

Design Lab '06

Press Release

Barcelona, November 30, 2006

Portable cooking with a renewable heat source, from Mexico

Design Lab 2006 finalist reveals Stirling Engine technology in a cooker

Combining technological advancements with a sleek, modern and usable design lie at the basis of the development of VESSTO, a portable ceramic cooker developed by Eduardo Altamirano Segovia. His concept is one of nine finalists in the fourth edition of the Electrolux Design Lab competition and was selected for its blend of appealing visual design, strong environmental considerations and its ability to attract consumers back to cooking wholesome and healthy meals in a unique manner.

VESSTO, an anagram for "Stirling Stove", is a cooker which combines physical flexibility and use of renewable energy as a power source. Making use of an advanced version of the Stirling Engine, Eduardo's concept uses heat from the stove to expand and contract small quantities of gas inside the appliance, which in turn power the product. The Stirling engine, originally developed by Robert Stirling in 1816, is not used widely but has been credited for its quiet operation and energy efficiency.

Today Stirling engines are primarily used in submarines, where silence and efficiency are primary requirements. The engine offers a perfectly quiet operation since no gas is vented and no explosions take place inside the structure. The initial start-up of VESSTO only uses a small integrated battery, until cooking points reach a high enough temperature to run the Stirling engine independently.

Self-powered, Eduardo's concept removes any need for a fixed cooking location. Consumers can prepare food in almost any place they desire, from kitchen to living room, garden to the great outdoors. The appliance is designed to encourage consumers to move away from ready-made-meals and back to cooking wholesome meals on a traditional stove, with a twist.

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"The appliance lends itself to endless possibilities", explains Eduardo, "The incorporation of Stirling engine technology offers consumers more freedom to cook anywhere they want, while at the same time reducing energy usage through its self powering system. A clean and appealing design finishes off the concept nicely, giving it appeal beyond practical and environmental considerations, by enticing consumers to return to traditional cooking. Modern technology and design can help enhance the overall experience and encourage consumers to literally go back to the stove".

VESSTO's touch sensitive and digital control panel is also powered via this unique concept. Lit by an Organic Light-Emitting-Diode (OLED), the display requires only a minimal amount of power to function while simultaneously offering clean and clear visual results. The control panel manages the four cooking points while also offering a screen displaying recipes, notes or other related cooking information which can be downloaded from, for example, the Web.

Light-weight and easily transportable, VESSTO is fitted with an aluminum base plate to protect surfaces it is placed on. The aluminum plate additionally supports the dispersion of heat and re-uses it, via the Stirling engine, to power the appliance.

A ceramic coating further makes cleaning the appliance easy and efficient. A sleep function incorporated in the cooking program means consumers can leave items to cook to perfection without getting involved, as a timer automatically switches off the appliance after a given period of time.

As a final touch, Eduardo's concept has been designed in numerous colors, to meet ever-increasing demands for more personalized appliances in the home. VESSTO is offered in yellow, red, blue and black.

VESSTO is one of nine finalists in this year's Design Lab Competition. In the fourth edition of this global competition, run by Electrolux, design students are being challenged to seek food preservation and preparation solutions that promote healthy eating habits for the consumer in 2016.

More details on the current as well as past editions of Design Lab can be found on the competition's recently revamped and dedicated website:
www.electrolux.com/designlab

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More information on the Stirling engine: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stirling_engine

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