

EC retailers braced for last-minute shopping rush

By [Yolandé Stander](#)

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Indications for Eastern and Southern Cape retailers are it has been a case of “jingle tills” for many stores. Sales assistants at one major retail chain said that, despite the recession, big household appliances like washing machines, fridges and big-screen TVs had sold well.

And one definite gift trend this year has been all in a name: “John Smit, John Smit, John Smit,” said Teresa Fogarty, of Fogarty's Bookshop at Walmer Park Shopping Centre in the Bay.

She said the autobiography of the longest-serving captain in Springbok rugby history was the popular choice this Christmas.

In one morning alone, she sold 25 copies of *Captain in the Cauldron - The John Smit Story*.

Ian Humpel, of Exclusive Books in East London's Vincent Park centre, confirmed the popularity of the book. He said that since its November 14 release he had sold 230 copies.

The book is retailing at about R225.

Fogarty said another book that had been flying off the shelves was Bay botanist Prof Richard Cowling's *Conserving Eden*, also selling at R225.

Fogarty and Humpel agreed that cookbooks and books about gardening were solid favourites among the fairer sex.

Top Franschhoek restaurant La Petite Ferme's latest cookbook, selling at about R220, and Justin Bonello's *Cooked in Africa*, at about R300, had been rated as two of the top book gifts for women this year.

“Any of Nigella Lawson or Jamie Oliver's books are also always hits,” said Fogarty.

The surprise this year was gardening books, she said. “It seems a lot of people are going back to nature.”

The most popular in this category was vegetable gardening, especially organic.

Hottest reads

The “hottest read” for teens this year was the *Twilight* series, thanks to the latest movies.

Twilight, *New Moon* and *Eclipse* would cost you about R110, while the last in the series, *Breaking Dawn*, was selling at R140.

For children, *Where is Wally* and old favourites by Roald Dahl have been selling like hotcakes.

Buying gifts for children could cost a pretty penny, with name brand toys proving popular.

Emile Steineveldt, from Toys R Us at Moffett Retail Park, said Ben10 and Bakugan figurines and other toys, ranging between R100 and R300, were good sellers this year.

For girls, Bratz dolls, Hannah Montana and My Life gaming consoles were popular.

He added that younger boys still enjoyed remote control cars, which could cost parents from about R80 up to R1300, while for young girls, the Baby Born dolls, strollers and playsets - costing anything from R40 to R1 200 - were high on the list.

Steineveldt said teenagers “went crazy” for Wii and Playstation 3 games, which ranged from R250 to R1000.

At Game, pampering gift sets like body lotion and bath salts were hits as smaller gifts for women. For men, power tools and braai utensils remained favourites.

At Clicks stores across the Bay, gift sets, especially perfume, had been selling well.

More expensive perfumes also remained good sellers while other cosmetic gift packs were selling fast.

On the music and DVD front Amanda Muller from Musica in George said local artists had received the most interest this festive season.

Their number one DVD seller was the latest *Huisgenoot Skouspel*. Close on its heels were the movies *Up*, *Ice Age 3*, *District 9* and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

Popular international artists included violinist Andre Rieu and Rihanna - especially her latest album, *Rated R*.

Old seasonal favourites including Boney M's Christmas album also sold well.

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