



PAPAFOXTROT

Do you need a talking point in your home or office? Something that says to friends and colleagues, “Wow, (insert name here) is deeper than I thought”? Then this model of the Arctic Princess gas tanker is for you. Made out of sustainable timber by English company Papafoxtrot, it’s guaranteed to attract attention. Just make sure you memorise this script: “Oh, that? That’s the Arctic Princess. Each of those tanks is 42 metres in diameter and cools to minus 163 degrees Celsius. It carries enough LNG – sorry, liquefied natural gas – to power 450,000 homes. What did you say? Yes, I will go out on a date with you.” [papafoxtrot.com](http://papafoxtrot.com) *JD*

THE MISREAD PLANET

In 1905, American astronomer Percival Lowell made a big announcement: he’d discovered canals on the surface of Mars – evidence that aliens were transporting water to grow crops. The whole thing turned out to be bunk, but it wasn’t completely forgotten; over a hundred years later, German craftsman Michael Plichta discovered a map that Lowell made to illustrate his theory, and decided to turn it into a globe. It was a massive labour of love – he learned traditional globe-making techniques in order to pull it off. The project turned out a treat, though, and he now sells replicas through his business Planetenkugel Manufaktur. [marsglobes.com](http://marsglobes.com) *CH*



THROWING STONES

The world of competitive stone skimming is currently in the throes of big change. The sport’s authorities are trying to work out if it’s OK for people to bring their own stones to contests. It’s not the first time they’ve tackled such a serious quandary; back in the ’70s, there was a stir when contestants in the U.S. started using more experimental projectiles, including artificial disks made out of pressed sand. One guy even tried to win a competition by attaching a firecracker to his stone. Purists have always condemned these kinds of tactics and sworn by the importance of skill. So, what goes into a perfect throw? Physicist Lydéric Bouquet, who conducted a study into stone skimming, says the optimum angle of release is 20 degrees. The full details of his paper can be read online, though we must warn you: as long as it is, it only really touches the surface of the sport’s techniques. *AC*



ST. VINCENT’S AXE

Annie Clark (AKA St. Vincent) has made a career out of writing music that is angular and slightly weird. So it’s fitting that the guitar she designed for Ernie Ball Music Man shares the same qualities. Pick it up and it’s hard not to feel like art rock royalty. The rosewood neck is sturdy enough to endure rowdy European tours; the tremolo bar is perfect for genre-defying solos; and the black finish complements nearly any outfit. The best bit: the instrument is so light that you can easily hold it with one hand, while *Pitchfork* editors eat out of the other. Yep, buy this guitar and you’ll be hanging out with David Byrne in no time. It’s that simple. [music-man.com](http://music-man.com) *SJ*



KURT VILE

Having just released his sixth album, *blieve i’m goin down...*, we had a chat with Kurt Vile about how becoming a father has affected his music. Is making an album a different process with kids around? I’ve learnt that you can’t combine them too much, because obviously you have to focus on the recording. You have to give the music 100 per cent to get in the zone. ‘Rock star’ and ‘dad’ do seem to sit on opposing ends of a spectrum – how do you reconcile the two? As best as I can! Once you get playing and you’re really oiled up, you’re in that cosmic zone. Then it stops and you go home. It takes a couple of days to readjust. Did your own dad influence your musicality much? Yeah, totally. He’s just as obsessive in his own way as me. He’s mainly into bluegrass and old-time music. Even before string instruments, he encouraged me at school to play the trumpet and stuff. Would you want your kids to follow you into the industry? I wouldn’t push them, but if they really wanted to do it that would just mean that they’ve got a little of their old man in them. *SK*

PUFF PIECES

The folks at English company Acme don’t just sell whistles. They sell the best goddamn, ear-blasting, compliance-inducing whistles the world has ever heard. The business started around 135 years ago, producing blowers for British police. Since then its clientele has expanded to include everyone from elite dog trainers to AFL umpires. Acme even made the whistles that were used on the Titanic (pictured). It’s truly the choice of professional blow-hards everywhere. [acmewhistles.co.uk](http://acmewhistles.co.uk) *AC*



PORTLAND GROWLER CO.

One of the quickest ways to ruin a good beer is to expose it to too much sunlight. The UV rays can mess with the hops and produce a foul smelling chemical called 3-MBT. The industry term for this process: skunking (no points for guessing why). Bottles with coloured glass do an OK job of preventing 3-MBT, but if you really want to be vigilant, it’s worth investing in an opaque jug – or ‘growler’. These ceramic ones from the Portland Growler Co. are the top of the line and come in a bunch of really nice finishes. [portlandgrowlercompany.com](http://portlandgrowlercompany.com) *SJ*



THE CHAIRMAN

Melbourne-based furniture maker Benjamin Baldwin knows that the simplest things are sometimes the best things. He crafts minimalist chairs and stools out of locally sourced timber, using traditional joinery techniques. They have a certain timeless quality that you just don’t get from flat-packed furniture. Maybe it’s the quality of the wood? Maybe it’s the tiny imperfections? Or maybe it’s just the fact that they’re so darn good lookin’. [benjaminbaldwin.com.au](http://benjaminbaldwin.com.au) *SJ*



KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

No paper? No kindling? No problem. This elegant contraption from Kiwi brand George & Willy gets a fire going in no time. It uses a system that was popularised by 18<sup>th</sup> century whalers: just dunk the porous ceramic tip in a tub of lamp oil, and light. It will burn for an impressive 15 minutes, which is more than enough time to ignite a log. It’s simple, safe and – if you’ve got a touch of the pyromaniac in you – a lot of fun. Plus, it doubles as a great prop if you ever want to stage a pretend Olympic torch relay. [georgeandwilly.com](http://georgeandwilly.com) *JD*