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Canada's Housewares Magazine

September 2014

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Super Sales Person

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March 7 to 10, 2015

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Visit www.housewares.org/attend

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Opening Lines

Stay focused and stay in business

When it was announced this summer that *Retail News*, the official trade magazine of the Canadian Gift Association, was closing down, a lot of people expected me to be happy. I wasn't. Competition is good for everyone, and it's never fun to be the 'last man standing' in terms of printed trade publications for the gift, tableware and housewares industry. But I think the closure points to a larger issue facing the giftware market – the inability to define precisely what the term 'gift' represents. It's also one of the problems faced by the owners of Bowring/Benix/Bombay Company stores, who filed for creditor protection in August.

While the last Benix kitchen store closed in June, Bowring and Bombay Company have struggled to find their footing offering a mix of home decor and giftware with some kitchenware thrown in for good measure. Tableware used to be the foundation of the giftware industry, and without it gift stores have struggled to find their footing, as seen in the evolution of the Toronto Gift Fair. Today, the market is fragmented and hard to define, comprised of everything from jewelry and scarves, to wall art and plush toys. Frankly, to outside observers it would seem quite a mess. But gift shop owners insist they have to explore every corner to find that one unique new item, that next big fad, in order to stay alive.

At one time, high-end china suppliers (Doulton, Villeroy & Boch, Waterford) brought their big brands (and huge exhibits) to the show and gave the marketplace some clout. Just 10 years ago, there were two very successful giftware trade magazines in Canada, and both carried plenty of advertising. Times changed, and so has their advertising base. *Gifts and Tablewares* folded a few years ago and earlier this year, the Gift & Tableware Association made a major investment in order to rebrand itself as the "Canadian Gift Association". And with the financial support of this large non-profit association, *Retail News* seemed destined for success. In fact, in the last issue, editor Erica Kirkland proudly announced they had won a graphic design award and were named the 'best trade magazine of the year' by the Canadian Business Press.

So what went wrong? According to the press release issued by association president Peter Moore, the magazine was losing too much money to continue, "demonstrating that the business model for print magazines is no longer sustainable in this digital age".

I don't agree. Based on the number of ads they carried, I believe the problem was that the editorial presentation no longer reflected the advertising audience. The magazine itself was absolutely gorgeous. I've always said so. Top photographers and stylists created stunning layouts in every issue. Produced by one of the best graphic design firms in Toronto, the magazine was on par with some of the leading consumer magazines in North America. Trouble was, many of the advertisements seemed out of place.

The cost to print a magazine has declined considerably over the years thanks to desktop publishing software and I know first hand it's easier than ever to produce. But the main reason *Home Style* has been consistently successful for over two decades is because we've stayed true to our market. I only care about housewares because staying focused is so important. We reach everyone in this industry – major chain buyers, hardware dealers, kitchen shop owners, commercial and restaurant suppliers – but we don't touch giftware. It will only dilute what we offer.

Retailers are never pleased by another retailer's failure. I was not thrilled to hear of the demise of the gift association's only printed publication, but that doesn't mean it's the end of the printed word. Yes, we can now get our current events, daily world news and celebrity gossip from a number of online sources, instantly. But if you're able to provide a quality editorial package with specialized, industry-specific information that can't be found anywhere else, a magazine still has potential. I keep urging our readers to enjoy *Home Style* online, but they always ask that we send them a printed magazine because they like to "take it home and read it cover to cover". Now that is something that *does* makes me happy.

– Laurie O'Halloran
laurie@homestylemag.ca



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People In the News

• **Grant Ball**, international general manager, will officially retire from London Drugs at the end of 2014 after 35 years with the company. A native of Alberta, Ball rose steadily through the ranks at London Drugs and has been a significant contributor to the success of the organization. A replacement had not been announced at press time.

• Canadian Tire president **Michael Medline** will be the retailer's next CEO, effective this December. He replaces Stephen Wetmore who will remain on the board in a non-executive position. Wetmore has been credited with turning around the company's performance since he took the job six years ago.

• **Shannon Mitchell** recently joined Browne & Co. as sales representative responsible for the greater Toronto area along with eastern and northern Ontario. Mitchell was formerly with The Casual Gourmet in Hamilton and will

replace Margaret Alsamgeest who retires in December after 26 years.

• Joseph Joseph has appointed housewares industry veteran **Don Turano** to the newly created position of North American President. Turano has more than 15 years of experience in the consumer goods market.

• Target Corporation's U.S. Board of Directors has named former PepsiCo CEO **Brian Cornell** as the company's new chairman of the board and chief executive officer. Cornell replaces Gregg Steinhafel, who left in May. That same month, **Mark Schindele** took over as president of Target Canada.

• Former Crate and Barrel CEO **Barbara Turf** passed away in July, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. She was 71. Turf retired from her position at Crate and Barrel in 2012 and had joined the company's board of directors.

• **Robert (Bob) Larimer**, owner of Metrokane, passed away on August 14th at the age of 85. In 1983, Larimer's wife, Riki Kane Larimer, founded Metrokane and together they built the business into a leading barware company focusing on wine accessories, specifically the Rabbit and Houdini brands. Metrokane (which is distributed by Swissmar in Canada) was sold to Taylor Precision Products last November, though Kane and Larimer were to remain with the company for 15 months to facilitate the operational merger.

• Trudeau recently promoted **Yanick Bienvenue**, who has been with the company for 15 years, to the role of director of product development for all housewares products. The role will be in addition to his responsibilities as segment leader for Food Preparation.

Giftware association folds its official trade magazine

On July 4th, members of the Canadian Gift Association were informed that Retail News, the association's trade magazine, would cease publication. In the press release, the board reported the magazine had lost more than \$1 million in the last five years.

Gift Association president and CEO Peter Moore stated in a press release to members: "Unfortunately, as demonstrated around the world by the closure of many well known titles, the business model for specialist print magazines is not sustainable in an increasingly digital age.

"It is very sad that yet another award winning magazine will stop being printed. The Board spent many months considering this decision before acting. A study conducted to review whether the magazine might be transitioned to a digital-only platform indicated Retail News would continue losing money. Faced with rapidly declining advertising revenues and constantly increasing costs, no reasonable alternative to closing the magazine was discovered."

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Remembering Ben Buerman

I was saddened to hear of the death of our good friend Ben Buerman on July 8th, at the age of 79, after a very brief but difficult battle with cancer.

When Ben started distributing the Wüsthof line in Canada in 1992, we had only been publishing *Home Style* for a couple of years. He started advertising with us right away, and continued to do so until his retirement a few years ago.

Ben was born in Amsterdam and was active in helping his father in the underground resistance at the age of 10. By 14, he had travelled across Europe and developed a taste for travel that would last a lifetime. With a degree in commerce and retail management, his diverse career included military service and owner of a produce store in addition to being a successful entrepreneur.

A man of great integrity, Ben was passionate about the business and was always happy to share his considerable knowledge of cutlery. I can remember sitting with him in our backyard in Burlington, Ontario, one afternoon in the summer of 1993. We enjoyed a cold beer while he methodically explained the finer points of German manufacturing techniques. It was the beginning of a mutually beneficial friendship that lasted over two decades, and many more beers.

Together with his partner and devoted wife of 40-plus years,



Nancy, Ben built the Wüsthof brand steadily across Canada. Enthusiastic, hard-working and knowledgeable, they made a formidable team, complementing each other's personalities beautifully.

During his career, Ben always had a special affinity for independent kitchen shop owners and they became the primary retailers of the high end knife line. He was an eternal optimist and a man of strong character. Ben could never understand it when a customer let him down or was dishonourable. He was a man you could trust, and he expected no less from those he worked with.

As Nancy said in his obituary: "Ben was exceptionally principled, generous and supportive of the underdog. He would always look on the bright side – there were no problems, only solutions. He loved to tinker and fix things and was an avid audiophile and camera buff. He enjoyed good company, good food and fine wine. His life was lived to the fullest and his only regret was that he wasn't given the time to complete everything on his checklist."

Ben and Nancy worked well together and enjoyed a wonderful life travelling to five continents. After he retired as president of Wüsthof in 2012, they spent much of their time in Hawaii where they owned a condo in Maui, their favourite island destination.

Ben will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. His dry sense of humour was a joy, his enthusiasm for life was infectious, and his friendship was a gift that I will always treasure.

- Laurie O'Halloran

Retail Technology

Still plenty of room to grow in e-commerce

E-commerce is growing steadily in Canada, but with fewer than half of this country's businesses running websites, there's still plenty of room for growth.

Canadian enterprises saw online sales rise almost 12% last year to \$136-billion, according to Statistics Canada. Yet the rate of businesses going online was stagnant: compared to 2012, the percentage that had a website was virtually unchanged at 46%. It was larger businesses that reaped the lion's share of online sales, at 64% or \$87-billion.

Corinne Pohlmann of the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses says a major barrier, particularly for smaller businesses, was the hefty investment

needed to build and maintain a website.

Establishing an online shopping portal – including infrastructure to accept payments and security measures to protect customers' personal and financial information – is more difficult for a small operation to handle, she says. Instead, many use social media such as Facebook or shopping portals such as eBay as inexpensive routes to a web presence. Of those that had a website, 38% integrated social media into their digital strategy in 2013, compared to 33% a year earlier.

Certain sectors were more likely to set up their own shop online: about 22% of wholesale trade businesses and 18% of retail trade enterprises sold their products and services online. For those that

did sell online, e-commerce accounted for 24% of their total sales.

More than three-quarters of Canadian businesses used anti-virus and anti-spyware software in 2013, and 62% used a firewall, the report showed.

Cash not carried as often by consumers

A recent MasterCard study suggests that non-cash instruments account for 90% of payments in this country, among the highest rates in the world. That doesn't mean Canadians have stopped carrying notes and coins, however. Cash still accounts for over 40% of all transactions, but the small dollar-value of most purchases skews the value scale.

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Trio of retailers file for creditor protection

A trio of giftware and housewares chains owned by a prominent Canadian retailing family has gone into bankruptcy protection, hurting several prominent vendors in the industry and a void in the retail landscape.

Bombay & Company, Bowring and Benix, owned by a member of the Isaac Benitah family that also owns Fairweather, International Clothiers and other chains, received court protection from creditors in August. They reportedly owe \$86.6-million. Almost half of the debts – \$39.5 million – is owed to companies tied to brothers Isaac and Fred Benitah as secured creditors.

Bombay has 55 stores and Bowring has 57 stores across Canada. The company employs about 1,240 people in total. Benix closed its final store in June.

The Benitah family claim they had trouble competing with U.S. rivals that have invaded Canada such as Bed Bath & Beyond, Home Sense, Williams Sonoma, Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel.

Canada has room for dollar store growth

Dollar Tree acquisition of U.S. rival Family Dollar Stores is unlikely to topple Dollarama's dominant market share in Canada, but it could attempt to challenge people's perceptions about the types of goods a dollar store sells.

In the United States, dollar stores carry a large assortment of packaged and frozen food, while Canadian consumers venture to Dollarama mostly for household goods, kitchen accessories, paper products, and seasonal items.

But grocery retail is still very competitive in Canada, much more so than it used to be, and that would make it a lot harder for any dollar store to move into that category.

Dollar Tree offered \$8.5-billion for its competitor in a deal that will make it North America's largest discount retailer. It has grown to about 200 stores in Canada since acquiring 85 Dollar Giant Stores in 2010, and executives have

plans to reach about 1,000 stores in this country. That would put the chain in league with Montreal-based Dollarama, which has 900 stores and plans to open about 300 more in the coming years.

Retail analyst Keith Howlett of Desjardins Securities predicts the deal, which will take Dollar Tree to more than 13,000 from 5,000 stores with the addition of Family Dollar, will not have a near-term impact on Dollar Tree's expansion plans in Canada.

There appears to be ample room in the Canadian market for more dollar stores. Neil Linsdell, an analyst with Industrial Alliance Securities in Montreal, estimated recently that Canada has capacity for 2,400 such stores.

Consumers still like physical stores

Pure-play online retailers like Amazon now account for about 5% of total U.S. retail sales, according to estimates from A.T. Kearney, with another 5% going through the online channels of traditional brick-and-mortar stores. The other 90% of sales still happen where sales have been happening for hundreds of years: in physical stores. And that's where the future of the retail industry lies, the consultancy firms says in a new report on the industry.

Physical stores are clearly customers' preferred shopping channel and a place where the most significant consumer and retailer value continues, and will continue, to be created.

Shoppers actually find physical stores appealing. They provide consumers with a sensory experience that allows them to touch and feel products, immerse in brand experiences, and engage with sales associates who provide tips and reaffirm shopper enthusiasm for their new purchases.

The consultancy surveyed 2,500 shoppers from seniors to teenagers and asked them whether they prefer physical stores or the internet for various stages of the shopping process, from discovering new products to making a return. Even among the famously Inter-

net-centric millennial generation, the store wins out in most cases.

The big implication of the study is that all other things being equal, it's better to have lots of stores complementing a decent online operation. If old-school retailers can get better at e-commerce faster than online-only companies can figure out physical stores, the numbers suggest shoppers will keep spending the bulk of their dollars with them.

Reverse showrooming is the newest trend

In the past few years, as online shopping exploded and smartphones became the norm, the showrooming phenomenon seemed poised to gut the revenue of offline retailers. But a recent report from BI Intelligence finds that retailers have discovered "reverse showrooming," or "webrooming". This is when consumers go online to research products, but then head to a bricks-and-mortar store to complete their purchase.

Showrooming was once seen as an existential threat to bricks-and-mortar retailers, but it turns out the reverse dynamic is more popular. Reverse showrooming is actually more common than showrooming. In the U.S., 69% of people reverse showroom, while only 46% showroom, according to a Harris poll.

