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50



INSIDE: New lifestyles section

You don't have to strain your wallet to stock your home with the right fitness equipment. **HEALTHY LIVING**



Fearsome flick

King Kong opens at midnight tonight, this remake is worth staying up late for

GUIDELIV

Cuban hopes to clean up

Mavs owner invests in hygiene firm he says is awash in potential

By **CRAYTON HARRISON**
Technology Writer

Mark Cuban's latest investment has gone in the toilet.

The Dallas Mavericks owner is funding a California firm that makes bidet-like attachments for commodes.

Brondell Inc., named after valve-flush toilet inventor J.F. Brondell, has been selling its Swash products since January.

Now the company is flush with cash. Mr. Cuban was the lead investor in a financing round that raised

\$1.3 million for Brondell, the company plans to announce today.

He'll also join the company's board of directors.

Mr. Cuban hasn't tried the Swash yet, but it's in a promising market, he said Monday via e-mail. There are 220 million residential toilets in the U.S., Brondell believes.

"It's all about putting butts in seats," said Mr. Cuban, borrowing a sports industry mantra.

Mr. Cuban's got a million of 'em.

"He told us one of the reasons he wanted to invest was to clean up America," Brondell chief executive Scott Pinizzotto said.

"I liked the technology and the opportunity," Mr. Cuban continued. "Like most consumer investments I make, I don't base it on my personal experience."

The Swash replaces the regular old toilet seat and attaches to the pipe and to an electrical outlet. At the touch of a button, a small nozzle inches out from beneath the seat, spurting water upward. The toilet seat can also be pre-heated for comfort.

Swash models range from



Mark Cuban

\$429 to \$549. They're available through several outlets, including Home Depot Inc.'s Web site and at some Bed Bath & Beyond Inc. locations.

Mr. Pinizzotto acknowledged that U.S. consumers aren't particularly adventurous in their toilet preferences. But this is the dawning of a new bidet.

Americans have shown an interest in better hygiene, buying expensive electric toothbrushes and water filtration systems, the CEO noted.

Mr. Pinizzotto and his co-founder, Dave Samuel, didn't invent the technology themselves. Similar toilet attachments are popular in Japan, said Mr. Pinizzotto, who used to work in Tokyo as a product designer for Sony Corp.

Mr. Samuel was the founder of Internet radio site Spinner.com, which was sold to America Online in 1999 — the same year Yahoo Inc. bought Mr. Cuban's company, Broadcast.com. The two knew each other from the dot-com days.



Brondell

Brondell's Swash 600 is shown replacing the regular seat on a toilet. A button powers a small nozzle out from beneath the seat to spurt water upward.

Brondell will use the money to expand its marketing reach, recruit new distributors and develop some new products it plans to announce late next year.

Mr. Pinizzotto declined to reveal details of those upcoming products.

"We have a few surprises," he said. "We'll be expanding the whole category of getting people to think about the toilet and their toi-

let seat in a different way. There's an opportunity here to really improve that area of the bathroom."

Staff writers Suzanne Marta and Terry Maxon contributed to this report.

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