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Canada's Housewares Magazine

November 2014

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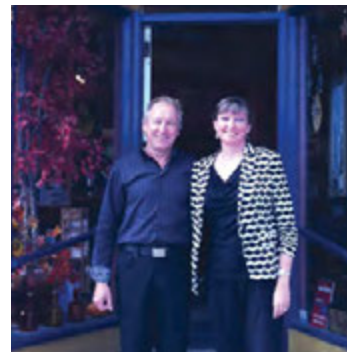
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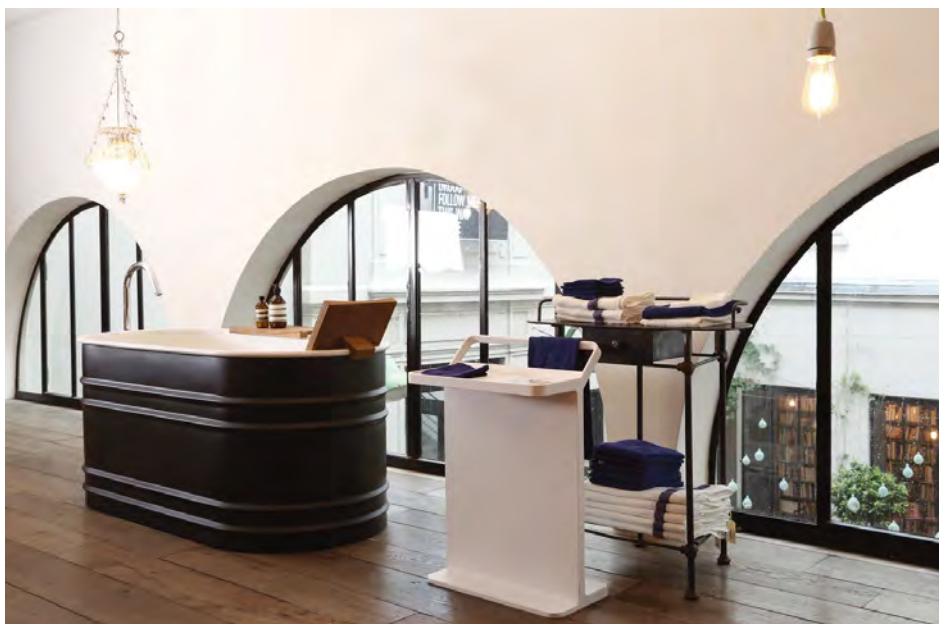
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014
Volume 25 • Number 6

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PRINTING & PRODUCTION
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HOME STYLE is published
six times a year by
Lorell Communications Inc.
146 Cavendish Court
Oakville, ON L6J 5S2

www.homestylemag.ca

Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product
Agreement No. 40011823

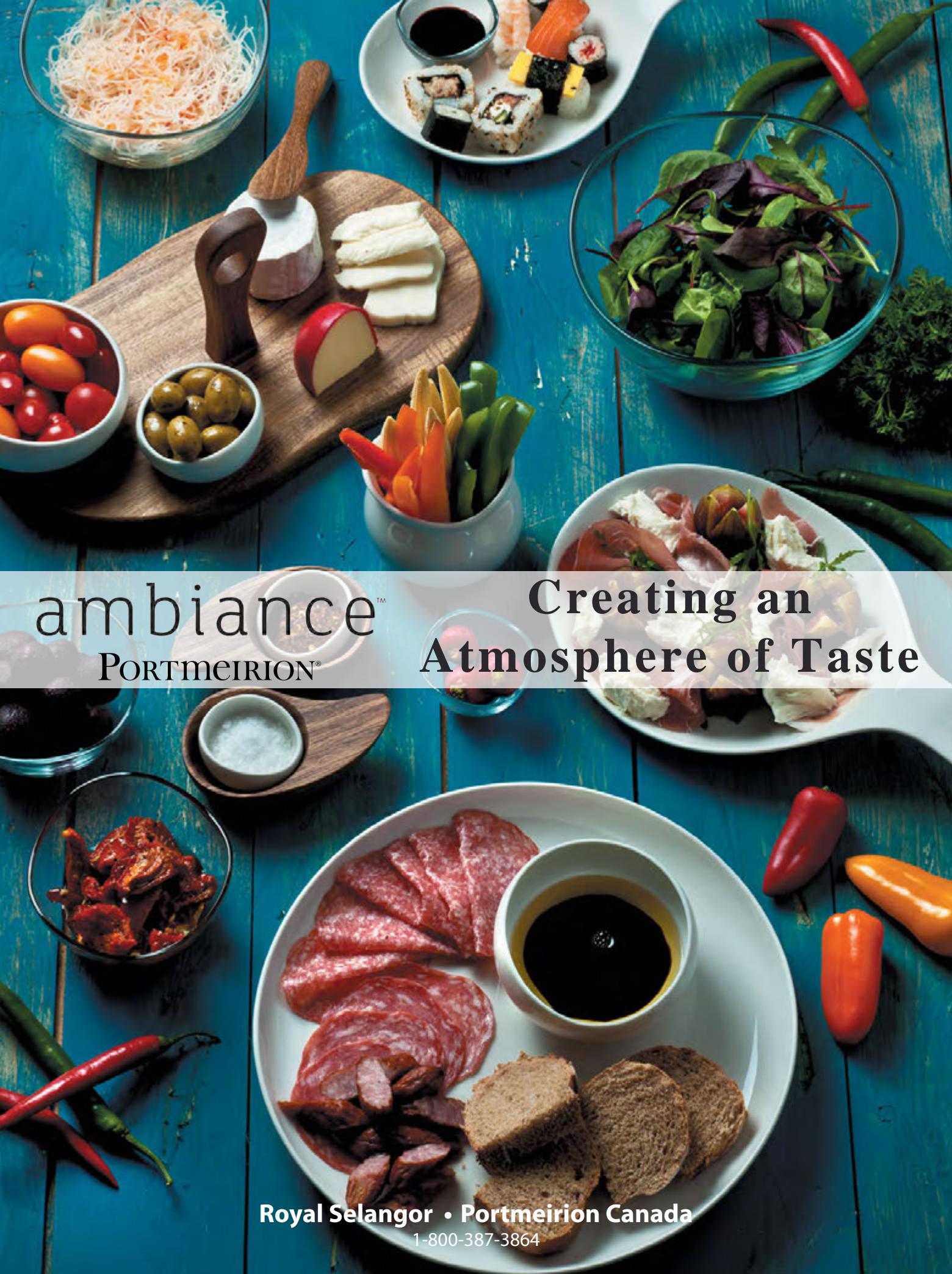
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Contact the Hong Kong Trade Development Council

Visit www.hktdc.com/fair/hkhousewarefair

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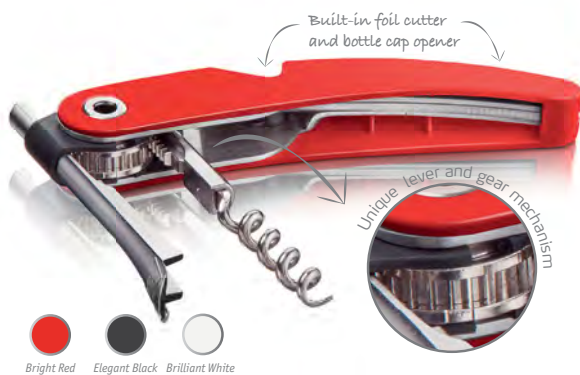
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Our strange addiction

Last week, sitting in a restaurant, I witnessed something very disheartening. At the next table, an elderly couple were enjoying a dinner out. In the past, I've always enjoyed watching two people who have been together so long, and are so comfortable with each other, that words aren't necessary. But that wasn't the case in this instance. These two diners were sharing their meal with people who weren't even in the restaurant! They were each so focused on their cell phones they barely even acknowledged the person across the table. It made me so sad to watch them and I wondered – not for the first time – am I the only person left on this planet who is not addicted to their cell phone?



Albert Einstein once said "I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interactions. The world will have a generation of idiots." Well, that day is here. We are multitasking like never before but how much are we accomplishing? Our minds are so cluttered, it's hard to focus on any one thing properly.

According to research, the average person now takes in the information equivalent of 175 newspapers every single day. The amount of science produced in the past two decades surpasses all theories and discoveries of the preceding 100,000 years. Yet we continue to add all sorts of new distractions to our routine on a daily basis.

Take a look at your local park on a sunny afternoon. The kids are playing happily, the parents are sitting on the bench with their heads bent over their phones. Or how about when a plane lands? Before it even starts to taxi to the gate, every passenger has whipped out their phone and is furiously trying to find out what they missed during their two hours in the air. And what about the show exhibitor who never looks up from his iPhone and then wonders why nobody comes into his booth?

Though my teenage daughter strongly disagrees, I think these smart devices could be making us dumber. When was the last time you had to memorize someone's phone number? It's been proven that we absorb less information off a screen than we do off a printed page. But even more disconcerting, as far as I'm concerned, is the fact that cell phones are destroying the art of conversation. How many times do you meet someone for lunch and the first thing they do is throw their phone on the table, where it's readily accessible. The beeps or blips or vibrations are impossible to resist, even if it's just to take a peek to see who's calling. After all, it might be somebody more important than the person you're with, right?

Texting and emailing are definitely addictive, according to psychologists. I've just finished a marvelous book (yes, a printed, hardcover book) called *A Deadly Wandering*. It's the story of the first person charged in the U.S. with texting while driving and causing a deadly accident. The driver did not even realize he was texting at the time of the crash because he was doing it one-handed, and it had become second nature. This was way back in 2006, and texting was still a relatively new phenomenon so the prosecutors had several addiction specialists testify in court. They had discovered that cell phones and gambling – especially on slot machines – stimulate the brain in exactly same way. With slot machines, you never know when it will pay off. The player usually leaves unsatisfied but has to come back for more – just in case it's the big win. The same is true of cell phones. Users can't resist scanning every single message. Most are worthless, but it might be urgent and you can never predict when that will be.

I do have a blackberry that I use when I travel or to text my kids (as long as I have my reading glasses) but that's about it. My office is in my home, which means I retrieve emails on my big, beautiful 27-inch screen, and I have access to my land line pretty much 24/7. It's the only one I'll use for phone interviews. Often, the only time I pull out my blackberry is to recharge it before I head out to meet someone.

We're more connected to our devices, yet more disconnected from each other, than ever before. The average woman now spends 10 hours a day on her phone and men spend eight hours. That doesn't leave much time for real life interaction.

This holiday season, I hope we can each take a break from the technology that tethers us and enjoy some quality time with family and friends – live and in person.

– Laurie O'Halloran
laurie@homestylemag.ca

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People In the News

• After three decades in the industry, **Janet Burt** officially retired from Helen of Troy in late September. Prior to Helen of Troy, Janet spent many years with World Kitchen and EKCO.

• **Jesse O'Halloran** has joined the *Home Style* team as sales and promotion manager. He will be responsible for social media marketing, display advertising and the new Gourmet Gallery, making its debut in the January 2015 issue.

• Toni Palozzi has appointed the following sales representatives for Canitra Agents: **David Thibault** in B.C. and Alberta; **Alexandra Mathurin** on Vancouver Island; **Richard Waters** in Toronto and the GTA; and **Diane Brunelle** in Quebec.

• **Janine Maguire** has returned to Zwilling J.A. Henckels as product manager. She was most recently with Jarden Consumer Solutions. As well, **Leon Benz** has

been appointed vice president of sales and marketing for Zwilling.

• Emerald Expositions has announced several appointments on the NY NOW team. **Randi Mohr** and **Scott Kramer** have been appointed to the new positions of vice president, show directors for NY NOW, and Allison Garafalo has been promoted to sales director. Mohr will be responsible for NY NOW's sales processes and systems management plus NY NOW's HOME Collection. Kramer will continue to oversee the LIFESTYLE and NEW Collections as well as the HANDMADE Collection. As part of the restructuring, the role of senior vice president, formerly held by Christian Falkenberg, was eliminated.

• **Douglas C. Campbell** has resigned as CEO of Sears Canada. He is stepping down at the end of the year and returning to the United States to "tend to personal family issues." **Ronald Boire**, chief

merchandising officer and president of Sears Full Line Stores and Kmart Format, has left the U.S. to become acting president and chief executive officer for Sears Canada.

• The International Housewares Association board has elected its officers for the next term and five new directors. **Dave Elliott**, general manager of KitchenAid Global Small Appliances, was elected IHA chairman; **Gary Seehoff** of Evriholder was elected IHA vice chairman/chairman elect; and **Greg Cairo**, president of Group SEB USA was elected IHA treasurer. The officers will serve one-year terms.

The new IHA directors are **Richard Joseph** of Joseph Joseph; **Robert Kay** of Taylor Precision Products; **Alejandro Peña** of Jarden Consumer Solutions USA; **Paul Rowan** of Umbra; and **Philippe Trudeau** of Trudeau Corporation. They were elected to three-year terms that begin Oct. 1, 2014.