A new study in China dispels the public acceptance in that country of household duties as legitimate rigorous exercise. The study concluded that women and seniors were more likely to list domestic physical activity as a significant portion of their daily exercise. The research also found that those who do the most housework were also the most overweight. The results suggests that Chinese consumers are either overestimating the amount of moderate activity they actually do, or they are eating too much afterward to compensate!

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Rates on Mink Mile no longer affordable

Williams-Sonoma and Pottery Barn will vacate their giant storefronts at 100 Bloor Street West sometime in 2015 in the face of escalating rents along Canada's "Mink Mile." Together, the stores comprise 37,000 square feet on what's considered Canada's prime – and priciest – retail strip.

Bloor Street rents have really escalated rapidly in the last 10 years," says John Crombie of Cushman & Wakefield, citing current ground-floor rents of about \$325 per square foot. Retail rents averaged closer to \$180 or \$225 per square foot just seven years ago.

Even second-floor rents, traditionally a bargain because anything above ground-floor was seen as too far a climb for consumers, are escalating rapidly as Toronto's fierce pace of intensification pushes retail destinations skyward to meet growing downtown demand.

Rents in some second-floor levels along the Mink Mile have virtually tripled over the last few years.

The prime location was worth the hefty premium in order to boost the profile of Williams-Sonoma when it was new to Canada. That's no longer as important. The stores have been located at 100 Bloor Street West since 2002.

The chains will continue to occupy space at Sherway Gardens, Yorkdale Shopping Centre and the Eaton Centre. They also have stores in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec.

Japanese chain to open Canadian store

Muji, which has expanded rapidly across Asia and Europe and recently opened its ninth store in the United States, will launch its first Canadian foray in the Toronto Eaton Centre in mid-December. It intends to add two more stores in the city by the end of next year, before spreading to other large urban markets. There are 270 stores worldwide.

With some 3,000 available products (compared with about 7,500 in its Japan-

ese stores), Muji will be doing battle with the likes of Target, Staples, Shoppers Drug Mart and even Ikea. But this doesn't faze the Japanese company, which sticks resolutely to its position as an environmentally responsible antidote to overpriced global brands, shoddy discount goods and wasteful packaging. To keep costs down, it steers clear of high-priced malls, spends nothing on market research, next to nothing on advertising – less than 2% of sales in Japan and below 1% overseas – and largely ignores the competition.

By 2017, Muji expects to be operating even more stores abroad. They accounted for 21.2% of total operating revenue of \$2.35-billion in 2013. The company is aiming for 30% by 2016.

Nordstrom gears up for Calgary opening

Karen McKibbin, president of Nordstrom's Canadian division, has been gearing up for two years for the September 19th launch of its first store in Calgary's Chinook Centre. For obvious reasons, Nordstrom is taking a decidedly different approach from Target, opening its first six stores gradually over two years.

A lot is riding on McKibbin making a positive first impression with Nordstrom in affluent Calgary. As Target works to make up for lost ground, Nordstrom is investing in a slow, deliberate rollout, betting that its first foray outside its home country will pay off in giving customers reasons to return amid rising competition in the luxury field.

Nordstrom posted \$14-million of operating losses last year in Canada and expects \$35-million in 2014, chief financial officer Mike Koppel says. He expects the red ink will flow for "several years" before the division contributes to the retailer's bottom line.

Eventually, the company anticipates it can generate \$1-billion of annual sales in up to 10 department stores and as many as 20 of its Rack discount outlets.

Nordstrom will host charity galas for the opening of its Canadian stores, as it

does with its US store openings. Its first gala will be held on September 17th in Calgary, two days prior to the opening of the store. All 1,800 gala tickets sold out within two weeks.

A second Canadian gala will be held in March of 2015, prior to the opening of its new Ottawa location. Subsequent galas will be held for the Vancouver and Toronto stores.

Nordstrom's Calgary gala will benefit the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and the Calgary United Way. The entire cost of the gala is underwritten by Nordstrom, meaning that all proceeds from ticket sales go to these charities.

Over the years, Nordstrom's store opening galas have raised millions for various charities. Many raise in excess of \$100,000. The 2008 gala for the opening of Nordstrom's Aventura Mall store in Miami, for example, raised more than \$212,000 from its over 1,700 attendees.

The affluent also like to get a good deal

Wealthy shoppers rave about the pampering they receive at upscale retailers like Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor and Barneys. But how often do wealthy shoppers actually shop in those stores? According to a new survey from Millionaire Corner, not a lot. Among respondents with a net worth of \$5 million or higher, the top retail destinations were Home Depot, Lowe's and Target. Nearly half the well-heeled respondents also said they liked to shop at Costco, and a full third admitted to setting foot in Walmart. Apparently 47% of the wealthy also routinely use Groupon.

The survey found that Lord & Taylor was a regular destination for just 3% of multimillionaire respondents. Neiman Marcus attracted only 8%.

When the Luxury Institute published its annual Luxury Consumer Experience results last year, it reported that while affluent shoppers say they "love the Lord & Taylor experience," only 14% of them shopped in Lord & Taylor in the preceding year. Most of them – 66%, to be exact – were busy buying at Target.

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Lodge introduces new dishwasher-safe line



Counseltron has launched a new line of Lodge heat-enhanced treated pans. The cookware uses a new process that includes the same steps as the traditional cast iron skillet but there is an additional nitrogen extreme heat process added. The result is a product that can survive 400 cycles in a commercial dishwasher with no oxidation. The new process will debut on the new Lodge mini server series and the 6.5-inch and 8-inch skillets, shown above.

Cold brew machine ready for roll out

Keurig's cold product, which will allow consumers to make their own carbonated soft drinks, will hit the market in fiscal 2015, says Green Mountain Coffee Roasters CEO Brian Kelley. Production facility upgrades and construction are underway in Vermont and Georgia. The company has partnered with Coca-Cola for branded beverages in the system, which won't require users to separately purchase CO₂.

From talk show host to product designer

Ellen DeGeneres is planning to launch her own lifestyle brand. She recently explained her vision to *Women's Wear Daily*, saying that she intended her "brand" to be big.

The brand is to be called E.D., but will be pronounced as one word "Ed." Ellen confided that Ed is a nickname that was

given to her by wife, Portia de Rossi.

The E.D. collection will cover everything from gifts and accessories to housewares and pet products.

Ellen will be working with J. Christopher Burch of Burch Creative Capital, Marisa Gardini, president of Isaac Mizrahi, and Michael Francis, chief global brand officer of DreamWorks. Ellen calls them "the most amazing team ever, an all-star team."

The initial collection is set to be launched late October/early November and will feature tableware, candles, home decor, pajamas, and gift wrap. A full launch featuring a broader home-and-garden range, women's and men's clothes, and pet accessories is scheduled for next spring. Distribution will be on-line through a major retail partner.

Whirlpool buys stake in Italian company

Whirlpool has agreed to pay 758 million euros to buy a 60% stake in smaller Italian rival Indesit to further expand beyond its U.S. home market. The deal is the latest in a string of buys by foreigners of Italian companies battling the country's longest recession in 70 years.

The acquisition of Indesit, which is a market leader in Italy, the United Kingdom and Russia, follows Whirlpool's purchase of a majority stake in China's Hefei Rongshida Sanyo Electric last year for \$552 million.

Family-controlled Indesit, which produces washing machines, freezers and ovens, has been searching for eight-months for a buyer that would help it reduce its dependence on Italy and compete against cheaper products from eastern Europe and China.

With growth still weak in some European countries, analysts say the purchase is unlikely to boost Whirlpool's sales in the short term, but could offer cost synergies and help margins, which are lower than Indesit's in the region.

Whirlpool is currently the fourth-biggest player in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, where it made 16% of its \$19 billion global sales last year.



A colourful, compact brewing system

Just in time for the back to school season, Nespresso will be promoting their most lightweight, compact and colourful coffee brewing system yet, the Inissia. The streamlined machine comes equipped with a convenient handle and can fit into the smallest condo or university dorm room. The Inissia line comes in six vibrant colours.

Consumers consider less than two brands

To better understand how consumers make purchase decisions, Retail Council of Canada recently partnered with The NPD Group and MasterCard Canada to conduct a comprehensive study on the Canadian shopper. The study focussed on select product groups: face cream, winter apparel, beverage machines (single-serve coffee/juicer), personal accessories, and PC/Electronics. Only those who planned a purchase were asked.

Surprisingly, consumers in all categories typically considered less than two brands when planning a purchase – and approximately two retailers. "Only 19% of those who had planned to buy a beverage machine switched brands before purchasing." On average, nearly 25% of purchasers switched retailers.

Physical stores remain the dominant purchase channel, but on-line purchases are growing. The percentage who purchased on-line:

Beauty: 9%
Winter Apparel: 11%
Beverage Machine: 16%
Personal Accessory: 23%
PC/Electronics: 30%

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Trudeau celebrates 125 years

Building on 125 years of experience is a rare achievement for a Canadian company but Trudeau has earned its reputation around the world as the brand consumers turn to for quality, value and innovation in the kitchenware and housewares categories. Known as a leading edge global marketer, Trudeau continues its dedication to the industry both at home and abroad.

Trudeau's extensive distribution network of countries has expanded to include offices and distribution centres in Montreal, Chicago, Madrid (Spain), Enschede (Netherlands), Cambridge (U.K.), Hong Kong, Yantian (China) and Shenzhen (China). In total, Trudeau products are now sold in 70 countries around the world.

Trudeau takes great pride in its exclusively Canadian designs by overseeing a continuous stream of new products from the drawing board to the store shelves. Some of the innovations in the last decade that have set Trudeau apart include the signature Graviti Plus mill (a new and improved 'anniversary model was released this year); the Stress Less Corkscrew, recommended by the Canadian Association of Professional Sommeliers; and the universally popular Bottle Cap Catcher.

Today, in-house industrial designers create products in collaboration with a product development team in Canada. The 360 degree approach, from the research and development stage to quality control, logistics, sales, marketing, customer service and in-store support is what builds a solid foundation for Trudeau's wide range of product offerings.

Trudeau is also committed to doing its part for the environment, and has established an EcoFriendly Committee that constantly studies and makes recommendations

targeting the three "R's" (reduce, reuse and respect). Comprehensive testing and quality control also make it possible to offer competitive warranties and ensure high customer satisfaction.

The company was originally established in 1889 under the name Genin Trudeau. Initially the focus was on giftware and glassware importing but they eventually evolved into an international kitchenware and housewares company that exports products around the world. Through four generations, Trudeau Corporation has been a privately held family business – a company built on long-standing traditions reflected in its strong customer base and superior service offered by experienced employees.

Visit Trudeau at www.trudeau.ca or follow Trudeau on Facebook at facebook.com/trudeaucuisine or on Twitter @trudeauKitchen



Above, chairman Robert Trudeau, right, with president Jacques Dubuc. Below, Trudeau's head office is located in Boucherville, Quebec.



IHA TARGETS CONSUMERS

The International Housewares Association (IHA) has launched a new consumer engagement initiative, called **Inspired Home**, designed to directly market its members' housewares products to consumers.

Since its beginnings in 1938, IHA has always played a key role as a business-to-business organization connecting housewares companies and brands to retailers, primarily through its annual International Home + Housewares Show. While these efforts will continue to be a main focus for the organization, IHA is now embarking on a new strategic direction: connecting its housewares expertise to the ultimate buyers and end users – consumers.

"Our goal is to elevate the housewares industry in the eyes of the consumer to drive product visibility and industry credibility, benefitting both members and retailers," says Derek Miller, IHA's vice president, global marketing. "Inspired Home gives us the opportunity to interact and engage directly with consumers all year round, providing resources and inspirational content that will inform their purchasing decisions and ultimately drive housewares sales."

Representing some of the most well-known brands in the housewares industry, IHA will be showcasing its members' products through a variety of marketing and public relations elements including a new website, IHAinspiredhome.org, social media channels, media relations efforts and strategic partnerships.

Each exhibiting IHA Member company will have its own profile page on IHAinspiredhome.org with up to 50 product images for consumers to easily access, along with links to the member's website and social media platforms.



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Fifty years of home fashion from Danica

Based in Vancouver, Danica currently employs nine designers, introduces 600 to 800 new items every six months, and has global sales of \$20 million. The company has weathered two recessions and managed to survive very nicely for almost 50 years in Canada by 'treating housewares as fashion'.

Two-thirds of the business is devoted to the company's Danica, Danica Studio and Now Designs branded products, which are carried by 5,000 specialty stores and 100 chain stores. The remaining business is custom design for stores such as Crate and Barrel, London Drugs, Safeway and Davids Tea.

Longtime friends Rodney Benson, an accountant, and Jeremy Braude, an engineer with an MBA in marketing, fell into housewares 36 years ago as new immigrants from South Africa.

Their first product was a modular, dowel wine-rack – a by-product of a South African broom factory. Convinced they could sell 100,000 racks, they struck a deal for 100 free samples and set aside \$6,000 for marketing. After six months, they had only sold 3,420 wine racks.

Braude then decided to adapt an industrial overhead pot rack for home use. The simple wood-framed steel grid was a daring design for the late 1970s. A Vancouver wood shop made their samples, and their San Francisco wine rack rep gave them a corner of his gourmet show booth for 10% of deals inked.

But when the neophytes returned home with orders, they had to buy half the woodwork shop to induce the owner to stay in business.

Next came two years of rapid growth where they were opening up 100 new accounts every month. The friends discovered their personalities in no way matched their education. Braude preferred bank reconciliations to sales calls and Benson was the exact opposite, so they happily switched roles.

But soon it became apparent no-one was reordering. Retailers loved the product, but consumers didn't. When the 1981 recession hit, the friends merged their failing business with a local wholesaler called Danica Imports. The merger saved them. When Danica's original owner wanted out two years later, he sold his share to them.

