

**High glam** The Elica Collection Star Cookerhood by Integrated Appliance Group looks like a crystal lightshade but is in fact a rangehood and extractor fan.



**Change of direction** Classeque Leisure Products' tandem sunlounger can be used side by side or, as seen here, facing each other. Photo: Brook Perks

## Best in show

From liquid floor tiles to energy-saving devices, designEX 2008 delivered. **KRISTIE LAU** reports.

A standard cooker hood doubles as a shiny disco ball while squidgy liquid patterns shift around on solid floor tiles. These are just some of the award-winning innovations to emerge from this year's designEX. The two-day forum, which celebrated its 20th anniversary this year at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, is an annual showcase of what's hot in design.

Revolutionary products from a range of design fields are introduced to the public, including the latest in contemporary furniture and homewares. Among the most anticipated elements of designEX are the best new product awards. Nine products are presented in nine categories, judged on criteria such as product excellence, functionality, durability and aesthetics – and this year's entries didn't fail to deliver.

### Wallpaper

The Stevie English wallpaper range, heavily influenced by Britain's rock'n'roll culture of the 1960s and 1970s, is a modern collection produced by Sydney design company Afficionados of the Nod. The pattern, which picked up the award for best fabric, reworks the Union Jack symbol



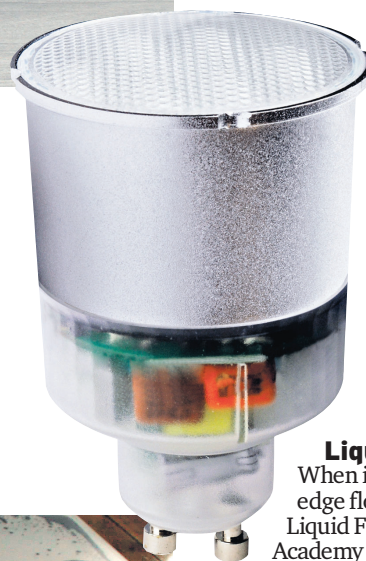
**Trick of the tiles** Liquid Floor Tiles by Academy Tiles are non-slip and use two non-toxic, coloured substances and a faintly flexible top. Photo: Jacky Ghossein

as well as other iconic images. A palette of dark, bold tones is contrasted with strong whites and neutrals. Jagged edges are splashed alongside faded ones and the end result is an eye-catching pastiche of striking, intricate motifs. The print is

screened onto silk sheets and hand-coated with high wet-strength gloss so that its finish remains durable. The range is available from Afficionados of the Nod's Surry Hills showroom and priced at \$320 per 10.5-metre roll. See [www.afficionados.com.au](http://www.afficionados.com.au).



**Sixties feel** Stevie English wallpaper produced by Sydney design company Afficionados of the Nod.



### Light saver

Megaman Lighting's Linear Dimmable GU10 Reflector 11W Lamp.

tool, it can basically be used in any room that requires air extraction. Creators say that in a commercial sense, the product is ideal for smoking areas. It's priced at \$3998. For more information, see [www.iagappliances.com.au](http://www.iagappliances.com.au).

### Sunlounger

A brightly coloured, multifunctional tandem sunlounger has taken top honours in the category for best furniture product. The large outdoor seat, produced by Classeque Leisure Products, can be separated to seat people either parallel or facing each other. And the typical swinging levers you usually find on sunloungers have been replaced by a much more user-friendly, fully adjustable backrest that locks into place without any fiddly external bits. Side tables run the entire length of the sunlounger and mesh canvas has been hand-welded together for a completely seamless look. Prices range from \$7899 to \$8999 and there are up to 14 colour schemes to choose from. See [www.classique.net.au](http://www.classique.net.au).

### Dim and dimmer

In the world of lighting, it is virtually impossible to find dimmable compact fluorescent lamps. Megaman Lighting's Linear Dimmable GU10 Reflector 11W Lamp, which is compatible with almost any conventional dimmer switch, has won best product in lighting technology. Megaman says the product gives "smoother dimming than other competitors" and due to its high operating frequency, it also avoids dreaded flickering effects. It comes in six shapes, including candle lamps (which work with decorative fittings such as chandeliers) and tubular lamps (which work with general downlights and lampshades). Prices start from about \$36 each. See [www.megaman.cc](http://www.megaman.cc).

### Liquid floor

When it comes to cutting-edge flooring, the new Liquid Floor Tiles range by Academy Tiles undoubtedly takes the cake – and the top gong. Each amazing tile has been made using two non-toxic, coloured liquids and, with applied pressure, they appear to ooze beneath you, creating an optical illusion with every step. A non-slip, scratch-resistant glass surface has been put on the tiles and Academy says each has high bending strength. They've been designed primarily for commercial use as the tiles can be personalised with corporate logos or other images of a buyer's choice. There are 13 different colour schemes to choose from and a range of different sizes. The tiles come in three sizes – 30x30cm, 50x50cm and 80x80cm – and are priced from about \$290 per tile. See [www.academytiles.com.au](http://www.academytiles.com.au).

### Extractor fan

A spherical cluster of sparkling crystals won this year's award for best kitchen appliance. The glamorous Elica Collection Star Cookerhood by Integrated Appliance Group looks nothing like an air duct, but that's exactly what it is. The cooker hood allows constant air flow of up to 400 cubic metres an hour, so while it serves as a capable kitchen