

technopolis

Cruise the highways and rat runs of Gizmo City with the grand wizard of gadgetology, Jonathan Margolis



ENERGENIE REMOTE GSM CONTROLLED POWER SOCKET

I once spent an entire Greek summer holiday agonising over whether I had, while going round the house unplugging stuff before we left, switched the freezer off, I had, and the smell of meat left to fester in summer heat for two weeks was something that still comes back to me.

It's a matter of opinion whether this excellent gadget would have helped in the circumstances, but it could mean peace of mind for a lot of people if not this holiday (imagining that you are already on it), then maybe next.

It's a plug adaptor with a fitted sim card, meaning you can turn electrical appliances of up to 16 amps on or off by SMS. The Energenie also has a sensor that will text you when a temperature threshold, set by you, has been exceeded, so you can then turn on the aircon or heating in a specific room from a distance. Additionally, it monitors power and will alert you by text if energy is lost - so you can know that, say, your business server or home fridge is not working. Not a glamorous product, then, but an exceedingly clever and sensible one. £129.99, from www.energenie4u.co.uk.



ION AIRPRO WIFI

I had to cross two personal Rubicons before deciding this superb, action-capturing new mini HD video camera was the most toothsome technological titbit I could set before you this holiday month.

The first was an increasingly nauseous feeling about the whole narcissistic modern business of "sharing". Let me put it this way: in the unlikely event that, say, Prince Phillip is aware of how much and how willingly everybody shares (aka shows off in public) about their thoughts and deeds, howsoever tedious, I'm sure I could out-narrumpn him.

The second was that the Ion AirPro - recommended by an action-man friend as the best camera of its kind - comes in a package more or less impossible to open and has instructions more or less impossible to read.

But, crikey, it's a good product. The 1080p HD pictures from its bulbous ultra-wide-angle glass lens are sharp enough to cut yourself on and the build quality of the whole device is superb - designed to work down to almost 10m under water. The AirPro also snaps good five megapixel stills with a simple flick of a sliding switch. The lightweight (123g) AirPro comes in a number of configurations, from the basic camera to this one, which includes a WiFi-powered cap (a "Pod") that will transmit a stream of your doubtless fascinating deeds of derring-do via your iPhone or Android to an excited waiting world on Facebook or YouTube.

Although the technology is impressive and as faultless as our creaky 3G phone networks will allow, this is where, morally, the AirPro and I part company slightly. For me, unless you are walking, cycling, abseiling somewhere truly interesting - Mars, maybe - I do not wish to be shared with. These things should be private, as I'm sure HRH would agree.

The £299 WiFi version I've selected has a good variety of straps and mounts for cycle, motorbike, ski or skydive helmet, and also for bike frames or jet skis. And with a 32GB miniSD slotted in, the AirPro will record up to four riveting hours of your heroism. £299, from www.iontheaction.co.uk.

PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-FT4

If you're less of a sharer and more of a somebody who just likes to take spectacular holiday photos regardless of rain, water or sand, this beautiful Panasonic should be your perfect holiday companion.

I'm a sucker for brightly coloured gadgetry, but the Lumix DMC-FT4 isn't just a pretty, hard-to-lose little box of joy. It's virtually armoured, with a metal flight-case style body that will laugh at being dropped on to concrete from 2m, and happily work 12m beneath the waves. It's also freezeproof to -10°C and dust sealed.

It packs a fine 12.1 megapixel sensor and takes pics that aren't quite pro-standard but as good as most of us would ever want, and does Full HD video and software-generated 3D. There's a handful of interesting, if OTT features, like a GPS receiver with more than a million place names stored, so the camera always knows and records where it is, and a compass, altimeter and barometer for reasons I don't fully understand.

A wonderful camera for absolutely anybody, but most especially for children to use in the wild. In orange, blue, silver or black for around £295. Google for best price. See www.panasonic.co.uk for info.



ETON RUKUS SOLAR

Eton radio has a long track record of outdoorsy electronics, and this diminutive new solar-powered boombox, the Rukus Solar, is very much in that tradition. It's not the most robust piece of kit, so while it would happily provide party sounds for an expedition or safari, I would avoid getting it wet, throwing it about too much or using it to hammer in tent pegs. But it gives a good eight hours of reasonably loud stereo sounds when fully charged by the sun.

The Rukus kicks up a bit of a retro, transistor radio kind of a sound, but I couldn't help liking it. It's light and attractive, and so easy to set up via Bluetooth from your portable phone or music player that it's practically a crime against geekdom.

Good for the more boisterous kind of beach party, too, on the grounds that you may well balk at taking other portable stereo music players to anything less sedate than a picnic.

£149.95, from www.nevadaradio.co.uk. See www.etoncorp.com for info.



FOR EXCLUSIVE VIDEO BULLETINS OF MORE HIGH-TECH WIZARDRY FROM JONATHAN, GO TO TECHNOPOPOLIS TV AT FREE-TO-AIR ACCESS: WWW.HOWTOSPENDIT.COM AND FOLLOW JONATHAN AT TWITTER.COM/TECHNOPOLISFT

SILLY STREET

If I screw up my eyes and think very hard, I can just about work out why this is only on the periphery of being silly, but silly nonetheless. It's a device to back up your media cards - a good thing, I agree - to, um, a recordable DVD. The idea is that you can travel and back up your photos without taking a laptop. But the Plextor PlexEasy is pretty big and needs to travel with a hefty mains plug and adaptor. Might as well take a small laptop, non, and get the not inconsiderable additional benefits thereof?

Plextor PlexEasy, around £90; Google for best price. See www.plextor-digital.com.





technopolis

Cruise the highways and rat runs of Gizmo City with the grand wizard of gadgetology, Jonathan Margolis

ENERGENIE REMOTE GSM CONTROLLED POWER SOCKET

I once spent an entire Greek summer holiday agonising over whether I had, while going round the house unplugging stuff before we left, switched the freezer off. I had, and the smell of meat left to fester in summer heat for two weeks was something that still comes back to me.

It's a matter of opinion whether this excellent gadget would have helped in the circumstances, but it could mean peace of mind for a lot of people if not this holiday (imagining that you are already on it), then maybe next.

It's a plug adaptor with a fitted sim card, meaning you can turn electrical appliances of up to 16 amps on or off by SMS. The Energenie also has a sensor that will text you when a temperature threshold, set by you, has been exceeded, so you can then turn on the aircon or heating in a specific room from a distance. Additionally, it monitors power and will alert you by text if energy is lost - so you can know that, say, your business server or home fridge is not working. Not a glamorous product, then, but an exceedingly clever and sensible one. £129.99, from www.energenie4u.co.uk.

ION AI

I had to c
Rubicons
action-ca
camera w
titbit I co

The fir
whole na
this way:
willingly
howsoeve