But in 1990, they sold the wood business and hit their stride when Braude got the idea to sell casual, economical dinnerware and textiles using original designs. With Danica, they had also inherited Canadian distribution rights for Now Designs, a Los Angeles kitchen textiles company. When Now Designs' owner retired, they bought his company.

Today, Danica has 67 employees and stocks about 4,000 different items. Their factories are willing to handle broad production in small quantities. Customers may order only a few hundred of any one mug, but they have more



Company founders, friends and partners, Rodney Benson, left, and Jeremy Braude.

than 100 mugs in their collections.

"Charge us more, but we don't want to overbuy," Benson says. Danica buys in full 40-foot containers, but orders as many as 300 different items at once.

Another key strategy is steadfastly helping specialty store clients differentiate from big box and mass merchants by providing exclusive products.

The company survived the 2008 recession by drastically re-engineering operations to cut overhead by 10%. They didn't cut into their core competency budgets of sales and design and Danica not only retained its sales levels for 2009 but, actually became more profitable.

Benson and Braude plan to retire in 2015. Sushil Arora will take over as CEO and both of the men's sons will become executives. As this Canadian company faces encroaching North American competition from new players, the next generation's initial strategy will be to expand into specialty stores in Europe.

(Excerpted from the Vancouver Sun, July 2014.)

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Maritime show joins with Trader's Forum

Maritime Gift Show recently announced a new venture that would see the Show partner with Trader's Forum for an event called The Atlantic Retail Fair. The new fair will focus on serving a wide range of retailers, wholesalers and distributors in the Atlantic Provinces and Eastern Quebec.

"We are very glad to have achieved an agreement with John Luckhurst, Director of the Maritime Gift Show", says Alex Nelyubin, president of Trader's Forum." "Increased resources from combining our efforts will be allocated to marketing and adding value to attract buyers. The Maritime Gift Shows management knows specifics of the local market and offers great relationships with the local buyers.

"The Maritime Gift Show has been the go-to-Show for Atlantic buyers for over 40 years, most of whom want a local show that meets all of their needs and saves them time and the cost of travelling elsewhere," says John Luckhurst. "Together, we will be able to bring a wider variety of products and price points to the growing number of businesses in Atlantic Canada."

The Atlantic Retail Fair held from September 6 to 8 marked the first collaboration of an ongoing alliance. The fair was held at the Halifax Exhibition Park and was divided into 2 sections: The Maritime Gift Show and The Trader's Forum Show.

Detailed information is available at www.maritimegiftshow.ca.

Fair caters to growing middle class in China

This year's Interior Lifestyle China was held from September 18th to 20th at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre with the theme "Best Time".

Organized by Messe Frankfurt (Shanghai), Interior Lifestyle China is the only platform in China for middle to high-end lifestyle related products. It attracted 350 exhibitors and 23,000 local and international visitors.

As China's middle class continues to grow, an increasing number of domestic and international companies are keen to establish their brands there. This year's Italian pavilion attracted four new cookware exhibitors: Alluflon, the Biemme Group, Carlo Giannini, and Guardini.

The Interior Lifestyle China show will be held in conjunction with Paperworld China, the trade fair for the stationery and office supplies industry. Holding the two shows at the same venue offers buyers a larger range of products to choose from.

For details, visit www.il-china.com

Vegas Market growth plan right on target

Las Vegas Market has announced that phase three of its strategic growth plan will be implemented at next year's Summer Market, scheduled for August 2 to 6, 2015. The goal is to position the market as the leading buying platform for furniture, home decor and gift in the western United States. Highlights of the phase three transformation include the launch of two new showroom floors for boutique home décor, textiles and gourmet housewares, tabletop and gift.

"The strategic enhancements planned for Summer 2015 represent the culmination of a three-year realignment and reimagining of Las Vegas Market," says Dorothy Belshaw, president of Gift & Home Décor, International Market Centers. "By offering an enriched presentation of better goods, remerchandising existing resources and launching new categories, Las Vegas Market has created a compelling, multi-dimensional platform designed to appeal to today's cross-category buyers and suppliers."

Las Vegas Market will introduce a new permanent presentation of gourmet housewares, casual tabletop and related gift merchandise. The floor plan will offer a range of showroom sizes and configurations and will showcase an anticipated 75 tenants in categories such as cookware, bakeware, woodenware, serveware, glassware and bar accessories, gadgets, small electrics, casual

tabletop and specialty foods.

"This presentation fills a void in the western markets, offering a dynamic cross-category resource for independent specialty buyers, including kitchen shops, hardware and grocery stores, and vineyards," Belshaw explains. "The gourmet housewares category complements and extends Las Vegas Market's strong and growing home and lifestyle resources, offering cross-merchandising solutions for buyers and new channels of distribution for vendors."

The three-phase plan, which began in 2013, includes the introduction of new product categories as well as growth of existing categories and re-merchandised presentations. Since 2013, Las Vegas Market has experienced dramatic growth, with 850,000 square feet of new and expanded showrooms and more than 1,200 new lines.

The Las Vegas Market Summer Market, which ran from July 27 to July 31 and featured 2,000 exhibitors, set a record for the largest number of resources participating in the event.

For more information on the 2015 market, visit www.lasvegasmarket.com.

Despite the momentum of social media, trade shows are still one of the best resources available for connecting with your market and showcasing new products. The advantages of being able to physically see and feel the product, as well as being able to engage the people behind it, are unsurpassed by traditional forms of advertising. The key benefits for trade show exhibitors remain unchanged:

- The ability to meet prospective new clients and interact with existing ones.
- The opportunity to be a trend setter.
- It's a great way to advertise your company and your products.
- It's the best way to build sales and enhance your own product knowledge by meeting experts in the field.

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Keep calm and retail on

by Candace Sutcliffe, Retail Manager, CA Paradis/The Chef's Paradise



Hopefully most of you reading this edition of *Home Style* have enjoyed a little time away from your business this past summer. As the frantic pace of retail is about to hit lightning-speed for the holidays, “success under stress” seems to have become the new selling methodology, especially with the onslaught of competition in a shrinking marketplace.

As traditional retail hours are constantly being stretched to meet the demands set forth by the 24/7 accessibility of e-tailing, work-life balance is becoming a theory of the past. Sundays used to be a day of rest, evenings were for family and holidays were a time for celebration. That’s no longer the case.

Consumerism is at an all time high; if we’re not working, there’s a good chance we’re shopping. I have yet to meet any successful sales professional who has not delayed holidays because it was a bad time, or they had too much pending. However, taking time for yourself to reboot may actually be the best investment for your business.

I recently felt a tad bit envious reading some of the perks a friend was enjoying in her new position at Zappos.com (the on-line shoe giant and recent Amazon acquisition). Beyond your typical health and dental package, they offer employees at all levels an on-site gym, car detailing and oil changes at no charge, gourmet meals at any time of day, a Pina Colada and Kegorator station (it is headquartered in Las Vegas after all), free weight watchers sessions, an on site salon for manicure and/or hair style emergencies, designer shoes galore, and the list goes on. Sounds fab-

ulous doesn’t it? In true American business fashion, the company is blurring the lines between personal and professional time, posing a real threat to the creative environment they are supposedly fostering.

I too have all these same perks and benefits in my working life (minus the Pina Coladas!); however, mine are events and outings that break my daily routine and provide short breaks to recharge my batteries. Human beings are not designed to run continuously. Science has shown that we operate more rhythmically when we have periods of rest to renew energy throughout the day.

Successful retailing requires focus and ingenuity. Studies conducted in a variety of creative industries all demonstrate that time away – disconnected from work – actually increases productivity and creativity.

The Energy Project is an organization designed to “energize people and transform companies”. Company founder Tony Schwartz noticed during his own company growth that many of his employees were “more willing to settle for easy solutions rather than doing the hard work necessary to get the best results”. The intensity and demand had begun to wear his team down which “showed up in a collective tendency to be more emotionally reactive, shorter and sharper”. Schwartz quickly enforced mandatory days off. He also stresses to companies he works with that employees should use every vacation day at their disposal, without guilt.

Schwartz’ client list spans 36 countries and over 175 high profile companies such as Coca-Cola, Nike, Nestle,

LEGO, Green Mountain, Kraft and Apple. According to his Energy Audit, taken by over 150,000 people worldwide, Schwartz found that 70% of workers feel unfocused, disengaged and are emotionally and physically exhausted. The Energy Project research also revealed 59% don’t get regular sleep; 69% have difficulty focusing and are easily distracted, especially by email, and another 58% say that there are significant gaps in what they say is important in life and how they actually live.

Vacations and getaways are intended to help keep stress under control. High performers know that managing their emotions can be critical in remaining calm and in control during stressful periods. Taking time away from your business can also help to clear your vision and focus on areas that may be lacking attention. Beyond that, a vacation can also provide time to reflect and appreciate the positive achievements you are contributing to your organization; gratitude has been linked to decreased stress levels, which in turn produce greater satisfaction levels.

If a defined vacation is not in your foreseeable future, consider taking short breaks throughout the workday to renew your energy levels. More importantly, learn to disconnect from work once you leave the office. Make your life work; rather than your work life. ☺

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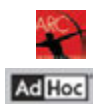
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There's no place like *this* Home

Dedicated to their customers and their community, the owners of Orillia Home Hardware Building Centre have made their store the envy of the organization

By Laurie O'Halloran

Last fall, we finally sold our tiny seasonal cottage in the Kawarthas and bought a summer home in Bayshore Village, a lovely lifestyle community in Orillia, Ontario, on the shores of Lake Simcoe. When we took possession in October, our new next door neighbors, Jan and Graham, were putting the finishing touches on their gorgeous custom built home. I took my first tour of their place this spring and was in

awe of the fabulous light fixtures and faucets and paint colours. I asked Jan for the name of her decorator. Her response was music to my ears. She said they'd selected and purchased everything themselves with the help of the friendly staff at the local Orillia Home Hardware Building Centre.

The next day I visited that Home Hardware store and was not the least bit surprised to see a huge banner draped across the front entrance announcing they had recently won the national award as the best Home Hardware dealer in Canada – for the second time! (A Newfoundland dealer has also been honoured with the award twice.)

Located in the heart of central Ontario's cottage country, the store is a

favourite with locals and tourists from miles around. As soon as you walk through the welcoming front doors, it's easy to see why Orillia Home Hardware was a double winner. And the credit goes to the two partners who run the business, John Locke and Bill Ecklund.

These two dealer/owners work in perfect sync, each contributing uniquely to the success of the operation. But they're not just business partners, they are also brothers-in-law, married to two sisters, Katie and Ann. From the day they first met 46 years ago, they got along so well it seemed inevitable that one day they would be partners.

In the 1960s, Bill, who's from the Simcoe region, was working in the wholesale lumber industry and John, who is

The store is located in the heart of Orillia, an Ontario resort town of 30,000 nestled between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. It features a 10-acre lumber yard. Shown above, the winning dealers/owners, Bill Ecklund, left, and John Locke.



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Dealer Profile: Orillia Home Hardware

from Owen Sound, Ontario, was in the retail hardware business. The sisters were also from Owen Sound, which is how John and Ann met. Katie and Bill met when he was working in Port Credit and she was a student nurse in nearby Oakville. They fell in love and were married in October of 1968. John and Ann tied the knot nine months later, and the four have been close ever since, seeing each other socially and vacationing together regularly.

Because they were in similar businesses with mutual interests, Bill and John often discussed working together one day. That day arrived in 1999. At the time, John had worked for Beaver Lumber for over 30 years and was running the Peterborough store. Bill, who had settled in Oakville, came up one day to take a look at the nearby Lindsay Beaver Lumber store. They decided to take over that store and in 2000, Bill and Katie moved to nearby Fenelon Falls while John continued to commute from Peterborough.

That all changed when Home Hardware bought out Beaver Lumber. In every community that had both a Beaver and a Home, the Home dealer had first right of refusal to take over the two stores. In Lindsay, that meant John and Bill would lose their store. But they're quick to point out that, throughout the transition, the folks at Home were wonderful to deal with, making sure they were well looked after.

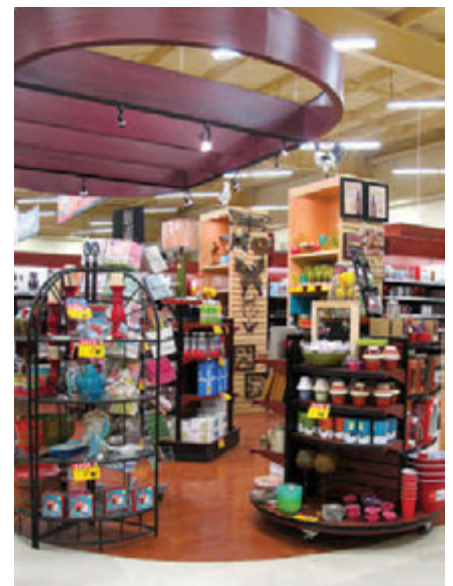
The pair started looking around for new opportunities. They had been so impressed with Home, their preference was to be part of their organization.

"We knew we wanted to work together because we were so compatible," recalls John. "We also knew we wanted to be aligned with Home Hardware because they're a dealer-driven organization and that's what we were after. So many other retail chains are closely controlled by head office and the dealers don't have the freedom to respond to their individual community's needs.

He adds that "as Home dealers, we own the company but don't have to worry about things like Bay Street and the stock market and retail regulations.



Orillia Home Hardware welcomes customers with an inviting glass-covered entrance, left. A Ladies Night is held twice a year to showcase new giftware and housewares products, below. A full service gift registry at the store includes several exclusive items that are sourced locally, bottom.





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Dealer Profile: Orillia Home Hardware

Head office makes sure everything runs smoothly for us so we have the freedom to be the best merchants we can be.”