Retiring from the board are **Steven Fraser** of Knightsbridge Global; **Michael Magerman**; **William P. Reibl** of Infusion Living; **Erik Reid** and **Scott Severinson**. Re-appointed for a second three-year term were **Anthony Kircher** of Winix America; and **David Sabin** of The Fuller Brush Company.

Also serving on the IHA Board are **Hildy Abrams** of Gourmet Settings; **Brett Bradshaw** of Bradshaw International; **John Collins** of Neatfreak; **Evan Dash** of StoreBound; **Keith Jaffee** of O2 Cool; **Daniel Oehy** of Swissmar; **Jenna Sellers Miller** of Architec; **Will Symonds** of DKB Household USA; and **Jay Zilinskis** of Meyer Corporation.

Letters

I would like to thank you for a great editorial in the latest issue of the magazine! I love your magazine and also read it cover to cover. There are always great articles and as I manage an independent cook shop, I am so thankful to have *Home Style* around!
 Ginny McCullough,
 Vincas Kitchen, Delta, B.C.

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Celebrating 60 years in Thunder Bay

The Kitchen Nook (aka The Finnish Book Store) is celebrating its 60th anniversary in Thunder Bay, Ontario, this year. Owned and operated by Richard and Marlene Koskiniemi, the store was founded in 1954 by Richard's grandparents, who were natives of Finland. (Thunder Bay has the largest Finnish population outside of Europe.)

Although the store has been modified over the years to more a kitchen shop, they continue to sell many products that appeal to Finnish and Scandinavian culture, including cookbooks. There is also a cooking school and an active bridal registry. Every Christmas, they stage a special fundraiser in store in support of the Alzheimer's Society (Richard's grandmother died of the disease). This year, Marlene and Richard promise it will be bigger and better than ever as they celebrate their anniversary.

From day one, the store has earned a reputation for exceptional customer service, and that tradition continues. This summer, Richard and Marlene, who have been married for 22 years, renovated the beautiful stone building, located on the corner of Bay and Algoma Streets. The second floor is now a condo while the main floor houses the kitchen store that continues to draw a very loyal clientele. The owners enjoy a good work/life balance by closing the store for two weeks every February and taking time to get away with their daughter Mariah, who is attending university in Toronto.

To mark their 60th year, the store is working with key vendors such as Swissmar, Zwilling, Port-Style, Fox Run and Norpro to provide product giveaways and customer contests.

Oakville Place set to expand

RioCan is set to break ground in June 2015 on the redevelopment of Oakville Place, led by the addition of a new Pusateri's Fine Foods. The opening of Pusateri's is part of a \$30 million dollar renovation that is scheduled to be completed in 2016. Centrally located with visibility from major highways, RioCan's Oakville Place is the only enclosed shopping centre in the area. Pusateri's is expected to create approximately 150 jobs and is scheduled to open in time for the holiday season, 2015.

Family-owned and operated for over 45 years, Pusateri's remains a one-of-a-kind shopping destination for food enthusiasts. It has three locations in the Toronto area, but in Oakville it will be within a few kilometres of a new Longo's upscale grocery store as well as a Whole Foods.

The Tire unveils loyalty program

The 'My Canadian Tire Money' rewards program was rolled out nationally in October. It's the first major overhaul to the country's oldest loyalty program, the paper coupon currency it launched in 1958. The goal is to gather more customer purchasing information.

"With the information received through the program, we'll better understand how and when customers shop and what they are buying," chief operating officer Allan MacDonald said in a media presentation.

Retailers from Loblaws to Starbucks have crafted digital programs aimed at getting to know customers' shopping habits and to encourage them to spend more by offering special deals on their favourite items. But customers who pay cash or use non-Canadian Tire debit or credit cards have been invisible to the retailer.

A 2013 Colloquy Loyalty Census found that 90% of Canadian customers belong to at least one loyalty program and households belong to an average of eight programs.

Canadian Tire stressed that the paper loyalty 'money' will not be eliminated. Those who sign up for the new program will still be able to collect Canadian Tire Money on in-store and online purchases. And people holding on to the estimated \$100-million in outstanding paper money and wanting to enroll in the digital program have an option to convert their bills into online points, executives said.

Sears sells off Canadian stake

Sears Holdings announced this fall that it hopes to raise up to \$380 million by lowering its stake in Sears Canada to 12% from 51% through a rights offering. Chief Executive Officer Eddie Lampert and his hedge fund, which together own 48.5% of Sears Holdings, will buy about half of the offering. The move comes after a year-long attempt to find an outside buyer for the company's holdings of Sears Canada. The \$380 million target is about half of what the company had previously indicated its stake was worth.

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Ralph Lauren opens chic coffee shop

Ralph's Coffee, the first-ever coffee shop from designer Ralph Lauren, is now open on the second floor of the new Polo Ralph Lauren flagship store overlooking Fifth Avenue in New York City.

"The smell of freshly brewed coffee evokes so many memories for me," Lauren said in a press release, "mostly of time spent with friends and family, the people I love." The shop serves his own La Colombe coffee blends made from South American and African beans.

Cafés inside department stores are nothing new – the Kelly Wearstler-designed BG restaurant in Bergdorf Goodman in New York or the Nordstrom Café locations nationwide – but boutiques serving boutique coffee is certainly a developing trend.

Williams Sonoma returns to its roots

Sonoma, California in the same location where the first store opened almost six decades ago. The timing coincides with the 99th birthday of Chuck Williams, the company's legendary founder.

Williams' culinary legacy began in 1956 when he purchased a hardware store in the Northern Californian wine

country town of Sonoma. An avid cook, Williams began introducing cooking and serving equipment that he found in his travels to France. The merchandise was used by professional chefs and had never been available to home cooks. The items he selected quickly caught on and Williams converted the space to his first store, which combined a well-organized merchandise presentation with his own passion for personal service.

A cooking school featuring an innovative design allowing for hands on instruction for up to 12 students carries on Chuck's commitment to not only equip, but also educate the home cook. The new concept also joins the original footprint of the store with the residence where Chuck Williams lived.

The original footprint has been planned with the bay shelving and black and white floor tiles that became early trademarks for the brand. Select fixtures and materials were salvaged and incorporated to maintain the integrity of the architecture. A garden of raised beds and planters to grow herbs and seasonal crops has been created for use by the onsite culinary team.

Amazon to test a bricks & mortar store

Amazon.com may soon test the waters of bricks and mortar retailing – again. In October, the *Wall St. Journal* reported that the online retailer is set to open a location in Manhattan, across from the Empire State Building. The location, near Macy's famed Herald Square store, is expected to serve as a warehouse with limited inventory for same-day delivery, product returns and exchanges and pickup of online orders.

No specific grand opening date was offered, but the report said the location would be open in time for the holiday shopping season.

The report said the location could also be used to showcase electronics including Amazon's Kindle tablet, Fire smartphone and Fire TV set-top box. It was not known what presence, if any, housewares would have at the location.

For years, the building on West 34th Street was an integral part of the New York Tabletop Market as it was home to a number of leading tableware and gift vendors. Currently, about two dozen gift and home product suppliers continue to occupy showroom space on three floors of the 12 story building, which is owned by Vornado Realty Trust.

Crate & Barrel opens first Russian store

Crate & Barrel opened its first Russian location this fall, amid a sharp economic slowdown and a trade war between Moscow and the West over Ukraine.

The company celebrated the opening of a 3,000 square meter outlet in the Afimall shopping mall in Moscow's business district with champagne, caviar and oysters.

The store is the first of eight planned across Russia as the company takes on rivals like IKEA and Russian furniture superstore Hoff. Three massive IKEA stores surround Moscow, and the chain has announced a \$2.5 billion expansion plan. But Nur Akgerman, Crate & Barrel's regional head, said their smaller stores are an asset, which targets upper-middle class buyers with global tastes.

Crate & Barrel is importing the entire product range from the United States, which will likely increase costs, and Russia is mired in a slump.

Economic growth in Russia this year is expected to be near zero. And what with low oil prices and Western sanctions on Moscow over its support of separatists in eastern Ukraine, long-term forecasts predict an extended period of stagnation.

Akgerman is still optimistic: "Russia may be in a little bit of a downstream, but if you look at it from a 10 to 20 year perspective, it's upstream," she says.

Akgerman also waved off the risk of sanctions, which have already halted food imports to Russia worth \$9 billion.

If IKEA is any indication, Crate & Barrel has grounds for optimism. Sales at IKEA, which has 14 stores in Russia, grew 18% last year.

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Household China opens new interactive kitchen

Household China & Gift has undergone several transformations since it first opened its doors on King Street in Waterloo, Ontario back in 1958. The two-story kitchen store has moved into new categories, such as children's products and collectibles, but has always stayed true to its culinary roots. Cooking classes were introduced in 2007 after the second floor was completely refurbished to include a working kitchen.

This summer, the store unveiled another new retail dimension, an interactive kitchen on the main floor where an in-house chef prepares a two-course executive lunch daily. Since the store is located next to Laurier University, the fare features student brown bag lunches and shoppers can either dine-in or take-out. A charming enclosed patio area has been created at the front of the store with bistro tables and chairs.

Owner Traudie Kauntz says this new *Interactive Kitchen On King* (or "iKoK) gives customers an opportunity to sit down with a chef and discuss food, products, or cooking techniques. "Now when you walk into Household China, you walk into sights, sounds, and delicious smells," she says. "This is a brick and mortar store like no other. Service has always been something we excel at. We've just taken it one course further.

Created with the help of her staff (including daughter Shannon Rea), the kitchen is providing a new experience in good taste for Household China customers. Whether they are sharing recipes or enjoying delicious coffees or smoothies, homemade soups or breads in-store, Traudie says her ultimate goal is to deliver "great retail therapy". Based on the response from the community so far, her strategy is paying off.



The Interactive Kitchen on King serves two lunch choices daily, above. The private patio, left, offers customers a chance to relax outdoors.



Fernanda Inserra of Philips demonstrates the company's new air fryer.

Home celebrates 50 years at Fall Market



Home Hardware rolled out the red carpet for its 1100+ dealers as they travelled to St. Jacobs, Ontario for the company's annual Fall Market last September. Home celebrates its 50th in 2014.



Cathy Campbell and Tim Casey of Paderno are regular exhibitors at the Home market.



Adam Ball of United Sales & Marketing, left, with Jesse O'Halloran of Home Style.



Celebrity chef and Home Hardware spokesperson Anna Olson meets with dealers.



Mary Ann Amodeo and Glenn Macgregor conduct cooking demos at the T-Fal booth.

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*Tested on a green smoothie: Green apple (200g), kale(100g), celery (120g), oranges (300g), carrot (200g), distilled water (250ml). Serving size is 400ml. Testing conducted on behalf of Breville Pty Ltd. December 2013 - Australian Government, National Measurement Institute

Vitamix targets the growing smoothie market



Vitamix held a culinary media luncheon at Spendido restaurant in Toronto on October 15th to mark the launch of the company's new personal-sized blender.

The new S30 is small but mighty. It boasts a powerful 790-watt motor, metal drive system and the company's signature laser-cut, stainless-steel blades. The result is a smoother blend, even with tough ingredients. The machine also gives users blending control with a variable speed control and a pulse feature to effortlessly create a variety of textures.

The new S30 also comes with two shatter-resistant, BPA-free containers. Additional cups with lids provide retailers with an add-on sales opportunity.

With the growing consumer desire for healthy options, smoothie consumption among Canadians continues to increase, says Vitamix president Scott Tennant. An ongoing online study by ORC International found that more than 448 million smoothies were made in homes

throughout Canada from November 2013 to September 2014. Consumption reached its peak last summer, with approximately 47 million smoothies made at home in both June and July.

In September 2014, more than 42 million smoothies were made in Canadian homes. For those who made smoothies at home, 30% of respondents consumed their beverage while on-the-go (outside home or work), using a to-go cup.

Depending on the time of year, roughly half of Canadian households create at least one smoothie at home per month. About 16% of smoothie makers said they blend six or more smoothies per month.

To create their blended items, 44% of Canadian households surveyed use a countertop blender, while 18% utilize a single-serve blender, and 27%, or 3.6 million Canadian households, report owning a single-serve blender.

"The trend of creating blended beverages at home is clearly on the rise," says Karen Haefling, vice president of marketing for Vitamix. "Vitamix machines can quickly blend whole foods for a refreshing smoothie, making it easy for families to get the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables."

She adds that Vitamix S30 was designed with convenience in mind. "It comes with two unique containers, including a blend-and-go cup that fits comfortably in cup holders and can be clipped onto a belt, making it easy to eat healthy on the run. The size of the machine is perfect for travel or the office."



Above, Scott Tennant tells Toronto media about the benefits of the new Vitamix S30.

Few entrepreneurs have succession plan

Surprisingly few Canadian family businesses have formally planned how the next generation will take over. The 2014 Deloitte Family Business Survey of 120 family-owned companies found that just 17% of those surveyed have a formal leadership succession plan in place. While half have an informal plan, that doesn't leave them in much better shape than the 33% with no plan at all, says John Hughes of Deloitte Canada.

