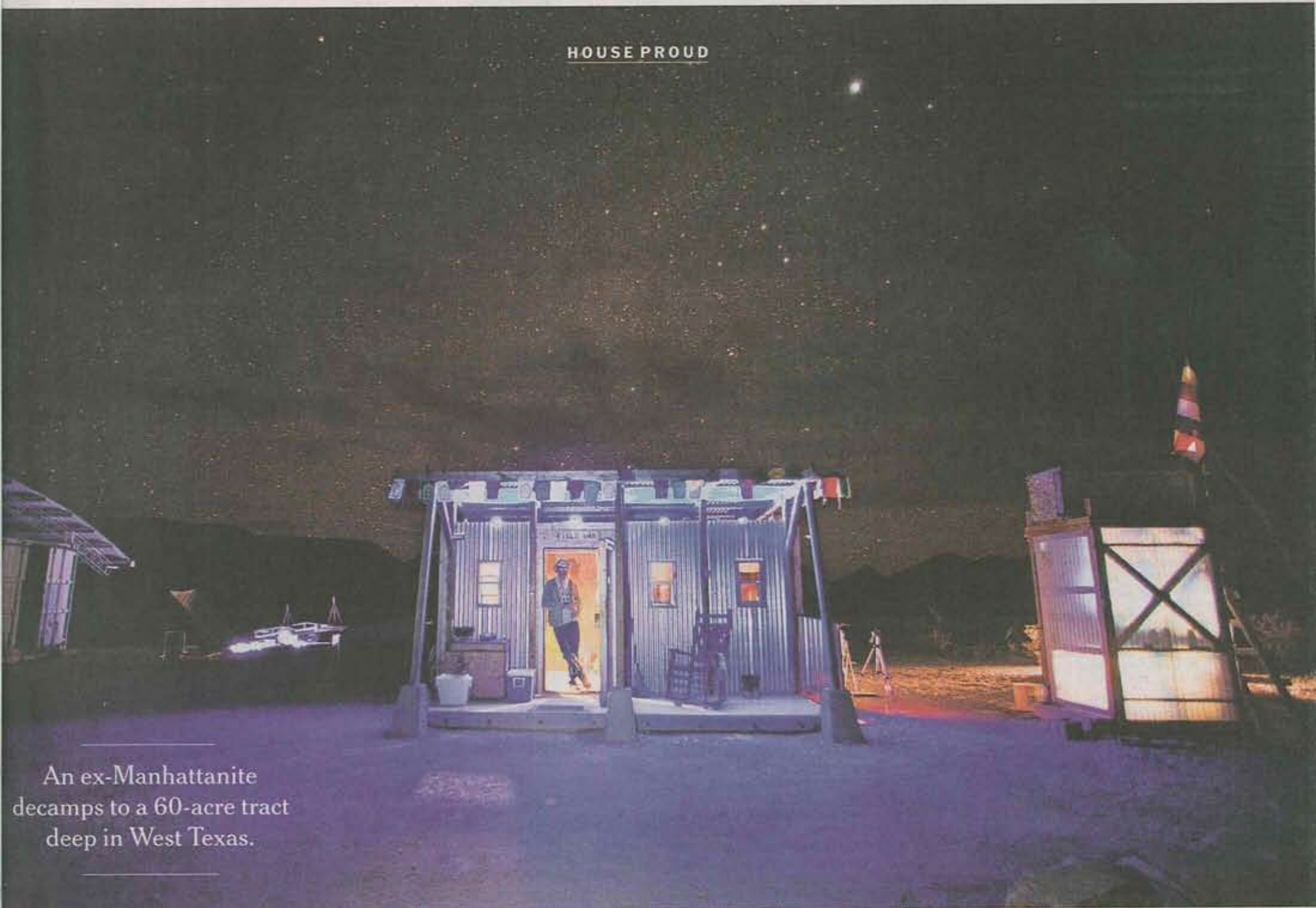


HOUSE PROUD



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

An ex-Manhattanite decamps to a 60-acre tract deep in West Texas.

STAR-DRENCHED A typical night at John Wells's desert homestead. Below, a light sculpture made by Dave Liatti, a friend from Brooklyn, hangs above Mr. Wells's bed.