While scouting for locations in Ontario, they considered Owen Sound, Parry Sound, Niagara and, finally, Orillia, which they had initially rejected until Home’s head office convinced them the region was undergoing a major transformation. The town had both a Beaver Lumber and Home Hardware, the dealers wanted to retire, and in 2001 Bill and John took over both locations. Situated just a few blocks apart, the Home store focused on housewares

and giftware while the Beaver store served contractors and home renovators. The owners travelled between the stores by golf cart for the next six years.

Although each store catered to a unique clientele, and customers seldom visited both Home stores, it was starting to get confusing for newcomers to Orillia, a town that was quickly attracting a wealthier (newly retired) population base. By 2007, Bill and John realized it was time to build one super store. The Beaver store on King Street was old and needed refurbishing but the site was good so that’s where they decided to re-

build. (The Home Hardware store was closed and the land sold.)

After a few permit delays, the beautiful new, 33,000-square-foot Home Hardware store opened in the spring of 2008. With a large warehouse, full-service kitchen/bath installation, garden centre and a 10-acre lumber yard, it has become a favourite destination for contractors and custom home builders.

They have been very involved in giving back to the community from day one, regularly donating about \$100,000 a year to local charities, which has helped raised their profile. But John’s merchandising savvy and talent for in-store design has also been instrumental in attracting new customers to Home Hardware – the ladies.

“The women love us,” says Bill. “When we opened the new contractor side of the business, we decided to invite their wives to the store as well since they are the ones who usually spend the money in the household.”

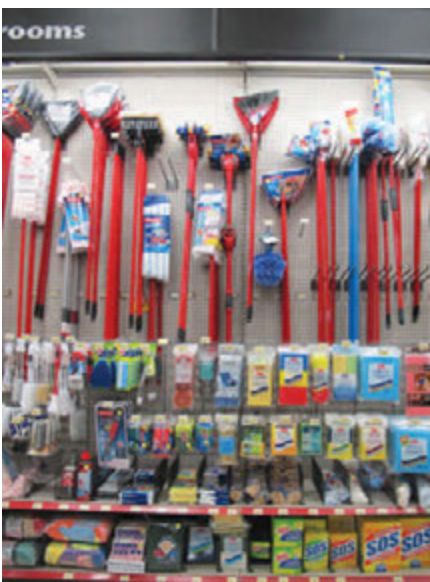
John decided to hold a Ladies Night twice a year, in spring and fall, to showcase new products and encourage women to explore what they had to offer. They offer product specials and serve food and refreshments during the events, which now attract over 700 women who will line up for over an hour waiting to get into the store. On a daily basis, it’s not uncommon to see women strolling through the housewares section pushing a full shopping cart. In addition to more than 20,000 kitchenware skus, the store often includes items not usually found in a Home Hardware, including sun dresses and make-up kits. Finding a great new product and watching it move out the door is John’s favourite part of the job.

“We are always willing to try something new and take risks,” he explains. “We’ve gone from selling hardware to being a full service retailer – almost like a small department store.”

While Bill Ecklund’s greatest strength is his ability to interact with people, John Locke’s forte is advertising and merchandising. He creates most of the store’s print ads and is ‘the voice of the



The housewares section includes a huge assortment of coffeemakers and accessories (the best selling category) as well as cleaning products and a full aisle of floor care. In the hardware section, above left, pink tools are showcased on an end-cap display.



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Dealer Profile: Orillia Home Hardware

store' in their local radio ads. (People often come in simply to 'see what the guy who sings on the radio looks like'!)

Whenever they travel, Bill says John will see things and immediately be able to visualize how to use the idea in their

store. Always looking for new ways to 'wow the customer', John's favourite phrase is "how can we do this"?

Bill remembers one trip to Las Vegas with their wives. He showed Bill an interesting display of upside-down um-

brellas in one of the hotels. By the time they returned to Orillia, Bill had forgotten all about it. John had already devised a way to design and create a similar display in their spacious store!

Though they both praise the knowledge and skill of the Home Hardware product buyers, the owners also like to think outside of the box. They regularly visit the Toronto gift shows and aren't afraid to source items they feel are specifically suited to their community. They have to keep the assortment new and fresh because their customers often have guests visiting from out of town. "Our customers bring their friends, their family and their neighbors to shop in our store," says Bill. "Our goal is to overwhelm them every time they walk through the door."

Today, sales are split 50/50 between contractors and consumers. The store has exceeded their expectations and the owners have made a name for themselves not just in Orillia, but right across the Home Hardware organization.

"We had two stores that were successful," says John, "but they in no way came close to what we've seen from this store since 2008. It's been incredible."

Little wonder Orillia Home Hardware is considered the flagship store for the organization – the standard by which others are measured. There is an atmosphere and energy to the store that is rare in Canada. Dealers from across Canada regularly visit Orillia. They walk away amazed – and full of great ideas to improve their own operation.

Home Hardware's Ray Gable says the organization has always considered John and Bill to be great merchants. "Together, they are a very successful team who are customer-focused, enthusiastic and willing to experiment. They really pay attention to every detail, which has made the store a destination location for the entire area."

A key part of the store atmosphere, of course, is the warm and friendly staff. Though product assortment is important, as Bill points out, "our main investment is in our people".

The store employs a total of 85 people, including about 20 students, and

Home honours top dealers at gala event

Last April during the Spring Market, Home Hardware announced that Orillia Home Hardware was the recipient of the annual Walter J. Hachborn Store of the Year Award for the second time. (They also won in 2010.) Now in its 17th year, the award pays tribute to the top store selected from Home's 1,100 dealers for achieving the highest standards in retailing, merchandising, service, staff performance and overall quality.

The prestigious award encompasses about 150 different elements, from customer relations to product promotion and community involvement. It epitomizes the values on which Home Hardware was created 50 years ago when Walter J. Hachborn co-founded the company – value, service and dependability. Orillia Home Hardware Building Centre first received this accolade in 2011.

John Locke and Bill Ecklund and their staff are considered leaders within Home's dealer-owner network as well as within their community, with customers continually commenting that they should be a model for all businesses. In addition to providing superior customer service and expert advice, the company demonstrates a strong social conscience through several initiatives that enhance the lives of Orillia residents including their support in areas such as the performing arts and general cultural interests.

Home Hardware president and CEO Paul Strauss says the store embodies everything the award stands for and is a great champion of the Home brand. "John and Bill truly exemplify our slogan of 'Home Owners helping homeowners with expert advice.'"

Orillia has won it's region every year for the past five years and usually earns near perfect scores in every category. "We tell our staff that this is our goal each year, and they always rise to the occasion," says John. "We all work so hard to achieve that goal and Home Hardware makes it all worthwhile. It's incredible that they allow you to win more than once. That's what makes every dealer want to continually strive to do better. It's very motivating to know you can win this award more than once."



Home Hardware co-founder Walter Hachborn, centre, presents the award named in his honour at the April Spring Market gala dinner. President Paul Strauss is shown on the right.

Dealer Profile: Orillia Home Hardware

both Bill and John's sons and a son-in-law are now part of the full-time staff.

"People have come to expect a superior level of service in our store," says John. "A large portion of our customer base still insists on personalized attention and that's why our policy has always been to not just carry interesting products but also to 'carry more people'. Most of our staff have been with us for 15 years."

Pauline MacLean, who has been part of the store's office staff since 2007, says Orillia Home Hardware is "the best place she has ever worked".

She adds that the passion of the store's owners can be felt by everyone who works at the store. And it's that passion that John and Bill hope will always be a part of their operation.

Now 67, they both are starting to 'think' about retirement, but have no plans to slow down in the near future. They want to make sure their sons are really ready to take over the business, and that includes sharing their enthusiasm and dedication to the customers.

"Our greatest challenge is continuing the passion for the business," says Bill. "We want to pass on the torch to a younger generation at the right time."

In the meantime, they can be found in the store at least five days a week. As John explains: "Retail is a tough business. To be successful you have to be an integral part of it. You can't be a hands-off operator. You have to get up every day, go to the store, work hard, make sure you understand the competition, and make sure you're in tune with your customers. Fortunately for us, we also have a lot of fun and we love coming to work every day."

After hours, they enjoy fishing and entertaining at home, where they are both now neighbors at Bayshore. Katie Ecklund has retired from nursing and Ann Locke, a retired teacher, are enjoying the many activities that this resort community offers.

John says that Orillia has been a great market because so many people are retiring to Lake Simcoe. It has also kept them somewhat insulated from the negative impact online selling and social

media has had on so many other retailers. Their average customer is now between 55 and 70 years of age and not very tech-savvy. But that could change, which is why they've hired so many young people who understand that aspect of retail. But both Bill and John feel it's even more important for their successors to understand the value and importance of the Home Hardware family.

"Home Hardware has a great reputation", explains John. "It's a name people trust and respect, which also enhances our reputation. Yes, we have the freedom to add our own unique touches to our store, but we couldn't have come this far without the support of Home Hardware. They give us everything we need to be successful. We are proud to wear the red jacket."

Based on the recognition they've received, it's pretty clear Home Hardware is just as proud to have them as part of their dealer community. 🍷

About Home Hardware

A company that is 100% Canadian owned and operated, Home Hardware has a presence in every Canadian province and territory. It is the country's largest independent, dealer-owned hardware, lumber, building materials and furniture co-operative. Founded in 1964, the cooperative now includes 1,080 stores with annual retail sales of more than \$5 billion. Recognized by the North American Retail Hardware Association as Canada's best-trained dealer group, Home's dealer/owners have access to 100,000 brand name and private label products. All dealers are able to take advantage of Home's spring and fall markets held at the company's head office and distribution centre in St. Jacobs, Ontario.

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Zest for life

With a passion for cooking – and an adorable pup to greet visitors – Jenny and Kyle Otsuka have made their kitchen shop a key destination stop for tourists visiting Ontario’s beautiful Prince Edward County

By Denise Gaze • Photography by Johnny Lam



Carter Otsuka loves going to work. Every day, he warmly greets every person who enters Zest, a beautifully designed kitchen shop located in the heart of Picton, a charming rural town in eastern Ontario’s Prince Edward County. Jenny and Kyle Otsuka, who are the owners of Zest, say that Carter is always a big draw at the store because he is such a friendly guy. Carter is also a 12-year-old Yorkie-Poodle cross. But he has been working in retail for a couple of years now and he sure knows how to make a customer feel welcome!

Zest’s bright interior is clean and sleek, enhanced with vibrant colours. Despite the modern look, a large rustic brick wall indicates a history that both Jenny and *Home Style* recently decided to pursue.

With assistance from Krista at the Prince Edward County Archives, we discovered that the original building dates back to 1893. It was once a bakery and private dwelling but now has heritage district designation, part of a historical set of buildings on Main Street.

Jenny and Kyle, who are both passionate cooks, bought the building two years ago. They had fallen in love with the area after buying a cottage there to use as a weekend retreat. The building, formerly occupied by Picton Dry Cleaners, was completely renovated and they

Jenny and Kyle Otsuka (shown with their dog Carter) fell in love with the Picton area after buying a cottage there. Two years ago, they opened Zest Kitchen Shop.



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Independent Retailer Profile: Zest

opened Zest Kitchen Shop in 2012.

"I did not have a lot of retail experience but I loved working with people," says Jenny, who also came up with the fresh sounding name 'Zest'.

She remembers handing out flyers for a pizza shop when she was a young girl and working as a cashier but she had never run a store on her own before.

"My last job was at Koodo Mobile and centred on how to grow revenue with our existing customer base, so a lot of my experience involves how to do that without being irritating," she adds with a laugh.

Jenny, who was born in Toronto, met husband Kyle, who is originally from Hamilton, when he moved to Toronto. Kyle has a degree in economics that complements Jenny's degree in business. He was previously in sales and customer relationship management. Today, he manages a heating and plumbing wholesale division in nearby Kingston while helping out at the shop on weekends.

"I handle the day to day operations of the business and the book keeping," says Jenny. "I do all the buying for Zest although Kyle will give me a second opinion when it comes to buying, but since I am working full time at Zest, I like to say I am the boss."

Living in a picturesque area like Picton means lots of tourists come through the door. Prince Edward County is a beautiful region on the shores of Lake Ontario. It has a small population of just over 25,000 people and attracts over half a million tourists each year. One major draw is the emerging wine region as well as Sandbanks Provincial Park, which boasts one of the largest and most beautiful beaches in Ontario.

Zest draws a lot of walk-by traffic, especially during the summer months when a steady stream of tourists and cottagers frequent the area.

"We are almost like an island com-

munity," says Jenny. "You have to cross a couple of bridges to get over to Prince Edward County.

At 1,500 square feet – not including the office or stockroom – the store offers plenty of room to browse. There is also an apartment located above the shop. During the summer, Jenny, Kyle and Carter live in the flat and rent out their cottage to vacationers.

"With all the expense associated with starting the store, we decided renting the cottage would help earn an extra income," says Jenny. "I don't love having to pack up and leave our cottage on the



The store's bright, clean interior is accentuated with vibrant colours. Small appliances were recently added to the product mix.

WHY I LOVE IT

> wine glasses by Lehmann

The Ricardo glass collection by Lehmann was created in partnership with the prestigious Winemaker Association of France (Union des Œnologues de France) and Mr. Gérard Basset, Word's best sommelier 2010. The unique design of these glasses is ideal for observing wine's colour, while their long stem prevents wine from warming. Their curves have been specifically designed to enable better restitution of wine aromas and the thinness of the rim enhances wine tasting experience. The high performance crystal is lead-free and offers excellent transparency, brilliance and sonority. This glass collection features high breakage resistance, even after repeated dishwasher cycles. It is ideal for daily use as well as professional use.

