



The modern conversion, which used to be a house

House of Gifts is an Aladdin's cave of homewares; filled with tableware, vases, cushions, ornaments and candles of every conceivable shape, colour and size.

Words Joanna Eckersley **Photographs** Isuru Upeksha

House of Gifts does exactly what it says on the tin. The former home is a homely treasure trove of gifts for any occasion, whether you're looking for a wedding gift for your cousin, or searching for a cushion cover to complement your new paint job.

The shop is on a quiet residential street in Colombo 3, and looking through its wide windows visitors can see a fine selection of glassware, sparkling in the sunshine. The directors of the 10-year-old establishment go to particular lengths in selecting these products: they travel to India, China, Thailand and Dubai to hand-pick the best items on offer and carefully ship them to Sri Lanka. The ones that make the cut are displayed on glass shelves: crystal cups, colourful champagne flutes, twirling vases and goblets forged into unusual shapes.

Walking past the glassware visitors reach a wooden staircase on their left, decorated with dangling wind-chimes, which leads them up to the second floor where the soft furnishings are on show. There are softly textured cushion covers in all kinds of designs and colours, table runners, rugs and throws.

Most need at least half an hour to make their way through the store and select their purchases from the wide array of products. Luckily the second floor also sells a selection of clocks to remind them what the time is. A grandfather clock stands tall above smaller generations of the classic style. As with many of the products, there is a real variety in the scope of what's on offer—there's something to suit every taste.

Back downstairs past the staircase is House of Gifts' candle selection. The many candles of different sizes, scents and solidities (some of them are made of gel!) can also be displayed in a whole host of ways. You can buy candle holders which hang from on high, displaying the flame within swirling metal-work, or you can display your candles in pretty little table centre-pieces.

If you have a specific gift in mind you should be able to find it in this shop, which also houses, among other things, high quality knives, toasters, table-mats, bathware, frying pans and baskets. Equally, if you're decorating your home or looking for an extra touch of luxury

you can choose from glass beads, fake flowers, wrought-iron sculptures made in Sri Lanka, bendable sprigs and decorative knick-knacks.

Once shoppers have exhausted their energies and selected their gifts it's time for them to be wrapped. Though you have to pay for the paper gift wrapping is free and staff are trained to make your gifts look extra special. All that remains is to hand the beautifully wrapped present over to its new owner and watch the delight in their eyes as they open it up.

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