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Holiday gifts for pampered pets

From cell phones to freshwater pearls, these goodies are the cat's meow

Sandy Robins
MSNBC contributor



Sandy Robins

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It's that gift-giving time of year again and America's imaginative pet toy and gift manufacturers have been hard at work dreaming up innovative presents for Fido and Fluffy to celebrate this howliday season.

According to the 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey published by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA), it promises to be a big spending spree with an estimated 154 million pet owners expected to splurge on toys, treats and decorative housewares.

No doubt a cell phone is going to be on top of every yuppie puppy's wish list.

The bone-shaped, waterproof and scratch-resistant PetCell, by [Petsmobility](#), attaches to the collar and auto answers like a speakerphone. It's designed for workaholics to stay in touch with stay-at home pets. It will also help quickly retrieve a lost pet, as anyone finding an animal wearing a phone will be able to contact the owner by simply pressing the callback button.



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PetsMobility Network

The PetCell collar for pets

The phone is priced around \$300. The monthly calling plan, costing around \$15, will launch in March 2006.

Fortunately, you won't have to worry about Fido going over his minutes because he won't be able to dial out. And, despite this wonderful technology, rollover, in dog terms, still means just that!

Pearls for pups

Fashion trends dictate that different colored strands of pearls worn as necklaces, collar charms and anklets are this season's hot jewelry item for both cats and dogs.

"Freshwater pearls are very popular," says Laura Thompson Temple of Fifi and Co. in Philadelphia. "And so are strands of pink pearls intertwined with gray."

The 2006 Oscar Newman Collection focuses on silver trinkets studded with seed pearls and Swarovski crystals in popular pastels that mimic semi-precious stones like pink tourmalines, ice blue topaz and peridot. Necklaces (\$90) and matching anklets (\$12) on a soft flexible cord are designed to accessorize the latest canine fashions.



Oscarnewman.com

Necklace and anklet accessories from the Oscar Newman Collection

Consequently, a velvet chaise lounge-shaped pet jewelry box for jewels and hair accessories at Dukeanducchesspetgifts.com would make a great gift (\$58).

Another must-have item is a pale pink faux fur coat, confirms designer Stephanie Bell of Fancy Furs. She adds that Santa Claus outfits are hugely popular again this year, worn with pearls of course!

A pet carrier is currently the most essential lifestyle-to-go accessory that

any dog, cat, parrot, rat, rabbit and ferret can own. The messenger bag style is practical and trendy for pet lovers who ride bicycles or scooters. The Celltei Pak-o-Bird can be carried as a front or back carrier as well as a shoulder bag. The dense mesh keeps insects out and prevents the bird pecking through it. There are also two D-Rings for hanging bird toys and adjustable perches. From \$89.

Dishes for fancy feasts

The holiday season is the perfect time to buy the family pet its own dinnerware, possibly even a dining table.

Designer Susan Sherwood of Jo Sherwood Designs turned to the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans for inspiration for her Civilized Pet Collection. The handcrafted glass designs are dishwasher safe and have matching place mats as well as lids to seal cans (\$24 to \$45). A fluted water bowl on a wrought iron stand is an ideal gift for a pet that enjoys drinking out of a glass. It also prevents long, floppy ears from getting wet (\$37).

The Rare Earth Company has a range of two-bowl and four-bowl pet bistro tables in oak, mahogany and maple. Priced at about \$500, they are designed to blend with the general interior design of any home.

Fluffy would probably enjoy an extra comfort zone around the home. The shaggy Beetle-style couch from Catnap (Wild Things for Pets) comes in shocking pink and a multitude of fun colors, for \$89.



Reef-one.com

The BiOrb Smart Aquarium

For tropical fish fans, the BiOrb Smart Aquarium is the latest spherical state-of-the-art fish tank with simple instructions: "Add water, add fish." It's equipped with an LED light system with programmable settings offering sunrise, sunset and moonlight modes, and also has a five-stage filtration system that takes all the hassle out of fish care. \$129.99 from Reef-one.com.

CONTINUED: The gift that keeps giving



HOLIDAY GUIDE

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There's a wonderful range of new toys and play centers for small critters. The Critter Operated Chopper is the latest pet-powered exercise toy for hamsters and gerbils. This interactive motorcycle features an adjustable operating wheel that rolls on any flat surface as the pet exercises (\$24.95).

The Critter Trail Off to School Bus is a multi-purpose accessory that can be used as a home, a cage add-on or a carrier for hamsters, gerbils and pet mice. The school bus design includes real rolling wheels and a built-in handle to encourage interactive play between pets and their owners. It also comes with a dashboard food dish and rooftop water bottle (\$19.95) at [Superpetusa.com](#).

The My Personal Pet Book is a great gift for pet lovers of all ages (\$67.95). It features photographs of your special pet in a selection of fun storylines with titles like "Rendezvous at the Zoo," "A Star is Born" and "Fun in the Jungle." Information on how to produce this personalized book, from taking the required photographs from different angles to uploading them on to the Web site, is available at [Mypersonalpetbook.com](#).

For the dog lover who has everything, [The Original Dog Bible](#) is a unique reference book covering everything from dogs in popular culture, grooming, breeds and healthcare. It has an excellent resource section detailing clubs, Web sites, doggy playgroups and fun activities nationwide (\$24.95).

Now it's your pet's turn to hand out presents. Fido and Fluffy can send their list of special people as well as their feline and canine friends to the [Mutt Lynch Winery](#) in Sonoma County, Calif. They will send gift baskets featuring their dog-related wines like Portrait of a Mutt and Merlot Over and Play Dead with personalized notes attached. Gift packs cost around \$39.95.

A weekend away in California's famous wine lands is a great holiday escape for pet parents. The famous [Cypress Inn](#) in Carmel, Calif., owned by the legendary Doris Day, has been acclaimed the most pet friendly hotel in Californian wine country. That means cats and dogs can enjoy a break from home too!

And finally, give a gift that keeps on giving by sponsoring a needy animal at [The Best Friends Animal Sanctuary](#) in Utah for as little as \$17.00. This year, destitute pets from hurricane Katrina have been

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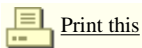
their biggest relief effort to date. The donation will provide food, shelter and critical veterinary care and the opportunity to find a new family. In return, you will receive a color photograph and information about your pet and a certificate of appreciation.

Here's to *Yappy Howlidays*.

Sandy Robins is a freelance writer and columnist based in Irvine, Calif. Her work has appeared in numerous publications in the United States and internationally.

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