

size matters

The times they are a'changing, whether it's what you find in the bottom of your wallet or on your plate, says Sally Feldman. Could this be the start of something big?



And so it comes to pass – the five-cent piece is facing imminent extinction. Apparently, this deceptively harmless, slender little coin has become just too troublesome for retailers to deal with, and is set to go the way of the one and two-cent piece. Yeah, they're a nightmare, those teeny silver suckers, aren't they – take your eyes off them for five minutes and they're rolling down the side of the car seat, getting stuck between the folds of your LV leather wallet and keeping the price of a toothbrush below the \$20 mark. And, let's face it, the economic

may strike me down, but I wonder when we'll see a backlash against teeny-weeny baby herbs and return to salad leaves that don't need keyhole-surgery skills to prepare. The age of the expansive white plate harbouring a thimbleful of all-too-fleeting entrée is long past, so surely micro-vegetables are next for the, er, chop. Could the day come when we see the triumphant resurgence of the giant pumpkin?

And how many fashionistas will have to die needlessly of pneumonia before they finally see the light (or catch sight of themselves in a shop window) about

The time can't be too far off before prices are rounded up to the nearest \$100, or gold bullion makes a comeback – now *that* would finally make sense of the oversized tote

downturn is bad enough without all those shop assistants having to stop tweeting Barack Obama for a second to mess up their nail extensions counting out change.

Give me a big coin with hard-edged corners any day – you know where you stand with a 50-cent piece, though I fear that it, and its smoother cousins, 10 cents and 20 cents, are not long for this world, either. In fact, the time can't be too far off before we see prices being rounded up to the nearest \$100, or gold bullion making a comeback – now *that* would finally make sense of the oversized tote. What a disquieting world it must be indeed for those among us who remember when you could get change out of five bucks for a couple of serfs.

So take the time now to celebrate all that comforting small change, which jingles so reassuringly at the bottom of our handbags or piles up in jars on kitchen benches across the land, ready to bail us out when we run out of milk or aged balsamic, or need to bribe local dignitaries. Before you know it, we'll be paying for everything with plastic... Oh yes, silly me, we are already.

And what will be the next blow for the god of small things? Will she lose her grip entirely to the god of large things? (And no, I'm not alluding to Kevin, despite him moving the economy in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform.) The Produce Awards judges

wearing nought but a pelmet board and a pair of tights? And how much smaller can cars get before they're classed as toys and people-movers mistakenly drive over them in shopping-centre car parks?

As our coinage takes a thrashing, what other diminutives will come under scrutiny? Perhaps in the not-too-distant future, dog whisperers will have to be reskilled because no one owns an animal (or husband for that matter) with small-pet syndrome. The term 'boutique' will revert to its original meaning, and hotels will be flagged simply 'B&B', 'medium' and 'large', with a super-size option if you're on the Gold Coast. A boutique will be – how's this for crazy? – where you buy clothes, which, if we can just wean ourselves off those micro-ingredients, will cover slightly more than our underwear (at least if we're over 18).

It's already started, but I see more and more hotels getting in touch with their inner mansion by swapping a couple of dusty teabags and a chocolate mint on the pillow for larder-sized packets of loose leaf and nanna jars of shortbread. Dare we dream that they'll go one step further and provide luxurious bathroom products in large bottles whose labels you can read without a magnifying glass – discreetly micro-chipped, of course so that people like me don't accidentally pack them in our suitcases to take home. You will, however, be able to buy them instead of stealing them – along with a vast hotel umbrella and the in-house DJ's chillaxation CD – at the hotel boutique. Just don't expect any change. **VE+T**