

VOCAL LIVING

AUSTRALIA

IN GOOD FORM p31
PARED-BACK STYLE,
CLOUDS AND BRICKS

RIGHT PATH p175
NEW DIRECTIONS IN
AUSTRALIAN GARDENS

LIGHT TOUCH p124
LIVING BEAUTIFULLY
IN BRISBANE, LONDON
AND BUENOS AIRES

kitchens &
BATHROOMS p191



A '60s SYDNEY APARTMENT'S
CONFIDENT MAKEOVER P146

\$8.50 SEPT/OCT '09 NZ \$9.90



9 312966 803009

LEFT: SPECIALISING IN ARTISANAL HARDWARE, LONDON'S LABOUR AND WANT MAKES SLATES OLD-SCHOOL COOL. ABOVE, THE BE-ISSUE BRONVEGA 'R922B' RADIO-PHONOGRAPH NOW PLAYING VINYL AND MP3s AND, FAR RIGHT, AREAWARE'S 'MAGNO' RADIO RE-INVEST AUDIO EQUIPMENT WITH EMOTION. BELOW: POSTFOSIL SPORTS FURNITURE IS A FIVE-PIECE COLLECTION THAT DOUBLES AS LOW-TECH SPORTING EQUIPMENT. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.

BACK TO

As the technology that surrounds us tends itself, herald the return of low-tech objects. IMAGINE IF THE cautionary maxim of the RSPCA pet-owning campaign was stuck on all the cool stuff in every technology department of every store around the world: 'Design is for life not just for Christmas'. It might mesh with the aspirational narrative of advertising – new is the nexus to happiness – but it would serve to remind of the implications of investing in 'the latest'.

Sure, that mobile phone can converge ever-more applications in a never-before-offered custom colouring, but its ownership contributes to an aggressive upgrade culture; 400 million gadgets get scrapped globally every year.

At what point in history did technology shake off its practical-applications-of-knowledge semantics and slip into the streamlined labour-saving obsolences? Most likely it was the late 1980s when Silicon Valley shrank microprocessors so small, so cheaply that Wall Street could turbo drive its trade and change the economic landscape of the world forever. Back then, business models rushed to rebuild around a rate of change so fast that technology was locking into life-cycles as short-spans as fashion. Seizing on the transience and trend potential of it all, smarties such as Apple hooked the world on speed. Addicted in a flash, we

BASICS

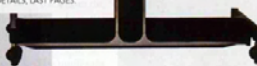
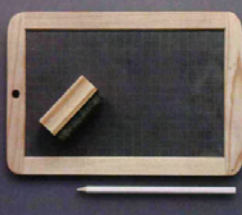
to whiz past in a constant bid to update the kind which last a lifetime or more.

threw our 'too slow' snuff into the conscience-saving void of 'away' and waited for the next fix. But the invisible 'away' soon materialised into the meaning 'near' as planned obsolescence pummelled the planet's biodiversity.

Now it's time to drag technology down from its high horse of chilly austerity back to the practical application of which knowledge that exists dense, well-designed communities, passive houses and cradle-to-cradle design principles are what will spare the globe total collapse. We need to go back to creating and buying one-for-life objects that can be repaired, shared, disassembled and recycled into the next life.

As *Mintopoli* magazine columnist Bruce Sterling said, "It's high time for designers to plunder and upgrade the vernacular technologies of the Third World: wheelbarrows, bicycle rickshaws, rainwater barrels, window boxes, awnings, mosquito nets..." And it's time to re-engage with the great performer in the plain package whose speak-for-itself, low-impact form elicits the emotional attachment that leads to a for-ever bond. No, gadgets won't go away (our world is irrevocably digital) but why do they have to look so damn gadgety? Why not reflect in their features the same dumb humanity that endears us to others. ANNEMARE KEELY

LEFT: TRANSFERRING POWER BETWEEN LAMP AND BASE VIA MAGNETIC INDUCTION, POSTFOSIL'S 'GOOD NIGHT ELEVEN' IS A PORTABLE PIECE THAT MINIMISES THE USE OF POWER. ABOVE LEFT: AREAWARE 'TORCH' BY JONAS DAMON IS AN ECO-FRIENDLY LED FLASHLIGHT. FAR LEFT: NO-EMEALED CORRESPONDENCE WILL SURPASS THE LETTER PENNED WITH A MONTBLANC 'MEISTERSTÜCK'.



EVYLYN WAUGH BRIDESHEAD REVIVED

STRONGER THAN STEEL AND A RENEWABLE RESOURCE, BAMBOO GIVES PEDDLE POWER A NOSTALGIC EDGE IN THE BIOMEGA 'SHIMMOO' BIKES BY ROSS LOVEGROVE. ABOVE LEFT: AS BOOKS DISAPPEAR INTO THE DIGITAL ETHER, PENGUIN CELEBRATES THE PAPER WORD WITH A CLASSICS SET IN LEATHER BOUND BY BILL AMBERG. ABOVE RIGHT: STUDIO DOOM'S SCAR PANELED 'BIRCHHOUSE' ILLUMINATES AN INSECT ATTRACTING SUPPORT STICK AT NIGHT. RIGHT: THE 'ATTENTION' TEA TOWEL FROM THIRD DRAWER DOWN DOES AWAY WITH DISHWASHERS.

ABOVE: IN LIGHT OF THE EUROPEAN BAN ON FROSTED BULBS, INGO MAURER HAS DESIGNED THE HEAT-RESISTANT 'EURO' COOKTOP TO TURN CLEAR BULBS FROSTED. ABOVE LEFT: WACHS' COOLO DISHWASHER REDUCES THE DISHWASHING MACHINE TO ITS ESSENTIALS. BELOW: THE POSTFOSIL STACKING 'TORCH' POT GROWS WITH THE PLANT, ELIMINATING THE NEED TO BE POT. FAR LEFT: LABOUR AND WANT'S 'DOUBLE SCREW DRIVER SET' WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO THE NEW 'REPAIR' CULTURE.