

HOT STUFF

- [Laura Thomas](#)
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HANDY TOOL /

Writing the right way makes sense, cents

Raised in the valley of entrepreneurship to a physicist father, perhaps it was just natural that Colin Roche became an inventor and small businessman at a young age.

"I was always that guy that was daydreaming of building something, making something," Roche said recently. It was a Saturday detention at Palo Alto High School in 1987 where he first dreamed up the ergonomic pen he's now selling, the PenAgain.

The pen, shaped like a wishbone and designed for the pointer finger to rest on top, took 15 years more to get off the ground.

Roche went to California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, where he and his business partner, Bobby Ronsse, ran a pet maintenance business that employed other students. He worked in a couple of other businesses, where, he said, "I earned my honorary MBA," and was out of work at the end of the dot-com boom like so many others.

Roche returned to his idea, phoned up Ronsse, now a mechanical engineer, and said he wanted to talk about the "pen, again," where the name comes from. The pair began meeting at the Oasis in Menlo Park over several weeks, sketching out their product.

The PenAgain was ready by the 2002 national stationery show in New York, where Roche and Ronsse were overwhelmed with orders.

Now the PenAgain (shown below, \$9.99) is in stationery stores, college bookstores and drugstores nationwide and will soon be in major office supply stores in the fall.

"It makes writing fun," Roche said. "It uses the natural weight of your hand and eliminates the need to grip tightly or push down hard," he said. "You might find yourself writing more, and that can't be such a bad thing."

The PenAgain can be found in many retailers around the Bay Area. Check www.penagain.com for locations.