



MARIE WANTIE



COURTESY OF ISA AUCCOUTURIER



COURTESY OF MOREBEST



COURTESY OF MOMA DESIGN STORE/TOKYO

CLASSY CAFFEINE HITS

"Oooh, I want one of those," squealed our resident fashion guru when she first saw Sfena's Aroma espresso maker—forgetting, apparently, that she didn't even drink coffee. But then, this is no ordinary percolator. Product designer Ichiro Iwasaki knows a thing or two about Italian esthetics, having spent part of the '90s working in Milan. That's where his Contrast tableware range—of which the Aroma is the most eye-catching member—first debuted in 2004, prior to going on sale in Japan late last year. Our only concern is that, with this beauty occupying pride of place in our kitchen, we're going to have to upgrade everything else in our apartment.

Sfena Aroma Espresso Maker, ¥10,500. Available from Spiral Market: 2F Spiral Bldg, 5-6-23 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-3498-5792. Open daily 11am-8pm. Nearest stn: Omotesando, exit B1. <http://store.spiral.co.jp>

COVER TO COVER

Novelty, thou knowest no bounds. We couldn't suppress a smile when we first heard about MoreBest's trick cases, which allow you to conceal your Sony PSP or Nintendo DS inside what looks, to the undiscerning eye, like an old-fashioned hardback book. You know, the things that your parents used to read. Oh, never mind... The B5-sized cases have enough space for the console, games, instruction manual and AC adaptor, plus all those other random wires that came with it. Take one with you to the next *Lord of the Rings* convention and your geek friends will be goblin-green with envy. Currently available in Nintendo DS Lite and PSP 2000/3000 editions, and there's a Nintendo DSi one in the works.

Nintendo DS/PSP Trick Cases, ¥2,480. Available from Amazon Japan. <http://morebest.jp/>

DISHY DISHES

The best gift ideas are invariably the ones that come after it's already too late. Eiji Miyaki's Flower Bowls are a case in point: these would've made the perfect Mother's Day present, were it not for the fact that we stumbled across them a month too late (and, for the record, had forgotten all about Mother's Day anyway). Made from glossy white porcelain, the three nested dishes can be used individually, or stacked together to create a neat petal effect. As dainty as they look, they're microwave and dishwasher-safe, too. Maybe next year, mum, maybe next year.

Flower Bowls, ¥7,500 for set. Available from MoMA Design Store: 3F Gyre, 5-10-1 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku. Tel: 03-5468-5801. Open daily 11am-8pm (closed on Gyre hols). Nearest stn: Meiji-jingumae, exit 4. www.momas-tore.jp

BOUND WITH LOVE

Regular readers of this column will know that we're suckers for good stationery, and Isa Aucouturier is truly a lady after our hearts. The Tokyo-based bookmaker creates stunning handmade notebooks and sketchbooks using traditional Japanese and French binding techniques. Her Calligraphy series notebooks are made from Japanese *washi* paper, while the Bradel has *washi* covers and Canson paper pages. Each one is a unique piece, and custom tomes can be made to order. (If you really want to get hands-on about it, Aucouturier also offers one-on-one bookbinding classes at her workshop.) So nice, we'd almost feel guilty about writing anything in them. Almost.

Isa Aucouturier books, approx ¥5,000-¥10,000 each. For details about ordering see www.reliure-isa-aucouturier.com