

HFN Staff Report

Technology pervades our society—preschoolers are using computers, for goodness sake—and the home furnishings industry is no exception. HFN's annual Best Tech feature highlights some of the year's most technologically innovative products. Plugged-in categories such as small appliances and lighting are well represented—along with some surprising soft goods.

1 IPHONE, APPLE

Apple has answered the call for a do-everything compact electronic device with its new sleek and stylish iPhone. The iPhone eliminates the need to carry a mobile phone, MP3 player, PDA, Blackberry and digital camera as it combines all of those functions in one slim package. All of these functions are easily accessible via a highly interactive multifunctional color glass-touch screen, which dominates the face of the device. Touch screens are beginning to show up across the home goods arena, from refrigerators with high-tech LCD screens to humidifiers with full digital read-out screens.

2 PULSONIC ELECTRIC SHAVER, BRAUN

Touted as the "next generation of electric shavers" when it was launched earlier this year, the product uses pulsonic pulses to deliver a closer, more comfortable shave. Pulsonic technology delivers more than 10,000 microvibrations per minute through the shaver head, which cause the skin to vibrate and the facial hair to stick out. This technology exposes more facial hair and reduces skin irritation, according to the company. In addition, it causes hairs to emerge from the skin that would normally have been missing.

3 THERMOLON COOKWARE, GREENPAN

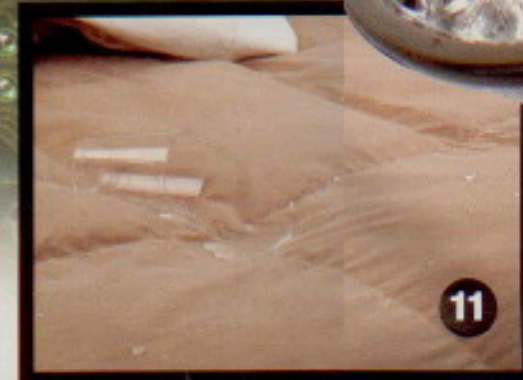
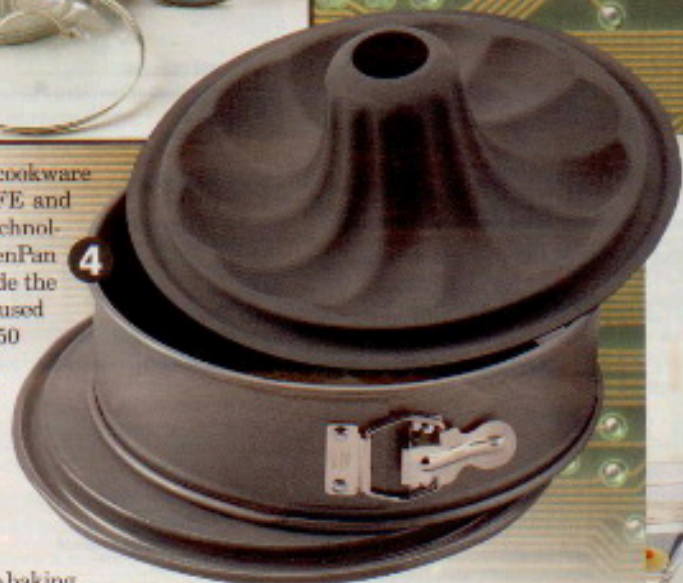
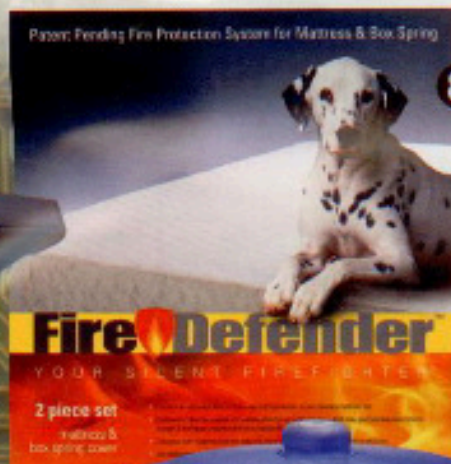
For those who are looking for alternatives to traditional non-stick cookware, GreenPan cookware wants to be the answer. Manufactured without PTFE and PFOA—two chemicals used in non-stick cookware technology that have received a lot of negative attention—GreenPan is made with a new coating called Thermolon to provide the non-stick convenience consumers want. It can also be used at high temperatures—it is oven- and stovetop-safe to 850 degrees. When the cookware debuted on HSN in August, with chef Todd English demonstrating it, 24,000 pieces were sold in less than four hours. Come Dec. 15, consumers will be able to buy it on hsn.com in a burgundy color as well.