Other models also available



Champagne



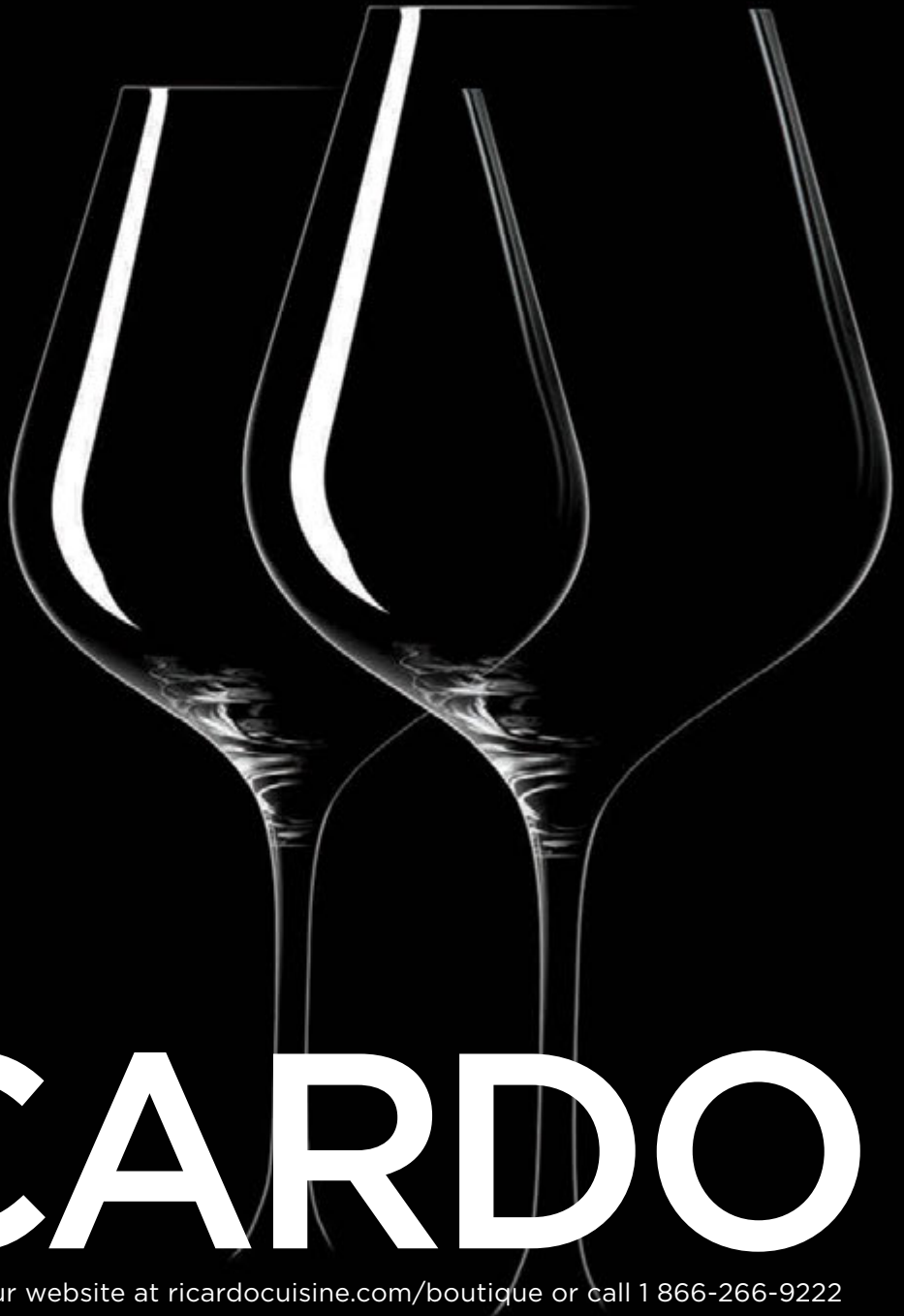
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Independent Retailer Profile: Zest



lake, but you do what you have to do.”

From concept to completion, it took seven months to get Zest up and running. Now open for two years, Jenny says business has been good.

“There is so much we are still learning from a year-to-year growth perspective, but things are going in the right direction for us,” she explains.

Jenny is very proactive by nature, and always keen to learn new things. Marco Raponi of Nespresso says that Zest Kitchen Shop is a unique and well-managed kitchen shop.

“They stay knowledgeable and well-trained about all the advances made in our coffee technology to provide their customers all the answers to their questions,” he adds.

“Bringing in new customers is some-

thing I always think about,” Jenny says. “We have a small local population, but in the summer it just explodes. We have to provide the kind of customer experience that makes people want to come back, especially the tourists. It can be tricky learning to read your customers but my number one priority is to give them a positive experience.”

At Zest there is a lot of emphasis on window displays since it’s located in an area with a high volume of street traffic. Jenny wants the displays to be compelling and timely.

“If strawberries are in season, we build a theme around them,” she says. “I never push anyone to buy something I think is not quite right for them. Sometimes a customer can’t articulate what they want, so I help them figure out

what product they need.”

Recently Jenny has added small appliances to the inventory and she is getting quotes from local contractors to set up an in-store kitchen at Zest. “We do have a partnership with a local chef here,” she adds. “In the fall we plan to run some knife skills classes.”

In a resort town like Picton, the winters are quiet. The majority of Zest’s business is done between June and September with a spike during the holiday season. “Basically we harvest for winter,” says Jenny.

Despite the challenge of operating a seasonal business, Jenny enjoys being in business for herself. “I know the effort I put in will create results, whether negative or positive”, she explains.

For this industrious couple, every

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Independent Retailer Profile: Zest



success and failure provides them with an opportunity to learn.

"I first met Jenny and Kyle at the Toronto gift show and was so impressed that they were so focussed on their business," says Emil Rocha of Le Creuset. "They knew exactly what they wanted and went after it."

He goes on to say: "their customers always come first. They will even go the extra mile to deliver the product themselves if they don't have it in stock when the customer comes in. Their exemplary customer service is the main reason for their success."

Currently carrying just over 2,000 SKUs, Zest offers brand names along with one-of-a-kind products such as cutting boards created by local artisans. She also stocks locally-made jellies and sauces as well as cookbooks from the surrounding area.

"My greatest strength has been to be able to not just come up with an idea, but to execute it," explains Jenny. "We are currently building an online presence and one of our biggest challenges is figuring out how to compete and engage customers effectively on social media."

Trying to find the perfect new must-have item for the store, Jenny visits the gift show in Toronto and the housewares show in Chicago.

"I also check out customer reviews of an existing product to determine if it's a good fit for our store," says Jenny. "I make sure that it's not a product that is available at a big chain store because we can't always compete with their prices."

Both Jenny and Kyle firmly believe in giving back to their beautiful community. On the anniversary of Zest's first year in business, they invited Canadian food writers Rose Murray and Elizabeth Baird to come for a book signing event. All the proceeds went to the Recreation Outreach Centre for Youth in Picton.

The couple recently hired a part-time employee so they can finally have some time off together. They made sure they found someone with a "happy disposition". This was mandatory since a positive experience for the customer is Jenny's main priority. "I wanted someone with a kind, helpful attitude. Everything else could be learned," she adds.

Carter would also give two paws up to the notion of giving the customer a positive experience. Greet people with enthusiasm – and wag your tail!

With culinary passion and energy, as the name Zest suggests, the Otsukas have gone from weekend cottagers to business partners, creating a tourist attraction of their very own in Picton, the place they now call home. 🐾

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Happy Hour

What's new in barware and cocktail accessories



Trudeau's innovative Cooling Aerator, left, uses a stainless steel rod filled with a non-toxic cooling gel that will maintain pre-chilled whites or reds for up to an hour while enhancing flavour and aroma. Also new are these colour-embossed metal wine charms with protective backing, each representing a global wine-producing region.



The Vin Edge uses fluid dynamics to create a vacuum seal that protects the wine and eliminates the need for recorking or pumping. Distributed by **InterContinental**, the patent-pending VinEdge provides a clean pour every time, no drips or splatters. Also new from InterContinental is this oak bottle, left. While a typical oaking process can take months or years, this oak bottle infuses the same flavour in 24-28 hours. There's no need for bulky barrels or messy oak chips. The skull decanter, below, is ideal for Halloween parties. It's made of cool, lead-free crystal. A complementary double wall skull shot glass is also available.



Browne has unveiled the Essentials Professional glass rimmer left. This unique bar accessory features three individual tiers for lime juice, salt and sugar. It also includes a juice sponge. It fits any glass up to 5.5-inches in diameter.



Also part of the Essentials collection, the All-in-One Bar Station, right, has six garnish compartments with a cover, salt rimmer and a tray that slides out when not in use. Additional compartments can be added.





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Happy Hour



The OXO Steel vacuum wine preserver from **DanESCO** easily extracts air from the bottle, slowing down the oxidation process that can flatten the taste of wine. The easy-to-hold, contoured neck prevents pinching and the soft grips are non-slip.



Prepara ice ball makers, above, can be infused with fruit, herbs or any other flavour to enhance drinks. The silicone cap closes securely for storage anywhere in the freezer. Available in packs of two or four.



Also from Danesco, this Natural Living wine rack is made of acacia wood in a modular design that holds 12 bottles.



David Shaw Designs will be promoting a wide range of wine and cocktail accessories this fall including a wood and steel bottle opener, left, and a wine decanter with stainless steel filter funnel, above. Both are designed by Sebastian Conran for Universal Expert. New from Zyliss is this handy four-in-one wine tool, right. It includes foil cutter, corkscrew, a vacuum pump and two rubber bottle stoppers.



The Bellagio mechanical rack and pinion wine opener from **Farfalli** embraces traditional Italian design and style. Made of lightweight, durable aluminum, it comes in a variety of colours. Easy to use with a helical spiral, the opener comes packaged in a unique gift box. Distributed by Don Schacter.

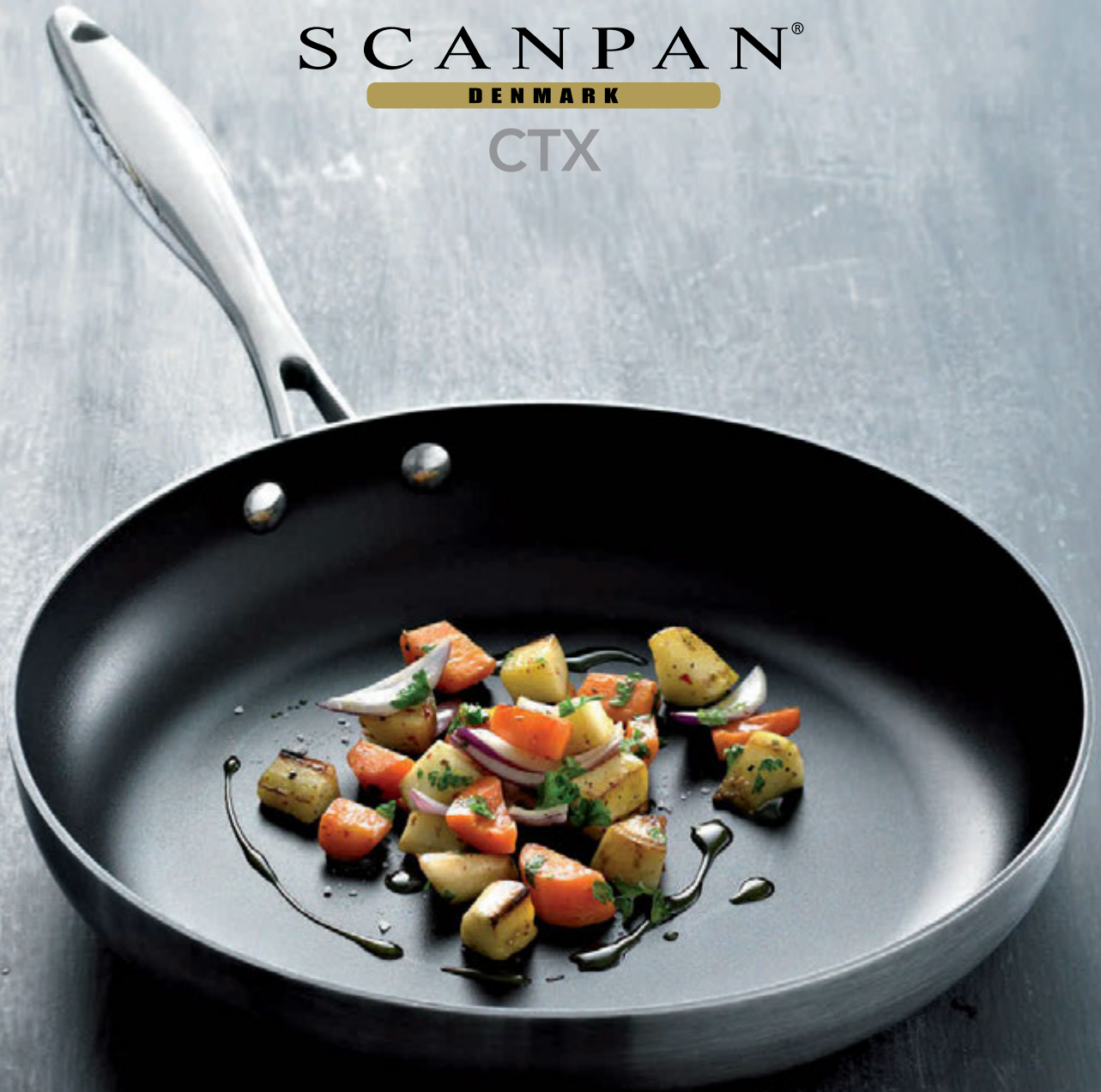


Capitalizing on a hot new trend, **Port-Style Enterprises** introduces the solid copper Moscow Mule Mug. Available with either a smooth or a hammered finish, the mug is large and inviting with a decorative crimped handle. The solid copper construction is accented by a tin lining and solid brass accents. The lacquer coating is tarnish-resistant.

