

Rise of the scuppie — caring, cashed-up consumer

FIRST there were hippies. Then there were yuppies. And now, swarming around us in their ethical yet impossibly stylish shoes, we have scuppies, a hybrid of the two.

Standing for Socially Conscious Upwardly Mobile Persons, scuppies are the most influential consumer group of our time. Just like hippies, they care about society and the environment — but, just like yuppies, they care about their quality of life and bank balance, too.

The term was coined by the self-confessed American scuppie Chuck Failla: "I'm a professional. I'm ambitious, I like nice things. I want security and a degree of wealth. But I don't like to go after those goals in anything other than a socially conscious way."

Now, thanks to a scuppie manifesto on his website and *The Scuppie Handbook*, due to hit the shelves later this year, he is showing others how to live the scuppie way.

Being a scuppie is about having a high-quality, ethical lifestyle.

Scuppies have decent jobs and



Celebrity scuppies Bono and Leonardo DiCaprio

make good money, but might, like Failla, indulge in a little pro bono work on the side. They still buy all the nice stuff, they just make sure it doesn't come at (too high) an environmental/social/human cost.

So, Starbucks is fine, if it's Fairtrade coffee. And imported fruit on home-made granola in the morning is OK, if

it was carried home from the supermarket in a recycled bag.

There is more, however, to gain from scuppieness than a warm, fuzzy feeling as you slide between your organic cotton sheets at night.

It also grants you access to the most prestigious of social groups.

Thanks to the glamorous cult of

green, being socially conscious and eco-aware is the norm among most people swanning around at the upper echelons of society.

From Bono to Leonardo DiCaprio, conspicuous consumerism is out and caring consumerism is in.

Naturally, scuppies have come under attack from the more hardcore elements of the eco-movement, riled by the rampant contradictions at the heart of their practices.

But there are degrees of scuppiedom. "You might be 80 per cent hippie and 20 per cent yuppie, or 40 per cent hippie and the rest yuppie," Failla says.

"But you're not going to find a scuppie chaining himself to a redwood tree in a forest or in an inflatable boat, chasing an oil tanker."

You will, however, find them in the organic cafe, at the school gates and in your yoga class, because the scuppie group is growing — and fast.

□ **Columnist Colin Pearce is unwell. He'll be back on deck next week.**