Archive for the "Products" category

Television?s Most Favored Seat

OZ · Saturday, February 16th, 2008

From the office of Dr. House to the interrogation room of the major case squad in Law and Order: Criminal Intent, and countless other television series, stands an iconic chair. Emeco's classic 1006 Navy Side Chair. In production since 1944, the chair continues to gain popularity. Apparently it's even a product of the twelve colonies, making a cameo in the reimagined Battlestar Galactica series.

"Legend has it that Wilton Dinges, who founded Emeco in 1944, actually tossed a 1006 Navy Chair out the window of a six-story building. The result? A few minor scratches. Emeco's 77-step patented construction process was invented to satisfy a military need for lightweight, corrosion-resistant equipment" for use on aircraft carriers, submarines, etc.

"In the late 1990s, the Navy Chair's iconic design began catching the attention of architects and designers, initiating a new era for Emeco. Beginning with soft, recycled aluminum, 1006 Navy seating goes through a series of hand-crafted processes, including heat treatment and anodizing, to render the chair diamond-hard and virtually indestructible. Though imitations of the 1006 exist far and wide, Emeco's Navy Chair is the only one to go through this rigorous production process. Three small welds on the back of the slats are left exposed to indicate that this often-copied seating is the real thing. Specially made stainless steel foot caps are covered with a clear plastic glide to prevent scratching floors or snagging carpets."

The chair has also been subject in a short documentary film capturing its creation. 77 Steps, a film by Eames Demetrios, you can view it at DASFilmFest.com, a site where Eames also offers fortnightly movies on Design, Architecture and Sustainability.

Design Now!

OZ · Thursday, February 7th, 2008

Last month art book publisher Taschen released Design Now!.

"Not only an in-depth exploration of contemporary design practice, this book is also a rallying call for a more sustainable approach to product design of every type, from lighting and furniture design to consumer electronic equipment, transportation, product architecture, and environmental design. Visually stunning and highly informative, Design Now! illustrates the latest work by 90 of the world's leading designers and design-led manufacturing companies

[Editor's Note: See appended for the complete list, an online exclusive], while also featuring in-their-own-words statements that give a unique insight into the nature of 3-dimensional design today. Additionally, the editors' introductory essay authoritatively outlines the main issues facing designers, manufacturers and consumers, and offers a perceptive vision for a better way forward that focuses on the need to reduce, reuse, and recycle."

A median of six pages are dedicated to each design practice, totaling five hundred and sixty pages in a hefty hardbound volume with text in English, German and French.

Featured Designers

Iro A. Ahokas
Airbus Design Team
Werner Aisslinger
Ron Arad
Dodo Arslan
Asko
Yves Béhar
Markus Benesch
Steven Blaess
Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec
F. & H. Campana
Claesson Koivisto Rune
Kenneth Cobonpue
Continuum
matali crasset
deepdesign
Designapkin
Stefan Diez
Ding3000
Tom Dixon
James Dyson
Ecocats
Ecolean
Ecosistema Urbano Arquitectos
Ecotricity
Elegant Embellishments
Eliumstudio
Joseph Forakis
Naoto Fukasawa
Christian Ghion
Stefano Giovannoni
Emiliano Godoy
Konstantin Grcic
GRO Design
Alfredo Häberli
Zaha Hadid
Jaime Hayon
Sam Hecht
Indio da Costa
Intelligent Energy
James Irvine

