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We review new products

Eat your greens

If you're having trouble weaning your baby, you might be interested in the Baby Safe Feeder. It looks like an overgrown dummy but the teat is actually a mesh bag into which you can put all sorts of foods. Because it eliminates the risk of choking, it's a safe way of learning about new foods, and it can also help relieve the pain of teething.

We gave the feeder to six parents to try with their babies. Generally the children were quite slow to grasp the idea of the feeder but, with a

The Baby Safe Feeder can help with weaning



little persistence, most of them enjoyed using it. It worked well with all but the most mushy or crumbly foods.

The Baby Safe Feeder costs £12, plus postage, from www.shyproducts.co.uk. The bags are replaceable and can be cleaned by hand or in the dishwasher.

The shirt that doesn't stain

Any man who's ever spilled a lunchtime glass of red wine down his shirt and spent the rest of the day trying to hide the stain will be interested in this innovative new garment. The Rocola Shirt Tec shirt claims to be stain resistant and non-iron – and it pretty much lives up to its claims.

We asked three volunteers to test out the Rocola shirt for comfort, care and stain resistance. All of

Tea, coffee and red wine just

ran off on to the floor, while

ketchup wiped clean with a cloth

them found it comfortable and certainly difficult to mark – one wearer spilled coffee all down it but it simply ran off. Washing is straightforward – you just have to remember it needs the delicates wash, not the hot one. The packaging says it's non-iron,

but the label inside advises 'iron while still damp' and it does need this for that crisp, well-heeled look. It's ideal as an office shirt, although it's a little stiffer than a standard shirt and its repellent qualities mean that, if it's warm, beads of sweat just trickle off the shirt, rather than being absorbed.

In the lab, we tested a new Rocola shirt for its stain resistance and again after five washes. When it was new, tea, coffee and red wine ran off on to the floor, while ketchup, bolognese sauce and chocolate ice cream wiped clean with a dry cloth. Fountain pen ink needed a damp cloth, while lipstick, butter and engine oil all left slight marks. Washing slightly reduced its ability to resist stains, but it's still much better than standard cotton. To prolong its stain-resisting life, we suggest you avoid using fabric softeners when washing it. The shirt will probably lose some of its stain-resistant ability after many washes, but tumble drying and ironing will help to bring it back to its original condition.

The Rocola Shirt Tec comes in white, blue, blue stripe and blue check and costs £50 from www.menswear.co.uk.

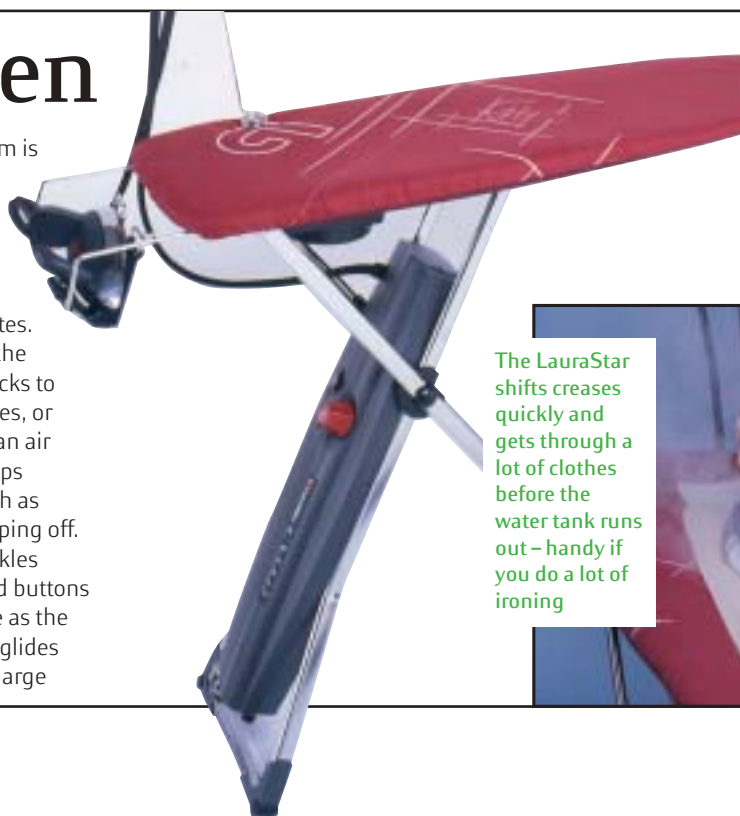
PHOTOGRAPHY NICK WRIGHT

Steam queen

The LauraStar Steamax was voted one of the best generator irons of our last irons test, so we couldn't wait to take a look at the LauraStar Magic Evolution II. It's an all-in-one steam iron, board and generator system (which means it has a large water tank).

We gave the LauraStar to two home-ironing businesses, plus a domestic goddess (who takes her ironing very seriously). Each used the LauraStar for a

week. The system is really good for shifting creases quickly on virtually all types of fabric, including delicates. The fan (under the board) either sucks to flatten out clothes, or blows to create an air cushion that stops heavy items such as sheets from slipping off. Even tricky wrinkles around cuffs and buttons stand no chance as the iron effortlessly glides over them. The large



The LauraStar shifts creases quickly and gets through a lot of clothes before the water tank runs out – handy if you do a lot of ironing



A toothbrush fuelled by solar power

The Soladey-2 is a solar-powered toothbrush that doesn't need toothpaste. At first glance, its small head and thin plastic handle don't look very hi-tech. However, between the handle and head there's a small titanium rod partially encased in plastic. According to the manufacturer, this reacts with sunlight or the light bulb in your bathroom, releasing negatively charged ions that blend with saliva to help disintegrate dental plaque. More than two million are sold in Japan each year.

We gave six volunteers a Soladey-2 toothbrush, some plaque-disclosing tablets and a standard manual toothbrush for comparison.

Overall, our volunteers thought the Soladey-2 was good at cleaning teeth, doing slightly better than the standard toothbrush in making teeth look and feel clean. It was easy to access all areas of the mouth, and its small head was good at getting in between teeth. Our trialists liked the softness of the bristles, too. The handle was quite comfortable to hold, although one volunteer thought a longer handle made of rubber would have been better.

However, all our volunteers thought not using toothpaste made their breath seem less fresh. Our dental expert wasn't convinced by the claims for the toothbrush. He said that using fluoride toothpaste regularly is the best thing you can do for your teeth.

Only half of our volunteers said they would buy the Soladey-2. It's expensive, at around £12.50, with replacement heads costing around £12 for four. You can get it from health food shops or online at www.pitrok.co.uk.



The Soladey-2 toothbrush contains a titanium rod that reacts with light

water tank keeps steaming long enough to get through nine shirts, two pairs of jeans, four T-shirts, a table cloth and a sheet. However, there are a

few little niggles that let the LauraStar down.

For example, the iron's triple steam and fan control button is hard to get used to. And not being able to stand the iron up is frustrating – you have to lay it down on a separate rubber mat, which often gets in the way. Also, the labelling of the iron's controls isn't intuitive and doesn't have pictograms as a guide.

You have to use deionised water, which isn't as convenient as tap water. And it takes 25 minutes for the

tank's lid to cool before you can refill it – annoying if you're in a rhythm. Despite the niggles, both the professional ironers liked the LauraStar and rated it more highly than their Tefal and Moulinex models. However, our domestic goddess was happy to return to her trusted Morphy Richards and board as the LauraStar was just too much bother for the odd shirt.

It's a hefty £480 (from Miller Brothers), but worth considering if you do lots of ironing.

