

# [material world]

Hans Blix, monkey business, bad breath



How to buy...

## AN EXOTIC PET

Had enough of passé pets? Fear not, more exotic critters abound. (Actually, do fear a little bit...)

### the gadgeteer

This month's most peculiar new hi-tech gadget

With the world the way it is, nuclear winter could be with us in time for spring. But suppose you don't notice the mushroom cloud, the widespread panic or the premature baldness?

Nukalert lets you avoid the embarrassment of booking a restaurant for the day after you die. It tells you not only how much radiation is in the air, but also how long you've got left.

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a budding

Hans Blix and have \$160 (£85) to waste, check out [www.nukalert.com](http://www.nukalert.com) and see whether you can get one through customs.



PHOTOGRAPHY KOBAL ILLUSTRATION HARRY MALT

## 1 SCALY PETS

A python costs around £150, but can be on the deadly side. A boa constrictor (from £60) is a safer option – you'll need a supply of frozen mice (£1 a week). Lizards are more fun, though; a bearded dragon (£75 plus) eats live locusts (£10 a week).

## 2 TALKING PETS

The most talkative parrots, such as the African Grey, cost around £650. That sounds steep until you consider that they can live to 80 (equivalent to 30,000 fairground goldfish). Parrots are sociable and need lots of attention – if you're short of time, consider a less needy cockatoo (£200 plus).

## 3 FURRY PETS

If you like your pets hairy, try a sugar glider (£125). They look like flying squirrels, boast monkey-like intelligence, and eat an inexpensive mix of fruit and insects. They're nocturnal, too – so they'll sleep all day and be up for petting action in the evening.

## 4 PETS THAT CRAWL

There's nothing like a tarantula to get the old pulse going (and then stop it). The Chilean rose variety costs £15 and eats only a cricket or two a week (a tin of 50 costs £2). But their dull personalities and poisonous nature mean they're not ideal for kids.

## Unhappy Shopper

### #6 Don't play with your food, says the Shopper...

Bapless burgers, rocketing salami prices and bad breath – Dr Atkins has a great deal to answer for. But the most chilling aspects of his legacy are only now emerging.

The new low-carb 'SunLite' potato, now on sale in the US, cropped up in last month's *Which?* With 30 per cent less carbohydrate and 25 per cent fewer calories than a normal spud, you can eat more than you usually do and not notice the difference. And you may well not notice, because some reviews are claiming the SunLite has less flavour than a normal tatty too.

If flavour is what you want, try the new combination of apple and grape, known as the 'Grapple' (presumably because apes already exist). Combining fruits is nothing new; the nectarine is a pleasant combo of a plum and a peach. But the Grapple isn't that clever. It's just an apple left to soak in grape juice. The Unhappy Shopper, aged nine, did that with carrots and Coca-Cola – diet potatoes soaked in Lucozade Sport, anyone?