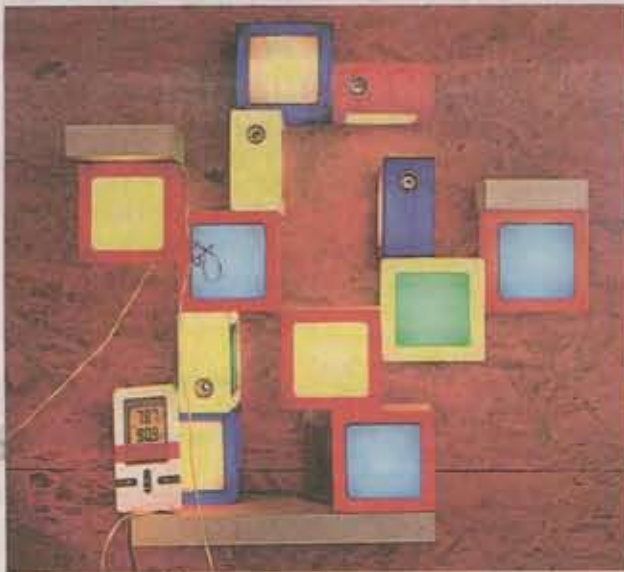
A Glow in the Desert

By **PENELOPE GREEN**

YOU won't find directions to the Field Lab, a homestead two and a half miles off Highway 118, deep in the West Texas desert and 30 miles or so from the Mexican border, on MapQuest. But John Wells, who built the place and lives there all by himself, will meet you under a highway billboard in his white Toyota pickup and lead you in, accompanied by a cloud of tenacious Fizzle Flat dust. (He might even offer you dinner: a plate of red beans, rice and broccoli, and a tangy slice of homemade cheese, olive and beer bread, cooked all afternoon in his solar oven.)

Known locally as the Moonscape, this raggedly lovely landscape of mesas and buttes, mesquite and desert juniper is rough and cheap, which makes it a tempting site for off-the-gridders like Mr. Wells. There are no paved roads, no electricity and no

TERLINGUA, Tex.



water, but you can see the Milky Way more easily here than you can at the Hayden Planetarium. (Last Thursday night, shooting stars fell with ho-hum regularity.) And your yearly property taxes might be less than a month's worth of cable and Internet service. Last year, Mr. Wells's were \$86.

With his ZZ Top beard, battered cowboy hat and worn boots, Mr. Wells, 51, looks like a native. But like many of his neighbors, he's a recent transplant, a former fashion and catalog photographer, late of Manhattan and Columbia County.

Despite those coordinates, which might suggest a kinship with the art-world pilgrims in Marfa, more than 100 miles away — a distance that counts as "nearby" in Texas terms — Mr. Wells is not here to make art, exactly, though his photographs of his new home are exquisite. Nor did he arrive with a book deal or an end date.

Following a long tradition of solitary back-to-the-landers, Mr.

Continued on Page 4

IN THE GARDEN

All Things Bright and Clever

PTERIDOMANIA
ruffled fronds of a bird's-nest fern would be at the set of the old TV show "The Lost."



After the austerity years, a crop of housewares in refreshing fruit shades.



Manhattanite
60-acre tract
West Texas.

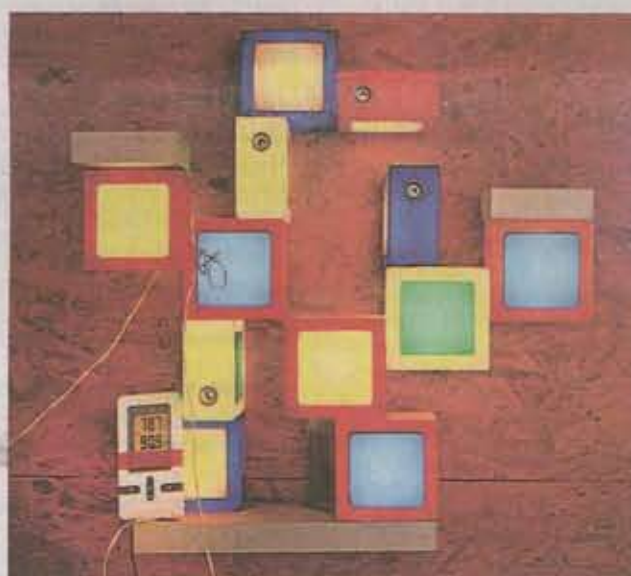
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

STAR-DRENCHED A typical night at John Wells's desert homestead. Below, a light sculpture made by Dave Liatti, a friend from Brooklyn, hangs above Mr. Wells's bed.

