

January 16, 2011

Tykho radio in yellow, \$149 from Safari Living

Wategos beach towel, \$59.95 from SunnyLIFE

Blue party cup, \$2.95 from SunnyLIFE

Fink water jug in satin pink, \$339 from Make Designed Objects

Pinto beach towel in coral, \$59.95 from Sheridan

LUXE FOR LESS

Hugo beach towel, \$297 from Safari Living

Canasta side table, \$1140 from Space

Beaches and Australia go hand in hand like turkey and cranberry sauce; you could have one without the other but they just wouldn't be the same. With a coast stretching more than a staggering 31,000 kilometres and containing about 11,000 beaches, it's no wonder the majority of the population lives near the coast. So make a picnic and grab your sunscreen because it's time to hit the beach.

Besides the usual fare of bathers, thongs, sunnies and a hat, other seaside essentials include beach towels, parasols, picnic ware and games. Nautical-style beach accessories have long been popular and it's a trend that's here to stay, from the traditional blue-and-white striped beach towels to the contemporary, multi-coloured, Missoni versions. When it comes to hard-wearing picnic ware for outdoor dining, melamine is king, coming in a smorgasbord of colours, styles and products. When you tire of lazing around in the sun, why not listen to your splash-resistant radio from Safari Living, or play a spot of beach cricket thanks to SunnyLIFE — we could do with the practice.

A newcomer to the parasol design world, Basil Bangs' products include the brightly coloured, '80s influenced Le Pixel parasol. Stylish and practical, it has exclusive fabrics with the highest-grade UV protection to keep you cool all summer long.

STOCKISTS
Basil Bangs (02) 421 302 342, basilbangs.com.au
Globewest 9518 1600, globewest.com.au
Ikea 8416 5000, ikea.com.au
Make Designed Objects 9347 4225, made Designed Objects.com
Market Import 9500 0764, marketimport.com
Safari Living 9510 4500, safariliving.com
Sheridan 1800 625 516, sheridan.com.au
Space 9426 3000, www.spacefurniture.com.au
SunnyLIFE 9421 6325, sunnylife.com.au

TECHKNOW

Tested by James Smith



DAB + RADIOS PINELL SUPERSOUND II rrp \$399

When DAB radios first appeared on these shores, they were compromised by prohibitive pricing, a situation that's improved considerably in the past 18 months as they have become more widely available and more manufacturers have thrown their hats into the ring. Adding theirs to the mix are Norwegians Pinell, and what a fine affair it is. The Supersound II is a sleek-looking number, available in black or white and boasting DAB and internet radio that's won rave reviews in Europe. It's easy to see why: sound from its single speaker is warm and clean, even when pushed to its limit. Connecting to the world's 20,000 internet radio stations wirelessly or otherwise is effortless and it will hook up to your stereo, PC and iPod too.

ROBERTS RADIO ECOLOGIC 4 rrp \$299

In this fledgling market, Roberts are old hands to Pinell's Johnny-come-latelies, with the Brits already having a number of models available here and due to welcome more in the coming months. The Ecologic 4's big selling point is its eco-warrior cred: when plugged into the mains it operates on reduced power, and it also promises a whopping 150 hours' battery life. Given the latter is achieved with six D-sized batteries, you could also use it for muscle toning. It switches instantly between stations and comes with a big, bold LCD display through which you can store up to 20 favourites. The bass and treble controls are a neat touch too, although they can't do much to disguise somewhat feeble audio.

techknowmail@gmail.com

VERDICT
And the winner is... Green credentials aside, the Ecologic suffers in comparison to the Supersound II — and other Roberts models — when it comes to performance. On the other hand, Pinell's arrival Down Under is a stylish one, with full-bodied sound in which even audiophiles will find pleasure.

CHECK THIS OUT

Among the tablets, paper-thin TVs and smartphones on display at the 2011 Consumer Electronics Show, Sony's Headman stood out for ingenuity. Whether the prototype becomes reality is unclear, but it's intriguing: a visor with dual screens that allow users to view 3D video on the go.