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Spiraling into the Journal World

Consumers' demands for user-friendly and cleverly themed journals have spun the creative wheels of designers.



"I thought they would be quite seasonal, like the camping and vacation journals," she says. "But they sell throughout the seasons."

Morina claims that Oprah Winfrey indirectly helps the year-round popularity of journals by promoting journal keeping on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Morina adds that, with journals, people are looking to leave a legacy or keep a memory.

"[Journal keeping] is similar to taking pictures," she says. "It leaves a reminder of where you've been and what you've done."

While journal sales are growing, Kimberly Cameron, manager of Riecker's Gallery in Traverse City, Mich., says that women continue to make the majority of journal purchases.

"Fishing and hunting [themes] don't sell as well, even as gifts," she says. "Women think [journals] would be cool gifts [for men], but don't think men would write in them."

But journals with pre-printed writing ideas could encourage a broader audience to use journals. The "Me" journal from Journals Unlimited, for example, has guide phrases such as "News and events with family and friends," "People and things that brighten my day," and "I am excited about..." Not knowing what to write often deters would-be journal keepers.

"You don't have to have much imagination to buy one," says Cameron of "Me" journals. "You don't have to be a writer."

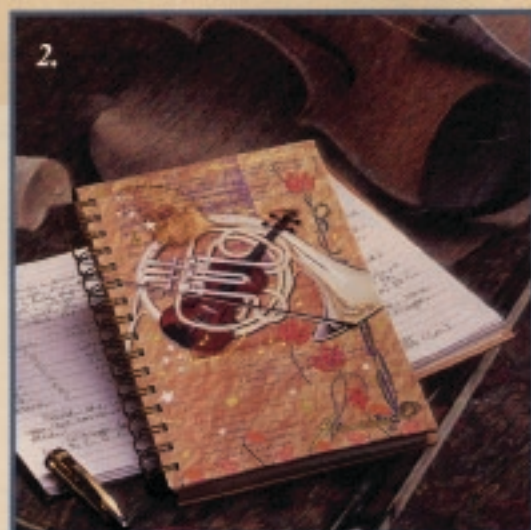
In fact, she's finding many of her customers buying journals, specifically the pre-printed ones, as impulse buys. Cameron displays them on a long bench next to the point of sale. She adds that the demand for journals is so great, especially for spiral-bound journals, that they sell themselves. Piling them by theme is the extent of her merchandising strategy.

"Most people pick them up and look through them as they're paying," she explains. "Then they buy."

Cameron even has customers who request specific journal themes from her store.

"It's fun because now I'm working with manufacturers to get specific items for my customers," she says.

Having consumers request formats, sizes and other specific preferences demonstrates a lasting interest in journals, and that's good news for the category. ♦



1. "The Ellen Blonder Herb Stamp Collection" from Rubber Stampede (800-632-8386; www.rubberstampede.com) features lovely images of garden herbs for decorating a recipe journal or cards. Set, \$20. **Circle 186**

2. Antioch Publishing's (937-767-7379) wirebound journals have 160 fine-lined pages and are bound with a color-coordinated, plastic-covered wire spine. \$9.99. **Circle 187**

3. Dragonflies decorate this journal from Mudlark Papers Inc. (888-683-5275). It is part of the Picnic collection of stationery gifts. \$9. **Circle 188**

4. The Write It Down! series from Journals Unlimited Inc. (800-897-8528) gives writing suggestions that make journal writing a snap. \$19.95. **Circle 189**

5. "Little Scribbles" from Running Press Book Publishers (800-632-8386) is a new series of intimate and elegant blank books created in mini format. Titles include "Friendship," "Love," "Travel" and "A Woman's Notes." \$4.95. **Circle 190**

JOT THIS DOWN...

Even though journals may be selling themselves, a good display can only further increase sales.

- Highlight seasonal journals in store displays.
- Journals are relaxing and stress relieving, so cross-merchandise them within your personal-care displays.
- Women are already buying journals. Place them in your men-themed and children-themed displays to attract different consumers.
- Have a wide variety of journals, including different bindings (spiral-bound and perfect-bound), formats (lined and unlined) and sizes (travel sizes and large sizes ideal for sketching).
- Soothing music creates a wonderful writing atmosphere. Place journals in and around music displays.