



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Cooking at the speed of light

PRODUCT • Black & Decker has just introduced the Infrared Speed Oven, being heralded as "groundbreaking" innovation.

Marketing aside, this new compact, countertop appliance cooks food in a hurry and automatically sets time and temperature. Wired magazine listed the oven in its Best Gadgets and Gizmos on the Planet 2007 issue.

The appliance uses infrared wavelengths to cook food with light technology rather than microwave radiation. \$150 at Canadian Tire.

— CanWest News Service

Get moving on kitchen renos

BOOK • If you are planning to update your bungalow's kitchen, or even create a "bungalow-style" kitchen in your non-bungalow home, a new book will help you with your renovations.

The New Bungalow Kitchen, by Peter Labau, is worth reading to glean ideas for your project, whether that is making basic kitchen improvements or creating an addition.

And if breaking down walls to expand your space is in your plans, the author does not hesitate to give his opinion on that often asked question — do you maintain the look of the original architecture or be purposefully different? His answer is make it look like it was always there.

Labau, who was president and co-founder of The Classic Group, an architecture, interior design and construction company in the Boston area, includes one of his firm's own projects among the 17 featured bungalow kitchens.

Labau's advice makes a lot of sense. For instance, solid planks of wood for cabinetry, in a high-humidity area like kitchens, don't hold up as well as veneered surfaces even if the bungalow aesthetic is all about natural materials.

He proves you can incorporate granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and microwaves into a classic bungalow and still maintain a period style that's known for its craftsmanship and richness of detail.

Hardcover, \$38. Taunton Press.

— Kim Pemberton, CanWest News Service

Tidy toilets in a cleaner way

PRODUCT • The clean gurus at Clorox have come up with a new way for homeowners to scrub toilets that doesn't involve reusing a grody brush.

The Clorox ToiletWand is a disposable cleaning system that promises a sparkling commode every time, thanks to one-use brush heads. Simply snap a new disposable head on the wand before each cleaning, swish the swiveling unit around the bowl, and release it into the garbage.

The system comes in a white caddy with storage areas for the wand and brush heads.

— Calgary Herald

HEAT UP THE NIGHT

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

Charcoal hot again

Charcoal is really making a comeback. That's the message from big box retailers and specialty stores as outdoor cooking season fires up.

"This year I've seen a big resurgence in (the demand for) charcoal," says Rob Hatch, spokesperson for Canadian Tire. The outdoors store keeps running out of lump charcoal as Calgarians clue in to the tasty benefits derived from cooking with it.

Likewise, Trevor Hannan of Barbecues Galore has witnessed increased interest in the store's charcoal cookers, such as the Big Green Egg barbecue.

Other cookers gaining in popularity are the Traeger smokers. They burn natural hardwood barbecue pellets to imbue food with a delicious smoky flavour. Adding to their appeal is the ability to purchase them in the form of a pink pig or black longhorn cow.

— Lisa Kadane, Calgary Herald

at Barbecues Galore.

"The same thing happens with the patio heaters." Hannan's only explanation for the phenomenon: "The nights are a lot colder in Calgary."

Rob Hatch attributes the craze to the growth in and popularity of "outdoor rooms."

The Canadian Tire spokesperson says homeowners have invested in landscaping, top-of-the-line grills and nice patio furniture. Since they're outdoors,

they'd rather warm up by the light of a fire or flicker from a heat lamp — still dressed in their summer best — than resort to bundling up in a blanket or unsightly fleece pullover.

What's more, fires and heaters add an extra couple months of life to Calgary's notoriously short summer.

"You really want to do everything you can to extend the season as much as possible," says Hatch.

SEE NIGHT, PAGE G2

Images courtesy: PatioLine Imports, Home Depot, Canadian Tire and Barbecues Galore

Do it for me

Website helps you find someone to do your chores

VALERIE FINHOLM
MCCLEACHY NEWSPAPERS

Have domestic chores turned your life into drudgery? A new website has a solution: Outsource them.

The website, domystuff.com, allows people to auction off chores and other tasks.

"It solves two problems: 'don't have enough free time in my life,' and 'don't make enough money,'" says Darren Berkovitz, 23, a Californian who launched domystuff.com two months ago with three

partners, all in their 20s.

Tasks are posted on the site by "employers" and bid on by "assistants." Anyone looking for help can limit bidding to those who live near their town or city. There is also a "global" section for jobs such as web marketing or computer programming. Feedback similar to that on eBay, where possessions are sold, is posted by the employer about the job performance of the assistant.

Seth Meister, of Kelowna, posted a job on domystuff.com to have almost 3,000 family

photos scanned.

"I have wanted to digitalize my photos for many years now," says the 38-year-old father of two. "Obviously I'm quite wary about sending these out to a stranger, but the truth is, if I don't send them out to someone I'll never do it myself."

Twelve people applied for the job, Meister says, and the average bid was about \$750. Meister can choose any of the bidders or none.

Domystuff.com has impressed such experts as Ina Steiner, editor of Auction-

Bytes.com, a trade publication for online merchants.

"I think they're on to something," Steiner says. "There are tasks you just don't want to deal with. When I look at the listings I see I could get somebody to weed my garden and mow my lawn."

Domystuff.com may be the first service-based website in the United States, Steiner says, but she predicts it won't be alone long. She says eBay is testing a site in Australia.

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arch art niches, 4 upper bedrooms, master with huge walk-in closet, den, mud-room with built-ins, newly developed walkout basement with wet bar, 5th bedroom & roughed-in media room. A must view!

