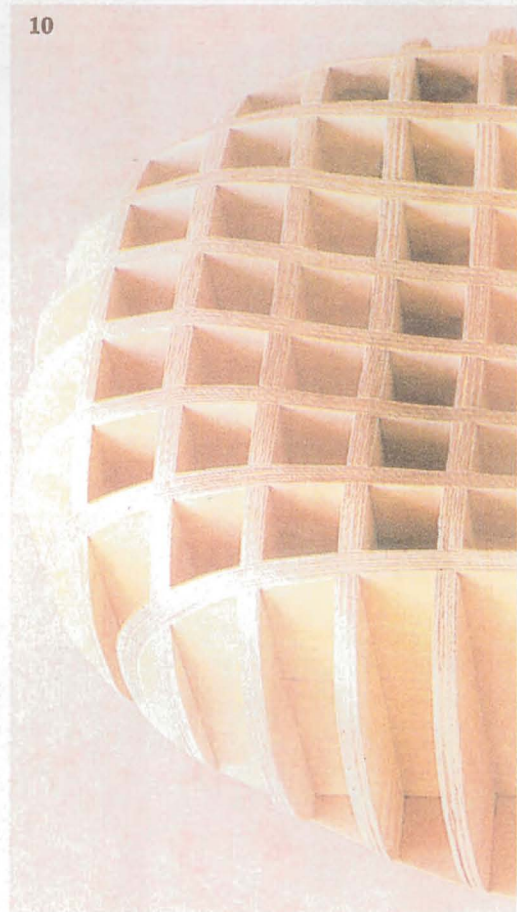
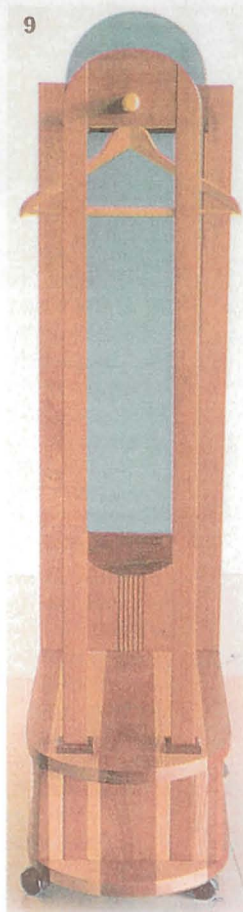
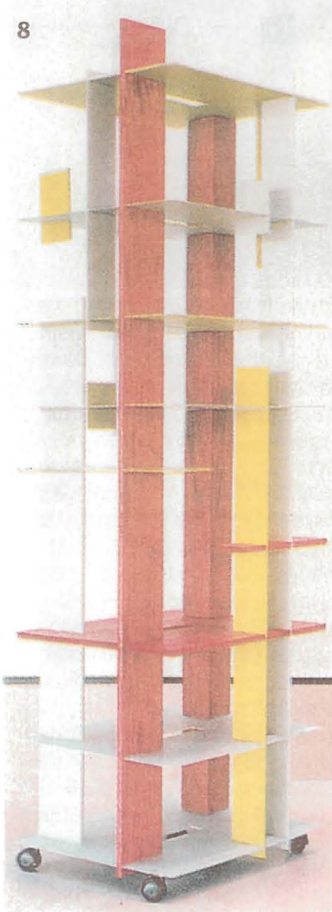


# WINNERS

In this year's *Sydney Morning Herald* Young Designer industrial design, a sophisticated take on a familiar item



IT ALL started with a wheel. Sydney's up-and-coming designers were not asked to reinvent it, but to use it as the starting point to design and develop a stylish and functional domestic object that could be easily moved around the house.

This was the broad blueprint for the 1997 *Sydney Morning Herald* Young Designer of the Year awards, which were announced at the Powerhouse Museum last night.

It is a competition that puts the spotlight on local design talent during Sydney Design Week. Each entrant was given four Caford castors to be used for a piece of furniture to be made from either new or recycled materials. The theme was mobility and the result was more than 50 submissions of contemporary furniture, many with the vitality that comes only with the ideas of youth.