Toyo Ito

Jonathan Ive & Apple Design Team

Patrick Jouin

Suntae Kim

Nikola Knezevic

Lavernia Cienfuegos y Asociados

Leading Edge Design

Mathieu Lehanneur

Lievore Altherr Molina

LOT-EK

Ross Lovegrove

Lunar Design

Marine Current Turbines

Marmol Radziner Prefab

Jean-Marie Massaud

Fredrik Mattson

Ingo Maurer

Alberto Meda

Jasper Morrison

Brodie Neill

Nendo/Oki Sato

Marc Newson

NICE Car Company

Patrick Norguet

Office of Mobile Design

Ora-Ïto

Giovanni Pagnotta

Satyendra Pakhalè

PearsonLloyd

Philips Design

Phoenix Design

POC

Porsche Design Studio

Karim Rashid

Seymourpowell

Fumie Shibata

Jens Martin Skibsted

SMART DESIGN

Sony Design Team

Philippe Starck

Swe Des

Teague

Tesla Motors

Danny Venlet

Clems Weisshar & Reed Kram

Hannes Wettstein

Tokujin Yoshioka

Youmeus

Michael Young

Design within Reach Annual Book

OZ · Friday, January 25th, 2008

Earlier this month, the modern classics furniture shop Design within Reach released their Annual Book for 2008. It's even more compact than last year's edition, measuring a little over 6" x 7". A useful and practical reference book, the sharp layout and sizeable product photos are supplemented by the occasional spread offering a behind the scenes look into the furniture production process. 228 pages conclude with a thorough index.

While other furniture stores (Ligne Roset, B&B Italia) release impressive catalogs, this compact volume genuinely passes as a book rather than a traditional catalog and is printed on recycled paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

Limited copies remain available at some DWR Studios or contact DWR online.

B&O Magazine

OZ · Monday, October 15th, 2007

Bang & Olufsen, perhaps the most prominent designer brand of cutting-edge audio products, has just released their 2007/2008 Collection catalog. While the brilliant ground-breaking BeoCenter 9000 along with its variants are long gone, there's plenty to admire from the BeoCom 4 to EarSet2. Most noteworthy about the catalog, one half is the new 57 page B&O Magazine.

B&O Magazine features a variety of art and music articles that to some extent incorporate Bang & Olufsen products.

Sometimes their products are the centerpiece, as in **Theater of Dreams** where "Designer David Lewis tells Paul Clements where he got the inspiration for the BeoVision 7". Essentially an ad piece, it nonetheless imparts interesting product information. "Switch it on and the LCD screen turns and tilts toward the viewer (if it's on a motorized stand or wall bracket). Automatic Picture Control technology, means the picture on the screen adapts to the room's changing light conditions."

Other articles have a less direct relation to their product line. **Ways of Seeing** observes how "Music is a big factor in helping the illusion of the film come to life." Bruce LaBruce for example notes "Music works when it's at odds with the visuals. Stanley Kubrick was the master at using unexpected music that might not at first seem to support the scene - as when he used Singin' In The Rain to accompany a brutal beating in A Clockwork Orange (1971)."

For the article, **The Color of Sound**, B&O "asked three illustrators to listen to their favorite

track on Bang & Olufsen's BeoLab 5, then decorate the iconic speakers to reflect what their mind's eye saw." The resulting art adorning the futuristic speakers, transforms the item from a device with arguably limited aesthetic appeal to a new age artistic sculpture.

These short pieces are complemented by an equally abundant array of longer-form stories. In *Inner Vision*, Mike Burgess interviews chief designer David Lewis regarding the new Beo5 remote, its three year development and how its design evolved based on a "joint Bang & Olufsen and NASA research project into sensory deprivation." Cinematographer Barry Ackroyd talks "about how he plays with color and, in the process, our emotions" in the four page piece, *Shades of Emotion*, while music Producer Tony Visconti reminisces on *Bowie's Berlin Years*.

The highlight feature is *Paradise Found* by Cristóbal Martinez.*Paradise Found* offers an inside glimpse into the development of starchitect Frank Gehry's first hotel design, Marques de Riscal, located in the Spanish town of Elciego, 75 miles south of Bilbao. The hotel's bold "dancing" design would usually fail to integrate into the surrounding urban landscape, but this is defied with the use of "honey-colored Spanish sandstone specially sourced to harmonize with Elciego's monumental church". Such careful material usage extends to the "pink and gold-toned titanium - colors that symbolize the red and white wines produced by the Riscal Vineyards."

To receive a copy of the B&O Magazine & Catalog, join the community at bang-olufsen.com or contact your nearest Bang & Olufsen store.

Apple iPhone Review

OZ · Thursday, September 6th, 2007

The iPhone was back in the limelight yesterday when Apple announced a stunning $599 to $399 reduction for the 8GB model, effective immediately. The 4GB version will be phased out. Also unveiled, iPod Touch, an iPhone with complete browser and WiFi, stripped of its other communication abilities. Both will incorporate a highly sought after feature, the ability to purchase and download music directly on the device via the new iTunes Wi-Fi Music store.

