wetlands near Alloa. Members also receive a quarterly magazine, *Nature’s Home*. Scotland has habitats of international importance, from the Machair grasslands of the north-west coast to the fertile farmlands of Aberdeenshire and Angus.

These special places are home to many important birds and animals – eagles, otters, capercaillie, pine martens, Scottish crossbills, corncrakes, wild cats, red squirrels and the wonderfully-named ‘dark-bordered beauty moth’ all spend time here. The RSPB is striving to improve the conservation prospects for all of the 16 highest-priority UK bird species that are resident in Scotland, plus other threatened wildlife and landscapes. Membership costs just £60 a year for a family or £48 for one or two adults; find out more [here](#).



Edinburgh designer Uta Rosenbrock uses silver, wood and beads to make her lovely jewellery. A particular feature is a versatile silver pendant with interchangeable silver or wooden inserts; there are also delicate earrings and silver rings. Uta can be contacted at utasjoolz@yahoo.co.uk.

Or if gifts for the home are what you need, Kiki Blum, a stitchsmith based in Newtongrange, makes great cushions using a variety of new wool and upcycled vintage blankets and repurposed kilts. Her range also includes bags, fleece blankets, stockings and these fabulous carrot decorations – just the thing for all those incoming reindeer... Kiki makes her personalised products to order, with the emphasis on longevity, purpose and quality. She loves her sewing machine (bought for her by her Mum) so much she says she would save it from a burning building! Kiki's products can be found at End of Terrace Trading on etsy [here](#).



Tasty Buns Bakery Stall



Since [Tasty Buns Bakery](#) and café opened in Bread Street (yes really...) it's become a go-to place for everything from brownies to banana cake, flapjacks and hot chocolate, with a fine line in 'boozy bakes' such as Mixed Berry Mulled Wine Mini Loaves.

At Jupiter the mouth-watering shortbreads, macarons, mince pies, meringues and traybakes were being snapped up – but you can get some yourself in the shop, which has over 50 five star reviews on Trip Advisor and is open 8.30am-5pm Monday-Friday and 9.30am-4pm on Saturdays. And on 14 December Tasty Buns is hosting a Festive Sconefest – get along there to enjoy eight varieties, two sweet, two boozy sweet, two savoury and two boozy savoury. It's not Christmas without a Christmas scone!

Despite the dreich weather, Jupiter Artland's Christmas Fair was a great afternoon out (there was even [artificial] snow). Helpers were on hand to push the cars that got stuck in the slightly muddy overflow carpark – luckily Santa didn't appear to have any problems.



[Jupiter Artland](#), Bonnington House Steadings, Wilkieston, EH27 8BY, is now closed to the public until 18 May 2019.

On Friday 14 December there will be a one-off Little Sparks Taster Session offering an introduction to this regular term-time class; this will include opportunities for outdoor learning, messy play, art and adventure. Children must be aged 3-5; £12.50 per child. Booking is essential and may be made [here](#).