

# UNIQUE SCOTTISH GIFT GUIDE; 2025



THE SCOTTISH  
UNICORN

*Ignite Your Scottish Spirit*



The Scottish Unicorn is pleased to present a curated selection of **Unique Scottish Gifts** for the Holiday Season—inspired by Scotland’s heritage, artistry, and enduring spirit. Each tells its own story: the taste of a buttery shortbread, the pattern of a tartan recalling clan and kinship, the gleam of a handcrafted timepiece, the timeless beauty of a castle rising from the mist. Whether you’re gifting a loved one or treating yourself, these treasures capture the essence of Scotland—to wear, to savor, to read, and to keep. We hope you enjoy our Scottish Gift Guide for 2025!

## *MacKinnon Watches: Timepieces Woven with Heritage*

In the Scottish Highlands, husband-and-wife team **Matt and Belinda MacKinnon** found their inspiration: The pair founded **MacKinnon Watches** ([www.mackinnonwatches.com](http://www.mackinnonwatches.com)) in 2020 to celebrate Scottish heritage in a distinctly modern way—combining the artistry of traditional tartan weaving with contemporary watch design. Each piece allows its wearer to carry a small heirloom of Scotland with them, wherever life may lead.

**MacKinnon Watches** are designed and assembled in Scotland using authentic tartans sourced from renowned weaving mills such as **Lochcarron of Scotland** and **House of Edgar**. The result is a collection that feels deeply personal—elegant timepieces that tell stories of clan and legacy. Their specialty lies in **custom tartan timepieces**, where customers can choose from over a thousand authentic tartans to create a watch—or even an Apple Watch strap—that reflects their family heritage or a cherished place.



“*Wear your story*,” is the brand’s guiding motto—one that captures the emotional heart of their work. One of their favorite customer stories? A father gifting his son a watch in their clan tartan before he moved abroad: “A reminder that no matter where life takes you, Scotland is always close at hand.” **MacKinnon Watches in three words: Scottish. Authentic. Craftsmanship.** A perfect keepsake for anyone who carries Scotland in their heart—or on their wrist.

**MacKinnon Watches** ships worldwide, including to the United States (with all customs duties prepaid for a seamless experience). Canadian shipping is also available; DDP to Canada coming soon. Gift packaging and personalized engraving are also offered for those seeking something truly special this Christmas.



## *The Castles of Scotland: A Masterwork by Martin Coventry*



Few books capture the soul of Scotland quite like *The Castles of Scotland*, Martin Coventry's monumental, newly released **sixth edition** of the definitive guide to Scotland's fortified heritage. More than 35 years in the making, this extraordinary volume has become both a beloved treasure for castle enthusiasts and an indispensable reference for researchers, historians, and genealogists searching for their Scottish roots.

Coventry's passion for Scotland's castles began early—not with manicured manor houses or aristocratic estates, but with *ruins*: “battered scenic ruins with a bloody history,” as he recalls. His heart lay with windswept towers, ghost stories, forgotten lairds, and the

rugged beauty of places where history clings to every stone. It was during a visit to **Slains Castle**, perched dramatically above the North Sea, that he realized Scotland had no single comprehensive guide to its fortified buildings. “So I decided to compile it,” he says simply.

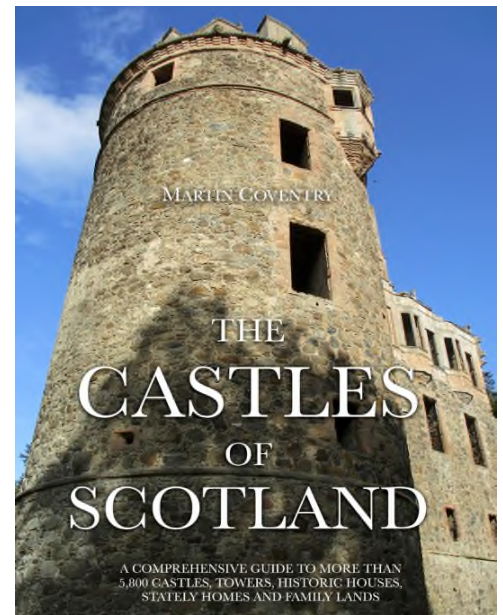
The first edition appeared in 1995 with just over 1,700 entries. The sixth, published in July 2025, is a vastly expanded achievement—**5,847 entries**, made possible by decades of meticulous research and the growing availability of digitized historical sources.

A lifetime spent exploring Scotland's fortresses has given Coventry many favorites, but one stands out: **Dirleton Castle**, a photogenic East Lothian treasure he's visited more than 30 times: “A beautiful ruin with many chambers, gardens, yew trees, and the most remarkable stories”.

Then there are the ghost stories, none more memorable than the haunting of **Meggernie Castle**, where legend tells of a murdered lady whose spirit wanders in two halves: the upper floors by her torso, the grounds by her legs. Strange? Perhaps. But 19<sup>th</sup> century witnesses who recorded seeing her even described receiving a “burning kiss” from the spectral upper half.

Beautiful, immersive, and exquisitely researched, *The Castles of Scotland* is more than a book—it is a journey into the heart of Scotland's past. **A perfect gift for those who cherish Scottish heritage or dream of exploring its ancient stones.** The sixth edition is available worldwide at: [www.thecastlesofscotland.co.uk/purchase](http://www.thecastlesofscotland.co.uk/purchase) Or contact Martin directly at [martin@thecastlesofscotland.co.uk](mailto:martin@thecastlesofscotland.co.uk) Hardback: £65 UK / approx. \$105 US

*All images courtesy of Martin Coventry*



## *The Lady Row Collection: A Modern Tribute to the First Lady of Baltersan Castle*

In the rolling countryside near Maybole, where the ruins of **Baltersan Castle** stand against the Ayrshire sky, a new kind of legacy is taking shape. It comes not from stone or mortar, but from silver and design — a modern tribute to the castle’s first lady and to Scotland’s enduring spirit of craftsmanship and grace.

