

DOMESTIC Goddesses:

Midcentury Appliances That

Rocked Our World

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'Innovation' and 'style' are just two words that describe American home goods during the postwar years. When WWII ended in the summer of 1945, not only did the country have cause to celebrate the end of a major world crisis, but we also cheered the conclusion of rationing and lack of consumer products during the Great Depression and war years. In terms of design and technology, the era's coming domestic products would change the way Americans thought about modern living forever.

NEW DAYS

The postwar period began with soft, rounded forms on appliances, carried over from the 1940s when manufacturers put the production of just about everything on hold to support the war effort. Afterward, many appliance companies simply picked up where they left off, since it took factories several years to convert back to domestic production and consumer demand was high. This can be seen in the 1948 Kelvinator refrigerator, a great example of art deco styling. Over at GE, they borrowed heavily from the burgeoning airline industry with their Stratoliner, Stewardess and Airliner ranges that used the popular streamlined designs of the past. Manufacturers did begin to address requests for more color in their products, though. Philco introduced a range designed by industrial designer Harold Van



Doren with a choice of four accent colors—yellow, green, red and neutral taupe.

One innovative company would set a trend that was so new and different it would take other manufacturers years to compete. Los Angeles-based Thermador brilliantly separated the oven from the burners of a standard range to create the first built-in oven and cooktop in 1946. Beautifully designed in stainless steel, the units appeared solid and heavy duty, yet sophisticated. The

