

[material world]

Rants, raves, ideas and news



How to buy... A YACHT

As philosopher David Lee Roth once said: 'Money can't buy you happiness, but it can buy you a yacht big enough to pull up right alongside it'. Yachting's expensive – as a hobby, it makes skiing look like a trip to Aldi – but it's jolly good fun

the gadgeteer

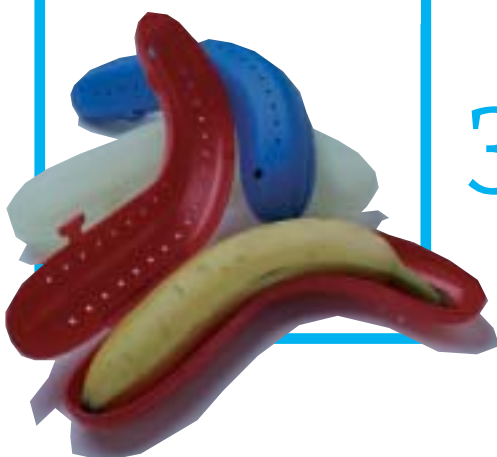
This month's most peculiar new lo-tech gadget

Bruised bananas: up there with burnt money and wet matches in the annoyance stakes.

Until now, there was little you could do. BananaGuard changes all that. Yes, banana lovers, it's a plastic, 'nana-shaped case.

Prices range from £3.95 for standard colours to a high rollin' £4.35 for glow in the dark. See www.bananaguard-uk.com for more information.

Only one question nags us more forcefully than 'who on earth is going to buy one of these things?' How could they not call it BananaArmour?



PHOTOGRAPHY NICK WRIGHT, KOBAL ILLUSTRATION HARRY MALT

1 GET YA SEA LEGS

Join a yacht club (typically upwards of £75 a year). You'll get to talk to knowledgeable types and might be able to crew someone's boat – a great way to find out whether you like sailing. Alternatively, charter a holiday yacht; prices range from £500 for a week in Cornwall to around £1,500 for more exotic places. Check out www.sailingholidays.com for ideas.

2 FLASH THE DOUBLOONS

Around £5,000 buys a decent 23-foot boat second-hand; a new 46-footer from a desirable brand such as Oyster costs more than £500,000. Keeping a yacht is expensive, too: expect to spend around 10 per cent of the boat's price annually on maintenance and marina fees (marina fees are twice as high in the south east). You can save by going for a mooring, which costs £800 to £1,200 a year.

3 RESPECT THE SEA

Legally, you don't need formal qualifications but Davy Jones's locker awaits the foolhardy captain. Contact the Royal Yachting Association (www.rya.org.uk) for courses. Training for day trips costs around £500 and takes about five days. You'll learn boat handling, basic navigation and maintenance.

Unhappy Shopper

#5 It isn't the screens that need saving, says the Shopper – it's us

Not content with spoiling the tranquillity of local boozers everywhere, TV has moved into the supermarket. And what are we forced to watch on these new screens? A bit of footy? Improving documentaries? Thought-provoking West End operas? Nope, adverts.

It works, too.

According to ad giants JC Decaux, Tesco's recently introduced in-store channel has increased sales of the products it plugs by 10 per cent (incidentally, that's the same Tesco that came fifth in our December league table of misleading press ad baddies).

If it's working for Tesco, you can expect just about everyone to follow suit. Still, at least they're telling you about stuff you can buy – travel on the Heathrow Express and you're subjected to BBC News 24 (presumably so-called because it uses the same 24 seconds of footage over and over again). Can't they break it up with a few adverts or something?