"They may have a sense of who's coming up through the ranks, but that isn't really a plan," says Hughes, who also leads the Canada's Best Managed Companies program. There is no designated successor for the CEO or president at 54% of the companies surveyed, and of those that do have one, it is formally recognized in just 13% of cases.

Millennials want a hands-on experience

Research from LoyaltyOne suggests retailers should consider providing Millennials with a hands-on shopping experience. The company claims that offering sessions with an expert in a field related to potential purchase might motivate this demographic to shop more at a store. For example, 84% of Millennials – consumers aged 18 to 29 – said the chance to redeem rewards/loyalty program points for a session with a chef or nutritionist would motivate them to shop more with a grocery store.

LoyaltyOne noted that 69% of Millennials said a session with a plumber or electrician would motivate them to shop more with a home improvement store.

Although Millennials do have a strong attraction to shopping consultation, they aren't alone as LoyaltyOne found 69% of study respondents generally claim an expert session with a chef or nutritionist would motivate them to shop more with the grocer offering the session. When the study results are broken down by gender, 72% of women said they'd be motivated by the chef or nutritionist session versus 64% of men.



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One unique aspect of the Knork fork is the beveled outer tines, which allow users to cut food easily. Each piece is also slightly heavier than the average flatware, creating a more stable, balanced utensil.

The flatware has become a favorite of several well-known chefs and has been used in culinary competitions on *Bravo's Top Chef* and *Top Chef Masters* as well as on Food Network programs such as Rachael Ray. It was also the exclusive silverware for the first annual Los Angeles Food and Wine Event.

The company recently launched a line of black titanium coated knives, shown above. Knork is distributed in Canada by InterContinental Mercantile.

Breville announces settlement in lawsuit

Breville has entered into an agreement with Hurom, a kitchen appliances company based in South Korea, to resolve Breville's lawsuit against Hurom for false and misleading advertising claims related to Hurom's Slow Juicer. The Lawsuit challenged Hurom's advertisements comparing its Slow Juicer to centrifugal juicers, for which Breville is a global market leader. Hurom has agreed to modify its advertising in connection therewith. The terms of the parties' settlement were not made public and remain confidential.

"We are pleased with today's outcome, which we believe validates Breville's market position and the quality for which our juicers and other kitchen products have become known worldwide," says Damian Court, President of Breville USA. "We shall continue to assert our rights and defend our product line from false and misleading advertising campaigns as we continue to develop innovative and exciting new appliances and products to enrich the lives of our consumers on the global stage."

Stephen Krauss, president of Breville Canada, says "these proceedings were initially instituted by Breville as part of its ongoing commitment to take legal action when it considered it necessary to maintain accuracy in the marketplace regarding information about our products and our brand."

Club Coffee condemns Keurig's new brewer

Canada-based Club Coffee has filed suit against Keurig Green Mountain claiming the company is using "anti-competitive measures to maintain a near monopoly and keep single serve coffee prices artificially high."

According to a press release issued by Club Coffee, the company is seeking \$600 million in damages. The company claims that Keurig's new 2.0 brewers, which hit the shelves of major retailers in September, offer no improvements to the brewing process and are designed to

lock out competitors using what Keurig says is "proprietary technology."

"Keurig has used claims of proprietary technology to coerce retailers and other customers into exclusive arrangements to sell only Keurig-blessed products," says John Pigott, Club Coffee CEO. "The situation is simple here. Keurig wants less competition, less consumer choice, less room for innovation and to keep prices high for consumers."

The launch of the 2.0 brewer line by Keurig has raised eyebrows over the company's move to limit the types of K-Cups that can be used with the new units. The new Keurig brewers work only with the company's own K-Cups as well as those that are licensed.

Club Coffee claims that the technology used by Keurig to limit the types of K-Cups used with the 2.0 brewers can be "easily duplicated." Club Coffee claims it has pods in production that can be used with units in the 2.0 assortment.

Philips decides to split the company

Philips will divide into two companies as the Dutch conglomerate turns its lighting business into a separate entity. It is the latest step in Philips' plan to move out of consumer electronics and into fast-growing areas like healthcare.

The split will take up to 18 months to complete and the company said it should make it easier for both the new entities to raise money and invest.

Philips, which invented the audio cassette and compact disc, grew into a world-leading electronics company by the 1960s but it has always been hesitant to move out of less profitable businesses, such as audio and video, vinyl records and TVs.

Philips CEO Frans Van Houten said "I appreciate the magnitude of the decision we are making, but the time is right to take the next strategic step for Philips. Great companies need to reinvent themselves, we can do that, we can stay relevant, we can grow and we can stay successful. It takes courage but it's a path we've been preparing for carefully."

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Healthy eating enthusiasts drive sales of blenders in Canada

by Armin Begic, Manager, The NPD Group

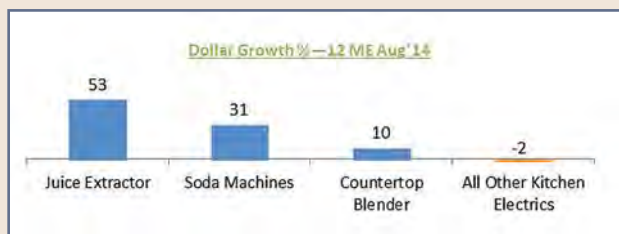
There has been a lot to get excited about in the small appliance industry this year, especially around the beverage categories. As of August, year-over-year sales of juicers have climbed 53%. Within Juicers, there are two main types: Masticating and Centrifugal. Masticating juicers use an auger to relatively slowly crush and squeeze the juice from the food materials added, but often require some more chopping from the user prior to juicing. Centrifugal juicers shred the foods added, and the juice is pulled from the food by the fast spinning action.

Masticating juicers tend to be expensive; their average retail over the last 12 months has been around \$220. Most units sold are centrifugal, likely due to the lower cost, with an average price of \$114. Serious juicing enthusiasts tend to choose masticating juicers because they extract more juice from the source foods, and process leafy greens better than the centrifugal models. And these additional benefits are clearly driving growth, as the masticating juicers are growing at an even faster rate than the total category despite the higher average pricing.

Similar to juicers, blender growth also appears to be driven by consumer health awareness, and sales are gravitating to the higher price points. As of August, countertop blender sales have climbed 10 percent versus last year – and the blender is an appliance that has been around for a while. Further, 9% of total sales came from blenders priced \$200 or more, compared to only 2% for the same period last year. Consumers are clearly willing to spend for the perceived benefits in the higher end.

Typically, higher priced blenders include more powerful motors measured in horsepower or multiple blades to process food more finely.

Soda machines are another fast growth area in small appliances. As of August, sales year over year are up 31%, while sales of the carbonators have more than doubled. Carbonator growth has outpaced growth in the flavor syrups – possibly indicating many consumers prefer to use their machines for carbonated water – a healthier option compared to soda.



B & M Marketing becomes Cuisivin

B & M Marketing (Canada) has officially changed the company name to Cuisivin. The move is designed to more accurately describe the business and brand portfolio offered, says Bishu Mukherjee, CEO of the family-owned business. "As the diversity in our brands and marketing channels continues to evolve, we recognized the need to identify the company with a moniker encompassing that broader scope," he explains.

This fall, Cuisivin will launch several new Dualit toaster series, including one with a copper finish, above, as well as a nostalgic model featuring Emma Bridgewater's Polka Dot design. (The company also distributes Govino glassware and Brix chocolate.

For more information contact: 1.877.AGE.WINE



A colourful new twist on bakeware

Featuring upgraded tools and gadgets crafted from the latest technology and materials, Trudeau's new Structure line of baking pans offer an exclusive reinforced steel rim for secure handling. Each piece provides the non-stick and flexible properties that make silicone so appealing. The Canadian design underwent extensive product testing in order to provide a cohesive look to the entire collection. There are two sizes of muffin pans, a loaf pan and pie plate available in the Structure collection. The rest of the bakeware collection is expertly colour-coordinated in shades of fuchsia, mint, coral and grey, designed to inspire consumers to create works of art in the kitchen.

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Canadian Tire gets back into e-commerce

Canadian Tire is banking heavily on digital commerce with a new three-year strategic growth plan. In an interview with the *Globe & Mail*, president Mike Medline said "putting money into an evolving way of shopping can be tricky for retailers needing to continually re-invest and support overhead costs of a massive store network.

"When we get better at e-commerce, the goal is to not cannibalize our own business, it's to take other peoples' business and grow [Canadian Tire's] business," said Medline. Canadian Tire will spend an average of \$575-million a year on digital technology and store upgrades from 2015 to 2017.

Medline, who will take over as CEO from Stephen Wetmore in December, believes it is possible for the 490-store chain to increase its digital sales as well as its square footage, even as box retailers such as Future Shop, Staples and Toys R Us shrink their overall store footprint. Square footage at Canadian Tire's retail stores will grow 1% per year in the next three years and locations still have an average size of 41,000 square feet.

Canadian Tire has spent the past three years pulling itself out of the digital wilderness after abandoning its first online shopping website in 2009 due to poor sales. The company began a cautious e-commerce foray again in 2011 with online tire sales before its reboot last year on a more thorough and modern Canadian Tire website offering in-store pickup of goods for customers.

Online grocery sales could triple by 2023

Online grocery sales are expected to reach between \$80 billion and \$123 billion in the U.S. by 2023, according to statistics released by Steve Bishop of *Brick Meets Click*. That means online sales will go from the current 4% to between 11% and 17% of the total grocery market.

This year, online grocery sales will total about \$27 billion U.S. "The question and opportunity is who will cap-

ture the growing online sales," Bishop says. "Will the in-store lost sales be recaptured and offset by your online channel or lost to the competition? It's a good time to step up your online game."

Bishop presented his views during a webinar produced by The Food Institute. The presentation noted the strong presence of Amazon in the marketplace. Already, Amazon reaches 62 million grocery shoppers a month, and 52% of all shoppers who have bought canned or packaged goods online.

A recent study by JLL called *Out with the old, in with the new: Why the grocery landscape is shifting* agreed that e-commerce is slowly gaining a greater share of grocery dollars. The study predicts that from 2013 to 2018, the growth in e-commerce grocery revenue is projected to be 57.4%, which amounts to about 2.5% of the overall market in 2018.

In addition, the JLL study warns that while e-commerce is growing, so are other sectors of the grocery market. By 2018, traditional grocery dollars will account for only about 37.2% of the market, and a majority of consumers will split their supermarket funds between fresh format and limited assortments stores, supercenters and e-commerce.

Retailers including Target and Wal-Mart have worked hard on their social media efforts, but a new survey from Capgemini shows consumers are actually slightly less interested in interacting with retailers on social media than they were two years ago. The survey also pointed to smartphones as the best digital means to reach customers – 45% cited the gadgets as important for informing retail decisions, up from 40% in 2012.

Trend Tracking

Retailers need help going online

Retailers of all sizes are looking to grow their business during the crucial holiday season but need more help navigating the online shelf, according to a new survey conducted by Google Canada. Three quarters of Canadians (72%) say they will do online research before buying gifts this year, and claim the web is the most influential source for holiday gift inspiration. In contrast, four in ten independent retailers say they won't be advertising online during the busiest retail period of the year.

While retailers recognize the value of digital and some have started to connect with customers online, understanding how to make it work for their business – and impact the bottom line – is an ongoing challenge. The survey found that half of business owners (49%) want to use the Internet more to promote their business, but 'need more guidance and support.'

To help these business owners get started online, Google Canada and Retail Council of Canada have launched *Retail Spark*, a series of educational workshops across the country.

Many small retailers can't adapt to the modern consumer's shopping habits, which now includes hours of online product research before buying either online or in store. More than half (56%) say it is more difficult to be a small business today compared to 10 years ago, listing a range of reasons: the way customers shop has changed (37%), customers do more research before coming into store (28%) and the feeling that it is harder to reach customers (23%).

Other key findings from the research include:

- One third of Canadians (31%) say they intend to shop at independent retailers this holiday season.
- Canada is a nation of entrepreneurs: 64% of SMB respondents started their business on their own.
- Small businesses are missing from digital shelf: 61% of small retailers do not have an online presence.
- Two-thirds of owners who use offline advertising only say it is harder to be a business owner today than a decade ago.

High-wattage electrics in demand

Sales of powerful kettles and toasters are sky rocketing in Europe amid fears they will be next on an EU high-wattage hit-list. The appliance website ao.com reported sales rose 58% in one week last September because of worries the kitchen goods will also be outlawed in favour of low energy alternatives. Brussels has already banned vacuum cleaners of more than 1,600 watts as part of efforts to cut household energy use.

Sales of toasters and kettle started to rise after the EU announced a clampdown on high-energy home appliances in a bid to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is part of a wider strategy designed to dramatically cut energy use in the home in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Vacuum cleaners of more than 1,600 watts will be banned.

The EU has set targets to reduce energy consumption by 30% by 2030. It appears that smaller appliances have been earmarked as part of that drive but it's not known which appliances and which power levels will be affected.

