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Desirable objects for festivities

Sheila Stanley

IF you are looking for something really meaningful to give to loved ones for Christmas, Hari Raya or Chinese New Year, you might want to pick something out from the "Objects of Desire" collection by the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

The collection of gifts, packaged by the foundation to raise funds for its AIDS programmes, was the brainchild of creative consultant Richard Hsu.

The name was coined by Hsu to get a "catchy name within one single title which suggested the project".

It refers to desirable items; things people would wish to receive during festive seasons.

And what exactly does Hsu define as desirable?

A collection aimed at appealing to people of different ages, lives and bank balances, one can find items within a wide range of prices.

Hsu says this was done to capture a diverse segment of the market.

For the lavish spenders, there is the Mercedes SLK convertible priced at RM470,000, of which RM20,000 will be donated to the foundation.

There are also trips like the Eastern & Oriental Express trip from Singapore to Bangkok worth RM7,300, of which RM5,176 goes to the foundation, and holiday packages from resorts like Pangkor Laut and Bon Ton on the Beach.

Equally appealing are crystal perfume bottles from Daum and fashion apparel for men and women from designers Ermenegildo Zegna and Gillian Hung of Isetan.

Less expensive items include masks designed by students from The One Academy in Kuala Lumpur going for RM80.

Just in case you have friends or relatives who prefer to have a good feast, there are RM350 gourmet hampers from Shangri-La Hotel and dining certificates for Scallini, Citrus and Grappa worth RM200.

Hsu says his collection does not claim to be definitive of Malaysians' desires. He adds that the items are those which he himself would buy.

"The question I asked myself was, 'If I went out shopping, what would be the items available here which I would find special or fun to own and at the same time creative and attractive'," he says.

Hsu said the collection depended not on market trends, but on his taste.

The collection was described by foundation chairman Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir as "an innovative marketing programme which enables the foundation to form partnerships with the Malaysian retail industry to raise funds".

She says: "'Objects of Desire' extends the spirit of giving in the festive seasons to help create an environment which is free of AIDS and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS."

This, perhaps, is the greatest strength of the collection - that in giving gifts to loved ones, we are also giving to AIDS and HIV-infected Malaysians.

* An exhibition of the collection will be held at Isetan Gallery, 4th floor Isetan, Lot 10, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur today and another at Bon Ton Restaurant, 7 Jalan Kia Peng, Kuala Lumpur, from Dec 17 till Jan 15.

(END)