A Glow in the Desert

By PENELOPE GREEN

TERLINGUA, Tex. You can't find directions to the Field Lab, a home two and a half miles off Highway 118, deep in the West Texas desert and 30 miles or so from the Mexican border, on MapQuest. But John Wells, who built the place and lives there all by himself, will meet you under a highway billboard for a white Toyota pickup and lead you in, accompanied by a cloud of Fizzle Flat dust. (He might even have a plate of red beans, rice and broccoli, and a loaf of cheese, olive and beer bread, cooked in a far oven.) In the Moonscape, this raggedly lovely landscape of cholla, mesquite and desert juniper is rough and rocky. It's a tempting site for off-the-gridders: there are no paved roads, no electricity and no



water, but you can see the Milky Way more easily here than you can at the Hayden Planetarium. (Last Thursday night, shooting stars fell with ho-hum regularity.) And your yearly property taxes might be less than a month's worth of cable and Internet service. Last year, Mr. Wells's were \$86.

With his ZZ Top beard, battered cowboy hat and worn boots, Mr. Wells, 51, looks like a native. But like many of his neighbors, he's a recent transplant, a former fashion and catalog photographer, late of Manhattan and Columbia County.

Despite those coordinates, which might suggest a kinship with the art-world pilgrims in Marfa, more than 100 miles away — a distance that counts as "nearby" in Texas terms — Mr. Wells is not here to make art, exactly, though his photographs of his new home are exquisite. Nor did he arrive with a book deal or an end date.

Following a long tradition of solitary back-to-the-landers, Mr.

Continued on Page 4

IN THE GARDEN



ROBERT WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Send In the Fronds

HELLO, John Ireland. In my kitchen, my neighbors say, was my attic space was a home chapel. In the shop Ireland of monumental Mary and the left me some-walk-up with and dormer

the wainscot-ant to display

something. But what? A domed canary cage? A bust of St. Polycarp, patron saint of earache sufferers?

The other day, I experienced something like an epiphany. What the kitchen needed was a hanging fern.

A few decades ago, the plant to buy would have been obvious: a Boston fern. Anyone would recognize *Nephrolepis exaltata*. It's the ferny-looking fern — the one with the long, shaggy ruffles of greenery, cascading like a fondue fountain.

The Boston fern is not without its merits, noted Tom Stuart, proprietor of the Hardy Fern Library, an online taxonomical guide.

"There's almost no way to kill a Boston fern," Mr. Stuart said from his home in Car-

Continued on Page 6

All Things Bright and Clever



MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

COLOR IS THE NEW BLACK Tivoli is one of many companies offering colorful housewares.

After the austerity years, a crop of housewares in refreshing fruit shades.

By JOYCE WADLER

CHICAGO

THE International Home and Housewares Show at the McCormick Place convention center this week boasted "13 miles of aisles," and if you were to walk them, perhaps as a visitor from another planet, you might have the following impressions.

These Earth people love coffee and little brightly colored, high-tech coffee makers, but perhaps they all live alone, for they seem obsessed with something called "single-serve units."

They are very environmentally concerned: everywhere it is green this, recycle that. They are determined to cut back on waste, no matter how many new products they have to buy to do that.

Their place of worship seems to be the kitchen, where even spatulas stand upright and honored, and their primary source of sustenance, after coffee, is cupcakes.

They are obsessed with clean homes and spend their leisure time gazing into the moving parts of their vacuum cleaners, which are designed for this purpose with transparent casings.

As confident as these Earth people seem —

Continued on Page 8

All Things Bright and Clever

A WARM CAP The Brasa Avani ventless fire, \$415, with an accessory screen, \$165.



