

Kitchen Design

A Well-Bread Look At The Cool History Of The Toaster

(NAPSA)—The next time you enjoy a bite of warm, crisp toast, you may want to consider this tasteful review of the past, present and possible future of the appliance that made it for you.

Back in ancient Rome, bread was stuck on a knife and toasted over an open fire. As the art of cooking advanced over the centuries, the practice of making toast was improved with toasting forks, toast racks and similar tools, but the bread still had to be held to a flame and the results could be variable, to say the least.

At last, in the late 1800's, Thomas Edison domesticated electricity, giving kitchen appliance designers much food for thought. In the early 1900's a number of electric toasters were patented. Then, in 1919 a man named Charles Strite came up with the automatic or pop-up toaster. It had a timer and spring to keep the toast from burning.

Since then, toasters were pretty much all basic, rectangular, and indistinguishable from one another. Until, in 1999, that is, when T-Fal, the company behind many innovative kitchen products, unveiled its 2-slice Avanté toaster. With an angular silhouette—wide, bagel-friendly slots tilted invitingly forward—the Avanté was part Art



The shape of things to come: toasters today have come a long way in beauty and their ability to brown bread, bagels and more.

Deco and part architecture. Some say the shape of kitchen toasters changed forever.

The appliance's unique angular design—flat back and curved face—was created to be safer and more convenient to use and it projected a bold design statement that appealed to style-conscious homeowners who demand something special from an appliance they see and use every day.

Although retro in design, the Avanté looked straight into the future with its features, including self-centering mechanisms and electronic control for more even browning, cool-to-the-touch exteriors for safety and distinctive Hi-Lift lever which conveniently raised toast above the slots for easy removal.

Later, the Deluxe Chrome Avanté featuring a striking black and chrome exterior came along. Next came the family-size 4-slice Avanté.

The latest enhancement is the addition of a special Bagel mode, that automatically toasts bagels with extra heat on the inside and less on the outside, for perfect results every time.

Today, the line includes both 2-slice and 4-slice versions, in chrome and black as well as in white with chrome accents. These striking, modern toasters are engineered with extra-wide, 1.3-inch slots that automatically self-adjust to accommodate a variety of breads, bagels and muffins.

They all have crumb trays for easy cleaning, and a useful re-heating mode.

The latest toasters are equipped with 6-position precision electronic browning, and a cancel function to interrupt toasting mid-cycle.

Thermal-insulated housings keep these toasters cool to the touch. The two 4-slice toasters have pullout crumb trays; the 2-slice toasters, crumb traps. Each has back handles for easy portability.

For more toaster facts, including where to get one, you can visit www.t-fal.com or call 800-395-8325.