The **Lady Row Collection** takes its name from **Egidia Blair, Lady Row**, who lived and died on these lands in the early 1500s. The eldest daughter of John Blair of that Ilk, Egidia was remembered for her generosity and her far-seeing mind. Her will, written in 1530, endowed local churches, helped fund the building of a bridge across the River Girvan, and provided alms for the poor. In a time when women’s influence was often confined to hearth and chapel, Lady Row’s philanthropy left a tangible mark on her community — including the small “Lady’s Chapel” added to nearby Crossraguel Abbey after her death.



Scallop Pendant  
(Matching earrings also available)

It is this spirit of *giving back* that inspired **Angelo Ovidi**, custodian of Baltersan Castle, to create a jewelry line that would both honor her and help fund the castle’s rebirth. Each piece in the collection is a fusion of elegance and purpose — a wearable link between Scotland’s past and its future. Crafted with meticulous care, the designs draw inspiration from 16th-century motifs found in Baltersan’s stonework: quatrefoils, interlaced hearts, and stylized fleur-de-llys.

“Lady Row represents the best of Scottish heritage,” says Ovidi. “She reminds us that history isn’t just about castles and battles — it’s about compassion, creativity, and continuity. We wanted the jewelry to capture that.”

Sales from the Lady Row Collection directly support the **Baltersan Restoration Fund**, which aims to rebuild the castle as a cultural and artistic haven. (You can read about Baltersan’s rebirth in our feature article “*There’s More History in Ayrshire than Burns – Reimagining a 16th-Century Castle*” in this issue.)

Each purchase becomes both a keepsake and a contribution: an ornament with a purpose. Pieces range from pendants and earrings to limited-edition brooches, all beautifully presented with heritage-themed packaging and available worldwide through the Baltersan Castle Website: [Lady Row Collection – Baltersan 1584](#) To wear something from the Lady Row Collection is to carry a fragment of that story — a small gleam of Ayrshire history reborn.



Angel Pendant with Pearl

*All images courtesy of Angelo Ovidi, Laird of Baltersan.*

## *Walker's Shortbread – Scotland's Sweetest Tradition*



Over a century ago, in 1898, 21-year-old **Joseph Walker** opened a small bakery in the Speyside village of Aberlour with a single ambition: **To bake the world's finest shortbread** ([www.walkersshortbread.com](http://www.walkersshortbread.com) – website toggles UK/US sites).

Armed with a £50 loan and an unwavering commitment to quality, Joseph perfected a recipe made with only **four simple ingredients—flour, butter, sugar and salt**—which remains the foundation of Walker's Shortbread to this day. His skill and reputation quickly spread. Local shooting parties began making detours to his bakery, while word of his famously rich shortbread travelled throughout the Highlands. By the 1930s, Joseph's sons James and Joseph joined the business, introducing delivery vans, expanding production, and helping the bakery grow into a beloved regional brand.

In the decades that followed, **Walker's remained proudly family-owned**, with each generation bringing new capabilities while safeguarding tradition. The third generation modernised operations, expanded product lines, and built on the brand's tartan-wrapped identity—**instantly recognizable to customers worldwide**. Today, the fourth generation of the Walker family continues to lead the company, ensuring that the brand's values, craftsmanship, and sense of place remain at its core.



*All images courtesy of Walker's Shortbread*

From its roots in Aberlour to global distribution in more than 100 countries, **Walker's Shortbread has become one of Scotland's most iconic exports**. Despite its international reach, the company continues to bake in its home village, using the same principles Joseph Walker established more than 125 years ago: **Natural ingredients, uncompromising quality, and pride in every batch.**



## *ScotlandShop: Weaving Heritage into Modern Style*

Born in the Scottish Borders in 2002, **ScotlandShop** ([www.scotlandshop.com](http://www.scotlandshop.com)) began with founder Anna White's vision to blend traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design — connecting people around the world to their Scottish roots through the timeless beauty of tartan.

From its earliest days, the brand has celebrated Scotland's rich textile heritage while supporting local makers and rural communities. Each piece in their collection carries the colors and patterns of clan and kinship into the modern world — living proof that tartan never goes out of style.



**ScotlandShop's** story is also a transatlantic one. Their first retail store opened in Edinburgh in 2017, soon followed by a tour of North America that took them from New York's Tartan Week to Highland Games across the U.S. and Canada. That journey inspired their first overseas home in **Albany, New York** — a city whose name itself comes from Alba, the Gaelic word for Scotland. To mark the occasion, they designed the official Albany Tartan, now proudly worn at weddings, curling events, and celebrations throughout the New York Capital Region.

For the holiday season, **ScotlandShop's** collection offers an abundance of tartan treasures —



from personalized Christmas stockings to festive garlands, tree skirts, and Santa hats that bring a cozy Scottish spirit to any home. Their tableware and décor lines make gatherings feel even warmer, while embroidered touches add a heartfelt, handmade feel.

Today, with stores in Crieff, Edinburgh, and Albany, **ScotlandShop** continues to embody what it means to be a modern Scottish brand: rooted in tradition, inspired by innovation, and devoted to helping people around the world wear their story in tartan.

*All images courtesy of ScotlandShop*

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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