

### A helping hand

Tying in with our main interiors feature on getting your house in order this spring, I'm really impressed with a new hand-held vacuum cleaner called the Gtech multi. It's a high-performance vacuum that cleans for 30 minutes on a single charge and makes cleaning the stairs a doddle. It lights up to ensure you don't miss any dust and as it is fairly light and fun to use, even children may be persuaded to lend a hand! Find it priced at £149 at [www.lovevacuuming.com](http://www.lovevacuuming.com).



### Brighten up

The Burgbad Bel bathroom collection includes a space-saving, mineral-cast washbasin with under cupboard and pull-out drawers, £1,671, a mirror modular, £339.60 and ceramic wall-hung WC with soft-close seat, £754. Find all of them at Ripples, Tunbridge Wells O1892 617462, Canterbury O1227 459525, [www.ripples.ltd.uk](http://www.ripples.ltd.uk)

## ANIMAL magic

Liven up your table with this menagerie of furred and feathered friends



Sketch hen range from Marks & Spencer, egg cup, £6, mugs, £8, bowl £9.50, jug £25, [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)



# Notebook

Sara Niven Smith makes her pick of the best April products

### More than sofas

Sofas & Stuff don't just do fabulous sofas, as the company's first table range proves. This Chamomile dining table, (£1,245) is made from European oak with Shaker-inspired legs and would be perfect for family gatherings this Easter. The matching bench is £555. For more information, visit [www.sofasandstuff.com](http://www.sofasandstuff.com) or call the Eridge showroom, near Tunbridge Wells on 01892 572309.



### Be bold

Ensure you have a sunny outlook every day with Farrow & Ball's new Yellowcake Estate Emulsion, £36 for 2.5 litre, Farrow & Ball, Tunbridge Wells O1892 512 121 or visit [www.farrow-ball.com](http://www.farrow-ball.com). The company has also just launched a new range of wallpapers that's well worth checking out.



Peep mugs in fine bone china, £10.50 each, Hoopers, Tunbridge Wells O1892 530222 [www.herdy.co.uk](http://www.herdy.co.uk)

# April HOME SAVER

Tired of a never-ending list of tasks? We've the know-how and tips you need to cross off a few

## Spring clean your home

Blow away winter cobwebs with a satisfying deep clean



### SMART BUY

The Gtech Multi lets you clean hard and soft surfaces with ease

**Buy new supplies** Stock up on cleaning essentials, as well as cloths and coloured gloves. Look for a pair with moisturiser built in for extra care, from £1.50 for a pair of multi-purpose gloves, Bizzybee.

**Invest in clever tools** Treat yourself to Oxo Good Grips Deep Clean Brush Set, £5.99, Lakeland, to clean hard-to-reach areas. The large brush is for scrubbing grout, shower door tracks and cooker tops, while the smaller one tackles fixtures and has a rubber wiper blade at one end to remove dirt from plugs and other crevices.

**Do away with wires** Cleaning tricky areas is hassle free with a cordless hand-held vacuum. Use the Gtech Multi to clean down the back of the sofa, curtains, skirting boards, stairs and shelves, and add the attachments provided to reach up high. It can be used on hard and soft surfaces and one charge lasts 30 minutes. Gtech Multi, £149.95, John Lewis.



### PLUM CHOICE

Change the colour of your cabinets for a brand-new look

## KITCHEN REVAMP

Breathe new life into your kitchen with these fab ideas

✓ **PAINT WALLS** Choose neutral shades for a calm feel or bright colours for greater impact. Use paints formulated for kitchens – they are tougher than regular matt paint and will withstand heat and moisture better.

✓ **REPLACE DOORS** If your unit carcasses are in good condition, replace the doors. They come in standard sizes with pre-drilled holes, so it's an easy DIY job. Kitchen Door Workshop has a wide range of styles. Alternatively, spray your doors with Plasti-kote Twist & Spray paint, around £8 for 400ml.

✓ **CHANGE HANDLES** Unscrew dated handles, measure the distance between the holes and buy new handles with holes the same distance apart for an easy swap. Or, fill the holes and choose a different design.

✓ **ADD A SPLASHBACK** Remove an old splashback and replace it with a self-adhesive glass one for a hit of bold colour. A 60cm x 75cm glass splashback in a range of colours costs £135.29 at Topps Tiles.

**TIP** Burn a scented candle to get rid of cooking smells.

## 3 uses for a... SANDWICH BAG

\* **POP A** wet flannel inside, seal, and put in the freezer – it makes a great cold compress when needed.