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IHA launches new consumer platform

The International Housewares Association has officially launched its new website, *Inspired Home*. The digital platform is designed to provide consumers with content on emerging home trends and housewares products, IHA officials said.

Inspired Home is the first foray into business-to-consumer marketing for the IHA. "We designed *Inspired Home* to be an informative, fun online resource by creating it in a highly visual, editorial style, which we know consumers seek out when looking for home inspiration," says Phil Brandl, CEO of the IHA.

According to the association, *InspiredHome.org* is designed to appeal to those who seek out lifestyle imagery and content for home and housewares inspiration. Visitors to the *Inspired Home* platforms will find photography, slideshows and tip lists featuring a host of products and design ideas.

More electrics on display at Ambiente

Retailers attending Ambiente next February will have an opportunity to peruse a larger number of small appliance suppliers. According to show organizers at Messe Frankfurt, the number of exhibitors from the small electrics segment has increased over the past two years and that trend will continue in 2015.

"More and more companies from (the

small appliance) segment want to make presentations in Frankfurt," says Thomas Kastl, Ambiente's director for the show's dining section. "Small electrics will be bigger than ever at Ambiente next year, both in terms of exhibition space and number of exhibitors."

In 2014, the fair featured 4,700 exhibitors and welcomed 144,000 attendees from 160 countries. For more information, visit www.messefrankfurt.com

Lifestyle Tokyo fair to feature global designs

Interior Lifestyle Tokyo has started preparing for its 25th edition, scheduled for June 10 to 12, 2015 at Tokyo Big Sight, West Halls 1 to 4 and the Atrium. This fair not only exhibits high-end products and attracts key design experts from around the world, it also addresses trends and new lifestyle ideas.

In 2014, the fair welcomed record-breaking participation of 819 exhibitors from 27 countries and regions, and showcased a variety of lifestyle products. Interior Lifestyle Tokyo also welcomed a record 27,543 visitors from 33 countries and regions.

In order to further enhance the fair's brand, the 2015 edition of Interior Lifestyle Tokyo is planning trend-setting highlights and events to create new business opportunities. Visitors will find a wide range of inspiring products on display, including Japanese artisanal

skills, the latest designs in the 'Movement' area, work from up-and-coming young designers in the 'Talents' and 'Next' zones, and innovative dining items in the 'Kitchen Life' area.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.interior-lifestyle.com/en/>

Tendence reveals living & giving trends

Coming fresh from the Tendence Fair, held in Frankfurt from August 30th to September 2nd, are the latest living and giving design trends for the year ahead. The focus was on pastel colour shades and cuddly home accessories that will usher in the cosy feeling that goes with the Autumn season. It will be a white Christmas with folkloristic elements as colourful accents.

The fair presented products from 1,211 exhibitors from 51 countries. They welcomed 35,000 trade visitors looking for inspiration for spring 2015.

Another key trend was fun gadgets for the home. Products that encourage one's playful instincts and are also innovative are very much in demand as gifts, especially for amateur chefs.

In gourmet food products, individuality is as much in demand as the highest levels of processing and quality. Using new creations in taste, the trend is towards products that come from local sources such as fresh plums, wild cherries or quinces.

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Why stores still rule

Despite all the media hype about online shopping, most purchases are still made in person, in the store. Make sure you give customers a reason to keep coming back through your door.

By Anthony J. Stokan

In August of 1994 a guy in Philadelphia went shopping for a CD online, paid for it with his credit card and in the process, made history. In a small two-story home in New Hampshire champagne corks popped as a team of young cyberspace entrepreneurs celebrated the first retail transaction on the Internet using a readily available version of powerful data encryption software designed to guarantee privacy.

That same summer, in his garage just outside of Seattle, Jeff Bezos was proceeding with plans to launch an online retail business called Amazon. In July of 1995, he sold his first book online and within two months, sales had reached \$20,000 a week. Bezos realigned the old model of catalog sales via the Internet and pioneered online sales.

Some days it's difficult to imagine an entire generation has grown up who take connectivity, wi-fi and e-commerce for granted. Consumers around the world are increasingly shopping online for more products. Yet, for all the media

hype of how online retail dominates, the vast majority of purchases are still made in person, in a physical location.

Holiday sales can account for 20% to 30% of a retailer's total annual sales. A successful holiday can turn around a bad year or make a good year even better. It presents challenges as well as opportunities.

The "shifting customer landscape" isn't theory – it's the reality retailers face daily. Never has the path to purchase been more complicated, with consumer interaction now involving social media, mobile devices and traditional media.

E-commerce has created a minefield of free shipping, guaranteed on-time delivery, in-store pick-up and omni-channel expectations. Yet not all merchants are delivering – or even focusing – on these key initiatives. Are these retailers underestimating the e-com tidal wave? Regardless of who's buying where, there's a lot of spending going on and in North America less than 10% of it is happening online. E-commerce wants consumers to believe you don't need to hassle with parking, crowds, and limited stock selection when there's an unlimited inventory of goods and services at your fingertips.

The reality is, e-commerce represents such a small portion of all retail sales it could be another decade before the average retailer feels genuinely impacted. The great divide in the years ahead may wind up being a generation of boomers remaining loyal to mainstream retail

and a growing tribe of millennials engaging in a delicate balancing act between online and in store.

A more significant change in the past several years is our addictive reliance on our cell phone. For younger people, it is even more likely they are looking at their phones while in stores and at malls. It has become routine in the past couple of years to see most people using their cell to research products and look for better deals. That means pressure is on retailers to offer more value to customers, and to do a better job marketing to them in the mobile arena.

The five most common ways consumers will use their phones daily while holiday shopping this season:

- Price comparisons with retailers to decide where to buy an item
- Taking photos of products they are considering buying and asking peer advice about that potential purchase
- Researching product features
- Comparing prices to take advantage of price-matching guarantees
- Checking product reviews written by other consumers

In some product categories, online buying makes sense. Products that can be easily researched and compared, with a purchase decision based largely on price, provide few compelling reasons to go to a store. But not all retail is created equal and some shopping needs to be done in person. Initial online research helps shoppers mitigate choice on appliances, housewares and home



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decor. But for the vast majority of consumers, it's necessary to visit the store to test drive or engage in a tactile manner with the item being considered.

This is where the opportunity for retailers to distinguish themselves in meaningful ways presents itself. Once in store, a capable sales associate can do a superior job of answering questions, working with a budget, and most importantly, making the customer feel 'good' about the choice made. It's a perfect recipe for success for a brick and mortar retailer, and one more opportunity for a person to make a genuine difference. The Internet is great for so many things, but in most of retail, the store still rules.

Across the country, retailers large and small are re-thinking their relationship with their initial foray into social media. Consumers have rapidly become bored with endless online product pitches and less importance is being placed on following retailers on social media (such as Twitter and Facebook), finding out about new products through blogs, and participating in online retail customer communities. Consumers now consider social media a less important part of their customer journey – from awareness to post-sale activity.

It's quite possible a trend could be emerging revealing that social media is less important to the shopper journey compared with conventional retail store experiences. There is definitely a question mark over where and how 'social' fits into the shopper journey. It appears social media is most relevant in the 'awareness' and 'choice' phases of shopping journeys but much less when it comes to completing the transaction.

The largest polarization in retail during the past decade has revolved around value. Amazon and E-bay have trained a new generation of shoppers to expect cheaper deals online. Passionate online shoppers expect online prices to be lower than in-store, but have been trained to 'buy cheap'.

Don't let online shopping myths stop you from making your store a success. Mass media has been foretelling the

death of the retail store for more than a decade and yet Canadians are still very passionate about their malls and stores. Right across the country we are seeing new store openings and mall renovations and expansions.

With the exception of the books, music, movies and video games, consumers don't yet seem ready to drop the traditional retail experience from their shopping routine. Nothing will ever replace a consumer's desire to see, touch and try a product before buying. Getting the product immediately is just as important today. Few online ventures can offer these advantages.

The key to this holiday season and moving forward this decade is your store's shopping 'experience'. It is something your customers can't ever perceive receiving better, faster or cheaper online. I am not advocating you dismiss the threat online retailers pose to your store's future success. You must be proactive and identify ways to be more competitive against the future threat of online retailers such as:

Stay price competitive

The primary reason for buying online is price. The moment your customer starts shopping stateside they quickly realize the loss of perceived savings as the taxes, duties, exchange, shipping add up. Be sure you're priced as competitively as you can afford to be so your customers believe they are getting great value in your store.

Convenience is key

Your customers need a compelling reason to shop your store. Don't underrate convenience in planning every aspect of your store, from enticing windows, idea inspiring displays, in store events to ease of checkout. Constantly re-invigorate your space as a destination.

Give genuine customer service

Be sure your employees are seen as experts in what your store offers, and not just cashiers or stock people. Most customers like interacting with people who are passionate about what they sell

and/or do. This is one of the greatest strengths of a niche retailer.

I want it now

Instant gratification. This is what makes the best retailers successful. Know what it is your customers want and be sure you always have these items in stock. Utilize vendor websites to show customers alternative solutions and upgraded product that may not be part of your current inventory. Look for opportunities to increase the value of the basic sale with add-ons from the vendor.

Utilize the customers' sense of touch

You can't touch or feel any item online before you buy. Get merchandise into your customers' hands and encourage a tactile environment within your store. Engage your customers to value their use of the sense of touch.

Even as a single specialty store, it's viable and valuable to have an online presence. I'm not encouraging you to launch an online version of your store. Be realistic. Your customers are online and will search for products or a store like yours. It can be as simple as a home page, an overview of what you sell or do and a location guide.

Through dialogue with your customers determine if Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook or a blog will enhance your online presence. Get some online buzz going as it will give you an opportunity to interact with your target consumer. Don't dismiss social media. Identify and utilize what is appropriate for you and use it to drive consumers to your store and you will reap the rewards.

For years, news sources have been telling us online retail is cannibalizing sales in physical stores; that "low price" is the only thing that will get consumers into your store or that it will soon become a showroom only. But the truth is, the death of the brick and mortar store has been greatly exaggerated. ☺

Anthony Stokan is a retail and shopping centre expert, consultant, speaker and writer. For more details, visit info@anthonyrussellinc.com.



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A retail reinvention

In these challenging times, enterprising kitchenware retailers such as Merv Schwantz are finding new opportunities by focusing on food

By Denise Gaze

Necessity is the mother of invention and if you're in retail, reinventing your business model has become the new normal. Today, you simply have no choice. In that regard, Merv Schwantz, owner of Entertaining Elements in Kitchener, Ontario, may be the master of reinvention.

Born in Pembroke in the Ottawa Valley, Merv took the long route to opening his kitchen shop. For 25 years, he was the general manager for a large production company in Guelph, Ontario. When an American company bought the business, Merv hung on for five years but by 2007, he'd had enough.

"There was just too much travelling that kept me away from home," he says.

In 2008, at the tender age of 54 and with no retail experience, the first reinvention began. Merv decided to go in an entirely new direction by opening a kitchen store in St. Jacob's, a quaint tourist spot near Kitchener.

By day, it was a kitchen shop. But in the evening, the store's focus was on 'Dinner with the Chef'. Each night, 12 to 14 patrons would gather to dine on a three- or four-course meal at a fixed price. The chefs not only prepared the food, they instructed and entertained guests at the same time.

However, after a four year run, Merv

found the number of people heading to this tourist spot started to dwindle down each season.

"We noticed that the local residents would only come to this area when they had out-of-town visitors," says Merv. "Even the American tourists were not coming through as often."

Undeterred, Merv scouted out a new location in downtown Kitchener and decided to expand upon the original Entertaining Elements concept. After six months of extensive renovations, meet-



Merv Schwantz has found new success with programs such as 'Dinner with the Chef'.

ings with designers and building permit delays, the new and improved Entertaining Elements opened in October 2012. The luxurious 5,000-square-foot space includes an exquisitely designed kitchen for the 'Dining with the Chef' program. It was an extremely successful part of the business before, and that continues at the new location. There are currently five chefs on rotation.

There is also a wine tasting party room adjacent to the chef's kitchen, where the 'Dinner with the Chef' guests can mingle. In the kitchen store (located at the front of the building) oils and vinegars are prominently displayed in the centre aisle.

That was not enough to keep Merv busy, however, so he also decided to open a casual restaurant within the store. Called Bistro Nash, the restaurant was extremely busy on the day *Home Style* visited. It has 40 tables and is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. six days a week. (I can confirm first-hand that the food is fantastic and Merv was definitely in his "element" chatting up the lunch crowd.)

Merv never stops thinking of what he can do to drive more people into the store. He has teamed up with Bailey's local foods, a year-round farmers market in the Kitchener/Waterloo region. Every Tuesday, a representative from

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Profile: Entertaining Elements

Bailey's sets up a table at the front of the store loaded with fresh vegetables, fruits, breads, preserves and other baked goods. (During our visit, one customer told me the "the best butter tarts in the world could be found right here".)

Recently Merv added another new feature at Entertaining Elements. On Wednesdays the store now offers 'dinners to go'. Customers can pick up a complete take-away meal for \$20.