There were storage units on wheels. Chairs on wheels. A chaise longue on wheels. Commodes on wheels. Stools on wheels. A screen on wheels. Shelves on wheels. Couches on wheels. Almost everything, in fact,

except perhaps a grandfather clock or umbrella stand on wheels.

But in the end, there had to be a winner. The overall prize went to Annika Ekholm, a third-year architecture student at the University of NSW, for her innovative laundry unit on wheels. Named "pulito" (which in Italian translates to "clean"), it is an ingenious piece of industrial design that functions both as a mobile laundry basket and as a clothes horse for shirts, underwear and hosiery.

"It's really a pet for the laundry," says Ekholm of the plywood prototype. "The whole idea was to create a laundry basket and a clothes horse in one unit that could fold away and look attractive, and that could be manufactured for a reasonable price. It was also designed to resolve that whole household laundry problem, particularly in apartments where there is not so much space."

Modern living, it seems, requires modern solutions to that age-old problem of the pile of dirty washing. And, ultimately, it is a product of design that has the potential to improve the ways of living a domestic life.

The judges - Terence Measham,

# ON A ROLL

of the Year award the choice was between an ingenious example of and the great Australian tradition of making do. DUGALD JELLIE reports.

director of the Powerhouse Museum, Davina Jackson, editor of *Architecture Australia*, Madeline Lester, the federal president of the Design Institute of Australia, and John Sandeman, design director of *The Sydney Morning Herald* – agreed that Ekholm's laundry unit was the most inventive piece of furniture submitted, ideally suited to the requirement of mobility and eminently functional.

"We're witnessing in Sydney and Melbourne a major boom in townhouse living and this is a great contraption for a townhouse problem of how to store and dry the laundry," says Jackson of the unit. "It needs refinement in some aspects of its design, but the basic idea is very sound indeed."

Measham was similarly impressed by its practicality: "It identifies a real need – which is how to dry your socks and other garments on a wet day – and addresses it. More than any other entry in the competition, the mobility of this unit is really relevant, because you can pull it inside or onto a deck or roll it away for storage in a cupboard."

Lester also gave it top marks in her report card. "It's a space-saving solu-

tion. It's not that well made, but it's a prototype that displays a high level of thought, and for a very functional piece of furniture it is also very aesthetic."

Nicolle South, an architecture graduate from University of Sydney, won the award for best design using new materials with her entertainment unit, made from plywood and pine, using horizontal lines and geometric shapes.

Terence Measham says it is "an accomplished version" of the entertainment unit on which you place your television and video-recorder. From other judges, South's entry provoked stronger praise.

"I can see this on the floor of any of the best contemporary furniture manufacture showrooms in Sydney," says Davina Jackson.

While Madeline Lester says it displays a sophisticated approach to the use of some of the new materials available today, and is a fine example of a piece of three-dimensional furniture.

Martin Wilcock, a first-year architectural technology student from Sydney Institute of Technology, won the award for the recycled material section for his storage unit made from

two grease drums, engineering components and timber. "I think it's a superb piece of recycling, particularly as it's traditionally Australian and refers to the great days of bush furniture, and uses the same techniques," says Measham.

The judges also highly commended Stephen Moule's mobile clothes unit and its high level of craftsmanship using recycled timbers such as Douglas fir, Kauri pine and Australian red cedar; Claire Stannard's stylish shelving unit, with its architectural shapes and resolution of an electrical cabling problem; and Luis Nheu's whimsical and witty stool that was, all agreed, exceptionally comfortable.

Ekholm, as overall winner, will receive a return trip for two to the design mecca of Europe, Milan (courtesy of Alitalia), plus \$2,000 spending money. New Materials category winner Nicolle South receives a Ron Arad Bookworm and Recycled Materials winner Martin Wilcock gets Arad's Fiam Cler mobile shelving (both from Space Furniture).

The designs of 14 finalists will be on display at the Powerhouse Museum's Turbine Hall until August 16.



