

Kitchen Gadgets for Every Occasion

BY KATHARINE FISHER BRITTON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SHERMAN

Suzanne Cote, media relations coordinator for King Arthur Flour in Norwich, Vt., loves her Aerolatte milk frother. She has two; one for home and one for the office. “It’s useful,” she says, “and doesn’t take up a lot of real estate.” Important these days, considering the vast number of useful gadgets there are for your kitchen. Some of King Arthur’s top sellers include an acrylic pizza wheel (won’t scratch nonstick surfaces); kid-friendly cake and cookie decorating sets; and the Thermapen, a digital thermometer that is “the ultimate in speed” (70 to 300 degrees Fahrenheit in five seconds). “You can even use it to take your own temperature in a pinch,” notes Cote. CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

- 1 sodastream Home Soda Maker** ■ \$79.95
- 2 prepara herb-savor** ■ \$22.95
- 3 Zak! Designs stacking mixing bowls** ■ \$10.95-19.95
- 4 Microplane zester/grater** ■ \$15.95
- 5 Microplane ultimate citrus tool** ■ \$12.95
- 6 chef'n palmpeeler palm held vegetable peeler** ■ \$5.95

*Products courtesy of
Main Street Kitchens
in Hanover, N.H.*



Fun Stuff

If you haven't updated your kitchen gadgets lately, you're in for a treat. Apple corers now let you dial-a-slice: choose eight for snacking or 16 for pie making. Board & Basket in West Lebanon, N.H., sells the Cuisipro apple corer that features an easy release lever for discharging core and seeds. If time is an issue, pick up the apple peeler/corer/slicer, also a best seller at King Arthur Flour; it promises to do all that in under 10 seconds. Shoppers at Aubergine in Woodstock, Vt., love the Garlic Twist, "a full-function manual kitchen tool" that skins, minces and collects.

No matter what fruit or vegetable you're addressing, there's a gadget specifically designed to get it recipe ready. The Cherry Chomper — a very popular item at Main Street Kitchens in Hanover, N.H. — is useful and darling. It looks a little like SpongeBob SquarePants, if SpongeBob was a cherry. If strawberries are your intended target, why not invest in a Chef'n Strawberry Slicester and a Strawberry Stem-gem. Banana cream pie on your menu? Pick up a Hutzler banana slicer, cleverly shaped like a banana. A great recent invention — and another hot seller at Main Street Kitchens — is individual, vegetable-

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shaped storage units for your fruits and veggies. Gadgets have become both more food specific and more complicated: some egg slicers now come with instructions.

Like using fresh herbs but can't keep them fresh in your fridge? Consider the Herb Savor from Prepara that promises to prolong the life of your herbs for up to three weeks. A pair of Herb Snips — with their five, sharp, 3-inch blades — will let you snip those herbs quickly and neatly. And, by all means, pick up a pair of onion goggles! Everyone swears by them. If your recipe calls for lemon zest, ground nutmeg, grated chocolate or shredded cheese or potato, fear not, there's a Microplane grater designed specifically for your grating needs.

Ever wonder why other peoples' baked

goods look and taste better than yours? Perhaps they stopped by King Arthur Flour and picked up an Escali, a professional-style digital scale to weigh their ingredients; seven measuring spoons, designed to fit into those narrow-necked spice jars; and their exclusive dough whisk, which has an ergonomic grip and flow-through blades to whip even the stiffest dough into shape. No matter what you're set on cooking, there's a pan for you: mini-muffins, heart-shaped muffins, extra-large muffins or just muffin tops. King Arthur has them all, as well as pans for brioche, monkey bread, scones, donuts, buns, coffee cake, quick breads, hamburger buns, popovers and biscotti — and the mixes to fill them.

Trends

There are several recent trends in kitchen gadgets and appliances, according to Mary and Marv Schouten, owners of Main Street Kitchens. One is toward color. Those Microplane graters and zesters come in yellow, orange, red and lime green.

Another trend is toward comfort. Remember the vegetable peeler your mother had? It was probably metal and had a little doo-hicky on the end of the handle for French-cutting green beans. Today's vegetable peelers are not your mother's. They fit comfortably in your hand (the Oxo vegetable peeler is a perennial bestseller at Main Street Kitchens) and are boldly colored. The Perfect Peeler by Kyocera features a ceramic blade and is three peelers in one: it rotates to vertical, horizontal and 45-degree positions to fit small, large, left and right hands. Mina Roberts, owner of Aubergine in Woodstock, Vt., loves her colorful Palm Peeler, with its ring that slips over a finger to nestle the peeler portion snugly in the palm. Also in the Palm family are a zester and a brush. Roberts sells a lot of their Kuhn Rikon nonstick paring knives, which also come in a multitude of shades. All this color is just fine with Claire Nelson, who owns Board & Basket with her husband, Drew. One customer described their store as "eye candy," it looked so festive.

A third trend, according to the Schoutens, is toward sustainability and ecofriendliness. Cutting boards and drawer organizers are now made from bamboo (Totally Bamboo) or recycled flax (Architec), both of which can be found at Main Street Kitchens. Board & Basket offers a Typhoon food prep board made from durable beech from sustainably managed forests. A current bestseller at both stores is the Fountain Jet Home Soda Maker from sodastream. You can make your favorite carbonated beverages for a fraction of the cost.

Better yet, the cylinders are rechargeable, so no empty cans or plastic bottles go into the landfill. The Zak! Designs mixing bowls, available at both stores, make great gifts. They're festive and made from recycled melamine.

The ecofriendly trend also extends to cookware, which now happily comes with nonstick cooking surfaces that are also nontoxic. The Cuisinart nonstick cookware creates its nonstick surface using ceramic versus petroleum-based material to conserve existing oil supplies. They are PTFE and PFOA-free, according to the label. People who like to cook are quite particular about their cookware. Aubergine's Roberts favors Swiss Diamond pans with their micro-diamond encrusted surface. Schouten likes her All-clad. "You can't use cheap cookware and produce something good," she states. "And it goes the distance."

Quality cookware is also important to Claire Nelson, who will not be parted from her Le Creuset. Board & Basket sells a full line. "The key to good cooking," explains Drew Nelson, "is to use a metal with good heat dispersion, like copper, combined with even heat distribution: a pan that won't warp. You want a good under-

surface, for 100 percent contact, so the pan sits on the stove."

The Nelsons predict a trend toward induction cooking, which promises to be "the fastest, safest, most efficient cooking experience available." It's safer; because it uses magnets to cook there's no heat. Nelson demonstrates by placing a dishtowel between the pot in which he's boiling water and the cooking surface. The water boils within minutes, yet both towel and cooking surface remain cool. The towel makes clean up after cooking bacon a breeze, he reports.

Not only are the manufacturers getting more ecoconscious, customers are, too. All the store owners report a brisk business in "carrying systems": reusable bags, which come in all shapes, sizes, colors and materials. Schouten reports a dramatic decrease in the number of shopping bags they hand out. Now that's progress.

Why this explosion in kitchen gadgets? Roberts says it's because "people are spending more time in the kitchen and eating out less. They want to have the experience and not have it take too long."

"The kitchen was where it was at in my family," she adds. "Everything happens in the kitchen." ■



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