"We are really trying to grow the local culinary scene", he says.

Part of the appeal of Bistro Nash is that the food is organic and local. The restaurant recently won a Trip Advisor Excellence Award. However, Merv points out this can be a double-edged sword.

"One day you are first in the ratings and then one bad review can take you right down," he explains. "I spend a lot of time responding to both positive and negative comments on social media. It's very time consuming, but it is important to show both sides of the story."

With Bistro Nash and 'Dinner with the Chef' now the prime revenue producers for the shop, Merv admits he has scaled down the retail aspect of his business. Presently Entertaining Elements is only carrying about 300 skus.

"We've found there is a greater market here for food and catering," he says. "The downtown core is undergoing a major transition. When the big malls arrived, they decimated the area. Many small shops had to close their doors, but now things are looking up."

Merv is feeling positive about the new condominiums under construction just a block away. He hopes they will be a boost for business. Approximately 170 units will bring new people to the area and, hopefully, a spending surge as well. With the influx of new people to the downtown, Merv will consider expanding his kitchenware product assortment in the future.

"We had to adjust the skus from an all-encompassing kitchen store and move away from tableware to focus on knives and cookware," says Merv. "My mind is focussed on what will drive customers through our doors. I think most retailers are seeking new ways to stay in business,



Top: Entertaining Elements has a key location right on the main street of downtown Kitchener. Centre: The store offers a variety of flavoured oils and vinegars. Above: Customers can enjoy "dinner with the chef" events in the beautiful store kitchen.



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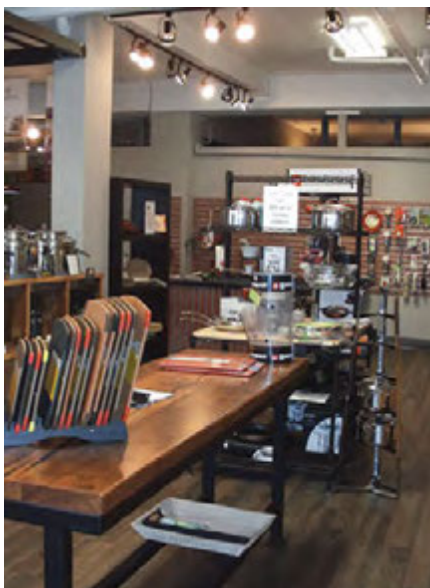


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Profile: Entertaining Elements



The store moved and was revamped in 2012 to accommodate an expanded gourmet food section in addition to housewares products.



trying to find their niche.”

He adds that “even though business is up every year, it can still be a struggle at times and the food industry brings its own set of challenges. Everyone wants local and we have taken a leadership role in this area.”

Another challenge is the fact there are a number of restaurants nearby and Merv knows he is competing for a limited number of customers. “That is why we keep diversifying and branching out to things like catering,” he says. “You do it to survive. You don’t have a choice.”

Merv works six days a week and employs three full-time and two part-time staff. He does admit the long hours can grind you down when you are working 12 hour days but he “likes the independence of owning my own business.”

In the kitchen shop, Merv tries to keep up with the latest must-have item.

“You have to be able to hit a home run when new products come out and really promote the hell out of them,” he says.

Speaking frankly, Merv stresses that “you also need cash flow” and admits this has been a problem on occasion. “Without it, it can be difficult to pay suppliers on time.”

Despite some hurdles in the last two years, Merv loves working with people and his number one goal is always to provide customers with the best service possible. “If I can educate consumers about quality products, it makes me feel great,” he says.

“I have known Merv since he opened his first store in St. Jacobs,” says Margaret Alsemgeest of Browne & Co. “He is pleasant to deal with and always has a smile on his face. He is very well-versed in housewares, especially knives.”

He also strives to have good people around him. “People are key in this business” says Merv. “But you also have to have the right attitude. Retail is not a ‘get rich quick’ business. You have to do your homework, make sure you are in an area with potential for profitability”.

Since Merv got his start a little later in retail, retirement is not looming on the horizon anytime soon although spending winters in a warmer climate playing golf all day would suit him just fine.

His love of people and a strong work ethic, as well as a ‘never give up’ attitude is what drives him. He is also proud of the fact he has been able to give much back to the community.

“We donate our ‘Dinner with the Chef’ nights for live auctions at charity events,” says Merv. “Over the past five years, these auctions have raised over \$75,000 for charities such as The Cancer Society, local hospitals, the Humane Society and the local Art Gallery.”

Seven years later, after numerous tweaks and changes to the kitchen retail store model, Merv still has a ‘go big or go home’ attitude.

“We have to keep being creative to entice customers to take money out of their wallets,” he says. The wheels are constantly turning for Merv Schwantz, the master of retail reinvention. 🐾



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Storage solutions

Michelle Hespe looks at how and why The Container Store has become an American retail success story

Back in July 1978, a 1,600-square-foot store opened its doors to sell empty boxes to customers. Some people laughed at the audacity, while others scoffed at the concept of storage containers enriching and simplifying life. After all, when you consider that ceramic ornaments were still a huge trend, and people liked to have all their stuff on display, it's not surprising that the whole idea of hiding belongings in an orderly manner didn't sit well with most. Who would have thought the store would not only change lives, but also become an inspiration to millions?

Enter The Container Store. Led by chairman and CEO Kip Tindell, chairman emeritus Garrett Boone and archi-

tect John Mullen, the store was on a path that would set it apart from the others. At the time, it was a completely new category in retail. The Container Store was pioneering affordable storage and organizational solutions.

Commercial parts bins, wire drawers, mailboxes, popcorn tins, burger baskets, milk crates and wire leaf burner – that's where it all started. Today, The Container Store carries everything from luggage, totes and bags to storage, desks, shelving, toy storage, trash organizers and much more. The philosophy behind it all is not only to organize people's lives, but also to save time. And in today's manic world, where technology has fuelled people to moving almost at

the speed of light, saving time and being able to relax and not stress out over a missing object or a badly organized file of papers, makes life that much better.

The company has come a long way in 36 years. Today, each store is on average 25,000 square feet and carries more than 10,000 innovative products. And that doesn't include the online store, along with a community that is growing by the day.

It's not only the choice of products that helps The Container Store sell more than \$700 million every year, it is also a strong dedication to staff, putting them first and taking care of them every step of the way through their career. The fact that The Container Store offers staff an



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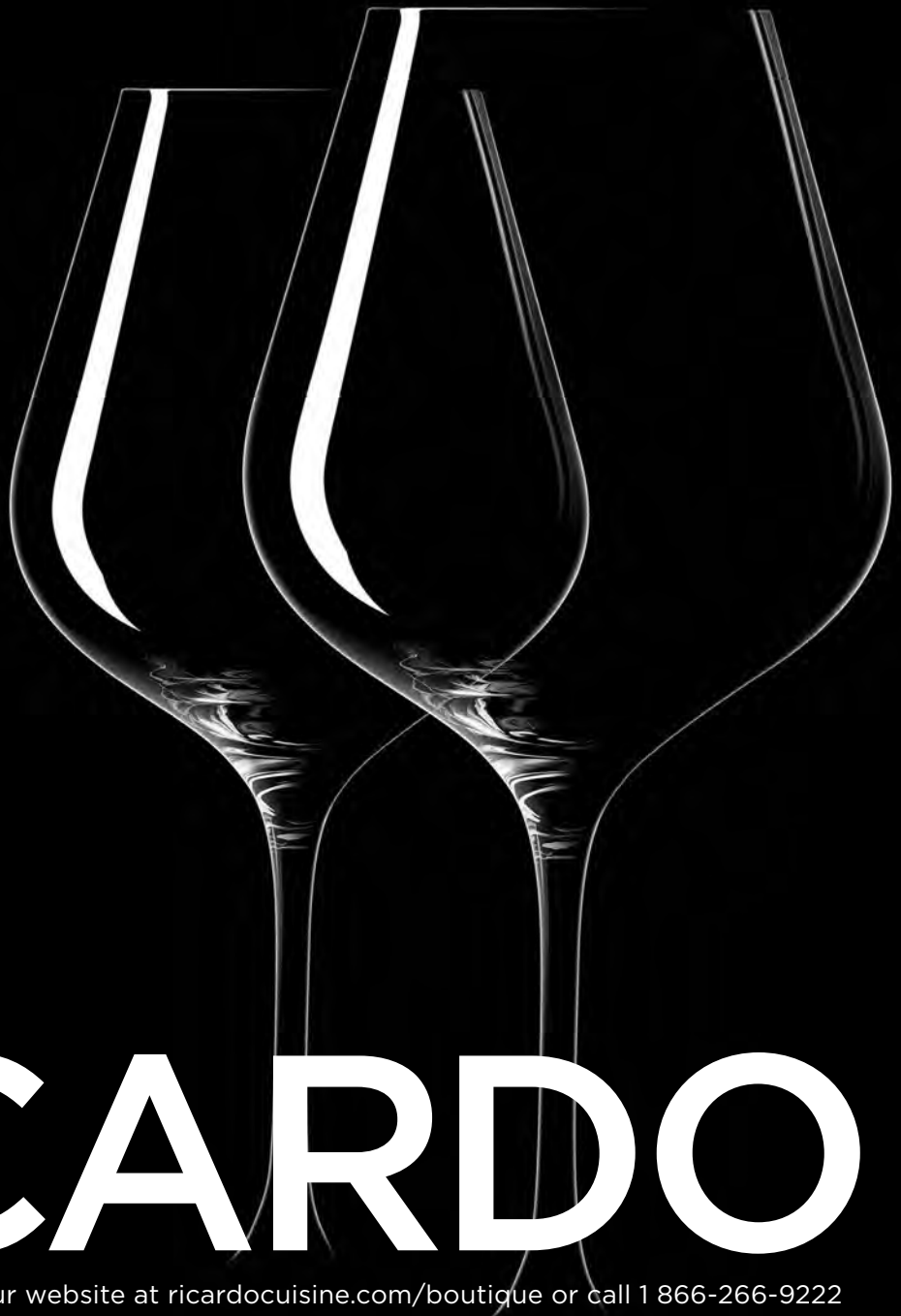
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Global Retailing: The Container Store

incredible 263 hours of training a year, rather than the industry-standard eight hours, is a remarkable indication of the store's belief that one great staff member is equivalent to three good employees.

As a spokesperson for The Container Store says: "We believe if we take better care of our employees than anyone else – by paying them better and training them more – that they in turn will take better care of our customers than anyone else. This keeps our customers coming back over and over again."

This employee-first approach has obviously worked. Year after year, *FOR-TUNE* magazine has placed The Con-

tainer Store as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work For." The company came in at 28 in 2014, the 15th time that The Container Store has made the cut.

It's also the mindset of Kip Tindell, who has taken the business to great heights (though share prices have slumped since the company's IPO last November – see sidebar). Throughout his high school and university years, Tindell kept notes on how he liked to live and how he thought a good business should be run. He scribbled down what he admired in others and created some grounding philosophies. He then invited the entire staff from his Houston store to their manager's home to present the principles he had developed. Everyone embraced the ideas, and from that day forward, The Container Store had the following guiding principles.

The Container Store tries to create an "air of excitement" in every single department. Next year they will launch a premium line of closet organizers for the home.



1. One great person is equivalent to three good people. This principle works for everyone involved. The store only hires 3% of the people that apply, and they believe that investing in one great person (who is paid more and given more training and responsibility) is better than hiring three good people.

2. Communicating is leadership. "We don't work on a 'need to know' basis, but rather we ask ourselves, 'Who will benefit from having this information? Who needs this communication to help them do their job better and to help them be the best employee, the best leader, the best person they can be?' Tindell has said many times, "this 360-degree thinking and execution is one of the many key differentiators to business."

3. Fill the other guy's basket to the brim. Making money then becomes an easy proposition. Tindell says "some companies believe that you have to burn the other party in order to succeed. We don't. We know that crafting mutually beneficial relationships with our business partners works, and it has been a successful approach for our business since the very beginning."

4. The best selection, service and price. "A few great retailers have achieved a combination of the best selection and the best service," the company says on their website. "To add competitive pricing to that equation is generally unheard of, but The Container Store works hard to achieve all three simultaneously with this philosophy."

5. Intuition does not come to an unprepared mind. This is The Container Store's training philosophy. "We want our employees to use their intuition." They want them to anticipate the needs of customers and recommend product solutions. "We are the experts and must ensure our customers feel taken care of by us. But we know that to help employees do this, we must provide them with the information and training, to know how best to apply their intuition."

6. The "Man in the Desert Selling" is a philosophy about astonishing customers rather than just giving them what they come to expect in a store.

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Revised forecast leads to rapid drop in share price

Kip Tindell, who recently released a book on “conscious capitalism”, has had a rough introduction to running a publicly held company. The Container Store’s stock doubled in its first day of trading in November of 2013, only to erase those gains over the past year. Tindell, who watched the stock decline rapidly after he cut the company’s forecast, now says he may stop providing guidance to investors.

