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velocity

ROADRUNNER
HIT THE STREETS
WITH OUR SUMMER
RUNNING SPECIAL

RESURRECTION
LONDON'S DOME
RISES AGAIN

WALKING AWAY

KIM CLIJSTERS ON HER
SURPRISE RETIREMENT

NEED TO KNOW



NECKS GENERATION ←

Made from high quality silk and available in a range of bright, eye-catching colours, Benita Kompanje's ties are the result of deciding that life really should be lived differently. Eager to escape the nine to five grind, she relocated to the Netherlands and set up Funkytie.com in 2006, deciding to sell ties rather than any other clothing because, she says, "they always fit, and knickers don't!" The ties are delivered to the home or office in their own smart wooden box in just a couple of days, and Kompanje plans to ensure that buying her ties becomes more than a fashion statement. She made ties for Comic Relief in March this year and is planning more charitable partnerships, so that "just wearing a tie can help to make a difference". Costs €39.95 (£28). www.funkytie.com

IN THE BANK

With their niggling charges and record profits banks have come to be seen as a necessary evil by many users, but we may soon be free from their financial clout. Zopa.com launched in the UK in 2005 as "a marketplace for social lending", allowing people to lend money to and borrow from one another, side-stepping the banks and their associated cost. Borrowers list loan details and a personal profile, and lenders bid on the loan. The lender with the lowest interest rates 'wins' eBay-style, and the idea is catching on fast, with trend spotting site Springwise.com recently reporting a surge in social lending across new territories. Boober.nl launched at the start of the year in the Netherlands and has plans to expand into Belgium and Germany, while Smava.de launched in Germany in March and is already building its network of lenders and borrowers. www.zopa.com, www.boober.nl, www.smava.de

BAG TO THE FUTURE ↓

Why carry a laptop bag when you could carry a 'soft electronic device'? This new bag from Eleksen hooks up directly to your Windows Vista laptop to display emails, appointments and other information on the bag's tough LCD screen, meaning you can access your info on the move without even opening your bag. How long before bags come with keyboards and we can get rid of the laptops altogether? Price TBC www.eleksen.com



The Steinway branded pen from Conway Stewart



WRITE STUFF ↑

Chewed, abused and shoved to the bottom of a bag, the free pens picked up at conferences and events are not usually considered works of art. Not, that is, unless they've been made by Conway Stewart. The English company has been making beautiful pens by hand since 1905 and has more recently supplied pens to corporate clients including the G8 Summit, the Oriental Express, Steinway and Rolls Royce. Prices vary widely depending on exact specifications, but if your company can foot the bill it too could enter the market for ultra high-end freebies. Pens cost from £328 to £12,000 (€480 to €18,000). www.conwaystewart.co.uk