Thanks to an unwavering attention to design, the iPhone manages a rare feat. It lives up to its hype.

Early adopters suffering activation issues during iPhone's debut weekend, were quick to verbalize their frustration, denouncing their iPhone's as bricks. While it certainly resembles a brick, subtle flourishes and materialistic choices coalesce to form an aesthetically appealing device, whose build far surpasses Apple's iPod models, primarily due to an avoidance of cheap plastics. A nicely balanced metallic build and optical quality glass melded with an abnormally centered battery, create an ideal heft and comfortable form factor. Its sheer minimalism and flush surfaces also serve to reduce visible wear and tear.

As with Apple's iPod's, the rechargeable battery is inaccessible and irremovable. Eventual battery replacement requires the phone be returned to Apple for an $79 fee. iPhone rental during this period costs another $29. Given its usage as a phone, many will find this unacceptable. Luckily this is a good battery that should last the average user two to four years. I've had to recharge the unit only once or twice a week and Apple anticipates a minimum of two hundred full recharge cycles before a replacement is required. Usage

indicates extensive video play and wireless drain power the fastest.

While Apple does note battery life on the package, they fail to do so adequately and at release time neglected to mention that iPhone + iTunes are not supported on 64-bit operating systems. iTunes is required for syncing and account registration with AT&T, so Windows XP & Vista 64-bit users need to downgrade.

The iPhone's truly remarkable qualities reside in its interactive capabilities. This starts with a virtual keyboard that heralds the future of interactivity. It's surprisingly functional & Apple fully capitalizes on its virtual state, providing customizations based on usage scenarios. When typing in a web address field, a *.com* button is conveniently included. Enter an email address into the **To:** or **Cc:** field and the **@** key is prioritized, while unusable characters vanish. Characters not even provided on standard QWERTY keyboards, from the English Pound to the Euro, are easily accessible. Navigation between text fields is seamless with the inclusion of next and previous buttons. Even drop-down navigation menu options, increasingly common on websites, are displayed via an enlarged rolodex style visualization.

Key presses are responsive and enlarge when pressed, accompanied by a mutable click sound. This implementation offers a suitablly sufficient counterpoint to tactile feedback. Granted it doesn't rival the speed of thumb typing on a Blackberry or Palm, though one gains greater flexibility with less wear and tear.

Typing mistakes are compensated by decent auto-correction and an ingenious magnifying glass for re-positioning the cursor in text fields. This is accomplished by briefly holding the finger in position until the magnifying glass appears and then sliding the cursor to the desired position. It's effective, though repeated attempts to achieve the desired outcome can become overly frequent.

A common concern of virtual keyboards is their tendency to obstruct content. This is pleasantly a rarity and usually not an issue, as page contents can be scrolled while the virtual keyboard remains active.

The days of viewing bastardized websites through mobile phones are over. iPhone succeeds beyond expectations in displaying web pages as intended. Not only is ArTect.net highly readable on an iPhone, SIGGRAPH event coverage was written entirely on the iPhone via ArTect.net's wordpress backend.

Ultra Mobile PC's, notably the OQO or Sony Vaio UX, offer equally brilliant screens and conventional browsers in a similar handheld form factor. However they're nowhere near as usable since browser interactivity is not tailored to such a small device. This is where Apple's customization delivers.

Load a website, the browser automatically zooms the content to fit horizontally on screen, removing the common slack space prevalant on many sites. Rotate the device when faced laterally and a built-in gyro spins the view from portrait to landscape automatically. It's a prime example of Apple's underlying design philosophy. Physical buttons only exist when truly required.

Webpage navigation is fluid and at times easier than conventional browser use. Slide your finger on the display to pan. A pinch motion or double tap effectively controls zooming.

The most distinctive feature of iPhone's Safari browser is how it handles multiple webpages. A framed pullback view of each webpage is shown and quickly browsed with a horizontal flick of a finger. It's a wonderfully intuitive system, replicated for weather reports. Tapping in the web address field reveals a convenient google search field and a Share button to send links via

email.

The greatest fault, flash based websites are not supported, though Apple is already working to remedy this. Javascript and dependent technologies such as AJAX are fully supported and have worked without fault. It's inevitable that some limitations will always persist due to the iPhone's inability to install browser plug-ins. Though to Apple's credit, they've made their best effort to incorporate any other vital web browsing tool, from PDF to Word and RSS readers. Quicktimes play fullscreen as if viewing a youtube clip.

