

Defy launches solar hybrid appliance range in SA

In a bid to help consumers save on electricity costs and reduce the impacts of loadshedding, domestic appliance manufacturer Defy has launched its Solar Hybrid fridge and freezer products in South Africa. The range includes a fridge and a chest freezer, both of which use solar power to reduce electricity consumption from the grid.



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Despite being a solar-powered fridge and freezer, the Solar Hybrid range operates a little differently from other solar appliances on the market – they run off a dual power source and also plug into the electricity grid. The Solar Hybrid products run directly off the solar panels during the day when the sun is out and revert to the electrical grid at night when it is dark.

The installation does not require batteries or inverters, which reduces the cost of ownership but limits access to reliable solar power to daytime hours in suitable weather conditions. When no sunlight is available, the fridges and freezers will draw energy from the power grid. This hybrid model reduces the fridge's energy consumption by 44% and the freezer's by 38%.



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The range retails for less than R6,000, including the cost of the solar panels needed.

Evren Albas, CEO of Defy Appliances, commented, "Traditionally, solar refrigerators are high-cost items and require expensive batteries or inverters. However, the Solar Hybrid range provides a built-in intelligent electronics solution aimed at providing this innovative technology to a wider market at an affordable price to help save on electricity costs. This while at the same time making it easier for more people to live a greener life by increasing sustainable solar power usage."

"The rising cost of electricity coupled with disruptions in power supply such as loadshedding and lengthy unplanned power outages are affecting everyone in Africa. It is these challenges that inspired us to democratise the cost of solar products to make this innovation available to more communities," noted Albas.



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Defy says the range was designed with Africa in mind, "lowering energy costs by up to 44%, and by keeping food frozen for up to 49 hours" with endure-chill technology when there is no power.

According to Albas, there are two major challenges that Africans face almost daily: access to a reliable – and affordable – source of power; and unnecessary food spoilage due to lack of proper storage, and again, lack of a reliable and continuous power supply. “We decided to do something about it and developed our Designed for Africa Solar Hybrid range that makes use of Africa’s most abundant resource – sunshine,” explained Albas.

South Africa has one of the highest local resources to produce solar energy in the world. Most areas in the country have an average of more than 2,500 hours of sunshine per year. The annual 24-hour global solar radiation average is about 220 W/m² for South Africa, compared to about 150 W/m² for parts of the USA, and roughly 100 W/m² for Europe and the United Kingdom.

Speaking at the virtual launch event on 11 February, Vere Shaba, founder and CEO of Greendesign, said that engineering has the potential to solve some of our greatest challenges as a continent, not only on a large scale, but on a smaller scale too – in our everyday decisions. “Appliances like these show that climate and social innovation is possible in our homes. Not only possible, but important if we are going to address the challenges of energy equity, energy security, energy sustainability and climate change as Africans,” said Shaba.

The Defy Solar Hybrid product range will be available in 78 stores at the end of February and will further expand to more stores across the country as the product penetrates the market. The installation process is managed by Defy’s trusted partner who specialises in solar installations and has a countrywide footprint.

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