QUICK CHANGE The Tassimo Bosch T20, a single-serve coffee maker, is about \$130; color inserts, \$20, change its look.



HOT POT A faux terra-cotta pot that houses a combination barbecue and herb garden, \$124, could be a space saver.



ABOVE AND TOP, MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BRING A TREND Pantone's color forecasts are by manufacturers. This year, there was a lot of light color, as Pantone had predicted.



HARNESS THE SUN A solar-powered barbecue with aluminum base, \$500, from the French company ID Cook.



MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SLEEK Nespresso's booth featured its single-serve coffee makers, including the 4.3-inch-wide Pixie, about \$250.



PURE FOOD Dr. Andrew Weil's bi-level Electronic Food Steamer, \$215.

GREEN AND CLEAN The Ergorapido Green, a vacuum cleaner from Electrolux made with 70 percent recycled plastic, is about \$130.



MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SIP LIKE A STAR Susan Sarandon promoting the SodaStream system for making soda at home, which could reduce the number of cans and bottles in the waste stream.



BURNING BRIGHT The Fuego bio firelight, about \$200, is fueled by bioethanol.

From Page 1, This Section

ularly after their fourth serving of coffee — secretly crave direction, for an imposing labeled "Pantone" decrees "2011 Color of the Pantone 18-2120 Honeysuckle," their render- not, tropical pink.

for reasons that are not immediately ob- they revere certain individuals: The appear- of a person called Susan Sarandon, on behalf product called SodaStream, caused great ex- tent.

we are jumping all over, perhaps because of at coffee, so here is an overview of what s to be happening in the homes on Planet

STILL, A WEHRMACHT GRAY MIGHT HAVE MADE THINGS WORSE

tone, it turns out, is a company that codifies to help designers communicate the precise they want. It also forecasts color trends up years ahead.

in orange, yellow, magenta and green.

The bright blasts of color were also evident in those single-serve coffee makers, which were every- where.

"It's gone from a fad to a phenomenon," said Chris Stevens, vice president of corporate rela- tions at Keurig.

The most ambitious single-shot display was that of Nespresso — a tricked-out white space with a light show and a soundtrack with a disco beat — which was introducing the Pixie, an espresso ma- chine that will sell for about \$250.

"Basically, it's a compact machine that allows

quart Electronic Slow Cooker, for \$286. The Slow Cooker is programmed with 40 recipes from Dr. Weil's books, said Jim Mylonas, the vice president and general manager of Gorham, a subsidiary of Lenox, the company that owns Dansk.

At the show, however, the steamer appeared to be cooking meat. Isn't Dr. Weil a vegetarian?

"He is," Mr. Mylonas said. "But not everybody is. The Electronic Slow Cooker works with the rest of the 90 percent of the country who still eat meat."

FIRE GOOD, FOSSIL FUELS BAD

Another interesting development was the move toward fireplaces fueled by bioethanol. The Danish company Stelton showed one called Fuego that was sculptural and modern, an open glass dome over an iron base, for about \$200.

was just recently at a fireplace show. The number of wood-burning stoves outweighed the gas by four to one."

FOR BEST SUPPORTING ROLE IN A TRADE SHOW

"She's taking questions between 12:45 and 12:55," a trade show spokesperson told reporters who had gathered to see Susan Sarandon outside the exhibit of SodaStream, the home soda maker. "It can only be about environmental stuff. Nothing about her personal life and her recent marriage breakup and her new 29-year-old boyfriend."

In fact, as even a visitor from another planet would know, the person whom the 64-year-old actress is rumored to have been seeing is over 30, and Ms. Sarandon has denied that he is her boy- friend. And faced with a 6-foot-tall display of crushed cans and bottles, it is clear that what goes on between two little humans, even those with a 30-year-age difference, doesn't amount to a hill of beans.

"This case contains the beverage packages used by an average Chicago family in 5 years," a sig-



ABOVE AND TOP, MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

URING A TREND Pantone's color forecasts are by manufacturers. This year, there was a lot of light color, as Pantone had predicted.



PURE FOOD Dr. Andrew Weil's bi-level Electronic Food Steamer, \$215.