The power to display webpages as intended and Apple's decision to back the more common, albeit slower EDGE technology over the 3G, raises speed concerns. Overall the EDGE technology is satisfactory when you're not in the proximity of an accessible Wi-Fi access point and it's noticeably faster than dial-up. One side effect, long pages that require significant scrolling can suffer a two or three second delay rate in displaying loaded segments, blogs are a particular culprit. The argument that filtered websites on competitor's smartphones remain faster to load is obvious, but ultimately it's bullshit. Many popular websites are already available in stripped down versions, here is Amazon's for example. With the iPhone, the choice is yours...

Email functionality is a strong facet of the iPhone. When a workstation's power supply began exhibiting problems, I ultimately emailed more on the iPhone versus webmail on my functioning PC. Multiple email accounts are supported with their own inbox, and after the 1.1 update, the iPhone checks all accounts automatically from any email menu.

Ironically in reviewing the iPhone, I have yet to comment on its use as a phone. The verdict, respectable. Reception has been surprisingly decent, given AT&T's notorious reputation. One exception, a peculiar lack of reception when talking with fellow iPhone users. Coincidental? I'd only be surmising.

Maximum speaking volume is merely adequate though and could use a boost [Editor's note: Apparently added with the 1.1 update]. Some phone features are flawless, notably address book transfer from Windows and the virtual dialing pad. However after making a call, the lack of immediate *keypad* accessibility is disconcerting. Instead alternative options, from *hold* to *speaker* and a *keypad* access button, present themselves. It's an anti-habitual action given the physical state of keypads on other phones. The real crowd pleaser is Visual Voicemail, it's listed on screen. The concept is so elegantly simple, one easily forgets that this is an innovative feature.

Apple's implementation of Google Maps on the iPhone deserves special mention. It successfully interprets highly generic terms that may stump other search engines. "Books Wall Street NY" or "Pizza" followed by a zip code will bring up all applicable listings with actionable phone numbers and webpages. Beware, it isn't infallible. While in San Diego I entered an address for a theater and found myself in a parking lot thinking I must have drunk too much the night before. Google Maps mainstay features, Car Directions and Satellite overlay make an appearance.

All this plus a built-in iPod. Even the soon to be defunct 4GB model can contain five feature length films with stunning quality. Be forewarned that the OS & reserved space consume half a gigabyte.

The iPhone is not for everyone. Apple has specifically targeted individuals and rejected corporate accounts. It's not enterprise ready, though capable of being so. I have heard directly from educators on college campuses and employees of large corporations experiencing the iPhone email connectivity doldrums. At launch the iPhone was limited to direct IMAP/SMTP

connections. Any email problems can be circumvented but may require a degree of technical savvy. The sole synchronization error between my workstation and the phone occurred with the outgoing email server settings from Outlook.

Hard core smart phone users may not be able to reconcile the lack of certain features or its offering of flexibility at the cost of speed. It's difficult to leverage software related criticisms though, as the underlying architecture is so well developed. The lack of a mobile version of iTunes was sorely missed and Apple answered. No instant messaging, yet its arrival is inevitable. Till then iPhone can utilize web based instant messaging solutions. Individuals have already started releasing web based games specifically designed for the iPhone. Battleship anyone?

Those hesitant to become early adopters shouldn't hold back due to a misguided belief that the technology & design is not sufficiently mature. I personally did not intend to purchase one until my grinning friend from Prague stuck an iPhone in my hands. It sold itself.

[Editor's Note: This article was originally published in three parts between the 6th and 11th of September.]

2007 IDEA Winners Revealed

OZ · Saturday, July 21st, 2007

The Industrial Designers Society of America's, 2007 International Design Excellence Awards were just announced. The jury selected 81 winners in 14 categories ranging from furniture and ecodesign to packaging and transportation.

The sponsor Business Week has published an interactive slideshow with information on each winner.

Products shown:

Kohler Steward Waterless Urinal. "Virtually splashless, inhibits odors and is easy to keep clean."

Tesla Roadster. Electric powered sports car. "It produces zero emissions and has a 250 mile range on a single charge as well as 0 to 60 mph in 4.0 seconds."

