

# Shopping for Personalized Paradise

Custom stores in Seoul



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FINDING PERSONALIZED stores can be hard in a flurry of fast fashion brands that sell mass-produced, identical items. True personalization takes commitment and a passionate interest in each customer as you create a product specifically catered for them. This is the beauty of customization and it is being slowly recognized by some niche brands in the capital city of Seoul. So if you find yourselves looking for a one-of-a-kind item, here is a list of our recommendations that might be right up your alley!

## L'eau Magique

L'eau Magique is a personalized perfume studio that prides itself on all things “organic and hand made.” Tucked away from the main street, the interior of their Yeonnam branch feels like a lab-meets-apothecary with wooden shelves delicately arranged to showcase numerous bell jars infused with unique pre-made scents like candy, lemon soda, and almond chocolate.

Since I asked for a personalized perfume, the store owner was kind enough to guide me through the overwhelming number of essential oils, pipettes, and a digital weighing balance lining the custom perfume-making table. He first asked for the category of fragrances I preferred and even assessed my “warm” skin tone and lip color to better understand if spring or autumn seasonal scents would suit me. To ensure that the final product accurately reflects my perfume preferences, the store owner also asked for my favorite brands of perfumes to use as a reference when creating their formula.

From L'eau Magique's list of hundreds of scents, the most trending ones right now are spring season scents like freesia, blackberry, daffodil, and peach. The store owner chose a scent blend of narcissus, patchouli, vanilla, and ylang-ylang after I told him I liked Dior's Poison perfume, as well as dewy, floral scents. While the personalized perfume did smell slightly different from Dior's original scent, it still had similar floral notes, and I personally preferred the stronger aroma of vanilla, which made it long-wearing.

**Address:** 42, Donggyo-ro 38 gil, Mapo-gu, Seoul, 03982  
(Yeonnam Branch)

**Opening Hours:** 12:00-21:00, Tuesday to Sunday

**Prices:** ₩38,000 for a personalized perfume, ₩29,000 to ₩50,000 for premade scents



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## Saegimsori

Nestled in the main handicraft street of Insadong is the longstanding personalized stamp store called Saegimsori. Known for being the store that originated handmade *dojangs*<sup>[1]</sup> in South Korea, Saegimsori has become a cult favorite due to its high quality and the staggering variety of stamps it offers. The store has been visited by Korean President Moon Jae-in and has even been broadcasted on the show, *The Return of Superman*.

Once you go through the store's heavily stickered glass door, every inch of Saegimsori's shelves is lined with wondrous varieties of handmade stamps, giving the store a niche feel befitting its unique service. There is a mixture of traditional and modern stamp designs: you could select a folk-art tiger, Joseon embellishments, or perhaps a cartoon character. The owner of the store, Jang Yun-seok, explained that the body of the stamp can be personalized by engraving or embossing on a variety of materials such as jujube wood, jade stone, and nacre.

If you are looking to buy a gift stamp for a loved one, you can also customize a couple or family wooden stamp. Even new mothers who want to cherish the memory of their pregnancy can request Saegimsori to make a special stamp with their baby's umbilical cord embedded inside. Jang also designs faith, zodiac, and “face shadow” *dojangs* for customers interested in personalizing their stamp case according to their astrological sign, religion, or facial structure.

On Jang's recommendation, I ended up buying a black tree jadestone stamp in Korean calligraphy. I also chose to personalize it with my name, and after fifteen minutes, my stamp was handed to me in a soft-shelled case decorated with a traditional Korean beaded tassel and a complimentary bookmark stamped with my chosen seal.



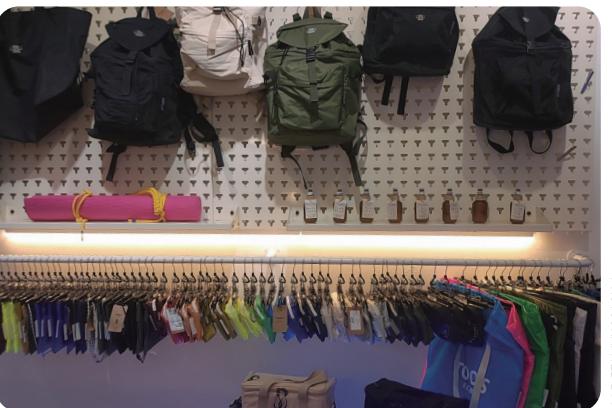
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## ToolsBC8000 Hardware Store 168

ToolsBC8000's motto is “we are ready to work with you,” and that is exactly what they strive to do. Designed to be a personalized bag store, ToolsBC8000 aims to provide all the tools necessary to make a uniquely personal bag. Around a five-minute walk from Noksapyeong station, the store boasts a rather unbeatable selection of customizable materials where you can choose your bag's body, belt, pocket, and color.

Styled to express an underground hip-hop theme, their small “Vaulter” fanny packs are among the most preferred by customers according to the store owner, Yoon Jong-ho. However, if you want something more casual in style, their “Receiver” pouches, and “windbags” in neon green are also great options.

Since I needed a bag for carrying my belongings, I opted to customize a bag from the “Clutcher” line, which is a blend of a tote and a laptop bag. Upon Yoon's recommendation, I chose a mustard grey color with a matching pocket and pink and grey line patterned nylon strings. My personalized final product was packaged in a Styrofoam food container, which—according to Yoon—signifies that any object can become a “tool” for your personal happiness! ☑



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**Address:** 168, Noksapyeong-daero, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, 04390  
**Opening Hours:** 12:00-19:00, Monday to Sunday

(Closed on Tuesdays)

**Prices:** Around ₩20,000 to ₩58,000 for all personalized bags

[1] *Dojang*: A personal stamp usually made out of wood or stone to sign your name in Korean letters