

Homeware with a funky twist

Fancy an idiot-proof iron or a microwave lookalike that gets rid of bacteria and odour? CHEAH UI-HOON reports

IF PART of your pastime includes checking out the do-it-yourself stores for the latest gadgets and tools, then you're in luck, as there are more innovations coming into the market these days.

Frankie Ang, managing director of Blenwel - on the third level of Harbourfront Centre - is one of those distributors who are keeping an eye out for the newest products out there with a twist. The twist can be either it's a very good system, or that a scientific innovation has been incorporated - things which make daily tasks easier to accomplish.

Mr Ang has long been in the trading business, with brands like LauraStar, a premium Swiss ironing system, in his portfolio. Then he decided to open Blenwel, a 6,000 sq ft store featuring electronics, personal and healthcare products, cookware, home appliances and car-care accessories. 'I also want to champion made-in-Singapore products,' he says.

Live demonstrations are also key to the store as each station will have its own promoter. 'We just want to provide effective yet simple solutions for busy lifestyles,' he says.

Looking for products with a twist - which make for funky and yet practical gifts - is also Daniela Riccio's forte. The Australian had helped market the popular Luxe Guide before, and now brings in products through her own Glamourpuss.

The latest in the market now are Hello Dolly tools - real work tools like hammers, measuring tapes, and screwdrivers, but in candy pink. 'They're meant for ladies who have to do their own fixing in the house!' she says of the range that's being retailed at Egg3 at Erksine Road.

Sure 'nuf, more women - singles especially - have to dabble in fixing up their homes these days, so here are some tools to make it more fun.

There's always space in the marketplace for a slight twist on the conventional. We preview some of the items here, all of which are available at Blenwel unless stated otherwise.

Hello Dolly kits

IF YOU love pink, then you must have a Hello Dolly hammer. If anything, to signify you're an independent woman. Hello Dolly is a new brand designed by women for women; it originated in New Zealand and is now being distributed all over the world. There's Digger for Hello Dolly's gardening tools, and DIY Dolly for the home fix kit. They're sold either individually or in a set, with individual tools starting from \$20. Check out the Hang-It-Up kit, for example, which includes a 20-in-1 screwdriver, a hammer, a tape measure and assorted hardware. The kit rolls away into a pretty package, and 'those paintings are set to be hung up on your walls.



LauraStar Ironing System

WITH the top-of-the-line system retailing at \$2,288 a pop, this had better be a state-of-the-art iron. And apparently LauraStar is - as it takes the guesswork out of your ironing and you end up with professional results. It's idiot-proof in that there's just one temperature setting and a soleplate makes sure that the iron doesn't stick to your garment. It's effective because of the extra powerful but fine steam which straightens out material yet keeps it dry. Check out the demonstration at Blenwel. The good news is, if you don't want the whole system, the entry-level iron is priced at \$699.



Klenz Nano Silver Radical system

IT MIGHT look like a safe or a small microwave, but what the Klenz does is to zap away bacteria and fungi and also deodorise. Based on nanotechnology, Klenz uses nano silver to affect bacterial cellular metabolism and inhibit bacterial growth. Stick in your combs and brushes, electronic equipment, shoes, leather products, cosmetic products, books and toys, and they can be sterilised in eight minutes. Priced at \$450.



Automatic mahjong tables

YOU can't help but be amazed that someone actually sat down to think of a way to come up with a mechanised mahjong table, but why not? One of the problems of this popular game is the clacking of tiles

when you shuffle after each game, so if you want to have it done silently and automatically for you, check out these tables. The centrepiece rises where you push in the tiles, and a new set of tiles will automatically open up in front of every player. From \$2,688 to \$4,888.



Zielonka Smelkillers

TRUST the Germans to come up with this technology - which seems to be just high-grade stainless steel. These steel discs - for the hands, shoes, cars, and rooms; and even a lollipop if you've just eaten garlic or durian - neutralise odours as soon as they come into contact with air and water. The best thing is



that they don't do this by 'masking' over the odour with a perfume, and they won't ever need refilling. Does this mean if one uses WMF cookware, the kitchen won't have an after-food odour? The price range on the whole for Zielonka range of products would be from \$31 to \$55.

Cobb BBQ Grill & Cooking System

FOND of barbies? Winner of the Design Institute of South Africa award in 2007, Cobb uses only eight charcoal briquettes for three hours of cooking. The flow of air through the holes in the grill into the dome ensures an even cooking area, so that meat comes out moist and crispy. The outside stays cool to the touch even though the grill is on. Priced at \$185.



NanoCotz

NANOCOTZ is a combination of nanotechnology and advanced colloidal chemistry - by providing surface protection to fabric, glass, stone and other types of surfaces. Spray the solution onto the surface and it'll repel water and thus prevent a whole host of problems when water gets into a material. NanoCotz Stone, for example, will ensure that moss and algae won't grow, stops salt efflorescence (a white salt deposit), and makes stone surfaces easier to clean. NanoCotz Stone, \$30; Fabric \$45 and Windscreen \$25.



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