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A Hot Office Lunch for the COVID-Cautious

BY LORRIE BAUMANN

This year StoreMaxx is introducing the Hot Box, a solution for those who are re-emerging from the COVID-19 lock-down but who aren't sure yet that they want to brave the crowds in the company break room or their local fast food hot spot. The Hot Box is a food container that will heat up a meal-sized food portion in minutes with no necessity for a power outlet or even a battery – all it needs is a few ounces of tap water.

The Hot Box is a dual-walled container – the inner three-compartment container holds the food and the outer container holds a single-use Therma Pak, StoreMaxx's proprietary thermal pack. Take the all-natural Therma Pak out of its foil packaging, then add a little water to the outer container with its Therma Pak, and a chemical reaction heats the water into steam. A lid holds the steam inside the container. "It's the steam that heats the meal," said Ed Spitaletta, StoreMaxx's Chief Executive Officer. "The Hot Box is revolutionary in the respect that there's nothing like it on the market. It's like carrying

a little microwave oven with you wherever you go. In the office setting, it's very convenient and economical, and the container is washable and reusable."

The capacity of the inner container is about 20 ounces. "That's up to a pound and a half of food – that's a pretty hefty meal," Spitaletta said.

The thermal material in the Therma Pak is made from sea shells, Spitaletta said. The inner and outer containers are a lot like those your customer is already bringing home from restaurants or the hot bars at supermarkets. Noticing that consumers, including his wife, were finding ways to repurpose those containers at home rather than simply throwing them away is how StoreMaxx was started in 2008, Spitaletta said. "The premise of the company originally was to bring to the retail market goods that were home-friendly but not available to consumers in retail stores," he said. "I identified commercial-grade food storage containers... I started putting together a line – several different lines of

commercial-grade, restaurant-quality containers into a program."

When batch food preparation caught on among consumers who were trying to beat the effects of the Great Recession or adhere to special diet regimes, popularity of the StoreMaxx containers exploded, Spitaletta said. "We were fortunate that, as a company, we went out and started to acquire some pretty sizable accounts," he said. "We started developing account relationships in the supermarket trade, drugstore trade, warehouse clubs and convenience stores, home centers, specialty big-box stores."

While the product is technically disposable, in that it's economically feasible for people to use it just once before discarding it, in general, consumers do reuse the containers,

Spitaletta said. "The driving force behind the company is ecologically friendly," he said.

"We really do want to do our part in the reduction of our carbon footprint, as much as we can. We do that by creating an item that's recyclable and reusable – it's not a single-use product."

Hot Box, like all of the products that StoreMaxx offers, is made in North America. It's

packaged as a set of five – one for each lunch in the work week. The company is also planning to launch a club pack that will be released in late June. The suggested retail price for the five-item set is \$14.99.

For more information, contact StoreMaxx at 844.SNAP-PAK or visit www.snappakusa.com. **KN**



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Escaping to the Outdoors



AeroPress Go

The AeroPress Go is compact, lightweight and durable, so it's ideal for coffee lovers who want to enjoy their favorite brewed coffee while they're away from home. The AeroPress Go travels self-contained in its mug, so it's easy to toss into a backpack or a suitcase or to stash away in the galley kitchen of an RV or boat.

The breakthrough rapid, total immersion brewing process of the AeroPress Go produces rich flavor without bitterness and high acidity with a process that yields coffee with only one-fifth the acid level of the ordinary drip brew. Cleanup afterwards is a snap – just eject the spent coffee grounds and rinse the plunger.

AeroPress Go is made in the USA. For more information, call 1.650.493.3050 or visit www.aeropress.com.



Great Scrape

Great Scrape is a barbecue cleaning tool that has no wire bristles, so there's no danger of bristles detaching from the tool and becoming embedded in the food that comes off the grill. It's made of solid hardwood that chars when it comes into contact with the heated grill, so that its edge takes on the shape of the grill's bars. The Great Scrape will last for years, and it's offered in multiple models. For more information, visit www.thegreatscrape.com.

The ICEMULE Traveler

The Traveler is a soft cooler that doubles as incredibly durable luggage. With a 35-liter capacity, 36 soda cans plus ice will fit easily inside it and stay cold for 48 hours or longer. The hassle-free Traveler is extremely accessible, as the exclusive Bowhead Top™ opens wide to allow for easy removal of the contents. This cooler is equipped with a completely unique suspension system, and the removable butterfly backpack strap ensures that this is the easiest-to-carry, high-capacity soft cooler around. The suggested retail price is \$289.95. For more information, visit www.icemulecoolers.com.



Bambu

Bambu's Grubware® utensils are the ideal carry-with-you utensil set that allows people to say "No, thank you," to plastic cutlery. Made of certified organic bamboo, the company's products carry the familiar USDA Organic seal. Grubware is made without glue or lacquer and finished in an organic linseed oil.

The travel pouch comes in two styles: Renewable Cork Fabric and Renewable Hemp (with a cork liner). The update design is the new D ring on the pouch to snap it to a bag or pack. For more information, visit www.bambuhome.com.



Grand Fruit Infusion Pitcher

With the Grand Fruit Infusion Pitcher, Prodyne expands its popular line of water-infusing products to quench the thirst of health-conscious consumers. The 90-ounce Grand is designed for daily use and is made from BPA-free, crystal-clear acrylic and includes a removable fruit infusion rod that can be filled with an endless variety of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs to satisfy the consumer who seeks alternatives to sugary beverages and expensive artificially flavored seltzer waters. Available with clear, blue, red or green lid and handle. The Grand Fruit Infusion Pitcher from Prodyne retails for a suggested \$24.99. For more information, visit www.prodyne.com.



ICE BAG Collapsible Wine Coolers

The ICE BAG® from Franmara is perfect for parties and picnics. The ICE BAG chills wine bottles, and then folds down for easy storage after the wine is gone. It's very strong and durable with sturdy loop handles.

Available in Clear, Pink, Purple, Red, and Blue, and with newer models in Gold, Silver, Black and White solid-color designs. The ICE BAG for Wine measures 9-5/8 inches high and 4-5/8 inches by 4 inches at the base. A larger size is available for champagne. Retail prices range from \$6 to \$8. For more information, call 1.800.423.5855 or email orders@franmara.com.

StoreMaxx Inc. Introduces Hot Box

The Hot Box from StoreMaxx offers a means of heating a prepared meal any time and anywhere – without waiting in line to use the microwave oven in the office break room. With the Hot Box, food is placed in a tray that goes into an outer tray that holds a Therma Pak™ chemical warmer. The user adds 3 ounces of room temperature water into the outer tray that holds the Therma Pak and tops that with the inner tray holding the food. Within 20 seconds, the Therma Pak heats the water to generate steam to heat the meal. The meal is heated and ready to eat in only four to five minutes.

Hot Box is manufactured using the highest-grade recyclable BPA-free food-safe contact resins and looks from the outside like the kind of ordinary food storage container that a grocery shopper might find stacked next to the prepared food bar in the store. It's affordable, recyclable and easy to use. Visit www.storemaxx.net.



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