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My goodness Terence, that's a cool phone...

RACHEL COOPER

STUDIO Conran, part of the design group founded by Sir Terence Conran which is famous for sleek furniture and homeware, has stepped up its footprint in the high-tech space by designing a mobile phone handset for leading Japanese mobile operator NTT DOCOMO.

The chocolate-bar shaped phone, which launches in Japan later this month, is the latest in a series of collaborations between the Japanese telecoms operator and top designers including French macaroon king Pierre Hermé, Stefano Giovannoni, who creates kitchenware for Italy's Alessi, and Japanese art director Kashiwa Sato.

Aimed at 20- to 40-year-olds, the phone has been a year in the making and is manufactured by LG.

Roger Mavity, chief executive of Conran Holdings, said that in the phone market physical design has lagged "phenomenal" technical design and is "quite mediocre". Studio Conran believes there is a market for a "beautifully designed object" that concentrates on doing the simple things well, he said.