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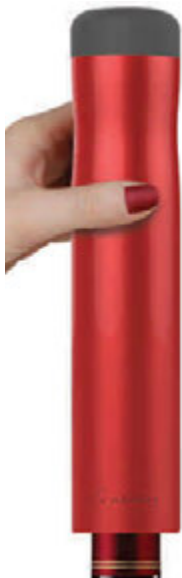


VICTORINOX
SWISS ARMY

Happy Hour



Architec's new Bar Mixer cubes, allow, allows users to freeze fresh fruit, herbs or juice for cocktails. A strong poly skeleton and lid provides strong support in the freezer and keeps ingredients fresh longer. Available from [Jascor Housewares](#), the set includes 12 odor-resistant silicone cups. Also new are these Savor Cube trays, below, from Architec's Homegrown Gourmet line. The dishwasher-safe silicone trays can freeze fruits and vegetables for use later in cocktails or smoothies.



[Metrokane](#) has announced that it is expanding its Rabbit line with 11 new products that feature cohesive packaging and high-quality materials. One of the new barware items is the Automatic Electric Corkscrew, shown left. Similar to the company's original electric corkscrew, the new product automatically removes a cork from a wine bottle and ejects it. However, the new version works without the need to push any buttons. Users just remove the foil with the built-in foil cutter, and then set the corkscrew on top of the bottle and hold it in place. Available in black, silver and red. The company is also launching an adjustable stainless steel jigger, above left, and a new stainless steel wine/champagne sealer, above right. The jigger slides up and down to adjust capacity and a window allows for quick and easy reference. The Rabbit sealer features an ergonomically-designed twist handle and keeps champagne and sparkling wine bubbly for days after opening. Both come gift-boxed. Distributed by Swissmar.



The Final Touch Twister stainless steel aerator and decanter set instantly oxygenates wine using a three-phase system, left. It filters sediment and enhances both the scent and flavour of red wines. The 'On The Rock' set, below, includes a stainless steel chilling



ball, a chilling ball base, stainless steel tongs and whisky glass, all beautifully gift-boxed. Below right, this handy silicone beverage bin collapses to under two inches for compact storage. It's made of BPA-free food-grade silicone with molded handles that provide a good grip. The Final Touch line is from [Product Specialties](#).



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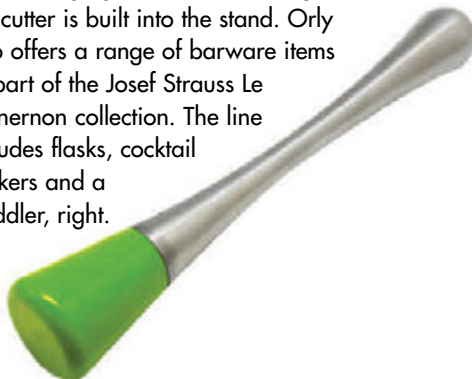
Happy Hour



Tovolo's sophisticated ice molds from **MDC Housewares** deliver slow-melting ice for cocktails. The extra large, 3-inch x 2-inch size is perfect for highballs, left, while the sphere molds are ideal for whisky or scotch, right. The silicone caps seals tight so molds stack neatly in freezer. Also new from MDC is this original fish corkscrew by hand made of 18/10 stainless steel with a 'concertina' mechanism, below.

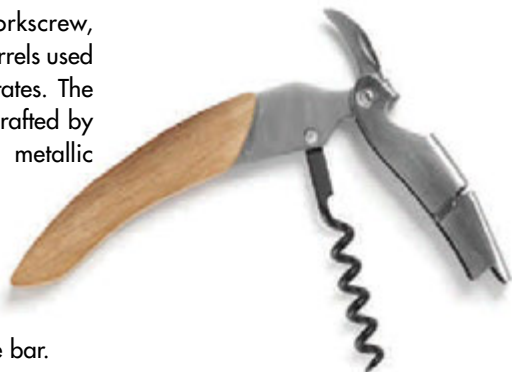


Orly Cuisine is promoting the new Cool Kitchen Pro electric wine bottle opener, right. It comes in stainless steel or black and is simple to use with comfortable, vibration-free operation. An indicator light is on when charging. A stand and charger are included. A foil cutter is built into the stand. Orly also offers a range of barware items as part of the Josef Strauss Le Vigneron collection. The line includes flasks, cocktail shakers and a muddler, right.



The ice sphere mold by **RICARDO** was originally designed for whiskey or scotch lovers. Because of the shape of the ice ball, the contact surface with the glass is minimized and the melting process slowed. Its leak free design allows it to go into the freezer in any position.

The **RICARDO** sommelier's corkscrew, right, is made of recycled oak barrels used at the most reputable French estates. The wood handle was meticulously crafted by a skilled French artisan. The metallic helix's non-stick coating helps ease cork extraction and helps reduce the risk of breakage. The handle and double lever finish are handmade to create a one-of-a-kind piece for the home bar.



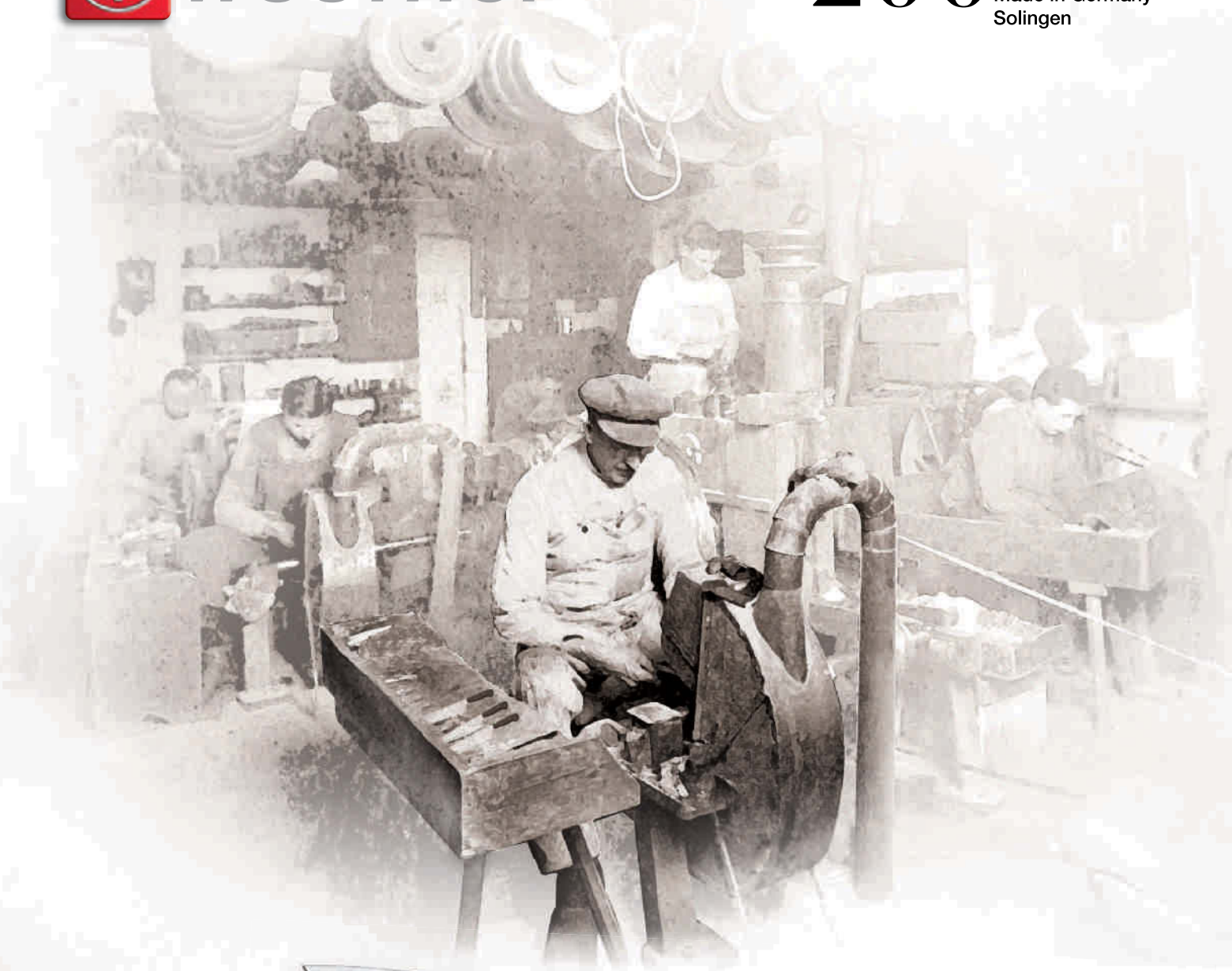
Part of the innovative **Carrol Boyes** collection, this decorative bar cart is made of sturdy stainless steel with glass shelf.



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Happy Hour

The pocket-sized single pull corkscrew from **Vacu Vin**, right, is a durable tool designed to remove any cork. It's the first pocket corkscrew to utilize a gear and lever mechanism. This mechanism allows a cork to be pulled in one continuous, smooth, vertical motion. The corkscrew even removes corks that are not made from cork. It includes a foil cutter and a one-motion cap bottle opener. Available gift boxed in red, black or white.



Noé wine accessories from **Alessi** are named after Noah, of Noah's Ark, who was the 'first reported case of drunkenness'. The line includes a seal, left, with an opening large enough to fit most wine and champagne bottles and a champagne opener, right.



MOLECULE-R, a Canadian company, has created a line of do-it-yourself cocktail kits. Users can learn how to create a Margarita slushie topped with fresh lemon mousse or deconstruct a Mojito into floating mint caviar.



Sagaform is launching two new barware items this fall, a beer tasting set and the Shot Glass Tick Tac Toe set, shown below. The game comes with a glass board and nine shot glasses adorned with either an X or an O. Participants can play for who drinks up, and who doesn't.



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Cooking Appliances

An Overview of the Canadian Small Appliance Market
by Armin Begic, Manager, The NPD Group

Canada is a large country, with significant differences between regions and these differences are apparent in small home appliance purchases.

These differences show up clearly in syrup and carbonator attachment rates for home soda makers. Although Quebec has the lowest attachment rates for syrups-to-machines, it has the highest attachment rate for carbonators-to-machines, indicating a higher preference for carbonated water. The West had the highest syrup-to-machine ratio indicating more of a preference for flavoured soda. The West also drives over 1000 units per store selling nearly twice as many soda machine syrups per store as the Atlantic region.

And while countertop blender growth is flat in most regions except Quebec, Quebec also had the fastest unit growth in hand blenders, +10.1% year-over-year as of June 2014. And specialty blenders (i.e. milkshake makers) are very popular in the West, making up 66% of the total market in units.

Ontario, with its large population base, leads the country in total sales dollars of fryers. But the province actually sells the fewest units per store, selling 40% less per store than the Atlantic region, and nearly half the units per store of Quebec. Quebec leads in unit sales, and has an average price 6.6% lower than the national average. Higher priced fryers sell well in the West, with an average price 8.4% greater than the national average.

Regional data provides insights into the different buying patterns of consumers across Canada, and illustrates that Canada is not just a single market for home products. Understanding these insights can lead to more efficient inventory allocation and sales productivity, and getting the right products, to the right customers, in the right places

What's hot in toasters, ovens, fryers, grills, slow cookers, raclettes, wafflemakers & more!

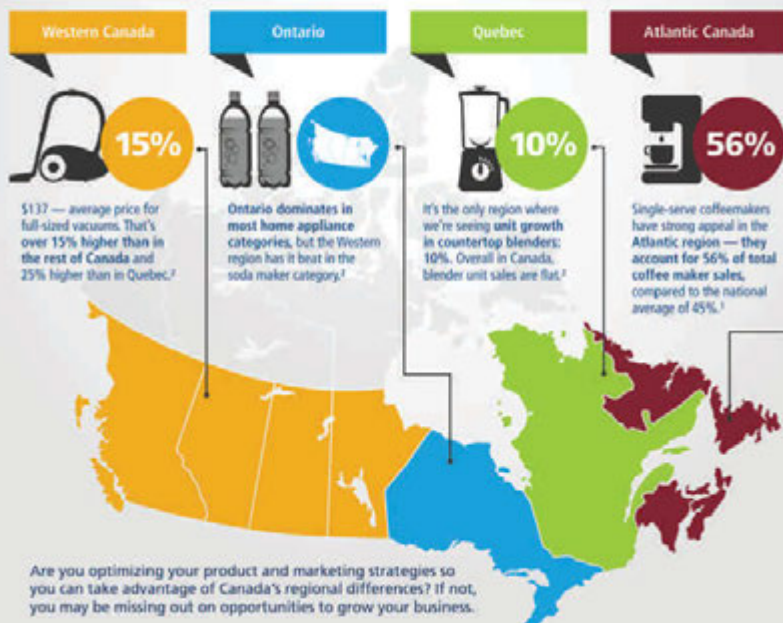


Using Rapid Air technology, the **Philips** Airfryer cooks perfectly with little or no oil. Custom accessories, include a grill pan, double layer rack and baking pan to fry, bake, roast or grill a variety of foods. A recipe booklet offers 25 delicious recipes. Also new from Philips is this premium pasta machine. With 1600 pounds of extrusion force, it can make one pound of pasta just 15 minutes. Unique shaping discs provide the option of making spaghetti, penne, fettuccine and lasagna. It offers easy cleaning and storage with dishwasher safe parts and one-push cleaning tools.



How Do Home Appliance Purchases Vary By Region?

Each region in Canada has its own trends and culture. Those differences aren't limited to language and food preferences — home appliance purchases differ across the country, too.