GREEN AND CLEAN The Ergorapido Green, a vacuum cleaner from Electrolux made with 70 percent recycled plastic, is about \$130.



From Page 1, This Section

Early after their fourth serving of coffee — secretly crave direction, for an imposing Pantone decrees "2011 Color of the Year," their renderings, tropical pink.

For reasons that are not immediately obvious, they revere certain individuals: The appearance of a person called Susan Sarandon, on behalf of a product called SodaStream, caused great excitement.

People are jumping all over, perhaps because of the coffee, so here is an overview of what is happening in the homes on Planet Earth.

ILL, A WEHRMACHT GRAY MIGHT HAVE MADE THINGS WORSE

One, it turns out, is a company that codifies and helps designers communicate the precise color they want. It also forecasts color trends up to 15 years ahead.

When we announce a color of the year, it is not just a color; it is a mood, the feel of the country, the mood, the environment, the economy," said Giovanni Marra, director of corporate marketing, who was wearing a color that was not honeysuckle, but a soft purple. "I'm seeing it in apparel, accessories, home decor."

How would he characterize honeysuckle, in terms of mood?

"Refreshing, rejuvenating," Mr. Marra said. "After the last couple of years, when it was difficult economically, it would be good for people to look at a color that could renew and refresh."

Is color only for the United States, or is it a global color," he said.

What's going on in the Middle East right now? "It's true. They are definitely challenging the Middle East right now."

On the floor, there was a lot of pink, although the color of the credit for that could be given to the manufacturer pointed out, pink also has a cancer-awareness association. There is a lot of bright neon colors as well, a trend that has also been predicted.

Those two-slice toasters sell for about \$100. The manufacturer is introducing toasters in "chili pink," "citrus pink," "lime green" and "azure blue." And the manufacturer is introducing the kMix Collection, which includes espresso makers, blenders and toasters

QUICK CHANGE The Tassimo Bosch T20, a single-serve coffee maker, is about \$130; color inserts, \$20, change its look.



HARNESS THE SUN A solar-powered barbecue with aluminum base, \$500, from the French company ID Cook.



MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SIP LIKE A STAR Susan Sarandon promoting the SodaStream system for making soda at home, which could reduce the number of cans and bottles in the waste stream.

in orange, yellow, magenta and green.

The bright blasts of color were also evident in those single-serve coffee makers, which were everywhere.

"It's gone from a fad to a phenomenon," said Chris Stevens, vice president of corporate relations at Keurig.

The most ambitious single-shot display was that of Nespresso — a tricked-out white space with a light show and a soundtrack with a disco beat — which was introducing the Pixie, an espresso machine that will sell for about \$250.

"Basically, it's a compact machine that allows

Cutting back on waste is a priority — no matter how many new products we have to buy to do that.

you to make the same barista-made espresso faster," said Franz Niedermair, vice president for marketing. "It has the smaller footprint and it's a little bit hipper, cooler for the younger audience. You've got the colors — the lime, the red, the silver and the indigo blue."

What's that song?

"We got it from Lausanne headquarters."

The Tassimo Bosch T20, another single-serve coffee maker, was introduced last year in black and white, and sells for about \$130. The company is now offering colored inserts — strawberry red, lime green, mint blue and hazelnut brown — for about \$20 each.

"If you bought it this year, and you are sick of your white kitchen, you can jazz it up with inserts," said Heather Gordon, a Tassimo spokeswoman. "Or you could do red for the holidays. Or brown."

MY ACOLYTES WILL HAVE IT MEDIUM-RARE

Andrew Weil, M.D., a lifestyle guru and leader in the field of integrative medicine, is doing a new line of cookware for Dansk. It includes the bi-level Electronic Food Steamer, for \$215, and the five-

quart Electronic Slow Cooker, for \$286. The Slow Cooker is programmed with 40 recipes from Dr. Weil's books, said Jim Mylonas, the vice president and general manager of Gorham, a subsidiary of Lenox, the company that owns Dansk.

At the show, however, the steamer appeared to be cooking meat. Isn't Dr. Weil a vegetarian?

"He is," Mr. Mylonas said. "But not everybody is. The Electronic Slow Cooker works with the rest of the 90 percent of the country who still eat meat."

