



vinyl revival

Still scarred by memories of the hideous tricoloured vinyl of the '70s? Shed those kitsch preconceptions; vinyl is making a comeback and it's joining the eco elite! Swedish flooring company Bolon has released a groundbreaking collection of woven vinyl, containing specially developed plasticisers based on renewable vegetable material. In a bold move, Bolon has eschewed the traditional hues of dull brown and white for eye-popping shades of yellow and rich, earthy greens and greys that epitomise the crisp beauty of nature. **Above:** Bolon 'Botanic Collection', **vinyl**, \$75/sqm; visit bolon.com or call (03) 9827 1311 for stockist details.



once upon a fold

Armed with dexterous fingers and extraordinary imagination, Justine Fahd is on a mission to beautify the world, one intricate paper heart at a time. Upon a Fold, her newly opened online store, is dedicated to the art of paper folding, with exquisite pop-up cards and paper objects. The store not only showcases her own talent for manipulating paper but also houses unique paper art from around the world. We're in a frenzy over the carved paper placemats and cute-as-a-button paper flowers, not to mention Justine's own rustic paper hearts, which she attaches to every package. **Above, left & right:** Publique Living 'PopMat' **placemat**, \$30/pack of 10, Badbooks paper **flowers**, \$16.50/set of 6, all Upon a Fold, uponafold.com.au.

TREND RADAR: a new leaf

Put those pinkies down! Tea time has turned topsy-turvy, with designers eschewing dainty china cups and florals for a generous dose of surreality and gothic humour, manipulating porcelain in ways you never thought possible. This is one tea party where you won't need to mind your manners.

1. Display your flowers in all their glory in this stacked teacup vase. Designer Laura Pregger has ingeniously separated the porcelain from its function, turning the traditional vase on its head. €410/vase (\$606.25), laurapregger.ch.



2. Afternoon tea isn't normally served with a pair of disembodied legs (with red stilettos, no less), but the Blaue Blume cake stand, by Undergrowth Design, manages to be seductive and sweet at the same time. £126 (\$206.75), ofcabbages.co.uk.

3. At first glance, this plump porcelain tea set appears child-sized, but it's actually a large, scaled version of a doll's house tea service. It retains the shape of the tiny originals, thus the somewhat comical, toy-like appearance. www.designerette.nl.



4. Beccy Ridsdel's 'Stripped to the Bone' collection plays with the delight of new discoveries, with each piece 'peeling' back to reveal a darling design that lies beneath. £120/plate (\$197), www.beccyridsdel.co.uk.



green tee

Adding impact to the eco crusade is dynamic design duo Me and Amber (check out their fanciful greeting cards at meandamber.com) and clothing company Moral Fibre, which have joined forces to create a collection of organic t-shirts. Crafted from a mix of 100 per cent organic cotton and bamboo, the tees are sewn using solar and wind power, and shipped (not flown!) to the shores of Byron Bay, where they're printed with non-toxic, water-based dyes. If that isn't enough to win over the most ardent of eco sceptics, simply pop one of the animal print-adorned t-shirts over your head and marvel at the soft-as-a-feather material and lightweight touch. Tiger t-shirt in White Bamboo, \$70; Dirty Harry t-shirt in Black Bamboo with organic cotton Fairtrade bag, \$85. Visit moralfibre.com to buy at the online store.



many bulbs make light work

Talk about design longevity: the humble incandescent bulb has remained relatively unchanged since its invention 130 years ago. London designer Tim Fishlock has created a memorial to the soon-to-be-extinct bulb (incandescents will be phased out in Australia by the end of 2010) called 'What Watt?', a chandelier made from 1243 discarded bulbs. Fishlock's creation is illuminated by a single low-energy fluorescent bulb, resulting in a spectacular celebration of past and present. Visit timfishlock.com for more information.

Name this paint!

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let there be lite

These hand-spun wooden lightshades may look merely decorative but they actually carry more eco cred than Stella McCartney. They're the handiwork of South African designer Porky Heffer of Animal Farm, who shapes the indigenous African hardwood to hold an energy-saving bulb. Made from 100 per cent recyclable un-dyed timber (sustainably sourced from African plantations), we love the idea of grouping the sculptural bulbs together to create an en masse declaration that global change is indeed achievable. Lite, \$595/each, available exclusively from One Small Room, (08) 7120 2368, www.onesmallroom.com.au.



