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PERSONAL JOURNAL.

[THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.]

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New Housewares You Never Knew You Needed

ences a report by Yankelovich, the North Carolina-based marketing-consulting firm, that compares today's home to a beehive: a "hive is a home designed to open out and facilitate connection." In other words, you can come in to my home now, but make sure you wipe your feet on my new silicone doormat or the queen bee might deliver a nasty sting.

Perusing the list of new products being touted for that hive, it's hard to tell which might create a buzz. Will it be adjustable garment hangers that eliminate the dreaded misshaped shoulder crisis? Or perhaps real-looking flowers that light up at night using solar power?

While none of the many new products at the show have been tested, since most aren't yet available to consumers, there are several that look like they might garner more interest than others.

Clear Flow's bathroom faucet filter, for example, is trying to take the popular idea of filtered kitchen water into the bathroom. The small filter allows a user to turn it on or off and also serves as a drinking fountain. Better still, says Clear Flow President Bill Warren, it dispenses with the changeable filters that similar attachable units require. After eight months of use, the whole \$30 unit is simply thrown out. "Our big hook is convenience," he says. "Since people have to change filters all over the house—from vacuum cleaner bags to air filters—who has time for another one?"

Convenience combined with hygiene is also the pitch for TxF Products' Scrub 'N Flush, a toilet-cleaning tool that features a single-use brush head made of wood pulp that disintegrates after about a minute of scrubbing. Once used, the head can be ejected into the bowl and flushed away like toilet paper.

With a starter kit that costs \$4.99 for the handle and four brush heads and with additional heads costing \$2.99 for eight, the company is aiming at those who might be squeamish about cleaning their toilet with a regular brush that they then store inside a holder. TxF spokeswoman Gigi Lubin says that experts call such a cleaning method a recipe for "bacterial stew." With that lovely picture in mind, it may be an idea whose time has come.

So, too, two products being unveiled by Maverick Marketing Ventures, for man and dog, respectively. The \$29.99 Chillow—as in chilled pillow—and the \$39.99 Canine Cooler for the dog bed both are cushions that use self-cooling technology. Their creators claim to have invented a cooling method that requires no refrigeration or electricity, relying instead on certain nontoxic liquids and materials and heat-distribution theories to keep the mats at room temperature, which feels cool because it's well below body temperature.

L'Equip's R.P.M. Blender, is aiming more for the swoosh, which is why it has a tachometer display instead of the more conventional blend-chop-puree settings. The unit, which will retail for about \$149, has a brushed-metal commercial grade design to match its racy style, all part of a

Home Remedies

The marketing pitches for these new products stress comfort, convenience and cleanliness.



L'Equip R.P.M. ▶ Blender

Price: \$140

Comment: Be careful you don't get a ticket while crushing ice.

◀ Toast-It Toaster Bags

Price: About \$6 for two reusable bags

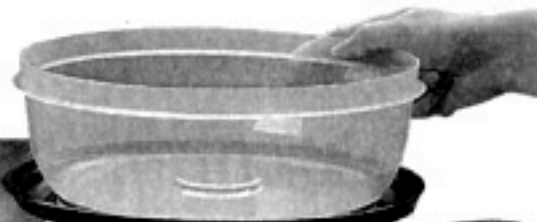
Comment: Apparently, gooey grilled cheese without the muss.



▼ Clear Flow Bathroom Faucet Filter

Price: \$30

Comment: So much for changing filters—you throw the whole thing out when it's done.



▲ Snap-Saver No-Brainer Container

Price: About \$20 for a 12-bowl set

Comment: Stop cursing the gods and your spouse for lost lids.

▼ Scrub 'N Flush

Price: About \$5 for the starter kit including four brush heads

Comment: That dubiously clean toilet bowl brush becomes biodegradable.

Made 2 Measure ▶ Adjustable Garment Hangers

Price: \$4 to \$6 for a three-pack, depending on type

Comment: No more wrinkly shoulders for the fashion forward.



push to market it especially to "motorheads and speed enthusiasts," says L'Equip's Cheryl Slavinsky. "No one has ever put a tachometer on a blender before." Well, thankfully it's here now, so we can make smoothies at 500 revolutions per minute and crush ice in three seconds as we peel out at 20,000 rpms. Why one might need crushed ice in three seconds is a point to ponder in our slower moments.

It's also hard to know what to think of another new trend from Europe, which will be featured by two companies, Toastabags and Toast-It Toaster Bags. Simply put, you can insert sandwiches or pizza—or anything else that you might want to put in a toaster oven or grill—into

top-opening bags made of heat-resistant material and then stick them into a regular toaster to get cooked. Both brands of toaster bags are reusable and cost from around \$6 to \$10 a set. Both manufacturers claim that their aim is to provide a muss-free method of making things like grilled cheese without having to buy another appliance. Odd as this is, it's a laudable goal.

As is the emotional relief we feel when thinking about being able to match tops to storage bowls without frustration. While world peace may still be far away, storage nirvana might be within our grasp. The sock enigma, though, is still outstanding.

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