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Piece meal

We'll take sugar that's a bit of a puzzle and a portion-controlling cake tin



1. DESIGNER BEER

The beers from microbrewery 32 Via dei Birrai, outside Treviso, are a memorable concoction of Italian source water (arguably the best in the world) and Belgian hops. The handcrafted, unfiltered white beers and pale and dark ales come in attractive bottles with a signature 'triple seal': a silicone stopper, bottle top and plastic capsule. From €75 for 12 bottles, tel: 39.0423 681983 (Italy), www.32viadeibirrai.com

4. PUZZLE SUGAR

Though we shouldn't really encourage playing with food, jigsaw-puzzle sugar shapes are a great distraction when there really isn't much to say over coffee. Part of the repertoire of French sugar specialists Can à Suc – which also makes teddy bears and hearts – the puzzle lump is the least sugary of all its sweet offerings. £12, from Fortnum & Mason, tel: 44.20 7734 8040 (UK), www.fortnumandmason.com

2. HONEY SWEETS

Mestre Cacau's dark chocolate bonbons with organic honey reflect three Portuguese food trends: a penchant for traditional and organic; an emerging artisanal chocolate industry; and a growing awareness of environmentally friendly packaging – in this case, the cardboard roll. We like them because they are sticky, come in small quantities and take some seeking out. €13, from *Delicias de Origem Portuguesa*, Lisbon, tel: 351.217 958 368, www.mestrecacau.pt

5. PORTIONS CAKE TIN

It's not that much of a headache to work out how to vary the size of a slice of cake when catering for different appetites, but German design company Konstantin Slawinski has made it foolproof anyway. The SL14 S-XL cake tin has an uneven base and dividing ridges that demarcate larger and smaller portions. €24, from *Konstantin Slawinski*, tel: 49.221 28 55 39 00 (Germany), www.konstantinlawinski.com

3. RAPESEED OIL

Oleifera is a rare, high-quality rapeseed oil made by a band of entrepreneurial farmers on the English/Scottish border, and packaged with the help of Newcastle design consultants NE6. Billed as being healthier than olive oil, it is distributed throughout the UK, answering the call for locally grown produce that lowers food miles. £6.50 for 500ml, from selected Sainsburys, or buy online at www.borderfields.co.uk

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