STARK BEAUTY

Having lent his artistic flair to luxury hotels in Paris, LA and Miami, design maestro Philippe Starck has turned his attention to Venice, converting one of the floating city's most stately aristocratic homes into an opulent Venetian palace. One of the exclusive Design Hotel group, Palazzina Grassi (literal translation: 'fat mansion' – proof that everything sounds better in Italian) is outrageously decadent: bespoke furniture crafted in moonstone onyx, floor-to-ceiling gilded mirrors, transparent glass wardrobes (to display your Chanel suit, of course) and the pièce-de-résistance: a hidden front entrance marked only by a mammoth bull's head. Boasting million-dollar views overlooking the Grand Canal, this bastion of privilege may come at a price but we reckon having the chance to sink down into a bona-fide Louis Ghost Chair makes it all worthwhile. Visit www.palazzinagrassi.com



GREEN TEE: PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL TOBAR. STYLING LESIELE HAILAME



the collector

Swapping parliamentary robes for a career creating lamps out of vintage tools, Driza-Bones and duck feathers, former government minister Michael Yabsley chats to us about upcycling, being an ideas man and growing old gracefully

WORDS VANESSA KEYS PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL TOBAR

Not many people can glance at a weathered Driza-Bone coat and envisage an elegant, hand-stitched lampshade mounted on a vintage carpenter's plane, circa 1890. Michael Yabsley, however, is not like many people. As a young boy, he spent hours scavenging around his local garbage tip for discarded tools, the remains of old car engines and surveyor's tripods. "I'm attracted by two things: the artistic form of the artefacts and the extraordinarily high quality of the materials, which you just don't find in modern manufacturing," he says. After stepping away from the political limelight in 1994 (he now works as a lobbyist and political consultant), Michael, struck by a lightbulb moment, dug out his collection of what he calls 'orphan artefacts' and designed a series of sculptural lamps. "The idea of giving a new life to something that would otherwise be discarded is a wonderful, breathtaking feeling," he says.

TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Who would've thought that a tapered railway sleeper, a vintage maplewood carpenter's plane or (and this takes the cake) a 1930s inverted fuel funnel fitted with a hand-thonged pigskin could become highly desirable objets d'art? "Every part of the lamps I create is a found object, with an emphasis on industrial and rural artefacts," says Michael. "Two things come into play: the age and the quality of materials. I go to great lengths not to take away from the ageing process – these are living, breathing artefacts; integral pieces of history that should be allowed to grow old gracefully."



"I CRINGE WHEN I'M TOLD THAT SOMETHING HAS BEEN RESTORED TO ITS FORMER GLORY. BLEMISHES AND DENTS AND DINGS ARE THE MARKS OF LIFE, THE MARKS OF EXISTENCE. I DON'T WANT TO BOTOX MY ARTEFACTS."

rebirth of style

"As I collected more and more, it started to occur to me, 'I love these things but can't keep them in the shed forever.' That's when the whole reuse-and-upcycling idea came into play. I call them 'orphan artefacts' – they have reached the end of their life cycle and have been rejected but their beauty never fades. They have real artistic and design merit, and it devastates me to think of how much unnecessary waste happens in the world." Above: 1930s stamping machine lamp with springbok hide, \$2950.



THE IDEAS MAN

"After I'd finished my first lamp [a wooden surveyor's tripod fitted with a raw calico shade, similar to the one pictured above], I began to see things in a new light," says Michael. "Suddenly, everything from an electric drill to an old wooden post had potential." His guiding principle is "to do as much as needed but as little as possible. My lamps are often described as a cross between art and sculpture; I like that. I really want people to see the art in them." *Wombat Hollow Iron Bed & Lamp Co, call (02) 4888 2011 or visit wombathollow.net.au*



1940s sharpening wheel on butcher's block lamp with duck-feather shade, \$1650.

In conversation with Murchison-Hume

Meet Max Kater, the eco chic co-director of eco cleaning brand Murchison-Hume

How did Murchison-Hume come about?

"It was the combination of becoming a housewife and a mother. My freshly minted inner housewife wanted cleaning products that were easy to use and effective; my maternal instincts told me they had to be non-toxic, kid-proof and as natural as possible – and of course, they had to look and smell gorgeous. Everything from oven mitts to rubbish bins had been redesigned and I just thought, 'Why not cleaning products?'"

What sets your products apart from other eco-friendly cleaners?



"Three words: colloidal cleaning technology [microscopic particles that lift dirt from surfaces at a molecular level]. The more I researched these products, the more impressed I was. I decided that if these cleaners are used to clean up oil spills, my greasy pots would be a doddle! They're the safest and most effective way of cleaning your house, period. It took four years to learn how to fragrance them – it ate most of the essential oils we tried. I'm very proud that we're the very first company to use this technology specifically for domestic use."



What are your tips to an eco-friendlier life?

"Remember to stop and think. We do so many wasteful things every day without thinking how it will impact others or the planet. I don't advocate knitting your own hemp shoes, but take a moment to rethink how you go about your daily life. Simple things like ceiling fans instead of air-conditioning, cashmere instead of heating, and hand-washing your clothes instead of dry-cleaning are all efficient, painless ways to lower your carbon footprint – and your monthly living expenses." Murchison-Hume, call (02) 9362 4810 or visit murchison-hume.com.

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