Midea 3KG Mini Washer. "...independent water circulation system frees it from the constraints of plumbing."

LightAir IonFlow 50. Stylish Air Purification.

Samsung SyncMaster 971P. Mobius LCD Monitor.

Naoto Fukasawa Monograph

OZ · Saturday, July 7th, 2007

Last week's look at the O2 Cocoon phone referenced Naoto Fukasawa's influence. One of Japan's most renowned product designers, he has redefined the designs of common items through careful observation of everyday use and imaginative implementation of simple geometry and clean lines. Perhaps more than any singular designer, the famous MUJI product line embodies his design mark. Jasper Morrison encapsulates it best, "Naoto's great skill is in combining humor, concept and function into a package, which seems so natural that it is accessible to us all immediately and without instructions."

Phaidon has just published his first monograph, Naoto Fukasawa, a sizeable cloth bound volume. Fukasawa offers concise insight into the principles behind each design with three hundred photos and illustrations. Further complemented by essay contributions from Jasper Morrison, Kenya Hara, Antony Gormley, Masato Sasaki and his former IDEO colleagues, Bill Moggridge and Tim Brown. Mr. Fukasawa is now Design Director at PlusMinusZero.

MotoDanica

OZ · Wednesday, July 4th, 2007

Walking on 33rd & 8th in NYC, the above image is hard to miss. It's plastered across an entire building facade. This new ad campaign for Motorola stars Formula One racecar driver Danica Patrick, highlighted in a dramatic Flash microsite designed by agency, DraftFCB and directed by Jason Koxvold. Invited to handle 3D Animation & Visual Effects duties for the microsite, I decided to collaborate with talented Prague based VFX studio, imagesFX, to deliver within the tight schedule.

In the Motodanica microsite, Danica Patrick offers insight into her indycar and a trifecta of Motorola bluetooth gear. You even have the chance to win "her other car", a Danica customized 2007 Honda Civic Si Sedan with the same slick blue & black stylings.

Easter Egg: To access a brief hidden sequence introduced by Danica Patrick and animated by imagesFX, type 'burn' and hit enter once the MotoDanica site is fully loaded.

Credits

Creative Director: Luke Bailey
ACD/Director: Jason Koxvold

Producer: John McAdorey
AD: Takuji Maeda, Colin McNamara
Writers: Tina Whelski, Seth DeCroce
Flash: Drew Ziegler
Account: Dafna Gabbay
PM: Stephen Carpi, David Kincaid
Sound: Joel Stearns
Production: Believe Media
VFX Producer/Digital Artist: Oliver Zeller
VFX by imagesFX
VFX Supervisor: Jan Rybar
Digital Artists: Marek Denko, Hynek Pakosta, Peter Sanitra

O2 Cocoon Musicphone

OZ · Friday, June 29th, 2007

As the hype around Apple's iPhone reaches a crescendo today, it seems only appropriate to look at a phone design that's completely different.

Designed by Syntes Studio, the beautiful seamless exterior Cocoon once opened, reveals a phone interior whose design channels Jacob Jensen. Heavily influenced by Naoto Fukasawa's Neon, its deceiving shell also hides an exterior LED display, yet the Cocoon takes a large evolutionary step imbuing character into its appealing form, and providing expanded functionality.

A cute microsite designed by Agency Republic is now live in anticipation of its August launch in the U.K. Further availability expected in Ireland and Germany.

> **A Unique Project Setup**
>
> The project was carried out in close collaboration with Streative Branding and O2. Streative is an Amsterdam based trend agency that works for O2 to bridge the gap between the consumer on the street and the overall design process. The bleeding edge design inspiration came straight from real

consumers via Streative's "Super Moles" - strategically placed vanguards, who embody influential brand insight.

Intrigued by Syntes' narrative and brand focused design approach, Streative and O2 approached Syntes to develop a design concept for O2's own branded music phones. Syntes Studio could then translate consumer insight and the O2 brand framework into the overall design platform of the project - "A Life Within".