FIRE GOOD, FOSSIL FUELS BAD

Another interesting development was the move toward fireplaces fueled by bioethanol. The Danish company Stelton showed one called Fuego that was sculptural and modern, an open glass dome over an iron base, for about \$200.

It's "mouth-blown glass, so it won't break," said Nils Lindblad, the company's North American director. "You can have it on the porch or on dark winter evenings when you are looking over the mountains in Colorado."

But not on the coffee table in a New York City apartment?

"No," Mr. Lindblad said. "We don't want to deal with all the liability. We say it is for outdoor use."

Brasa, of New Orleans, was showing a line of alcohol-fueled fireplaces designed for floor and tabletop use. Some sat on ceramic bases, others were shielded by glass, and prices ranged from \$185 to \$725. The best seller, said Brasa's founder, Scott Begg, is the Avani, an open portable table fire that sells for \$415.

Is it recommended for people with toddlers or cats?

"Depends on how fluffy the cat's tail is," Mr. Begg said. "People who have young children or cats with fluffy tails gravitate to models with more glass."

Across the hall, for those still addicted to wood-burning stoves, was the Bad Ash Fireplace Vacuum Cleaner, made by the Austin Baccus Company, which retails for about \$170.

We hate to be the ones to break it to you, we told the company's national sales manager, Chad Crockett, but this wood-burning stuff appears to be out.

He did not seem concerned.

"I would answer, with the rising cost of energy, I think you are going to see more pellet and wood fireplaces than gas inserts," Mr. Crockett said. "I



HOT POT A faux terra-cotta pot that houses a combination barbecue and herb garden, \$124, could be a space saver.



MICHELLE LITVIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SLEEK Nespresso's booth featured its single-serve coffee makers, including the 4.3-inch-wide Pixie, about \$250.



BURNING BRIGHT The Fuego bio firelight, about \$200, is fueled by bioethanol.

was just recently at a fireplace show. The number of wood-burning stoves outweighed the gas by four to one."

FOR BEST SUPPORTING ROLE IN A TRADE SHOW

"She's taking questions between 12:45 and 12:55," a trade show spokesperson told reporters who had gathered to see Susan Sarandon outside the exhibit of SodaStream, the home soda maker. "It can only be about environmental stuff. Nothing about her personal life and her recent marriage breakup and her new 29-year-old boyfriend."

In fact, as even a visitor from another planet would know, the person whom the 64-year-old actress is rumored to have been seeing is over 30, and Ms. Sarandon has denied that he is her boyfriend. And faced with a 6-foot-tall display of crushed cans and bottles, it is clear that what goes on between two little humans, even those with a 30-year-age difference, doesn't amount to a hill of beans.

"This case contains the beverage packages used by an average Chicago family in 5 years," a sign over the display read. "That equals 8,732 bottles and 1,925 cans totaling 10,657 packages. 71% of these will go to landfill. A single replaceable SodaStream bottle can replace all of that. And more."

When Ms. Sarandon spoke, she was the embodiment of cool mom, relaxed and down-to-earth in glasses, jeans and sneakers, with a casual mop of red hair.

"You all may be wondering what I am doing here," she began. "I was wondering at first, but I am concerned about the environment and a lot of garbage that comes out of my house. We recycle, but I see the canisters fill up, and when I heard about this, it seemed like such a fun, sexy way to address the can and bottle situation."

(Pepsi and Coca-Cola executives take note: It is no longer a can, it is a situation.)

Ms. Sarandon said she was shocked to learn that only 25 percent of cans and bottles are recyclable and talked about alternatives. (In other words, SodaStream.) Then she took a question about her favorite soda flavor.

"I'm kind of partial to the root beer," she said. "But I'm trying to figure out the citrusy ones, because I own a bar now. I'm trying to make the fizzy ones, add vodka."

Finally, she talked about her plans to franchise the bar and whether it might be coming to Chicago. Small wonder she is revered at trade shows.

SHPLO! SHAKA VROOM VROOM SWOOSH

Exciting as her presence was, Ms. Sarandon did not provide the only showbiz razzle-dazzle. Evolu-

Continued on Following Page