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Buddha-licious

On the hunt for the hottest Buddhas in Los Angeles. TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPH BY ANITA ROSENBERG

ONE DAY YOU'RE OUT SHOPPING FOR

Jimmy Choo shoes and Balenciaga bags at Sunset Plaza, when suddenly you feel the need for good karma blow your spending spree wide open. Desiring to truly make a life change, you drop that pair of platform sandals, hop in your Lexus hybrid, and head down La Brea for a pit stop at the local Buddha store. Inside, thousands of Buddha statues line the shelves and you don't know what to do—you panic! You want a Buddha, but are confused. Buddha calls out to you—buy me, buy me! You wonder, *How do I pick out the perfect Buddha?*

WHO IS BUDDHA?

Buddha is not a god, saint, or deity, but the founder of Buddhism. Born Prince Siddhartha Guatama around 560 BC, he was a man who realized human suffering is universal and, through meditation, halted the karmic cycle and achieved enlightenment. The image of Buddha (meaning “the enlightened one”) is an aid for Buddhist meditation, expressing calm feelings and encouraging good health and fortune. Many temples, businesses, and homes throughout Asia pay homage to him. If you're short on Buddha knowledge, hit the bookstore and pick up one of the many tomes on the religion or *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse.

The number one rule when searching for a Buddha to bring home is “Buddha chooses you.” Simple as it sounds, it's true. If I had read Jeff Greenwald's travelogue *Shopping for Buddhas* (Lonely Planet Publications, \$10.95) before my trips to Asia, I might have been more ambitious in my pursuit of the perfect statue. Instead, I was overwhelmed by the huge selection at the jade factory in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Determined to bring home a souvenir, I was scanning the shelves of thousands of finely carved sculptures when it happened: One special Buddha called out to me.

It's all about the expression in the eyes and the face. Kind eyes. Calm expression. Does it feel right? Each Buddha has its own unique utterance and this is the secret to the Buddha statue.

Buddha Bulletin

- ★ Buddha emanates serenity.
- ★ Buddha greets your guests.
- ★ Buddha has magnetic centering ability.
- ★ Having Buddha around makes you feel good.



KNOW YOUR BUDDHA

When shopping for Buddha there are positions (*asanas*), hand gestures (*mudras*), and crown shapes (*usnisas*) to look for. “Both hands resting palms up represent meditation and bring harmony. Right hand touching the earth helps ground you. Right hand raised with palm facing outwards means ‘fear not.’ But what makes Buddha a Buddha is the cranial bump of wisdom,” says Cari Markell, owner of Silk Roads Gallery on La Brea.

HOW MANY BUDDHAS ARE TOO MANY?

Every Buddha serves a unique and specific purpose. Jewelry designer Loree Rodkin started her collection in Kyoto and Bali. “I was brought to my knees by the emotions I felt from Buddha imagery—long before it was a decorating trend. In the madness of my life, I had found my center, my quiet sanctuary, and with that my Buddha collection started.”

As a Feng Shui practitioner I see successful and well-known people every day searching for more meaning and purpose in their lives. We're lucky in Los Angeles because there are fabulous shops featuring Asian accents and

statuary. But as you peruse LA's bountiful Buddha options, keep in mind the significance of the statue you're buying—that it should remind you of positive Buddhist principles as well as add to your life and home. Happy Buddha hunting! ★

Get a Buddha

Tara Home 245 Main Street, Venice, 310-452-8272; tara-home.com

Koan 6109 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, 323-464-3735; koancollection.com

Out of Asia 3249 South La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles, 310-204-5885; outofasia.com

Silk Roads Gallery 145 North La Brea Avenue, Suite C, Los Angeles, 323-857-5588; silkroadsgallery.com

Terra Nova 301 North Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, 310-858-6639; terranovadesigns.com