

Holiday Shopping With A Ferret Cause

A ferret enthusiast finds ways to shop for the holidays and benefit ferrets at the same time.

By April Pietroiacovo

Posted: December 1, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

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If you do a little research, your holiday shopping can benefit ferrets in shelters, whether directly or indirectly.

Like it or not, the holiday shopping season is upon us. With the economy down this year, I'm worried about buying gifts for my loved ones as well as giving to my favorite ferret charities. I decided to challenge myself: can I do all of my gift shopping, give to my favorite ferret shelters and buy a new sparkly, plastic Christmas tree?

Making A List

First, where am I going to shop? I live about 60 miles from a decent mall, and lately I've become accustomed to shopping online. There are no crowds, no parking and no traffic to deal with; even though gas is cheaper now, my pocketbook seems to always be a little on the light side.

My next consideration is the list of those I'm buying for: Mom, Dad, my brother Jesse, his wife Brandy, and my nephews Brandon and Mikey. Then there's my Uncle Pat, my veterinarian and vet techs (don't forget about those who take care of your fuzzies!), my crazy ferret friends and their ferrets too! I suppose I should put my fiancé Travis on the list also.

Checking It Twice

Like many ferret owners, I have two types of people on my list: those who have ferrets and would enjoy receiving something ferrety and those who would not. There are many gifts out there for ferret lovers that directly benefit shelters. The first person on my list, Mom, actually runs a ferret shelter. She loves jewelry and clothing with ferrets on them, so I hop online and go to the website of the Lakeroad Ferret Farm in New York. That's where I order a pink and cranberry beaded necklace with a silver ferret charm (\$25), matching earrings (\$25) and a "My Grandferrets Love Me" T-shirt (\$24). I'm done shopping for Mom and a ferret shelter gained \$74.

My dad helps with the ferret shelter and loves to watch ferrets play in his backyard fuzzy playground. I surf on over to The Hidey Hole, home of ferret yard ornaments and other great items. Yard ornament in the shape of two ferrets: \$25. Grilling apron: \$18. Shipping: \$12.20. A happy Dad and supporting a ferret shelter: priceless.

Now, on to finding gifts for my ferret friends. Ferrets Are Love is known for its luxury play-mats and handmade beaded bracelets. Just so Robin, Kim and Brianna don't get in a fuzzy throwdown and dook it out over their gifts, I'm going to get them all the same things. Their goody box will have gifts for them and their ferrets, including: a stuffed black-footed ferret plush (\$17), elastic "I love ferrets" bracelet (\$3), 'Lil Ferret notepads (\$2), a tote bag (\$8) full of crocheted eggs (\$5 for 6) and Supersoft center open sacks for their fur-kids (\$20 for two). Ferrets Are Love uses the profits to help shelters as well as the endangered, black-footed ferret.

I never forget the people who help me keep my ferrets healthy and happy: my veterinarian and the seven vet techs at Goldenview Animal Hospital. Avon is a great source of skin care products, and my Avon store uses the profits to help purchase litter, bedding and cleaning supplies Daisy Day Care and Shelter; It also helps pay the vet bills for the shelter. Everybody gets a bottle of holiday hand cream (\$0.99), holiday chapstick for the cold wind in Colorado (\$0.69) and mini-file (\$0.79) all stuffed into Christmas mini-stockings (\$2.99 for two). These wonderful people take care of my ferret Forest, and I take care of them!

Who's Naughty, Who's Nice?

I'm not sure how anyone could live without ferrets, but even the ferret-less among us deserve gifts. My Uncle Pat loves cats but has no need for a new ferret hammock and bedding set from Little Feet Ferret Bedding. He likes cool and useful gadgets, so this year I will get him a digital voice recorder that he can keep verbal notes on while he's driving. How can I buy a digital voice recorder for my Uncle Pat and benefit ferret shelters? I would like to shop at an electronics store but how could that benefit ferrets?

The answer is GoodSearch. This site allows you to shop at major retailer websites with a portion of your purchase going to your favorite shelter. You can even generate money for your favorite shelter simply by searching the Internet



through GoodSearch. First, enter your favorite ferret shelter name or just search for "ferret" in the "Who do you GoodSearch for?" text box. It's really difficult to pick just one charity, but you can always come back and select a different shelter each time if you want to share your love. You can find almost anything with retailers such as Best Buy, Home Depot, Target, Sears and Land's End just to name a few. A similar site that may have other ferret shelters registered is iGive.

I love this shopping online and helping ferrets everywhere! A twill shirt from Land's End for my brother Jesse, an American Express gift card for my shop-a-holic sister-in-law Brandy, and video games from Toys 'R Us for my nephews Brandon and Mikey. Done shopping! Oh, wait, I suppose I could get my fiancé Travis that air compressor from Sears that's he's been salivating over. Then I'll make him buy us a sparkly plastic Christmas tree!

April Pietroiacovo is a ferret specialist for Totally Ferret and lives in Colorado with her fiancé Travis. Her ferret family consists of Isabella Gucci-Jones and Forest among others. She's been owned by ferrets for 17 years and enjoys helping new ferret owners and shelters.