The Cocoon Concept

A huge challenge in the creation of this phone was to translate the O2 brand into tangible and tactile experiences. The idea of the cocoon concept was to create a form factor that could seamlessly switch between three modes: music player, phone and alarm clock. To achieve this, a new kind of clamshell phone was invented with a seamless hinge-instead of the usual ?two halves joined together?. The seamlessness of the form combined with the story of a Life Within formed the foundation for the name "O2 Cocoon". The Life Within is conveyed by the clear contrast between inside and "outside", the de-bossed symbols and the hidden exterior LED-display that "speaks to the user" by displaying personal messages such as "good morning" or "incoming call". This kind of personal interaction and whimsical surprises epitomize how Syntes Studio strives to add soul and emotion to all their designs, thereby strengthening the relation between the product and the user.

User Experience is Paramount

The O2 Cocoon portrays several innovative design features that add to the user experience, such as the scroll-wheel in the hinge, the stereo speakers on both sides and a unique battery cover release. The climax of the user experience happens when the user docks the O2 Cocoon in its "Nest". At this point big clock digits automatically light up on the LED display and the device turns into a radio alarm clock.

Specifications

3G plus Quadband GSM/GPRS
Music player (MP3, AAC, AAC , WMA, WAV)
FM radio with RDS
Stereo headphones 3.5mm jack
Stereo Bluetooth
2GB internal flash memory
MicroSD card support (up to 2GB)
External music controls
2-megapixel camera with video recording, auto-flash and zoom
Video calling
Video streaming/download/playback (Synchs with Windows Media Player)
Docking nest supplied
External hidden LED display

Samsung Phone by Jasper Morrison

OZ · Wednesday, June 6th, 2007

On Monday, Samsung unveiled a new mobile phone designed by leading industrial designer, Jasper Morrison.

"Simple contours and clean lines comprise this compact bar design". It's aesthetically pleasing, yet doesn't quite pop like Morrison's kitchen appliance line for Rowenta. This seems more ordinary, until its camera functionality becomes apparent.

The phone features a 3.2 megapixel camera with auto focus, half-shutter and a panorama mode. Its personality comes to the forefront with a unique beanbag tripod accessory. Occasionally present in the toolkits of SLR photographers, the added stability and convenience this platform provides is a surprising addition to a mobile phone. Camera controls are isolated on one side. Where as cameras are usually treated as supplementary features on mobile phones, Samsung and Morrison have strived to create a stronger dual purpose combination.

Press Release

Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd., a global leader of mobile phones and telecommunication systems, and Jasper Morrison, a leading industrial designer, cooperated to bring an attractive mobile phone, SGH-E590. The Samsung E590 is a perfect solution for users who want to have all of the advanced multimedia features with eye-catching design in a hand.

Through the partnership with Jasper Morrison, well known for his talents in various areas of industrial design, the E590 is designed to touch customer?s emotion. The stylish E590 comes in simple contours and clean lines which comprise this compact bar design. True to Jasper Morrison?s witty sense, the mobile phone provides dual face; one side features phone keypad and LCD screen while the other side is outfitted with dedicated camera functions.

With the sleek design, E590 is equipped with a powerful camera functions even other digital cameras would envy the capabilities as it allows the users to enjoy 3.2 Megapixel camera with Auto Focus and Half-shutter. Panorama shot feature offers intuitive camera UI which displays easy to use icons. Moreover, E590 comes with the Bean bag, a unique tripod which is a truly useful and portable accessory made of a special rubberized material for maximum flexibility and grip.

"The SGH-E590 is a very pragmatic work of art that reflects the synergy between Samsung and Jasper Morrison. We have teamed up to satisfy our users with high-performance technology and emotional design." says Geesung Choi, President of Samsung?s Telecommunication Network

business. He added, "Through the partnership with renowned designers, Samsung will strengthen our design power to bring design excellence to our customers."

The Samsung E590 is available in two colors, noble black and snow silver, and will be launched in Europe, China and South East Asia in June.

SGH-E590 Specification

Standard
GPRS Class 10 / EDGE / Tri-Band (900/1800/1900)
Camera 3.0 Megapixel Auto focus Camera with half shutter
Intuitive Camera UI / Panorama shot
Display
262144 Color TFT Screen (220x220 pixels. 1.79")
Features
Music player (MP3/AAC/AAC+/e-AAC+/wma)
Bluetooth 2.0/ USB 2.0
Voice streaming & Messaging / Video recording
90 MB / External Memory Slot (MicroSD)
Size
94x42x13.5mm
Weight
66g