Tindell, who has run the company since 1978, says he’d “strongly consider” doing away with forecasts because they put too much focus on the short term. The retail chain cut its profit and sales forecasts on October 7th, sending the stock on a 25% plunge that day.

“It’s been intense, it’s been stressful,” he said in an interview. “But we’ve never felt better about the business.”

Tindell, whose employees earn as much as double the typical retail worker, regularly seeks advice from a brain trust of other socially conscious executives including Costco co-founder Jim Sinegal and Southwest Airlines co-founder Herb Kelleher.

He consulted with peers when deciding to go public and determined that “all of the options are worse than an IPO.” If it had steered clear of public markets, the company would have had to put itself up for sale, seek more private-equity support or take on debt in order to grow. Most importantly, the IPO let Tindell compensate employees with shares, something he believes in.

Shares have slumped 66% this year. At press time, it was trading well below the IPO price of \$18. The Container Store reported annual sales would be \$800 million to \$810 million, down from a previous estimate of \$830 million. It also reported a 0.4 percent decline in same-store sales, missing the 0.3 percent gain predicted by analysts.

Tindell says they hope to increase the average sale per customer – which now sits at \$60 per trip – with high-end products like its Elfa closet system, which can retail for \$2,000. The company also plans to open more stores.



“Imagine a man lost in the desert. He’s been wandering for weeks,” Kip once said to his expectant staff in Houston. “He stumbles across an oasis, where he’s offered a glass of water, because surely he must be thirsty. But if you stop to think about what he’s experienced and what his needs really are, you know that he needs more than just water. He needs food, a comfortable place to sleep, a phone to call his wife and family, maybe a pair of shoes and a hat to screen the sun’s rays.” And that is the difference in service at The Container Store. The staff go above and beyond, and ask all of those extra questions about what a customer might need or want, to help with their storage solutions and ultimately, their lives.

7. Maintain an ‘air of excitement’. In Tindell’s own words, when you are three steps in from the entrance of a store, you can tell whether or not a retail store has ‘it’. “The ‘air of excitement’ is our employees’ smiling faces and genuine concern for customers’ needs,” he says. “It’s the bright, visual, innovative and conversation-provoking products we sell. It’s our clean, well-organized shelves. It’s music that is pleasant and speaks to our customers.”

Among its many other awards and accolades, The Container Store was a 2003/04 USA national winner in the *gia* Global Innovation Awards. It was a store that stood out to the *gia* jury.

“It has been an omni-channel concept from the very beginning,” says one of the *gia* expert jurors, Wolfgang Gr-

uschwitz. “Call and pick up, click and pick up, and now curbside pickup and home delivery. All of these things make it very easy for customers. There is security in having not only online contact, but also a brick building with human contact, for advice and guidance.

“The store is essentially about storage solutions. But with the great visual merchandising ideas, architecture and décor, it is also a great looking store. Customers are inspired by the products.”

And that is what makes the CEO of The Container Store a happy man: that the store he created to sell empty boxes not only changes people’s lives, but also inspires people to create better lives. That’s a great accomplishment. 🐦

The Container Store is America’s leading retailer of storage and organization products. The company opened its first store in 1978 and today has 64 store locations that each average 25,000 square feet. To learn more visit www.containerstore.com.

For information on unique concept stores and housewares retailers in Chicago, visit www.housewares.org/show/attend/nonUS.aspx.



The Container Store launched a new *Bridal Shower Guide* this past spring offering tips, ideas and inspiration for the ultimate, organized shower. The retailer also kicked off a monthly contest where brides can win a \$1000 *Store More Card* by creating a Pinterest Board called “The Organized Shower.” A new winner will be chosen each month through March 2015

The Container Store’s Bridal Shower Guide is divided into three themed sections: kitchen-themed showers, closet-themed showers and travel-themed showers. It’s available in stores, online and via direct mail to select customers. It is supplemented online with suggestions for shower decorations, do-it-yourself party favors, checklists and the perfect gifts for each shower theme.

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Giving thanks

Michelle Hespe speaks to Jean-Luc Colonna d'Istria, the executive vice president of *Merci*, a very sophisticated retail store in Paris. This impressive merchandiser was one of six Global Honorees selected at the 2014 *gia* Global Innovation Awards in Chicago, held during the International Home + Housewares Show last March.



Since 2009, fashion, design and food lovers have been drawn to a store that has successfully forged a path in an area of Paris that was never really a retail destination. It was originally a residential area, and yet *Merci*, housed in a 12,000-square-foot light-flooded, warehouse space that was once a wallpaper showroom, blends grandness with Bohemian chic and fits into the funky Beaumarchais neighborhood. It's as if it has always been there.

At *Merci*, there are no windows facing the street so there are no upfront window displays to give it a leg-up. Rather, the focus is on a central atrium and courtyard. It not only lets the natural light flood in to highlight the floorboards, exposed ceiling beams and brick walls, but also makes the windows appear as works of art – gardens outdoor framed against Parisian skies.

Among it all there are three cafés and restaurants that allow customers to sit and relax while enjoying an exceptional shopping experience. They can take in the beauty of the building and its many wonderful offerings.

Merci is known as a true artist's space, something that Parisians, who epitomize style, hold in high regard. The store inhabits the space beautifully,

Though the store doesn't spend any money on advertising, the atrium interior space is used to 'wow' customers with innovative, interactive product displays.



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One of many remarkable displays that exemplify the fairy-tale atmosphere at Merci is this lifesize tribute to the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe in the centre atrium.

showcasing classic designs while also placing new designers firmly in the limelight.

Today, over one million visitors stream through *Merci's* doors every year, achieving \$23 million annually in sales. That's an incredible result for a company that does not spend any money on advertising. Instead, *Merci* focuses on a tight PR strategy and word of mouth to make things happen. The company's 25,000 Facebook followers alone generate enough publicity to keep the cash registers continually in action.

Merci also backs things up with Facebook/Twitter/YouTube events and promotions; live product demonstrations and product sampling. To add to this,

the *Merci* e-shop was launched in 2013. It now represents 8% to 10% of the offline revenue.

The key difference with *Merci's* promotional approach is that "everything is based on storytelling, rather than price promotions." It's not such a surprising approach when you consider the store could be the backdrop to a fairy tale, with its expansive windows, leafy garden courtyard and innovative displays.

Despite being chic, the judges and expert jury at this year's *gia* awards loved the warm, homey atmosphere and design of *Merci*, exemplified by the absence of traditional retail fixtures. Instead, you'll find vintage pieces of furniture or old chandeliers and huge wooden tables made for sharing and display. The stunning design keeps customers coming back as they feel welcomed, undoubtedly wishing they lived in an old wallpaper showroom themselves.

Jean-Luc Colonna d'Istria is aware of

the love that many have for *Merci*. But like most retailers, he's often too hard at work to sit back and reflect objectively on his business or assess it's operations.

"I think *gia* and the exchange in Chicago with other international retailers helps a business assess what they are doing, and look closely at the specifics of the company," he says. "Fast-paced retail operations are so time-consuming that you never take the time out to explain or describe to others what you are actually doing that is so successful."

The *gia* program gave Jean-Luc and his staff a chance to sit down and document what they have been doing in the last five years, and to think about where they are headed. The experience of becoming a *gia* winner at home in France, and then travelling to Chicago to check out the American housewares scene, also gave Jean-Luc a great chance to compare *Merci* to other retail businesses around the world.

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Merci devotes considerable space to bed, above, and bath, left. The kitchenware area is shown centre. Below left is the “used book library” for customers.



“Being in Chicago and sharing experiences with other retailers has been very interesting,” he says. “I certainly gained a better understanding of what kitchenware retailing is all about in the U.S. market. I am not a pure player in the kitchenware category, so it was interesting to learn about the expertise of the long time players in this game.”

On the night of the *gia* awards dinner in Chicago, when the presenter announced *Merci* as one of five Global Honorees, Jean-Luc was incredibly pleased.

“It was very satisfying to learn that after just five years of business, *Merci* was already well-known by my international colleagues,” he says.

Jean-Luc is now back in Paris with his colleagues, ready to set new goals for *Merci* as the company reaches its fifth birthday. And as he continues to develop the company and the brand, after his experience with the *gia* program there is one thing for sure.

“We will come back to the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago because I believe that benchmarking your business against the U.S. market is a necessity for European retailers,” he says. “Sourcing is global, but retail culture remains local.” ☺



For more information about the *gia* program, the co-sponsors, or participating in 2014-2015, contact Piritta Törrö at piritta.torro@inspiredconnection.fi. Additional information on the *gia* program is also available online at www.housewares.org/gia.

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What's hot in coffee capsules, storage systems, mugs and more



Simax mugs from **David Shaw Design** have a 13.5-ounce capacity and are dishwasher-safe. They're made in Europe of lightweight borosilicate glass to withstand extreme temperatures.



Shown above, Dualit NX coffee capsules provide a quick, convenient way to purchase Nespresso compatible coffee. Available in four delicious flavours, each capsule holds a fine blend of freshly roasted, perfectly ground coffee and sealed with state of the art technology. The capsules are designed to deliver a smooth crema and balanced flavour. Distributed by **Cuisivin**.

These sturdy 12-ounce stoneware mugs from **Paderno** are now available in new fall colours, left. The mugs can go safely into the microwave oven or the dishwasher.



Swissmar introduced the new CAPstore Vertuo 20 capsule holder at the August gift fair. Shown left, the compact storage system handles both capsule sizes used with the Nespresso VertuoLine machine. It has an attractive chrome finish and a rotating based.

The ProAccurate Insta-Read beverage and frothing thermometer, right, is NSF-certified. It features a large dial, stainless steel stem, durable polycarbonate lens and target range indicator. It is water-proof, shatterproof and has an adjustable stainless steel clip. The sheath can be used as a handle extension. Available from **Browne & Co.**



Jascor Housewares line of permanent coffee filters include these classic Goldtone filters, a staple in the modern kitchen. They're available in a cone or basket shape to fit most standard coffeemakers. The filters are a reusable, flavour-enhancing, long lasting alternative to wasteful paper filters.



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Coffee etc.



Mind Reader has launched a range of new functional, space-saving storage accessories for single serve cups and capsules. Versatile enough for home or office, there is a wide range of items designed to keep the kitchen or lunch room tidy. Available in bilingual packaging exclusively from **On Route**.



This stylish new coffee capsule holder from **Caffitaly**, above, can efficiently store 40 CAFFE capsules, lavazza blue or Starbucks Verismo. It stands just 27 cm tall and is constructed of chromed stainless steel on a convenient swivel base. Also new this year is the Latté+, shown right. Available in black, white or chromed stainless steel, it has a maximum capacity

of 250ml. The non-stick coated stainless steel bowl is designed to accommodate a completely new magnetic drive milk frothing system. There is no need to swap parts. One click will prepare thick milk froth and two clicks will make hot milk. Three clicks will reward the user with a rich froth from cold milk for the perfect iced cappuccino. It makes a perfect gift and is ideal for office, home, cottage or RV.



Rounding out their coffee accessories, Caffitaly offers these hand-blown espresso or cappuccino glasses. Made from high density, mouth-blown glass, they're sold in sets of two.



KitchenAid® introduces a whole NEW beverage line-up just in time for the holiday season.



① **KitchenAid® Sparkling Beverage Maker** | Pop, clink, fizz this holiday with KitchenAid®'s first premium countertop soda maker. Compatible with Soda Stream's range of over 60 pre-made soda syrups, the flavour options are nearly endless. **MSRP: \$249.00**

② **KitchenAid® Maximum Extractor Juicer** | Cut down on kitchen prep work with the Maximum Extractor Juicer's new two-stage blade system. The stainless steel technology slices fruits and vegetables into smaller sizes before juicing, making it ideal for large leafy greens like kale and romaine lettuce. **MSRP: \$499.99**

③ **KitchenAid® Easy Clean Juicer** | Juice, rinse, go! The Easy Clean Juicer is designed to simplify the juicing process with the innovative ceramic slicing disk. The pulp screen manually rotates to provide three pulp levels and can be used to customize recipes based on personal preference. **MSRP: \$399.99**

④ **Nespresso by KitchenAid®** | KitchenAid®'s iconic design and performance meets Nespresso's superior ability to provide the highest quality coffee in this single-serve espresso maker. The premium brewer heats in 30 seconds and offers six volume and strength options. **MSRP: \$399.99/\$499.99 (with frother)**

⑤ **KitchenAid® Pour Over Coffee Brewer** | Impress the coffee aficionado on your list with the automatic pour over brew technology that makes the perfect cup of coffee every time. Just like a trained barista, this new model staggers water flow to evenly saturate the grounds and extract even the most subtle flavours. **MSRP: \$199.99**

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COMING
NEXT JULY...



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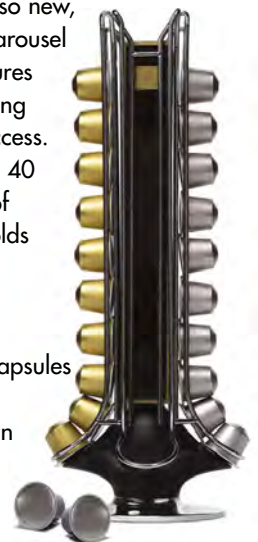
Coffee etc.