4 LA FORME PERFECT, KAISER BAKEWARE

Consumers who love the easy cleanup of silicone and the baking advantages of metal don't have to choose one over the other in Kaiser Bakeware's La Forme Perfect collection—it combines both materials into one product. Using commercial-grade heavyweight steel as the exterior and lining the product with silicone, La Forme targets the baker who wants the benefits of steel's heat conductivity and silicone's ease-of-release properties. The collection includes 10- and 11-inch springform pans, 10- and 12-inch loaf pans, 11- and 12-inch flan pans, and a 8.5-inch bundt-form pan.

5 PRO PROFESSIONAL MARTINI MAKER, WARING

Putting a new, electrical spin on the question "shaken or stirred?" Waring's Pro Professional Martini Maker includes a touchpad control that allows users to customize their cocktails to, of course, be either shaken or stirred. The process takes just one minute, but users also have the option to stop the Martini Maker at any time during the mixing cycle. The Martini Maker also chills cocktails to 34 degrees after the mixing cycle is complete. It can be used to mix other drinks, including margaritas.



BEST TECH 2007

HFN salutes technologically advanced offerings throughout the home

6 SPA THERAPY BEAUTY PILLOW, PERFECT FIT INDUSTRIES

With copper infused in its fibers, Perfect Fit has tackled a unique niche in the growing health and wellness textiles subcategory with the Spa Therapy Beauty pillow. "Copper is used by the body to help form collagen," said Allen Robinson, senior vice president of marketing and product development. "When copper comes in contact with the skin, it helps reduce fine lines and wrinkles." The beauty industry seems to agree with this claim: Companies including Neutrogena advertise the benefits of skin-care products containing the metal.

7 UV-ST ULTRAVIOLET VACUUM, HALO

Halo has shed some light on the harmful germs, allergens and other nasties lurking in carpeting. The upstart vacuum company's new UV-ST Ultraviolet Vacuum has an ultraviolet bulb that kills dust mites, mold, bacteria, viruses, fleas and other harmful microbes while vacuuming. The germ-killing vacuum has gained retail traction at a rapid pace as concerns about healthy indoor living escalate.

8 FIREDEFENDER, LOUISVILLE BEDDING

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, about 20,800 fires are attributed to mattresses and bedding each year. This statistic not only prompted the Consumer Product Safety Commission to implement stricter flame resistant guidelines for mattresses, but it encouraged Louisville Bedding Co. to introduce its FireDefender mattress pad and boxspring cover. FireDefender upgrades old mattresses to the CPSC's new standards and can prevent fire from igniting a mattress for up to 30 minutes, according to the company.

9 FOOD SANITIZING SYSTEM, LOTUS

With two appearances on Donnie Deutsch's "The Big Idea" and a write-up as one of Time magazine's best inventions of 2006, the Lotus Food Sanitizing System has received plenty of attention. The product cleans fruit and vegetables by using ozone, which supposedly removes impurities ranging from bacteria and toxins to pesticides. Other food-cleaning products have also appeared on the market, meaning that a new category in small kitchen electrics may be emerging.

10 LEDS, VARIOUS LIGHTING COMPANIES

Long-lasting, energy-efficient light-emitting diodes are being marketed as replacements for high-performance halogen and metal halide bulbs in retail display and commercial applications where it's costly to change bulbs. Examples include MR-16 bulbs used in track lighting, retail displays and landscape lighting, but the cost, nearly \$40 each, is prohibitive for consumer residential use. There is currently no industry standard for performance, light output or quality, so products being marketed vary widely on these factors and on price. Bulbrite's new "super-high power" 1-watt LED MR-16 bulb, pictured, can be used for track lighting or landscape applications.

11 NANOTECHNOLOGY, VARIOUS TEXTILES COMPANIES

Nanotechnology—manipulating particles at the molecular level—is increasingly being applied to home textiles products as stain blocker. It causes liquids to bead up on a fabric's surface instead of seeping in. Epoch Hometex's new Alternative Naturals line (pictured) harnesses the science; Hollander Home Fashions has a mattress pad, Town & Country Living has table linens and Springs Global has basic bedding that uses the futuristic fibers. ■