

IDEAL HOME SHOW 2009

Smart furniture to take
back to the future

THE PLATO saying, 'Necessity is the mother of invention', has never been more relevant. This year's Ideal Home Show, just like the 100 before it, is showcasing a new generation of gadgets and gizmos you never knew you needed.

And, while each of them is uniquely brilliant, they all have one thing in common — you'll wonder how we ever lived without them.

The trusty electric kettle won its place in the hearts and homes of the nation following its debut at the 1920 Ideal Home Show, so, too, did the electric mower in 1970.

So which inventions will find a permanent place in the homes of the future? Here are our top ten picks from the professional innovation competition.

1. Divorce Cabinet: Designed by Alexandra Tinning

IF YOU'RE invited to a wedding of friends whose marriage you're sure is doomed to fail, there is one reason to be cheerful: the wedding present is a no-brainer.

This retro-style cabinet, perforated down the centre for ease of sawing in half, was designed with splitting up in mind. It comes with a saw and an extra set of fold-down legs for each half. What happens to the dog is less straightforward.

2. Wing-It: Designed by Hannah Oakley

WHAT could be better than settling down with a good book in a comfy chair? Settling down with a good book in the Wing-It.

At first glance, it's an ordinary, classically designed armchair, but hidden within one of its wings is an energy-efficient light — bright enough to read by. Switch it off and the illuminated wing blends back in with the upholstery. Ingenious.

3. The Bedbox: Designed by Alexander Potts

NOTHING ruins your feng shui quite like a zed-bed in the corner of your living room. And sofas/beds — aside from being pricey — lack the satisfying squish of an ordinary sofa. So if you're short on bedrooms but want to put up your guests in comfort AND style, the bedbox — a



sleek side table that unfurls four interlocking panels to become a 'tutty upholstered sleeping surface' — could solve the problem.

4. Bloom Chair: Designed by Zita Menyhart

LIKE a flower opening in the sun, this cute-as-a-button bloom-inspired bottom-perch unfurls its petals whenever an extra seat is

needed. Have a garden party in your lounge and transform your carpet into a giant, daisy-covered lawn. When the party's over, simply slide the petals together and fold away.

5. Drinks Bottle Lighting: Designed by Sarah Turner

THEY say one man's trash is another's treasure, but few could

fail to appreciate the intricate beauty of Sarah Turner's ReDesign lighting range, which recycles and utilises plastic drinks bottles.

With some clever cutting, she has mastered the art of turning cola bottles into chrysanthemums, to form the basis of her beautiful ceiling and table lamps.

6. I Rest My Case: Designed by Alexandra Parker-Brown

TINY flats have their charms, but what they never have is space for your suitcase. If yours is gathering dust, you could swap it for this upholstered, leather Chesterfield-style footstool, that doubles as luxury luggage. You can use it all year round — until the baggage handlers take a shine to it, that is.

7. Note Table: Designed by Danielle Quinn

'I'M LEAVING you', the dinner's in the dog' — it's one of life's laws that when you have an important message for someone, there's no pen or paper in sight.

But with the Note Table — a kind of giant Etch-a-Sketch on legs — leaving a note for the one you love is easy. The surface of the oak table incorporates a magnetic filings board and magnetic pen. A sliding eraser wipes the board clean, ready for Round Two.

8. Pxeilate: Designed by Alison Edwards

LIVING IN A NEW BUILDING CAN BE A PAIN. Pxeilate allows you to create your own artwork by popping out pre-perforated squares from a cardboard sheet which slots into a wall-mounted frame. The frame sits over a low-energy lamp, lighting your designs from behind. If you fancy a change of scenery, you can get popping on another sheet.

9. Private Dining: Designed by James Plant

IT'S NOT quite Narnia, but behind an elegant pair of wardrobe doors designer James Plant has hidden a pop-up book-inspired dining room, complete with an oak table, wood floors and wallpaper. When folded away, the room is just 17cm deep.

'Don't move, improve' is the theme of this year's show, and what better way is there than adding an extra room, without knocking down a single wall.

10. Kettle Table: Designed by Robin Murray

IF YOU DON't have room for a table and chair, then this marvel could be ideal. The table can be transformed into a bench with one flick of its beautifully crafted ash top. It's a convenient way to provide extra seating, but doesn't solve where you'll sit for dinner.

RACHEL PORTER

5 MUST-SEE ATTRACTIONS

SMARTER LIVING

A mind-boggling array of time, space and energy-saving gadgets.

SHOW HOUSES

See how a tired Sixties family home can be brought up to date and take inspiration.

HOME & GARDEN THEATRE

More familiar faces from TV home make-over land share the tricks of the trade.

LEISURE LODGES

Forget camping, these log cabins are where those in the know get back to nature.

BEAUTY BAR

Round off the ideal shopping trip with a glass of bubbly and some beauty therapy.

LEARN TO DRIVE LIKE LEWIS

THERE comes a time, let's face it, when a bloke needs a bit of respite from all that shopping at the show.

So maybe when your partner is watching a cookery demonstration, admiring curtain material or being pampered in the Beauty Bar, why not slip off to the Games Lounge? Unashamedly chauvinistic, it is described as the 'men's creche' — a place for a pint, a ploughman's and some serious play.

It features an 18 ft-long Scalextric car racing track where everyone can play at being Lewis Hamilton. Those who record

the fastest lap times will win Scalextric Digital World Championship sets worth £260.

The Games Lounge also features a Fifties-style juke box, pinball machine, pool table and Sony PlayStation 3 consoles. There are sofas and beanbags to relax on in front of a plasma screen cinema area. 'The creche is not just for men,' said a spokesman for the show.

'Everyone can go there to enjoy a break from the shopping. It's just that we expect men to be the main users.'

Fast lane: Lewis Hamilton

Daily Mail

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