

Home-product heaven

These items drew attention at this year's International Builders' Show

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ORLANDO, Fla. (MarketWatch) -- Those who walked the exhibit halls at the International Builders' Show in Orlando last week had the opportunity to glimpse a plethora of the latest in home products, enough glitzy displays to make owners of even the most modern houses envious.

Advanced technology and everyday practicality played a role in many an eye-catching item at the show. Below are 10 that caught our attention:

1. A swipe of a finger opens the Kwikset biometric scanning deadbolt, displayed at the show. The fingerprints of 50 users can be stored in the device that operates on four double-A batteries and will sell for about \$200. Select Home Depot stores in New York, Orlando and San Diego are selling them already; the lock will be available at home retailers nationwide in June. <http://www.kwikset.com/>
2. TurboChef displayed a Speedcook oven that will cook a 12-pound turkey in 42 minutes instead of four hours, and will shave an hour off the time it takes to bake an apple-cranberry pie. In addition to its speedy performance, the oven's brightly colored doors in hues including red, orange and blue set it apart in a sea of stainless steel appliances. The 30-inch oven has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$7,495. <http://www.turbochef.com/residential/default.aspx>
3. How about an oven that can take instructions over the Internet? The Connect IO Intelligent Oven from TMIO is so smart it can keep your roast cool all morning and then cook it to perfection once you tell it to start from work or wherever. It has "cook now" or "cook later" modes, and also operates as a fast-cooking convection oven. Not sure it's behaving while you're away? The oven will e-mail you once it starts heating your dinner, telling you what time to be home. <http://www.tmio.com/company/pr20061030.shtml>
4. Forget about a regular shower head -- Kohler is selling a shower experience. The DTV Custom Showering Experience allows homeowners to personalize their shower through a panel that resembles an iPod, mounted on the bathroom wall. Homeowners can angle numerous shower heads and adjust the temperature to their liking, and then save the scheme for future showers. The digital interface for the shower system starts at about \$1,039; the six-port thermostatic valve starts at about \$1,102. <http://www.us.kohler.com/performance/showers/dtv.jsp?section=2&nsection=2&nsubsection=3&category=11&nitem=cat11>
5. Two new clothes washers from Amana feature antimicrobial component protection that resists mold, mildew and odor-causing bacteria. The Enlighten Series features a front-load washer,

- and became available in January, while the Traditional Series, featuring a top-load washer, became available in December. The estimated retail price for the Traditional washers range from \$399 to \$499; an Enlighten washing machine retails at \$799. In late July, the company will begin selling its antimicrobial dishwasher; expect other kitchen products with the feature in the future. <http://www.amana.com/amana/jsp/homepage.do>
6. Also prevalent at the show: residential elevators. A number of companies displayed their elevators at the show, including ThyssenKrupp Access. Prices on home elevators vary by specifications including the number of floors they serve, but according to ThyssenKrupp's Web site, its Lev model starts at about \$15,000. <http://www.tkaccess.com/>
 7. For those who have trouble coordinating their interior decorating, Design House of Mequon, Wis., has created a series of coordinated design packages that bring together matched lighting, ceiling fans, locksets, door hardware, bath accessories and faucets. For a contemporary look, for instance, select the Chablis set and let your contractor do the rest. <http://www.wholehouse.com/>
 8. And for those who have trouble coordinating their burgeoning multimedia devices, Best Buy has teamed up with Lifeware to provide a Connected Home package that ties in many of your most commonly used devices. The package, which retails for \$15,000 and is being marketed to builders who would install it in new or remodeled homes, includes a media server, flat-panel HDTV, software, wireless access, digital thermostats and heating controls, surveillance camera and lighting dimmers and switches. Once hooked up, you can control the home's systems from the TV screens. A great feature: You can watch a program in the living room, put it on pause when you head to sleep and return to the exact spot in the program once you've brushed your teeth and put on your pajamas and hopped into bed. www.BBFB.com/connectedlife.
 9. It beats singing in the shower. MTI Whirlpools offers its Antigua brand of freestanding tubs that includes air bath, chromatherapy and Stereo H2O, "an invisible audio system that delivers full-bodied sound through the tub." There is also the Neptuner from Quebec-based Neptune, which works much the same way in sending audio waves through the shell of the bathtub, turning the whole thing into one big surround-sound speaker. <http://www.mtiwhirlpools.com/>
<http://www.bainsneptune.com/english/index.html>
 10. Outdoor living spaces are hugely popular. And it has moved way beyond adding an outdoor cook station or fire pit. Today you can buy a complete outdoor great room from Fire Stone Home Products. The room is capped by an arched trellis or set off with columns and can include a fireplace, lighting, outdoor kitchen and furniture settings for dining or conversation. http://www.firestonehp.com/great_room.html



