



NAV VALUE

LOOKING FOR a GPS navigation system? The RAC 2000 takes some beating. At £59.99 it may be nearly the least expensive sat-nav in Halfords' wide range, but it doesn't skimp on features or functionality. It has a 3.5in touch screen, UK and ROI mapping, simple address and full postcode search, safety-camera data preloaded with free updates for life, searchable Points of Interest and 1gb flash memory. Users can download maps, travel guides, weather info etc and it's supplied with charger, USB cable, mounting, quick-start guide and 30% off RAC Breakdown discount voucher. From your local Halfords' store or see halfords.com.

GOOD HOOD REVIVAL

DEDICATED TO keeping environmental impact down while producing the most comfortable garments, SueMe's Hooded 'Sweat' is made from polyester and cotton for softness, warmth and durability with 360g/sq m single-sided brushed fleece and tight knitted outer face to keep the wind out. It features a woven tape bound neck for comfort and strength, pocket on right-side seam with hidden zip (big enough for a Blackberry), two hand-warmer pockets (the left one with button hole for routing headphone cables through) and snug six-part drawcord hood with reversed fleece lining. Supplied in a reusable cotton bag, it costs £45 from sueme.com or call 01707 852244.



Shop front

Clive White finds some useful kit for caravanners

SHARPER SHOOTER

RICOH'S NEW 10mp CX4's image-sensor-shift stabilization reduces blur by the equivalent of about 3.7 shutter-speed stops for sharper images in dim lighting and at high zoom ratios. It also has new 'subject-tracking AF' autofocus for action photography, 'night landscape multi-shot' (combines four exposures to reduce image noise) and 'creative shooting mode' (for a variety of camera effects). With its 10.7x optical zoom lens (35mm equivalent 28-300mm), comprehensive range of automatic and manual controls and new ergonomic, compact body, the CX4 is easy to keep with you at all times for great results. SRP is £259.99 from alphadigitalservices.co.uk or call 01189 337000.



Tower Power

THE NEW MagicBox Tower sound system docks most iPod models and iPhones, charging and playing music, and has a 20-preset DAB/FM radio and alarm clock. The mains-powered Tower features a high-resolution backlit inverse display with scrolling text, auto/manual

scan, snooze/sleep timer and aux-in socket within its robust aluminium case. Standing 15cm high by 8cm wide it takes little table space and is available in metallic red, purple, blue or black at £69.99 from Comet or see comet.co.uk.

JIGSAW PUZZLED?

DREMEL SAYS its new TRIO is more than a jigsaw. The compact, powerful (200W), variable speed (10,000-20,000rpm) 3-in-1 spiral saw cuts, sands and routs, for use on wood, plastic, drywall, sheet metal and wall tile, enabling quick, controlled cuts even if they are intricate. 360-degree cutting technology and plunge-cut ability eliminate pilot drilling. Dust extraction is possible with standard vacuum cleaner hoses. With excellent ergonomics, including two-position handle, TRIO is smaller than conventional jigsaws and ideal for lighter DIY tasks and hobby use. Supplied in a storage case with a selection of attachments and accessories, £119.99 from B&Q and online at diy.com. For details see dremel.co.uk.



SANTA PAWS

MUCH AS we love our canines, the aroma of damp dog is hardly their most endearing quality. Equafleece Dog Jumpers are popular with owners of working dogs and for use after hydrotherapy – if the professionals like them they'll be good gifts for pets. Designed to wick moisture away while retaining body heat, Jumpers are suited to long-term wear with no straps or pressure points, and they're washable. In sizes from 9in Puppy (£17) to 43in (£49) – including the 14in Dachsie (£20), to fit Millie here. Prices inc UK delivery from equafleece.co.uk or order hotline 0845 123 5296. If your dog's a bit of a style guru, faux fur collars in leopard, snow leopard and tiger cost £5 extra.



Read all about it

COST-EFFECTIVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Eve and Terence McLaughlin
David and Charles
ISBN 9780715338285
£14.99 hardback



According to a poll conducted a few years ago by the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, *The Good Life* is the nation's ninth favourite sitcom of all time (*Only Fools and Horses* topped the list).

