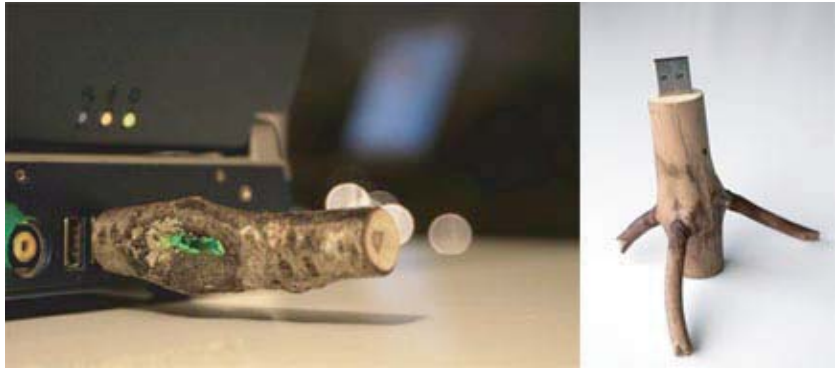


1. Fetch files with a memory “stick”

Taking their inspiration from an obvious double entendre, Netherlands-based design firm Oooms created a natural memory stick out of salvaged branches. Each one has a unique look, and holds from 12MB to 1GB of files. Completely handcrafted, these pieces take computer accessory design in a new direction, for more ecologically minded consumers.



www.oooms.nl

2. Storm watcher

Developed by internet-based broadcasting company Ambient, the Ambient Umbrella is a new technology designed to take the work out of predicting the weather. Similar to the company's other devices that help alert users to traffic conditions and energy usage, the umbrella signals, using a pulsing blue light, the possibility of rain. By wirelessly downloading weather updates from the Ambient network, the umbrella can predict for you whether you should take it along. The network and the umbrella is already available to 180 million users in the U.S., and according to the company, can even penetrate structures "inaccessible to other wireless technologies."



www.ambientdevices.com

3. Mystery cookies in the East Village

A new bakery on First Avenue between 13th and 14th streets was at the center of a heated debate during January. Opening with no press, no sign and with staff who kept the secret safe, the bakery serves only a small selection of pastries like perfectly crunchy cookies and chocolate filled croissants, accompanied by unflavored, plain coffee in either regular or decaf. But what drew New York foodies and design aficionados alike were not the treats alone, but also the unique decor. Located on a busy, yet un-hip block of the East Village, the bakery uses 100% recycled materials for the interior of the store, like milk paint, wheat board, bamboo and cork. Not only are these materials used for the counter, floor and walls, but all of the food is made with 100% organic ingredients.



Eventually, the guesses of a few food bloggers were confirmed and the man behind the project was revealed to be Maury Rubin from the acclaimed City Bakery off of Fifth Avenue. Despite the fact that the mystery is over, this storefront remains signless and the product thankfully perfect.

223 First Avenue, West side of street, between 13th and 14th Streets



4. DIY Chewing gum

Before chemicals and manufacturing plants, chewing gum was derived from a tree that grew exclusively in Central America, supporting the economy of the area. Tapping into the DIY trend, while at the same time educating consumers about the origins of chewing gum and the impact of removing this cottage industry from the rainforests, the Glee Gum kit is interesting for both children and adults. The kit includes everything you need to make 50 pieces of gum, like “chewing gum base (containing natural chicle), confectioner's sugar, corn syrup, natural peppermint and tutti frutti flavors, and a pan for softening the chicle gum base.” An unusual, organic afternoon project.

www.gleegum.com/make-gum-kit.htm



5. Skeletal McQueen

Adding to the long list of designer-brand collaborations, this month Puma brought their Alexander McQueen designed sneaker to two stores, in New York's Meatpacking District, and Washington D.C.'s Georgetown. Inspired by the delicate bone structure of the human foot, McQueen decided on varying “natural” colors and an ergonomic, swirling design with a webbed detail. Unveiled during Spring fashion week in September, the design has been long awaited by fashionable downtowners, and is expected to be as successful as Puma's Jil Sander line, which still proves difficult to find throughout the country.

www.puma.com

6. Gaming integration

Putting to rest any doubts that the gaming industry is monstrously popular, we finally see the complete hybridization of man and machine. Launched last year, but unavailable until now, the neXfit Gaming Exercise Bike fully integrates the gaming console of your choice with a sleek, silver stationary bike, featuring button equipped handlebars controlling the action on your screen.



www.coolhunting.com/archives/2006/01/nexfit_bka6_gam_1.php

7. aNYThing Store Opens

Independent New York designer and native Aaron Bondaroff has opened his own store on the Lower East Side. Carrying not only his own streetwear line aNYThing (A New York Thing), Bondaroff focuses on the stars of the downtown fashion world, both new and established. Look for lines like United Bamboo and Benjamin Cho, as well as a plethora of collaborations from names like Terry Richardson, Ryan McGinley, Neckface and Mark Gonzalez. Everything is housed in a sleek wood and lacquer space, which Bondaroff says is "classically symmetrical like the Black Lodge in Twin Peaks."



151 Hester Street at Essex, 212.777.0919

8. The New York Magazine Look Book

For those without a subscription, the Look Book can be found every week at www.nymetro.com under *Shopping and Fashion*



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