DanESCO is featuring several new coffee accessories this year. The Prepara double-walled, stainless steel travel mug, above, is designed to fit most Keurig machines and most car cup holders. A new line of double-walled coffee glasses, below, capture air to create a vacuum layer of thermal insulation to keep coffee hotter longer.



BIA mugs make mornings a little brighter. Perfect for everyday use, the porcelain mugs are sold individually in three distinct patterns. Shown above are the 'chalkboard' mugs. Also new, the Nespresso carousel by Prepara features an elegant rotating base for easy access. It can hold up to 40 capsules. Each of the four sides holds 10 capsules and the centre cavity provides extra storage for 10 capsules for a total of 50 capsules stored in a minimum of counter space.



Canadian company brews up good taste

An Ottawa startup firm is starting to make waves in the highly competitive coffee market. Single Cup Coffee is using a new technology to offer bold new flavours to consumers. With sales hitting \$12 million a year already, Robin White, V.P. of marketing, says North American coffee drinkers are clearly ready for a better-tasting hot beverage and they are ready to fill the void left now that Keurig's K-cup patent has expired.

"Our key competitive strength is the quality of our products – they just taste better," he says. "Consumers are increasingly interested in specialty coffees and they love combining the convenience of the single-serve platform with quality drinks."

The line, which is distributed in Canada by On Route, includes the popular Guy Fieri and Cake Boss range. There is also a variety of hot chocolates and soups which are richer and creamier thanks to the company's new 'Supercup' design. The company currently supplies retailers such as Loblaw and Sobey's and has entered into a partnership to distribute Touch single serve brewers to the commercial/office trade.



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Garment Care



Your customers can take ironing to the next level with the DG8520 Steam Station from **Rowenta**. The exceptional 4.8 bars of pressure easily removes wrinkles from hanging garments and drapes. The time saving steam station has all the key features, such as a durable, stainless steel soleplate with a precision tip and 400 micro steam holes for even steam distribution. Constant high-powered steam is available at the touch of a trigger to ensure ironing is fast and effortless. The 1.4-litre removable water tank allows for continuous ironing sessions up to one hour. Made in France, the Steam Station is ideal for anyone who takes pride in their garments, tapestries and textiles.

Hamilton Beach has launched a new 1500-watt chrome and stainless iron with retractable cord, model 14881, shown right. It features a full-size stainless steel soleplate, three-way auto shut-off, a spray/blast function and adjustable steam controls. This iron also offers an anti-drip and self-cleaning function.



This sleekly styled Hamilton Beach stainless steel iron, model 14955, left, features advanced electronic controls and a retractable cord. It has a chrome skirt, stainless steel soleplate, three-way automatic shut-off and a special spray blast function. Offering 1700 watts of power, this high performance iron prevents drips and is self-cleaning.



The IronEase Pro ironing board made its Canadian debut this summer. Designed and manufactured by **de Machinor**, this board addresses the design flaws inherent in many traditional ironing boards. The result is a markedly more effective product that saves time and makes ironing feel like less of a chore. The IronEase Pro has eight unique time-saving design features, including the patented Shoulder Wing Design that makes ironing a collared shirt much easier. A multi-layered 100% cotton board cover is supported by foam and felt layers for added durability. The heat-resistant XL ironing tray is perfect for steam generators while a special cord holder keeps cords safely out of the way.

The 1200-watt Universal iron from **Proctor Silex**, right, has a large funnel and clear fill indicators on the water reservoir for easy filling at the sink. Company research shows this model rated particularly high with Millennial consumers who are frustrated with their current irons. It features a non-stick soleplate, adjustable steam and automatic shut-off.





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Clean-up Crew

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Since its introduction 10 years ago, the Ergorapido by **Electrolux** has been recognized as an iconic product and an “object of beauty” thanks to its innovative design and beautiful colours. Today, the Ergorapido has become a “must-have-product” for over 10 million people around the globe. Its features vary by model and can include the company’s exclusive Brushroll Clean technology. It eliminates the need for scissors since pet and human hair that accumulates on the brush roll is instantly removed and whisked to the dust cup by pressing a button. It offers 2-in-1 cleaning convenience by operating as a stick vacuum and a handheld vacuum that cleans bare floors, countertops and upholstery. The Lithium ION batteries charge faster and run longer than the average cleaner. The Ergorapido stands on its own and doesn’t need a charging stand to stay upright. No more picking up the vacuum when it falls over or finding a place to rest it. Users can clean around and under low furniture with the 180-degree swivel head. The brush roll is designed for bare floor and area rug cleaning. This unit also comes with an easy to clean filter system and a cyclonic dust cup. It uses powerful cyclonic suction technology to maintain suction power longer.



Hoover has launched the revolutionary Air Cordless series 3.0 Upright Vacuum offering 50 minutes of continuous vacuum, above. It’s the first full-size cordless, cyclonic vacuum that can clean an entire home using lithium-ion battery technology. The vacuum comes with two LithiumLife batteries that, when combined, provide 50 minutes of fade-free power to clean both carpets and hard floors. The WindTunnel 3.0 technology offers three nozzle channels of powerful suction to capture dirt. It has a steerable design, removable cleaning tools and weighs just 9.9 pounds. The vacuum also comes with a five-year limited warranty.

Rowenta’s new floor care collection is sure to make an impact with homeowners. Powerful on the inside, quiet on the outside, the range has unrivaled decibel levels that make it up to four times quieter than other vacuums. Made in France, the Silence Force Extreme canister range combines European styling with superior engineering. The Rowenta Stick vacs blend thoughtful ergonomics and smart technology. The sticks’ ultra-slim Delta Head and Delta Vision LED Headlights are ideal for tight corners or under furniture.



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Clean-up Crew



Counseltron's fashionable cleaning line by Vigar is offered in a wide array of colours and prints to make everyday chores a little more fun. Shown are the pink dust pan and broom set from the Rococco Line. There are also brushes, scrubbers and even gloves to match.



Consumers can clean up in comfort and style with the Fresco line of brushes from **Jascor Housewares**. Each brush has a soft grip handle and is available with the company's signature chic colour palette. The collection includes nine different pieces including: dish, utility, soap-dispensing, grout and glass brushes as well as a dustpan with brush.



The Casabella Raw eco-friendly line includes this wood indoor sweeper, left. It's made in Switzerland of FSC wood. The bristles are made from RPET (recycled plastic bottles from landfills) and the hanging loops are made from coconut cord. It's safe for all floor types. The Raw dustpan and brush set, above, is made from the same materials with a natural finish. Casabella is distributed by **MDC Housewares**.



Cleaning pairs from Full Circle include this ergonomic dish sponge and brush set with replaceable heads, above, and a mini dustpan and brush set, below. Ideal for minor messes, the line is distributed by **DanESCO**.



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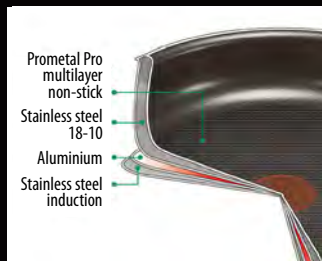
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Grill Gadgets

What's cooking in barbecue accessories



Napolean has unveiled a wide range of innovative grill accessories this season. The universal charcoal tray, left, lets grill masters enjoy the taste of charcoal with the convenience of gas. Simply place the tray inside and fill with charcoal. It includes a smoker box for wood chips. The cast iron sizzle plate, far left, has a wooden serving base and a removable handle so you can present a sizzling hot plate to the table. Offering superior heat dispersion, it can be used on the grill or stove. An oversized cutting board, below left, is made from sustainable bamboo wood. It features an anti-bacterial surface with a juice groove and comes with two stainless steel bowls that conveniently hide away beneath. It can catch chopped vegetables, or meat drippings. Napolean is also introducing a rotating skewer rack, below. Made of commercial grade stainless steel, it offers an exclusive push and turn motion to rotate food perfectly. The raised rack prevents the food from sticking.



The LotusGrill is an exciting new portable charcoal BBQ. Distributed by **Carsim Trading**, it has a patented built-in fan. The grill heats up to cooking temperature within four minutes of lighting the charcoal. With its double-layered construction, it can be moved while in use or set down on any surface. The inner bowl and grill can be removed and put in the dishwasher. It comes in two sizes, regular and XL and in six different colours. Various accessories are also available.

The Burger Master from **Port Style Enterprises** instantly shapes and stores eight quarter pound patties at a time. No need to touch the meat with this silicone gadget. Simply freeze and remove before grilling.



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Grill Gadgets



Crispy, hot sandwiches are easy with the **KitchenAid** panini press. Made of cast iron, it warms evenly, searing food with grill marks while giving the press enough weight to ensure maximum contact between food and the cooking surface. Silicone grips offer comfortable handling while the dark-coloured interior provides better browning and resists staining.



Fox Run is now distributing the Skrapr Grillr from Handy Home Products. A complete tool for all BBQ grills, it has a stainless steel blade that is moulded into the tool for maximum scraping strength on the toughest surfaces. It's both anti-bacterial and dishwasher-safe.



Hamilton Beach is launching a new outdoor grill that assembles in less than 10 minutes with a Phillips screwdriver. Though photos were not yet available at press time, the company says the Hamilton Beach Professional Grill comes partially assembled in a package specially designed to facilitate easy unpacking. The stylish stainless steel BBQ comes with a side burner, coated cast iron cooking grids, a large 29 x 17-inch grill surface and push and turn ignition system.

Gefu **TWINCO** angled barbecue skewers, available from **David Shaw Design** come in a set of two. Made of 18/10 stainless steel, they are dishwasher safe and double pronged to prevent food from slipping. The integrated slider easily removes the cooked food.



Grilling makes people happy!

A survey by Weber-Stephen products reveals that the majority of grill owners (56%) feel happy when they fire up their grill. According to the survey, grilling equals positive emotions: 64% of grill owners said that grilling is relaxing after a stressful day; 77% of grill owners said grilling is just plain fun; and 75% of grill owners agree that grilling makes a week night dinner a special occasion.

Other highlights from the Weber GrillWatch survey included:

- 70% of consumers (in the U.S.) currently own an outdoor barbecue grill.
- In order of importance, grill owners look for: ease of use (20%), grill size/capacity (16%), features (12%) and cooking capability/efficiency (12%).
- Up five percentage points from last year, 50% of American grill owners said they prefer grilling outside over cooking indoors.
- 78% of grillers under the age of 35 say they grew up in a grilling household, compared to 43% of grillers 55 and older.



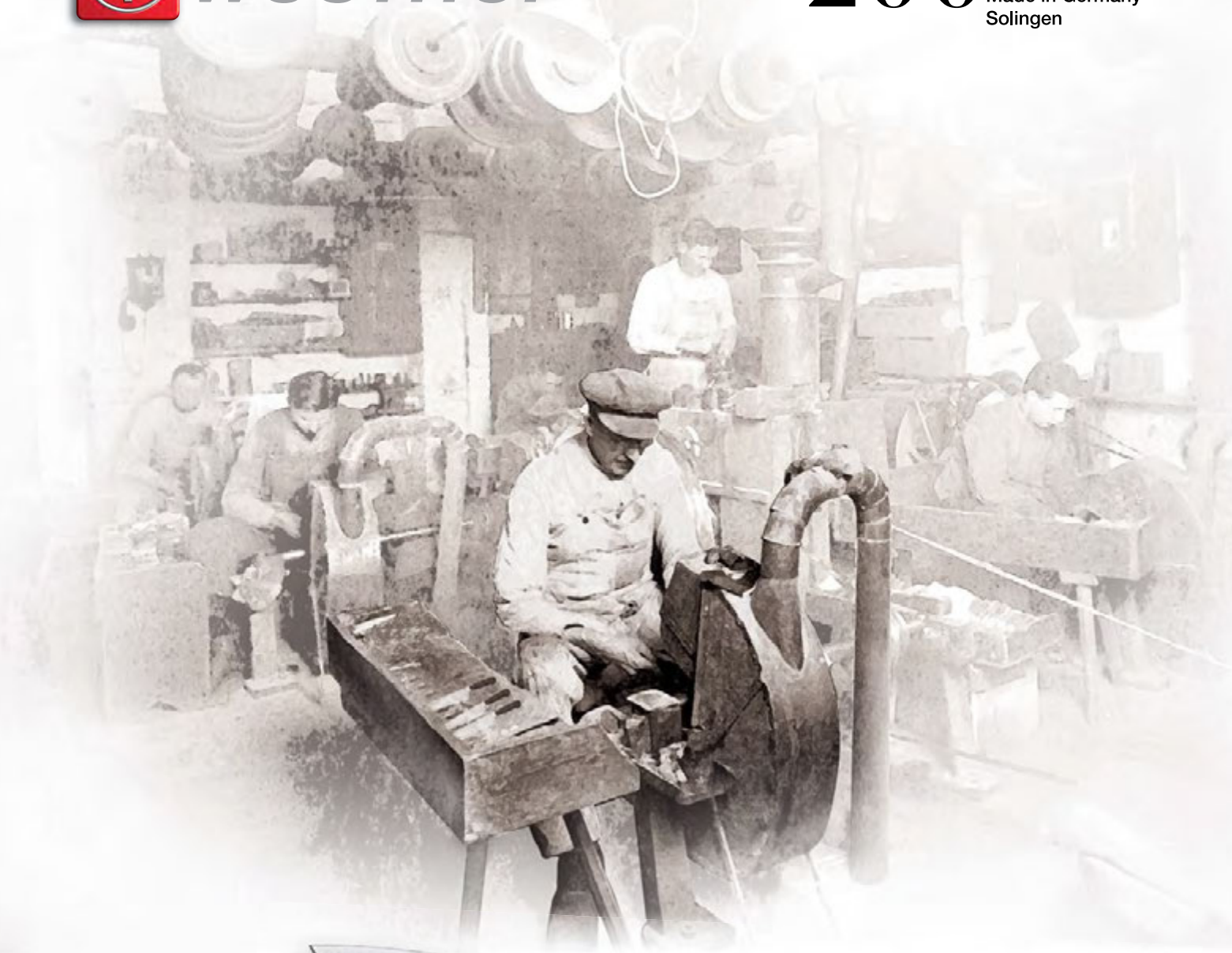
Counseltron's new grilling accessories by Lodge make cooking over the campfire or barbecue much easier. They have introduced a dishwasher-safe, silicone head basting brush, heavy-duty spatula, a spoon and large tongs. Each of these items features a long durable wood handle with stainless steel making it ideal for flipping, grilling and basting.



