

# Recycled Products Holiday Buyers' Guide

With the coming of the “green” revolution starting around 2006 or so, consumers saw an explosion of consumer goods that claimed some level of sustainability or eco-cred. A good deal of these products include a certain percentage of recycled content, of course. In this, the Holiday Edition of our recycled products column, we focus on some of our favorite consumer products that include some measure of recycled content.

And, as always, if you have a product you'd like to see featured in this column, please send your nominations to Dylan de Thomas at [dylan@resource-recycling.com](mailto:dylan@resource-recycling.com). And, Happy Holidays!

**Company:**

**Crazy Crayons, LLC**  
(Pelican Lake, Wisconsin)  
<http://crazycrayons.com/>

**Product:**

**Crazy Crayons**

**Target Market:**

Your favorite crayon users, particularly appropriate for schools

**Recycled Content:**

100-percent recycled crayons

LuAnn Foty, the self-described “crazy crayon lady,” started collecting crayons in Troutdale, Oregon in 1993, placing a bin in the entryway of an area grocery store. In the 17 years since, she has collected over 47,000 pounds of crayons to be sorted, melted, strained and hand poured into new crayons.

Crazy Crayons accepts used and broken crayons from around the country – though the organizations asks for American-made only due to lead and other hazardous-additive concerns – and, once received, are sorted by Opportunities Unlimited, a local work center that employs people with developmental disabilities.

The crayons come in different shapes (e.g., moons, stars, earth, what looks like an earthworm, etc.) and sizes, with the office favorite being the Eco Stars: A set of 20 different colored star-shaped crayons. All products come in a box made from 100-percent recycled material.

**Company:**

**English Retreads**  
(Boulder, Colorado)  
[www.englishretreads.com](http://www.englishretreads.com)

**Product:**

**Hybrid (lined) Handbag**

**Recycled Content:**

Made from recycled PET bottles with accents of recycled rubber

**Target Market:**

Your favorite hipster fashionista

English Retreads makes its bags from inner tubes the company collects



from Boulder, Colorado-area truck stops, with each tube having approximately 60,000 miles logged before being converted into groovy handbags, wallets, belts, dog collars and other accessories.

Heather English, founder of the company, came up with the idea while floating down her hometown's titular Boulder Creek in an inner tube. Being a vegetarian, she wanted to create something that was durable and fashionable but not made from leather.

The new handbag model, the Hybrid, doesn't have the same recycled rubber content as some of the company's other bags, but makes up for it in using fabric made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate, a favorite of many products making appearances in this column. The ad copy on this bag, suggests “hitting the fashion high road,” which the Hybrid most certainly does. That, and beg for as many road/car-related puns as one can fit in one's trunk.

**Company:**

**Loll Designs**  
(Duluth, Minnesota)  
[www.lolldesigns.com](http://www.lolldesigns.com)

**Product:**

**Pitch Birdhouse**

**Recycled Content:**

100-percent recycled HDPE

**Target Market:**

Your favorite sustainably-minded flock

The pictured avian home, and most of Loll Designs' various outdoor furniture items, are made from 100-percent recycled post-consumer or post-industrial high-density polyethylene, depending on the color chosen (the black is all post-industrial). Though the pitch birdhouse is made for the comfort of your fine feathered friends,

the majority of the company's furniture is for human lollygagging (pardon the pun).

Loll even manufacturers some items using a 50-percent recycled content Richlite material, a paper composite made with old corrugated containers, which the company says holds up under outdoor conditions.

The company has numerous green initiatives, including offering carbon offsets for shipping its products, and all of the (recycled) raw materials the company uses to make its wares are sourced in the U.S., adding to Loll's sustainable bona fides.



**Company:**  
Nerman-Lockhart, Inc.  
(Tappahannock, Virginia)  
www.nermanlockhart.com

**Product:**  
**Holy Smokes! Firestarters**

**Recycled Content:**  
100-percent recycled wax and wood fiber

**Target Market:**  
Your favorite hearth'd-yet-fire-starting-challenged pal

Nerman-Lockhart's Holy Smokes! fire starters are made from 100-percent recycled wax, entirely sourced from used church candles.

In fact, a sticker on the package reads "30 percent Lutheran, 30 percent Catholic, 40 percent All Other (An Ecumenical Blend)."

The blessed wax blend is mixed with scrap sawdust and pressed and cut at an area mill and packaged under the company's various labels. The Hot Flashes label ("You don't need a man ... to light your fire") is my particular favorite, but they also offer Bear Bun Warmers ("For a happy camper"), Moose Flambé, Fishy Wishy ("The one that got away? There are BIGGER fish to fry") and Wise Guys ("Why was there a star over Bethlehem? God knew three guys were coming who would never stop to ask directions").

The fire starters are as effective as they are amusing, allowing users to light fires without kindling or other starting agents, and they smell pretty good too.

**Company:**  
Recycline, Inc.  
(Waltham, Massachusetts)  
www.preserveproducts.com

**Product:**  
**Preserve Everyday Tableware**

**Recycled Content:**  
100-percent post-consumer recycled PP

**Target Market:**  
Your favorite green-minded parent or picnic aficionado

Preserve, with the motto "Nothing wasted. Everything gained," makes its products from recycled polypropylene (PP) collected via its Gimme 5 program (PP is resin code No. 5). The Gimme 5 program is partnered with select Whole Foods Market stores, collecting PP products, such as toothbrushes, yogurt cups or hummus tubs at in-



store bins, and offers mail-in opportunities for No. 5-labeled plastic items.

The materials recovered are then processed and made into items (e.g., pictured Everyday Tableware) meant for everyday use, and are even textured to hide everyday wear-and-tear, such as knife marks. One's kids (the material is melamine- and BPA-free, for the chemically-concerned parent) would be unlikely able to trash the durable, brightly-colored items, and, when you are finished with reusing the set, send it back to Preserve and they'll recycle it back into more of their product.

**Company:**  
Adbusters  
(Vancouver, British Columbia)  
www.adbusters.org

**Product:**  
**Blackspot Unswisher Sneakers**

**Recycled Content:**  
The sole is made from 100-percent tire rubber

**Target Market:**  
Your favorite anti-capitalist who still likes cool-looking footwear

Adbusters, the group behind famed anti-commercial magazine, decided to make a shoe as an "experiment in grassroots capitalism," and the Blackspot shoe line was born. The shoes are made from sustainably-sourced virgin materials, such as organic hemp and "vegan leather," and produced in fair-trade or unionized factories. In addition, the shoes are only sold in independently-owned retailers to make sure that monies from the sales of the shoes are put back into local economies.

The Blackspot Unswisher was designed by famed shoe designer John Fluevog and its rugged-looking sole is made from recycled vehicle tires. Frustrations with the soles coming off due to shoddy gluing is no concern with the Unswisher, as the soles are stitched, glued and embedded for extra durability.

Profits from the shoe marked with a circular, blank "anti-logo" go back to the Adbusters media group, "a global network of culture jammers and creatives working to change the way information flows, the way corporations wield power, and the way meaning is produced in our society."

