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INDUSTRY DECISION MAKERS
CH 10, 2008 • \$10
MAG.COM

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Off-Pricer Getting It O

The big off-price chains are increasing their market share and becoming more attractive to cash-starved suppliers. In Foc

Breaking Down Some New Ideas

By Andrea Lillo

NEW YORK—For all the consumers that see a plastic bag tumbling down the street and wonder how long it will be before it degrades, a number of biodegradable products are making their way to market, offering an alternative to products that will last long after the customer has tossed it away.

In a growing green industry, these products target consumers who don't want to add to landfills, and yet still want style and the same level of performance for the products in their home.

In the past, the environmental movement "has a reputation of appealing to charity or self-sacrifice," with the message to spend more money on green products to benefit the environment, said Andy Van Meter, president of Design Ideas. But with the company's new line, EcoGen, it is "bringing to market a product that is comparable to similar ones in the store."

EcoGen is made of PHBV, a material that has been in development for decades but only made commercially viable within the past two years, he said, and his company is the first to use it for home products. EcoGen launched as a bath accessories group in January, and at the International Home & Housewares Show another category will debut, for either the kitchen or home office, he said.

And for those concerned about it degrading while on the job, that's not the case, he said. To biodegrade, it has to be composted in an "extremely micro-organism environment," with high heat. But in everyday usage, it performs the same as other injection-molded plastics, such as polystyrene or polypropylene, and looks the same, too. And the reaction has been very posi-

Right: The EcoGen line from Design Ideas will soon incorporate either kitchen or home office items.

Below: Casabella's new dish drainer is one of several items from the company made from bioplastic, which is derived from corn starch.



At market, Casabella will debut its line of kitchen organizers made from biodegradable and compostable products derived from corn starch, and which is certified for compostability. The new items will include a dish drainer, a cutlery tray and a sponge holder.



Typhoon will show a line of mills made from a biodegradable material called PLA. Available in five colors, the mills will be part of its new line for Pantone, called Pantone Universe by Typhoon.

At Umbra, its Garbino trash can is now made of recycled materials, and the

majority of its cans are degradable. The Garbini line, for example, has been revamped into corn plastic.

With so much attention given to plastic grocery bags, simplehuman is addressing the other plastic bags in people's lives: trash bags. Its new biodegradable can liner uses an additive technology that will be good in the original packaging for more than 18 months, but will degrade in direct sunlight. As durable as its regular can liners, the biodegradable ones are available in white or a clear blue tint to meet municipal recycling guidelines, and are available in three and four sizes, respectively. ■

DKB to H Cole & M Zyliss at

IRVINE, Calif.—After Jan. 1 from Zyliss U hold USA Corp., a Diethelm Keller E its new name as w brands—Zyliss and upcoming Internat wares Show.

"It's our mission business," said Sanj ecutive officer of the "it gives us a larger which have been co over the last few year

Cole & Mason, a Br its mills that the con 2006, will have its ful ket at the show, he sa



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of sust wood, produ

include items m acrylics and plastics less steel and soft t as combinations of t hand-operated electr

At Zyliss, offering help them eat a heal with the salad spin at the show, along w boards: "All the prod to incorporate a hea huri added.

Colors in the line Choudhuri said. "If are actually two h light." These two-to the introductions for he added.

The company doe tions in the future, b we have the right sy Cole & Mason and Z fect synergy between addition, other bran pany may migrate t well. But "we have t make sure each lev

Latin Flavor: Lifetime to Debut Vasconia Line

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"And it's a generational thing—the grandmother, mother and daughter all shop together."

The Vasconia packaging is also bilingual, as 60 percent of Hispanics prefer both English and Spanish on the packaging.

And though there are so many cultures included in the Hispanic group, the line targets Mexicans—which make up 70 percent of the Hispanics in America, Spitz said—and Caribbean groups such as Puerto Ricans and Cubans, which are about another 10

With the new collection, Lifetime is offering specialty cookware and accessories familiar to the Hispanic household, such as comals, used to make tortillas, and calderos. The majority of the cookware is aluminum, which is traditional for this market, in gauges ranging from 1.4 to 2.0. Fry pans are one of the key items, along with steamers, which are used to make tamales and are offered up to 32 quarts in Lifetime's line. Other cookware items include cast iron, including a fajita pan along with the comal, and cast aluminum, such as a double

grill. Calderos will range from 1.6 to 11.5 quart sizes.

In addition, each piece will have brand identity, carrying a "V" with a flame. "It all relates to each other," Spitz said.

Ranging from \$3 to \$39.99, the cutlery group will have the basics, Spitz said, including the traditional slicer, chef's knife and santoku, as well as citrus and avocado knives.

Gadgets will include the basics as well as "some unique pieces," such as a bean masher and corn stripper, along with the traditional can opener and