\* **NO RUBBER GLOVES?** Secure over your hands with an elastic band for messy jobs, then throw away.

\* **USE TO CARRY** make-up and toiletries so any spills don't leak into your bag, especially when travelling.

## All in the details Painting a planter

Give garden essentials a facelift with a bold paint shade



**1** Lay the planter down on top of a dust sheet. Stick a piece of masking tape diagonally on one side of the planter. Repeat on the next side, so the masking tape pieces join to a point at the top.



**2** Dip a brush into Hammerite Direct To Rust paint, £9.99 for 250ml (we used Zingy Lime), and coat the area below the masking tape. Paint slightly over the tape so coverage is solid.



**3** When dry, add another coat if necessary, then remove the masking tape while the paint is still wet. Leave to dry fully. Plant the pot then position it in pride of place on your patio or decking area.

TRIED & TESTED

# Spring clean

Keeping your home fur-free can be a constant battle when you're a pet owner, so we've put seven of the top vacuum cleaners to the test...

Tester: *Your Cat* sub-editor Chloë Hukin who owns two shorthaired moggies, Ebony and Betty.



WIN

## BOSCH POWER ANIMAL

Price: £239.95

Buy it from: [www.bosch-home.co.uk](http://www.bosch-home.co.uk) or tel. 0844 892 8979. Also available from John Lewis stores.

**Description:** The Bosch Power Animal (BSGL5PETGB) gets pet hair and allergens under control with its ProAnimal turbo brush. The TwinBrush features bristles for picking up dust and hair, which are easy to clean. It takes extra large self-sealing 4.5L bags too, allowing you to vacuum for longer. Using HEPA filtration, it'll also cut down on allergens. The vacuum cleaner also comes with a crevice nozzle and upholstery attachment.

**Tester's verdict:** "I tested the bagged version of this cleaner and, after cleaning two rooms, the amount of fur and dust I found in the bag was amazing! This vacuum really did give our floors a deep clean. The cleaner comes with a few different attachments, some of which are stowed inside the front of the cleaner, and the special pet attachment was fantastic! It's lightweight, packs neatly away and the filter seemed to not only get rid of the dust, but also left the rooms with a lovely fresh scent."

Star rating: \*\*\*\*\*

\*We have one Bosch Power Animal to give away (choose whether you'd like the bagged or bagless version) – turn to page 71!



## GTECH MULTI

Price: £149

Buy it from: [www.gtechonline.co.uk](http://www.gtechonline.co.uk) or tel. 0845 519 3281. Also available from John Lewis stores.

**Description:** A cordless, lightweight handheld vacuum cleaner which gives the user the freedom to clean from floor to ceiling – and everything in between! Provides 30 minutes of running time on a single four-hour charge and comes with a number of on-board cleaning attachments.

**Tester's verdict:** "This truly is a lightweight vacuum and a great alternative to lugging a full-sized cleaner around the house. It was perfect for cleaning the sofa, skirting boards and even my car – especially because it meant I didn't have to drag a full-size vacuum cleaner around. The suction was great and it picked up cat hair easily – and using the longer attachment, I also managed to do a quick zip round on the floors too. I found the its only vice is that you have to keep your finger pressed down on the trigger to keep it turned on."

Star rating: \*\*\*\*

## AEG APTICA PET ATT7920BP

Price: £199.

Buy it from: Selected retailers.

**Description:** Packed with 'the latest innovation in multi-cyclonic technology', the Aptica effectively separates dirt and dust so your filters don't get clogged. It also comes with a pet turbo nozzle with soft rubber nodules to lift and remove pet hair easily. The Aptica has an anti-odour HEPA filter that not only rids your home of allergens, but also reduces smells.

**Tester's verdict:** "I liked the sturdy look of this cleaner, and

it was lightweight with a good hose length. The dual-purpose floor nozzle worked well when I switched floor surfaces and it really got into the corners. The pet turbo nozzle was extremely powerful, picking up pet hair effortlessly. Overall, a great cleaner for a great price."

