

New products make modern living easier

HOUSEWARES SHOW | For those seeing green, exhibit also displays eco-friendly items

BY CELESTE BUSK

cbusk@suntimes.com

From hundreds of green products and kitchen gadgets to storage solutions, lighting options, home-office products and pet supplies, this year's 2008 International Home & Housewares Show had something to please the tastes and needs of just about everybody.

The show at McCormick Place showcased more than 2,000 exhibitors and drew more than 60,000 people from the trade industry representing manufacturers, distributors and importers from more than 100 countries. The three-day showcase of new products, which ended earlier this week, was brimming with thousands of items geared to making living in the 21st century a little easier, and greener.

Although this year's show was devoid of showstopping gadgetry found in past years, there were still plenty of new products and updated revisions of older products to keep consumer interest high. Everywhere you looked, there was something of interest, from small kitchen appliances, gourmet specialty foods and cookware to bake-

SEE HOUSEWARES, PAGE 6

ware, kitchen tools, home decor items, space organizers, storage systems and home healthcare

products.

"This year we're seeing a lot of environmentally friendly products in particular — green products such as cookware that may have less chemicals in its no-stick coating, and lots of bamboo products like cutting boards and decorating accessories," said Lisa Casey Weiss, lifestyles consultant for the International Housewares Association. Weiss also noted that many green products were wrapped or packaged in eco-friendly materials.

Weiss said another trend at the International Home & Housewares Show was the effort to bring nature indoors.

"There's one company [Air Wick] that has a broom that releases an outdoor floral scent when you sweep your home. Another company [Febreze] has a storage unit for closets that has a pocket where you can insert a sheet of scented fabric to make the closet smell nice."

Weiss also says the show products seemed to be "a result of our tight economic environment, where consumers are looking at their current home and making the decision not to move, but to remodel, refresh and update with simple products." For example, Weiss points to the Pebbles Wall Mural by Environmental Graphics. The product is a wall-sized mural that goes up as easily as wallpaper. (For information, visit www.egproducts.com.)

"There also were many wood polishes that 'restore' furniture without sanding and refinishing," she said.

Another interesting product is Window Fingers by the Marie Kowalski Corp (www.windowfingers.com). "These are more affordable window treatments that come in vertical panels that hang almost like vertical blinds," Weiss said. "They come in different colors and you can mix and match the colors to create different patterns, which is something different than using traditional drapery."

As for the 2008 color trend,

Weiss says the show had a lot of "green-colored products." For example, Kitchenaid is introducing appliances such as refrigerators and stoves in a "pearish green," she said. "We also saw a lot of eggplant purple in dinnerware, serving bowls, flatware and dishes, as well as very bright colors such as oranges, yellows and reds. These bright colors are optimistic colors, not soothing like blue, but vibrant and stimulating to make a home a little cozier."

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

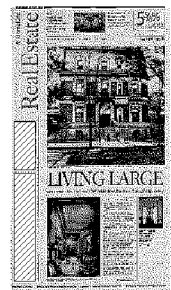
SOMETHING FISHY: AquaVista Enterprise's AquaVista Aquarium looks like a thick picture frame, but it is really an aquarium that hangs on the wall. The product offers a choice of backgrounds ranging from underwater ocean-scapes to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The suggested retail price is \$264 for the AV 100 model. Tabletop models also are available. Call (888) 627-8284; www.aquavistainc.com.

FLUSH WITH PRACTICALITY: "Foot Flush" is a pedal control that you put on the bathroom floor and attach to the toilet, so you don't have to use a hand to flush the toilet. It's priced at \$19.95. It's made by FFI Corp. in North Haven, Conn. Call (866) 237-2882; www.footflush.com.

BRIGHT IDEA: MAXSA Innovations offers a variety of outdoor lighting that works with batteries or solar panels. The lights automatically turn on when motion is detected. Prices are affordable. For example, the suggested retail price for the Solar-Powered LED Security Spotlight is \$79.95. Call (703) 495-0661; www.maxsainnovations.com.

NO LOST KEYS: I Touchless Housewares & Products Inc. makes the Biomatic Fingerprint door lock. A fingerprint is the key to open the door. Suggested retail price is \$299.99. Call (800) 660-7978; www.itouchless.net.

COOL CANS: NineStars is showcasing its line of garbage cans that open without touching through infrared technology.



NineStars says you can get 10,000 openings on the energy from four size D batteries. Price range: \$99.99 to \$124.99. Call (626) 839-1883; www.ninestarsusa.com.

'GREEN' RUG: The Bamboo Shag Area Rug by Anji Mountain Bamboo Rug Co. has the characteristics of the dense pile of traditional rugs, but it's woven with a blended yarn made of bamboo and cotton. Prices vary. Call (888) 344-5004; www.anjimountainbamboorugco.com.

SWEEPING UP: Air Wick's Fresh Sweep Broom has a round pocket for an air-freshening scent tablet. Suggested retail price is \$9.99. There's also a toilet bowl brush caddy (\$6.99). Visit: www.airwick.us.

KEEP OUT! A heavy stainless steel wall vault is attached to studs in the wall for added security. The vault by SecureLogic can be ordered with a fingerprint recognition lock or a coded lock. The company also makes the InvisiVault which looks like a framed picture. It's also attached to wall studs and can be opened by remote control. Price range: \$299 to \$479. Call (800) 344-3242; www.wall-vault.com.

KEEP IT CLEAN: Oxygenics TriSpa Series showerheads "infuse oxygen into each water drop" to create more pressure. The showerheads have multiple pressure and spray settings and swiveling options. Price range: \$49 to \$65. Call (800) 344-3242; www.oxygenics.com.

Note: Many of the products were recently released on the market, while others are expected to be on the market by the end of the year. For more information, call or visit the company Web site. Prices are subject to change.



One trend visitors to this year's show saw was an effort to bring natures indoors. | AL PODGORSKI~SUN-TIMES



Desila Ingguratupolie of AquaVista Enterprises, which makes picture frame aquariums. | AL PODGORSKI~SUNTIMES



SecureLogic's InvisiVault



**Oxygenics
TriSpa Series
showerhead**



**NineStars
Infrared
Stainless Steel
Trash Can**



AquaVista Aquarium



**Air
Wick's
Fresh
Sweep
Broom**



FFI Foot Flush