Are you optimizing your product and marketing strategies so you can take advantage of Canada's regional differences? If not, you may be missing out on opportunities to grow your business.

¹ Source: The NPD Group / Retail Tracking Service, Q4 2013
² Source: The NPD Group / Retail Tracking Service, YTD April 2014

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For the party & potluck host
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Cooking Appliances

The stylish new Fusion table grill from **Swissmar** is similar to but different from a raclette. It offers tremendous versatility for home entertainers. The large ceramic coated cooking surface has an underside drip tray for added convenience.



Jarden has launched a new line of Oster cooking appliances. The appliances have a cooking surface with a DuraCeramic non-stick natural ceramic coating which is four times more durable than other non-stick coatings and cooks up to 20% faster. These appliances, which include an electric skillet, panini maker/grill, wok and a griddle, contain no PTFE and PFOA. The coating also has excellent food release, so cooking with additional oils and fats is optional while clean-up is simple and easy. The line is available with two surface colours, cream or silver.



This stainless steel Cool Kitchen Pro unit from **Orly Cuisine** works as either a deep fryer or fondue. It offers 800 watts of power and has a 1.2-litre capacity. The inner enamel pot is removable, as is the electric cleaning component. It includes a basket, six fondue forks, a fork ring holder and a lid. The deep fryer includes a basket and removable lid. The cover also has a convenient viewing window.

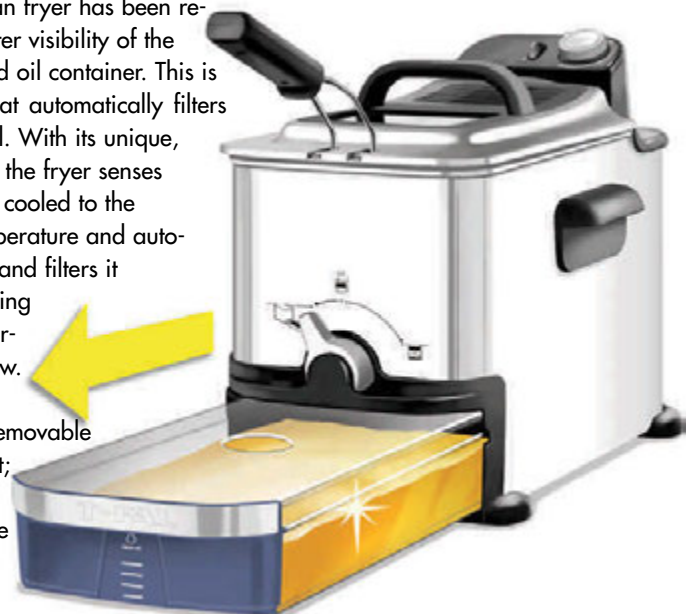


The deep fryer includes a basket and removable lid. The cover also has a convenient viewing window.



Orly's Cool Kitchen Pro wafflemaker, above, is available in stainless steel or black. The eco-friendly appliance has a non-stick coating with no PTFE or PFOA. The 700-watt appliance is easy to clean.

The **T-fal** EZ Clean fryer has been redesigned for better visibility of the control panel and oil container. This is the only fryer that automatically filters and stores the oil. With its unique, patented system, the fryer senses when the oil has cooled to the appropriate temperature and automatically drains and filters it through a cleansing mesh into the storage drawer below. Once filtering is completed, the removable drawer slides out; the oil is clean and ready for the next use. The oil can be used up to 16 times.



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Airfryer Viva Collection

PHILIPS

Cooking Appliances

The **Crock-Pot** Casserole Crock from Jarden has a rectangular design that is the perfect size and shape to prepare casserole dishes, lasagna, desserts and more. The stoneware is oven-safe for use in conventional ovens to cook and warm. The Casserole Crock uses the Cook & Carry slow cooker locking lid system for easy transport, without spills or mess. Users can prepare a casserole in advance, then let it slow cook. It's available in a variety of colours and patterns.



The Crock-Pot Hook Up connectable entertaining system provides flexibility for the party host. Units plug into each other to create the perfect table setting for any size party with everyone connecting their own individual unit to another. Up to six units can plug together using one outlet. Each unit is designed with HIGH, LOW and WARM settings. The removable stoneware and glass lids are dishwasher-safe, and stack for compact storage. It comes in three different sizes.

Targeting gourmet stores, **KitchenAid** is introducing the high performance Pro Line Series of small appliances. Each product in the line is engineered to create precise movements, incredible power, quiet operation and easy-to-navigate controls to ensure professional-style results every time. Die-cast materials with premium finishes add durability and a distinctive look to any countertop. The portfolio of Pro Line appliances includes a 7-quart stand mixer, 16-cup food processor, 5-speed cordless hand blender, 1.5-litre electric kettle with variable temperature control, plus a 2-slice and 4-slice automatic toasters. Each is equipped with a host of smart functions such as a keep-warm function. Made of die-cast materials with a premium finish



The new Griddler Deluxe by **Cuisinart** offers six enticing cooking options and an extra-large grilling surface is ideal for entertaining a crowd or making family meals. The reversible grill and griddle plates, combined with dual-zone temperature control, give home chefs complete control. This grill is perfect for making pancakes and eggs for breakfast, panini and open-faced sandwiches for lunch, and burgers or fajitas for dinner. The new SearBlast feature locks in the flavor of steaks and chops. With dishwasher-safe accessories, this premium countertop appliance offers 1800 watts of power for exceptional mealtime versatility.

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Cooking Appliances



The **Breville** Smart Fryer is the first to offer twice-fried fries. This setting produces that restaurant quality crisp fry with a soft texture inside. With this special program, the fryer first blanches the fries on a low temperature and then cooks them at a high temperature to crisp the exterior. There are seven pre-programmed settings on the LCD display. It will make 2.5 pounds of fries. Also new from Breville is the Quick Touch microwave oven, above right. The

1.2 cubic foot oven has smart settings with an easy-to-use interface, including Smart Cook, Smart Reheat and Smart Defrost. These settings each include a list of popular foods. The Quick Touch also has an "A Bit More" button that will add some additional time as required.

The Breville Thermal Pro skillet, below right, has a seven quart capacity and thick aluminum design that guarantees optimal heat retention. The skillet has 15 heat settings and a pan tilt function to conveniently drain away excess fats.



The Dual Breakfast sandwich maker from **Hamilton Beach** makes one or two sandwiches at one time. The unit is ready in 5 minutes and is easy to clean with a non-stick cooking surface. Parts are removable and all are dishwasher-safe. With a compact design, this versatile appliance features power and preheat indicator lights plus a built-in timer with audible tone. Quick and easy recipes are included.



This sleek toaster from Universal Expert is available in two-slice and four-slice models. Designed by Sebastian Conran and distributed by **David Shaw Designs**, this 1200-watt toaster has auto shut-off and function buttons for defrost, cancel, bagel and reheat. A slide-out crumb tray allows for easy cleaning while the self-centering mechanism and seven control levels ensure perfect browning.

The Hamilton Beach Double Basket deep fryer has an extra large 4.5-litre oil capacity and can easily cook two different foods at the same time, below. The unit ensures fast cooking with an immersed heating element. It's easy to assemble, use and clean. Features include power and ready lights, adjustable temperature, breakaway cord, a window on the lid and basket hooks for easy draining.



The Searing Grill from Hamilton Beach has a unique glass lid and a hooded design. It won't lose heat regardless of how many times it's opened to check on food. The large capacity grill delivers outdoor grill results with a high-heat searing capability. It has a non-stick cooking surface and removable, dishwasher-safe grids.



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GLOBAL knife blades utilize Cromova 18 high-carbon stainless steel that is ice tempered and hardened to Rockwell C56°-58°. This holds a razor sharp edge longer than any other steel and resists rust, stains and corrosion. A new (angled) fluted pattern (it's made parallel to the blade of the knife in an oval shape) is exclusive to Global, shown above. Also new is the MinoSharp 3-stage ceramic water sharpener, below. It offers three stage sharpening wheels from coarse to fine, identified by three colours, blue, brown and yellow. Made in Japan and distributed by **Browne & Co.**

The Cork line from **IVO Cutlery** is designed to bring nature indoors. The environmentally-friendly handle comes from the bark of cork oak trees in Portugal. The removal of the bark actually stimulates regrowth. This natural handle is comfortable to hold with a non-slip grip.



Cuisinart is unveiling several new cutlery collections this fall. The professional-quality cutlery is made from superior high-carbon stainless steel blades for precision and accuracy. All blades are tapered and narrow gradually to an extremely sharp, fine edge, perfect for that festive dinner with family and friends. The Cuisinart Classic 15-piece Triple Rivet Block Set, far right, features a classic triple-rivet handle with a sharp, metallic grey block. Customers have the opportunity to purchase pieces as a complete set or through open stock, which will then include a bonus blade

guard for complete safety. The Classic 15-Piece Stainless Steel set has ergonomically-designed hollow stainless steel handles and is paired with a black painted block, left. The Classic 14-Piece pakkawood-designed set, below centre, features triple rivet handles. The pakkawood material is hygienic and durable, providing moisture resistance when exposed to wet environments or extreme temperatures. Handles may vary slightly due to the unique nature of the material. Not shown is the Elite Pro 8-Piece Titanium premium set with an ultra-durable titanium coating.





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Knives & Sharpeners



Fürie has teamed with country star Trisha Yearwood to launch a new series of lightweight knives. Available separately or as part of a 7-piece block set, above, the knives are made of Japanese stainless steel with a patented reverse-wedge handles designed to reduce slippage and fatigue. Also new is the Trisha Yearwood by Fürie sharpener, below. This Diamond Fingers sharpener features eight diamond fingers that lightly re-shape and hone the edge to a perfect angle. Distributed by **Danesco**.



Marking the company's 200th anniversary, this special gift set from **Wüsthof** features two precision-forged, full-tang knives that are essential to everyday food prep tasks – a 9-inch cook's knife and 3.5-inch paring knife. Each razor sharp knife is made of high-carbon steel blades and elegant rosewood handles and brass rivets.



The blades on these knives by **RICARDO** are created with a unique curve to maximize cutting action. The handle and the blade are designed to provide exceptional comfort during everyday use. The collection includes a chef's knife, bread knife and paring knife, all made of German MoV stainless steel. The blades are laser-tested, hardened and tempered. The handles are made of brown Pakkawood and riveted onto the blade.



The **Chef's Choice** Model 700 electric sharpener uses an advanced diamond abrasive technology. The first of its kind, it will quickly apply an incredibly sharp and durable edge to both ceramic and steel knives. It has three sharpening stages and precision knife guides to handle any blade type.



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Knives & Cutting Boards



David Shaw Designs offers a set of three kitchen knives plus a chopping station as part of the Universal Export line by designer Sebastian Conran. The knives, above, feature one-piece stainless steel construction and an easy-grip handle.



This knife set from Oneida features Asian-style, oval stainless steel weighted hollow handles with brushed and polished finishes. High carbon and taper ground blades offer superior slicing while a bolster design protects hands.

This beautiful 3-piece Rosewood carving set from Victorinox includes a generously-sized board, an 8-inch carving knife and an 11-inch fork. The knife's curved high carbon steel blade is designed to follow the contour of the meat on the bone. The wood board has a rubberized finish to protect it from stains. The Rosewood handles are lightweight and well-balanced.



Green Bamboo cutting boards from Orly Cuisine are available in a wide range of shapes and sizes. They come either with or without a groove. Green bamboo is an eco-friendly resource that's harder and lighter than wood.



RICARDO Black walnut butcher blocks are made in Quebec by a traditional craftsman. Their assembly requires a rigorous selection of the wooden pieces to ensure maximum performance. Details such as the thickness of the butcher block, its assembly process and the precise wood selection, ensure a long life span for the board and the knives. The product is available in two different sizes to add elegance to any kitchen.



New shapes in the Zwilling Pro knife series include a rocking Santoku which bridges the functionality of a chef knife with the precision cutting of a Santoku.



The KNORK 3-piece chef starter set is perfect for the new homeowner. It goes beautifully with original KNORK flatware, the official brand of Bravo's Top Chef. The set includes a chef's knife, serrated knife and paring knife crafted from single forged high carbon steel and an Acacia cutting board. Available from InterContinental.

Knives & Cutting Boards

MDC Housewares offers a diversified assortment of wood kitchen accessories and cutting board in several shapes and sizes. The company's exclusive range of maple wood cutting and carving boards are ideal for serving and entertaining. All the boards are made in Canada from Canadian maple.



Epicurean is expanding its line of Novelty Shape boards. The company has added several new shapes, including a bunch of grapes and an apple, above, that will join existing shapes such as a mustache, a pig and a whale. The whimsical shapes of the collection bring fun and flair to both kitchen settings and parties. Made from the same wood fiber composite as all of Epicurean's cutting boards, the new Novelty Shapes are all dishwasher-safe. Epicurean has also announced that it is introducing a new pink colour to its line of recycled poly boards. Epicurean will donate 10% of all sales to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

Counseltron's Metaltex line features stainless steel blades and Bakelite handles to prevent slippage while cutting.



Architec has launched several new cutting boards this year including the innovative Gripperwood Concave board, below. With its unique concave design, the juices are never separated from the meat. It's distributed by **Jasco**, who are also introducing the Madeira Fogowood collection of cutting and serving boards. Fire and heat are used in a special treatment process to achieve rich espresso tones.



The Slice&Sharpen board has a ceramic sharpener conveniently built into the handle of this non-slip cutting board by Joseph Joseph. Distributed by **DanESCO**.

The sun shines on Toronto gift fair

The day before the Toronto Gift Fair opened in August, it was announced that the owners of Bombay, Bowring and Benix had filed for court protection from creditors. It was not good news for the giftware industry. Fortunately the filing did not impact the show in a particularly negative way. The housewares halls saw steady traffic on Sunday, and it picked up considerably on Monday. Exhibitors reported good order writing and quality buyers (including the Hudson's Bay team).