Star rating: \*\*\*\*





Stay in control with our organising tips

## HOW TO... *organise your bathroom cabinet*

- Start by clearing out the medicine cabinet. Check dates on any medication, take anything that has expired to your local pharmacy so they can dispose of it safely. Check bottles and tubes of lotions and ointments – if anything has separated, changed colour or hardened then get rid of these too. Locate all of the half-used beauty products that have been forgotten about.
- Discard anything that smells funny or has discoloured, separated or changed texture. Some products will have a symbol of an opened tub on the back with a number inside. This is the amount of months this product should be kept after opening. Generally products, especially facial skin care, shouldn't be kept for more than 12 months, and organic items even less.
- Give the inside of the cupboard a clean before placing everything back.
- Try to keep like products together, such as skin care or first aid, and place the taller items at the back so that you can see the shorter items at the front.
- Re-stock any items that have expired or run out – cover most eventualities with painkillers, for adults and children, antihistamines, anti-diarrhoea tablets and indigestion treatments. In your first aid kit add: plasters, antiseptic, bandages and sterile dressings, medical tape, eyewash solution and a thermometer.

Feature Laura Higgins Main image Godmorgon range, Ikea



## Q&A

How can I remove chocolate from carpets and upholstery?

*Technical expert from ServiceMaster Clean, Ian McCormack has this advice:*

'First scrape as much off as possible, without pushing it into the fabric. Make up a mix of 3 heaped teaspoons of biological washing powder to 1L of hand-hot water. Pre-test the mix in an inconspicuous area. Dab it on to the stain and leave it damp. The enzymes in the mixture will eat away at the chocolate until it's gone. This could take from one to eight hours. If all the chocolate has disappeared, take a clean white cloth, gently rinse the area with cold water, taking care not to over wet, and dab dry with another clean white cloth. Leave it to dry naturally. If the chocolate stain hasn't been removed repeat the above. If all attempts at removal have failed, call in the experts. Call ServiceMaster Clean on 0800 021 3073 or visit the website [www.servicemasterclean.co.uk](http://www.servicemasterclean.co.uk).'



## Laura's choice...



'For zipping around the house in super-quick time I think

the Gtech Multi cordless vacuum is ideal. With 12 different cleaning modes, 30 minutes of run-time and an LED light to show up dirt in dark corners, it makes light work of cleaning, especially as there is no cord or plug holding you back. It even has a 36cm extension tube and concealed flexible hose so you can tackle cobwebs on the ceiling, and all of the attachments are stored onboard the vacuum so they don't get lost.'

Gtech Multi, £149, available from [www.lovevacuuming.com](http://www.lovevacuuming.com) and John Lewis



disposition should brave the YouTube footage of Ozzy Osbourne (55) and Jessica Simpson's fearful version of *Winter Wonderland* – unless you want to see the befuddled Black Sabbath hell-raiser being towed on a toboggan by a pop starlet of 23.

Better by far – and funny, too – are Bing Crosby and David Bowie (*below*), 44 years between them, jointly warbling *Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy* around a Christmas tree in '77. It's strangely touching, even though Bing later claimed he



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But now the bar's been raised and all records smashed: Tony Bennett has made a jazz album with Lady Gaga. He's 87, she's 27. Being three-quarters Italian, she might just pass for his granddaughter.

The results will be out in the autumn and we'll see who triumphs – the super-smooth old trouser six decades her senior or the young pretender. My money's on the former.

*Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga's album is due for release on the Streamline/Interscope label later this year*

### Clever iPad cushion

OK, it's not beautiful but who cares when you can watch TV in bed comfortably on your tablet. The iCushion comes in various colours, £24.95 ([mobiletoyz.co.uk](http://mobiletoyz.co.uk), 0203 287 0725)



### || Shopping ||

## The joys of spring

This month we can't live without...

by Tiffany Daneff



### Clean machine

I'd rather not have to bother with cleaning at all, but this is really clever. It's cordless with 30 mins use per charge, good suction and LED lights to shine into dark corners under car seats and behind sofas. The Gtech Multi, £149 ([lovevacuuming.com](http://lovevacuuming.com), 0845 519 3281). £20 discount for readers until March 31; quote code SG02

### Mutt-have coat

What's the smart dog sporting this spring?

A Seventies London Underground District Line moquette coat, of course. £44.95 for small 39x24cm (LxH); £49.95 for large 45x25cm (LxH).

From the London Transport Museum ([tmmuseumshop.co.uk](http://tmmuseumshop.co.uk), 020 7565 7295)



### Switched-on style

I have a pussy willow design Hannah Nunn handmade papercut lamp that is ten years old and still glowing strong. Small table lamp in various designs, £69 ([hannahnunn.co.uk](http://hannahnunn.co.uk), 01422 646118)



### Potting shed sorted

I like the idea that these Gardener's Gubbins Pots will keep my potting shed tidy. Really, they should, especially the pot labelled 'Misc'. £19.95 ([burgonandball.com](http://burgonandball.com), 0114 233 8262)