

Looking for good-looking, useful presents that actually work?

Twelve years after registering the business name, The Good Store, Marshall Martin's dream has finally come to fruition — his own gift store filled with good-looking, useful things that work.

The former ABC presenter and producer came up with the concept while working in New York at Tower Records, around the corner from some luxurious gift stores that stocked "disgustingly expensive things that weren't practical".

"The Good Store is about useful presents," Mr Martin said. "Ask someone if they have an umbrella that works or a teapot that doesn't drip and the answer is usually no. People don't need more stuff, they just want stuff that works."

Products range from simple fly swatters, knife sharpeners and can openers to more quirky finds such as spin-top toys, fail-proof alarms, De Beers Bling Blink acrylic rings (by the inventors of the diamond ring), Scalextric car sets and the Estwing hammer, made from one piece of forged steel.

Other items include wallets, watches, books, KitchenAid appliances, Alessi wares, stationery, gift cards, glasses, original Reyn Spooner Hawaiian shirts ("actually made in Hawaii"), Crocs shoes, gardening tools, kitchen tools and gourmet coffee and teas.

Placards outlining a product's origins, what it does and why it's the best, written by Mr Martin, sit alongside every product and are fascinating to read.

There's every chance that he will beat you to the punch, though, and tell you the stories himself, describing himself as an "old-fashioned shopkeeper".

Take the Baggy Green caps for example. Manufactured by the



The shop offers a range of colourful spinning tops.

makers of the original test caps, they feature the same bottle green flannel fabric in an eight-panel design — the only difference being the motif on the front.

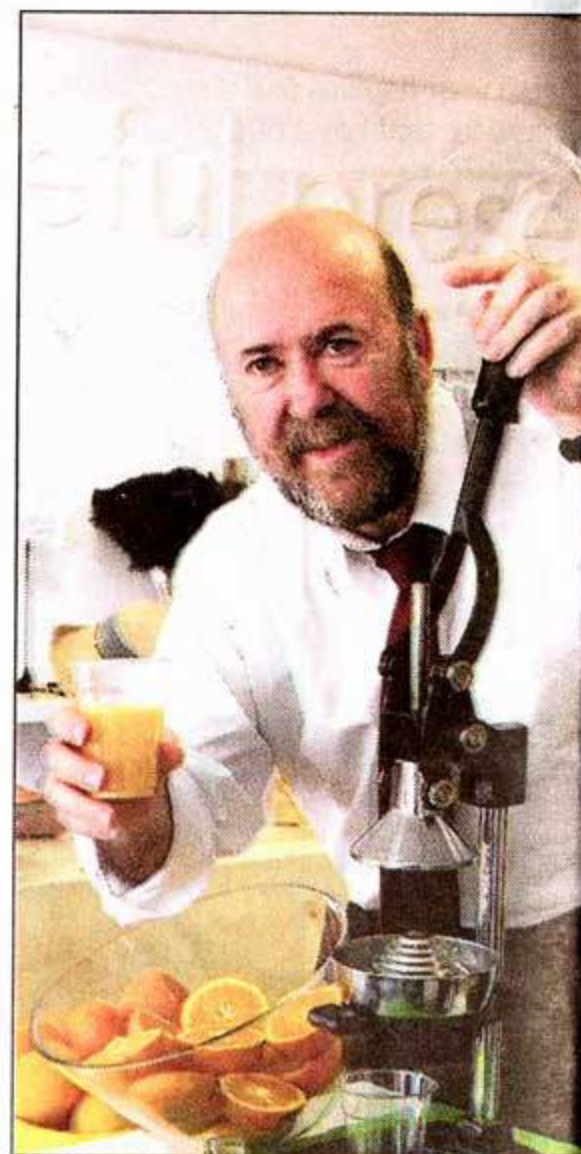
"The original caps have the Coat of Arms on the front but ours have a wicket with two bats crossed in front," he said.

And then there's the Big Squeeze citrus juicer and Bialetti Mukka Express coffee machine. The stories behind these products are too long to go into but having been privy to a freshly squeezed orange juice and piping hot coffee, I have to agree that the products are pretty damn good.

Mr Martin said he wrote a list of 200 items that he wanted to include in the store and set about finding them before opening. But unlike many gift store owners, he sourced products by word of mouth rather than from buying trips or trade fairs.

"I went to one trade fair in Sydney and all I saw was candles so that put me right off," he joked.

"Friends tell me about what they have that works and what doesn't and I take my lead from that."



Marshall Martin tests out a Big Squeeze citrus juicer.

Fly swatter.



Bialetti Mukka coffee machine.

The Good Store, Shop 2, 363-367 Albany Highway, Victoria Park. Phone 9361 8271. Gift vouchers are available.

'People don't need more stuff, they just want stuff that works'.



Dessert bowls.



Pisellino cotton bud holder.



Salad Song (cruet set).