

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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- A AFFAIRS** Oil minus corruption: Ghana gets rich nicely
 - B BUSINESS** Pulling the rug: Iran's carpet makers get knotted
 - C CULTURE** The best media store in the world? Tsutaya's big bet
 - D DESIGN** A New Zealand beach home with a Herbst crust
 - E EDITS** Locking up your money in Milan, a Stockholm 'hood and an Austrian culinary classic
- EXPO** Southern comfort: the Charleston craft revival

Charm, the next offensive. Is it time to go back to finishing school?

Why businesses, brands and nations need a new buzzword for 2012 and beyond. **MONOCLE REPORTS** on the top charmers

1 SMILE

...
A small gesture transforms transactions and makes them matter

2 BE HONEST

...
Be proud of qualities that can't be faked

3 BE TRUE

...
Have an opinion. Don't workshop your vision

4 BE FRIENDLY

...
We all want a bit more warmth

5 AND...

...
Charm is not measurable. Bad luck for copy-cat firms



Konnichiwa!

OUR JAPAN TRAVEL GUIDE

A MONOCLE GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S MOST CHARMING NATION



HEAD FOR THE HILLS:

Get your skis on for a tour of the Japan Alps (also home to famed puddings)

LISTEN TO THIS:

From J-pop to traditional tunes, you'll be filling your tote with CDs from a Nippon tour



WELL GROOMED:

Even the fluffed-up pooches are exquisitely coiffed (and behaved)

TAKE THE BULLET:

Ride the Shinkansen to see Japan at high speed





Collectors' item
Matchbox magic

Presentandcorrect.com has a large range of old Czech matchboxes for sale, which are like miniature works of graphic art.

Umbrella concept

Japan [RESIDENCE]

Perched on a hillside in the quaint, leafy Tokyo suburb of Ome is Ikeda Yukie Architects' Sunbrella House. Although corners are dramatically curved and materials exposed, the house lends itself to a genteel, inviting minimalism. The elderly clients wanted a comfortable homestead with easy access to the surrounding nature. Wooden rafters fan out like the spokes of an umbrella – hence the name. Despite the house only having one bedroom, one bathroom and measuring 86 sq m, the architect has managed to craft a harmonious interior. — DMP snowpict.com



Seats of tradition

Mexico [STOOLS]

Mexican designer Héctor Esrawe looked to African and pre-Hispanic American cultures for inspiration for his new Ban stools. The sculptural collection is reminiscent of traditional seats representing status, religion and identity in ancient communities. Made from certified solid walnut, tzalam and beech, and finished with natural oils, their striking form is a modern update on an age-old tradition. — HP esrawe.com



Bathing beauties

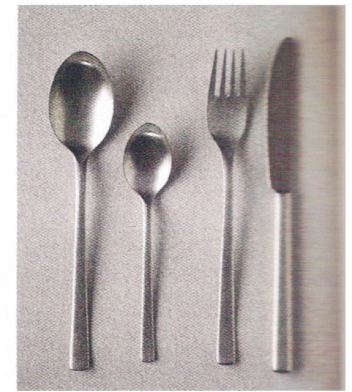
Italy [BATH TOYS]

This handsome bird and fish were originally designed in 1969 by British designer Patrick Rylands for Trendon Toys. Rylands was awarded the Duke of Edinburgh Prize for Elegant Design in 1970. Included in the V&A's permanent collection, the bath toys have been given a new lease of life by young Milan toy firm Selegiochi. — selegiochi.com

Cut to the quick

Germany [CUTLERY]

Cutlery is something that should last a lifetime. The German company Pott is a rare bastion of tradition and quality. Manufacturing flatware since 1904, its silver and stainless steel cutlery has been honed to perfection – each knife goes through 90 stages of production. — HM pott-bestecke.de



No sweat

Finland [SAUNA]

After failing to get planning permission to build a fixed outside sauna, an Åland island resident hired the help of young London practice Denizen. The owner can tow its portable pine DW Sauna on to the nearby lake when it freezes over. The people at the town hall will be spitting out their Glögg. — DMP denizenworks.com

Cordless wonder

Germany [EQUIPMENT]

The move to mobile workstations means keeping office space smart can be a challenge. The Yill is a mobile energy storage unit designed to power a normal workstation for two to three days without the tangle of cords and cables. To recharge, simply plug the lithium titanium battery into any plug or renewable power source. — HP yunicos.com