There were several new lines being shown in Hall 7, including Universal Export and Lenox. A 6 p.m. closing and shortened 4-day schedule helped keep the energy high, but the housewares hall could greatly benefit from a centrally-located demo area generate some culinary excitement on the show floor.

The next fair is set for January 24 to 29.



Sushil Arora of Danica, left, with Annemie Foure, who travelled from South Africa to launch her "Helping Hands" line at show.



Linda Heidman of Swissmar greets Tim Reibling of Cilantro - The Cook Shop in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.



Spotted at the Chef's Choice exhibit, left to right, Evelyn and George Winkler, Mary Darin and Peggy



Denise Gaze of Home Style with Stephen Setlakwe of A. Setlakwe in Quebec.



Harvey Geiger of Wüsthof, left, with Mark Bartling and Lex Vlassie of The Happy Cooker in Winnipeg.



Mark Iversen, left, and Ejil Iversen, introduced the innovative Lotus smoke-free grill at the Carsim Trading booth.

Exhibiting for the first time as the new 'David Shaw Designs', left to right, Gerald Greenwood, Rhonda Symons, U.K. designer Sebastian Conran (brother of Sophie) and Ivo Caixeiro.





Left to right: Oliver Janousek of Octagon (sales agency), Natalie Nelson of The Pan Tree, Derek Marcotte of Wüsthof Canada and Cathy Slobodian of The Pan Tree.



Wüsthof celebrates during Toronto fair

Over 200 retail customers, colleagues and sales associates were invited to a special cocktail party at the Sheraton Toronto Hotel on Sunday, August 10th to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Wüsthof. From the humble beginnings of Johann Wilhelm Wüsthof in 1814, to seven generations later, the iconic knife company is still run by a family member. Now under the guidance of Harald Wüsthof, (who was on hand for the event), the company remains committed to the design and manufacture of fine, precision-forged knives. We provide a few highlights below.



Harald Wüsthof travelled from Germany for the anniversary event. He's shown above with, right to left, Traudie Kauntz, Margo Hayes and Shannon Rea of Household China & Gifts in Waterloo, Ontario.



Donna Marie Hyde and Jim Hyde of The Culinary Poet in Goderich, Ontario.



Rick Williams of Williams Food Equipment, left, with Udo Blumenthal, who also travelled from Wüsthof Germany.



Howard Goldstein of Golda's Kitchen is shown with Anne Geiger of Geiger Agencies (profiled on page 74.)



Claire Lauzon of Ma Cuisine in Ottawa, right, with Fuson Williamson and Olivier April, both from Wüsthof's head office.



Traudie Kauntz, left, with Laurie O'Halloran of Home Style, center, and Sigrid Wolm of From The Kitchen to The Table.



NY NOW reveals top design trends

Retailers searching for that special little something were in luck this past summer as the latest edition of NY NOW showcased a diversified range of giftware, kitchenware and unique, one-of-a-kind items. The hot and humid weather did little to dampen the spirit of the 25,000 visitors to the show, held August 15th to 20th at the Jacob K. Javits Centre. The aisles were busy, and the convention centre itself has never looked better (thanks in large part to the efforts of president Alan Steel). Exhibitors reported on-site orders were up 30%.

In total, over 2,800 fashion-forward exhibitors showcased their wares at the August show, with awards presented in several categories (see sidebar). Key product trends included a return to more earth tones, natural materials, botanicals and a focus on sea life, as featured on page 76.

The next NY NOW is set for January 31st to February 4th.

Gourmet award winners take center stage

Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Best New Product awards were presented in four product-specific categories at NY NOW this August, including cooking (cookware, bakeware and small electrics); dining (tabletop, serve ware, bar/wine accessories, picnic/barbecue accessories, cutlery); gourmet accessories (specialty foods, kitchen, dining, textiles, cookbooks, storage/containers) and kitchen preparation (kitchen gadgets, knives and cutting tools). Winners and finalists were selected by a panel of editors based on innovative design; creative use of materials/construction; and use of new technology.

The winners and finalists are:

BEST OF MARKET

Twig New York – Hankook Chinaware New York for its Cutlery Series, a collaboration of Twig New York and ceramist Hayoon Kim, which began from old cutlery found in a small flea market in London. This collection is made with Fine Bone

China with 50% of bone ash and hand-painted with 24K gold.

COOKWARE CATEGORY

Winner: **VIETRI** for its Buon Gusto Medium Yellow Casserole baking dishes which go effortlessly from oven to table. Dishes are made in Tuscany of earthenware, and are dishwasher, microwave and oven safe.
Finalist: **Creo** for its Creo Smartglass.
Finalist: **Rosanna** for its Savour.

DINING CATEGORY

Winner: Coltellerie Berti for **MATCH** for its Compendio Steak Knife, a set of six steak knives handmade by artisans in Italy.
Finalist: **Lorena Gaxiola** for its Soft Rocks Glasses.
Finalist: **Red Pomegranate** Gilded Tableware for its Rabat covered dish.

GOURMET ACCESSORIES CATEGORY

Winner: **Rosanna** for its Stockholm Collection of canisters, bowls and mugs.

Finalist: **Birdkage** for its Peyton Mini Bib Apron in Olive.

Finalist: **The Spice Lab** for its Tea Collections.

KITCHEN PREPARATION CATEGORY

Winner: **Define | Bottle** for its Define Bottle, right, an eco-friendly water bottle that allows users to take fruit infused water to go.

Finalist: **Zoku** for its Fish Pops.

Finalist: **Corkcicle** for its Whiskey Wedge.

On the final day of the show, two products, Define Bottle by Define Bottle and Pop up House Fort by rhocchi, were winners in the "Peoples' Choice" category.

BEST OF HOME

Define | Bottle, which was originally selected as the Kitchen Preparation category winner in the Tabletop + Gourmet Housewares Best New Product Awards.



BEST OF LIFESTYLE

rhocchi for its Pop up House Fort, which is portable, packable, easy to set up and hangs for easy storage. The Pop up House Fort was originally selected as the Toy category winner in the Baby + Child awards.

Maritime artisan group travels to NY NOW

With the financial support of the government of Canada, a delegation from the four Maritime provinces travelled to NY NOW in August for the first time. Comprised of local artisans and designers, the mission was organized by the Craft Alliance Association to help Atlantic Canadian entities enter, explore and succeed in international markets.

Of notable interest is Anointment, a company from Sackville, New Brunswick, that won the show's Eco award for most sellable product for its all-natural baby oil. Other exhibitors showcased a range of handmade and artisan giftware.

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The new Ricardo eco-friendly plant-based summer serveware collection is not only harmless for the environment but also stylish and functional. The collection includes a dinner plate, salad plate, salad serving bowl, salad server set, cup and pitcher in beautiful and vibrant colours. It is 100% natural, plant-based and biodegradable as well as durable, resisting to staining and odor retention. The exclusive plant based material makes the serveware shine like ceramic and smooth like glass. Dishwasher and microwave safe, it is easy to care for and use every day.



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Trend: BACK TO NATURE



Twig New York is a trendy lifestyle brand with an artistic twist. Each of the collections is designed to combine romantic designs with functional tableware items. The Foliage line is shown left.



Christopher Marley designs a line of beautiful wall-mounted pieces using natural artifacts and insects. Each one is museum-quality.



This stylish Staghorn cake stand from Lunares is made of silver with a gold plated base.

Birch was a popular material at the show. This tray and bowl set was part of a collection from Boston International that includes prep bowls, spreader sets, napkin caddy with a twig weight and dinner bells.



Escluso's sculptural organic candles are handmade and inspired by the beauty of nature. Many use real seasonal flowers and plants.

Trend: THE DEEP BLUE SEA



The Thomas Paul range of melamine tableware includes this dramatic pattern called Scrimshaw, left and below. The whale is shown on a two piece tray set and round tray while an octopus is featured on an oversized tray.



This stunning set from Caskata Home is called Sea Life. Featuring gold accents of mixed sea life, coral and fish, the line comes boxed as a set of four appetizer plates. Also available, a shell pattern and aquarium design.



Trend: GET A GRIP ON DRINKWARE



Life Factory showcased new glassware with colourful silicone sleeves for added protection and grip. The pedestal base ensures stability.

Dimple self-chilling glassware from Soiree Home keeps drinks cold for 30 minutes without diluting the flavour thanks to a frozen insert. Each glass has an insulated hand grip and magnetic connection.



Trend: FUN & FRIVOLOUS

Consumers can 'bake the perfect man' with this fun new cookie cutter from Talisman Designs. It's a twist on a classic design in stainless steel.



The Carrol Boyes collection comprises a dynamic range of over 1000 lifestyle products, from unique flatware to serving bowls, shown. Trays and bowls are sculpted from various metals.



Barware was big in NY. WildEye Designs capitalized on the Zombie trend with a new cocktail shaker and a hip flask, shown left.



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Harvey Geiger

Partner/owner (with wife Anne) of Geiger Agencies



Like so many successful agents in our industry, Harvey Geiger began his career at the bottom, as a commissioned sales rep selling vacuum cleaners for Sears. And like many others, he acknowledges it was the best training he could have had. He's even more grateful to Sears for introducing him to his future wife and business partner, Anne.

Harvey was born in 1947 and grew up in southern Saskatchewan, near the Montana border. He was one of six children on a large working farm where his family raised cattle and grain. Harvey rode the horses and herded the cattle and though he says there were difficult years, it was generally a good life.

Once he finished high school and a bit of university, however, he decided he'd had enough small town living. He wanted to spread his wings and see the world so he flew to Toronto and spent the next couple of years working odd jobs, and generally having a good time.

In the mid-70s, a friend suggested they drive down to Windsor for the day and apply for a job at the brand new Sears store. With nothing to lose, Harvey jumped in the car, and they were hired on the spot.

Though he didn't know much about selling, Harvey was very personable and he liked people. He quickly moved to Windsor and started full-time at Sears. It was best decision he ever made. The first week on the job, he caught sight of his future wife, Anne, a department manager in the same store. He was immediately smitten. The two started dating, and they were married in 1971.

At the time, Sears frowned on married couples working together, so Harvey and Anne decided to make a brand new start together with a bold move to B.C. Anne was able to land a job at the Richmond Sears store, and Harvey went to work in the furniture department of the Surrey store.

The couple spent the next seven years in B.C. and Harvey, a commissioned sales rep, was one of the store's top earners. But after their first son Michael was born, and Anne was pregnant with their second, they got wanderlust. Anne's father was ill so they decided to return to Ontario. Harvey arranged for a transfer

to the Mississauga Sears, and son Brian was born shortly after they arrived in 1977.

Though he enjoyed retail, a newspaper ad for a Henckels rep caught Harvey's eye one day. He had always enjoyed working with the vendors at Sears and often wondered what sales life would be like on the 'other side'. He also knew a bit about knives since he and Anne were both avid cooks so he sent off his resume.

Henckels hired him, and Harvey began his new career selling knives and gourmet tools to small independent retailers. "After all my years at Sears, I felt I could sell anything," he recalls. "But I was really happy to be in the housewares business, working for a good-sized company with a high quality product."

He stayed with Henckels for seven years before deciding to move into the linen business. He joined Cambridge Towel where he spent the next three years calling on major accounts. It was a great learning experience, but Harvey eventually realized he preferred calling on the independent shop owners.

By that time, their boys were in school and Anne had gone back to work for an insurance agency. Harvey felt the time was right to pursue his dream of starting his own sales agency. His goal was to build the business to the point where Anne could join him, which happened after just three years.

In the beginning, they sold everything from crystals to duvets, but today their lines are split evenly between housewares and linens (a throwback to his Cambridge days).

His big break in kitchenware came when Derek Marcotte and the late Ben Buerman, president of Wüsthof Canada, decided to move to Ottawa in the mid-80s. They were looking for someone to handle their premium German knife line. Wüsthof soon became Harvey and Anne's main housewares brand.

"I've been very protective of that line because it has meant a lot to me," he says.

Today they also carry a range of mid-priced linens in addition to Edgecraft, Gastrolux cookware and the Universal Stone. While Harvey handles most of the Toronto accounts, Anne covers southwestern Ontario and central Ontario as far north as Orillia.

"I like selling high-end products because I understand how they're used," says Harvey. "We entertain a lot. I like fine wines and good food. Anne is a fantastic cook, we understand the value of quality kitchen tools."

They also understand the value of good relationships with their retail customers. Harvey loves being his own boss, thoroughly enjoys working trade shows, and happily spends many weekend conducting demos. He has a low key sales technique and is never pushy, something his customers appreciate.

"Harvey is a true gentleman, with a wonderful sense of humour," says Marjorie Agnew at The Main Course in Toronto, a long-time customer. "When he visits we are always happy to see him and he treats everyone with such warmth and respect. He is a man of integrity who is always honest in his guidance."

His vendors feel the same way. Peggy Liddle, sales manager at Edgecraft, says "Harvey is a true professional in the industry. He understands the needs of his customers and works diligently to help them select just the right assortment for their stores. He has helped establish our Chef'sChoice brand in the greater Toronto area and we are fortunate to have him represent us."

After all these years together, it's obvious that Harvey is still very much in love with the "cute young girl" he first saw at Sears in Windsor. He says they have been perfect partners, and though Anne may be ready to start slowing down, he says he is still enjoying the job too much to consider retirement, although he does see the industry changing.

"There are more challenges today for a number different reasons, one of which is fewer independent kitchen shops," he says, "and that reduces the need for personal relationships, which I regret."

With their passion for travel, and four grandchildren they adore, it's a good bet that Harvey and Anne's retirement – which won't come for many years yet – will be just as sweet as their working life together. 🍷

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