

WAY TO GO!

To the Ga-Adangbe people of Ghana and parts of Togo, death isn't the end. They believe the deceased person goes on to a new life in the next world where they are more powerful than before. The Ga-Adangbe believe that the dead can influence the lives of the living, so to keep them sweet, friends and relatives shell out for the most extreme coffins on the planet.



BUT IS IT ART?

Yes! The work of Ghana's coffin designers has been exhibited in art galleries all over the world. In 2000, the British Museum bought an eagle coffin made by Paa Joe as an exhibit.

I JUST CAN'T STOP COFFIN'!



A frilled lizard made for Festival Melbourne, Australia, in 2006.



I'M DYING FOR SOME WATER...

One of about twelve coffin makers in Teshie and other suburbs of Accra, Ghana's capital city.

CARVING OUT A LIVING

Coffins are carved and built by skilled carpenters in small workshops. The coffins are shaped and styled using traditional woodworking tools, and often without plans but using photos of the real objects as a guide. An epic paint job usually finishes them off in style.



Funeral procession in Ghana



Casket case

Paa Joe, one of Ghana's leading coffin makers, puts the finishing touches to a Mercedes Benz coffin. Joe hopes the relatives of the deceased, a driver, will be dead proud.

800
Cost in US dollars of the most expensive coffin designs in Accra, Ghana.

Designs for the departed:
Coffin designs from just one of the workshops include:

- Mobile phones
- Trainers
- Lions
- Jet aircraft
- Crabs
- Cruise ship
- Pineapples
- Robot
- Soft drink bottles
- Referee's whistle



WORK AND PLAY

Some coffins are designed to reflect the dead person's job, such as this giant fish for a fisherman. Others may be in form of a car for a taxi driver, a chicken for a farmer or a camera for a photographer. Designs may be modelled on the deceased's favourite animal or interest – from a football boot to a musical instrument.

WANT MORE?