

| WEB WATCH |

This month's favourite websites

Miniobjectsofdesire.com.

The brainchild of husband-and-wife team Stephen and Louisa Quiddington, miniobjectsofdesire.com, or Mood, was created for parents who want to inspire a love of great design in their children. Choose from a carefully curated collection of children's designer furniture, toys and accessories, be it covetable and iconic mid-century classics or the best in contemporary style, such as the Memory balloon lights by Boris Klimek, above, from £125 each. Each piece is functional and playful, ideal for a modern nursery or cutting-edge bedroom.

Thestylishdogcompany.com.

We picked up the scent of this specialist website, with its beautiful dog beds, bowls and other accessories for discerning owners of canines, a few years ago, but now it has us pricking up our ears again with news that founder Susan Troy has used the company logo to create a signature fabric in four elegant, muted shades. The design features on a new range of pet and home accessories, including the luxury bed (below), £119, which can be ordered via the brand-new website, as well as at Susan's first shop, which has just opened in Guildford.

**Theoakandropecompany.co.uk.**

The Oak and Rope Company's idea of hand carving and personalising solid oak accessories, from toast and wine racks to benches and swings, has won fans as diverse as George Clooney and members of the Royal Family. They have "gift idea" written all over them and each piece can be engraved with the wording of your choice. Delivery time is 10 to 14 days and prices start from £19 for a phone stand.



| FOCUS ON |

MANGLE & WRINGER

Vanessa Willes's range of traditional cleaning products caught our attention with its beautiful packaging and non-toxic ingredients

What was the inspiration behind the range?

"It's more a question of who than what. I originally trained in architecture and interior design, but two things happened a few years ago to change the course of events. First, I was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome or ME and, secondly, I met a wonderful woman called Bette Smith who helped me around the house as I recovered. Her more old-fashioned approach was to offer practical and gentle physical therapy, which included teaching me how to make cold processed soap like her mother. What I learned, however, was more than just soap making; it was the value of slowing down and taking the time to appreciate the simple things in life. Bette told me about the cleaning products she had made using her soap and how safe and effective they were, so when I inherited her recipe books, I knew they were too good not to share."

What does the range include?

"We sell Spray and Go, Good for Glass, Bathroom Balm, Kitchen Cleanser, Pure Laundry Powder and a Natural Bleach, all of which are biodegradable, non toxic and fragrance free. In spring, we will be launching six more of Bette's wonderful remedies including a laundry bar made to her original recipe. We are also researching natural fragrances and essential oils for a scented range later this year."

How are the products made?

"They're all made from natural, food-based ingredients. At the heart of each one is Bette's traditional soap made from coconut oil. To this we add bicarbonate of soda, citric acid, calcium carbonate, glycerine, acetic acid and

lemon oil. We believe that everyone has a right to know exactly what they are buying, so all the ingredients are clearly listed on the label."

Are they just as effective as standard cleaning products?

"They are, partly because traditional soap is so good at cutting through grease and grime. They have natural antibacterial qualities in the acetic acid and lemon oil to banish harmful germs. All Mangle & Wringer products have a shelf life of between one and two years."

Can you tell us more about Bette's ethos?

"She grew up in Gloucestershire after the Great War. Her mother taught her the value of hard work, thrift and practicality and she took this with her when she went into service in London at the age of 14 in 1934. Her work ethic and common sense carried her through the Second World War and back to Gloucestershire, where she not only ran a laundry, but brought up a family and 'kept house' for others. She believed 'our health is our greatest wealth' and she was forward thinking in her concern about the chemicals we bring into our homes. She had a passion for the countryside and was environmentally aware before her time."

Did she pass on any other cleaning tips?

"I have a large, battered cardboard box full of her handwritten recipes, diaries and practical know-how, which offer an insight into the life of an extraordinary woman. Bette's tips can be found on our website as well as a free e-book of recipes to download."

Visit mangleandwringer.co.uk. ►