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Home Storage

What's new in home storage and organization products



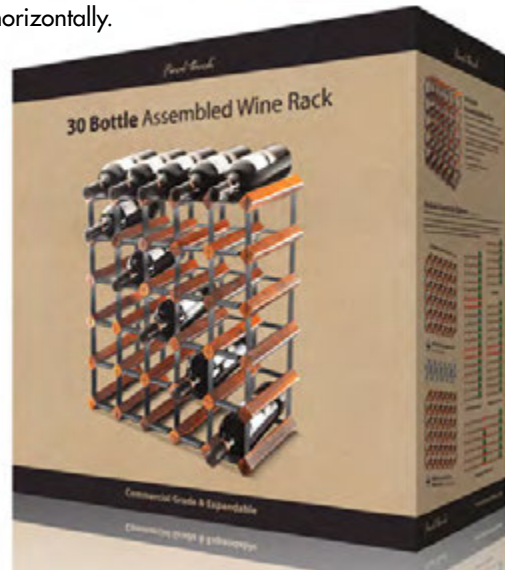
David Shaw Design is promoting several storage items from the Universal Expert by Sebastian Conran collection. The bread bin, above, is made of stainless steel and beech wood. The compact design is perfect for countertop or kitchen shelf. It has a flat top for cutting bread or storing a toaster and a ventilated floor for fresh-

ness. The Countertop Tidy, left, is made of stainless steel and is dishwasher-safe. It's ideal to organize utensils, bottles and spices or brushes. Also new is this deluxe tool caddy, below, made of stainless steel with a folding wood handle.

It features handy dividers to keep tools, brushes and cleaning supplies easily accessible and well-organized.



Product Specialties has introduced a new collapsible beverage bin and a range of assembled wine racks. Made of durable BPA-free, food-grade silicone, the beverage bin collapses to under two inches and easily expands to full capacity in seconds by simply pushing down on the handles. The wine racks come in two styles to hold either 12 or 30 bottles, with either a cherry or maple finish. The racks feature a steel crossed frame on the front and a back that locks into wood. It can expand vertically or horizontally.



The rubber base of the GeckoTech Reusable Hook from **ShurTech Brands** is made of revolutionary micro-suction technology that allows the hooks to securely adhere to surfaces. They can be used effectively on painted surfaces, glass, stainless steel, tile and more for limitless organizing

and decorating in any room of the home. GeckoTech Reusable Hooks are also waterproof, providing a simple solution for bath and shower articles. The hooks can be reused by peeling back an edge of the hook and re-applying to the new area.



Storage



Made in France of high resistant ceramic, these airtight storage jars are from the Emile Henry Natural Chic collection. Each jar comes with six blank labels and is available in five colours and three sizes from **Browne & Co.**



Made of sturdy 600 denure polyester, these Hanging Bucket Bins come with plastic hooks for hanging anywhere – or from each other. Each bin has a chalkboard label for easy identification of the contents. Available in both small and large sizes from **GreatUsefulStuff.**

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HomeStyle

2015 Editorial Calendar

January/February

Editorial Submissions due: November 28, 2014

Advertising Material due: December 12, 2014

- Kitchen gadgets, tools and utensils
- Focus on Tea: kettles, tea pots and tea accessories
- Outdoor dining/acrylics
- Pressure Cookers
- **Toronto Gift Fair Preview**
- **NY NOW Show Preview**

March/April

Editorial Submissions due: February 2, 2015

Advertising Material due: February 11, 2015

- Motor-driven Appliances: blenders, mixers, food processors, juicers, slicers & choppers
- Glass Beverageware and Stemware
- Food Storage Containers
- **Chicago Housewares Show Preview**

May/June

Editorial Submissions due: April 13, 2015

Advertising Material due: April 22, 2015

- THE COFFEE ISSUE – Focus on coffeemakers & espresso machines
- Floor Care Trends
- Bakeware and Decorating Accessories
- Appetizers/Serveware

July/August

Editorial Submissions due: June 15, 2015

Advertising Material due: June 24, 2015

- Pepper Mills & Spice Grinders
- Stovetop Cookware
- Casual Dinnerware and Table Linens
- Beverage Makers
- **Toronto Gift Fair Preview**
- **NY NOW Show Preview**

September/October

Editorial Submissions due: August 17, 2015

Advertising Material due: August 26, 2015

- Heating Appliances: Focus on toasters, deep fryers, slow cookers, toasters, ovens & grills
- Knives, Sharpeners & Cutting Boards
- Barware, Cocktail & Wine Accessories

November/December

Editorial Submissions due: October 9, 2015

Advertising Material due: October 21, 2015

- Coffee Accessories/Pods/Filters
- Irons, Garment Care and Laundry Products
- Home Storage and Waste Containers
- Sports/Hydration Bottles & Coolers
- Cleaning Products/Brooms/Brushes

Gourmet Gallery

Making it's debut in 2015 is the *Home Style* Gourmet Gallery.

At a special rate of just \$495, participants will receive one-sixth of a page in a special gourmet section that will be published in both the January and the July Toronto Gift Fair preview issues. Simply submit your photograph and advertising copy and we'll do the rest.

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contact Jesse O'Halloran at jesse@homestylemag.ca or call 905-338-0799

Home Storage

The EverFresh mesh and wire laundry hamper from **NeatFreak** uses all natural 100% environmentally-friendly enzymes built into the fabric of the product. It will continually reduce the odor of dirty laundry. The hamper has a light-weight frame and sturdy handles to easily transport laundry from room to

room. The mesh body allows for air flow and the durable polyester fabric can be wiped clean. It's also available with long shoulder straps. NeatFreak has also introduced an eight and 24-compartment drawer organizer, below. These flexible, breathable organizers are ideal for ties, socks or accessories and fit easily into most dresser drawers.



The patented design of **Spectrum's** Bella Over the Cabinet Door styling centre features a curved basket that can be used on the left or right side of cabinet door and has height-adjustable brackets to clear most sink bowls, shelves and plumbing. The padded foam brackets are also removable for wall mounting. Accommodating up to 3-inch hair dryer nozzles, the basket features ample storage space for flat irons, curling irons, hair brushes and other accessories. There is also a 4-tier styling station that stores a hair dryer with the nozzle or

handle-down and features three sets of hooks to accommodate cords, flat irons, curling irons and hair brushes. It provides a spacious section to store hair styling tools and accessories. Also new from Spectrum, the Bloom kitchen lid organizer, shown below, is made of chrome and satin nickel, fits snugly over the cupboard door.



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Linda Heidman

National Sales Manager, Swissmar Imports



If you have your health, nothing else really matters. Nobody knows that better than Linda Heidman. On January 17th of this year, Linda happily celebrated her 50th birthday with her family. On January 18th, she suffered a massive stroke that left her temporarily paralyzed. Her husband immediately called 911 and she was rushed to a nearby heart and stroke clinic where she was given a powerful new drug, called TPA, that saved her life. After two weeks in the ICU, she was transferred to a rehab centre where she spent months dealing with a variety of physical challenges before returning to work in late July.

It was a harrowing ordeal for sure, but luckily Linda comes from hardy stock and possesses a fierce determination that helped her recover faster than most.

A country girl at heart, Linda was raised on a large farm near Peterborough, Ontario, where she and her sister had both horses and cows. Her father was a contractor and her mother, a nurse. They both taught their children to be independent and self-sufficient, which came in handy when Linda found herself pregnant as a teen. She's proud of the fact that she managed to finish high school and support her son, Christopher, as a single mom without ever accepting any financial help.

It wasn't easy, but Linda was fortunate to find a terrific job working for Pleasure Valley, a sprawling 600-acre park offering horseback riding and other outdoor activities. She loved the job, and thanks to her effervescent personality, soon found herself in charge of selling corporate events for the park. Much like a wedding planner, she helped clients organize team-building functions and social events.

Selling came naturally to Linda, but by 2000, she was tired of working seven days a week. She had married in 1990 and had a daughter, Alissa, while taking classes at Durham college at night. A friend had helped her son get a job working in the warehouse at Swissmar in Richmond Hill and she told Linda about an opening in

customer service. She applied and was hired by Daniel Oehy in 2001.

"I was looking for a company that offered personal growth and a chance to get ahead," she says. "I found the right one."

It was a busy time at Swissmar but Linda quickly got comfortable in her new role. She enjoyed dealing with the customers and helping them solve problems. She also developed an appreciation for the quality kitchenware lines that Swissmar carried. A talented cook, she was soon doing demos at trade shows, impressing both Daniel and his colleague Maria Brown. Before long, Linda was promoted to customer service manager.

"I loved working the trade shows, it was so exciting," Linda recalls. "I hadn't travelled much so to be surrounded by all these fascinating products and retail entrepreneurs who wanted to buy those products was amazing. I felt I had the best job ever."

It soon got even better. In 2005, Daniel's vice president, Thomas Arn, moved back to Switzerland and Linda was asked to take over as national sales manager. Though she had no direct sales experience, Daniel had faith in her. He wasn't disappointed.

Suddenly, Linda was selling to the major buyers and heading up a team of 15 "terrific sales agents" across the country. She was responsible for a range of high profile brands, such as Peugeot, Mauvier and Metrokane, as well as the Swissmar line.

"For a farm girl like me to be part of an international organization was incredible," Linda explains. "I was travelling to Frankfurt and Chicago and helping Daniel introduce products from around the world. I felt like a kid in a candy store."

Daniel also felt lucky, having found the perfect person to look after his most important retail and commercial customers.

"Linda is not your typical salesperson," he says. "Starting from her first day 13 years ago, she has managed to build great relationships with everyone she encounters. Her personality makes her so easy to deal with. She is definitely the

most positive person I know and always puts everyone else first. We are proud to have her on the Swissmar team."

Linda is a people person with a great sense of humour and a kind heart. Relationships are important to her.

"I truly like our retail partners and I care about their business because they are the reason for our success," she says. "These people work seven days a week, merchandising and selling our products. If there is anything I can do to help or make their job easier, I will."

Linda knows how hard it is to be a retailer today, though, and empathizes with customers who are struggling. But she tries to stay positive and keep both them, and her sales reps, motivated. One of those reps is Ford Nixon, who has worked with Linda from the start.

"Norma and I have been so fortunate to have Linda as our sales manager," he says. "Her energy level is amazing and the way she interacts with our customers, both at the trade shows and in their stores, is wonderful."

Ford adds that everyone at Swissmar was thrilled to have Linda back healthy and fully recovered from her stroke. "Their support and willingness to take care of her job while she was away will never be forgotten," says Linda.

Despite the trauma she suffered earlier this year, Linda's already positive attitude has become even brighter. The months she spent roaming her beautiful two-acre property with 'best friend', Bear, a German Rottweiler, helped her put things into perspective.

"Turning 50 almost killed me", she says jokingly, "but it also showed me how truly fortunate I am to work with people who truly value and appreciate me. I will always be grateful." 🐾

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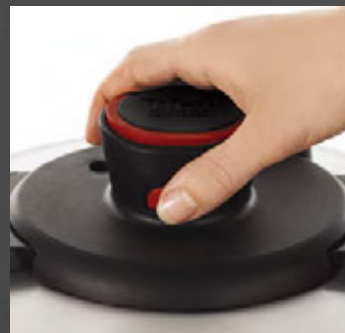
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