And while we all enjoyed a good laugh at Tom and Barbara's attempts at self-sufficiency, I bet there are plenty of us who secretly wished we could escape the rat race and live off the fruits of the land.

While the authors of this book don't claim they have the answers to all your money worries, there's no doubt you could save a few pennies following their advice. Offering chapters on everything from basic equipment, composting, livestock and alternative power to what to grow and where to grow it, this is a detailed guide to making the most of your property.

The book was first published in the 1970s (when Eve McLaughlin says "we were widely regarded as cranks"), but has been comprehensively updated for the modern audience and includes a 'useful website guide' at the back. At 256 pages, this is a hefty, text-heavy tome aimed at determined home growers. But then again, if you're serious about trying to substantially cut your bills, this could be the answer. **JT**

THE FRY CHRONICLES

Stephen Fry
Michael Joseph
ISBN
9780718154837
£20 hardback



It's difficult to believe that Stephen Fry's autobiography of his early years – *Moab is my Washpot* – was written 13 years ago. In fact, Fry has been on our screens for 28 years and is now perhaps this country's most revered comedian/writer/actor/gameshow host/documentary maker.

The Fry Chronicles covers his life at university and tentative steps into the world of showbusiness alongside famous friends such as Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson. While some of his words will have you shamefacedly searching for a dictionary, Fry has a fantastic gift for storytelling that makes this a hugely-enjoyable read. Plagued by doubts about his ability, he is remarkably honest about his flaws, concluding with a brief account of his introduction to cocaine that suggests another instalment is due: "The tragedy and farce of that drama are the material for another book."

Photography from the period, featuring family, friends and the likes of Laurie, Ben Elton, Tony Slattery and Robbie Coltrane, add further to the book's appeal. Well worth a look. **JT**

RSPB HANDBOOK OF BRITISH BIRDS

Peter Holden and Tim Cleeves
Christopher Helm
ISBN
9781408127353
£9.99 paperback



The third edition of this popular identification and information guide has been updated to include a new 'Rarities' section and pages helping you distinguish between hard-to-identify birds.

You can't help but be struck by the sheer amount of work that has gone into this book over the past decade. Around 300 species that breed (or are seen regularly) in the British Isles are covered in detail – there is artwork for each bird, identification, habit and voice details (the red grouse says 'go-back, back, back' apparently) as well as habitat, feeding, breeding, migration and population data. In addition, a small colour-coded map beside each entry relates that particular bird's distribution across Britain at different times of year, allowing you to plan your bird viewing well in advance.

Conservation is a major element in the RSPB's work ("if bird populations are healthy, like a miner's canary, then the health of our environment is also good") and the authors use a 'red, amber and green' traffic light system to denote which species are most at risk. The number of birds that fall in the 'red' classification (the humble house sparrow, for example) is somewhat alarming.

This is a great book to take away on a break and one that you'll go-back, back, back to time and again. **JT**

OZ CLARKE 250 BEST WINES: WINE BUYING GUIDE 2011

Oz Clarke
Pavilion
ISBN 9781862058965
£6.99 paperback



We all enjoy a glass of vino in the caravan at the end of a long day's exploring, but it's fair to say that most of us know very little about the intriguing world of wine. In fact, if you're anything like me, the decision-making process at the local supermarket revolves around two questions – red or white and does it cost less than a fiver?

This useful little book by leading wine writer and TV presenter Oz Clarke is a fine introduction to the grape in all its varieties. Clarke lists and describes his top 100 wines for 2011 and adds further sections headed '50 For Around a Tenner', 'Around £6' and 'Cheap and Cheerful' (my favourite), which prove you don't have to spend a small fortune on a decent glass.

You will also find guides to wine regions of the world and how to go about buying more mature examples, as well as a comprehensive retailers' directory. The short chapter entitled 'How to taste wine' explains the optimum way to introduce a tittle to your tastebuds – there really is a point to all that gurning – and also how to spot a 'faulty' wine.

Unfortunately, the book is printed in three colours – black, white and red – which doesn't make it much of a visual spectacle, but it's otherwise well presented, good value at £6.99 and enormously informative. **JT**

Unfortunately, the Club Book Shop is no longer available. The titles reviewed this month are available from all good book sellers