

Gadgets help with summer fun

SmartHome Inc., a leading provider of home automation products and personal gadgets, has announced summer products for the backyard chef, party host, gardener or anyone participating in summertime fun. "Generally around this time of the year, people begin spending more time entertaining outdoors and the home becomes a focal point of relaxation, which makes it a great time to simplify life by automating the home," said Matt Dean, vice president of sales and marketing for SmartHome, which is based in Irvine, Calif.

The following products are available through SmartHome's Web site, www.smarthome.com, or by calling (800) SMARTHOME.

■ **Cooking Fork and Thermometer (\$24.99)** - This product ensures popular barbecue meats such as beef, chicken and fish are cooked safely to perfection.

The high-tech cooking utensil has an easy-to-read LCD screen built into its handle, which displays an exact temperature reading and notes if meat is rare, medium or well done. In addition, the fork can be set to specific temperatures with the press of a button, and will beep when the meat reaches the pre-determined temperature.

■ **Rechargeable Cordless Blender (\$49.99)** - This cordless blender gives consumers the freedom to enjoy cold blended drinks just about anywhere, including the back yard or campsite.

The blender's 44-ounce, impact-resistant pitcher makes it ideal for outdoor parties.

■ **Pool Eye Alarm (\$129.99)** - Giving parents peace of mind while children play outdoors, this pool eye alarm sounds a 100dB siren when it detects a disturbance caused by a child or pet as light as 15 pounds falling into the pool.

For nighttime pool protection, a night vision component, using passive infrared (PIR), monitors the pool's surface for a disturbance caused by a child falling into the pool, while an underwater wave sensor monitors below the water's surface.

■ **Automatic Garden Hose Revider (\$129.95)** - This product addresses the problem of tangled garden hoses.

When finished watering the garden or washing the car, users simply press the retract button on the main unit and the hose will automatically rewind itself.

The device works with standard garden hose attachments, including water pressure-activated sprinklers.

Photo opportunity right outside your door

Did you know that one of the most varied and rewarding of photographic subjects is literally right at your doorstep?

It's streetlife! Whether it's the familiarity of your own town or the unexplored streets in a strange place, streetlife provides tremendous opportunity for you and your camera.



Focus on Photography

Monte Nagler
If you look through a photography book or at a collection of old photographs, you'll find some of the most interesting pictures are invariably of streetlife.

This is largely because it is this aspect of our lives that most readily reflects the fashions, trends and lifestyles of a particular period.

Store fronts have an identity of their own. Advertising signs, lamp posts, even mailboxes are important features of the street and can be effective elements of a photographic composition.

A street is dynamic. Cars, buses and bicycles are all subjects with strong pictorial potential.

And, of course, there are the people.

People walking down the street, people engaging in animated conversation, people standing on the corner - all wonderful opportunities for streetlife photography.

There is an almost irresistible appeal in people pictures and a subject preoccupied is easy prey to a photographer with a keen eye and a quick response.

A street market can be a treasure house of streetlife pictures.

Market people are extroverts by nature and often have faces and mannerisms which can make great photos.

One of the problems that often occurs in streetlife photography is confusing and busy backgrounds.

Try to avoid this by choosing a camera position that isolates your subject from the surroundings. Use a telephoto lens to frame your picture tightly and by using a wide aperture, distractions in the background will be kept out of focus.



MONTA NAGLER

The possibilities for streetlife photography are endless. This is a shot Monte Nagler took in Cambodia. This interesting woman is a caretaker for the Buddha.

To minimize problems with contrast, photograph subjects that are out of direct sunlight. Better still, an overcast day provides the best lighting for streetlife people pictures.

Bright colors are more saturated and lighting on faces is more flattering.

Use a fast film in the 400ASA range either color or black and white depending

on your preference. The faster films will enable you to hand hold exposures under most circumstances.

So there you have it. Become streetwise with streetlife.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave a message for him at (734) 953-2047.

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